**Associations between Conflict Management Styles and Well-Being in Jordan**

**Introduction**

Ensuring the presence of a healthy and stable environment at work is essential for both the organisation as well as the employees working in the organisation. Nevertheless, organisational challenges in the workplace are inevitable. Challenges such as the constant changes, the shift in economic growth (Barak, 2005), and the different personality traits and styles that can lead to conflict between individuals (Benton, 2017). Interestingly, interpersonal conflict is one of the most essential factors that influence the relationships between individuals at the workplace (Barki and Hartwick, 2001; Rahim, 1983), which in turn results in reducing the well-being of employees, their motivation, engagement, and thus, decreasing their performance at work (Chen et al., 2012).

**Theoretical Background**

Previous research postulated that conflict negatively impact the well-being of employees (Barki and Hartwick, 2001). Supporting that, De Dreu and Van Vianen (2001) asserted that conflict is associated negatively with employee satisfaction and business performance. The numerous unresolved conflicts will impact the motivation levels of the employees and their relationships, and thus, affecting their well-being (De Dreu and Van Vianen, 2001; De Dreu and Weingart, 2003). However, some scholars tend to support the contingency approach which asserts that whether conflict is good or bad is based on how employees handle conflicts (Rahim, 1986, 2002; Callanan and Benzing, 2006). If managed appropriately, conflict can enhance the productivity and innovativeness of employees. It can also improve the interpersonal relationships, the process of problem solving, the levels of creativity and profitability (Chen et al., 2005). Nevertheless, improper conflict handling can hinder innovation, create inefficient organisations, and decrease productivity (Liu et al., 2008).

One way of handling conflicts revolves around individuals understanding their conflict management style as well as the conflict management style of the other party. Several conflict management styles have been developed such as the Dutch Test for Conflict Handling. This instrument is comprised of five styles which are: avoiding, yielding, forcing,

problem solving, and compromising. Avoiding describes individuals that have a low concern for self and a low concern for others (De Dreu et al., 2001). This style involves decreasing the heaviness of the issue as the individual avoids thinking about the problem by suppressing his/her views. Yielding describes individuals that have high concern for others and low concern for self. Individuals with this style are inclined to accept, incorporate and take others will. It includes a one-sided concession, providing assistance, and unconditional agreements. Forcing describes individuals that have a high concern for self and a low concern for others. This style involves hostility and deceptions, persuasive negotiations, and positional commitments. Problem solving describes individuals that have a high concern for self and a high concern for others. This focuses on reaching a situation that will satisfy both parties (i.e. a win win situation). It includes communicating and exchanging information, as well as understanding the preferences, needs, and priorities of each other. It also involves making trade-offs between the matters that are important and others that are not important. Lastly, compromising describes individuals that have an intermediate concern for self and an intermediate concern for others. This style is considered by some such as Pruitt and Rubin (1986) as half-hearted problem solving. Nevertheless, others consider it as a style that is distinct on its own (Van de Vliert, 1997).

Previous studies such as the one conducted by Wall et al. (1987) which included participants that worked on a task in teams showed that the well-being of employees is negatively correlated with conflict. Further, the study presented that the problem-solving style (i.e. individuals that have high concern for self and others) covey high quality solutions than the forcing style (i.e. individuals that have high concern for self and low concern for others) that focuses on achievement and outcomes (Quaddus and Tung, 2002). Moreover, a study for Wall and Nolan (1987) was conducted to examine the relationships among group well-being and conflict types and styles, demonstrated that group well-being is positively correlated with the problem solving style than that with the avoiding style (i.e. individuals that have low concern for self and others). Additionally, Lee (2008) reported that employees were more satisfied with supervisors that have problem solving, compromising (i.e. moderate concern for self and others), and yielding styles (i.e. individuals that have a high concern for others and a low concern for self). However,

employees with supervisors that have forcing (i.e. high concern for self and low concern for others) and avoiding styles considered their supervisors as incompetent, which resulted in lowering their well-being.

## Methodology and Design

This research adopted the quantitative approach. It will examine the different conflict management styles individuals possess in relation to their well-being in Jordan, as research in Jordan about this topic is scarce. Data has been collected from one of the top 20 companies in Jordan, Naouri Group, a Shipping and Logistics company, from 224 participants, half male and half female, from all managerial levels and across all departments (Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing, Quality Assurance, Operations, and Documentation). Conflict management styles were measured using the Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (De Dreu et al., 2001). Well-being was measured using the quality of work life questionnaire (Swamy et al., 2015). Further, reports from the company about the employee's well-being were extracted, specifically, the number of off days (annual vacations and sick leaves). As such, this research is comparable with other studies that used identical questionnaire in different contexts, which allows contextual comparison and contributes to Jordan's business psychology literature. As this research is ongoing, it is essential to note that findings from this research are going to presented and discussed at the conference.

## Conclusion

Jordan, a country with a strong collectivist culture may be different from the western countries that have strong individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2018). In this situation, it is essential to examine which conflict style would effectively resolve the conflict at the workplace in Jordan. Thus, findings from this research can assist the management and human resources professionals in Jordan to promote and guide employees towards a better well-being. Also, organisations can deliver training programs that introduce the different conflict styles to improve their well-being and encourage them to use the problem-solving and compromising style more to avoid conflict and increase their well-being.

**Summary**

Despite vast research on conflict management styles in relation to the well-being of employees at the workplace, research about this topic is very scarce in Jordan. This research explores conflict management styles in relation to well-being in Jordan. The research employed the Dutch Test for Conflict Handling to measure the different conflict styles. The research used the Quality of Work life instrument to measure the well-being of employees at the workplace. Further, reports from the company regarding their annual and sick vacations were extracted. The data collection process took place in Jordan, in one of the top 20 companies in Jordan, Naouri Group, a Shipping and Logistics company, from 224 participants, half male and half female, from all managerial levels and across all departments (Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing, Quality Assurance, Operations, and Documentation). Research findings will be presented at the conference and will be provided electronically to the attendees.

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