Conflict Management Strategies Adopted by Jordanian Managers based on Employees' Perceptions: the Case for the Manufacturing Industry

Dr. Abdelghafour Alzawahreh
Assistant Professor of Management, the Hashemite University, Jordan.

Dr. Samer Khasawneh
Associate Professor of Human Resource Development, the Hashemite University, Jordan.

Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the conflict management styles of Jordanian managers working in the manufacturing industry based on employees' perceptions. A total of 457 non-managerial employees participated in the study by completing the Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCIII) (Rahim, 1983). The results indicated that participants perceived the integrating style as the dominant conflict management style practiced by Jordanian managers. Moreover, the Jordanian managers adopted the compromising conflict management style as their secondary style, which is practiced moderately. Furthermore, based on Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), results indicated that there were no significant differences among the conflict management styles and the proposed demographic variables. The study ended by offering a number of practical and theoretical recommendations for academics and practitioners.

Keywords: Conflict Management Style; Management strategies; Conflict Resolution; Manufacturing Industry; and Jordan.

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Conflicts in organizations are inevitable, regular, and indeed normal, because organizations inherently consist of human interaction, interdependence, and various levels of hierarchy (Bell & Song, 2005; Wood, 2003). Conflicts in the workplace are constructive so that managers should not avoid it because it is necessary in attaining...
organizational goals (Deutsch, 2000; Eckert & Rinehart, 2005; Rahim, 2002). In general, conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement, disharmony, or incompatibility between two or more individuals or groups of people (American Heritage Dictionary, 2007). Conflict is “the internal discord that results from differences in ideas, values or feelings between two or more people” (Hendel, Fish, & Galon, 2005, p. 333).

Conflict occurs whenever one party presents an opposing interaction that interferes with the aims or goals of another party (Almost, 2005). Jensen-Campbell and Graziano (2005) stated that inevitability of conflict stems from three apparently-panhuman psychological tendencies: a) people differ in their attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and life experiences; b) such differences induce people to be egocentric and often to have difficulty perceiving the perspectives of others; and c) people are generally motivated to protect and promote their own self-interests. Conflict is part of organizational culture, and as with all workplace predicaments, resolutions must be found (Lulofs & Cahn, 2000).

Researchers have emphasized the importance of managing conflict in organizational settings (Aritzeta, Ayestarán, & Swailes, 2005; Bell & Song, 2005; Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier & Chin, 2005). Effective management of conflict is essential for individuals, groups, and organizations to function successfully (Rahim, 2000). If managed effectively, conflict can be a positive force in organizations (Rahim, 2002; Song, Dyer, & Thieme, 2006). Therefore, since conflicts affect organizations on a daily basis, the management of them must be taken seriously for the sake of the organization and its employees (Bordone & Moffitt, 2006).

However, workplace conflict, if not managed effectively, leads to increased stress, reduced workplace performance, and negatively impacts health and the well-being of employees (McKenzie, 2002). Other negative effects of workplace conflict
include dysfunctional behavior (e.g., absenteeism), reduced productivity, increased accident rate, high turnover, and even the failure of an organization (Khun & Poole, 2000). There are indications that managers spend a large portion of their time (e.g., 40%) dealing with workplace conflicts (Adams, 2006; DuBrin, 2004; Roberts, 2005; Stanley & Algert, 2007). Hessel (2003) proposed that for a manager earning a salary of $60,000 annually, approximately $18,000 of that salary would be allocated to duties related to conflict management. In addition, "it is estimated that more than 65% of performance problems result from strained relationships between employees-not from deficits in individual employees' skill or motivation" (Workplace Dynamics, 2006, p. 4).

Since this study investigates the conflict management strategies of managers at an individual level, Rahim’s model is used as the basic framework for the study. In Rahim’s model, the first dimension (concern for self), describes the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns. The second dimension (concern for others), describes the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy the concerns of others (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). The combination of the two dimensions yields five conflict management styles: avoiding, dominating, integrating, obliging, and compromising (Rahim, 1983).

Individuals that use the avoiding conflict management style generally have a low concern for themselves and others. “The avoiding style is indirect and uncooperative. It can be frustrating to interact with someone who uses the avoiding style. One individual may want to talk about issues and solve problems, while the other recoils from interaction. This can leave the conflict to stew; creating what has been termed the ‘chilling effect’, with disputants becoming increasingly cold and
withdrawn” (p. 202). The individuals that use this style are often characterized by an unconcerned attitude toward the issues or parties involved (Rahim, Magner, & Shapiro, 2000). The avoiding conflict management style is often perceived as being a particularly ineffective method to manage conflict (Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

Individuals who use the dominating conflict management style show a high concern for themselves and low concern for others. The dominating style displays competing behaviors associated with a dominating or aggression. This behavior uses any accessible or existing power toward forcing others to lose the conflict such as personal criticisms, threats, and antagonistic jokes (Rahim, Antonioni, & Psenicka, 2001). The dominating style is appropriate to use when a quick decision is needed, the issue is trivial but important (Rahim, 2001).

The integrating conflict management style is used by individuals with high concern for both themselves and others. The goal is to work together to find possible win-win solutions that will satisfy everyone. By analyzing the situation and soliciting suggestions to meet all the participants’ goals, members are able to reach workable outcomes that are acceptable, thus ending the conflict in a more harmonious manner (Rahim, 2001). The conflict management style is useful for effectively dealing with complex problems and is appropriate when one party alone cannot solve the problem, when commitment is needed from others, and when dealing with strategic issues pertaining to organizations' goals (Rahim, 2001).

The obliging conflict management style is associated with a high concern for others and a low concern for oneself (or low level of assertiveness and high level of cooperativeness). This style is used when individuals sacrifice their wants for the other party, often creating a lose-win situation. Lastly, individuals with compromising conflict management style utilize intermediate concern for self and others (Rahim,
Buntzman, & White, 1999). “Compromising requires searching for the intermediate position, through strategies such as splitting the difference, meeting the partner halfway, suggesting a trade-off, maximizing wins while minimizing losses, and offering a quick, short-term resolution to the conflict at hand. As such, compromising typically satisfies some of each person’s needs but not all of them” (p. 202). The compromising style leads to a bargain win with neither party fully getting what they set out for, but in the end feeling that they did not completely lose either. Rahim (2001) stated that the compromising style is most effectively used when parties are equally powerful, a temporary solution to a complex problem is needed, consensus cannot be reached, and goals of parties are mutually exclusive (Rahim, Magner, & Shapiro, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Organizations are experiencing constant pressure to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. One important area that has gained widespread concerns from academics and practitioners in business organizations is increasing workplace conflict; increasing time managers have invested in dealing with conflict; and significant impact to organizations. Managing conflict in the workplace has become a significant part of managers' responsibilities because of its impact on the growth and development of any organization. While extensive research has been conducted in business settings in western countries, not enough research studies have been done on conflict management in Jordan. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to identify conflict management styles of managers working in the manufacturing industry in Jordan based on their perceptions.
Research Questions

To achieve the primary purpose of the study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How do non-managerial employees in the manufacturing industry perceive their managers' conflict management style when resolving conflicts in the workplace?

2. Are there statistically significant differences in employees' perceptions of their managers' conflict management styles based on their gender, education, and experiences in current position?

Significance of the Problem

The results of the present study are important for a number of reasons. First, the outcomes of this study may assist Jordanian managers operating in the manufacturing industry to understand their own conflict management styles as a step toward becoming effective in managing workplace conflict. Second, the fact that managing conflicts in the workplace have important economic impact on organizations as well as social impact and theoretical importance, certain proactive measures may take place to revise policies related to human capital, the most important asset in the organization. Third, the results of this study may also have a significant impact on organizational leaders and leadership practices. Given the fact that conflict can significantly affect organizations, organizational leaders may allocate more resources to manage conflict in workplace (Roberts, 2005). Fourth, the result of this study will also help fill in the gap in the literature related to the lack of research regarding the conflict management styles of managers operating in the manufacturing industry in Jordan. Last, top management in the manufacturing industry may design
workshops aimed at improving the conflict management skills and conflict resolution strategies of their managers.

Methodology

Study Participants

The participants of this study comprised of 457 non-managerial employees employed by 14 organizations operating in the manufacturing industry in Jordan. Both purposive sampling and convenience sampling procedures were utilized. The demographic characteristics of participants included 63.2% (n = 289) males and 36.8% (n = 168) females. With regard to the education level of participants, there were 32.9% (n = 150) with a high school diploma, 47% (n = 215) with a bachelor’s degree, and 20.1% (n = 92) with a master’s degree. Respondents had a varied levels of experience at current position ranged from less than five years (30.4%, n = 139); 5-9 years (50.3%, n = 230); and 10 years and above (19.3%, n = 88).

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is the Rahim’s Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCIII) (Rahim, 1983). The instrument is a 28-item survey instrument that measures five conflict resolution styles as follow: avoiding (six items), dominating (five items), integrating (seven items), obliging (six items), and compromising (four items). The items were modified to measure employees’ perception of their immediate managers’ styles of handling disagreements with them. Employees are instructed to indicate the extent to which they agreed that each item described the way in which their immediate manager handled interpersonal conflicts with them on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. While a person may use all five conflict management styles in certain situations, a dominant style is the style most often used by an individual. The Cronbach alphas for these five scales are .91, .90, .81, .83 and .86, respectively (Rahim, 1983). The instrument is also shown to have evidence of construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity with a sample of 1,219 managers (Rahim, 2004).

Instrument Translation

Three translators bilingual in English and Arabic separately translated the English version of the scale into Arabic. These translators were instructed to retain the meaning of the items as close to the original as possible. The resulting items were then compared to assess the item-by-item similarity across the two translations. In the case of discrepancies or disagreements, the translators discussed and revised the items until consensus was reached. When the Arabic translation was finalized, the items were then back-translated (from Arabic to English) by three other people bilingual in
English and Arabic following the same comparison and revision process. A panel of five experts evaluated the back-translated items to ensure that item meanings were equivalent in both the original English version and the back-translated version. If differences in meaning were found between items, those items were put through the forward and back-translation process again until the panel was satisfied there was substantial meaning equivalence.

Following the subjective evaluation, a more quantitative process was implemented in which a group of eight fluent English speakers (faculty members who are graduates from western countries including the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia) rated the equivalence of meaning between the original English version of the instrument and the back-translated items. These reviewers compared the back-translated items with the original items and rated the functional equivalence of each pair using a 7-point Likert-type rating scale with anchors ranging from 1 (Not at all similar in meaning) to 7 (Very similar in meaning). Items with mean ratings below four would have been put through the forward, back-translation and subjective evaluation process again. However, no mean ratings fell below this threshold.

The Arabic instrument was then pilot tested with a group of 30 employees, whom were excluded from the main sample of the study. Changes recommended by the validation panel and those identified as needed during the pilot test were incorporated into the instrument. These changes occurred in the wording of some items.

**Data Collection**

The survey instrument was administered to 520 non-managerial employees employed by 14 organizations operating in the manufacturing industry in Jordan. Each organization was contacted either by phone or in person to gain permission to conduct the study and administer the survey instrument. Once permission was granted, the
researchers scheduled meetings with managers in middle and top management positions within the organization, explained nature of the study, and assured confidentiality, voluntaries, and anonymity. Finally, instruments were handed and collected during those meetings. Participants were instructed that the instrument may take approximately 10-12 minutes to complete. A total of 457 usable instruments returned with a response rate of 87%.

Data Analysis

The alpha level was set at .05 a priori. Procedures for statistical analyses are discussed by each research question. Question one is to determine how non-managerial employees in the manufacturing industry perceive their managers' conflict management style when resolving conflicts in the workplace. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations is used to achieve this research question. Lower scores indicated less preference to use the particular conflict management style while higher scores indicated a greater preference to use the particular conflict management style.

Question two is to determine if significant differences exist in employees' perceptions of their managers' conflict management styles based on their gender, education, and experiences in current position. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to identify the differences in conflict management styles based on demographic characteristics. MANOVA is an extension of analysis of variance (ANOVA) in that it can accommodate more than one dependent variable. As with ANOVA, the independent variables in MANOVA are a categorical variable, and the focal point is on the differences between levels of each categorical variable. Nevertheless, what makes MANOVA a multivariate procedure is that it examines the differences between groups for more than one dependent variable simultaneously (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Moreover, MANOVA was been chosen because it accommodates multiple dependent variables while controlling for the Type I error that can be inflated when multiple univariate analyses of variance are
employed (Gardner, 2001). In the second research question, the scale scores for the conflict management styles were treated as the dependent variables, whereas the different levels of the categorical demographic variables (e.g., gender, level of education, and years of experience in current position) were treated as the independent variables. Each independent variable was tested separately.

In the case where significant differences among levels of the independent variables were detected (meaning that the collection of the dependent variables differed among levels of the independent variable), MANOVA analysis was then followed with univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post hoc comparisons utilizing Tukey’s test at an alpha level of .05. Tukey’s test is one of the most conservative post hoc methods because it maintains the experiment-wise error rate at the pre-determined alpha level (Hinkle, Wiersma, Jurs, 1998).

The tests of significance used with MANOVA are Hotelling’s Trace, Pillai’s Trace, Wilk’s Lambda, and Roy’s Largest Root when assessing the difference between group means. Hotelling’s Trace and Wilks Lambda is the test of significance used in this study. However, the other tests of significance along with their effect size and power are reported in this study to provide additional information about their similarities and differences with each other. In the event that the independent variable had two levels (e.g., gender), Hotelling $T^2$ was used; otherwise if the independent variable had more than two levels (e.g., level of education), the ordinary MANOVA was utilized (Hair et al., 1998).

Finally, MANOVA assumptions are considered in this study. The first assumption was the equivalence of the variance/covariance matrices across all groups. Fortunately, if the groups are of roughly equal size (i.e., if the size of the largest group divided by the size of the smallest group is equal or less than 1.5), a violation of this assumption has minimal impact (Hair et al., 1998). The Box’s M test is used to check for this assumption. Usually, values below .05 indicate a violation of this assumption. The second assumption (homogeneity of variance) is tested using Leven’s test of equality of error variance. However, if the groups are roughly of equal size then a violation of this assumption has a minimal impact. The last assumption states that any linear combination of the dependent variables must follow a normal distribution. This assumption is tested by visually inspecting skewness, kurtosis, and
the histogram for each dependent variable. Finally, the recommended sample size for MANOVA is 20 observations per cell. At minimum, the number of subjects in each cell should be more than the number of the dependent variables utilized in the study in order to be considered for this analysis (Hair et al., 1998). The minimum required sample size is satisfied in this study.

Results

The data collected from all participants are coded, entered to the SPSS spreadsheets, and analyzed using software package SPSS version 17.0. Descriptive statistics for all variables in this study were examined using SPSS frequencies. The minimum and maximum values of each variable were examined for the accuracy of data entry by inspecting out of range values. An examination of these values did not detect any out of range values. Missing subjects were not detected either. Results of the study are addressed by each research question. The descriptors used in this study to classify managers' conflict management style based on mean values were as follow: below 2.5 (not practiced); 2.5-3.49 (moderate practice); and 3.5 and above (dominant style-high practice).

Results Pertaining to Research Question One

Research question one is about determining the conflict management styles of managers working in the manufacturing industry based on employees perceptions. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were used to achieve this question. As shown in Table (1), the mean values for the five conflict management styles ranged from a low of 2.79 to a high of 4.05. The results indicate that the dominant conflict management style is the integrating style followed by the compromising conflict management style, which is moderately practiced by managers.
Table (1): Means and Standard Deviations of the Five Conflict Management Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Management Style</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromising</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominating</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligating</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results Pertaining to Research Question Two

Research Question two concerns the significant differences in employees' perceptions of their managers' conflict management styles based on their gender, level of education, and experiences in current position. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) statistical procedures were used because this research question involved multiple dependent and independent variables. The five conflict management styles are treated as the dependent variables, whereas categorical level variables (e.g., experience in current position) are used as the independent variables. The results for each independent variable are reported separately. MANOVA analysis yielding significant differences is followed with ANOVA analysis and post hoc comparisons, respectively. All post hoc comparisons utilize Tukey’s test at an alpha level of .05.

Gender

Gender was used as an independent variable to determine whether employees' perceptions of conflict management styles for managers differed for males (n = 286) versus females (n = 166). The results of the box test showed no significant differences in the variances among the two groups (Box’s M = 22.98, F = 1.51, p = 0.09). With respect to the equality of error variance, all factors met this assumption. Hotelling's Trace is selected as the test statistic to evaluate the presence of differences across gender with regard to the set of dependent variables. MANOVA analysis revealed no
significant differences across levels of gender. As shown in Table (2), the calculated value of Hotelling's Trace is 0.01 ($F = 0.88, df = 5, p = 0.49$) indicating that differences did not exist for male and female respondents across the dependent variables.

**Table (2): Multivariate Tests of Significance, Effect Size, and Power for Gender.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANOVA Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of Education**

Education levels are used as the independent variables to determine if significant differences existed in the perceptions of the conflict management styles across levels of education. The Box test revealed no significant differences (Box’s M = 38.52, $F = 1.26, p = 0.16$), indicating that the covariance matrixes were equal across the groups. With respect to the equality of error variance, all factors met this assumption. Wilks Lambda is selected as the test statistic because we have more than two groups. MANOVA analysis showed no statistically significant differences across educational levels. The calculated value of Wilks Lambda is 0.99 ($F = 0.301, df = 10, P = 0.98$) (see Table 3), indicating that differences did not exist across levels of the independent variable for the dependent variables.

**Table (3): Multivariate Tests of Significance, Effect Size, and Power for Levels of Education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANOVA Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experiences in Current Position

The respondent’s total years of experience in current position is treated as an independent variable to determine if significant differences in perceptions of conflict management styles emerged across these categories. The results of the box test showed no significant differences in the variances among the three experience groups (Box’s M = 38.58, F = 1.26, p = 0.15). With respect to the equality of error variance, all factors met this assumption. Wilks Lambda is selected as the test statistic because we have more than two groups. MANOVA analysis showed no statistically significant differences across categories of work experience. The calculated value of Wilks Lambda is 0.98 ($F = 0.91$, $df = 10$, $p = 0.52$) (see Table 4).

Table (4): Multivariate Tests of Significance, Effect Size, and Power for Years of Experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANOVA Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Conflicts in the workplace are unavoidable and widespread. Conflicts arise whenever two or more individuals interact, regardless of their position in the organization (Darling & Walker, 2001). Understanding and promoting effective conflict management strategies is of paramount importance for the growth and development of any organization. Song, Dyer, and Thieme (2006) stated “conflict management in firms appears to be more critical than ever” (p. 344). Managers usually take on one or more styles when dealing with conflict, which have been the focus of considerable research for decades. Limited research exists in Jordan regarding conflict.
management styles. In specific terms, little or no research studies exited in the manufacturing industry investigating employees' perceptions of their managers' prefer style when handling conflict with them. A sample of 457 employees is selected to participate in the study representing 14 manufacturing organization.

The results of this research indicate that the dominant conflict management style managers take on when dealing with conflicts in the workplace is the integrating style. While a manager may use all five conflict management styles in a certain situation, a dominant style is the style most often used by an individual. Managers in this study tend to work together with their employees to find possible win-win solutions that will satisfy everyone. By analyzing the situation and soliciting suggestions from all parties involved, members are able to reach workable outcomes that are acceptable, thus ending the conflict in a more harmonious manner (Rahim, 2001). Friedman, Tidd, Currall, and Tsai, (2000) stated, "those who are more integrating produce an environment with less conflict, while those who are more dominating or avoiding produce an environment with more conflict (p. 49). Meyer (2004) asserts that there is a need for organizations to encourage use of conflict management behaviors and skills that are more collaborative to effectively manage conflict. Individuals with collaborative skills (e.g., integrative style) have few conflicts in the workplace (Meyer, 2004). Research indicates that more cooperative conflict management styles are more likely to be associated with positive individual and team outcomes than less cooperative conflict management styles (Lin, 2003). This result is justifiable by the fact that the manufacturing system in Jordan is moving toward valuing the most important asset to the organization, which is the human capital. In the past five years certain proactive measures have been implemented emphasizing total quality management programs.
The results of this study also indicate based on employees perceptions that managers tend to use a secondary style when handling conflicts in the workplace in certain situations. The compromising conflict management style came second in place after the integrating scale, implying moderate practice. Meaning, it is also used by managers but in certain situations. In this study, managers tend to utilize intermediate concern for self and others. In cooperation with their employees, managers search for the intermediate position, through strategies such as splitting the difference, meeting the partner halfway, suggesting a trade-off, maximizing wins while minimizing losses, and offering a quick, short-term resolution to the conflict at hand. Based on that, the compromising style typically satisfies some of each person’s needs but not all of them. The compromising style leads to a bargain win with neither party fully getting what they set out for, but in the end feeling that they did not completely lose either (Rahim & Buntzman, 1999). Rahim (2001) stated that the compromising style is most effectively used when parties are equally powerful, a temporary solution to a complex problem is needed, consensus cannot be reached, and goals of parties are mutually exclusive (Rahim, Magner, & Shapiro, 2000). A compromise management style is characterized by finding mutually accepted solutions through negotiating differences.

Nowadays, employees are different, have different needs and expectations, and need to be valued and involved in all aspects of organizational life. Reaching win-win solutions between management and employees can enhance employees commitments and loyalty, maximize healthy relationships, and improve bottom line results.

Another strand of results regarding demographic variables indicate that gender, level of education, and years of experience in current position do not have an
impact on the conflict management styles. This result is justified given the fact that equal employment opportunity in management positions is provided for both genders; training workshops are provided on a continuous basis for new and old managers; and that all managers have the option of pursuing a higher education degree. This result opens the door for more demographic variables to be included in further research.

Based on the above discussion, a number of recommendations are suggested for practice and theory: (a) Similar studies should be conducted on a large scale in Jordan to include all types of organizations (e.g., service, retail, banking, and manufacturing), (b) more demographic variables should be studied to determine their impact on the conflict management styles, (c) advanced statistical techniques should be utilized to provide better explanations for the variables under study (e.g., structural equation modeling), (d) the Ministry of Labor in Jordan should emphasize the use of cooperative management styles in the workplace (e.g., integrating and compromising) when managing conflicts, thus enhancing organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and (e) joint partnership between private industry and higher education should be formed to gain insights on the modern techniques currently used on the world to handle and manage conflict in the workplace.
References


