



## The perception of the role and style of conflict management on human resources in organizations

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### Abstract

Conflict is something which cannot be controlled by human. Every human being has a conflict management style and perception according to his/her role, thought, and environment in dealing with it, especially in Human Resources who manages employees. The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of the role of Human Resources in dealing with conflict in the organization and to find out how the conflict management style of Human Resources in their organization was. The method used was a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach by looking at the experiences of those who were Human Resources in dealing with organizational conflicts. With qualitative methods, interviews were conducted with four informants from different organizations, with two organizational criteria, they were modern organizations and traditional organizations. The result of this research was the perception of individual's role as Human Resources in responding to organizational conflict was a natural and normal thing, conflicts were handled wisely according to the causes of existing conflicts. The conflict management style used by Human Resources in modern organizations and traditional organizations was different. Modern organizations used an integrative conflict management style. Meanwhile, traditional organizations used a conflict management style of dominance and compromise. The conclusion of the study was that the conflict management style applied to each Human Resources was based on the perception of the role obtained from the principles and environment of their organization.

**Keywords:** Conflict Management Style, Conflict, Human Resources

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### Introduction

Human Resources (HR) are individuals who have a very important role for organizations which are focused on developing the quality of employee performance with job training and career development (Swanson, 1995), focusing on employee welfare to get their rights (Lee *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[10]</sup>, and maintain a good relationship between employees and the organization (Werner & De Simone, 2012), in order that goals and systems can work well. Thus, the management of employees in the organization is very concerned, especially in terms of conflicts which occur between employees or superiors and subordinates in the organization. Conflict is a condition where differences in understanding between humans result in disputes and conflicts between them (Wahyudi, 2015). Conflict also triggers the disharmony of a group, even an organization. It is caused by many things, such as differences in background, thoughts, and interests. In the research of (James *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[8]</sup> conveys that conflict is triggered by perception and background, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic creating physical distance between employees which ultimately resulted in many employees experiencing a high level conflict with themselves and between colleagues (Dinibutun, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>.

Each individual has their own view or perception of conflict depends on how they see conflict in the organization. With this perception of organizational conflict, many individuals in the organization who ultimately avoid conflict.

According to (James *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[8]</sup> conflict avoidance is good if there are problems with cultural differences in multicultural organizations which should be muffled with respect. In addition, some see conflict as natural and acceptable thing. In the research of (Sridasweni *et al.*, 2017), conflict must be faced wisely with an approach of bringing together and uniting the conflicting parties.

Perception according to (Robbins, 1996), is an individual's thought or point of view of the environment by giving meaning or interpretation. According to (Toha, 2020), perception is behavior which is obtained more than what is displayed by the five senses. It can be concluded that perception is an individual's beliefs, thoughts, ideologies obtained through the ability to see, hear, and feel which are processed to organize and interpret the meaning of the environment.

Role is individual behaviors in organizations (Gibson, 2006) <sup>[6]</sup>. It can be regarded as the rights and obligations of individuals in their environment. Perception of the role according to (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007) <sup>[9]</sup> is the belief or point of view of the individual in dealing with a situation, in this case is the situation in the organization. According to (Robbins, 1996) the perception of the concept of conflict in organizations is known as The Conflict Paradox which is divided into three parts, they are; 1.) The traditional view, which assesses that conflict is a bad thing and should be avoided. 2.) Human relations view, which sees conflict as a natural thing to happen, thus conflict must be faced wisely. 3.) Interactionist view, which sees that conflict must exist to encourage critical thinking for all members in the organization to increase morale and performance.

Individual perceptions, especially on their role as Human Resources in the organization, view conflict according to what they usually find through five senses and the state of the organization's environment. This perception forms a conflict management style in individuals in dealing with the organizational conflicts. (Cader, 2017) <sup>[3]</sup> conveys that conflict management style used by Human Resources managers is seen from the environment by carrying out proactive behavior and incorporating religious principles, they are mutual help, patience, and brotherhood. In line with (Mash *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[12]</sup> which uses a conflict management style based on its environment, the object of research is two different types of organizations with the subject of Human Resource managers, they are intensive and traditional knowledge having different conflict management styles according to the subject's perception of conflict. The conflict resolution used is also in accordance with the cause of the conflict.

Conflict management style is an attitude taken by individuals in the organization in dealing with conflict. According to (Rahim, 2001), there are 5 types of conflict management styles, including:

### 1. Integrative Style

The integrative style is the most ethically satisfying style in responding to conflict. Both parties are actively involved in problem solving, thus both of them can get a favorable outcome.

### 2. Obliging Style

This obliging style is a style used by individuals in an attitude which tends to succumb. The individual sacrifices his interests and prioritizes the interests of others.

### 3. Dominating Style

This conflict management style is considered to have no respect for the other party. There is an element of coercion in the individuals involved to have to follow the wishes of the other party. In short, this management style is dominating and can harm as well as exploit others.

### 4. Avoiding Style

This management style is the attitude of individuals who tend to avoid when faced with conflict.

### 5. Compromising Style

The causes of conflicts found by the role of Human Resources in the organization are poor communication, bad behavior, personality differences, lack of an employee reward system at work, siding with one person, and nepotism. Conflict resolution carried out by Human Resources in their research is to discuss problems, apologize, and find a middle way between the two conflicting parties (Isa, 2016).

Therefore, based on the background of conflict, especially in Human Resources, this study aimed to discuss the perception of the role of Human Resources in each organization regarding how to respond to organizational conflict and find out how the conflict management style used by Human Resources in each organization.

## Research Method

### 1. Research Design

The research method in this study was qualitative with a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is the general meaning of several individuals related to the phenomenon raised in research (Creswell, 2013) <sup>[4]</sup>. The writer in this case acted as an observer of the phenomenon.

### 2. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques were carried out by in-depth interviews, source documents, and literature studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with 4 respondents who were Human Resources (HR) from different organizations. The interview was conducted online through the zoom application because it was still in the Covid-19 pandemic condition.

### 3. Sampling Technique

Sampling technique was done through purposive sampling by having organizational criteria. Organizational selection was determined by two different types of organizations, they were modern organizations and traditional organizations. This sampling was also a reference from existing research, in research (Mash *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[12]</sup> which discussed conflict management styles in Human Resources managers based on different types of organizations, adapted and undergoing renewal.

### 4. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis techniques were carried out according to Milles & Huberman in the book of Qualitative Research Methods, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018). The data collected from the results of in-depth interviews were reduced by drawing an outline and important points related to the research topic. Then, the data was presented with a discussion related to the topic to get the conclusions from the results of in-depth interviews related to the topic.

## Research Result

### 1. Human Resources Perception of Conflict

Informants who were Human Resources in their respective organizations, responding to conflicts was a natural thing. For them, conflict was natural to be found in all situations, especially in organizations. Conflict was not something which had to be avoided, but it had to be faced according to the causes of the conflict found. They faced conflicts with the principle attitudes they had personally (individually), the role of Human Resources, and the culture of the organization. For informants, the existence of conflict formed a better system and organization as well as created critical thinking for each employee.

It could be concluded that the perception of Human Resources in organizational conflict was based on Robbins' concept with the term The Conflict Paradox, informants included into the individuals in organizations having the perception or view of the human relations view, which judged that conflict was often found wherever it was and it was normal.

### 2. The Causes of Conflict in Organizations

Conflict did not just happen without any reason. There were various causes of conflict in this study based on the results of interviews with informants who represented their organizations, the conflicts caused both by internal and intergroup factors. The cause of conflict within the individual was a difference of opinion. In addition, the causes of conflict were also obtained from interpersonal, both among employees, superiors and subordinates caused by differences in cultural backgrounds, differences in thinking, differences in arguments, misunderstandings, and indiscipline at work.

*“Usually it is a personal problem which is brought to the workplace. There were also problems with indiscipline, some of the staffs are still often late for various reasons”.*

Conflicts found in modern organizations tended to be caused by differences in arguments, feelings problems, and lack of discipline.

*“There are often misunderstandings in each groups. For example, the message or information which should be clearly conveyed from the superiors to managers but instead directly to staff becomes the cause of conflict”.*

In traditional organizations, the cause of conflict was caused by misunderstandings and the length of bureaucracy between divisions or between groups.

### 3. The Attitude of Human Resources in Facing Conflict

Based on the various causes of conflict found in modern organizations and traditional organizations, they caused various attitudes in dealing with conflict, according to its context. Conflicts which occurred within individuals (Human Resources) were inner conflicts from several systems and procedures which were not suitable for them, but they took it because they had to carry out their role. In modern organizations, interpersonal conflicts between employees and interpersonal, and conflicts between superiors and subordinates were carried out with one on one term, which was a two-on-one conversation between one of the parties in

conflict with Human Resources. By doing it, Human Resources also conducted one on one with other parties involved in the same conflict. This was implemented in order to be fair to all employees, Human Resources did not take sides from one party. Furthermore, Human Resources could draw conclusions from the organizational conflicts they faced. Thus, Human Resources united the two parties in a room to resolve the conflicts. The results of this study were in line with the research from (Li *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[11]</sup> which used the one on one method in mediating both parties.

According to (Hutagalung, 2017), interpersonal communication is very important for the running of the organizational system with problem solving carried out with an interpersonal approach. This results in good cooperation within the organizational environment, because the channels for discussion are more open. However, in several cases of informants, traditional organizational conflicts also addressed conflicts by seeking a middle way, even though they returned to prioritizing the interests of those who had power. Arbitration was carried out, seeking a middle way from a third party.

### 4. The Obstacles During Responding to Conflict

Conflict resolution was not as easy as one might think. There were obstacles in dealing with it, namely differences in viewpoints, thoughts, and some individuals in conflict who did not want to be mediated or intervened.

*“It is hard when we want to mediate both parties, there is one of them who does not want to be mediated, we finally give advice on how to do it, then monitor the conflicting parties, although we ourselves have already known about who is really at fault in this conflict”.*

The biggest obstacle found was that one of the parties refused to mediate. This was found in the results of interviews with modern organizations, by refusing the media prepared by the Human Resources team, it could also slow down the problem solving process and lead to one of the parties resigning. In modern organizations, there had been 2-3 cases of mediation refusal.

*“Different opinions and thoughts were usually the obstacles when solving problems”.*

In traditional organizations, the obstacles which were often found were differences in perceptions and opinions that led to one party succumbing”.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

### Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion of the research, the followings were conclusions of this study:

- a) The perception of the role of Human Resources in responding to organizational conflicts was human relations view. Viewing and having the belief that conflict was a natural thing. Human Resources who had a view of human relations as a perception of organizational conflict did not use avoiding and obliging management styles. These two conflict managements were not in line with the concept of human relations perception in organizational conflict, but rather the traditional perception in organizational conflict.

- b) A good conflict management style to do in an organization was integrative, domination, and compromise. It considered that the conflict management style was effective in responding to problems in the organization, while the avoiding and obliging conflict management styles were both used in personal or personal conflicts.

Role Perception and Their Conflict Management Human Resource Managers' Role Perception and Their Conflict Management Style, 2019. April. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jssw.v6n1a6>

### Suggestions

- a) The writer suggests for further research to use other types of organizations and more research samples. Thus it can give various research results according to various organizations.
- b) The writer suggests for further research to explore about organizational communication on the influence of organizational culture on conflict management styles of the role of Human Resources.
- c) The researcher suggests that further research should also focus on the principles of the research subject in dealing with organizational conflict.

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