
Conflict in Teams and Ways of its Resolution

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Abstract: This article provides a scientific, psychological, and sociological analysis of conflicts that arise within teams, focusing on the factors related to psychology, social interaction, and communication. The study examines the causes of conflict formation, stages of their development, the influence of internal and external factors, and effective strategies for conflict management. Based on theories of conflictology, management psychology, organizational behavior, and modern communication technologies, the author analyzes mechanisms for resolving conflicts constructively within team environments. Special attention is given to mediation, negotiation techniques, stress management, emotional intelligence, and the role of leadership in conflict resolution. The research offers important scientific and practical conclusions aimed at improving teamwork effectiveness in modern educational, industrial, and administrative systems.

Keys words: conflict, team psychology, mediation, negotiation, leadership, communication, organizational behavior, constructive resolution.

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts within teams are among the social phenomena that have existed throughout human history. Any team represents a combination of individuals with diverse personalities, experiences, worldviews, and interests. Therefore, differences of opinion, emotional tension, conflicts of interest, and communication breakdowns inevitably emerge during collective activities. Conflict itself is not inherently negative; rather, the way it is managed determines the level of team development. When conflicts are resolved constructively, they foster innovative thinking, stronger communication systems, and effective collaboration. Conversely, destructive conflicts lead to a decline in trust, loss of motivation, increased stress, and reduced productivity.

Modern research in conflictology, management psychology, team dynamics, and communicative behavior demonstrates that most conflicts within teams are closely related to individual psychological traits, emotional reactions, leadership styles, organizational culture, and communication quality. In particular, the rise of digital communication, remote work formats, and rapid information exchange has transformed the nature of conflicts, making them more complex.

This article examines the theoretical foundations of team conflicts, their causes, types, stages of development, and effective resolution strategies. The paper is structured into four main sections:

- The essence, causes, and psychological foundations of team conflicts
- Classification and developmental stages of conflicts
- Conflict management methods: mediation, negotiation, leadership, and communication

- Conflict prevention in teams: organizational culture and emotional intelligence

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONFLICT

At the core of any team conflict lies the human factor. In psychological literature, conflict is defined as a contradiction arising from the incompatibility of goals or interests between two or more parties. The sources of such contradictions may include individual personality traits, differences in temperament, conflicting needs, or poorly managed emotions.

Key psychological concepts in conflict include:

- Collision of needs – conflict arises when individuals cannot satisfy their needs;
- Unaccepted viewpoints – ineffective communication leads to misunderstanding;
- Role conflict – unclear or poorly distributed responsibilities create competition;
- Emotional triggers – stress, fatigue, or perceived injustice form the psychological basis of conflict.

Therefore, effective conflict assessment requires a deep analysis of individuals' internal states, including motivation, emotional background, and interpersonal relationships.

CLASSIFICATION OF CONFLICTS

Team conflicts can be classified as follows:

- Intrapersonal conflict – internal contradictions within an individual;
- Interpersonal conflict – disagreements between two individuals;
- Individual–group conflict – when a team member rejects group values;
- Intergroup conflict – conflicts between departments or teams;
- Vertical conflict – between leaders and subordinates;
- Horizontal conflict – between employees of equal status;

Task conflict – disagreements over task execution methods.

Modern theory distinguishes between functional and dysfunctional conflicts. Functional conflicts stimulate development and innovation, whereas dysfunctional conflicts hinder productivity and communication.

STAGES OF CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT

Most conflict theorists identify the following stages:

- Latent stage – disagreement exists but is not openly expressed;
- Escalation stage – dissatisfaction grows but remains implicit;
- Open confrontation – tension peaks and communication deteriorates;
- Constructive or destructive resolution – conflict outcome;
- Post-conflict recovery – rebuilding trust and restoring relationships.

Each stage has distinct psychological and communicative characteristics. Effective conflict management is possible only when leaders or mediators accurately identify the current stage.

MEDIATION

Mediation involves a neutral third party whose responsibilities include:

1. analyzing the situation;
2. listening to both sides;

3. facilitating solution development;
4. reducing emotional tension.

The mediation process typically consists of five stages:

Preparation → Listening → Problem identification → Option development → Agreement.

NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUES

Effective negotiation relies on the following principles:

- ✓ the “win–win” model;
- ✓ asking open-ended questions;
- ✓ emotional regulation;
- ✓ reliance on facts;
- ✓ focusing on the problem rather than personalities.

LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT

Leaders play a central role in conflict management. Their responsibilities include:

- ✓ clear task distribution;
- ✓ adherence to fairness principles;
- ✓ maintaining communication channels;
- ✓ motivating team members;
- ✓ identifying conflicts at early stages.

Transformational leaders promote open communication, trust, collaboration, and innovation, significantly reducing the likelihood of destructive conflict.

THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

A healthy organizational culture enables constructive conflict resolution. Its indicators include:

1. mutual respect;
2. transparent communication;
3. clearly defined responsibilities;
4. social justice;
5. interdepartmental cooperation;
6. freedom of expression.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Employees with high emotional intelligence are able to:

- ✓ manage their emotions;
- ✓ understand others’ feelings;
- ✓ withstand stress;
- ✓ de-escalate conflicts.

Numerous studies confirm that emotional intelligence often plays a more critical role than cognitive intelligence in effective teamwork.

PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

Conflict prevention strategies include:

1. team-building training;
2. development of communication skills;
3. regular feedback sessions;
4. collective decision-making;
5. incentive systems;
6. stress management practices.

These approaches foster stability, psychological safety, trust, and a positive professional climate.

CONCLUSION

Team conflict is a natural and inevitable process. When managed effectively, it strengthens teams, enhances creativity, adaptability, and competitiveness. Negative effects of conflict are primarily linked to poor communication, injustice, passive leadership, emotional instability, and inexperienced management.

This article has explored the psychological foundations of team conflicts, their classifications and stages, mediation and negotiation techniques, leadership roles, organizational culture, and the importance of emotional intelligence. The effectiveness of modern teams largely depends on the practical application of these principles.

Preventing and resolving conflicts is a continuous process that supports the strategic goals and core values of any organization.

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