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Human Behavior as a Significant Cause of Conflict among Construction Professional Parties

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Abstract
Conflict is a disagreement between parties and usually it inevitable in construction project. Many previous researchers have agreed that a conflict take away the success of the project in terms it cannot be done within allocated and expected time, cost and quality, which is then often accompanied by the destruction of individual and good working relationships. Besides, there are also studies which clarify that the conflict in construction industry is not just a problem but it is worse than that. So, the objective of this paper is to identify the significant causes of the conflict in human behavior aspect that influences the performance of professional parties. The questionnaire survey has been distributed by hand or via email to the potential respondents at Perak. The result concluded that there are three significant causes of conflict which are (i) different professions that create dissimilar perception among professional parties, (ii) poor communications among the professional parties and (iii) mistrust in the performance of duties in teamwork meanwhile the major impact is increased due the stressful working environment. Integrating or collaborative method is also highly preferred by respondents when dealing with conflicts. It could also be concluded that the success in construction projects mainly depends on how well professional parties handle conflicts.
Keywords: Conflict Management, Human Behavior, Professional Parties

Introduction

Generally, in construction industry there are always conflicts during the construction industry. Conflict is generally defined as a discrepancy between parties involved with interest or ideas and one of process in which party interests are being opposed or negatively affected to other parties (Lee, 2008). Moreover, it is also complex and competitive in which participants with different views, belief, demand, prospects, views, ego and different levels of knowledge of the construction process work together (Ogunbayo, 2013a; Cakmak and Cakmak, 2014).

If the conflict is not solved, it may become a dispute (Cakmak and Cakmak, 2014). Once a dispute happens, the consultants can drag this issue to the court and high cost will be imposed to settle it (Adnan et al., 2012). As mentioned by Mohd Isa et al. (2009), conflict is better to be preventing than to cure and Montes et al. (2012) stated that conflict can be managed in the

variety of ways. Mostly conflict is needed to be preventing before it become more worst because it can give negative impact to the project.

Conflict and disputes can be avoided from occurring and resolving if professional parties understand the cause of conflict (Baloyi and Agumba, 2014). It is essential that the main causes be properly identified (Harbans, 2003). The large root cause of conflict can be categorized into three types which are human behaviour, contractual and technical problem due to uncertainty and low experience (Jaffar et al., 2011); (Cakmak and Cakmak, 2014). Table 1.0 listed all the possible causes of any conflict from previous studies that can be found in the construction industry into three categories which have been stated before.

Table 1.0: The Causes of Conflict and Disputes based on Categorized Conflict

Item	Causes of Conflict and Dispute	Categorised
1.	The absence of team spirit among the participants.	Human Behaviour
2.	Poor Communication between parties involved in project.	
3.	Project participants to deal promptly with changes and unexpected conditions.	
4.	Blaming and pointing finger towards each other when problem occurs in construction.	
5.	Different profession that create dissimilar perception among professional parties.	
6.	Fraud and faith on works.	
7.	Impolite and lack of courtesy among each professional parties.	
8.	Negligence or negative attitude of the project professional parties.	
9.	Desire to be always right on the opinion given. (Egocentric)	
10.	Anger, rudeness and hatred toward other parties.	
11.	Disputes over payment.	Contractual
12.	Miscalculations and over calculation.	
13.	Contract clause, which unrealistically and unfairly shifted.	
14.	Ambiguous contract provision.	
15.	Overdesign by design team.	
16.	Role conflict or ambiguity of role among the participants.	Technical
17.	Contractor who submit unrealistically low bid.	
18.	Late instructions or information from architect or engineer.	
19.	Unrealistic client expectation and determination.	
20.	Error and incomplete technical specification.	

From the Table 1.0, it shows 10/20 causes of conflict and disputes came from human behavior among the construction professional parties. Because of that, this paper will be identified the significant causes of the conflict in human behavior aspect that influences the performance of professional parties. To achieve the objective of this paper, the questionnaires survey was distributed to selected professional parties which are Architect, Engineer and Quantity Surveyor that involved in the construction industry located in Perak. The result shows that these professional parties agreed the significant causes of conflict are the different profession that create dissimilar perception among professional parties, poor communications between among the professional parties and mistrust in the performance of duties in teamwork.

The Significant of controlling the Human Behavior to prevent conflict.

Human behavior is significant causes of the conflict issues in construction project because it is related to different party among professional (Tashi and Peansupap, 2013; Dada, 2013). Conflict also emerges when the behavior of one person is intrusive or might obstruct the actions of another. It is agreed by Cheung and Yiu (2006) where adversarial attitude and dissimilar perceptions by the team members are the main sources of construction conflict nowadays. In fact, individual with different background, orientation and values are to work on complex issues on the project would causes of conflict among professional (Ogunbayo, 2013a). Thus, the previous researcher also stated that, the difference in perception make the differences in level of technical understanding or the management approach could be adopted by the others. It makes the professional team fail to understand their responsibilities under the design team contract (Jaffar et al., 2011).

Conflict in human behavior related with interpersonal conflict. Because, interpersonal relationship based on personality clashes and interpersonal antagonism which are detrimental to organization performance are the first in the emotional aspects in the conflict occurs (Chen et al., 2014). Basically, in term of human behavior it includes the interpersonal issues and project related to matters that involves a group of different people and different personalities in the project (Acharya et al.,2006). In addition, it related with human interaction, personality, cultures and professional background among project team (Jaffar et al., 2011). It agreed by the Lester (2007) conflicts can be caused by differences in opinions, cultural background or customs, project objectives, political aspirations, or personal attitudes. Mahamid (2014) concluded that the significant sources are parties' expectations and inter parties' problems mostly from human behavior related.

On the other hand, conflict can be started by poor communication, dissatisfaction, desire to obtain power, ineffective leadership, lack of openness and so on (Khanaki and Hassanzadeh, 2010). This creates tension between projects and interested groups (Awakul and Ogunlana, 2002). Basically, the causes of conflict construction are related to individual ambition, frustration, dissatisfaction, desire for growth, communication, level of power, fraud and faith and lack of trust among team member. (Jaffar et al., 2011). As posited by Ogunbayo (2013a) the causes of conflict among the project team members could be difference in belief, orientation,

demands, prospects, views, imagination and ego. The open exchange of ideas, the objective assessment of alternatives, and the rigorous contrasting of perspectives produces conflicts out of which creative ideas and solutions emerge. At the same time, such interactions may also produce anger and alienation, which can lead to disaffection and departure by the offended team members (Ensley et al., 2002). Hence, the change of conflict level may turn into psychology between the contracting parties (Yiu and Cheung, 2006).

Jehn and Bendersky (2003) stated that conflict usually happens out of competition and defection in complex social behavior. It is agreed by the Prenzel and Vanclay (2014) as they said that conflict represent complex social problem and although they emerge frequently, they are always a challenge for opposing parties. Thus, Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) mentioned that since there is no effort to maintain personal needs and the needs of others or to clarify the motivations and intentions behind any behavior, conflict will eventually increase the potential for misperception and miscommunication. As stated by Jaffar et al. (2011), most people who are involved in construction have their own need that usually can arise from the construction dispute and confrontations.

Thus, some conflicts are not caused by lack of clarity but it can happen because of the unclear job description. This leads to confusion in the role and responsibilities (Mitkus and Mitkus, 2014). It will later lead to misunderstanding and unpredictability of scope of work (Ilter, 2013). According to Harbans (2003), conflict can also appear from the negligence by the professional practice. Commonly, conflict emerges to parties when there is change in construction which results in additional works (Gorse, 2003). Project managers, architects, engineers, and quantity surveyors are the key participants to every construction project. They are usually drawn from different organizations to form a project team. Conflict becomes inevitable because of these differences (Cheung and Yiu, 2006). This make the professional parties might be regarded to be involved in a competition. Cheung and Yiu (2006) suggested that the conflict highly involved one's personality and it is due to unrealistic expectation, lack of team spirit and misunderstanding. The ego is also presence and it engages features of charismatic behaviors and the "hand-off" aspect of shared leader behaviour.

Motsa (2006) found that aggressiveness, anger, defiance of rules, competitive, curiosity, hate; hostility describes the pugnacity in people. These could be the causes of a conflict. Other than that, blaming the people within a group could also emerge a conflict. Femi (2014) agreed that causes of conflict usually come from the anger, sarcasm, lack of trust, competitive culture, harsh feedback, the feeling of being unappreciated and so on.

Other than that Adnan et al. (2012) mentioned that corruption in construction industry in Malaysia is higher compared to other sectors. This reflects the bad behavior among participants. Cheung and Yiu (2006) believed that emotional and psychological are reasons why escalation of conflict occurs. According to Mitkus and Mitkus (2014), causes of conflict in the

construction industry include unfair behavior of construction participants and psychological defend mechanisms which is sought to protect the self-respect and self-esteem of the person.

Thus, the success of construction project depends on the behavior of the parties involved in the project from starting to finishing stages. Thus, most company's works at construction industry are exposed to unethical behavior during project lifetime (Baloyi, 2014). The current study examined the transformation of conflict and how it is rooted solely in different preferences for basing a decision into conflict rooted in interpersonal incompatibilities and emotions (DeChurch and Hamilton, 2007). According to Lee (2008), conflict is inseparable in all human interactions.

Basically, there are many causes of conflict but the most significant is related to human behavior. Apart from that, researchers has also determined causes human behavior conflict in construction which comprise technical opinions and personality (Al-Sibaie *et al*., 2014), mistrust in the performance of duties in teamwork, poor communications and misunderstanding between among the professional parties (Cakmak and Cakmak, 2014), the absence of team spirit and support among professional parties (Md Yusof et al., 2011), difference in profession that create dissimilar perception among professional parties, negligence or negative attitude of the project professional parties (Mitkus and Mitkus, 2014), misunderstandings and disagreements from differentiation (Agwu, 2013) and not to forget consultants' failure to understand their responsibilities under the design team contract (Al-Sibaie et al., 2014).

All the causes discussed above have been listed in Table 1.0 that will be used as variables in the questionnaires survey. So, the conflict in human behavior is most affected compared to conflict between contract and technical issues because it is related to human attitudes. It is then could be the root of the conflict.

Method

The scope of the study is limited to all professional teams such as Architect, Engineer and Quantity Surveyor. The questionnaires survey is distributed to selected professional consultants in construction industry to achieve the objective of this paper. In order to get return of responds, the question is not open types questionnaires but it is designed in a straight forward manner based on the objective. It was prepared in simple form for better understanding and to avoid misinterpretation of respondents which might lead to an error in data analysis. The question issued the most significant causes of the conflict issues that usually happen in construction project. Thus, questionnaire method was based on five-point of Likert- scale which are related to human behavior. i.e., Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Moderate =3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree=1. There are 10 questions are posed to verify finding for this study.

The total population for these professional practices in Perak is 160. With amount of 160 populations, this total is highly recommended by Krejchi and Morgan (1970) which suggested the ideal number of a population in sample would be 113. The method of selecting a sample population for this study is by using probability sampling technique. It includes stratified

sampling where the population are divided into several mutually exclusive strata which consists of Engineer, Architect and Quantity Surveyors and then randomly sampled from each of these strata. The list of company for professional team is based on board of registration that is in Perak. Most of the questionnaires surveys were distributed by hand and through email in every construction companies that are in Perak. However, from 113 samples distributed to the respondents, only 97 (82.20%) gave feedback while 16 (17.79%) sample did not respond to the questionnaires survey.

The validity of the questionnaire survey for this paper have been analyzed by using the reliability analysis to examine this instrument.

Table 2.0 : Cronbach's Alpha for all variables on human behavior.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.887	10

Table 2.0 expressed that, the reliability analysis of all variables for this survey to get valid variables. Hence it can be said that the Cronbach's Alpha for this study was 0.887. The reliability analysis of these variables is good. The conclusion that can be pulled out; all the data information was relevant to every question stated in questionnaires that were distributed to the respondents. Therefore, the variables are considered as reliable to adopted in the questionnaires.

The data obtained is analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) with the latest version of Version 21. SPSS is more accurate when doing analysis because it is very flexible instruments that can be used to analyze the data. Descriptive Analysis is used to analyze the data obtained from respondents. By using descriptive analysis from SPSS, the data then is analyzed by using Average Index Method (AIM) to obtain the mean of the findings. The item is also ranked on variable based on level of agreement respondents.

Result

The significant causes of conflict are important issues that need to be tackled in the construction industry while it helps prevent conflict from occurring in future. Thus, about 10 variables which are related to the significant causes for the conflict had been submitted to the respondent to identify the significant major causes of conflict that has been agreed by most of the respondents. The result obtained is as shown in Table 3.0.

Table 3.0: The Mean for Main Causes of Conflict in Human Behavior Occur in Construction Industry (n=97)

The main causes of conflict	Mean	Ranking
Different profession that create dissimilar perception among professional parties	4.00	1
Poor communications and misunderstanding between the professional parties.	3.87	2
Mistrust in the performance of duties in teamwork.	3.86	3
Dissatisfaction and blaming each other when problem occurs in construction.	3.68	4
Negligence or negative attitude of the project in professional parties.	3.56	5
The absence of team spirit and support among professional parties	3.55	6
Impoliteness and lack of courtesy among each professional parties.	3.18	7
Lack of respect and underestimate among the professional parties.	3.18	8
Fraud and faith in works.	2.96	9
Anger from previous hatred	2.87	10

From the table shown above, there are 10 variables of main causes of conflict that can affect the success of a construction project. A literature review is done to identify the major causes of construction conflict. Table 3.0 shows the ranking of main causes of conflict that are put in descending order. After it has been calculated by using average index, the result shows that the highest causes of conflict are the different profession that create dissimilar perception among professional parties which made 4.00, while poor communications between among the professional parties was 3.87 is in ranking 2, mistrust in the performance of duties in teamwork is about 3.86 and the ranking is 3 out of the 10 variables. The lowest ranking start from anger from previous hatred is 2.87, followed by Fraud and faith in works which is 2.96 and lastly is the Lack of respect and underestimate among the professional parties is 3.18. All the questions are descending in ranking and is meant to ease the analysis. All these variables are analyzed based on significance of main causes of conflict.

Based on the analysis table above, surprisingly the most significant causes of conflict which the highest ranking is different profession that create dissimilar perception among professional parties. With the mean of 4.00 it was ranked by the respondent as the first rank. Most of

respondent agreed that disagreement of perception enable the occurrence of the conflict among professional in construction practice. It is agreed by previous study where Cheung and Yiu (2006) they stated that, the major conflict in construction is from the adversarial attitude and dissimilar perceptions among professional in construction. Different professions usually have difference in term of knowledge and experience in dealing with people. Mitkus and Mitkus (2014) in previous research, they agreed to this statement where different perception is very dangerous because it can create a negative perception among party involved. Apart from that, it can create a lot of argument and questions because of the difference of the profession. Based on this data, the most significant causes of conflict among professional is dissimilar perceptions. So, it is different with the previous study that has mentioned that the communication is more significant compared to the other major causes of conflict. The results revealed that the major contributing causes of conflict is from the dissimilar discipline would led to the difference in perceptions amongst members in team. This is agreed by the professionals because in construction project nowadays, different perceptions are given during opinion in meeting the conflict or disagreement always happened. The disagreement does not only involve opinion but also the view of each roles of task.

The second highest ranking out of 10 variables is poor communications among the professional parties with the mean of 3.87. The communication of construction industry plays an important role because the communications are an instrument to deliver the information to others. This is supported by Awakul and Ogunlana (2002) who stated that the lack of proper communication between parties could contribute to conflict, thus misunderstanding the information deliver could also happen. This can lead to finger pointing among professional if conflict emerges in construction. The important information spread between parties are not well distributed thus it spark disagreement between parties involved. Most of the previous researchers have agreed that the poor communication is the main cause of conflict occurs. Meanwhile, the third rank is mistrust in the performance of duties in teamwork were the mean is 3.86. Respondent also agreed that the mistrust also plays a part in causing the conflict. Without trust in teamwork, the works cannot be implemented. Worse scenario of blaming and finger pointing among the people might take place if the problem keeps occurring especially when it is related to work and task. Thus, this serious issue in teamwork can lead to damage of relationship in future.

The lowest ranking goes to the anger from previous hatred with the mean is 2.87. It cannot be denied that the anger from previous hatred can create a conflict in construction. Thus, respondents are moderate with this analysis because if the professionals have some previous conflicts, they will not be able to accept this job from architect or client. In addition, it is not professional for them to be angry even if the problem had occurred during previous project. They could be said as not being professional if they get carried away by the previous problems. Thus, it is difficult to perform the task with other parties if the previous hatred is still ongoing.

The second lowest ranking ranked by the respondent is fraud and faith in works. The mean for this variable is 2.96 and this variable is not tally with what people say. Most of them said that

the faith and fraud is the main cause of the conflict but based on the Table 3.0 the most of respondent are moderate with that perception. As stated by Jaffar et al. (2011) fraud and faith usually happened in construction. As mentioned by Adnan et al. (2012) in previous study, corruption is also a part of fraud and faith. It is higher in the construction industry if compared to the other sectors. Most of the people who deal with fraud and faith usually try to benefit themselves. However, based on this analysis the result for this study are moderate. The construction industry in Perak is concerned about the clarity of the works. This can be interpreted that the fraud and faith does not give impact towards the conflict emerged. In addition, the respondents in Perak take this issue moderately since it goes back to one's ethic. So normally it related with the spirit of professionalisms to the party involved. If the party are using fraud and faith during works, they are not professional and need to be prevented.

Lastly, the third lowest score of mean shown in Table 3.0 falls to impolite and lack of courtesy among each professional parties, Impolite and lack of courtesy is commonly related to construction people because they work under stressful environment. Basically, it is related to task performance. If the performance is not satisfying, the bad words might be used to release the tension to others. This issue is regarded moderate by the respondents and is not noteworthy led to the conflict.

Conclusion

The result shows that the most significant in major causes of conflict in construction is different professional that create dissimilar perception among professional parties. Out of 10 questions for the major causes of conflict the respondents, they all agreed that different professional will create the different perception because it happened in construction industry nowadays. Most of the professionals want their perception to be accepted even though the opinions are not suitable to be accepted. This is true because from previous literatures also stated that most conflict often come from the different background of professional. Apart from that, most conflict emerges are basically from the different professional that create dissimilar perceptions. The cause is also infectious as it could cause another problem and conflict in construction industry.

Based on the finding, most of the conflict is coming out of the behavior among professional which are related to the task and roles among them. It poses a negative effect towards the performance of the project. Yet, if the team members have experienced conflict on the task given, then it will lead to quality reduction of performance. So, to recommend this problem the professional team should provide the quality work on their task as to prevent conflict from emerging among professional team. There is also a need for change in the behavior especially when they need to cooperate with others and work as a team. The professional parties should more cooperative attitude if the other team is query the task.

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