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Workplace Conflict Effect on Innovative Behavior: The Roles of Engagement and Proactive Personality

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is as natural a phenomenon as harmony in social relations. In all industries, especially those prioritizing collaborative teamwork, it is clear that effective conflict management is critical to sustaining positive employee relationships. With this study, we set out to investigate the impact of workplace conflicts on employee innovation. For this purpose, data were collected from employees through a survey conducted in the aviation industry in Turkey, and 393 responses were received. Structural Equation Modeling was used for hypothesis testing. The study revealed that conflict with colleagues has a detrimental impact on both innovative behaviors and work engagement. Work engagement was identified as a complete mediator in the relationship between conflict and innovative behaviors. Furthermore, a proactive personality was found to moderate the influence of conflict on innovative behaviors, also playing a significant role in the indirect relationship among these variables. The research concludes with practical recommendations for managers and suggestions to researchers for future studies.

Keywords: Conflict with Colleagues, Innovative Behaviors, Work Engagement, Proactive Personality.

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INTRODUCTION

Humans have the inherent ability to exercise agency and cultivate equilibrium within their environment, thus ensuring the continuity of their existence. Nonetheless, when disparities in needs and aspirations arise among individuals, the process of adaptation inevitably encounters obstacles, giving rise to tensions and conflicts. Conflict could be defined as a process that begins with the perception that something that one of the parties values is about to negatively affect or negatively affects the other party (Robbins & Judge, 2015), as a state of interaction that occurs in the form of incompatibility or disagreement between individuals and groups (Rahim, 1985). According to Thomas (1992), conflict can be characterized as the unfolding of events initiated when one party observes that another has obstructed or is about to obstruct a matter of concern to them.

In exploring theories that elucidate conflict, it is essential to consider two prominent perspectives. The social exchange theory offers valuable insights by suggesting that individuals aim to maximize rewards while minimizing costs, thus favoring situations where rewards surpass costs. This theory delves into behavioral outcomes within diverse social contexts, encompassing factors such as age, race, gender, and class, spanning domains like marriage, sexuality, and employment (Blumer, 1975; Mead, 1934; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959;

Emerson, 1962). It presents a comprehensive framework incorporating concepts such as exchange, reciprocity, agreement, behavioral sources, cost-benefit analysis, distributive justice, honest exchange, and power dynamics. Complementing this perspective, Lewin's field theory offers further insights into the interplay between individuals and their organizational environment, influencing behaviors. For instance, employees often exhibit positive outcomes when they operate within a conducive and meaningful work environment. When employees' roles and organizational objectives are well-aligned, it fosters motivation and dedication to their work and the organization (Burnes & Cooke, 2013).

Coping with conflicts and managing them is an element that will increase organisations' productivity and success (Thomas, 1992). Companies should cease regarding conflict as inherently negative and detrimental. Instead, they should actively strive to resolve conflicts efficiently and proactively. It's essential to acknowledge that promoting engagement and fostering innovative behavior greatly relies on employees' awareness of the conflict management climate (Jung & Yoon, 2018). It is important to have optimal conflict management to maintain good interpersonal relationships, especially among employees in sectors teamwork is important (Lee & Hyun, 2016). With the culture fostering collaborative

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conflict management has a positive impact on both job satisfaction and perceived work productivity (Choi & Ha, 2018). Due to a weak link in the chain, work harmony can deteriorate quickly. After all such performance failure in the team and the avoidance approaches that will be shown toward conflicts may have a negative impact on the achievement of the company's goals and may hinder harmony and innovative behavior in the workplace (Seedhouse, 2020).

This research examines the impact of interpersonal conflict on innovative behavior in organizations, with a focus on the air transportation sector. Additionally, the study evaluates the moderating and mediating effects of two other variables: work engagement and proactive personality. Understanding the effects of conflict on innovative behavior, which is critical to the development of air transportation, is essential for organizations. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is one of the first few studies to examine the mechanism through which interpersonal conflict impacts innovative behavior and this is the first study in the context of the Turkish aviation sector. The findings are anticipated to provide insights for managerial practices in the workplace and to contribute to the existing literature on related topics.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The Effect of Conflict with Colleagues on Innovative Behaviors

Innovation is fostered within an integrative organizational structure and culture that places emphasis on and supports diversity, belief in the abilities of employees, cooperation, and teamwork (Kanter, 1988). The introduction of a new idea or the acceptance, realization, and implementation of an idea put forward by others is defined as innovative behavior (West & Farr, 1989; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). The discovery or acceptance of innovative ideas could be an individual activity; however, the innovation must be implemented and accepted collectively by the organization, and management processes must be carried out correctly so that such an activity could be considered an innovation (Van De Ven, 1986).

The climate in the work environment has a significant impact on the employee performance in workplaces. Interpersonal conflict is the most common stress factor at work, and occupational factors such as monotonous work at a busy pace and status are closely related to interpersonal conflicts at work (Appelberg et al., 1991). In these processes, employees often experience conflicts related to their jobs while interacting with colleagues or delivering service to customers (Lee & Hyun 2016). Only enterprises with a resource-rich working environment can ensure that job demands can be met, especially when there are high job demands, and thus they can encourage employee engagement in their work (Bakker et al., 2011).

Jung & Yoon (2018) highlight the importance for

organizations to foster a positive approach toward conflict, encouraging the development of innovative behaviors. They suggest that viewing conflicts as opportunities and actively resolving them can enhance innovative contributions. Conversely, avoiding conflicts is linked to reduced innovative behaviors. Therefore, organizations should prioritize implementing effective conflict management strategies to cultivate a culture that promotes employees' innovative potential. According to Chen et al. (2012), integrative conflict management is positively related to job satisfaction and innovative behaviors. Accordingly, when the conciliatory approach increases, job satisfaction and innovative behaviors increase as they are positively affected. Innovative behaviors are considered to contribute significantly to increased organizational success by enhancing organizational performance and providing a competitive advantage (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Lee & Hyun, 2016).

Based on the studies stated above and the relevant literature, it can be concluded that conflicts among employees have effects on their innovative behavior, as expressed in the following hypothesis:

H1. Conflict with colleagues significantly affects the innovative behavior of employees.

The mediating Role of Work Engagement

The concept of engagement was first introduced by Kahn (1990). According to Kahn, engagement refers to the ability of organizational members to physically, cognitively and emotionally involve themselves in their work roles (Kahn, 1990). Schaufeli et al. (2002) define work engagement as a positive mood associated with job involvement, dedication and vigor. Engaged employees demonstrate enthusiasm in their tasks, feel a sense of significance in their roles, and possess the capability to effectively manage work demands. Consequently, burnout and work engagement are distinct concepts that warrant separate measurement tools. On the other hand, Maslach & Leiter (2016) define work engagement from a different perspective, considering it the antithesis of burnout. They define burnout as a psychological syndrome that arises as a long-term reaction to enduring interpersonal stressors in the workplace.

Engaged employees tend to experience positive emotions more frequently, such as happiness, joy, and enthusiasm. Consequently, they cultivate their own resources and transmit the positive aspects of their engagement to their peers (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). These employees often demonstrate behaviors such as belief in the organization, a drive for continuous improvement, a deep understanding of business demands and the broader context, as well as showing respect and support towards colleagues. They also exhibit a proactive approach to advancement and maintain up-to-date

knowledge about developments in their field (Robinson et al., 2004). According to Schaufeli and Salanova (2007: 167), work engagement correlates with positive organizational outcomes on both attitudinal and behavioral levels, including increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, engagement in extra-role activities, and enhanced performance. Moreover, work engagement is closely linked to mental well-being.

There are many studies examining the relationship between work engagement, conflict, and innovative behavior. Agarwal et al. (2011) state that the quality of direct interactions between employees and their supervisors affects the level of employee engagement. According to this, work engagement is positively related to innovative work behavior and negatively related to the intention to quit work. While work engagement mediates the relationship between work engagement, leader-member interaction, and innovative business behavior, it also partially mediates the intention to quit the job. Chen & Huang (2016) argue that employee engagement could increase innovative behavior, and engagement can reduce task conflict, suggesting that managers should invest in increasing employee engagement instead of using available resources for other applications. According to Jung & Yoon (2018), if businesses stop considering conflict as negative and harmful and make more efforts to solve conflict efficiently and actively, and when employees are positively affected by this new conflict management climate, their level of engagement in work increases, which leads to increased innovative behavior. Work engagement has a full mediating effect between conflict management and innovative behaviors.

Based on the current empirical results and previous studies, the following hypotheses were developed regarding the relationship between work engagement, conflict with colleagues, and innovative behaviors:

H2. Conflict with colleagues significantly affects employees' work engagement.

H3. Work engagement significantly affects employees' innovative behavior.

H4. Work engagement has a mediating effect between conflict with colleagues and innovative behaviors.

The Moderating Role of Proactive Personality

Proactivity is strongly linked to job performance, encompassing key behaviors essential for achieving work-related objectives (Crant, 1995). Frese & Fay (2001) define proactivity as the ability to anticipate opportunities and threats before they arise and to take proactive action. It can be argued that individuals with higher levels of proactivity exhibit a greater willingness to enhance their work performance, such as through improved communication with superiors or colleagues and providing constructive feedback. Proactive individuals are more inclined towards career

development, psychological empowerment, and self-improvement, demonstrating conscientious task execution and efficient energy utilization in pursuit of their goals. Moreover, they excel in establishing effective communication networks (Fuller & Marler 2009).

Numerous studies highlight the positive impact of proactive employees in the workplace. Spiztmuller et al. (2015, 35) assert that proactive personality correlates positively with both job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Proactive individuals demonstrate an aptitude for recognizing and seizing opportunities, taking initiative to effect meaningful change. Bakker et al. (2012) underscore that employees capable of proactively adapting their work environment exhibit stronger organizational commitment and enhanced performance, with proactive tendencies correlating with higher levels of organizational citizenship. Dikkers et al. (2010) posit that proactive personalities represent a valuable personal resource that positively influences employees' engagement with their work. With support from colleagues and managers, proactive individuals can cultivate increasingly high levels of work engagement over time.

Studies examining the effect of proactive personality on individuals' creativity and innovative behaviors have found that proactive personality positively affects employees' creativity and that managerial support enhances this relationship (Kim et al., 2009). Additionally, proactive individuals are less affected by interpersonal conflicts due to their higher work engagement compared to others, resulting in minimal changes in their performance (Li et al., 2014). In the aviation sector, where even minor mistakes can have severe consequences, employees' individual characteristics and abilities are critically important. Air transportation employees work in shift systems in extremely stressful environments under time pressure, often dealing with passengers who do not adhere to established rules. Ultimately, conflicts become inevitable in this working environment. In the aviation sector, service quality is closely linked to employee-customer interactions (Yelgin & Ergün, 2022). Ji et al., (2019) investigated the effect of proactive personality on the safe behavior of airline cabin crew and concluded that proactive personality has a positive, albeit indirect, effect on the safe behavior attitudes of cabin crew.

Considering the importance of exploring the relationship between proactive personality as a predictor of proactive behaviors, and variables such as conflicts with colleagues, work engagement, and innovative behavior, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H5. Proactive personality has a moderating effect on the relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behavior.

H6. Proactive personality has a moderating effect on the indirect effect of conflict with colleagues on innovative behaviors through work engagement.

In this study, the following situational mediation model, in line with the empirical research in the literature, was created (See Figure 1).

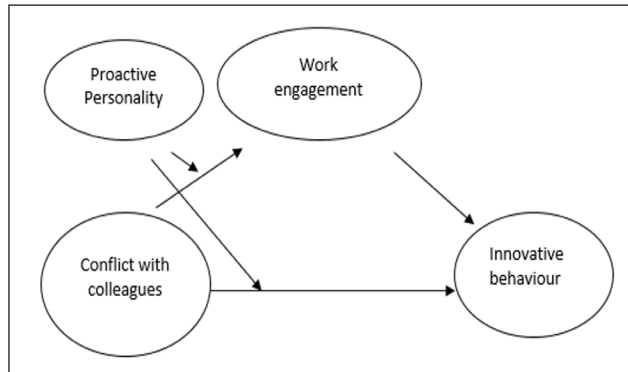


Figure 1: Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

Due to the challenges associated with accessing the entire population, researchers often focus on a research universe perceived as a representative subset. For this study, the selection of the research universe was guided by a focus on a field emphasizing teamwork, intense communication and interaction, and where personnel performance significantly influences organizational outputs. Hence, the aviation sector was deemed suitable for this purpose. The research sample consists of employees who voluntarily participated in the study at the offices of aviation organisations carrying out ground services in different provinces of Turkey.

Before administering the survey, a pilot study was conducted on 30 employees to determine how the survey statements would be perceived by the aviation employees who would fill it out. Through face-to-face interviews during this pilot study, it was understood that there were no statements that would be misunderstood by the employees. Subsequently, the researcher delivered a total of 420 surveys to the offices of the aviation organization. During the survey administration stage, employees were briefed about the research, and the content and scope of the surveys were explained to the participants. The researcher clarified any statements that participants had misunderstood while filling out the questionnaires, ensuring accurate completion. Ultimately, the study obtained 393 valid questionnaires constituting the sample. According to Kline (2005), a sample size of 384 is considered sufficient to make generalizations about the research population.

Scales

The study employed a survey technique, a widely used quantitative research method, for data collection. The survey comprised two sections: the first aimed to gather participants' demographic information (age, gender, marital status, education level, tenure at the institution, city of work, and position within the organization), while the second included questions from four different scales pertaining to the research variables.

The scale of conflict with colleagues: The levels of conflict that participants experienced with their colleagues were measured with a scale consisting of four statements adapted into Turkish from Janssen (2003) (Topçu et al., 2018). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.86. The scale includes the following questions: "Do you and your colleagues have conflicts about work-related issues?"; "Do you and your colleagues have different opinions on some workplace issues?"; "Do you experience conflicts in personal relationships between you and your coworkers?" and "Do you and your colleagues have different perspectives on work-related issues?".

The scale of innovative behavior: The innovative behavior scale used in this study is a one-dimensional scale consisting of six items used and validated by Scott & Bruce (1994), and is quite commonly used in Turkey. The reliability of the scale in the original language was 0.89. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Çalışkan, Akkoç & Turunç (2019). The scale was found to have a single-factor structure in Turkish as in its original form.

The scale of work engagement: To find out the level of employees' work engagement, the 17-expression *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)* developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) was shortened to nine items by Schaufeli et al. (2006), and then used in this study. The validity and reliability of the scale were tested and adapted to Turkish by Özkalp & Meydan (2015). The nine-item version of the scale consists of three dimensions: vigour, engagement and concentration. Each of these dimensions is measured with three items. The Cronbach Alpha value was found to be 0.94 for the one-dimensional version of the scale with nine items.

The scale of proactive personality: The shortened *Proactive Personality Scale* developed by Bateman and Crant (1993) and later revised by Claes, Beheydt and Lemmens (2005) was used to measure the proactive personality characteristics of employees in the study. The shortened proactive personality scale consists of 10 items. The internal consistency and reliability coefficients of the shortened form of the scale were found to be 0.76 and 0.86. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Akın et al. (2011).

Table 1: Correlations, Validity, Reliability and Means among Variables

	1	2	3	4	α	KMO	Mean
1 Proactive personality	1				0.850	0.872	4.22
2 Conflict with colleagues	.06	1			0.749	0.716	3.21
3 Work engagement	.48**	-.181**	1		0.881	0.831	4.15
4 Innovative behavior	.48**	-.15**	.54**	1	0.847	0.834	4.00

Notes: n = 393. *p < .05. **p < .01.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the subsequent stage involved data analysis. During this stage, it is crucial to select analysis methods that align with the research, the structure of the scales, and the variables under investigation. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS and Amos programs. Descriptive analyses, factor analyses, and structural equation modeling were employed for this purpose.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to measure the validity of the scales used in the research. The survey items were extensively reviewed in light of the relevant literature to ensure content validity, and the suitability of the scales was confirmed by interviewing field experts and managers. The scales used in this study are the scales previously used in some academic studies, and so the validity and reliability of them had been tested and confirmed. Cronbach α values of the scales used in the study were found to be between 0.749 and 0.881, and α is considered to have an acceptable reliability when above 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett tests were performed to determine the suitability of the data collected through the scales for factor analysis. Although all KMO values were found to be above 0.70, Bartlett values of the variables were found to be significant ($p < 0.000$). These results reveal that the scales used in the study to measure the validity are suitable for factor analysis. When examining the correlation values, significant relationships between variables were identified. The "conflict with colleagues" variable was negatively correlated with both innovative

behaviors and work engagement. Positive and significant relationships were observed for the other variables (see Table 1).

Following the validity and reliability analyses, the data analysis stage was started, and the relationships between variables were tested through the Structural Equation Model. In order to determine the validity of the scales used in the research, the varimax rotational Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to the items that were previously determined to be suitable for factor analysis by the principle components analysis method. With CFA, when eigenvalues are greater than 1, a factor is established. Accordingly, based on the factor analysis applied to the Work Engagement Scale consisting of three dimensions and nine items, the third item was removed from the scale as it was found to have loaded another dimension and the 7th item was removed from the scale as its loading value was below 0.400. The remaining seven items in the structure were found to explain 58.65% of the structure under one dimension. The other three scales retained their single-factor structures. The factor load values of the expressions included in all scales were found to be above 0.400.

In addition, the scales were examined with DFA to determine the compatibility of the factor structure obtained with the exploratory factor analysis. Based on the DFA analysis, relevant modifications were made by combining the items that had a high relationship on the scales whose relationship could easily be defined. Following the modifications, the fit values were found to have increased and single-factor models had acceptable compliance values (See Table 2).

Table 2: The values of single-factor DFA models

Index	Conflict with Colleagues	Innovative Behavior	Work Engagement	Proactive Personality	Acceptable Compliance
χ^2	2,654	15,756	54,468	84,055	-
Df	1	6	12	33	-
P	0,103	0,015	0,000	0,000	-
χ^2/df	2,654	2,626	4,789	2,547	<5
TLI	0,974	0,989	0,906	0,943	>,90
CFI	0,996	0,973	0,946	0,958	>,90
RMSEA	0,065	0,064	0,078	0,063	<,08
SRMR	0,013	0,020	0,081	0,040	<,10

RESULTS

Participants

Several key findings emerged from the survey results based on the demographic characteristics of participants. The results show that the group under the age of 30 ($n=134$; 34.1%) constituted the largest segment. When the gender distribution of employees was considered, the number of males ($n=264$; 67.2%) was found to be more than twice the number of females ($n=129$; 32.8%). Regarding marital status, the number of married individuals ($n=189$, 48.1%) was nearly equivalent to the number of single individuals ($n=197$; 50.1%), indicating that nearly half of the employees were married. Upon examining the educational status of the employees, those holding undergraduate degrees ($n=166$; 42.2%) constituted the majority, followed by those with high school degrees ($n=140$; 35.6%). Regarding employee titles, those occupying office positions were the most represented ($n=180$; 45.8%), indicating that approximately half of all participants held office roles.

Analysis of the Indirect Effect

An indirect effect is an effect that occurs when a third variable or variables mediate the effect between two variables. The simple relationship that exists between two variables is not sufficient to explain the relationship between variables in depth. In order to fully understand the causal relationship between these two variables, determining how this relationship occurs through a connection (mediation) or under what circumstances it can change (moderating) is very important for understanding social reality (Memon et al., 2019).

Three different methods are usually used in indirect effect analysis: regression analysis, structural equation modelling and process macro analysis. The method used in this study is *Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)*. In SEM, causal relationships that are theoretically thought to exist between variables are tested through structural models and current relationships are determined by this analysis. Although path analysis with observed variables is similar to traditional regression analyses, what makes it superior to these analyses is that it allows multiple relationships to be tested at the same time. For this reason, SEM models are preferred more in cases where it is desired to test the moderating effects between variables and to test complex variables (Byrne, 2016).

The Mediating Effect of Work Engagement

Among the approaches employed in testing mediation models, the Baron and Kenny method, also referred to as the classical approach, stands out as the most widely employed causal step approach. According to this approach, four criteria must be met for the mediation test to be performed, which are listed below (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

1. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables should be statistically significant,
2. The relationship between the independent and mediating variables should be statistically significant,
3. When used together with the independent variable, the relationship between the mediating variable and dependent variable should be statistically significant,
4. If the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable becomes statistically non-significant when the independent and the mediating variable are handled together in the analysis, then the full mediation effect occurs, if the relationship decreases, the partial mediation effect occurs.

According to Baron and Kenny, if a variable that is claimed to be a mediating variable meets four criteria, it is called the mediating variable. Baron & Kenny's approach was adopted in this study, and the mediation effect was analyzed following the stages stated above.

Stage 1: The independent variable (Conflict with colleagues) has a significant impact on the dependent variable (Innovative behavior of employees)

According to the results obtained with the path analysis conducted with the observed variables, it was found that the effect of employees' conflict levels with colleagues on innovative behaviors was statistically significant and negative at the 99% confidence level ($r=-0.156$; $p=0.000$). Thus, a 1-unit increase in the level of conflict with colleagues reduces innovative behavior by 0.156 units. Therefore, conflict has a reducing effect on innovative behaviors. Based on these results, the H1 hypothesis "Conflict with colleagues significantly affects the innovative behavior of employees" was accepted.

Stage 2: The independent variable (Conflict with colleagues) significantly affects the mediating variable (work engagement).

According to the results of the path analysis conducted with the observed variables, it was found that the effect of conflict with colleagues on work engagement was statistically significant and negative at the 99% confidence level ($r=-0.181$; $p=0.000$). According to these results, a 1-unit increase in the level of conflict with colleagues reduces the level of work engagement by 0.181 units. Based on this analysis, the H2 hypothesis "Conflict with colleagues significantly affects employees' work engagement" was accepted.

Stage 3: The mediating variable (work engagement) significantly affects the dependent variable (innovative behaviors).

According to the results of the path analysis with the observed variables, there is a statistically significant and positive effect of the direct effect of work engagement on innovative behaviors in the 99% confidence level ($r = -0.542$; $p = 0.000$) (See Figure 2). Accordingly, a 1-unit change in employee engagement leads to a 0.542-unit change in innovative behavior, which indicates that the increase or decrease in the level of engagement of employees changes proportionally in innovative behaviors. Therefore, the H3 hypothesis “Work engagement significantly affects the innovative behavior of employees” was accepted.

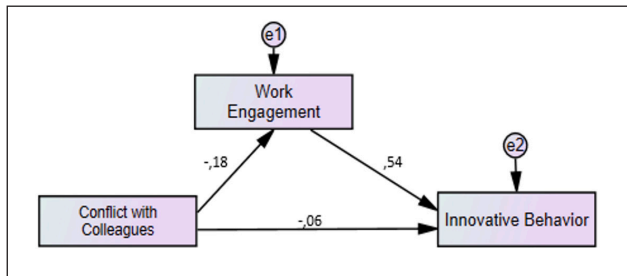


Figure 2: Mediating Effect of Work Engagement

Stage 4: Regarding the achievement status of the fourth stage, which serves as the final criterion for determining the presence of a mediation effect (See Figure 4.1), when examining the model, the effect of the independent variable (Conflict with colleagues) on the dependent variable (Innovative behaviors) (path coefficient) is observed to be -0.06 if a mediating variable is present. This shows that the relationship which was found to be significant before has become statistically insignificant ($r = -0.058$; $p = 0.178$), as presented below (Table 3). This result also shows that work engagement has a full mediating effect on the relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behaviors. Based on these results, the H4 hypothesis “work engagement has a mediating effect between conflict with colleagues and innovative behaviors” was accepted.

The Moderating Effect of Proactive Personality

A mediation impact path analysis was conducted with the IBM Amos program to test the moderating role of proactive personality in the effect of conflict with colleagues on innovative behaviors. The estimated and moderating variable values were standardized before the moderating impact analysis was performed. If the values are analyzed without standardization, the effect of the interactive term on the result variable will cause multiple connection problems, and this may prevent accurate determination. The path analysis regarding the effect of proactive personality and obtained findings are presented in Table 4.

Examining the results regarding the moderating impact analysis, it was found that conflict with colleagues had negative effects on innovative behaviors (Beta=-0.151; $p = 0.000$), and proactive personality had positive and significant effects on innovative behaviors (Beta=0.477; $p = 0.000$). It was also found that the interactional effect (moderating effect) of the variables of conflict with colleagues and proactive personality was significant (Beta=-0.137; $p < 0.01$). Therefore, if the proactive personality is high, the effect of conflict with colleagues on innovative behaviors decreases, which means that the relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behaviors is moderated by proactive personality. Based on this, the H5 hypothesis “Proactive personality has a moderating effect on the relationship between conflict and innovative behavior with colleagues” was accepted.

Structural Model Analysis

What is meant by creating a model in structural equation modeling is the creation of a structure in which the causal relationships of variables with each other are revealed. In SEM, when the model is prepared based on theoretical foundations, drawing and defining this model can be done later. For the current study, the parameters in the model are defined and the variables

Table 3: Analysis results regarding the mediating effect of work engagement

Independent Variable	Direction of Relationship	Dependent Variable	Standardised Beta Coefficient	p
Conflict with colleagues	→	Work engagement	-0,181	0,000**
Conflict with colleagues	→	Innovative behavior	-0,058	0,178
Work engagement	→	Innovative behavior	0,542	0,000**

Table 4: Analysis Results Regarding the Moderating Effect of Proactive Personality

Independent Variable	Relationship direction	Dependent Variable	Standardised Beta Coefficient	p
Conflict with colleagues	→	Innovative behavior	-0,151	0,000**
Proactive personality	→	Innovative behavior	0,477	0,000**
Interactive variable	→	Innovative behavior	-0,137	0,002**

and relationships to be presented in the model are determined as below (See Figure 3). The values of the predictive and moderating variables were standardized before the analysis. The path analysis performed and the results obtained with this analysis are presented in Figure 3 and Table 5.

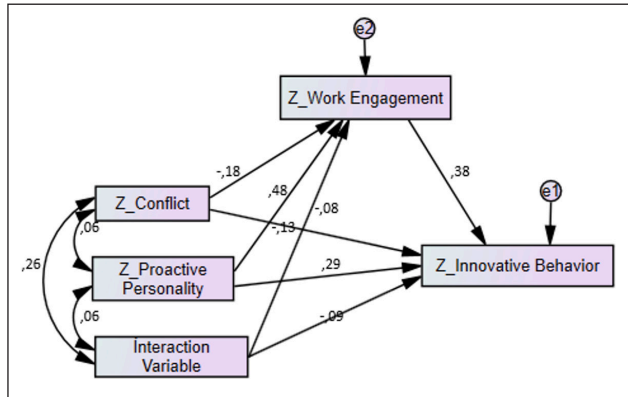


Figure 3: Structural Model Analysis with Standardised Factors Loads

After structural model analysis (See figure 3 and table 5), the following results were obtained:

- There is a statistically significant and positive effect of proactive personality on work engagement ($r= 0.481$; $p=0.000$). Based on this, proactive personality significantly affects employees' level of dedication to work.
- Moreover, a proactive personality has a statistically significant and positive effect on innovative behaviors ($r= 0.295$; $p=0.000$). Employees with a proactive personality exhibit more innovative behaviors. Based on this, the H5 hypothesis "Proactive personality significantly affects the innovative behavior of employees" was accepted.
- The results of the analysis revealed some negative effects of conflict with colleagues on work engagement ($Beta=-0.179$; $p<0.000$), and proactive personality had positive and significant effects on work engagement ($Beta=0.481$; $p=0.000$). The interactional effect (moderating effect) of conflict with colleagues and proactive personality variables

on work engagement was significant ($Beta=-0.127$; $p<0.01$). Based on this, the hypothesis "proactive personality has a moderating effect on the relationship between conflict with colleagues and work engagement" was supported. Therefore, if the proactive personality is high, the effect of conflict with colleagues on work engagement decreases, which means that the relationship between conflict with colleagues and work engagement is moderated by proactive personality.

- The situational mediation effect of proactive personality was concluded to be statistically significant in the indirect relationship of conflict with colleagues mediated by work engagement on innovative behaviors. Accordingly, when the indirect relationship between conflict with colleagues and work engagement and innovative behaviors was added to the model as a moderating variable in the direct relationship between conflict and innovative behaviors with colleagues, the relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behavior became statistically significant in the full mediation of work engagement ($Beta=-0.083$; $p<0.05$). The relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behavior became statistically significant. In this case, the mediating effect of work engagement, which has a full mediating effect, turned into partial mediation with the moderating effect of a proactive personality. In addition, the significant effect of work engagement on innovative behaviors was found to have decreased from ($Beta= 0.542$) to ($Beta= 0.380$). As such, proactive personality as a moderating variable reduces the impact of conflict on work engagement, as well as reducing the impact of conflict on innovative behavior and the impact of work engagement on innovative behavior. The full mediating effect of work engagement transforms into partial mediation. Therefore, the H6 hypothesis "Proactive personality has a moderating effect on the indirect effect of conflict with colleagues on innovative behaviors through work engagement" was accepted.

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the research results unequivocally validates all six hypotheses.

Table 5: Results Regarding the Structural Model Analysis

Independent Variable	Relationship direction	Dependent Variable	Standardised Beta Coefficient	p
Conflict with colleagues	→	Work engagement	-0,179	0,000**
Conflict with colleagues	→	Innovative behavior	-0,083	0,048*
Proactive Personality	→	Work engagement	0,481	0,000**
Proactive Personality	→	Innovative behavior	0,295	0,000**
Interaction Variable	→	Work engagement	-0,127	0,004**
Interaction Variable	→	Innovative behavior	-0,088	0,034*

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Recognition of conflict within organizations has remained consistently significant over time. Managers are observed to dedicate a substantial portion of their managerial efforts to resolving conflicts (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Examining the historical development of approaches to organizational conflict, it is observed that there is a process that evolves from viewing conflict as a preventable situation, then perceiving it as an inevitable reality for the organization, and finally recognizing it as a situation that can create positive outcomes for the organization (Tosi et al., 2000).

Integration of participatory conflict management methods increases the innovative behavior of employees, while avoiding conflict management methods reduces the innovative behavior of employees (Jung & Yoon, 2018). According to Lewin's field theory, when employees are in good alignment with their jobs and organizations, it motivates them to be dedicated to their work and organizations (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). In sectors where stress levels are high due to the fast pace, time pressure, and communication problems, positive performances of employees may decrease. As outlined in social exchange theory, employees seek to receive certain reciprocations in their relationships. When expectations are not met, individuals are adversely affected (Blumer, 1975; Mead, 1934; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Emerson, 1962).

In fields such as air transportation where people from different cultures work together, employees frequently experience conflicts regarding their work while interacting with colleagues or serving customers (Lee & Hyun, 2016). They have to work in a shift system in an extremely stressful work environment and under time pressure, where they deal with passengers who do not follow the set rules. As a result of the tensions experienced in this working environment, conflicts become inevitable. Therefore, the quality of services is closely related to the behavior of employees interacting with the customer (Yelgin & Ergün, 2022). When a positive interaction is achieved with the customer, customer satisfaction can be gained and positive perceptions regarding the organisation and the delivered services can be created. In the delivery of a service, presenting the service by employees in a way that satisfies the customer makes the biggest difference. It is possible to claim that the quality of cabin service is one of the priority criteria for passengers to prefer an airline over another (Park et al., 2014).

The findings obtained in this study make a significant contribution to both scholarly literature and practical applications for five reasons:

Firstly, our study highlights that conflicts with colleagues have a significantly negative impact on employees' innovative behaviors. Accordingly, the increase in conflict in an organization decreases the innovative behaviors of employees. The conflicts that

are destructive and negatively affect group performance are considered unfunctional conflicts. If conflicts cannot be managed properly, the innovation and development climate are negatively affected in the organisation. It should be remembered that teamwork can easily be harmed due to elements negatively affecting good teamwork (Seedhouse, 2020). Therefore, positive and reconciliatory approaches to conflict management increase employees' innovative behaviors, while avoiding conflict management reduces the innovative behaviors of employees (Jung & Yoon, 2018; Chen et al., 2012).

Secondly, conflicts with colleagues have a significant and negative impact on employees' work engagement. In organizations where there is minimal conflict among colleagues, employee work engagement is expected to increase. Conversely, frequent conflicts are likely to decrease the overall engagement level within the organization. Research in the literature consistently demonstrates that engaged employees tend to outperform their less engaged counterparts. Engaged individuals experience positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, and enthusiasm, which they often share with their colleagues (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Agarwal et al. (2011) also highlight the importance of the quality of direct interactions between employees and their supervisors in influencing employee engagement. Furthermore, according to Chen & Huang (2016), increased employee engagement correlates with higher levels of innovative behavior, ultimately reducing task-related conflicts.

Thirdly, work engagement has a positive effect on employees' innovative behaviors. The related research literature similarly shows that employees who are engaged in work exhibit extra behaviors outside of their work roles (Robinson et al., 2004; Agarwall et al., 2012). Engaged employees with high energy and strong job identification tend to perform better, fostering innovation. This underscores the positive impact of work engagement on innovative behavior. They create their business resources, perform better, have a higher level of psychological capital, are happy with their jobs and find it fun to work in the organisation (Bakker et al., 2011). Another finding on work engagement revealed by this study is, work engagement serves as a full mediator in the relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behaviors. This means that when work engagement level increases, the impact of conflict with colleagues on innovative behaviors becomes insignificant. Some studies support this conclusion. For example, Jung & Yoon (2018) demonstrate that work engagement has a full mediating effect on the relationship between conflict management climate and innovative behaviors. Some other studies associate work engagement with positive organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, extra-role behavior, and high performance (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Leiter & Bakker, 2010).

Fourthly, our results indicate that proactive personality reduces the negative impact of conflict on work engagement in the model. This means that decreases in the level of conflict allow employees to focus more on their work. Similarly, proactive employees are less affected by conflicts, and they also tend to exhibit a higher level of innovative behavior. Moreover, proactive personality is a personal resource that positively affects the level of engagement level of employees. Proactive personality has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between conflict with colleagues and innovative behaviors (Li & Kong, 2018; Dikkers et al., 2010). Fuller & Marler (2009) assert that proactive individuals are closer to career development, psychological empowerment, and personal development issues. Therefore, an increase in the level of proactive personality significantly increases the level of work engagement, as well as leading to an increase in innovative behavior.

Finally, proactive personality indirectly has a moderating effect on the relationship mediated by work engagement in the effect of conflict with colleagues on innovative behaviors. According to Frese & Fay (2001), those who have a proactive personality trait enable people to cope more actively with job difficulties, such as stressors, unemployment, or career changes. These findings reveal that emphasizing the importance of a proactive personality can increase employees' level of work engagement and innovative behaviors. In this indirect relationship, proactive personality weakens the effect explained in the full mediation of work engagement, and the mediating effect of work engagement turns into partial mediation. Therefore, proactive personality has a moderating role in the relationship by reducing the impact of conflict with colleagues on work engagement and innovative behaviors. Higher level of proactive personality diminishes the impact of conflicts on employees, fostering increased engagement and a propensity for more innovative behaviors. Some studies also collectively emphasize the importance of proactive personality traits, employee engagement, and managerial support in fostering positive outcomes such as coping with stress, innovation, and reduced conflict in the workplace (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Chen & Huang, 2016; Kim et al., 2010).

In light of the findings obtained from the study, the suggestions can be listed under the following headings: recruitment and teamwork, human resources policies, innovative organizational culture, employee development and training, person-job alignment and performance, conflict management organizational structure and innovation, employee engagement and conflict resolution, and priority on proactive personalities. Therefore, the following recommendations can be made to managers:

- In sectors like aviation where teamwork is intense, ensure appropriate selection of team members. Since individuals who are good at teamwork will be

able to work more harmoniously with their team, they may experience less conflict in the business environment, leading to potential increases in their task performance.

- Foster an environment that supports innovative behaviors and encourages employee satisfaction, positive emotions, and problem-solving abilities. Modern aviation safety theory today is mainly focusing on understanding how people react to operational situations, and how the human factor interacts with new technologies and developments in aviation safety systems. The correct understanding of the human-caused factors in airplane crashes and the adoption of the correct applications for this purpose can be considered effective initiatives to reduce aviation crash rates (Sant & Hilal, 2021).
- Provide training opportunities tailored to employees' needs and preferences to enhance their competencies and confidence in innovation.
- Align job characteristics with employee competencies to improve performance and engagement in innovative behaviors. The ability of employees to perform well can only be realized with the compatibility of the job characteristics with the level of competencies of employees (Sadullah, 2018).
- Manage conflicts effectively rather than aiming for complete elimination, especially in safety-critical sectors like aviation.
- Adopt organizational structures that are open to innovation to remove barriers and resistance within the organization. In today's dynamic business environment, organizations recognize the important strategic role of employees' innovative behavior for the long-term growth and organizations performance.
- Invest in employee engagement to promote positive outcomes in conflict management and innovative behaviors.
- Prioritize the employment of proactive individuals who exhibit behaviors conducive to innovation and are less affected by conflicts.

In future studies, researchers should consider exploring the effects of additional variables on the relationships examined in the study. This could involve investigating factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, or technological advancements, which may influence the dynamics of organizational conflict, innovative behaviors, and employee engagement. Furthermore, conducting further research with larger samples or in different sectors for comparative analysis can provide valuable insights into the generalizability and applicability of findings across diverse organizational contexts.

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