



## Philosophical Approaches in the Utilisation of Conflict Management : Understanding and Managing Conflict in Social and Organisational Environments

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyse the use of conflict management in the view of philosophy as an additional insight in the context of social science and management, where with the right conflict management including by paying attention to philosophical aspects, it will foster new opportunities in achieving goals for organisational development. Through a literature review approach, the results show that the use of conflict management through philosophical views can open up new opportunities for organisational management that are considered to be able to solve conflicts effectively. By understanding conflict and managing it well, organisations can develop dynamically and productively, especially in creating better innovations to achieve common goals.*

**Keywords.** *Conflict, Management Science, Philosophy*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Management science always develops in practice in line with the diversity of organisations. Management itself is the basis for creating a managerial design in accordance with the conditions, situations, patterns and needs of the organisation so that the goals of an organisation can be achieved. Management experts continue to create patterns and develop concepts and classify one organisation with another so that the concept can be understood. The various approaches used for the development of management science have a variety of competing values, and attitudes that are considered capable of contributing the best to existing practices in management. The values adopted by managers in running the organisation, facing competition, and addressing various behaviours that continue to evolve. The existence of competition underlies managers in understanding management science philosophically as an active attitude to explore scientific roots that are in accordance with the concept of organisational and scientific applications that are able to accommodate human actions as actors in organisations.

The implementation of management in organisations often faces various complex problems, both internal and external. This can be an evaluation for optimisation and improvement of existing conditions in management. An organisation is closely related to the

conflicts that exist within it, so it is necessary to resolve them in a way that is considered the best.

According to Riyono (2012), cooperation and competition are two patterns of relationships that often occur in human life. Cooperation is an intensive form that can reinforce individual behaviour, while competition is considered a component in providing *challenges* that can encourage a person to behave. Conflict is between co-operation and competition.

For organisational managers or management, it is necessary to understand that the importance of management to be the decision that is considered the best, so that the management of a problem can be the best solution. Conflict itself can have positive and negative values depending on one's point of view in dealing with it. In organisations, conflict can be considered positive if it is aimed at bringing up new ideas or ideas, changes in a positive direction, creativity, and some new strategies to achieve common goals and organisational development.

Managers and leaders of organisations must know and study the causes of conflict and the purpose of conflict. Managers and leaders can manage conflicts that arise and take advantage so as to create new strategies to come up with the best solutions within the organisation.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Philosophy of Conflict**

Philosophy is a science that seeks to understand the nature of reality, truth, and the values of life through the use of reason and in-depth analysis of a phenomenon or object. Philosophy seeks to find answers to fundamental questions and is closely related to knowledge and morality using radical and systematic thinking patterns with critical and analytical thinking methods to explore complex concepts. Philosophy of science is something that is the basis for a deep understanding of the dynamics of a process of activities to gain knowledge scientifically. The stages used to understand a problem or phenomenon in the philosophy of science include ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

Ontology discusses a phenomenon that will be studied by science. Epistemology is a method or method used to examine more deeply about a phenomenon by using a certain process called the scientific method. Axiology is the benefits and limitations obtained as a result of an in-depth study of scientific method testing, where the benefits obtained can be in the form of benefits that are felt directly or indirectly and their influence on the development of a science on human civilisation.

Conflict philosophy is a branch of thought on disputes as a sign of imperfection that can be a threat to the success of the organisation so that it must be minimised or eliminated (Aristotle, 384-322 BC). Conflict philosophy focuses on the emergence of conflict from various perspectives in the context of the organisation, where conflict philosophy does not only see conflict as a negative thing but as a phenomenon that can provide new opportunities for change and the development of human civilization in managing organisations.

Based on some of the descriptions above, it can be concluded that philosophy produces a new branch of thought on a dispute (conflict) as a sign that everything always has an imperfect side and the development of human civilisation assesses existing problems into opportunities by identifying the source of the problem (ontology), the process of resolving conflicts that arise by managing conflicts based on in-depth testing of science (epistemology), to get both direct and indirect benefits for the development of human life.

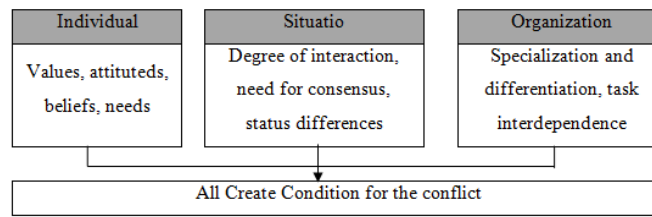
### **Ontology of Conflict**

Conflict is a problem that can be controlled by managing it and assessing the benefits that exist so as to bring up new ideas or ideas, so that positive value will arise from a problem. Conflict is the process of conflict over differences in perception where one party considers that the other party is not in accordance or deviates from a goal or interest of the main party (Robbins, 2014: 305).

According to Gibson (1977), relationships can create co-operation, interdependent relationships and can also create conflict. This happens if each component of the organisation has its own interests and goals, and does not cooperate with each other. Asley M. (in Peter du Toit, 2000) explains that conflict arises when some parties believe their aspirations cannot be achieved together and feel there are differences in values, needs, or interests. They deliberately use their power in an attempt to exclude, neutralise or change each other to protect and enhance their interests in this interaction.

Meanwhile, those who view conflict as something positive state that conflict is part of the movement of society and conflict will always exist in human life. This positive view departs from the belief that conflict is rooted in human nature (Ruslan, 2001). The roots of conflict that often arise include four aspects, namely: differences in knowledge and understanding, differences in values, differences in interests, and personal issues or historical backgrounds (Mitchell *et al.*, 2003).

Tosi, *et. al.* (1990: 524) describes the causes of conflict as follows:



**Figure 1:** Initial conditions causing organisational conflicts

*Source: Tosi (1990)*

Some thinkers have different concepts of understanding although they are substantially similar. However, understanding the types of conflict can help organisations to develop appropriate strategies in managing conflict, so that conflict can be used as an opportunity to create innovation, better solutions, and strengthen relationships between individuals within the organisation.

### **Epistemology of Conflict**

According to Robbins (2014), several views of conflict are described as follows: 1) conflict in the traditional view, where conflict in management is seen as detrimental, and 2) conflict in the interactionist view, where conflict is encouraged on the basis that harmonious, peaceful, and calm group cooperation is prone to becoming static, indifferent, and unresponsive to the need for change and innovation. The main contribution of this view is to recognise that minimal levels of conflict can help keep a group energised, self-critical and creative. The interactionist view does not argue that all conflict is good. According to James & Charles (in Wirawan, 2010: 22), there are 5 types of conflict: 1) Intrapersonal Conflict, is a person's conflict with himself where there is a gap between one's personal desires and the reality faced; 2) Interpersonal conflict, is a dynamic that is considered important in organisational behaviour because it involves several roles between members that directly affect the process of achieving organisational goals; 3) Conflict between individuals and groups, is the relationship between the way individuals deal with pressure to achieve conformity by their work groups, which is accompanied by punishment if the norms of group productivity are not achieved; 4) Conflict between groups and organisations, is a dispute between line and staff, groups of workers and management due to differences in interpretation of a policy within the organisation; 5) Conflict between organisations, is a conflict that arises because of competition between organisations with each other due to the development of a new program that is considered to have a beneficial value on resources and is more efficient.

## **Axiology of Conflict**

The emergence of conflict has a positive impact in the context of social relations within the organisation. The benefits obtained according to Gibson *et. al.* (1997: 437) in various contexts, including in organisations and interpersonal relationships as follows:

- a. Improving communication, improving communication in the organisation by dealing with conflict directly and encouraging open dialogue so that members in the organisation can learn to communicate effectively, which leads to better understanding in decision making.
- b. Improved problem-solving skills, effective conflict management not only resolves current problems, but also improves the problem-solving skills of organisational members. Thus, organisational members can develop sustainable solutions.
- c. Increased productivity, effective conflict management can prevent escalation so that members within the organisation can focus on goals without distraction.
- d. Enhancing leadership, conflict management can be used as a tool by leaders to neutrally resolve conflicts towards the best solution. As such, these leadership skills contribute to developing future leaders and bringing about a positive organisational culture.
- e. Increasing organisational trust and connection, conflict resolution skills can increase trust and connection among organisational members. Thus, members within the organisation can more easily work together and develop strong relationships.

Understanding the benefits of conflict plays an important role in creating a productive, communicative, and cooperative organisational environment, thereby strengthening organisational performance to achieve common goals.

## **Conflict Management**

Conflict management is a method in which the negatives arising from conflict can be minimised so that the purpose of conflict management itself is to maximise positive attitudes in the organisation (Abdelrahman, *et. al.* 2018). According to Mitchell, Borton, & Slocum (1978) conflict management is a process used to resolve conflicts that occur in organisations. In their view, conflict management includes six stages, namely recognition, analysis, decision making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. At the recognition stage, managers must be able to identify the sources of conflict that exist in the organisation. At the analysis stage, managers must be able to analyse existing conflicts and determine the impact caused by these conflicts. At the decision-making stage, managers must be able to determine the actions to be taken to resolve conflicts. At the implementation stage, managers must be able to execute the

actions that have been determined and make the necessary changes. At the monitoring stage, managers must be able to oversee and evaluate the ongoing process. At the evaluation stage, managers must be able to evaluate the results of the actions taken and make improvements as needed.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that conflict management is a process used to overcome or manage conflict in an effective and efficient way, and by using various appropriate strategies and techniques.

### **Purpose of Conflict Management**

Conflict is a phenomenon that cannot be avoided and is felt to hinder organisational goals. Therefore, conflict management must be carried out in a structured manner to bring about solutions and achieve the expected goals. The following are the objectives of conflict management, according to Sudarmanto (2021) including:

a. Advancing the creativity of organisational members with conflict

If conflict can be managed properly, this will add creativity and innovation to the parties or members involved in the conflict, this creativity and innovation can also foster organisational productivity.

b. Providing joint activities and cooperation

Organisations are social systems whose members need to collaborate, support each other, and work together. Conflicts that occur need to involve all members of the organisation so that they can evaluate each other and learn together about existing problems, so that in the future the activities in the organisation can run smoothly and be even better in the future.

c. Keeping away from a bad and uncondusive environment

What often happens in organisations makes the organisational climate visible to all members of the organisation, so that each member can have a good or bad impression. If the impression is bad, it will reduce productivity and create a negative climate that can be felt by each member. Therefore, it is important to create a good atmosphere so as not to create a negative climate due to the conflict itself.

d. Increased loyalty and organisational attachment

Conflict can lead to a sense of unfair and inappropriate treatment. It is not good for organisational effectiveness if it continues to happen, and attachment and loyalty in the organisation also diminishes.

e. Creating a system for conflict resolution

Organisations will be better and more viable if they are able to resolve the various forms of conflict that occur. An organisation that can learn from its problems and keep them from recurring is something that all members of the organisation must maintain. If it cannot be maintained, there is the potential for disintegration or division within it.

Effective conflict management not only aims to ease tensions, but also to strengthen the organisation. The proper use of conflict management is central to creating an organisation that is productive, harmonious, and able to face challenges within the organisation.

### **Conflict Management Strategy**

The reality of human life cannot be separated from conflict because human beings are social creatures who cannot live alone because humans are social creatures, especially in today's modern life, where society means the tendency to form a better order through certain social groups. Therefore, competition and conflict are real realities that occur a lot and become something that cannot be avoided (Kartono, 2013). The response that arises from conflict management gives rise to a variety of new strategies. Starting from avoidance, negotiation, stand firm, disengagement, to surrender.

- a. Strategies in conflict management are needed for individuals and groups as an effort to improve personal relationships related to problem solving. Mangkunegara (2009) explains that the strategies that managers should use in managing conflict are as follows:
- b. Avoiding, a person or organisation tends to avoid conflict. Things that are sensitive and have the potential to cause conflict as much as possible are avoided so as not to cause open conflict.
- c. Accommodating, members of the organisation are able to collect and accommodate the opinions and interests of the parties involved in the conflict, then find solutions by prioritising the interests of other parties based on the inputs that have been obtained.
- d. Compromising, conflict resolution by negotiating with the conflicting parties, so that a solution or middle ground emerges for the conflict that arises.
- e. Competing, the conflicting parties compete with each other to win the conflict, so that some of their interests are sacrificed for the benefit of other stronger parties.
- f. Collaborating, the conflicting parties will find a solution by cooperating synergistically in resolving the conflict, and still respecting the interests of other parties, so that common interests are achieved.

Conflict management through the strategies outlined above enables organisations and individuals to improve relationships, resolve problems more effectively, and maintain conducive conditions within the organisation. The right strategies in conflict management can improve personal and group performance and encourage more harmonious co-operation.

### **Managing Conflict Management to Determine Solutions**

Conflict management is essential in organisations to overcome differences of opinion and interests that arise. With the right strategy, conflict can be turned into an opportunity to increase collaboration and innovation within the organisation so that it can achieve the goal of continuing to grow, through: 1) Identification, management of conflict should have gone through the stage of recognising the problem and understanding the problem well; 2) Analysis, the discovery of problems that have been understood then analyse the causes of conflict from the parties to the problem, focus on the main problem, then find a choice of solutions; 3) Agreement, the emergence of a choice of solutions provided should wait for the parties to the problem to discuss in determining the best solution to conflict resolution; 4) Implementation, the conflicting parties who have mutually agreed to focus on the problem and together find a solution; 5) Evaluation, after carrying out the implementation of conflict management, the next is to evaluate, assess whether the solution taken is correct or causes new conflicts. Evaluation is one way to prevent other conflicts that may occur.

According to Lacey (2003:20), managing conflict as a source of learning can be done through the following approaches:

- a. Problem Solving, is a win-win solution approach where actors meet to discuss problems and issues related to conflict with the aim of integrating the needs of each group so that creative solutions emerge. Both parties have a high level of trust and are committed to resolving the conflict.
- b. Superordinate Goals, which is an effective conflict reduction method by shifting different goals to a higher-level common goal.
- c. Expansion of Resources, is an effort to resolve conflict by focusing on resolving the source of the problem. If the conflict arises due to scarcity of resources, it is necessary to expand resources.
- d. Avoidance, is a temporary avoidance in the face of a conflict to wait for more information to take appropriate action to determine a solution.

Systematic conflict management can help organisations address conflict in a positive way and prevent prolonged negative impacts. With the right approach, conflict can be turned



into an opportunity to improve collaboration and strengthen relationships between members in the organisation.

### **3. METHODS**

The method used in this study is Literature Review to collect, critically evaluate, and summarise results related to topics that are directly relevant to the utilisation of conflict management in a philosophical view, so as to demonstrate at a practical level such as understanding the causes of conflict, then finding ways to resolve conflicts, and considering the benefits and limitations of decisions taken in the context of managerial decision-making philosophically, and applying the basics of social science in comprehensive management.

### **4. RESULTS**

#### **Conflict Utilisation Management in Philosophy**

Conflict management in the view of philosophy is a strategy in an effort to resolve conflicts between two or more people carried out carefully, critically, and responsibly by maximising the ratio of instruments by understanding the various factors that cause conflicts that begin with identifying the source of conflict (ontology), after that looking for ways to resolve conflicts (epistemology) by considering the benefits and limitations of the decisions taken (axiology).

The philosophical values applied by a person in the use of conflict according to Boyatzis, et. al. (2000), that humans operationalise their philosophy include three forms, namely the operationalisation of pragmatic, intellectual and humanitarian philosophies. In detail, it is explained as follows:

- a. Pragmatic philosophy, for a person, pragmatic philosophical values are based on the meaning of the philosophical treasures themselves relating to realism, wisdom, and meaningfulness. The meaning of the value of an activity is seen from the benefits in achieving the desired results.
- b. Intellectual philosophy, based on the perspective of objectivity and imagery that tends to determine the value of an activity in terms of the theoretical influence used to understand everything.
- c. Humanitarian philosophy, meaning the judgement of a person based on their hard work effort, in terms of how it affects certain people.

The connection between conflict management and philosophical values also refers to Rahim and Magner (1995) who explain that there are five forms of conflict management,

including:

- a. Integrating, for someone with an integrating/collaborating style, they will show high attention to themselves and others. Problem solving involves a team effort approach through the cooperation of both parties who accept not only one's personal beliefs, but have an open mind to understand the opposing party's point of view, thus realising a useful solution.
- b. Obliging (accommodating), which is self-sacrifice that ignores personal interests to satisfy the interests of the other party.
- c. Dominating, showing high attention to oneself and low attention to the other party to take charge of the situation. This party has low respect for the other party's wants, needs, and expectations.
- d. Avoiding, showing low regard for self and others who not only fail to fulfil personal needs, but also do nothing to fulfil the wants, needs, and expectations of others.
- e. Compromising, showing a moderate level of concern for oneself and others with a give-and-take approach, to reach a solution that will be considered in resolving the conflict that occurs, even willing to give in to create a harmonious decision and satisfy all parties involved.

Thus, conflicts that arise can be attempted to be overcome with a positive approach that is adjusted to the conditions to foster the value that can be taken (Notoatmodjo, 2009: 161). Professional values in the utilisation of conflict management that can be taken are independence, hard work, innovation, creativity, and development values.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Philosophy is a discipline that explores the nature of reality, truth, and life values through critical analysis. In the context of science, philosophy of science serves as the basis for understanding the process of scientific knowledge acquisition through the stages of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontology focuses on the phenomena to be studied, epistemology establishes research methods, and axiology evaluates the benefits and limitations of the study results.

Conflict philosophy, on the other hand, offers a broader perspective on organisational conflict, not only as a problem that needs to be eliminated, but also as an opportunity for change and development in its resolution. Conflict in organisations can be triggered by various factors, including human needs, identity, community relations, differences in intercultural understanding, conflict transformation, and negotiation of principles.

Conflict management is an important process that aims to address conflict effectively. These approaches include avoidance, accommodation, compromise, competition, and collaboration, depending on the situation and type of conflict. The purpose of conflict management is to create a conducive atmosphere in the organisation, enhance creativity, facilitate cooperation, and prevent negative impacts that can hinder the achievement of organisational goals.

The benefits of conflict management include improved communication, enhanced problem-solving skills, increased productivity, leadership development, and improved trust and relationships within the organisation. Conflict management strategies should be tailored to the situation and context of the organisation, with the aim of achieving the best solution and maintaining harmony between the parties involved. By understanding conflict and managing it well, organisations can develop more dynamically and productively, and create better innovations in achieving common goals.

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