# Leadership styles: relationship with conflict management styles

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership styles and conflict management styles among managers, while handling interpersonal conflict (mangers and subordinates).

**Design/methodology/approach** – Middle-level managers ($N = 150$) from different private sector manufacturing industries were included in the study to seek responses through questionnaire based on instruments for conflict management and leadership styles.

**Findings** – Managers who perceived to exhibit more on transformational leadership style adopted integrating and obliging style of conflict management. Those who perceived to exhibit more on transactional style opted for compromising style of conflict management. Whereas, managers perceived to exhibit laissez-faire leadership style adopted avoiding style to manage conflicts with subordinates.

**Originality/value** – Despite the universal acceptance of leadership importance in corporate settings, research so far investigated leadership styles as determinants of conflict management styles are population-specific, including nursing managers (Hendel, 2005), university academic staff (Paul, 2006) and healthcare professionals (Saeed, 2008). Furthermore, the findings in the referred studies are not consistent, and this issue seems to be at an exploratory phase that requires further investigation to establish the relationship. Blake and Mouton (1964) and Rahim (1992) tried to measure the strategies in which individuals typically deal with the conflicts. This approach treated conflict styles as individual disposition, stable over time and across situations. It is argued and supported by literature that leadership styles or behaviors remain stable over time and are expected to be significantly related to conflict management styles (Hendel, 2005).

**Keywords** Transactional leadership, Leadership styles, Transformational leadership, Conflict management styles

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

For an organization to be successful, the employees are required to work in harmony to achieve its goals. Because leadership involves the exhibition of style or behavior by managers or supervisors while dealing with subordinates, leadership is a critical determinant of the employees' actions toward the achievement of the organizational goals.

The presence of emotional tensions and conflicts in the organization is one dimension of organizational environment. The leaders may help to release tensions, harmonize misunderstanding and deal with disruptive behaviors (Fisher, 2000). Leaders react to problems, resolve crises, reward and punish followers, provide encouragement and support to followers. Leaders are also concerned about organizational innovation, seek to foster organizational cultures that are conducive to creativity, innovation, conflict-free and challenging environment. In the ideal and conducive environment, leaders tend to influence strategies in conflict management and enhance people to work together effectively. It becomes imperative for a leader to achieve organizational objectives, accomplished by focusing on both the rational and emotional aspects of conflicting issues while resolving disputes or conflicts that occur at any level in the organizational hierarchy.

Constructive conflict management requires considerable social skills. Managers must be able to adapt their conflict management behaviors to a given situation. In some cases, it may be best to confront conflict, and in other cases, it may be better to avoid conflict or accommodate. Conflict management research focus is centered primarily on the conflict situation and the person – situation interaction (Knapp *et al.*, 1988). However, it is believed that conflict behavior is determined by both situational and dispositional influences.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) examined the possible links between individualistic and collectivistic cultural values and preferred conflict styles and found that there are a number of similarities and difference among these cultures. Other Studies have examined the frequently used conflict management styles in public- and private-sector managers (Anis-ul-Haque, 2004). Studies also report a connection between conflict resolution and attachment styles (Cown and Cown, 2005), setting the argument that leadership styles may influence conflict negotiation strategies.

Leadership theories are classified as trait, behavioral, contingency and transformational (Northouse, 2007). Earliest theories assumed that the primary source of leadership effectiveness lay in the personal traits of the leaders themselves. Later behavioral theories of leadership sought to explain what the leaders do and how the employees react, both emotionally and behaviorally. Afterward, the contingency theory of leadership studied leadership style in different environments (Northouse, 2007). Although, these theories clarify role and task requirements for employees, yet they are unable to cope with the inspiration and innovation that leaders need to compete in today's global marketplace.

Over the past 20 years, there has been considerable interest in testing new paradigms of leadership. Previous leadership models have been criticized for failing to explain the full range of existing leadership styles and behaviors (Northouse, 2007). In response to such criticism, the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership emerged. As organizations are forced to transform and expand traditional management practices, identifying high performance and transformational characteristics of leaders is becoming critical. Bass (1985) a proposed three-dimensional model of leadership styles: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire.

In research literature, the Bass model has been examined in different perspectives, like job involvement in group cohesion and performance (Bass *et al.*, 2003), managerial performance, potency, performance (Kark and Shamir, 2002), employees job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bass and Avolio, 1994), extra effort, turnover intention

(Seltzer and Bass, 1990) and with reference to organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000).

Given the dominant role of leadership in work place and the complexity in understanding human resource management in complex organizations, the effects of leaders requires attention to the issues like conflict handling (Smith and Tonidandel, 2003). It was argued that the employees' perception of leadership styles has relationship with conflict management (Ekvall, 1996). Despite the universal acceptance of leadership importance in corporate settings, research for investigated leadership styles as determinants of conflict management styles are population-specific including, nursing managers (Hendel, 2005), university academic staff (Paul, 2006), and healthcare professionals (Saeed, 2008). Furthermore, the findings in the referred studies are not consistent, and this issue seems to be at an exploratory phase that requires further investigation to establish the relationship.

### Literature review

The strength of social systems lies partly in how managers prevent serious conflicts and when conflicts do arise, how they address them to maintain system integrity and preserve the well-being of their members. Organizations adapt to changes in the environment by facing major conflicts, addressing them and reorganizing the necessity to deal with them.

Conflict management is the practice of identifying and handling conflict in a sensible, fair and efficient manner. Conflict management requires such skills as effective communication, problem solving and negotiating with a focus on interests.

Conflict is a pervasive phenomenon, both in social circles and professional interactions. It is put aptly by Landau *et al.* (2001) that "conflict exists in all human relationships: It always has and probably always will", or according to Boohar (2001), "individuals who never experience conflict at the workplace are living in a dream world, blind to their surroundings or are confined to solitary confinement". Various definitions of conflict have been provided by many researchers from multiple disciplines like psychology, behavioral sciences, sociology, communication and anthropology. Rahim (1983) considered conflict as "an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (individual, group, organization, etc.)". Marquis and Huston (1996) define conflict as: "the internal discord that results from differences in ideas, values, or feelings between two or more people". The definitions suggested by the scholars of different disciplines are looking at conflict from different angles. However, the common theme that seems dominant in all these definitions is the aspects of differing needs, goals or interests and the perceived or real interference from one party to the other party.

Conflict in organizations is often avoided and suppressed because of its negative consequences and to seek to preserve consistency, stability and harmony within the organization (Nadler and Tushman, 1999). Such situations necessitate conflict to be studied empirically focusing on its appearance, causes, consequences, emotional, cognitive, motivational and behavioral aspects (Nauta and Kluwer, 2004).

To function effectively at any level within organizations conflict management skills are important prerequisites. Therefore, being aware of the extent of conflict at various levels of an organization is crucial for the management of organizations. Too little conflict results in organizational stasis, while too much conflict reduces the

organization's effectiveness and eventually immobilizes its employees (Marquis and Huston, 1996).

Conflict management has grown into a major subfield of organizational behavior. Conflict resolution is prescribed not simply as a mechanism for dealing with differences within an existing social system, but also as an approach that can facilitate constructive social change toward a responsive and equitable system (Fisher, 2000). Today, successful organizations need to develop the processes, cultures and behaviors capable of accommodating and resolving conflicts in ways that benefit consumers and employees (Nadler and Tushman, 1999).

A number of scholars have developed typologies of conflict management styles using the conceptual model by Blake and Mouton (1964). The two dimensions have been variously labeled "desire to satisfy one's own concern" and "desire to satisfy other's concern" (Thomas, 1976), or "concern for self" and "concern for other" (Rahim and Bonoma, 1979). Typologies presented by Rahim are integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding.

Integrating or collaborating style involves openness, exchange of information and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties. When people use the integrating style, they have concerns for themselves and for others, are problem-solving and solution-oriented (Rahim, 2000). Studies have shown that supervisors who use an integrating style achieved more behavioral compliance, less likely to experience persistent conflict at work and have less disputes (Rahim and Buntzman, 1990).

The obliging or accommodating style is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concerns of the other party. Accommodating is an appropriate strategy when two people cannot agree, but a decision is required to be made. Like the collaborating style, the accommodating style is cooperative, but unlike the collaborating style, the accommodating style is indirect and passive (Blake and Mouton, 1964).

In the dominating or competing style, people are more concerned with their own interests than their partner's interests. This style is assertive and uncooperative. Managers who use the competing style typically are ineffective in meeting their goals and inappropriate in their treatment to subordinates and escalation of conflict and are less likely to comply with directives of management (Rahim and Buntzman, 1990).

The avoiding style has been associated with withdrawal or sidestepping situations based on having little or no concern for oneself or others. As such, it is uncooperative and indirect. This style has also been called non-confrontation, inaction and withdrawal that is shown to be inappropriate and ineffective (Gross and Guerrero, 2000).

The compromising style involves give and take, whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision, characterized by moderate levels of both cooperation and assertiveness. The available research suggests that the compromising style is generally perceived to be moderately appropriate and effective (Gross and Guerrero, 2000).

### Leadership

One of the current approaches to leadership that has been the focus of much research in the recent decade is the bass model approach. In fact, this model is part of the new leadership paradigm, which gives more attention to the transformational element of

leadership. Bass and Riggio (2006) suggested that its popularity may be due to its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and follower development.

Transformational leaders rather than focusing solely on current needs of their employees or themselves focus on future needs. These leaders rather than being concerned with short-term problems and opportunities faced by the organization are more concerned with long-term issues, rather than viewing intra- and extra-organizational factors as discrete, view them in a holistic perspective. The transformational leadership is not a substitute for transactional leadership, rather a complement to it. Research has proven that transformational leadership augments the effects of transactional leadership (Bass, 1990). These components of transformational and transactional leadership are predicted to effect organizational outcomes, followers' satisfaction and leaders' performance. Bass (1990) observed that a leader generally exhibits both styles, with one being more predominant. In an attempt to identify the behaviors underlying these leadership styles, Bass developed the multi-factor leadership theory. This model has been generalized across a wide variety of organizations, cultures and hierarchical levels of management (Bass and Avolio, 1993).

The transformational leadership has consistently been linked to high levels of effort, performance and satisfaction (Bass, 1990). Epitropaki and Martin (2005) examined the impact of transformational and transactional leadership perceptions as important predictors of employees' reported organizational identification, performance, affective organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, burnout and employees' health (Lewis, 2003; Saeed, 2008). Rafferty and Griffin (2004) developed a series of hypotheses suggesting that certain sub-dimensions of transformational leadership that are uniquely associated with a number of outcomes include affective and continuance commitment, role breadth self-efficacy, interpersonal helping behaviors and intentions to turnover.

Transactional leaders identify and clarify subordinates' job tasks and communicate to them how successful execution of tasks will lead to the receipt of desirable rewards. Transactional managers determine and define goals for their subordinates, suggest how to execute tasks and provide feedback. Previous investigations suggest that transactional leadership can have a favorable influence on attitudinal and behavioral responses of employees (Bass, 1990).

Laissez-faire leaders abdicate their responsibility and avoid making decisions. Subordinates working under this kind of supervisor basically are left to their own devices to execute their job responsibilities. Although laissez-faire leadership is observed infrequently, managers still exhibit it in varying amounts. Prior research has found that laissez-faire leadership has an adverse effect on work-related outcomes of employees (Yammarino and Bass, 1990).

Blake and Mouton (1964) and Rahim (1992) tried to measure the strategies in which individuals typically deal with the conflicts. This approach treated conflict styles as individual disposition, stable over time and across situations. It is argued and supported by literature that leadership styles or behaviors remain stable over time and are expected to be significantly related to conflict management styles (Hendel, 2005). A schematic model can be sketched to explain the overlapping role of both models of leadership and conflict management styles (Figure 1).

In the proposed model, the conflict style constructs are shown in the top row of each entry whereas the leadership constructs are shown in parentheses on the bottom row.

Keeping in view the above literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H1.* The transformational leadership style is predicted to exhibit positive relationship with constructive (integrating and obliging) and negative relationship with destructive (dominating and avoiding) styles of conflict management.

*H2.* The transactional leadership is anticipated to have positive relationship with compromising conflict management style.

*H3.* The laissez-faire leadership would have positive relationship with destructive (dominating and avoiding) and negative relationship with constructive (integrating and obliging) styles of conflict management.

## Method
### Participants
The sample of the present study consisted of 150 managers (34 women and 116 men) from the private-sector manufacturing industries. The sample was selected by using a simple random sampling technique. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured to secure the confidentiality of the information provided. A total 180 questionnaires were distributed and 150 were received back completed in all respects, with 80 per cent response rate.
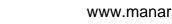
### Measures
The organizational conflict management inventory (OCMI) consisted of 37 items including five dimensions: integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding by Anis-ul-Haque (2004) was used to assess the conflict management styles of managers. Instrument reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) based on the sample was 0.91. The Urdu-adapted version of the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) (Almas, 2007) originally developed by Bass (1985) was used to assess the leadership styles of managers. The MLQ consisting of 36 items has three dimensions including transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership. Cronbach's Alpha for the instrument was found to be 0.83.

| | | CONCERN FOR SELF (Working Model Of Self) | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | **High (Positive)** | **Low (Negative)** |
| **CONCERN FOR OTHERS (Working Model Of Others)** | **High (Positive)** | **Integrating (Transformational)** | **Obliging (Transformational)** |
| | | **Compromising (Transactional)** | |
| | **Low (Negative)** | **Dominating (Laissez-faire)** | **Avoiding (Laissez-faire)** |

Figure 1.
Proposed model; correspondence of leadership styles with conflict management styles

*Data analysis*
Data collected on OCMI and MLQ were scored and sorted in accordance with the
directions of the instrument developers. The intercorrelation table of all variables along
with reliability coefficients of all scales and inferential statistics were calculated.
Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between
leadership and conflict management styles.

## Results
Descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation of all variables included in the study
are shown in Table I.

The correlation matrix shows that the transformational style has significant positive
relationship with transactional style and with constructive conflict handling styles
(obliging and integrating) and negative with the laissez-faire style (Table II). The
transactional leadership style exhibits a significant positive relationship with
compromising and negative relation with dominating conflict management styles. On
the other hand, the laissez-faire style depicts significant positive relation with avoiding
and negative with integrating style of conflict management (Table III).

The results of the multiple regression analysis show that the transformational style
has significant relationship with the integrating style of conflict management, whereas
the transactional and the laissez-faire do not show significant relationship. The value of
$R^2 = 0.153$ shows that 15.3 per cent of variance is explained by independent variables

| Study variables | $M$ | $SD$ | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Organizational conflict-management inventory* | | | | |
| Integrating | 42.41 | 5.97 | 28 | 52 |
| Obliging | 29.93 | 4.86 | 21 | 51 |
| Compromising | 5.00 | 1.74 | 1 | 10 |
| Dominating | 11.84 | 3.01 | 8 | 17 |
| Avoiding | 27.12 | 6.03 | 11 | 35 |
| *Multi factor leadership questionnaire* | | | | |
| Transformational | 26.05 | 4.18 | 14 | 36 |
| Transactional | 22.97 | 5.40 | 13 | 35 |
| Laissez-faire | 6.62 | 1.87 | 4 | 19 |

**Table I.**
Descriptive statistics for all variables ($N = 150$)

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transformational | **(0.92)** | | | | | | | |
| Transactional | 0.40*** | **(0.84)** | | | | | | |
| Laissez-faire | −0.18* | 0.11 | **(0.71)** | | | | | |
| Obliging | 0.18** | 0.12 | −0.02 | **(0.81)** | | | | |
| Integrating | 0.23** | 0.07 | −0.19* | 0.06 | **(0.93)** | | | |
| Compromising | 0.01 | 0.21** | 0.06 | 0.06 | −0.06 | **(0.72)** | | |
| Dominating | −0.08 | −0.16* | 0.05 | −0.13* | −0.17* | 0.02 | **(0.81)** | |
| Avoiding | −0.11 | −0.06 | 0.22** | −0.03 | −0.27** | 0.02 | 0.16* | **(0.75)** |

**Table II.**
Correlation matrix of all study variables ($N = 150$)

**Notes:** *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$; Boldface shows alpha reliability values of variables

(leadership styles) in dependent variable (conflict management) with ($F = 4.01$, $p < 0.001$). Beta values of 0.35 ($p < 0.003$) shows that transformational style contributes more among these variables to affect the integrating style (Table IV).

The results show that only transformational style is significantly affecting the obliging style. The results also depict that 6.5 per cent of variance is explained by leadership styles in obliging style ($F = 12.01$, $p < 0.05$) and beta value equals to 0.22 ($p < 0.01$).

In Table V, the transactional style has significant relationship with the compromising style. Variance of 5.6 per cent has been explained by the transformational style in compromising strategy. The corresponding beta value is 0.25 for transactional ($F = 12.01$, $p < 0.05$).

Results show beta value $-0.26$ ($p < 0.05$) for transactional and $-0.19$ ($p < 0.01$) for transformational styles of leadership have significant negative impact on dominating style of conflict management. Model explains 6.4 per cent variance in dominating style ($F = 12.14$, $p < 0.05$) (Table VI).

| Model | $B$ | $SE$ | $\beta$ | $t$ | $p$ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Transformational | 0.421 | 0.195 | 0.35 | 5.118 | 0.003 |
| Transactional | 0.371 | 0.281 | 0.10 | 1.320 | 0.189 |
| Laissez-faire | $-0.035$ | 0.096 | $-0.03$ | 0.367 | 0.714 |

**Notes:** $R^2 = 0.153$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.144$, $F = 4.01$, $p < 0.001$

**Table III.**
Regression analysis for leadership styles and integrating style of conflict management ($N = 150$)

| Model | $B$ | $SE$ | $B$ | $t$ | $p$ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Transformational | 0.321 | 0.127 | 0.22 | 2.518 | 0.013 |
| Transactional | 0.371 | 0.281 | 0.10 | 1.320 | 0.189 |
| Laissez-faire | $-0.035$ | 0.096 | $-0.03$ | 0.367 | 0.714 |

**Notes:** $R^2 = 0.065$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.059$, $F = 12.01$, $p < 0.05$

**Table IV.**
Regression analysis for leadership styles and obliging style of conflict management ($N = 150$)

| Model | $B$ | $SE$ | $\beta$ | $t$ | $p$ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Transformational | 0.042 | 0.037 | 0.10 | 1.144 | 0.255 |
| Transactional | 0.083 | 0.028 | 0.25 | 2.944 | 0.031 |
| Laissez-faire | 0.015 | 0.076 | 0.01 | 0.194 | 0.846 |

**Notes:** $R^2 = 0.056$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.037$, $F = 12.01$, $p < 0.05$

**Table V.**
Regression analysis for leadership styles and compromising style of conflict management ($N = 150$)

| Model | $B$ | $SE$ | $\beta$ | $t$ | $p$ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Transformational | $-0.143$ | 0.064 | $-0.19$ | $-2.232$ | 0.027 |
| Transactional | $-0.143$ | 0.049 | $-0.26$ | $-2.945$ | 0.004 |
| Laissez-faire | $-0.025$ | 0.131 | 0.01 | $-0.193$ | 0.847 |

**Notes:** $R^2 = 0.064$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.047$, $F = 12.14$, $p < 0.05$

**Table VI.**
Regression analysis for leadership styles and dominating style of conflict management ($N = 150$)

Table VII shows that only laissez-faire leadership style significantly impacts avoiding style, whereas transformational and transactional leadership do not show significant effect. The value of $R^2 = 0.13$ explains 13.1 per cent of variance by leadership styles in the avoiding style ($F = 3.14$, $p < 0.01$).

## Discussion

Negotiation and dispute resolution are among the core tasks of management and are central to strategic decision-making and operation of organizations. While tensions and conflicts occur naturally in organizations, some people may act in ways that resolve these conflicts and stimulate cooperative behavior, while others may act in ways that leave conflicts unresolved and stimulate antagonistic behavior.

The results of the study supported the first hypothesis, anticipating that the transformational leadership style would have positive relationship with constructive styles of management and negative relation with destructive styles. Standardized beta weights revealed that transformational leadership style contributed a significant positive effect on integrating style ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$), obliging style ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$) and negative impact ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < 0.05$) on the dominating style of conflict management.

These findings are in accordance with the results of prior research demonstrating that transformational leadership has significant influence on integrating and obliging styles of conflict management (Hendel, 2005).

Transformational leadership is effective and facilitative leadership style and is positively related to subordinate satisfaction, motivation and performance (Gasper, 1992). In turbulent environments and conflicting situations, transformational leaders are likely to be more effective because they seek new ways of working, positively managing conflicts, seek opportunities in the face of risk and are less likely to support the status quo.

The second hypothesis is also substantiated that transactional leadership style would exhibit a positive relation with compromising style of conflict management. The findings are consistent with the theory that transactional leadership is an exchange process based on the fulfillment of contractual obligations and transactional leaders offer rewards conditional on their behaviors (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

The compromising style of managing conflict in the organizations involves give-and-take to attain a mutually acceptable agreement. Research has indicated that transactional leaders identify and clarify for subordinates their job tasks and communicate to them how successful execution of those tasks will lead to receipt of desirable job rewards (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

The third hypothesis is partially verified that the laissez-fair leadership style has significant positive effect on the avoiding ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) style of conflict management. These findings are consistent with the prior research (Rahim, 1992; Bushyacharu, 1996) that avoidance style may take form in postponing an issue until a

| Model | $B$ | $SE$ | $\beta$ | $t$ | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transformational | −0.148 | 0.129 | −0.10 | −1.145 | 0.254 |
| Transactional | 0.069 | 0.098 | 0.06 | 0.712 | 0.478 |
| Laissez-faire | 0.686 | 0.000 | 0.26 | 3.611 | 0.001 |

**Table VII.**
Regression analysis for leadership styles and avoiding style of conflict management ($N = 150$)

**Notes:** $R^2 = 0.131$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.112$, $F = 3.14$, $p < 0.01$

better time or withdrawing from a threatening situation. In addition, laissez-faire leaders are also avoiders and withdrawn in dealing with issues related to their subordinates (Bass, 1990).

*Practical implications of the study*
The findings of the study have both important theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical viewpoint, the study supports propositions and extends to the prior work on leadership in addition to conflict management. First, it examines the conceptual similarities and differences among different leadership styles. Second, it promotes a theoretical model, which integrates different aspects of leadership and conflict management literature. Third, it examines which leadership styles have more favorable effects on conflict management.

Organizations should train leaders to ensure that their primary focus is on people management. This means reducing anxiety and anger among employees, promoting optimism and confidence, developing people's skills, helping them manage conflict, building trust within and across teams and ensuring alignment around achieving the best possible organizational aims and objectives (Michie and West, 2004).

While developing training modules, in the light of the study recommendations, the management should emphasize the importance of different domains of transformational and transactional leadership as a fundamental aspect of sound supervisory practices due to the impact it seems to have on perceptions of effective human resource management.

*Limitations and future research*
While assessing managers' conflict management and leadership styles, it was not possible to control some of the confounding factors like the impact of organizational climate and structure.

In addition, the results of the study were based on subjects' self-report. The probability of variance and aspect of social desirability in selection of responses on the scales of study variables could not be minimized through method variance.

Variables other than leadership may influence choice of conflict-handling mode. Further research is recommended on the issues with reference to personality factors and characteristics of the organizational environment.

Furthermore, the findings should be tested in future research in public sector organizations and other than manufacturing sector e.g. profit and non-profit organizations of corporate sectors, banking, telecommunication, education, etc.

Additionally, the Bass model of leadership should be replicated in other cultural context to further explore the predictive role of leadership styles while managing conflicts.

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