

Influence of Transformational and Transactional Leaderships, and Leaders' Sex on Organisational Conflict Management Behaviour

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Conflict is an inevitable organisational feature with implications for both functional and dysfunctional effects on organisational life depending on how it is managed. Effective management of organisational conflict is suggested to depend on the quality of organisational leadership behaviour. This study therefore investigated the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles and leaders' sex on organisational conflict management behaviour. Data on measures of transformational and transactional leadership styles, leaders' sex and organisational conflict management behaviours were collected from one hundred and six male and female employees of eight service organisations in Lagos and Ibadan. Employees were accidentally selected. Results revealed that effective organisational conflict management behaviour is more related to transformational leadership than transactional leadership, there is no significant difference between male and female leaders and there is no significant interaction between leaders' sex and leadership style in effective conflict management behaviour. Implications of these findings for theory and practice are discussed.

Key words: Transformational and Transactional Leaderships, Leaders' Sex and Organisational conflict Management

Conflict as an inevitable feature of social and organisational lives, has been an important subject in organisational research. A number of research have been devoted to incidences, causes and management of conflict in organisations and in response to the growing demands for workplace harmony and productivity, effective conflict management is becoming paramount (Chan, Monroe, Ng, Tanet, 2006) so as to be able to avoid negative aspects of conflict and benefit from its positive aspects. Conflicts that are not properly managed will fester and get worse, while organisations will benefit from effectively managed conflicts. The way a conflict is handled would affect whether it becomes beneficial or destructive (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004). Conflicts which are managed effectively and appropriately will add substantial value to an organization in addition to acting as catalyst for change [Lacey, 2000] and create a conducive workplace for its workers where relationships, trust and respect will prevail

among its employees [Gill, 1992]. Having such working environments will result in stimulated team spirit and increased productivity. Furthermore, with strengthened working relationships, the "us" versus "them" polarization associated with organisational conflict can be eliminated [Pedersen & Jandt, 1996]. This is crucial as good working relationships are important to achieve organizational goals. Damaged relationships would hinder future work together initiatives.

Management of conflict in organisations calls to attention the important role of managers [Roper, 2005] and with the increasing numbers of women in leadership and management positions in organizations (Neubert & Palmer, 2004) alongside men, coupled with the obvious importance of conflict management skills in providing effective leadership, there is need to focus attention on transformational and transactional leaderships and possible sex differences in the two leadership qualities and in their implications for conflict

management in organisations. As such, it is reasoned that leadership style and leader sex will have implication for effective conflict management in organisation. Although, transformational and transactional leaderships have been correlated with a number of positive organisational outcomes and leader sex have been implicated in transformational and transactional leaderships, there is dearth of research on the implications of sex differences in the two leadership styles in conflict management in organisation. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of transformational and transactional leaderships and leaders' sex on conflict management in organisations.

Literature and Hypotheses

Organisational Conflict and Conflict Management Strategies

A sample of traditional views on conflict describes the common dominant theme as the aspects of differing needs, goals, or interests and the perceived or real interference from one party unto the other party to achieve these needs, goals or interests (Suppiah & Rose, 2006). Much research on organisational conflict has focused on causes to include warring egos and personality clashes, poor and ineffective leadership, dissatisfaction caused by management style, inadequate line management, poor communication, weak performance management and heavy workload and bullying and/or harassment, desire to obtain power, lack of openness and so on (CIPD, 2008; Khanaki & Hassanzadeh, 2010). Viewed from this perspective, conflict carries within it the notion of negativity and implication for destruction. Potential negative and destructive elements of conflict in organisational conflict include time wasting on conflicts [Dana, 2001; Adkins, 2003; Bacal, 2004], low employees motivation [Dana, 2001; Adkins, 2003; Smith, 2002; Hessel, 2003], lower productivity [Adkins, 2003; Smith, 2002; CIPD, 2008], equipment being stolen or vandalized [Dana, 2001], relational strain in the workplace, absenteeism, turnover and intent to leave organisation (CIPD, 2008),

negative consequences for health [De Dreu, Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2004] and stressed-related medical claims [Smith, 2002]. However, more recent understandings view conflict as having positive and functional aspects. Potential positive and functional elements of conflict include learning, higher levels of creativity and innovation, improved quality of group decision-making, and increased overall team and organisational effectiveness (Dreu, 2008).

Extensive research has also been done in regard to conflict behaviour. In many studies, conflict handling behaviour has been treated as a choice between cooperation and competition, a uni-dimensional model. However, concern over the limiting applications of a uni-dimensional model has resulted in the development of a two-dimensional model used to identify and analyze behavioural responses to conflict. This two-dimensional model was developed by Thomas [1976]. The Thomas model is an extension of Blake and Mouton's [1964] work. Blake and Mouton developed a Managerial Grid and argued that managerial behaviour is a function of two variables: concern for people and concern for production. Five management styles are identified on the grid with the most desirable style being a maximum concern for both people and production.

Similar in structure is the two-dimensional model of conflict behaviour which identifies five modes of conflict handling behaviour depending upon varying intensities of assertiveness and cooperation. Assertiveness is defined as behaviour intended to satisfy one's own concerns and cooperativeness is defined as behaviour intended to some extent to satisfy another's concerns [Kilmann, 2010]. The five conflict handling modes that Thomas identified are: (1) avoiding (unassertive, uncooperative), (2) competing (assertive, uncooperative), (3) accommodating (unassertive, cooperative), (4) collaborating (assertive, cooperative), and (5) compromising (intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness). The avoiding method involves a low concern for self and a low concern for others (Rahim, 1983). This method does not allow for a

well-resolved conflict because a person who uses the avoiding method disregards the conflict by being evasive (Gross & Guerrero, 2001). The competing style has a high concern for self and a low concern for others. This strategy entails a person considering his or her interests only and disregarding the other party (Friedman, Tidd, Currall, & Tsai, 2000). The accommodating style of conflict management has a low concern for self and a high concern for others. With this type of conflict management, one party essentially cooperates and gives in to the other in order to resolve the conflict (Friedman *et al.*, 2000). Collaborative style has a high concern for self and a high concern for others. This style focuses on effectively dealing with conflict in a collaborative way (Gross & Guerrero, 2001). Finally, the compromising style has intermediate levels of concern for both self and others. Compromising as a conflict management strategy represents a middle ground; the individual is focused on his or her goals and the goals of the other party.

Effectiveness of these modes can be reason to range between most inappropriate (ineffective) to most appropriate (effective) conflict handling strategies with avoiding and competing being most inappropriate, compromising being either appropriate or inappropriate depending on the situation and collaborating and compromising being most appropriate conflict handling strategies. As it is claimed, awareness of how people prefer to deal with conflict seems extremely crucial for leaders to play their leading role properly. Therefore, through these years researchers have been trying to illuminate how people deal with conflict and what is the impact of their preference on the performance and efficacy of their organization. For example, Lee (2008) in a study showed that when superiors implementing competing and avoiding styles of conflict to deal with conflict, their subordinates view them as incompetent superior, consequently resulting in job dissatisfaction. Conversely, subordinates are more satisfied when superiors exercise collaborating, compromising and accommodating conflict modes.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership and Conflict Management Behaviour

Theories of transformational and transactional leadership are initially developed by Burns (1978). According to the researcher, transformational leadership involves motivating followers to move beyond their own self-interests for the benefits of the group and the organization and view their task from the new perspectives (McLaurin & Amri, 2008). Judge and Piccolo (2004) demonstrated that transformational leadership is a very powerful influence over leader effectiveness as well as employee satisfaction and increase the intrinsic motivation of their followers and build more effective relationships with them. John and Moser (2001) also argued that transformational leader acts as a change agent who is skilled in managing the unpredictable situation at the workplace. Furthermore, transformational leader also demonstrates some other key behaviours such as role modelling, creating a vision and making the norms and value clear to all (McLaurin & Amri, 2008).

Transformational leadership can be categorized into charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Charisma refer to the "magnetic" personality of the leader that is based on appealing values, beliefs and principles that engender confidence in, commitment to, and admiration for the leader (Antonakis, *et al.* 2003). Inspirational motivation refers the behaviours of the leaders that motivate followers to view the future optimistically, stress on the team spirit, project idealized vision and communicate a vision that is achievable (Antonakis, *et al.* 2003). As for the intellectual stimulation, the leader stimulates innovation and creativity in their followers by questioning assumptions and approaching old situations in new ways (Nicholson, 2007) thereby creating higher levels of commitment to organizational change efforts (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008). Individualized consideration refers to the attention leader pay to each follower's need for achievement and growth by acting as a mentor (Nicholson, 2007).

In contrast to transformational leadership, and except for management-by-exception, the transactional leadership styles are also effective, and they also have positive influences over leader performance as well as employee attitudes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Transactional leadership involves motivating the followers through the use of rewards, praises and promises (Burns, 1978). There exist mutual agreements between the leader and followers, where once the followers achieve the work objectives, they will be rewarded. Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam (2003) categorized the transactional leadership into three sub scales, namely, contingent rewards, management by exception (active) and management by exception (passive). Contingent rewards refers to the leader clarifying the work that must be achieved and use rewards to achieve results (Nicholson, 2007). Management by exception (passive) refers to leaders who intervene only when problems arise whereas management by exception (active) refers to leaders who actively monitor the work of followers and make sure that standards are met (Antonakis, *et al.* 2003).

Both transformational and transactional leadership styles have been found to positively correlate with organizational outcomes in studies of various types of organizations (Snodgrass & Schachar, 2008). Studies undertaken by Avolio and Bass (2004) and Dumdum, Lowe & Avolio (2002) found that transformational leadership is positively correlated with organizational effectiveness. Other studies also found that transformational leadership gains greater followers effectiveness and satisfactions than transactional leadership (Snodgrass & Schachar, 2008). For instance, Bass (1998) found that transformational leadership can have a significantly greater effect than transactional leadership in predicting employee satisfaction with the leader. Koh, Steers, & Terborg (1995) also found that transformational leadership can strengthen employees' sense of belongingness and fulfil employees' needs for self-actualization and finally increase the productivity of the employees. This implies that in general,

transformational rather than transactional leadership have more positive effects on employees and organisational outcomes. Thus, it would be expected that transformational leadership will relate more positively to effective conflict management in organisations than transactional leadership. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leaders will be perceived by subordinates to be better in organisational conflict management behaviour than transactional leaders.

Leaders' Sex and Organisational Conflict Management Behaviour

A great deal of research has been conducted regarding the differences and similarities in the ways the male and female manage conflict. However, despite the large number of studies conducted, previous research on sex differences in managing conflict has proven to be inconsistent (Brewer, Mitchell, & Weber, 2002; Orbe & Warren, 2000; Sorenson *et al.*, 1995). In fact, the results are so contradictory that some studies show that males and females employ different approaches to conflict, while others find no measurable differences between the sexes (Sorenson *et al.*, 1995). Mills and Chusmir (1988) reported that men were more likely to dominate while women were more likely to compromise. However, other researchers have observed no differences between males and females in their use of different styles (e.g., Renwick, 1977). Additionally, in the many studies where a sex difference was seen, there was so little variance in the selection of conflict management strategies that the findings were determined to be insignificant (Orbe & Warren, 2000). To test for underlying trends in those studies, Holt and DeVore (2005) conducted a recent meta-analysis of self-report data on conflict styles from 36 studies of organization members. Overall, they found that males reported somewhat higher levels of competing, while females reported higher levels of compromise. In general, there is fairly consistent agreement in the empirical literature that gender differences in conflict style, when they are found, tend to suggest

that women, unlike men, favour accommodating strategies, whereas men, unlike women, prefer to be more confrontational, aggressive, and competitive strategies (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, Chin, 2005). In more simple words, following the gender role perspective, competitive behaviour appears consistent with a masculine gender role, while accommodating behaviour appears consistent with a feminine gender role. Evidence suggests as well that men are more avoiding in their style of conflict handling than are women (Brahnam *et al.*, 2005), which accords precisely with gender role expectations, as men are expected to remain “cool” and “in control” (Haferkamp, 1991), and are found to experience anxiety in social settings which may make them more likely than women to avoid conflict (Brahnam *et al.*, 2005).

Due to the inconsistencies between sex differences and conflict management, Brusko (2010) explored gender roles as determinant of conflict management styles. A masculine gender role represents the possession of masculine traits and at the same time the rejection of feminine traits. The masculine gender role is generally associated with “an instrumental orientation, a cognitive focus on “getting the job done” (Bem, 1974). Conversely, a feminine gender role represents the possession of feminine traits and a rejection of masculine traits and is generally associated with “an expressive orientation, and affective concern for the welfare of others. An androgynous gender role represents both masculine and feminine traits. Brusko (2010) found significant sex differences between how males and females manage conflict. Masculine gender was more related to dominant (competing) and avoiding styles of conflict management. Individuals who are more masculine tend to be more interested in result and less directed by feminine characteristics, such as concern for others. Thus, the relationship between the masculine gender role and the dominating (competing) conflict management strategy, high concern for self and low concern for others, was not surprising. Due to the low concern for others the relationship between

the masculine gender role and avoiding conflict management strategy was logical.

Though, evidence of sex effect in conflict management styles has been inconclusive, it is worthy of further exploration. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2: Female leaders will be perceived by subordinates to be better in organisational conflict management behaviour than male leaders.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership, Leaders' Sex and Conflict Management Behaviour

Gender issue in leadership has been widely explored in research. Among this earliest research in this area, Rosener (1990) compared women's and men's leadership styles and concluded that women were more likely to use their socialisation experiences to progress in their careers while men conformed to the traditional command and control, or transactional, leadership styles. Women were found to motivate others by transforming their self-interest into the objectives of the group whereas the men viewed their work performance as a series of transactions resulting in extrinsic rewards and punishments for positive and negative performance. Carless (1998) also found, within financial organisations, that managers and their superiors rated female managers as more transformational than male managers. However, the research significantly found that subordinate employees reported no observational differences between the female and male leaders use of the transformational style.

Alban-Metcalf and Alimo-Metcalf (2000) developed the transformational leadership questionnaire (TLQ) to measure differences between the two sexes and concluded that generally women display more transformational forms and men display more transactional forms and generally women are more likely to describe their style of leadership as transformational and men as transactional, generally women are more likely to be described by their direct reports as adopting a transformational style and men are more likely to be described as adopting a transactional style.

Although Vecchio (2002) discounted the possibility that noteworthy gender effects might emerge in research on transformational and transactional leadership, researchers in this area have reasoned that transformational leadership might be particularly advantageous to women because of its androgynous qualities (e.g., Yoder, 2001). Pursuing this idea, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) carried out a meta-analysis of 45 studies that compared male and female managers on measures of transformational and transactional leadership styles. Compared with male leaders, female leaders were (a) more transformational and (b) engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviours (i.e., exchanging rewards for followers' satisfactory performance) that are one component of transactional leadership. Also, male leaders were more likely than female leaders to manifest two other aspects of transactional leadership: active management by exception and passive management by exception. In comparison to men, the transformational leadership may be especially advantageous for women (Eagly *et al.*, 2003; Yoder, 2001) because it encompasses some behaviour that are consistent with the female gender role's demand for supportive, considerate behaviours. The transformational repertoire, along with the contingent reward aspect of transactional leadership, may resolve some of the inconsistencies between the demands of leadership roles and the female gender role and therefore allow women to excel as leaders.

Many studies on sex differences in conflict management reported that male leaders are more likely to adopt competing and avoiding styles and female compromising and accommodating styles (Brusko, 2010; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Mills & Chusmir; 1988; Sone, 1981). Female conflict management style is consistent with transformational style while the male conflict management style is consistent with transactional style. Thus, it would be expected that female leaders will be more transformational and male leaders will be more transactional and that there will be interaction between leaders' sex and the

two leadership styles in conflict management. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 3: Leaders' sex and leadership style will significantly interact in effective organisational conflict management behaviour.

Method

Sample

Data were collected from one hundred and six (male = 80 and female = 26) employees of 8 organisations, namely 2 educational institutions, 2 manufacturing companies, 2 banking institutions and 2 private business concerns. Participants were accidentally selected, and their ages ranged from 24 to 51 ($x = 33.2$) and their organisational tenure ranged from 2 to 10 years ($x = 4.4$). Participants occupy lower and middle level positions in their various organisations and rated 8 male and 8 female managers/supervisors.

Measures

Modified and revalidated version of the MLQ-1 (Bass, 1985) in the Nigerian applied setting by Odetunde (2005) and effective organisational conflict management behaviour scale (OCMS) developed by this researcher were used to measure transformational and transactional leaderships and effective organisational conflict management behaviour styles. Participants rated their managers/supervisors on the modified version of the MLQ-1 (Odetunde, 2005) and the effective organisational conflict management behaviour scale (OCMS) on a 5-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Frequently). Higher values indicate a greater perceived amount of the leadership style and effective organisational conflict management ability of leaders. Odetunde (2005) identified two factor structures on the modified version of MLQ-1 namely transformational and transactional leaderships with the transformational leadership comprising of the facets of Charismatic Leadership, Individualised Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation and Contingent Reward, and the transactional leadership comprising of

the Management-by-Exception facet. Cronbach alpha for the transformational leadership is 0.98 and the transactional leadership is 0.63. The Effective organisational conflict management behaviour Scale consists of 10 items derived from the literature of conflict handling. Through validation exercise, the initial 25 items generated from the 5 conflict handling modes in the literature were reduced to final 10 items used in this study. Two items measure each of the 5 conflict handling modes. Sample items on the scale includes, In handling conflict with the subordinates, my manager/supervisor (1) "Avoids discussing the conflict issue", (2) "Enforces his/her wish on everyone", (3) "Accommodates the views and interests of everyone", (4) "Ensures that his/herself and others desires are met" and (5) "Concedes some grounds to others". Cronbach alpha for the scale is 0.91.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations of all measured variables are shown in Table 1. Results show positive relationships between transformational leadership and transactional leadership, (.47, $p < .001$), transformational leadership and effective organisational conflict management behaviour (.61, $p < .001$), transactional leadership and effective organisational conflict management behaviour (.34, $p < .001$). Thus, while the transformational and transactional leaderships seem to have significant positive relationship with effective organisational conflict management behaviour, transformational leadership seems to be more positively related effective organisational conflict management behaviour than the transactional leadership.

Table 1: Means standard deviation and correlations study among variables

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1	Transformational Leadership	83.24	27.28	1.00		
2	Transactional Leadership	18.89	5.44	0.47**	1.00	
3	Effective organisational conflict management behaviour	23.56	7.49	0.61**	0.34**	1.00

To test the three hypotheses in this study, regression analysis, t-test analysis and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. To test hypothesis 1 which predicted that transformational leaders will be perceived by subordinates to be better in effective organisational conflict management behaviour than transactional leaders, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results of the multiple regression analysis in Table 2 show that transformational leadership ($T = 6.56$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and transactional leadership ($T = 2.75$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) have significant

effect on effective organisational conflict management behaviour. Also, the interaction effect of transformational and transactional leadership was significant ($T = 3.74$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) as indicated by the slope of the curve (interception). However, the interaction effect was lower compared to the effect of transformational leadership alone. This implies that transformational leadership style is a better predictor of effective organisational conflict management behaviour than the transactional leadership or the combination of the two leadership styles.

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis to test the difference between transformational and transactional leadership on effective organisational conflict management behaviour (OCM).

Variable	Df	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	T	P	
Interception	1	8.61	2.30	3.74	<.001	Sig
Transformational Leadership	1	0.16	0.02	6.56	<.001	Sig

Transactional Leadership	1	0.09	0.12	2.75	<.05	Sig
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Hypothesis 2 which predicted that female leaders will be perceived by subordinates to be better in effective organisational conflict management than male leaders was tested by conducting a t-test analysis. The results are shown in Table 3. It will be observed that there is no significant difference between male and female leaders in

effective organisational conflict management behaviour ($t = 1.65, df = 74.8, p > .05$). This implies that there is no difference between male and female leaders in effective organisational conflict management behaviour.

Table 3: T-test analysis showing the difference between male and female leaders on effective organisational conflict management behaviour (OCM).

Variable	Leaders' Sex	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p >	
OCM	Male	63	24.59	6.59	74	1.65	.05	ns
	Female	43	22.05	8.51				

Hypothesis 3 which predicted that leader's sex and leadership styles will significantly interact in effective organisational conflict management behaviour was tested by conducting a 2-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of the analysis in Table 4 show that transformational leadership ($F(1,105)=6.21, p>.05$) and transactional leadership ($F(1,105)=4.54, p>.05$) had significant main effect as well as significant interaction effects ($F(1,105)=4.05, p>.05$) on effective organisational conflict management behaviour. However, leaders' sex

($F(1,105)=3.34, p<.05$) did not. Also, there were no significant interaction effects between leaders' sex and transformational leadership ($F(1,105)=2.84, p<.05$), leaders' sex and transactional leadership ($F(1,105)=0.81, p<.05$) and leaders' sex, transformational and transactional leaderships ($F(1,105)=2.99, p<.05$) on effective organisational conflict management behaviour. This implies that leader's sex does not have any interaction effects on leadership style in predicting effective organisational conflict management behaviour.

Table 4: Two-way analysis of variance showing difference in the means of male and female leaders on effective organisational conflict management behaviour (OCM)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P	
Total	5888.16	105	-	-	-	
TRF Leadership	58.82	1	258.82	6.21	>.05	sig
TRS Leadership	188.91	1	188.91	4.54	>.05	sig
TRF X TRS Leadership	2.06	1	2.06	4.05	>.05	sig
Leaders' Sex	138.99	1	138.99	3.34	<.05	ns
Leaders' Sex X TRF Leadership	118.09	1	118.09	2.84	<.05	ns
Leaders' Sex X TRS Leadership	33.93	1	33.93	0.81	<.05	ns
Leaders' Sex X TRF X TRS Leadership	124.55	1	124.55	2.99	<.05	ns

Discussion and Conclusion

As an inevitable social process which could have either functional or dysfunctional impact on the organisational life, this study investigated the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles and leaders' sex on organisational conflict management behaviour. Reconceptualised and revalidated transformational and transactional leadership (Odetunde, 2005) and a newly constructed organisational

conflict management behaviour scale by the researcher were adopted for use in the study.

First, the study shows that though both transformational and transactional leadership styles predicted effective organisational conflict management behaviour, transformational leadership is the better of the two leadership styles. This is consistent with some previous studies. For example, earlier

studies (Burns, 1978; Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1998) concluded that transformational leaders appeal to subordinates' self-interest by establishing exchange relationships with them. Lehen, Ayman, and Korabik (1995), also found that that transformational leadership was strongly associated with using an integrative conflict management style which instigated satisfaction of followers with the leader. Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1990), and Bycio, Allen, and Hackett (1995) also found transformational leadership to have strong positive relationships with subordinates' extra effort, satisfaction with the leader, and subordinate - rated leader effectiveness. The prediction of effective conflict management behaviour by transformational leadership is therefore, not unexpected because of the inspirational qualities, relationship and challenge-oriented nature of the transformational leadership implied in charismatic leadership, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and contingent reward, the leader is adequately equipped to provide conducive and enabling work environment. These qualities provide the leader with positive assessment and attraction to the subordinates with resultant reduced vertical conflict (conflict between superior and subordinates). This relates to Wiltiford's (1982) finding that positive interpersonal attraction to the transformational leader leads to relative ease in conflict management. Also, transformational leader with his social proximity to and positive interpersonal relationships with the subordinates is expected enhance the understanding of the needs and value of subordinates and thus facilitate achievement of individual subordinates' needs and goals. Because, the transformational leaders engender trust and confidence in the followers (Eagly & Carli, 2007); exhibit optimism and excitement about goals and future states; examine new perspectives for solving problems and completing tasks; and focus on development and mentoring of followers and attend to their individual needs (Judge & Bono, 2000), they are able to solve vertical conflicts before they escalate. Since ability to understand and help subordinates satisfy their needs are essential ingredients of crisis management

in organization, the implication is that transformational leaders will engender less conflict in organization.

Second, the study shows that there is no significant difference between male and female leaders in organisational conflict management behaviour. This is also consistent with some previous studies that did not find difference between male and female in their use of different styles. Taqadus, Shami, Saif and Ahmed (2008) found that women managers do not differ from male managers in the choice of conflict handling style. Gayle (1991) explained that sex was not a factor in conflict management styles and found no significant relationship between conflict management strategies in respect to sex. The finding is however, inconsistent with studies that found sex differences in the adoption of conflict handling styles (e.g. Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, Chin, 2005; Brusko, 2010).

Hypothesis 3 which stated that there will be significant interaction effects between leader sex and the two leaderships on effective organisational conflict management behaviour was not confirmed. So, leader sex did not interact with either of the two leadership styles to predict effective organisational conflict management behaviour. It therefore follows that since there is no significant difference between male and female leaders in the management of conflict; leaders, irrespective of sex, may as a matter of necessity need to adopt transformational leadership style which has consistently been found to be a better predictor of effective organisational conflict management behaviour in order to be able to effectively manage organisational conflict.

Implications of Study

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for industrial/organizational setting, practicing managers and leaders, and corporate management consultants. First, since conflict is functional or helpful to the organisation and may be advantageous to the extent that it leads to innovation and change, emphasis of leaders or management should not be on elimination of conflict, but on its

management. Since transformational leadership has been found in this study to be a better predictor of effective conflict management behaviour and a consequent harmonious organizational environment, practicing managers and leaders may need to adopt more of transformational style of leadership to improve subordinate perception and leaders/managers-subordinates relationship in the work setting.

Second, with regard to sex differences, findings of the present study suggest that there are no differences between male and female leaders in organisational conflict management behaviour. The implication of this is that the various barriers placed by nature and culture in the ways of women do not seem to have any negative impact on their leadership performance. Women in spite of these barriers seem determine to perform as much as men in leadership position. Though, women are transformational in leadership, the leadership style is not exclusive of women. It is associated with both feminine and masculine characteristics, which suggests that transformational leadership is a stereotypically gender-balanced style. Women equally seem to have developed positive and healthy self-image as well as high sense of competence, and self confidence and the will to succeed in leadership position. These factors must have contributed immensely to women equal performance as men in leadership performance.

Third, corporate management consultants and organizations may find the findings of this study useful in leadership selection and training packages for new entrants and incumbent managers. Training in mentoring and recognizing the varying development needs of employees can promote the transformational factor of individual consideration. Integrative problem-solving, rather than competitive (win-lose) relationships, would equally advance the transformational factor of intellectual stimulation. These qualities can be acquired through leadership training.

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