Role of Psychological Empowerment on Organizational Conflict Management -Case Study on Sounelgaz in Laghouat-

دور التمكين النفسي في إدارة الصراع التنظيمي – دراسة حالة على مؤسسة سونلغاز في الأغواط–

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Abstract:

The aim of this research is to highlight the role of psychological empowerment and its dimensions on organizational conflict management and its styles from the point of view of the employees of Sounelgaz in Laghouat state. Survey data was collected through distributing 100 questionnares, 99 were recovered. 66 were fit for statistical analysis. Survey data was analysed using the programme (Smart PLS 3.0), the results showed that there is no role of psychological empowerment on organizational conflict management and its styles.

Keywords: empowerment, psychological empowerment, conflict, conflict management.

JEL Classification Codes: O15, D23, D74.

ملخص:

يهدف البحث الى ابراز دور التمكين النفسي .بمختلف أبعاده على إدارة الصراع التنظيمي .بمختلف أنماطه من وجهة نظر عمال مؤسسة سونلغاز بولاية الأغواط. تم جمع البيانات من خلال توزيع 100 استبيان حيث استرجعنا 99، 66 منهم كان صالح للتحليل وتم تحليلها باستعمال منهجية نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية بالمربعات الصغرى (PLS–SEM). كانت النتائج المتحصل عليها بعد التحليل الاحصائي باستعمال برنامج (Smart PLS version 3.0) أنه لا يوجد دور للتمكين النفسي .بمختلف أبعاده على إدارة الصراع التنظيمي .بمتلف لأنماطه

كلمات مفتاحية: التمكين، التمكين النفسي، الصراع التنظيمي، إدارة الصراع التنظيمي

تصنيفات JEL : O15, D23, D74.

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1. Introduction:

An empowered and committed employees is widely claimed to be essential for the effective functioning of modern organizations (Janssen, 2004, p. 56). Enhanced competition and organizational change require employees who have the willingness and commitment to exert considerable effort in maintaining and improving work processes, products and customer service (Janssen, 2004, p. 56).

On the one hand, empowerment is defined as the process of enhancing feeling of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Conger & Kanungo, 1988, p. 474). Researchers have distinguished between two major constructs: structural empowerment and psychological empowerment (Kimura, 2011, p. 45). Structural empowerment is defined as a practice, or set of practices to offer access to information, resources, support and opportunity to acquire a set of skills in work environment (Takuma , 2011, p. 45). And psychological empowerment is defined as a motivational construct demonstrated in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Amore, Vazquez, & Faina, 2020, p. 170).

On the other hand, conflict is a fundamental force governing all aspects of life within an organization. Conflicts can occur between individuals, groups and departments, and it is defined as a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about (Buchnan & Huczynski, 2017, p. 702).

This paper aims to highlights the four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) and their effects on conflict management styles.

Research Problematic: in the light of the presented introduction, the main question for this paper is: to what extent does psychological empowerment amongst Sounelgaz employees impact their conflict management?

Research Hypotheses:

H1: there is statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on conflict management

H2: there is statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on collaborating style

H3: there is statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on accommodating style

H4: there is statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on competing style

H5: there is statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on avoiding style

H6: there is statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on compromising style.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Psychological Empowerment:

Before we define psychological empowerment, we should define empowerment. Throughout the years, researchers have had two perspectives to empowerment. The first perspective is structural (relational) and the second perspective is motivational (psychological).

Empowerment is defined as the creation of power through working with others as well capability to influence one's ideologies (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020, p. 4).

Empowerment is intrinsic to employees and free of policy and management practices (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020, p. 4).

Empowerment means giving employees the autonomy to make decisions about how they go about their daily activities (Carless, 2004, p. 406).

Conger and Kanungo 1988 defined psychological empowerment as a process that ignites feelings of self-efficacy among employees where formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing effective information remove all factors that reinforce powerlessness (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020, p. 4). This idea has been extended by Thomas and Velthouse 1990 and they conclude that a comprehensive set of tasks, namely meaningfulness, choice, competence and impact can motivate employees (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020, p. 4).

Spreitzer 1995 defined psychological empowerment as a process or a state that is demonstrated in four cognitions (dimensions): meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020, p. 4).

Psychological empowerment can be defined as an individual's conception of his or her job role and ability to influence outcomes (Lyu, Ji, Zheng, Yu, & Fan, 2019, p. 199).

2.2. Dimensions of Psychological Empowerment:

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) formed a concept of psychological empowerment in terms of changes in cognitive variables that they call task assessments (Amenumy & Lockwood, 2008, p. 270). Spreitzer (1995) determined a set of similar dimensions of psychological empowerment: meaning, competence (self-efficacy), self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). Meaning is the value of a work objective or purpose judged in relation to an employee own ideas or standards (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). Competence or self-efficacy is an employee belief in his or her capability to perform activities with skill (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). Self-determination is an employee sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). Impact is the degree to which an employee can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1995, pp. 1443-1444).

2.3. Measurements of Psychological Empowerment:

Psychological empowerment was measured by an eighteen-item scale which was based on the scale that was developed by Spreitzer (1995). The scale measured four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact).

2.4. Conflict Management:

Before defining conflict management, a proper definition of organizational conflict must be presented. Based on the available literature, researchers have had different perspectives toward conflict.

There seems to be two general approaches toward conflict. The first approach has focused more narrowly upon phenomena associated with competitive intentions, such as deliberate interference with others' goals. The second approach has focused on adopting more general definitions, which move 'upstream' in the conflict process to include events (usually a party's perceptions) which occur prior to the choice of conflict-handling styles (Thomas, 1992, p. 268).

Thomas (1992) defines conflict as the process, which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concerns of his' (Thomas, 1992, p. 265).

March and Simon (1958) defines conflict as a breakdown in the standard mechanisms of decisions making, so that an individual or group experiences difficulty in selecting an alternative (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 17).

Rahim (2000) defines conflict as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (individual, group, organization) (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 18).

Thomas K.A defines conflict as "process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected something that the first party cares about" (Chaturvedi, 2013, p. 276).

2.5.   Conflict Management:

In this section, the main focus will be on one particular approach for managing conflict in the workplace between individual as employees at any hierarchy level versus another.

The most common styles (strategies) for handling conflict within an organization are the five styles model, which was developed by Rahim & Bonoma (1979), and Rahim (1983).

The handling of conflict is an important issue for the management of an organization. Blake and Mouton (1964), Thomas (1976) and Rahim (1983) suggest two dimensions form handling interpersonal conflicts: the first dimension is concern for self and the second dimension is concern for others (Gunkel, Schlaegel, & Taras, 2016, p. 569).

The combination of the two dimensions results in five styles (strategies) for managing conflict, just as figure 01 and table 01 demonstrate.

Figure 01: Interpersonal Styles of Handling Conflict.
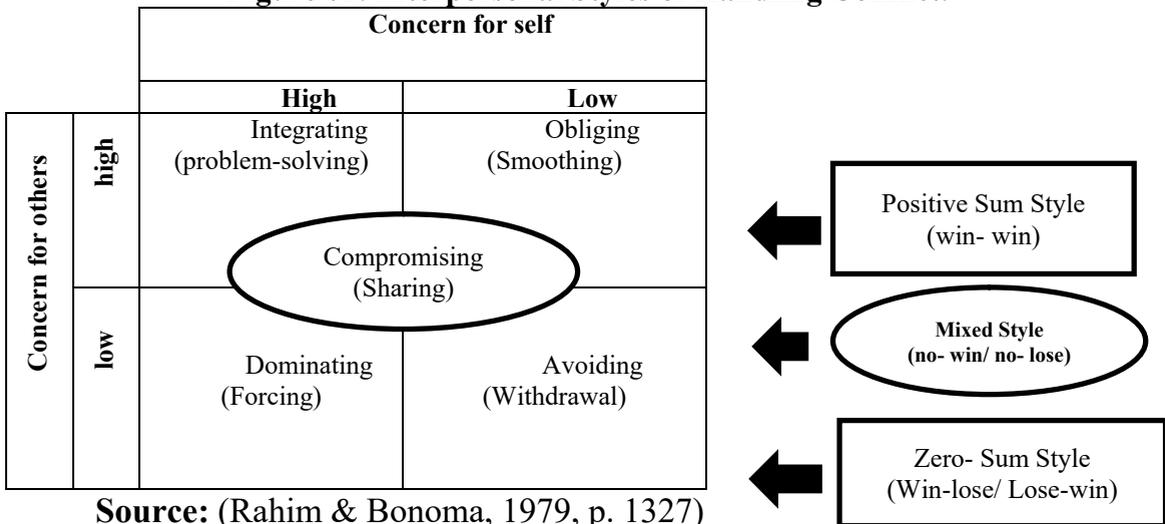
Source: (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979, p. 1327)

The figure demonstrates the five styles:

Integrating style: this style occurs when the level of concern for self and concern for others is high. This style is known as problem-solving. It involves collaboration between parties (openness, exchange of information

and examination of differences to reach a solution acceptable to both parties) (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 28).

Obliging style: this is known as the accommodating style. This style occurs when concern for self is low and concern for others is high. This style is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party. It is also useful when a party is willing to give up something in exchange for getting something from the other party in the future (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 29).

Dominating style: this style is also known as competing. This style occurs when concern for self is high and concern for others is low. This style is identified with win-lose orientation or with forcing behaviour to one's position (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 29).

Avoiding style: this style is also known as suppression. This style occurs when concern for self and concern for others are low. Avoiding style has been associated with withdrawal, buck passing, or sidestepping situations. An avoiding person fails to satisfy his own concern as well as the concern of the other party (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 29).

Compromising style: this style occurs when concern for self and concern for others are intermediate. The compromising style involves sharing whereby both parties give up something to make acceptable decision (Rahim A. M., 2000, p. 30).

Table 01: Conflict Management Styles, Definitions, and Use

Style	Definition	Use
Collaborating	Attempting to work with other people to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both.	The use of this style might involve digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals to find an alternative that meets both sets of concerns.
Accommodating	Neglecting own concerns to satisfy concerns of the other person.	The use of this style might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view.
Competing	Pursuit of own concerns at the other person's expense, and using whatever power seems appropriate to win.	The use of this style might mean standing up for your rights, defending a position you believe is correct, or trying to win.
Avoiding	One does not immediately pursue own concerns or those of the other person or address the conflict.	The use of this style might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation.
Compromising	The goal is to find an easy and quick way, which is a mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties.	The use of this style might mean splitting the difference, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground position.

**Source:** (Sportman & Hamilton, 2007, p. 158).

2.2.Measurement of Conflict Management Styles:

Conflict management styles were measured using the ROCI II (Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II). It consists of twenty eight items measuring five styles of conflict management (integrating style, obliging style, dominating style, avoiding style and compromising style).

3. Methodology:
3.1. Research Model:

Figure 02: Research Model Design
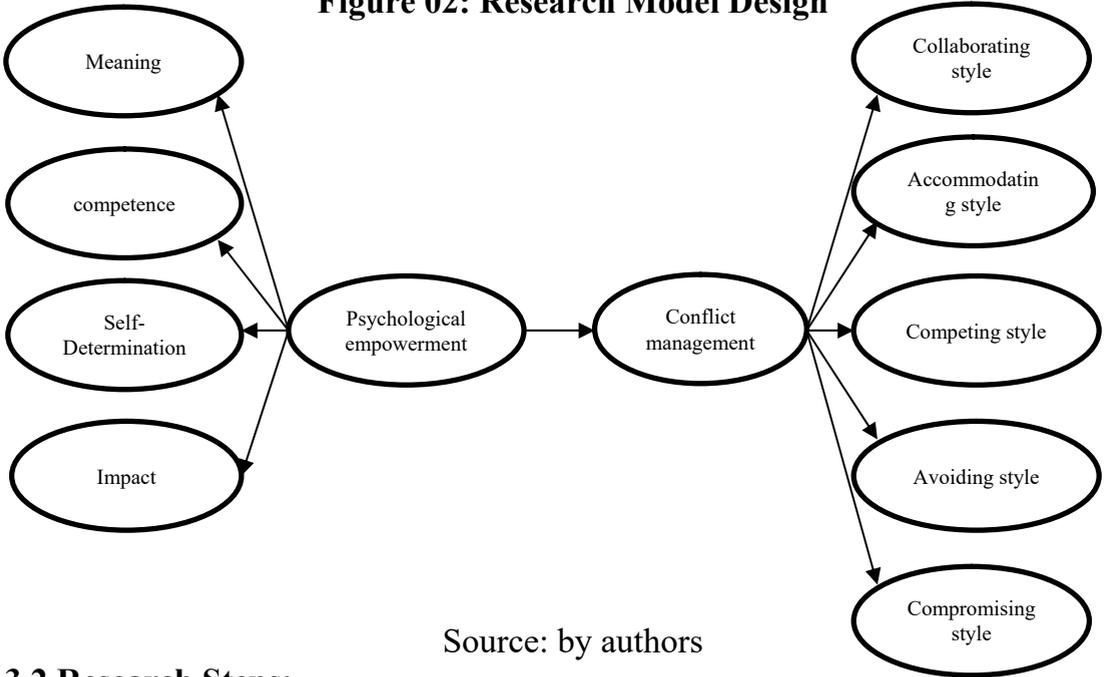
Source: by authors

3.2.Research Steps:

A questionnaire was used as a primary tool to collect data related to our research. 100 questionnaires were distributed to the employees of Sonelgaz. We recovered 99 of them, 66 of them were fit for analysis. The survey was launched on July 2021.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first section reveals personal information of the respondent (age, gender, qualification, length of service and job title); the second section contains items that define the indicators of the research variables. A five scale Likert was adopted to measure respondents' answers.

Table 02: Number of Questionnaire Items

Variables	dimensions	Number of items	Items definitions
Psychological Empowerment	Meaning	4	M1 to M4
	Competence	4	C1 to C4
	Self-determination	6	SD1 to SD6
	Impact	4	I1 to I4
Conflict Management	Collaborating style	6	CM1 to CM6
	Accommodating style	6	CM7 to CM12
	Competing style	4	CM13 to CM16
	Avoiding style	6	CM17 to CM22
	Compromising style	3	CM23 to CM25

Source: by authors

3.3. Statistical Tools:

In order to reach the set of objectives for this study, SPSS version 23 and Partial Least Square "PLS" methodology using Smart PLS 3.0 (student version) were applied. The two softwares were used to analyse the relation between variables and test the research hypotheses. The reliability and validity of the scale were tested by Average Variance Extracted and Composite Reliability.

4. Results and Discussion:

4.1. Statistical Analysis:

In this section of the paper, the statistical analysis for sample research and for test research hypotheses are investigated and presented.

Sample Analysis:

For sample analysis we used descriptive statistical as (frequencies, percents).

Table 03: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	59	89.4
Female	7	10.6
Total	66	100

Source: SPSS outputs.

As table 03 demonstrates, there is a massive percentage of male workers in the labor force in Sonelgaz.

Table 04: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
Less than 25 years	1	1.5
From 26 to 35 years	14	21.2
From 36 to 45 years	27	40.9
More than 46 years	24	36.4
Total	66	100

Source: SPSS outputs

Table 04 illustrates that 41% of the sample is composed of workers aging between 36 -45, 36.4% of the sample is composed of workers who

are more than 46 years old, 21.2% of the sample is composed of workers aging between 26-35, and only 1.5% of the sample is composed of workers less than 25 years old.

Table 05: Length of Service

Length of service	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	4	6.1
From 6 to 10 years	19	28.8
From 11 to 15 years	21	31.8
More than 15 years	22	33.3
Total	66	100

Source: SPSS outputs

Concerning data length of service, table 05 shows that 33.3% of the sample have more than 15 years of service, 31.8% have between 11 and 15 years of service, 28.8% have between 6 and 10 years of service and only 6.1% have less than 5 years of service.

Table 06: Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
High school	12	18.2
Undergraduate degree	48	72.7
Graduate degree	5	7.6
Other	1	1.5
Total	66	100

Source: SPSS outputs

Table 06 demonstrates that 72.7% of the sample carries an undergraduate degree.

Table 07: Functional level

| Functional level	Frequency	Percent
Managers	46	69.7
Frontlines	20	30.7
Total	66	100

Source: SPSS outputs

Table 07 illustrates that 69.7% of the sample are managers and 30.7% are frontliners.

4.2. Assessment of the Measurement Model:

Model at First: structural equation modelling (SEM) outcomes in the first result illustrated that the model is compatible with data research. Styles of conflict management (collaborating style, accommodating style, competing style, avoiding style and compromising style) are affected by psychological empowerment.

Figure2: first result of the research SEM model.
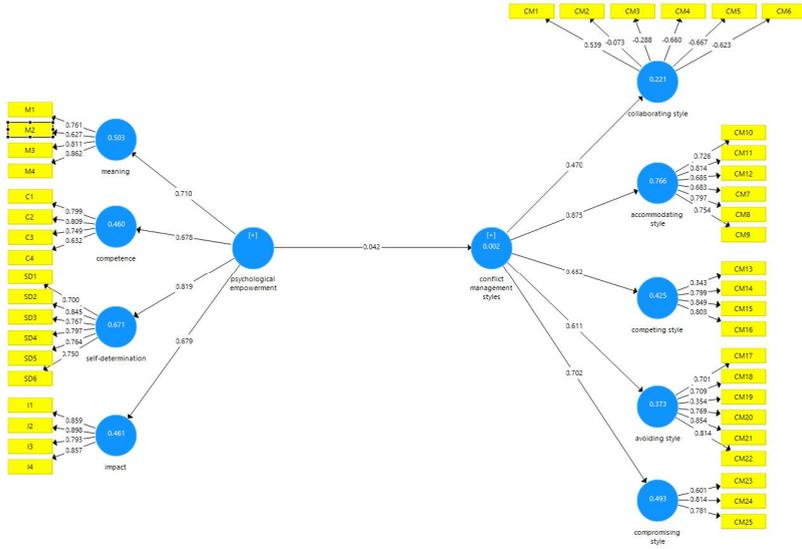
Source: by authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

Model at Last: after the first calculation of our research model, we have removed all items that indicated individual item reliability less than 0.7. The 12 removed items are as follow: M2, C4, SD1, CM2, CM3, CM4, CM5, CM6, CM12, CM13, CM19, and CM23.

Figure 3: Result of the research SEM model at last
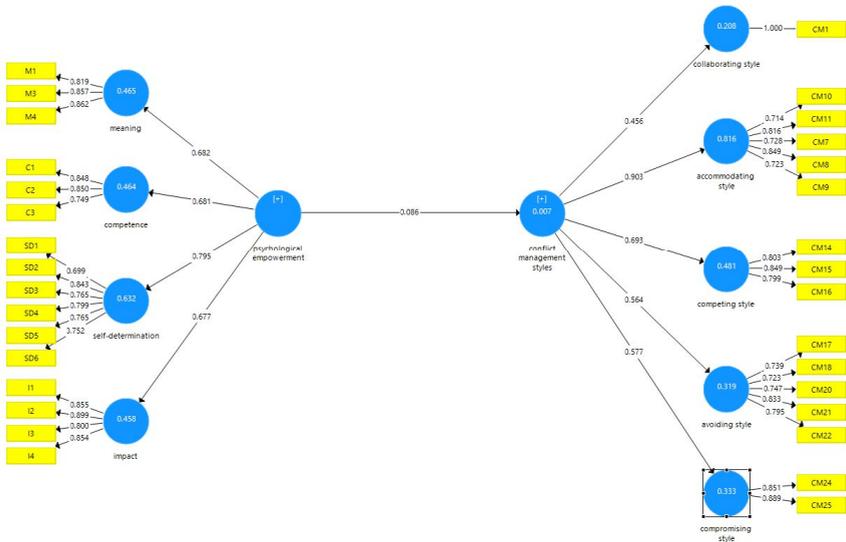
Source: by authors based on Smart PLS 3 output

Consistency and Reliability: the previous figure and the table below show all items, with the factor loading scoring more than 0.7. Our model is

tested through composite reliability in which the measure of reliability is statistically accepted.

Table 08: Research model's Factor Loading, composite reliability and average variance extracted

Items	FL> 0.7	CR > 0.7	AVE > 0.5
M1	0.821		
M3	0.858	0.883	0.716
M4	0.860		
C1	0.849		
C2	0.850	0.857	0.667
C3	0.748		
SD2	0.816		
SD3	0.755		
SD4	0.849	0.899	0.641
SD5	0.809		
SD6	0.771		
I1	0.852		
I2	0.899	0.914	0.727
I3	0.802		
I4	0.854		
CM1	1.000	1.000	1.000
CM7	0.728	0.877	0.590
CM8	0.849		
CM9	0.723		
CM10	0.714		
CM11	0.816		
CM14	0.803		
CM15	0.849	0.858	0.668
CM16	0.799		
CM17	0.739		
CM18	0.723		
CM20	0.747	0.878	0.591
CM21	0.833		
CM22	0.795		
CM24	0.851	0.862	0.757
CM25	0.889		

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

Table 08 demonstrates that the composite reliability changes between 0.714 to 1.000 which is above the recommended value of 0.7.

AVE results are between 0.590 and 1.000, which is more than 0.5. This proves that our model is internally consistent.

Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker criterion indicates that the latent variable should explain better the variance of its own indicators than the variance of other latent variables by showing the highest score, just as the table demonstrates.

Table 09: Model's Fornell- Larcker criterion

	immodatin style	Avoiding style	Collaborating style	Competence	Competing style	Compromising style	Impact	Meaning	Self-determination
Accommodating style	0.768								
Avoiding style	0.328	0.768							
Collaborating style	0.439	0.143	1.000						
Competence	-0.159	0.319	-0.050	0.817					
Competing style	0.523	0.138	0.256	-0.239	0.817				
Compromising style	0.447	0.197	0.015	-0.109	0.329	0.870			
Impact	0.100	-0.072	0.220	0.310	0.127	-0.058	0.853		
Meaning	-0.024	0.259	-0.099	0.606	-0.111	-0.014	0.167	0.846	
Self-determination	0.156	-0.089	0.103	0.215	0.079	0.180	0.400	0.312	0.801

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

4.3.Assessment of the Structural Model:

R and R Square Value: (Chin, 1998) suggested that when the value of R Square is less than 0.19, it is considered weak. When it is more than 0.33, it is considered moderate, and when it is more than 0.67, it is considered substantial.

Table 10: Model's R square value

	R square	R Square Adjusted	Result
Accommodating style	0.816	0.813	Substantial
Avoiding style	0.319	0.308	Weak
Collaborating style	0.208	0.196	Weak
Competing style	0.481	0.473	Moderate
Compromising style	0.334	0.323	Moderate

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output

Table 10 demonstrates that the independent variable "Psychological Empowerment" is explained by 81.6, 31.9, 20.8, 48.1 and 33.4 percent by dependant variables (accommodating style, avoiding style, collaborating style, competing style and compromising style) respectively.

F Square Value: Furthermore, the effect size F square, which indicates the relative effect of a particular dependant latent variable on independent latent variable. (Cohen, 1998) indicated when F square values are 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, they are representing small, medium and large effect size.

Table 11: Model's f square value

	Conflict management	Result
Psychological empowerment	0.005	Small effect size

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

The table above indicates that the independent variable "psychological empowerment" has small effect size on the dependant variable "conflict management".

Q square Value: Q square value demonstrates the ability of the model dependent variables to forecast and predict the model independent variable. Q square is acceptable when it is positive, above the value 0.

Table 12: Model's Q square

	Q square = 1- SSE/SSO	result
Meaning	0.319	acceptable
Competence	0.302	Acceptable
Self-determination	0.338	Acceptable
Impact	0.328	Acceptable
Accommodating style	0.182	Acceptable
Avoiding style	0.456	Acceptable
Collaborating style	0.305	Acceptable
Competing style	0.151	Acceptable
Compromising style	0.209	Acceptable

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

Goodness of Fit of the Model:

The measurement of goodness of fit (GoF) illustrates the global fit of the research model. The purpose of GoF is to account on the study model. Fit of models is considered high when GoF is higher than 0.36 (Wetzels, Odekerken-Schroder, & Van Oppen, 2009).

Table 13: Model's GoF value

GoF
0.179

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

Path Coefficient of The Research Hypotheses Test:

Table 14: Path coefficient and hypotheses test

hypotheses	Relationship	value	Decision
H1	Psychological empowerment → conflict management	.634	Unsupported
H2	Psychological empowerment → collaborating style	.649	Unsupported
H3	Psychological empowerment → accommodating style	.621	Unsupported
H4	Psychological empowerment → competing style	.643	Unsupported
H5	Psychological empowerment → avoiding style	.668	Unsupported
H6	Psychological empowerment → compromising style	.645	Unsupported

Source: By authors based on Smart PLS 3 output.

The table above indicates that the independent variable "psychological empowerment" has no statistically significant effect on conflict management and its dimensions.

5.Conclusion:

From this study, it is concluded that psychological empowerment is defined as a process that ignites feelings of self-efficacy among employees where formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing effective information remove all factors that reinforce powerlessness (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020, p. 4). It also includes four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact.

Also, conflict is defined as "the process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected something that the first party cares about" (Chaturvedi, 2013, p. 276). The most common strategies for handling conflicts are: integrating style, obliging (accommodating) style, dominating (competing) style, avoiding style and compromising style.

The results of the questionnaire analysis showed that there is no statistically significant impact of psychological empowerment on conflict management, which means that the sample we chose considers that psychological empowerment does not have any effect on how employees deal with conflicts. Also, it does not conclude that there is no effect between psychological empowerment and conflict management styles.

Although the sample did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the effect between psychological empowerment and conflict management styles exists, it is highly recommended that Sounelgaz should empower their employees in the appropriate form to reduce conflicts between groups.

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