Investigating the Effect of Leadership Styles on Conflict Resolution Methods and Attitudes of Employees of Yazd Electricity Distribution Company

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Abstract: It seems leadership style is related to and influenced by behavioral factors such as conflict resolution styles and employee attitudes. Therefore, this research investigates the effect of leadership styles on conflict resolution styles and employee attitudes with regard to the moderating role of demographic variables in the Yazd Electricity Distribution Company. This research is a descriptive and correlational research in terms of method, practical in terms of purpose and survey in terms of data collection method. In this research the questionnaire was taken from the article of Karadaka et al. (2015) and Quintana et al. (2015) with 46 questions designed on the Likert scale. The statistical population of this study is the employees of Yazd Electricity Distribution Company. Using simple random sampling, 140 questionnaires were distributed among the employees. The reliability of the questionnaire, which was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method, is equal to 0.889. The validity of the test was also confirmed by content and structure methods. Using structural equation modeling and partial least squares approach with the help of PLS software, the results of testing the research hypotheses showed that leadership styles have a significant and positive effect on conflict resolution styles and employee attitudes. Also, the demographic variable has a moderating role in the relationship between leadership styles and attitudes among employees of Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Conflict resolution styles, Employee attitudes, Demographic variables.

INTRODUCTION

Since organizational activities require interaction between individuals and groups in the organization, these interactions can lead to conflict. Conflict has various forms and is considered a constant challenge for managers who are responsible for achieving organizational goals (Atefi, 2014). Conflict is a natural consequence of human communication and generally arises as an internal misunderstanding of differences in thoughts, values, and feelings between two organizations or individuals (Kantek & Gezer, 2009). Putnam (2007) defines conflict as: the interaction of individuals who interact with each other and differ in their main goals, sub-goals, and values, and individuals see others as a potential barrier. In order to achieve their goals (Jamaruni, 2016). Conflict indicates that people are interested in their opinions, while a reasonable amount of it seems necessary for individual and organizational growth (Furumo 2009). Poor interpersonal communication, high stress, decreased success, and increased absenteeism are negative outcomes of conflict (Karadakal et al, 2015). Unfortunately, most managers look at the phenomenon of conflict with a traditional and negative view, and not only do they make almost no effort to create it. Rather, in case of conflict, they deal with it by applying incorrect and unconscious methods and try to suppress it (Azarnia et al., 2016). While the phenomenon of conflict is not inherently good or bad, but it is the conditions that make it useful or harmful, these conditions and factors are: the nature of the conflict, the size and severity of the conflict, its duration, the goals of the parties involved, and so on. Meanwhile, the type of organization and management's approach to conflict has a significant role in constructive or non-constructive conflict. Conflict, if consciously dealt with, will not only have a negative effect (creating an atmosphere of intimidation, exacerbation of seizures and incoherence, reduced organizational performance), but also as a positive force (personal growth, improving the quality of decision making and Creativity and innovation, improving group performance) can be used in the life of the organization (Karimi and Shashpari, 2014).

On the other hand, the way of perception and the employees' Attitudes are different in dealing with organizational phenomena. A person's attitude reflects the way he thinks, feels and reacts to his surroundings. Accordingly, each person's attitude plays an essential role in their behavior. Attitude is the long-term organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes according to some aspects of the environment in which the individual is placed (Karami, 2016). Thorsion (1998) defines attitude as the intensity

of a person's feelings about a stimulus. Other definitions have also discussed the classification of objects in the evaluation spectra (Talebi and Hosseinpour, 2015). Attitudes originate from factors such as internal and personality factors such as their beliefs and individual tendencies and are sometimes influenced by external factors such as income, external influencers and economic factors (Jariany, 2016). Meanwhile, leadership studies have shown that Leadership Styles as transformational are directly related to the behavioral consequences of employees and their attitudes (Quintana et al, 2015).

Accordingly, modern organizations and their employees demand a dynamic, creative leadership style that meets the needs of staff and the environment. If the leadership style is evaluated by good followers will be obtained positive organizational results (Soluk et al., 2014). The emergence and dominance of the view that the success and effectiveness of organizations depend on the proper management of resources, especially human resources, has led in recent years to study and study leadership behavior (Zhenpeng et al. 2013). Therefore, leadership has an important role in the productivity of organizations and this productivity is achieved when the impact process is provided using appropriate methods and behavioral patterns (leadership style) (Karami, 2016). Leadership is one of the factors affecting the well-being of employees as well as the performance of the organization. Given that different methods of studying leadership have been conducted and in all of them there is a common approach and general understanding of leadership but studies still do not properly answer the impact of different leadership styles on employees and the organization (Lee et al., 2015). Every organization needs a specific leadership style, and managers undoubtedly know that their success depends on the human resources in organizations, and this idea has led them to seek the right style in managing the affairs of organizations (Nekouei Moghaddam and Et al., 2010). In fact, appropriate leadership style is a facilitating and motivating factor for employees that directly and indirectly affects their behavior. Applying a special attitude and a special and consistent leadership style in the organization, especially in government organizations, cannot guarantee the growth and development of the organization (Jamaruny, 2016). Leadership Styles and Conflict Management Strategies have been considered by many researchers and thinkers. Therefore, a lot of research has been done on them. But in a few cases, the relationship between these two variables has been measured. Therefore, the main question that arises in the present research is whether Leadership Styles affect Conflict Resolution Styles and Employee Attitudes?

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HYPOTHESES
1. Leadership Style and its Effectiveness
Leadership behavior is the specific actions that a leader takes to direct and coordinate the work of group members. On the other hand, leadership style is the foundation of the structure of a person's needs that motivates his behavior in different situations (Rusta, 2016). In the past, researchers thought that managers were simply either task-oriented or relationship-oriented, and decreasing one style, such as duty-oriented one, increased the opposite style, such as relationship-oriented one. The gradual evolution of thought in this field has led to the fact that the assumed styles of organizational leadership are not contradictory and a barrier to aggregation, and the personality and behavior of managers are often a combination of both styles. Therefore, it was recommended that managers, in order to be successful, should pay maximum attention to both employee relations and duty at the same time. This tendency, of course, completely ignored the environmental factors and recommended the best way forever and everywhere (Nekouei Moghaddam et al., 2010).

It is now believed that leadership style is due to a person's long-standing and relatively stable personality and this style is a function of everyone's hierarchy of motivation. In other words, some managers get their major satisfaction from good personal relationships with others. In fact, they feel comfortable when they have good relationships with others, their self-esteem depends to a large extent on what those around them express an opinion about them and what their relationship is with them. These people are called leaders with relationship motivation. On the other hand, a number of managers are task motivated, these are the ones who get the most satisfaction out of doing the job and they gain their self-esteem from achieving the goal and not from their relationships with others (Rusta, 2016).

2. Conflict Resolution Styles
Conflict is traditionally seen as an incompatible thing in the organization. When inconsistent behavior and differences are seen, it means that we will prevent other goals from being achieved. It is believed that a healthy organizational climate should reflect perfect coordination. This traditional view of conflict acts as a negative effect on management's view. That is, the conflict must avoid all costs and ultimately be managed legally in the organization. However, most management theorists agree that conflict in organizations is inevitable because it is often inherently identified in the organizational structure and through competition in members for scarce resources (Lewis, 2011). Conflict includes five styles: flexibility, avoidance, competitiveness, participatory problem solving, and compromise, each of which will be discussed below.

Flexibility
People who choose this style go beyond their own interests and desires and allow others to achieve their desires. Many of these people believe that having a good friendship is more important than anything else. In fact, the focus of this style is on maintaining personal relationships with others. Of course, with this method, we may lose our future credibility and influence (Maughan, 2011).

Avoidance
People who choose this style do not involve themselves in conflict. Their motto is "You decide for yourself and forgive me." This method is usually used when the subject is minor and trivial. There are other important issues, involvement in conflict leads to a lot of damage or more information is needed before conflict management (Maughan, 2011).

Competitiveness
Choosing this style means that one party puts its own interests and desires ahead of the other. In this way, one party feels that the subject is extremely important to him, so he tries hard to get it and does not think about disrupting relations with the other party. In this way, one side has to accept the other side's point of view. In using this style caution should be exercised as it may increase conflict and force the loser to retaliate (Maughan, 2011).

Solving a Participatory Problem
 Choosing this style helps people work together so that everyone wins. Using this style, people are looking for solutions that suit their interests and also maintain good and effective communication. Using this method reduces bad feelings and increases people's commitment and allows people to get to know each other. Despite the numerous advantages of this method, wasting time and weakening the power and energy of individuals are among its disadvantages (Maughan, 2011).

Compromise
People use this style when they are not looking to get all their desires and interests, that is, it is enough to satisfy some needs. In this method, flexibility, exchange and negotiation have a special place. We use this method when different goals are of different degrees of importance to the parties, or we want to reach a temporary solution or time is short. Of course, it should be noted that people often remember what they lose rather than what they gain, and this may create an atmosphere of pessimism (Maughan, 2011). According to the aforementioned principles, the first hypothesis of the research can be presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Leadership Styles have a significant effect on Conflict Resolution Styles in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.

3. Attitude
Jared Behnar and Michael Wank (2005) have defined attitude as "a brief assessment of the position of thought" and have considered something containing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses. Also, quoted by Iz and Plat (1988), they believe that attitude is not a vague state or feeling, but a form of experience that is related to both objects, events of specific people and issues, and is basically evaluative "(Jariany, 2016). According to Friedman et al. (1970), quoted by Karimi (2012), a military attitude is durable that includes a cognitive element, an emotional element, and a desire for action. The emotional component includes the person's emotions and feelings about the subject, especially positive and negative evaluations. The behavioral component includes how the individual is willing to act on the subject. Cognitive component includes thoughts about which a person has a special attitude, including: facts, knowledge and beliefs (Talebi and Hosseinpour, 2015). Considering the theoretical foundations of Leadership Styles and conflict resolution, as well as the concept of attitude, the following hypotheses can be made:

Hypothesis 2: Leadership Styles have a significant effect on Employee Attitudes in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.
Hypothesis 3: The demographic variables of the leader and the employees moderate the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.
Hypothesis 4: The demographic variables of the leader and employees moderate the relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Attitudes in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.

RESEARCH METHOD
The research strategy is causal because the effect of one variable on another variable is measured. The research method is survey, because in this research, a community has been studied and it is practical in terms of purpose,

because the research results can be used in organizations and companies and it has the test of theoretical concepts in real situations. It is also descriptive in terms of the purpose of the research, in terms of research environment, it is of field type and in terms of research method is of the survey type. Almost all variables of this research were qualitative and index was defined for each of them and to measure them, the attitude scale of five Likert Scales options is used.

The statistical population of the present study is 219 employees of Yazd Electricity Distribution Company. Because the size of the population is limited, the Cochran's formula is used to determine the sample size. Based on this, taking into account the allowable error equal to 0.05, the minimum number of sample size is equal to 140 people. In the present study, 160 questionnaires were distributed and after collecting 140 questionnaires were analyzed that were completely completed. Simple random sampling method was used for sampling.

In order to gather information in the field of theoretical foundations and literature of research on the subject have been used library resources, articles, required books and also the global information network. A questionnaire was used to collect data and information for analysis. The questionnaire of this research consists of two general parts. In the first part, a number of questions were asked in order to identify demographic variables (gender, age, marriage, education, service history). In the second part, the respondents were asked to answer the questions according to the Likert spectrum in order to measure each of the components of Leadership Styles, Attitude and Conflict Resolution Styles. The questions posed on the Likert scale have been assessed with the following options: 1. Strongly Agree 2- Agree 3. No opinion 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree.

Since the questionnaires used in this research have been researched and extracted and translated with the help of internal and external sources, the sentences and questions used were first modified and finalized through content validity and using the opinions of professors and experts. To measure the validity of the structure are used the factors of factor loading of indicators, convergent validity and divergent validity. In order to evaluate the reliability of the research tool, before its final implementation, during a preliminary study, the opinions of about 30 respondents were collected and its value was calculated using SPSS statistical software by Cronbach's alpha test and some of the questions were corrected with the opinion of the professors. The results of measuring the reliability of the research questionnaire show 0.889. Since the calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire as well as for the whole data is higher than the acceptable value ($\alpha = 0.7$), the reliability of the questionnaire is strongly confirmed. Table 1 shows the reliability of each variable.

Table 1: Reliability value of research variables

Variable	Number of items	Reliability value
Benevolent style	5	0.852
Transformational style	9	0.879
Exchange style	5	0.710
method of leadership	19	0.924
Friendly style	9	0.822
Avoidance style	6	0.729
Competitive style	4	0.734
Conflict Resolution Styles	19	0.716
Employee Attitudes	8	0.859
whole questionnaire	46	0.889

In this research, in order to analyze and review the data using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution tables and percentages have been investigated the demographic characteristics of the questionnaires. To answer the research questions and analyze the data and test the statistical hypotheses of the research has been used the structural equation analysis test. In this study, SPSS and PLS software were used to classify, statistical analysis and test research hypotheses.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to the results of the descriptive test on the relationship between the demographic variables of gender, 101 people were males and 39 people were females, with a frequency of about 72% male and 28% female. The number of married people in the statistical sample is 133 people and the number of single people is 7 people. Also, the highest percentage of the research community in terms of degree is bachelor with 59%. Regarding the demographic variable, the highest frequency is related to the age group between 41 and 45 years with 33.7%. The highest frequency of respondents in terms of work experience is related to the experience category of 16 to 20 years with 37.3%.

Main Model Outputs (Path Coefficients and t-statistic)

Using the internal model, hypotheses can be examined. By comparing the value of t calculated for the coefficient of each path, we can confirm or reject the research hypothesis. Thus, if the absolute value of t-statistic is greater than 1.96, at the 95% confidence level, and if the t-value is greater than 2.58, the path coefficient at the 99% confidence level is significant. The test results of the conceptual model of the research in the significant state of coefficients are shown in the figure below.
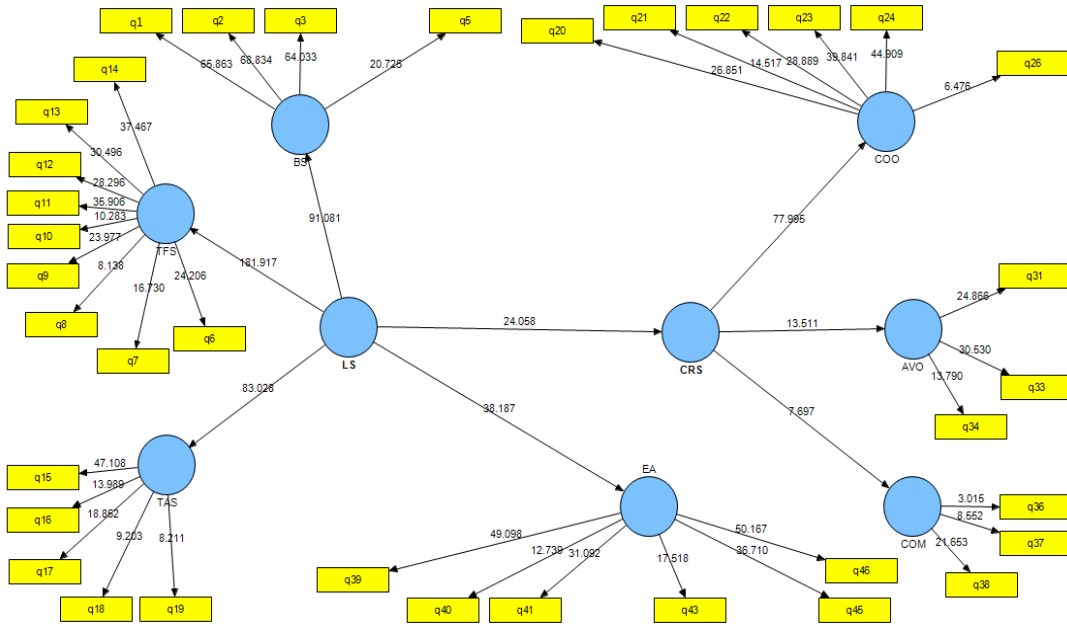

Fig.1: The main model in the case of significant numbers after removing inappropriate items (t-value)

The numbers on the paths indicate the t-value for each path. To check the significance of the path coefficients, it is necessary to make the value of t of each path higher than 1.96. In this analysis, the value of t-statistic for all routes is higher than 1.96 and as a result are significant at 95% confidence level.
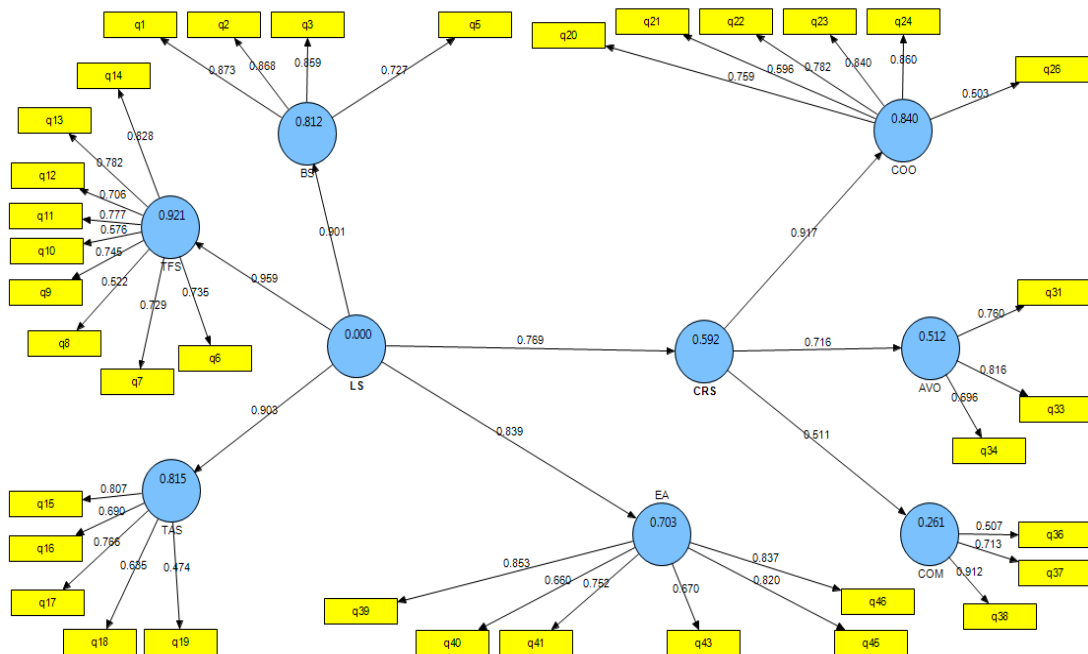

Fig.2: The main model in the standard mode after removing the inappropriate items (path coefficients)

The numbers written on the lines are actually beta coefficients from the regression equation between the variables, which is the path coefficient. The numbers inside each circle represent the value of R2 of the model whose predictor variables are entered into that circle via an arrow. Approximately 60% of the variance changes in the Conflict Resolution Styles variable are explained by the Leadership Styles variable, also, 70% of the variance changes in the Employee Attitudes variable are explained by the Leadership Styles variable.

The Outputs of the Main Model (Path Coefficients and t-statistic) Regarding the Demographic Moderating Variable
In this analysis, the value of t-statistic for the variable paths of the leader and employees to Conflict Resolution Styles is less than 1.96 and Employee Attitudes is higher than 1.96 and thus at the 95% confidence level, the effect of the demographic variable on the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles is insignificant and significant on the relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Attitudes.
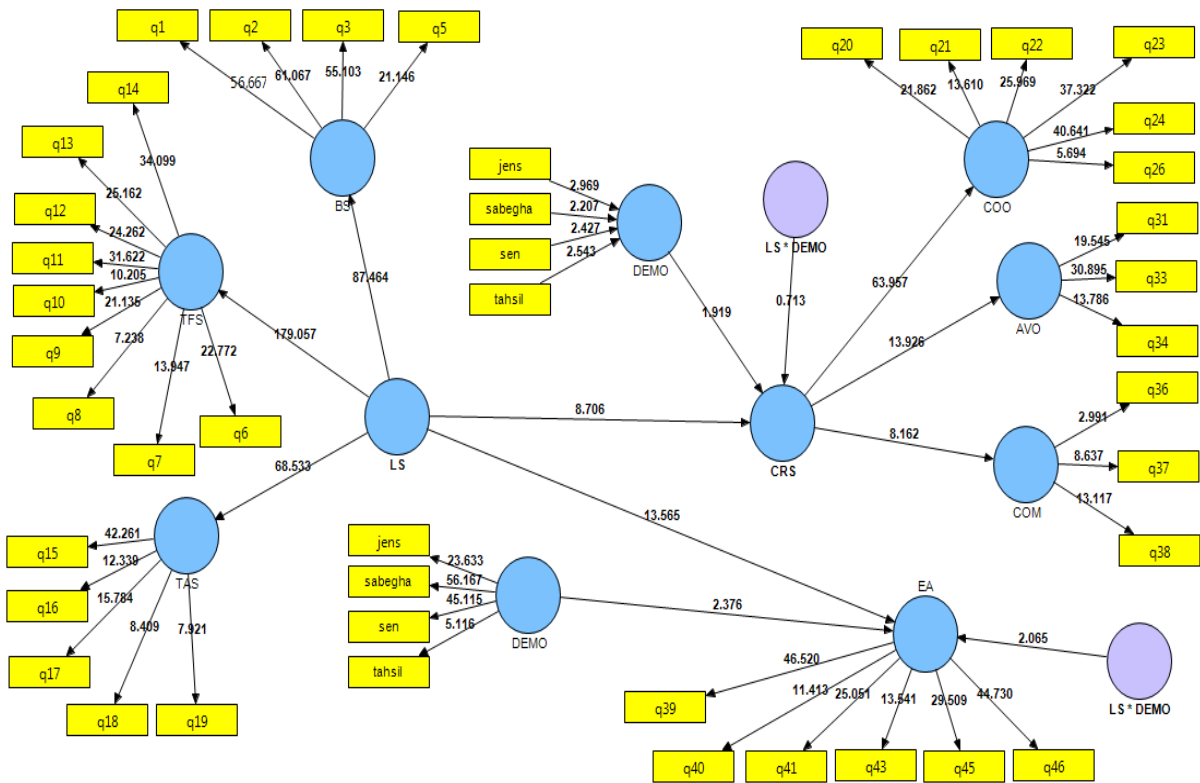

Fig.3: The main model in the case of significant numbers regarding the effect of the demographic moderator variable (t-value)

Considering the entry of the demographic modifier variable of leader and employees into the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles and Employee Attitudes, it can be inferred that the entry of this variable has caused changes in the path coefficient and intensity of these relationships.
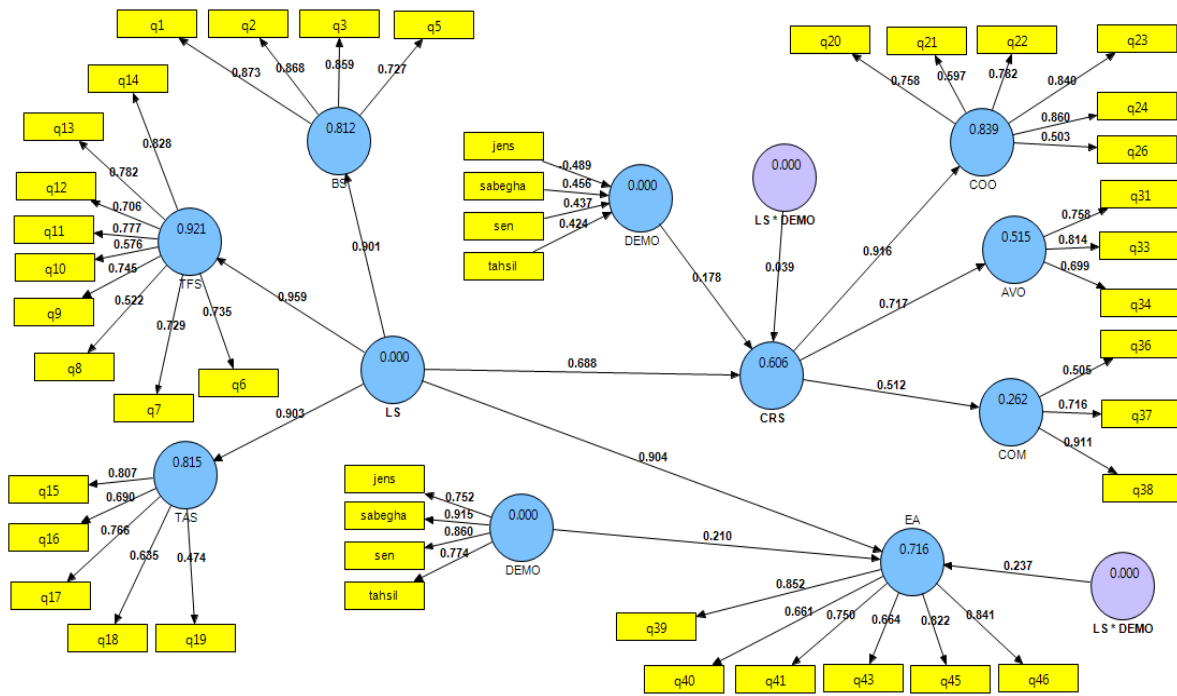
Fig.4: The main model in standard mode regarding the effect of demographic moderator variable (path coefficients)

Internal Model (Structural Model)

In the form of internal model, hypotheses were examined and the path of structural model was evaluated. Each path corresponds to one of the model hypotheses. Testing each hypothesis by examining the sign, size and statistical significance of the path coefficient (beta) between each latent variable and the dependent variable. The higher the path coefficient, the greater the predictive effect of the latent variable than the dependent variable. Considering the results of examining the relationships between independent and dependent variables using the relevant coefficient, we can examine the significance of the effects between the research variables. In order to evaluate the significance of the path coefficient or the beta must be considered the significance of the t-value for each path coefficient. The results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Direct linear effect of the role of research variables in the main model

path		t-statistic	standard error	β
CRS -> AVO	Conflict Resolution Styles to avoid style	13.511	0.053	0.716
CRS -> COM	Conflict Resolution Styles in a competitive style	7.697	0.066	0.511
CRS -> COO	Conflict Resolution Styles in a friendly style	77.995	0.012	0.917
LS -> BS	Leadership Styles in a benevolent style	91.081	0.010	0.901
LS -> CRS	Leadership Styles to Conflict Resolution Styles	24.058	0.032	0.769
LS -> EA	Leadership Styles to Employee Attitudes	38.187	0.022	0.839
LS -> TAS	Leadership Styles in exchange style	83.028	0.011	0.903
LS -> TFS	Leadership Styles in a transformational style	181.917	0.005	0.959
DEMO -> CRS	Demographic variable to Conflict Resolution Styles	1.919	0.058	0.176
DEMO -> EA	Demographic Variable to Employee Attitudes	2.376	0.064	0.210
LS* DEMO -> CRS	Demographic variables related to Leadership Styles with Conflict Resolution Styles	0.713	0.058	0.039
LS*DEMO -> EA	Demographic variable in relation to Leadership Styles with Employee Attitudes	2.065	0.064	0.237

According to Table 2, the value of t-statistic for all paths except the effect of demographic variables on Conflict Resolution Styles are greater than 1.96, which shows that at 95% confidence level all paths are significant.

Test Results of Hypotheses

After examining the fit of measurement models and structural models, it is time to review and test the research hypotheses. Since in each of the research hypotheses, both the relationship (negative or positive relationship) and the significance of the relationship are discussed. Therefore, to investigate these two issues, we need the significance coefficients Z for each of the hypotheses, respectively, to examine the significance of the relationship and the standardized coefficients of the paths for each of the hypotheses (beta value) that we have already obtained. In the following, according to the two mentioned factors, the results of the hypothesis test are given in detail in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of research hypotheses

hypotheses	Description of the hypothesis	Significant amount	Path coefficient	Relationship type	result of the hypothesis
1	Leadership Styles have a significant effect on Conflict Resolution Styles in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.	0.769	24.058	Positive and direct	Confirmed
2	Leadership Styles have a significant effect on Employee Attitudes in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.	0.839	38.187	Positive and direct	Confirmed
3	Leader and employee demographic variables moderate the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.	0.039	0.713	Insignificant	Non-Confirmed
4	Leader and employee demographic variables moderate the relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Attitudes in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company.	0.237	2.065	Modifier	Confirmed

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the first hypothesis of the research we investigated the effect of Leadership Styles on Conflict Resolution Styles in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company. Considering the significant value of this relationship, which is equal to 24.058 and more than its critical value is 1.96, therefore, the first main hypothesis of the research is confirmed. Accordingly, Leadership Styles used by the managers of this organization improve the styles and methods of resolving organizational conflicts of employees. Also, the path coefficient of this relationship with an intensity of 0.769 shows the strong impact of Leadership Styles on Conflict Resolution Styles of employees. The results of this hypothesis Correspond with the results of Karami (2017) who studied the relationship between Leadership Styles with conflict management and also with the results of Kardaka et al. (2015) who examined the effect of leadership role perspective on Conflict Resolution Styles. In the second hypothesis, it is claimed that Leadership Styles have a significant effect on Employee Attitudes in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company. Given that the value of t calculated for this relation (38.187) is greater than its critical value (1.96), it can be concluded that the collected experimental data also confirmed this hypothesis and with 95% confidence, it can be said that Leadership Styles has a significant effect on Employee Attitudes and has a positive and direct effect with a path coefficient of 0.839. Therefore, it seems that the Leadership Styles of the managers of Yazd Electricity Distribution Company will have a significant impact on the Employee Attitudes of this organization. The present study is consistent with the results of research by Quintana et al. (2015) which examined the effect of leadership styles on employee attitudes and consequences in Spanish hotels. This result is also in line with some of the results of research by Lee et al. (2015), Talebi Namvar and Hosseinpour (2015) and Salajgeh and Ahmadzadeh (2014).

According to the third hypothesis of the research on the role of moderating role of the demographic variable of leader and employees in the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles in Yazd

Electricity Distribution Company, the test results of this hypothesis regarding the calculated t value for this relationship is equal to / 713 0 less than its critical value (1.96), so it can be concluded that the collected experimental data do not confirm this hypothesis and with 95% confidence, it can be said that the demographic variable does not affect the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles. According to the fourth hypothesis of the research on the role of moderator of demographic variable of leader and employees in the relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Attitudes in Yazd Electricity Distribution Company, the test results of this hypothesis according to the calculated t value for this relationship is equal to / 2 is greater than its critical value (1.96), therefore, it can be concluded that the collected experimental data also confirms this hypothesis and it can be stated with 95% confidence that the demographic variable affects the relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Attitudes. The result of this hypothesis is consistent with part of the results of research by Quintana et al. (2015) and Vitanen and Kano (2009).

Practical Suggestions

As the research findings showed that leadership style has a positive effect on Conflict Resolution Styles, therefore, in order to maintain the physical and mental health of employees and reduce their lack of motivation, as well as reducing negative organizational conflicts and leading conflicts to the discourse of progress and organizational creativity, it is suggested about the factors of leadership styles, some of which are: Clearly articulate the values, purpose and mission of the organization, instill a sense of trust in employees, respect and value them, support their views and suggestions and enlighten the future, clarify expectations and consider rewards to meet them. To see the problems and try to solve them through interaction with employees as much as possible and use leadership style behavioral factors that have the greatest impact on organizational conflict resolution methods.

Considering the confirmation of the second hypothesis of research on the effect of Leadership Styles on Employee Attitudes, it is suggested given that Employee Attitudes is a key component in organizations and organizational behavior to achieve goals and visions, and given the important role of leadership in achieving this goal, today's organizations to survive in today's competitive world, must play a role. Employee Attitudes and its impact and application on Leadership Styles are very important because Employee Attitudes and Leadership Styles are mutually influential, as well as the way employees think and how they view organizational issues, it is extremely important to improve productivity and efficiency in government agencies is suggested comprehensive research on the best leadership style in such organizations, which can be more effective and faster on the efficiency and performance of employees, is identified and then localized as a culture in the organization and for the use of managers and supervisors.

Considering the confirmation of the fourth research hypothesis about the effective role of moderator of demographic variables of leader and employees in the impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Attitudes is suggested teaching the right methods of leadership and management style, paying attention to the educational levels and background of managers, creating the right legal and work system, especially in the category of secondary education (bachelor), which has more employees in this category of education in the organization. Also, increasing the spirit of responsibility can be considered as appropriate strategies to increase the impact of demographic and demographic variables on the relationship between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles and Employee Attitudes.

Therefore, it is suggested that this organization with the approach of strengthening the mentioned cases and also examining managers in terms of psychological and personality characteristics, training managers in in-service courses in this field, creating a field for employees to continue their education in their specialized field can be useful given that exchange leadership style is appropriate in long-term interactions, therefore, maintaining and using this style seems appropriate. Accordingly, it is suggested that managers who feel that their employees have inappropriate methods of resolving conflict and negative attitudes, seek to strengthen the dimensions of exchange leadership style and conditional reward factors and management on an exceptional basis.

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