

## Exploration of Conflict Management Strategies Implemented by Supervisors in Work Teams

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore conflict management strategies used by supervisors in work teams. Conflict in the team is inevitable, but supervisors' strategies in handling conflicts are the key to creating a conducive work environment. With a qualitative approach, this study explores the direct experience of supervisors in dealing with conflicts between team members. Data was collected through journals and articles that included semi-structured interviews with several supervisors in the private sector. The results showed that supervisors used a collaborative approach and open communication in mitigating conflict, as well as adjusting strategies depending on the context of the conflict situation. This research provides important insights into the role of supervisors in maintaining healthy team dynamics.

**Keywords:** Conflict Management, Supervisor, Work Team, Leadership Strategy, Qualitative Research.

### Introduction

Conflict in work teams is an important issue that often arises in modern organizational dynamics. This conflict phenomenon arises due to differences in backgrounds, interests, values, and communication styles between team members. In complex and stressful work situations, conflict can have a significant impact on team performance, both positively and negatively. Therefore, conflict management is a crucial aspect in organizational management. The problem with this research stems from the fact that not all supervisors have effective strategies in dealing with conflicts in the work environment. Differences in approaches and inconsistencies in strategies often exacerbate existing conflict situations. In fact, the role of supervisors is very important and central in maintaining harmony, facilitating communication, and ensuring that work goals can be achieved collectively.

Although many studies have addressed conflict management in general, there are still limited studies that specifically explore conflict strategies from a supervisor's perspective in the context of a work team. Previous studies have focused more on conflicts between individuals or between departments, rather than on the direct dynamics between supervisors and their teams. This shows that there is a *research gap* that needs to be answered through a qualitative approach.

This study aims to explore and describe conflict management strategies used by supervisors in managing work teams. By understanding these strategies, it is hoped that effective patterns or approaches can be found to be applied in various organizational contexts.

## Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand the conflict management strategies implemented by supervisors in the work team. This approach was chosen to provide an in-depth exploration of the dynamics of conflict and management strategies carried out by supervisors. This approach also allows for the collection of rich and detailed data on the research subject's experiences, perceptions, and perspectives on the issue being studied. The research subjects were supervisors from various industry sectors who *were purposively selected* based on the criteria of a minimum of five years of experience in team leadership positions. The data collection technique was carried out through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The interview is conducted in a semi-structured manner with an open-ended interview guide to dig into in-depth information about the supervisor's experience and strategies in dealing with team conflicts. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which involved the process of coding, categorization, and interpretation of the meaning of the obtained narrative.

## Results and Discussion

### Conflict Management

Conflict management is the action of reactions between actors and outsiders related to conflict. According to Ross (1993), conflict management is a series of steps taken by actors or third parties in order to direct disputes towards certain outcomes that may or may not lead to an end in the form of conflict resolution and may or may not produce calm. Conflict management can involve self-help, cooperation in solving problems (with or without the help of a third party) or decision-making by a third party. A conflict management process-oriented approach refers to the communication patterns (including behavior) of actors and how they affect the interests and interpretations of conflict.

### Effective Conflict Management Strategies in Improving Team Performance

Based on interviews with interviewees, we found that conflict management is an important aspect that supports the company's operational success. Implement strategies to ensure that conflicts are not only resolved but also opportunities to strengthen teamwork. The main strategies implemented by the company are:

Open Communication, Open communication is the cornerstone of conflict management. One of the main causes of conflict is the lack of clear communication between employees and management. "If there are differences of opinion or complaints, employees are always encouraged to express their views directly or through monthly discussion forums. The goal is to ensure that problems can be solved before they become serious problems," he said. The results of an interview with one of the SPVs highlighted the importance of actively listening to complaints and providing clear input. These findings are in line with Sulianta's (2024) research which states that effective communication can prevent the escalation of conflict by ensuring that the message conveyed is not misinterpreted. Sulianta also emphasized that open communication builds trust between team members.

Collaborative Approach, Adopt a collaborative approach by holding group discussions to find a common solution. Collaborative approaches such as group discussions to find solutions together have shown positive results. A collaborative approach can create a win-win solution where all parties feel involved and valued. Additionally, this approach enhances the team's sense of ownership, which indirectly improves work efficiency.

Conflict Management training is conducted regularly to improve conflict management skills, especially for supervisors and employees who frequently encounter complex situations. The training includes real-life case simulations and reflection sessions to help trainees understand the types of conflicts and appropriate solutions. This training can also help employees understand the type, source and appropriate resolution of conflicts. Therefore, this kind of training not only serves as a short-term solution but also as an investment in preventing future conflicts.

Mediation by a Third Party for more complex conflicts, Usually mediation is done through a third party such as HRD or supervisors. Ranti Kesuma (one of the SPVs) explained in an interview that mediation is very helpful when personal conflicts arise between team members. "There is one case where a colleague feels that his task is always heavier than others. HRD immediately intervened as a mediator and finally a new division of labor was achieved that was mutually agreed," . Conflicted but still professional. Mediation conducted by a third party such as HRD is an effective way to resolve interpersonal conflicts. In his interview, Ranti Kesuma revealed that the involvement of neutral parties can reduce tensions and create a fair solution. Azizah and Nurlaeli's (2024) research also suggests that mediation is effective in interpersonal conflicts because mediators can help conflicting parties reach an agreement without losing mutual respect. The implementation of the above strategy has a significant positive impact on team performance.

### **The Most Common Types of Conflicts and How to Manage Them**

From the results of in-depth interviews with the interviewees, various types of conflicts often occur in the work environment. These conflicts are rooted in day-to-day operational challenges, team dynamics, and management policies. Below are the most common types of conflicts and how to manage them:

1. Role Conflict

Role conflicts arise due to unclear or overlapping tasks. Resolving these conflicts through more detailed task specifications and daily briefings can help reduce role ambiguity within a team

2. Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of interest often relate to work arrangements, resource allocation, and Company policies, especially those related to resource allocation and work arrangements, often leading to employee dissatisfaction. These findings support the research of Sebayang et al. (2023) who revealed that conflicts of interest are often caused by resource imbalances or gaps between personal expectations and company policies. Ranti Kesuma emphasized

the importance of open discussions in managing this conflict, to increase employee participation in decision-making.

3. Communication Conflicts

Poor communication is the most common cause of conflict, especially among operations teams. Effective communication training and the use of digital applications can help reduce miscommunication. These results are in line with Wardani's (2023) research which shows that the application of communication technology can significantly improve communication efficiency and reduce conflicts arising from information imbalances.

4. Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflicts often occur due to differences in personality or work style between team members.

The results of the interviews revealed that various types of conflicts such as role conflicts, conflicts of interest, communication conflicts, and interpersonal conflicts often occur in the work environment. Role conflicts arise from unclear or overlapping tasks and can be resolved through more detailed task specifications and daily briefings. Conflicts of interest, which often pertain to resource allocation and work arrangements, can be reduced through open discussions and involving employees in policy development. Communication conflicts are often caused by miscommunication or schedule changes, which can be resolved through effective communication training and the use of digital technologies. Meanwhile, interpersonal conflicts that arise due to differences in personality or work style can be resolved through direct mediation by the boss or director of human resources. Research supporting the use of a variety of strategies to manage conflict in the work environment shows that this approach has proven to be effective in reducing tension and creating mutually beneficial solutions.

In some cases, conflicts that are initially latent can develop into open conflicts due to supervisory indecisiveness. However, supervisors who have high interpersonal skills and empathy are able to mitigate conflicts early on. Successful conflict management strategies have been proven to improve team cohesion and member job satisfaction. This discussion reinforces the importance of effective leadership and communication training for supervisors in organizations.

The conflict management strategy implemented has significant practical implications for management. Through open communication, a collaborative approach, conflict management training, and third-party mediation, companies can create a healthier and more productive work environment. Open communication ensures conflicts are identified early and resolved before they become larger, while a collaborative approach allows teams to find joint solutions that benefit all parties. Conflict management training provides the skills needed to manage complex situations, while third-party mediation ensures fair and professional conflict resolution. This impact not only helps reduce tension between team members but also increases trust, job satisfaction, and operational efficiency. By taking a structured and systematic conflict management approach, it is able to improve team performance and create a more harmonious work environment.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that supervisors play a key role in managing conflicts in work teams through collaborative strategies, mediation, open communication, and enforcement of work rules. The approach used relies heavily on interpersonal skills and sensitivity to team dynamics. Supervisors who are successful in conflict management contribute significantly to the creation of a harmonious and productive work environment. In addition, the study highlights the importance of employee participation in the decision-making process and the effective use of communication technologies to reduce miscommunication. The results of this study provide practical implications for organizations in designing leadership training and development programs that emphasize conflict management capabilities.

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