

Counseling Based on Local Wisdom for Conflict Settlement in the Workplace: A Case Study in Kendari

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Abstract

Conflicts can manifest in nearly any environment, including the workplace, and they arise from people's interactions with each other, which can be both constructive and destructive. There are many ways to settle these issues, but one way is to include local residents in counselling. This study, therefore, reflects on the degree to which a counselor's actions and measures for settling conflicts using local wisdom can benefit both parties. This research focuses on how disputes arise in the workplace and how counseling based on local wisdom can help resolve them. The participants for this study were four employees who had worked for more than two years in the same division, namely administrative services, but came from different tribes. The results of this study revealed that a counseling approach based on local wisdom could significantly help to resolve disputes that often occurred among the employees in the office, demonstrating that approaches that use local expertise can successfully settle conflicts in the workplace. The implementation of cultural values by counselors—such as *Kohanu* (culture of shame), *Moreu* (politeness), *Medulu* (join), *Mepokoaso* (unite), and *Samaturu* (helping each other)—have positive consequences in terms of making colleagues more respectful and helpful toward each other when conducting work. This in turn had an indirect effect on personal and office efficiency.

Key words: *Counseling, Local Wisdom, Workplace Conflict*

Introduction

In general, conflict occurs when different interests, preferences, beliefs, feelings, values, ideas, or perceptions of truth collide. Conflict creates anxiety (Hirsh & Kang, 2016; Wasino, et. al., 2021), so it can cause extreme reactions from community members if they become too obsessed with it and constantly look for it. They may also become very afraid and avoid it at all costs (Coleman & Ferguson, 2014). An employee-focused study conducted by the Chartered Institute of Staffing and Growth (2015) showed that about four out of ten employees, some 42% of UK respondents, experienced workplace tensions in the past 12 months. Many disputes arise between employees

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and their supervisors, and the study revealed that workers were more likely to report friction with their superiors at work (Chory & Hoke, 2019).

Conflicts are inevitable in any organization because of the differences in work and personal interests among employees. There are different ways of expressing confrontation such as embarrassment, non-cooperation, coercion, and frustration (Velotti, et. al., 2014). Conflicts are caused mostly by personality clashes among employees, misunderstandings, and a lack of communication among workers (Faude & Fuß, 2020). The problems created by organizational disputes include absences, productivity issues, and staff turnover (Nur & Susanto, 2020). Employees who feel high levels of job pressure are also affected by inadequate contact with their co-workers. This was confirmed in research by Pitafi, et. al., (2020), who showed that conflict's influence on employee performance can be determined based on the root of the conflict, namely the manner in which the conflict is conveyed.

More specifically, workplace conflicts can take the form of relationship conflicts between employees, and to prevent this from happening, a safe, comfortable work environment is needed for employees. In a well-functioning work environment, workers participate in direct but polite conversation, show empathy and accept each other's differences, and respect everyone in the workplace, regardless of position or length of tenure. If a workplace has a mechanism for resolving conflicts at an early stage, such as by providing counseling or having a manager capable of mediating disputes, then employees will generally feel more fairly treated and be more satisfied with their work (Butts, 2016). Indeed, reducing employee conflict can help increase employees' productivity, motivation, and loyalty while decreasing medical costs, worker compensation claims, and litigation costs (Ekienabor, 2016). A leader who can provide a sense of security and comfort is therefore very necessary, especially if he or she can provide suitable counseling for any employees who are experiencing conflict in their work environment (Boekhorst, 2015).

Thus, counseling programs for employees play a very important role in improving workplace performance. In general, they have a direct influence on performance, job satisfaction, motivation, and reactions to stress. The successful implementation of counseling programs in companies and other organizations is inseparable from the management role, because managers must also encourage and facilitate career development to improve employee performance. Through counseling, workplace or organizational problems that need resolving will be exposed, such as whether an employee needs to engage in educational and training activities to acquire the skills

needed to carry out his duties effectively or whether that employee has the right attitude to react to various changes and complex problems in working relationships.

In this sense, employee counseling plays a very important role in the world of work, especially for career development and employees' mental health (Thompson, et. al., 2014), because it helps employees to feel comfortable with themselves and their environment and to have an objective and positive view of others, so they are able to meet the needs of themselves and their families. To achieve this, counseling should provide advice, reassurance, communication, a relaxation of emotional tension, clarity of thought, and reorientation in the world of work. Counselors can help employees deal with non-technical problems in the office, such as dealing with an unpleasant boss, unsupportive colleagues, or even seemingly detrimental workplace policies. With satisfactory guidance from a counselor, employees will feel relieved and empowered to continue their work comfortably, ultimately increasing productivity (Xiong, et. al., 2016).

In contrast, without any solution to these non-technical problems, they will continue to burden the employees and ultimately reduce productivity in the workplace. In practice, counseling activities can be offered at any time (an open-door policy) or during performance appraisals, and these approaches have both advantages and disadvantages. The former is expected to be more useful because problems can be resolved faster, and employees will not hesitate to be more open with their counselors. However, if these counselors are also functional managers, there is a risk that such counseling activities may waste their time and detrimentally affect their day-to-day work. The latter approach is more widely applied, such that at certain times during a performance appraisal, employees will be given the opportunity to talk about any problems or obstacles they face.

Based on the abovementioned problems, this study aims to investigate the extent to which counseling based on local wisdom can provide solutions to employees who experience conflicts in their work environment, as well as what the counselor's efforts are in resolving disputes through the local wisdom approach. This study also adopts the theory of humanistic existence, which posits that every individual basically has an active potential in choosing and making decisions for him or herself and the environment. The theory emphasizes responsible freedom, such that individuals have broad freedom to carry out any action as long as they bear the risks and avoid abnormal behavior. Conflict theory is the antithesis of functional structural theory, which emphasizes order in society.

Research Questions

In this study, several key issues were examined that relate to using counseling based on local wisdom to resolve conflicts in the work environment. Thus, our research questions were as follows:

1. Are there any conflicts between employees in the work environment?
2. How can counseling based on local wisdom be applied to help resolve conflicts in the work environment?

Literature Review

Conflict in the Workplace

Rahim (2001) reported that social conflict research has received varied interest from the political science, economics, psychological, and anthropological fields of academia. A substantial amount of study on social conflict has also been undertaken by sociologists and theorists. Management researchers have also begun looking at it in recent years. It is generally agreed that social pressures can both positively and negatively affect efficiency

Conflict in the workplace represents an important risk factor for an organization or institution, as well as human life due to welfare concerns (Sonntag, et. al., 2013). Among the various conflicts in the workplace, human causes are generally considered by conflict researchers to be the most common (e.g., Oxenstierna, et; al., 2011; Danielsson, et. al., 2015). Researchers have also concentrated on the role of environmental and organizational influences in the occurrence of work disputes (e.g., Lu, et. al., 2011). Many aspects of the work environment—such as the physical characteristics, social assistance from co-workers and supervisors, or the nature of the work—have all been found to contribute to organizational tensions (Carmine, et. al., 2021; Shrestha, 2019).

Furthermore, Caesens, et. al., (2019) emphasized that conflicting relationships impair performance, and this effect has often emerged in various studies and meta-analyses. Therefore, improving the physical work environment for employees, increasing their level of social awareness, and possibly changing the nature of work assignments can minimize work-related tensions and thus improve employee performance.

Counseling through Local Wisdom

Counseling literally involves an exchange of ideas and feelings between two people (i.e., the counselor and client) in order to help clients, develop their abilities, so they can solve their own

problems and adjust in a way that will help them feel comfortable, maintain good mental health, have an objective view of others, and fulfill their daily needs well. Counseling in the workplace helps settle issues and address human needs and problems. Workplace job issues can cover many aspects, such as retirement, promotion, demotion, disputes, tension, and so on. By recognizing interpersonal problems, workers can learn to organize their emotions, so they can perform more efficiently. The role of a counselor is very diverse and can include, for example, providing advice and direction, assisting clients in making choices about a situation at hand, showing what steps they can take, and reassuring the client (Botha & Hugo, 2021; Nur'Aini, 2021; Prayitno, 1997).

In terms of beliefs, the counselor will develop the client's beliefs by giving them the courage and confidence to solve problems and achieve their goals and aspirations. Employee communication becomes smoother by daring to express feelings and communicating better with superiors and subordinates, and tensions will automatically diminish as a result. On discussing their problems with people they trust, worker's emotional tensions will slowly decrease, allowing them to face their problems again and think constructively about how to solve them.

Prayitno (1997) stated that for providing good service to both parties, there are several forms of counseling that could be considered in the world of work.

1) Job placement

Placement services help job seekers by providing information about jobs, job analysis, and other cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of job placement. From the institution's perspective, the role of the counselor is to help the office recruit suitable workers according to the type, strata, and structure of the work involved. From the perspective of both job seekers and employers, counselors try to build a good atmosphere by having the right person in the right place, so workers are placed according to their personal characteristics, talents, interests, and areas of expertise. Such placement services can also apply to workers looking to occupy new positions within an existing structure.

2) Work adjustment

Counselors can provide orientation services to novice workers who need to gain the right perceptions, insights, and accurate knowledge about their new field of work. The main theme of this is to ensure an appropriate and rapid adjustment to meet the performance demands of a new workplace, because this can assure the success of the novice's initial work.

3) Job satisfaction

It is desirable for workers to feel happy and at home at work and be satisfied with their working conditions, because this leads to workers to carrying out further duties with even greater enthusiasm. If a state of dissatisfaction befalls workers, counseling services are needed to help them develop positive attitudes toward their work.

4) Transfer of workers

The transfer of workers is not just done due to dissatisfaction with an existing job—employees may also want to move to gain new experiences or satisfy some other desire. Whatever the reason, the job-transfer process often requires counseling assistance for both placement and adjustment.

5) Alleviation of other problems

Personal problems may relate to family, health, attitudes and daily habits, hobbies and free time, social relationships, and so on, so these can also be objects of counseling. If these problems are left unaddressed and allowed to escalate, they will start to affect the productivity of the worker concerned and possibly others in the workplace. Conversely, if these personal problems are handled properly, it has a positive impact on working relationships and the performance of the worker.

Local wisdom is defined as human conventions for acting in a certain space, and this explicit knowledge emerges over a long period of time in a particular culture. This long process of civilization is embedded in society, making local wisdom a potential resource, not just as a reference for one's behavior but also for dealing with the dynamics of a particular society.

Local wisdom is reflected in various types of traditions and cultures—such as songs, proverbs, *sasanti*, advice, slogans, utterances and ancient books—and related to daily behavior. Local wisdom also often manifests in long-lasting life habits, and its sustainability is reflected in the values that apply to certain groups of people, with them usually becoming an inseparable part of life that can be observed through daily attitudes and behavior.

Conflict Resolution through Counseling based on Local Wisdom

Interethnic conflict, ethnic conflict, and ethno-religious conflict are all terms used to describe conflicts arising from variations in values, beliefs, and communication patterns, as well as the range of rites and traditions whose contrasts and contradictions are embedded within (Hartoyo, et. al., 2020). The national motto of Indonesia is “*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*,” which translates as “Unity

in Diversity.” This philosophy reflects the diverse communities in Indonesia in terms of geography, race, ethnicity, and even religion, because Indonesia hosts a wide variety of cultures. Culture is a unit of interpretation, memory, and meaning for people, and it often influences their beliefs, values, and norms. Culture influences human behavior, because everyone reflects their culture, and this leads to characteristic human groups. In reality, culture causes values to be inherited, interpreted, and implemented in line with a process of social change (Harper & Leicht 2018; Johnson & Hinton, 2019; Olonisakin et al., 2021).

In a workplace, there may be frequent quarrels and disputes between parties. To prevent this from happening, managers really need to pay attention to the quality and performance of their subordinates, because this can be affected by their interactions at work. If these interactions are not harmonious, it will cause problems. Such problems can be avoided or resolved through work counseling, which aims to provide insights that help employees to find solutions to the problems they face. Thus, counseling is central for developing workers and even managers. Indeed, all supervisors can be included in the same counseling process as part of their normal work (Xiong, et. al., 2016).

For managers, an important goal of counseling is to allow employees to accept some responsibility for developing themselves. For example, they can first advise employees with the intention of directing them toward a series of desired activities. Second, they can reassure employees, so they will be confident to undertake such activities. Third, it can help open up communication with management and also provide opportunities to explain various views to employees. Fourth, it can relieve the emotional tension of employees when they have the opportunity to discuss their problems with others. Finally, clearing the mind of serious problems with other people will help employees to think more clearly about their problems (Prayitno, 1997).

Local wisdom, which reflects the life values and development of a community, are largely unwritten, but it can have a strong binding power in society, so it may be very relevant to problem-solving through counseling in a workplace. Indeed, the local wisdom that applies in an area may mandate sanctions from the community if someone violates these rules. Lev & Holt (2019) argued that the customs that exist in society where people are still steeped in their original culture will often be applied in everyday life by the community. What is more, customs also play a role in the national legal system of Indonesia. The values of local wisdom are positioned highly as playing a role in the conservation and preservation of natural resources, the development of human

resources, and the development of culture and science, and they serve as a source for advice and beliefs and act as a basis for forming a communal environment, developing ethics and morals, and serving a political function (Lev & Holt, 2019).

Conflict Resolution through Counseling based on Local Wisdom in Kendari

Southeast Sulawesi's local wisdom, especially in Kendari, is very diverse. Awad & Shaleh (2018) explained that in general, the Tolaki people have four cultural value structures as follows: (1) cultural value system (mutual support, harmony, etc.), (2) system of norms (everyone's social position in society; attitudes and actions in the community; and manners among family, society and the state), (3) legal system (e.g., punishment for people who violate Islamic doctrine), and (4) basic rules system (e.g., ceremonies for birth, marriage, and death). Furthermore, some important notions in Tolaki culture include Kohanu's "shame culture," Moreu's "politeness," Medulu's "merging," Mepokoaso's "unifying," and Samaturu's "helping each other" (Awad & Shaleh, 2018).

Awad & Shaleh (2018) found that one Tolaki community leader reported that the elements of togetherness and the integrity of a collective in the cultural value system were still maintained, but they were beginning to fade. The data showed that the youth were mostly uneducated about *Kalosara* traditions. In our study, we found that Tolaki culture is virtually extinct, including its ideals and symbols, so drastic action is urgently needed before things get any worse (Awad & Shaleh, 2018). Therefore, the implementation of values based on traditional wisdom need to be addressed in social life, so that traditions continue to be handed down from generation to generation.

In terms of counseling based on local wisdom, the people in Kendari, especially the Tolaki tribe, often use a local culture called *Kalosara*³ to solve problems. This is divided into five areas, namely *Sara wonua* (governance), *Sara meombu* (ritual customs related to religion), *Sara mbedulu* (marriage customs), and *Sara mandarahi* (arts). The fifth is *Sara mondau, mombopaho, mombakani, melambu, and me'oti-oti*, which relates to farming, gardening, raising livestock, and fishing. For violations of law and conflict resolution, *Sara Wonua* is used. The symbol for this in

³*Kalosara* is a local tradition that is used by the Tolaki community to solve various kinds of problems, including those related to violations of the law.

Kalosara is rattan with the ends forming a figure of eight, while for *Sara mbedulu*, one end of the rattan sticks out. These two types of *Kalosara* symbols are commonly used.

Various cases can be resolved with *Sara wonua*. One incident involved a dispute between the Tolaki people and the Balinese people that took place in a particular region. The Balinese had a strong legal right to a property, but the other side also had strong evidence. The people on this property had long-established homes and the surrounding trees still remained. To settle the conflict, tribal members assembled in a field to try to find a unanimously acceptable solution. The answer was found according to *Kalosara* customary law, with the Tolaki customary organization being in a position to make a different decision. It was determined that the land would be split in half. By taking this decision, these people with different ethnicities could continue to live in peace. The *Kalosara* process involves local customary stakeholders called *Tolea* and *Pabitara*,⁴ with the *Tolea* being the customary leader and the *Pabitara* being the spokesperson. Disputes and conflicts in the social system of a society will often occur, because every society will have tensions, and there may be elements of domination and coercion.

Methods

Research Design

The study employs an interpretive case study design. It is adopted to elucidate a complex phenomenon which might be a school leader, a group of pupils, a curriculum, a practice, an occurrence, a process, or a collection of people (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, the phenomenon is in the form of workplace interpersonal conflict practices and problem solving strategies. This design is critical because it teaches readers about workplace problems and how to overcome them using local wisdom. As a result, this design can be used not just as a theme approach, but also as a means for generalizing what is gained through a case study process to other circumstances and contexts that someone may encounter.

Participants

Due to the occurrence of their frequent job conflicts, the researcher employed four lecturers who were also administrative staff in one division. This was made possible because the researchers

⁴ *Tolea* is the customary leader, while *Pabitara* is the spokesperson who carries out the *Kalosara* cultural court process by presenting various parties.

were emotionally attached in them as well as their supervisors. They are occasionally involved in conflict situations for a variety of reasons. Initially, the researcher inquired about the availability of ten volunteers to be interviewed, but only four responded positively. They have worked as subordinates for more than two years and represent a diverse range of races, genders, and ages (See table 1). The four participants represented a variety of ethnic groups, including Bugis, Tomia, Tolaki, and Gorontalo. The four participants were categorized as male or female based on their gender. They are also of varying ages. There are individuals aged 24, 29, 30, and 31 years old. To maintain ethical standards in research, the author's name is written as a pseudonym. The following table summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1.

Participants of this study

No	Pseudonames	Gender	Age	Etnic
1	Partisipant_1	Female	29	Bugis
2	Partisipant_2	Male	31	Tomia
3	Partisipant_3	Female	30	Tolaki
4	Partisipant_4	Male	24	Gorontalo

Data Collection Tools

This study's data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted between January and March of 2021. The observations focused on how employees communicate with one another, how they carry out their assigned tasks and responsibilities, and how they resolve conflicts among themselves. The researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire instrument for in-depth interviews. The semi-structured interview guide asks questions such as "what conflicts frequently occur between them" and "how do they resolve conflicts." This inquiry is based on a research question proposed by Flippo (1980). In-depth interviews were conducted at the university and at home in an informal, relaxed, and stress-free environment. This occurred as a result of the Covid-19 condition subsiding and the government continuing to permit house-to-house visits. Similarly, all participants voluntarily provide the researcher with the information he or she requires. According to Widodo (2014), the purpose of the interview was to gather information about the reality of the phenomenon, which in this case is work conflict among employees. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and audio recordings were made. As a result, the findings can be transcribed by incorporating supporting data from the audio recording. The transcription is followed by a description of the interview's time. This was performed from the

start to the end of the interview in order to create a neat and organized transcription. As a result, the transcription is compiled into a complete artifact that is compared to a predefined concept.

Data Analysis

According to Widodo (2014), the analysis of interview data begins by using recorded interviews, recording the essentials, writing data, codifying data, interpreting data, and validating data using triangulation methods. In addition, the results of the in-depth interview transcriptions are processed through a construction process, which provides additional new insights to the case study. In this study, data were analyzed by using thematic analysis.

Findings

This section presents the findings about conflicts that are often found in the work environment of the administrative services division of an institution in Kendari. Observations were conducted between the first week of December 2020 and the fourth week of January 2021. After making observations, the informants were given a questionnaire, and several informants were interviewed about the conflicts they often encountered and whether a counselor helped them to resolve disputes. It should be noted that in this division, a leader often serves as a person for employees to tell their stories to if they are under pressure. Presented below are the results from the observations of the employees who were the informants for this study and the interviews with them.

Conflicts that Often Occur in the Workplace

A number of questions were put to participants about what conflicts they often encountered and how they dealt with such conflicts. Based on the interviews with participants, it was found that disputes often occur among workers, especially in terms of differences of opinion, differences in work allocations, and differences in perceptions about handling problems due to poor communication in the administrative services division. However, such disputes did not lead to major or prolonged conflicts that reduced the performance of employees. Below are some responses from participants to questions about the conflicts that often arise.

- (1) “Disputes are like miscommunications. However, such misconceptions do not lead to a reduction in performance. If there’s a misunderstanding, it’s usually resolved right away. It does not stay long.” (Partisipant_1, Personal Communication, Januari 15, 2021).

- (2) "I don't feel that there are disputes or arguments because of personal problems between me and my co-workers. I also don't feel any emotional conflict between myself and my co-workers. Misunderstandings do occur sometimes, but they are normal and do not persist." (Partisipant_2, Personal Communication, Januari 29, 2021).
- (3) "Conflicts that occasionally develop are typically a result of the environment and workload. Work accumulates and, on average, has tight deadlines. As a result, emotional control is impacted when communicating with coworkers." (Partisipant_3, Personal Communication, March 13, 2021).
- (4) "I occasionally clash with a coworker when we are assigned tasks to complete together yet he has reasons to avoid the work." (Partisipant_4, Personal Communication, February 11, 2021).

From the responses above, it can be concluded that disputes in the work environment are commonplace, but most importantly, these disputes do not create tension between fellow employees. This may be due to the presence of a counselor as a person for employees to express their complaints to at work. If there is a dispute between fellow employees, this counselor can provide advice that is guided by the cultural values of Kendari, where all these employees work.

The Role of Counseling Based on Local Wisdom in Resolving Conflicts in the Workplace

From the interviews and observations, the researchers derived several findings. First, for counseling based on local wisdom, the leaders of these employees have in this case succeeded in growing an awareness of cultural values in the employees, as evidenced by the responses of some employees in their interviews:

- (5) "While disagreements or misunderstandings sometimes occur, we also support each other if one of us has work that is building up." (Partisipant_3, Personal Communication, March 17, 2021).
- (6) "Also, many other friends support me if I'm not able to go. Although there are moments when things go bad, I'm happy that I've been backed up when I couldn't get to the office." (Partisipant_1, Personal Communication, February 20, 2021).

In addition, the employees also said that they did not feel any personal clashes between themselves. Any disputes that occur are limited to work, as evidenced by the results of the observations. The employees work according to their respective duties. When someone asks for help with their work but there is a misunderstanding, the parties are only at odds for a limited time. Once the problem is resolved, they continue to work properly together. This was supported by a statement from one of the employees:

- (7) “My co-workers always help me when I have a heavy workload, even though it is not something they are obliged to do.” (Partisipant_2, Personal Communication, January 17, 2021).

This proves that cultural values, especially the Tolaki “Samaturu” culture of helping each other, are very well understood by employees. Other such values are also embodied in the employees of this administrative service division, namely the “Kohanu” culture of shame and the “Moreu” culture of politeness, which were suggested by the counselor. This is evidenced by a response from one of the employees:

- (8) “The counselor once told me that working in this division must involve dignity, because there is a leadership authority that must be maintained. Therefore, there needs to be a culture of shame and politeness in work that involves communicating with other people. Thus, even when there are internal problems with fellow employees, for example, it is not allowed to make this known to many people, and everyone must still be courteous with fellow employees when communicating” (Partisipant_4, Personal Communication, March 21, 2021).

Based on the results of the interviews and observations, it can also be concluded that despite frequent conflicts between employees in the administrative service division of the institution, the employees were able to handle them themselves thanks to the cultural values that the counselor, in this case their leader, reminded them of. Even though the employees come from different ethnic backgrounds, this does not weaken the assumption that each individual will uphold the values of

their own tribe. Moreover, because their workplace is located in Kendari, it is necessary to appreciate the cultural values that are shared by the surrounding community, such as Kohanu's "shame culture," Moreu's "politeness," Medulu's "merging," Mepokoaso's "unity," and Samaturu's "helpfulness" (Awad & Shaleh, 2018).

Discussion

The theory of humanistic existence basically explains that every individual has the active potential to make choices and decisions for him or herself in the environment. This theory emphasizes responsible freedom, so individuals are given broad freedom to carry out any action as long as they bear the risks and avoid abnormal behavior. Thus, counseling programs for employees are very important for improving workplace performance. Indeed, it has a direct influence on performance, job satisfaction, motivation, and reactions to stress. However, successful implementations of counseling programs in organizations cannot be separated from the role of management, because they can also encourage career development and improve employee performance. Through counselling, problems can be revealed that must be resolved, such as whether or not employees need to engage in educational and training opportunities in order to acquire further skills for carrying out their duties or whether they have the necessary attitude for dealing with various changes and complex issues.

The role that counseling plays in improving productivity in the workplace seems to answer some of the challenges of globalization. Organizations therefore need to provide counseling to employees in order to develop quality human resources who are both moral and cultured in addition to being highly skilled in areas like science and technology. Indeed, with effective counseling, employees can carry out their duties in an effective manner and help achieve organizational goals. Managers are also very important for a counseling program, because they operate as guides, leaders, decision-makers, and motivators for employees. They also function as drivers of performance in the quest for operational effectiveness. However, if a counseling program is not successful in improving employee performance, organizational performance will also be affected, so some form of disciplinary action may be needed.

What is more, society cannot be separated from the traditional cultural values that have been passed down from one generation to the next (Wang, et. al., 2014; Zeng & Greenfield, (2015). Drawing on Geertz (2007), local wisdom is something that really influences human dignity in the

community. Therefore, if the traditional values that exist in a society are undermined, the community loses its identity, as well as its sense of pride and belonging. If these values have been forgotten, counselors can use local wisdom to remind employees of them, thus providing urgently needed guidance and advice.

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that conflicts between employees are indeed something that cannot be entirely avoided, especially those that arise from misunderstandings in communication, workload and less of attention. However, they can be resolved using counseling based on local wisdom, and this can also be done by managers. In addition, counseling based on local wisdom is important for instilling cultural values, thus preventing the culture itself from becoming extinct. Furthermore, when employees come from different ethnic backgrounds, they can learn the culture of other employees and therefore enrich their cultural knowledge, helping them to respect each other in the workplace.

This research, however, has limitations, most particularly in the areas of cultural comprehension. Counselors will confront difficulties in grasping the cultural conceptions of each office worker due to Southeast Sulawesi's cultural diversity. As a result, it is strongly required that counselors or mediators who assist in resolving conflict in this office have a varied cultural understanding to grasp the character of employees who come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultural perspectives. Additionally, this research can be expanded by including Islamic beliefs into counseling. Hence, not only local wisdom is utilized, but also religious aspects are integrated to shape the character of employees who not only adhere to local norms and customs, but also uphold the noble principles of religion while performing their job responsibilities.

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