

## Conflict Communication in the Development Project of Bandar Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

*Project Bandar Malaysia is a commercial development project that occupies 486 acres of land and will boost commercial and innovation activities, as well as provide a better quality of residential housing and main transportation hub. The involved parties in the event include China government, the Malaysian government (Barisan Nasional), the Malaysian government (Pakatan Harapan), IWH-CREC Sdn Bhd (ICSB), the Wanda Dalian Group, and other potential investors. Qualitative analysis was performed on the information provided by the informant to identify the types of conflicts occurring and the methods of handling the conflicts, which are explained in Dual Concern Theory, such as Domination, Integration, Compromising, Avoiding, and Obliging. The main factor that caused the conflicts is subsequently analyzed, which is the communication factor. A weak communication system between the parties involved in the conflicts between Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Harapan during the government transitional period has caused the project Bandar Malaysia to develop roughly. Therefore, the study determines whether the conflict management taken by the government is consistent with the five elements stated in the Dual Concern Theory and the effectiveness of communication according to Aristotle's Communication Model through its three components.*

*Keywords: communication; conflict; development; Malaysia*

### DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

Conflict is an extremely common phenomenon in every organization every day and nor is it entirely avoidable. Laue (1987) defined conflict as a natural competition between two or more parties concerned with resources, power, and prestige, while Chanin and Schneer (1984) emphasized cognitive aspects. Robbins (1991) also declared that conflict has some common characteristics: conflict always comprises two or more parties (individuals, groups, institutions, etc.). However, Laue (1987), Chanin and Schneer (1984) and Robbins (1991) consider conflict as a contradiction that develops from views and opinions that are not consistent because the conflict will most likely damage the inner harmony organization. Conflict always perceived as something negative and should be shunned by all parties. However, the conflict is a catalyst that will bring benefits to an organization in certain situations, such as increasing creativity in organizations, renewing views, and creating healthy competition between all parties in the organization. Conflict is one fairly common occurrence. When a conflict exists, if you can strategically manage the conflict, the conflict may lead to further benefits than harm to an organization.

### TYPES OF CONFLICT

Scholars from the organizational behavior sector refer to all conflicts that appear in organizations as organizational conflicts. Normal organizational conflicts can be divided into three forms; namely, in individuals (intrapersonal), between individuals (interpersonal), and between organizations (inter-organizational). Lamb (2008) considered conflict in individuals as a conflict that appears between an individual and himself. That is, individuals have to survive to overcome or fight the awareness and addictive behavior of the individual themselves. For example, an individual is determined not to smoke anymore, but his addiction is busy against

his mind. Based on Dana (2001), the conflict between individuals is the most conflict commonly found in an organization. The conflict between individuals comprises at least two or more individuals. This situation can be found among colleagues, superiors and subordinates, employees and customers, and others. Conflicts between organizations or groups are referential to conflicts that arise between two or more groups that have different views, religions, races, or cultural differences. Usually, conflicts between groups will occur mostly due to one group does not understand another group, or sometimes due to insufficient communication between the groups involved. Deutsch and Coleman (2000) have proven that this type of conflict will arise for reasons the groups involved are desperate to convey mutual consent; scrambling for scarce resources; groups have various goals; the opinions of different groups toward the assignment rely on each other; poor communication channels between group members; trouble to gain recognition; overlapping responsibilities between members group. However, when a conflict has occurred, it is dependent on the actions taken by the manager and whether it will finally provide a positive or negative impact on the organization.

#### CONFLICT FACTORS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Three main factors will result in conflict in the organization: Economy, value and power. Common economic conflicts refer to parties involved in the conflict that opposes and grabs to obtain the resources. Each party involved focuses their emotions and behavior toward achieving their benefits. Common value conflicts refer to aspects of culture that are not corresponding, as philosophy and practice for each individual are different. Conflict power will occur when one of the parties involved in the conflict wants to increase their level of control in their social situations. Obtaining more factors involved in a conflict, the more complicated and difficult to resolve the conflict. (Fisher, 2000). In the case of Bandar Malaysia, it seems that the main factor involved is the power factor. The government has the greatest power and control to determine whether to continue or terminate any agreement. The ICSB managed to receive one offer from 40 companies in local and international competitions in 2015. However, the offer was terminated without any notification by the Barisan National government in May 2017, following the revelation of the 1MDB corruption case. The Pakatan government hopes to approve the reinstatement of the project in April 2019. Some say that the project was revived after a possible detoxification exercise proving that the project can still generate economic benefits for the development of cities in Malaysia. Fischer (2000) determined that conflicts may occur when communication is unclear. Lack of clear communication is considered the main factor that results in organizational conflict when compared with other factors, such as poor management methods, changes in administration, and the desire for great power. Unclear communication will cause confusion, hurt, and anger. All negative emotions will also cause the conflict to worsen. As in the case of City Malaysia, when the TRXC announced that their share sale agreement had lapsed due to the ICSB's failure to pay within the time period has been promised even though the end date has been postponed several times. Tan Sri Lim Kang Hoo was also surprised (Ben, 2017). He did not expect things such as this to happen. He considered ICSB to have fulfilled all conditions determined. The termination of the agreement without a term and the emergence of conflict between one of the main Chinese investors with the Malaysian government resulted in the market stocks in Malaysia being shaken. Less clear information from all related parties also results in the conflict becoming more complicated.

#### MANAGING CONFLICT

All conflicts have a way of working them out. According to Ogunlana and Mahato (2011), people who hold an important role in a project must be given attention. Along with the construction industry that has become globalized, the sector is also growing into a

multidisciplinary and diverse community culture, and construction managers will mix and mingle with plenty of individuals from various cultures. Conflict management is a process in that communication turns emotions negative to calm emotions and can discuss solutions for the conflict. Management conflict also refers to an action that allows one party to deal with inequalities in choice and interest to maximize organizational effectiveness. Conflict management is a practice that is able to identify and handle conflicts in a way that is sane, fair, and efficient. The occurrence of conflict in the workplace is an extremely common phenomenon, wherein it is important that one understands the conflict that occurs and knows how to resolve the conflict. Conflict management assumes all conflict can be managed for the benefit of all parties involved in the conflict. Conflict management strategies are behavioral methods used to resolve conflict. Conflict management strategies refer to techniques and ideas designed to reduce the negative effects of conflict and enhance positive effects for all parties involved in the conflict. The choice of techniques and ideas used depends on the type of conflict that needs to be managed. All conflicts and choices are consequences of interacting with other people, problems, and situations for each individual. Some individuals are more selfish, while some individuals care more about others than themselves. Conflict management is extremely important for an organization to function effectively (Howell, 2014).

#### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Conflict management is a communication skill that leads to conflict management. Conflict management analyzes the role played by communication whether it worsens conflict or improves the conflict. Usually, conflict management begins with an assessment of the source, the individuals involved, their goals, and the state of communication in the conflict, as well as the way communication can affect the transformation of the conflict. Effective communication can provide security and peace while weak and unclear communication will result in conflict (Gyamfi, 2009). Most conflicts will occur due to ineffective communication. The parties involved in the conflict usually have different backgrounds. The parties have different perceptions of their situation, but before they can explain their perspectives, the conflict is difficult to resolve. Poor communication often leads to feelings of confusion, frustration and anger. This will worsen the conflict situation and affect the relationship between the parties involved.

#### ARISTOTLE'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Based on a communication model created by a philosopher from Greek, Aristotle. This communication model can be divided into 5 main elements, viz speaker, speech, occasion, audience and effect (effect). In a communication cycle, the speaker will provide a speech to the listener at a time and affect that listener. According to Aristotle, there are three components of communication that are important to have effective communication, namely, Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. All three components are interrelated. Ethos is the speaker's credibility. The reliability of the speaker's speech is extremely important toward attracting the listener's attention and obtaining confidence from listeners. Pathos is the speaker's emotion. The speaker's emotions facilitate the listener to understand the speaker's feelings, such as anger, sadness, happiness, confidence self, and so on. Logos is the logic of the speaker. Listeners are not influenced by the speech of the speaker, but are influenced by the logic of the speech. Speech logic is supported by statistics and facts.

#### DUAL CONCERN THEORY

A variety of ways exists that can help in handling conflict. The theory of Dual Concern is originally from Blake and Mouton (1964), which has two main dimensions that aim to manage conflict in terms of taking weight on the interests of others and the interests of production (De Dreu et al., 2001). By using the same concept from the original idea by Blake and Mouton (1964), Rahim and Bonoma (1979) reinterpreted and this modification of the Dual Concern Theory aims to manage the conflict between supervisors, executives, and colleagues. They can distinguish which way handles conflict into two basic aspects: self-concern and concern for others. The first aspect describes the level (high or low) at which a person tries to satisfy his own desires, while the second aspect describes the level (high or low) at which a person tries to satisfy other people's desire. The combination of these two aspects can produce five methods for handling conflict; namely, dominance, integration, compromise, avoidance, and help.

#### DOMINATION

Dominance methods can be detected when individuals only follow their needs and own goals and ignore the needs of others. Dominance provides focus more on yourself and less on others. Individuals who use this method would try their best to expand their power and influence others aggressively. Anger, arguments, and irritation are always used when dealing with this method. The conflict between all parties will most likely be resolved by the use of force that is controlled by the individual. The method of dominance is a "win-lose" situation, in which one party will force the other party to compromise with more powerful parties. The party that uses the dominance method is the party that holds some power that the other party does not have. By holding said power, the holder is able to resolve the conflict with their wishes and the other party can only follow the holder's request. This method is must not be bad. This method is quite useful, especially during situations where pressure and decisions need to be made in a short period of time (Canary, 2003).

#### INTEGRATION

The integration method involves the search for a possible solution to the conflict that meets the benefits for all parties involved in the conflict. This method is filled with an open mind, information exchange, looking for alternative options, studying the most effective solution, and acceptance by all parties involved (Rahim, 2002). This method is a "win-win" situation. In this method, all parties usually only focus on their own needs. Most parties are not willing to sacrifice a little self-benefit wherein it can achieve the benefit of other parties. Innovative ideas are always created during individuals use this method to manage conflict. This integration method contacts all parties involved in the conflict positively. All parties who are involved in the conflict can achieve effective communication and harmony and trust between other partners.

#### COMPROMISING

The compromise method is a method of managing conflict by reaching a point that is equal to satisfying some of the needs of all parties involved in the conflict. The party using the compromise method must always be reminded that not all parties involved can satisfy the requirements they are completely in every conflict. Each party involved should always be willing to accept some losses to reach that middle point. This method comprises a give-and-take situation where all parties will sacrifice something to reach a mutually acceptable decision for all parties involved in the conflict (Thomas et al., 2008). This method is a consideration for oneself and a consideration for the other party. This method can take care of the needs of all parties involved in the conflict. Therefore, individuals who use this method to manage conflict are often realistic and fair. Although this method seems to be the most appropriate

method of managing conflict, this method will sometimes also cause problems. Individuals will feel tired and frustrated from time to time because their needs cannot be fully fulfilled.

#### AVOIDING

Individuals who use this method to manage conflict often do not when it concerns benefiting themselves and other individuals. There are usually individuals who are willing to withdraw wherein they would not be involved in a possible conflict situation large will result in misunderstandings between the parties involved in the conflict. Individuals like this are individuals who lack self-confidence and do not able to manage conflict. This method is associated with the situation of withdrawal. Individuals who use this method to manage conflict is an individual who does not care what the conflict is and the interests of all parties involved in the conflict. The party will feel increasingly isolated from the other party and become less responsible for their behavior after a short period of time, although this method is suitable for use in small conflicts and involving parties whose relationship is not very close (Rahim, 2002).

#### OBLIGING

The help method is a method that is more concerned with your needs and the other party's benefit and less concerned with one's own needs and benefits. Individuals who use this method will sacrifice their interests and the other party can gain the greatest benefit. This method considers the happiness of the other party more important than the quarrel between the parties involved in the conflict. This method is allied to reducing various incomes and emphasizing similarities to satisfy the interests of other parties involved in the conflict (Rahim, 2002). Individuals who use this method usually need support and appreciation from others. They also prefer to make neutral choices. This method is known as the most harmonious method. This method is suitable for those who care more about harmony than self-interest.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the researcher found several conflicts which has happened throughout the Bandar Malaysia project. The conflicts can resolve through the 5 methods covered in the Dual Concern Theory, including dominance, integration, compromise, avoidance and help by the parties involved in these conflicts. The parties involved in the conflict are such as the Chinese government, the Malaysian government (Barisan Nasional), the Malaysian government (Pakatan Harapan), Dalian Wanda, ICSB and other potential investors. The parties involved must prioritize the main elements in the communication system, namely, the speaker, speech, time, listener and effect, to achieve effective communication. Effective communication requires these key elements, plus the three components from the Model of Aristotle's communication, namely, credibility (Ethos), emotion (Pathos) and logic (Logos). Effective communication not only reduces conflict, but also accelerates the development and progress of a country.

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