

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in 9 principal areas along with a summary: (1) Definitions of conflict (2) Source of conflict (3) The theory of conflict (4) Levels of conflict (5) Process of conflict (6) Conflict management styles (7) Relevant variables and (8) Relevant research.

2.1. THE DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

Conflict in this study includes interpersonal conflict in an organization or in a workplace and excludes international conflict. To scope the definitions of conflict, this literature will review some particular definitions described by various researchers and scholars from certain fields of study such as social psychology, communication, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, organizational behavior, conflict management, and negotiation. Therefore, the conflict definitions can be described across these fields of study.

Conflict is explained through communication process and behaviors for example in small group, interpersonal relationship, and leadership skill for resolving conflict. In a study of communication, it is necessary to define conflict which exists during communication. Hybels and Weaver (2009) mentioned “conflict means the expressed struggle between at least two individuals who perceive incompatible goals or interference from others in achieving their goals” (p. 276); in addition, Seiler and Beall (2005) concluded that the key terms of conflict comprise expressed struggle, interdependent parties, incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others. However, Baron, Byrne and Branscombe (2006) in studying social psychology argue that although conflict relates to the existence of incompatible interests, conflict sometimes does not occur when there are incompatible interests between parties. They suggest that there are social factors causing conflict.

Organizational behavior is one of fields that study characteristics of conflict in an organization by viewing conflict as a major factor in organizational life. Andre (2008) describes conflict in sections of leadership and defines conflict as “the awareness on the part of two or more parties that they have incompatible goals, and that one party has, or will, negatively influence the other’s pursuit of those goals” (p. 372). In addition, Gray and Starke (1984) studied organizational conflict and gave the meaning of conflict in aspect of behavior by a person or group that intends actively or passively to attain goals by another person or group and block the other’s goal. Managing conflict is one of the dimensions to study organizational behaviors. Huczynski and Buchanan (1991), as well as, cite the definition of conflict from Thomas (1976, pp. 889-935), conflict is “a process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his”. This definition is commonly referred to clarify the existence of conflict. This relates to awareness and frustration in conflict.

Every interpersonal relationship must contain conflict among family, friends, lovers, and coworkers. As a result, interpersonal conflict can occur everywhere and Devito (2007) studied it and gave the meaning of conflict as “disagreement between or among connected individuals: close friends, lovers, family members, or coworkers.” Furthermore, Roloff and Soule (2002) explain that “conflict arises whenever a person’s actions have an adverse impact on another individual” (p. 479). They also review that various definitions of conflict fall into 2 aspects (a) whether conflict is perceived as the period of time or continuance and (b) whether it relates to specific actions or is a common situation (Canary et al, 1995, as cited in Roloff & Soule, 2002). They cited several scholars, for example Deutsch (1973, p. 73, as cited in Roloff & Soule, 2002)) stating that “Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur.... An action that is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures or in some way makes the latter less likely or less effective” (p. 476). In addition, they referred to Coser (1956, as cited in Roloff & Soule, 2002) to note that “conflicts arise from feelings of frustration, but that the source of the frustration need not be the contentious parties” (p. 477).

In terms of the study of resolving conflict, Tillett and French (2007) describes that conflict is notified with fight in both physical ways and verbal ways and with the result of winning or losing. They also differentiate conflict; problem and dispute by defining “Conflict exists when two or more parties or groups perceive that their values or needs are incompatible” (p. 17) and conflict is an ongoing action while a problem and dispute occur in a specific action, time or situation. Dana (2001) also defines workplace conflict as “A condition between or among workers whose jobs are interdependent, who feel angry, who perceive the other(s) as being at fault, and who act in ways that cause a business problem” (p. 5). In resolving conflicts at work, Cloke and Goldsmith (2000) state that conflict consists of two truths: the truth of impasse, that is, being stuck in a problem and the truth of transformation, that moving from the problem and understanding in depth of the problem. Plus, Sermsak Visalaporn (2540), a famous Thai scholar in studying conflict management strategies, summarizes that conflict is a situation in which one’s action interfere with another’s action to achieve a goal or a situation in which one or two parties have different values, interests, ideas, methods, or targets and need to communicate with each other or have a social relationship and this difference is incompatible. In conflict among women in a company, Heim et al. (2001) summarized that “Conflict occurs when the needs or concerns of two individuals (including their values, opinions, goals, and behaviors) appear to be incompatible” (p. 212). To find out subjective features of conflict resolution and psychological, social, and culture influences, Deutsch (1991) defined conflict as “a pervasive aspect of existence. It occurs at all levels of social life: the interpersonal, inter-group, inter-organizational and international. It occurs not only between social units, but also within the different types of social units, within persons as well as within nations” (p. 27).

Lewicki et al. (2003) focused on the negotiation process which plays a key role in resolving conflict. They gathered definitions of conflict from various well known experts and they summarized conflict as a “sharp disagreement or opposition, as of interests, ideas, etc.”(p. 17). They referred to the conflict definition of Pruitt and Rubin (1986, as cited in Lewicki et al., 2003) as “the perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties’ current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously”.

Hocker and Wilmot (1985, as cited in Lewicki et al., 2003) defined that “conflict results from the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals” (p. 17).

In conclusion, conflict is a process of disagreement which one person perceives and feels frustrated with another side when they are interpersonal and try to reach the same goal and this conflict is a pervasive and continuous state. In giving the definitions of conflict, the experts also attempt to identify the sources of conflict which can be discussed in the next topic.

2.2. SOURCE OF CONFLICT

There are several sources of conflict within any organization. Some of those discussed in this section have been studied broadly by scholars in the organizational behavior field. Huczynski and Buchanan (1991) propose 5 main sources of conflict: (1) employment relationship relating to the exchange of labor and wages including the subordination of the employee and the authority of the employer (2) competition over scarce resources in sharing a limited amount of money, space or equipment (3) ambiguity over responsibility or authority resulting in rejecting duties and responsibility as people do not know how far their authority and responsibility extend (4) task interdependence when depending on other persons to achieve goals and (5) differentiation- because of different training, values, beliefs, and experiences, people tends to produce different ideas. Grouping the different persons in the same group leads to conflict. Besides, McShane and Glinow (2007) add 2 sources of conflict: incompatible goals occur when one’s goals seem to interfere with another person’s goals. Another source is communication problems due to the lack of opportunity, ability or motivation to communicate effectively. People may misunderstand and misinterpret the message from others. Furthermore, Gray and Starke (1984) provide more sources of conflict in terms of differences in perceptions, the environment of the organization and other sources of conflict for example, individual differences (like and dislike), differences in attitudes, task unbalance (some groups are strong but some groups are weak to control the situation), and differences in time horizons to forecast the phenomena in the long run view or in the short run view. Meanwhile, a variety of

other sources of interpersonal conflict consist of organizational change, different sets of values, threats to status to save face, contrasting perceptions due to different prior experiences and expectations, lack of trust in a relationship, personality clashes in individual differences, and incivility-the lack of mutual respect, empathy, and caring among work groups (Newstrom, 2007).

To more clearly explain the phenomena of conflict, the related theory of conflict will be shown in the below topic.

2.3. THE THEORY OF CONFLICT

2.3.1 Type of Conflict

Although conflict occurs extensively in many situations and locations, conflict can mainly be grouped into 2 different types, that is, conflict of ideas and conflict of feelings, so called personality conflict (Tubbs, 1992). Conflict also can be divided into 3 main categories, namely, relationship conflict – when persons are aware of incompatible interpersonal goals and the existence of tension and friction. The second type is task conflict, coming from the differences of opinions and view points while performing a task. The last type falls into process conflict, stemming from the differences of opinions about the process to finish a task including who will take care of the task, what and how resources will be allocated (Andre, 2008).

In the past century, the perspectives of conflict have been transformed from time to time and it is better to study the history of thought of conflict.

2.3.2 The Changing Views of Conflict

Looking back over the past century, researchers and scholars became more understandable to find the answers of the question about whether conflict is destructive or productive for organizations. There are 2 distinct phases of the transitions in conflict thought: The traditional view and the current view.

Traditional view was popular until the early 1940s. This early view assumed that conflict was harmful for organizations. As the result, conflict should be eliminated and avoided. This affected the reaction and responds to conflict by suppressing it and did not allow any advantage of conflict to appear (Gray & Starke, 1984). Moreover, Sermsak Visalaporn (2540) summarized the school of thought of the traditionalists in that conflict undermined an organization by obstructing the effectiveness of working because it led to tension and hostility among employees. It was the best for an organization if no existence of conflict in organizations and conflict arises from the failure of management. Management can control and change subordinates' behaviors, aggressive action, competition and conflict by providing suitable climate at work.

Conversely, the present view has commonly been applied by researchers and scholars these days. It shows that organizational conflict is neither good nor bad per se, but is unavoidable. Thus, organizations will experience conflict even though they have carefully controlled their employees (Gray & Starke, 1984). Gray and Starke (1984) also show the relationship between the amount of conflict (low and high) and organizational performance(low and high).They explain that if there is too little conflict, there is little innovation and creativity because when employees are comfortable, they ignore to improve their performance. On the other hand, if there is a lot of conflict, employees will lose their energy in resolving interpersonal and intergroup conflict rather than attempt to achieve goals; thus, performance reduces. Most importantly, the current perspectives provide 2 crucial implications. First, conflict can probably stimulate employees to create methods of working or resolve problems and second, management of conflict becomes a key strategy to encourage constructive conflict and resolve destructive conflict (Gray & Starke, pp. 481-483, 1984). To sum up, conflict may increase the performance of employees and whether conflict is a drawback or a benefit depends on conflict management. The appropriate level of conflict can motivate employees to work effectively and solve problems. Nevertheless, there are several factors influencing work performance. Management cannot control these factors such as generic factors

and psychological factors; rather, management needs to learn how to live with conflict positively (Sermak Visalaporn, 2540).

2.3.3 Advantage and Disadvantage of Conflict

Nevertheless, conflict is mostly viewed as an obstacle to and destructive for organizations, a constructive outcome of conflict can be identified. Essentially, positive conflict needs a great deal of effort to manage it. If conflict has been hidden or avoided, not only does a win-lose situation occur but there is also the eventually tendency of destructive conflict to increase. Gray and Starke (1984) argue that conflict can cause several positive outcomes. The energy level of groups or individuals increases with conflict when they talk louder, listen more carefully and work harder. They refer to a research study in which it was shown that group cohesion increases when they are in conflict because conflicts with outsiders suppress disagreements within the group and make group members utilize all energies toward enemy. During the conflict, hidden problems are recognized by management. If the disagreement between two groups never shows, they may work at a reduced level of performance without management's awareness to determine the cause of the disagreement. In addition, conflict motivates groups to clarify their objectives and rationale of their work. Group members will begin to think seriously about the purpose of their group when there is threat from outsiders; thus, conflict may promote a more efficient division of labor. Next, conflict encourages groups to protect values they think are important because groups see themselves as the protector of certain values. Different departments have their own goals such as marketing people try to find high quality, while production people try to reduce unit cost. Eventually, the effort of resolving conflict like this might benefit the overall organization. Another productive outcome is that individuals or groups are motivated to seek information. If no conflict exists, there may be no motivation to gather additional information to analyze and resolve the problem. Moreover, conflict can increase an organization's overall effectiveness because it stimulates groups or individuals to adapt to the changing external environment that the organization encounters.

In contrast, if conflict is not managed with care, it causes negative outcomes. The conflict will hinder or break down communication between the involved parties because individuals or groups feel upset with each other, so they automatically stop speaking and communicating. Then the situation will become worse without passing information between parties. Moreover, anger, anxiety, distress, and aggression of individuals or groups are provoked to react to someone who is blocking their goals. This leads to verbal, psychological, or physical violence. Finally, over conforming to group demands stems from over protecting the group from an outside threat without anyone in the group thinking about solutions and the group fails to view its opposition with any objectivity and perceptions are distorted (Gray and Starke, 1984).

2.3.4 Models of conflict maps

Although there are a lot of models of conflict map that help understand and analyze conflict by several perspectives, 8 models of conflict are chosen by Furlong (2005) to balance between simple and complicated image.

1) The circle of conflict (Cause of conflict) is a model that categorizes the important causes of conflict into six categories: Values, Relationships, Moods/Externals, Data, Structure and interests.

2) The triangle of satisfaction (interests in conflict) is an extension of the circles of conflict and concentrates on the area of interests which are divided into 3 dimensions: 1) result or substantive interests 2) process or procedural interests 3) psychological or emotional interests.

3) The boundary model (Cause of conflict) is set to evaluate the root cause of conflict from a structural and behavioral point of view and uses boundaries to identify conflict when people interact with the boundaries such as rules, laws, contracts, culture expectations, and norms. This suggests that conflict occurs when parties disagree on boundaries, expand, or break boundaries or refuse to accept the authority and jurisdiction inherent in a boundary.

4) Interests/rights/power model emphasizes the different approaches that people select to handle conflict by considering interest-based, rights-based and power-based as a guide for choosing appropriate approaches.

5) The dynamics of trust relates to blame and trust which occur during conflict. It indicates that blames and lack of trust increase difficulty of resolution by demonstrating steps of blame.

6) The dimensions model considers the existence of conflict by identifying 3 key dimensions: the cognitive dimension or perception (how we perceive and think about the conflict, the emotional dimension or feeling (how we feel about conflict) and the behavioral dimension or actions (how we act or what we do about the conflict).

7) The social style model pinpoints only personal conflict to assess individual communication styles and there are four basic personality and communication styles: Analytical, Driving, Amiable and Expressive.

8) Moving beyond the conflict model represents the stages to help people let conflict go and move beyond it to end the conflict, or live with conflict in their lives.

2.4. LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Most scholars such as Tillett and French (2007), and Newstrom (2007) outline the levels of conflict based on location and cause. There are 4 main levels of conflicts by location:

1) Intrapersonal conflict: arises from within the individual and another person hardly notices the existence, for example, personal decision-making, moral question, and initiating relationships. Other levels of conflict can frequently lead to and cause intrapersonal conflict.

2) Interpersonal conflict: exists between two or more individuals (excluding intergroup conflict) when they affect a person's emotions or when self-concept is threatened, serious upset occurs and relationships are damaged. It can be conflict in long-term relationships, such as marriage and in single interactions, for instance sellers and customers.

3) Intragroup conflict: emerges within a group or party when one person in the group is interfering with the group goals or when the groups block an individual's goals. A group means a number of individuals who have to have a relationship with each other and may be externally set such as a work team formed by a manager, may be formed by its members for example a social club, may be permanent for example the academic staff of a department or may be temporary such as a task team.

4) Intergroup conflict: occurs between two or more groups (parties). Large groups consisting of sub-groups are sometimes difficult to differentiate intergroup conflict from intragroup conflict because there is a stronger perception of the identity from each other than the larger group. It includes conflict within organizations and conflict between organizations, intra-national and international conflict. For example, labor-management conflict, wars, United Nations debates, marketplace, competitive firms, conflict between departments.

2.5. PROCESS OF CONFLICT

Robbins (1993) defines 4 stages of processing conflict: potential opposition, cognition and personalization, intentions, behavior, and outcomes. The process of conflict has five stages: potential opposition (incompatibility), cognition and personalization, intentions, behavior and outcomes.

Potential opposition or incompatibility: The first step in the conflict process is mentioned to determine the causes or sources of conflict. They consist of 3 main sources: communications, structure and personal variables. Communication is related to using different words and connotations, jargon insufficient exchange of information and noise in communication channel and these conditions can lead to conflict. The structure means the external factors such as size, degree of specialization in the tasks

assigned to group members, the ambiguity of the assigned responsibility, jurisdictional clarity, members/ goal compatibility, leadership styles, reward systems and the degree of dependence between groups. These factors stimulate conflict. Personal variables are internal factors which exist in certain personality types- for example individuals who are highly authoritarian and dogmatic- lead to potential conflict. Another reason for conflict is difference in value systems. Value differences are the best explanations of diverse issues such as prejudice disagreements over one's contribution to the group and rewards one deserves.

In stage 2, cognition and personalization, the beginning of conflict is defined when conflict must be perceived by the parties. If no one is aware of a conflict, then it is generally agreed that no conflict exists. Therefore, stage 2 occurs when the parties decide what the conflict is about and emotions plays a major role in shaping perception.

In the next stage, intentions are decisions to react to the other parties by using two dimensions of cooperativeness, namely, the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns and assertiveness, that is, the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns. There are five conflict handling intentions identified. Competing is defined when one person seeks to satisfy his or her own interests regardless of the impact on the other parties to the conflict. Collaborating is applied in a situation in which the parties desire to satisfy fully the concerns of all the parties. In collaborating, the intention of the parties is to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view. Avoiding appears when a person may recognize that a conflict exists and wants to withdraw from it or suppress it. Avoiding includes trying to just ignore a conflict and avoiding others with whom you disagree. Accommodating is the willingness of one party to please the opponent's interest rather than his or her own. Finally, compromising is selected in a situation in which each party to a conflict is willing to give the position to the opponent. Intentions provide elementary guidelines for parties in a conflict situation and people probably change their intention because of rethinking or because of an emotional reaction to the behavior of the other party.

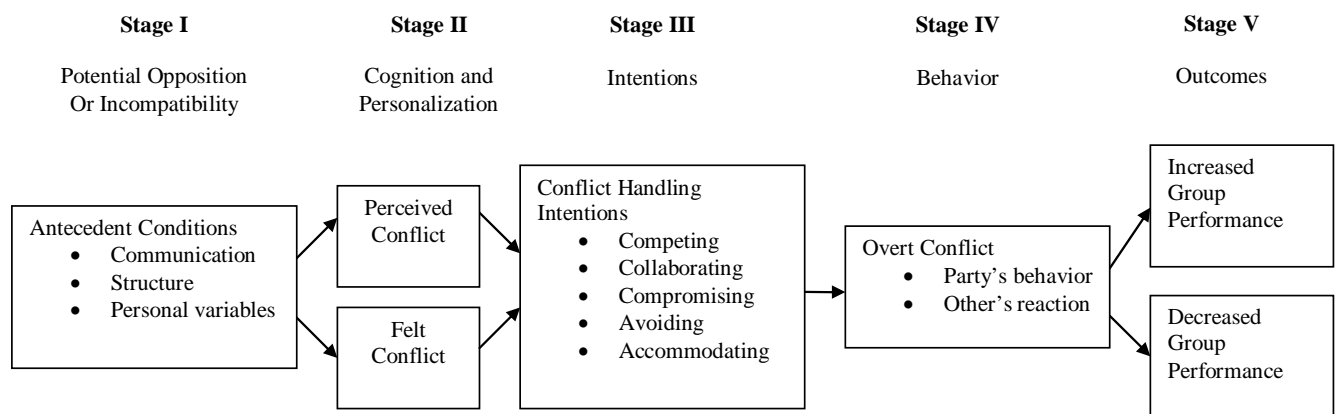
Behavior is a stage where conflict becomes noticeable. The behavior stage includes the statements, actions and reactions made by the conflicting parties. These

conflict behaviors are usually overt attempts to implement each party's intentions.

In the last stage, outcomes, the action and reaction between parties results in consequences. These outcomes may be functional in that the conflict results in an improvement in the group's performance, or dysfunctional in that it hinders group performance.

In conclusion, in the first stage, the presence of certain conditions like barriers to communication, the size and structure of work groups, or differences in personalities stimulate conflict. If the conditions have a negative impact on the interests of an individual, the parties will develop hostility towards the individual or group responsible for the situation and the conflict reaches the second stage (cognition and personalization). In the third stage (intentions), the parties to the conflict decide upon the action to be taken to deal with the conflict. The conflict process is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The conflict process



Source: *Organizational behavior: Concepts, controversies, and applications* (6th ed.), by S. P. Robbins, 1993, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

2.6. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

To deal with conflict positively, there are a variety of conflict management styles defined by different scholars and the most commonly used concepts are shown as follows:

Dean and Jeffrey (1986, as cited in Lewicki et al., 2003, p. 23) demonstrated the framework of conflict management styles which are categorized into 2 dimensions based on 2 independent levels of concern: concern about their own outcomes and concern about the other's outcomes.

There are 5 major strategies for conflict management:

1) Contending (also called competing or dominating): Actors strongly focus on their own outcomes and present less concern about other's outcomes. It includes threats, punishment, intimidation, and unilateral action.

2) Yielding (also called accommodation or obliging): Actors strongly focus on other's outcomes and are less interested in their own outcomes. Even though yielding seems to be a weak strategy, in some cases it can be helpful.

3) Inaction (also called avoiding): Actors try to have little interest in what they gain their own outcomes and have little concern about other's outcome. In other words, inaction means withdrawal, passivity: they try to retreat, be silent or do nothing.

4) Problem solving (also called collaborating or integrating): Actors apply the problem solving strategy by presenting high concern for how they attain their own outcomes and high concern for how the other party attains his or her outcomes and finding the maximum of the joint outcome or win-win.

5) Compromising: Actors show a moderate level of concern about their own outcomes and give a moderate level of concern about the other party. "Pruitt and Rubin remark that they do not view compromising as a viable strategy because they see it as arising from one of two sources-either lazy problem solving involving a half-hearted attempt to satisfy the two parties' interests, or simple yielding by both parties" (p. 24). There are other scholars who view compromising as a valid strategy of conflict management.

Thomas and Kilmann (1997, as cited in Lewicki et al., 2003) proposed the model of 5 major conflict management styles with 2 levels of concern in terms of assertiveness a party keeps his or her own gain and cooperativeness a party try to satisfy the other party to find the mutual goals.

1) Collaboration. This style is characterized by both high concerns for self and for others. Individuals with this style focus on collaboration, openness, and exchange of information. They prefer to analyze conflict issues thoroughly and openly with all parties. Those with integrative styles confront issues head on, focus on problem solving and finding a win-win solution.

2) Avoidance. This style is associated with both low concerns for self and for others. Individuals with avoiding style approach conflict by suppressing, setting aside, and ignoring the issues. Avoiding conflict satisfies neither their own nor other people's goals. People who avoid conflict may not acknowledge its existence and refuse to address or deal with issues.

3) Accommodation. This style involves low concern for self and high concern for others. The person with this style of dealing with conflict focuses on the needs of others while sacrificing or ignoring his own needs. This style is also called accommodating or smoothing. Those with an obliging style resolve conflict by focusing on similarities, playing down differences, and setting aside their own goals.

4) Competition. This style is characterized by high concern for self and low concern for others. The style is also known as forcing or competing because people who use it see conflict as a competition in which their primary goal is to win. Dominating people resolve conflict by imposing their will through formal power or any other available means. This approach creates a win-lose situation that can, in the long run, exacerbate rather than resolve conflicts.

5) Compromise. This style is associated with intermediate concern for both self and others. People with this style try to achieve a reasonable middle ground so that all parties win. They explore issues to some extent and move to a give-take

position where there are no clear losers or winners. Everybody ends up with something, but not everything he or she wants. Compromising focuses on negotiation and diplomacy. It satisfies rather than optimizes. Managers who use this style can be successful in reaching an agreement. However, because the goal is agreement not results, it can lead to negative results in certain circumstances.

2.7. RELEVANT VARIABLES

2.7.1 Gender

Even though the literature related to gender influencing conflict management styles is numerous, it can be exemplified in this report. Some studies reveal that women are more cooperative than men, whereas others suggest that women have more competitive styles than men. Al-Ajmi (2007) studied the effect of personal characteristics on conflict management style of employees in Kuwait. He concluded that gender made the difference in conflict management. He also cited McKenna and Richardson (1995, as cited in Al-Ajmi, 2007) to point out that there was gender differentiation in conflict management styles and illustrated the study of Brewer, Mitchell and Weber (2002, as cited in Al-Ajmi, 2007) stating that men were likely to use compromising styles and women had a tendency to avoid. On the other hand, Thomas W. K., Thomas F. G. and Schaubhut (2008) suggested that men were relatively competitive than women. Moreover, Monroe, Ng, Chan, and Tan (2006) found that there was no difference in using integrating, obliging and compromising styles between male junior accountants and female junior accountants but men were more dominating and women had a greater tendency to avoid. To study gender together with culture and organizational role, Holt and DeVore (2005) stressed that in individualistic cultures, compromising was applied more often by females and women were more likely to use compromising than men, regardless of culture. They also found that men were more likely to appear forcing than women in individualistic cultures and regarding to organizational role, men were more likely than women to select an assertive styles with their bosses.

However, few studies argue that there are no gender differences between men and women in the conflict management styles. For example, Sutschek (2002) and Al-Ajmi (2007) cited Conrad (1991, as cited in Sutschek, 2002) and Korabik, Baril, and Watson (1993, as cited in Sutschek, 2002; Al-Ajmi, 2007) to confirm that women did not differ from men in preferred conflict management styles.

In the general conclusion, these studies assert differences in conflict management styles, which reflect gender differences.

Hypotheses 1: There is a significant effect of employee's gender on his/her conflict management style.

2.7.2 Work experience

There are numerous studies proving that work experience has the effect on practicing conflict management styles. For example, Drory and Ritov (1997) revealed that inexperienced employees did not change their choice of using the different conflict management styles in view of their opponent's power and experienced employees were less dominating, more obliging, and more avoiding. Furthermore, Hignite, Margavio and Chin (2002) proved that experienced information system employees had significantly higher scores on the compromising mode than did the inexperienced employees. Al-Ajmi (2007) further cited Posner (1986) and Eidson (2003) to explain that there was a relationship between years of experience and preferred conflict management styles. Conversely, a few researchers argue that work experience do not influence selected conflict management styles. For instance, Patana (2002) found that gender, age, educational qualification and years of work experience did not significantly affect conflict management styles of the deans in a university in Thailand and a university in Philippines and Konovsky et al. (1989) proved that no significant differences for year of experience in conflict management.

Hypotheses 2: There is a significant effect of employee's work experience on his/her conflict management style.

2.7.3 Organizational culture

Rudd and Lawson (2007) demonstrated that organizational culture can influence the interaction and outcomes of individuals such as personality, communication styles or characteristics, decision making styles because it plays a important role in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of members in an organization and the organizational culture was defined as “the pattern of shared values and belief that help individuals understand organizational functioning and thus provide them with the norms for behaviors in the organization” (Deshpande & Webster, 1989, p. 4, as cited in Rudd & Lawson , 2007, p. 8). Furthermore, in the study of factors influencing human behaviors and values, one of the theories which are extensively referred is 5 culture dimensions of Hofstede (2009). He studied behaviors in workplace from 74 countries in every region around the world. The culture dimensions were divided into 5 aspects to explain people in each country: (1) Power Distance Index (PDI) was measured to represent inequality of people in terms of power and wealth, that is, high PDI means people were aware that they have different power and the level of wealth from others. (2) Individualism (IDV) and collectivism identified how much people care about the relationship with family and friends. High collective level meant people’s behaviors rather depended on members in their groups. If individualism was high, people in that society preferred individual lifestyles and discarded other people. (3) Masculinity (MAS) and femininity demonstrated the degree of difference of men’s values and women’s values. When masculinity in a society was high, the society stressed men’s values more than women’s values. However, if the femininity index was high, it meant equality of men and women; rather, means women’s values dominate men’s value. (4) Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) measured to what extent people accept uncertain situations, risk, or change in society. It was found that a society which has a strict rules and regulations normally had high levels of uncertainty avoidance. People in this society do not like change. (5) Long-Term Orientation (LTO) was the added latest dimension to cover the association between values and short term orientation or long term orientation. If people were likely to prefer short term orientation, they respected tradition, social culture and obligations to protect their face and their status in the

society. These dimensions were held to examine the degree and relationship of the impact of organizational culture and impact of national culture on employees in the population.

Hypotheses 3: There is a significant effect of employee's organizational culture on his/her conflict management style.

2.8. RELEVANT RESEARCH

In the new age, there have been several researchers and scholars trying to prove and study a school of thought in the dimensions of factors which influence preferred conflict management styles of staff working in various types of business such as, industrial business, trading business, government organizations and educational institutes. Drory and Ritov (1997) studied 480 subjects to examine effects of work experience and opponent's power on conflict management styles. The result confirmed that under the low-power opponent condition there was a higher preference for dominating and a lower preference for avoiding, obliging, and integrating. Inexperienced subjects did not change their choices of using the different conflict management styles in view of their opponent's power. The results also revealed significant interaction effects of the two independent variables. Al-Ajmi (2007) conducted research on 420 full-time employees working in five different government organizations under the study of the effect of personal characteristics on conflict management style: a study among public sector employees in Kuwait. The results indicated that there were significant differences found in choosing the conflict management style with regard to years of experience, managerial level, and gender; meanwhile, these differences could not be found with regard to age. Furthermore, Holt and DeVore (2005) investigated the study of culture, gender, organizational role, and styles of conflict resolution. The finding proved the following areas: (1) individualistic cultures such as American culture chose forcing as a conflict style more than collectivistic cultures; (2) collectivistic cultures such as Asia culture preferred the styles of withdrawing, compromising, and problem-solving more than individualistic cultures; (3) in individualistic cultures, compromising was applied more frequently by women; (4) women were more likely to use compromising than

men, regardless of culture; (5) men were more likely to appear using forcing than women in individualistic cultures; and (6) with regard to organizational role, men were more likely than women to choose a forcing style with their superiors.

Monroe et al. (2006) examined the conflict management styles used by male junior accountants and female junior accountants. The findings revealed that men and women did not differ significantly in terms of using integrating, obliging and compromising styles, and that women were more inclined to avoid conflicts and men tended to be more dominating. Brahnham, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier and Chin (2005) proved the study of gender-based categorization for conflict resolution and analyzed 163 traditional-age (18-22) students enrolled in undergraduate IS courses at a large Midwestern university. The findings showed that when compared with their male counterparts, women were more likely to utilize a collaborative conflict resolution style and men were more likely to avoid conflict. As collaboration was commonly viewed as a productive style and avoidance was considered as a disruptive method in the conflict resolution process, the study suggested that women may manage conflict more effectively than their male counterparts. Freeman and Browne (2004) asserted that the national culture affected the choice of conflict management styles.