

STYLES OF HANDLING CONFLICT IN GREEK ORGANIZATIONS: THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationships of dimensions of emotional intelligence: social skills, motivation, empathy, and transformational leadership of supervisors to subordinates' integrating style of handling conflict. Data for this study were collected with questionnaires from managers working at various functional units and different hierarchical levels in Greek organizations. Results provided support for the model which suggests that transformational leadership, social skills, motivation, empathy are positively associated with the utilization of integrating as a conflict management style. Implications for management are discussed including the need for managers to use emotional intelligence competencies and transformational leadership, so that their subordinates are encouraged to enhance more integrating style of handling conflict. This will help the supervisors and subordinates to work together to attain goals.

Keywords: Conflict Styles, Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Supervisors, Subordinates, Greece.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict is defined as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance between social entities individuals or groups (Pondy, 1967). Conflict in organizations occurs when organizational members engage in activities or hold attitudes that are incompatible with those of colleagues or outsiders who utilize the services or products of the organization (Rahim, 2001). Conflict influences relationships between organizational functions and organizational effectiveness (Ruekert & Walker, 1987; Shani & James 2000; Dawis & Graham, 2005; 2006).

Conflict in the organizational environment is inevitable and ongoing. Conflict management is a basic dimension of team effectiveness. Managers spend at least 20% of their working time managing conflicts (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). When a team feels that its interests are threatened, communication difficulties arise that lead to high intensity conflicts. If conflict is not dealt with effectively the consequences for organizations are negative (Barclay, 1991; Jarowski & Kohli, 1997). In particular, unmanaged conflict has deleterious effects on the problem-solving process in organizations (Nicotera, 1995; Jehn, 1995; 1997). Furthermore, unmanaged organizational conflict is related to job dissatisfaction among the organizational members involved (Menon et al, 1997).

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Conflict in organizations can be classified as intra-organizational (i.e., conflict within the boundaries of the organization) and inter-organizational (i.e., conflict between two or more organizations). Intra-organizational conflict may also be classified on the basis of the level (i.e., individual or group) at which it occurs. Hence, intra-organizational conflict may be classified as inter-personal, intra-group, and inter-group (Rahim et al, 2000).

Conflicts do not have unique sources in a single specified area. As a result, we must give definitions according to the contents of the conflict as well as to the various shapes and forms that they take. The research on conflicts should take into consideration the whole width of the conflict, including the types, dimensions and aspects of the conflict (Wall & Callister, 1995; Nauta, & Sanders, 2000; Polychroniou, 2005).

Conflict management in an organization, does not necessarily refer to strategies that avoid, diminish or erase conflict. On the contrary it involves designing effective strategies aiming at minimizing the dysfunctional elements of conflict and the parallel enforcement of the functional elements of conflict (Menon et al, 1997).

Blake and Mouton (1964) were the first authors to develop a conceptual scheme for classifying the styles for handling intra-organizational conflict. The pivotal notion in their model was the extent to which the manager is concerned for production or for people. Their idea was further developed by Thomas (1976) who placed emphasis on the intentions of the party, namely: cooperativeness (i.e., attempting to satisfy the other party's concerns), and assertiveness, (i.e., attempting to satisfy one's own concerns).

Rahim (1983) built on that earlier seminal work and considered conflict-handling styles on two dimensions, which represent motivational orientations of individuals in conflict situations: concern for self, and concern for others. The former dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns in conflict resolution. The latter dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person desires to satisfy the concerns of others. Empirical research has yielded general support for these dimensions (Ruble & Thomas, 1976; Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Their combination indicates the existence of five styles of handling conflict: Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. In the present study only integrating style was used.

Descriptions of these styles are:

Integrating (high concern for self and others) style involves openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties. It is associated with problem solving, which may lead to creative solutions.

Obliging (low concern for self and high concern for others) style is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party.

Dominating (high concern for self and low concern for others) style has been

identified with win–lose orientation or with forcing behaviour to win one's position.

Avoiding (low concern for self and others) style has been associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, or sidestepping situations.

Compromising (intermediate in concern for self and others) style involves give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The role of leadership in management is largely determined by the organisational culture of the company. It has been argued that managers' beliefs, values and assumptions are of critical importance to the overall style of leadership that they adopt. There are several different leadership styles that can be identified. Each technique has its own set of good and not-so-good characteristics, and each uses leadership in a different way (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004).

Following Burns (1978) and Bass (1985; 2002) transformational leadership is associated with distinct dimensions of charisma or idealized influence (extent of pride, trust, and respect engendered by and emotional identification with the leader), intellectual stimulation (extent the leader encourages followers to question their own way of doing things and become innovative), and individualized consideration (extent the leader provides personal attention and encouragement for self-development of followers).

Transformational leaders tend to be less predictable than transactional leaders. The transformational leader has the capacity to motivate people to do more than normally expected. Transformational leaders raise subordinates consciousness about new outcomes and motivate them to transcend their own interests for the sake of the department of organization. They create an atmosphere of change, and they may be obsessed by visionary ideas that excite, stimulate, and drive other people to work hard. Transformational leaders have an emotional impact on subordinates. They stand for something, have a vision of the future, are able to communicate that vision to subordinates, and motivate them to realize it. The true transformational leader often does not fit within a traditional organization and may lead a social movement rather than a formal organization (Daft, 2004; Hellriegel et al, 2005).

The leaders who possess interpersonal intelligence may be associated with transformational leadership for several reasons. Leaders who possess empathy aspect of emotional intelligence (EQ) are likely to recognize followers' need, take active interest in them, respond to changes in their emotional states, and to work together to attain goals (Rahim et al, 2002). Empathy is likely to be associated with individualized consideration. Social skills aspect of EQ, which is associated with enabling followers to engage in desirable behaviours, is likely to be associated with intellectual stimulation (Goleman, 2001; Rahim et al, 2006).

Employees are likely to respect and emotionally identify with a leader who is considerate and is willing to help employees to be effective, enhance utilization of integrating style for handling conflict and improve their job performance (Rahim et al, 2002; 2006).

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EQ) refers to one's ability to be aware of one's own feelings, be aware of others' feelings, to differentiate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and behaviour (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; 1994). This definition consists of three categories of abilities: evaluation and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and using emotions in decision-making. Goleman (1998) provided a similar definition: 'the capacity for organizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships'. These and other definitions by Bar-On (1997), Bar-On & Parker (2000), Boyatzis (2001) and others are complementary.

In his role as a consultant in organizations, Goleman (1998; see also Goleman, 1995; Goleman et al, 2002) found that EQ is twice more important than technical skills and IQ for jobs at all levels. He also reported that EQ plays an increasingly important role at the highest levels of a company. It appears that EQ relates to a number of non-cognitive skills, abilities, or competencies that influence an individual's capacity to deal with environmental demands and pressures.

The EQ construct was discussed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and had its roots in Gardner's (1983) concepts of intra- and inter-personal intelligences. Whereas, intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to be aware of and regulate one's own emotions (feelings, moods, and desires), interpersonal intelligence is associated with one's ability to understand others' emotions and to induce desirable responses in them.

Several researchers have attempted to develop self-report measures of EQ (Bar-On, 1997; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Mayer et al, 1997; Schutte et al, 1998; Boyatzis & Goleman, 2001), but psychometric properties of these instruments are questionable. Davis et al (1998) concluded from their three studies that, 'as presently postulated, little remains of emotional intelligence that is unique and psychometrically sound. Thus, questionnaire measures are too closely related to established personality traits, whereas objective measures of emotional intelligence suffer from poor reliability'.

In general, several scholars use the term EQ to include almost everything but IQ: emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, innovation, and so on (Goleman, 1998; Bar-On & Parker, 2000). Other authors support that there should be a more restrictive model of EQ based on ability and distinguished from personality (Salovey & Mayer, 1994; Mayer et al, 2000; Cherniss & Adler, 2000; Lane, 2000; Goleman, 2001; Rahim et al, 2002; 2006).

The above studies propose five dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. In the present study empathy, social skills, and motivation were used.

Descriptions of these dimensions are:

Self-Awareness is associated with the ability to be aware of which emotions, moods, and impulses one is experiencing and why. This also includes one's awareness of the

effects of his or her feelings on others.

Self-Regulation refers to the ability to keep one's own emotions and impulses in check, to remain calm in potentially volatile situations, and to maintain composure irrespective of one's emotions.

Motivation represents the ability to remain focused on goals despite setbacks, to operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure, delaying gratification, and to accept change to attain goals.

Empathy refers to one's ability to understand the feelings transmitted through verbal and nonverbal messages, to provide emotional support to people when needed, and to understand the links between others' emotions and behaviour.

Social Skills is associated with one's ability to deal with problems without demeaning those who work with him or her, to not allow own or others' negative feelings to inhibit collaboration, and to handle affective conflict with tact and diplomacy.

HYPOTHESES

Conflict Management Styles

When working as a member of a team, individuals must make decisions concerning the allocation of tasks toward individual goals and team goals. The job design literature has been clear in suggesting that a favourable climate is necessary for job redesign efforts to be successful since it moderates the relationship between job complexity and satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; 1980; Ferris & Gilmore, 1984).

Integrating goals in teams is a value-added activity, since new knowledge is continuously developed. Integrating style is positively related to information sharing and organizational learning within organizations. Joint decision-making and information sharing is necessary in order to achieve individual and organizational outcomes (Ruekert & Walker, 1987).

Burke (1970) suggested that, in general, a confrontation style was related to the effective management of conflict, while forcing and withdrawing were related to the ineffective management of conflict. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) indicated that a confrontation style dealing with intergroup conflict was used to a significantly greater degree in higher than lower performing organizations.

Various styles of dealing with conflict have been identified. These include the integrating, the obliging, the dominating, the avoiding, and the compromising style (Rahim, 1983). Of these styles, the integrating (also referred as problem solving) style is the one that optimizes the learning outcomes and the effectiveness of conflict management (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas, 1976; 1992; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995; Van de Vliert & Euwema 1994; Janssen & Van de Vliert, 1996; Polychroniou, 2004; 2005). In the case of supervisor - subordinate conflict, the choice of the style depends, among others, on supervisor's emotional intelligence as well as leadership effectiveness.

Integrating Style

The integrating style involves high concern for self as well as for others. The employment of the integrating style within the organizational context encourages communication, information sharing, and problem solving. This style includes the elements of confrontation and problem solving. Confrontation involves informal communication, which leads to creative problem solving (Rahim et al., 2000). Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) found this conflict management style to be more effective than others in attaining integration of the activities of different subsystems of an organization.

Rahim et al (2002; 2006) suggest that subordinates are better able to negotiate and effectively handle their conflicts with emotionally intelligent supervisors. Following this study, we are hypothesizing that a supervisor's motivation to enhance emotional intelligence competencies, such as empathy, social skills, and motivation, and transformational leadership will encourage subordinates to use more integrating style in managing conflict.

Transformational Leadership

In the process of attaining goals, there may be supervisor-subordinate conflict which must be handled functionally for positive outcomes. Existing literature suggests that dimensions of supervisors' emotional intelligence and supervisor's transformational leadership influence subordinates' styles of handling conflict with supervisor, employee outcomes and job performance (Rahim et al, 2002; 2006).

Scholars and writers in management are beginning to emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership on conflict management (Bass & Avolino, 1993; Bernet, 1996; Megerian & Sosik, 1996; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Goleman, 1998; 2001; Bass, 2002; Rahim et al, 2002; 2006). These theoretical contributions suggest that some aspects of emotional intelligence may be associated with effective leadership and effective conflict management.

In general transformational leaders who possess aspects of EQ are likely to exhibit behaviours associated with handling conflict for positive outcomes (Rahim et al, 2006). Taking lead from these contributions, we hypothesize that transformational leadership is positively associated with the utilization of integrating as a conflict management style.

Taking lead from these contributions, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership is positively associated with the utilization of integrating as a conflict management style.

Emotional Intelligence

In order to understand the emotional processes and deal with them effectively, one needs to have empathy, social skills and motivation. Empathy and social skills involve one's ability to perceive others' emotions, feelings, and needs and help others to regulate their emotions to achieve desirable goals. Motivation is needed to help an individual to remain focused for attaining goals (Church, 1997; Shipper & Dillard, 2000; Druskat & Wolf, 2001).

Goleman (2001) indicates that in workplace self-awareness positively influences self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation; and self-regulation, in turn, influences empathy, social skills, and motivation.

Goleman (2001) (see also Rahim et al, 2002) suggested that emotional intelligence is associated with social competencies, such as empathy, social skills, and motivation. We selected empathy, social skills, and motivation components of EQ for the present study because we believed that manifestations of empathy, social skills, and motivation in an organizational context will have a significant influence on employees' styles of handling conflict.

On the basis of our theoretical discussion, we formulate the following hypotheses for the study:

Hypothesis 2: Empathy is related positively with the utilization of integrating as a conflict management style.

Hypothesis 3: Social skills are related positively with the utilization of integrating as a conflict management style.

Hypothesis 4: Motivation is related positively with the utilization of integrating as a conflict management style.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

The present research investigated how supervisor's empathy, social skills, motivation and transformational leadership are associated with the utilization of integrating style by subordinate as a conflict management style. In particular, this study investigates subordinates' perceptions regarding their supervisor's emotional intelligence as well as leadership effectiveness. Moreover, it is investigated how subordinates at different hierarchical levels handle conflicts with their supervisors in Greek organizations.

Participants were 267 managers working at various functional units (production, logistics, marketing, sales, human resources, R&D, finance, accounting) in Greek organizations. Of these organizations, 28.2% belonged to the service industry, 18.6% to merchandising sector, 14.7% to financial services sector, and 13.4% to manufacturing sector. All organizational sizes were represented, with organizations with 301-400 employees (56 or 21% of participants) and organizations with 1 to 100 employees (123 or 46.1% of participants) being the least and the most frequently indicated, respectively.

Of the participants, top managers represent 31 (11.6%), middle managers 82 (30.7%), and lower managers 154 (57.7%). Moreover, 162 (60.7%) of the participants indicated that they were working in the same position for 1 to 3 years and 76 (28.5%) for 4 to 6 years.

The sample was well educated, as 49.3% of the participants had completed graduate studies and 21.2% postgraduate studies. Finally, in terms of age and gender 142

(53.2%) of the participants were 21 to 30 years old, 89 (33.3%) were 31 to 40 years old, 124 (46.4%) male and 143 (53.6%) female.

Data were collected by means of questionnaires in a series of face-to-face structured interviews regarding subordinates' perceptions for the following: (a) superior's emotional intelligence, (b) superior's transformational leadership, (c) handling conflict with superiors. This method of data collection is considered to be most appropriate due to the status of the participants (lower, middle and top managers) and the need for confidentiality (sensitivity issues regarding subordinates' perceptions for their supervisor). Moreover, face-to-face interviews increase the reliability of data. Furthermore, Greek managers were in depth interviewed in order to collect as more data as possible.

Measurement

Conflict management. Conflict management styles were measured with 28 items adopted from the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983). These items measured how subordinates at different hierarchical levels handle conflicts with their supervisors concerning integrating style. Rahim (1983) built on that earlier seminal work and considered conflict management styles on two dimensions, which represent motivational orientations of individuals in conflict situations: concern for self, and concern for others. The former dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns in conflict resolution. The latter dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person desires to satisfy the concerns of others.

Sample items for integrating style are: 'I try to investigate an issue with my supervisor to find a solution acceptable to us', 'I try to integrate my ideas with those of my supervisor to come up with a decision jointly'. The ROCI-II uses a 7-point Likert scale (7 = Strongly Agree...1 = Strongly Disagree) for ranking each of the items and a higher score indicates a greater utilization from the subordinate. Integrating style subscale consisted of 7 items.

Transformational Leadership. Developed by Bass (1985), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used as instrument to assess the three aspects of transformational leadership: charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is a widely used instrument to assess the three aspects of transformational leadership. However, there has been lack of evidence of construct validity of the instrument (Tajeda, 2001). Carlessa's (1998) study indicated that there is little evidence to support that the MLQ measures three distinct transformational leader behaviours. In the present study, we conceptualize transformational leadership as a unidimensional construct consisting of the three types of interrelated behaviours.

Transformational Leadership was measured with 12 items adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass, 1985). The respondents were asked to rank each item on a 7-point box scale (7 = Strongly Agree...1 = Strongly Disagree). The scale was computed by averaging the responses to the items. A higher score indicates greater transformational leadership. Sample items for this scale are: 'In my mind, he/she is a symbol of success and accomplishment', (charisma) 'My

supervisor doesn't let rules stand in the way of solutions', (intellectual stimulation) 'My supervisor gives me reasons to believe in what I can do' (individualized consideration).

Emotional Intelligence. Dimensions of supervisory emotional intelligence (EQ) were measured with 30 items adopted from the EQ Index (EQI) (Rahim et al, 2002; 2006). These items measured subordinates' perceptions of their respective supervisors' EQ dimensions concerning empathy, social skills, and motivation. Sample items for the three dimensions are: 'My supervisor understands the feelings transmitted through nonverbal messages', 'My supervisor understands the links between employees' emotions and what they do' (empathy), 'My supervisor confronts problems without demeaning those who work with him or her', 'My supervisor handles emotional conflicts with tact and diplomacy' (social skills), 'My supervisor has a passion for work that goes beyond money or power', 'My supervisor stays focused on tasks at hand even under pressure' (motivation).

The EQI uses a 7-point Likert scale (7 = Strongly Agree...1 = Strongly Disagree) for ranking each of the items and a higher score indicates a greater emotional intelligence of a supervisor. Empathy, social skills, and motivation subscales consisted of 6, 6, and 7 items respectively.

RESULTS

To test the four hypotheses, data analysis proceeded in two stages using S.P.S.S. 13.0: factor analysis and regression analysis.

EQI. Exploratory factor analysis (principal component analysis, varimax rotation, loading $>.50$, eigenvalue >1) on the EQI items supported the three independent dimensions of emotional intelligence: empathy, social skills, and motivation with loadings range .69 to .88. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of the three subscales of the EQI, as assessed with Cronbach α , were .78 (empathy), .89 (social skills), and .82 (motivation).

MLQ. We computed an exploratory factor analysis (principal component analysis, varimax rotation, loading $>.50$, eigenvalue >1) on the 12 items of MLQ. Results confirmed a significant factor representing transformational leadership with loadings range .73 to .91. The Cronbach α for this scale was .87.

ROCI II. Exploratory factor analysis (principal component analysis, varimax rotation, loading $>.50$, eigenvalue >1) on the ROCI-II items supported independent dimension of conflict management style: integrating with loadings range .68 to .84. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of the subscale of the ROCI II, as assessed with Cronbach α , were .84 (integrating).

We computed two regression analyses. Each regression analysis was computed with integrating style as the dependent variable and a) the three subscales of the EQ: empathy, social skills, and motivation, and b) transformational leadership as the independent variables.

Transformational leadership was positively associated with integrating style that provided full support to Hypothesis 1. It appears that transformational leadership is a very good predictor of subordinate's utilization of integrating as a conflict management style ($\beta = .47, p < .001; \Delta R^2 = .58, p < .001$). Empathy, social skills, and

motivation were also positively associated with integrating that provided support to Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3, and Hypothesis 4 respectively. It appears that social skills is a good predictor of subordinate's integrating style for conflict handling ($\beta = .44, p < .001; \Delta R^2 = .33, p < .001$). To a lesser degree, motivation ($\beta = .16, p < .05; \Delta R^2 = .08, p < .05$) and empathy ($\beta = .13, p < .005; \Delta R^2 = .03, p < .005$) can enhance subordinate's utilization of integrating as a conflict management style.

DISCUSSION

This study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between: (a) empathy, social skills, motivation and integrating style and (b) transformational leadership and integrating style in Greek organizations giving emphasis on supervisor-subordinate interaction. In particular, this study investigates subordinates' perceptions regarding their supervisor's emotional intelligence, as well as leadership effectiveness. Moreover, it is investigated how subordinates at different hierarchical levels handle conflicts with their supervisors in Greek organizations.

The study contributed to our understanding of the linkage among various dimensions of emotional intelligence (EQ), transformational leadership and conflict management styles. Overall, the results provided support for the model, which suggests that supervisors' aspects of EQ such as empathy, social skills, and motivation are positively associated with subordinates' utilization of integrating style in order to handle conflicts with their supervisors. There are significant intercorrelations among the dimensions of EQ. These interrelationships should be explained so that practitioners can improve and use appropriate dimensions of EQ to enhance their subordinates' conflict management strategies and performance. Knowing how the various dimensions of EQ influence each other is important as each dimension may influence outcomes, not only directly but also through the mediation of its effects on other dimensions of EQ.

The implications of the study are that supervisors need to acquire and use their empathy, social skills, and motivation competencies as well as to enhance their own transformational leadership. In today's battle for excellent employees, management has to offer more than high pay to win employees' trust and motivate employees. Employee loyalty is at an all-time low. Workers now focus on maintaining a portable skill set so they can move from opportunity to opportunity, rather than making a long term commitment.

Supervisors may be more successful in achieving organizational goals if their subordinates are empowered to do their jobs. Transformational leadership has positive impact on subordinate's willingness to integrate goals with their supervisors and follow a creative problem solving process. Subordinates are encouraged to use more integrating style in order to handle conflict. This will help the supervisors and subordinates to work together to attain goals. Supervisors and subordinates should be trained to use integrating style and generally not to engage in win-lose strategy of handling conflict.

Appropriate interventions may be needed to enhance supervisors' social competencies and transformational leadership that would involve education and specific job-related training. Organizations should provide positive reinforcements for learning and improving managers' essential emotional competencies needed for specific jobs.

Moreover, education and training may be of limited value when it comes to improving supervisors' EQ. Organizations may have to adapt the policy of recruiting managers with vision and charisma who are likely to be high on EQ.

There should also be appropriate changes in the organization design that would require creating flatter, decentralized, and less complex structures. These changes in the organization design, culture, and positive reinforcements will encourage managers to acquire emotional competencies and enhance transformational leadership needed for improving their job performance and encouraging subordinates to enhance their integrating and compromising styles in order to handle conflicts.

Further research is needed to enhance our understanding of the interrelationships of emotional intelligence, conflict management styles, and leadership effectiveness of subordinates and supervisors. Other criterion variables for future research include subordinates' learning and effectiveness, skills development, intent to leave a job and organizational commitment.

LIMITATIONS

Data were collected from convenience samples that might limit generalizability of results. It should be noted that the relationships found in this study are correlational and not causal. The analysis suffers from the small sample size. Larger and representative sample is needed to further investigate the relationship between: (a) emotional intelligence and conflict management styles, (b) transformational leadership and conflict management styles in Greek organizations giving emphasis on supervisor-subordinate interaction.

Furthermore this study is limited by the fact that conflict management styles (compromising, avoiding, obliging, dominating) apart from integrating style were not investigated in relation to supervisor's emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Also, emotional intelligence dimensions (self-awareness, self-regulation) apart from empathy, social skills, and motivation were not investigated in relation to subordinate's conflict management styles.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research is needed to enhance our understanding of the interrelationships of emotional intelligence dimensions, transformational leadership, and conflict-management styles of employees and supervisors. An important area of future research concerns carefully designing and evaluating the effects of intervention on supervisory emotional intelligence (EQ) and leadership effectiveness in enhancing positive conflict management styles. Field experiments are particularly useful in evaluating the effects of enhancing EQ and transformational leadership of supervisors on individual and organizational outcomes.

There is also need for scenario-based studies and laboratory studies to better understand the effects of EQ and transformational leadership. Attempts should be made to obtain independent measures of the criterion variables. Also it will be useful to investigate the differences in the perceptions of observers regarding the leadership performance of managers with low and high EQ. Moreover, future studies should try to investigate of how other variables (task allocation, group learning, employee skills,

and job satisfaction) are also associated with emotional intelligence, leadership and conflict management styles.

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