Organizational Industrial Conflicts

Industrial conflict-Organizational conflicts:

Organizational conflict, or **workplace conflict**, is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between people working together. Conflict takes many forms in organizations. There is the inevitable clash between formal authority and power and those individuals and groups affected. There are disputes over how revenues should be divided, how the work should be done, and how long and hard people should work. There are jurisdictional disagreements among individuals, departments, and between unions and management. There are subtler forms of conflict involving rivalries, jealousies, personality clashes, role definitions, and struggles for power and favor. There is also conflict within individuals – between competing needs and demands – to which individuals respond in different ways.

Types:

Conflict affecting organizations can occur in individuals, between individual and between groups. The **five levels** of **conflict** are-

1. Intra- personal (within an individual),
2. interpersonal (between individuals),
3. intragroup (within a group),
4. intergroup (between groups), and
5. Inter-organizational (Between Organizations)
6. Intra-organizational (within organizations)

Conflicts within work groups are often caused by struggles over control, status, and scarce resources. Conflicts between groups in organizations have similar origins. The constructive resolution of such conflicts can most often be achieved through a rational process of problem solving, coupled with a willingness to explore issues and alternatives and to listen to each other.
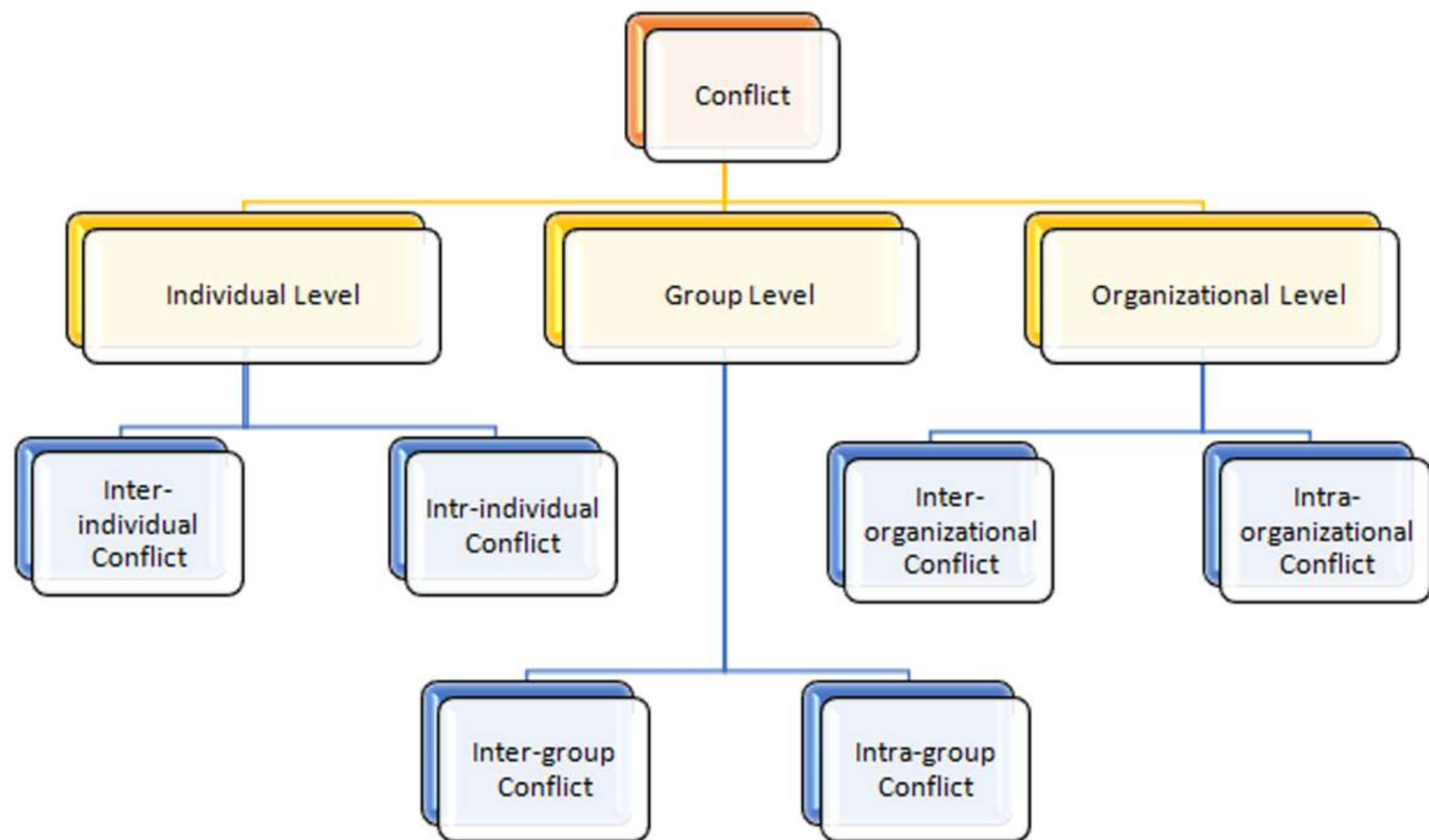
1. **Intra- Personal conflict:**

Intrapersonal conflict arises within a person. For example, when you're uncertain about what is expected or wanted, or you have a sense of being inadequate to perform a task, you are experiencing **intrapersonal conflict**. **Intrapersonal conflict** can arise because of differences in roles.

2. Inter- Personal conflict

An inter-personal conflict involves a conflict between two people, most often from a mutual dislike or personality clash. According to Boston University FSAO, "Causes for workplace conflict can be personality or style differences and personal problems such as substance abuse, childcare issues, and family problems. Organizational factors such as leadership, management, budget, and disagreement about core values can also contribute." University of Colorado–Boulder cites as primary causes of workplace conflict as poor communication, different values, differing interests, scarce resources, personality clashes, and poor performance.

It was pointed out that there is a basic incompatibility between the authority and structure of formal organizations and the human personality. Human behavior cannot be separated from the culture that surrounds it.

3. Intragroup conflict

Conflict arises in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position, and resources. People who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and, to some extent, conformity within a group. People who seek power therefore struggle with others for position or status within the group. Rewards and recognition are often perceived as insufficient and improperly distributed, and members are inclined to compete with each other for these prizes.

In western culture, winning is more acceptable than losing, and competition is more prevalent than cooperation, all of which tends to intensify intragroup conflict. Group meetings are often conducted in a win-lose climate — that is, individual or subgroup interaction is conducted for the purpose of determining a winner and a loser rather than for achieving mutual problem solving.

4. Intergroup conflict:

Intergroup conflict occurs in four general forms. Horizontal strain involves competition between functions, for example, sales versus production, research and development versus engineering, purchasing versus legal, line versus staff, and so on. Vertical strain involves competition between hierarchical levels, for example, union versus management, foremen versus middle management, shop workers versus foremen. A struggle between a group of employees and management is an example of vertical strain or conflict. A clash between a sales department and production over inventory policy would be an example of horizontal strain.

Certain activities and attitudes are typical in groups involved in a win-lose conflict. Each side closes ranks and prepares itself for battle. Members show increased loyalty and support for their own groups. Minor differences between group members tend to be smoothed over, and deviants are dealt with harshly. The level of morale in the groups increases and infuses everyone with competitive spirit. The power structure becomes better defined, as the "real" leaders come to the surface and members rally around the "best" thinkers and talkers.

5. Intra-organizational conflict

Intra-organizational relationships, such as buyer-supplier relationships, joint ventures, or strategic alliances, often involve conflicts. Conflicts between organizations differ from interpersonal conflicts on several dimensions. Among the distinguishing features of intra-organizational conflicts are decision-making parties with specific incentives and motivations as well as the presence of a governance structure to prevent and manage conflicts. Scholars in business and management have also noted the importance of the institutional context on the development and repair of intra-organizational conflicts.

Causes:
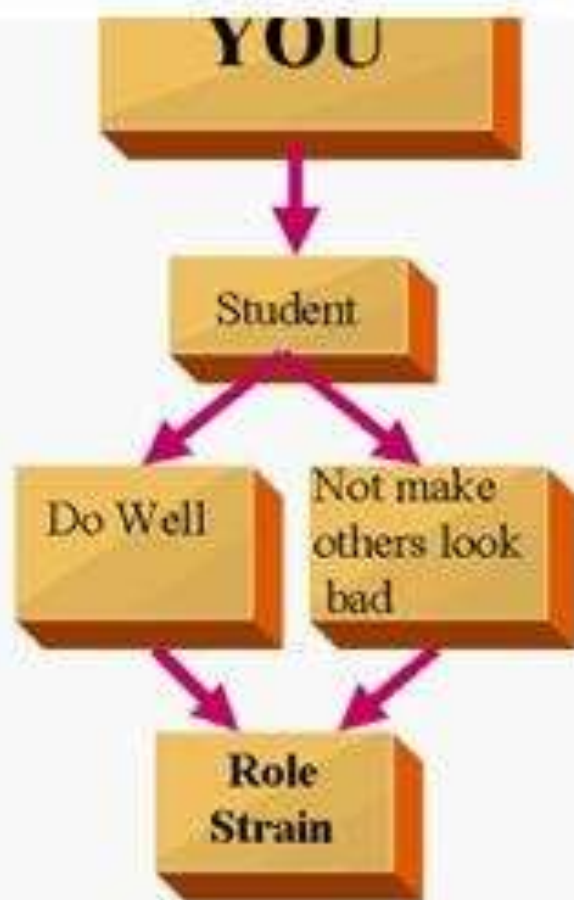
a. Role Conflicts
b. Behavioral Conflicts
c. Office Romance

Role conflict

One source of personal conflict includes the multiple roles people play within organizations. Behavioral scientists sometimes describe an organization as a system of position roles. Each member of the organization belongs to a role set, which is an association of individuals who share interdependent tasks and thus perform formally defined roles, which are further influenced both by the expectations of others in the role set and by one's own personality and expectations.

For example, in a common form of classroom organization, students are expected to learn from instructors by listening to them, following their directions for study, taking exams, and maintaining appropriate standards of conduct. Instructors are expected to bring students high-quality learning materials, give lectures, write and conduct tests, and set a scholarly example.

Another in this role set would be the dean of the school, who sets standards, hires and supervises faculty, maintains a service staff, readers and graders, and so on. The system of roles to which an individual belongs extends outside the organization as well, and influences their functioning within it. As an example, a person's roles as partner, parent, descendant, and church member are all intertwined with each other and with their set of organizational roles.

Left diagram:

YOU → Student → Do Well / Not make others look bad → **Role Strain**

Right diagram:

YOU → Worker / Student / Son or Daughter → Come in for emergency / Study for exam / Visit Mom in hospital → **Role Conflict**

b. Passive aggressive behavior

Passive aggressive behavior is a common response from workers and managers which is particularly noxious to team unity and productivity. In workers, it can lead to sabotage of projects and the creation of a hostile environment. In managers, it can end up stifling a team's creativity. Paula De Angelis says "It would actually make perfect sense that those promoted to leadership positions might often be those who on the surface appear to be agreeable, diplomatic and supportive, yet who are actually dishonest, backstabbing saboteurs behind the scenes."

Passive-Aggressive Behavior		
Passive	**Passive-Aggressive**	**Aggressive**
• You accept other peoples' criticisms of you. • You avoid conflict no matter what. • You rarely contest others.	• You don't share your honest view when asked. • You refuse to notify people of your dissatisfaction with them. • You take part in gossip but not confrontation.	• You put down others in front of people. • You are fueled by anger. • You are known to have a "short fuse."

c. Office romance

Office romances can be a cause of workplace conflict. In a survey, 96% of human resource professionals and 80% of executives said workplace romances are dangerous because they can lead to conflict within the organization. Public displays of affection can make co-workers uncomfortable and accusations of favoritism may occur, especially if it is a supervisor-subordinate relationship. If the relationship goes awry, one party may seek to exact revenge on the other.