

**Gender of a Leader and Frequency of Conflict at Work; The Mediating Role of Conflict
Handling Strategy**

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PSB3E-BT15: Bachelor Thesis

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Month 11-2021

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Abstract

Conflict between a leader and their subordinates can have negative consequences for the organization as well as for workers' wellbeing. A variable that might have impact on the conflict involvement of a leader is gender. Results of previous research on the matter are inconsistent; some claim that female leaders are less involved than male leaders in conflict while other literature states that there is no gender difference at all. Female leaders would have less conflicts because of gender expectations and the conflict handling strategy who acts on this. Females would use the problem solving conflict handling strategy more, while males use a forcing one. Because a problem solving strategy is more effective this explains why female leaders are less involved in conflicts at work. In the current study we investigate whether conflict handling strategies mediates the relationship between the gender and conflict involvement of a leader. We stated that the conflict handling strategies of problem solving and forcing do have a mediating role in the relationship between gender of a leader and conflict involvement of a leader. We conducted a dyadic field study ($N = 242$; 121 dyads) whereby leaders answered questions about themselves and the subordinate about the leader in question. Results showed that not a single conflict handling strategy has a mediating role. We conclude that there is a gender difference of the leader with conflict involvement, but that this relationship does not get explained by the difference in conflict handling strategies.

Keywords: gender of a leader, conflict involvement, conflict handling strategies

Gender of a Leader and Frequency of Conflict at Work; The Mediating Role of Conflict Handling Strategy

Conflict is an outcome of human interaction and arises when individuals, groups or organizations want to achieve their objectives, and these differ in one way or another. For this reason conflict at our workplaces is common (Danielsson et al., 2015). Conflict can also occur with our leaders, a relationship that is for most people unavoidable. The Dutch population reported conflicts with their leaders by 11.7% (Centraal bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS], 2020). An interesting aspect about this is how variables of different leaders can influence conflicts with their subordinates because this can be trained or a leader can be selected for these influential variables. This can be important as conflict at work can cause negative consequences for an individuals' well-being (Sonnetag et al., 2013) as well as for the organizational performance (Meier et al., 2013).

One of these influential variables for workplace conflict could be the gender of the leader as there are gender differences in social orientation and expectations. Females tend to be more communal while males are more focused on their self (Eagle & Karau, 2002). Unfortunately, there has been little research on the relationship between gender of a leader and conflict involvement with their subordinates at the workplace, moreover the results of the studies are mixed. On one hand there is evidence that there is a difference between gender and conflict involvement in a way that there is less reported conflict by subordinates when the leader is female than when the leader is male (Bass, 1990; CBS, 2020). On the other hand there has been indications whereby no significant difference was indicated between male and female leaders and conflict involvement with their subordinates (Merluzzi, 2017; Skjørshammer & Hofoss, 1999). To extend the literature the why question within this relationship will be considered by means of a mediator; the conflict handling strategy of the leader. Within a social psychological framework there has been indicated that “woman will be

more collaborative (i.e. problem solving) than men” (Brahnam et al., 2005, p. 6) and that males use a forcing conflict handling strategy more than females, because they choose more often “to gain more than their competitors” (Vinacke et al., 1975, p. 9). Because a problem solving conflict handling strategy is considered as more resolving research suggests that females are more effective in solving conflicts than males (Brahnam et al., 2005).

In the current study we aim to provide more information and clarification about the discussion about the relationship between the gender of the leader and the conflict involvement with their subordinates. This research also takes a look at this relationship if there is a gender difference in conflict handling strategy which would explain the difference in conflict involvement of a leader with their subordinates.

Literature Review

The Role of Gender of a Leader in Conflict Involvement

The current study will investigate the main-effect between gender of the leader and the conflict involvement with their subordinates by explaining this relationship with the difference in conflict handling strategies of the leaders (figure 1). To support this model with literature there will be looked into the three relationships that are present. The relation between gender and conflict involvement will be considered as the main-effect, because without a significant difference between a male and female leader there is no reason to investigate the mediator variable. The two relations with conflict handling strategy will be considered as side-effects in the literature review.

What is remarkable about the literature of the main-effect of the gender of the leader with conflict involvement is that there is a lack of research with the leader perspective that is being handled in the current study. Skjørshammer and Hofoss (1999) do have investigated the difference between male and female leaders within conflict involvement as a side-effect and this has shown that there was no significant difference. However, their research has been

based on the research of Bass (1990) which concluded that there would be less conflict involvement when a leader is female than when the leader is male.

To pick a side in this debate, there will be looked at the general difference of male and female in conflict involvement at work in a social psychological framework. There are gender differences regarding norms, so are females expected to be more warm and communal while males are expected to be more individualistically and competitive (Eagle & Karau, 2002). These beliefs have been linked to certain workplace behavior, outcomes and rewards (Correll, 2001; Dumas & Stanko, 2017; Gneezy et al., 2013; Helgesen, 2011). This results in that males have less negative consequences regarding to conflict involvement because it is gender consistent (Eagle & Karau, 2002). The data of the CBS (2020) supports this by indicating that 28.0% of the Dutch male population has reported conflicts with colleagues in general versus 23.4% for the Dutch female population.

Hypothesis 1. Female leaders are less involved in conflicts with their subordinates than males.

The Mediating Role of Conflict Handling Strategies

Conflict handling refers to the way people deal with conflict while the people's intentions and actions are taken into account (Van De Vliert, 1997). There are five conflict handling strategies that can be distinguished: yielding, problem solving, avoiding, forcing and compromising. These conflict handling strategies differ in the way someone has concerns for others and for themselves as shown in figure 2. Yielding is a strategy that manifests itself in sacrificing self-interests to satisfy the needs of others, what in practice expresses itself in unconditional promises and offering help. Another strategy is the problem solving conflict handling style whereby someone will try to construct a solution that satisfies the needs of all parties, which involves exchanging information about preferences and showing insights. A similar handling style is the compromising one which involves making concessions to resolve

a conflict. This manifests itself in a mix of all the actions that are typical for the other conflict handling strategies (Van De Vliert, 1997). People using the avoiding conflict handling strategy tend to disengage from conflicts through reducing the problem of an issue and suppress thinking about it. While people with a forcing style try to maximize individual gain even at the expense of others. They do this by making threats, bluffs and use persuasive arguments (De Dreu et al., 2001). Within organizations “it is not surprising to find that the most valued conflict management strategy is collaboration” (i.e. problem solving) (Brahnam et al., 2005, p. 4). Furthermore is yielding also a conflict style that has been considered as appropriate and efficient (Mckenzie, 2002).

The mediating role of conflict handling strategies finds support within the social psychological literature. The already discussed gender difference in social orientation and expectations extends by also influencing the preference of conflict handling strategy (Brahnam et al., 2005; Ndubisi, 2013). Males seem to satisfy their gender expectations with a forcing conflict handling strategy (Vinacke et al., 1975), while females do this with a problem solving strategy (Brahnam et al., 2005). This is because males “prefer to be more confrontational, aggressive and competitive” (Brahnam et al., 2005, p. 4), whereas females are more socialized to define themselves in a context of relationships with others (Gilligan, 1982). The research of Brahnam et al. (2005) suggests herewith that females will be better in solving conflicts than males, because there is not a significant gender difference within the yielding, compromising and forcing conflict handling styles.

Hypothesis 2. The yielding conflict handling strategy does not explain gender differences in conflict involvement of a leader.

Hypothesis 3. The problem solving conflict handling strategy has a mediating role in a way that female leaders use this strategy more than males and for that female leaders are less involved in conflicts.

Hypothesis 4. The avoiding conflict handling strategy does not explain gender differences in conflict involvement of a leader.

Hypothesis 5. The forcing conflict handling strategy has a mediating role in a way that male leaders use this strategy more than females and for that male leaders are more involved in conflicts.

Hypothesis 6. The compromising conflict handling strategy does not explain gender differences in conflict involvement of a leader.

Current research conducted a dyadic field study whereby each dyad consisted of a subordinate and a supervisor. The subordinate answered items about the supervisor in question, while the supervisor answered these items about themselves. There has been chosen for this dyadic approach because this way the self-serving bias of the leader could be filtered out.

Method

Participants

In total there has been handed out 121 dyads, so 242 people (132 males, 106 females, 3 unknown) participated to the current study. The age of the participants varied between 17 and 72 years ($M = 33.7$, $SD = 9.9$). Because a good understanding of Dutch was a requirement for completing the questionnaire, we suspect that at least the majority were Dutch. To analyze the data there has been chosen for a linear regression analysis to determine if conflict handling strategies have a mediating role. To run the linear regression analysis gender has been labelled (1 = male; 2 = female).

Supervisors

Of all the 121 participating supervisors 75 were male and 45 were female (1 unknown). Their age fluctuated between 18 and 72 years ($M = 38.9$, $SD = 13.0$). The majority of the supervisors had studied HBO ($N = 46$) or at the university ($N = 31$). The supervisors

worked an average of 38.5 hours a week ($SD = 11.2$) whereby their typical workday lasted for 8.2 hours ($SD = 1.5$). On an average they worked 7.0 years in their current supervisor function ($SD = 8.6$) and had an average, at the time of participating, of 18.9 subordinates ($SD = 21.7$). Six of the supervisors had a specialized function, 57 supervisors had a function in lower management, in middle management worked 37 supervisors and 14 supervisors had a top management function.

Subordinates

Of the subordinates identified 57 people themselves as male and 61 as female (3 unknown). The age of the subordinates laid between 17 and 60 years ($M = 28.7$, $SD = 10.7$). Their education level was more divided over the levels than as with the supervisors, but the biggest group had studied MBO ($N = 36$). The subordinates worked in comparison with the supervisors less hours a week ($M = 26.0$, $SD = 11.7$) and less hours on average on a typical workday ($M = 6.9$, $SD = 1.7$). The subordinates worked an average of 3.8 years in their current function ($SD = 4.8$)

Research Design and Measures

A field study was carried out to test the hypotheses through dyadic questionnaires. These questionnaires were taken within 38 days (November 11th to December 19th) and consisted of 11 (subordinate) or 13 (supervisor) demographic questions and two separate questionnaires that measured the conflict handling strategy of the supervisor and the frequency of conflict between the supervisor and their subordinates. Appendix A shows the measures as they are originally. In the questionnaires the items have been rephrased in a way that the supervisors questions referred to themselves and that their subordinate, the second half of a dyad, answered questions referred to their supervisor. The complete questionnaire also measured other variables, but these are excluded from this research.

Conflict Management Strategies. The Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (DUTCH; De Dreu, 2001) is based on the Dual Concern Theory (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) and measures which conflict handling strategy the supervisor uses and which strategy the subordinate thinks their supervisor uses. The DUTCH is a 20-item measure whereby every conflict handling strategy will be measured within four items. Scores are awarded through a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Examples of items for the yielding strategy ($\alpha = .79$) where “I give in to the wishes of the other party” or “I concur with the other party”. Items like “I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and the other party” and “I stand for my own and other’s goals and interests” have measured the problem solving strategy ($\alpha = .86$). The avoiding strategy ($\alpha = .82$) has been measured with items like “I avoid a confrontation about our differences” and “I avoid differences of opinion as much as possible”. Some items for the forcing conflict handling strategy ($\alpha = .81$) where “I push my own point of view” and “I search for gains”. Examples of items for the compromising strategy ($\alpha = .80$) are “I try to realize a middle-of-the-road solution” and “I emphasize that we have to find a compromise solution” (see Appendix A).

Conflict Involvement. The Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS; Spector & Jex, 1998) is designed to assess how well people get along with others at work. In the setting of the current study this will express in how well the supervisor gets along with their subordinates according to the supervisor and a subordinate. The ICAWS consists of four items and must be answered on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *very often*) whereby high scores represent frequenter conflict between the supervisor and their subordinate. Examples of items of the ICAWS are “How often do you get into arguments with others at work?” or “How often do other people yell at you at work?” (see Appendix A) In the current study this measure has a Chronbach’s Alpha of .64.

Because of the studies' dyadic nature whereby two different people fill in scores about one person there has been chosen to add up two scores of the DUTCH and ICAWS items and divide this by two. This way assured that the point of view of the supervisor and of the subordinate will be incorporated.

Procedure

Every person who collaborated with this study has been asked to hand out approximately twenty dyads to a supervisor or subordinate who was then responsible for filling in the other missing half of the dyad. This happened from the 10th of November because that was when the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen) approved the research plan. Two questionnaires were coded as a dyad with the same dyad number and were put each into a separate envelope. These two small envelopes were put into a bigger envelope to keep the questionnaires together. The envelopes were mostly handed out in Groningen and for that the questionnaires were in Dutch.

Before the questionnaires actually started the participants had to read the informed consent and check a box to give permission. The informed consent emphasized that participation was completely voluntary, anonymously and that the participant could stop at any time during the research. Furthermore the informed consent included information about the current research and a brief description about the questions that would be asked. At the end of the consent were the contact details of the lead researcher with the message that the participant always could make contact for questions before, during or after the research.

The questionnaires took approximately fifteen minutes to fill in. The first questions comprised the age and gender of the participant after which the first item was asked: "How often do you get into arguments with your subordinates?" (for subordinate version: "How often do you get into arguments with your supervisor?"). This item belonged to the ICAWS and the measure for conflict involvement was thus the starter. After this measure the DUTCH

was represented in the questionnaire. After this there were some demographic questions asked concerning the participant's working hours a week, working hours on a typical day, education level, current profession, the sector the participant works in, years of working experience, years of experience within their current organization, years of experience within their current sector, if they ever worked in another sector, what kind of managerial position they have (supervisor version only) and how many subordinates they had (supervisor version only). The questionnaires ended with a debriefing that repeated the contact details and thanked the participant for participating.

Results

The gender of the leader was negatively correlated with conflict involvement ($r = -.33$, $p < .001$). Correlations between the gender of a leader and conflict involvement with the five conflict handling strategies could be found in table 1. Like mentioned before the scores of the items from the subordinate and supervisor are merged together, so only one linear regression analysis was executed.

Main-effect: Gender and Conflict Involvement

The main relation between gender and conflict involvement has slightly different statistics for every mediation model because of difference in used degrees of freedom (table 2). Table 2 shows for every model with a different mediator a significant relation in a way that female leaders are less involved in conflicts than male leaders, which is in line with Hypothesis 1. Furthermore have the R^2 reasonable values, which means that the linear regression model fitted the models.

Yielding

Within the mediation model with the yielding conflict handling strategy the relation between gender of the leader and the yielding conflict handling strategy was found nonsignificant with a bad fit for the linear regression model ($F(1, 105) = 0.02$, $R^2 < .01$, $p =$

.878). Furthermore the analysis showed non significance within the complete model between the yielding conflict handling strategy and conflict involvement ($b = -0.18$, 95% $CI [-0.40, 0.03]$, $p = .089$) and significance between gender and conflict involvement ($b = -2.82$, 95% $CI [-4.31, -1.32]$, $p < .001$). These effects combined with the significant results for the total ($b = -2.84$, 95% $CI [-4.34, -1.33]$, $p < .001$) and direct ($b = -2.82$, 95% $CI [-4.31, -1.32]$, $p < .001$) effects with the nonsignificant indirect effect ($b = -0.02$, 95% $CI [-0.32, 0.30]$) indicates that the yielding conflict handling strategy was not a mediator, which is in line with Hypothesis 2.

Problem Solving

There has not been found a gender difference for using the problem solving conflict handling strategy ($F(1, 108) = 1.56$, $p = .214$) with a bad fit for a linear regression model ($R^2 = .01$). With all the variables present there has been found a significant relation between the problem solving strategy and conflict involvement ($b = -0.27$, 95% $CI [-0.46, -0.9]$, $p = .004$), and between gender and conflict involvement ($b = -2.50$, 95% $CI [-3.95, -1.05]$, $p < .001$). The total effect of this mediation model was significant ($b = -2.75$, 95% $CI [-4.23, -1.26]$, $p < .001$) and so was the direct effect ($b = -2.50$, 95% $CI [-3.95, -1.04]$, $p < .001$). The mediation effect with the problem solving conflict handling strategy was not significant ($b = -0.26$, 95% $CI [-0.20, 0.13]$) which shows that the problem solving does not have a mediating effect. This is in contrast with Hypothesis 3.

Avoiding

In the mediation model with the avoiding strategy there was a bad fit for the linear regression model with no difference between male and female leaders in using the avoiding conflict handling strategy ($F(1, 103) = 0.17$, $R^2 < .01$, $p = .683$). In the complete model there was a not a significant difference between the avoiding strategy and conflict involvement ($b = 0.08$, 95% $CI [-0.97, 0.26]$, $p = .363$). The relation between the gender of the leader and conflict involvement, on the other hand, was significant ($b = -2.90$, 95% $CI [-4.45, -1.36]$, $p <$

.001). These findings are matching with Hypothesis 4 and the analysis of the total ($b = -2.88$, 95% *CI* [-4.42, -1.33], $p < .001$), direct ($b = -2.90$, 95% *CI* [-4.45, -1.36], $p < .001$) and indirect effect ($b = 0.03$, 95% *CI* [-0.20, 0.25]) also correspondent with this.

Forcing

The analysis also showed for the forcing conflict handling strategy a poor fit of the model and that there was no gender difference between leaders using this strategy ($F(1, 108) = 3.51$, $R^2 = .03$, $p = .064$). Analysis with all the three variables present showed a significant relation with conflict involvement for a forcing conflict handling strategy ($b = 0.25$, 95% *CI* [0.08, 0.41], $p = .004$) as well as for the gender of the leader ($b = -2.45$, 95% *CI* [-3.90, -1.01], $p = .001$). The total effect of current mediation was significant ($b = -2.83$, 95% *CI* [-4.30, -1.36], $p < .001$) just like the direct effect ($b = -2.45$, 95% *CI* [-3.90, -1.01], $p = .001$). However the indirect effect showed no significance ($b = -0.39$, 95% *CI* [-0.94, 0.02]), which means that the forcing strategy does not have a mediating role, which is in conflict with Hypothesis 5.

Compromising

In current model gender of the leader had a significant result with the compromising conflict handling strategy ($F(1, 106) = 6.25$, $R^2 = .05$, $p = .014$), which means that female leaders used the compromise conflict handling strategy more than male leaders. Results of the whole model show no significant relation between the compromising strategy and conflict involvement significant ($b = -0.07$, 95% *CI* [-0.26, 0.12], $p = .449$), while the relation between gender and conflict involvement, in contrast, was found significant ($b = -2.61$, 95% *CI* [-4.16, -1.05], $p = .001$). These first result already provides evidence for Hypothesis 6, but further support was found in the total ($b = -2.75$, 95% *CI* [-4.25, -1.24], $p < .001$), direct ($b = -2.61$, 95% *CI* [-4.16, -1.05], $p = .001$) and indirect effect ($b = -0.14$, 95% *CI* [-0.66, 0.24]).

Discussion

In the current dyadic study we investigated if different conflict handling strategies that supervisors used mediated the relationship between the gender of the supervisor and the conflict involvement of the supervisors with their subordinates. The main-effect of gender on conflict involvement of the supervisor was suggested to be there in a way that there would be less conflict involvement with the subordinates when the leader was female than male (Bass, 1990; CBS, 2020; Eagle & Karau, 2002). Furthermore, we stated that the conflict handling strategies of problem solving and forcing would have a mediating role. Yielding, avoiding and compromising, on the other hand, would not have a mediating role. These hypotheses were based on social psychological literature that concluded that females would be tend to use the problem solving strategy more and males would prefer to use the forcing strategy, because of gender expectations (Brahnam et al., 2005; Ndubisi, 2013; Vinacke et al., 1975).

The results of the current study revealed evidence for that the gender of a supervisor has significant impact on conflict involvement of the supervisors with their subordinates in a way that supports Hypothesis 1. An unexpected result was that none of the five conflict handling strategies had a mediating role within the main-effect. This contradicts with the literature that supported Hypothesis 3 and 5 (Brahnam et al., 2005; Ndubisi, 2013; Vinacke et al., 1975). Another remarkable result was that only the compromising conflict handling strategy had a significant relation with the gender of a leader in a way that female leaders use the comprising strategy more than male leaders.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation about this study is that the conflict handling strategies and the conflict involvement do not really line up. Conflict involvement represents how often supervisors have conflicts with their subordinates and it makes sense to think that how more effective a conflict strategy is the less supervisors would be involved in conflicts. But this does not have to be necessary true, an avoiding conflict handling strategy, for example, could also lead to

less conflict involvement because the supervisor would avoid the confrontation and therefore there would not be a conflict (De Dreu, 2001). The avoiding conflict handling was a strategy of main interest and could have influenced the results in this way. Future studies may consider using a different dependent variable that connects better with the intention of the conflict handling strategies. For example a variable that covers how people feel during a conflict, is if the conflict is relationship or task oriented (Jehn, 1995) which would extend to literature. This is also an important aspect because such a study would focus more on the underlying problem that conflict at work can have negative impact for the individuals' well-being (Sonnentag et al., 2013) as well as for the organizational performance (Meier et al., 2013). A strength of the current study that should be incorporated in a new research is the dyadic nature. This prevents that variables will not only depend on own interpretation.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The theoretical implications of this research are quite important. The study has chosen a clear side in the debate if gender has a significant relationship with conflict involvement (Bass, 1990; CBS, 2020; Merluzzi, 2017; Skjørshammer & Hofoss, 1999), hereby being in line with the literature that supported that a female leader would be less involved in conflict in comparison with a male leader (Bass, 1990; CBS, 2020). Because of the lack of research with the leader perspective this study enlightens new insights.

Although this study concluded that conflict handling strategies do not have a mediating role, the analysis challenged some existing literature. The research of Brahnam et al. (2005) implicated that there was a significance difference between gender and the avoiding and problem solving conflict handling strategies. In contrast, this study showed no significant gender difference between these conflict handling strategies but it did show a significant difference between gender of the supervisor and the forcing conflict handling strategy in a way that males are more tend to use this strategy than females. However, this is also

explainable within the social gender expectations theory with research showing that males are more confrontational (Rontehal & Hautaluoma, 1988), aggressive (Kilman & Thomas, 1977) and competitive (Rubin & Brown, 1975). These properties correspond with the forcing conflict handling strategy.

As far practical implications concerns this study could be important within organizational selection. Choosing a supervisor could be very important to businesses and it could be crucial how supervisors deal with conflict, so determination of the current using conflict handling strategy could be add to a selection as a problem solving strategy significantly predicts less conflict involvement. It could also apply to supervisors who are already in function and tend to be involved in multiple conflicts. There could be training to determine which strategy they are using and if this is an ineffective one the supervisors could be trained to use a more productive one.

Furthermore these findings can help against gender discrimination as females are seen as less capable to fulfill tasks that a leader needs to do (Anonymous, 2021). Current research shows that woman leaders have significant less conflicts than male leaders which simply means that woman are general better at this area. Of course males probably also have stronger sides in comparison with woman but this knowledge could still help with breaking the stigma that males are better leaders at the workplace.

Conclusions

Taken together, these results provided support for that females leader are less involved in conflict with her subordinates at the workplace. This relationship cannot be explained by gender differences in the use of conflict handling strategies.

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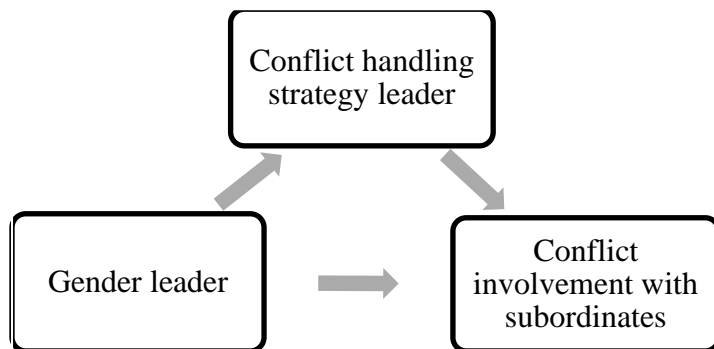
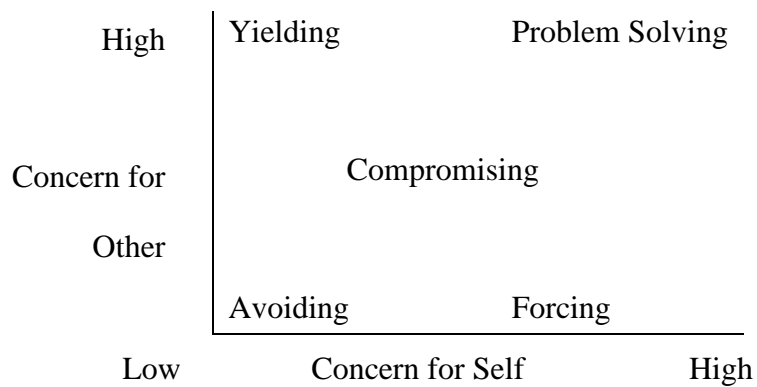
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Figure 1*Hypothesized Research Model***Figure 2***Theoretical Representation of the Five Conflict Handling Strategies***Table 1***Correlations Gender and Conflict Involvement with the Conflict Handling Strategies*

		Yielding	Problem Solving	Avoidance	Forcing	Compromise
Gender	<i>r</i>	.04	.10	.07	-.15	.207
Supervisor	<i>p</i>	.647	.311	.450	.119	.027*
Conflict	<i>r</i>	-.16	-.29	.07	.31	-.15
Involvement	<i>p</i>	.095	.002*	.497	.001*	.125

Note. * is significant with $p < .05$

Table 2*Significance Test between Gender and Conflict Involvement across Models*

		Yielding	Problem Solving	Avoidance	Forcing	Compromise
Gender	<i>df</i>	1, 105	1, 108	1, 103	1, 108	1, 106
Leader x	<i>F</i>	13.94	13.41	14.83	15.54	13.08
Conflict	<i>R</i> ²	.12	.11	.12	.12	.11
Involvement	<i>p</i>	< .001*	< .001*	< .001*	< .001*	< .001*

Note. * is significant with $p < .05$

Appendix A

The Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (DUTCH):

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

Yielding:

1. I give in to the wishes of the other party.
2. I concur with the other party.
3. I try to accommodate the other party.
4. I adapt to the other parties' goals and interests.

Compromising:

5. I try to realize a middle-of-the-road solution.
6. I emphasize that we have to find a compromise solution.
7. I insist we both give a little.
8. I strive whenever possible towards a fifty-fifty compromise.

Forcing:

9. I push my own point of view.
10. I search for gains.
11. I fight for a good outcome for myself.
12. I do everything to win.

Problem solving:

13. I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and the other party.
14. I stand for my own and other's goals and interests.
15. I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution.
16. I work out a solution that serves my own as well as other's interests as good as possible.

Avoiding:

17. I avoid a confrontation about our differences.
18. I avoid differences of opinion as much as possible.
19. I try to make differences loom less severe.
20. I try to avoid a confrontation with the other.

Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS):

1. How often do you get into arguments with others at work?
2. How often do other people yell at you at work?
3. How often are people rude to you at work?
4. How often do other people do nasty things to you at work?