

Investigation of Relationship between Personality Traits and Conflict Management Styles in Guilan Province Schools Managers

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ABSTRACT

The current research tries to investigate relationship between managers' personality traits and its dimensions (extroversion and introversion and emotional stability and neuroticism) with conflict management styles (collaboration, compromise, competition, avoidance and accommodation) in Guilan province schools managers. Statistical population of this research was all managers of all school levels of Guilan province in Iran which was about 1848 people. A sample size of 317 was selected through sampling method explained in chapter 3, which was accidental stratified sampling method. After determining sample size, managers of all school levels were selected by simple accidental method. Research methodology was applied from its objective point of view and data gathering method was descriptive (non-experimental) and it is of field research type. Field environment for this research was all Guilan province schools. Correlation coefficient which is a mathematical index & is used to determine direction & quantity of relationship between two variables was used in this research. Because data were gathered by means of distance method, therefore distance Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

KEYWORDS: personality traits, conflict management styles, Guilan province schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

21th century has been called management century, because abundance of human & industrial products necessitates a thinking knowledgeable coordination force called manager. Presence of a manager is necessary for developing & sustaining the effectively of today complex organizations because the conservation & growth of organizations & also efficiency & affectivity of educational system depends on management quality. Managers' performance quality within an organization determines that organization's performance & a society's organizations' performance makes up that nation's performance. An organization's management involves considering combinations of facilities, organizational features & human resource appropriately, material resources within an organization and recognizing human resources management is so important that it is an essential factor in success. Defeat of social organizations is mostly due to failing to handle human resources. In view of the fact that a society's success or failure is in the society's manager's hands, especially educational managers, these managers' intellectual, spiritual, mental & emotional characteristics must be considered. This is because educational managers, like other members of a society, have different talents, motivations, interests, & inclinations & they have various attitudes, knowledge & value system and these individual differences will affect their performance. Not all managers behave similarly. These differences not only arise from knowledge level, attitude & value system but also arise from personality characteristics. The fact that an appropriate recognition of personality characteristics of managers' impacts on conflict management dimensions is necessary to improve employees' performance level & therefore productivity level in organization, correlation analysis was used to investigate relationship between managers' personality traits dimensions & conflict management in schools managers of all levels in Guilan province.

Statement of the problem

Not all managers behave similarly. These differences not only arise from knowledge level, attitude & value system but also arise from personality characteristics. Although these differences might look unimportant in appearance, but they lead to great differences & behavioral results when they pass through mediating cognitive processes. Such differences arise mainly from personality-related differences. Because managers have more

decision-making power with respect to ordinary people & other employees, their personality can affect their decisions. In other words, managers have their own personal philosophy and their attitude towards different issues of organization & employees affect their behavior. Managerial style & philosophy of any manager is affected by his culture & personality. Personality-based differences can be a source of inadequate growth & creativity or a resource for conflict & inevitable organizational problems (Ghaffarzadeh, 2006, 76). One of these inevitable problems is personal differences in organization, maintaining personal characteristics of managers parallel to cooperation with others & these are challenges ahead of some organizations. In spite of this, manager's personality is one of the few aspects that have not been investigated very much, although it has great impacts on attitude, performance & management style of managers.

Scientists have presented many different ideas & classifications on personal dimensions of people. One of these models is 4-factor personality model of Hanz-Eysenek. He used models of Pavlof, Jung & Krachmer's models in his own theory. He measured & classified personality traits using factor analysis like Cattle. Although he used ordinary & sick people in his researches, but most of his researches were conducted in psychological institution of Madsly hospital in England. On the other hand, conflict means an obvious struggle between at least two people in a way that one of them feels that shortage of facilities, conflict of goals & other side's intervention will stop him from achieving his own goals (Sorenson, 2006, p115). Conflict management needs strategies that are based upon self-confidence, flexibility, vast perspective & open mind towards different methods (Hellviege, 2003, p373). In fact, conflict management strategies are the individuals' response in different conflict settings. Although these strategies are continuous, they might change in different circumstances (Freedman,2000, p3). Thomas (1976; quoted from IzadiYazdanAbadi, 2000),classified conflicting behavior in two categories based on management network model of Blake &Mouton: Assertiveness& cooperativeness. Assertiveness refers to behaviors that are related to individual's own satisfaction & cooperativeness emphasizes on behaviors that are related to others' satisfaction. Five strategies for conflict management are proposed based on this viewpoint: avoidance, compromise, accommodation, competition & collaboration. Avoidance strategy (lack of cooperativeness, lack of assertiveness) ignores both sides' benefits through avoiding confrontation with conflict or postponing a solution (Thomas, 2007, p90). Compromise strategy (lack of assertiveness, cooperativeness) means trying to satisfy other side's needs and interests, even if individual's own interests are ignored in this way (IzadiYazdanAbadi, 2000). Competition strategy (lack of cooperativeness, assertiveness) describes imperative, domineering methods to control conflict. In accommodation strategy (moderate cooperativeness, moderate assertiveness) both sides consider both their own & the other side's interests & expectations, & finally collaboration strategy is adopted when one or both sides have great tendency in both side's interests satisfaction & everything will be directed towards cooperation & collaboration. This strategy satisfies both side's demands & preferences (YazdanAbadi, 2006, p102). Wilsoon&Pootnum classified these five strategies in 3 strategies solutionism (collaboration and accommodation), lack of struggle (compromise and avoidance)& control.

Research model

Based on the definition of this research's variables and goals, researchers try to investigate managers' personality traits (independent variable) & conflict management styles (dependent variable). Therefore research conceptual model is as follows:



Figure 1.Content model of research

Research hypotheses

The main hypothesis of this research is as follow:

There is relationship between managers' personality traits&conflict management styles in Education Bureau of *Guilan province*.

And subsidiary hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is relationship between managers' extroversion characteristic& application of collaboration style in solving conflict.
2. There is relationship between managers' extroversion characteristic & application of accommodation style in solving conflict.
3. There is relationship between managers' extroversion characteristic & application of compromise style in solving conflict.
4. There is relationship between managers' extroversion characteristic & application of competition style in solving conflict.
5. There is relationship between managers' extroversion characteristic & application of avoidance style in solving conflict.
6. There is relationship between managers' introversion characteristic & application of collaboration style in solving conflict.
7. There is relationship between managers' introversion characteristic & application of accommodation style in solving conflict.
8. There is relationship between managers' introversion characteristic & application of compromise style in solving conflict.
9. There is relationship between managers' introversion characteristic & application of competition style in solving conflict.
10. There is relationship between managers' introversion characteristic & application of avoidance style in solving conflict.
11. There is relationship between managers' emotional stability characteristic & application of collaboration style in solving conflict.
12. There is relationship between managers' emotional stability characteristic & application of accommodation style in solving conflict.
13. There is relationship between managers' emotional stability characteristic & application of compromise style in solving conflict.
14. There is relationship between managers' emotional stability characteristic & application of competition style in solving conflict.
15. There is relationship between managers' emotional stability characteristic & application of avoidance style in solving conflict.
16. There is relationship between managers' neuroticism characteristic & application of collaboration style in solving conflict.
17. There is relationship between managers' neuroticism characteristic & application of accommodation style in solving conflict.
18. There is relationship between managers' neuroticism characteristic & application of compromise style in solving conflict.
19. There is relationship between managers' neuroticism characteristic & application of competition style in solving conflict.
20. There is relationship between managers' neuroticism characteristic & application of avoidance style in solving conflict.
21. Managers' personality traits can predict conflict management styles.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In this part of the research, firstly the relationship strength of managers' personality traits& its dimensions (extroversion andintroversion and emotional stability andneuroticism) with conflict management styles dimensions is investigated & then, the role of each independent variable of managers' personality traits on conflict management dimensions (as dependent variable) will be measured.Thereforeone main hypothesis & 21 subsidiary hypotheses were propounded to this end.

Main hypothesis test: There is relationship between managers' personality traits& conflict management styles in Education Bureau of *Guilan province*.

Ho: There is no relationship between managers' personality traits & conflict management styles in Education Bureau of Guilan province.

H1: There is relationship between managers' personality traits & conflict management styles in Education Bureau of Guilan province.

Table1. Summary of relationship model of managers' personality traits with conflict management styles in Gilan province Education Bureau.

Certainty level	Sig. level	Correlation coefficient	dependent variable	Independent variable
%99	0/000	0/601	Conflict management styles	Managers' personality traits

Table 1 shows that managers' personality traits variable has direct positive relationship (correlation coefficient = 0.601) with conflict management styles. In other words, in 99% certainty level, H_1 is verified. As a result, research main hypothesis (i. e. there is relationship between managers' personality traits & conflict management styles in Gilan province Education Bureau) is verified.

Table2. Summary of subsidiary hypotheses test results.

Hypothesis result	Certainty level	Sig. level	Correlationcoeff.	Dependent variable	Independent variable
verified	%99	0/000	0/692	Application of collaboration	Extroversion characteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/623	Application of accommodation	extroversion characteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/605	Application of compromise	Extroversion characteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/459	Application of competition style	extroversion characteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/439	Application of avoidance style	extroversion characteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/124	Application of collaboration	introversioncharacteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/368	Application of accommodation	introversioncharacteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/257	Application of compromise	introversion characteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/429	Application of competition style	introversioncharacteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/553	Application of avoidance style	introversioncharacteristic Of managers
verified	%99	0/000	0/774	Application of collaboration	Managers' emotional Stability characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/865	Application of accommodation	Managers' emotional Stability characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/721	Application of compromise	Managers' emotional Stability characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/391	Application of competition style	Managers' emotional Stability characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/384	Application of avoidance style	Managers' emotional Stability characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/112	Application of collaboration	Managers' neuroticism characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/175	Application of accommodation	Managers' neuroticism characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/283	Application of compromise	Managers' neuroticism characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/449	Application of competition style	Managers' neuroticism characteristic
verified	%99	0/000	0/798	Application of avoidance style	Managers' neuroticism characteristic

Table 3 shows managers' personality traits variable, model summary & regression coefficient for conflict management styles variable.

Table3. Regression of independent variable (managers’ personality traits) & dependent variable (conflict management styles) in Gilan province schools managers.

constant	Independent variable coeff.	Square of corr. Coeff.	Dependent variable	Independent variable
3/3	0/105	0/361	Conflict management styles	Managers’ personality traits

Pearson correlation coefficient & a p-value less than 0.01 show that a relationship does exist between managers’ personality traits&conflict management styles.

R-squared value shows that 36.1 percent of conflict management styles variable variations can be described by managers’ personality traits variable. Therefore the following relationship is established between research two main variables:

$$\text{Conflict management styles} = \text{managers’ personality traits} * 0.105 + 3.3$$

Conclusion & Recommendations

Psychologists believe that personality characteristics are not nervous – psychological structures in human beings, but "they are items that individuals use to evaluate each other and determine an individual's status from others' viewpoint". In Hougan's opinion, individuals’ responses to personality questionnaires are not real descriptions of them but they are strategies to introduce them.

Inter-personal theories supporters believe that personality is not placed within an individual, but it exists within inter-personal relationships. This research was conducted to determine relationship and impacts of managers’ personality traits variable on conflict management styles in Guilan province. Therefore according to the results and considering the fact that all of the hypotheses are verified, the followings are recommended:

It is important that managers are trained and educated so that they can handle conflict management and use each style in its appropriate situation. Managers might use the same style always, possibly because it is an appropriate method to solve conflict and it has been useful all time. A manager's personality might make him use a particular method always; or he/she may believe that methods which use violence are useless and adverse and therefore he/she might always use methods that involve collaboration with others (collaboration style).

Education and reforming managers’ attitudes is very important. Managers must learn that continuous use of the same style will not be helpful in all situations to manage conflict and attention to conditions and conflict situation, personality of the people involved and conflict cause will help choose an appropriate style to solve conflict. It is also recommended that the causes and dimensions of conflict management be identified in school managers and individuals must not suppress viewpoints that cause conflict but they had better express conflicting ideas, because this improves decision-making and consequently it will lead to better performance of managers in long-time period. Actually, managers’ knowledge about the nature, features, and causes of conflict will help with solving conflict. Managers can also be directed towards constructive conflict because constructive conflict has positive results for group or organization. This kind of conflict will allow the individuals toknow opportunities and problems that were somehow consigned to oblivion and therefore creativity and performance will improve. In order to reduce conflicting organizations, management-employees groups and committees can be formed. This strategy aims to involve employees in managerial issues and present a collaboration model. This method will help members (managers and teachers in this study) feel they belong to their work environment.

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