

Structural and personal conflict in organization



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

What is Conflict?

Definition

When the terminology “ conflict” is mentioned, people often think of brutal wars or social violence. However, conflict coexists with us in our daily life, in all level of organizational operation as well as personal activities. Daily conflicts are usually not too serious, and because they are too small to be sensed, we often forget about them after just one or two minutes.

Another approach to the definition of conflict has been raised by the TEAR Fund members in their books “ Peace building in our community”, which describes conflict as a natural occurrence between two or more people or groups who have differences and incompatibility in their goals or their thinking.

Conflict happens as a part of life. Religiously, every of us have been made by God to be unique, it means that we are different from the others, in the way we think and the way we behave. As a result, when we demonstrate our different viewpoints or opinions, we may raise a conflict if there is a lack of respect and understanding of the other ideas.

Causes of Conflict in Organizations

According to [...], conflict in organizations can be classified into two types: Structure-based conflicts, which occur in the way that the organization is structured and work is organized; Personal conflicts which is raised by differences and uniqueness of different persons.

Some key Ideas of Structural and Personal Conflict in Organization

Structure-based Conflict

Specialization: Often occurs in jobs that are specialized, when each person becomes advanced at one aspect only. Lack of understanding of what tasks the others are performing could raise a Specialization Conflict. An small example for this type of conflict: a Salesperson makes promises with customers about time, quality as well as the design of the delivered goods, however, the workers cannot catch up with the work to make the delivery on time, because the salesperson has made a promise that exceeds the workers' ability due to his lacked of knowledge of product manufacturing.

Interdependence : Work is usually divided into many parts for many groups. Each group has to finish the assigned part on time in order for the process to be smoothly finished. When a group has been stucked and cannot finish the its part on time, the whole process is delayed, and that group will be blamed for lateness. As a result, conflict arises as the blamed group tries to prove themselves to be innocent.

Jurisdictional Ambiguities: This conflict happens when nobody admits their faults. This is a real example from my RMIT experience. My friend would like to exclude one curriculum in this semester, and he noticed the Course Department in week 3. Up to the middle of week 4, he received the email of Course Department for an appointment with the secretary of the Course Department, but he couldn't meet her at the Course Administrator's Room, although he had tried up to 5 times. Up to week 5, he is forced to pay 100\$ as fee for late withdraw. He contacted the Course Coordinator, and received a message of being free for fee. However, the Student Service claimed that

the Course Coordinator asserted in the Database System that he has to pay 100\$, but he also send a fee-free confirmation email for him. As a result, he was stuck between the two walls when nobody admits his case as their fault, and he has to pay 100\$!

Common Resources

Resources are usually limited, and being shared among groups. As a result, conflict is potential. As the resource become scatter or unique, potential conflicts come real. For example, a room is for one group of students, however, in the case of being lack of rooms, many groups of students have to share the same room, and maybe the room is not enough for all of them. Furthermore, each group of student believes that their work is the most important. This raises the conflict, leading to a waste of time on arguing.

Goal Differences

When two or more groups have different goal although they share the same general goal, they may meet each other in conflict. For example, from [....]

In workplace, there are bosses and workers. The relationship between bosses and workers is traditionally the bosses take the supreme command over the workers. For some workers, those relationships are not acceptable, when those have the right to assign work for them, or to evaluate their work. The more workers work under a boss, the more chance that conflict will happen. As the modern model of organization, team work and team empowerment have been used to minimize the potential conflict of authority relationship.

Status Inconsistencies

Differences in status between bosses and workers can result in conflict. For example, benefits such as flexibility in working hours, the right to evaluate work value and giving command, higher salary for shorter work time is available for managers only. The stronger differences between bosses and worker are, the higher potential conflict will occur.

Personal Conflict**Skills and abilities**

The workforce of the organization comes from many backgrounds and has different level of skills. And the work is usually divided into many parts, so rarely people want to be in the same groups with newcomers as their belief of inexperienced new recruits, or experienced workers may not feel satisfied with their new manager who has just graduated, being full of theories' knowledge and lacked of practical experience.

Personalities

People often keep their personalities and their expectation of partners as they enter workplace. Sometimes they become prejudiced and critical, and affecting negatively to the other members, especially new comers or new recruits.

Perception

Perception is individual observation to the society, influencing significantly to the consideration of a person. For example, a person's contribution to a project is always considered, by him, to be more important than the others' contribution. We all think we do more than our assigned part because our part is more important to us than the others' contribution.