

## Workplace Conflict: Indigenous Studies on Indonesian Employees

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### ABSTRACT:

The work place owes itself elements of cultures, personality, perception, and other things from many cultures, upbringing, and other behavioral factors that employees are exposed to. This variety leads to the complex dynamics of living people, which includes possible conflicts with one another. Conflicts take place because people have needs, wants, and interests to meet. And these are prone to words, actions, and decisions from others. The non-assertive typical characteristic of the Indonesian certainly affects the dynamics of conflicts they experience. This research aims to explore some aspects of that; the definition of conflicts from the Indonesian perspective, factors that lead to conflicts, and ways to solve conflicts by Indonesian workers. The approach used is Indigenous Psychology that emphasizes on studying the attitude and thought that a person has in his/her cultural context. The participants are 700 Indonesian employees. Data are gathered using open-ended questionnaires designed by the researcher to reveal conflicts at work among Indonesian employees. Results indicate that respondents define a conflict as a common phenomenon that may happen at work. Another respondent suggest that a conflict is a lack of cooperation. Respondents argue that conflict is simply a matter of difference, and the remaining and something discomfort. Factors that trigger conflicts are; negative personality of co-workers, difference in how to handle work, ineffective communication, jealousy against co-workers, lack of work commitment, absence of cooperation, lack of work satisfaction and personal matters outside work. Ways to resolve conflicts are; interpersonal communication of those involved in a conflict, general consensus, by being patient and willing to accept, reporting to a supervisor, self-retrospect, and improving passion for work.

**Keywords:** *work conflict, employees, Indonesian*

### INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a real thing in one's life, because it is a social process of people who are trying to reach the goal by the opposing party opponent, and after all, it is made so that others will take notice or appreciate his achievements. Dynamics of complex life is seen from the many conflicts going on in people's lives. According to Mangkunagara (2009), conflict occurs because what is expected by a person against himself, other people, the organization with the fact that was expected.

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There are four forms of conflict within the organization (Mangkunagara, 2009), the first one is hierarchy conflict that is, the conflict at the level of the organizational hierarchy. The second form is functional conflict that is, the conflict of the various departments within the organization functions. The third form is line staff conflict, namely, the conflict between the leaders of the unit staff staff-related chiefly authority / authorities working. The fourth forms are the formal-informal conflict, namely, the conflict is related to the norms prevailing in the informal organization with formal organizations.

Sources of conflict can emerge from the self, the environment, or other people who have different attitudes, opinions, means, purpose or value system espoused (Anoraga, 2006). Causes of conflict in the organization according to Luthans (2002) is the coordination of work that is not done, the dependence of the performance of duties, tasks that are not clear (no job description), differences in work orientation, differences in understanding of organizational goals, differences in perception, the system competence incentive (reward), and motivational strategies are not appropriate. Meanwhile, according to Ranupandojo (2006) causes of conflict include many scarce resources, differences in goals, interdependence in carrying out the work, the differences in values and perceptions, one's style of working, unclear organizational and communication problems.

Work conflict has negative impact on employees performance and job satisfaction (Barki & Hartwick, 2001). Conflict also result high employees turnover and job dissatisfaction causing low productivity (Hom & Kinicki, 2001). Although work conflict seems to produce ineffectively in the workplace, work conflict will result good or bad effect depends on the way of employee conflict management (Rahim, 2002; Callanan & Benzing, 2006). Mangkunagara (2009) explains conflict management can be done in several ways including: problem solving, high-level objectives (libordinate goal), the expansion of the source, to avoid conflicts, paving the conflict (smoothing), compromise, the order of authority (authoritative commands), change the human variables (altering the human variables), change the structural variables, and identify a common enemy.

Another way that can be used to reduce conflict is an avoidance, cooperation, and discussion exactly identify the sources of conflict to determine each issue, bringing the two opposite sides of the conflict to their own opinion and views and feelings respectively regardless who is right or wrong (Siagian, 2005).

According to the results of CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) found that the majority of employees (85%) had to deal with conflict and 29% always or often. Percent in Germany last digit to 56%, while in Ireland (37%) and the USA (36%). The main causes of workplace conflict is seen as a clash of personality and ego (49%), followed by stress (34%), and heavy workload (33%). Culture also plays a part in the cause of perception, as the Brazilian workers are more likely to see the clash of values as the main cause of conflict (24%), in France 36% of employees at the lack of honesty as a key factor, compared with the global average of 26%.

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According to the results of a study of conflict in the Canadian workplace (2008) this study found that nearly all HR professionals (99%) deal with conflict. The most common cause of conflict is a war of ego and personality differences (86%), poor leadership (73%), lack of honesty (67%), stress (64%), and the difference in values (59%). Results of this study cannot be generalized so obviously because the values of different cultures have an influence on the cognitive, emotional, motivational and individual behavioral systems (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

According to Hofstede (2001) culture is the collective programming of the sort of way of thinking, being and behaving that result in differences in the aspects of one's life, namely beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. So, in this case culture forming individual beliefs, attitudes and behaviors with a special way through the process of collective learning.

Characteristics of Indonesian cannot be equated with the characteristics of German, Irish, USA, Brazil, France, and Canada. Indonesian society refers to two basic rules, namely the principle of harmony and respect for the principle (Suseno, 1993). Harmony principle says that in every human situation should be such that it would not cause conflict, while respecting the principle demands that human beings in a manner of speaking and carrying oneself always show respect towards others in accordance with the degree and position. Principles aimed at maintaining harmony in a state of harmonious society (Suseno, 1993). There is a harmonious state in which all parties are at peace with each other, like collaboration, mutual acceptance, in an atmosphere of calm and agreed. Pillars means trying to avoid the outbreak of conflicts.

A conflict in the Indonesian community is usually broken when the conflicting interests (Suseno, 1993). If there have been interests conflicting then softened with traditional techniques compromise and integrated into the existing order of the group so as not to conflict arises. Indonesian people as far as possible to avoid the physical and inner conflict with the authorities, others, and the environment.

### **METHOD**

Researchers used a type of indigenous psychology research. Indigenous psychology is an approach that emphasizes the study of behavior and thinking in the context of one's culture (Kim and Berry, 1993). Participants in this study are 700 Indonesian people, who work as civil servants and private sector employees. This study uses a data collection tool in the form of an open-ended questionnaire that was developed by researchers working to uncover conflicts.

Table I. Unit Analysis

Unit Analysis	Sub Unit Analysis
Work conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="456 281 1419 317">1. What is workplace conflict according to Indonesian employees ?</li><li data-bbox="456 323 1419 401">2. What are the primary factors affecting the appearance of work conflict on Indonesian employees ?</li><li data-bbox="456 407 1419 485">3. What kinds of Work conflict often happens in the workplace of Indonesian employees ?</li><li data-bbox="456 491 1419 527">4. How do Indonesian employees resolve work conflict?</li><li data-bbox="456 533 1419 562">5. What is the impact of work conflict among Indonesian employees ?</li></ol>

The data collected from the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed using indigenous psychology approach. The process of data analysis starts from the tabulation of response data that has been collected from the participants open-ended questionnaire, then the answer is then cut in order to do the preliminary coding, axial coding, and cross-tabulation. Preliminary coding was sorting through the responses according to the similarity of the response. The similarity of responses judged not by researchers but pure interpretation of the word or phrase that describes the response of the participants appeared to open-ended questions.

Axial coding is to recognize and make the first researcher to be familiar to the participants' responses. After researchers familiar with participant response, the next new researchers do coding and category. Axial coding process is done by a combination of the responses of participants who possess similarities. Cross-tabulation is made of the percentage of participants who had clustered coding results.

Coding is done for several times depending on the diversity of research participants answer. Coding is done starting from the specific nature become more common. This phase is done on all open-ended questions in the questionnaire one by one. This analysis is done by dividing the research questions in categories based on frequency tables.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Field Findings from the respondent characteristics are as follows:

Table II. Demography of the Respondent

Characteristic		Total	(%)
Age (years)	<20	61	8.714
	20 - 30	370	52.857
	31 - 40	104	14.857
	41 - 50	119	17
	> 50	46	6.571
Total		700	100
Gender	Male	363	51.857
	Female	337	48.143
Total		700	100
Occupation	Civil servant	154	22
	NON-Civil servant	546	78
Total		700	100
Total		697	99.571
Not Identified		3	0.429

Field findings from the result of analysis process are as follows:

**Indonesian employee’s perspective on work conflict**

Table III shows Indonesian employee’s perspective on work conflict. 35.286 % respondents describe work conflict as a work problem which must overcome, 32.143 % respondents consider work conflict as a lack of cooperation in the workplace, 22 % respondents define work conflict as the differences occur in the workplace, 2.571 % describe work conflict as a discomfort situation and 8 % respondents have uncategorized answer.

Table III. Indonesian employee’s perspective on work conflict

Category	Total	%
Work problem	247	35.286
No cooperation	225	32.143
Differences	154	22
Discomfort	18	2.571
Others	56	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>

**Factors that trigger work conflict among Indonesian employees**

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Table IV describe factors that trigger work conflict among Indonesian employees. Most of respondent consider personal negative nature as a main problem that trigger work conflict. Meanwhile, differences way in finishing the work, lack of communication and jealousy because of different job achievement, poor of work commitment, lack of cooperation among teamwork and job dissatisfaction are being the secondary reasons for work conflict. Personal problem outside work also provokes work conflict although it is not significant. 11.8 % respondents have uncategorized answer.

Table IV. Factors that trigger work conflict among Indonesian employees

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Personal Negative Nature	505	24.048
Differences In Finishing the Work	327	15.571
Communication	258	12.286
Jealousy	218	10.381
Work commitment	207	9.857
Lack of Cooperation	154	7.333
Job dissatisfaction	138	6.571
Personal problems outside work	45	2.143
Others	248	11.810
<b>Total</b>	<b>2100</b>	<b>100</b>

### Ways used by Indonesian employees to overcome work conflicts

Table V describe ways used by Indonesian employees to overcome work conflicts. There are five ways used to overcome work conflict. They are : individual communication (talking directly to person who caused the conflict), discussion (group communication), patience and receive (do nothing), reporting and protest to the supervisor, introspection, keep working and add excitement.

Tabel 5. Ways used by Indonesian employees to overcome work conflicts

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Individual Communication	183	26.143
Discussion/ Group communication	156	22.286
Patience And Receive	129	18.429
Discussed over/ Reporting / Protest	32	4.572
Introspection	18	2.571
Keep Working / Add Excitement	13	1.857
Others	169	24.143
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>

### Effects of work conflict among Indonesian employees

This research found six effects of work conflict among Indonesian employees (Table VI). The effect caused by work conflict are disharmony social relationship, low of work motivation, discomfort feeling, better work performance and no effect at all.

Table VI. Effects of work conflict among Indonesian Employees

Category	Total	%
Disharmony Social Relationships	210	30
Low work motivation/spirit	199	28.429
Discomfort feeling	101	14.429
Better Work Performance	11	1.571
No effects	5	0.714
Others	174	24.857
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>

## DISCUSSION

Conflict is a disagreement between what is expected by a person against himself, other people, the organization with the fact what is expected (Mangkunagara, 2009). According to Robbins (2008) conflict is a process that begins when one party has the perception that another party has negatively affected, or will affect, something of concern or interest of the first party.

Meanwhile, Wijono, (2010) defined conflict as interaction between individuals, groups or organizations who make the opposite purpose or meaning, and feeling that the other person as a potential bully towards achieving their goals. Wijono (2010) defines that conflict is the mismatch condition and appearance of the various opposition purposes of behavior, both of which exist within the individual, group or organization.

Wirawan (2010) defines organizational conflict is conflict that occurs when one party destination is not the same as the others. Wirawan (2010) defines conflict is a condition of employment between the worker with another worker interdependent, who feel angry, guilty and assume another go because of a problem. Blackard and Gibson (2014) defines workplace conflict is a dynamic process of habituation interaction of two or more employees have the same position of difference or incompatibility between them. Based on the findings, perspectives on conflict showed that workplace conflict is a matter of work, lack of cooperation, differences and discomfort in the works. From these results differ slightly when compared to the view according to some figures. Most of definitions about conflict are more focused on the existence of a conflict, perceptions about the negative influence of other people, focuses on goal difference, and focuses on the relationship of interaction, while employees Java tribes focused on work issues. Although different, but overall equally oriented interpersonal relationships, it's just the perspective of the dominant Indonesian employees view the conflict as a matter of work globally.

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The similarity of orientation on interpersonal relationships, this can be attributed to the principle of Indonesian people live a more put together. Like the three dominant value is the reference Indonesian life, namely collectivism (togetherness), spirituality (spirituality), and humanity (tolerance) (Santosa 2012). Compared to other cultures, such as China considers that the value of togetherness is ancient in achieving happiness. A conflict in Chinese culture is considered as a slander or lies of a harmony (Chen & Starosta, 1997).

Factors that trigger work conflict may come from yourself, the environment, or other people who have different attitudes, opinions, manner, purpose or value system espoused (Anoraga, 2006). Causes of conflict in the organization according to Mangkunagara (2009) is the coordination of work that is not done, the dependence of the performance of duties, tasks that are not clear (no job description), differences in work orientation, differences in understanding of organizational goals, differences in perception, the system competence incentive (reward), and motivational strategies are not appropriate. Meanwhile, according to Ranupandojo (2006) causes of conflict include many scarce resources, differences in goals, interdependence in carrying out the work, the differences in values and perceptions, one's style of working unclear organizational, and communication problems.

Other causes of conflict by Wirawan (2010) is a limited resource, different goals, mutually dependent or interdependent tasks, organizational differentiation, ambiguity of jurisdiction, improper reward systems, communication is not good, inhumane treatment or violate human rights and legal, social characteristics of the diverse, personal, needs, feelings and emotions, not independent mindset, culture conflict and violence.

Gibson et.al, with a different opinion (2006) simply states that the conflict is caused by the presence of working dependence, goal difference, and a difference of perception. Another with Wijono opinion (2010) states that the conflict is caused by situations that do not fit, plan activities and time allocation is not appropriate, uncertain job status, and differences in perception.

The findings of the study showed that the factors that trigger conflict are the negative nature of the personal, the difference in completing the work, communication, jealousy, work commitments, lack of cooperation, job dissatisfaction, and personal outside work. Factor dominates over the negative nature to others. From these results, there is little difference when compared with the above experts. Anoraga (2006) focused on yourself, Mangkunagara (2009) focused on the lack of cooperation, and Wirawan (2010), Ranupandojo (2006) focused on scarce resources as the main factor triggering the emergence of workplace conflict, Gibson et. al, (2006) focused on the dependence of work, while Wijono (2010) focused on the situation that is not appropriate.

The results are also in contrast to the results of previous studies, that of CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) states that the main causes of workplace conflict is differences in personality and ego especially in Ireland, the United States, and Britain. Personality differences in question here is not necessarily a negative personality, it's just a difference in emphasis. While in Germany that a major factor is stress, and in France is honesty and openness. According to the results of a study of conflict in the Canadian workplace (Psychometric Canada, 2008), a major



factor causing conflict with the results of the research CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) is the differences in personality and ego. Other results declared major factors triggering the emergence of conflict is due to a lack of clarity of roles (Buss, 2009). But it would be different if compared with Indonesian, that work conflict in the Indonesian community is usually broken when the conflicting interests (Suseno, 1993).

Based on the opinions of the experts and the results of previous studies when compared with the findings of this study, it appears the similarities and differences in factors that trigger labor conflicts are motivated by cultural differences. Factor equations between the findings with existing views include personal negative nature, communication, cooperation, and job dissatisfaction. While the difference include the difference in solving problems, jealousy, job commitment, and personal problems off the job. But overall both remain focused on interpersonal interactions.

The findings of the study showed that workplace conflict is common in Indonesian employees, among others are difference, work problems, communication problems, interpersonal relationship problems, and lack of cooperation. In any case the difference between the employee and the employer are considered to be the main focus as a conflict of employment for Indonesian employees. These findings were compared with the opinion of the nature of the conflict according to Wijono (2010) can be categorized as organization al conflict within the individual and interpersonal conflicts. Meanwhile, according to Mangkunagara (2009), it can be incorporated into any form of good role in conflict hierarchy, functional conflict, line staff conflict, and the formal-informal conflict, because who experienced conflict starting from the bottom to the employee at the top, both in the department or not.

Meanwhile, CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) states that a work conflict is a major conflict between employees on its own. According to the results of a study of conflict in the Canadian workplace (2008) sector is often a conflict in a government job. Results further found that workplace conflict is a conflict that often occurs with the boss (Buss, 2009). When compared with the findings of this study, it will show the difference in the form of conflict that often occurs. The results further highlights the most out of the conflict forms the subject, but the findings of the field that has been studied highlights of the attitude.

To describe the occurrence of a conflict is not an easy work. At the time of data collection, the researchers used the question that cannot be used to reveal aspects of how the processes of work conflict is experienced by the participants. Therefore, such data is not obtained as the desired results. This causes researchers unable to discuss it in detail.

Many attempts have been done to deal with work conflict. Mangkunagara (2009) describes conflict management can be done in several ways including: problem solving libardinate goal, expansion of resources, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative commands, altering the human variables, altering the structural variables, identifying a common enemy. Another way that can be used to reduce conflict by Anoraga (2006) is a avoidance, cooperation, and discussion to identify the sources of conflict to determine each issue, bringing the two opposite sides of the conflict to their own opinion and views and feelings respectively, regardless who is right and wrong.

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Meanwhile, according to Ranupandojo (2006) methods that are often used to deal with conflict is to reduce or resolve conflict. For conflict reduction methods, the most common method used is to cool the first issue and make enemy together to divert the attention of the members of the group. For conflict resolution methods, the ways are pressing, compromising, and integrative problem solving. Another way that is often used in western countries are grievance machinery, which is a process of starting a complaint with the immediate supervisor to arbitration.

Ways in which Indonesian employees resolve work conflicts are, among others, is to individually communicate, communicate as a group, patient and accepting, reporting, introspection, and keep working with spirit.

Ways based on the findings obtained when compared with some of the views outlined earlier are the ways to resolve conflicts with communication. The same way also when compared with the harmony principle which states that Indonesian has no interests of conflicting, traditional techniques of resolving conflict may take part those are compromising and integrating groups in order to avoid (Suseno, 1993). It is also expressed by Santosa (2012) if there are conflict of interests, then this can be resolved is by traditional techniques by compromising to reach an agreement between both parties.

Communication is an important part in establishing harmony and a way to prevent the onset of work conflicts and restore harmony. When Communicating or conveying arguments, everything tends to use methods that are not directly (Santosa, 2012) such as the use of figurative language, symbolism, or symbols. In addition, there are many uses of oral language (oral), especially among rural communities. The goal is to uphold the principles of respect, which demands that human beings in a manner of speaking and carrying oneself always show respect towards others in accordance with the degree and position (Suseno, 1993).

In addition there are similarities, there are prominent differences in the findings of this study which states that the way to resolve the conflict is with patience, accept, and keep working with spirit. When compared with the views of the experts, whose orientation focuses on the encountered conflict and efforts to avoid or deal with it, this study findings stated that no other way than to focus on efforts to avoid or confront the conflict with the patience, accept, and keep work with spirit. This strongly reflects the principle of Indonesian culture, namely 'narimo'. Through this principle, the Indonesian were satisfied with their lives. Anything that has been held in his hand is gladly done. 'Narimo' mean other people do not want and do not envy the happiness of others. They believe that human life in this world is governed by the Almighty in such a way, so it does not need to work hard to get something. 'Narimo' people can be said as people who give thanks to God (Herusatoto, 2003).

Each workplace conflict occurs and is accompanied by the impact emerging for those who experience it. Both the negative impacts and positive impacts. According to (Priliantini, 2008), the negative impact of conflict include decreased productivity, confidence slumped, the establishment of camps, secret information and communication flow is reduced, the moral problem arises, time wasted, and delayed decision-making process. While the positive impacts include increased motivation, problem identification / solving the rise, bond tighter groups,

adjustment to reality, knowledge / skill increases, increased creativity, helping to achieve the goals, and encourage growth.

According Wirawan (2010) the negative impact of the conflict is the cost of conflict, destructive relationships and communication between the parties involved in the conflict, corrupt system of organization, develop negative feelings, decrease the quality of decision making, psychological withdrawal, physical withdrawal, decreased job satisfaction, lower productivity , resulting in a negative synergy system, which is not necessary organizational restructuring, and increasing chronic diseases.

Then the positive impact of creating something new or a change, improve efforts, understand people better, bring out problems, stimulate critical thinking, creative, innovative, produce high-quality solutions, help revitalize the norm obsolete norms, motivate parties to the conflict to improve their creativity, raise approach, a social phenomenon that cannot be avoided must be faced, give valuable experience, and facilitate an understanding of the problem, the opponent of conflict, relations between individuals as well as groups.

Based on the findings, the impact of labor conflicts that occurred on Indonesian employees are disharmony, social relations, not morale, feelings of discomfort, better performance, and some are not impacted. The negative impacts are social relationship disharmony, no morale, feelings of discomfort, while the positive impact consists of a good performance, and some are not impacted. Dominated negative impact of these findings when compared with the opini of Priliantini (2008) and Wirawan (2010) are a little bit different. According to Priliantini (2008) in the spotlight is a productivity issue, Wirawan (2010) more into the spotlight in the transaction costs of conflict, ranging from the time, money, resources used, physical energy, and psychiatric used for things that are not productive, whereas the findings were dominated on social relationship disharmony.

While the positive effects obtained in this study is similar to the theories that have been advanced by Priliantini (2008) i.e. improved performance. It is in contrast to the opinion that further highlights Wirawan (2010) about a change or create something new.

This is also illustrated by the results of CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) that there are positive and negative effects of work conflict that occurred. Negative impacts include, decreased motivation, anger or frustration, and anxiety. There are things that have no impact, while the positive impact include feeling fine as indicated by the confidence, passion, and work hard. While the results of a study of conflict in the Canadian workplace (2008) suggests that the negative impact of a work conflict include the employee leaves the organization, pain, feeling attacked or humiliated, and depressed. Overall, it is concluded that the impact of workplace conflict is more likely to be felt by each individual.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, some conclusions are obtained as follows:  
According to Indonesian employees :

1. Work conflict is a work problem, lack of cooperation, differences and discomfort in works.
2. Factors that trigger work conflict are personal negative traits, the difference in completing the work, communication, jealousy, work commitments, lack of cooperation, job dissatisfaction, and personal problems outside the job.
3. The form of work conflicts that often occur include a difference, work problems, communication problems, interpersonal relationship problems, and lack of cooperation.
4. The ways used to resolve work conflicts they face are to communicate individually, to communicate in groups, to be patient and accepting, to report, to introspect, and to keep working with spirit.
5. The impacts of work conflict include the social relationship disharmony, low working spirit, feelings of discomfort, better work performance, and some are not impacted.

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