

**The Effect of Power Construal of a Leader on Conflict Handling Strategies in the  
Workplace; The Moderating Role of a Leader's Age**

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### **Abstract**

People in leading positions spend a considerable amount of their time handling interpersonal conflicts. Research has shown that leaders greatly influence conflict at work based on how they choose to handle such conflict. As leaders additionally differ in how they perceive the power corresponding to their position, it can be assumed that this also influences the leaders' choice of conflict strategies. The current study investigates how perception of power influences which conflict management strategies leaders choose. Therefore, two types of power construal (power construed as opportunity and power construed as responsibility) and their influence on the leaders' choice between five different conflict strategies (forcing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising and problem solving) were studied. As older leaders are supposed to perceive power differently compared to younger leaders it was hypothesized that the relationship between power construal and conflict management strategies is moderated by the leaders' age. We conducted a field study and collected 121 dyads of leaders and employees from different companies. It was found that Power construal as opportunity positively correlated with the conflict strategies forcing and avoiding. Age had a slight negative effect on accommodating and problem solving. No moderation effects by age on the relationship between power construal and conflict management strategies were found. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

*Keywords:* leadership, power construal, age of the leader, conflict management strategies

### **The Effect of Power Construal of a Leader on Conflict Handling Strategies in the Workplace; The Moderating Role of a Leader's Age**

Having conflicts is an inevitable part of human existence. Whenever individuals come into contact with each other there is a chance that incongruent objectives, needs, ideas or values can lead to disputes. In our private lives we are often free to choose how to handle such occurrences and who to approach in what way. In many working environments, however, our influences on that matter are limited and we can also rarely control who we interact with (Davis et al., 2009). This becomes especially important when considering how influential interpersonal conflict and conflict management are on the effectiveness and well-being of individuals and organizational groups in the workplace (De Dreu et al., 1999; Spector and Jex, 1998).

Many interpersonal conflicts at work are directly affected by the people in leading positions: Leaders spend around 20 percent of their time managing conflicts (Thomas, 1992), and many of their personal variables play an influential role in the communication with employees and how conflict is perceived in general (Rahim, 2001).

Erzen et al. (2015) have listed a total of 485 studies, which investigated the relationship between leadership and conflict management, as well as different factors contributing to the relationship. Including 32 of them in a meta-analysis, they found the relationship to be significant but of low magnitude. The researchers argued that factors related to an individual's own self, like extraversion, temperament, culture, etc. may have a greater influence on conflict management than factors related solely to leadership. It could be assumed that these individual factors combined with the external factor of leadership, might have a much greater impact when it comes to the relationship with conflict. (Erzen et al., 2015). Among other factors, Erzen et al, furthermore discovered the strongest negative effect between leadership and conflict management in the samples of managers. This finding

suggests that the actions or strategies that some managers in the role of leaders undertake during conflicts are negative for its outcome (Erzen et al., 2015).

In the context of Erzen et al.'s findings, the present research contributes to the studied factors that can influence a leader's conflict management strategies. Namely, this research investigates the relationship between a leader's choice of conflict strategy and their construal of power, meaning the individuals' perspective of their respective power (De Wit et al., 2017). This paper primarily examines two types of power construal: Power as responsibility and power as opportunity. Power as responsibility refers to an individual's view to construe power as something that entails having to take care of tasks, having to make decisions, or having to do what is needed to achieve certain goals (De Wit et al., 2017). Power as opportunity refers to an individual's view to construe power as something that entails them having the possibility to do what they deem important, being able to make decisions and generally being able to achieve what is needed to achieve certain goals (De Wit et al., 2017). Further, as prior research already identified age to be an influential factor in various aspects in the workplace, such as work attitude, work behavior and performance (Walter & Scheibe, 2013), a moderation effect by the age of the leader on the relationship between power construal and conflict strategy is assumed and examined as well.

### **Conflict Management Strategies**

The five conflict strategies that are used in this study are based on the Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (DUTCH). It defines five major conflict strategies and all of them are based on the Dual Concern Theory by Pruitt and Rubin (1986). The strategies develop from the combination of either a high or low concern for self together with either a high or low concern for others during a conflict. There is *forcing*, which results from a high concern for self and a low concern for others. It involves imposing one's will on others (De Dreu et al., 2001). There is *accommodating*, which results from a low concern for self and a high concern

for others. It involves accepting and incorporating others' will (De Dreu et al., 2001). There is *avoiding*, which results from a low concern for self and for others. It involves reducing the importance of the issue and suppressing thinking about it (De Dreu et al., 2001). There is *problem solving*, which results from a high concern for self and for others. It involves finding an agreement that satisfies both parties' aspirations as much as possible (De Dreu et al., 2001). Lastly, there is *compromising*. It involves an active search for a middle ground and results from a moderate concern for self and others (De Dreu et al., 2001). It is disputed whether compromising is a legitimate conflict management strategy because it is very closely connected to problem solving (De Dreu et al., 2001). Nonetheless, it is included in the 'extended' version of the DUTCH and can offer additional insights (De Dreu et al., 2001).

To gain a better insight into the influences of age on handling conflict, Beitler et al. (2018) proposed in their study to group the conflict strategies according to their potential to escalate or reduce conflict. This idea was based on prior research suggesting that people seek to reduce conflict with increasing age (Beitler et al., 2018). Since this current research aims at studying the influence of the leader's age as well, the conflict management strategies will be divided into destructive (forcing, avoiding) and constructive (accommodating, compromising, and problem solving) strategies.

### **Power Construal of Leaders and Conflict Management**

Construal of power in prior research has already been linked to aspects of attractiveness of power (Sassenberg et al., 2012), leading individual's beliefs about what usage of power is appropriate (Gordon & Chen, 2013), their willingness to take risks (Anderson and Gallinsky, 2006), or their willingness to take advice (De Wit et al., 2017).

This research argues that each type of power construal influences a leading person's conflict management style, specifically what conflict solving strategy they use. It is hypothesized, that leaders, who construe their power as opportunity will use more destructive

conflict management strategies, such as forcing and avoiding, because they are expected to be less susceptible to influences from outside. As they are supposed to see their power as means to primarily achieve certain goals, they might be more likely to disregard others concerns in conflicts and be more willing to let conflict escalate. Leaders who construe their power as responsibility on the other hand will be expected to use more constructive strategies, such as accommodating, problem solving or compromising, because they have higher concerns for others, and see their power as means to reduce conflict and improve the relationships with and between their coworkers.

**Hypothesis 1.** Power construal as opportunity correlates positively with the destructive conflict management strategies forcing and avoiding.

**Hypothesis 2.** Power construal as responsibility correlates positively with the constructive conflict management strategies accommodating, problem solving, and compromising.

### **The Moderating Role of Age of a Leader**

A growing number of research studies the developmental side of age and its influence on aspects like goal prioritization, behavior, cognition, and emotions through a lifespan (Li & Hiu-Ling Tsang, 2016) and has also been linked to several aspects in the workforce as well (Walter & Scheibe, 2013). An important factor there for example is the aspect of emotional aging in leaders, as it was found that the emotional and affective experiences of leaders in the workplace change through age (Walter & Scheibe, 2013). Furthermore, Li and Hiu-Ling Tsang (2016) conducted a study with 133 participants aged 18-78 about the understanding of possible and desired use of wealth and power. The researchers found out that older people reported more prosocial understanding about desired and possible use of wealth and power compared to younger people. Regarding conflict management at work, Yeung et al. (2014) compared 280 Chinese managers and executive employees on their usage of conflict

strategies in relation to their age. It was observed that older employees used fewer dominating strategies when in a power holding position and interacting with subordinates compared to younger workers (Yeung et al., 2014).

In accordance with all these findings, the present study hypothesizes that age influences the leaders' choice of conflict strategies. It is assumed that increasing age leads to a more prosocial and less dominating and selfish approach to conflict. It is therefore hypothesized that increasing age in the leaders will lead to less usage of destructive strategies (forcing, avoiding) and more usage of constructive strategies (accommodating, compromising, problem solving) when dealing with conflict.

**Hypothesis 3 a.** There are positive main effects between age and constructive conflict management strategies.

**Hypothesis 3 b.** There are negative main effects between age and destructive conflict management strategies.

Furthermore, since older leaders are expected to be more prosocial and less dominating, the leaders' construal of power and more importantly its impact on the leaders' choice of how to handle conflict might be influenced by the leaders' age. It is assumed that the relationship between power construal as opportunity and destructive conflict management strategies weakens with age. Older leaders are assumed to be less likely to construe power as opportunity and they are also less likely to use conflict strategies that escalate situations further. The influence of power construal as opportunity on the leaders' choice for destructive conflict management strategies is therefore hypothesized to decrease the older the leaders are. In contrast to that, leaders who construe their power as responsibility are assumed to be older and consequentially are more likely to use constructive conflict management strategies. Power construal as responsibility is therefore hypothesized to have a greater impact on the leaders



choosing constructive conflict management with increasing age of the leader. Age is therefore expected to be a moderator on both relationships.

**Hypothesis 4 a.** The influence of power construal as opportunity on destructive conflict management strategies decreases with increasing age of the leaders.

**Hypothesis 4 b.** The influence of power construal as responsibility on constructive conflict management strategies increases with increasing age of the leaders.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 242 participants in the form of 121 dyads took part in this study. Each dyad consisted of a leader and an associated employee of the same company. There were 117 leaders included in the analysis (44 females, 73 males,  $M_{age} = 39.03$ ,  $SD = 12.50$ ), four dyads had to be excluded due to the leaders not having answered on variables critical for the analysis. All participants were Dutch. Most of the leaders (110 of 118) indicated their leadership function (14 top management, 36 middle management, 54 lower management, 6 highly qualified), 117 leaders reported about their total working experience ( $M_{years} = 16.75$ ,  $SD = 12.35$ ), and 114 leaders indicated their working experience in their current position ( $M_{years} = 6.41$ ,  $SD = 8.01$ ).

### Research Design and Procedure

All participants filled out questionnaires in Dutch based on their corresponding position in the company. The leaders and the employees received different questionnaires. The leaders were asked to answer questions based on their own position, while the employees were asked to rate their corresponding leaders. Each questionnaire consisted of Likert scale questions ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = *never* or *strongly disagree*, 7 = *very often* or *strongly agree*). All participants were asked to report their approximate working hours per day and per week, their highest education, their official Dutch job title, their field of work, their working

experience in years in total and in their current company, their work experience in years in their current working position, and whether they worked in another profession beforehand.

All participants were approached and recruited directly through their companies, and they all took part in the study on a voluntary basis. There was no compensation for their participation.

## **Measures**

### ***Conflict Management Strategies***

For the assessment of the five conflict handling strategies for the leaders (accommodating, compromising, forcing, problem solving, avoiding) a 7-point Likert scale based on the questions from the Dutch Test For Conflict Handling (De Dreu, 2001) were used (see Appendix A for the full scale). The participants indicated their agreement on four different statements for each of the five strategies (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

The accommodating conflict handling strategy scale included statements such as: “I usually give in to the wishes of my subordinates” The compromising strategy scale included statements such as: “I usually try to find a middle ground solution”. The forcing strategy scale included statements such as: “I usually push my own point of view”. The problem solving strategy scale included statements such as: “I usually stand for my own and my subordinates’ goals and interests”. The avoiding strategy scale included statements such as: “I usually avoid a confrontation about my differences with my subordinates”. Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .81$  for the accommodating scale,  $\alpha = .89$  for compromising,  $\alpha = .81$  for forcing,  $\alpha = .92$  for problem solving, and  $\alpha = .86$  for avoiding.

### ***Power Construal***

The leaders’ construal of power was measured through six 7-point Likert Scale statements (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The statements were based on the scale by De Wit et al. (2017). For each concept (power construed as opportunity, power construed as responsibility) there were three statements (see Appendix B for the full scale). The

assessment of construal of power as opportunity included statements such as: “I have the tendency to see my power as the opportunities that it gives me to tell my subordinates what to do without having to ask them what they want to do”. The assessment of construal of power as responsibility included statements such as: “I have the tendency to see power as the responsibilities it entails towards my subordinates and their needs”. Cronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .63$  for the power construal as opportunity scale, and  $\alpha = .74$  for the power construal as responsibility scale.

### Results

The conflict handling strategy with the highest score on average among the leaders was problem solving, followed by accommodating, compromising, avoiding, and forcing. A stronger tendency to construe power as responsibility than to construe power as opportunity among the leaders was observed. A correlation analysis between the five conflict management strategies and the two concepts of power construal revealed that power construal as opportunity was positively correlated with forcing and avoiding, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1. Power construal as responsibility was not found to be significantly correlated to any conflict strategy, thus no support for Hypothesis 2 was found. The correlations between power construal and the conflict management strategies can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Coefficients for Power Construal and Conflict Strategies*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Power as responsibility	4,99	1,66						
2. Power as opportunity	3,29	1,22	0,135					
3. Avoiding	3,75	1,32	0,156	,286**				
4. Problem solving	5,23	1,22	0,144	-0,087	0,158			
5. Forcing	3,65	1,25	-0,051	,290**	0,114	0,104		

6. Compromising	4,33	1,40	0,033	-0,043	,190*	,493**	0,081
7. Accommodating	4,35	1,09	0,081	0,123	,322**	,414**	0,047 ,456**

*Note.* \* $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed); \*\* $p < 0.01$ ;  $N = 117$

Linear regression analyses with age as predictor and the five conflict management strategies as dependent variables respectively showed the only significant negative main effects for accommodating ( $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(1, 115) = 6.77$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $b = -.02$ ,  $t = -2.60$ ,  $p = .010$ ) and problem solving ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(1, 115) = 6.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $b = -.02$ ,  $t = -2.46$ ,  $p = .016$ ). Therefore, not enough support for neither Hypothesis 3 a, nor b was found.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test for interactions between power construal as opportunity and the age of the leaders as independent variables and each of the destructive conflict management strategies (forcing and avoiding) as dependent variables. Next, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test for interactions between power construal as responsibility and the age of the leaders as independent variables and each of the constructive conflict management strategies (accommodating, problem solving, and compromising) as dependent variables. To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity through interaction, the variables were centered and interaction terms between the independent variables were created and added to the regression model. This led to the following findings:

#### **Age as a Moderator on Power Construal as Opportunity and Forcing**

Power construal as opportunity and the age of the leader accounted for a significant amount of variance in forcing ( $R^2 = .085$ ,  $F(2, 114) = 76.57$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The interaction term between power construal as opportunity and the age of the leader was not significant for forcing ( $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 113) = .84$ ,  $p = .36$ ,  $b = -.0066$ ,  $t(113) = -.92$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### **Age as a Moderator on Power Construal as Opportunity and Avoiding**

Power construal as opportunity and the age of the leader accounted for a significant amount of variance in avoiding ( $R^2 = .083$ ,  $F(2, 114) = 5.13$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The interaction term

between power construal as opportunity and the age of the leader was not significant for avoiding ( $\Delta R^2 = .003$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 113) = .005$ ,  $p = .94$ ,  $b = -.0005$ ,  $t(113) = -.07$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### **Age as a Moderator on Power Construal as Responsibility and Accommodating**

Power construal as responsibility and the age of the leader accounted for a significant amount of variance in accommodating ( $R^2 = .074$ ,  $F(2, 114) = 4.58$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The interaction term between power construal as responsibility and the age of the leader was not significant for accommodating ( $\Delta R^2 = .004$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 113) = .52$ ,  $p = .47$ ,  $b = -.0049$ ,  $t(113) = -.72$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### **Age as a Moderator on Power Construal as Responsibility and Compromising**

The moderation model between power construal as responsibility, the age of the leader and compromising was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Power construal as responsibility and the age of the leader did not account for a significant amount of variance in compromising ( $R^2 = .035$ ,  $F(2, 114) = 2.09$ ,  $p > .05$ ). The interaction term between power construal as responsibility and the age of the leader was not significant for compromising ( $\Delta R^2 = .004$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 113) = .51$ ,  $p = .47$ ,  $b = -.0049$ ,  $t(113) = -.72$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### **Age as a Moderator on Power Construal as Responsibility and Problem Solving**

Power construal as responsibility and the age of the leader accounted for a significant amount of variance in problem solving ( $R^2 = .21$ ,  $F(2, 114) = 15.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The interaction term between power construal as responsibility and the age of the leader was not significant for problem solving ( $\Delta R^2 = .004$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 113) = 0.51$ ,  $p = .48$ ,  $b = .005$ ,  $t(113) = .72$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

The results provided no supporting evidence for neither Hypothesis 4 a, nor Hypothesis 4 b.

### **Discussion**

This research investigated the relationship between two types of power construal (as opportunity and as responsibility) and five different styles of conflict management (forcing, avoiding, problem solving, accommodating, and compromising) among leaders in the

workplace. It was hypothesized that power construal as opportunity is linked to destructive conflict strategies such as forcing and avoiding. Power construal as responsibility was supposed to be linked to constructive conflict strategies such as accommodating, problem solving, and compromising. It was assumed that there are main effects between the leaders' age and the five conflict management strategies. Older leaders were supposed to use more constructive conflict strategies and less destructive conflict strategies compared to younger leaders. Furthermore, a moderating effect on the relationship between both types of power construal and the respective conflict management strategies by age was expected. The influence of power construal as opportunity on destructive conflict strategies was supposed to be weaker for older leaders compared to younger ones. The influence of power construal as responsibility on constructive conflict strategies was supposed to be stronger for older leaders compared to younger ones.

There was supporting evidence found for the connection between power construal as opportunity and destructive conflict strategies. Both forcing and avoiding were weakly but still significantly positively correlated with power construal as opportunity. There was no supporting evidence found, however, that power construal as responsibility is related to either accommodating, problem solving, or compromising. All correlations were found to be insignificant.

There were two significant main effects found between the leaders' age and the conflict management strategies accommodating and problem solving. The slopes revealed to be slightly negative, indicating that older leaders had a decreased tendency to choose accommodating and problem solving for handling conflict at work.

There were no significant moderation effects found to influence the relationship between either type of power construal towards either type of conflict strategy. All interaction effects were insignificant.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

One limitation consisted of the size and diversity of the sample. The participants were all Dutch, and the leaders were fairly young on average ( $M_{age} = 39.03$ ,  $SD = 12.50$ ). A bigger and more diverse sample when it comes to age and nationality could have potentially led to different results, especially when it comes to the influence of the leaders' age on other variables, which was a focal point of this research. Prior studies like the one from Li and Hiu-Ling Tsang (2016) regarded a much broader age range thereby reaching a higher informative value when it comes to the influence of age on other aspects. It can also be assumed that power construal in a more diverse sample would have a bigger impact on the choice of conflict strategies used by the leaders than it has been the case in this study. Broader differences between the leaders when it comes to age, power, position, line of work, culture etc. could have led to very different outcomes regarding the leaders' construal of power and its influence on conflict.

Another limitation that stands in connection to the first one was the recruitment of the participants. The dyads were collected through a field study by directly approaching the companies without offering compensations. This process made it difficult to recruit more top-level managers or chief executives (14 of 117 in the sample reported to be top management). Again, since power construal as a concept relies highly on different perceptions of power, a more diverse sample with more top-level managers could have potentially led to more significant findings on the influences the two types of power construal could have on the choice of the conflict management strategies by the leaders. The influence of age would also have assumingly been more significant considering that top positions usually are taken by older, more experienced workers.

As a third limitation it must be mentioned that the participants were only instructed to fill out the questionnaires independently but did so unsupervised. There were no control

mechanisms in the study for checking whether the participants answered the questions diligently or on their own terms. This also greatly influences the validity and reliability of the findings.

A strength of this research was probably the insight into the working and conflict mentality of small and medium-sized Dutch businesses. When it comes to power construal and conflict strategies, most leaders seemed to perceive their power as responsibility and indicated to rather choose constructive conflict management strategies than destructive ones. Problem solving and Compromising were even the first two choices, which leads to believe that Dutch leaders of that caliber use their power primarily for the sake of the company and choose to solve conflict in the interest of their employees and coworkers.

For future research it should be considered to replicate the study on a larger scale, trying to reach a bigger, more diverse sample when it comes to age and leading positions. This would lead to a higher informational value about the relations between age, power construal and conflict management among Dutch leaders and it would be interesting to see whether the current findings were confirmed. Furthermore, even though it might be very difficult to organize, having more powerful leaders from different cultural backgrounds participating in the study under more controlled circumstances could lead to very different findings and give additional insights into the influence of culture on power perception and conflict at work.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

This study adds to the research on conflict management in the workplace. The study revealed power construal as opportunity to be connected to destructive conflict strategies but could not give support for power construed as responsibility being related to constructive conflict strategies. Interestingly, more leaders in this relatively young sample indicated to



construe power as responsibility rather than as opportunity. This finding could be important to pay special attention to in course of a replication study, as the direct influence of age on the leaders' power construal was not studied in the current sample.

Regarding age as an influencing factor on conflict management strategies, prior research has suggested that the choice for constructive conflict management strategies increases with age (Blanchard-Fields et al., 2007). The current research cannot confirm to that, however, as age was not significantly related to any of the conflict management strategies in the sample. Additionally, this study even revealed a slight negative influence of age on problem solving and accommodation, two constructive conflict management strategies, that were supposed to be positively influenced by age. The findings could be explained by the small sample size, the relatively young age of the leaders and potentially by the Dutch conflict management mentality, that was represented in this sample. As problem solving and compromising seem to have been the primary conflict handling strategies, and construing power as responsibility seem to have been the main perception of power among young Dutch leaders, it can be said that the sample per se was not in congruence with prior research findings. If choosing to solve conflict in the interest of all workers is the main course of action among younger Dutch people it can be assumed that older leaders in this case may have less adapted to this, therefore decreasing the tendency for problem solving with age. This argumentation would also go in line with the main effect in the sample being only slightly negative, as the age difference between younger and older leaders was only around 12 years. This would probably make culture or working mentality more influential for choosing certain well-established conflict solving strategies than age alone. Older leaders may have therefore adapted to the cultural dependent work environment but have adapted less strong to it.

For accommodating as a conflict strategy becoming slightly less of a choice with age in the sample, it could be possible, that as older leaders might be more experienced with certain situations, they are more inclined to choose proactive conflict strategies in comparison to younger leaders, because they anticipate a better outcome from that.

Overall, the findings give important theoretical insights into potential influences of culture on conflict management by leaders in the workplace. Most results from this Dutch sample do not go in line with prior research and partly even show evidence to the contrary. This indicates that there are more influential factors for solving conflict in leaders than just their age or the manner in which they perceive their power, as Erzen et al. (2015) had also already pointed out.

The findings could also have practical implications for small and medium-sized Dutch companies as the sample points to a relatively stable perception of power as responsibility in Dutch leaders across a certain age range. The sample also showed that a tendency towards construing power as responsibility goes in accordance with rather choosing constructive conflict strategies like problem solving and compromising, which according to research leads to more harmonious conflict resolutions at work (Beitler et al., 2018).

## **Conclusion**

Construing power as opportunity in Dutch leaders is linked to a higher usage of destructive conflict management strategies like forcing and avoiding. The influence of construing power either as opportunity or responsibility on the choice of the leaders' conflict management strategies is neither increased nor decreased by the age of the leader.

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## Appendix A

### Conflict Management Strategy Scale

“When I have a conflict at work, I usually do the following:”

1. I usually give in to the wishes of my subordinates. (Accommodating)
2. I often concur (agree) with my subordinates. (Accommodating)
3. I usually try to accommodate my subordinates. (Accommodating)
4. I usually adapt to my subordinates’ goals and interests. (Accommodating)
5. I usually try to find a middle ground solution. (Compromising)
6. I usually emphasize that my subordinates and I have to find a compromising solution.  
(Compromising)
7. I often insist that both my subordinates and I give in a little. (Compromising)
8. I usually strive whenever possible towards a fifty-fifty compromise. (Compromising)
9. I usually push my own point of view. (Forcing)
10. I usually search for gains for myself. (Forcing)
11. I usually fight for a good outcome for myself. (Forcing)
12. I often do everything to maximize my own gains. (Forcing)
13. I usually examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and my  
subordinates. (Problem solving)
14. I usually stand for my own and my subordinates’ goals and interests. (Problem  
solving)
15. I often examine ideas from both mine and my subordinates’ sides to find a mutually  
optimal solution. (Problem solving)
16. I usually work out a solution that serves my own as well as my subordinates’ interests  
as best as possible. (Problem solving)
17. I usually avoid a confrontation about my differences with my subordinates. (Avoiding)

18. I avoid differences of opinion with my subordinates as much as possible. (Avoiding)

19. I usually try to make differences of opinion look less severe. (Avoiding)

20. I usually try to avoid a confrontation with my subordinates. (Avoiding)

## Appendix B

### Power Construal Scale

“I have the tendency to see my power in terms of...”

1. The opportunities that it gives me to tell my subordinates what to do without having to ask them what they want to do (power construal as opportunity)
2. The responsibilities it entails towards my subordinates and their needs (power construal as responsibility)
3. The opportunities it gives me to make my own decisions without having to think about my subordinates' desires or needs (power construal as opportunity)
4. The obligations it entails towards my subordinates (e.g., take care of things that need to be done. (power construal as responsibility)
5. The opportunities it gives me to achieve goals that I find important for myself rather than for my subordinates. (power construal as opportunity)
6. The responsibility to ensure that important goals of my subordinates are met. (power construal as responsibility)