

Navigating workplace conflict in diverse academic settings: The roles of core self-evaluation and emotional intelligence in strengthening regional higher education

Sry Rosita*; Musnaini; Dian Mala Fithriani Aira; Feny Tialonawarmi

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jambi, Indonesia

**To whom correspondence should be addressed. Email: sry_rosita@unja.ac.id*

DOI: 10.22437/ppd.v11i6.29825	Received: 04.12.2023	Revised: 13.02.2024	Accepted: 25.02.2024	Published: 29.02.2024
----------------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------

Abstract

This study examines the direct effects of core self-evaluation (CSE) and emotional intelligence (EI) on workplace conflict while exploring the mediating role of perceived workplace diversity. Grounded in organizational psychology and contextualized within a regional Indonesian university, the research adopts a quantitative design, utilizing structured questionnaires administered to 94 academic staff members at Universitas Jambi. The findings indicate that neither CSE nor EI has a statistically significant direct effect on workplace conflict. However, EI is positively associated with diversity perception, which in turn significantly increases relational, task, and process conflict—demonstrating a mediated effect. In contrast, diversity does not mediate the relationship between CSE and conflict. These results reveal the complex interplay between individual psychological resources and organizational diversity in shaping interpersonal dynamics within higher education. The study highlights the importance of context-sensitive institutional strategies, including the integration of emotional intelligence training and inclusive workplace policies, in effectively managing diversity and mitigating conflict. It contributes to the broader discourse on academic workplace behavior by highlighting how personal dispositions and structural diversity jointly influence conflict outcomes, particularly within regional universities engaged in local development.

Keywords: *Core self-evaluation, Emotional intelligence, Perceived diversity, Workplace conflict, Regional universities*

JEL Classification: H83, I23, I24, M54, R58

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary higher education, workplace diversity has become an inescapable reality in organizational settings. As universities evolve into more inclusive and pluralistic environments, faculty members increasingly work across generational divides, cultural boundaries, and academic hierarchies. Although these diverse settings offer rich perspectives and potential, they also give rise to complex interpersonal dynamics and frequent conflict. When poorly managed, such conflict can disrupt collaboration, reduce morale, and undermine institutional effectiveness. Therefore, understanding how individuals respond to conflict within diverse organizational contexts is not only timely

but also essential for the sustainability of higher education institutions.

In this context, two psychological constructs—core self-evaluation (CSE) and emotional intelligence (EI)—have garnered increasing attention in organizational psychology and human resource management. Individuals with high CSE typically exhibit stable self-esteem, a strong internal locus of control, and greater resilience, enabling them to navigate role ambiguity and workplace tension more effectively (Cheung et al., 2015; Oh, 2022; Anand & Mishra, 2019). Similarly, individuals with high emotional intelligence (EI) are better equipped to regulate their emotions and empathize with others, which is crucial for de-escalating tension and promoting constructive communication (Schlaegel et al., 2020; Hopkins & Yonker, 2015). These attributes are particularly crucial in academic settings, where interpersonal relationships and intellectual collaboration are central to daily operations.

Despite the global relevance of these constructs, their application within the Indonesian academic context—characterized by hierarchical structures, strong collectivist values, and increasing diversity—remains underexamined. This issue is especially pertinent in rapidly developing nations like Indonesia, where institutional growth is accompanied by greater heterogeneity among faculty and staff. In such contexts, the absence of psychological preparedness to engage constructively with diversity can exacerbate interpersonal conflict and deteriorate the organizational climate. Thus, investigating how CSE and EI facilitate conflict management in diverse academic environments directly addresses a pressing institutional need.

This concern is particularly acute in regional universities such as Universitas Jambi, which play a vital role in advancing local development agendas and cultivating regionally grounded human capital. In these institutions, effectively managing workplace conflict is critical, as academic staff not only engage in teaching and research but also act as agents of social transformation and regional knowledge production.

This study situates itself within the ongoing discourse on workplace diversity and conflict management in higher education, aiming to investigate the psychological foundations of conflict resolution in diverse academic institutions. By integrating theoretical models with localized observations it offers valuable insights into how personal attributes influence professional interactions within university settings. In doing so, the study underscores the strategic importance of cultivating psychological competencies—such as self-evaluation and emotional regulation—as integral components of institutional capacity-building initiatives.

Despite growing awareness of diversity-related challenges in higher education, empirical investigations into the psychological mechanisms underlying conflict resolution among academic staff—particularly in Indonesian universities—remain scarce. Available evidence indicates a high prevalence of interpersonal and interdepartmental conflicts, which often remain unresolved due to emotional rigidity, hierarchical communication norms, and limited self-reflective capacity among faculty members.

At Universitas Jambi, internal assessments have documented persistent interpersonal tensions among faculty, contributing to elevated stress levels and diminished collaboration (Agustina, 2021). This phenomenon is not unique. At the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), conflicts between faculty groups and university leadership over governance issues disrupted academic operations (DetikNews, 2022). At Universitas Batanghari, leadership dualism led to salary payment delays, affecting over 40 lecturers and resulting in widespread dissatisfaction (Jambi24Jam, 2023). Even at Indonesia's premier institution, Universitas Indonesia, tensions over statute revisions escalated into a governance crisis involving faculty, students, and administrators (Civil

Society Watch, 2021). Supporting this, a study at Universitas Jambi found that 88.47% of female faculty members in the Faculty of Economics reported high levels of occupational stress, primarily driven by role conflict and interpersonal pressures (Rosita, 2014).

These institutional tensions are not isolated incidents but reflect deeper structural issues with potential repercussions for the broader developmental missions of regional universities. In the context of Universitas Jambi, where higher education is expected to contribute to regional capacity-building, economic empowerment, and local governance reform, unresolved faculty conflicts threaten to compromise academic performance and erode institutional trust, thereby limiting the university's capacity to fulfill its regional mandate effectively.

Collectively, these cases reveal that conflict within academic institutions is not merely anecdotal but structural, manifesting across institutional hierarchies and geographical regions. However, most existing accounts are descriptive, emerging from media reports or internal documentation, with minimal incorporation into empirical research frameworks that explore conflict resolution through the lens of psychological constructs such as CSE and EI.

The lack of rigorous, data-driven studies that examine how individual-level psychological traits influence conflict outcomes in diverse academic settings represents a significant research gap. Moreover, the potential mediating role of perceived workplace diversity in this relationship remains largely unexplored in the Indonesian context. Consequently, there is a paucity of models that link micro-level psychological traits with macro-level institutional challenges in managing diversity-induced conflict in universities.

Although institutional reports highlight the urgency of addressing conflict in Indonesian universities—especially those grappling with tensions across hierarchical and cultural lines—a conceptual gap persists. Specifically, there remains a limited understanding of the psychological processes, including core self-evaluation and emotional intelligence, that underpin these conflicts, particularly as mediated by perceptions of workplace diversity.

Existing studies have established the individual significance of core self-evaluation (CSE) and emotional intelligence (EI) in workplace dynamics. However, few have investigated how these traits function jointly in conflict management, particularly within higher education institutions characterized by growing organizational diversity. Furthermore, diversity itself is often treated merely as a contextual backdrop rather than as a mediating construct that actively shapes the relationship between psychological traits and conflict outcomes.

Much of the current literature on CSE and EI originates from Western or corporate settings (e.g., Schlaegel et al., 2020; Hopkins & Yonker, 2015; Oh, 2022; Anand & Mishra, 2019), where organizational cultures, power structures, and institutional norms differ significantly from those found in Indonesian universities. This raises concerns about the generalizability of such findings, especially when applied to culturally diverse and hierarchically structured academic environments.

In the Indonesian context, empirical studies exploring the intersection of psychological competencies and perceived diversity in shaping conflict management are still limited. Research tends to concentrate on administrative approaches to diversity (Jada et al., 2014) or conflict typologies without adequately linking these to individual traits or institutional culture. Moreover, conflict is rarely conceptualized within a structured behavioral framework, often being treated as a byproduct of miscommunication or systemic inefficiencies rather than a dynamic outcome influenced by personality and

organizational diversity.

Addressing this gap, the present study proposes a novel integrative framework that combines psychological constructs (CSE and EI), organizational context (perceived diversity), and behavioral outcomes (conflict management). This framework transcends fragmented discussions to provide a cohesive model for understanding how internal psychological evaluations and emotional competencies intersect with perceptions of diversity, influencing professional behavior. This approach offers both theoretical depth and practical relevance to the broader academic literature on human resource management.

Based on these identified gaps, this study makes several key contributions to theory and practice. First, it advances the theoretical understanding of how CSE and EI function as intrapersonal resources for mitigating conflict within complex and diverse academic settings. By integrating these traits into a unified behavioral model, the study extends prior research that typically considers them in isolation.

Second, the study offers a context-specific application by situating its analysis within Indonesian universities—an environment that remains underrepresented in the global literature on organizational behavior. In doing so, it challenges the assumption that Western-developed models of EI and CSE can be universally applied without accounting for sociocultural specificities, such as hierarchical structures, collectivist norms, and resource constraints. The use of Universitas Jambi as a case site provides valuable empirical data from a region with distinct academic, administrative, and cultural dynamics.

As a public university located outside Indonesia's major academic hubs, Universitas Jambi plays a critical role in human capital formation, inclusive development, and regional competitiveness. Understanding how psychological competencies influence conflict management in such institutions is essential not only for internal governance but also for enhancing the university's contributions to regional development goals.

Third, the study reconceptualizes diversity not merely as a demographic attribute but as a mediating psychological and organizational construct. This approach recognizes that diversity—when perceived through the lens of individual differences—can either intensify or mitigate conflict, depending on one's emotional competencies and self-concept. This perspective aligns with and enriches emerging theoretical frameworks that treat diversity as a dynamic organizational process rather than a static variable (Roberson, 2019; Ghauri et al., 2019; Çayak & Eskici, 2021).

Lastly, the study offers practical implications for university leadership, human resource practitioners, and faculty development initiatives. By identifying key psychological traits that enable faculty to manage diversity-related tensions, the research provides actionable insights for targeted training, strategic hiring, and effective conflict mediation. It also informs policy frameworks designed to foster both individual growth and institutional cohesion.

Accordingly, the present study aims to examine systematically the roles of core self-evaluation and emotional intelligence in managing workplace conflict within a diverse academic setting. Specifically, it investigates the direct effects of these psychological traits on conflict management strategies among lecturers at Universitas Jambi. Moreover, it explores how perceptions of workplace diversity mediate the relationship between these individual attributes and conflict-related outcomes. The central research question guiding this inquiry is: To what extent do core self-evaluation and emotional intelligence, mediated by workplace diversity, influence conflict management behaviors among university faculty members?

By addressing this question, the study aims not only to test theoretical propositions

regarding personality and emotional regulation in conflict resolution but also to provide empirically grounded recommendations for improving faculty well-being and institutional performance. Through a rigorous quantitative methodology, the research seeks to develop a model that connects psychological traits, diversity perceptions, and conflict behaviors—one that can be validated and adapted across comparable educational institutions in Indonesia and other Global South contexts.

In doing so, the study fills both empirical and theoretical voids by proposing and empirically testing an integrative model grounded in the lived experiences of academic professionals in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative survey research design to achieve three core objectives: description, explanation, and exploration. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to academic staff at Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia. According to the university’s personnel data system (<https://dss.unja.ac.id/sdm>), the total number of lecturers in 2023 was 1,653.

A probability random sampling technique was used, yielding a final sample size of 94 lecturers based on a 10% margin of error. The sample included lecturers across all academic ranks, from Assistant Experts to Full Professors, ensuring adequate representation and enabling generalization of findings regarding the relationship between psychological constructs and workplace conflict.

To ensure the instrument’s clarity and reliability, a pre-test was conducted with a subset of junior lecturers (1–5 years of experience). The objective was to evaluate the validity and interpretability of items measuring core self-evaluation (CSE) and emotional intelligence (EI) in an academic context.

Measurement model and constructs

The research instrument assessed four latent constructs: Core Self-Evaluation (X1), Emotional Intelligence (X2), Workplace Diversity (Z), and Conflict at Work (Y). Each construct was operationalized using multiple indicators based on established theoretical frameworks. The conceptual model tested in this study is presented in Figure 1.

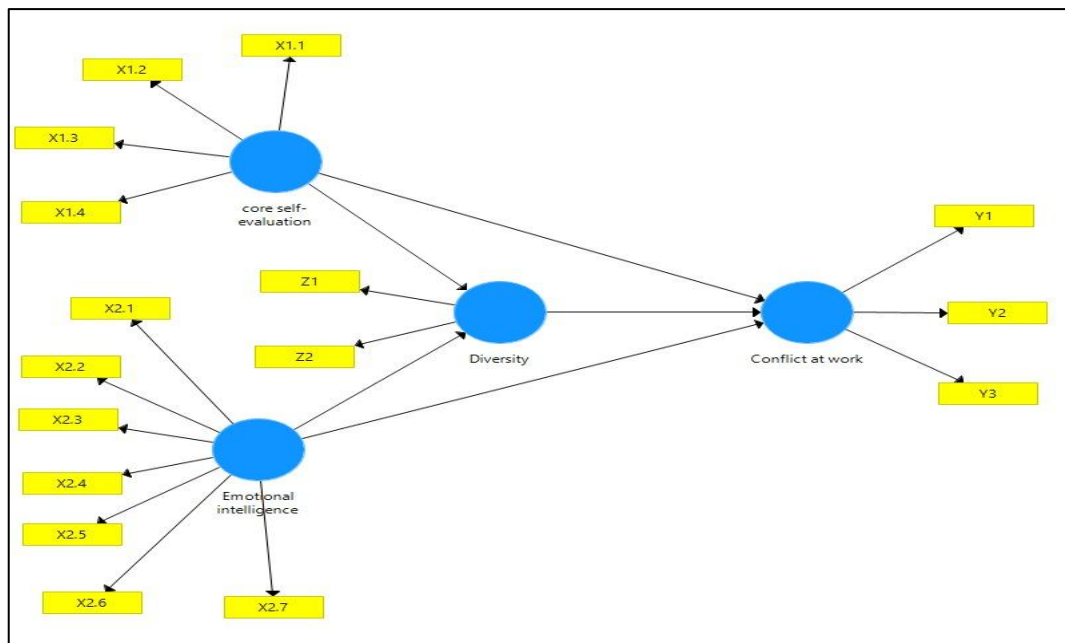


Figure 1. Research model

Where:

Core Self-Evaluation (X1)

- X1.1 Self-esteem
- X1.2 Generalised self-efficacy
- X1.3 Locus of control
- X1.4 Emotional stability

Emotional intelligence (X2)

- X2.1 Self-awareness
- X2.2 Emotional resilience
- X2.3 Motivation
- X2.4 Personal sensitivity
- X2.5 Influence
- X2.6 Intuitive
- X2.7 Conscientiousness

Diversity (Z)

- Z1 Primary dimensions
- Z2 Secondary dimensions

Conflict at work (Y)

- Y1 Relational conflict
- Y2 Task conflict
- Y3 Process conflict

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual model, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H1: Core self-evaluation influences workplace conflict.
- H2: Emotional intelligence influences workplace conflict.
- H3: Core self-evaluation influences workplace diversity.
- H4: Emotional intelligence influences workplace diversity.
- H5: Workplace diversity influences workplace conflict.
- H6: Workplace diversity mediates the relationship between core self-evaluation and workplace conflict.
- H7: Workplace diversity mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace conflict.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique, implemented via the SmartPLS software. This approach is particularly appropriate for theory development and for testing models with complex interrelationships among constructs, especially when the sample size is relatively small.

Measurement scales

All questionnaire items utilized semantic differential scales, allowing respondents to evaluate bipolar adjective pairs on a five-point continuum. This method facilitated precise measurement of individual perceptions related to CSE, EI, diversity, and workplace conflict.

Scoring and categorization

Respondent scores were categorized into five ordinal levels—very low, low, moderately high, high, and very high—based on the following score ranges:

Table 1. Assessment category classification

Category	Score Range
Very Low	20 – 35.9
Low	36 – 51.9
Moderately High	52 – 67.9
High	68 – 83.9
Very High	84 – 100

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the survey data and statistical modeling. The analysis begins with a descriptive overview of each key construct—core self-evaluation, emotional intelligence, perceived diversity, and workplace conflict—followed by an evaluation of the measurement model to assess construct validity and reliability. The final part of the results section focuses on the structural model and hypothesis testing, including direct and indirect (mediated) relationships among variables. Together, these results provide a comprehensive understanding of how individual psychological traits and organizational diversity interact to shape conflict experiences among lecturers at Universitas Jambi.

Core Self Evaluation

The core self-evaluation (CSE) variable comprises four psychological dimensions: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability. These dimensions were measured using a structured questionnaire administered to lecturers at Universitas Jambi. The results of the data analysis are presented in Table 2, which summarizes the actual and maximum scores for each dimension, along with their percentage scores and categorical classifications.

Table 2. Core self-evaluation scores of lecturers at Universitas Jambi

Dimensions	No Item	Actual Score	Score Max	Score Level	Category
Self-esteem	X1.1	392	470	83.40	High
Generalized self-Efficacy	X1.2	377	470	80.21	High
Locus of control	X1.3	380	470	80.85	High
Emotional Stability	X1.4	378	470	80.43	High

Overall, the findings indicate that lecturers at Universitas Jambi exhibit a high level of core self-evaluation. Specifically, the self-esteem dimension recorded an actual score of 392 out of a maximum of 470, yielding a percentage score of approximately 83.4%, which falls into the "high" category. This suggests that respondents generally maintain a positive self-image, perceiving themselves as capable and worthy individuals.

The generalized self-efficacy dimension scored 377 (80.2%), indicating that lecturers feel confident in their ability to handle challenges and perform effectively across various work-related situations. The locus of control dimension scored 380 (80.9%), reflecting a strong belief among participants in their ability to influence outcomes through their efforts. Finally, the emotional stability dimension registered a score of 378 (80.4%), indicating a general tendency among respondents to remain composed and resilient in the face of stress or emotionally demanding circumstances.

Collectively, these results suggest that the academic staff at Universitas Jambi possess well-developed psychological resources. Their high levels of self-confidence

perceived personal control, and emotional regulation indicate a preparedness to meet the demands of a dynamic and diverse academic environment. These traits are particularly valuable in managing occupational stress and navigating complex interpersonal relationships. The consistently high scores across all four dimensions affirm that core self-evaluation is a prominent psychological attribute among the respondents, potentially playing a significant role in shaping their responses to workplace challenges and conflict.

Emotional intelligence

The emotional intelligence (EI) variable encompasses seven psychological dimensions: self-awareness, emotional resilience, motivation, personal sensitivity, influence, intuition, and conscientiousness. These dimensions were assessed to capture the scope and depth of emotional competence among lecturers at Universitas Jambi. The descriptive statistics derived from the survey responses are presented in Table 3, detailing actual and maximum scores, percentage values, and the corresponding categorical classifications.

Table 3. Emotional intelligence of lecturers at Universitas Jambi

Dimensions	No Item	Actual Score	Score Max	Score Level	Category
Self-awareness	X2.1	378	470	80.43	High
Emotional resilience	X2.2	362	470	77.02	High
Motivation	X2.3	371.5	470	79.04	High
Personal sensitivity	X2.4	376.5	470	80.11	High
Influence	X2.5	354.5	470	75.43	High
Intuitive	X2.6	374.5	470	79.68	High
Conscientiousness	X2.7	393.5	470	83.72	High

The analysis reveals that the emotional intelligence of lecturers at Universitas Jambi consistently falls within the "high" category across all measured dimensions. In the domain of self-awareness, respondents demonstrated a pronounced ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions in professional settings. The actual score of 378 out of a possible 470, equivalent to 80.4%, indicates a well-developed capacity for emotional insight and self-control, allowing lecturers to remain attuned to their emotional states while managing academic responsibilities and engaging with colleagues.

Emotional resilience recorded a score of 362 (77.0%), suggesting that lecturers are generally able to maintain performance and emotional stability under stress. This ability to recover from setbacks and manage pressure without emotional disruption is critical for sustaining professional effectiveness. The dimension of motivation, with a score of 371.5 (79.0%), reflects a strong internal drive among respondents, suggesting that they are capable of maintaining energy and focus even in the face of work-related obstacles.

Personal sensitivity, often associated with empathy, yielded a score of 376.5 (80.1%). This suggests that lecturers are responsive to the emotions of others and able to demonstrate understanding and compassion, thereby fostering collaboration and mitigating interpersonal conflict. The influence dimension scored 354.5 (75.4%), reflecting the lecturers' capacity to communicate persuasively and guide others toward shared goals, a skill crucial for fostering cohesive academic teams.

In the area of intuition, the score was 374.5 (79.7%), pointing to an ability to make well-informed decisions that integrate both emotional awareness and rational judgment. This capacity enables lecturers to respond effectively to new or uncertain situations by drawing on prior experiences. The highest score among all dimensions was found in conscientiousness, with 393.5 out of 470 (83.7%). This result reflects a strong sense of responsibility, discipline, and integrity in professional behavior, underscoring a commitment to ethical conduct and consistent performance.

Diversity

The diversity variable is conceptualized through two principal dimensions: primary diversity and secondary diversity. Primary diversity refers to inherent personal characteristics, including gender, age, and physical or mental abilities. In contrast, secondary diversity encompasses acquired or contextual attributes, such as educational background, geographic origin, income level, marital and parental status, religious affiliation, and work experience. Descriptive statistics derived from the questionnaire responses are presented in Table 4, which outlines the actual and maximum scores, percentage values, and category levels for each dimension.

Table 3. Lecturer Diversity at Universitas Jambi

Dimensions	No Item	Actual Score	Score Max	Score Level	Category
Primary	Z1	326.7	470	69.5035461	High
Secondary	Z2	318.7	470	67.80141844	High Enough

The findings reveal that Universitas Jambi is home to a teaching staff with notable diversity across both primary and secondary characteristics. In terms of primary diversity, the data suggest a balanced gender representation, with male and female lecturers contributing relatively equally to the academic environment. The age distribution among lecturers is also wide-ranging, reflecting the coexistence of multiple generational cohorts within the institution. This generational spread enables the integration of diverse teaching perspectives and pedagogical approaches. Moreover, diversity in physical and mental capabilities—though less frequently discussed in academic metrics—adds richness to the institutional environment by fostering inclusion and expanding the spectrum of personal experience and resilience.

Regarding secondary diversity, the data indicate that lecturers come from diverse educational and geographic backgrounds, thereby enhancing the interdisciplinary and intercultural dimensions of academic interaction. The variation in academic qualifications and specializations among faculty members contributes to intellectual plurality, which is beneficial for both teaching and research collaboration. Religious affiliation also emerges as a relevant factor, with the institution accommodating lecturers from multiple faith communities, thus promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. Furthermore, diversity in marital and parental status suggests the presence of individuals with varied life responsibilities and social roles, offering unique perspectives on work-life balance and the need for institutional support. Differences in income levels and work experience further enrich the university’s academic profile, with some lecturers bringing decades of practical experience into the classroom. In contrast, others introduce fresh insights from recent academic training.

Workplace conflict

The workplace conflict variable in this study is conceptualized through three interrelated dimensions: relational conflict, task conflict, and process conflict. Each dimension captures a distinct type of tension that may arise within academic institutions. Relational conflict refers to interpersonal discord, typically rooted in emotional incompatibilities or strained social interactions. Task conflict stems from differing perspectives regarding responsibilities, objectives, or content-related issues. Process conflict involves disagreements over the methods and procedures used to accomplish work.

Descriptive data on workplace conflict among lecturers at Universitas Jambi were obtained from questionnaire responses and are summarized in Table 5, which presents

the actual scores, maximum possible scores, percentage values, and corresponding categorical classifications.

Table 3. Workplace conflict among lecturers at Universitas Jambi

Dimensions	No Item	Actual Score	Score Max	Score Level	Category
Relational conflict	Y1	282.5	470	60.11	High Enough
Task conflict	Y2	285.5	470	60.74	High Enough
Process conflict	Y3	294.5	470	62.66	High Enough
Relational conflict	Y1	282.5	470	60.11	High Enough

The analysis indicates that workplace conflict among lecturers at Universitas Jambi consistently falls into the "high enough" category across all three dimensions. Relational conflict, with a score of 282.5 (60.1%), suggests a moderate level of interpersonal tension, potentially stemming from differences in personality, communication styles, or emotional responses. Task conflict, scoring 285.5 (60.7%), indicates a notable level of disagreement regarding work-related goals, responsibilities, or content areas. Process conflict registered the highest among the three dimensions at 294.5 (62.7%), indicating frequent disputes over how work should be organized, delegated, or executed.

While none of the conflict dimensions reached a "very high" classification, the consistent presence of tension suggests that unresolved conflicts may hinder collaboration, reduce organizational efficiency, and negatively affect overall workplace well-being. These findings underscore the crucial need for effective conflict management strategies that foster emotional regulation, enhance communication, and promote team coordination. They also underscore the importance of equipping academic staff with the psychological competencies necessary to address and navigate conflict in a diverse institutional environment.

Measurement model evaluation

To ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study, a series of measurement assessments were conducted. The first step involved evaluating the loading factor values for each item associated with the core constructs—core self-evaluation, emotional intelligence, diversity, and workplace conflict. These results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Loading values for core constructs

	Conflict at work	Diversity	Emotional intelligence	core self-evaluation
X1.1				0.796
X1.2				0.769
X1.3				0.876
X1.4				0.825
X2.1			0.777	
X2.2			0.625	
X2.3			0.798	
X2.4			0.819	
X2.5			0.708	
X2.6			0.776	
X2.7			0.794	
Y1	0.937			
Y2	0.965			
Y3	0.937			
Z1		0.800		
Z2		0.912		

As indicated in Table 6, all item loadings exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.50, thereby confirming the construct validity of the items. The items measuring workplace conflict (Y1, Y2, Y3) exhibit particularly strong loadings, ranging from 0.937 to 0.965, suggesting a robust representation of the underlying latent variable. Similarly, item loadings for core self-evaluation range from 0.769 to 0.876, for emotional intelligence from 0.625 to 0.819, and diversity from 0.800 to 0.912. These values affirm that all items make significant contributions to their respective constructs.

Reliability assessment

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement model, composite reliability (CR) values were calculated. As shown in Table 7, all constructs exceed the conventional Cronbach's alpha (CR) threshold of 0.70, indicating strong reliability. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha was computed to reinforce these findings. Although the alpha for the diversity construct (0.652) is somewhat lower than that of the other constructs, it remains above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60, suggesting satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 7. Composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Conflict at work	0.963	0.942
Diversity	0.847	0.652
Emotional intelligence	0.904	0.880
Core self-evaluation	0.889	0.841

These results confirm that the measurement instruments are both valid and reliable for capturing the constructs under investigation.

Structural model results and hypothesis testing

The structural model, developed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) algorithm, illustrates the relationships between latent variables and forms the basis for hypothesis testing. As depicted in Figure 2, all latent constructs—core self-evaluation (CSE), emotional intelligence (EI), diversity, and workplace conflict—are reliably measured by their respective indicators, each of which meets the threshold for construct validity and reliability.

In the core self-evaluation construct, locus of control emerged as the most influential indicator, followed by emotional stability and self-esteem. While generalized self-efficacy contributed the least, its factor loading remained within acceptable validity parameters. Within emotional intelligence, personal sensitivity was the most salient dimension, emphasizing the importance of empathy and social awareness in academic settings. Motivation and conscientiousness also showed strong contributions, whereas self-awareness, intuition, and influence demonstrated moderate loadings. Emotional resilience, though valid, was the weakest dimension in this construct.

For the diversity construct, secondary diversity—encompassing differences in educational background, regional origin, income, and belief systems—exhibited stronger factor loadings than primary diversity, such as gender, age, and physical ability. This suggests that lecturers are more perceptive of less visible, context-dependent forms of diversity. In the case of workplace conflict, task conflict emerged as the most dominant form, followed by relational and process conflict, indicating that disagreements over responsibilities and methods are central tensions within the academic work environment.

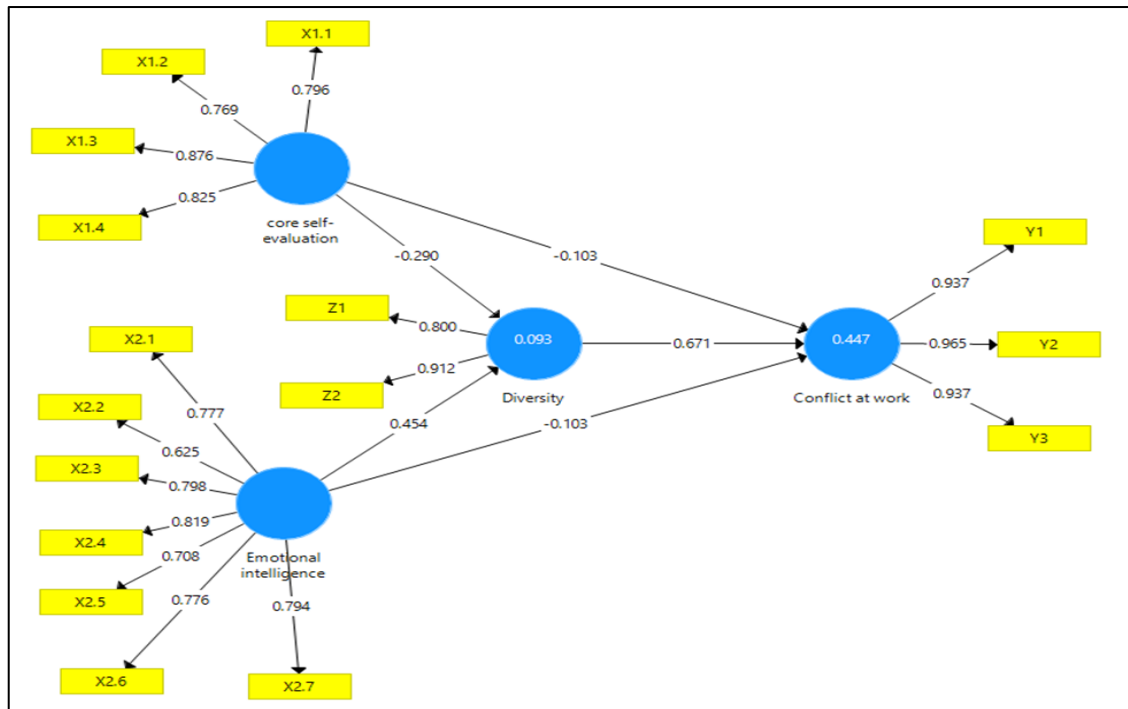


Figure 2. PLS model algorithm

The structural path coefficients and associated significance levels are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Hypothesis testing results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Core self-evaluation -> Conflict at work	-0.103	-0.078	0.127	0.806	0.421
Emotional intelligence -> Conflict at Work	-0.103	-0.118	0.139	0.743	0.458
core self-evaluation -> Diversity	-0.290	-0.236	0.172	1.693	0.091
Emotional intelligence -> Diversity	0.454	0.417	0.215	2.117	0.035
Diversity -> Conflict at work	0.671	0.676	0.063	10.699	0.000
Core self-evaluation -> Diversity -> Conflict at work	-0.195	-0.157	0.114	1.702	0.089
Emotional intelligence -> Diversity -> Conflict at work	0.305	0.284	0.148	2.052	0.041

The results show that both core self-evaluation and emotional intelligence have negative but statistically insignificant direct effects on workplace conflict ($p = 0.421$ and $p = 0.458$, respectively). This suggests that although individuals with stronger psychological traits may perceive less conflict, these traits alone do not directly predict conflict mitigation in academic environments.

In contrast, emotional intelligence demonstrates a statistically significant positive association with diversity ($\beta = 0.454$, $p = 0.035$). This indicates that emotionally

intelligent individuals are more likely to engage positively with diversity, interpreting it as a resource rather than a source of friction. Meanwhile, core self-evaluation exhibits a negative, marginally significant relationship with diversity ($\beta = -0.290$, $p = 0.091$), suggesting a more complex and context-dependent dynamic.

The diversity variable exhibits a strong and statistically significant positive effect on workplace conflict ($\beta = 0.671$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the dual nature of diversity: while it enriches academic dialogue and broadens perspectives, it also introduces potential for tension when differences in background, values, or expectations are not managed effectively.

Mediation analysis further reveals that diversity significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace conflict (indirect effect $\beta = 0.305$, $p = 0.041$). This suggests that the ability to understand and manage emotions enhances diversity awareness, which in turn influences conflict experiences. In contrast, the mediating role of diversity in the relationship between core self-evaluation and conflict is not statistically significant (indirect effect $\beta = -0.195$, $p = 0.089$). However, it trends in a negative direction.

In summary, the structural model results suggest that psychological traits, such as emotional intelligence, play a significant role in shaping perceptions of diversity, which in turn impact workplace conflict. These findings underscore the importance of higher education institutions integrating both emotional competencies and diversity literacy into their professional development and conflict management strategies.

Discussion

Core self-evaluation does not directly influence workplace conflict

The results of this study indicate that core self-evaluation (CSE) does not exert a statistically significant direct effect on workplace conflict among lecturers. Although the direction of the relationship is negative, suggesting that higher levels of CSE are associated with lower conflict, the effect is not strong enough to reach statistical significance. This suggests that internal attributes such as self-confidence, perceived control, and emotional stability alone may not be sufficient to reduce relational, task, or procedural tensions in academic environments.

At Universitas Jambi, lecturers generally exhibited high levels of locus of control and emotional stability, indicating a strong belief in personal agency and effective emotional regulation. However, these traits did not correspond to lower levels of reported conflict. This discrepancy implies that conflict in academic settings may be more influenced by external factors—such as institutional hierarchies, communication norms, or perceived fairness—than by individual psychological strengths. While this finding diverges from studies such as Anand & Mishra (2019) and Oh (2022), it highlights the context-dependent nature of conflict resolution, particularly in hierarchical and collectivist cultures like those found in Indonesia. Thus, individual capacities, such as CSE, may require complementary organizational structures and support to yield significant conflict-reducing outcomes.

Emotional intelligence does not directly influence workplace conflict

Similarly, emotional intelligence (EI) was not found to have a statistically significant direct effect on workplace conflict. This result challenges theoretical expectations that individuals with high emotional intelligence (EI) would be more adept at managing interpersonal tension and workplace stress. In the academic context of Universitas Jambi, this disconnect may stem from cultural or institutional constraints that

limit emotional expression or underplay the relevance of emotional competence in conflict scenarios.

Despite the lack of direct effect, lecturers who scored high on EI exhibited strong personal sensitivity, conscientiousness, and motivation—traits that are widely associated with constructive interpersonal behavior. As noted by Hopkins & Yonker (2015), Fiksenbaum (2014), and Yeh (2018), emotional intelligence (EI) influences how individuals perceive and process social cues. Therefore, it is plausible that EI influences conflict indirectly or in conjunction with contextual factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, or workload demands.

Core Self-evaluation does not positively influence workplace diversity

Interestingly, the relationship between CSE and workplace diversity was negative and only marginally significant. This suggests that lecturers with high self-evaluation may not actively perceive or engage with diversity in meaningful ways. While these individuals may feel secure in their competencies, they may not necessarily demonstrate openness to varied perspectives or backgrounds unless those traits are complemented by interpersonal awareness.

This observation supports the argument that strong self-concepts while empowering, do not automatically translate into intercultural sensitivity or flexibility. Ghauri et al. (2019) contend that effective engagement with diversity requires not only self-confidence but also emotional and cognitive flexibility. Similarly, Jada et al. (2014) emphasize that diversity involves recognizing and valuing differences, which may not align naturally with a predominantly self-focused psychological orientation.

Emotional intelligence positively influences workplace diversity

By contrast, emotional intelligence was found to have a significant positive relationship with diversity. Lecturers with higher emotional intelligence (EI) were more likely to perceive and respond constructively to variations in their colleagues' gender, age, religion, regional origin, and educational background. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that emotional intelligence enhances empathy, perspective-taking, and adaptability—key attributes for successful engagement with diversity (Çayak & Eskici, 2021; Jada et al., 2014).

Practically, this result suggests that enhancing emotional competencies can be an effective strategy for cultivating inclusive academic environments. In institutions where demographic and ideological diversity is increasing, EI development may promote intercultural understanding, tolerance, and collaboration.

Diversity significantly influences workplace conflict

One of the most notable findings is the significant positive impact of diversity on workplace conflict. As perceptions of diversity within academic departments increase, so too does the likelihood of experiencing relational, task, and process conflicts. While diversity enriches institutional life, it also introduces challenges related to communication, coordination, and mutual understanding.

At Universitas Jambi, diversity spans both primary dimensions (e.g., gender, age) and secondary dimensions (e.g., religion, regional origin, educational background). Without institutional mechanisms to manage these complexities, diversity may become a source of friction rather than a source of enrichment. This finding aligns with Jehn (2014), Bleaney & Dimico (2017), and Ghauri et al. (2019), who highlight the risks associated with unmanaged diversity. It underscores the importance of proactive diversity management strategies, not only in recognizing differences but in equipping faculty to navigate them constructively.

Diversity does not mediate the relationship between core self-evaluation and conflict

Despite the centrality of diversity in this study, it did not significantly mediate the relationship between core self-evaluation and workplace conflict. This finding implies that individuals with high CSE may not interpret or engage with diversity in ways that meaningfully alter their experience of conflict. It suggests that self-evaluative strength alone does not extend to social sensitivity or intergroup responsiveness.

This nuance contributes to a broader understanding of the limitations of individual traits in managing collective challenges such as diversity-induced conflict. Studies by Raja et al. (2019) and Oh (2022) similarly show that high-CSE individuals maintain stable and positive self-views; however, they may not necessarily display the flexibility required to adapt to socially diverse environments.

Diversity mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict

Ultimately, the study reveals a significant mediating effect of diversity on the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace conflict. Emotional intelligence enhances an individual's engagement with diversity, which in turn influences their experience of conflict. Interestingly, the mediated effect is positive, suggesting that increased awareness of diversity can heighten sensitivity to potential tensions and disagreements.

This finding reflects the dual-edged nature of diversity: as individuals become more attuned to differences, they may also become more aware of exclusion, inequity, or misalignment. Schlaegel et al. (2020) and Yeh (2018) support this view, noting that EI enables deeper emotional investment in social dynamics, which may amplify conflict sensitivity under certain conditions.

This insight carries practical implications. Interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence (EI) should be paired with institutional initiatives that promote inclusive dialogue and provide structured tools for managing diversity-related tensions. Doing so may ensure that increased sensitivity does not result in increased vulnerability but rather in constructive and empathetic conflict resolution.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study finds that neither core self-evaluation (CSE) nor emotional intelligence (EI) exerts a direct, statistically significant effect on workplace conflict among academic staff at Universitas Jambi. Nonetheless, individuals who exhibit higher levels of these psychological traits tend to approach interpersonal tensions with greater constructiveness. Among the examined variables, workplace diversity emerges as a central organizational factor, showing a significant positive association with conflict across relational, task, and process dimensions. While emotional intelligence enhances sensitivity to workplace diversity, core self-evaluation is associated with a marginal reduction in perceptions of diversity. Furthermore, diversity is found to mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace conflict but does not mediate the link between core self-evaluation and conflict.

These findings underscore the intricate interplay between individual psychological resources and organizational diversity in shaping workplace dynamics in higher education. They also suggest that unmanaged diversity—particularly in settings marked by demographic heterogeneity and evolving institutional mandates—may erode cohesion, collaboration, and trust. This is especially salient for regional universities like Universitas Jambi, which are tasked with fostering inclusive knowledge production, advancing local

development, and serving as agents of social transformation.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed for regional higher education institutions:

First, emotional intelligence and self-awareness should be systematically integrated into institutional policies and academic staff development frameworks. Training in emotional regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution must be institutionalized rather than implemented as isolated initiatives. These competencies can be embedded within existing lecturer certification, promotion, or continuing professional development programs to ensure sustained and scalable capacity building.

Second, universities should adopt and enforce inclusive workplace policies that foster psychological safety and intercultural competence. This may include implementing diversity charters, codes of conduct, and cross-cultural engagement initiatives. Leadership development programs should emphasize inclusive leadership competencies—equipping university leaders to respond effectively to interpersonal challenges and diversity-related tensions.

Third, although core self-evaluation does not have a direct impact on workplace conflict, supporting psychological well-being and personal growth remains critical. Preventive interventions such as confidential psychological counseling, peer mentoring systems, and reflective practice sessions should be made accessible to promote resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional stability among faculty members.

Finally, future research should explore how structural factors—such as governance practices, leadership accountability, and institutional communication climates—interact with individual psychological traits to influence conflict dynamics in academic settings. Such investigations could inform the development of empirically grounded and context-specific policies aimed at cultivating a more harmonious, inclusive, and developmentally oriented academic culture, particularly within Indonesia's growing network of regional universities.

REFERENCES

- Agustina, E. (2021). *Pengaruh Konflik Interpersonal Dan Norma Sosial Terhadap Stres Kerja Dosen FKIP Universitas Jambi* [Universitas Jambi].
- Anand, P., & Mishra, S. K. (2019). Linking core self-evaluation and emotional exhaustion with workplace loneliness: does high LMX make the consequence worse? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(10), 2124–2149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1570308>
- Bleaney, M., & Dimico, A. (2017). Ethnic Diversity and conflict. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 13(2), 357–378. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744137416000369>
- Çayak, S., & Eskici, M. (2021). The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence in the Relationship Between School Principals' Sustainable Leadership Behaviours and Diversity Management Skills. *Journal Frontiers in Psychology*, 12(December), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.774388>
- Cheung, Y. H., Herndon, N. C., & Dougherty, T. W. (2015). Core self-evaluations and salary attainment: the moderating role of the developmental network. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(1), 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1042897>
- Civil Society Watch. (2021). *Perang Saudara di Universitas Indonesia Memalukan*. <https://csw.id/perang-saudara-di-universitas-indonesia-memalukan/#:~:text=Tapi konflik yang terjadi dikarenakan,menggantikan statuta lama buatan 2013>

- Fiksenbaum, L. M. (2014). Supportive work-family environments: implications for work-family conflict and well-being. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(5), 653-672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.796314>
- Ghauri, E., Mansi, M., & Pandey, R. (2019). Diversity in totality : A study of diversity disclosures by New Zealand stock exchange listed companies Diversity in totality : A study of diversity disclosures by New Zealand stock exchange listed companies. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(7), 1419–1459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1539862>
- Hopkins, M. M., & Yonker, R. D. (2015). Managing conflict with emotional intelligence: abilities that make a difference. *Journal of Management Development*, 34, 226-244. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-04-2013-0051>
- Jada, U., Jena, L. K., & Pattnaik, R. (2014). Emotional Intelligence, Diversity, and Organizational Performance: Linkages and Theoretical Approaches for an Emerging Field. *Jindal Journal of Business Research*, 3, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2278682115627240>
- Jambi24Jam. (2023). *Dampak Konflik Internal Unbari: Dosen Tak Digaji, Gubernur Jambi Dilaporkan ke Mabes Polri*. <https://www.jambi24jam.com/2023/06/dampak-konflik-internal-unbari-dosen.html?m=1#:~:text=Jambi%2C%20J24,menerima%20gaji%20sejak%20Maret%202023>
- Jehn, N. A. K. (2014). When Diversity helps performance: Effects of Diversity on conflict and performance in workgroups. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 25(2), 189- 212. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-04-2013-0023>
- Oh, S. (2022). Core Self-Evaluation, Emotional Reactivity to Interpersonal Conflict, and Subjective Well-Being: The Moderating Role of Horizontal Collectivism. *Sustainability*, 14. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052515>
- Academic
- Raja, T. H. L., Setiawan, A., Prasetya, B. A., & Santoso, B. (2023). Measurement Impact of Core Self-Evaluation on Job Outcomes and the Role of Organizational Socialisation. *Information Sciences Letters An International Journal*, 12(7).
- Roberson, Q. M. (2019). Diversity in the Workplace: A Review, Synthesis, and Future Research Agenda. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour*, 6, 69-88.
- Rosita, S. (2014). Pengaruh Konflik Peran Ganda Dan Stress Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Dosen Wanita Di Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Jambi. *Manajemen Bisnis*, 2(2), 185-192. <https://doi.org/10.22219/jmb.v2i2.1705>
- Schlaegel, C., Engle, R. L., & Lang, G. (2020). The unique and common effects of emotional intelligence dimensions on job satisfaction and facets of job performance: an exploratory study in three countries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(8), 1562–1605. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2020.1811368>
- Yeh, C. M. (2018). The relationship between free time activities, emotional intelligence and job involvement of frontline hotel employees. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(4), 767-788. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1496127>

