

*Review article*

Conflict and Conflict Management in Organizations

Aris Teguh Hidayat^{1*}, Muhammad Yamin¹, Susanti¹

1. Department of Nursing, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Hesti Wira Sriwijaya, Palembang, Indonesia

*Correspondence: Aris Teguh Hidayat | Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Hesti Wira Sriwijaya | arishidayat@gmail.com

Abstract

Introduction: In running an organization cannot be separated from the conflict in line with the change of plans and goals to be achieved by the organization. Good conflict resolution arrangements are required for conflict management to be implemented and conflict can be a functional conflict and have a positive impact on the organization.

Method: This study uses an observational approach to the situation in a private organization in Indonesia. The author conducted observations during 2024 and analyzed the conflict management carried out in the organization.

Results: Longstanding and rising conflicts and poor management of conflicts can lead to a decrease in the performance of the organization itself. Nurses as health care professionals sometimes have a different perspective with other health teams to provide quality care to patients.

Conclusion: Conflicts in nursing that can be completed can result in better teamwork, productivity, and patient care. While non-functional nursing conflicts can lead to job dissatisfaction and decreased quality of services provided and ultimately impact on patients.

Keywords: Conflict, Management conflict, Nursing, Nursing conflict, Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations consist of various different components that are interdependent in the process of cooperation to achieve certain goals. Differences in organizations often cause incompatibilities that ultimately lead to conflict. Institutional changes that occur, whether planned or not, not only have an impact on changes in structure and personnel, but also have an impact on the creation of personal and organizational relationships that have the potential to cause conflict (Hossain, 2017).

Conflict is one of the many problems found in any organization, including hospitals, where there is human interaction. Conflict between members or between groups in an organization often arises when there is a change in the organization, whether it includes plans or organizational goals. Conflict must not only be accepted and managed well, but must also be encouraged, because conflict is a force for progress. Conflict can help in making necessary changes in the home or work environment. However, unresolved conflict can result in dissatisfaction, unhappiness, hopelessness, depression, and other emotions. It can result in behaviors such as physical or emotional withdrawal, resignation from work, dissolution of personal relationships, aggression, and even violence (Zafar, Ashfaq, Ali, & Imran, n.d., 2014).

Every group in an organization has a tendency to conflict. Conflict is closely related to human feelings, including feelings of being ignored, belittled, unappreciated, abandoned, and also feelings of irritation due to excessive workload. These feelings can trigger anger at any time. This situation will affect a person in carrying out their activities directly, and can reduce the productivity of the organization's work indirectly by making many mistakes intentionally or unintentionally. Efforts to handle conflict are very important because every change in an organization tends to bring conflict. Good conflict resolution management is needed in an organization. The presence of conflict in an organization cannot be avoided but can only be minimized. In addition, if the conflict is not handled properly and thoroughly, it will disrupt the balance of resources and strain the relationship between the people involved. The potential for conflict in the hospital environment is quite large and higher due to the complex interactions between fellow nurses, doctors, paramedics, administrators, and patients and their families. Causes of conflict include competition, rumors, unclear responsibilities, lack of information or poor communication, poor leadership or management conflicts, misunderstandings, unfair treatment, poor work environment, discrimination or lack of equal

opportunity, intimidation and harassment, hierarchy, lack of training, budget or economic conflicts and violations of agreements (Akpabio, John, Akpan, Akpabio, & Uyanah, 2015). Nurses as health care professionals sometimes have different perspectives from other health teams to provide quality service to patients. These various perspectives sometimes cause conflict between nurses and doctors regarding patient care. In addition, a stressful work environment can be a source of tension, miscommunication, and conflict, not only among nurses but also patients (Higazee, 2015). The existence of a team in nursing staff can also support the emergence and or solution of conflict. Good care team conditions will support good conflict management. Conflicts in nursing teams or health teams can be avoided by improving several things such as integration between teams, understanding the educational background of each member, and leveling services according to the competence of each member (Chang, Chen, & Chen, 2017). Conflict management is very important to overcome conflicts that will arise in the nursing process. These conflicts can arise in individuals, groups, and organizations, all of which will have a direct impact on the quality of patient care. The purpose of this writing is to find out and describe the definition of conflict, the nature of conflict management and the benefits of conflict for the sustainability of the organization, as well as the positive and negative effects of conflict on nursing services.

METHOD

Conflict is a condition that arises whenever an individual or group clashes with another group that occurs in such a way that it often makes emotions aroused and compromise is no longer considered an option (Aondoseer & Muhammed, 2015). Conflict is related to management such as organizational behavior that leads to organizational politics. This is related to a person's resistance to achieving goals that can cause others to fail to achieve their goals so that it can create disputes and disagreements between employees (Khan, Iqbal, & Hussainy, 2016). Conflict exists when an action by one party is considered to prevent or interfere with the goals, needs, or actions of another party so that the perception and parties to the conflict must understand that it exists or does not exist. In general, conflict is caused by incompatibility or differences in terms of values, goals, status, and so on. In carrying out organizational activities consisting of interactions between several people in it, of course, it will not be free from conflict. This is in line with El-Hosany, W. A. (2016) who stated that the occurrence of conflict in an organization depends on teamwork, collaboration and creativity of employee groups, but the focus is on achieving results and maintaining reciprocal relationships between employees.

Conflict in an organization is a state of dispute caused by actual or perceived conflicting needs, values and interests between formal authority and power and affected individuals and groups. According to Thakore (2013), organizational conflict is behavior intended to hinder the achievement of goals that originate from communication (conflicts arising from misunderstandings and others), structural (conflicts related to organizational roles), and personal (conflicts originating from individual differences). Organizational conflict involves competition, jealousy, personality clashes, role definitions and struggles for power and support between individuals in the organization, and can also take the form of conflict within individuals, namely between competing needs and demands, where individuals respond in different ways (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014).

Thakore (2013) distinguishes several types of organizational conflict that can occur, including (1) Intrapersonal conflict: is internal to the individual where its influence greatly affects the functioning of the organization, (2) Interpersonal conflict: emphasizes the interaction of human factors in an organization that arises as a result of many individual differences, including personality, attitudes, values, perceptions and other differences; (3) Intergroup conflict: occurs between members of different teams or groups which is very common in organizations and makes coordination and integration of task activities very difficult; (4) Intragroup conflict: occurs within a group or team consisting of task conflict where there is a disagreement of group members' perceptions about the content of decisions and involves differences in perspectives, ideas and opinions, and relationship conflict where there is a mismatch of interpersonal perceptions and hostility between individuals; (5) Interorganizational conflict: occurs between two or more organizations, usually caused by competition, corporate takeovers, mergers and acquisitions.

RESULTS

The Nature of Conflict Management for Organizational Sustainability

In organizational life, there will always be conflict. Fast and appropriate conflict resolution is needed so that the conflict does not drag on and have a negative impact on the sustainability of an organization. Therefore, the ability to manage conflict is needed for all leaders or managers of the organization, known as conflict management. Conflict management is the use of resolution and stimulation techniques to achieve

the desired level of conflict in the organization (Aondoseer & Muhammed, 2015). This can be interpreted that conflict management is a process in which parties involved in the conflict or third parties develop conflict strategies and implement them to control the conflict in order to produce the desired resolution.

When conflict becomes dysfunctional in the organization, conflict management becomes necessary to reduce or overcome it. Likewise, when organizational conflict becomes non-existent and needs to be improved, conflict management also becomes necessary. Both resolution and stimulation techniques are needed by managers for effective conflict level control (Bradford, 2005). Conflict in the organization has an impact on productivity or poses a threat to the needs of other employees that must be addressed. If conflict management is carried out effectively, conflict can contribute to organizational effectiveness, but if mishandled it can lead to counterproductive behavior, between both parties or the losing party.

A manager may not feel the need to intervene when minor problems occur between employees unless such incidents become daily occurrences and develop and involve other employees who were not initially involved. However, if the conflict is a situation where one employee threatens another party, this requires immediate action.

Research conducted by Hossain, Z. (2017) shows that conflict management in an organization will allow the organization to evaluate the effectiveness of the system, which if conflict management is carried out constructively will help the organization identify whether the system that has been implemented is running effectively or needs improvement. Handling conflict management properly supported by strategies and systems will help the organization develop its competence, especially in terms of non-technical competence. Conflict management can improve organizational skills in terms of handling internal conflicts so that the organization becomes stronger.

A hospital is required to have special strategies in dealing with conflict (Scott & Gerardi, 2011). Conflict can be effectively prevented by not only focusing on the source and cause, but also by using a structural approach in the organization (Van Keer, Deschepper, Francke, Huyghens, & Bilsen, 2015)

Nursing managers are required to master conflict management in nursing. There are many conceptual models that discuss the problem of conflict in conflict management. The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (2012) states that the conceptual model of conflict in an organization will provide guidance on the source, results, procedures, prevention of conflict. The conceptual model in question discusses the triggers of conflict, responses or perceptions of conflict, conflict management, and the consequences of conflict. However, in fact, the prevalence of conflict in nursing staff is still high. In fact, most conflicts occur due to the ineffective role and function of management in a health organization.

DISCUSSION

Benefits of Conflict for Organizational Sustainability

When an organization reaches a mature point, fresh ideas in the organization are often difficult to obtain, this is when the organization needs conflict. Conflict is said to be functional if its impact can provide benefits or advantages for the organization, conversely it is called dysfunctional if it has a negative impact on the organization. This functional conflict will trigger new ideas that can make the organization survive. Patton (2014) suggests that conflict in an organization can motivate individuals to work harder, satisfy certain psychological needs such as dominance, aggression, appreciation and ego, provide creative and innovative ideas and facilitate understanding of problems and lead to better coordination between individuals and departments, in addition to strengthening intra-group relationships.

The conflict itself can increase the competency capabilities possessed by the organization related to the conflict management process itself so that the organization becomes strong and if conflict management is managed properly it can strengthen group performance in the organization. This was also stated by Shah (2017) who stated that conflict fosters creativity and innovation where some organizations see conflict as an opportunity to find creative solutions to problems because conflict can inspire members to brainstorm, while examining problems from various perspectives. Research conducted by Omisore & Abiodun (2014) on the benefits of conflict for textile workers in Pakistan also concluded that conflict can cause members of a company organization to work together, learn from each other, and listen to each other to achieve organizational goals.

Positive and Negative Impacts of Conflict on Nursing Services

Interpersonal relationships between nurses and colleagues, groups, patient families, or others can be a source of conflict. Causes of conflict include unclear job descriptions, communication breakdowns, time pressure, standards, unclear policies, differences in status, and unmet expectations. A study even proved that 57% of problems occurred in nursing staff, 33% of conflicts occurred over interactions between nurses

and doctors, 67% of conflicts occurred between nurses and doctors with incidents in patients (Jerng et al., 2017). Other studies show that 73.5% of conflict incidents occur due to interpersonal conflicts that arise due to disagreements about something, negative emotions, and interference from external parties (El-Hosany, 2016).

Conflict affects individual and organizational performance. Conflict that can be resolved functionally is a form of resolution that can result in better teamwork, productivity, and patient care (Overton & Lowry, 2013).

Pickering (2001, p.3) stated that if conflict is dealt with wisely, it can have a positive impact on all parties involved in their workplace. The positive impacts include: increased motivation, increased problem identification/solving skills, closer group ties, increased ability to adapt to reality, increased knowledge/skills, increased creativity, helping efforts to achieve goals, encouraging organizational growth.

If conflict is not handled properly, it can have a negative or even destructive impact. Some of the negative impacts caused by conflict include: decreased productivity, decreased trust, formation of factions, information is withheld and communication flows are reduced, moral problems arise, time is wasted, decision-making processes are delayed (Pickering, 2001, p.3).

According to Robbin (2017), conflict that is balanced with positive conflict criteria and does not cause stress is very important for an organization, including nursing services. Conflict that develops within nurses in providing services to patients can make nurses think and start looking for better alternatives, for example collaborating with colleagues or other health practitioners for the sake of improving patient care.

Conflicts that arise and are not communicated will develop into larger conflicts and have a negative impact on service. This conflict will reduce job satisfaction and disrupt the effectiveness of teamwork (El-Hosany, 2016). A conflict must be managed properly because if not, conflict can become an issue in patient safety and the health care environment (Sherman, 2012). Intense conflict over a long period of time affects individuals emotionally and physically, and causes psychological disorders. Time spent on conflict can be spent doing more productive things. Conflict can cause work sabotage, employee morale problems, decreased service productivity and services. Nurse conflict with patients can cause inefficiency in service, job dissatisfaction, and disregard for patient care. In general, conflict will develop if team members' perceptions of conflict are not right (Hartman & Crume, 2014). Building effective communication between nurses is the right solution (Bonnice, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Conflict arises from clashes between individuals or groups with other groups that occur in such a way that emotions are often aroused and compromise is no longer considered an option. Conflict is not something that should be avoided or minimized. The urgency of conflict lies in how the conflict itself is handled, especially in each stage of the conflict process that is outlined in conflict management. Conflict has a positive impact in creating a performance process that will improve organizational performance. Conversely, conflict that is not handled properly will actually have a negative impact by reducing organizational performance. Every organization, in this case including hospitals, should identify and act to anticipate conflict by having policies that have been made in dealing with conflict. In terms of nursing services, the nursing committee should conduct a review of quality indicators, identify types, and results of conflict in nursing.

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