

# The Relationships between Team Process Variables and Conflict Types - a Systematic Review.

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## 1. Introduction

### Background

- Increased collaboration in organizations has heightened the importance of studying conflicts within teams and their relationship to team performance (De Wit et al., 2012). Conflicts in teams are categorized into task, relationship, and process conflicts (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001).
- Previous reviews and meta-analyses focus on the relationship between task conflict and team performance identifying mediators / moderators (DeChurch et al., 2013; Bradly et al., 2015; O'Neill et al., 2013; O'Neill & McLernon, 2018). Less attention centers on the relationship between relationship / process conflict and team performance. As teams need to handle all kinds of conflicts it is important to investigate those relationships as well as mediating / moderating factors.

**Aim of the review** is the identification of mediating / moderating factors between specific conflict types and team performance, with the distinction between team behaviors and emergent states.

## 2. Methods

- A systematic literature search in six databases was made with the keywords conflict and team performance (5689 articles). The abstract screening was performed with the machine learning software ASReview, resulting in 183 articles (Van De Schoot et al., 2021). The full article screening was performed on criteria's e. g. team-level constructs. A systematic analysis of the resulting 16 articles was performed with excel.
- The Input-Process-Output model was used to classify the variables, conflict types as input and team performance as output variables (Hackman & Morris, 1975). The process factors found, were divided into team behaviors and emergent states (phenomena emerging from and influencing team interactions) for a more structured evaluation of the results (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

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## 3. Findings\*

Input		Process Variables		Output
		Team Behavior	Emergent State	
Task conflict	→	+ Cooperative CM Mo <sup>1</sup> + Team goal learning orientation Mo <sup>6</sup> + Teamwork quality Me <sup>24/18</sup> Mo <sup>17</sup> + Information exchange / interpretation Me <sup>1</sup> - Competitive CM Mo <sup>12</sup> - Team goal performance orientation Mo <sup>6</sup>	+ Team emotion regulation Mo <sup>10/11</sup> + Team norms Mo <sup>8</sup> + Team trust P-Me <sup>20</sup> + Psychological safety climate Mo <sup>2</sup>	→ Team performance
Relationship conflict	→	+ Cooperative CM Mo <sup>1/22</sup> + Team support Me <sup>14</sup> + Teamwork quality Me <sup>24</sup> Mo <sup>17</sup> + Information exchange / interpretation Me <sup>1</sup> - Competitive CM Me <sup>5</sup> - Avoiding CM Me <sup>5</sup> - Team goal performance orientation Mo <sup>6</sup>	+ Team emotion regulation Mo <sup>10</sup> + Team emotional intelligence Me <sup>19</sup> + Affective similarity Me <sup>4</sup> + Team trust / respect / cohesiveness Me <sup>20/9</sup>	
Process conflict	→	+ Teamwork quality Me <sup>24</sup> Mo <sup>17</sup>	+ Team trust / respect / cohesiveness Me <sup>9</sup>	

\*CM = conflict management; Mo = moderation; Me = mediation; P-Me = partially mediation; +/- = positive / negative effect on team performance; only significant results are listed

## 4. Implications

**Research implications:** Further research should focus on process variables addressing the specific essence of conflict types. We propose the following research framework:

Input		Process Variables		Output
Task conflict	→	Open discourse / constructive controversy (e. g. Tjosvold et al. 2014)	→	Team performance
Relationship conflict	→	e. g. Team emotion regulation		
Process conflict	→	Variables need to be developed		

**Practical implications:** Practitioners are advised to select appropriate team behaviors based on the specific type of conflict that arises in order to effectively manage conflict situations so teams can perform. If a particular type of conflict persists over time, it is crucial to further develop the found emergent states, so teams can facilitate conflict resolution and team performance can be secured.

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