

# Leadership Style as a Predictor of Conflict Management Style in the Workplace

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

**Problem Statement:** Conflict avoidance might be intentionally used as a leadership strategy to improve leadership effectiveness and outcomes. However, the direct relationship between the use of conflict avoidance as a leadership strategy and its perception as effective leadership remains ambiguous. This proposed empirical study is designed to investigate and establish the connection between the practice of avoiding conflicts and the perception of good leadership. The purpose of this proposal is to motivate researchers to delve into this area of leadership study and enhance understanding of this complex and subjective subject matter. While there is substantial literature on leadership styles and conflict management separately, the direct correlation between specific leadership styles of university administrators and their preferred methods of conflict resolution remains under-explored. This gap hinders the development of targeted strategies to enhance leadership effectiveness and conflict management in higher education institutions.

**Methodology:** A quantitative approach was used to conduct this study, where data were collected directly to the office of Education Authority with  $n = 330$ . One way Anova is employed for data analysis in this study. The results showed that conflict positively affects leadership style and organizational commitment. However, leadership, organizational culture, and other ethic have positive effect on faculty member of department.

**Findings:** The study's findings indicate that there are significant differences in Conflict Styles and Leadership Styles among faculty members in a university setting, as evidenced by the statistical tests conducted. The low p-value rejects the null hypothesis, and the significant F-value supports the conclusion of a difference in styles.

**Index Terms:** Leadership Style, Conflict Management, Organizational commitment, Work-Life Balance

## I Introduction

There are various valid justifications for evading conflict: Some stem from a desire to maintain politeness, avoiding contentious or challenging topics to prevent embarrassment or loss of goodwill. Cultural factors might also play a role, such as the tendency in some Asian cultures to steer clear of negative discussions. Furthermore, considerations related to performance (where conflict can impede productivity) or individual well-being (stress or health issues due to negative confrontations) are also relevant [14]. Conflict avoidance involves responding to confrontations in a manner that delays, overlooks, or prevents the initiation or escalation of conflict [13]. In the context of leadership, avoiding conflict can be a part of a leader's personality or behavior: However, it can also be a strategic component of a leadership approach, employed to defer conflict resolution to a more opportune moment, circumvent immediate adverse effects, or delegate the resolution process to others [12]. Effective leadership is often gauged by factors such as follower satisfaction and success. Satisfaction, a highly

subjective criterion, is influenced by qualities that define an excellent leader like honesty, delegation skills, communication, confidence, creativity, integrity, decisiveness, and more. These traits contribute to the satisfaction of the led and, ideally, to success. Therefore, the intentional use of conflict avoidance in effective leadership implies that a leader strategically avoids conflict in situations where it benefits their leadership style [11]. This does not imply indefinitely delaying conflict resolution or completely evading it. Certain leadership styles may incorporate intentional conflict avoidance more than others, such as contingency leadership which varies styles based on the situation, or transformational leadership where a leader might avoid conflict due to not requiring explicit agreement from followers [10, 14, and 16]. With the identification of conflict avoidance, effective leadership, and their deliberate application, the research question arises: How are conflict avoidance and effective leadership causally related? [15]. Addressing this question seeks to illuminate the impact of conflict avoidance in leadership and its anticipated outcomes [9]. This is a draft for an empirical study designed to investigate the causality between conflict avoidance and effective leadership.

## II Background

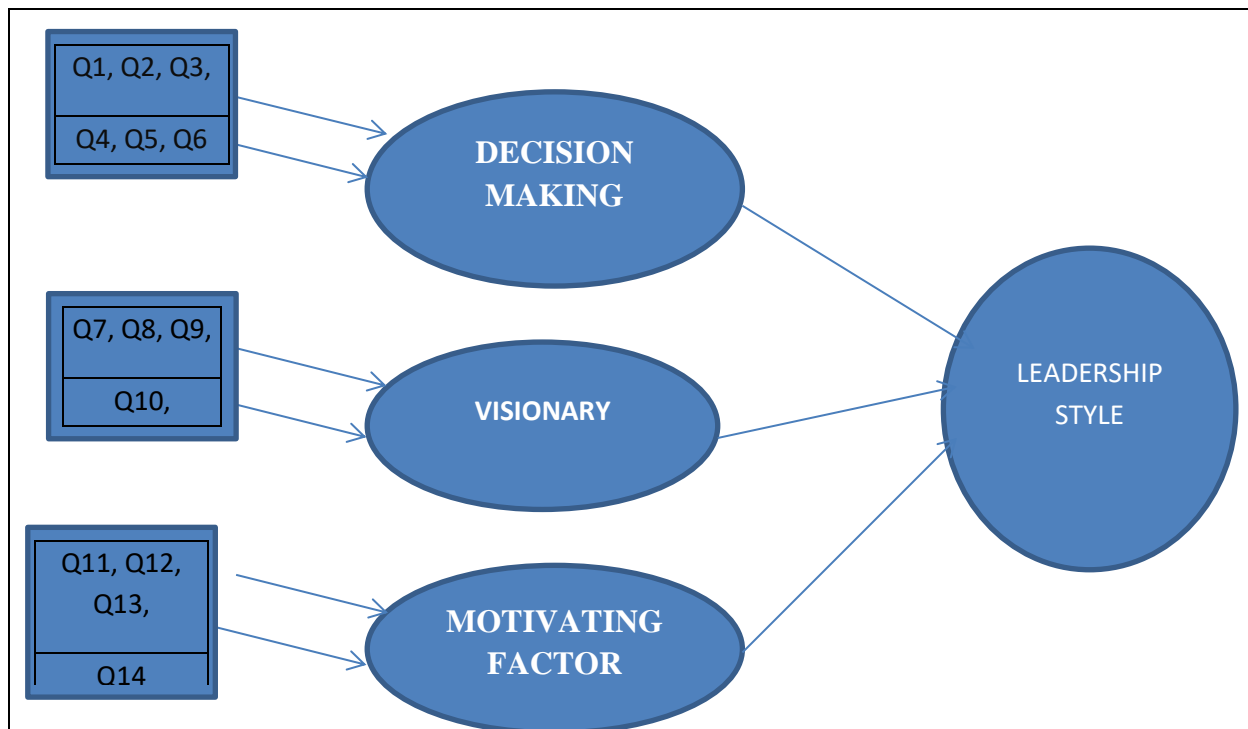
Contemporary literature suggests that the success of an organization is closely linked to its employees' performance [15]. However, establishing a clear connection between various leadership styles and organizational dissent remains a challenge for scholars. The role and influence of different leadership styles in modern organizations are varied, and there's a need to further investigate the effectiveness of these diverse styles [17]. The suitability and practicality of each leadership style should be evaluated based on its adaptability under various circumstances. With changing business landscapes, leaders are reevaluating their approaches to optimize performance and enhance employee engagement. Kaptanoğlu, A. (2010) noted that a comprehensive definition of leadership is still elusive, with scholars primarily focused on reinterpreting existing concepts. Jacobsen, D. I. (2017) explored situational leadership, identifying gaps in the practical application of this theory and leading to the development of an updated version, SLII. Hoffner, L. (2018) emphasized the importance of followers' roles in situational leadership. Conflict management strategies range from creating winners and losers (Jones & White, 1985), with mutual decisions often resulting in optimism among stakeholders. A win-lose outcome usually arises when one side exerts dominance, power, and authority, while a lose-lose scenario occurs when neither party achieves their goals, leading to compromise or withdrawal. Robbins (1996) observed that conflict management depends on the intent to dominate, compromise, abstain, collaborate, or leverage opportunities arising from conflicts. Black and Mountain (1964) introduced a conflict resolution grid focusing on mutual conflicts, based on two axes: concern for people and concern for production. Since the early 1970s, some researchers have adopted a neutral perspective on conflict; Schmidt & Felix, C. O., Ahmad, A. H. B., & Arshad, R. B. (2016) defined it as behavior stemming from a process where one entity seeks to further its interests in relation with others. Fush, P., & Fush, G. (2015) described conflict situations as those involving incompatible activities among organizational members or with external parties. Finally, Hackman M. Z., & Johnson, C. E. (2009) defined conflict as a dynamic process occurring between interdependent parties characterized by negative emotional responses due to perceived disagreements and obstacles in achieving goals.

## III Materials and methods

Hence, the objective of this research is to explore a wider array of elements linked to organizational commitment, leadership style, and conflict management, particularly within the context of both private and public universities. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, the majority of studies in these areas have primarily focused on the population of Lucknow. However, within Lucknow itself, there appears to be a gap in research regarding how conflict, leadership, organizational culture, and work ethics interact within organizations. This study aims to bridge this gap and provide deeper insights into these dynamics specific to the Lucknow population. In this assessment, it is acknowledged that it's not feasible to encompass all factors and theoretical aspects in the study.

### 3.1 Methodology

Fifty-four items were generated to reflect the five constructs. The response format was a 5-point, likert type scale utilizing very agree to very disagree as end points. However, at the end, thirty-one were used to measure each construct because the rest have inadequate factor loading in figure 1:



**Figure 1: Research Model**

### 3.1.1 Population and sample size

In this study, the target population comprised employees from various departments within a university. While determining the appropriate sample size for statistical analysis, several benchmarks were considered. Based on expert advice, an initial sample size of 330 was suggested, considering the indicators for measuring a finite sample. However, this approach was deemed somewhat stringent. Consequently, the researchers turned to guidelines suggested by various scholars who advocate adjusting the sample size based on power analysis. To this end, the study utilized type one and type two error measurements, with  $\alpha$  set at 0.05 and  $\beta$  at 0.95, along with the number of predictors outlined in the researcher's proposed model. The methodology used to calculate the sample size and the results obtained from one-way ANOVA and the finite solution approach are detailed in the subsequent tables.

### 3.1.2 Procedure

The main goal of this research is to present, examine, and interpret the gathered data and to discuss the outcomes of the study. The following sections of this chapter will showcase the data using various methods such as frequency tables, graphs, and charts. The data will be scrutinized using univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analytical techniques. For univariate analysis, tools like frequency tables, percentages, mean, and standard deviation are used to represent the data. Bivariate analysis, including correlation techniques, will be utilized to explore the relationships between different variables. Moreover, the study incorporates multivariate analysis, specifically multiple linear regression, to assess the connections among conflict management styles, leadership styles, challenges, and opportunities, as well as organizational attributes of the sampled companies and the demographic details of the respondents. This research adopts a descriptive and cross-sectional survey methodology. This approach is chosen as it involves collecting data over a specific period through fieldwork. The study focuses on the Siddhartha Nagar district, selected randomly due to logistical considerations and the need to gather pertinent, timely data efficiently. Primary data forms the basis of this study, gathered using structured questionnaires designed to elicit respondents' opinions on the topic. The number of completed surveys forms the foundation for the analysis and conclusions of the research. A sample size of 331 was determined through stratified random sampling, ensuring equal representation of all data points in the sample. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Section A, which gathers demographic data from respondents, and Section B, which contains statements related to key variables of the study. These statements are formatted as close-ended questions with a five-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. To ensure the accuracy of the responses, Likert scales are used, and the questionnaire's validity and reliability are established through expert validation in accounting and related fields. A preliminary test involving 5% of the sample (398 respondents) was conducted to check consistency, followed by a retest two weeks later. The correlation between the initial test and the retest confirmed the reliability of the instrument. Of the 331 distributed questionnaires, all were adequately completed and returned. The analysis of these questionnaires was carried out using simple frequency counts and percentages.

### 3.1.3 Data collection

The data for this study was gathered through a questionnaire survey, which was directly distributed to the Education Authority's office in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. From this effort, responses were received from 281 participants, representing the entire sample size. Recognizing the significance of individual characteristics in research, this study pays special attention to how these characteristics relate to the variables being investigated. It is posited that limited evidence indicates a direct correlation between the behavior of variables and that of the population or sample from which these variables emerge. Therefore, an analysis of certain demographic traits of the participants was conducted to explore their relationship with the cross-sectional data utilized in this study. The questionnaires were given to 330 randomly chosen employees from the study unit. Following persistent follow-up and assistance from field workers involved in the research, all 330 employees successfully completed and returned their questionnaires.

### 3.1.4 CFA Analysis of Effective Factors

Factor Analysis was conducted to condense a broad range of variables into a more manageable set of factors, which are instrumental in evaluating the influence of leadership on various aspects of employee engagement. This method aims to streamline the large number of variables into a smaller number of factors, essentially serving as a technique for data reduction. The primary goal of Factor Analysis in this context is to simplify the number of variables for easier analysis. The specific areas subjected to Factor Analysis in this study include Financial Literacy, Savings, Access to Credit, and Basic Existing Facilities. The study hypothesizes that Leadership Style and Conflict Management Style, particularly in areas such as Decision Making, Motivation, and Vision, significantly affect university employees, potentially influencing their growth and development. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test was utilized to determine the adequacy of the sample size for Factor Analysis. The ideal value for this statistic should exceed 0.7. According to Table 1, the highest KMO statistic is 0.671, suggesting that the sample size is sufficiently large for Factor Analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was employed to assess the suitability of the data for Factor Analysis. This test needs to be significant at the 0.05 level. In Table 1, the significance value is 0.0, which is below 0.05, indicating that the data are appropriate for Factor Analysis.

**Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test<sup>a</sup></b>			
<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Test Value</b>	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>.671</b>	<b>905.917</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Decision Making</b>	<b>.629</b>	<b>152.814</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Visionary</b>	<b>.674</b>	<b>113.974</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Motivating Factor</b>	<b>.614</b>	<b>47.290</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Conflict Style</b>	<b>.601</b>	<b>3212.832</b>

In factor analysis table 1, the KMO statistic measures the sampling adequacy for each variable, and values closer to 1 indicate better suitability for factor analysis. Generally, KMO values above 0.6 are considered acceptable. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity assesses whether the observed variables inter-correlate at all using the identity matrix. A significant chi-square value ( $p < 0.05$ ) suggests that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and is suitable for factor analysis. It's important to note that the interpretation of these values depends on the context of study and the specific criteria used in analysis.

### 3.1.5 Research Validity Test

This segment of the research demonstrates the significance of the proposed study, highlighting how the chosen metrics and model effectively assess employees in the Lucknow district. Conducting empirical validation is a crucial step in the research process, as it evaluates the proposed model's reliability, ensuring its high acceptability and effective implementation. Statistical analysis is employed as the primary method to substantiate the model's acceptance. In order to validate and support the study's claims, experimental verification was conducted through a university in Lucknow using specific samples. Verifying the model's validity is imperative for its acceptance. The two-sample t-test was utilized to assess the impact between Conflict and Leadership factors, serving as a practical statistical tool for comparing means.

### Hypothesis 1

**H (0):** There is no significance difference between Conflict Style and Leadership Style respect to faculty of university.

**H (1):** There is significance difference between Conflict Style and Leadership Style respect to faculty of university.

**Table 3: Descriptive**

Leadership									
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	Between-Component Variance
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
1.75	4	2.7143	.00000	.00000	2.7143	2.7143	2.71	2.71	
1.88	4	1.7143	.00000	.00000	1.7143	1.7143	1.71	1.71	
1.94	7	1.9592	.49634	.18760	1.5001	2.4182	1.43	2.36	
2.00	41	1.9791	.26012	.04062	1.8970	2.0612	1.57	2.64	
2.06	18	1.7619	.24622	.05803	1.6395	1.8843	1.29	2.14	
2.13	28	1.8010	.24231	.04579	1.7071	1.8950	1.36	2.14	
2.19	40	1.8411	.17307	.02737	1.7857	1.8964	1.57	2.29	
2.25	39	2.0861	.31100	.04980	1.9853	2.1869	1.64	2.71	
2.31	15	1.9429	.28469	.07351	1.7852	2.1005	1.57	2.64	
2.38	14	2.1990	.15893	.04248	2.1072	2.2907	2.07	2.50	
2.44	9	2.1111	.14773	.04924	1.9976	2.2247	1.93	2.36	
2.50	11	2.2792	.25646	.07732	2.1069	2.4515	2.00	2.71	
2.56	26	1.8571	.30639	.06009	1.7334	1.9809	1.50	2.64	
2.63	18	2.2183	.29953	.07060	2.0693	2.3672	1.93	2.71	
2.75	9	2.5635	.56406	.18802	2.1299	2.9971	1.64	3.14	
2.81	1	2.5714	.	.	.	.	2.57	2.57	
2.88	12	2.2560	.54352	.15690	1.9106	2.6013	1.64	2.93	
2.94	2	2.2143	.20203	.14286	.3991	4.0295	2.07	2.36	
3.00	4	2.6786	.04124	.02062	2.6130	2.7442	2.64	2.71	
3.06	4	2.8214	.20620	.10310	2.4933	3.1495	2.64	3.00	
3.13	10	3.0571	.18070	.05714	2.9279	3.1864	2.64	3.21	
3.19	5	2.6714	.41833	.18708	2.1520	3.1909	2.07	3.07	
3.25	3	2.7857	.24744	.14286	2.1710	3.4004	2.50	2.93	
3.44	1	2.7857	.	.	.	.	2.79	2.79	
3.50	4	2.7679	.42207	.21104	2.0962	3.4395	2.36	3.36	
3.56	1	2.8571	.	.	.	.	2.86	2.86	
Total	330	2.0911	.42373	.02333	2.0452	2.1370	1.29	3.36	
Model	Fixed Effects		.28923	.01592	2.0598	2.1225			
	Random Effects			.08867	1.9085	2.2737			.10321

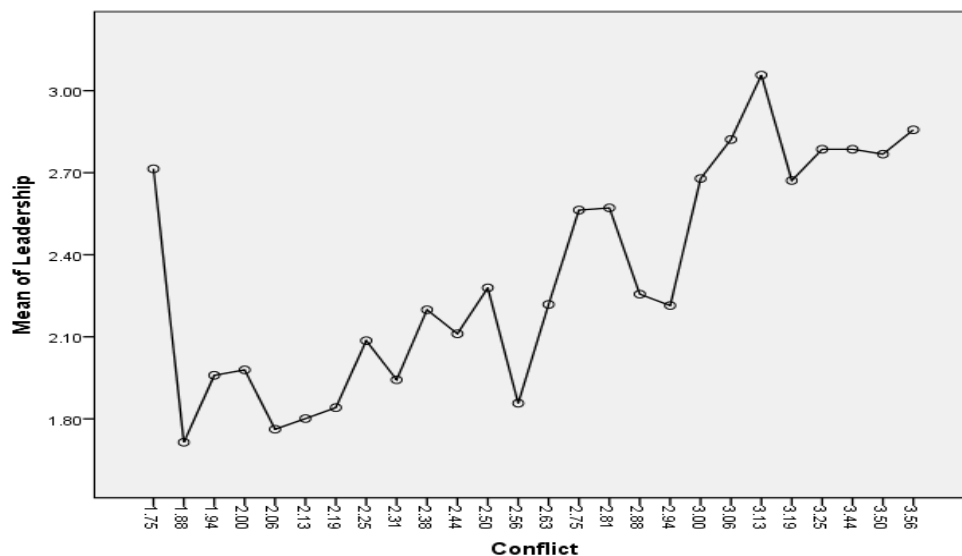
**Table 4: ANOVA**

Leadership					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33.640	25	1.346	16.085	.005
Within Groups	25.431	304	.084		
Total	59.071	329			

**Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Leadership			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
5.141 <sup>a</sup>	22	304	.006

**a. Groups with only one case are ignored in computing the test of homogeneity of variance for Leadership.**



**Figure 1: Graphical Structure of Mean Value**

**Outcomes:** From the paired sampled analysis of t-test (Table 2), it is evident that the sample size of male and female respondents was 180 and as table 3, 4 this study found that respondent statistically closely significant different with participants while adopting,  $p = .005$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that significance difference between Conflict Style and Leadership Style respect to faculty of university. The study found that the value of  $f$  is 16.085 which were significant at .05 which has under the significance level of 5% means that there is significant difference between Conflict Style and Leadership Style respect to faculty of university.

### 3.2 Conclusions

This research focused on exploring various leadership styles at the University of Lucknow, examining their causal relationship with Conflict Management Style. Organizational dissent was a key outcome variable in this study, with conflict management strategies being integral in elucidating the link between leadership styles and organizational commitment. The study was structured as explanatory and employed quantitative methods. All the proposed hypotheses were validated. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The findings concluded that leadership styles exert a significant and positive influence on conflict management, impact vision positively and significantly, and have a notable positive effect on motivational factors.

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