

# The Impacts of Workplace Conflict on Employees's Contextual Performance and Employee's Commitment: A Case Study of Private Universities in Thailand

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**Abstract**—This paper examined the impact of workplace conflicts on employee's contextual performance and employee's commitment in an organization. This paper will further emphasize the importance of conflict management and its impact on employee performance and commitment. It is of utmost importance for organization to manage all rising conflicts and also to find the most appropriate strategies to minimizing all arising conflicts. In order to achieve the objectives of this research, questionnaires were constructed and distributed to 286 respondents working in two private universities in Thailand. The findings revealed that there is a statistical significant relationship between relationship conflict and employee's contextual performance. Results from the findings also revealed that there is no significant relationship between task conflict and employee's contextual performance while indirect effect may occur. However, we found that there is statistical significant relationship between overall work conflicts and employee's commitment.

**Keywords**— *Workplace Conflicts, Task Conflict, Relationship Conflicts, Employees' Commitment, Employee's Contextual Performance*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's modern and volatile market, organizations have to be extremely efficient and upfront with regards to overall performance and business management and enhancement. For that matter, modern organizations nowadays not only have to be externally rather internally strong and conflict free [1]. Any organization that is facing internal conflicts of any kind cannot make progress, neither can such organization compete against its competitors in true letter and spirit because the employees are unable to focus on the goal and aim of the organization instead their focus is on the conflicts and its managements [2]. Hence, the efficiency of the employees and the organization reduces to a great extent. Thus, this research will shed light on

different types of conflicts within an organization along with its impact on the employees and organizational performance [3].

Kerzner [4] stated that conflict is a part of change and it is inevitable. It is a communication processes and at such conflicts is expected to occur in any organization. Verma [5] stated that conflicts cannot be avoided, as long as workers will interact in order to deliver their responsibility at work, conflict is sure to occur. Therefore, management cannot resolve all conflicts but rather try to manage these conflicts in order to enhance the organizational performance. Management are hereby bound to resolve conflict in an appropriate manner for the purpose of increasing the organizational performance, this will be result of good cooperation, time management, good communication and it will also increase cooperate productivity [6]. Conflict can occur among individual, groups organization etc. Every organization has a set of different people from different background, when two or more people come together to work, there are chances that disputes will occur, and the last thing managers want to worry about is two parties having some sort of disagreement because conflict causes stress [7].

Managers often view conflict as synonymous with problem. Faced with this, it becomes exciting to study and get to know the subject better, which is still little discussed in scientific works and in organizations. This research addresses the management of conflicts in organizations, under the view that conflictive situation, if well managed, can present opportunities for growth and change [8].

Commitment is ones intention to persist in a course of action. Therefore, organizations often try to encourage commitment in their employees in order to achieve stability and to reduce cost turnover. Employee's commitment cannot be ignored. It is widely believed that committed employees work harder and are likely to put more effort in their job to achieve

the organizational objectives. Previous research has overtime demonstrated that commitment does contribute to a reduction in turnover [9]. The level of an employee's commitment can determine the employee's performance of the organizations as a whole [10].

This study aims to emphasize the impacts of conflicts on the employee's contextual performance and employee's commitment towards the job in the educational sector in Bangkok Thailand. As it is known that conflict is a normal occurrence in every organization [2]. It's very important to emphasis on the importance of its impacts towards the organization.

The purpose of this study is to further emphasis the importance of conflict management and its impact on employee's contextual performance. This research will further identify the gaps of conflict resolution in and organization. The study objectives are

- 1) *To study and identify the types of conflict that can occur in an organization*
- 2) *To examine the impact and effect of workplace conflicts on the contextual performance of the employees*
- 3) *To examine the impact of workplace conflict on the Employee's Commitment.*

Findings from previous researchers have shown conflicts influence employee's contextual performance in an organization [2]. We further extend these ideas of conflict management and expected the positive impact on employee's commitment and emphasizes the importance and impact on the employee's contextual performance in the organization.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Concept of Workplace Conflict

According to Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, there are five types of conflict management styles such as integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding styles. Rahim [11] differentiated the styles of managing conflict on two basic dimensions specifically concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension (concern for self) elaborates the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concern while the second dimension (concern for others) explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy the concern of others. Combination of these two dimensions results in five specific styles of handling conflict.

However, Jehn [6] distinguished conflict into two dimensions, which are Task Conflict and Relationship Conflict. Task Conflict occurs when there is a perceived disagreement among group members about the content of their decisions and differences in ideas and opinions [12]. Interpersonal Conflict is conflicts that occur between individuals, when two or more people face a situation in a different way. Although much of the conflict is caused by organizational processes, most friction and disagreement are interpersonal in origin, making them more difficult to deal with [6].

### B. Impact of Workplace Conflict

Hoteppo [13] investigated the effect of organizational conflict on organizational performance. The research revealed that limited resources is the major cause of conflict and that conflicts have both negative and positive effects on organization, but when managed properly, the positive effects can be used to encourage organizational innovativeness and build cooperation among the employees.

Employee's Contextual Performance involves behavior ways that support the psychological and social context in which workplace task are performed. Employee's Contextual Performance is defined as the act of doing a job while interacting with coworkers, supervisors and customers, as well as demonstrating self-disciplined behavior, persistence to work and willingness to put more effort on the job voluntarily. Job performance is a means to reach a goal or set of goals within a job, role, or organization. Campbell [14] affirm that job performance is strictly a behavior and a separate entity from the outcome of a particular job which relates to the success and productivity of the organization not a single action but it's rather a complex activity. Thus, we propose hypothesis as follows:

H1: Work conflict within an organization leads to inefficiency in the performance of employees.

Furthermore, Frone [15] suggested that conflict is a silent job stressor; he provided empirical evidence that conflicts with superiors is indeed associated with reduced level of organizational commitment that can damage an employee's attitude towards an organization. Employee's Commitment is defined as an individual psychological bond to an organization, which includes a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the value s of the organization. Employees' willingness of accepting of the organizational goals and pursuing the mission of the organization, and their willingness to exert effort on the organization to reach the goal of the organization [16]. Meyer [17] defined commitment as a psychological state that binds an individual to the organization. Hence, we propose hypothesis as follows:

H2: Work conflicts hinder the employee's commitment of the company.

Therefore, Figs1 illustration the concept framework of this this research.

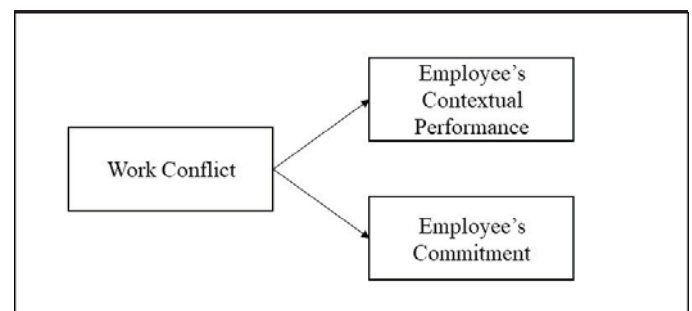


Fig.1 Research Framework

### III. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the main objectives of the study in exploring the impact of work conflict (task conflict and relationship conflict) on employee's contextual performance and employee's commitment, questionnaire was developed

#### A. Data Collection and Procedure

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 286 employees who work at two private universities in Thailand during December 2017. Adopting Yamane [18] simplified formula to calculate the sample size, the population of select universities is approximately 1,000, thus, the sample size of 286 should be adequate. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Part A was consisted of questions relating to the demography information of the respondent while the part B was consisted of questions refer to variables of workplace conflict and its impact on employee's contextual performance and employee's commitment at their workplace.

#### B. Measurement Items

This paper employ Likert scale anchored from 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree for all domain constructs.

- Employee's Contextual Performance was measured with 7 items from Motowidlo [16] scale for employee's contextual performance. For example: a) I am willing to help other employees with their work regardless of an ongoing conflict, b) I will cooperate with others to get the job done even when we have dispute, c) I will persist in overcoming obstacles to get my job done. d) I will offer to help others finish their job even when there are conflicts among us, e) I will support and encourage a coworker with a problem, f) I will take the initiative to solve a work problem, g) I will exercise personal discipline and self-control when conflict arises.
- Employee's commitment was measured with 3 items modified from Meyer [9] and Meyer [19]. The examples are: a) I would be glad to spend the rest of my career in this organization, b) I feel obligated to this organization regardless of conflict, c) I feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization regardless of several conflicts
- Workplace Conflict measures were adapted from Jehn [6]. The measurement scale asks the respondent to consider the amount of task or work-related conflict he or she experiences with others in the work place. Respondents were asked to choose the answer that best suits their opinion; with statement such as, a) People I work with often disagree about opinions regarding the work being done, b) There is conflict about the work among the people I work with, c) Those I work with often have different opinion among themselves, d) There is a high extend of differences in opinion among those I work with. We also adapted Cox [20] Organizational conflict measurement scale to measure how employees relate with one another during an

ongoing conflict. Respondent were asked the following questions: a) the atmosphere here is often charged with hostility, b) Backbiting is a frequent occurrence at my workplace, c) One party frequently undermines another, d) There are often feelings of hostility among parties, e) Much "plotting" takes place "behind the scene"

#### C. Reliability Test

The Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis test has been used to evaluate and construct reliability. According to Table 1, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7 of all tested variable, thus, confirmed construct stable and consistent.

TABLE I. RELIABILITY TEST

Reliability Test		
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Task Conflict	.857	4
Relationship Conflict	.753	5
Employee's Contextual Performance	.857	7
Employee's Commitment	.785	6

#### D. Validity Test

To test the validity of this research analyses, this paper used factor analysis to test the convergent validity of all the measurement items. The KMO value is .825 indicating that the sample is adequate to proceed with factor analysis while Bartlett's test confirmed that there is a sufficient correlation among the variables (0.00 is less than 0.05). The loading value of all items of each variable are above 0.6.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

We found valid 286 respondents. 51% of respondents are male and 49% of respondents are female. In term of Age, 58% of the respondent were between the age of 20-30 years old, 37% of the respondents were between the age of 31-40 years of age, and 5% of the respondent were between the age of 41 to 50 years old. In term of the highest educational level, 65% of the respondent has bachelor degree, which has the highest ranking, 31% holds a master's degree, 1% have Doctoral degree and 3% have high school degree. In term of the duration of time the respondents have been working in the organization. 61% of the respondents have been working in the university for about 1-3 years, 32% have been working in the university for about 4-6 years, and 7% have been working in the university for about 7- 9 years and none of the respondent has worked with the organization for over 10 years.

#### A. Hypothesis Testing

Regression of relationship conflict and task conflict on employee's contextual performance confirmed that the overall model is statistically significant with p-value less than 0.05. Relationship conflicts have a p-value of .005, therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between relationship

conflict and employee's contextual performance, while the effect size is relatively small as the value of adjusted R-square is 0.028. However, coefficient of relationship conflict is very low at 0.193 as shown in Table II. Thus, arise of relationship conflict induces low positive impact on employee's contextual performance which confirm hypothesis 1. For task conflict's coefficient, it has a p-value of .804 in the model which is above 0.05 (level of confidence). Therefore, task conflict is not statistically significantly impact on employee's contextual performance. However, the correlation between task conflict and employee's contextual performance is statistically significant. Hence, hypothesis 1 is supported.

TABLE II. COEFFICIENT ON EMPLOYEE'S CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.759	.213		12.944	.000
Relationship Conflict	.193	.069	.179	2.816	.005
Task Conflict	.014	.058	.016	.248	.804

a. Dependent Variable: Employee's Contextual performance

To test hypothesis 2, regression of work conflict which include task conflict and relationship conflict was run on employee's commitment suggested that the overall model is statistically significant as the p-value is .081 which is less than 0.10 (level of confidence) as shown in Table III while the effect size is relatively small as the value of adjusted R-square is 0.028. The constant value is negative while the coefficient of work conflict also low, thus, arise of work conflict has low positive effect on employee's commitment. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is supported.

TABLE III. COEFFICIENT ON EMPLOYEE'S COMMITMENT

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.462	.270		-1.708	.089
Work Conflict	.156	.089	.103	1.750	.081

a. Dependent Variable: Employee's Commitment

## B. Discussion

This study confirmed the overall model that task conflict and relationship conflict impact employee's contextual performance as Motowidlo [21] affirmed to the impact of individual differences in task and employee's contextual performance. In addition, Kehinde [22] attested to the impact of conflict management on corporate productivity. Furthermore, this paper also affirmed the impact of work conflict on employee's commitment. The finding is consistent with Frone [15] that provided empirical evidence that conflict is indeed associated with reduced level of employee's commitment. This paper provided empirical evidence of the negative effect of work conflict on employee's contextual performance and employee's commitment.

## V. CONCLUSION

This research enhances understanding on the impact of work conflict on related factors that impact on overall employee performance. Work conflicts exist and these conflicts do have an impact on relationship conflicts and task conflicts. Also, work conflict does have an effect on employee's commitment.

According to Rahim [11] Cooperative conflict management style model that confirms that the five conflict strategies can have different effectiveness in resolving conflicts. Rahim's model also suggest that integrating strategy is the most appropriate strategy, because it allows both parties to be a part of the decision making process. The integrating strategy allows a mutual and efficient solution to any arising conflicts.

We recommended that employees should adopt the integrating strategy when conflict arise, this will help both parties emerge a positive behavior towards handling conflicts, which can lead to a more productive organization. We suggest that managers, superiors, team leaders should carefully strategize on ways to minimize relationship conflicts; furthermore more emphasis should be placed on how employees manage their relationship conflicts. Managers must not be biased handling relationship conflicts because it can emotionally affect the employees, which can lead to a less productive staff. Managers must make sure that relationship conflicts are not overlooked or neglected. We suggested that employees should distinguish their personal relationship conflicts from their respective job responsibilities and have a mind focused on the goals of the organization.

We suggested further research be made on different circumstances. The research is carried out in Thailand and there are cultural limitations to the aspect of openness to personal opinions. Certain topics are avoided by Thai people because they might be considered impolite to discuss and due to this fact people are more likely to feel uncomfortable to answer some questions, which was regarded as a limitation to the output of this paper.

Another Limitation encountered was that the employee's find it difficult answering questions regarding conflict at their workplace, which impacted the findings of this paper.

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