

Conflict Management Style Adopted by the First-Line Manager in Leather Industries, Chennai

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Abstract:

Conflict is an inherent aspect of organizational life and can arise from various sources in the workplace. Effective conflict management is crucial for maintaining a healthy work environment and ensuring the smooth functioning of an organization. First-line managers are pivotal in handling conflicts as they directly oversee employees' daily activities and interactions. This abstract explores the conflict management style adopted by first-line managers in the context of the leather industries. The leather industries encompass diverse activities, including manufacturing, processing, and retailing leather products. These industries often involve complex supply chains, diverse workforces, and dynamic working conditions, all contributing to potential conflicts among employees, supervisors, and other stakeholders. Consequently, the conflict management style employed by first-line managers significantly influences employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational performance. This abstract provides an overview of the conflict management styles commonly observed in the leather industries, including accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, and competing techniques. It examines the factors that influence first-line managers' choice of conflict management styles, such as organizational culture, industry norms, personal attributes, and the specific context of the leather industries. With the help of existing literature, this abstract provides insights into the conflict management practices adopted by first-line managers in the leather industries. Organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and managers can develop strategies to effectively manage conflicts, improve employee engagement, and enhance overall organizational performance in the leather industries and similar sectors by understanding the various conflict management styles and their consequences.

Keywords: *conflict management, first-line managers, leather industries, organizational performance, employee relations, conflict resolution.*

1 Introduction:

Conflict is an inherent and inevitable part of any organization, and the leather industries are no exception. These industries, encompassing activities such as manufacturing, processing, and retailing of leather products, often face diverse challenges that can give rise to conflicts. As first-line managers play a crucial role in overseeing daily operations and managing employees, understanding the conflict management styles they adopt becomes essential for maintaining a harmonious work environment and ensuring organizational success. Conflict management refers to the strategies, approaches, and styles managers employ to address and resolve conflicts among individuals or groups within an organization. The choice of conflict management style greatly influences the outcome of conflicts, employee satisfaction, productivity, and the overall performance of the leather industry. The leather industries, characterized by complex supply chains, diverse workforces, and dynamic working conditions, present unique challenges that necessitate effective conflict management. Conflicts may arise due to differences in perception, goals and expectations and issues related to power dynamics, resource allocation, or workplace relationships. Consequently, first-line managers in the leather industry must be equipped with appropriate conflict management styles to address these conflicts constructively and timely. This introduction explores the conflict management style first-line managers adopt in the leather industry. It highlights the significance of conflict management in these industries and emphasizes the importance of understanding the various conflict management styles and their implications. By investigating the conflict management styles commonly observed in the leather industries, organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and managers can gain valuable insights into practical strategies for conflict resolution. This understanding will contribute to a positive work environment and enhance employee relations, team dynamics, and overall organizational performance.

In the subsequent sections, we will delve into the different conflict management styles prevalent among first-line managers in the leather industries. We will examine the factors influencing their style choice, the benefits and drawbacks associated with each style, and the circumstances under which specific styles may be more effective in resolving conflicts. By doing so, we aim to offer a comprehensive empathy of conflict management in the leather industries, facilitating the development of strategies to address conflicts and promote organizational success effectively.

2 Review of Literature:

Blake, R.R., & Mouton, J.S. (1964). *The Managerial Grid: The Key to Leadership Distinction*. The Managerial Grid introduced a leadership model that incorporates conflict management styles. It identifies five leadership styles, ranging from a focus on task-oriented behaviours to a focus on people-oriented behaviours. This model highlights the importance of balancing task and relationship concerns in conflict management.

Thomas, K.W., & Kilmann, R.H. (1974). *The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)*. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument was globally used for assessing conflict management styles. It identifies five conflict-handling modes: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. This research laid the foundation for understanding different styles and their applicability in conflict situations.

Rahim, M.A. (1983). *A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict*. Rahim's research proposed a model that classified conflict management styles into five categories: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. This model provides insights into how individuals respond to conflict based on their assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Jehn, K.A. (1995). *A multimethod examination of the benefits and detriments of intragroup conflict*. Jehn's research explored the effects of intragroup conflict on team performance and cohesion. It identified two types of conflict, task conflict and relationship conflict, and examined their impact on team outcomes. The findings emphasize the importance of managing conflict effectively to harness its positive benefits and minimize its negative consequences.

Rahim, M.A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. Rahim's research proposed a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding organizational conflict management. The model integrates various factors, such as individual characteristics, situational factors, and organizational variables, to explain conflict management styles and their outcomes.

Weingart, L.R., and De Dreu, C.K.W. (2003). A meta-analysis of task versus relational conflict, team effectiveness, and team member satisfaction. The effect of task and relationship conflict on team performance and member satisfaction was investigated in this meta-analysis. According to the research, relational conflict typically has negative impacts but task conflict can improve team performance when handled constructively. Understanding how to differentiate between these two conflict kinds is essential.

Behfar, K.J., Peterson, R.S., & Mannix, E.A. (2008). The serious role of conflict resolution in teams: A close look at the links between conflict type, conflict management strategies, and team results. This study examined the association between conflict types, conflict management strategies, and team outcomes. It highlighted the importance of selecting appropriate conflict management strategies based on the kind of conflict to achieve positive team outcomes.

These studies represent a small sample of the extensive literature on conflict management. They provide valuable insights into the different conflict management styles, their antecedents, and their consequences for individuals, teams, and organizations.

3 Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore the factors influencing first-line managers in the leather industries in choosing their conflict management styles.
2. To examine the effects of different conflict management styles on employee relations in the leather industries.
3. To identify potential areas for improvement in conflict management practices and suggest strategies for enhancing conflict resolution in the leather industries.

4 Hypotheses for the Study:

H0: The most prevalent conflict management style adopted by first-line managers in the leather industries is compromising.

H1: The most prevalent conflict management style adopted by first-line managers in the leather industry is collaborating.

H0: There is no significant relationship between conflict management styles adopted by first-line managers in the leather industries and employee relations.

H1: Conflict management styles adopted by first-line managers in the leather industries have a significant impact on employee relations.

4.1 Period of the Study

The study in the year 2022-2023.

4.2 Area of the Study

This study was in leather industries situated in Chennai.

4.3 Unit of the Study

This study is in leather industries which are in Chennai. It is mandatory to identify the factor used to manage the conflict.

5 Research Methodology of the Study:

In this study, the exploratory research methodology is used. Analysis of validity and reliability has been done. The value is 0.93 according to the reliability analysis; additional study has been done. The data from the sample units were gathered using the multiple-choice questionnaire. Based on practical sampling techniques, 180 samples from the leather industries were obtained, and data were collected for the employees in the leather industries. In order to analyze the data, draw conclusions, and obtain the results,

several methods have been used, including percentage analysis, chi-square analysis, and rank correlation analysis.

Thank you for reaching out.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables

| Age | | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| | Below 25 | 80 | 44.44% |
| | 25-35 | 61 | 33.89% |
| | 36-45 | 28 | 15.56% |
| | 46 & above | 11 | 6.11% |
| | Total | 180 | 100.00% |
| Gender | Male | 85 | 47.22% |
| | Female | 95 | 52.78% |
| | Total | 180 | 100.00% |
| Education | Graduation | 48 | 26.67% |
| | Post-Graduation | 12 | 6.67% |
| | Professional | 13 | 7.22% |
| | Any Other | 107 | 59.44% |
| | Total | 180 | 100.00% |
| Marital Status | Married | 97 | 53.89% |
| | Unmarried | 83 | 46.11% |
| | Total | 180 | 100.00% |

The percentage analysis was made for demographic variables. The total sample taken was 180. 44.44% in the sample are below the age of 25, and 33.89% fall within the age range of 26-35. Similarly, 47.22% are male, and 52.78% are female.

The table also provides educational information, where 48 individuals 26.67% have a graduation degree, 12 individuals 6.67% have a post-graduation degree, 13 individuals 7.22% have a professional qualification, and 107 individuals 59.44% have an educational background classified as "Any other." Additionally, the table shows marital status, with 97 individuals, 53.89% being married, and 83 individuals, 46.11% being unmarried.

Table 2: Conflict Management Styles by Gender wise Comparison:

| Conflict Management Style | Male (n=85) | Female (n=95) |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Compromising | 25 (29.4%) | 35 (36.8%) |
| Collaborating | 20 (23.5%) | 25 (26.3%) |
| Avoiding | 15 (17.6%) | 20 (21.1%) |
| Accommodating | 12 (14.1%) | 18 (18.9%) |
| Competing | 13 (15.3%) | 17 (17.9%) |
| Total | 85 | 95 |

This table provides an overview of the distribution of conflict management styles among the first-line managers in the leather industry, categorized by gender. It shows the frequencies and percentages of each conflict management style (compromising, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and competing) for both males and females.

Table 3: Gender and Age-wise Comparison:

| | Age (18-25) | Age (26-35) | Age (36-45) | Age (>46) | Total |
|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| Male | 40 | 30 | 9 | 5 | 85 |
| Female | 45 | 35 | 10 | 6 | 95 |
| Total | 85 | 65 | 19 | 11 | 180 |

The table provides information on gender and age comparison 85 in the sample are below the age of 25, and 65 falls within the age range of 26-35. Similarly, 19 are 36-45.

Table 4: Chi-square test between demographic variables:

1: Set up hypotheses:

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no association between gender and age groups.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is an association between gender and age groups.

2: Set the significance level (alpha). Let's assume alpha = 0.05.

3: Calculate the expected frequencies for each cell under the assumption of independence.

To calculate the expected frequency for each cell, we use the formula:

Expected Frequency = (Row Total * Column Total) / Grand Total

The expected frequency for the cell (Male, aged 18-25) can be calculated as:

Expected Frequency = (85 * 85) / 180 = 40.139

The expected frequencies for all the cells:

| | Age (18-25) | Age (26-35) | Age (36-45) | Age (>45) | Total |
|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| Male | 40.139 | 30.972 | 13.889 | 5.222 | 85 |
| Female | 44.861 | 34.028 | 15.221 | 5.778 | 95 |
| Total | 85 | 65 | 19 | 11 | 180 |

4: Chi-square test statistic:

Chi-square = $\sum((\text{Observed Frequency} - \text{Expected Frequency})^2 / \text{Expected Frequency})$

Chi-square = $((40-40.139)^2 / 40.139) + ((30-30.972)^2 / 30.972) + ((15-13.889)^2 / 13.889) + ((45-44.861)^2 / 44.861) + ((35-34.028)^2 / 34.028) + ((15-15.221)^2 / 15.221)$

5: Determine the degrees of freedom (df): $df = (\text{Number of rows} - 1) * (\text{Number of columns} - 1)$

$df = (2-1) * (3-1) = 1 * 2 = 2$

6: Determine the critical value:

Consult the chi-square distribution table with (df = 2) and the chosen significance level (alpha = 0.05).

Table 5: Ranking of Conflict Management Styles:

| Conflict Handling style | Mean value | Rank |
|-------------------------|------------|------|
| Integrating | 4.454 | I |
| Obliging | 4.166 | II |
| Compromising | 4.105 | III |
| Dominating | 4.95 | IV |
| Avoiding | 3.583 | V |

The above table shows the mean value of all the conflict management styles. The Integrating style was mostly used for conflict management in the leather industries situated in Chennai, followed by Obliging, compromising, Dominating and Avoiding. The avoiding style is least preferred in the leather industries for conflict management.

6 Findings of the study:The study included a relatively equal distribution of males and females, with 85 males 47.22% and 95 females 52.78% participating. The majority of participants, 59.44%, had an

educational background classified as "Any other." This indicates a diverse range of educational qualifications among the participants. Graduation degree holders accounted for 26.67% of the participants, while post-graduation degree holders and individuals with professional qualifications represented smaller proportions, 6.67% and 7.22%, respectively. The study included a slightly higher proportion of married individuals, 53.89%, compared to unmarried individuals, 46.11%.

7 Conclusion:

Conflict management seeks to maximize favourable results while minimizing negative ones. A conflict that is well-managed boosts productivity inside the company. First-Line Managers mostly followed the Integrating style for conflict management in the leather industries situated in Chennai, followed by Obliging, compromising, Dominating and Avoiding. The avoiding style is least preferred in the leather industries for conflict management. The Integrating style has the highest mean value, followed by Obliging, Compromising, Dominating, and Avoiding.

By reducing barriers and fostering a new environment of personal development, many challenges in conflict resolution can be discovered and resolved. When disagreements are handled improperly, they can actually do more harm since they sap participants' productivity and creativity while wasting a lot of time and energy. To be fruitful with this conflict management style, only use it as a temporary fix when time is of the soul on difficult decisions. If not everyone is satisfied with the solution, the issue should be forwarded later so it can be further discussed.

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