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Chapter 6

Conflict Resolution by Managers

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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Abstract

Conflicts occur in a variety of areas, not excluding the work life. Conflict resolution methods are essential for further development of the conflict in terms of its escalation or de-escalation. The proposed chapter focuses on the issue of dispositional vs. situational approach to exploring the ways of conflict resolution. Results of the presented research projects are based mostly on the theories distinguishing between five conflict resolution styles: avoiding, competing, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating. The chapter also includes the results of the research, in which an original methodology for identification and specification of the differences in the conflict resolution methods within various situational contexts was used. Model conflict situations were placed into three different environments (work, home, and among friends) and associated with two different conflicts (backbiting and false accusations). The results also confirmed the differences in use of the conflict resolution methods by managers both in terms of the environment in which the conflict occurred and the content of the conflict. Within the framework of these studies, gender-based comparisons have also been carried out confirming several gender specificities in the selection of ways to resolve conflicts between men and women.

Keywords: conflict, conflict resolution, manager, gender, situational approach

1. Introduction

Conflicts have been, are, and will be a natural part of our lives. An individual constantly responds to stimuli from the surrounding environment. If they are in conflict with their interests, there is a tension and hence a conflict situation [1]. In accordance with this consideration, conflicts are the reality of our life but some methods of their resolution or non-resolution, such as mutual insults, rudeness and violence, are not necessities of our lives [2].

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Just as in the general view of conflict resolution in people's lives, also in the context of interpersonal conflicts, it is possible to specify their positive impact on human relationships and the social world of people as such. Rue and Byars [3] see this positive effect in a number of areas, highlighting the "dynamizing" aspect of conflict action and its resolution. Social conflicts mobilize communication, emotions, and behavior.

A productive conflict helps to clarify the issues at stake and plays an important role in the development of interpersonal relationships, social groups, organizations, and communities that are likely to be stagnant if they are trying to persistently prevent these conflicts [4]. However, the correct solution of the conflict also plays an important role in developing the personality of a particular person. That is why it is more important to pay attention to how the conflict should be managed than to prevent it. A major challenge in conflict management is, according to the aforementioned authors, to prevent and avoid the escalation of the conflict, or to exploit its potential for productive discussion. Eggert and Falzon [5] also pointed out the possible positive impact of the conflict, which is linked to a constructive conflict resolution.

2. Conflicts

Conflict research has a long tradition and was mostly incorporated into a model of more general concepts, which has also significantly marked its definition and exploration. Lewin's [6–8] understanding of the conflict is derived from the concept of field dynamics, or the living space of a person, in which forces of varying valency and level continually operate. When studying conflicts, Dollard and Miller [9] rely on the definition and specification of the approach tendencies and the avoidance tendencies. These tendencies increase with the approach to a positive goal, or to a negative stimulus. The interdisciplinary approach to the conflict investigation was pointed out by Keller [10], who specifies the view of the conflict in terms of ethological, psychological, historical, philosophical, mathematical, and sociological contexts and we could continue in the calculation of the scientific disciplines.

There are a large number of definitions of conflict, mostly influenced by the theoretical and methodological conceptual focus of the authors [4]. In general, they describe two approaches, or viewing angles of this issue. The first of these approaches is related to understanding the notion of conflict in terms of an apparent manifestation in the form of physical or symbolic confrontation, words, or activities between the opposing parties. The second meaning is related to the understanding of this concept in the sense of a conflict of interest and is situated within ourselves. It is represented by situations in which an individual experiences frustration when, for example, mutually exclusive targets cannot be achieved at the same time.

It should be noted that the aforementioned definitions of conflict are relative, as conflict of interest often produces a manifested conflict. In addition, conflicts of interest may produce additional responses, such as reluctance, reconciliation, and inactivity. On the other hand, the manifested conflict may also have other causes than conflicts of interest, e.g., perception of

value diversity, anger, and so on. Both concepts of conflict occur at all levels of society—from individuals, through small social groups, to large social groups [4].

In [2], authors argue with definitions of conflict that are based on awareness of the incompatibility of goals, or activities, or competitiveness. These definitions do not sufficiently take into account what is essential to human relationships, and these are the rules that define how people behave. The authors point to the fact that not all inconsistencies of goals, opinions, and interests are in conflict, especially in a situation where people have the opportunity to meet their needs differently, or if the importance of these factors is not a priority. People may have different opinions and without a significant influence on their relationships. However, these ideas do not exclude the fact that incompatibility of goals, activities, and interests may be the cause of conflicts. These conclusions are confirmed by [11], who argue that a conflict is more than a mismatch of interests or a difference of opinion.

3. Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution involves, in particular, the forms of behavior and mutual responses of individuals in a conflict situation [12]. In [13], authors emphasize a dispositional concept in conflict resolution, which is related to a certain form of solving the conflict. The conflict resolution form in terms of the dispositional concept is based on personality traits, power needs, affiliation, and so on.

It is also possible to examine conflicts and their solutions in terms of situational concepts. Rahim [14] describes a contingent approach according to which the individual conflict resolution styles are applied on the basis of an assessment of their adequacy in a particular situation in which the conflict arose. Antonioni [15] points out that not all individuals are able to always use the best style of solution within each conflicting situation.

When characterizing the basic concepts of ways of defining and resolving conflicts, it is essential to accept both points of view—disposition and situational. It is not possible to examine conflicts and ways of solving them in isolation from the situation in which the particular conflict arose and from the personality traits of the people who deal with these conflicts.

The correctness of such consideration is also supported by a number of researches in which attention has been paid within various contexts to analyses of the relationships among situational characteristics, personality traits, and behavior [16, 17].

In the background of these projects, a more general methodological problem is often discussed to address the question of how behavioral predictions can be made on the basis of knowledge of stable, dispositional, trans-situational characteristics that affect behavior regardless of the particular situation, or how that particular situation or a type of situations (their perception) modify the given behavior [18–21].

Authors of [22–24] define conflicts within two dimensions—interest in self and own needs, and interest in others. Each style of behavior in a conflict situation is thus a functional level of

utilization of these dimensions. These theories distinguish five main conflict resolution styles, which are: avoidance, rivalry, compromise, adaptation, and cooperation [25].

Conflicts occur in a variety of social contexts, not excluding the working life. Collins [26] argues that the occurrence of conflicts in the work environment is inevitable, and therefore it is desirable to learn to address them and try to exploit their potential benefits. If the conflict is not properly resolved, losses occur in mutual relationships, trust, psyche, and often also in an organization as a whole [27]. At the same time, however, it is necessary to point out that if managers are forced to spend much time on conflict resolution, they lack behind in other management activities.

Effective conflict resolution in an organization or business is currently considered a legitimate, inevitable, and positive predictor of effective organization management. It is crucial for business productivity. Conflict is an essential feature of organizational life [28]. The organization is a place where there are disagreements in opinions and goals, and where conflicts among people but also among groups are seen as a common phenomenon, which cannot be avoided by any organization. According to [29], conflicts are reflected in the organizational structure, rules, procedures, and management. A key factor in working with organizational conflict is its impact on improving the organizational environment. However, the conflict must be functional; its solution must be the result of creative procedures. Only in this way can the conflict contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. On the other hand, if the conflict is uncontrollable, it can have dysfunctional consequences [30].

In the context of conflict issues in general and conflict resolution in managerial work, the issue of how effective conflict resolution can be is tackled in the forefront. The method of conflict resolution is essential for its further development in terms of the escalation or de-escalation of the conflict. However, this does not mean that there is no appreciation of the use of means to prevent conflicts.

Various theoretical and methodological concepts of conflict resolution methods are described in the literature. Even though these concepts correspond to certain theoretical and methodological bases, their common characteristic is in most cases to identify and specify individual attributes of the conflict resolution methods. In several publications, we can find the previously mentioned concept of Thomas and Kilmann [22]. In conflict resolution, in addition to the previously mentioned methods [22], there are styles such as dominance, positive vs. negative style, passivity, integration, delegation, mediation, negotiation, understanding, forgiveness, etc.

Irrespective of conflict resolution methods, Owen [31] recommends not to avoid conflicts, not take them personally, and take a neutral, emotion-free stance.

The ways of resolving conflicts can be discussed from different viewpoints. In several of our researches, we focused on the situational concept of conflict definition and ways of their resolution in the context of gender issues.

When characterizing the basic concepts of conflict resolution, it is clear as we have already mentioned that it is not possible to characterize, examine, and interpret this problem in isolation from the situation in which the particular conflict occurred and from the personality traits of the people who are actors of the conflict.

Conflict resolution is influenced by situational factors that have a strong impact on their character and quality. They also affect the attitudes and interests of conflict participants. The processing of a conflict strategy is dependent on a complex set of situational conditions. Changing these conditions also changes strategy selection. Callanan and Perri [28] provide a broad overview of situational factors that can influence the choice of a conflict processing strategy.

Reference [32] defines situational factors as a time and place of observation that do not result from personal knowledge (intra-individual) and stimulation knowledge (selection of alternatives) that have a demonstrable and systematic impact on the current behavior. These are the attributes of a decision, which affect the decision-making process and its results. Bercowitch and Jackson [33], in turn, speak of situational factors that affect the behavior and relate to all the social and physical conditions under which the process is proceeding. The situational approach, according to [34], emphasizes the elements of the situation that motivate people's behavior to resolve conflicts.

According to [35], the situational approach represents a specific emphasis on the impact of the situation on the choice of behavior and intra-individual changes over time. Behavior in a particular situation is unique, even though one has an own way of responding to situations. In accordance with [28], organizations should recognize that there may be a very large number of conflict-causing situations and should therefore create the right environment for a proper response to them, and the conflict itself would produce more positive results for the participating parties as well as for the organization itself.

4. Research on conflict resolution

In one of our research projects [35] dealing with conflict resolution by managers, we have attempted to identify the differences in the ways of resolving conflicts in different situations. The research file consisted of 52 managers (29 top managers and 23 line managers), of which 28 were men and 24 were women. The average age of these managers was 32 years, and the average length of managerial experience was 9 years. Data collection was carried out in 2013 by means of the snowball sampling method.

In the research, we used the questionnaire method. The questionnaire contained two model situations:

Situation 1: Imagine that someone is backbiting and you learn about it. What do you do?

Situation 2: You have a feeling injustice because of being falsely accused of something. What do you do?

The model situations took place in three different environments (at work, at home, and among friends) and in each environment the respondent had to choose from five options to resolve the conflict situation (avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, compromising, and competing) that corresponded to the concept by [22]. The individual ways to resolve the conflict were judged by managers on a 6-point scale from 1 (definitely yes) to 6 (definitely no).

The difference in the preference of avoiding solutions in the backbiting situations and false accusations at work was statistically significant at the significance level of 0.001. Managers in both cases rejected this way of solving the conflict. The identified statistically significant difference depending on the situation can only be interpreted in terms of the degree of the expressed disagreement (**Table 1**).

The difference in the preference of accommodation in the backbiting situations and false accusations at work was statistically significant at the significance level of 0.000. In this case, the difference was also identified in the degree of the refusal of this conflict resolution method by managers (**Table 2**).

The difference in the preference of collaboration in solving these conflicts in the context of the work was statistically significant at the significance level of 0.002. This way of resolving the conflict was in the situation of backbiting rather refused by managers. On the contrary, in the situation of false accusations, they rather agreed. It should be stressed that in this case the differences are substantial, as the preference of this procedure is in a backbiting situation in the refusal direction, but in the accusation situation in the direction of acceptance (**Table 3**).

The difference in the preference of the compromise as one of the options for solving the examined conflicts in the context of work was not statistically significant (0.234). The differences in this strategy in both situations did not differ. Managers in both situations agreed to this conflict resolution process (**Table 4**).

The difference in preference of competition as a way of solving these types of conflicts in the context of work was statistically significant at the level of 0.000. In this case, the managers expressed their disagreement with this approach to resolving the given conflicts. The identified statistically significant difference is in the degree to which this method of conflict resolution by managers is refused (**Table 5**).

	Work: backbiting	**Work: false accusations**	**t**	**p**
Avoiding	4.12	5.04	3.628	0.001

Table 1. Situations: backbiting at work and false accusations at work—resolution method: avoiding.

	Work: backbiting	**Work: false accusations**	**t**	**p**
Accommodating	4.08	4.94	3.766	0.000

Table 2. Situations: backbiting at work and false accusations at work—resolution method: accommodating.

	Work: backbiting	**Work: false accusations**	**t**	**p**
Collaborating	3.79	3.25	3.204	0.002

Table 3. Situations: backbiting at work and false accusations at work—resolution method: collaborating.

	Work: backbiting	Work: false accusations	t	p
Compromising	2.23	2.00	1.205	0.234

Table 4. Situations: backbiting at work and false accusations at work—resolution method: compromising.

	Work: backbiting	Work: false accusations	t	p
Competing	4.71	4.10	4.015	0.000

Table 5. Situations: backbiting at work and false accusations at work—resolution method: competing.

The second environment in which we analyzed the preference of individual ways of resolving the conflicts examined was the family. Differences in the preference of avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, and compromising in terms of backbiting, and false accusations in the family context are not statistically significant.

The third environment in which we analyzed the preference of the different ways of resolving the conflicts examined was the social situation among friends. Differences in the conflict resolution methods of avoiding, accommodating, and collaborating between the types of conflicts examined are not statistically significant.

Statistically significant differences were found in the preference of the conflict resolution methods of compromising and competing (**Tables 6** and **7**).

The difference in the preference of compromising as a method of dealing with backbiting and false accusations was statistically significant at the significance level of 0.031. Managers preferred this solution in both types of conflict. The statistically significant difference found can be interpreted in terms of a different degree of acceptance of this conflict resolution procedure. Moreover, this way of conflict resolution in the context of friends is preferred by managers in the case of false accusations rather than backbiting (**Table 6**).

The difference in preference of competing as a way of solving the given types of conflicts was statistically significant at the significance level of 0.041. In addressing both types of conflict, managers have been slightly opposed to this solution. The detected statistically significant

	Friends: backbiting	Friends: false accusations	t	p
Compromising	2.21	1.90	2.217	0.031

Table 6. Situations: backbiting among friends and false accusations among friends—resolution method: compromising.

	Friends: backbiting	Friends: false accusations	t	p
Competing	3.98	3.58	2.095	0.041

Table 7. Situations: backbiting among friends and false accusations among friends—resolution method: competing.

difference can be interpreted in terms of a different degree of refusal of this conflict resolution process. This way of conflict resolution by managers in the context of friends is denied to a greater extent in the case of backbiting rather than false accusations (**Table 7**).

The presented findings relating to the differences in the preference of the individual ways of resolving conflicts between the situations of backbiting and false accusations markedly indicate the situational approach in defining the theoretical-methodological concepts of conflicts and ways of their resolution [28, 32]. Acceptance of the situational approach is confirmed by the differences in the preference of the individual ways of solving the conflicts examined in terms of the three settings (work, family, and friends), within which the analyses were carried out. In addressing these conflicts, managers clearly preferred a compromise solution and, to a certain extent, took into consideration also the context of collaboration. The situational context was most pronounced in terms of preference for the conflict resolution method of competing. At the same time, it is important to point out that the necessity to think about the situational approach in terms of conflict resolution methods was most evident in the work context. Interestingly, in dealing with these conflicts, the difference in the preference of compromising was reflected in the context of friends, but did not appear in the contexts of work and family.

5. Research on gender issues in dealing with conflicts

In addition to the situational approach, we have focused on gender issues in a number of studies of managers in the context of exploring the conflict resolution methods. Gender issues are one of the typical research problem areas in various fields of knowledge. Gender issues are focused on in almost every discipline that deals with human behavior, cognition, society, and culture [36]. According to [37], the gender topic has a key dimension in personal life, social relationships, culture, and we could also add the working life. We based our approach on the concepts of gender as a social construct [38], with an emphasis on gender roles, gender identity, and expectations connected to gender [39, 40].

In the chapter, we present the results of the research, in which the ways of solving the conflict situations were investigated by means of Thomas-Kilmann's TKI questionnaire [41]. This research was conducted on the sample of 114 respondents, 68 female managers and 46 male managers, aged from 18 to 55 years, working in the areas of trade, services, production, and education. The average age of these managers was 29.13 years, and the average length of their managerial experience was 6.11 years. Data collection was carried out in 2016 by means of the snowball sampling method.

Unlike the above analyses, in this case the dispositional (trans-situational) approach to conflict resolution has been accepted. Male and female managers assessed each of the questionnaire items describing five ways of conflict resolution (avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, compromising, and competing). The different ways to resolve the conflict were judged by the male and female managers on a 6-point scale from 1 (definitely not) to 6 (definitely yes).

Comparisons of the responses of the male and female managers confirmed the existence of statistically significant differences in the preferences of conflict resolution methods in terms of four styles (accommodating, compromising, competing, and avoiding) (**Table 8**).

The addressed female managers had higher scores in the conflict resolution methods of compromising and avoiding, and the male managers in the strategy of competing.

Female managers do not look for conflicts and therefore avoid them more often to maintain good interpersonal relationships. Tactically, they prefer to change the topic or ignore the problem. If the conflict cannot be avoided, they choose the compromise strategy, the basic idea of which is that the involved parties partially give up on what they wanted to achieve initially, and thus get something else out of their goals. This style, unlike collaborating (we did not find any statistical significance in it), however, often brings a much less satisfactory solution.

The third style, which female managers prefer more than male managers, is Accommodating that focuses on minimizing the conflict in order to preserve relationships. Women often sacrifice their opinions and goals in order to maintain good relationships with others.

The goal of the competing way of resolving conflicts, in which the higher scores were achieved by the male managers, is to win over others and force them to accept their opinions. This often escalates the already created conflict and increases the likelihood of conflict occurrence in the future. It is demonstrated by convictive techniques, using the position, power and influence, imposing suggestions on others, assertive and aggressive behavior. This style is adequate for the quick and vigorous decisions needed to achieve the best results. Several other studies have confirmed our findings that men prefer the use of a dominant style of conflict resolution, unlike women who prefer to avoid in conflict [13]. Women often try to mitigate the conflict using the strategy of compromise or the explanation of behavioral patterns. Men will use more physical strength to convince others [42].

Understanding gender roles in a conflicting interaction is based, according to [43], on the theory of communication differences. The authors refer to the research that shows that in

	Gender	M	t	p
Conflict resolution methods—TKI				
Accommodating	Female	3.64	4.053	0.000
	Male	3.11		
Compromising	Female	3.26	3.562	0.001
	Male	2.87		
Competing	Female	3.05	−3.759	0.000
	Male	3.73		
Avoiding	Female	3.38	4.158	0.000
	Male	2.67		

Table 8. Comparison of assessment of conflict resolution methods between female and male managers.

some circumstances there is a difference in the gender perspective of the conflict. Men tend to dominate and compete, while women try to compromise. The control over the conversation is in the hands of men, who lead it where they want. Women are expected to remain in the role of the listener. Also, Allhoff and Allhoff [38] affirm that women in mixed discussion groups speak less. Men take the initiative, direct the conversation, and do not like to be interrupted. On the contrary, women tend to support the debate, ask questions and show interest. According to [43], it is therefore efficient to give each individual, regardless of gender, the spectrum of communication behavior. Because, a conflict is usually about power and self-respect, the chance of its constructive solution thus increases.

As mentioned above, in defining gender issues as a social construct [38], emphasizing the gender roles, gender identity, and the expectations associated with gender [39, 40], it is crucial to pay attention to the relationship of work and family. In the context of the conflict between work and family, several researches focusing on work and personal satisfaction and quality of life were conducted [44, 45]. One of the most well-known concepts of the positive effects of the links between the workplace and the family areas is the work-family enrichment by Greenhaus and Powell [46]. By this term, the authors understand the extent to which the experience gained in the performance of one role will help improve performance and success in the other. In this case, it is the positive impact of solving the conflict of work and family. Positive work and family experiences contribute to higher well-being and consequently to greater life satisfaction. Even if these positive effects occurred only in one of the areas (work or family), they often perform a protective function against stress and possible failure in the other area.

Eby et al. [47] dealt with studies and research on conflict of labor and family relationships. They distinguished them into three groups: a connection with the work area, with the family, and the individual characteristics of the individual. The issues of work conflicts, pressure, tension and stress, unfair remuneration for work performance, time demands, high workload, and loyalty, have been at the forefront of discussions. Many work preconditions for enhancing the experienced conflict are the source of the aforementioned work-related stress [48].

In further research, conflict resolution analysis in the context of gender issues was, again, enriched by the attribute of situational approach. This research was carried out on the sample of 154 respondents, 78 female managers and 76 male managers, aged from 20 to 65 years, working in various economic areas. The average age of these managers was 31 years, and the average length of their managerial experience was 10 years. Data collection was conducted in 2015 by means of the snowball sampling method.

Through multivariate analysis, we analyzed the ways of dealing with conflicting situations from the viewpoint of the interactive impact of gender (male and female managers) and the work area (education, healthcare, trade, and production). One Way Scatter Analysis confirmed the F-test value of 2.050 and a statistical significance of 0.015. Further analyses concerned the interactive impact of gender (male and female managers) and the size of the organization (small business and big business) (F-test 2.253, statistical significance 0.055), gender (male and female managers) and age categories of respondents (18–34, 35, and over) (F-test 2.533, statistical significance 0.033). These F-test values indicate the existence of statistically significant

interactions between the family and the investigated factors (work area, size of organization, and age category) in assessment of the conflict resolution methods. Statistically significant interactions are shown in **Figures 1–3**.

A statistically significant interaction in the analysis of the conflict resolution method—Collaborating (F-test 2.037; p = 0.001) was demonstrated among the male and female managers working in the fields of production and education (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.049). School managers use cooperative strategies more often than managers in the field of production. Male managers use less of this strategy than women, and that is true mainly for the managers working in production (**Figure 1**).

The statistically significant interaction in terms of gender and work area in the conflict resolution method of accommodating (F-test 2.030; p = 0.050) was demonstrated among the male and female managers in production and healthcare (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.050). The female managers from production as well as healthcare use the accommodating conflict resolution strategy almost equally, unlike the male managers. These differ in the fact that healthcare managers are more adaptable than managers who work in the field of production. They use less accommodating than the female managers in a given sector (**Figure 2**).

A statistically significant interaction in terms of gender and the work area was also observed in the way of dealing with conflicting situations—Competing (F-test 2.331, p = 0.002). In this

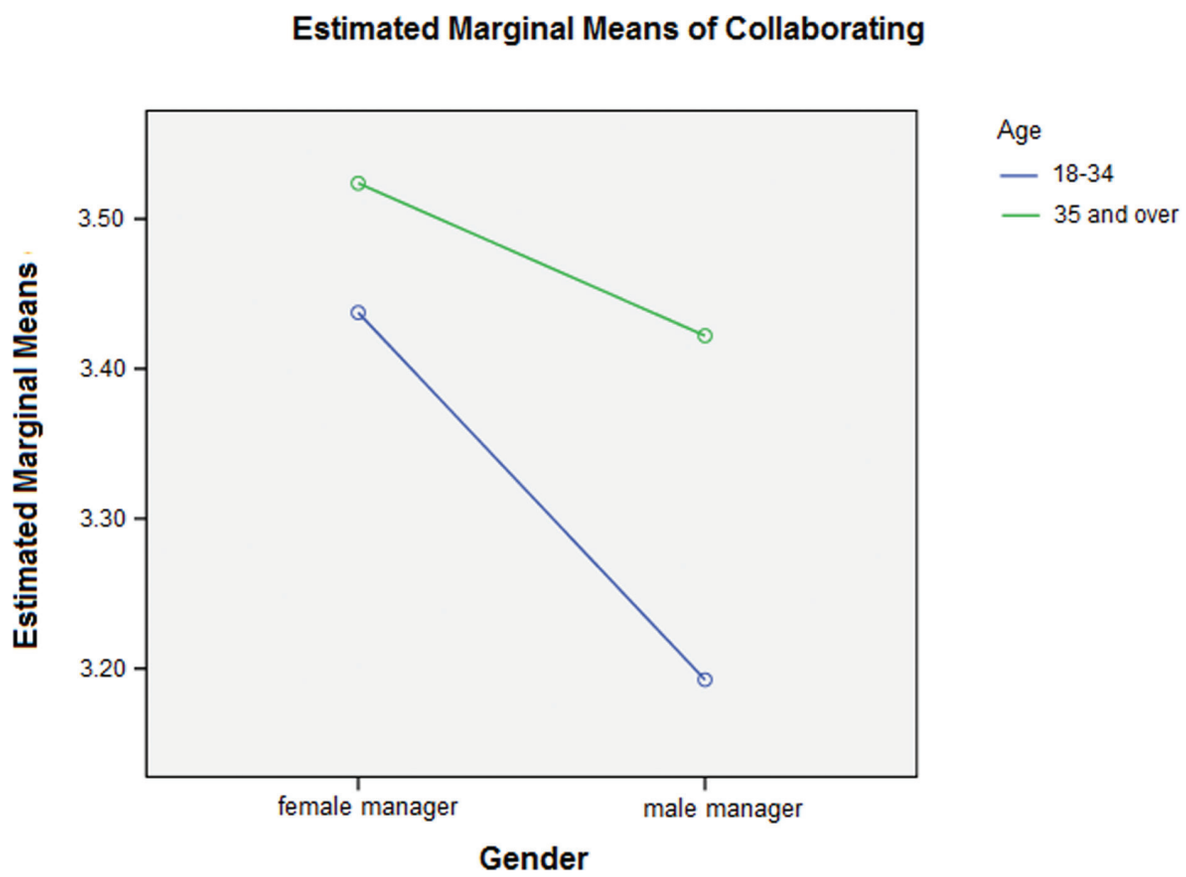

Figure 1. Multivariate analysis of perception of the strategy collaborating – gender × working area.

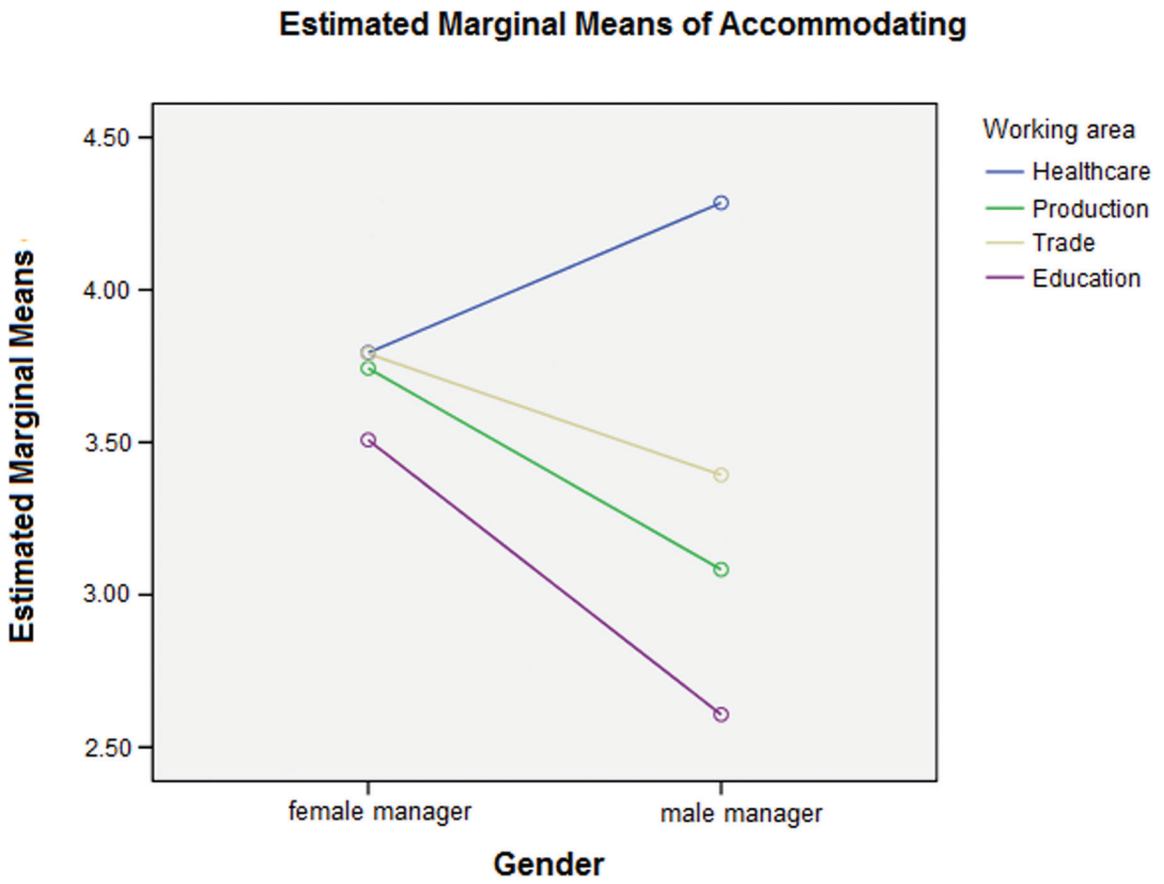

Figure 2. Multivariate analysis of perception of the strategy accommodating – gender × working area.

context, several significant interactions have been identified, in particular among the male and female managers in the field of healthcare and education (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.007), healthcare and production (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.026), trade and production (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.004), as well as trade and education (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.001).

Healthcare female managers are using this way to resolve conflicts more often than the female managers in the areas of trade and production. On the contrary, the male managers in the healthcare sector use competing less than the male managers in production and trade. This is the most effective method of conflict resolution used in the field of education. Even the education managers use it more than the trade and healthcare managers (**Figure 3**).

Significant interactions were recorded also in the context of gender and the size of the organization (F-test 2.253, p = 0.050) in the collaborating strategy (Tukey Post Hoc Test 0.008), and it is recognized that the female managers are more likely to use the cooperative strategy in small businesses, as compared to women in large organizations and, contrarily, men in large organizations cooperate more intensively than the male managers in small businesses (**Figure 4**).

The conflict resolution method of collaborating has also proved to be statistically significant in the studied interactions of gender and the age categories of managers (F-test 2.033, p = 0.048), with this strategy being more used by older as well as younger female managers. It is interesting to note that the younger female managers prefer this strategy similarly to the older male managers (**Figure 5**).

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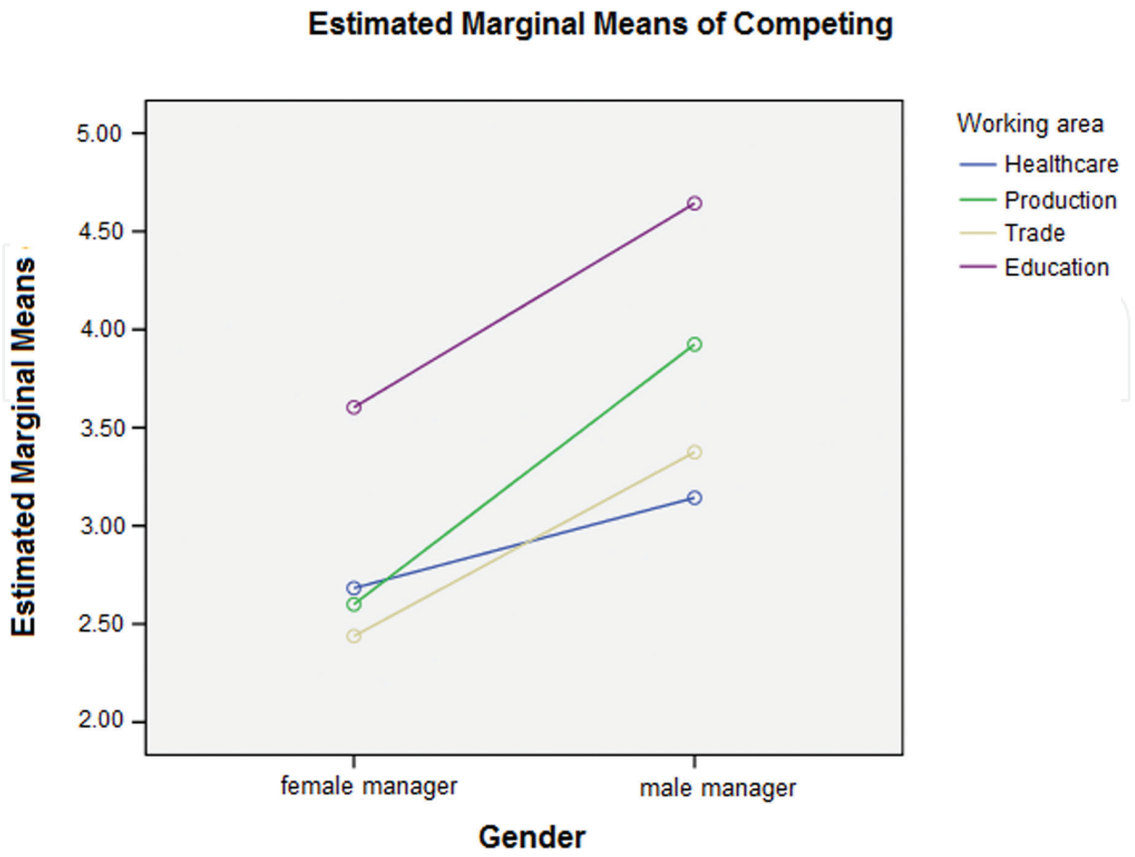

Figure 3. Multivariate analysis of perception of the strategy competing – gender × working area.

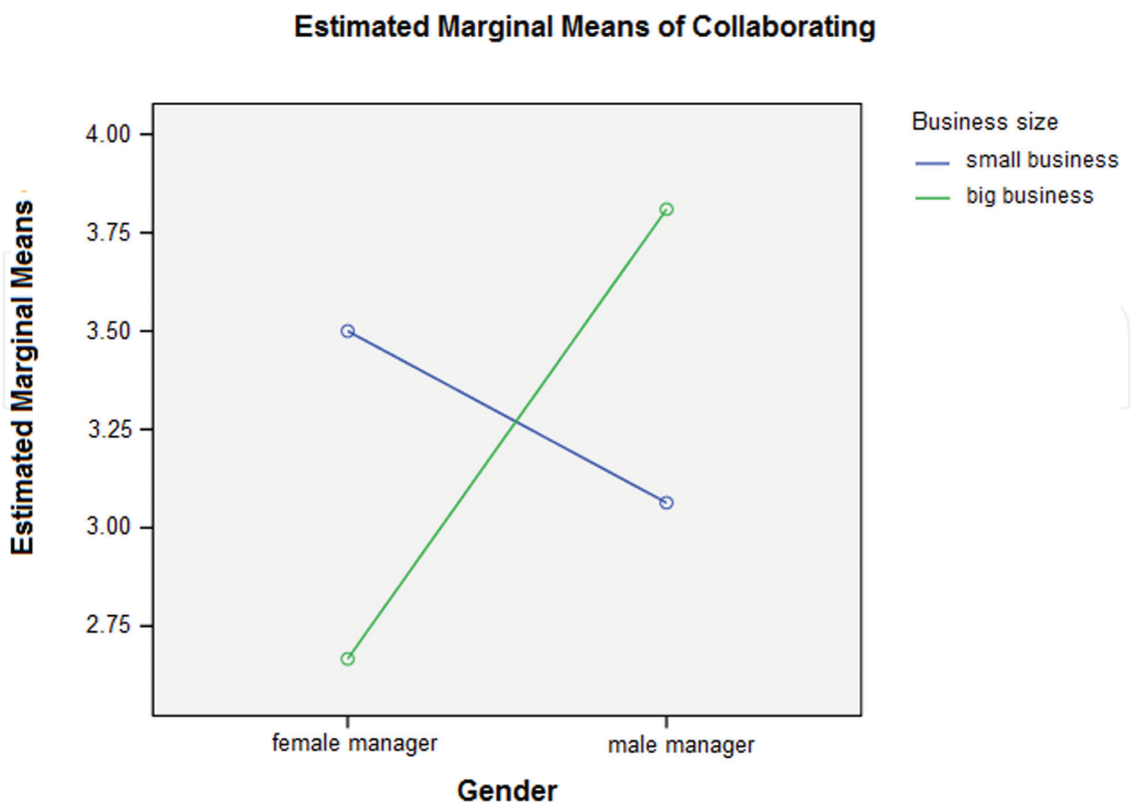

Figure 4. Multivariate analysis of perception of the strategy collaborating – gender × company size.

The presented findings support the aforementioned concept of understanding gender as a social construct, with an emphasis on gender roles, gender identity, and family expectations in the context of conflict resolution by managers, as well as in terms of more general concepts of gender issues.

6. Conclusion

The identified and specified significant differences, as well as interactions, not only contribute to the discussion of the dispositional and situational approaches to exploring the conflict resolution methods, but also to a more general theoretical and methodological discussion of dispositional/situational concepts.

In this context, it is necessary to interpret the already presented findings that men prefer the use of a dominant, competing style of conflict resolution, in contrast to women who rather prefer to avoid the conflict [13], and that women often seek to mitigate the conflict by using the compromising strategy. Men use more physical strength to convince others [42]; they express their dominance and competitiveness. Women try to compromise [43], speaking less in mixed discussion groups. Men take the initiative, direct the conversation, and do not like to be interrupted. On the contrary, women tend to support the discussion, ask questions, and show interest [38].

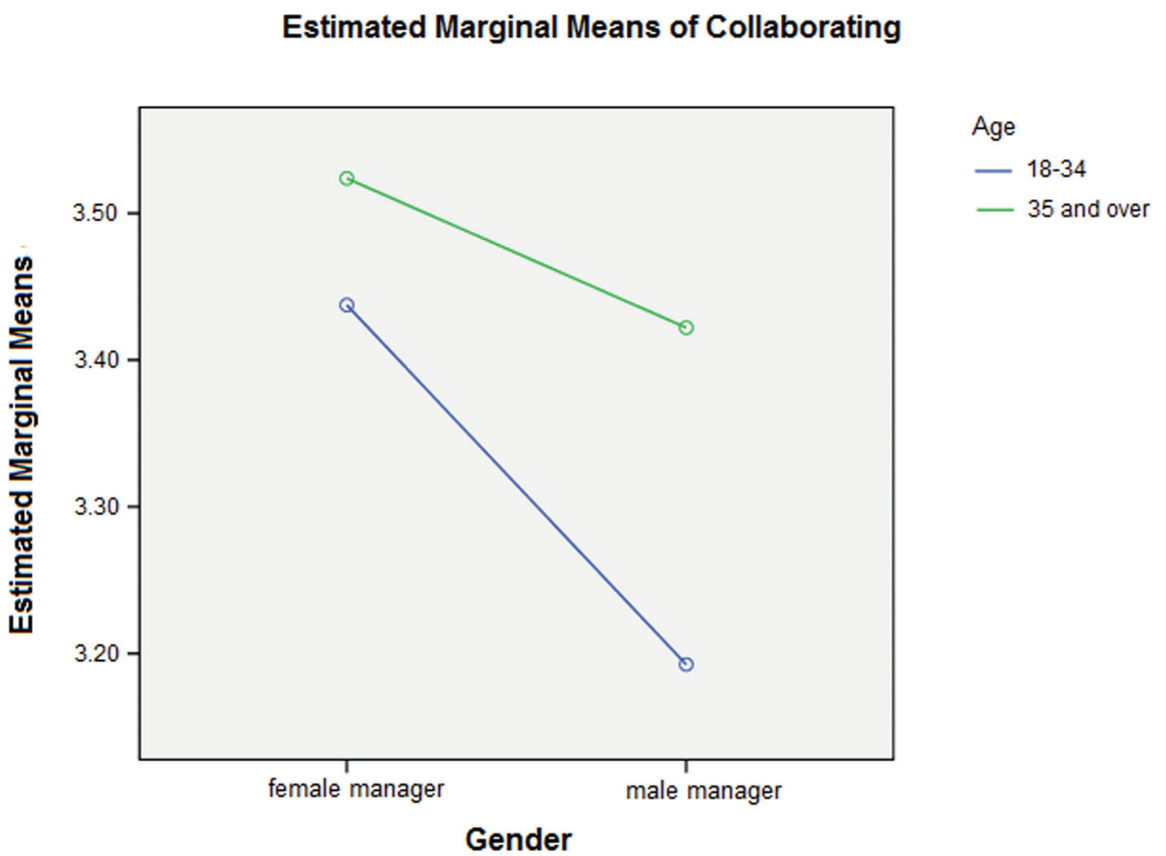

Figure 5. Multivariate analysis of perception of the strategy collaborating – gender × age.

It is clear from the above-mentioned research results that the level of generalization of certain claims in both dispositional and situational terms, as well as in the context of gender issues, is a question that can be discussed. In this sense, it should be noted that the mosaic of knowledge areas that are related to conflict definition issues as well as ways of solving them is much richer. In the context of research on conflicts in managerial work, which is a part of the study of organizational conflict, it is possible to consider the orientation of research projects in the direction of identification of cultural specifics, or the aforementioned discussion on the dispositional and situational concepts of conflict definition and analysis, or the impact of the conflict resolution processes and their outcomes on individuals as well as on the organization as a whole. This is also related to the discussion of the use of the interactive approach in designing the further research, analyses, and interpretation of the results of the study.

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter [3, 4, 5, and others], the positive perception of effectively solved conflicts is characteristic also for the presented research results as well as the other possible directions of the conflict investigation. In this respect, it is important for the research projects to focus on the issue of identifying factors that are related to effective conflict resolution, or to the escalation of conflicts and their negative impact on individuals as well as on the organization.

In this sense, it is possible to direct the focus of further research to the process of building mutual trust between the conflicting parties. Examining the trust attribute, which must be perceived by the other side of the conflict as a pivotal step and not as a weakness, is one of the important research orientations in this area. In the context of managerial work, the selection of people for managerial positions, the preparation and training of managers, the specification of the factors related to effective conflict resolution is essential. These factors can be considered as important predictors of successful managerial work. Their research is, however, linked to the difficulties that are caused by the research sample itself—the managers, their job exhaustion, time stress, availability, but also unwillingness to reveal their conflict resolution procedures. The snowball sampling method, which we have used several times in the research, is one of the solutions to these difficulties within this context. At the same time, it is important for managers themselves to see the benefits of these research results for their work.

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