Chapter – II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
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Earlier chapter dealt with the importance of the study i.e. “WHY” this study. In this chapter, the researcher proposed to elaborate on “HOW” aspects of the study based on the understanding of the literature survey. The study got insights into definitive part, and outcome of earlier research. The study was well thought and planned taking into consideration the negativities involved.

The researcher had the following research questions, which he wanted to address in this study.

- Are conflict management styles fixed or are they situational?
- Does conflict management have impact on work environment?
- Are Age and Conflict Management skill associated with each other?
- Are non conventional approaches effective in Conflict Resolution?
- Are Conflicts studies in IT Industry valid in Manufacturing Industries?

The flow chart as shown in fig. no. 2.1 summarizes and depicts the approach and framework adopted to conduct the study. It also indicates the approach for conclusive findings.

Based on the planned research methodology and for the purpose of understanding the methodology, a blueprint was formulated and conceptualized that depicts salient steps of research methodology to represent the process of this research.

This blueprint was also used to keep track of progress of the study. The blueprint is furnished herewith for ready reference as shown in the following page.
After having discussed with the guide, and 1st Level Managers of few organizations, the researcher formulated following objectives of the study.
2.1. Formulation of Objectives

1. To study and analyze the Conflict Management Styles adopted by the 1st Level Managers in Manufacturing Organizations.

2. To assess the impact of Conflict Management Style on Organizational Effectiveness. As Organizational effectiveness, based on his earlier experiences the following parameters were identified –
   a) Employee Satisfaction
   b) Attrition Level
   c) Positive Outcome of Conflict
   d) Development of the Organization in terms of New Innovations
   e) Constructive Changes / Improvements.

3. To examine the changes in Conflict Management Styles and its effect of change in Work Environment and further investigate the impact on Conflict Management Styles.

4. To investigate the impact of Integrating and Differentiating Factors of work environment in the Organization.

5. To identify the possibility of influence of third party or external forces and their role in Conflict Resolution.

6. To suggest most appropriate Conflict Resolution method to be adopted while dealing with the young work force.

2.2. Research Design and Method

In view of the comprehensive nature of this research project, following methodology was applied to meet the research objectives.
As stated earlier, the study involved identifying the relationship between variables which were identified, defined and delineated for the study.

Focus and stress was given on situational approach of conflicts as experienced by the researcher keeping in mind and understanding of certain events and phenomenon’s which could help and add value to the conclusive findings.

2.2.1 Research Design

For the study the researcher had identified, defined and delineated the variables of the study. The study is related to establish relationship between the variables.

The descriptive research design was thought to be the most appropriate research design. In order to arrive at conclusion, findings, the data was collected from various sources viz.:

**Primary Data** –

1) **Cases:** Based on the experience, expertise of the researcher 3 cases was constructed which were related to researcher’s observation. These cases are presented and analyzed.

2) **Questionnaire** was designed and deployed to evolve responses from practicing Top Managers in Manufacturing companies. Questionnaires were drafted keeping in mind the objectives of this study. The Questionnaire had 3 sections. Section Opening pertains to the profile of the respondents and the organization.

**Section A** had 43 questions with multiple choice and 7 point Likeart scale to respond. 1 question in the end required a brief explanation. In this section 4 questions pertained to Indication of Conflicts, 8 questions on Conflict Resolution process, 2 questions on Employee Dissatisfaction, 4 questions on Integration of Conflict in Management Strategy, 12 questions on Open Culture/freedom of Expression, 6 questions on Involvement on Decision making process and 3 questions on Outcome of Conflicts.
Section B had 13 questions on Discretion and Delegation of Authority.

Section C was related to the Thomas Kilmann Instrument/tool, to measure the Conflict Management style.

3) Data from the Human Resources Department of the companies where Questionnaires were deployed. There were related to the annual turnover of the company and the attrition levels of White Collar.

Secondary Data -

Various journals, books and magazines were referred and reference of Thomas Kilmann Model was taken so as to understand and analysed the Conflict management style of respondents and overall approach of the organisation so as to manage Conflict.

Following is the list of Companies which were selected and participated in the survey and the respondents of the Companies contributed to the research study.

2.2.2 Research Method

The universe of the study being very large say almost infinite, it was not possible to collect the data from the all the Organization’s. The researcher had to resort to sampling techniques given the constraints of availability of time, geographical constraints, and willingness of the respondents to share information.

Considering his past experiences, the fact was aware that conflicts are integral part of any organization and organizations large or small, were very sensitive to Conflict Resolution Methods, and had hesitation when sharing information related to conflict management.

Although the plan was to conduct probability sampling, because of the factors mentioned above, the sampling had to be restored to non probability Convenient Sampling. Therefore, in the organization where the respondents were willing to share information and were also willing to complete the questionnaires were contacted.
The hypothesis testing and conclusion part of the thesis was completed by applying various statistical tools like Chi-Square test, t-test, Spearmen’s Rank Correlation so as to achieve conclusive findings.

**Convenience sampling method** was used. Non-Probability samples that are restricted are called Convenience Sample. It is one of the methods of Non-Probability Sample.

From the initially targeted 47 companies, there were two companies which were not willing to participate in the survey, in spite of repeated follow ups, since they were preoccupied or were not available. It was decided to remove those 2 companies and finally select 45 companies who have consented for our survey.

Pilot Study was conducted in 05 manufacturing organizations out of the finally selected 45 companies. The data collected through this pilot survey was analysed. This survey helped in deciding the scope and also for modifying the questionnaire which was used for the main survey.

Since the researcher was not sure of participation of companies, a targeted list was prepared and after pilot study all companies were approached and all of them consented and agreed for their participation in the survey.

As discussed earlier, only Private Limited, Multi National Companies and Public Limited Companies where considered since it is expected that these companies have systematic approach in the organisation.

The universe for the study was thus defined and total 45 Companies were selected with their consent. The justification for selection of companies is as elaborated in the following pages.
**Defining Universe for the Study:**

1. Target Manufacturing companies were chosen that have a business turnover largely ranging from **150 Cr. to 2000 Cr.**

2. The other set of Manufacturing companies were a part of Multinational Companies or large Multinational Groups which were in the range of **50 to 150 Cr.** since they had plans to grow their revenue in the coming years to **150Cr. to 500 Cr.** in future.

3. Data was collected from organisations which were professionally managed companies and with proper organizational structure which had at least four Functional Heads reporting to the CEO/Md/COO.

All these 45 Companies mentioned in **Table No.2.1** which is shown in the following page, were assigned a code for analysis purpose.

It was decided to not reveal the identity of the companies that were being analysed for the responses of their first level managers. This codification was done to safeguard the interpretation of the responses of first level managers of the individual Companies and ensure that this survey/research does not affect or harm the business interests of the participating companies. Therefore, the codes were assigned as Mfg. 1, Mfg. 2, so on and so forth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SR.NO.</th>
<th>NAME OF THE COMPANY</th>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>NO OF RESPONDENTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>RPG LIFE SCIENCE LIMITED</td>
<td>MUMBAI</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FORBES MARSHALL</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MINDA CORPORATION LTD.</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>WALCHANDNAGAR INDUSTRIES LTD</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>EATON CORPORATION PVT LTD</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SAINT GOBAIN - GYPROC</td>
<td>MUMBAI</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RPG ENTERPRISES LIMITED</td>
<td>MUMBAI</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>CEAT LTD</td>
<td>NASHIK</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>JBM GROUP</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>NEEL METAL PRODUCTS LTD</td>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>BHARAT FORGE LTD</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>MAHINDRA HINODAY LTD</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>TAL MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SONA KOYO STEERING SYSTEM</td>
<td>NCR</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ATLAS COPCO LTD</td>
<td>PUNE</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>BURCKHARDT COMPRESSION PVT LTD</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>TREDEGAR FILM PRODUCTS IND. PVT.LTD</td>
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<td>22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>SADHU FORGING LTD</td>
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221 1st level managers of these organizations were selected who are the functional heads. The approach of work and strategies in the working of department, is directed and driven by such 1st Level Managers. In view of this, it was decided to involve only 1st Level Managers, as the other members of the department would not have autonomy to work on conflicts, which is an organization issue and is driven by the respective functional heads.
Data from 45 organizations was collected and the total respondents to the questionnaires were 221, which was the sample size of the research.

Following changes were made based on the findings of the Pilot study.

1. **Section heading was added.**

   It was felt that segregating the contents of the questionnaire based on its contents and type of questions will give a better and user friendly format.

2. **Name & Designation /Identity was made optional for confidentiality.**

   Feedback was received that respondents would be restraining themselves with their choice of responses due to any inherent fear or apprehension of being questioned by the management about their responses in future. Hence, it was decided to keep the name and other identity optional for the comfort of the respondent to give an honest response.

3. **Age was converted into approx. for confidentiality.**

   Since age could also reveal the identity, for the reasons mentioned above, it was changed to approximate age.

4. **39 Question – changed ‘Directors’ to MD.**

   It was realized through the feedback that many organizations had the title of Director used in different hierarchical manner, not necessarily denoting as a Director on the Board. Hence, to eliminate any ambiguity, the word MD was used to denote Managing Director.

5. **Market share being an internal data and confidential, was not available. Hence this was dropped.**
6. **Question 1 Shifting to the end of the questionnaire**

   Question 1 being an open ended questionnaire, based on the feedback from pilot study, and comments from respondents, that there could be many such questions to write and will be time consuming was shifted to the end as a last question.

7. **Thank you acknowledgement was added:**

   Thank you acknowledgement was added at the end of the questionnaire which was felt necessary and was being courteous, because feedback by filling up the questionnaire was being received inspite of them having a busy schedule.

It was ensured that all 1st Level Managers were part of the research study, which are responsible and accountable for the respective functional areas.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections viz. - Section A,
   - Section B,
   - Section C.

**Section A** was based on the individual opinion of the respondent on conflict situation manifestations and feedback about organizations on various aspects in line with the research study.

For data, use of Likert type scale along with nominal YES / NO scale is extensively done, since it was found to be most convenient and time saving method. All the Likert type scales are the original work of the researcher and found to be very high in their reliability for various statistical tests used so as to come to the some constructive conclusion.

**Section B** of the questionnaire was purely based on discretion and delegation of Authority for which 7 point Likert scale was found to be most appropriate.
Section C was purely based on Thomas Kilmann study considering various office situations where the respondents usually respond or they usually tend to respond.

In Section C, 13 pairs of statements were given to the respondents and were asked to encircle / select most appropriate statement which might be the behavior of the respondent in given particular situation. The respondents were specifically asked to select most resemblance / closest to his behavior.

As a part of the study and so as to have conclusive findings, respondents were asked to tick the applicable age bracket, association and tenure with the current organization. The name, designation and function of the respondents were kept as optional based on the findings from the pilot study.

After introducing necessary refinements and modifications in data collection instruments, the data collection was conducted from the 45 selected companies who had consented to participate in the study.

Consolidated data analysis was done for 45 Companies with an approach to statistically evaluate the impact of different variables identified during the study. During the study, care was taken to make sure that most of the 1st level functional managers were covered and have positively responded, so that the Top management perspective is well captured as a true representation of all 1st level Managers in the company.

Section C of the questionnaire was analysed based on Thomas Kilmann model and the data was represented in Tabular/ graphical form to substantiate the findings.

3 cases were constructed which were related to the observations and his past experiences. These cases are presented and analyzed. The cases which are presented and analyzed are as follows –

- Case 1 : Strike by Employees Union
- Case 2 : Sons of Soil
- Case 3 : Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)
2.3. Formulation of Hypotheses:

The researcher was aware about the role of hypotheses in the research. Further, he had also accepted the fact that the hypotheses remain the guiding force throughout the study and all activities are aimed at validating the hypotheses.

In the light of earlier discussion, and the objectives formulated with discussions with the experts in the field, following hypotheses, which are tested and validated.

Hypothesis 1: The very existence of Conflict Resolution Process leads to better understanding the dissatisfaction levels of Employee.

Hypothesis 2a: Appointing external consultant creates disagreements on matters relating to approach of Management to Handle Issues and Decisions taken by Management.

Hypothesis 2b: It would also indicate that non involvement in decisions leads indication of conflicts.

Hypothesis 3: Brainstorming Sessions involving employees leads to Innovative Practices and in turn, benefits the Organization in terms of better efficiency and Effectiveness.

Hypothesis 4: Whenever the Organization follows practices of Open Culture and free vending of Grievances, it leads to Constructive Changes / Improvements and benefit in Positive Outcome of Conflict.

Hypothesis 5: Age of an employee has a correlation with existence of Conflict and Positive Outcome of Conflict, in terms of the ability to manage conflicts more maturely.
Hypothesis 6: Lack of Openness and lack of Formal Conflict Resolution process in an organization will result in Managers easily moving away from Collaborating conflict handling mode.

Hypothesis 6b: lack of openness and lack of formal conflict resolution process in an organization will result in Managers easily moving away from Competing conflict handling mode.

2.4. Explication of operational terms in Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The very existence of Conflict Resolution Process leads to better understanding the dissatisfaction levels of Employee.

2.4.1 Explication of Operational Term - Conflict Resolution Process :-

Conflict Resolution is a process that empowers people to build mutually beneficial relationships and to resolve conflict effectively. Various Organizations can have different approaches for conflict resolution depending on the type of environment, nature of work, demographics. Many Organizations also have documented formal conflict resolution process so as to resolve conflict.

Dudley Weeks in his PhD thesis described eight steps so as to resolve conflicts efficiently which are classified as follows (56) -

- Create an Effective Atmosphere
- Clarify Perceptions
- Focus on Individual and Shared Needs
- Build Shared Positive Power
- Look to the Future, and then Learn from the Past
- Generate Options
- Develop "Doables" - Stepping-Stones to Action
- Make Mutual Benefit Agreements.
2.4.2. Explication of Operational Term - Dissatisfaction Levels of Employees:

Job dissatisfaction is a matter that concerns all the parties involved. It matters to organizations, to managers, to customers, and perhaps most of all to employees. Job dissatisfaction is by definition unpleasant, and most individuals are conditioned, probably even biologically-driven, to respond to unpleasant conditions by searching for mechanisms to reduce the dissatisfaction.

This drive towards adaptation is as natural and inevitable in workplaces as it is in any other environment. But for better or worse, it has gathered particular attention among organizational researchers because employees’ adaptive mechanisms may operate in such a way as to affect organizationally-relevant outcomes, ranging from changes in job performance to such withdrawal behaviors as absence or turnover.

What is less prevalent in this domain is agreement about the strength of the relationship between individual and organizational outcomes and job (dis) satisfaction and related states.

Empirical associations between job satisfaction and various behavioral outcomes have been inconsistent and generally modest in size. More seriously—and perhaps at the root of the problem—the processes underlying the associations have remained a black box for the most part.

Rosse and his colleagues (Miller & Rosse, 2002a; Rosse & Noel, 1996), among others, have suggested that one potential avenue for improving our understanding of this adaptive process among employees is to explore person logical factors that may help explain why different employees respond differently to similar sources and levels of dissatisfaction. The primary purpose of this study is to begin systematically exploring this possibility. (57)

Significance of Hypothesis:

The researcher was of the Opinion that Conflicts were inherent part of any work environment. However, in the presence of a Conflict Resolution Process in the
organization, such conflicts tend to take a positive outcome of the perception of the employees satisfaction levels. It was also thought it to be an associating factor for the overall Employee Dissatisfaction in the organization.

Since conflicts are integral part of the work environment, it is therefore essential that presence of Integrating processes like Conflict Resolution Process need to be in place to handle such work related conflicts in organizations.

Conflict Resolution Process if present in organizations, gives forum and an opportunity for its employees to bring out various issues that are troubling them to be addressed in the conflict resolution forum.

Therefore, organizations that have instances of conflicts could use the Resolution mechanism as a process to understand the dissatisfaction levels in its employees. This is very important aspect that could lead to a harmonious working environment and reflect on the overall employee happiness levels.

**Hypothesis 2a: Appointing external consultant creates disagreements on matters relating to approach of Management to Handle Issues and Decisions taken by Management.**

2.4.2a.1 Explication of Operational Term - External Consultants –

A consultant (from Latin: consult are "to discuss") is a professional who provides professional or expert advice in a particular area such as security (electronic or physical), management, accountancy, law (tax law, in particular), human resources, marketing (and public relations), finance, engineering, or any of many other specialized fields.

A consultant is usually an expert or a professional in a specific field and has a wide knowledge of the subject matter.

External Consultant is someone who is temporarily hired externally (either by a firm or some other agency) whose expertise is provided, purely on a temporary basis, usually
for a fee. As such, this type of consultant generally engages with multiple and changing clients.

The overall impact of a consultant is that clients have access to deeper levels of expertise than would be feasible for them to retain in-house, and may purchase only as much service from the outside consultant as desired. (58)

Significance of Hypothesis:

It has been seen that many organizations tend to have a preference to appoint consultants to work on many of their projects or issues. These decisions are taken by the top management. Based on the past experiences, it was felt and was of the opinion that appointing an external consultant as an advisor in handling grievances and such decisions taken by Management based on consultant’s advise, will create disagreements among the employees.

Employees feel part of the organization when they are involved in decision making process and when decisions are evolved through internal teams and committees, then the employees perceive it to be reasonable and also appropriate. The context of external consultants is valid in this situation also as consultants are perceived as outsiders and not sensitive to manage internal organizational issues as they base their actions & recommendations by acquired data from the organization. Instead issues can be better managed internally by those who are part of such issues as a Collaborating process.

Management in Organisations often tends to use the services of external Consultants to handle organizational issues that they are faced with. Many times even before taking certain business decisions, it has been observed that Managements prefer to consult the external expert or consultants who give inputs based on which final decisions are taken by managements.

As part of the working team on many issues, the researcher in his past has observed that appointing such external consultants does not go too well all the time with the employees. The external consultant is viewed as an outsider who has little knowledge on
the internal dynamics and issues. He bases his findings on the data he collects from meeting employees are by getting inputs from managers.

In view of such perception, the concept of appointing external consultants is relevant to understand if it creates disagreements on matters relating to the approach of Management to handle Issues and Decisions taken by Management.

**Hypothesis 2b: It would also indicate that non involvement in decisions leads indication of conflicts.**

2.4.2b.1 Explication of Operational Term - Indication of Conflicts –

Indication of conflicts is a manifestation of people’s behaviour in certain situations such as in Hypothesis 2b) there is non-involvement in decisions. Such manifestations could be seen as absenteeism at work, employee turnover, non adherence to the systems etc.

**Significance of Hypothesis:**

Here, it is also relevant because, non involvement in decisions gives the psychological Position of not being part of the decision taken and it is perceived by an individual to be imposed on him.

Due to this there would be a tendency to critically look at the decisions and find reasons for not fully complying with the decisions. In a situation like this, the environment is more of doing what is told without feedback or inputs back to the supervisors and thereby leading to a very aristocratic style of working.

This environment pushes people to Compromising, Avoiding or Accommodating style of conflict resolution as the management has shown zero concern for others.

Hence, as per Thomas Kilman (op. cit., p. 6) representation of conflict style, this would tend people to get into Avoiding situation as the concern for others does not exist due to non involvement in decisions.
Another side or flip side of the above hypothesis, is the aspect of the feeling of non involvement of the employees in the decisions taken by the management due to the role of the consultants, as the decisions will seem to have been taken based on inputs and recommendations of the external consultant appointed by the management.

Such consultants mostly come in with a mission to collect all relevant data and then put in place an analysis based on which management is able to take decisions. Such decisions taken without the involvement of the employees would also lead to conflict situations as the employees would not own up or feel convinced about the appropriateness of such decisions.

**Hypothesis 3: Brainstorming Sessions involving employees leads to Innovative Practices and in turn, benefits the Organization in terms of better efficiency and Effectiveness.**

2.4.3.1. Explication of Operational Term - Brainstorming Sessions –

A group of people who get together and 'throw out' ideas in the hopes that a creative thought process will lead to positive and valuable insights.

One of the important factors in this regard is that no idea is challenged or rebuked, but considered. 'Boss Pressure' has no place for this environment to be fully productive.

The main idea is to reduce social inhibitions among group members, stimulate idea generation and increase overall creativity of the group. (59)

2.4.3.2. Explication of Operational Term - Innovative Practices –

The term “Innovative Practices” mentioned in his thesis means to introduce new method, device or a process resulting from the study of experiments with an approach to develop or to produce better / improved quality of product keeping in mind the requirement of Customer.
2.4.3.3 Explication of Operational Term - Organizational Efficiency & Effectiveness

Organizational efficiency can be described as an organization that is productive without waste.

The capacity of an organization, institution, or business to produce desired results with a minimum expenditure of energy, time, money, personnel, and material can also be linked to organizational efficiency.

Likewise, Organizational effectiveness can be described, using the definition for the adjective "effective" by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, as an organization that produces a desired effect. Organization effectiveness can also be considered as quality output produced by the organization.

**Significance of Hypothesis**:

In the given dynamic environment within which the Organizations operate, it is very important for the Organizations to improve and innovate so as to remain competitive in the Market. Different Strategies are adopted by Managers to achieve excellence in different business processes.

It was felt that in order to innovate in any given Business Process, the managers must have Open Discussions and create think tanks so that any conflicts which may arise can be resolved through discussions and innovative processes/consultations that will be used to manage conflicts.

It has been observed that Brainstorming sessions are effective tools used by organizations to address and manage many work related situations and problems. It is a scientific tool adopted to bring in the involvement of employees and it stimulates the employees to think of various options available to manage the problem in a newer way and thereby, it could bring out effective solutions because of the inputs from employees who are actually facing the problem.
It challenges status quo and creates synergy. Hence this hypothesis was framed to validate this aspect of efficiency and effectiveness by involvement of employees through the process of Brainstorming.

**Hypothesis 4: Whenever the Organization follows practices of Open Culture and free vending of Grievances, it leads to Constructive Changes / Improvements and benefit in Positive Outcome of Conflict.**

2.4.4.1 Explication of Operational Term - Open Culture –

"Open Culture" is a concept according to which knowledge should be spread freely and its growth should come from developing, altering or enriching already existing works on the basis of sharing and collaboration, without being restricted by rules linked to the legal protection of intellectual property. (60)

2.4.4.2 Explication of Operational Term - Grievances & free vending of grievances -

"A grievance is a wrong or hardship suffered, which is the grounds of a complaint." (61)

Free vending of grievances is nothing but expressing their true feelings about a happening or event where they were treated on equal grounds or were not given justice.

If there is no free vending of grievances, it may then lead to high employee dissatisfaction which further lead to conflicts.

2.4.4.3 Explication of Operational Term - Constructive changes and Improvements –

Constructive changes and improvements are nothing but activities which add value to the process, end use product or any improvement which simplifies the activity or any given task.

These changes / improvements can also help to reduce cost minimize human effort. Japanese have developed concepts like Kaizen, Poka-yoke which leads to mistake proofing and continual improvements.
2.4.4.4 Explication of Operational Term - Positive Outcome of Conflicts -

Conflict is always difficult, but it leads to growth and change, which is good. Some level of organizational conflict is actually desirable — it’s not always dysfunctional.

When conflict exists, it generally indicates commitment to organizational goals, because the players are trying to come up with the best solution.

This in turn promotes challenge, heightens individual regard to the issues, and increases effort. This type of conflict is necessary. Without it, an organization will stagnate!

When conflict does occur, the results may be positive or negative, depending upon how those involved choose to approach it.

If you can approach conflict positively, it can:

- Improve the quality of decisions
- Stimulate involvement in the discussion
- Arouse creativity and imagination
- Facilitate employee growth
- Increase movement toward goals
- Create energetic climate
- Build more synergy and cohesion among teams
- Foster new ideas, alternatives, and solutions
- Test positions and beliefs

Significance of Hypothesis:

Positive conflict is very useful in group deliberations. When faced with a conflict, most healthy groups will look for more information to resolve it. Because the disagreement
was expressed, a more thorough investigation will be conducted. When the group makes a decision, it will be based on additional information that probably wouldn’t have been obtained had the conflict not occurred.

It was also observed and experienced by the researcher that Open culture and free vending of grievances by employees creates a very conducive work environment wherein every employee is totally engaged with his work and the organization. Such an environment is stress free as there are no pent up feelings or grievances and could accumulate over a period of time and explode someday.

In an open environment issues are addressed from time to time and there exists a condition of Tranquility & rhythm at the work place. It was a belief of the researcher that conflicts in such positive environment will surely lead to improvements and better alignment of employees within the organization.

Open culture and free vending of Grievances are integrative approaches to balance conflict situations with a positive outcome. It basically acknowledges that conflicts are grievances are part of work environment and such practices are progressive initiatives of a progressive organization that could lead to constructive changes and improvements which would result in the positive outcome of conflicts. Hence this Hypothesis was felt to be relevant for this study.

**Hypothesis 5: Age of an employee has a correlation with existence of Conflict and Positive Outcome of Conflict, in terms of the ability to manage conflicts more maturely.**

2.4.5b.1 Explication of Operational Term - Ability to manage conflicts -

Ability to manage conflict nothing but to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting.

It involves doing things to limit the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict. Properly managed conflict can improve group outcomes.
Also, Conflict resolution involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflict. When people talk about conflict resolution they tend to use terms like negotiation, bargaining, mediation, or arbitration.

Businesses can benefit from appropriate types and levels of conflict. That is the aim of conflict management, and not the aim of conflict resolution. Conflict management does not imply conflict resolution.

Conflict management minimizes the negative outcomes of conflict and promotes the positive outcomes of conflict with the goal of improving learning in an organization.

**Significance of Hypothesis:**

In India, it is a common approach to link age with maturity and thereby link the ability of older people to manage conflicts better. However, in the Industrial or work environment it is relevant to understand if the common notion of age linked to maturity and ability to handle conflicts.

Keeping this in mind this Hypothesis was formulated and it could be an indication of how organizations perceive this aspect.

**Hypothesis 6: Lack of Openness and lack of Formal Conflict Resolution process in an organization will result in Managers easily moving away from Collaborating conflict handling mode.**

**Explication of Operational Term - Formal Conflict Resolution Process -**

Formal Conflict Resolution Processes are also called as integrating process and referred to defined, documented and communicates processes in existing organization. Employee should confine to the guidelines defined in such process to resolve conflicts.
Significance of Hypothesis:

Managers are gainfully employed and would like to be integrating with the organizational culture and environment. Human nature is generally aspiring to succeed and grow professionally. Lack of Openness and lack of any formal Resolution process in an organization will create an environment of uncertainty in its employees. They would therefore like to protect their interest first and will therefore move away from a collaborative conflict handling mode to any other mode that represents lesser assertive posturing. This Hypothesis could throw significant light on why employees behave differently or in other words, how their conflict handling behavior or mode is situational to the organizational environment.

**Hypothesis 6b: lack of openness and lack of formal conflict resolution process in an organization will result in Managers easily moving away from Competing conflict handling mode.**

Significance of Hypothesis:

This Hypothesis is based on the previous hypothesis and it is relevant to also observe and study if the lack of Openness and lack of any formal Resolution process in an organization which will create an environment of uncertainty in its employees, thereby making them less assertive. Competing mode is a quadrant in Thomas Kilmann mode that represents high concern for self and low concern for others.
2.5 Selection of model to identify conflict management style of an individual

To analyze the Conflict of Management Style of individuals/Organization following tools were studied. The different Conflict Styles are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Conflict Style Tools Studied</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Management Style Quiz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure No. – 2.5.1](image)

2.5.1. Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory\(^{(62)}\):

The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory (KCSI) is a conflict style inventory developed by Dr. Ronald S. Kraybill in the 1980s.

Like the widely-used Thomas Kilmann Inventory (TKI), it is built around the Mouton-Blake grid and identifies five styles of responding to conflict, calling them:

- Directing,
- Harmonizing,
- Avoiding,
- Cooperating,
- Compromising.
Features differentiating this inventory from predecessors in the Mouton-Blake tradition are an option for cultural adaptability (via special instructions for users from individualistic and collectivistic cultures), and its organizing of scores in categories of Calm and Storm.

Questions are in Likert Scale format, with users choosing a response on a scale of 1-7. Interpretation pages give principles for interpretation and tips for maximizing effectiveness of each style.

According to the publisher's website, a Ph.D study in 2004, found it valid and reliable, however, the research sample was small, less than a dozen subjects. In a second larger study, researchers at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, administered Style matters to more than 300 subjects and rated the inventory well on validity and reliability, standard benchmarks of consistency and accuracy of measurement in testing.

The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory Validation has been used frequently in applied settings to identify conflict styles in calm and storm situations but had not been assessed for reliability or validity in previous research. This paper provides a scale validation of the inventory. Results indicate the 40-item inventory to be a reliable and valid measurement tool. The results are discussed with implications for measuring conflict styles.

2.5.2. Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (63):

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory–II (ROCI–II) is a 28 item questionnaire measuring conflict management styles. It is designed to measure five independent dimensions of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: Integrating (IN), Obliging (OB), Dominating (DO), Avoiding (AV), and Compromising (CO).

The instrument contains Forms A, B, and C to measure how an organizational member handles her (his) conflict with her (his) supervisor, subordinates, and peers, respectively.
The five styles of handling conflict are measured by 7, 6, 5, 6, and 4 statements, respectively, selected on the basis of repeated factor and item analyses. An organizational member responds to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale.

A higher score represents greater use of a conflict style.

1. Integrating (IN)
Involves high concern for self as well as the other party involved in the conflict. Concerned with collaboration between parties to reach a solution. (7 items)

2. Obliging (OB)
Low concern for self and high concern for the other party involved in the conflict. Attempts to play down the differences and emphasize the commonalities to satisfy the concerns of the other party. (6 items)

3. Dominating (DO)
High concern for self and low concern for the other party. It is a win-lose orientation and forces behavior to win one’s position. (5 items)

4. Avoiding (AV)
Low concern for self as well as the other party. Associated with withdrawal, passing-the-buck, sidestepping, or see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. (6 items)

5. Compromising (CO) - (4 items)
Problems are solved in ways in which an optimum result is provided for all involved. Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are minimized.

The five styles of handling conflict are measured by 7, 6, 5, 6, and 4 statements, respectively, selected on the basis of repeated factor and item analyses.

An organizational member responds to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. A higher score represents greater use of a conflict style. The ROCI-II is brief which can be administered in 8 minutes, yet the subscales have adequate reliability and validity.
The ROCI–II is self-administering. The directions for filling them out are given on the Questionnaire. There is no time limit and the respondents typically require 8 minutes to complete the ROCI–II.

Although respondents should not be stopped before finishing, they should be advised not spending too much time on any items. The test must be taken individually. If the respondents are allowed to take an instrument home, they should be instructed not to fill it out in collaboration with others.

The examiner may assure the respondents that the ROCI–II is not tests of intelligence or behavioral skills. The subjects must be assured that the anonymity of the tests will be maintained and only summarized data will be made public.

2.5.3. Conflict management Style Quiz:\(^{(64)}:\)

The techniques we use are based on many variables such as our basic underlying temperament, our personality, our environment and where we are in our professional career. However, by and large there are five major styles of conflict management techniques in our tool box. In order to address conflict we draw from a Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, Harmonizing or Compromising style of management. None of these strategies is superior in and of itself. How effective they are, depends on the context in which they are used.

Each statement below provides a strategy for dealing with a conflict. Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 4 indicating how likely you are to use this strategy.

1 = Rarely  2 = Sometimes  3 = Often  4 = Always

The questions are asked indicating how an individual would behave rather than how he thinks you should behave.

1. I explore issues with others so as to find solutions that meet everyone’s needs._______
2. I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations. ______

3. I try to meet the expectations of others. ______

4. I would argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view. ______

5. When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open. ______

6. When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible. ______

7. I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved? ______

8. I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on. ______

9. I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows. ______

10. Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious. _____

11. I try to accommodate the wishes of my friends and family. ______

12. I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right. ______

13. To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway. ______

14. I may not get what I want but it’s a small price to pay for keeping the peace. ______

15. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself. ______
The 15 statements correspond to the five conflict resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points in the respective categories. The one with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy.

However, if you are a leader who must deal with conflict on a regular basis, you may find your style to be a blend of styles. Style Corresponding Statements:

**Total:**

Collaborating: 1, 5, 7 ______

Competing: 4, 9, 12 ______

Avoiding: 6, 10, 15 ______

Harmonizing: 3, 11, 14 ______

Compromising: 2, 8, 13 ______

2.5.3.1 Brief Descriptions of the Five Conflict Management Styles based on Conflict Management Style Quiz:

**Collaborating Style:**

Pros: Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitments. Cons: Time consuming; energy consuming.

**Competing Style:** Authoritarian approach.

Pros: Goal oriented; quick.

Cons: May breed hostility.
Avoiding Style: The non-confrontational approach.

Pros: Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.
Cons: Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.

Harmonizing Style: Giving in to maintain relationships.

Pros: Minimizes injury when we are outmatched; relationships are maintained.
Cons: Breeds resentment; exploits the weak.

Compromising Style: The middle ground approach.

Pros: Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.
Cons: No one is ever really satisfied; less than optimal solutions get implemented.

2.5.4. Thomas Kilmann Tool:

2.5.4.1. Introduction

There are various styles of behavior by which interpersonal conflict can be handled. In order to manage conflict effectively, one style may be more suitable than the other depending upon the situation. Follett (op.cit., p.5) conceptualized five methods of handling conflict in organizations i.e. domination, compromise, integration, avoidance and suppression.

Conflict management style has been continuously measured by a variety of different taxonomies. Management Gurus in social psychology and organizational behavior have proposed models that reduce the myriad tactics of conflict handling styles.

One of the first conceptual schemes for categorizing conflict revolved around a simple cooperation-competition dichotomy followed the intuitive notion that styles can be arrayed on a single dimension ranging from competition or selfishness.
However, doubts were raised over the ability of the dichotomy to reflect the complexity of an individual’s perceptions of conflict behavior. In other words, the limitation of single-dimension model is that it fails to encompass styles that involve high concern for both self and other, and styles that involve neither high concern for neither self nor other.

Subsequent theorists then drawn on a new two-dimensional grid for classifying the styles as suggested by Blake and Mouton (op.cit., p.6), which is a self-oriented and other-oriented concern. Other authors have labeled the two dimensions differently but the basic assumptions have remained similar.

Although it has also been debated that individuals select among three or four conflict styles, the evidence from confirmatory factor analyzes concluded that the five factor model has a better fit with data than models of two, three and four styles orientations. While the conflict styles somewhat differ in terms of name, the general principles and basic descriptions of the styles appear very similar. Each instrument has been utilized in numerous research studies, yet an examination of the results indicates many inconsistencies and contradictory outcomes. Such unequivocal invite a methodical, statistical analysis of all data in an attempt to determine a more valid overall picture.

For the purpose of this study, the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) is chosen so as to analyze styles of handling interpersonal conflict on two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. It is among the most popular styles of handling conflict used in research.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) has been used successfully for more than 30 years to help individuals in a variety of settings understand how different conflict styles affect personal and group dynamics.

The TKI measures five “conflict-handling modes or ways of dealing with conflict: Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating. These five modes can be described along two dimensions, assertiveness and cooperativeness.
Assertiveness refers to the extent to which one tries to satisfy his or her own concerns, and cooperativeness refers to the extent to which one tries to satisfy the concerns of another person.

Competing is assertive and not cooperative and Accommodating is cooperative and not assertive. Avoiding is neither assertive nor cooperative, while Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative. Compromising falls in the middle on both dimensions.

Individuals respond to the 30 items on the TKI tool, the items are scored, and respondents see which of the five conflict-handling modes they tend to use relatively often and which modes they use less frequently.

Their percentile scores compare how frequently they use a mode with how frequently members of the norm group use the mode. Scores are grouped in three categories: high (scores that fit in the top 25% of the norm group’s scores on a conflict-handling mode), medium (scores that fit in the middle 50%), and low (scores that fit in the bottom 25%).

CPP, Inc., publisher of the TKI assessment, in their website, recently updated the norm sample and the percentile ranks used to describe the conflict modes as measured by the TKI. The goal of this effort was to broaden the representativeness of the norm group and ensure that changes in occupational and respondent diversity were reflected in the TKI’s norm sample.

This technical brief describes the reforming process and analyzes the results of the reforming. It also briefly explains minor changes in how TKI results are reported to clients.

2.5.4.2 Thomas Kilmann Tool & Scoring Methodology

Considering situations where respondents differed from wishes differing from those of another person and their response to such situations.
Respondents were given several pairs of statements describing possible behaviour responses and asked to circle “A” or “B” which is the most characteristic of their own behaviour and which is most likely used by them.

The questions which will be asked to the respondents were as follows –

1. A - There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.  
   B - Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress the things upon which we both agree.

2. A - I try to find a compromise situation.  
   B - I attempt to deal with all of his and my concerns.

3. A - I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
   B - I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

4. A - I try to find a compromise solution.  
   B - I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

5. A - I consistently seek the other’s help in working out a solution.  
   B - I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.

6. A - I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.  
   B - I try to win my position.

7. A - I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.  
   B - I give up some points in exchange for others.

8. A - I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
   B - I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

9. A - I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.  
   B - I make some effort to get my way.
10. A - I am firm in pursuing my goals.  
    B - I try to find a compromise solution.

11. A - I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.  
    B - I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

12. A - I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy.  
    B - I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.

13. A - I propose a middle ground.  
    B - I press to get my points made.

    B - I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.

15. A - I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.  
    B - I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.

16. A - I try not to hurt the other’s feelings.  
    B - I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.

17. A - I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
    B - I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.

18. A - If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain his views.  
    B - I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.

19. A - I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.  
    B - I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.

20. A - I attempt to immediately work through our differences.  
    B - I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for
21. A - I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.
B - I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.

22. A - I try to find a position that is intermediate between his and mine.
B - I assert my wishes.

23. A - I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
B - There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.

24. A - If the other’s position seems very important to him, I would try to meet his wishes.
B - I try to get him to settle for a compromise.

25. A - I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.
B - In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.

26. A - I propose a middle ground.
B - I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.

27. A - I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.
B - If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain his views.

28. A - I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B - I usually seek the other’s help in working out a solution.

29. A - I propose a middle ground.
B - I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

30. A - I try not to hurt the other’s feelings.
B - I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.
The following pages contain the test analysis and methodology explanations for the deployment and usage and interpretation of the Thomas Kilmann Tool which will capture and analyse the conflict management styles of the respondents in the organisation.

The table shown on page no.83, has the scoring sheet tabulation frame/template, which can be used as a ready template for analyzing the scores in the above questionnaire test. The interpretation of the scores and other such explanations have also been elaborated in the subsequent pages in the relevant sequence.

2.5.4.3. Scoring

Circle the letters below which correspond to the letter you circled on each item of the Questionnaire and then total the number of items circled in each column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Competing (forcing)</th>
<th>Collaborating (problem Solving)</th>
<th>Compromising (sharing)</th>
<th>Avoiding (withdrawal)</th>
<th>Accommodating (soothing)</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
2.5.4.4. Data Interpretation of Thomas Kilmann Tool:

Record the results of the Test in the graph below by circling the style with the highest score and then drawing an arrow to the style with the next highest score, and so on until you finish all five styles.

Next, subtract the difference of scores between succeeding styles and mark the difference close to the arrow separating the two styles.

How to interpret your results your “dominant” conflict management style is predicted by the style with the highest score.

The “strength” of your preference (that is, your willingness to stay or move from one style to the next) is predicted by the difference between the scores of the styles. If the difference is high, resistance is high. If the difference is low, you may move from one style to the other with ease.
**Conflict Management Styles as per Thomas Kilmann Tool**

![Diagram of Conflict Management Styles]

(Figure No. 2.5.4.4)

**Accommodating (1/9) – Win/Lose Assumption**

If your dominant style is Accommodating, you dislike the impact that differences between people may have on their relationships and believe that self-sacrifice and placing the importance of continued relationship above one’s own goals is necessary for solving conflict.

From this point of view, it is better to ignore differences than to risk open combat by being over-sensitive. If your Accommodating score is HIGH compared with other styles, it reflects a need for affiliation and acceptance, interest in appeasing others.

Since personal objectives are set aside by the user, the cost of this style lends itself to exploitation and can become incredibly burdensome in the long term if accommodation is followed or follows avoidance as your two top scores, you should consider your dominant style one of avoidance-accommodation (see avoidance).

**Competing (9/1) – Win/Lose Assumption**

If your dominant style is Competing, you see differences among people as reflecting their skills: some people have skills, others have none, and some are right and some are
wrong. Ultimately, right prevails and this is the central issue in conflict. We owe it to ourselves and those who rely on our judgment to prevail in conflicts with others whose opinions and goals are in doubt.

If your Competing score is HIGH compared with others, you believe that persuasion, power and force are acceptable tools for achieving conflict resolution and most people expect them to be employed. You believe that conflict is a competition for status that will be won by the person demonstrating more competence. This style places prime importance on personal goals to the exclusion of any concerns for the relationship.

**Avoiding (1/1) – Win/Lose Assumption**

If your dominant style is Avoidance, it is likely that you had bad experiences with either accommodation or Competing or you see conflict as the results of people’s preferences and aspirations and as such, beyond anybody’s influence.

So, conflict is seen as a necessary evil that we must either accept or withdraw from human contact. If your avoidance score is HIGH, it shows a sense of hopelessness and withdrawal since conflict is perceived as a now in alternative, leaving open the option of leaving it either psychologically and physically.

**Compromising (5/5) – Win/Lose Assumption**

If your dominant style is Compromising, you believe that differences between people should be treated in light of the common good and that party’s need to “win a little, lose a little”. This style tries to soften and make more tolerable the effects of losing by limiting the gains.

Both ends are played against the middle in an attempt to serve the “common good”. If your Accommodating score is HIGH, you believe that, although everyone should have an opportunity to air personal views and feelings, these should not be allowed to block progress. It is never realistic for everyone to be satisfied and those who insist in such unrealistic goals should be shown their error.
Collaborating (9/9) – Win/Win Assumption

If your dominant style is Collaborating, you believe that conflict itself is neither good nor bad, but usually a symptom of tensions in relationships and should be treated accordingly. When properly interpreted, differences may be resolved and serve to strengthen relationships rather than divide.

Conflict cannot be ignored and requires problem-solving often of the type that goes beyond the superficial issues. Trust is the result of solving conflicts successfully and to the satisfaction of people. In this respect, past successes in finding creative solutions to conflict serve to promote future successes, creating a win-win cycle.

A HIGH collaboration score shows implicit faith in the process of conflict resolution and the assumption that working through differences will lead to creative and effective solutions that everyone will support.

All five styles and their variations are equally available responses to conflict. The fact that a person prefers a given style does not mean he or she will not use other styles. Indeed, this model assumes that we use each style at one point or another.

Nevertheless, our “dominant” style reflects our particular beliefs about conflict, our preferences and “comfort zone”. Secondary choices constitute backups preferences when we find it necessary to abandon our preference, creating a “response hierarchy”.

It is important to emphasize that we have the ability to change our dominant style and our response hierarchy. If a person genuinely desires to have a more constructive approach to conflict management, change is entirely possible and it is a personal option.

To change our style, we must become aware of the available options and then undertake a conscious program of building skills where we need them. With some discipline and commitment, it is possible to change or improve our skills and to provide a response that is appropriate to each individual conflict, either as a party to, or as a third-party (mediator or facilitator).
2.5.4.5. Selection of Tool based on the comparison:

Thomas Kilmann Instrument (TKI) was finally chosen as appropriate tool for data analysis. This tool was found to be simple and self explanatory and could be administered without any special training or guidance.

Further, the TKI can be quickly administered and interpreted, requiring about 10-15 minutes for answering the questions and about 20 minutes for interpretation. Interpretation of the responses helps respondents to identify the appropriate use of the styles and also help them become more comfortable with styles they are less familiar with.

Compared to some other conflict instruments, the TKI has shown that it reduces the social desirability bias from over 90% to less than 20%. Also, other instruments that do not use a forced-choice format may, inadvertently, confuse the frequency of using each mode with the amount of conflict in the situation.