

The Impact of Work Conflict on Work Stress Among IT Employees

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of work conflict on work stress among IT employees. The rapid development of information and computer technology in Indonesia in actualizing the digital transformation in Indonesia requires a very large role from IT employees. As a result, IT employees tend to have a large workload, which may lead to increased work stress. Work stress arises from the interaction between individuals and their work environment. In the workplace, IT employees not only work individually but also work in teams very often. One of the factors that contribute to work stress is work conflict, which can occur anywhere and at any time. Therefore, effective conflict management is essential to ensure the employee's productivity and organizational productivity are not disrupted. This research used a quantitative method with simple linear regression analysis. This study involved a sample of 106 IT employees that were selected using purposive sampling, and the data were collected using a questionnaire. The result showed a significance value of 0,000 ($p < 0.005$), with an F value of 36.044 and an R Square of 0,264. The results of this study indicate a very significant impact between work conflict and work stress among IT employees

Keywords: Work Conflict; Work Stress; IT Employees

1. Introduction

Indonesia is currently undergoing massive digital transformation in various sectors. It started with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world, where people were encouraged to carry out all activities from home through online platforms. This has ultimately affected the need to accelerate technological and digital development in Indonesia to be able to adapt in challenging situations. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics in Indonesia, the development of information and computer technology has continued to increase from 2019 to 2022. In 2019, the development of information and communication technology in Indonesia was only 5.32%, while in 2022 it rose to 5.85%. This indicates a growing demand for IT professionals to support the realization of technological and digital development in Indonesia.

IT employees are workers who work directly in the development, testing, implementation, or providing solutions in the field of information systems (Messersmith, 2007). The high competition in digital development, both globally and in Indonesia, has led to an increasing workload for IT employees. According to Maharani and Budianto (2019), the excessive workload can affect work stress among employees. Work stress is a tension felt by the individuals that can affect their emotions, thinking process, and overall condition (Hasibuan, 2019). According to Bhastary (2020), individuals with work stress tend to have unstable emotions and restless feelings, tend to isolate themselves, have sleeping problems, smoke excessively, feel anxious and nervous, and have increased blood pressure.

Work stress on employees can lead to decreased work productivity and job satisfaction, as well as increased burnout and turnover intention (Universari & Harsono, 2021). This not only has a negative impact on the individuals but also on the organization, as employees may tend to have higher absenteeism due to boredom at work, therefore making the organization less optimal. Thus, it can be said that work stress is the interaction between individuals and their work organization. One of the factors that influence work stress is work conflict. Work conflict refers to disagreement between two or more individuals or a group within an organization due to a difference in status, goals, values, or perception (Fahmi, 2017).

Rofik (2021) stated that work conflict can never be avoided and will always occur. Work conflict can happen between employees and employees or between employees and the supervisors. One study showed an influence between work conflict and work stress among employees. In a work environment, IT employees not only work individually but also work in teams, so there is a possibility that IT employees experience work conflict that can lead to work stress.

A study conducted by Paramita (2019) showed that work conflict has a significant effect on work stress among employees, with a significance value of 0,001 ($p < 0,005$). Individuals who are in a conflict with their peer or supervisor will experience an uncomfortable work environment that leads to tension or stress for the individual. Another study on work conflict and work stress was also conducted by Faozen (2020). This study showed a significant impact of work conflict on work stress. This indicates that the higher the work conflict on employees, the higher the work stress. This shows that work conflict and work stress that are not managed well can have a negative impact on both individuals and company. Therefore, the hypothesis of this research is that there is an impact of work conflict on work stress among IT employees.

2. Methodology

This research is involved two variables. The independent variable of this research is work conflict (X1) and the dependent variable is work stress (Y). The population of this research is consist IT employees with a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for this sample research are an IT employee, at least 18 years old and have worked for a minimum of six months. The total number of this research subject was 106 IT employees. Data collection of this research conducted using a questionnaire that distributed online via Google Form.

2.1 Work Conflict

In this study, work conflict was measured using the *Workplace Interpersonal Conflict Scale*, developed by Wright et, al (2017). It consists of 7 item measure of the frequency of conflict behavior, with the following response options: Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, Often and Very Often.

2.2 Work Stress

In this study, work conflict was measured using the Job Stress Sscale, developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983). It consists of 13 items across 2 dimensions. This scale is using Likert Scale, ranging from 1 to 4, with the following response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree.

2.3 Analysis Technique

This study examines the impacts of work conflict (X1) on the work stress (Y) by using the simple linier regression data analysis technique. Simple linier regression refers to a statistical model that involves only one independent variable and one dependent variable (Purba & Purba, 2022). It aims to examine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

3. Result

3.1. Cronbach Alpha Test

The reliability in this study was assessed using Cronbach's alpha variance analysis, with a minimum reliability coefficient of 0,70 (Azwar, 2018). The reliability of the work conflict variable in this study can be considered reliable, with a coefficient value of 0,733. The job stress variable is also considered reliable, with a coefficient value of 0,847.

Tabel 1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistic

Scale	Reliability	N of Items	Description
Work Conflict	0.735	7	Reliable
Work Stress	0.847	20	Reliable

3.2 Demographic Information

Based on the data collected from a sample of 106 IT employees, the descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of scores on the work conflict. The descriptive analysis for work conflict variable shows a minimum score of 11 and a maximum score of 30, with a hypothetical mean of 20.42 and a standard deviation of 4.136. These findings provide an overview of the general tendency of work conflict levels experienced by IT employees in the sample.

Tabel 2. Descriptive Analysis of Work Conflict Variable

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Work Conflict	106	11	30	20.42	4.136
Valid N (listwise)	106				

A categorization of work conflict among IT employees was classified into three level: High, Medium and Low. The results shows that 17.9% of IT employees experienced low levels of work conflict, 71.7% experienced moderate levels, and 10.4% experienced high levels.

Table 3. Categorization of Work Conflict Variable

Category Range	Frequence	(%)	Category
$X > 30$	11	10.4%	High
$11 < X < 30$	76	71.7%	Medium
$X \leq 11$	19	17.9%	Low

Based on the data collected from a sample of 106 IT employees, the descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of scores on the work stress variable. The results shows a minimum score of 14 and a maximum score of 46, with a hypothetical mean of 31.83 and a standard deviation of 6.783. These findings provide an overview of the general tendency of work stress levels experienced by IT employees in the sample.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Work Stress Variable

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Work Stress	106	14	46	31.83	6.783
Valid N (listwise)	106				

A categorization of work conflict among IT employees was classified into three level: High, Medium and Low. The results shows that 15.1% of IT employees experienced low levels of work stress, 67.9%, experienced moderate levels, and the remaining 17% experienced high levels of work stress.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Work Stress Variable

Category Range	Frequence	(%)	Category
$X > 46$	18	17%	High
$14 < X < 46$	72	67.9%	Medium
$X \leq 14$	16	15.1%	Low

After conducting the descriptive analysis, a simple linear regression test and F-test analysis were conducted to examine the impact of the work conflict variable on the work stress variable. The results of the simple linear regression analysis showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), with an R Square value of 0.264. Additionally, the F-test analysis was conducted by comparing the calculated F-value and the F-table value. The results showed that the calculated F-value was 36.044, while the F-table value was 3.93.

This finding indicates that there is a highly significant influence of work conflict on work stress among IT employees. The work conflict variable has a 26.4% influence on work stress, while the remaining 73.6% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Table 6. F-Test

Variables	F-Value (Calculated)	F-Value (Table)	Description
Work Conflict Work Stress	36.044	3.93	There is a significant impact

Table 7. Simple Linear Regression Test

Variables	R	R Square	Sig.	Description
Work Conflict Work Stress	0.514	0.264	0.000	There is a significant impact

4. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that work conflict has an impact on work stress among IT employees. Work stress is a common issue experienced by workers. According to Rizki, Hamid, and Mayowan (2016), work stress refers to a feeling of pressure perceived by employees while performing their duties. Work stress may occur when an individual is faced with excessive demands and pressure, or when they encounter obstacles that are difficult to overcome.

In addition, work stress can also be triggered by the presence of work conflict. Work conflict can occur at any time and in any place, including in the workplace. Work conflict is an unpleasant condition experienced by an individual, either physically or mentally. Prolonged work conflict can lead to increased stress among employees (Hatmawan, 2015). This finding is in line with research conducted by Anuari, Utami, and Prasetya (2017), which found that work conflict has a significant influence on work stress among employees. Uncontrolled work conflict may affect stress on employees. Work stress among employees often leads to lower work motivation and organizational commitment, which can negatively impact on overall organization performance.

Work conflict arises from difference in opinions, perceptions, goals, or even the interpretation of information. It can occur between individuals or between groups. Employees who are in conflict may cause psychological stress and fatigue. This aligns with Hasby (2017), who stated that arguments among employees can lead to a lack of harmony in workplace relationships. Furthermore, the formation of exclusive groups among employees can lead to inequality and discomfort for other workers. This situation may result in reducing employees' comfort in the workplace and contribute to psychological pressure. As a result, this may increase employee absenteeism and decrease employee productivity.

This study also aligns with the findings of Suryani and Yoga (2018), who stated that work conflict affects work stress. Conflict and stress are interrelated and inseparable. The higher the level of work conflict experienced by employees, the greater the level of stress. Moreover, intense and prolonged conflict can trigger internal conflict within individuals or between individuals in the organization. If such conflict is not properly managed, it may escalate work stress and have negatively affect the overall organizational performance.

In conclusion, employee work stress can be influenced by work conflict. Work stress may lead to decreased productivity, job performance, work motivation, and organizational commitment, all of which can ultimately impact on the company as a whole. However, work conflict is not always negative. When work conflict managed effectively, work conflict can contribute to organizational growth to create positive changes and innovation. Therefore, work conflict does not necessarily need to be avoided, but should be managed properly to prevent it from becoming prolonged and detrimental.

5. Conclusion

This study found that work conflict has a significant impact on work stress among IT employees, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$). This indicates that the higher the level of work conflict, the higher the level of work stress experienced by IT employees. The influence of work conflict on work stress in this study was found to be 26.4%, and the remaining 73.6% is influenced by other factors or variables that were not included in this study. The categorization of work conflict among IT employees in this study was divided into three levels: high, medium, and low. The percentage of IT employees experiencing high levels of work conflict was 10.4%. Meanwhile, 71.7% were categorized as having moderate levels of work conflict, and 17.9% were in the low category. Work stress among IT employees was also classified into high, medium, and low levels. This finding showed that 17% of IT employees experienced high levels of work stress, 67.9% were categorized as moderate, and 15.1% experienced were in the low category.

6. Closing Statement

Based on the findings of this study, work conflict has been shown to influence work stress. It is recommended that companies can identify and understand the various forms of conflict in order to increase their awareness and responsiveness when conflict arises in the workplace. Companies are also expected to manage conflict effectively to prevent it from becoming prolonged, as ongoing conflict can lead to work stress among employees and may have a negative impact on the overall organization performance.

For future research, this study is expected to serve as a useful reference. It is also suggested that future studies can examine other variables that may influence work stress, including internal factors such as personality type, or external factors such as workload, work-family conflict, work environment, and organizational climate

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