Conflict Management in the Global Office during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract
COVID-19 pandemic has changed all aspects of life. It causes conflict in some aspects, including working life in the global office. Employees have to work online. Job responsibilities must be fulfilled virtually. This paper aims to describe conflict management in the global office during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper is a literature review. Literature was identified from the archives from PubMed and Elsevier databases. All the literature was published in 2020. The inclusion criteria were the literature should be peer-reviewed and related to the topic of the paper. Keywords were conflict, COVID-19, global office, and management. Challenges, uncertainty, and fear accompanied daily working activities. A virtual working routine might be intercepted with family life. When conflict arises, self-management has to be applied. Win and win solutions, open communication, and frequent negotiation can tackle conflict. Global collaboration can reduce the conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Conflict; COVID-19; Global office; Management

Introduction
COVID-19 pandemic has changed all aspects of life. It causes conflict in some aspects, including working life in the global office. Employees have to work online. Job responsibilities must be fulfilled virtually. Challenges, uncertainty, and fear accompanied daily working activities. A virtual working routine might be intercepted with family life (Li et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges in the global world. This pandemic is not related to national boundaries, but it has reached the international area. Therefore, it needs international cooperation to resolve the problem (Brown and Susskind,
Global collaboration is needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic as soon as possible. Experiences can help to respond effectively to any situation. However, each country has a different situation, cultural, social, economic, and political development. Severe impacts on the economy and international relations also occur. Mitigation of people and goods cause the conflict. People need to go to work but their movements are limited. Therefore, communication is mostly done virtually through gadgets. This might induce conflicts besides different cultural backgrounds. International cooperation must be done to tackle the conflict together. Otherwise, fighting alone against the COVID-19 pandemic is extremely exhausted (Li et al., 2020).

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Method

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Discussion

Conflict sources

Conflict can come from family conflict, job dissatisfaction, and job stress. Family conflict can mediate the association of workload with job dissatisfaction and stress. Job dissatisfaction comprises of feeling not enjoy and bored with the job. Family conflict arises due to the work demand interferes with family life. The relation is interrupted due to workload. Domestic chores are not well done due to high job demands. Family activities are often missed. Partner conflicts are commonly encountered. Meanwhile, job stresses are manifested in aches and pains such as headache, back aching, stiffness at the neck, worries, and difficulties in emotional control. Heavy workloads are described as fast, excessive, and hard-demanding jobs (Sadiq, 2020).

Job stress and job dissatisfaction
Job stress and dissatisfaction are associated with low performance and absence. Based on the conversation of resource theory, it is stated that workload is a job demand or stressors. It consumes the worker’s energy, time, and psychological resources. Extra time consumed for workload will affect other roles’ time (family). It will create conflict between two roles and impact the office’s work (Sadiq, 2020).

Work stress is harmful. Negative feelings and emotions lead to metabolic, gastrointestinal, and cardiovascular diseases. In addition, work stress also causes low job performance, conflict, psychological disorders, and suicide. Heavy workload induces emotional stress and conflict (Sadiq, 2020).

Managing the conflict can be done by concerning individual rights and collective rights. Personal privacy might be compromised due to collective rights. For example, wearing masks and taking health protocols must be done before entering an office or public area (Mykhalovskiy et al., 2020). International collaboration is better than the international competition. The COVID-19 pandemic condition must be seen as global problem, therefore international cooperation is needed (Brown and Susskind, 2020). Global cooperation will allow the connection for humanitarian movement (Setiawan, 2020). Having resilience when facing any difficulties will help to grow and develop during the hardest time in the COVID-19 pandemic. This can promote positive attitudes (Shek, 2021).

Some strategies in doing collaborating are as following (Li et al., 2020):

1. Cross-cultural communication among anyone must be done. Multilateral collaboration is essential in sharing experiences and information
2. Strengthening data and information sharing
3. Adopting other experiences in a timely, coordinated, and reasonable manner by using communication platforms and technology (big data)
4. Self-evaluation by using the latest data and artificial intelligence.
5. Developing virtual communities as the world is one community.
6. More tolerant to each other without questioning the different cultures and backgrounds
International conflict

International conflicts also happen among countries, such as China and the United States. Great power competition occurs. Coordination is needed for a mutual challenge. The crisis must be resolved by coordination. Conflict and competition cannot resolve any crisis. The coordination needs the basic intellectual tools for international relations. The International Relations Theory is essential in resolving the global and national crisis. That theory is also important to comprehend the problem. Conflicted states cannot cooperate because they don’t have the same interests. Interstate relations are not simple. They have specific behaviors. However, these things are often dismissed. The practical implication of The International Relations Theory evaluation is very essential to appreciate the best intellectual tools for current policy responses. It also helps in shaping the degree of international cooperation in the future. This theory suggests for appropriate policies to tackle the crisis and conflicts (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

Based on The International Relations Theory, there are three paradigms or explanations for this theory, namely the liberal, the realist, and ideational approaches (normative and constructivism). The realist theory is the best approach because it assesses optimal policy responses. Those theories are described as following (Basrur and Kliem, 2021):

a. The realist approach

In the realist approach, the basic principles of international relations and politics are the same. International affairs are always complicated. This approach is not a unitary theory, but it comprises some different variables. Selfish is translated into competitive behavior by Hans Morgenthau. However, neo-realists such as Kenneth Waltz, emphasize a competitive situation in the international system. They don’t have any central organizing authority. Therefore, there is no monopoly in managing inter-state relations. Therefore, it protects all states from one to another (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

By using the anarchic international system, countries or states become the primary actors. It employs survival strategy by self-helping. It depends on neorealism.
It also maximizes security or power. Due to asymmetric power distribution, this anarchic international affair has weaker states. Balancing against powerful countries is difficult. Facilitating or circumscribing foreign policy are the choices for social relations, domestic institutions, and leadership (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

Realism approaches are being pessimistic regarding the prospects for mutual support and cooperation among all states or countries. Therefore, national self-help is essential. Travel bans and great power competition happen. European Union countries’ capitals went into a nationalist. There are competition laws, freedom of movement, and fiscal discipline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several European Union countries shut their borders. They also banned export, including medical supplies for Italy. The realism countries banned the export of medical supplies for several weeks. They are lack of solidarity. China gives medical equipment support to other countries such as Rome. China sees the pandemic as an opportunity to lower competition for the global union. It is called “mask diplomacy”. China accumulated power by being recognized as a provider of many public health things and supplies. The United States has no sense of leadership. The US tried to restructure and bypass global supply from China. This induced conflict between countries. However, realists emphasize that no state can have long-term gains forever. They force to have zero-sum competition (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

China also refuses to accept Taiwan as an independent country in diplomatic concepts. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) disregards any Taiwan’s reports and researches about Covid-19. This is under the neoclassical realists’ approaches regarding domestic factors. The domestic ideology affects the China’s policy decisions. It locks international cooperation. When a big international crisis occurs and cooperation fails, there is a trust deficiency. It is characterized by anarchy (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

b. The liberal approach

The liberal theory emphasizes four requirements for cooperation, namely trans-nationalization, interdependence, democracy, and international institutions.
Liberal highlights that countries must pay very expensive or cooperate. Global cooperation in the economy involves trade, finance, and manufacturing. Therefore, every country must work hand in hand together to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic needs many costs, materials, resources, and energy to resolve (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

Cooperation must be implemented consistently to get the best result. The United States seeks medical supplies because the supplies are scarce. European states cannot coordinate policy. China and the United States are in disputes about those things. There will be never-ending trade wars because interdependence will not automatically produce cooperation. When interdependence raises serious problems, then the states will cooperate. The Cold war occurs by doing tacit cooperation with extreme caution. However, the conflicted countries compete by alliance building. A low level of interdependence during the COVID-19 pandemic might bring a high level of cooperation due to national survival threat. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in cooperative studies by lowering competitiveness. The scientists work together to combat the COVID-19 (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

Conflicts between China and the United States have prevented the global scientific cooperation between those two powerful countries. The conflicts will stop funding sharing to fight against the virus. The United States stopped giving funding to Chinese programs related to the COVID-19 (Basrur and Kliem, 2021). The conflicts between those countries will affect the global office management as well.

The same condition affected international institutions as well. The Group of 7 major economies (G7) could not hold a meeting in March 2020. A meeting of foreign ministers revealed that every country must do research cooperation. They need to do anything to tackle the economic fallout (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

Meanwhile, the G20 did almost the same action. This organization supported fund for poor countries. However, the sum $5 trillion injections are just the same as previous commitment sums of money from members. However, the WHO has been said as being late for giving announcement about the onset of the pandemic. The
WHO announced it on 11 March 2020 at the time when the COVID-19 infection had affected 113 countries (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

However, democracy is said as the binding factor among developed economies countries. Collective action is very little between Europe and North America. They have engaged in war due to sharing medical supplies, ventilators, and protective equipment. Finally, the liberal theory only has a small role in explaining the weak characteristics of cooperation during the crisis (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

c. Ideational approaches

The constructivist approach is the same as the ideational theory. This theory emphasizes the needs of identities, roles, and belief structures. The ways of responses depend on a reality consensus. Therefore, the reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic depend on beliefs about each countries’ priorities in the situation. The possibilities of cooperation are determined by their beliefs about what is feasible. The lack of collective action during the pandemic arises from a realist thought structure (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

Some countries fail to cooperate during the Covid-19 pandemic because they think that self-help must come first. It is regarded as an ideational construct for the constructivist. The constructivist gives the opportunities for changes by giving opinions to the unalterable reality perception. This ideational structure concept is useful in thinking mode in challenging situation. It is also helpful in remodeling responses’ habits. However, it is not so useful in giving insights for the short-term responses like the COVID-19 pandemic situation (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

On the other side, constructivists think about cooperation and conflict altogether. It explains very little about crisis responses. Constructivism cannot be used to predict something. It lacks utility. New thinking is less in the constructivism theory. Having a more desirable present ideational structure remains a complicated problem (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).
The normative theory emphasized a moral perception about the right things to be done. It is different from the materialist view regarding politics in the international systems. It is critical in identifying the responsibilities during a crisis or pandemic. There are two basic approaches, namely “backward mapping” and “forward mapping”. The “backward mapping” concerns the origin and history of the policy process. This theory also emphasizes how the origin and history of the policy contribution to the problem created. Therefore, the “backward mapping” approaches will think about the person who was responsible for the pandemic, the warning of policy marker, and the actions of the policy maker. Meanwhile, the “forward mapping” approach emphasizes the responses during the pandemic or crisis. The appropriate policymaker actions are also questioned. Those questions are normative. However, they also have several important practical implications. The type of responsibility is associated with the consequences of the policymaker’s actions. It is also related to sanctions and punishments, from a legal or political point of view. This is important because unpunished people tend to repeat their errors. These conditions harm society. Constructivism and normative theory are essential in understanding important aspects of international cooperation. However, those theories cannot explain why states tend to give an opportunity for competition overriding the cooperation regarding the collision between individual and collective interests (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

There is a change in the way intellectuals concern about global politics. There is a decline in realism. The alternative approaches arise. It was revealed that the alternative paradigms in International Relations Theory are less than realism. The dominance of the country and individual national interests is obvious in global responses to the pandemic. Due to the systemic trust deficiency in the international affairs during the COVID-19 pandemic, states will do self-help strategy. Cooperative collective action is less. Those behaviors dominate the international management of the Covid-19 pandemic. Cooperation occurs based on national interests (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).
A realist will expect limitations on an international trade to minimize the menace. A realist also expects a significant lowering-down of globalization. The economic effects of the pandemic are huge and uncertain. The effects include recession, widespread impoverishment, a fight of capital, death toll, and fall in agriculture. Those conditions lead to cooperation and conflict. However, the current COVID-19 pandemic is also accompanied by other global critical issues, namely severe economic contraction, climate changes, or the nuclear war in the next period. All of these realities will not induce intense global cooperation, but those conditions spur nationalism, power application, and zero-sum competition. The aim is to guarantee the individual state. The positive sides of realisms are the states resemble the successful activities of their friends. Governments will adopt any successful measures and managements from other states or countries. This will reduce conflict in a peaceful condition. We hope Europeans and Americans imitate successful measures of China, New Zealand, Taiwan, and South Korea in preventing the spread of Covid-19 transmission. Finally, realism is the best to describe international cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic (Basrur and Kliem, 2021).

**The Theory of Global Public Goods**

The theory of Global Public Goods emphasizes ‘public goods’ in the middle of the twentieth century. This theory explores the reasons why certain goods with particular properties (no rival and no excludable) tend to be systematically underprovided by the market. The reasons were when individuals may enjoy the good without contributing to the supply, then the incentive will undermine the collective interests. This condition will lead to under-provision. However, sometimes individuals are unable to achieve any outcome. Therefore, a status quo will be present (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

In certain conditions, there will be public goods that are not suitable in certain geography. These are called global public goods (GPGs). They don’t share the characteristics of traditional public goods. These goods are owned by many countries. Therefore, they have ‘global or near global’ conditions. The examples are maintaining world peace, addressing
climate change, managing refugee flows, avoiding financial crises, and others (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

The theory of Global Public Goods is very essential during globalization in recent years. The practical implications are global communication, international trade, and cross-border travel. People are more connected and interdependent than previously. Physical borders are not barriers anymore for the flow of ideas, goods, services, and technology. Those varieties induce huge inequalities based on the ability of each country because some countries are more capable than others (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

However, there is no exact mechanism to resolve the feature of global public goods (GPGs). With the traditional public good, the government has to make sure the provision within their particular country. However, there is no one to be relied upon. It is called ‘Westphalian dilemma’. National governments may switch domestic law and build national commission to make sure the optimal level of a traditional public good is maintained in normal state (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

Consent is hardly got in practice. There are two circumstances in which a supranational authority can interfere national governments, namely the World Trade Organization (WTO) appellate system and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Therefore, many GPGs will tend to be under-provided. Infectious disease control and public health are also considered as a global public good (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

Reflections on future financing arrangements

Alternative financing management is arranged based on the principles of equality. These principles determine how the financial burden of GPGs might be divided among countries. The financial problem often becomes the source of conflict. There are mandatory payments, i.e. a small part of total financial costs. Reforming the financing of international management means improving and repairing the existing mechanism. This is important to reduce conflict. The current burden-sharing principle regulates that a country must pay according to its ability. This principle can be applied to all financial contributor countries. This
is essential to repair and develop the stability of the existing financing management (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

Different GPGs will have different features. Therefore, one arrangement is not suitable for all cases. It must be done case by case. Financing strategies must be implemented based on the special features of the GPG. The more complicated the GPGs, the more countries need to take responsibility. This condition applies to climate changes and the COVID-19 pandemic. Different obligations might apply to different countries. The measures from International Monetary Fund, The European Union, and the United Nation act as the boundaries. The principle “polluter pays” means the more a country (or a party) imposes a problem, the more the country (or the party) pays as the responsibility. Another principle is the benefit principle. It means the more the country (or the party) gets benefits, the more the country (or the party) has to pay as a part of the contribution (Brown and Susskind, 2020).

**Conclusion**

Conflict management is important in the global office. Employees have to work online. Job responsibilities must be fulfilled virtually. Challenges, uncertainty, and fear accompanied daily working activities. A virtual working routine might be intercepted with family life. When conflict arises, self-management has to be applied. Win and win solutions, open communication, and frequent negotiation can tackle conflict. Global collaboration can reduce the conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on The International Relations Theory, there are three paradigms or explanations for this theory, namely the liberal, the realist, and the ideational approaches (normative and constructivism). The realist theory is the best approach because it assesses optimal policy responses.
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Conflict of interests

None
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