Conflict Management Styles and Type A Personality

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between Type A personality and conflict management styles. Totally 111 valid questionnaire forms were collected through blue color employees of a subcontractor. In order to measure Type A personality, Type A personality scale suggested by (Yıldız & Özsoy, 2013) was used. To measure organizational conflict management styles, the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) was used. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between the dominating dimension of conflict management styles and Type A personality.

Key Words: Conflict, Type A personality, personality. Conflict Management
JEL Classification: M 10, M12, M19

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1. Introduction

Personality has been long studied in organizational behavior and so far, it has been related to many issues in organizational context (George, 1992; Bono & Judge, 2004). Conflict handling styles is one of the topics that have been related to personality in previous studies (Antonioni, 1998; Messarra, Karkoulian & El-Kassar, 2016). Yet, the studies have been conducted to analyze the relationship between personality and conflict handling styles, mainly done with the Big Five Personality factors (Antonioni, 1988) or with Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Mills, Robey & Smith 1985; Whitworth, 2008). Thus, there are several research that was conducted to analyze the relationship between conflict handling styles, FFM and MBTI. However, to my knowledge there seems to be only very few research (e.g., Baron, 1989) that examined Type A behavior pattern together with conflicts in organizations. Therefore in this study it was aimed to analyze the relationships between Type A personality and conflict handling styles.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Type A personality

Type and Type B personalities were suggested by Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman in 1950’s. They defined Type A personality as “being hasty, nervous and excited”. On the other hand Type B personality was considered as being calm and quiet (Friedman & Rosenman, 1959; Kunnanatt, 2003). Later on, these construct got a significant attention on social psychology, organizational psychology, industrial psychology and cardiovascular diseases (Jenkins, 1998). Depending on the previous studies about Type A personality, it seems that people who score high on Type A personality have some behavioral tendencies such as “competitiveness, success-orientation, work-orientation, aggressive behavior and felling under time pressure”. Therefore, these characteristics present the key facets of Type A personality.

Work orientation: Work has a central position for people who score high on Type A personality. They always want to achieve and perform more than before (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997; Carroll, 1992; Luthans, 2010; Brief, Schuler & Sell, 1981; Kunnanatt, 2003; Friedman & Rosenman, 1959; Rayburn & Rayburn, 1996).

Time pressure: They usually act, eat, walk and talk too fast. Time is so critical for them. They do not usually want to wait on traffic or any kind of queue (Carroll, 1992; Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997; Greenberg, 1999; Luthans, 2010; Friedman & Rosenman, 1959; Suls & Sanders, 1988; Rayburn & Rayburn, 1996; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Fretwell, Lewis & Hannay, 2013; Watson, Minzenmayer & Bowler, 2006; Nahavandi et al., 1992).
**Competitiveness**: They do not easily accept being a loser. They always compare themselves with others around. They want to achieve more than the people around (eg., at school or work). (Kunnanatt, 2003; Carroll, 1992; Suls & Sanders, 1988; Rayburn & Rayburn, 1996; Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997; Luthans, 2010; Fretwell, Lewis & Hannay, 2013; Watson, Minzenmayer & Bowler, 2006; Nahavandi et al., 1992; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974).

**Aggressiveness**: They get angry quickly, there is a constant tension in their behavior. So having tendency to get angry is one of the main characteristics of Type A personality (Carroll, 1992; Rayburn & Rayburn, 1996; Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997; Luthans, 2010; Friedman and Rosenman, 1959; Fretwell et al., 2013; Watson, Minzenmayer & Bowler, 2006; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974).

**Success orientation**: As being work oriented and competitive, they seek for power and they tend to earn more. That is why; success plays a vital role in their life (Carroll, 1992; Fretwell, Lewis & Hannay, 2013; Watson, Minzenmayer & Bowler, 2006; Nahavandi et al., 1992; Rayburn & Rayburn, 1996; Brief, Schuler & Sell, 1981).

### 2.2 Conflict Management

Conflict is indispensable “when more than two social entities come in contact with” (Rahim, 2010). When such entities (i.e. individuals, groups, organizations, and nations) have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills, then conflict is likely to occur (Rahim, 2010). That’s why conflict is defined as “an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc.)” (Rahim, 2002: 207). Organizations consist of individuals and groups (both formal and informal) and therefore conflict in organizations are also indispensable (Rahim, 2010; Üngüren, 2008). Approaches to conflict has been changed, previously conflict was seen undesirable, but now it is considered that conflict should be managed so that its consequences provides positive outcomes for individuals and organizations (Göral, Bozkurt & Bozkurt, 2015). In other words, managing conflicts in organizations provides effectiveness and increases performance in organizational setting (Rahim, 2002). Below five main conflict handling styles are discussed shortly (Rahim, 2002).

**Integrating (IN)**: It involves high concern for self and also for the others. It is concerned with problem solving. To be able to reach an acceptable solution for the parties involved in conflict, exchanging of information, examining the differences and openness are necessary (Rahim, 2002).

**Obliging (OB)**: It involves low concern for self and high concern for others who are involved in conflict. By using this style a person attempts to play down the differences and
emphasizes commonalities to satisfy the concerns of the other parties involved in conflict (Rahim, 2002).

**Dominating (DO):** It involves high concern for self and low concern for the other party. It is highly related with forcing behavior to win one's position (Rahim, 2002).

**Avoiding (AV):** It involves low concern for self and also for the other party who are involved in conflict. It has been associated with withdrawal and side stepping (Rahim, 2002).

**Compromising (CO):** It involves intermediate in concern for self and other party involved in conflict. It is associated with “give-and-take” when both sides of the conflict give up something to make a mutually reasonable decision (Rahim, 2002).

It is important to note that all these styles could be appropriate or inappropriate depending on the importance of the conflict and the situation (Rahim, 2002).

### 2.3 Hypothesis

Since previous research provide that people who score high on type A personality have tendency to have higher level of conflict (Baron, 1989), nevertheless it is hard to assume the relationship among conflict management styles and Type A personality depending on the previous findings. Because there are limited numbers of studies that examined the relationship between Type A personality and conflict handling styles. Yet as having tendency for being competitive, selfish and aggressive it is expected that;

H₁: Type A personality will associate with dominating positively. Because dominating style includes high concern for self and low concern for the others who are involved in conflict.

H₂: Type A personality will associate with integrating negatively. It emphasizes collaborating and since Type A personality has characteristics as being aggressive, selfish and impatience, a negative relationship is expected between integrating and Type A personality.

Since all three of compromising, obliging and avoiding doesn’t involve high concern for self it is expected that;

H₃: Type A personality will associate with compromising negatively.

H₄: Type A personality will associate with obliging negatively.

H₅: Type A personality will associate with avoiding negatively.

### 3. The Current Study

**Procedure:** The data collected by conducting a survey method. We created a questionnaire form including Type A personality Scale, Rahim Conflict Management Scale (ROCI-II) and some personal information questions. We distributed the questionnaire forms to employees by hand and collected totally 111 valid² questionnaire forms.

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² Normally, around 130 questionnaire forms were distributed, however only 111 forms were considered as valid.
Participants: 111 employees (working for a subcontractor as blue color employee) participated to the study. Demographics of the participants; female 56 %, aged between 19 and 48, mean age 32.17 (SD=6.88), 16.8 % married, 6 participants did not report their marital status. Only 7 participants held a bachelor’s degree; 2 participants had primary school degree; 18 participants had secondary school degree; 84 participants, 75.7 % had a high school degree.

3.1 Measures

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II): It is a 28-item conflict handling style scale that was developed to measure five dimensions of organizational conflict. Participants were asked how much they agreed (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree) with the items. The dimensions are Integrating (IN), Compromising (CO) Obliging (OB), Dominating (DO), Avoiding (AV) described by Rahim (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Type A personality (TAPS): To assess the Type A personality, a 23-item Type A scale suggested by (Yıldız & Özsoy, 2013) was used. The scale was proposed for studies in Turkish Language. The scale measures Type A personality with 5 dimensions. Participants were asked how much they agreed (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree). Five factors are; Competitiveness (CP), Egocentrism (EG), Work Orientation (WO), Quickness (QU) and Impatience (IM).

4. Findings

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Type A</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egocentrism</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Orientation</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quickness</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatience</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCI-II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromising</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obliging</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominating</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=111, M= mean, SD= standard deviation, α = Cronbach’s α, ROCI-II=The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II

Reliability: The internal consistency for the 23-item TAPS was calculated as .74. For its dimensions a min value of 70 was achieved. Thus these scores are acceptable for the reliability of TAPS. With regard to ROCI-II, the internal consistency was found to be as .73. For its subscales with minimum of .69 alpha values, the scale was found to be reliable.

Factor Structure: ROCI-II: Separated principal components analyses (PCAs) were conducted with a varimax rotation for the ROCI-II, Eigenvalues greater than one was used to determine the factors. As predicted, five factors emerged: Integrating (IN), Compromising
(CO) Obliging (OB), Dominating (DO) and Avoiding (AV). Factor loadings ranged from .45 to 75. Total variance explained 54 %.

TAPS: Principal components analyses (PCAs) were conducted with a varimax rotation for the Type A personality scale. Eigenvalues greater than one were used to determine the factors. As predicted, five factors emerged: Competitiveness (CP), Egocentrism (EG), Work Orientation (WO), Quickness (QU) and Impatience (IM). Factor loadings ranged from .44 to 81. Total variance explained 55 %.

Table 2: Inter-correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type A personality</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Type A Score (TA)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness (CP)</td>
<td>.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egocentrism (EG)</td>
<td>.68***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work orientation (WO)</td>
<td>.51***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quickness (QU)</td>
<td>.81***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatience (IM)</td>
<td>.60***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating (IN)</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromising (CO)</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obliging (OB)</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding (AV)</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominating (DO)</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=111*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.00

Expect dominating, a negative relationship was expected among Type A personality (i.e., total Type A score) and conflict management styles; however even though negative relationships were achieved they were not significant. Therefore H1, H2, H3, and H4 were all rejected. On the other hand, as expected Type A score was positively correlated with dominating. Thus H1 was supported.

It is also useful to mention that some dimensions of Type A personality were related to some of the conflict management styles. For example, Egocentrism was positively related to dominating and negatively related to integrating. Further work orientation was negatively related to integrating. One other interesting finding was work orientation correlated with avoiding positively.

4.1 Limitations

First off all, this study has some critical limitations; it only includes a small sample group (i.e., 111 blue color employees). That is why; with this limited amount of sample size, it is
hard to make general assumptions. For this reason, this study only provides some new insight on the relationship of Type A personality and conflict handling styles. Also, this study did not include any white color employees to the sample, to compare white and blue color employees on the relationship of Type A personality and organizational conflict management styles would contribute more to the existing literature. Therefore, it is suggested that this study should be replicated by a larger sample size (including both white and blue color employees).

5. Discussion & Conclusion

Type A personality has been related to many critical variables. Therefore it is critical to understand this behavior pattern especially its effects on organizational outcomes. It is clear that, managing conflict optimally is valuable for both individuals and organizations. Thus it is necessary to understand the individual differences on conflict handling style so that managers can re-organize and hire the right employees. Even though the current study has critical limitations, it still provides some new findings on the relationship of personality and conflict handling style. Further, the current study provided a detailed overview by identifying some core facets of Type A personality. In this way it was obtained that the dimensions of Type A personality might plays different roles on the conflict handling styles. People who score high on Type A personality were found to be have higher tendency persuading on dominating style of handling the conflict. Egocentrism dimension of Type A personality was related to dominating positively and integrating negatively. Being work oriented as a key element of Type A personality was positively related to avoiding and negatively related to integrating. All the other facets of Type A personality dimensions had insignificant relationships with the conflict management styles. Depending on the findings of the current study we can conclude that Type A personality is needed to be studied in terms of conflict management styles and it seems that the egocentrism dimension of Type A personality is the most destructive facet of Type A personality.

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