

WORKPLACE CONFLICT AS A PREDICTOR OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE DECLINE: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY ON RELIGION BASED ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

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Workplace conflict is a common issue frequently encountered in organizations and can adversely affect employee performance if not properly managed. This study aims to examine the relationship between workplace conflict and employee performance within a religious organization. The research employed a quantitative approach using a correlational method, designed to measure the degree of association between two variables without intervention. The entire population of 88 employees was used as the research sample through total sampling technique. Data were collected using an online questionnaire based on a Likert scale and analyzed using SPSS version 24.0. The results of the analysis indicate a significant negative relationship between workplace conflict and employee performance. In other words, the higher the level of conflict in the work environment, the lower the employee performance. Conversely, when conflict is effectively managed, employee performance tends to improve. These findings are supported by previous studies, which suggest that unresolved conflict can lower motivation, disrupt communication, and increase work-related stress, ultimately leading to a decline in productivity.

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1. Introduction

The 4.0 industrial revolution has brought significant changes to organizational dynamics and heightened expectations regarding employee performance. Digital technology, automation, and the integration of information systems have transformed work processes, increased demands for efficiency, and expanded the scope of employee responsibilities. Employee performance is no longer assessed solely through quantitative metrics, but also includes the quality of work, adaptability to change, and effective cross-functional collaboration. However, alongside the growing complexity of the work environment, new challenges have emerged that may hinder performance optimization one of which is workplace conflict.

Workplace conflict refers to a state of misalignment between interests, goals, values, or expectations among individuals or between units within an organization (Paramita & Suwandana, 2022). Conflicts can arise from differing perceptions, high work pressure, ineffective communication, or imbalances in workload distribution (Isa & Indrayati, 2023). In certain contexts, conflict can serve a constructive role as a catalyst for innovation and process improvement (Converso et al., 2020). However, if not properly managed, conflict can instead lead to decreased productivity, create an unwelcoming work atmosphere, and result in work-related stress that ultimately diminishes employee performance.

Ideally, organizations aspire to cultivate a harmonious, collaborative, and productive work environment, where conflict is either minimized or managed constructively so that it does not negatively impact individual or team performance (Sousa et al., 2020). However, in practice, many organizations continue to struggle with internal conflicts that adversely affect employee performance. These issues are often exacerbated by the lack of effective conflict management systems and weak leadership in fostering a healthy organizational culture.

Data show that employee performance in Indonesia continues to face serious challenges. According to the Employee Experience 2023 survey by Job Street Indonesia, more than 47% of employees expressed dissatisfaction with their work environment, with one of the main contributing factors being interpersonal conflict and poor communication in the workplace. Additionally, the World Bank's 2022 report revealed that labor productivity in Indonesia remains below the ASEAN average attributed, in part, to managerial inefficiencies and suboptimal workplace conditions.

In response, organizations must develop structured and proactive conflict management strategies. Approaches such as communication skills training, leadership development programs, internal mediation mechanisms, and the promotion of a collaborative work culture may serve as strategic initiatives to reduce the frequency and intensity of workplace conflict while simultaneously enhancing overall employee performance.

This study seeks to examine the relationship between workplace conflict and employee performance. Specifically, it aims to analyze the extent to which conflict levels within organizational settings affect employee performance and to offer strategic recommendations for managing conflict to improve organizational effectiveness.

2. Literature review

2.1. Employee performance

Employee performance is a critical aspect of human resource management studies, as it plays a direct role in achieving organizational objectives. According to Mangkunegara (2021), employee performance refers to the quality and quantity of work outcomes achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them. Performance encompasses not only the final output but also the work process, attitude, and overall contribution to the team and the organization.

Research by Prasetya & Kato (2022) revealed that employee performance is influenced by several factors, including motivation, work environment, leadership style, and job satisfaction. In the context of modern organizations, performance is increasingly shaped by adaptability to change, technological proficiency, and collaborative teamwork. Recent research by Tan et al. (2023) shows that organizations with clear performance measurement systems and consistent feedback mechanisms tend to have employees who are more productive and better aligned with organizational goals.

Furthermore, Haryanto & Sari (2023) emphasize the importance of organizational support through training and career development as a key driver of enhanced performance. Employees who feel supported by their organizations tend to exhibit higher levels of work engagement and are more capable of delivering optimal performance. Therefore, performance management should not be viewed merely as an evaluation process, but rather as an integral component of managing employee potential, motivation, and psychological well-being.

2.2. Workplace conflict

Workplace conflict is an inevitable dynamic within any organization, given the diversity of backgrounds, interests, values, and job-related pressures faced by individuals and groups. According to Jadmiko & Azliyanti, (2023), workplace conflict refers to a form of disagreement or discord that arises when the goals or actions of one party interfere with or oppose those of another within a work context. Conflicts may occur horizontally—between peers—or vertically, involving supervisors and subordinates.

A study by Karakose et al., (2021) demonstrated that workplace conflict can have detrimental effects on work effectiveness, lower team morale, and increase stress levels if not properly managed. However, when addressed constructively, conflict—within certain limits—can also serve as a tool for evaluation and innovation. Research by Nourman Adittyta et al., (2023), indicated that organizations

with effective conflict management systems such as internal mediation or communication training are better equipped to mitigate the adverse impact of conflict on employee productivity.

Unresolved conflicts often lead to interpersonal tension, decreased job satisfaction, and in some cases, employees' intent to leave the organization. These findings are in line with those of Elahi et al., (2022) who noted that persistent and unaddressed workplace conflict is a major trigger for reduced performance and diminished employee loyalty. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to understand the root causes of conflict and develop resolution strategies to ensure that conflict does not obstruct the achievement of shared objectives.

In summary, workplace conflict is a critical variable that must be managed appropriately. In dynamic and competitive organizational environments, conflict management should not be viewed solely as a means of minimizing tension, but also as an opportunity to foster open communication, enhance collaboration, and continuously improve performance.

3. Methodology

The research approach employed in this study is quantitative, using a correlational research method. This method falls under the category of non-experimental research, aimed at identifying and measuring the relationship between two or more variables without introducing any intervention. The unit of analysis in this study is the employees of a company operating in the religious organizational sector, with a total population of 88 employees. The sampling technique used was total sampling, whereby the entire population was included as the research sample. Data collection was conducted through the distribution of online questionnaires using the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire instrument employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The collected data were analyzed using assumption testing and simple correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the variables of workplace conflict and employee performance.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Normality test

The results of the Model normality test can be seen in Table 1. The normality significance test shows that the model has a Sig work conflict of 0.443, and employee performance of 0.654. both significance values (> 0.05); it can be concluded that the data in the model is normally distributed, so the model is suitable for testing.

Table 1. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

		Workplace Conflict	Employee Performance
N		88	88
Normal Parameters	Mean	78.25	82.70
	Std. Deviation	12.65	14.32
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.092	0.078
	Positive	0.062	0.058
	Negative	-0.092	-0.078
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		0.865	0.734
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.443	0.654
a. Test distribution is Normal.			

4.2. Linearity test

Based on the linearity test results between Work Conflict (X) and Employee Performance (Y), the following results are obtained:

Table 2. ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Workplace Conflict * Employee Performance	Between Groups	(combined)	1098.123	7	156.875	4.789	0.000
		Linearity	1050.456	1	1050.456	32.075	0.000
		Deviation from Linearity	47.667	6	7.944	0.683	0.666

Within Groups	2703.584	80	33.795
Total	3801.707	87	

Based on the results of the linearity test between the variables of Work Conflict (as the independent variable) and Employee Performance (as the dependent variable), it is known that the significance value in the Linearity component is 0.000, which means it is smaller than 0.05. This shows that there is a significant and linear relationship between the two variables. This indicates that there is a significant and linear relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, the significance value in the Deviation from Linearity component is 0.666, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant deviation from the linear relationship between work conflict and employee performance. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationship between the two variables is linear and significant, and fulfils the assumption of linearity.

4.3. Simple correlation test

To determine the relationship between the variables of Work Conflict and Employee Performance, the Pearson correlation test was conducted. This test is used because both variables are interval scaled and have fulfilled the assumptions of linearity and normality. The results of the correlation test are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Correlations

		Workplace Conflict	Employee Performance
Workplace Conflict	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-0.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	88	
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	-0.642**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	88	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results of the pearson correlation test between the Work Conflict and Employee Performance variables, the correlation coefficient value is -0.642 with a significance of 0.000. Because the significance value is smaller than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. The negative coefficient value indicates that the relationship is negative, meaning that the higher the level of work conflict experienced by employees, the lower their performance level. Conversely, the lower the work conflict, the higher the employee performance. This relationship is in the strong category, as it falls between the range of -0.60 to -0.79.

4.4. The relationship between work conflict and employee performance

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant negative relationship between work conflict and employee performance, with a correlation coefficient of -0.642 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that the higher the level of work conflict occurring within the organizational environment, the lower the employee performance tends to be. Conversely, when work conflict can be minimized or managed effectively, employee performance tends to improve.

These results are in line with previous research. Haryanto et al., (2022); Nikbakhsh, (2022); Orellana et al., (2023) state that both personal and structural conflicts within government organizations negatively impact the achievement of performance targets. Meanwhile, Michinov, (2022) found the result in the private sector that conflicts among coworkers disrupt individual focus and motivation, ultimately reducing work effectiveness. also emphasize that unresolved conflicts increase work stress and worsen communication, significantly lowering employee performance.

These findings can be further analyzed using the Basic Organizational Behavior Model developed by Robbins and Judge.

This model divides organizational behavior into three main levels: input, process, and outcome. Input includes variables such as organizational structure, culture, and individual characteristics. In the context of this research, work conflict falls under the structural and social elements of the organization, which are important inputs influencing individual behavior (Gomes et al., 2023). The process consists

of perception, motivation, communication, decision-making, and leadership (Ardianto et al., 2023, 2024; Park & Kim, 2024; YUSDHika et al., 2023). High levels of conflict affect interpersonal processes such as communication and perception, which then lower work motivation and disrupt teamwork (BowenXue et al., 2024; Zhong et al., 2024). The outcome or final result of this model is employee performance, both individually and collectively. When conflict increases and organizational processes are disrupted, the final outcome is a decline in performance, as evidenced by the results of this study.

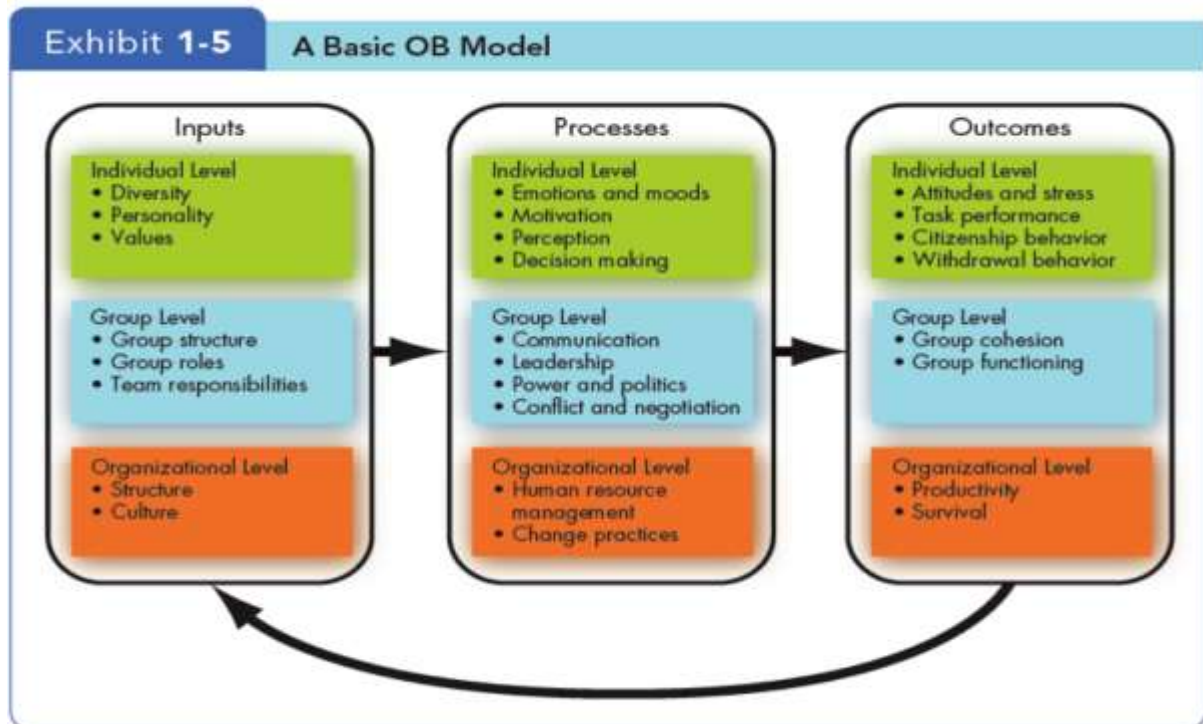


Figure 1. Organizational behavior model (Robbins, 2001)

Thus, work conflict acts as a dysfunctional input that hinders healthy work processes, negatively impacting the outcome in the form of decreased employee performance. These findings indicate that organizations need to pay attention to conflict management as a key strategy for improving employee performance. Such strategies may include communication training, conflict mapping, and the active role of leadership in resolving tensions among employees. Furthermore, it is important for organizations to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional conflicts. Within the framework of Robbins and Judge, functional conflict can foster creativity and innovation when managed properly, whereas dysfunctional conflict as observed in this study leads to disorganization and decreased performance output.

Referring to this organizational behavior model, it can be concluded that efforts to enhance employee performance are not sufficient through technical training alone; they also require a systemic approach to the social and psychological factors in the work environment, one of which is work conflict.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that work conflict has a significant negative relationship with employee performance. The higher the level of conflict occurring in the work environment, the lower the employee performance tends to be. Conversely, when conflict can be minimized or managed effectively, employee performance tends to improve. These findings are consistent with various previous studies that show that unresolved conflict can disrupt communication, lower motivation, and increase work stress, ultimately having a detrimental impact on employee effectiveness and productivity. Within the framework of the Organizational Behavior Model, work conflict is an input element that influences interpersonal processes within the organization and directly impacts the outcome in the form of performance. Therefore, conflict management becomes an important

aspect that organizations must pay attention to in order to create a healthy work environment that supports the sustainable improvement of employee performance.

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