



## ONLINE PROCEEDINGS



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ISBN: 978-979-011-660-3

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# **Effects of Source and Level of Conflict on Employee Performance at Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia**

( A Study on Three Units of Distance Learning University)

Andi Sylvana

Faculty of Economics, [sylvana@ut.ac.id](mailto:sylvana@ut.ac.id)

Heriyanni Mashithoh, Faculty of Economics, [heriyanni@ut.ac.id](mailto:heriyanni@ut.ac.id)

Yun Iswanto, Faculty of Economics, [yiswanto@ut.ac.id](mailto:yiswanto@ut.ac.id)

## **SUB THEME : Management and Strategic Development of ODL**

### **Abstract**

This research was conducted to reveal the effects of conflicts on employee performance at Universitas Terbuka (UT). The subjects of the research were 35 employees of the Multi Media Production Centre and Learning Materials Service Centre of Universitas Terbuka. The 35 respondents were asked questions about source of conflict, level of conflict, and performance. The variable source of conflict refers to two dozen sources of conflict put forward by Robbins (2006). The variable level of conflict refers to the following criteria of spirit and passion of members of the organization, work environment, and response to environmental changes. The performance variable refers to indicators of work load, work quality, knowledge of the job, articulation of ideas, decisions making, and work plan. Path analysis with a significance level of 5% was used in this research. The results showed that the source of the conflict influenced the level of conflict simultaneously. However, only three indicators of source of conflict (participatory decision making, criteria differences of reward system, communication barriers) influenced the level of conflict. Sources of conflict did not have influence on employee performance, while the partial variables (participatory decision-making and role dissatisfaction) affected the performance of employees. The level of conflict altogether had influence on employee performance significantly. Sources of conflict and level of conflict simultaneously had no impact on employee performance.

*Keywords: Source of conflict, level of conflict, employee performance*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Every individual, with all of his strength and limitation, has need and objectives to fulfill. To do this, he has to cooperate with other individual, till finally a group was developed. In further development, groups composed a bigger group, known as organization. One of the distinctive characteristics of a



group was the appearance of a conflict. A conflict is unseparated part of organizational life. Whenever there is an interaction between the organization member, external or either internal, a conflict is unavoidable. Indeed, a conflict is a phenomena in organizational life.

In general, a conflict is different argument between one or more members or groups in an organization which appears from a reality that they have to share scarce resources or work activity and they have different status, goals, values, or opinions where each party wants to win their interest or opinion (Luthans.1998). According to Brown (1976), a conflict is a form of interaction as a result of different interests, perceptions and choices. In can be in a form of small disagreement until fighting.

In an organization, too much or too little conflict will harm the organization. Too much conflict will yields a strong negative feeling, dependency, and uncontrollable aggressive act escalation, and also revance. Whereas, too little conflict will omit critical information for further organizational harmonization or development. Therefore conflict should not be avoided, since it is not always bring a negative effect to an organization. The duty of a manager is to organize conflict in order to avoid or at least minimize the negative effect so as to encourage functional conflict. In addition, organizing conflict is to reach win-win solution, so there won't be laten't conflict.

We can see conflict from two point of view, traditional and contemporer (Robbins,2000) or either from traditional management or modern management (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2005). In traditional point of view, a conflict brings negative effects that should be avoided. A good organization is an organization without conflict. This view also see a conflict as a result of mismanagement, such as leader disbelief and low intensity of group communication. Modern view stated as a logical consequences of human interaction, conflict cannot be avoided. The problem is not how to eliminate conflict but how to handle it won't harm the interpersonal or group communication and organizational goal. Conflict can increase employees' performance if it is managed well. A good organization is the one who can manage conflict that encourage or stimulate worker to achieve better.

This paper is a result of a study on three operational units of Universitas Terbuka, namely Puslaba, PPBAC and PPBANC. The study is attempted to see the effect of source and level of conflict on employee performance. Those three units were chosen because their work are related with the production and the distribution learning material, both non printed and printed. The problem of the study were whether the source of conflict influence the level of conflict, whether the source of conflict influence the employee performance, whether the level of conflict influence the employee perfomance, and finally whether the source and level of conflict altogether influence the employee performance. The result of the study hopefully become an input for UT manager in managing the conflict beside it will become an academic contribution for the development of organizational behavior concept. Thus, the hypotheses were the source of conflict significantly influence the level of conflict, the source of conflict significantly influence the employee performance, the level of conflict



significantly influence the employee performance, and finally the source and level of conflict altogether significantly influence the employee performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict refers to an opposition between two or more individuals, groups or organizations. Robbin ( 2006) defined conflict as Is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about. This definition adds that conflict refers to the point in an ongoing activity when an interaction "crosses over" to become an interparty conflict. Conflict encompasses a wide range of conflicts that people experience in organizations, such as Incompatibility of goals, differences over interpretations of facts and disagreements based on behavioral expectations. In short, basically conflict is a dynamic process and concerns with the perceptions of related parties.

Conflict may happen within individual, between individual and other person, between groups, and between units of organization . Knowing the antesequent of conflict, the manager of an organization will able to anticipate the conflict and take steps to overcome the dysfunctional conflict.

There were four types of conflict according to Hellriegel (1992) ; intrapersonal, group, and organizational conflict. Many experts differentiate conflicts based on the source. Robbins (2006) stated that the sources of conflict are:

1. Mutual task dependency. How far a worker in a team depends each other. Incongruity of work between units in organization may stimulate conflict. The mutual task dependency will increase the relationship intensity between working units. If it is forced to interact the potential of conflict will arise.
2. One line task dependency. The possibility of conflict occurrence will be greater if one working unit depends on the other working unit. If it is compared with the conflict occurrence, the one line task will make the lower worker feels that he is being forced by his superior.
3. High horizontal differentiation. The more the working unit, the higher is the conflict potential because of different interest between units or between the member of organization.
4. Low formalization. Regulation and rules will reduce conflict by reducing ambiguity. With sufficient level of formalization, the duty of each member in the organization will be clear. But if the formalization level is low, the duty will not clear thus it stimulate conflict.



5. Dependency regarding insufficient resources. The limited organizational resources and the dependence of many units in organization to the same resources may generate competitions that might turn into conflicts .
6. Differences in evaluation criteria. The difference in evaluating the work outcomes between workers will cause a conflict.
7. Differences in reward system criteria. If the management of an organization uses different criteria in evaluation and reward system, there will be conflict.
8. Participatory decision making. There was a proof that if the members of organization were included in the decision making, conflict will appear. This is because participatory process opens a big opportunity to uncover the dispute or disagreement, especially if there is value difference between participants.
9. Member heterogeneity. If the member is too heterogeneous, the opportunity to work cooperatively will decrease, so the appearance of conflict is bigger. The variety of member is as a result of different values, beliefs, and back ground.
10. Status incompatibility. If one of the member of organization has more status than others will stimulate conflict.
11. Role unsatisfactorily. There are many source of role unsatisfactorily; one of them is status incompatibility. If one of the member of organization received a certain role, then he/she will have an expectation towards the role. If the expectation was not fulfilled, he/she will be dissatisfied and trigger a conflict.
12. Communication barrier. Many parties understand that communication barrier , vertical or horizontal, will cause conflict because of misinformation.

Nimran (1996) stated that one way to understand conflict as a process is by using Pondy ' s six stage model of conflict. Each stage of the model is discussed below:

1. Latent conflict, certain conditions frequently found in organizations provide the latent potential for conflict to occur.
2. Perceived conflict, the stage in which one or more of the parties involved becomes aware, through some types of stimulus or information received of the potential for a conflict.
3. Felt conflict, the stage in which conflict has already felt by the parties involved. Here emotions such as anger, hostility and frustration are encountered.



4. Manifest conflict, the stage where some sort of adversarial behavior is exhibited, ranging from sabotage, open aggression, confrontation until poor performance
5. Conflict resolution, the stage where conflict was resolved or pressed by using many ways and approach, starting from avoiding the conflict until finding solution to solve the conflict, so the involved parties reach their goals
6. Conflict aftermath, here the conflict is either resolved or becomes the basis for future conflict. If the conflict is solved, it will improve the relationship between each member of organization. If the solution is not precise, it will trigger a new conflict.

Because conflict has both positive and negative effects to an organization, it has to be managed. Failure in managing the conflict will cause harmful effect. Conflict can ruin an organization by creating separation wall between colleagues, and resulting poor performance or even resignation.

The manager of organization realized that there are many types of source of conflict, so that the methods to solve the conflict are various, depends on the circumstances. Choosing a suitable conflict resolution depends on some factors including why the conflict occurred and what kind of relationship between the manager and the party involved.

Gibson (2002) mentioned some methods to handle conflict :

1. Problem solving
2. Superordinate goals
3. Expansion of resources
4. Conflict avoidance
5. Conflict smoothing
6. Compromizing
7. Authoritative command
8. Altering the human variable
9. Altering the structural variables
10. Identifying enemies together
11. Negotiation process

Robbins (2006) explained that based on the effects of conflict towards organization, conflict can be differentiated into functional and dysfunctional.

1. Functional conflict. Conflict that supports the goals of the organization and improves its performance.
2. Dysfunctional conflict. Conflict that hinders organization performance. This conflict is harmful and the manager of an organization does not like it.

Table 1. The relationship between conflict level and work performance

Situation	Level of Conflict	Level of Conflict	Internal Organization Characteristics	Level of Performance
A	Low or none	No function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apathetic</li> <li>• Boring</li> <li>• No respond to change</li> <li>• Lack of new idea</li> </ul>	low
B	Optimal	Functionall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full of spirit</li> <li>• Self- criticism</li> <li>• Inovative</li> </ul>	high
C	High	No function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divisive</li> <li>• Chaos</li> <li>• Uncooperative</li> </ul>	low

Source : Robbins, Stephen P. 2006. *Organizational Behavior: Concep, Controversies, and Application*. Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice-Hall

An organization can adjust to the changing environment, has a high working spirit and willingness to introspect itself and intend to find something useful that has a high performance. Disagreement or conflict in a discussion to decide a plan or an activity is a common occasion. This may also create satisfaction.

Whenever the situation in an organization is boring, lack of new ideas, apathetic to the environmental changing, a conflict won't happen in an organization so the performance level will be low. When the situation is getting worse, or chaos, no coordination between eah department, the organizational performance will be low. So, low performance is caused by low or high level of conflict.

Functional conflict can encourage performance. Therefore, there are some techniques to boost functional conflict. They are:

1. Comunication
2. Bringing in outsiders
3. Restructuring the organization
4. Encouraging competition

Maier in As'ad (1997) thought that someone's sucess in doing his responsibility. Lawler and orter in As'ad (1997) explained that performance is



successful role achievement that someone gets from his/her behavior. As'ad (1997) concluded that performance is someone's achievement based on the standards of the job. This opinion is similar to Dharma (1986) which stated that performance is someone's achievement or something which has done, either a product or service given by someone or group, so that the performance can be seen from both individual or group.

Soeprihanto (2000) said that performance or achievement is the result of someone's work in a certain period compared to many possibilities, such as standard, target or criteria which has been determined and approved.

Work appraisal is one of important duty of the manager. To do it objectively, it is not an easy job. Like or dislike in doing the appraisal must be avoided in order to maintain objectivity. Appraisal is an important activity because it can be used to improve the decisions and give feedback to the member of organization about their performance.

Soeprihanto (2000) defined performance appraisal as a system that is used to appraise and find out whether the workers or members of organization have done all of their jobs. The appraisal is not only to know the physical result but also all aspects such as working ability, discipline, work relationship, ideas, leadership, and specific ability related to the job.

According to As'ad(198) which quoted Maier's opinion, explained the general criterias to measure the performance are quality, quantity, time, position, attendance, safety in doing the job. Lopez 1982) mentioned the performance appraisal consists of quantity and quality of the result, organizational scope, organization planning, workers' knowledge, punctuality. Based on those opinions, Dharma (1986) stated that almost all of performance appraisal considered quantity, quality and punctuality. In short, performance appraisal of the member of organization must be done objectively, so it will be useful for the organization and also the member of organization.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The research is using path analysis. This analysis model is used to find out the influence of source and level of conflict towards the organization performance. By using this analysis, we can estimate the amount of causal relationship between variables and the hierarchy of each variable in the causal relationship path, directly or indirectly (Hasan, 1996).

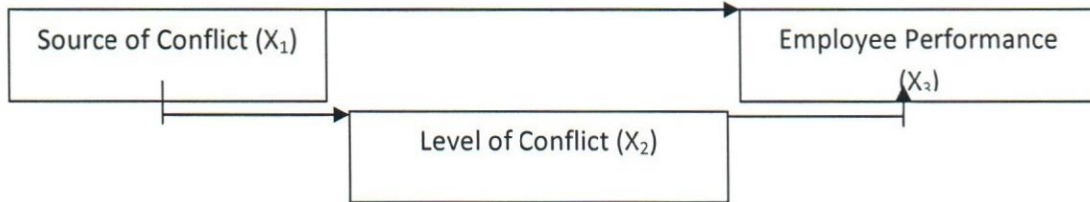
Path analysis was the development of multivariate regression analysis. In multivariate regression analysis, all variables are in a line in a block, while in path analysis the variables are divided into some block which are hierarchically structured. (Pedhazur, 1982).

The path analysis model was seen on Picture 1, and the equation is:

1.  $X_2 = P \cdot X_1$
2.  $X_3 = P \cdot X_2$
3.  $X_3 = P \cdot X_1$
4.  $X_3 = P \cdot X_1 + P \cdot X_1 \cdot X_2$



P = Coefficient of regression (path)



Picture 1

### Path Analysis Model

The data was collected from two sources:

1. Primary data, data was taken from questionnaires and interview about: sources of conflict, level of conflict, and organizational performance. The questionnaire was using a Likert scale with 5 choices of answer. They are 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for satisfactorily, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree.
2. Secondary data, data was taken from library study, by collecting articles, book or report which is related with organizational behavior and the object of the study.

The population for the research was all of employees in three units of Universitas Terbuka, PUSLABA, PPBA and PPBANC. The sampling was taken by using disproportionate stratified random sampling because each population has a level and every level has their own characteristics and unproportional amount. (Sugiono, 1999)

## Hypotheses Testing and Analysis

There are four problems to be discussed in this article: 1) whether the source of conflict influences the level of conflict, (2) whether the source of conflict influences the employee performance, (3) whether the level of conflict influences the employee performance, and (4) finally whether the source and level of conflict altogether influence the employee performance.

To answer those problems, the formulated hypotheses are:

1. To answer whether the source of conflict influences the level of conflict, the analysis was done simultaneously and partially.

The effects of all of variables of source of conflict (mutual task dependency, one line task dependency, high horizontal differentiation, low formalization, dependency regarding insufficient resources, differences in evaluation criteria, differences in reward system criteria, participatory decision



making, member heterogeneity, status incompatibility, role unsatisfactorily, communication barrier) to the level of conflict, can be seen from table 2.

Table 2

Model Summary the effects of Source of Conflict toward Level of Conflict

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.745 <sup>a</sup>	.555	.312	4.517

a. Predictors: (Constant), X12, X6, X8, X10, X5, X4, X1, X2, X9, X3, X11, X7

Based on table 2, the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> was 0.555. It means it is only 55% of level of conflict could be explained by all variables of the source of conflict. The rest (45%) were influenced by other variables. The range of R<sup>2</sup> was between 0 to 1. The greater the value of R<sup>2</sup>, the weaker the relationship between variables.

The formulated hypotheses are:

H1 : the source of conflict influence the level of conflict

H0 : source of conflict does not influence the level of conflict

The test of hypotheses was done by comparing the significance level of the research with the significance level of 0.05, using the following criterias:

- If the significance level is less than 0.05, the H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted
- If the significance level is more than 0.05, the H0 was accepted and H1 was rejected.

Table 3. Anova : The Effect of Source of Conflict towards level of Conflict

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	560.097	12	46.675	2.288	.045 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	448.875	22	20.403		
Total	1008.971	34			

a. Predictors: (Constant), X12, X6, X8, X10, X5, X4, X1, X2, X9, X3, X11, X7

b. Dependent Variable: X13

Table 3 showed that the significance level of the study was 0.045, greater than 0.05. It means H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted. In other word, source of conflict was related to level of conflict. Moreover this model could be used to predict the level of conflict.

T test was used to see the effects of each variables of source of conflict on the level of conflict. Beta or standardized coefficient was used to see how big the influence was.

Tabel 4

Coefficients of Each Variables of Source of Conflict towards Level of Conflict

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	48.739	11.961		4.075	.001
X1	1.471	.946	.263	1.554	.134
X2	1.359	1.068	.229	1.273	.216
X3	-.761	.590	-.229	-1.290	.210
X4	.713	.497	.257	1.434	.166
X5	-1.041	.948	-.208	-1.098	.284
X6	1.096	.973	.244	1.127	.272
X7	1.068	1.121	.230	.953	.351
X8	-2.438	.700	-.608	-3.482	.002
X9	1.197	.841	.258	1.423	.169
X10	.404	.603	.131	.670	.510
X11	-1.560	.699	-.480	-2.231	.036
X12	1.363	.614	.380	2.221	.037

a. Dependent Variable: X13

The formulation of hyphoteses order to find out the correlation of each variables of source of conflict towards Level of Conflict were:



- a. H1 : there was a linier correlation between mutual task dependency and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between mutual task dependency and the s level of conflict

Based on the result of SPSS, t research was 1.554, lest than t table.It means no correlation between mutual task dependency and the s level of conflict

- b. H1: there was a linier correlation between one line task dependency and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between one line task dependency and the level of conflict

Based on the result of SPSS, t research was 1.273, less than t table (2.042).It means no correlation between mutual task dependency and the s level of conflict

- c. H1 : there was a linier correlation between high horizontal differentiation and the s level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between high horizontal differentiation and the level of conflict

Based on the result of SPSS, t research was 1.434, less than t table.It means no correlation between high horizontal differentiation and the level of conflict

- d. H1: there was a linier correlation between low formalization and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between low formalization and the level of conflict

Based on the result of SPSS, t research was 1.290, lest than t table.It means no correlation between low formalization and the level of conflict

- e. H1: there was a linier correlation between dependency regarding insufficient resources and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between dependency regarding insufficient resources and the level of conflict

The result of the test was there was no linier correlation between dependency regarding insufficient resources and the level of conflict because the t research was 1.098, less than t table.

- f. H1: there was a linier correlation between differences in evaluation criteria and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between differences in evaluation criteria and the level of conflict

There was no linier correlation between differences in evaluation criteria and the level of conflict because the t research was 1.127, less than t table..

- g. H1: there was a linier correlation between differences in reward system criteria and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between differences in reward system criteria and the level of conflict

The result of the test was there was no linier correlation between differences in reward system criteria and the level of conflict because the t research was 0.953, less than t table.

- h. H1: there was a linier correlation between participatory decision making and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between participatory decision making and the level of conflict

The t research for participatory decision making was 3.482, more than t table (2.042). It means participatory decision making had a linier correlatio with level of conflict. The difference of the influence of participatory decision making was 0.608 or 60.8 %

- i. H1: there was a linier correlation between member heterogeneity and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation member heterogeneity and the level of conflict

The t research for member heterogeneity was 1.423, less than t table (2.042). It means member heterogeneity had no a linier correlation with the level of conflict.

- j. H1: there was a linier correlation between status incompatibility and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between status incompatibility and the level of conflict

The t research for status incompatibility was 0.670, less than t table (2.042). It means status incompatibility had no a linier correlation with the level of conflict.

- k. H1: there was a linier correlation between role unsatisfactorily and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between role unsatisfactorily and the level of conflict

The t research for role unsatisfactorily was 2.231, more than t table (2.042). It means role unsatisfactorily had a linier correlation with level of conflict.



The difference of the influence of participatory decision making was 0.608 or 60.8 %

- i. H1: there was a linier correlation between communication barrier and the level of conflict

H0 : there was no linier correlation between status incompatibility and the level of conflict

The t research for communication barrier was 2.221, more than t table (2.042). It means communication barrier had a linier correlation with level of conflict. The difference of the influence of participatory decision making was 0.608 or 60.8 %

2. The second problem was whether source of conflict influence the employee performance.

The effects of all of variables of source of conflict (mutual task dependency, one line task dependency, high horizontal differentiation, low formalization, dependency regarding insufficient resources, differences in evaluation criteria, differences in reward system criteria, participatory decision making, member heterogeneity, status incompatibility, role unsatisfactorily, communication barrier) to the employee performance, can be seen from table 5.

Table 5. Model Summary of the Effect of Source of Conflict to Employee Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.615 <sup>a</sup>	.378	.039	3.118

a. Predictors: (Constant), X12, X6, X8, X10, X5, X4, X1, X2, X9, X3, X11, X7

Based on table 5, the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> was 0.378. It means it is only 37.8% of employee performance could be explained by all variables of the source of conflict . The rest (62%) were influenced by other variables.

Tabel 6. Anova of the Effect of Source of Conflict to Employee Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	130.149	12	10.846	1.116	.396 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	213.851	22	9.721		
Total	344.000	34			

a. Predictors: (Constant), X12, X6, X8, X10, X5, X4, X1, X2, X9, X3, X11,X7

b. Dependent Variable: X14

Based on table 6, we find out that the significance level was 0.396, more than 0.05. Therefore, H0 was accepted and H1 was rejected. In short, there was no correlation between source of conflict and employee performance.

Based on the t test towards each variables of sources of conflict towards employee performance, most of the variables has no correlation with the employee performance, except for role unsatisfactorily. The t research for role satisfactory was 1.787, more than t table (2.042).

3. The third problem was whether the level of conflict influence the employee performance

Table 7. The Effect of the level of conflict toward the employee performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.419 <sup>a</sup>	.176	.151	2.931

a. Predictors: (Constant), X13

Based on table 7, the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> was 0.176. It means it is only 17% of employee performance could be explained by all variables of the level of conflict . The rest (83%) were influenced by other variables. The test of hypoteses was done by comparing the significance level of the research with the significance level of 0.05.

Based on the Anova test, the significance level of evel of conflict toward the employee performance was 0.012 or more than 0.05. It means the H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted, so level of conflict influenced the employee performance.

4. The fourth problem was whether the source of conflict and level of conflict simultaneously influenced the employee performance.

Table 8. The Effect of source of conflict and level of conflict toward the employee performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673 <sup>a</sup>	.453	.115	2.993

a. Predictors: (Constant), X13, X5, X3, X7, X11, X1, X4, X2, X12, X9, X10, X8, X6

Based on table 5, the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> was 0.453. It means it is only 45.3% of employee performance could be explained by source and level of conflict . The rest (55%) were influenced by other variables.

Based on the Anova test, the significance level of source and level of conflict toward the employee performance was 0.268 or more than 0.05. It means the H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted, so source and level of conflict influenced the employee performance



## Conclusion

All variables of source of conflict simultaneously influenced level of conflict, but partially there were three variable influenced it. Moreover, source of conflict and level of conflict, simultaneously did not influence the employee performance. But partially, unlike source of conflict, level of conflict influenced employee performance.

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