EXPLORING THE UNDERLYING MEDIATING PROCESSES BETWEEN INTRAGROUP CONFLICT AND TEAM OUTCOMES: A SOCIAL INFORMATION PROCESSING PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the underlying mediating mechanisms through which intragroup conflict (task conflict vs. relationship conflict) influences various team outcomes. This research topic is important because it introduces a new perspective, the social information processing theory (SIP), into conflict literature and contributes not only to intragroup conflict theories but also to SIP theories. Using the SIP perspective, an integrated mediation model of conflict is proposed. This model presents that the relationships between intragroup conflict (task conflict vs. relationship conflict) and team outcomes will be mediated by three processes: learning process of intragroup conflict, attribution process of intragroup conflict, and judgment process of intragroup conflict.

The study also considers the transactive memory system (TMS) theory which is integrated into the learning process of intragroup conflict. The learning process presents that TMS mediates the effects of two types of conflict on three team outcomes (team knowledge sharing, team innovation, and team standard job performance). Another theory, the attribution theory, is incorporated into the attribution process of intragroup conflict, which states that the effects of task conflict on the three team outcomes are mediated by relationship conflict. Finally, similarity–attraction paradigm is incorporated into the judgment process of intragroup conflict, that is, group cohesiveness plays a mediating role in the relationships of two types of conflict with the three team outcomes.

In addition, I explore the boundary conditions of the posited mediation model. Two team contextual variables are adopted as moderators (team task type and team learning orientation). It is expected that the mediating processes between relationship conflict and the team outcomes do not vary across levels of the moderators. However,
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