

## Leadership Dynamics and Conflict Resolution Strategies: A Case of Enterprise and Industry Development Sectors in Ethiopia

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### Abstract

This study sought to uncover the connection between leadership practices and conflict resolution methods favored by leaders in Ethiopian businesses and industries. Data for this research were gathered through a questionnaire completed by participants themselves, consisting of two parts: one evaluating leadership styles and the other assessing conflict resolution strategies. The study included 255 respondents, and the data were analyzed using independent sample t-tests and correlational analysis. The results revealed a notable disparity between how leaders perceive their own leadership styles and how their subordinates perceive them. Leaders tended to rate their leadership styles highly across all dimensions of transformational leadership and contingent reward style of transactional leadership. In contrast, their subordinates rated them more favorably in terms of idealized influence within transformational leadership and the contingent reward aspect of transactional leadership. Among the three leadership styles examined, a strong positive correlation was found between transformational leadership style and the collaborating conflict resolution strategy. Additionally, a positive correlation was found between transactional leadership style and the collaborating conflict resolution strategy. On the other hand, a negative correlation was found between laissez-faire leadership style and both the dominating and compromising conflict resolution strategies, it is crucial for leaders to consistently exhibit all aspects of these leadership characteristics for the adoption of various conflict resolution strategies.

**Keywords:** *Leadership style, Conflict resolution strategies; Enterprise Sector, Ethiopia*

### Introduction

Conflicts are an intrinsic element of human existence, permeating every facet of life. They are an inevitable aspect of our experiences, whether within the intimate confines of our homes, the professional arena of the office, or even while engaging with the narratives presented in television news. In the organizational realm, the repercussions of conflict are profound, leading to a convergence of work and personal life as the boundaries between them blur. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the trend towards flatter and more decentralized organizational structures, reflecting a shift in how businesses operate. Moreover, as organizations strive for greater openness and diversity, the nature of conflicts becomes notably intricate and multifaceted, necessitating a more sophisticated approach to resolution and management (Aula & Siira, 2012).

Management training programs aim to provide managers with essential business skills. According to Hill (2011), having individuals with the right skills in the right positions can give an organization a competitive edge (Naidoo et al., 2014). However, the costs and potential drawbacks of non-qualified managers have not been quantified. This raises concerns about their ability to effectively assume managerial roles. McBain (2012) highlights several benefits of recognized managerial qualifications, including meeting organizational competency needs, guiding skill development, and enhancing

organizational reputation, efficiency, and competitiveness. Such qualifications also boost managers' confidence and sense of empowerment in their roles.

Conflict resolution should primarily be handled by first-line managers, and in cases of significant conflicts, middle-level management should step in. Delegating conflict resolution to top management may signal a lack of confidence in lower-level managers and employees in general. Additionally, relying on top managers for conflict resolution can adversely impact organizational effectiveness, as they have other crucial responsibilities (Sapho, 2013). Effective leadership and conflict resolution are pivotal for an organization's success in executing planned actions and achieving high performance. The style of leadership adopted is influenced by a leader's beliefs, attitudes, values, assumptions, and the prevailing organizational culture. This underscores the critical role of leadership in shaping an organization's trajectory.

The existing studies by Masters and Albright (2002), Kozan (1991), and Kotlary & Karakowsky (2006) have made significant contributions to understanding conflict resolution and leadership styles in the workplace. However, there are critical gaps in their research. Masters and Albright focused on conflict resolution strategies and leadership styles separately, neglecting the crucial connection between the two, which is vital for effective leadership in handling workplace conflicts. Similarly, Kozan identified correlations between conflict types and leadership styles but did not delve into leaders' preferred conflict management approaches, a pivotal aspect of their role. Kotlary and Karakowsky investigated the influence of various leadership styles on the occurrence of group conflict, yet it did not address how leaders manage conflicts for optimal group performance. This study endeavors to address these shortcomings by investigating the connection between leaders' leadership styles and their conflict resolution strategies.

## **2. Review Of Related Literature**

### **2.1. Organizational Conflict**

Conflicts are an inevitable aspect of human interaction, and within organizations, they materialize as incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance among social entities. These conflicts arise from personal differences, informational gaps, goal disparities, and external pressures. While historically viewed as impediments to organizational functioning, some argue that conflicts are essential for growth, change, and defense against stagnation. The impact of conflicts on group productivity is pivotal, with constructive conflicts fostering creativity, innovation, and personal development. This ambivalence towards conflict often stems from a lack of understanding of its causes and effective handling methods, as well as a shortage of confidence in managing emotionally charged situations. Optimal conflict management requires maintaining an appropriate level focused on productive purposes (Whetten & Cameron, 2011).

Leaders play a decisive role in conflict resolution within organizations. They must first discern the source of the conflict to determine whether it is symptomatic of a larger issue or an isolated event. Recognizing that not all solutions lie solely within their domain, leaders should encourage subordinates to contribute to problem-solving (Bush & Folger 2005). Effective leadership entails promoting innovative thinking and seeking solutions collectively with subordinates, rather than attempting to solve critical challenges alone. Moreover, leaders should form diverse problem-solving groups to enhance creativity, recognizing that individuals with similar experiences may be inclined towards premature consensus (Aula & Siira, 2010).

When dealing with conflict, leaders should aim to establish common ground among conflicting parties, rooted in mutual goals and interests. This serves as a foundational platform for resolution.

Effective conflict management involves addressing the root cause of the conflict and facilitating open communication among all parties involved. In essence, leadership in conflict resolution requires a delicate balance between asserting authority and fostering collaborative problem-solving, all while ensuring the organization's overall productivity and success (Kotlyarl & Karakowsky, 2006).

## **2.2. Conflict Resolution Strategies in Organizations**

Organizational conflict management strategies are diverse and tailored to specific root causes and underlying circumstances. Each organization establishes its own set of procedures for handling conflicts. Notably, Blache and Mountain (1964), as cited in Panagoits (2006), were pioneers in creating a framework to categorize styles of addressing intra-organizational conflicts. Central to their model was the leader's prioritization of either production or people. Thomas (1974) expanded on their work by emphasizing the intentions of the conflicting parties. He identified five key conflict resolution strategies available to organizational leaders: collaboration, accommodation, coercion, avoidance, and accommodation.

### **2.2.1. Collaborating strategy**

The collaborative conflict resolution strategy involves an open discussion aimed at satisfying the concerns of both conflicting parties. It requires a willingness to acknowledge each other's needs while asserting one's own. This method is characterized by openness, information sharing, and a rigorous examination of discrepancies to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution (Copley, 2008). It fosters problem-solving and can lead to innovative solutions, utilizing the diverse skills and ideas of individuals. Collaborative resolution is particularly effective for tactical issues related to structural objectives and long-term preparation. Advocates argue that it leads to wise and efficient outcomes by thoroughly exploring both parties' interests. Studies have shown that in environments where concern for self-interest and altruism for others are balanced, the potential for joint gains is high. This strategy is recommended when parties are strongly committed to different goals, compromise is costly, and complex problems require synthesis of ideas. Additionally, it is valuable goal alignment with methodological divergence, as it helps bridge the gap and work towards common objectives. Research indicates a positive association between collaborative conflict resolution and transformational leadership styles, suggesting that leaders who exhibit transformational leadership are more likely to employ collaborative strategies in handling organizational conflicts (Panagiotis, 2006).

### **2.2.2. Compromising Strategy**

The compromising conflict resolution strategy entails finding a middle-ground solution where the concerns of conflicting parties are partly met, contingent on their willingness to be flexible and make sacrifices. This approach is most effective when parties have mutually exclusive goals or possess equal power. It is particularly useful when immediate action is required, as it offers a temporary solution while allowing for more thorough discussion at a later time. However, compromising may not be suitable for complex issues requiring a problem-solving approach, as it may lead to undefined conflicts and potentially unequal concessions. The compromise approach may pose problems if the initial demands are exorbitant or if the parties involved fail to demonstrate the necessary commitment to adhering to the compromise. Overall, compromising serves as a pragmatic approach to conflicts, providing a practical way to reach agreements in situations where immediate resolution is essential (Kestner, 2002; Rahim, 2002; Tosi et al., 2000).

### **2.2.3. Accommodating Strategy**

The accommodating conflict resolution approach involves yielding to the wishes of another person, prioritizing relationship harmony over personal goals. Those who adopt this strategy are inclined to avoid conflict, opting to give in to maintain or strengthen their relationships with others. This mode

is particularly suitable when the accommodating party is less familiar with the issues at hand or when the other party's position is deemed more valid or significant. Accommodation can also be effective when one party is willing to concede in hopes of gaining something in return. However, there are situations where accommodation may not be appropriate. For instance, if the issue in battle is of great importance to the accepting party and they believe they are right, this strategy would be unsuitable. Additionally, it is not suggested when the party yielding trusts that the other party's stance is both incorrect and unprincipled (Kestner, 2002; Friedman, Tidd, Currall, & Tsai, 2000).

#### **2.2.4. Dominating Strategy**

The dominating conflict resolution strategy is characterized by a win-lose mindset, involving forceful behavior to impose one individual's position or settle a conflict. This approach often leads to a disregard for the needs and expectations of the opposing party, potentially resorting to threats or intimidation. In organizational contexts, studies suggest that a dominating approach can discourage others from engaging in problem-solving efforts, particularly when dealing with supervisors. However, this strategy may be best suited for crises or circumstances where there is limited time for argument, or when upper management needs to implement critical strategies or unpopular decisions. It can also be applied when one party is prone to taking advantage of the other, necessitating a dominant stance to protect one's own interests (Rahim, 2002; Tosi et al., 2000).

#### **2.2.5. Avoiding Strategy**

Avoiding conflict resolution involves intentionally ignoring or withdrawing from a conflict rather than directly facing it. Those employing this strategy tend to neglect the concerns of both parties involved, lacking the ability to effectively address disputes. Individuals who avoid conflict often hope that the issue will resolve itself in their absence. This approach can be judicious when the issues at hand are minor, or when the drawbacks of challenging someone surpass the potential advantages. It may also be chosen when there is a low likelihood of success in resolving the conflict. Additionally, people may opt for avoidance to evade responsibility for any negative consequences that may arise from the conflict situation. This strategy is commonly observed in situations involving perceived minor or tactical issues (Kestner, 2002; Tosi, Mezo, & Rizzo, 2000; Copley, 2008).

### **2.3. Organizational Leadership**

Leadership is a complex concept with many interpretations. At its core, it involves one person influencing the actions of others, highlighting the importance of teamwork (Mullins, 2005). It's a mix of guiding group activities towards a goal and having the qualities that make this influence effective (Moorhead & Griffin, 2001). Daft (2005) emphasizes that it's about leaders and followers working together for positive changes. It's crucial to distinguish leadership from management. Management focuses on planning, organizing, and overseeing tasks, while leadership is about communication, motivation, and engaging with people (Mullins, 2005). Think of management as ensuring things run smoothly, and leadership as driving innovation and adaptability (Durbin, 2013). Leadership isn't based on a position, but on the trust and respect earned from others in the organization. Effective organizations need both strong management and leadership (Patterson, 2010). According to Bass and Avolio (2004), there are three main leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire.

#### **2.3.1. Transformational Leadership Style**

Transformational leadership is a distinct form of leadership characterized by its focus on uniting stakeholders around a common purpose, igniting elevated motivation and inspiration within the organization. It seeks to drive positive changes within the followers, achieving desired transformations through strategic and structural shifts within the organization (Simola et al., 2012;

Geib & Swenson, 2013). This leadership style encourages individuals to view challenges from fresh perspectives, unlocking their full potential and fostering creativity. It centers on the growth of employees' value systems, motivation, and ethical grounding, aiming to tap into their innate abilities for lasting, self-propagating change (Jong & Hartog, 2007; Kent, Crotts, & Aziz, 2001). Transformational leaders stand out for their ability to inspire followers towards significant achievements, all while seeking to enhance their own leadership skills and capacities. They go beyond their core responsibilities, nurturing leadership qualities in their followers by providing guidance, motivation, and sharing their own experiences (Demir et al., 2021). It's noted that this leadership style cultivates a conducive work environment, encouraging active participation, open dialogue, and advancement within the organizational structure (Tajeddini, 2016). However, it's important to note that charismatic and transformational leaders may face criticism for potentially exploiting their followers in pursuit of their objectives, which could pose risks to both individuals and society (Bass, 2005).

### **2.3.2. Transactional Leadership Style**

Transactional leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes clear expectations, rewards for good performance, and corrective actions for poor performance. This approach operates within defined roles and mission parameters, aiming to maintain stability within the organization. It involves a reciprocal relationship, where leaders provide something to their followers in exchange for desired outcomes. This might include rewards, recognition, or other incentives to motivate and guide their team towards achieving set objectives. While transactional leadership can effectively address immediate needs and alleviate concerns, it primarily centers on achieving the organization's established vision. This leadership style is applicable in various contexts, including both corporate and governmental settings, where leaders leverage their authority to influence and incentivize their team members in pursuit of organizational goals (Mohammed et al., 2020).

### **2.3.3. Transactional Leadership Style**

Laissez-faire leadership, also known as free rein or non-directive leadership grants team members a high degree of autonomy and encourages them to independently tackle challenges. While the leader is available for support and guidance, they refrain from providing specific instructions. This style champions employees' freedom of choice and empowers them to make decisions based on their own judgment. However, laissez-faire leaders typically offer minimal to no feedback on completed tasks (Smion, 2014). Unfortunately, this leadership approach has been associated with a lack of attentiveness to followers' actions and their impact on organizational outcomes, often resulting in reduced motivation among team members. Due to these negative attributes, laissez-faire leadership is often categorized as a non-leadership style and is dismissed in many organizational contexts (Anderson & McColl-Kennedy, 2005; Robbins & Coulter, 2007).

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher employed a correlational research strategy for this investigation. The link between the leaders' conflict resolution techniques and leadership styles was examined using the data that was collected. To find out what leaders think about their leadership philosophies and techniques for resolving conflicts, surveys have been employed. Information on a leader's preferred conflict resolution techniques and style was gathered from subordinates using the same process and manner. A quantitative research methodology was used in this endeavor, with an emphasis on gathering numerical data, including metrics, scores, and other quantitative indicators.

Employees in Ethiopia's Enterprise and Industry Development Sectors provided the data directly. Because the firm was very small, data was gathered from all of its employees using a census sample approach. As per Donard's (2010) observation, census sampling was the most feasible method as there was no need to determine the formal sample size because the controllable population size of 255 employees was sufficient. The principal data collecting tool for the study was a questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions to guarantee that the chosen respondents provided accurate and pertinent information. The researcher and skilled enumerators supervised the data collecting procedure, guaranteeing a methodical and trustworthy approach to data collection.

Data analysis is a pivotal step in research, involving the transformation of raw information into a usable form for informed decision-making. In this study, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was employed as a robust tool for encoding, inputting, refining, and dissecting the questionnaire-derived data. The connection between leadership style and conflict resolution approach was meticulously examined using correlation analysis. Additionally, an independent sample t-test was applied to discern any disparities in leadership style and conflict resolution strategies between leaders and their subordinates. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive examination of the dynamics between leadership style and conflict resolution methods as examined in this study.

## 4. Results And Interpretation

### 4.1. Leadership Styles

This section of the study investigates into the various leadership styles identified and presents the associated findings from the research. To assess the extent to which leaders embody their chosen leadership style, the responses of both leaders and subordinates were meticulously examined. Following this, one-sample sample t-tests were employed to measure the degree of implementation of leadership styles and their associated dimensions by leaders.

**Table 1: Leaders' Application of the different Leadership Styles**

Variables	Respondents	
	Leaders(n=52)	Subordinates(n=203)
<b>Transformational Leadership</b>		
Mean	3.19	3.08
SD	0.658	1.145
t-test	2.11*	0.98 <sup>ns</sup>
<b>Transactional Leadership</b>		
Mean	3.12	2.53
SD	1.003	1.256
t-test	0.83 <sup>ns</sup>	-5.31*
<b>Laissez Faire</b>		
Mean	2.40	2.89
SD	1.257	0.974
t-test	-3.42*	-1.59 <sup>ns</sup>

**Source:** Own Survey Data, 2023

The outcomes presented in Table 1 reveal a remarkable contrast between leaders and subordinates in their perceptions of leadership styles. The one-sample t-test results indicate a statistically significant difference for leaders in transformational leadership ( $M=3.19$ ,  $SD=0.658$ ,  $t\text{-test}=2.11$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), suggesting that leaders believe they employ transformational leadership. However, for subordinates

( $M=3.08$ ,  $SD=1.145$ ,  $t$ -test=0.98,  $p>0.05$ ), statistically significant difference between the hypothetical average leadership style rating and the actual observed mean score. This suggests that leaders perceive themselves to adopt a transformational leadership style, while subordinates do not concur. The difference in how leaders and subordinates perceive leadership style could arise from leaders' tendency to self-inflate their transformational leadership qualities or subordinates' misjudgment or underestimation of their leaders' leadership approaches.

The one-sample t-test results, with a mean of 3.12 and SD of 1.003 for leader respondents, indicate there is no significant difference between the expected average and the actual observed score ( $t$ -test=0.83,  $p>0.05$ ), suggesting that leaders perceive no significant difference in their use of transactional leadership. Conversely, for subordinate respondents ( $M=2.53$ ,  $SD=1.256$ ,  $t$ -test=-5.31,  $p<0.05$ ), the statistical analysis revealed a notable discrepancy between the projected mean value and the actual observed mean score, indicating an inverse relationship. This implies that subordinates disagree with their leaders' exercise of transactional leadership style. The disparity in perception between leaders and subordinates suggests a divergence in understanding or interpretation of the leaders' transactional leadership approach.

The findings from Table 1 reveal a significant difference in the average score for leaders in their use of the Laissez-Faire leadership style ( $M=2.4$ ,  $SD=1.257$ ,  $t=-3.42$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), aligning with the expected mean value. This implies that leaders generally do not adopt this leadership style. Conversely, the feedback from subordinates ( $M=2.89$ ,  $SD=0.974$ ,  $t=-1.59$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) does not provide conclusive evidence for leaders employing the Laissez-Faire leadership style. However, a discrepancy in the average means exists, indicating that while leaders themselves do not identify with this leadership style, subordinates perceive their leaders to exhibit laissez-faire characteristics more prominently than leaders' self-assessment suggests.

#### 4.2. Conflict Resolution Strategies

To determine the degree to which leaders employ each conflict resolution strategy, independent one-sample t-tests were performed on both leaders' and followers' responses. The outcomes of these tests are displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Results of t-test of the leader's conflict resolution strategies**

Variables	Respondents	
	Leaders(n=52)	Subordinates(n=203)
Avoiding		
Mean	2.77	3.01
SD	0.703	0.805
t-test	-2.37*	17.96*
Dominating		
Mean	2.94	3.03
SD	0.752	0.974
t-test	0.553 <sup>ns</sup>	15.05*
Compromising		
Mean	3.44	2.98
SD	0.777	0.832
t-test	4.1*	16.78*
Accommodating		
Mean	3.56	2.96

SD	0.802	1.091
t-test	5.01*	12.48*
Collaborating		
Mean	4.37	3.11
SD	0.657	1.131
t-test	14.97*	14.025*

**Source:** Own Survey Data, 2023

The table above shows that, on average, leaders score 2.77 on the avoiding conflict resolution strategy, with a standard deviation of 0.703. This is statistically different from the expected mean score, as indicated by a t-statistic of -2.37 and a p-value less than 0.05. Similarly, subordinates' responses show an average score of 3.01, with a standard deviation of 0.805. This is also statistically different from the expected mean score, as indicated by a t-statistic of 17.96 and a p-value less than 0.05, suggesting that both leaders and subordinates perceive the leaders as employing the avoiding strategy in conflict resolution. This suggests that leaders tend to overlook conflict situations when they arise. However, it's essential to note that avoiding conflict may not be a sustainable approach, as it may not resolve the underlying issues and could hinder the potential for turning conflicts into opportunities for positive change. While avoidance may be necessary in specific cases, such as trivial issues or situations where winning is unlikely, its effectiveness depends on the context, and it may not be a long-term solution.

Leaders' self-reported use of the dominating conflict resolution strategy is reflected by an average mean score of 2.94, with a standard deviation of 0.752. The t-statistic of 0.553 and the p-value greater than 0.05 indicate no statistically significant difference between the observed mean score and the expected mean score. This suggests that leaders perceive themselves as not typically adopting a dominating approach in resolving conflicts. In contrast, subordinates' perception of leaders' use of the dominating strategy is evident in an average mean score of 3.03, a standard deviation of 0.974, a t-statistic of 15.05, and a p-value less than 0.05. These results demonstrate a statistically significant difference, implying that subordinates perceive leaders as using the dominating strategy more frequently than leaders themselves acknowledge. This suggests that, unlike the leaders' perception, subordinates believe that their superiors tend to dominate when resolving conflicts. The significant difference in responses between leaders and subordinates may stem from the subordinates' misperception, interpreting their superiors' actions as a win-lose strategy, while leaders may lean towards collaboration. The dominating strategy in conflict resolution might be effective in emergency situations where quick decision-making is crucial, and there is limited time for collaboration or accommodation of diverse ideas.

The table above reveals that leaders tend to favor the compromising conflict resolution strategy. This is evident in their average mean score of 3.44, with a standard deviation of 0.777. The t-statistic of 4.1 and a p-value less than 0.05 indicate a statistically significant difference between the observed mean score and the expected mean score, further supporting the notion that leaders frequently employ the compromising approach. Similarly, subordinates' responses align with this observation, as their average mean score of 2.98 and a t-statistic of 16.78, accompanied by a p-value less than 0.05, demonstrate a statistically significant difference, suggesting that subordinates perceive leaders as inclined to compromise during conflicts. This inclination to compromise implies that leaders are committed to seeking a middle ground to address problems; partially satisfying the interests of conflicting parties through a give-and-take mechanism, where each party may need to make concessions to achieve a resolution.

The data in the table above suggests that leaders in this study tend to favor an accommodating conflict resolution strategy. This is supported by the mean score of 3.56 for leaders on the accommodating conflict resolution strategy, with a standard deviation of 0.802. The t-statistic of 5.01 and a p-value less than 0.05 indicate a statistically significant difference between the observed mean score and the expected mean score, further corroborating the notion that leaders frequently employ the accommodating approach. Similarly, subordinates' responses align with this observation, as their average mean score of 2.96 and a t-statistic of 12.48, accompanied by a p-value less than 0.05, demonstrate a statistically significant difference. This suggests that subordinates also perceive leaders as inclined to adopt an accommodating strategy in conflict resolution. This inclination towards accommodation implies that leaders prioritize maintaining harmony by pleasing others, even at the expense of their own personal needs, when dealing with conflicts.

The data presented in the table above suggests that collaborating is the most preferred conflict resolution strategy among leaders. This is evident in the high mean score of 4.37 for leaders on the collaborating strategy, with a standard deviation of 0.657. The t-statistic of 14.97 and a p-value less than 0.05 indicate a statistically significant difference between the observed mean score and the expected mean score, further supporting the notion that leaders frequently employ the collaborating approach. Similarly, subordinates' responses align with this observation, as their average mean score of 3.11 and a t-statistic of 11.7, accompanied by a p-value less than 0.05, demonstrate a statistically significant difference. This suggests that subordinates also perceive leaders as inclined to use a collaborative approach in conflict resolution. Collaborating involves attempting to satisfy the concerns of both parties through open discussion. Such leaders engage in open discussions with their subordinates, exchanging ideas and examining differences to reach a mutually agreeable solution. While both leaders and subordinates rate collaborating as the most frequently used strategy, there is a significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups. This discrepancy could be attributed to leaders' overestimation of their collaboration efforts, subordinates' underestimation of their leaders' collaboration attempts, or a misperception from both sides due to ongoing workplace conflicts.

According to the survey results, collaborating is the most prevalent conflict resolution strategy among leaders in the study area. Leaders using the collaborating approach strive to address the concerns of all parties involved in a conflict through open and honest dialogue. This strategy aims to find a mutually beneficial solution that addresses the primary needs and concerns of all groups involved. In contrast, leaders perceive domination as the least frequently used conflict resolution style, while subordinates believe accommodating is the least employed.

#### 4.3: The Relationship between Leadership Style and Conflict Resolution Strategies

The fourth research question of this study explores the correlation between leadership style and conflict resolution strategies. To investigate this relationship, zero-order correlations were calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Strategies**

Variables	Avoiding	Dominating	Compromising	Accommodating	Collaborating
<i>Transformational</i>	0.019	-0.079	0.32	0.14	0.49**
<i>Transactional</i>	0.039	-0.008	0.18	0.17	0.52**
<i>Laissez Faire</i>	0.047	-0.296*	-0.304*	-0.04	0.06

\*\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Source:** Own Survey Data, 2023

Table 3 reveals a statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership styles and collaborating conflict resolution strategy ( $r=0.49$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Similarly, a statistically significant correlation exists between transactional leadership style and collaborating conflict resolution strategy ( $r=0.52$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, a statistically significant negative correlation is observed between laissez-faire style of leadership and dominating conflict resolution strategy ( $r=-0.296$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), as well as between laissez-faire leadership style and compromising leadership style ( $r=-0.304$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). These findings suggest that leaders who adopt a transformational or transactional leadership style are more likely to employ a collaborative approach to conflict resolution. Conversely, leaders who adopt a laissez-faire type of leadership are less inclined to use dominating or compromising conflict resolution strategies.

## 5. Conclusion

Leaders appear to lean towards an avoiding strategy, while subordinates strongly agree with this perception. Divergent views on the dominating strategy indicate a significant disagreement, with leaders asserting a lack of dominance in conflict resolution, while subordinates perceive a dominating approach. Both groups commonly employ compromising and accommodating strategies, indicating a shared willingness to find middle ground for maintaining peace. Collaboration emerges as the predominant conflict resolution strategy among leaders, but a significant difference in mean scores with subordinates suggests a potential gap in understanding. These findings highlight the intricate dynamics of conflict resolution within the organization, emphasizing the need for clear communication and shared understanding between leaders and subordinates for a harmonious work environment.

Leaders show a statistically significant inclination towards transformational leadership, while subordinates perceive transactional leadership, emphasizing contingent reward and inspirational motivation. Discrepancies may arise from potential biases, with leaders potentially emphasizing their approach, and subordinates misinterpreting or underestimating their leaders' behaviors. Subordinates also disagree on their leaders' transactional leadership, especially in laissez-faire situations where leaders distance themselves. The study underscores the importance of a nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics, acknowledging varied perceptions among leaders and subordinates regarding different leadership styles within the organization.

Correlations highlight the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies. Positive correlations indicate that leaders with transformational and transactional styles tend toward collaboration in conflict resolution. Conversely, a positive correlation with laissez-faire leadership suggests a tendency for dominating approaches. A negative correlation with compromising conflict resolution implies a decrease in compromising strategies as leaders lean towards laissez-faire. Understanding these connections is crucial for organizational leaders seeking to align effective conflict resolution approaches with their leadership practices.

## 5. Recommendation

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance conflict resolution and leadership dynamics within the organization.

- Leaders must express their perspectives through workshops, meetings, and written communication to address organizational conflicts. CEOs, HR professionals, and communicators should collectively communicate, and conflict resolution training needs to be comprehensive for leaders and employees.

- Regular meetings between leaders and subordinates are essential for addressing concerns and avoiding dominant attitudes. Conflict resolution and communication facilitators, along with members from leadership and subordinate groups, should organize and moderate these forums. Guidelines enhance discourse by aiding participants in effective communication, contributing to the establishment of a welcoming workplace that promotes positive communication, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Design and implement collaborative leadership training courses to reduce the significant discrepancy in mean scores for leader-subordinate cooperation. Collaboration among trainers, organizational developers, and executives is essential for these courses. Emphasizing comprehension, communication, and collaboration in these initiatives improves teamwork, narrowing perception gaps, and fostering a more harmonious workplace.
- Regularly evaluating leadership and conflict resolution is crucial for improvement. This involves performance reviews, questionnaires, and feedback mechanisms, with data analysts, psychologists, and HR professionals conducting these assessments. Normalizing assessment procedures enables evaluations to adapt to corporate changes, providing a rigorous approach that showcases leadership and dispute resolution skills, facilitating peaceful workplace transformations.

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