

THE EFFECT OF CONFLICT TYPE TRANSFORMATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

Task conflicts between group members significantly impact team performance, so it is essential to determine which conflict resolution styles should be implemented. In this paper researcher analyses how different conflict management types affect team performance via task conflict. The researcher has focused on identifying the relationship between task conflict on creativity, performance, innovation, relationship, job satisfaction, stress, Knowledge sharing, trust and leadership through secondary research. Further Empirical research should be conducted to generalise the findings in diverse situations.

Keywords: Conflict Types, Task Conflict, Process Conflict, Relationship Conflict, Performance

INTRODUCTION

SP Robbins, TA Judge & S Sanghi defined conflict as a “process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected”.

Conflict has an important role in all groups and organisations. In the *traditional view* of the school of thought, conflict indicates a malfunction within the group and should be avoided. However, another school of thought in *human relations* claims that conflict is natural, inevitable, and a positive force in identifying group performance. However, the most recent school of thought of the *interactionist view* proposes that conflict is necessary to perform group effectively.

Conflict is the clash of interests between two individuals. It is a struggle to achieve the truth. It may differ according to the nation, caste, political and even personal beliefs. All individuals have their own beliefs, attitudes and interests. Some persons are more empathetic as they can understand others' point of view. However, some are not that adaptive. Conflict may arise in such situations. To avoid such situations, all individuals should try to understand the misunderstandings. Workplace conflict emerges when employees dispute conflicting interests, personalities, views, or ideas. Conflict is expected when people from various backgrounds and perspectives work side by side.

According to an SHRM survey, 44 percent of HR professionals expect increased political volatility at work in 2020 compared to past years. Workplace conflicts can be because for various reasons. Issues can be on the part of management or the employee itself. Lack of cooperation, verbal abuse, bullying, hostility, low quality or delayed work, project failure, and more are the ways of conflict that may arise in the workplace. Causes of conflict, especially in the workplace, include:

- Differences in the personality of individuals
- Undefined positions in the workplace.
- Mismanagement of organisational transitions and changes.
- Unequal resources for employees
- Shared human resources
- Unfulfilled requirements in the workplace
- Miscommunication, including misunderstood and out-of-context comments
- Irritating workplace practices, as perceived by certain co-workers.
- Variances in work practices or objectives, as well as differences in viewpoints, due to age, gender, or upbringing.
- Inconsistent implementation of a job description or the presence of overlapping responsibilities can lead to a lack of organisational effectiveness.

Usually, people follow their habits in the workplace also. They resist workplace changes. These issues may lead to conflict between employees and management. So better communication between management and employees was required to solve these issues. Employees must understand the reasons for changes in the workplace. Management should try to involve employees in decision-making and give training on new job responsibilities. Employees will work without fail if they get appropriate training and coaching. Hence Learning and Development's role in improving employees' competence is crucial. (Jose & Durai, 2022)

Another problem is poor communication. The information must be clear and concise. Otherwise, misunderstanding may happen in each stage of the process, leading to conflict between co-workers. Employees in an organisation are from different cultures and personalities and may be poor work habits. So, each employee will face different challenges in the workplace.

According to Harvard law school, there are three types of Conflicts. They are Task Conflict, Relationship Conflict and Value Conflict. They can be briefly explained as follows.

Task conflict

A task conflict occurs when employees disagree about the best way to complete work tasks. Task conflict can be caused by differences in attitudes, needs, or behaviours within an organisation. (*What Is Task Conflict in the Workplace? (With Example) | Indeed.Com*, n.d.). When colleagues disagree about what needs to be done or do not agree on the project's goal, they experience a task conflict. (*How to Resolve Workplace Conflict*, n.d.)

Relationship Conflict

When personal feelings are involved, a relationship conflict arises. A relationship Conflict situation may involve displaying a short temper at a co-worker, and even a sense of disrespect may be experienced. (*How to Resolve Workplace Conflict*, n.d.).

Value conflict

There is value conflict when co-workers have different lifestyles, values, and identities. The areas where employees can experience value conflict are in terms of Religion, Politics, Ethics and Social norms.

Process Conflict

A process conflict is similar to a task conflict where both parties disagree on how the project or task should be completed. (*How to Resolve Workplace Conflict*, n.d.).

The relationship of task conflict on various endogenous variables

Those who employ a more dominant or avoidant style experience greater levels of task conflict, increasing relationship conflict and stress. (Friedman et al., 2000). Meanwhile, the relationship between task conflict and group performance was positive when group conflict was managed actively and negative when it was passively managed. Similarly, task conflict increased group satisfaction when managed with cooperative behaviour but decreased satisfaction when managed with neutral or disagreeable behaviour. The results of this study provide a crucial first look at how group conflict management behaviours directly impact group outcomes and influence task conflict - group outcome relationships. (DeChurch & Marks, 2001).

Negative associations exist between both types of conflict and perceptions of supervisory leadership behaviours, but emotional conflict in its pure sense had stronger negative associations than mixed conflict. (Xin & Pelled, 2003). A framework for awareness of the dynamics of conflict and trust in virtual inter-organisational arrangements is presented, following an examination of three distinct structural forms of virtual alliances and strategies for generating trust and mitigating dysfunctional conflict. (Panteli & Sockalingam, 2005).

The connections between personality, team processes, task characteristics, product quality, and team member satisfaction in software development teams where the teams had agile methodology adaptation were examined, and it was discovered that the team that used an agile methodology with the highest job satisfaction are precisely those whose members possess the highest levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Additionally, member satisfaction is increased when they have control over the development and organisation of their work. In contrast, satisfaction and cohesion decrease as the conflict between team members increases. The teams exhibit a positive correlation between the personality trait extraversion and the quality of the software product. (Acuña et al., 2009).

A contingency model was presented in which the relationship between task conflict and team creativity is contingent on the level of conflict and when it occurs in the project team's life cycle. In a study of Information technology project teams in the greater China region, it was discovered that task conflict had a curvilinear effect on team creativity, with the highest levels of creativity occurring at moderate task conflict levels. In addition, it was discovered that this relationship was moderated by the team phase, with the curvilinear effect being strongest in the early phases and at later stages of the team life cycle; the task conflict was found to not correlate with team creativity. (Farh et al., 2010).

Conceptual Framework

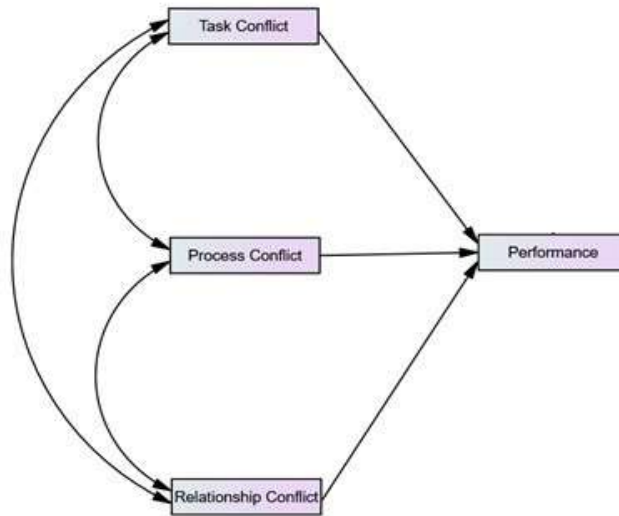


Figure 1

Source: Author

The model contains the following variables

Number of variables in the model: 4

Observed endogenous variables

- Job performance

Observed exogenous variables

- Task Conflict
- Process Conflict
- Relationship Conflict

As former researches indicate, task conflict is supposed to positively impact performance, whereas relationship conflict negatively impacts the performance variable. (Durai & Thomas, 2022). Nevertheless, in the practical scenario, there is only a narrow line that differentiates a task conflict from getting transformed into a Relationship Conflict.

Professional relationships can undergo risky situations due to task conflict because it typically leads to a personal conflict. Guenter et al. have identified the same in their research: “although task conflict can be advantageous, it can put teams at risk because it frequently leads to relationship conflict.” (Guenter et al., 2016).

Conclusion and Suggestions

In the present scenario, the author suggests adopting measures to prevent task conflicts from escalating into relationship conflicts, which can subsequently hinder performance. The model suggested in the study can be further developed and tested by including the mediating effect of conflict management styles (CMS) on employee performance.

Conflict of Interest

The authors claim no conflicts of interest. In addition, the authors strictly adhere to all ethical considerations, such as plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies.

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