



2528-9705



STUDYING THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of conflict management in changing organizational behavior. This research is applied and in terms of data collection method, it is descriptive-correlation research. The statistical population of this research was made up of managers and senior experts of active companies in the field of export, of which 70 people were selected as a statistical sample. To collect data, a researcher-made questionnaire was used, the validity of which was confirmed by the professors, and the reliability of the instrument was confirmed by measuring Cronbach's alpha. To analyze demographic questions, and descriptive statistics and to identify relationships between variables, the structural equation modeling method was used in Lisrel software. The findings indicate that all effective conflict management strategies, including competition strategy, cooperation strategy, avoidance strategy, and compromise strategy, affect changing organizational behavior. In addition, cooperation strategy is the most important effective conflict management strategy in changing organizational behavior.

Keywords: Conflict management, Organizational behavior, Management, Managers.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the change and dynamism of organizations is one of the basic principles according to this principle, managers should adjust and modify the desired systems in such a way that they are compatible with the environmental conditions. Organizational change is a very important concept that has attracted the attention of researchers for many years and is undoubtedly very important for increasing and improving the effectiveness of the organization or ensuring organizational growth. Organizational change is an integral part of organizational strategy (Luthans *et al.*, 2021).

The word change can be described as multidimensional with multiple meanings because it refers to concepts such as transformation, development, transformation, transformation, evolution, revival, innovation, revolution, and transition and is synonymous with it (Wang *et al.*, 2011; Potosky & Azan, 2023; Chukwuma & Zondo, 2024; Groulx *et al.*, 2024). Acceptance of change in today's changing world is one of the biggest factors in an organization's durability and survival, and only organizations can maintain their existence if they can adapt themselves to the rhythm of these inevitable changes (Lewis, 2019). The readiness of human resources for change reflects the level of cognitive and emotional willingness of people to accept and adopt a specific

Geliş tarihi/Received: 01.04.2024 – Kabul tarihi/Accepted: 28.08.2024 – Yayın tarihi/Published: 15.09.2024

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plan to purposefully change the existing situation and move forward (Sazesh & Siadat, 2018; Gharibi *et al.*, 2020; Bilgen & Elçi, 2022).

Today, thinkers and researchers of leadership and management science believe that human power is considered the most important asset in organizations and is considered a competitive advantage and advantage. The existence of correct and desirable organizational behavior based on interaction and empathy between these valuable resources is one of the main factors for success in all organizations, including production, management, service, education, and the like (Tjosvold *et al.*, 2019; Rahim, 2023). On the other hand, due to the ever-increasing scope and complexity of institutions and the difference in people's thinking, viewpoints, and beliefs, conflict is considered an inevitable part of today's organizational life. However, individual differences between people, perception, attitudes, and (physical) power cause conflict in common activities. In other words, differences cause conflict in social and organizational behavior (Bashori, 2022; Setiawati *et al.*, 2022; Afshaneh, 2023). The noteworthy point here is that the inevitability of conflict does not always imply its negativity; rather, if conflict is managed well, it can be constructive and useful for the organization by influencing organizational behavior (Borkowski & Meese, 2020). Planning effective strategies to reduce the destructive aspects of conflict and increase its constructive functions is considered by managers.

One of the most important characteristics of the leaders of successful organizations is the use of a suitable strategy and method of dealing with conflicts and discordant factors in the organization (Katz & Flynn, 2013; Anku-Tsede & Adjadogo, 2016; Parashar & Sharma, 2020; Iskanto *et al.*, 2022). Correct management does not preserve the conflict of organizations against changes and it does not mean that they always achieve their desires by having this skill, but it enables them to get acquainted with new developments to deal with threats and use opportunities, to find appropriate solutions (Hu *et al.*, 2017; Tabassi *et al.*, 2019; Ausat *et al.*, 2023). Conflict management means focusing on controlling conflicts and the factors that cause them and guiding and directing them in the direction of individual and organizational development goals. Conflict management is the method that managers use when facing conflict (Conbere, 2001; Wang & Wu, 2020). This type of management is the specific behavior patterns that the manager shows when facing conflict.

Considering the importance of conflict in organizations, the current research examines the role of conflict management in changing organizational behavior, and based on this, the most important question raised in the research is: Do effective conflict management strategies affect changing organizational behavior?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research is of the type of applied research and in terms of the method of data collection, it is of the type of research is descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of this study consists of managers and senior experts of companies active in the field of export, which are more than 200 people. Using Cochran's formula with a confidence level of 95% and a possible accuracy of 9%, the sample size of 70 people was determined. The sampling method in this research is simply random.

The collection of research data consisted of two parts. To review the literature on the research topic, mainly written information from libraries, books, and specialized and related magazine



articles have been used. To collect the desired information and measure the variables, a researcher-made questionnaire was used, and the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and experts. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was checked, which was more than 0.70, which indicates the appropriate reliability of the questionnaire.

To analyze demographic questions from descriptive statistics and to identify relationships between variables Structural equation modeling method is used in Lisrel software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results, 31.4% (N = 22) of the respondents of this research are women and 68.6% (N = 48) are men.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of respondents according to age.

Age	N	%
34-41 years	17	24.3
42-48 years	42	60.0
49-55 years	11	15.7
Total	70	100.0

According to the results of **Table 1**, the age of most people was between 42 and 48 years old (60%).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents according to the level of education.

Level of education	N	%
BSc	17	24.3
MSc	32	45.7
PhD	21	30.0
Total	70	100.0

According to the results reported in **Table 2**, most people had an MSc degree (45.7%). Bartlett's test was used to ensure the adequacy of the samples. The results showed that the value of KMO is equal to 0.836 and Sig. It is equal to 0.001. Considering that the KMO value is higher than 0.6, the volume of samples is sufficient to generalize the results to the population. To determine the impact of each of the conflict management strategies on organizational behavior change, second-order factor analysis was used and the factor loadings of the dimensions are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. The value of the factor load and t in the second-order factor analysis.

Dimensions	Competitive strategy	Cooperation strategy	Avoidance strategy	Compromise strategy
Factor load	0.84	0.98	0.85	0.95
T-value	9.16	6.47	6.15	7.13



According to the number of factor loadings, the most important strategy affecting organizational behavior change is cooperation strategy, followed by compromise, avoidance, and competition strategies. Also, the value of T is higher than 1.96, which shows that the parameters of the model and their path are meaningful. The goodness of fit test results are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Factor analysis goodness of fit indices.

Fitness indicators	RMSEA	Chi-square/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	NNFI	CFI	IFI
Amounts	0.57	2.51	0.81	0.82	0.91	0.91	0.92	0.92
Interpretation	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

In the goodness of fit test, the appropriateness of the data set is checked, according to **Table 5**, the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom is equal to 2.51 and RMSEA is equal to 0.57. Also, other available indicators confirmed the fit of the model. Therefore, the measurement model of the research is suitable in terms of fit indicators and all the mentioned factors can be integrated into the model. Also, the model can be extended to society.

After the factor analysis, the status of the factors and their effect on the change of organizational behavior has been investigated by the one-sample t-test, and its results are reported in **Table 5**.

Table 5. One-sample t-test results.

Factor	Hypothetical mean	t statistic	Significance level	Results
Competitive strategy	3	12.48	0.001	Competitive strategy affects changing organizational behavior.
Cooperation strategy	3	14.44	0.001	Cooperation strategy affects organizational behavior change.
Avoidance strategy	3	12.87	0.001	Avoidance strategy affects organizational behavior change.
Compromise strategy	3	29.72	0.001	Compromise strategy affects changing organizational behavior.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of conflict management in changing organizational behavior. Results of the research showed that all effective conflict management strategies, including competition strategy, cooperation strategy, avoidance strategy, and compromise strategy, affect changing organizational behavior. In addition, cooperation strategy is the most important and effective conflict management strategy in changing organizational behavior. The organization is an open system consisting of forces encouraging change (driving forces) and forces resisting changes (inhibiting forces). Organizational change occurs when the driving forces are stronger than the restraining forces. Any change that tries to disrupt the habits of perception and attitudes of the individual will be met with the resistance of the individual and this can cause conflict at the levels of the organization. Because conflict in the organization is



one of the important factors preventing change, conflict management and the use of appropriate strategies in this field becomes very important.

Conflict resolution methods can be divided into competition, cooperation, avoidance, compromise, and compromise methods (Kim *et al.*, 2023; Zhang *et al.*, 2023; Wang & Xu, 2024). Avoidance and compromise methods are adopted when there is a dispute but the issue is not very important and soft in an ordinary issue, he gets credit for another issue that is important to him. Also, he uses this strategy when he does not see the ability to confront the competitor in an issue or his requests are not very determined (Kwofie *et al.*, 2024). Cooperation strategy is a state in which people show a good cooperation spirit and are determined to achieve their desires, that is, the strategy of the parties is "win-win" (Maiti & Choi, 2021). The strategy of competition is also formed when two people or two groups are determined to achieve their desires and do not cooperate. The strategy of the parties in the competition is usually time Competition strategy is used when quick and decisive action is needed and competition is created to reach the correct decision (Todorova *et al.*, 2022).

Conflict and using the right strategy in this field are very important. According to the results of the research, the most important strategy affecting the change in organizational behavior is the cooperation strategy, followed by compromise, avoidance, and competition strategies. In the strategy of cooperation, it is usually necessary that all parties to the conflict come together and reach an acceptable solution by talking and negotiating. The cooperation method is used when it is necessary to maintain a friendly relationship between the parties or when the solution itself has a significant impact on the outcome of the work. A proper understanding of conflict management in the organization is an important aspect of management skills. If managers do not have a correct understanding of conflict management methods and their correct implementation in various situations, they will not have any plans to resolve conflicts and disputes. With proper conflict management, an organization will be able to minimize interpersonal problems and positively change organizational behavior to achieve better business results.

Appelbaum *et al.* (2022) presented research entitled "Investigation of Generational Conflicts in the Workplace". Studies show that once a generational conflict is identified and understood, organizations can reduce and resolve the conflict by coaching the involved parties to embrace generational diversity. Various components of HR activities should also be changed to accommodate generational differences for the organization to attract and retain talent. Since the events and developments have caused generational differences, organizations should be prepared for the conflicts that can arise from the reactions of different generations toward the future. If something comes out of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, it must be prepared. Tefera and Hunsaker (2020) identified three main concepts of discretionary behavior without reward and organizational effectiveness development to explain organizational citizenship behavior. The behaviors of organizational citizens in critical situations such as facing economic pressures and during the process of change management provide valuable and important help to the organization.

The limitations of the research include the use of questionnaires and the possibility of errors in honestly answering the questions. To conduct future research, it is suggested that the impact of knowledge management and organizational learning be evaluated as mediating variables in changing organizational behavior.



CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of conflict management in changing organizational behavior. The findings indicate that all effective conflict management strategies, including competition strategy, cooperation strategy, avoidance strategy, and compromise strategy, affect changing organizational behavior. In addition, cooperation strategy is the most important effective conflict management strategy in changing organizational behavior.


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: None

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: None

ETHICS STATEMENT: None

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