Leadership Styles and their impact on Conflicts; Mediatory Roles of Problem-Solving Behaviors and Dominating Conflict Behaviors among Employees in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study examined the interactions among two types of conflict—relationship, and task—and three leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. The study also examined the mediating roles of employees' problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior. A convenient sample of 382 service sector employees in Pakistan was used. Smart PLS 4 was used for statistical analysis. Results exhibit that transformational leadership positively impacts task conflict whereas laissez-faire leadership effects positively towards relationship and task conflict. However, as far as mediation are concerned, dominating conflict behavior mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style with relationship conflict and task conflict. No direct impact was found by the transformational and transactional leadership towards the relationship and the task conflict, in the same manner, problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior found no mediating impact in the relationship between transformational leadership and transactional leadership towards the relationship and task conflict. However transformational leadership and transactional leadership are found insignificant within both relationship and task conflict. Problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behaviors found no mediating impact on relationship and task conflict with transformational and transactional leadership styles. This research demonstrates that transformational leadership and laissez-faire leadership enhance task conflict which as a result is a productive sign for the organization with positive outcomes and the organization should take steps to have counseling sessions to reduce the dominating behavior among employees. This research also identifies any limitations of the study and makes suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laizfaire leadership, problem-solving behavior, dominating conflict behavior, relationship conflict, task conflict

Introduction

In today's world leadership styles are the foremost elements in terms of cultivating the best outcome from employees (AlNuaimi et al., 2021). Followers' or employees' behavior is dependent on leadership styles (Chammas & Hernandez, 2019). Leadership is responsible for managing the attitude of the employees (Han et al., 2019). Leadership is mainly characterized into three types, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). The leader needs to deal with conflict behaviors among followers (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012). However, according to Rahim (1983), five types of conflict-handling styles are taken into account i.e. collaborating, compromising, competing, avoiding, and accommodating. But due to the overlapping of styles, Ayoko (2017) suggests using a new approach to conflict management that includes three styles: problem-solving behavior, dominating conflict behavior, and non-confronting conflict behavior. Problem-solving behavior includes integrating and compromising conflict behaviors. It is a solution-oriented approach to conflict that focuses on finding a win-win solution for all parties involved. Dominating conflict behavior is a competitive approach to conflict that focuses on winning at the expense of the other party. Non-confronting conflict behavior is an avoidant approach to conflict that focuses on avoiding or minimizing conflict. In this study, we used two of the three styles: problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior. They wanted to see how these two styles of conflict management affected employee outcomes. The researchers found that problem-solving behavior was associated with positive employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Dominating conflict behavior, on the other hand, was associated with negative employee outcomes, such as job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. The researchers concluded that problem-solving behavior is a more effective style of conflict management than dominating conflict behavior. They also noted that no organization is immune to conflict, so it is important for leaders to be prepared to manage conflict effectively (Glavaš et al., 2019). Among conflicts, task conflict, and relationship conflict are conflicts that can occur in organizations, but they differ in their focus and nature. In summary, task conflict is focused on disagreements about the task at hand, while relationship conflict occurs when there are interpersonal disagreements, tensions, or issues between two or more people in a personal or professional relationship (Riley & Ellegood, 2019). Both types of conflict can be resultant in harm to the organization if not managed effectively (Bradley et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2019). Task conflict can lead to improved

decision-making, creativity, and innovation. When employees have different perspectives and ideas, task conflict can stimulate critical thinking and a more thorough exploration of different options (Lee et al., 2019). This can ultimately lead to better solutions and outcomes for the organization. Whereas, relationship conflict can lead to decreased communication, collaboration, and trust. When individuals experience conflicting expectations or demands placed on them in their roles, they may feel overwhelmed and unable to meet expectations, leading to decreased motivation and engagement (Wang et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2019). This can ultimately impact their job satisfaction and well-being.

In Pakistan, relationship conflict and task conflict issues are in the limelight (Akhtar et al. 2020). Organizations may have multiple hierarchies or power structures, which can lead to conflicting expectations and goals for employees. Relationship conflicts in Pakistani organizations are not uncommon, as they can arise due to a variety of factors such as cultural differences, communication issues, power dynamics, personal biases, and misunderstandings (Altaf et al., 2020). In addition, task conflict in Pakistani organizations is due to employees with different educational backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints (Ullah, 2022), for example, employees have different opinions about how to allocate resources, manage risks, or prioritize goals, leading to conflicts about task execution. These are in result of demotivation, less work engagement, dissatisfaction, and reduced job performance. Hence the objective of this study is to find the impact of leadership styles (TFL, TL, LZF) on relationship and task conflict. Moreover, followers' or employees' conflict behavior (PSB & DCB) is equally important to be examined as the governing roles between these leadership styles towards relationship and task conflict. Previous research focused on leadership styles with conflicts but not studied with the novel approach suggested by (Aw & Ayoko, 2017). This study will fill the gap by utilizing leadership styles to reduce the intensity of task and relationship conflicts with a new approach that has been utilized for the governing roles of followers' conflict behavior such as problem-solving behavior (PSB) and dominating conflict behavior (DCB) between leadership styles (TFL, TL, LZF) towards relationship and task conflicts. Although there is some research on the relationship between leadership styles and conflict, there is limited empirical evidence on the mediating impact of followers' problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior. The research on leadership styles and conflict has primarily been conducted in Western cultures, and there is

limited research on how these relationships may vary in different cultural contexts. Another factor that contributes to the body of existing literature is that there is limited research on the impact of laissez-faire leadership on conflict and the mediating impact of followers' problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior. To address relationship conflicts and task conflicts in Pakistani organizations, it is essential to encourage open communication through leadership styles for conflict resolution. The study by Asim and Siddiqui (2023) suggested to utilized these followers' conflict behavior for better outcomes by the employees in the organization due to the deep understanding of how problem-solving behavior has any mediating impact in the relationship between leadership styles towards relationship and task conflict? Another reason is when dominating conflict behavior is there then how it has any type of governing in maintaining a relationship with relationship and task conflict? this domination behavior may have positive outcomes due to domination on task achievement.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework
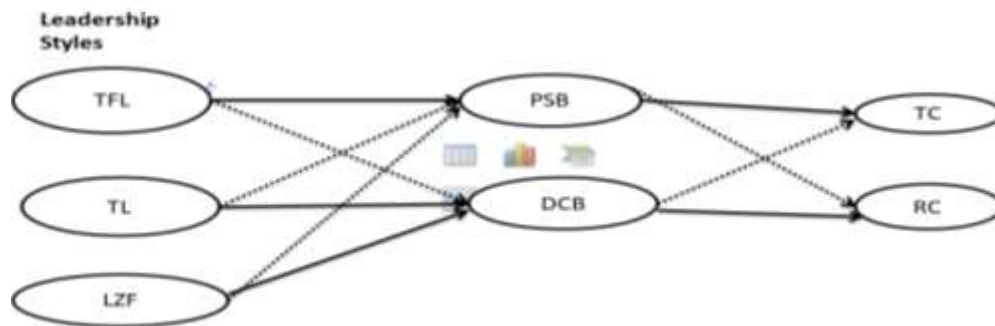
Literature Review

Theory and hypothesis

To explore the association between various elements and conflict, researchers developed a conceptual model using interpersonal conflict theory. The theory states that conflict can arise from a variety of factors, such as personality differences, communication problems, cultural differences, or differences in expectations. The theory also emphasizes the significance of emotions and how they are expressed throughout the dispute, as well as the role that position and power play in determining interpersonal conflicts. However, our conceptual model is based on

the interpersonal conflict theory to test the relationship of leadership styles with relationship and task conflict by utilizing mediator "problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior".

Transformational leadership and conflict

Transformational leadership emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their full potential and to work towards common goals (Purwanto et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019). Transformational leadership reduces negativity by increasing positive emotions among followers (Hannah et al., 2020). Specifically, transformational leaders were found to create a safe and supportive environment for their followers. Transformational leaders are focused on creating a shared vision and inspiring followers to work towards common goals (Ergeneli et al., 2007) and emphasize teamwork and collaboration can create a positive organizational culture that promotes positivity and reduces negativity (Klaic et al., 2020). Relationship conflict in organizations is a common issue that can lead to negative outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction, decreased performance, and increased turnover (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005). Moreover, relationships conflict not only affects individual performance but reflects in the organization and harms the achievements in terms of tasks (Lu et al., 2011). However, transformational leadership has been found to reduce relationship conflict in organizations by fostering a positive and supportive work environment that encourages open communication, trust, and collaboration (Kammerhoff et al., 2019). However, task conflict is a common issue in organizations that can have both positive and negative impacts (Boz Semerci, 2019; Lee et al., 2019b). When managed effectively, it can promote creativity, innovation, and better decision-making. However, if not managed properly, it can lead to negative outcomes such as decreased productivity and low morale. Organizations need to promote effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills to manage task conflict effectively. In this connection, the transformational leadership style is capable of treating in the manner to manage task conflict through open communication to get fruitful results and achieve common goals. Based on these statements we propose that

H₁ₐ Transformational leadership has a negative effect on relationship conflict.

H₁ᵦ Transformational leadership has a positive effect on task conflict.

Transactional leadership and conflict

Transactional leadership emphasizes creating a clear chain of command and a system of rewards and punishments to motivate followers to achieve specific goals (Antonakis & House, 2014). This leadership style is often contrasted with transformational leadership, which is more focused on inspiring and empowering followers to reach their full potential (Lee & Ding, 2020). When it comes to conflict, transactional leadership may be effective in managing conflict in the short term by providing clear guidelines and consequences for behavior that is not acceptable. The study conducted by Richards (2020), argued that the transactional leadership style has certain benefits other than limitations. The transactional leader uses their authority to impose a solution to a conflict, even if it does not fully address the concerns of all parties involved (Maral & Hamedoğlu, 2021). On the positive side, transactional leaders can use their authority and clear communication style to effectively manage relationship conflicts. They can establish clear expectations for behavior, and hold individuals accountable for their actions (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). It can reduce and eliminate the relationship conflict immediately by figuring out the consequences. In this way, transactional leadership can help to prevent conflicts from escalating and disrupting team dynamics. If the leader is focused solely on achieving results, they may overlook the emotional needs and concerns of team members. This can create resentment and further conflict, as individuals may feel undervalued and unsupported (Doucet et al., 2009; Zaman et al., 2021). However, it has been important to test the relationship between this leadership style and relationship conflict for a better understanding of the resolution. In addition, as far as task conflict is concerned, transactional leadership can be effective in task conflict situations where the issue is objective and task-oriented. Transactional leaders can provide a clear and structured plan for how the conflict can be resolved and offer incentives for the team to work toward the resolution (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). However, transactional leadership has been studied with the conflicts (Achmad & Fitriansyah, 2021; Hussein et al., 2022) for better results cultivation but task conflict and relationship conflict should be explained. Hence based on these statements, we argue that

$H2_a$ *Transactional leadership has a negative effect on relationship conflict.*

$H2_b$ *Transactional leadership has a positive effect on task conflict.*

Laissez-faire leadership and conflict

Laissez-faire leadership is a style of leadership where the leader allows their subordinates to make their own decisions and take charge of their work (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2021). This style of leadership is often described as "hands-off" or "free-rein" because the leader does not provide much guidance or direction to their team. In a laissez-faire leadership style, the leader assumes that their subordinates are knowledgeable and experienced enough to complete their work independently (Jafer et al., 2021). This style may be beneficial when the team members are highly talented and motivated and the work calls for a high level of autonomy, team members are highly talented and motivated and the work calls for a high level of autonomy, this management style may be beneficial (Jony et al., 2019). According to research, laissez-faire leadership might increase team member disagreement. In a study, employees who reported working with laissez-faire leaders were more likely to experience interpersonal conflict, such as arguments or disagreements with co-workers, than employees who worked with more directive leaders (Nielsen et al., 2019). However, it is important to note that the impact of laissez-faire leadership on relationship conflict may depend on other factors, such as the culture and values of the organization, the skills and motivation of the team members, and the nature of the work. For example, in certain situations, such as when team members are highly skilled and motivated or when the work requires a high degree of autonomy, laissez-faire leadership may be more effective and may not necessarily lead to increased conflict (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The impact of laissez-faire leadership on relationship conflict in organizations is complex and depends on a variety of factors (Nielsen et al., 2019). While laissez-faire leadership can be effective in some situations (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2021), leaders must be mindful of the potential risks and take steps to mitigate any negative impacts on team relationships. laissez-faire leadership can lead to an increase in task conflict, as team members may have different ideas and opinions on how to approach a task or project (Ågotnes et al., 2021). Without clear guidance or direction from their leader, team members may not be able to come to a consensus on the best course of action, leading to conflicts and disagreements. However, there are times when laissez-faire leadership can also encourage innovation and creativity within the team (Ahmed et al., 2019). Without strict rules or guidelines, team members may feel more free to explore new ideas and ways of approaching tasks, leading to new and innovative solutions. However, leaders need to strike a

balance between providing enough guidance to keep their team on track while still allowing them the flexibility to explore new ideas and approaches.

***H3$_a$** Laissez-faire leadership has a positive effect on relationship conflict.*

***H3$_b$** Laissez-faire leadership has a positive effect on task conflict.*

Mediating impact of Problem-solving behavior

The affiliation between transformational leadership and both relationship conflict and task conflict can be influenced by the mediating role of followers' problem-solving behavior. This style of leadership is often associated with reduced conflict and increased cooperation among team members (Manoppo, 2020). Followers' problem-solving behavior refers to their ability to identify and address conflicts and challenges within the team (Asim & Siddiqui, 2023). Problem-solving behavior is a novel approach derived from the two conflict management styles integrating and compromising (Asim & Siddiqui, 2023; Aw & Ayoko, 2017). This behavior is essential for effective teamwork and can help to reduce adverse consequences of conflict. The mediating part of followers' problem-solving behavior suggests that transformational leadership can lead to increased followers' problem-solving behavior, which in turn can lead to reduced relationship and task conflict. In other words, transformational leaders who inspire and motivate their followers can help to create a culture of problem-solving and collaboration, which can mitigate conflicts within the team. It is also noticed that among the five conflict-handling styles such as accommodating, avoiding, compromising, competing, and integrating, the two pillars (integrating and compromising) give fruitful consequences as utilization in the governing roles (Ågotnes et al., 2021; Ahmed et al., 2021).

Transactional leadership is characterized by leaders who focus on achieving specific goals and objectives through rewards and punishments (Alavi & Rabah, 2021). This style of leadership is often associated with reduced conflict (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). However, followers' problem-solving behavior can play a mediating role in the relationship between transactional leadership and both relationship and task conflict (Saeed et al., 2014). Plenty of studies have been found on transactional leadership with integrating and compromising styles but the novel approach has not yet been utilized therefore transactional leaders who provide their followers with clear goals and expectations, and who reward their followers for achieving those goals, may

still create a culture of problem-solving and collaboration among team members. Therefore, the mediating role of followers' problem-solving behavior can be applied in the relationship between transactional leadership and conflict, as long as transactional leaders can provide their followers with clear goals, expectations, and the necessary resources and support to engage in problem-solving behavior.

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by a lack of leadership or guidance from the leader. This style of leadership can lead to a lack of clarity, direction, and support, which can result in increased conflict among team members (Ågotnes et al., 2021). In this situation, followers' behavior in problem-solving may serve as a mediator between laissez-faire leadership and both relationship and task conflict. Problem-solving behavior which is derived from the previous two conflict-handling styles such as integrating and compromising is not used as a mediator in previous research but so does integrating and compromising.

In this regard, the social exchange hypothesis supports the role of mediators of followers' problem-solving behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and the Conservation of Resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). In line with the social exchange theory, employees and their managers have a relationship based on the social exchange through which they trade resources like time, effort, and talents for benefits like respect, support, and recognition (Jones, 2010). Jones (2010) presented the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Resources can be things, energies, or personal characteristics that individuals value. When individuals perceive that they are at risk of losing resources, they experience stress and may engage in behaviors to protect or regain those resources. (Snyder et al., 2020). In the situation of conflict management, leadership styles that be responsible for followers with the resources and support needed to engage in problem-solving behavior may foster a sense of reciprocity and mutual respect, which can lead to reduced conflict.

H4: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and relationship conflict.

H5: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and relationship conflict.

H6: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and relationship conflict.

H7: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and task conflict.

H8: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and task conflict.

H9: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and task conflict.

Mediating impact of dominating conflict behavior

Dominating conflict behavior is based on competing behavior (Aw & Ayoko, 2017). Conflict handling or management styles have been associated with leadership styles because the leader can control followers' behavior (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020; Zhao et al., 2019). Researchers used competing styles in various studies with leadership styles (Akanji et al., n.d.; Hendel et al., 2005; Khan, 2015; Saeed et al., 2014) but only a few studies have been found using dominating conflict behaviors (Asim & Siddiqui, 2023; Aw & Ayoko, 2017). However, dominating conflict behavior has not been studied in governing roles with leadership styles (transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership). However, studies also established the relationship between leadership styles and conflicts (relationship and task conflict) (Curşeu, 2011; De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2017; Doucet et al., 2009; Karadakal et al., 2015) but dominating conflict behavior is still unexplored. Based on these arguments we proposed that

H4: Problem-Solving behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and relationship conflict.

H10: Dominating conflict behavior mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and relationship conflict.

H11: Dominating conflict behavior mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and relationship conflict.

H12: *Dominating conflict behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and task conflict.*

H13: *Dominating conflict behavior mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and task conflict.*

H14: *Dominating conflict behavior mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and task conflict.*

Research Methodology

Research design

The methodology for this investigation was quantitative to evaluate the influence of leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) on conflict (relationship and task conflict) with the mediating impact of followers' conflict behavior (problem-solving and dominating).

The study followed the philosophy of positivism, which is a worldview that emphasizes the importance of objective reality and the use of scientific methods to study that reality. The study used a deductive research approach, which is a top-down approach that begins with a hypothesis and then tests that hypothesis using data. The research design was explanatory, which means that the study was designed to explain the relationship between leadership styles, conflict, and followers' conflict behavior. The data for the study was collected using a survey method. Responses were acquired from a sample of employees employing a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions about leadership styles, conflict, and followers' conflict behavior.

Sample and Procedures

This research is concentrated on the private services sector in Karachi, the sampling technique we have used is convenience sampling of non-probability sampling technique. the questionnaires were distributed to about 400 employees in Karachi and 382 positive responses were received. The questionnaire is adopted and has 7 constructs. The 5-point Likert scale is used in the questionnaire survey, where 5 showed highly agree and 1 will show highly disagree. The

adoption of the items is given in Table I. By taking into account a 99% confidence level, a 1% error risk, and a standard deviation of 0.5, the indicated sample size satisfies the requirement of the required sample size, which is 382 respondents. Additionally, contradicting the extensively utilized values to decide the smallest number of the participant per indicator we used data from 10 feedbacks, Westland (2010) demonstrated that the "obligatory sample size is not a linear function exclusively of indicator count" (Westland, (2010); P.476). Adopting Westland's (2010) method of the numerical algorithm for scheming the entire lowest size of the sample, the inferior obligation on sample size for this study is 382. It is grounded on seven latent variables and 51 items. To examine our model, we utilized Smart Pls V.4 software using Partial Least Squares (PLS). Succeeding the suggested dual-step systematic processes for structural equation modeling, we established the outer model for the estimation of construct reliability and validity. In the second stage, we inspected the inner model or structural model (Hair et al., 2013).

Table 1
Questionnaire development

Constructs	Items adopted	Sources
Transformational leadership	20	(Avolio & Bass, 1995)
Transactional leadership	12	(Avolio & Bass, 1995)
Laissezfaire leadership	4	(Avolio & Bass, 1995)
Problem-solving behavior	11	(Rahim, 1983)
Dominating conflict behavior	5	(Rahim, 1983)
Task conflict	5	(Jehn et al., 1999a; Shah & Jehn, 1993)
Relationship conflict	4	(Jehn et al., 1999b)

Table 2
Measurement Analysis

Variables	Items	Factor Loadings	RHO A	CR	AVE
Transformational Leadership	TL4	0.778	0.912	0.922	0.543
	TL5	0.759			
	TL8	0.737			
	TL9	0.711			
	TL10	0.723			
	TL11	0.711			
	TL12	0.738			
	TL14	0.719			
	TL19	0.729			
	TL20	0.759			
TransactionalLeadership	TRL2	0.759	0.814	0.872	0.629
	TRL3	0.806			
	TRL4	0.821			
	TRL5	0.786			
Laissezfaire Leadership	LZF1	0.715	0.871	0.896	0.684
	LZF2	0.870			
	LZF3	0.875			
	LZF4	0.837			
Problem-Solving Behavior	PSB1	0.702	0.851	0.885	0.563
	PSB2	0.739			
	PSB3	0.778			
	PSB4	0.741			
	PSB6	0.776			
	PSB7	0.765			
Dominating Conflict Behavior	DCB2	0.907	0.943	0.877	0.642
	DCB3	0.722			
	DCB4	0.743			
	DCB5	0.820			
Relationship Conflict	RC1	0.764	0.826	0.883	0.655
	RC2	0.836			
	RC3	0.807			
	RC4	0.827			
Task Conflict	TC1	0.756	0.888	0.910	0.668
	TC2	0.814			
	TC3	0.805			
	TC4	0.870			
	TC5	0.839			

Factor loadings > 0.7 (Hair et al., 2013)

AVE > 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988)

CR >0.7 (Gefen et al., 2000)

RHO A (Dijisktra & Hensler., 2015)

Table 3

Hypothesis	Beta	T values	P values	Decision
TL -> RC	0.179	1.776	0.076	Rejected
TL -> TC	0.196	2.241	0.025	Accepted
TRL -> RC	-0.058	0.708	0.479	Rejected
TRL -> TC	-0.030	0.426	0.670	Rejected
LZF -> RC	0.322	5.241	0.000	Accepted
LZF -> TC	0.431	7.627	0.000	Accepted

Table 4

Hypothesis	Beta	T values	P values	Decision
TL-> PSB -> RC	0.007	0.464	0.643	Rejected
TL -> PSB -> TC	-0.006	0.462	0.644	Rejected
TL -> DCB -> RC	0.022	0.529	0.597	Rejected
TL -> DCB -> TC	0.021	0.523	0.601	Rejected
TRL -> PSB -> RC	0.042	1.047	0.295	Rejected
TRL -> PSB -> TC	-0.038	0.778	0.437	Rejected
TRL -> DCB -> RC	-0.021	0.633	0.527	Rejected
TRL -> DCB -> TC	-0.021	0.626	0.531	Rejected
LZF -> PSB -> RC	-0.005	0.579	0.563	Rejected
LZF -> PSB -> TC	0.004	0.507	0.612	Rejected
LZF -> DCB -> RC	0.078	2.863	0.004	Accepted
LZF -> DCB -> TC	0.076	0.079	0.029	Accepted

Finding and Results

Measurement Analysis

In the preliminary phase of measuring the outer model, we considered the factor loadings, convergent validity, composite reliability (CR), and average extracted variance (AVE). Table III shows that all indicator loadings were greater than the permitted limit of 0.7. This indicates that each construct's measurement factors have a significant association with the construct itself. (Hair et al., 2013). Items were removed below 0.7. The recommended significance of 0.7 was surpassed by composite reliability values, which show how effectively the manifest variables signal the latent construct, Though the average variance, which signifies the leading total variation in the items comprised in the latent construct, surpassed the commended cutoff point of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2013). Additionally, a second stage involved calculating the discriminant

validity. It demonstrates the extent to which the measurements do not support the existence of another variable; this is demonstrated by near-to-the-ground correlations involving the compute of interest and the instruments of other constructs. Table IV reveals that each construct's AVE (diagonal values) has a square root that is bigger than the correlation coefficients that go along with it, It illustrates the construct's validity in discrimination (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to several latest criticisms of the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, they are not capable of consistently detecting discriminant validity The heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio is a different method for evaluating discriminant validity that is based on the multitraitmultimethod matrix (Hair et al., 2013) By employing this revolutionary technique, discriminant validity has been estimated. The findings are presented in Table V. Discriminant validity is logically as well as empirically distinct if the HTMT value is less than 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001). However, these criteria are strongly recommended (Henseler et al., 2015).

Structural Analysis

Hair et al. (2013) recommended analyzing the model as in structure or inner model, using a bootstrapping approach with a 5000-resample size by looking at the P-value, beta, and matching t-values. We began by examining the correlations between the variables. H1a is rejected because transformational leadership is adversely correlated with relational conflict, But task conflict is positively correlated with transformational leadership, hence H1b is accepted. Moreover, transactional leadership is negatively associated with task and relationship conflict which exhibits that H2a and H2b are rejected. Additionally, laissez-faire leadership is positively related to the task and relationship conflict hence H3a and H3b are accepted. As far as the mediation analysis are concerned, Problems solving behavior has no mediating impact between transformational leadership with both relationship and task conflict therefore H4 and H5 are rejected. Dominating conflict behavior is still found idle in mediating impact in the relationship between transformational leadership with relationship and task conflict so H6 and H7 are rejected. In the same manner, problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior have no mediating impact on the relationship between transactional leadership with the relationship and task conflict, in this light H8, H9, H10, and H11 are rejected. Additionally, problem-solving behavior has no mediating impact in the relationship of laissez-faire leadership with task and relationship conflict therefore H12 and H13 are rejected but surprisingly dominating conflict

behavior has mediating impact in the relationship of laissez-faire leadership with task and relationship conflict hence H14 and H15 are accepted.

Discussion

The present research adds to the body of knowledge concerning the crucial nature of leadership strategies to interpersonal and task conflict through the conflict behaviors of followers or employees. However, previous research focused on the leadership styles towards job satisfaction and employee commitment but little focus has been found on how the leadership styles shape relationship and task conflict directly and with the governing roles of follower's conflict behavior dimensions such as Problem-solving behavior and dominating conflict behavior. A total number of 18 hypotheses were tested, among those, 6 were direct and 12 were indirect.

The most significant finding from this research is that task conflict is increased under transformational leadership. But the core goals of transformational leadership are conflict reduction, increased teamwork, and enhanced performance (Prasetyo et al., 2020). The reason why transformational leadership increases task conflict may be because it emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to reach their full potential. It can also stimulate higher levels of task conflict because it develops followers' capacity for divergent thinking, gives them power, and promotes healthy debate. As has also been discovered in earlier investigations, task conflict has benefits (DeChurch & Marks, 2001). The study also adds to the body of knowledge on laissez-faire leadership, which can worsen relationship conflicts among followers, endanger organizational conditions, and weaken teamwork and collaboration, which ultimately hinders task achievement. The study also examines the advantages of task conflict. This finding was also validated by the study conducted by Zhang et al. (2011). However, as was mentioned at the outset of the discussion concerning transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership philosophies can also exacerbate task conflict. This results from a lack of interaction and dialogue with the followers. However, this is also validated by the study by Ahmed Iqbal et al. (2021) because it inevitably produces beneficial results by promoting ownership and accountability and giving team members more freedom and independence in decision-making. This may inspire people to share their distinctive viewpoints, concepts, and methods, which could result in productive task conflict. when team members have constructive disagreements and share their differing perspectives to get better outcomes.

This research also makes an addition by examining the conflict behaviors of followers as mediators between the conflict and the leadership styles (transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership), it is found that dominating conflict behavior act as a mediator in the relationship between laissez-faire leadership styles and both relationship and task conflict. However, in a manner with relationship conflict, it governs the relationship due to considering own perspective and ignoring other as the theory of conflict handling styles (Rahim, 1983) also support the argument and validate the results, however, no research has been found in using dominating conflict behavior as a mediator but this term is also used as a novel approach in conflicting researches and exhibited negative outcomes (Asim & Siddiqui, 2023a; Aw & Ayoko, 2017). As far as the mediation with task conflict is concerned, it has been found in contributing as a mediator, it is important to note that dominating behavior is generally not considered an effective or constructive approach for enhancing task conflict. Dominating behaviors, which involve exerting control, overpowering others, and seeking to win at all costs, often result in negative consequences and hinder team dynamics. So these arguments allow us to state that when it is not managed properly it may reduce confidence and will be a negative outcome (Rahim, 1983).

Managerial Implications

The fact that transformational leadership reduces task conflict has various managerial implications that might be advantageous for organizations and leaders given the competitive nature of organizations. Open communication and frank discussion among team members are encouraged by transformational leaders. Leaders may promote task conflict in a good way by creating an environment where different perspectives and ideas are respected. As a result, the team may become more innovative, creative, and capable of making better decisions Adopting this leadership style is important since it emphasizes developing trusting relationships and encouraging teamwork. Leaders can use task conflict to motivate collaboration and promote group problem-solving by encouraging a sense of shared vision and objectives. This may lead to better overall performance and increased team camaraderie. Team members can receive proactive help from their leaders as they learn how to resolve conflicts successfully. Leaders may improve relationships and outcomes by providing their employees with the knowledge and tools they need to handle disagreements constructively. Leaders can make use of task conflict's

advantages (Leo et al., 2019), such as increased creativity and alternative solutions. Better organizational outcomes and improved problem-solving skills may result from this. While slack leadership is typically connected with unfavorable results (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019; Lundmark et al., 2022) and increased task conflict (Wellman et al., 2019; Zaman et al., 2019), It is crucial to investigate any managerial implications that might have a favorable impact. Laissez-faire management can give team members the chance to take charge of their duties and initiatives. This independence and empowerment can promote motivation and engagement by fostering a sense of empowerment. The ability of team members to make decisions and control their workloads can help reduce task conflict by fostering creative problem-solving and alternate methods.

Limitation and Future Studies

Like all studies, this specific one had some limitations that present the potential for additional research. Problem-solving behavior and dominant conflict behavior are two novel conflict management style dimensions that are used in this study, but the third dimension, "non-confronting behavior," has not yet been investigated. However, for better outcomes, moderators can be employed to strengthen leadership, lessen interpersonal conflict, and enhance task conflict's beneficial effects, such as cognitive trust and role clarity. This study's sample and sampling methodology is a shortcomings. The sample size was 382 employees, which is a small sample because we employed convenience sampling to gather data from employees of the private service industry. Therefore, it is necessary to cautiously extrapolate the findings to a larger population. A bigger sample drawn from a variety of other industries, including the government, banking, textile, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), may be used in future studies.

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