

The Interpersonal Management and Conflict Management to Improve Journalist Performance (Phenemonology Study at PT WS Media Office)

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Abstract: *This study aims to determine interpersonal conflicts and conflict management that occur in the PT WS media office and to determine the factors that cause them and how to overcome them. The design of this study uses a qualitative approach. The research data collection method used is a deep interview by conducting interviews with leaders and journalists and staff at the PT WS Media Office totaling 5 people. The results of the study indicate that the conflict that occurred was due to personal conflict and interpersonal conflict and conflict of interest. And the PT WS Media Office implemented a conflict management strategy.*

Introduction

Journalists have a more important function in public relations in this age of expanding information. However, the intricate dynamics of journalism lead to circumstances where interpersonal relationships and conflict are becoming more difficult. Perceptions of other journalists' presence, time constraints, editorial emphasis variations, and internal competition, in particular, can all be sources of conflict that impair collaborative effectiveness in uncontrolled circumstances.

Conflict is an inevitable part of the workplace, particularly in high-stress professions such as journalism. Divergences in opinions, values, or objectives among individuals or groups within an organization often give rise to conflict. As noted by Fadillah et al. (2023), conflict represents a disruption caused by interpersonal or group disagreements that emerge during collaborative efforts, manifesting as interruptions in daily operations due to differing perspectives, principles, and emotional responses.

Effective conflict management techniques can be used in the journalism industry to improve cooperation, foster a positive work atmosphere, and assist journalists in

constructively resolving disagreements. Effective conflict management, then, entails identifying the underlying cause of the issue, keeping the discussion focused on the topic at hand, involving all parties, and developing a resolution plan that can help stop future occurrences of the same kind of conflict. Effective conflict management techniques, according to Rafsanjani et al., boost output and quality of work, improve management-employee relationships, lessen job-related stress, make it easier to execute ideas, and lower employee turnover rates.

A growing body of research has shown that effective conflict management is positively linked to improved organizational performance. Rozaq et al. (2024), writing in the journal *Karakter*, emphasize that managing conflict is a vital aspect of organizational leadership aimed at boosting overall effectiveness. Strategies like transparent communication, mediation, and ongoing evaluation play a key role in turning conflicts into chances for innovation and teamwork.

Another study by Sari et al. (2024), conducted within the Bali Provincial Civil Service Police Unit, suggests that effective conflict resolution contributes to stronger collaboration among employees while minimizing the adverse impacts of disputes. Establishing a harmonious work environment can also be supported through the implementation of clear organizational policies and interpersonal communication training. Although conflict management has been widely examined across various sectors, limited research specifically explores how interpersonal and conflict management operate within the journalism field. In fact, journalism is uniquely characterized by its demands for precision, tight deadlines, and continuous interaction with diverse stakeholders. To address this research gap, the present study aims to explore how interpersonal and conflict management strategies can be effectively utilized to improve journalistic performance. Understanding the nature of conflict in the media industry and how to address it is expected to foster a more productive and cohesive work environment for journalists.

Research Method

This study adopts a descriptive design utilizing a qualitative method. A qualitative approach focuses on exploring and gaining insight into a central issue or phenomenon. The researcher interviews participants or provides them with general and open-ended questions to grasp the main issues. The information gathered from participants is usually in the form of words or text. Kriyantono (2020) states that interviews in qualitative research are often known as in-depth or intensive interviews and are generally conducted in an unstructured format. Meanwhile, Bogdan and Taylor (1975) define the qualitative method as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words from people and observable behavior (Sari, 2020; Moleong, 2004:3). This study also uses interview methods involving the editor-in-chief and five employees as respondents. The outcomes obtained from both methods will be compared and analyzed to determine their alignment with the theoretical framework presented in this journal. As a fundamental aspect of qualitative

research, this approach is viewed as more effective than quantitative methods (Sari, 2020; Moleong, 2004:3).

Result and Discussion

In this study, the author found that interpersonal and conflict management issues arise due to the following:

a. The Personal and Interpersonal Conflicts

These conflicts occur as a result of work-related stress and differences in understanding between journalists, editors, and the company. This condition emerges due to the company's focus on profit maximization for long-term sustainability, while editors are responsible for achieving income goals through advertising and newspaper sales, in addition to ensuring the delivery of trustworthy and balanced news. At the same time, journalists face pressure to contribute to advertising targets while upholding ethical journalism by delivering accurate, transparent, and unbiased reporting. They are expected to carry out their duties with professionalism and independence. These differing responsibilities and expectations frequently lead to personal and interpersonal conflicts..

b. The Conflict of Interest

Conflict also occurs because the parties involved have interdependent tasks. When interdependence is high, the cost of conflict resolution increases; when it is low, the cost decreases. At PT WS Media Office, journalistic work is closely interconnected; for instance, when a journalist submits an article late, it hampers the editing schedule, causing workflow interruptions and potential conflicts..

Various elements that lead to interpersonal conflicts at PT WS Media Office include::

a. Poor Communication

Ineffective communication can trigger conflicts within an organization. At PT WS Media Office, conflicts frequently emerge from miscommunications between management and journalists, often stemming from unclear language, confusing expressions, or insufficient information. These disputes are intensified by personal agendas, contrasting viewpoints, individual differences, and group divisions.

Consistent with the findings of Iordanides and Mitsara (2014), the negative effects of conflict include disrupted interpersonal relationships, reduced communication quality, and a lack of coordination. This highlights how essential communication is for building a productive and efficient organization—the better the communication, the stronger the teamwork.

b. Task Interdependence

Conflict also occurs because the parties involved have interdependent tasks. When interdependence is high, the cost of conflict resolution increases; when it is low, the cost decreases. At PT WS Media Office, journalistic tasks are highly interdependent—for example, if a journalist is late in submitting an article, it delays the editing process, which leads to workflow disruption and conflict.

c. Emotional Dependence and Instability

Emotional factors frequently cause conflict within companies. According to an informant, conflicts among employees frequently arise from emotional instability, particularly when personal problems outside the workplace impact their work performance. Such emotional challenges can result in disagreements with colleagues.

Essentially, everyone has different personalities and egos, which makes interpersonal and other forms of conflict inevitable. At PT WS Media Office, emotional stress can affect all personnel, including management, journalists, and administrative staff. Given the diversity of the workforce, conflicts are inevitable. These disputes are not only confined to interactions between employees or between supervisors and subordinates but may also involve external stakeholders. These include other media outlets (competitors), sources, and even the audience. Conflicts with external parties are not only limited to competition but may also involve disputes with news sources or audiences. Disputes with sources usually occur when inaccurate information is published or reporting mistakes negatively affect the source. These conflicts can be addressed through legal means, particularly under the Press Law, which allows sources to respond and provide clarifications in cases of misleading reports.

Conflict Resolution at PT WS Media Office

PT WS Media Office has implemented various strategies to manage and resolve conflicts effectively.:

1. Deliberation by Bringing Together Conflicting Parties

When interpersonal conflict arises, the leadership at Kantor Media PT WS holds deliberative meetings, bringing together journalists and staff involved in the conflict to discuss and reach mutually beneficial solutions.

2. Active Communication Between Leaders and Journalists

The management fosters open communication between leadership and journalists by encouraging cooperative discussions aimed at reaching shared resolutions for ongoing challenges. The leadership facilitates communication by providing computer access and allowing mobile phone use to increase work efficiency. Additionally, the directors and chief editors keep in constant contact with journalists to tackle any work-related issues. They engage actively in group chats, which helps build stronger connections among staff and keeps everyone updated on each other's tasks, thereby enhancing team unity.

3. Negotiation

Conflicts with news sources typically arise when incorrect or misleading information is published. Such conflicts are resolved through negotiation. Kantor Media PT WS allows sources to issue a response or clarification regarding the disputed news. The corrected version of the article is then republished by Rakyat Cirebon. This method has proven effective in reaching agreements and resolving the conflict, ensuring that no party feels disadvantaged.

Conclusion

No company is entirely free from conflict throughout its operational journey. Conflicts may arise internally—among colleagues or even with superiors—or externally, involving parties outside the company who are still connected to its operations. At Kantar Media PT WS, conflicts occur both among employees and with superiors, as well as with external parties such as sources. This is understandable, given that Kantar Media PT WS is a print media company that relies on external sources and partners for advertising collaborations. The impact of conflict can vary significantly. Some conflicts may lead to losses for the company, but in some cases, they provide valuable lessons that help the company grow stronger. The consequences of conflict largely depend on how effectively the company manages and resolves them.

The findings of this study at Kantar Media PT WS indicate that interpersonal and conflict management issues stem from:

1. Personal and interpersonal conflicts
2. Conflicts of interest

To address these issues, the management of Kantar Media PT WS implements the following conflict resolution strategies:

1. Deliberation by bringing together the parties involved in the conflict
2. Active communication and open discussion
3. Negotiation

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