

CONFLICT ASYMMETRY: ANTECEDENTS AND THE ROLE OF SHARED IDENTITY AND SHARED CONTEXT IN MODERATING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH GROUP PERFORMANCE AND CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the asymmetry of conflict in groups, the factors causing them and their consequences. Value diversity is predicted as a determinant of conflict asymmetry while group performance and creativity are predicted as a consequence. This article also discusses the role of shared identity and shared context in moderating the effect of group conflict asymmetry on group performance and creativity.

Keywords: conflict asymmetry, value diversity, shared context, shared identity, group creativity, group performance

1. Introduction

In organizations, groups of people interact and work together to achieve goals, both common goals and personal goals. In reality, these interactions and collaborations do not always go well. There are times when problems (conflicts) occur related to organized life. The existence of differences among members of the organization allows for this conflict. These differences can be in the form of differences in personality, beliefs, demographics of activities, goals of each individual or cultural differences. Proper management of these differences will reduce the likelihood of problems as a result of them. Therefore, an understanding of conflict and its management is important considering that conflict is a necessity in organizing.

Tjosvold's (2007), conflict can be defined as different activities, one's actions interfere with the actions of others (Deutsch, 1973). Different goals and conflicting activities can interfere with communication or cooperation between group members in achieving organizational goals. The existence of conflict will also reduce the quality of good relations among group members and will ultimately reduce individual satisfaction, team performance (Susanto et al., 2011), liking for other group members and the desire to remain in the group (Jehn, 1995). Conflict, especially in the top management team, will also affect the quality of strategic decisions taken (Amason,

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1996).

An understanding of conflict is important, because besides having a bad impact, conflict can also have a good impact. The existence of a conflict will raise awareness for organizational members that there has been a problem in their organization. An understanding of the conflict will make handling it faster so that it does not result in lasting bad effects. The existence of conflict can also promote better problem solving by empowering the different views of organizational members, criticizing old assumptions that allow for changes in outdated practices and processes. The existence of conflict will also encourage the creativity of members to get the best results and can also increase self-confidence. Research in western and eastern countries indicates that by developing cooperative relationships and the skills for open-minded discussion, organizations can empower managers and workers to use conflict to investigate problems, create innovative solutions, learn from experiences and improve relationships (Tjosvold, 2008). Regarding the impact of conflict, Jehn (1995) states that the positive or negative impact of conflict depends on several things such as the type of conflict and structure in the group such as the type of work, job interdependence, and group norms. De Dreu & Weingart (2003) with a meta-analysis challenge the belief that some forms of conflict are positively related to performance. The results show that there is a strong and negative relationship between relational conflict, team performance and team member satisfaction (De Dreu and Laurie R. Weingart, 2003).

Most past conflict research has assumed that all team members have the same perception of the conflict that exists in their team and tend to ignore the possibility that members have different views regarding the existence and types of conflict that exist in the team (Jehn, 1995, Amason, 1996; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). These studies focus on the absolute level or total number of conflicts present in groups and how conflict affects group performance and satisfaction. However, researchers rarely combine the effects of conflict. Meanwhile group members may have different perceptions of the number and types of conflicts that exist in their group (Jehn & Chatman, 2000). Therefore, the research results fail to fully describe the nature and effects of conflict within the group. Meanwhile, the study of Jehn, et al (2010) found that asymmetric group conflict (the degree to which group members have different perceptions of the level of conflict in their group) will reduce performance and creativity in the group. In addition, individual conflict asymmetry (one member perceives more or less conflict compared to other members) can explain performance and satisfaction with the group. In addition, a negative relationship was found between asymmetry in relational conflict with work motivation and a negative relationship between asymmetry in job conflicts with job satisfaction and motivation (Jehn et al., 2006).

Given the negative impact that conflict asymmetry has on the effectiveness of the organization and individual team members, it is necessary to study the factors that cause conflict asymmetry in the team and what factors can reduce the negative effect of group conflict asymmetry on group performance. Referring to the study of Pelled et al., (1999) which shows that diversity can create conflict and that conflict will ultimately affect performance. This study will focus on the antecedents of conflict asymmetry, in particular value diversity and variables that moderate the relationship between group conflict asymmetry and team performance, particularly shared identity and shared context.

Based on the background previously described, the objectives of this study can be formulated as follows: 1. To analyze the factors that cause the asymmetry of conflict in the group. This research will analyze the role of value diversity in causing asymmetry of group conflict. 2. To analyze the role of shared identity and shared context in moderating the relationship between group conflict asymmetry and group performance

2. Literature Review

Relationship between Value Diversity and Performance

Value diversity can be defined as the difference in value held by group members. This value diversity describes the degree to which all members of the unequal group hold certain values regarding the group process. The difference in values held by all members may make them perceive different group processes or events in the work group. This will make them feel distant from each other, making it difficult for them to cooperate in carrying out their duties. These different values can also cause relational conflicts among members. Based on the Value Diversity and Affective Conflict Reduction / VDACR model (Rittle, 2007), the difference in values held will have a negative relationship with member satisfaction through affective conflict. The existence of uncomfortable conditions for members of this group will make them less creative in completing their work.

Research aimed at analyzing determinants of group performance in organizations suggests that success often depends on the ability of the work group to compromise and manage (rather than avoid) disagreements that arise (Tjosvold, 1991). Schwenk and Valacich (1994) found that evaluating and criticizing or engaging in work-related conflicts can provide better decisions in a work group than when members avoid conflict. Putnam (1994) also shows that disagreement explicitly about work helps group members to better identify issues.

However, in contrast to the above research, Jehn et al., (2010) who examined conflict asymmetry in groups found that group conflict asymmetry would reduce performance and creativity in groups. Work-related conflict asymmetry at a high level was negatively related to creativity, but there was no significant effect of job conflict asymmetry on performance. Furthermore, relationship conflict asymmetry is negatively related to objective group performance. Based on the research described above, it is possible that the effect of conflict with conflict asymmetry on group performance is not the same. Therefore, the proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 1: There is a positive relationship between group value diversity with a) performance, and b) grup creativity.

Group Conflict Asymmetry

According to Thomas (1992), there is no generally accepted definition of conflict. However, Rahim (2002) states that conflict can be related to a mismatch of preferences, goals and not just activities. The group conflict asymmetry is a group-level construct that refers to the level at which group members have different perceptions about the number of conflicts in the group (Jehn et al., 2010). This is a variation or dispersion in members' perceptions of the level of conflict in their group. In groups, it is possible for a member to have a higher perception of the number of conflicts in his group than other members perceive. If group members have different perceptions about the level of conflict in their group, this is called high conflict asymmetry or an asymmetrical view of conflict.

The conflict asymmetry perspective states that it is not only the average number of conflicts that are important to group function, but the different perceptions of group members and how this affects group processes and the attitudes of members when they work together (Jehn et al., 2010).

How there are differences in perceptions between group members in constructing a reality can be explained by and the Social Information Processing Approach (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001)). This Social Information Processing Approach has the basic premise that individuals are considered as adapting organisms, adapting attitudes, behaviors and beliefs to the social context and reality of their current and past behavior and situation. This premise leads us to the conclusion that a person can learn a lot about individual behavior by studying the social and informational environment in which a behavior occurs and adapting to it. The Social Cognitive Theory explains the psychological function in triadic reciprocal causality. In the determinant model, behavior, cognition and personal factors and environmental events operate as determinant interactions that influence each other in two directions. Because of this two-way influence, it can be said that individuals are both the result and the environment (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Based on these two theories, it can be understood why individuals can have different perceptions of one particular reality.

Conflict can be divided into three types, namely relationship conflict, task conflict and process conflict. Relational conflict occurs when there is an interpersonal mismatch between members. This type of conflict is related to differences in personality and differences in opinions and preferences on non-work issues (religion, politics, fashion) (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). An example is conflicts about personal tastes, political preferences, values and interpersonal styles. Relational conflicts tend to be more interpersonal and emotional, making them more likely to have negative affective responses (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

The second type of conflict is conflict related to work. Job conflicts can occur when there are differences in ideas, opinions, and views regarding job content. Job and relationship conflicts are negatively related to individual satisfaction, liking for other group members, and the desire to stay in the group (Jehn, 1995). However, this work conflict can improve decision-making output and group productivity (Amason, 1996). Examples of work conflicts are conflicts related to the distribution of resources, procedures and policies, judgment and interpretation of facts (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

The relationship between Value Diversity and Group Conflict Asymmetry

Value diversity occurs when group members differ in their thinking about the real work of the group, goals, targets or missions carried out. In some cases, these differences can lead to disagreements (job conflicts) related to job content such as disagreements about proper advertising (Jehn, 1994). They can also encourage process conflicts about delegation and allocation of resources. For example, group members who have effectiveness values (eg, quality) are likely to have disagreements regarding the task and allocation of resources with group members who have efficiency values (eg, product units). Furthermore, similarities in group members' goals and values will increase interpersonal relationships within the group (Hackman, 1990). Similarity in values will tend to reduce the relational conflict asymmetry in the group. (Jehn, 1994). The inequality of values among group members has shown an influence on the amount of conflict in the group (Jehn, 1994; Pelled, 1996). Because values are a guideline for behavioral choices, group members who do not hold the same values will tend to disagree about group actions such as goals, jobs and procedures. This will create a job conflict. Furthermore, because values can act as a perceptual filter, members with unequal values are less likely to prioritize and interpret group problems and events in unequal ways. This in turn can reduce work conflicts. Based on the description above, it can be suggested that members who have different values related to the work group and their goals will have different opinions based on their beliefs (Jehn, 1994). This will lead to conflict

asymmetry, both work conflicts, as well as relational conflict asymmetry. Therefore, Proposition 2 can be formulated as follows:

Proposition 2: Group value diversity is positively related to a) task conflict asymmetry and b) relational conflict asymmetry in the work group.

The Relationship between Asymmetry Conflict and Group Performance

Conflict is considered to interfere with team performance and reduce satisfaction because it will produce tension, antagonism, and divert team members from completing tasks, because members who are involved in conflict will tend to focus on the conflict they are experiencing rather than completing the task. De Dreu and Weingart (2003) in their meta-analysis show that the relationship between conflict and team performance is -0.26 for job conflict and -0.17 for relationship conflict. As for Jehh et al. (2010) found that the distribution of perceived relational conflict (conflict asymmetry defined as standard deviation) had a negative impact on team performance beyond the above average relational conflict. Based on the findings of Jehn et al., It can be said that conflict asymmetry is more dangerous than the conflict itself. Past research has assumed that relational conflict tends to jeopardize team effectiveness, although in certain situations, it can benefit team effectiveness (Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1995, Simon & Peterson, 2000). It is therefore not surprising that relational conflict is seen as more dangerous than work conflict when it affects team member satisfaction (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003). Even so, the study of Amason (1996) found that conflict can improve the quality of decisions. The study also found that the cognitive dimension of conflict was an improvement. Cognitive conflict is also positively related to affective understanding and acceptance. On the other hand, affective conflict becomes something that worsens decision quality and affective acceptance.

In contrast to previous research, Jehn and Chatman (2000) attempted to recognize the existence of conflict types in the group relative to the existence of other types of conflict (proportional conflict composition) and the number of conflicts perceived relative to the number of conflicts perceived by other members (perceptual conflict composition). perhaps it is critical to carry out group functions. Then, they proposed two types of conflict composition in groups and investigated the relationship between proportional and perspective conflict composition and group effectiveness (such as individual and group performance, commitment, cohesiveness, and member satisfaction) in two organizational samples. As a result, it was found that the composition of group conflicts consisting of high-level task-related conflicts had a higher performance, becoming a satisfied group compared to relationship and process conflicts (proportional task conflict). Then when group members disagree on the number of conflicts (high perceptual conflict), evidence of negative outcomes is found. Jehn et al., (2006) conducted a study that analyzed the effect of conflict asymmetry on mediation output, namely satisfaction, work motivation and absences. The result, found a relationship between negative relationship conflict asymmetry with work motivation and satisfaction. Based on empirical evidence that supports the negative relationship between group conflict asymmetry with team performance and satisfaction, the following proposition can be formulated:

Proposition 3: There is a negative relationship between the asymmetry of group conflict with a) group performance and b) group creativity.

Shared Identity

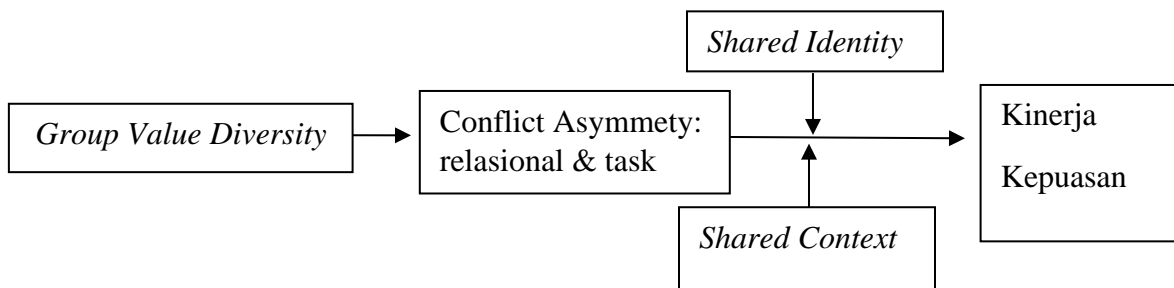
Shared identity is an emergent state - a property belonging to the team. A strong shared identity among team members will reduce conflict, especially interpersonal conflict (Jehn, 1999). Social identity theory states that individuals reduce ambiguity and enhance self-improvement by becoming part of their colleagues based on their relative similarities to themselves. They created an 'in-group' consisting of people who were similar to one another and different 'out groups' (Tajfel, 1974). When problems or miscommunication arise, in the absence of a strong shared identity, team members tend to evaluate the other members' behavior negatively, in a competitive rather than cooperative position. Intergroup hostility can appear as a relational conflict-conflict among members of the work group regarding interpersonal interactions, especially conflicts that are not related to work issues such as gossip, social events or religious preferences (Jehn, 1999). When a shared group identity stands out, team members will become loyal, more trusting and more concerned about improving the welfare of the team (Brewer and Miller, 1996). Therefore, this shared identity will create closeness among team members so that it will weaken the relationship between the asymmetry of group conflict with performance and creativity. Based on the explanation above, the following proposition is formulated:

Proposition 4: Shared Identity moderates the relationship between group conflict asymmetry with a) performance and b) creativity, especially high shared identity will weaken the relationship between the asymmetry of relational conflict and output.

Shared Context

Shared context exists when a team has access to the same and various information with the same equipment, work processes and work culture. In different contexts it will be difficult to develop a sense of mutual understanding (Fussell and Kreuz, 1992). Shared context will reduce the possibility of misunderstanding and the emergence of different approaches in viewing an event in the group process. Therefore, shared context is expected to weaken the relationship between job conflict asymmetry and output. Based on the description above, the following proposition is formulated.

Proposition 5: Shared Context moderate the relationship between group conflict asymmetry with a) performance and b) creativity, especially high shared contexts weaken the relationship between job conflict asymmetry and output. The research model can be described as follows:



Figur 1. Reseach Model

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