

The Relationship between Workplace Conflict and Job Performance: A Study of Staff in Terengganu Higher Learning Institution

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ABSTRACT

The study sets out to investigate the relationship between Workplace Conflict and Job Performance. The study had 3 objectives firstly to identify whether there is relationship between communication and job performance. Secondly, to examine whether there is a relationship between organizational structure and job performance and finally to determine whether there is a relationship between personality factor and job performance. To achieve the set objectives, the study use convenience sampling in sample selection according amount of the non-academic staff in UiTM Terengganu, Dungun. The study revealed that conflict in communication, organizational structure and personality affect the job performance. The study further revealed that communication is the major factor that affect conflict and job performance. The study showed a moderate positive relationship between communication and job performance. Conclusively, researchers recommend that the organization increase their level of communication in order to reduce the conflict among employees so the employees can perform well in their works.

KEYWORDS: Workplace Conflict, Communication, Organizational Structure, Personal Variables, Job Performance.

INTRODUCTION

A conflict existed in today's competitive workplace. Most of the workers will face the conflict as they join the organization, whether conscious or unconscious and the impact of conflict is inevitable either positive or negative. According to [1], education is the second work sectors where conflict frequently arises after the government. Conflict occurs when two or more persons, group, nations and countries disagreement about the issues due to difference in perceptions, differing from ideas, difference of behaviors, difference of interest, different attitudes, religious differences, politics and also unjustified distribution of national resources [2]. Meanwhile, according to [3], conflict arises due to the individual and societal tensions, historical, socioeconomic inequalities and poor governance. In [4] also indicated that conflict arises due to different in personality, autonomy reasons, functional interdependence and status. Conflict also occurs when one party avoids the goal achievement of the other person [5].

Conflict is an unavoidable fact of human life. It exists in many different levels of the organization. In fact, in [6] affirmed that conflict is a persistent aspect of both social circles and professional interaction. As for example, the internal conflict between management and staff among the sports organizations such as badminton associations and the National Sports Council continuously rises. It may give affect the performance of the athletics where the athletes could not perform as there are conflicts with the management. Besides, in [7] also described work-related conflict as an unpleasant fact in any organization as long as people compete for job, resources, power, recognition and security. Furthermore, the differences in beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes may also lead to the conflict [8]. It shows that conflicts may arise between 2 employees from a disagreement about how to complete a particular task or a clash between their personal values, goals or expectations.

In [9] indicated that work-life conflict creates stress for the employee and cause low performance for the organization. Besides, the clash between co-workers may cause to the personal and emotional conflict between them. As consequences, these conflicts may damage the organizational culture, worker morale and the overall reduction of organizational performance in the long run [2].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication

Communication is related to all management processes which are planning, organizing and controlling [10]. Communication is necessary to ensure that organizations can provide timely information about the change, and the

organization has to make sure that everyone has equal access to the change information [11]. Besides, by having a good communication within the organization, it can help employees to act as a participant in an organization's activity and it will help the employees to know and understand the organization policies or strategies [12]. In addition, in that study they also find that if an employee can participate in communication in the policy-making process, it will make their jobs meaningful. When the employees can take part in the process of running an organization, they will feel satisfied and satisfaction will reduce the chance of conflict occur.

Moreover, in [13] said that communication between superiors and subordinates give effect to the commitment and job performance. Every leader must have good communication skills to enable them to foster and create understanding and trust as it is necessary to encourage others to follow a leader. A leader without effective communication with the manager and employees is not an effective leader [14]. It shows that if the manager cannot communicate with the employees well, it will lead to the conflict within the organization.

H1: There is a positive relationship between Communication and Job Performance

Organizational Structure

According to [15], organizational structure defined the way an organization arranges the job and people so that they can perform their work, and met the goal. When a group is very small, and face to face communication is frequent, formal structure may be unnecessary, but in a large organization, decisions about the delegation of various task needs to be done. Besides, all the duties and responsibilities of employees in the organization must be identified, and lines of authority must be carefully described so the employee in the organization will understand their responsibilities of the job. So that, the employees will know what they do, who they report to, and for managers, who report to them. In [16] also indicated that there is a difference between formal and informal organizations which is the most formal organization have a clear definition of responsibility, authority and accountability. Meanwhile, while informal organizations based on shared interests, common beliefs, social values, feeling and tradition. The principles of division of labor and specialize are useful only if the organization can maintain an excellent coordination by ensuring the same processes are repeatedly performed by each person involved.

H2: There is a positive relationship between Organizational Structure and Job Performance

Personal Variables

There are many personality characteristics play a significant role in individual success. It includes the Big Five Personality Traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. In [17] also stated that these 5 factors are widely accepted and most commonly used by the researchers and professionals to evaluate individual personality. The first element of the Big Five Personality Traits is extroversion. Extroversion refers to the outgoing nature or personality traits like talkative, energetic and self-confident. In [18] found that extroversion positively associated with affective, normative and continuance commitment. Besides that, individuals who are high in extroversion could reciprocate the support received from the organization due to their disposition to look for frequent interaction in order to satisfy their needs for interpersonal exchange.

H3: There is a positive relationship between Personality Variables and Job Performance

Job Performance

Based on [19], the performance refers to the outcome of actions that achieved by the skills employees who perform in some situations. Besides that, job performance also can be defined as work performance in terms of quality and quality expected by an organization from each of its employees [20]. Somehow, job performance may result in the voluntary turnover among the employees where job satisfaction leads job performance. Then, it comes to intention to quit and lastly some employees will think of turnover [21]. However, in some cases, job performance has directly led to intention to quit and voluntary turnover. As no organization will progress by one or two individuals' effort only, foundation for high job performance should be investigated by organization [22]. Besides that, in [23] stated that job performance affected by the job satisfaction of the employees where job satisfaction is attached to emotional attachment towards the company.

Relationship between Conflict and Job Performance

In [24] believed that the conflict in information flow relates to the job satisfaction, where it may affect the performance of the employees. It has shown where interpersonal communication factors have a much greater effect on how satisfied employees are with internal communication than just receiving the right amount of information regarding their work or the organization. Communication skills of managers play a significant role in improving

the performance of the employees, as the increase in performance among the employees is one of the biggest concerns of all organizations [25].

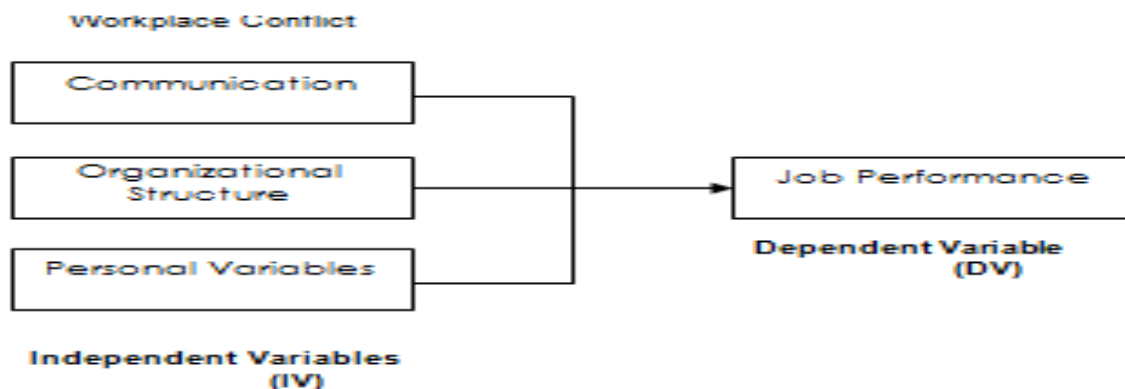


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research design relates to the overall approach of the study. The type of investigation that is used for this study is a correlational study. This correlational study answers questions regarding the relationship between variables or events. The researcher seeks to investigate the relationship between the workplace conflict and job performance. Correlational study does provide some indications as show how two or more things are related to one another or regarding what they share or have in common [26].

Survey Instruments

A questionnaire was designed to serve as the main instrument of this study. The items in the questionnaire were obtained from the literature reviews of past researchers for the purpose of this research. The researchers decided to amend and did some modification to fit the nature of this study. The questionnaire comprises 4 sections: Section A contains demographic of respondent such as gender, age, marital status, etc. Section B, C and D focus on the relationship between Workplace Conflict and Job Performance. This item is measured through at 5-point Likert scale based on the following values: 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often and 5-Very Often.

Sampling Frame

A comprehensive list of numbers of the non-academic staff at UiTMT serves as the sampling frame in the study. The company size in the sampling frame and measured in number of employees which are 240 employees.

Sampling Technique and Process

The sampling technique that has been used in this study is a probability sampling technique which is convenience sampling. It is because the researcher can choose any person to be the respondent. The entire questionnaires were given to the members of the population who were conveniently available to provide it. Furthermore, convenience sampling is the least expensive and least time-consuming of all sampling techniques. The sampling units are obtainable, easy to measure and cooperative.

The questionnaires were distributed to the non-academic staff at UiTMT. For the purpose of collecting data, self-delivered and post approaches had been used. All the data obtained were analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical packet program and three proposed relations were tested through regression analyses.

RESULTS

Correlation Analysis

In order to find the degree of relationship between dependent and independent Workplace Conflict (Communication, Organizational Structure and Personality) and Job Performance, the researchers used Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Pearson Correlation Coefficient is an index of the strength and direction of a linear relationship between interval variables [29].

Table 1: Correlation analysis (n = 240)

No	Variable	1	2	3
1.	Communication			
2.	Organizational structure	0.576**		
3.	Personality	0.887**	0.439**	
4.	Job performance	0.446**	0.395**	0.377*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows the findings about the correlation of Workplace Conflict and Job Performance among non-academic staffs at UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun based on Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The result of the finding showed that there were positive relationships between Workplace Conflict and Job Performance among non-academic staffs at UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun. The Pearson correlation coefficient was designed to answer the Research Question 1, 2 and 3.

Regression Analysis (Multiple Regressions)

According to [27], multiple regressions are one of the fussier of the statistical techniques. In testing hypothesis 1, 2 and 3, a regression analysis (multiple regressions) was performed with communication, organizational structure and personality as independent variables and job performance was used as the dependent variable.

To strengthen the evidence, the researcher analyzed the value R, R-Square, Durbin and Watson where it indicates the level of influences the independent variables towards dependent variables. The R-value for the variable was 0.477. It also demonstrated that the R-square 0.227. It can conclude that workplace conflict influences the job performance by 22%.

Table 2 shows a summary of multiple regression analysis for all the independent variables to job performance as dependent variables. Among all the independent variables, communication (section B) indicates the highest contribution towards dependent variable with t-values 1.737 and beta score 0.343, followed by organizational structure (section C) with beta score 0.304 and t-value 2.004. Lastly, the lowest contribution is personality (section D) with a t-value -0.093 and beta score -0.017.

Table 2: Regression analysis (multiple regression) (n = 240)

Independent Variables	Beta	T-Value
Communication	0.343	1.737
Organizational structure	0.204	2.004
Personality	-0.017	-0.093
R		0.477
r ²		0.227
F-value		11.373
Significant value		0.000
Durbin Watson		2.192

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was conducted to find the relationship between workplace conflict and job performance among non-academic staffs at UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun which consists of Communication, Organization Structure and Personality as the independent variables and Job Performance as the dependent variable. The relationship between Workplace Conflict (Communication, Organizational Structure and Personality) and Job Performance tested by answering the proposed hypothesis with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

H1: Communication and Job Performance

According to this survey, it shows that Communication and Job Performance has relationship. Thus, the hypothesis 1 is supported. Consistent with prior research, this study has also found a positive correlation between communication as a factor in conflict and job performance.

H2: Organizational Structure and Job Performance

The second hypothesis is supported in this study when the correlation coefficient for organizational structure and job performance is $r = 0.395^{**}$ at the p-value 0.000 at 0.01 significant levels. The "r" indicates that the organizational structure and job performance have a positive relationship even though it is weak.

H3: Personality and Job Performance

The last hypothesis was supported by this study when the correlation coefficient of personality and job performance is $r = 0.377^{**}$, where it is a weak relationship of the p-value = 0.000 at 0.01 significant levels. It

means that even though the relationship is poor, the relationship between personality and job performance is still positive. The personality of the employees may affect the level of conflict in the workplace at lead to the job performance

Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

Communication is the most significant factor in conflict in this study. The management of UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun should continue to make an effort to reduce the workplace conflict in order to ensure the job performance.

In the working environment, the management of conflict is necessary. The employees who work at workplace with less conflict are more likely to perform better than workplace with higher conflict. The organization should reduce the conflict in the workplace by increasing the level of communication among the employees. Thus, upper-level management should communicate with the lower management before making some decisions or solving the problems. Based on their study, in [28] suggested that employees and management should have open communication in their standard job and extra task as it will increase the employee's performance and reduce the conflict.

Besides that, the management of UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun should encourage discussion among the employees to reduce the level of conflict in the workplace. By having a discussion among the employees, they will participate in the organization's activities. Moreover, in [28] stated in their study that by having discussion, employees know that organization cares and emphasizes on the well-being and appreciates the contributions of its employees. Thus, it will reduce the communication conflict between the management and employees in the organization.

In order to further the research, the researchers have come out with several suggestions or in other words recommendations to help future researchers to conduct research appropriately.

The first suggestion is this kind of study can be expanded to other organizations or the academic staffs in UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun with a purpose of making comparison as it is generally awareness that employees would face the same kind of problems.

Apart from that, any researcher who would like to conduct similar research in the future, it is recommended to include interviews in their research. The primary purpose of having an interview is simply to strengthen and validate the results from the findings of this study.

CONCLUSION

As for the conclusion, from a study conducted by the researchers have identified several factors that directly influence the job performance of non-academic staffs at UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun. The researchers propose a conceptual framework which researcher found out can be a valuable mechanism or a tool that can be used by researchers in order to investigate or identify employees' workplace conflict towards job performance among non-academic staffs at UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun.

This study is important either to researchers or to the management of UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun. The success of the organization depends on the management and employees' commitment to drive the organization towards success and thus, achieve the organization mission and vision. Employees who experience less conflict in the workplace will feel motivated to work for the organization, and it will be beneficial to the organization as the employees will stay focused towards achieving organizational goals and objective.

Apart from that, based on the result obtained from this study, it is clearly seen that all 3 hypotheses are supported by this study. Moreover, this study has also contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the three independent variables of the conceptual framework which are communication, organizational structure and personality. Based on this finding, it can also be concluded that communication becoming the most influential factor in determining the level of conflict in the workplace and its effect towards job performance among non-academic staffs at UiTM (Terengganu), Dungun.

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