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An Investigation on Supervisor-Subordinate Relationships: Interpersonal Mistreatment and Conflict Management Styles

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Supervisor-Subordinate Relationship

This dissertation seeks to investigate the importance of supervisor-subordinate relationships on subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being. Prior research on this relationship has been conducted, and consistently and extensively examines the effects of supervisors' perceived attitudes and behaviors on organizational work-related outcomes. The majority of this work emphasizes communication (e.g., Bisel, Messersmith, & Kelley, 2012; Czech & Forward, 2013; Forward, Czech, & Lee, 2011), performance (Campbell & Swift, 2006; Dunegan, Uhl-Bien, & Duchon, 2002; Wakabayashi, Chen, & Graen, 2005; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005) and trust (Gómez, & Rosen, 2001; Knoll & Gill, 2011; Paillé, Grima, & Bernardeau, 2013). Despite this abundance of research, more is required to investigate the supervisor-subordinate relationship and specifically the assessment (positive vs. negative) of this interaction on well-being, since the examination of 'soft outcomes' is critically needed (e.g., De Dreu & Beersma, 2005; Spector & Bruk-Lee, 2008).

This is primarily due to the fact that investigating the supervisor-subordinate relationship is a continuing concern for top management of organizations in order for them to (1) ensure organizational effectiveness and competitiveness in a globalized era and (2) minimize economic costs to the organization (e.g., health care and sick leave), and psychological cost to their employees, whilst at the same time attempting to strive in maximize the organizations' productivity and performance (e.g.; Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; Meier, Semmer, & Gross, 2014). Robbins (2003) supported the notion that a good supervisor-subordinate relationship creates a supportive working environment. Therefore, taking these factors into account, this dissertation determines to address and bridge the research gap by contributing evidence on the importance of the supervisor-subordinate relationship using an experimental and field designs, and in doing so, identifying any mechanism or a psychological concept that might serve to support subordinates' and ultimately improve their work-related attitudes and well-being.

Organizations, in general, can be described as associative social systems where the organization members engage in interpersonal interactions, as a core mechanism through which to complete organized activities in reaching collective goals (Blau & Scott, 2003). Organizations consist of individuals in different positions and hierarchies affecting the type

of relations they have with one another (Greenberg & Baron, 1995). This hierarchy also represents privileges and responsibilities earned for each member in the hierarchical unit (Kim, Wang, Kondo, & Kim, 2007). It is a norm that lower-ranking organizational members defer to and respect individuals higher up, such as their supervisors, while these higher-ranking organizational members lead and protect their subordinates in return (Fiske, 1992). Focusing on this supervisor-subordinate relationship, the supervisor, as the authority figure that is usually close to their subordinates (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002), has the responsibility in their organization to (1) change the attitudes and behaviors of subordinates to achieve positive work outputs and (2) develop positive relationships with the subordinates in line with the organizational goals (Richmond, McCroskey, & Davis, 1986). Yet, in meeting these two objectives, it is naive to assume the interactions between these two employee groups will be consistently smooth and non-chaotic, and as such will have no negative impacts or consequences on subordinates' well-being. From a broad perspective, these social interactions have the potential to deteriorate into interpersonal mistreatment resulting in detrimental consequences to both the organizations and employees (e.g., Cortina & Magley, 2003; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001). This is particularly important as Aquino and Thau (2009) acknowledge that interpersonal mistreatment is more likely to occur in organizations that are not only stressful, but also ones that require social interaction to retain its competitiveness.

In a similar vein, conflict, as one of the forms of interpersonal mistreatment, also occurs regularly in organizations, when these two different employee members present divergent opinions about problems and procedures using their preferred styles. These preferred styles, known as conflict management styles, reflect employees' characteristic modes of managing conflict at workplace and result from various interaction episodes (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). As Lax and Sebenius (1986) put it, for supervisors, their central managing task is a constant negotiation, and hence interaction with other organizational members, including their subordinates, can be assumed to be an everyday task for them. Conflict that is managed in a constructive manner is advantageous to organizational effectiveness (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) and organization strategic decision making (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1997; Friedman, Tidd, Currall, & Tsai, 2000; Tjosvold & Johnson, 1983). Therefore, it can be seen that styles in managing conflict are important and represent a core dimension of managing interpersonal relations at work. Despite this, a number of scholars (De Dreu and Beersma, 2005; De Dreu, van Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004; Dijkstra, Dierendonck, Evers, & De Dreu, 2005; Spector & Bruk-Lee,

2008) concur that most studies deciphering the intricacies of interpersonal conflict, conflict management styles and employees' health and well-being are inadequate. To fan the flames, organizational leaders expect their employees to be productive in organizations, while at the same time, organizations themselves are inherently competitive and conflict-ridden by nature (Pondy, 1992).

In sum, this dissertation proposes that interpersonal mistreatment, as a situational factor of social interactions in the workplace, can be a means to examining the negative consequences it has on subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being. To address this issue, the first aim of this dissertation is to investigate the impact of interpersonal mistreatment of supervisors as compared to other organizational members (i.e., colleagues) on subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being. This is followed by an investigation of how important the styles of managing conflict are in terms of their effects on well-being and organizational attitudes of subordinates. The second aim is then to justify that interpersonal conflict that is managed effectively, i.e. using the appropriate style, can buffer the negative consequences of negative well-being and sustain subordinates' positive organizational attitudes. Alas, under some conditions there may be situations in which conflict cannot be managed in accordance with the situational needs. This leads to the third aim of investigating whether there are any psychological concepts that moderate the relationships between conflict management styles and subordinates' well-being. Bearing in mind that supervisors are the greatest source of interpersonal mistreatment and conflict (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988), and are able in particular to significantly affect subordinates' feelings of belongingness, self-esteem and value (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002; Lind, 1995), interactional justice, as a form of supervisory support is examined, as it could weaken the negative relationships between subordinates' styles in managing conflict and their well-being.

All three aims will be addressed through three empirical studies, which will be discussed following the introduction and literature review. The dissertation relies on organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction as the variables representing organizational attitudes, while for well-being, variables such as somatic strain, depressive symptoms, and positive and negative emotions are used as the indicators. As mentioned above, other psychological variable such as interactional justice is used to strengthen the research questions.

1.2 Structure of Dissertation

An overview of the format of this dissertation serves to guide readers in following the development of the investigation. This dissertation has been divided into six parts. The following Chapter 2 provides background to the concept of interpersonal mistreatment, conflict management styles, interactional justice, and related work-outcomes. The final section of this chapter offers a short introduction to the three studies. Chapters 3 to 5 present the three empirical studies focusing on the three main research questions in investigating supervisor-subordinate relationships. In Chapter 6, the main contributions are discussed taking into account the aims and research questions. This is followed by a section acknowledging the significance of the studies, and suggestion for future research. This dissertation concluded with practical implications of the research for the supervisor-subordinate relationships.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Interpersonal mistreatment

Workplace mistreatment is a complex and antisocial variety of organizational deviance, and a subjective phenomenon that stems from interpersonal interactions and organizational practice (Harlos & Pinder, 1999). Interpersonal mistreatment—rather than organizational mistreatment that focuses on obstruction and neglect by the organization—is defined as the termination of normative positive interactions or engagements in counternormative negative actions toward another organizational member (Cortina & Magley, 2003). Interpersonal mistreatment often devastatingly occur in the workplace and results in negative consequences for subordinates' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and self-esteem, as well as increased turnover intentions, anxiety, depression, and physical symptoms (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, Magley, Williams, &, Langhout, 2001; Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008; Hitlan, Kelly, Schepman, Schneider, & Zarate, 2006; Lim & Lee, 2011; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Williams & Sommer, 1997).

Cortina and Magley (2003) reported that interpersonal mistreatment can "range from subtle social slights to general incivility to blatant harassment and violence" (p. 247). Because of this broad definition, interpersonal mistreatment refers to a variety of behaviors, actions or exposures including abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007), aggression (Hershcovis, & Barling, 2010), bullying (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996), and impolite interaction (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Hence, the degree to which negative consequences occur to subordinates' work-related outcomes is dependent on the forms of mistreatment experienced, which takes into consideration the intensity and the intention to harm as factors that determine the severity of the mistreatment (Yang, Caughlin, Truxillo, Gazica, & Spector, 2014). In the same meta-analytic review, Yang et al. (2014) described three common forms of interpersonal mistreatment that were studied in workplace mistreatment. First is incivility, a low intensity form of mistreatment where the intention to harm another subordinate and to violates norms of mutual respect is ambiguous (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Second, with the highest intensity form of mistreatment, aggression, states the intention in harming the targets, and could be present in physical and non-physical or verbal abuse (Neuman & Baron, 2005). The third type, bullying, falls in between incivility and physical aggression which is estimated as having a moderate intensity and occurs repeatedly to targets for a longer time, making it

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difficult for the target to defend themselves (Einarsen, 2000).

Besides the forms of or exposure to interpersonal mistreatment, other factors of interpersonal mistreatment also play a role in determining its detrimental effect to well-being. Most of the research on abusive mistreatment focuses on that is perpetrated by the supervisors. Bullying or incivility or toxic colleagues is usually more specific to interpersonal mistreatments instigated by colleagues, while aggression tends to occur from supervisors and colleagues, and in some research that also studied aggression, it arises from customers as external instigators. It is worth noting upfront that to highlight the interpersonal mistreatment from supervisors, Study 1 focused upon non-physical form of aggression and abusive supervision. This is in agreement with prior studies that find that the majority of mistreatment that occurs in organizations is more subtle than violence, tends to be verbal (non-physical) rather than physical, indirect rather than direct and of a less intense form (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Baron & Neuman, 1997).

A recent definition of abusive supervision includes "sustained forms of nonphysical hostility perpetrated by managers against their subordinates" (Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacolone, & Duffy, 2008, p. 721) or "nonphysical hostility perpetrated by employees' immediate supervisors" (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011, p. 279). Abusive supervision has mostly been studied focusing on the outcomes of the stress and emotional exhaustion of the subordinates. In a study by Breaux, Perrewé, Hall, Frink, and Hochwarter (2008), these well-being outcomes are positively and strongly related with abusive supervision. For organizational attitudes variables, abusive supervision is positively related with turnover intentions and negatively related with organizational commitment (Starratt & Grandy, 2010; Tepper, 2007), while positively related with job satisfaction (Bowling & Michel, 2011; Haggard, Robert, & Rose, 2011).

In a meta-analysis of workplace aggression, Hershcovis and Barling (2010) found that supervisory aggression, when compared with co-worker and outsider aggression had the strongest relationship with subordinates' organizational attitudes (job satisfaction, affective commitment, turnover intentions), and organizational deviance. However, there was no significant difference between aggression from these three different perpetrators on well-being outcomes (psychological distress, depression, and emotional exhaustion). Nevertheless, aggression coming from a supervisor worsens the negative consequences for subordinates' psychological distress. The abovementioned findings focusing on interpersonal mistreatment from supervisors (abusive supervision and aggression), can be explained using the notable French and Raven's (1959) theory of power which is explained below:

[Power] is readily and accurately perceived by group members, and serves as a prioritization device in dyadic interaction, giving priority to the emotions, goals, and actions of high-power individuals in shaping interdependent action (Keltner, van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008, p. 186).

Power is defined as the ability to exert influence over others with five bases of power that derive from either an individual's formal position (legitimate, coercive, or reward power), their social position (referent power), or their expertise (expert power) (French & Raven, 1959). Due to their formal position, a supervisor has the capacity to influence subordinates' attitudes about and behaviors toward the organization (Frone, 2000). Subordinates are also more likely to attend to the actions of supervisors because of supervisors' legitimate power and the influence they have on subordinates' organizational outcomes such as promotions, work assignment and pay allocations (Chartrand & Bargh, 1996).

In comparison with interpersonal mistreatment by a colleague, mistreatment from someone with a formal power, i.e. their supervisor, may signal to the subordinates that they matter less and that their position within the company is in jeopardy (Kivimäki et al., 2005). This may strongly and adversely affect employee psychological emotions, attitudes and behaviors. The past research findings highlighted above concur with the idea proposed by power theory that suggests subordinates will feel more threatened because of supervisors have more power over subordinates' employment and authority over their performance in the organization (Bruk-Lee, 2006). Subsequently, one could assume that interpersonal mistreatment by a supervisor, could have pervasive and negative consequences on subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being. Therefore, using this power (French & Raven, 1959) as a theory to explain this phenomenon, it leads to the first research question in Study 1:

Research Question (1): *How detrimental is the impact of interpersonal mistreatment by supervisors on subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being?*

Further, researchers have acknowledged a proliferation of broad interpersonal mistreatment constructs within the organizational literature and have expressed concern regarding the conceptual and empirical distinctiveness of these measures (Aquino & Thau,

2009). What this means is that the interpretation of relationships between broad measures and other variables is unclear, especially in terms of the clarity of relationships between antecedents and interpersonal mistreatment, which can be improved when narrow, distinct forms of mistreatment are assessed (Ferris et al., 2008; Martin & Hine, 2005). As they acclaimed, the use of clearly defined and narrow constructs should improve the prediction and understanding of mistreatment.

Therefore, in the next study, interpersonal conflict, as one of the forms of interpersonal mistreatment (Cullen, Fan, & Liu, 2012), is studied comprehensively. This interpersonal conflict study is employed to emphasize the importance of supervisor-subordinate relationships in a way that provides more evidence on the detrimental effect of mistreatment, in general, by supervisors. In addition to that, Andersson and Pearson (1999) and Baron and Neuman (1996) argued that conflict could also arise simultaneously with a minor aggression before escalating into a form of increasingly intense aggression. As a result, although interpersonal conflict is classified as a form of interpersonal mistreatment by definition, it can always contribute to negative psychological consequences for parties involved in that particular conflict with another form of interpersonal mistreatment (e.g., aggression it simultaneously elicits). In other words, interpersonal conflict always has the capacity to detrimentally impact subordinates' lives in some way or another, hence substantiating the importance of studying interpersonal conflict in greater detail.

2.2   Interpersonal Conflict

Research into conflict has a long history. Similar to interpersonal mistreatment, it has been conceptualized at many different levels, from subtle non-verbal behaviors that take place in specific interaction episodes, to a general expressed dissatisfaction about one's relationship (Cingöz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007). Rahim and Bonoma (1979) depicted two primary originating points of organizational conflict which are within a person and between two or more individuals. These two points serve as the foundation for four types of organizational conflict within an organization, labelled as intraorganizational conflict: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup conflict (Rahim, 2010).

Intrapersonal conflict, also known as intraindividual or intrapsychic conflict, occurs when the organization member's required performance does not match with his/ her expertise, interest, goals, and values. Interpersonal conflict, by contrast, is a dyadic conflict and refers to conflict between two or more organization members that belong to the same or

to different levels of the hierarchy. Intragroup and intergroup conflicts both involve group levels of analysis. While intragroup conflict refers to a conflict among organizational members of a group or between two or more subgroups within a group, intergroup refers to a conflict between two or more organizational groups. This dissertation intends to focus on interpersonal conflict, particularly because many studies on the supervisor-subordinate relationships are related to this type of conflict (Rahim, 2010). Interpersonal conflict also referred to as affective or relationship or emotional conflict, involves socioemotional disagreements as opposed to conflicts associated with disagreements and disputes related to tasks (e.g., Jehn, 1997a, 1997b; Pelled, Eisenhardt, Xin, 1999; Rahim, 2010). Therefore, in this work, interpersonal conflicts with supervisors can be classified as interpersonal conflict as it involves incompatibility of feelings and emotions between two organization members.

Given that some degree of interaction among supervisors and subordinates is required in most workplaces, conflict is inevitable and can lead to both productive and un-productive consequences. This has been demonstrated by earlier researchers that find positive consequences of conflict in the workplace (e.g., Carnevale & Probst, 1998; Putnam, 1994). Further evidence from empirical research reports that increases in competitiveness and conflict need not be detrimental to productivity in organizations. However, as organizations strive to remain competitive, competitiveness and conflict themselves may have considerable negative consequences for employee well-being, and organizational attitudes including job satisfaction and organizational commitment (De Dreu & van de Vliert, 1997; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003a, 2003b; Jehn, 1995; Tjosvold, 1998). So how can one differentiate which type of conflict is usually associated with productivity and which type of conflict leads to non-productivity, i.e. that which is associated with detrimental effects on subordinates' work-related outcomes? This notion on the importance of conflict being present in organizations remains valid, as Rahim (2002) stresses that organizations that have no or little conflict will stagnate and reduce its effectiveness.

Following from the previous discussion, task conflict or substantive or issue or cognitive conflict is characterized by "disagreements among group members' ideas and opinions about the task being performed, such as disagreement regarding an organization's current strategic position or determining the correct data to include in a report" (Jehn, 1997b, p. 288). Different to interpersonal conflict, task conflict is associated with the tasks or other business-related issues involved in such a situation. When conflict become personal, it is more likely to escalate in such a way that when an individual in a conflict "depersonalizes" another, the more their actions are seen in a worse light (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

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Consequently, this makes more antagonistic responses seem appropriate and further escalates the original conflict. To put it briefly, interpersonal conflicts are unproductive, hard to manage, and likely to leave people with greater pressures as this socioemotional disagreement influence the conflict process and ultimately can be detrimental to subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being. Because of this, much research on conflicts is dedicated to interpersonal conflicts as it is disastrous to organizations.[1]

As far as its negative consequences are concerned, interpersonal conflict is classified as one of the prominent work-related stressors (e.g., Spector & Bruk-Lee, 2008; Spector & Jex, 1998). This is primarily because of influence on social interaction and personal relationships, especially on the satisfaction and quality of the work relationships experienced by the individuals involved (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). One of the most prominent studies on interpersonal conflict is by Frone (2000) from the adaptation of Fiske's (1992) general theory of social relations. It explains that interpersonal conflict with supervisors can affect subordinates' organizational outcomes, while interpersonal conflicts with colleagues can impact those of personal relevance because of the communal sharing model of interpersonal relations. His significant results supported the theory in a way that shows that subordinates' job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions are related to interpersonal conflicts with supervisors, while depression, self-esteem and somatic symptoms of subordinates are related to interpersonal conflicts with colleagues. The personal relevance of conflict, however, can also be pertinent when experiencing interpersonal conflicts with supervisors, as shown consistently in the three discrete studies of this dissertation. Underlying these assumptions, it is argued that the negative emotions and impaired affect from the personal relevance (i.e., depression, low self-esteem and somatic symptoms), in general is extremely substantial in that it is able to influence subordinates' cognitive process. Accordingly, it is also argued that it creates negative consequences for organizational attitudes and well-being.

Spector and Fox (2002) explained the substantial role of emotion when experiencing interpersonal conflict at workplace. Emotion has the role of energizing an individual psychologically with the objective of inducing an appropriate action. When an individual

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[1] Another type of conflict, known as process conflict, is associated with task disagreements pertaining to order and resource delegation (Jehn, 1997a). The dissertation focuses on interpersonal conflict in supervisor-subordinate relationships with brief information on how task conflict interacts with this relationship. Xin and Pelled (2003) argued that in comparison with process conflict, more attention has been given to interpersonal and task conflict and therefore, more evidence in explaining the nature of these requires investigation and comparison rather than process conflict.

appraises a situation that enhances their well-being, positive emotions will be experienced, whereas negative emotions will be experienced when the situation is considered as a threat to well-being (Lazarus, 1982). Because of this, emotion is also an adaptive function in response to environmental events (in this case workplace events) that have implications for individuals' satisfaction and performance (Affective Events Theory; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This theory further explained that these experienced emotions come from cognitive interpretation and that emotion will produce intentions that may enhance positive and negative states.

By the same token, Pruitt and Olczak, (1995) and Sorenson, Morse and Savage (1999) indicate that individuals respond to conflict based on the cognitive patterns and affective variables that are associated with a conflict situation. The common theme linking these frameworks of interpersonal conflicts studies is the emphasis on the stressor-stress-strain model. Various researches in organizational literature define a stressor as environment characteristic that imposes upon the perceptual and cognitive process of individuals. Stress is referred to as the properties of an environment experienced by the individuals whereas strain is the physiological and physical response to that stress (Eden, 1982). Lee and Ashforth (1996) further defined strain as affective and an individual's state which is characterized by depleted emotional resources and a lack of energy. Gross (1970) reported that psychological strain—such as depressive symptoms and somatic strain that are employed in Study 2 and Study 3—occurs when a stressor leads to impaired cognition or affect. Therefore, interpersonal conflict can indeed impair cognition, and elicit negative emotions when employees seek to make sense and react to the negative events (i.e., work stressor) (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Some of the major empirical studies supporting this notion include a meta-analysis by Spector and Jex (1998) showing correlations of mid .30 between conflict and negative emotional states such as anxiety, depression, and frustration. Fox, Spector, and Miles (2001) replicated these findings using Job Related Affective Well-Being demonstrating that negative emotions positively correlate with conflicts. The most pertinent study to this argument shows that interpersonal conflict with both supervisors and co-workers positively correlates with a measure of overall negative emotions (Bruk-Lee &, Spector, 2006).

Having discussed comprehensively the detrimental effects of interpersonal conflict, it may be realistic to assume that to counteract the negative effects of interpersonal conflict, appropriate styles in managing interpersonal conflicts have to be implemented. Yet, according to Simmons and Peterson (2000), interpersonal conflict is positively related to task

conflict, which is positively related with group performance and increased decision making. What this means is when task conflict is increased, there is also a possibility that interpersonal conflict could also be increased because of these two dimensions of conflict being positively related (Rahim, 2002). This suggests that learning to manage conflict effectively in organizations is essential. It might be expected that it can weaken the negative relationship between interpersonal conflict and subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being as will be explained in detail in Study 2 and Study 3.

2.3   Conflict Management Styles in Supervisory Conflicts

A prominent piece of research on conflict management styles was undertaken in 1940 by Follet in identifying five ways of dealing with conflicts: domination, compromise, integration, avoidance and suppression. Later on, Blake and Mouton (1964) presented a grid known as the Dual Concern Model theory for classifying the modes of managing interpersonal conflicts with supervisors. Each mode can be seen as a function of the degree of concern for self (concern for production) and the degree of concern for others (concern for people). Five types emerged from this grid: forcing, withdrawal, smoothing, compromise and confrontation. Subsequently stemming from this Dual Concern Model, Rahim and Bonoma (1979) extensively elaborated the theory by outlining the styles of managing interpersonal conflicts along two basic dimensions. The first dimension pertains to the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concern (concern for self), while the second dimension pertains to the attempt to satisfy the concern of others (concern for others). In other words, it is based on whether a person has high or low concern for one's own outcomes and high or low concern for the other person's outcomes. Crossing these two dimensions results in five ways of managing interpersonal conflicts: integrating, avoiding, obliging, dominating and comprising, which can be gauged using a comprehensive conflict management styles (CMS) self-report instrument: Rahim's (1983) Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventories I and II (ROCI-I and ROCI-II). It is worth noting that these styles are usually applied to organizational settings, with a possibility generalizing to any settings involving interpersonal interactions (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006).

Details of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict can be described as follows:

- *Integrating*: High concern for self and other. Involves openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties.

- *Obliging:* Low concern for self and high concern for others. Associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concerns of the other party.

- *Compromising:* Intermediate in concern for self and others. Involves give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision.

- *Avoiding:* Low concern for self and others. Is identified with withdrawal, buck-passing, or side-stepping solutions.

- *Dominating:* High concern for self and low concern for others. Is identified with win-lose orientation or with forcing behaviors to win one's position.

In the conflict literature, managing interpersonal conflict is usually described in terms of two dimensions that either cause of the behavior (concern for one's own and others' goals) or that result from it (integration and distribution) (Rahim, 2010; van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994). For further insights on conflict management studies, Prein (1976) and Thomas (1976) suggested organizing the conflict management styles into the *Integrative* and *Distributive* dimension of the labor-management bargaining of Labor Behavioral Theory by Walton and McKersie (1965). The central feature of labor-management bargaining is the sub-processes that make up the negotiation process that are still applicable to the emerging field of negotiations (McKersie & Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 2009). The integrative dimension (integrating—avoiding) represents the extent (high or low) of satisfaction with the concern received by self and others. In contrast, the distributive dimension (dominating—obliging) represents the ratio (high or low) of satisfaction with concern received by self and others. Rahim, Antonioni, and Psenicka, (2001) further explained that these two dimensions represent the *problem solving* and *bargaining* styles for managing interpersonal conflicts, respectively. This reconceptualization would provide more options and alternative strategies to management practitioners and employees to manage interpersonal conflicts effectively.

To consider this in detail, a *High-High* use of problem solving indicates attempts to provide satisfaction for both parties by finding acceptable mutual decisions for them, while *Low-Low* indicates the reduction of concern of both parties resulting from the failure in confronting and then resolving the issues at hand. For bargaining, *High-Low* represents attempts to satisfy one's concern and no or low concern of others and *Low-High* is an attempt to satisfy the opposite. Simply put, Rahim et al. (2001), conceptualize a problem solving style as the difference between integrating and avoiding styles, while for a bargaining style, it is

the difference between dominating and obliging styles. Compared to bargaining styles, problem solving styles improved interpersonal relations, and caused stronger feelings of self-worth self-efficacy, lower tension in the future, and thus lead to creative solutions that are important for organizational effectiveness (De Dreu, Weingart, & Kwon, 2000; Rahim, 2010; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994).

In the Dual Concern Model theory (Blake & Mouton, 1964), concern for self and concern for others are predicted by one's personal-cultural (personality) and situation (structural). Further elaborating these different sources is a work by Putnam (1988) explaining the personal category in treating the style as a personality attribute or a consistent way of managing interpersonal conflict, and therefore is seen as stable over time. It occurs as a result of perceived differences in the personalities or dispositional and/or cultural background between two or more organization members. For example, a person who has relatively high need for deference tends to mitigate the conflict management styles by being passive and preferring to wait and see what would happen as a result of the conflict.

Contrarily, others recognize structural factors as influencing an individual's use of a particular style of conflict management and that they are governed by situational rather than personality factors. Situational factors such as the nature of conflicts (e.g., perception of power, justice), situational constraints (i.e. the appropriateness of the style for that particular setting), the success rate of using the conflict management style in similar situations, and demands of the situation (e.g., job demands), are some of the situational variables that may affect individual decisions to use a particular style of conflict management (Hocker & Wilmot, 2013; Putnam & Wilson, 1982). In Study 2 and 3, both personality and situational factors are taken into consideration in order to understand subordinates' responses to interpersonal conflicts with supervisors. Primarily, the situational factors are more important for subordinates who have low concern for themselves i.e. obliging and avoiding, while personality factors are related with conflict responses for subordinates who have high concern for themselves i.e. integrating and dominating (Utley, Richardson, & Pilkington, 1989). Furthermore, it is argued that responses to conflict could be determined by both dispositional *and* situational factors. Some styles, for example integrating, are driven by personality and situational factors as will be discussed in greater detail in Studies 2 and 3.

Given the foregoing discussion, the chapter now turns to how subordinates' styles in managing conflict with supervisors will come into play in relation to subordinates' organizational attitudes and well-being. Major theoretical and empirical studies consistently showed that integrating or problem solving is the most effective conflict management style in