Adult Attachment Styles and Conflict Management Behaviors in Interpersonal Relationships at Work
รูปแบบความผูกพันและพฤติกรรมการจัดการความขัดแย้ง ระหว่างบุคคลในที่ทำงาน

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Abstract

This study examines how attachment styles affect individuals' conflict management behaviors among Thai workers. The respondents were Thai workers working for Thai organizations. A self-administered questionnaire was used in data collection. Totally, 415 usable questionnaires were returned. The one-way MANOVA was employed to examine the hypotheses. Findings revealed that individuals with a secure attachment style demonstrated more integrating and compromising conflict styles than those with insecure attachment styles. Findings also found that Individuals with a preoccupied attachment style demonstrated more obliging conflict management style than those with dismissive attachment style.

Keywords: Attachment Style, Conflict Management Behavior, Thai Workers

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาประเด็นของรูปแบบความผูกพันของกลุ่มคนวัยทำงานและ ผลกระทบต่อการจัดการความขัดแย้งที่เกิดขึ้นในที่ทำงาน โดยใช้แบบสอบถามในการเก็บข้อมูล และใช้การ วิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนพหุคูณแบบทางเดียวในการทดสอบสมมติฐานผลการวิจัยพบว่าผู้ที่มีรูปแบบความ ผูกพันแบบมั่นคงจัดการความขัดแย้งแบบบูรณาการและแบบประนีประนอมมากกว่าผู้ที่มีรูปแบบความผูกพัน แบบไม่มั่นคง ผู้ที่มีรูปแบบความผูกพันแบบกังวลจัดการความขัดแย้งแบบยอมทำตามมากกว่าผู้ที่มีรูปแบบ ความผูกพันแบบทะนงตน

คำสำคัญ: รูปแบบความผูกพัน รูปแบบการจัดการความขัดแย้ง กลุ่มคนทำงาน

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Introduction

Conflict is a normal part of everyday life. In any relationship, some degree of conflict is generally considered inevitable (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001). When two or more parties come in contact with one another to achieve their goals, their relationships may become incompatible (Rahim, 2001). They, therefore, might have relationship problems.

Undoubtedly, conflict is considered one of the major organizational concerns (Rahim, 2001). Because organizations include many groups of people working together, conflicts that occur within groups can influence interpersonal relationships throughout organizations as a whole (Boonsathorn, 2003). The organizational settings, therefore, provide a rich arena for studying conflicts since there are highly dependent situations involving authority, hierarchical power, and groups (Tjosvold, 1998). Baron (1990), for example, noted "organizational conflict is an important topic for both managers and for scientists interested in understanding the nature of organizational behavior and organizational processes" (p. 198); thus, it can be concluded that conflict is a fruitful area of research and occurs in organizations.

In the workplace, conflict and conflict management behaviors affect individual, groups, and organizational effectiveness (Choi, 2013). If organization members can manage or resolve conflicts effectively, the productivity of an organization will be improved and job satisfaction and personal well-being among members of an organization will be increased (Carter & Brynes, 2006). In contrast, when not handled well, unresolved conflicts can have adverse results for organizations and their members (Carter, 2005).

Long-lasting conflict can lead to dysfunctional behaviors, low productivity, and even an organization's demise (Kuhn & Poole, 2000). Hence, managing conflict in a timely manner is important in maintaining a healthy work environment.

Interestingly, personality is one of the factors that influence the styles of handling interpersonal conflict (Rahim, 2001). Attachment concepts developed by Bowlby (1969) can be used to explain adult relationships. Although scholars have supported the link between attachment styles and conflict management behaviors (Bippus& Rollin, 2003; Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Creasey, Kershaw, & Boston, 1999; Pistole, 1989), research on adult attachment styles and conflict management behaviors in interpersonal relationships in the workplace is lacking, especially in the Thai context. Applying attachment theory in an effort to clarify how Thai adults with different attachment orientations cope with conflict in the workplace is an interesting and appropriate area for investigation.

This study is significant for many reasons. First, it will extend attachment concepts from intimacy relationships to work relationships since a number of studies on attachment theory have been applied to explain individual behavior in romantic relationships. Second, this study will provide an interesting link between the constructs of working models (model of self and model of others) proposed in attachment theory and the two dimensions (concern for self and concern for others) of conflict management styles. Finally, the current study will broaden our understanding of attachment styles and conflict management behavior among workers through the study of non-Western contexts.

Research Objective

The present study aims to investigate how attachment styles influence individuals' conflict management behaviors among Thai workers.

Literature Review

This part reviews the literature regarding organizational conflict, attachment styles, and conflict management behaviors.

Organizational Conflict

Conflict has been defined by a large number of scholars. Smith (1966), for example, defined conflict as "a situation in which the conditions, practices, or goals for the different participants are inherently incompatible" (p. 511). Soon after Smith, Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma (1973) considered conflict as "an interactive state in which the behaviors or goals of one actor are to some degree incompatible with the behaviors or goals of some other actor or actors" (p. 232). From their views, an actor could be any kind of social entity such as individuals, groups, and organizations. Rahim (2001) noted that conflict occurs when one social entity engages in an activity that is different from his or her needs or interests. Further, he explained that conflict could relate to incompatible preferences, attitudes, values, skills, and goals among social entities. In other words, conflict can arise when two or more entities have different attitudes, values, beliefs, skills, and goals.

Conflict is a normal part of any organizational setting (Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012; Rahim, 2001) and might occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups (Hotepo, Asokere, Abdual-Azeez, & Ajemunigbohun, 2010; Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012). Carter (2005) noted that "conflict can also arise when individuals or groups are trying to cooperate in attaining a common goal but have differing opinions and beliefs about the best plan of action to pursue" (p. 2).

Organizational conflict can be considered functional or dysfunctional depending on how individuals or groups of people perceive it, handle it, and/or resolve it. Organizational conflict can be healthy (Özkalp, Sungur, & Ayşe Özdemir, 2009); without conflict, an organization will become apathetic, uncreative, and stagnant (Heffron, 1989). Putnam (1997) noted that conflict could be used to enhance communication skills and organizational development, as well as to broaden the viewpoint of organizational life. On the other hand, some researchers have viewed conflict as a destructive force in an organization that can obstruct a team's effectiveness, and decrease productivity and group satisfaction (e.g., Gardner, 1990; Neuhauser, 1988). Excessive conflict in an organization can impede successful communication and strategy implementation (Hall, 1991). Recently, Huan and Yazdanifard (2012) found that workplace conflicts might affect absenteeism and the loyalty of employees. In addition, when organization members are engaging in extreme levels of conflict, its repercussions can destroy long-term professional and interpersonal relationships and teamwork (Vivar, 2006).

In conclusion, organizational conflict can occur between two or more individuals, two or more groups, or an individual and the group. Conflict can be beneficial or destructive to organizations depending on how it is managed.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory has been considered one outstanding theory for describing individual behavior in personal relationships (Paulssen, 2009). The original purpose of attachment theory was to understand how parent-child interaction

influences the development of mental models of self and others, and a child's personality development (Bowlby, 1969). The theory has been used to explain a variety of relationships across individuals' life span, including those among parents and children, friends, romantic partners, and siblings (Guerrero, 2008). Attachment influences individuals from "the cradle to the grave" (Bowlby, 1979). That is, attachment can affect individuals' relationships with others, both romantic and nonromantic, throughout life.

Initially, Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) examined how children react to social situations such as separation from and reunion with their caregivers. Three different attachment styles–secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant–were identified as follows. Children who have secure relationships see their caregivers as reliable sources of comfort and security to regulate and relieve distress when they are upset. Children with anxious/ambivalent relationships, on the other hand, often see their caregivers as inconsistent. This leads to uncertainty and divergent emotional reactions. Finally, children with avoidant relationships do not seek support from their caregivers; they feel indifferent when their caregivers leave and return. It can be concluded that the primary caregiver has influence on a child's early development.

Another principle guiding attachment theory is internal working models (working models of self and others). The internal working models are the models resulting from the relationship at the beginning of individual's life between children and caregivers (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). As adults, people's characteristic style of shaping attachments to others lead them to behave in ways that are likely to reinforce their internal working models of self and others (Guerrero, 1996). The internal working models consist of generalized beliefs and expectations that reflect an internal representation of one's self and others (Guerrero, 1998). The model of self represents the degree to which an individual has a positive or negative image of self while the model of others reflects an individual's perceptions of rewarding or unrewarding relationships (Guerrero, 2008). These models are largely dependent on a person's past experiences (Collins & Read, 1994).

While Ainsworth et al. (1978) proposed three different attachment styles: secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) presented a clearer conceptualization of the relationship between working models and attachment styles by proposing four distinct attachment styles for adults: secures, dismissives, preoccupieds, and fearfuls, as shown in Figure 1. These internal working models and attachment styles play a vital role in individuals' interpersonal relationships with significant others in their adult lives (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Later in 1998, Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) have proposed the terms calling internal working model of self and others regarding Bartholomew's concept as "Anxiety" and "Avoidance," the two dimensions that reflect fundamental working models of self and others. The anxiety attachment dimension reflects the degree to which a person worries that a partner will not respond to him/her in times of need. A person with high anxiety has a poor view of self, and he/she tends to fear rejection in relationships. The avoidance attachment dimension represents the extent to which people are comfortable in close relationship, and the extent

to which they believe they can trust relationship partners. High avoidance indicates discomfort with closeness and the low level of trust in intimacy.

According to these two dimensions (anxiety and avoidance), the secures, who hold positive views of both themselves and others, are low in both anxiety and avoidance. They feel valued by others. These persons desire a balance of autonomy and closeness with their partners.

They are comfortable depending on others and having others depend on them.

Dismissive individuals, who hold positive views of themselves but negative views of others, are low in anxiety but high in avoidance. These persons are highly independent and not interested in developing attachments with others. They distrust others since they have negative view of others. Instead, dismissive individuals prioritize their work, goals, or activities.

	Model of Self (Dependence)	
	Positive (Low)	Negative (High)
Model of Other (Avoidance) Positive (Low)	Secure Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	Preoccupied Preoccupied with relationships
Negative (High)	Dismissive Dismissing of intimacy Counter-dependent	Fearful Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant

Figure 1 Model of Adult Attachment
Source: Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991)

Preoccupied individuals (who are similar to anxious/ambivalent) hold negative views of themselves, but positive views of others. They are high in anxiety but low in avoidance. They are likely to worry about partner's availability and the extent to which they are valued to the partner. In addition, they are dependent on others and view others as supportive. They really care about what others think about them.

Finally, the fearfuls, who hold negative views of both themselves and others, are high in both anxiety and avoidance. These persons have usually been hurt in past relationships. They are, therefore, afraid of getting close to others and fear rejection in intimate relationships. They may prefer not to depend on others (Brennan et al., 1998). Although most of the research on attachment theory has been conducted to explain adult

romantic relationships, some researchers have applied attachment concepts to describe individual behavior in work relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Paulssen, 2009; Thomson & Johnson, 2006).

Adult Attachment Styles and Conflict Management Behaviors

Scholars found that attachment is associated with psychological health, self-image, self-esteem, well being, empathy, core beliefs, academic achievement, and relational development (Bowlby, 1969, 1980; Fass & Tubman, 2002; Kenny & Sirin, 2006; Laible, Carlo, & Roesch, 2004; Wilkinson, 2004). The theory implies that attachment influences the way that individuals handle life's problems and deal with others in their lives. A small number of empirical studies have supported the link between attachment styles and conflict management behaviors (Bippus & Rollin, 2003; Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Creasey et al, 1999).

Conflict management styles proposed by Rahim (1983) can be linked to the study of adult attachment styles (Bippus & Rollin, 2003; Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000). That is, conflict management styles based on the two dimensions of concern

for self and concern for others are similar to the constructs of working models of self and others proposed in attachment theory. Rahim (2001) identified five approaches to managing conflict: integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding, as seen in Figure 2.

First, individuals with an integrating style have high concern for both self and others. These persons usually seek a solution that meets the need of both parties. It is related to the ideas of problem-solving, cooperation, and win-win solutions. This style helps an individual meet the best alternative to manage conflict (Boros, Meslec, Curseu, & Emons, 2010). Rahim, Buntzman, and White (1999) explored the relationships of moral development to the styles of conflict management among graduate students from an American southern university. The results showed that the highest stage of moral development is related to the integrating style. Additionally, Friedman, Tidd, Currall, and Tsai (2000) found that this style could reduce the level of task conflict and relationship conflict. These studies confirmed that the integrating style is an appropriate way to manage conflict; however, it is just one way to handle conflict.
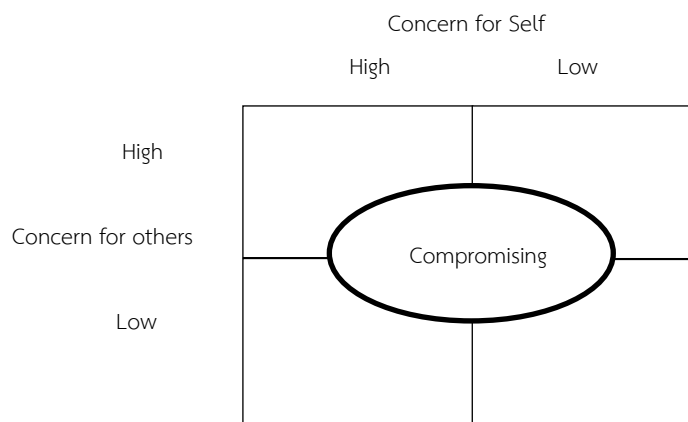

Figure 2 A Two-Dimensional Model of the Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict
Source: Rahim (2001)

Second, the compromising style is mapped at the intersection of the two dimensions of concern for self and concern for others. The compromising style involves the concepts of give-and-take or sharing. This style is most efficiently applied when both parties are equally powerful, and goals of both parties are mutually exclusive. According to Rahim (1992), this style contains sharing by which both parties "give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision" (p. 25). Gross and Guerrero (2000) concurred that this style is mapped at somewhere near the midpoint of the appropriateness and effectiveness dimensions.

Third, individuals with a dominating style combine high concern for self with low concern for others, leading to a win-lose style. These persons place their own needs above others'. This style, also labeled as "competing" (Rahim, 2002), is considered useful for some situations; for instance, when the individual has to deal with a colleague who has a high level of self-confidence or lacks knowledge (Papa & Canary, 1995). Additionally, the dominating style is useful when a quick decision is needed (Rahim, 2002). As Rahim et al. (1999) stated, "dominating may resolve a matter sooner than later, but is more likely to be a one-sided, short-sided, and short-lived solution" (p. 160). However, sometimes it can become counter-productive because it can develop resistance in the opposer, especially when he/she is equally powerful (Rahim & Buntzman, 1989).

Next, individuals with an obliging style have low concern for self and high concern for others, indicating a lose-win scenario. These persons are likely to agree to the demands of others. This style is used for reducing the individual differences and accentuating the similarities between self and others (Yuan, 2010). O'Connor (1993)

proposed, "the obliging style is characterized by a high concern for maintaining the relationship even at the cost of not achieving the goal. This style is useful when a person believes that the issue is much more important to the other party than oneself" (p. 84). It can also be employed when one party is weak (Iqbal & Fatima, 2013).

Finally, individuals with an avoiding style have low concern for both self and others. This style has been identified with a lose-lose situation. The avoiding style does not satisfy either one's own concern or others' concerns, so it is perceived as an ineffective approach to manage conflict. Rahim et al. (1999) suggested that this style "often serves to prolong an unsatisfactory situation, exacting a penalty on at least one of the disputants" (p. 160). Agreeing with Rahim et al., Gross and Guerrero (2000) found that the avoiding style is perceived as ineffective and inappropriate. Friedman et al. (2000) concluded that this style could raise the level of stress and conflict in the workplace. It is also used when an individual has to deal with minor issues or he/she anticipates the unfavorable response from the opponent (Lee, 2008). Although this style may suit some situations, literature does not appreciate frequent use of this style (Rahim, Antonioni, & Psenicka, 2001). Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Individuals with a secure attachment style will demonstrate more integrating and compromising conflict styles than will individuals with insecure attachment styles (dismissive, preoccupied, or fearful),

H2: Individuals with a preoccupied attachment style will demonstrate more obliging conflict style than will individuals with secure, dismissive, or fearful attachment styles, and

H3: Individuals with an avoidant attachment style (dismissive and fearful) will demonstrate more avoiding conflict style than will individuals with secure or preoccupied attachment styles.

Methods

This study employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from employees of Thai organizations. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), Kasikornbank Head Office (KBANK), and Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) were chosen as Thai organizations because they are well-known and well-established organizations in Thailand. SSRU, KBANK, and EGAT are the representative of public sector, private sector, and state enterprise respectively. In addition, these organizations consist of various departments that can provide a variety of employees.

The minimum sample size required for the study is 68. The sample size was determined using G* Power software based on the use of the one-way MANOVA in data analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), with approximately 80% power to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 significance level for medium effect size. In social science research, a medium effect size is sufficient to achieve acceptable power (Crano & Brewer, 2002). The researcher, therefore, would collect data from 450 participants because of a concern about receiving a low response rate and to ensure the statistical power requirements are met. As Crano and Brewer (2002) reported "if the number of participants is too low, statistical inference will have low power … we will fail to identify a difference where one might actually be present (a Type II error)" (p. 77).

To examine the hypotheses regarding attachment styles, the participants were asked to complete the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000). The ECR-R consists of two separate measures of attachment (anxiety and avoidance) that can assess adult attachment style based upon individual's internal working model. The ECR-R contains 36 self-assessment items; the first 18 items assess aspects of anxiety, while the remaining 18 items measure dimension of avoidance. The participants were requested to rate on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The current study used the Thai version of ECR-R developed and translated into Thai by Taephant, Jarukasemthave, and Krawcomsri (Taephant, 2001). The Thai version of the questionnaire was pilot tested with a group that was similar to the research sample to ensure that the participants would understand and could respond to it. Cronbach's alphas were reported for the subscales: .86 (Anxiety), and .83 (Avoidance).

After completing the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire, the participants completed the Rahim Organization Conflict Inventory II (ROCI-II, Rahim, 1983) to measure conflict style. The ROCI-II contains 28 self-report items, with a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that measures the conflict styles of 7 integrating items (1, 4, 5, 12, 22, 23, and 28), 6 obliging items (2, 10, 13, 17, 19, and 24), 5 dominating items (8, 9, 18, 21, and 25), 6 avoiding items (3, 6, 11, 16, 26, and 27), and 4 compromising items (7, 14, 15, and 20). The present study applies the Thai version of ROCI-II, developed and translated

into Thai by Boonsathorn (2007). Cronbach's alphas for the subscales ranged from .63-.78: .76 (integrating), .72 (avoiding), .63 (dominating), .78 (obliging), and .69 (compromising). The value of Cronbach's alphas for the overall scale was at an acceptable level for social science (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science. The statistics employed Multivariate Analysis of Variance. The acceptable statistical significance level is specified as alpha (α) ≤ .05.

Findings

The respondents wereThai workers working for Thai organizations. Four hundreds and fifty questionnaires were distributed and 415 were returned. The sample consisted of 64.6% of women and 35.4% of men. A secure attachment style was identified by 73.5% of the participants, 11.6% as a preoccupied attachment style, 11.3% as a dismissive attachment style, and 3.6% as a fearful attachment style. Concerning conflict management styles, 51.9% of the participants demonstrated an integrating style, 10.5% an avoiding style, 2.2% a dominating style, 5.1% an obliging style, and 30.4% with a compromising style.

The results indicated that employees with a secure attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 3.954, SD = .525) scored higher on integrating conflict style than those with preoccupied ($\bar{x}$ = 3.622, SD = .735), dismissive ($\bar{x}$ = 3.319, SD = .930), and fearful ($\bar{x}$ = 3.381, SD = .536) attachment styles. For the avoiding conflict style, there were no significant pairwise comparisons at the p < .05 or below. For the dominating conflict style, employees with a fearful attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 3.200, SD = .420) scored higher on dominating conflict style than those with secure ($\bar{x}$ = 2.395, SD = .600), preoccupied ($\bar{x}$ = 2.525, SD = .679), and dismissive ($\bar{x}$ = 2.459, SD = .795) attachment styles. For the obliging conflict style, employees with a secure attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 3.246, SD = .536) scored higher on obliging conflict style than those with dismissive attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 2.875, SD = .889). In addition, employees with a preoccupied attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 3.319, SD = .678) scored higher on the obliging conflict style than those with dismissive attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 2.875, SD = .889). For the compromising conflict style, employees with a secure attachment style ($\bar{x}$ = 3.869, SD = .547) scored higher on the compromising conflict style than those with dismissive ($\bar{x}$ = 3.271, SD = 1.031), and fearful ($\bar{x}$ = 3.050, SD = .676) attachment styles. Table 1 provides the pairwise comparisons between four types of attachment styles on five styles of conflict management behaviors.

Table 1   *The Results of the Post Hoc Comparisons between Four Types of Attachment Styles on Five Styles of Conflict Management Behaviors*

Dependent Variable	Attachment Styles	Mean Difference	P	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Integrating Style	Secure-Preoccupied	.332	.020*	.040	.625
	Secure-Dismissive	.635	.000*	.266	1.004
	Secure-Fearful	.573	.005*	.166	.980
	Preoccupied-Dismissive	.302	.301	-.148	.754
	Preoccupied-Fearful	.241	.520	-.231	.713
	Dismissive-Fearful	-.061	.989	-.580	.456
Avoiding Style	Secure-Preoccupied	.012	1.000	-.292	.317
	Secure-Dismissive	.345	.075	-.024	.716
	Secure-Fearful	.279	.160	-.080	.639
	Preoccupied-Dismissive	.333	.232	-.124	.790
	Preoccupied-Fearful	.266	.377	-.173	.707
	Dismissive-Fearful	-.066	.983	-.551	.417
Dominating Style	Secure-Preoccupied	-.129	.600	-.404	.145
	Secure-Dismissive	-.064	.951	-.384	.256
	Secure-Fearful	-.804	.000*	-1.128	-.480
	Preoccupied-Dismissive	.065	.973	-.332	.463
	Preoccupied-Fearful	-.675	.000*	-1.068	-.281
	Dismissive-Fearful	-.740	.000*	-1.164	-.316
Obliging Style	Secure-Preoccupied	-.073	.892	-.344	.198
	Secure-Dismissive	.370	.037*	.016	.724
	Secure-Fearful	.268	.277	-.142	.680
	Preoccupied-Dismissive	.443	.038*	.017	.869
	Preoccupied-Fearful	.341	.211	-.123	.806
	Dismissive-Fearful	-.101	.950	-.613	.409
Compromising Style	Secure-Preoccupied	.281	.087	-.027	.590
	Secure-Dismissive	.598	.002*	.189	1.007
	Secure-Fearful	.819	.002*	.308	1.331
	Preoccupied-Dismissive	.317	.335	-.174	.809
	Preoccupied-Fearful	.538	.068	-.030	1.107
	Dismissive-Fearful	.221	.773	-.399	.841

Note. * $p \leq .05$

Discussion

The present study investigated how attachment styles (i.e., secure, dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful) influence individuals' conflict management behaviors (i.e., integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising) among Thai workers who are working for Thai-owned organizations. The results of the study supported the first hypothesis, anticipating that individuals with a secure attachment style would demonstrate more integrating and compromising styles than would those with insecure attachment styles (dismissive, preoccupied, or fearful). These results are in accordance with previous research (Ben-Ari & Hirshberg, 2009: Bippus & Rollin, 2003; Morris-Rothschild, 2003; Pistole, 1989; Wachirodom, 2006). Bippus and Rollin (2003), for instance; the securely attached individuals would be perceived by their close friends as demonstrating more integrating and compromising conflict styles than would insecurely attached individuals (dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful attachment styles).

The second hypothesis is also substantiated that individuals with a preoccupied attachment style scored higher on obliging conflict style than those with dismissive attachment style. This result is in line with Pistole's (1989) findings that individuals having an anxious attachment style (who are similar to preoccupied) were likely to oblige and appease others more than did individuals with an avoidant style. Consistent with Pistole (1989), Wachirodom (2006) reported that vocational students with preoccupied attachment style used more obliging conflict style than those with secure and dismissive attachment styles.

The third hypothesis stated that individuals with an avoidant attachment style (dismissive and fearful) will demonstrate more avoiding conflict style than those with secure or preoccupied attachment styles. The results revealed that there were no significant pairwise comparisons at the $p < .05$ or below for the avoiding conflict style; thus, this hypothesis is not supported. Consistent with some previous studies, the results did not support the hypotheses regarding dismissive-avoidant and fearful-avoidant attachment styles. Bippus and Rollin (2003), for example, posited that fearfuls would be reported by their close friends as demonstrating more avoiding conflict strategies as compared to secures or preoccupieds. They found that the results of the planned comparison did not support the hypothesis. Ben-Ari and Hirshberg (2009) did not find that individuals with an avoidant attachment style (dismissive and fearful) demonstrated more avoiding conflict style than those with secure or preoccupied attachment styles. Instead, they revealed that avoidant attachment individuals made greater use of dominating conflict strategies.

However, the predictions for individuals with some nonsecure attachment styles (dismissive, fearful, and preoccupied) with regard to conflict management styles were not supported. It might have been due to the uneven sample sizes; more than half of participants identified themselves as having a secure attachment style.

Future Directions

This study examines how attachment styles influence individuals' conflict management behaviors among Thai workers. Through the research design, only Thai workers from three organizations (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Kasikornbank Head Office, and Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand) were recruited as participants. Thus, the generalizability of this study might be restricted

only to workers who work for these organizations. Future research should have a more representative sample of Thai worker participants from more organizations.

It might be interesting if the organizational type (public sector, private sector, and state enterprise) could be examined as a variables effecting individuals' conflict management behaviors. Organizational goals, organizational mission, decision-making process, and organizational culture can be different depending on the types of organization. Thus, it might influence workers' behaviors regarding conflict management styles.

In conclusion, the study was to examine how attachment style affected individuals' conflict management styles among Thai workers. The findings have fulfilled the objective and contribute to the field of attachment styles and conflict management style studies in nonromantic relationships. Further, the findings broaden the understanding of attachment styles and conflict management behaviors among workers through the study of non-Western contexts.

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