

Managers' conflict management styles and employee attitudinal outcomes: The mediating role of trust

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Abstract This study examines the mediating effects of trust on the relationships between manager's conflict management styles (CMS) and employee attitudinal outcomes, as well as identifies the potential deviations in the areas of CMS and trust from the west in Chinese culture. One hundred sixty-nine employees in Guangzhou of China participated. As predicted, Integrating CMS of managers is found significantly correlated to trust and subordinates' job satisfaction and turnover intention. Trust fully mediates the link between Integrating CMS and subordinates attitudinal outcomes. Results also support the expectations concerning the deviations on the impacts of the uncooperative CMS on subordinates under Chinese culture. Discussion and implications are presented.

Keywords Conflict management styles · Trust · Turnover intention · Job satisfaction · Chinese culture

Conflict is part of organizational life. Managers spend up to 20% of their time in the workplace dealing with conflict or its aftermath (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1998; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Conflict is considered to be a "natural process between people and, as such, is an inevitable aspect of a manager's job" (Markowich

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& Farber, 1987: 140). Researchers claim that conflict between managers and workers is particularly important, because, if managed poorly, it can undermine an organization's labor relations and productivity (Tjosvold & Chia, 1988). In fact, conflict management styles (CMS) have been the focus of considerable research for decades. Studies have found that cooperative styles of conflict handling, in which more concern is shown for others, generally yield beneficial outcomes in the workplace, whereas uncooperative styles generally produce negative outcomes (e.g., Meyer, 2004; Ohbuchi & Kitanaka, 1991; Rahim & Buntzman, 1989; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996). Other studies show that CMS of managers is related to various outcomes of subordinates, such as job satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, supervisor-subordinate relationships, long-term cooperation, and attitudinal and behavioral compliance (Alexander, 1995; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Follett, 1940; Rahim, 1986; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996). While the importance of managers' CMS has been demonstrated repeatedly, little is known about the mechanism through which the CMS of superiors influence the work attitudes of subordinates.

In the current study, we posit that the effective CMS of managers may facilitate the social exchange processes with their subordinates, and thus induce more positive work attitudes among those subordinates. Social exchange is based on the norm of reciprocity, which specifies that one would help and not hurt those who have helped oneself (Gouldner, 1960). Research has suggested that when managers adopt a conflict management style that focuses on satisfying the needs of both parties in conflict situations, supervisors and subordinates tend to build relationships based on trust and respect (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). It seems that when employees perceive they are being valued and cared by the supervisor in the conflict situations, trusting relationships will be developed. Employees will reciprocate by displaying positive work attitudes including higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention.

On the other hand, trust in leaders is found to be related to various leadership behaviors or managerial styles including transformational leadership, interactional justice and participative decision-making (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002) which share common characteristics such as open communication, expression of care and respect towards subordinates. These characteristics match well with cooperative CMS (integrating, obliging and compromising) which focuses on high concern and respect for others. It is likely that managers using cooperative conflict management styles enhance social exchange process and earn trust from subordinates which lead to positive outcomes. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of trust in the relationship between the conflict management styles of superiors and the work attitudes (job satisfaction and turnover intention) of subordinates.

A number of studies have discussed the unique leadership style in Chinese culture. The cultural tradition of Confucianism, under which the father-son relationship is considered paramount and supersedes all other social relations, legitimizes the superior's absolute power and authority over his inferiors (Farh & Cheng, 2000). Consequently, a leader has the right to maintain strong authority over subordinates, and the subordinates are obligated to obey. Prior studies have suggested that the communist tradition in China has given rise to a more command-based leadership behavior that emphasizes the loyalty and discipline of followers (Schermerhorn & Nyaw, 1990; Scott, Bishop, & Chen, 2003; Walder, 1986). In addition, compared

with Western countries, China has a larger power distance culture that predisposes people to take the inequality between the powerful and the powerless for granted (Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). Based on these findings, we suspect that while Western conflict management literature suggests that people tend to react more positively to cooperative CMS and more negatively to uncooperative CMS, Chinese employees are more tolerant of uncooperative CMS and thus less likely to have discussions or direct confrontations with their superiors in conflict situations. As a result, the link between the uncooperative CMS of managers and negative subordinate attitudinal outcomes may not be supported. Therefore, the second purpose of this study is to provide insight into the potential deviations in the areas of CMS and trust between supervisor and subordinate under the influence of Chinese culture.

This study contributes to the CMS literature by identifying trust as the mediator to enhance the understanding of the mechanism by which the CMS of leaders affects the attitudinal outcomes of their subordinates. It also contributes to the literature of trust by identifying CMS as a significant antecedent of trust which has been missing from the studies of trust in the past four decades. Finally, this study attempts to enhance our insight and theoretical understanding of the issues of CMS and trust in a Chinese context, which involves a culture markedly different from that of the West.

In the following sections, we first discuss the CMS literature and its effects. Next, we discuss how Chinese culture may influence the CMS of Chinese managers and the responses of employees, and try to explain their potential deviations from those in the West. Finally, we link the concept of trust to CMS and discuss the mediating role of trust in the relationship between a manager's CMS and a subordinate's job outcomes.

Conflict management styles

Rahim (2001) defines conflict as an interactive process that manifests itself in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individuals, groups, or organizations). Blake and Mouton (1964) were the first researchers to propose a grid for classifying the modes of handling interpersonal conflicts into five types based on two dimensions: concern for production and concern for people. Rahim (1983) used a similar conceptualization to create five conflict management styles based on two dimensions—concern for self and concern for others which portray the motivational orientation of a given individual during conflict. Recently, a dualistic model of harmony is proposed by Leung, Koch, and Lu (2002) to study conflict management focus on the harmony of the relationship at interpersonal level based on two perspectives—instrumental harmony and value harmony. Since this study investigates the conflict management styles of supervisors at an individual level, Rahim's model is used as the basic framework here.

In Rahim's model, the first dimension—concern for self, describes the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns. The second dimension—concern for others, describes the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy the concerns of others (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). The combination of the

two dimensions yields five conflict management styles: integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding. Briefly, “Integrating” is a high concern for self and others with a win-win outcome. “Obliging” is a low concern for self and a high concern for others with a lose-win outcome. “Compromising” is intermediate in concern for self and others with a no win-no lose outcome. “Dominating” is a high concern for self and a low concern for others with a win-lose outcome. Finally, “Avoiding” is low concern for the self and others with a lose-lose outcome (Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Among the five conflict management styles, the ones in which a moderate to high level of concern for the other party is shown, namely integrating, obliging and comprising, are considered as “cooperative conflict management styles”; while the ones in which little concern is shown for the other party, namely avoiding and dominating, are considered as “uncooperative conflict management styles” (Rahim, Magner, & Shapiro, 2000; Song, Xie, & Dyer, 2000). Previous research has widely supported the view that cooperative styles of conflict handling generally yield beneficial outcomes in the workplace (Meyer, 2004; Rahim & Buntzman, 1989; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996), whereas uncooperative styles generally produce negative outcomes (Ohbuchi & Kitanaka, 1991; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996). For example, there is substantial conjecture that the CMS of a leader is directly related to the level of job satisfaction of his or her subordinates (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). Alexander (1995) found that there are significant positive relationships between principals’ use of the collaborating style and teachers’ satisfaction with their work, their supervision, and their jobs in general. A positive relationship was also found between principals’ use of the compromising style and teachers’ satisfaction with their supervisors. Further, Rahim and Buntzman (1989) reported that subordinates’ perceptions of their superiors’ integrating style is positively correlated with attitudinal and behavioral compliance and satisfaction with their supervisor, whereas obliging style is positively correlated with attitudinal compliance. It has also been posited that when organizational parties are interdependent, such as in superior–subordinate relationship, the use of the collaborating conflict management style will lead to longer term cooperation (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996). Moreover, studies in team further support that cooperative conflict management leads to distributive, procedural and interactive justice; organizational innovation and team effectiveness (Chen, Liu, & Tjosvold, 2005; Chen & Tjosvold, 2002).

While some people, especially Chinese, believe that conflicts affect the harmony of interpersonal relationships and try to avoid them (e.g., Dyer & Song, 1997; Friedman, Chi, & Liu, 2006), studies suggest that conflict has both negative and positive consequences (Deutsch, 1973; Rahim, 1986). Today, conflict researchers even view conflict as a potentially useful occurrence in an organization, because, if handled appropriately, it can enhance creativity and innovation, improve the quality of decision making, and provide for mutual understanding (De Dreu, 1997; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999). According to Lewicki and Wiethoff (2000), the rise of conflict can test relationships and provide an opportunity for the parties that are involved to understand whether they are valued and trusted.

As previous literature has found that cooperative CMS generally produces positive job outcomes, we believe that a cooperative CMS (integrating, obliging, and

compromising), which focuses on satisfying the concerns of others, will lead to a positive job attitude among subordinates, including high job satisfaction and low turnover intention. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1 The cooperative CMS of managers (integrating, obliging, and compromising) is positively related to the job satisfaction of subordinates and negatively related to the turnover intention of subordinates.

Potential deviations of conflict management styles in the Chinese context

On the other hand, studies have found that uncooperative CMS (dominating and avoiding), which ignores the needs of others, is related to negative job outcomes. For example, dominating CMS is found to be negatively related to the perceptions of manager effectiveness among subordinates (Ohbuchi & Kitanaka, 1991). In addition, Meyer (2004) reported that when a manager increases the use of dominating CMS, the rate of accidents, absenteeism and overtime increase. While Western conflict management literature suggests that people tend to react more positively to cooperative CMS and more negatively to uncooperative CMS, the link between the uncooperative CMS of managers and negative subordinate attitudinal outcomes may not be supported in Chinese context.

To understand Chinese culture, one must understand the ideology of Confucianism, which has been predominant in China for more than 2,000 years. Confucianism supports authoritarian system which emphasis on the values of respecting one's parents and elders. Confucius's five cardinal relations (Wu Lun)—between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend—prescribe precise vertical relations between superiors and subordinates. As a result, a leader has the right to maintain strong authority over subordinates, and the subordinates are obligated to obey. Although the virtues of submission, humility, tolerance, and the hierarchy of subordinates are promoted, Confucian ideologies predispose Chinese leaders to act as the parents of the group or organization and practice authoritarian control (Bond, 1996; Hui & Tan, 1996). Research on indigenous Chinese leadership behavior shows that a paternalistic leadership style that focuses on authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership is prevalent in Chinese societies (Cheng, Chou, & Farh, 2000; Farh & Cheng, 2000). Interestingly, although most studies have found that authoritarianism has a negative effect on the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of subordinates (Cheng, Shieh, & Chou, 2002; Farh, Cheng, Chou, & Chu, 2004), a number of studies have found that authoritarianism has positive effects on employee loyalty to supervisors, commitment to organization, subordinate identification, compliance, and gratitude (Cheng, Chou, Huang, Farh, & Peng, 2003; Cheng, Chou, Huang, Wu, & Farh, 2004).

National culture may influence the tendency of employees to trust their management and the propensity of managers to engage in trust-building processes (Hofstede, 1991; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Although people in small power distance cultures tend to value work autonomy and freedom, people in high

power distance cultures, such as China, tend to take hierarchical inequalities for granted (Aycan, Kanungo, & Sinha, 1999; Earley & Stubblebine, 1989; Hofstede, 1991; Mak, 1998; Nasierowski & Mikula, 1998). It is also suggested that they have been exposed to, have become tolerant of, and have even submitted to authoritarian and command-based leadership for decades (Hofstede, 2001; Schermerhorn & Nyaw, 1990; Scott et al., 2003; Walder, 1986). Eylon and Au (1999) reported that open communication and employee participation did not lead to increased job satisfaction and job performance for people in high power distance cultures. In addition, a recent study in comparing conflict management between Chinese and Americans found that Chinese subordinates are more likely to use avoiding approach when having problems with the boss (Friedman et al., 2006).

These findings of higher tolerance of inequalities, together with the ideologies of Chinese culture that emphasize authoritarian leadership and unquestioning obedience from subordinates, point to the potential deviations in managerial behavior and employees' responses in China. We argue that in dealing with conflict situations in the workplace in the Chinese context, the uncooperative CMS of leaders (dominating and avoiding), which ignores the work autonomy of subordinates, open communication, and participative decision making, may not necessarily lead to negative consequences, such as low trust in leadership, low job satisfaction, or high turnover intention. Although studies conducted in the West have consistently found a negative relationship between the uncooperative CMS (dominating and avoiding) of managers and the job outcomes of their subordinates, we argue that this negative relationship may not be supported in the Chinese context.

Mediating role of trust on conflict management styles (CMS)

Trust is defined as “a psychological state consisting of the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998: 395). Many studies of trust are based on social exchange theory, which refers to “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and, typically, do in fact bring from others” (Blau, 1964: 277). Social exchange is based on the norm of reciprocity, which specifies that one should help and not hurt those who have helped oneself (Gouldner, 1960). Dirks and Ferrin (2002) refer to the principles of social exchange to explain the willingness of employees to reciprocate the care and consideration that their leaders express toward them in their relationships. This relationship goes beyond the economic contract in the way that the parties operate on the basis of trust, goodwill, and the perception of mutual obligation (Blau, 1964). This kind of exchange denotes a high-quality relationship, and the issues of care and consideration are most essential (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

Researchers suggest that when the degree of trust is high, individuals are generally more likely to engage in social exchange and co-operative interaction (Gambetta, 1988; Klimoski & Karol, 1976; Kramer & Tyler, 1996). Dirks and Ferrin (2002) present the first systematic review of empirical evidence for the antecedents and consequences of trust. In their framework for trust in leadership that was proposed in the meta-analysis, the consequences of trust include organizational

citizenship behavior (OCB), job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit, goal commitment, belief in information, satisfaction with leader, and leader–member exchange. This leads to the conclusion that trust in a supervisor is important for the positive job outcomes of subordinates.

Trust in leaders is significantly related to various forms of leadership behavior or managerial styles, such as transformational leadership, interactional justice, and participative decision-making (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Transformational leadership is found to have the strongest relationship ($r=0.72$) among all of the antecedents in the framework of trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). A theoretical model of transformational leadership suggests four key dimensions, namely charisma, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). In the dimension of individualized consideration, leaders express concern for followers and take account of their individual needs. It is suggested that such forms of leadership behavior, which demonstrate individualized concern and respect, gain the trust of followers and result in desirable outcomes (Jung & Avolio, 2000; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996). Interactional justice is found to be the third strongest antecedent in the trust framework ($r=0.65$). It is argued that interactional justice involves the degree of respect with which a leader treats his/her followers, and thus sends a strong signal about the nature of the relationship by which subordinates would make inferences about their degree of trust towards the manager (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Participative decision-making, another major antecedent of trust in the meta-analysis framework, sends a message about the leader's confidence in, and concern and respect for, subordinates, which affects subordinate's perceptions of elements of a leader's character, such as fairness (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Studies of interpersonal trust have pointed to the importance of communication between trustors (Mayer et al., 1995; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). In terms of the supervisor–subordinate relationship, researchers have contended that open communication between employees and management is a crucial factor in fostering the trust of employees in management (Gilbert & Tang, 1998; Mishra & Morrissey, 1990). Therefore, participative decision-making, which shows care and support and requires open communication between manager and subordinate, becomes a major antecedent of trust.

In summary, we can conclude that managerial behavior that shows care and respect for subordinates, as well as open communication, are important factors in fostering trust in the relationship, which are found in transformational leadership, interactional justice and participative decision-making. Nevertheless, these same characteristics match perfectly well with another important leader's behavior—cooperative CMS. Managers who use cooperative CMS show a high level of concern and respect for others. To understand and fulfill the needs of others, open communication is also necessary. Therefore, it seems that cooperative CMS shares the characteristics with transformational leadership, interactional justice, and participative decision-making, which are major antecedents of trust in the framework of the meta-analysis.

Based on the above discussion, we argue that employees may observe how they are treated by a manager in conflict situations in the workplace to make inferences about their degree of trust towards the manager as part of the social exchange process, which, in turn, influences their work attitudes and behavior. Based on social exchange theory, when employees perceive that the cooperative CMS of a manager

(integrating, obliging, and compromising) shows that they are being valued and cared for, their trusting relationship will be enhanced. With this trusting relationship, employees will reciprocate by displaying positive work attitudes, including higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. In fact, a study of self-directed work teams has provided evidence that trust in supervisor mediates the relationship between a leader's individualized support behavior and an employee's satisfaction with work (Butler, Cantrell, & Flick, 1999).

In this study, employee job attitudinal outcomes, including job satisfaction and turnover intention, are chosen as dependant variables. These two job outcomes were found to demonstrate the strongest relationships with trust in leadership in the meta-analysis review (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Number of studies has established an empirical relationship between trust and job satisfaction (Brashear, Boles, Bellenger, & Brooks, 2003; Driscoll, 1978; Lagace, 1991; Rich, 1997) as well as employee turnover intention (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Costigan, Ilter, & Berman, 1998; H. Tan & C. S. Tan, 2000). Recent research has further supported that increased trust in supervisors is negatively related to employee turnover intention. (e.g., Brashear et al., 2003; Connell, Ferres, & Travaglione, 2003; Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2006).

Based on the above discussion, we propose that:

Hypothesis 2a Trust mediates the positive relationship between the cooperative CMS of a manager and subordinate job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b Trust mediates the negative relationship between the cooperative CMS of a manager and subordinate turnover intention.

Materials and methods

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of all non-managerial employees of a direct marketing company located in Guangzhou, China. The company was set up in 1993 with around 170 employees. Of the 148 questionnaires distributed, 126 employees responded, yielding a response rate of 85.14%. Five of the returned questionnaires were excluded from the analysis because of missing pages. The final response rate for usable questionnaires was 81.76%. Of the total 121 subjects, 76% were female. The age of respondents ranged from 20 to 49 years. A significant percentage of respondents (63%) were in the 20- to 30-year-old age group. Tenure in the organization ranged from 3 months to 11 years, with a mean of 4.5 years ($SD=3.2$ years). In terms of education, 51.7% had completed high school, 35.8% had a post-secondary diploma, and 12.5% had a bachelor's degree.

Procedure

Survey was administered at the company site during office hours. Each subject was assured of the confidentiality of his or her anonymous responses. The researcher

collected the questionnaires immediately after completion. Questionnaire was administered in both English and Chinese. It was originally written in English, then translated into Chinese, and was validated by translation-back-translation to ensure that both versions were equivalent.

Measures

Conflict Management Styles The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) Form B (Rahim, 1983) was used in this study. The ROCI-II, which measures the five styles of managing interpersonal conflict, consists of 28 items. The items were modified to measure subordinates' perception of their immediate supervisors' styles of handling disagreements with them. Employees were instructed to indicate the extent to which they agreed that each item described the way in which their immediate supervisor handled interpersonal conflicts with them on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Trust in Supervisor McAllister's (1995) five items that measure affect-based trust and six items that measure cognition-based trust were used to assess the subordinate's level of trust in his or her supervisor. "This individual" and "This person" were replaced with "My supervisor." Responses to these 11 items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Job Satisfaction The three-item job satisfaction scale was based on a measure developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983). It was used to assess overall job satisfaction. The responses were on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Turnover Intention The turnover intention variable was operationalized as a three-item scale adapted from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Results

First, to tackle the common method problem that resulted from all of the measures being self-reported, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to examine the conceptual framework of the five CMS of managers, trust, job satisfaction, and turnover intention as perceived by subordinates, using the item parceling method that is recommended by Bagozzi and Edwards (1998). The constructs were randomly modeled by two and three parcels, respectively. We performed a confirmatory analysis using AMOS 5.0 to test whether the eight-dimensional model fit our data. The results show good support for the hypothesized model. Each item loaded significantly with its intended factor (Figure 1).

With the specified items loading on their respective dimension, the eight-factor structure yielded a good fit (CFI=0.94, TLI=0.91, GFI=0.86, RMSEA=0.08). CFI

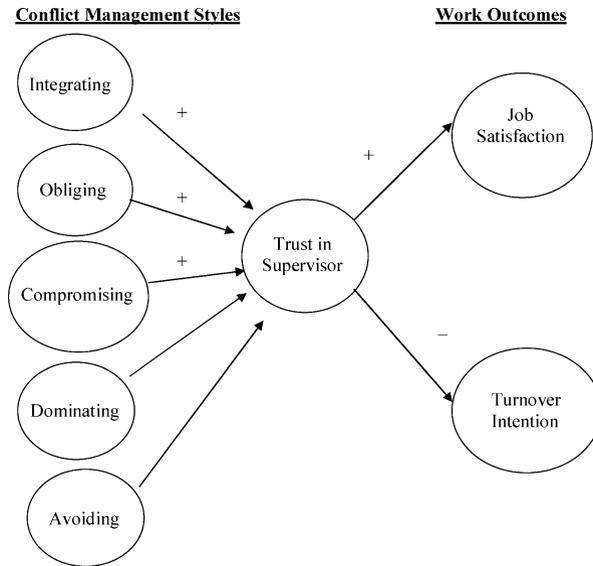


Figure 1 Conceptual model

is a more stable indicator of model fit for small samples, and values for CFI that exceed 0.90 indicate a good fit of the data. Therefore, the results suggested that the eight-factor model fit the data fairly well. We tested a one-factor model to compare with the eight-factor model. The results showed that the one-factor model yielded a poorer fit (CFI=0.56, TLI=0.50, GFI=0.58, RMSEA=0.19).

On the other hand, we performed confirmatory factor analyses for the 5 factor-model, 2 factor model and 1 factor model using AMOS 5.0 to test if the five conflict management styles are in fact fit into the two factor model of cooperative CMS and uncooperative CMS. Results show good support for the 2-factor model factor (CFI=0.974, TLI=0.94, GFI=0.98, RMSEA=0.08) as well as the 5 factor-model (CFI=0.971, TLI=0.947, GFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.07). This suggested that the five conflict management styles do loaded on the two-latent variables of cooperative CMS and uncooperative CMS. The results of the one-factor model yielded poor fit (CFI=0.65, TLI=0.56, GFI=0.74, RMSEA=0.20).

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and inter-correlations of all the variables. The alphas in this study ranged from 0.63 to 0.92. Tables 2 and 3 present the multiple regression analyses of cooperative CMS and uncooperative CMS on subordinates' job satisfaction and turnover intention. Results show that only Integrating CMS, not Obliging nor Compromising, has significant relationships on subordinate job satisfaction and turnover intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 1, which states that the cooperative CMS of managers is positively related to the job satisfaction of their subordinates and negatively related to the turnover intention of those subordinates, is only partially supported. No relationship is found between uncooperative CMS (both Avoiding and Dominating) and subordinates' attitudinal outcomes.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Integrating	121	3.53	0.79	(0.92)									
2. Obliging	121	2.91	0.59	0.63**	(0.82)								
3. Compromising	121	3.12	0.57	0.64**	0.57**	(0.63)							
4. Dominating	121	3.26	0.68	-0.30**	-0.07	-0.03	(0.75)						
5. Avoiding	121	3.17	0.58	0.05	0.15	0.16	0.20*	(0.72)					
6. Trust in supervisor	121	3.38	0.62	0.79**	0.59**	0.58**	-0.14	0.12	(0.90)				
7. Job Satisfaction	121	3.72	0.66	0.47**	0.24**	0.34**	-0.18*	0.10	0.55**	(0.80)			
8. Turnover Intention	121	2.29	0.83	-0.36**	-0.32**	-0.21*	0.21*	-0.02	-0.42**	-0.58**	(0.09)		
9. Education	120	2.61	0.70	0.18*	0.26**	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.31**	0.07	0.00	(N/A)	
10. Organization Tenure	113	4.48	3.23	-0.11	-0.03	-0.11	0.16	0.14	-0.02	-0.11	0.11	-0.15	(N/A)

Cronbach's alpha values are provided along the diagonal in parentheses; N/A not applicable.

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Table 2 Multiple regression analysis of cooperative CMS.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β
Controls:				
Educational level	0.05	0.04	-0.14	0.18
Tenure	-0.02	0.03	-0.13	0.03
Cooperative CMS				
Integrating			0.40**	-0.32*
Obliging			-0.13	-0.33
Compromising			-0.11	0.18
Overall R^2	0.02	0.01	0.23	0.17
ΔR^2			0.21	0.16
F	0.82	0.72	6.37**	4.22**

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Regarding the relationship between trust and CMS, significant relationships are found between trust and all three of the cooperative CMS ($r=0.79$, $r=0.59$, $r=0.58$, respectively), but not in any of the uncooperative CMS. Since uncooperative CMS is not related to subordinate job satisfaction and turnover intention in the result of multiple regression analyses, the argument concerning potential deviations of CMS in the relationship between managerial uncooperative CMS and subordinates' trust and attitudinal outcomes in the Chinese context is fully supported.

To test the mediating effects of trust, the three-step process described by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used to test whether trust in supervisor is a mediator of the relationships between the cooperative CMS of managers and subordinates' job satisfaction and turnover intention. In step 1, trust in supervisor was regressed on the control variables of education and organization tenure and on the independent variables (integrating CMS, obliging CMS, and compromising CMS). In step 2, the outcomes (job satisfaction and turnover intention) were separately regressed on the control variables and the three cooperative CMS. In step 3, the outcomes were

Table 3 Multiple regression analysis of uncooperative CMS.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β
Controls:				
Educational level	0.46	0.04	0.05	0.04
Tenure	-0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.03
Uncooperative CMS				
Avoiding			-0.14	-0.07
Dominating			-0.17	0.21
Overall R^2	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.04
ΔR^2			0.03	0.03
F	0.82	0.72	1.42	1.10

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

separately regressed on the controls, the three CMS, and trust in supervisor. If the coefficient of CMS becomes insignificant in Model 3, trust remains significant, then trust in supervisor can be considered as a complete mediator. If the coefficient of CMS remains significant but reduced, then there is evidence for partial mediation.

Table 4 presents the mediating regression models for testing trust as a mediator of the relationship between cooperative CMS and job satisfaction and turnover intention. Model 1 shows that integrating CMS was positively related to trust in supervisor ($\beta=0.50$, $p<0.01$). Model 2 shows that integrating CMS was positively related to job satisfaction ($\beta=0.40$, $p<0.01$) and negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta=-0.32$, $p<0.05$). When we enter the mediator trust in Model 3, integrating CMS becomes insignificant on both job satisfaction and turnover intention, whereas the beta of trust remains significant ($\beta=0.62$ and -0.63 , $p<0.05$, respectively; $\Delta R^2=0.11$ and 0.02 , respectively). These findings suggest that trust in supervisor fully mediates the positive relationship between integrating CMS and subordinate job satisfaction and the negative relationship between integrating CMS and subordinate turnover intention. However, neither obliging nor compromising CMS is related to trust in supervisor. Therefore, Hypotheses 2a and 2b, which propose that trust in supervisors mediates the relationships between cooperative CMS and the attitudinal outcomes of subordinates in job satisfaction and turnover intention, are only partially supported.

Table 5 presents the mediating regression models for testing trust as a mediator in the relationships between uncooperative CMS and subordinates' job satisfaction and turnover intention for comparison. As predicted, no mediating effect is found in trust on the relationship between uncooperative CMS and subordinate attitudinal outcomes (job satisfaction and turnover intention).

Table 4 Mediating regression analysis of cooperative CMS.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2		Model 3	
	Trust from subordinates β	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β
Controls:					
Educational level	0.16**	-0.01	0.18	-0.11	0.28*
Tenure	0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.02	0.04
Main effect:					
Integrating	0.50**	0.40**	-0.32*	0.09	-0.00
Obliging	0.08	-0.13	-0.33	-0.18	-0.28
Compromising	0.15	0.11	0.18	-0.01	0.28
Mediating effect:					
Trust from subordinates				0.62**	-0.63**
Overall R^2	0.67	0.23	0.17	0.34	0.24
ΔR^2				0.11	0.07
F	43.87**	6.37**	4.22*	9.13**	5.49**

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Table 5 Mediating regression analysis of uncooperative CMS.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2		Model 3	
	Trust from subordinates β	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β	Job satisfaction β	Turnover intention β
Controls:					
Educational level	0.29**	0.04	0.04	-0.13	0.22
Tenure	0.07	-0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.03
Main effect:					
Avoiding	0.12	0.14	-0.07	0.07	0.00
Dominating	-0.14	-0.17	0.21	-0.09	-0.13
Mediating effect:					
Trust from subordinates				0.61**	-0.60**
Overall R^2	0.13	0.05	0.04	0.34	0.22
ΔR^2				0.29	0.18
F	4.15**	1.42	1.10	10.78**	5.92**

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Discussion

This paper attempts to achieve two goals: to investigate the role of trust in the relationships between the CMS of manager and subordinate attitudinal outcomes; and to identify the potential deviations in the areas of CMS and trust in Chinese culture. Most of the hypotheses developed in this study have been supported.

This study once again confirmed that the use of Integrating CMS by manager leads to positive subordinate outcomes. Previous studies have also suggested that the use of an integrating style helps to produce positive outcomes in the workplace. For example, the field studies of Rahim and Buntzman (1989) have shown that supervisors who use an integrating style achieve more behavioral compliance, which reduces their conflict levels. Similarly, Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1996) found significant positive relationships between a manager's collaborative style and the perceived interpersonal and performance rewards of subordinates. The results of this study further illustrate the mediating role of trust in the relationships between integrating CMS and subordinate positive attitudinal outcomes. This contributes to the knowledge concerning the mechanism through which the conflict management style of superiors influence the work attitudes of their subordinates. It also supports our hypothesis that managers' effective conflict management style facilitates the social exchange process with their subordinate, and thus induces subordinate's positive work attitudes. For managers, this finding highlights the importance of trust-building in the supervisor-subordinate relationship. In addition, the results of this study also contribute to the trust literature by identifying managerial CMS as a significant antecedent of trust, which has been missing from the studies of trust in the past four decades.

In contrast to the results of Western studies (e.g., Ohbuchi & Kitanaka, 1991; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996), the link between

uncooperative CMS and the negative job outcomes of subordinates is not confirmed in this study. This result supports our arguments concerning the potential deviations in CMS and trust in Chinese culture. Neither dominating nor avoiding CMS is found to be related to trust towards supervisor, and the uncooperative CMS of managers does not reduce job satisfaction nor increase turnover intention of subordinates. Compared with Western countries, China has a larger power distance, which predisposes people to take the inequality between the powerful and the powerless for granted (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). With the cultural tradition of Confucianism, which legitimizes the superior's absolute power and authority over inferiors under paternalistic leadership style, Chinese employees have developed a higher tolerance for authoritarian leadership and inequalities and are more willing to show absolute obedience towards superiors (Cheng et al., 2000; Farh & Cheng, 2000). Although the inferior party in a hierarchical relationship should be loyal and obedient, Confucianism also asserts that the superior party should act gently and benevolently towards the inferior. Consequently, a kind of reciprocity of inferiors, which takes the form of genuine gratitude, personal loyalty, or obedience, can be established (Farh, Liang, Chou, & Cheng, 2005). Hui and Tan (1996) maintained that moral superiority is a major criterion for effective Chinese leadership. Indeed, empirical research has consistently shown that benevolence and morality have strong positive effects on the psychological responses of subordinates, such as identification and compliance with, gratitude and loyalty towards, and trust in the leader (Cheng et al., 2002, 2003, 2004; Farh et al., 2004). Therefore, under this kind of paternalistic leadership style in Chinese culture, uncooperative CMS becomes more acceptable and does not affect trust in leadership. This result also suggests a salient feature of trust in the supervisor–subordinate relationship under the paternalistic leadership style of Chinese culture. Trust in leadership, in this case, may not be based on the relationship with the leader (relationship-based) nor on the leader's character (character-based), but simply on the assumption of a manager's good intentions towards subordinates in the paternalistic leadership style. When a manager takes the role of parent in the organization, the employees believe he or she will take care of them and act for their benefit, despite an authoritarian leadership style or an uncooperative CMS.

Implications for practice

An implication for practice is that cooperative CMS, especially an integrating CMS, is desirable to ensure positive attitudinal outcomes for subordinates in the workplace. Therefore, to build a better work environment and to win the trust of employees, managers should show more concern towards their employees when dealing with conflicts in the workplace and should focus on solving the problems in a win-win situation. As the mediating role of trust has been supported in this study, managers should improve their managerial effectiveness by augmenting levels of trust and should work on different ways to build trust with subordinates. Organizations should provide more training opportunities for managers to promote trustworthy behavior in the areas of leadership, human resources, communication, and conflict management.

Limitations and areas for future study

Several limitations of this study that need further attention in the future should be noted. First, because all of the measures used are self-reported, common method variance due to single-source bias is a problem and may have inflated the magnitude of the relationships found. Second, the relatively small sample used for this study may limit the generalizability of the results. Third, this study only focused on the individual level to investigate the relationship between CMS and individual outcomes; future studies should focus on different levels, such as the team level, to investigate the relationships among CMS, trust, and team outcomes. Future research is also needed to examine the influence of national or corporate culture on the proposed relationships, and other mediators, such as trust in the organization or trust in co-workers, should also be explored. Finally, this study suggests a unique kind of trust, which exists under the paternalistic leadership style of Chinese culture and which has not been captured in the dimensions of trust, both affective and cognitive, in the previous trust literature. Future research in this area is necessary to enhance our understanding of trust in leadership.

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