An Examination between the Relationships of Conflict Management Styles and Employees Satisfaction

*Dr.T.Vijayakumar
**Ms. K. Anitha Christy

*Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies,
St.Xavier's Catholic College of Engineering, Nagercoil. T.N. India.

**Assistant Professor, Department of ECE, Jeyaraj Annapackiam Engg. College,
Nazareth, Tuticorin District, T.N. India.

Abstract

This study examined the relationships between conflict handling styles and subordinate's satisfaction with supervision. Data from 139 respondents from major industries in India including service, manufacturing, mining and construction demonstrated that subordinates were more satisfied with their superior's supervision through their exercise of integrating, compromising, and obliging styles. On the other hand, subordinates who perceived their superiors as primarily utilizing dominating and avoiding style viewed them as incompetent in supervision and thus lowering their level of job satisfaction.

Keywords: Conflict Handling Styles. Satisfaction with supervision

Introduction

Conflict is known to be inseparable in all human interactions. In any organization, role differentiation acquires different use of conflict handling styles. Work direction, reward, supervision, discipline and performance review also involve the use of conflict handling styles. Organizational change and control may be viewed from a conflict perspective. In attempts to explain the nature or dynamics of a particular organizational phenomenon, conflict may be incorporated as a causal factor.

A great question confronting our industrial society is concerned with the issue on how can the skills of managers be enriched so as to make it possible for them to act with greater proficiency when their contributions are from dealing with and through people especially their subordinates? One way of looking into this issue is from the conflict perspectives. The attention to interpersonal relationships is due to our belief that sound superior-subordinate relationships are important and consistent with humanistic and cooperative work environment sought by contemporary managers. It is also believed that positive interpersonal relationship at workplace is able to increase subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and subordinates with high levels of satisfaction are more likely to be committed to the organization (Brown and Peterson, 1993).

Differences in the perception of conflict possess implication in its own right. This is due to superior's uses of conflict styles may be reinforced by subordinates' responses or the superior may anticipate subordinates' reaction to the use of conflict styles. It is worthwhile for the superior to be aware of the existence of multiple sources of conflict in work situations and how it promote subordinates' job satisfaction since dissatisfaction itself could lead to many organizational dysfunctions such as decline in work performances, dissatisfaction, absenteeism, high turnover, and job stress (Churchill, Ford and Walker, 1976; Fisher and Gittelson, 1983: Van Sell, Brief and Schuler, 1981; Rahim and Buntzman, 1989).

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This research analyzes in general the distribution of conflict handling styles, and its consequences in terms of subordinates' satisfaction with superior supervision in Indian companies. There have been few studies done to investigate the consequences of superior styles of handling conflict in the Indian settings. Achieving greater understanding of the styles of handling conflict and adopting the appropriate one will enable the superior to better achieve their objective in maintaining organizational harmony and good unity. This research is inevitably conducted in Malaysian cultural setting with its diverse social and organizational culture. It will be interesting to look at how Indian workforce responds to different conflict handling styles as social behavior is normally implanted and entrenched in the given society. Another reason of this study is to extend the validity of previous research findings regarding the relationships between supervisory conflict handling styles and satisfaction with supervision in a Indian work environment. This will provide an opportunity for comparing the consequences of conflict handling style in this region with those reported as occurring in the West.

Research Questions

The delineation of research question is to find out the various methods of conflict handling styles employed by superior in the Indian companies, what are the consequences of conflict handling styles and how it affects. Subordinate's job satisfaction. Hence, this study seeks to answer the followings research questions.

1. Are there any significant differences in subordinates' satisfaction with supervision when subjected to different conflict management styles?

Scope of the Study

The foundation of this study rests upon the interaction among major variables as depicted in Figure 1 (Note 1). The primary data used in this study is secured through survey questionnaire. Cross-sectional data of respondents from Indian three industries namely, service, manufacturing, and mining and construction is subjected to quantitative analysis to test the conflict handling styles model.

Literature Review

This section reviews the relevant constructs and variables as well as their interactions involving: (1) Concept of conflict: (2) Typologies of conflict handling styles; and (3) Satisfaction with supervision.

The Concept of Conflict

Conflict is generally defined as a disagreement with regard to interests or ideas. It is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party (Wall and Callister, 1995). Rahim, (1992) and Antonioni, (1999) identified conflict as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities. Conflict can occur between individual, groups, organizations, and even nations (Rahim and Bonoma, 1979; Rahim, 1983, 1986). As human being interacts in organizations, differing values and situations create tension. Conflict is thereby viewed as a situation in which two or more individuals operating within a unit appear to be incompatible.

Organizations are becoming increasingly dependent on groups as the central unit of work. While groups have the advantage of pooling their collective resources, their interdependent nature inevitability creates conflict (Green, Leslie and Marks,

2001). Conflict has historically been viewed as undesirable, something to be avoided (Esquivel 1997). Classical organization theorists believed that conflict produced inefficiency and was therefore undesirable, detrimental to the organization and should be eliminated or at least minimized to the extent possible. Views toward conflict changed with the emerged of social systems and open system theory. Several researchers such as Janis (1972), Wilson and Jerrell (1981), Rahim (1986), Cosier and Dalton (1990), Kolb and Putnam (1992), Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1995), Van de Vliert (1997), and Cetin and Hacifazlioglu, (2004) supported the social and open system theory that conflict should be regarded as a positive indicator of effective organization management.

Thomas and Schmidt (1976) has reported that managers rated conflict management to be somewhat same level or greater importance than planning, communication, motivation or decision making. In support of this view, Lippitt (1982) suggested organization should treat conflict management as an important management-development activity.

Various models of conflict management have been developed throughout the years. Rahim and Bonoma (1979) differentiated the styles of handling interpersonal conflict along two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. These dimensions explain the degree (high or low) to which a person wants to satisfy the concern for others. Studies by Ruble and Thomas (1976) and Van De Vliert and Kabanoff (1990) support these dimensions.

Applying good management principles in building quality relationships with people will help to prevent or at least lessen conflict. In spite of the best efforts at prevention, conflict does arise. The secret is to learn to cope positively with conflict, and not to see it as an enemy to peace, but an opportunity for growth in relationships (Laue, 198 S, and Blome, 1983). In the past, management theorist used the term "conflict avoidance", but today this phrase is increasingly replaced with the phrase of "conflict management". Conflict management recognizes that while conflict does have associated costs, it can also bring with it great benefits. It is for this reasons that today's managers seek not to avoid, but to manage conflict within the organization (Nurmi and Darling, 1997; Su-Mei Lin, .2003).

Typologies of Conflict handling Styles

There are various styles of behavior by which interpersonal conflict can be handled. In order to manage conflict effectively, one style may be more suitable than the other depending upon the situation. Follett (1940) conceptualized five methods of handling conflict in organizations i.e. domination, compromise, integration, avoidance and suppression. Conflict management style has been continuously measured by a variety of different taxonomies. Researchers in social psychology and organizational behavior have proposed models that reduce the myriad tactics of conflict handling styles. One of the first conceptual schemes for categorizing conflict revolved around a simple cooperation-competition dichotomy followed the intuitive notion that styles can be arrayed on a single dimension ranging from competition or selfishness (Deutsch, 1949, 1973). However, doubts were raised over the ability of the dichotomy to reflect the complexity of an individual's perceptions of conflict behavior. In other words, the limitation of single-dimension model is that it fails to encompass styles that involve high concern for both self and other, and styles that involve neither high concern for neither self nor other (Ruble and Thomas. 1976; Smith, 1987, Thomas and Kilmann, 1974: Pruitt and Rubin, 1986).

Subsequent theorists then drawn on a new two-dimensional grid for classifying the styles as suggested by Blake and Mouton (1964, 1970) which .is a self-oriented and other-oriented concern. Other authors have labeled the two dimensions differently (e.g., Thomas and Kitmann. 1974; Rabun, 1983a. 1986; Thomas, 1976; Pruitt and Rubin. 1986; Van de Vliert and Hordijk, 1989, but the basic assumptions have remained similar. Although it has also been debated that individuals select among three or four conflict styles (Pruitt, 1983: Putnam and Wilson. 1982), but evidence from confirmatory factor analyzes concluded that the live factor model has a better fit with data than models of two, three and four styles orientations (Rahim and Magner, 1994, 1995). While the conflict styles somewhat differ in terms of name, the general principles and basic descriptions of the styles appear very similar (Kozan, 1997). Each instrument has been utilized in numerous research studies, yet an examination of the results indicates many inconsistencies and contradictory outcomes.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen Rahim and Bonoma (1979), and Rahim (1983, 1985, 1986a, 2001) styles of handling interpersonal conflict on two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. It is among the most popular styles of handling conflict used in research. In fact, Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) model was based on Blake and Mouton's (1964) grid of managerial styles as well as the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument (1974), Specifically, Rahim and Bonoma confirmed and refined the factor structure of the managerial grid through contact over 1,200 corporate managers across the United States (Rahim, 1983). This work leads them to identity five specific conflict styles, as shown in Figure 2 (Note 2). Rahim (1983, 1986a, 2001) defines styles of handling conflict as integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. It was Rahim's (1986a) idea that "organizational participants must learn the five styles of handling conflict to deal with different conflict situations effective" (p.30). The five conflict styles that emerge from various combinations of these two dimensions are described below:

Integrating Style

High concern for self and others reflects openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties. The integrating style concentrates on problem solving in a collaborative manner. Individuals with this style face conflict directly and try to find new and creative solutions to problems by focusing on their own needs as well as the needs of others. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) found the problem-solving (integrating) style to be more effective than other styles for attaining integration of the activities of different subsystems. When the issues are complex, this style is suitable in utilizing the skills and information possessed by different parties to formulate solutions and successful implementations. Thus, the integrating style is believe to be both effective and appropriate in managing conflicts and, therefore, is perceived as highly competent. The integrating style is competent because it provides each disputant with access to the other person's perceptions or incompatible goals, thereby enabling them to find solution that integrates the goals and needs of both parties (Tutzauer and Roloff, 1988).

Obliging Style

Low concern for self and high concern for others style is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party. Obliging is associated with accommodating behaviors that include putting aside one's own needs to please the partner, passively accepting the decisions the partner makes, making yielding or conceding

statements, denying or failing to express one's needs, and explicitly expressing harmony and cooperation in a conflict episode (Hocker and Wilmot, 1998). These types of conflict strategies are indirect and cooperative (Blake and Mouton, 1964). It can be used as a strategy when a party is willing to give up something with the hope of getting something in exchange from the other party when needed.

Dominating Style

High concern for self and low concern for others style has been identified with win-loses orientation or with forcing behavior to win one's position. The dominating style relies on the use of position power, aggression, verbal dominance, and perseverance. This style is direct and uncooperative (Blake and Mouton, 1964). Within interpersonal context, the dominating (competing / distributive) style has been found to be associated with low levels of effectiveness and appropriateness. However, Papa and Canary (1995) suggested that the dominating style might be somewhat effective in organizational contexts when there are production-related goats. In this case, an individual might use power strategies and aggression to effectively accomplish a goal, even, though these strategies may be seen as inappropriate at a relational level. Spitzberg, Canary and Cupach, (1994) term dominating style as the maximizing response to conflict, because it maximizes the importance of one's own needs at the expense of the other individual's needs. Therefore, the dominating style may be seen as effective but not appropriate.

Avoiding Style

Low concern for self and others style has been associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, or sidestepping situations. An avoiding person fails to satisfy his or her own concern as well as the concern of the other party. This style is useful when the issues are trivial or when the potential dysfunctional effect of confronting the other party outweighs the benefits of the resolution of conflict.

Compromising Style

Intermediate in concern for self and others style involves give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. It may mean splitting the difference, exchanging concessions, or seeking middle-ground position. It may be appropriate when the goals of the conflicting parties are mutually exclusive or when both parties, who are equally powerful, e.g. Labor and management, have reached a deadlock in their negotiation. This style may be of some use in dealing with strategic issues, but heavy reliance on this style may be dysfunctional.

Hypothesis to the Tested

The hypothesis is those dealing with consequences of conflict handling styles upon subordinates' satisfaction with supervision (HIa & Hib). More specifically, the following hypotheses were formulated which serve as focal points for the study. Organizational conflict researchers (e.g. Rahim and Buntzman, 1989; Burke, 1970; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Likert and Likert, 1976) generally assert that superior who exhibits integrating, compromising, and obliging styles are more prone to foster a cordial dyadic relationships among superiors and subordinates. These styles are related to an effective conflict management. Several studies on the integrating, compromising, and obliging styles of handling conflict show consistent results m satisfaction with supervision (Korabik, Baril. and Watson, 1993: Tutzauer and Roloff, 1988; Wall and Galanes, 1986: Vigil-King. 2000). Likewise, other studies recorded that superior uses dominating and avoiding is linked to negative effect on subordinate's satisfaction (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoeck, and Rosenthal, 1964; Likert, 1967). Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

5

Hypothesis la: Superior's integrating, obliging, and compromising styles have direct and positive effect on the subordinates' satisfaction with supervision.

Hypothesis lb: Superior's dominating, and avoiding styles have negative effect on the subordinates' satisfaction with supervision-.

Research Methodology

Sampling Design

The sample for this study comprises of the executives, managers and professionals in services, manufacturing, and mining and construction companies. This sample was selected for two reasons: (1) this represents the group of more educated people who are more aware of the kind of conflict styles with superiors, and normally hinge more on the non-traditional organizational-based kind of relationship to sustain their interest in the organization, and (2) the industries are among the more dominant industries in India that contribute significantly to the Gross Domestic Product and labor employment.

The companies that met the above criteria were selected from the list of companies gathered from the Federation of Manufacturers India (FMM), Construction Industry Development Board (CTDB), and Indian Trade and Commerce Directory. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting the samples from the large database. Data subjects were obtained through survey questionnaire.

Research Instruments

All data used in the study consist of responses to questionnaire items. Measures of the relevant constructs were taken from previous studies are discussed here.

Conflict Handling Style

Conflict management styles were measure by using the Form C of ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983a). This multi-item instrument contains 28 items uses a 5-point Likert scale to assess subordinates' perceptions on supervisor's style of handling conflict. The ROCI-II was designed to measure 5 dimensions or styles of resolving conflict. 7 items for measuring integrating style, 6 items each for measuring obligating style and avoiding styles, 4 items for measuring compromising style and 5 items for measuring dominating style. 4.2.2. Satisfaction with Supervision

Data Analysis Techniques

Reliability and factor analysis was used to check the consistency and dimensionality of the scale items. Multiple regression analysis is performed to. Check the criterion-related validity of the scale items. Pearson Inter correlation was used to. Measure the relationships among conflict handling styles and subordinates' satisfaction with supervision. It allowed a straight forward interpretation of the hypothesized relationships.

Research Result and Discussions

Sample Characteristics

From the total of 145 responses received, data from 139 respondents were usable. By ethnic group, 42% of the respondents were India, 38% were USA, and 17% were Bangladesh, while other races made up the rest. By gender, 53% were male and 47% were female. In terms of age, the highest proportion of respondents fell into the 23-30 years age group. They accounted for 63% of the total number of respondents. This was followed by the 31-46 years age group (33%), while those

above 41 years old accounted for the remaining.

On the whole, the education level of the respondents was high. Nearly 84% of the respondents had education up to tertiary level. Only 1% of the respondents had no tertiary education. The high educational level was reflected in the position or the type of occupation held by the majority of the respondents i.e. 7 Directors/General Managers/ Assistant General Manager, 3 Senior Managers, 46 Departmental Manager/Assistant Managers and 83 Executives.

The average salary of the respondents was higher than the population's average. The survey data showed that 27% of the respondents earned more than RM5000 per month, 14% earned RM40G1 to RM50QQ per month, 49% earned RM3001 to RM40CQ per month, and 10% earned RM200I to RM30O0 per month.

On average, the respondents had worked in the present company for 4 years with a standard deviation, of 3.6 years. It was noted that 59% of the total respondents had worked for 1 to 3 years in the present company, 25% had worked between 4 to 6 years. 12% had worked between 7 to 9 years, and 4% had worked between 10 and 13 years, white only 1% of the respondents had worked longer than 20 years in the present company. The degree of job mobility among respondents was reflected in the average number of previous jobs held by respondents i.e. 2 jobs. For the present sample. 20% responded that they had no previous job, 29% had one, 32%o had two, 11% had three and the rest reported that they had more than 4 previous jobs.

In terms of the organizational size, the survey had selected sample which represents the medium to large sized Indian companies. It was found that 39% of the companies had 1 to 100 employees, 7% had 101 to200 employees. 9% had 201 to 400 employees, 17% had 401 to 1000 employees and 29% had more than 1000 employees. Classifying the business according to the type of industry revealed that a greater portion of the companies are in services industries (55%), followed by manufacturing industries (23%) and 6% of mining and construction.

The survey revealed the following information about the respondent's superior. A 76% superiors reported in the survey were males and 24% were female. A majority of them were holding medium to high management positions. Racial composition of the superiors was: 46% Indian, 41% USA, 8% Bangladesh and 5% from other races. On average, the superiors had worked in the organization for 11 years with a standard deviation of 7.6 years - longer than the subordinates average. Only 1% had worked for less than a year, 30%o had worked between 1 and 5 years, 29% had worked between 6 and 10 years, 17% had worked between 11 to 15 years, 13% had worked between 16 to 20 years and 10% had worked more than 20 years in the present company. The superiors were holding various positions in the company with 33% of them in the first hierarchical level, 30% in the second level, and 26% in the third level, while only a fraction of them were in the lower management positions. Their educational level was also predictably high, with 55% of them having had tertiary education. Only 6% had up to either primary or secondary education. By designation, 64 of the superiors were the directors/general manager/ assistant general manager of companies. 23 were the senior managers, 50 were the departmental manager/assistant managers and the rest consisted of executives.

Validating the Scales

The standardized Cronbach Alpha and the inter-item correlation for each subscale are provided in Table 1 (Note 3). The internal consistency reliability coefficients for all the scales were satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978). All the scales had coefficient Cronbach Alpha greater than .78. The inter-item correlations for the five scales ranged between .14 and .82.

The data on the 28 conflict handling style items from the sample of 139 respondents were factor-analyzed. This was done to test the earlier postulation that the underlying set of data contained 5 distinct dimensions or factors (Steward, 1981). These initial factors were derived through the Maximum Likelihood analysis and the terminal solution was reached through Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization using the SPSS computer package. The analysis extracted five factors. The selection of a factor and an item was guided by the criteria: Eigenvalue > 1.0 and Scree Plot and factor loading >0.4, respectively (Ford, MacCallum, and Tait, 1986). Based on these criteria, the first five factors were selected. The results are presented in Table 2 (Note 4). The order of items was altered to show the clustering of items more clearly. The factor loading of >0.4 are underlined to indicate the items finally selected to represent the five sub-scales.

Three of the factors extracted which represented integrating, dominating and avoiding conflict handling styles contained all items as earlier included in the scale. Factor which represented obliging style contained 4 items as against 6 items earlier included in the scale. Item "My superior generally tries to satisfy the needs of mine" was found to be poorly correlated with the rest of the obliging styles items. It also loaded more on the integrating style. This item is dropped from the scale. A closer examination of the responses to this item indicated that respondents tend to overstate their intention (mean score of 4.0) to have a good superior-subordinate relationship. The reason for this could be that most individuals especially the subordinates wished for harmony at work and would make an effort to maintain a good working relationship with their superiors despite difference between them. Item "My superior usually allows concessions to me" of obliging style item failed to meet the selection criteria and was thus dropped from the scale. Factor which represented compromising style contained 3 items as against 4 items earlier included in the scale. Item "My superior tries to find a middle course to resolve an impasse" was found to be poorly correlated with the rest of the compromising style items and not be suitable for inclusion here.

A multiple regression analysis was run to lest the direct relationship between superior conflict handling styles and subordinates' satisfaction with supervision. The result indicates that significant relationship exists and together the independent variables explained about 43.7% of the variation on satisfaction with supervision. The relations between the five styles and "theoretically-related" dependent variable further reinforce the criterion related validity of the conflict handling scale. The result of analysis is shown on Table 3 (Note 5). The results showed that only integrating style has direct positive effect on satisfaction with supervision (Beta = .42; p < .0001). Also, it I s noted that dominating style has direct but negative effect on satisfaction with supervision (Beta = -.32. p < .0001).

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis HIa states that superior's integrating, compromising and obliging styles have direct and positive effect on the subordinates satisfaction with supervision. The correlational analysis in Table 4 (Note 6) provided good support for HIa. The integrating, compromising and obliging styles of handling conflict showed positive relationships and highly correlated with satisfaction with supervision.

8

These three correlations were significant beyond .01 level.

In the relationship of conflict handling styles to satisfaction with supervision, integrating style ranked highest among other style exercises (r = .62, p < .01). This was followed by compromising style and obliging style which had coefficients of correlation of .33, p < .01 and .29. p < .01 respectively. The ranking of inter correlation was somewhat similar to the study of Rahim and Buntzman (1989) conducted on respondents with post graduate working experience. It was expected that integrating, compromising and obliging style represents a high level of inner acceptance between superior and subordinate relationships. As Rahim and Buntzman (1989) found out, the integrating, compromising, and obliging style of handling conflict tends to foster a more satisfied, cooperative and prolonged relationships among superiors and subordinates.

Literature on organizational conflict also shows that integrating, compromising, and obliging styles are positively associated with supervision with satisfaction. Burke (1970) suggested that, in general, a confrontation (integrating), compromising, and obliging styles were related to the effective management of conflict that lead to supervisory satisfaction, while forcing (dominating) and withdrawing (avoiding) were related to the ineffective management of conflict that lead to supervisory dissatisfaction. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) indicated that an integrating, compromising, and obliging styles dealing with inter-group conflict was used to a significantly greater degree in higher performing organizations than lower performing organizations.

A field study with a convenience collegiate sample by Rahim and Buntzman (1989) suggested that the integrating (problem solving), compromising and obliging styles of handling conflict is positively correlated with supervision with satisfaction. Likert and Likert (1976) strongly argued and provided some evidence to suggest that an organization that encourages participation and problem solving (integrating) behaviors attains a higher level of satisfaction with supervision. Several studies on the integrating, compromising, and obliging styles of handling conflict show consistent results. These styles result in high joint benefit for the parties, better decisions, and greater satisfaction with supervision (Korabik, Baril, and Watson, 1993: Tutzauer and Roloff, 1988: Wall and Galanes, 1986). Vigil-King (2000) study shows that superior that use more integrating conflict management styles are likely to have higher subordinates' supervision with satisfaction than superior using less integrating styles.

Among subordinates, integrative style emerges as a very important cue for acceptance and recognition of the superior's conflict management style as reflected in the present result. It most likely gains their compliance and least likely to provoke their resistance (Gross and Guerrero, 2000). Similarly, greater satisfaction with supervision among subordinates may lead to. greater cooperation and heightened dependence. In the superior-subordinate interaction-, subordinates frequently say what is acceptable rather than what they know is true. Therefore, an individual subordinate may, use a more obliging style with superiors. This is due to subordinates are likely to withdraw from a conflict situation (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoeck and Rosenthal, 1964).

As the present results supported the general view the integrating, compromising and obliging style has a positive effect on the superior- subordinate relationship. The high degree of inter correlations among the integrating, compromising and obliging served to temper the previous discussions and tended to suggest that while integrating style emerged as the dominant explanatory of conflict handling style, its effective utilization might be tied to some extent, to the

9

superior's exercise of a combination of other style such as compromising and obliging style.

Hypothesis Hlb predicts that superior's dominating and avoiding styles have negative effect on subordinates' satisfaction with supervision. Both the dominating and avoiding styles showed relatively negative but significant correlation (r= -.50, p < .01; r = -.24, p < .01 respectively) with supervisory satisfaction. In the dominating style, subordinates' responses tend to be dependent on the normative acceptance of the position and prerogatives of the organization at large including its leadership. The present result concurred with the conclusion made by Rahim (1986) and Burke (1970) that dominating and avoiding styles are less effective means of supervisory satisfaction.

The present result seems to support Hypothesis Hlb. The study indicated that the dominating style perceived held by a superior was negatively associated with supervisory satisfaction. Past researchers supported this correlation (e.g. Van de Vliert, Euwema, and Huismans, 1995; Van de Vliert, 1997: Rahim and Btintzman, 1989; Gross and Guerrero. 2000) have stated thai dominating style which is derived from control over negative or punishing outcomes for others does not appear to be a suitable style for dealing with subordinates. It is negatively related with concern for the other party which will usually not improve the relationship. (Sorenson, Morse and Savage, 1999). The traditionalists believed that dominating is ineffective and can lead to conflict of social interaction. Although it has been found in some studies that individuals can achieve substantive outcomes through forcing behavior (De Dreu and Van de Vliert. 1997: Rahim, 1992; Thomas. 1992) but people could not be forced into a deep-seated acceptance of organizational requirements.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of this study were consistent with the hypotheses based upon other organizational studies involving qualified and professional people. The research instruments used in this study were tested and found to be reliable in our Indian work environment. The results provided some tentative, but hopefully useful guidance for organizational administration.

Inter correlations among the live styles of conflict handling showed that the results are closely similar to Rahim and Buntzman (1989). The results revealed that integrating, compromising and to some degree obliging are found to be in association with each other. These inter correlations may give rise to a favorable halo effect with respect to the perceived influence, for example if a superior is perceived as having integrating style, this will also augment other styles (e.g. compromising, obliging) at his/her disposal. On the other hand, dominating was the least correlated with all other styles and most often stands alone. Among all the conflict styles, dominating was most related to avoiding style. It indicates that dominating and avoiding style tend to be used interchangeably. Though not considered as a serious disadvantage, notable inter correlations among the five styles of handling conflict denote the difficulty of finding conflict style typology which is both exhaustive and conceptually distinct.

The challenge of the contemporary organization is also to encourage the use of the integrating/problem solving style of handling conflict among superior and subordinates. Employees should also be trained not to engage in win-lose or bargaining style of handling conflict. This can be done by strengthening the integrating conflict-management style and discouraging the use of an avoiding style. To attain this goal, training in conflict management of subordinates and superiors and appropriate changes in organization design and culture would be

10

needed (Rahim, 2001).

References

1. Antonioni, D. (1999) Relationship between the Big Five Personality Factors and Conflict Management Styles. *International Journal of. Conflict Management,* 9(4): 336-355.

2. Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J.S. (1964). *The Managerial Grid.* Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Co.

3. Blake. R.R. and Mouton, J.S. (1970). The Fifth Achievement. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science,* 6: 413-426.

4. Blame, G. (1983). Work Teams: Applications and Effectiveness. *American Psychologist,* 45: 12-133.

5. Brown, S.P. and Peterson, R.A. (1993). Antecedents and Consequences of Salesperson Job Satisfaction: Meta-analysis and Assessment of Causal Effects. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 30: 63-77.

6. Burke, R.J. (1970). Method of Resolving Superior-subordinate Conflict: The Constructive use of Subordinate Differences and Disagreements. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance,* 5: 393-411.

7. Cetin, M.O and Hacifazlioglu. O. (2004). Academics Conflict Management Styles. *Dogus University Journal.*

8. Churchill, Ford and Walker. (1976). Organizational Climate and Job Satisfaction in the Sales Force, *Journal of Marketing Research.* 13:323-332.

9. Cosier, R.A. and Dalton, D.R. (1990). Positive Effects of Conflict: A Field Assessment". *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 1: 81-92.

10. De Dreu C.K..W. and Van de Vliert, E. (1997). *Using Conflict in Organizations.* London: Sage.

11. Deutsch, M. (1949). A Theory of Cooperation and Competition. *Human Relations, 2:* 129-151.

12. Deutsch, M. (1973): *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes.* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

13. Esquivel, A. (1997). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 44: 350-383.

14. Fisher, CD. and Gittelson, R. (1983). A Meta-analysis of the Correlates of Role "Conflict and Ambiguity. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 68: 320-333.

15. Follett, M.P. (1940). Constructive Conflict. In B.C. Metcalf and L. Urwick (Eds.), *Dynamic Administration:* The collected papers of Mary Parker Follet (pp. 1-20), New York: Harper.

16. Green, B., Leslie, A.D. and Marks, M. (2001). Maximizing the Benefits of Task Conflict: The Role of Conflict Management. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 12(1): 4-22.

17. Gross, M.A. and Guerrero, L.K. (2000). Managing Conflict Appropriately and Effectively: An Application of the Competence Model to Rahim's Organizational Conflict Styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 11: 200-226.

18. Hellriegel, D.Slocum, J.W. Jr. and Woodman, R.W. (1995). *Organizational Behavior. 7th Ed.* West Publishing Co., New York, NY.

19. Janis. l.J. (1972). *Victims of Groupthink.* Honghton Miffilin. Boston.

20. Kahn, R.L., Wolfe, D.M., Quinn, R.P., Snoeck, J.D., and Rosenthal, R.A. (1964). *Organizational Stress. Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity,* New York: Wiley.

21. Kolb, D.M. and Putnam, L.L. (1992). The multiple faces of Conflict in Organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior.*13:311-321

22. Korabik, K.., Baril, G.L. and Watson, C. (1993). Managers' Conflict Management Style and Leadership Effectiveness: The Moderating Effects of Gender. *Sex Roles,* 29: 405-420.

23. Kozan, M.K.. (1997). Culture and Conflict Management: A Theoretical Framework. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 8(4): 338-360.5

24. Laue, J.H. (1981). *Conflict Intervention in Handbook of Applied Sociology.* M.E. Olsen and M. Micklin (Eds.),New York, Praeger.

25. Lawrence, P.R. and Lorsch, J.W. (1967). *Organization and Environment.* Homewood, 111: lrwin-Dorsey.

26. Likert, R. (1967). *The human organization.* New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

27. Likert, R. and Liken, J.G. (1976). *New Ways of Managing Conflict.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

28. Lippitt, G.L. (1982). Managing Conflict in Today's Organizations. *Training and Development Journal,* 36(7): 67-74.

29. Locke, E.A. (1976). The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction. *In Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology,* Ed. Marvin Dunnette.   Chicago, IL: 1297-1350.

30. Nunnally, J.C. (1978). *Psychometric Theory,* New York: McGraw-Hill.

31. **Nurrai,** R.W. and **Darling, J.R.** (1997). *International Management Leadership: The Primary Competitive Advantage.* International Business Press, New York.

32. Papa, M.J. and Canary, D.J. (1995). Conflict in organizations: A competence-based approach. In A.M. Nicotera (Ed) Conflict and organizations. Communicative Processes, pp: 153-179. New York: State University of New York Press.

33. Pruitt, D.G. (1983). Strategic Choice in Negotiation. *American Behavioral Scientist, 27:* 167-194.

34. Pruitt, D.G. and Rubin, J.Z. (1986). *Social Conflict: Escalation; Stalemate, Settlement.* New York: Random House.

35. Putnam. L.L. and Wilson, C.E. (1982). Communicative Strategies in Organizational Conflicts: Reliability and Validity of a Measurement Scale.   In M. Burgoon (Eds.), *Communication Yearbook,* 6: 629-652.

36. Rahim, M.A., (1983a). A Measure of Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict. *Academy of Management Journal,*26: 368-376.

37. Rahim. M.A.. (1983b). *Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-ll, Form A.* Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

38. Rahim, M.A., (1983c). Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory -1. Palo Alto, CA: *Consulting Psychology Press:*

39. Rahim, M.A., (1983d). Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory -II, Form A, B, & C. Palo Alto, CA: *Consulting Psychology Press.*

40. Rahim. M.A.. (I983e). Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventories: Professional

Manual. Palo Alto, CA: *Consulting Psychology Press.*

41. Rahim, M.A. (1985). A Strategy for Managing Conflict in Complex Organizations. *Human Relations,* 81 -89.

42. Rahim, M.A. (1986). Referent Role and Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict. *Journal of Social Psychology-,* 126:79-86.

43. Rahim, M.A. (1986a). *Managing Conflict in Organization.* New York: Praeger.

44. Rahim, M.A. (1986b). Referent Role and Styles of Handling Conflict: A Model for Diagnosis and Intervention. *Psychological Reports,* 44: 1323-1344.

45. Rahim, M.A. (1992). *Managing Conflict in Organizations* (2nd Ed.). New York: Praeger.

46. Rahim, M.A.(2001). Managing Organizational Conflict. Challenges for Organization Development and Change. In R.T. Golembiewski (ed), *Handbook of Organizational Behavior* (2nd rev. ed., pp. 365-387). New York: Marcel Dekker.

47. Rahim, M.A. and Bonoma, T.V, (1979). Managing Organizational Conflict: A Model for Diagnosis and Intervention. *Psychological Reports,* 44: 1323-1344.

48. Rahim, M.A. and Buntzman, G.F. (1989). Supervisory Power Bases, Styles of Handling Conflict with Subordinates, and Subordinate Compliance and Satisfaction. *Journal of Psychology,* 123: 195-210.

49. Rahim, M.A. and Magner, N.R. (1994). Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the Rahim Organizational Conflict lnventory-11, *Psychological Reports,* 74: 35-38.

50. Rahim, M.A. and Magner, N.R. (1995). Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict: First-order Factor Model and its In variance across Groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 80: 122-132.

51. Roznowski, M. (1989). Examination of the measurement properties of the job descriptive index with experimental items. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 74(5),* 805-814.

52. Ruble, T.L. and Thomas, K.W. (1976). Support for a Two-dimensional Model of Conflict Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance,* 16: 143-155.

53. Sager, F.K. (1994). The Role of Behavior Intentions in Turnover of Salespeople. *Journal of Business Research,* 29(3): 179-189.

54. Simmons, T. and Ruth, S. (1997). *A Win-win Situation.* News and Observer, NJ, 10

55. Smith, W.P. (1987). Conflict and Negotiation: Trends and Emerging Issues. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology,* 17: 641-677.

56. Smith, P.C.; Kendall L.M. and. Hulin C.L. (1969). The *Measurement of Satisfaction in Work and Retirement. A Strategy for the Study of Attitudes.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

57. Sorenson, R.L., Morse, E.A. and Savage, G.T. (1999). A test of the motivations underlying choice of conflict strategies in the dual-concern model. International Journal of Conflict Management, 10(1), 25-44.

58. Spitzberg, B.H., Canary, D.J. and Cupach, W.R. (1994). A Competence-based Approach to the Study of Interpersonal Conflict. In D.D.Cahn. (Ed.), Conflict in Personal Relationships, pp: 183-202. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

59. Su-Mei Lin (2003). Relationship among Conflict Management Styles, Employees' Job Satisfaction and Team-Effectiveness. A Comparison between Public

and Private Hospital in Taiwan. *ProQuest Information and Learning Company.*

60. Thomas, K.W. (1976). Conflict and Conflict Management. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook *of Industrial and Organizational Psychology-* (pp. 889-935). Chicago: Rand McNally.

61. Thomas. K.W. (1992). Conflict and Negotiation Processes in Organizations. In M.D. Dtmnette and L.M. Hough (Eds.). *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (2nd Ed., pp. 651-717). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

62. Thomas, K.W. and Kilmann, R.H. (1974). *The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE Instrument.* Tuxedo, NY: Xicom.

63. Thomas, K.W. and Schmidt, W.H. (1976). A Survey of Managerial Interests with Respect to Conflict. *Academy of Management Journal,* 19: 315-318.

64. Tutzauer, F. and Roloff. ME. (1988). Communication, Processes Leading to Integrative Agreements: There Paths to Joint Benefits.*Communication Research,* 15: 360-380.

65. Van de Vliert, E. (1997). Complex Interpersonal Conflict Behavior: Theoretical Frontiers. Hove, UK: *Psychology Press.*

66. Van de Vliert, E. and Hordijk, J.W. (1989). A Theoretical Position of Compromising Among Other Styles of Conflict Management. *Journal of Social Psychology,* 129:681-690.

67. Van de Vliert, E. and Kabanoff, B. (1990). Toward Theory-based Measures of Conflict Management. *Academy of Management Journal,* 33: 199-209.

68. Van de Vliert. E., Euweina, M.C. and Huismans. S.E. (1995). Managing Conflict with a Subordinate and a Supervisor: Effectiveness of Conglomerated Behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 80: 271 -281.

69. Van Sell, M., Brief. A.P. and Schuler, R.S, (1981). Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity: Integration of the Literature and Directions for Future Research. *Human Relations,* 34: 43-71.

70. Vigil-King, D.C. (2000). Team Conflict, Integrative Conflict-Management Strategies, and Team Effectiveness: A Field Study. *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation,* University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

71. Wall, J.A. and Callister, R.R. 1995). Conflict and Its Management. *Journal of Management,* 21(3)515-558.

72. Wall, V.D. Jr. and Galan.es, G. (1986). The SYMLOG Dimensions and Small Group Conflict. *Central States Speech Journal,* 37: 61-78.

73. Wilson, J.A. and JerrelL S.L. (198r). "Conflict Malignant, Beneficial, or Benign", in J.A. Wilson (Ed.). New Directions for Higher Education: *Management Science Applications in Academic Administration,* 105-123