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UNDERSTANDING THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH
TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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UNDERSTANDING THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the integrative approach to conflicts. Integration is an active search for information about facts and interests - motivated by a willingness to find mutually satisfactory agreements - and is usually necessary for creating high quality settlements in conflicts. Thus, in order to understand how to avoid win-lose outcomes, or impasses, we need knowledge about factors that relate to, and promote, integration. We here use five data-sets to explore factors relating to individuals' inclination to integrate. Our results show that (a) degree of integration varies, that (b) the variation can be explained by individual differences, by situational differences, and to some degree by group differences, and that (c) integration predicts high quality outcomes in conflicts.

KEY WORDS: Conflict Management, Negotiation, Integrative style, Integrative behavior.

Handling conflicts constructively are one of the greatest challenges in the modern world. Despite maturing societies, growth in scientific knowledge, and a more educated population, we still face damaging conflicts. Conflicts escalate, we reach impasses, and we hurt each other in the conflict process. Individuals get psychological problems, interpersonal relations break down, groups fight, and nations and societies are at war. Notwithstanding all this, conflict management researchers still insist that many – and even most – conflicts have an integrative potential. That is, parties can get a mutual satisfactory agreement if they persistently search for it. Therefore, many of the harmful conflicts that we face today have the potential of being handled constructively.

In order to handle conflicts constructively, the individuals involved must – according to conflict research (e.g., Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993) – have an integrative approach. That is, they must search for information about facts and interests, and creatively use that information to generate mutually satisfactory agreements. Thus, integration is a key concept in the conflict management literature. It is used in relation to various aspects of the conflict management process – e.g., integrative potential, integrative outcome, integrative process and integrative intention/style and behavior – and is largely synonymous with the term problem solving in conflict research, and with the "win-win" notion in the negotiation literature.

At a broad level, integration concerns the creation of values over and above what is achieved if the parties only divide the values that seem obviously available at the outset of a conflict management process. Value creation is about identifying areas of joint gain and to create settlements based on this. Values can, for example, be created by trading across issues where the parties have different priorities, rather than by compromising on one single issue at a time. In order to do so the parties must somehow share information about (differential) priorities, and propose solutions that take both parties interests into account. For example, a customer may get a price discount in exchange for increasing the quantity bought.

Alternatively, values can also be created by transforming the conflict through a focus on underlying interests. For example, two farmers may be in conflict over how to divide between them a limited supply of water. Rather than quarrelling over a fixed pie of resources (i.e., water), the farmers can try to expand the pie of resources by cooperating on how to increase the total amount of water supply. In order to transform the conflict, the parties must search for the underlying causes of their disagreement, and explore whether this can lead them towards solutions that better meet their needs than fighting over a fixed and limited water supply.

Needless to say, when integrative potential exists in conflicts – and conflict management researchers forcefully insist that it frequently does (Bazerman & Neale, 1992) – parties will be better off searching for it, rather than to settle for suboptimal compromises, or worse; ending up in conflict escalation processes and possible impasses. However, conflict management researchers also agree (e.g., Thompson, 1998) – based on a countless number of studies – that conflicting parties typically fails to realize the integrative potential in a conflict. Thus, the aim of the present paper is to focus on the integrative approach to conflict. We do so because an integrative approach – in preferred style and actual behavior – are at the core of creating mutually beneficial agreements in conflicts (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). The purpose and contribution of the paper is to broadly examine factors at different levels of analysis and in different types of conflicts that relates to the use of an integrative approach in conflicts.

THE RESEARCH ON INTEGRATION IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The dual concern model (Blake, Sheppard, & Mouton, 1964) is a reasonable starting point for examining the integrative approach in conflict management. It postulates that preference for, and choice of, a conflict handling strategy depends on two sets of concerns; concern for own outcome and concern about other's outcome. Individuals with high concerns for own outcome put high value on own interests and are not likely to yield easily in conflict situations. Individuals with high concern for others, either genuinely or tactically (Pruitt &

Rubin, 1986), will extend effort to help the other party getting good results. The dual concern model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

According to this model, a high degree of concern for, both, other's welfare and one's own welfare, fosters a preference for an integrating (or problem solving) conflict management style. This style is characterized by information exchange, efforts to understand the other party's concern, and motivated cooperation in search of mutually beneficiary solutions. Alternatives to an integrative style are contending, yielding, and inaction. A high degree of concern only for one's own welfare and low concern for the other's welfare foster a preference for a contending style. This implies power-oriented win-lose behavior. Only high concerns for others interests, and low for own, implies that one are willing to yield, i.e., give in to the demands of the other party. Inaction, i.e., to not get actively involved in the conflict, is a likely choice if concerns both for own and others outcomes are low.

In the language of behavioral negotiation research (e.g., Putnam, 1990; Walton & McKersie, 1965), rather than conflict management, one typically distinguishes between distributive and integrative sub-processes rather than on concerns and approaches. Distributive sub-processes are about claiming values at the expense of the other party, and a strong focus on this will imply strong preferences for contending. An integrative sub-process implies an integrative style with information exchange – creatively searching for mutual gain and efforts to satisfy the concerns of both parties. Today negotiation research is predominantly about integration, and it is clearly verified that when there is integrative potential in the conflict, there is a lot to gain from approaching the conflict with an integrative style (see for example the meta-analysis by De Dreu, Weingart, and Kwon, 2000).

In the current paper, we examine results from five data-sets that all have included measures of an integrative approach to conflicts. The nomological net of variables included in this article is presented in Figure 2. At the core of the model is an integrative approach, and we first study whether integration is related to group level characteristics such as type of education and gender (Study 1). After that we move to situational differences by examining the effects of different types of relationships between the parties (Study 2). We then examine how relatively stable individual difference variables influence integration (Study 3). The two final studies focus on the relation between integration and outcome qualities, first in a real life dispute resolution (conflict) context (Study 4), and second in a simulated deal making (negotiation) situation (Study 5).

Insert Figure 2 about here

STUDY 1

The integrative approach to conflict management – as opposed to a distributive zero-sum approach – focuses heavily on concern for the other party, as discussed with regard to the dual concern model above. Thus, having a relational – rather than an individualistic – belief-system should help individuals to resolve conflicts constructively. One will be genuinely concerned about the outcomes for others. In addition, through an active focus on the concerns one will learn about interests and be able to identify mutually satisfactory agreements. Gelfand, Major, Raver, Nishii, and O'Brien (2006) argue that negotiation is an inherently relational activity, and that the focus of research so far has been too arelational with an emphasis on rationality and competitiveness. Our first research question, therefore, is concerned with whether groups that differ in supposed relationship concerns will vary in their preferences for an integrative style in conflicts. Gelfand et. al. (2006) argue that there are

group differences in relational self-construal. Gender differences have been found as women score higher than men on having a relational self-concept (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000). Gelfand et al. (2006) also argue for differences along occupational lines such that stronger relational self-concepts are likely to be found in occupations that demands stronger connections with other people. We believe psychology student are more relationship oriented than business students. We therefore predict:

> Hypothesis 1: Women rather than men, and psychology students rather than business students, will have high integrative style

Method

A total of 549 undergraduate students participated in Study 1, consisting of 236 business students (39% women, 61% men) and 316 psychology students (77% women, 23% men). The mean age of the participants was 21.7. We conducted the study during one business class-meeting and one psychology class-meeting, respectively. When the class started, each student received a description of a conflict scenario, followed by questions about how they would handle the described situation. The task was a conflict scenario based on Ting-Toomey, Gao, Trubisky, Yang, Kim, Lin, & Nishida (1991), where the participants read the following:

> Imagine that you are involved in a group project at work. Bonus for the project work will be given to the group as a whole, making the entire group dependent on the performance of each member. All members get an equal share of the bonus. The effort of each group member therefore impact the bonuses achieved by the other members. Management has assigned you to the role as leader of the project group. Your responsibility is to coordinate the work of the group project members and to ensure the completion of the project within the deadline. In your view, all the group members except one have done very well. This one member's work is so poor that the quality of the whole project work is in jeopardy, and thereby the bonuses for all project members

also. You want to get this group member to redo his/her part of the project in the

remaining time before the project is due. This group member will basically have to

start all over again, concentrating into three days what the rest of the project members

have spent a long time working on. The person can do it, but only with concerted,

round-the-clock effort. The project member in question is someone you do not know

very well, except for the project meetings.

Integrative style was the dependent variable in this study. We used the "Rahim

Organizational Conflict Inventory" – ROCI – (Rahim, 1983) to measure integrative style.

ROCI intends to measure the different conflict management styles (i.e., integrative,

dominating, yielding, and inaction). The version we used consisted of four items measuring

integrative style. The questions referred to the conflict scenario, and participants were asked

to indicate, on a five-point scale, to which extent (1 = very low, 5 = very high) they would:

"… exchange accurate information with the group member to solve the problem together",

"… try to work with the group member for a proper understanding of the problem", "…try to

bring all our concerns out, so that the issues can be resolved the best possible way", "…try to

work with the group member to find a solution to the problem which satisfies our

expectations". A principal component analysis including items for all the four conflict

management styles revealed that the integrative style discriminated very well from the three

other styles. The integrative style scale also showed acceptable reliability as measured with

Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .71$).

Results

Hypothesis 1 was tested by a 2 (gender) x 2 (education) ANOVA of integrative style.

We found a statistically significant main effect for gender and an interaction between gender

and education. The main effect indicated that men (M = 4.16) had lower integrative style than

women (M = 4.28), $F(1, 545) = 5.25$, $MSE = 0.24$, $p < .05$. This main effect is qualified by the

gender/education interaction, $F(1, 545) = 10.62$, $p < .001$. As can be seen graphically in Figure 3, the lower integrative style of men *only* occurred for business students. Men studying psychology were as integrative as were the women. Thus, male business students have a less integrative style than male psychology students, female business students, and female psychology students. Post hoc analyses (Scheffé) support this observation. Male business students were significantly lower on integrative style compared to each of the other three groups ($p < .05$), all of which were similarly to one another ($p > .60$). The data partly support Hypothesis 1; men are lower on integrative style than women, but only when they are business students.

Insert Figure 3 about here

STUDY 2

In Study 2, we examine whether and how the relationship between the conflicting parties influences the preference for using an integrative style. At the outset of a conflict, an individual may have a good, neutral, or a bad relationship with the other person. In general, we will expect a good relationship to trigger a more integrative style than a neutral or a poor relationship. In a good relationship, you wish the other party well and will not risk hurting the relationship through a destructive conflict (Thompson, 1998). If one has a poor relationship with the other party, the concerns for the other will be lower, and as the dual concern model postulates, one will easily end up contending. Of course, one can speculate that in good relationships one will avoid conflict, e.g., by yielding or inaction, in order to avoid the potentially destructive consequences. One could also suggest that in bad and neutral relationship one will work harder – because one expects this is needed – to get a constructive

outcome. But this is contrary to the theory, and also to existing empirical evidence (e.g., Lewicki, Barry, Saunder, & Minton., 2003; Thompson, 1988). Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: The better the relationship between the conflictive parties, the higher the preference for using an integrative style.

Method

The participants in Study 2 were 171 individuals, of which about half were students sampled from three different academic institutions, and half were employees sampled from various companies. The mean age was 31.4, and there were an equal number of men and women in the sample. Following the procedure in Study 1, the participants received a conflict scenario followed by questions about how they would handle the conflict. The scenario in Study 2 read:

Imagine a situation where you and William work at different departments in a company. The company is planning a new joint project involving both departments. However, you and William disagree on the budget for the new project. The two of you view the case very differently, and strongly advocate your own opinions. Both of you think that the other's budget proposal is beneath an acceptable professional standard, and that using it as a management tool may seriously hamper the success of the new joint project.

The independent variable in this study was relationship quality. We manipulated relationship quality to be good, neutral, or poor. In the good relationship condition, the participants read: "You like William very much and think he is nice. The two of you have great rapport, and you get on with each other very well". In the neutral relationship condition, they read: "Your relationship with William is completely neutral". Finally, in the poor relationship condition they read: "You do not like William at all, and do not think he is nice. The two of you have poor rapport, and you don't get on well with each other". Pre-tests

showed that these instructions indeed were associated with good, neutral, and poor

relationships, respectively. The dependent variable in this study was integrative style, which

was measured with the same four questions as in Study 1. Integrative style had good

discriminate validity and was highly reliable ($\alpha = .82$).

Results

We tested Hypothesis 2 by ANOVA and pair-wise comparisons of integrative style

across relationship quality conditions. We found a statistically significant effect of

relationship quality on integrative style, $F(2, 168) = 6.49$, $MSE = 0.25$, $p < .01$. As illustrated

in Figure 4, the participants preferred an integrative style more when the relationship was

good ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.44$), rather than neutral ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.55$) or poor ($M = 4.17$, SD

$= 0.50$). Planned pair-wise comparisons showed that integrative style in the good relationship

condition was significantly higher than integrative style in both the neutral relationship

condition ($p < .05$), and the poor relationship condition ($p < .001$), but that the latter two

conditions did not differ significantly from each other ($p > .10$). The data support our

Hypothesis 2; an integrative style is positively associated with the quality of the relationship.

Insert Figure 4 about here

STUDY 3

Intuition may tell us that individual differences play a role in explaining integration in

negotiation. However, the first wave of research on individual differences (in the 1960s and

1970s) showed inconclusive results (Rubin & Brown, 1975). This has partly been attributed to

the use of inappropriate methods (e.g., two-choice Prisoner's Dilemma games), and to the

focus on the "wrong" individual difference variables. Recently, interest in studying individual

differences has again increased. The focus is now more on integrative negotiation outcomes,

and on individual difference variables that can be linked specifically to the outcomes. One recent approach has been to focus on abilities relevant for integration (Lewicki et al., 2003). The reason being that constructive conflict handling often is a complex problem solving process where there is a need to plan, reason, think abstractly, and to learn from experience, and also to handle emotional challenges. Kurtzberg (1998) has, for example, found that cognitive ability helps identifying integrative outcomes in negotiation.

Here we examine three sets of variables tapping into motivational, cognitive, and affective aspects of "ability". The first group of variables – cognitive motivation and achievement motivation – concerns willingness to apply oneself in order to achieve good results. This should trigger efforts to explore the conflict and search for multiple solutions (cf., Schei, Rognes, & Mykland, 2006). The second group of variables – creativity and an exploring cognitive style – refers to cognitive factors related to creative information use. Being high on these factors are likely to be helpful for finding non-obvious win-win solutions in conflicts (cf., Kurtzberg, 1998). The last variable – positive affect – concerns emotions and are a less stable attribute than the other variables studied here. Based on previous research we expect positive affect to predict intention to use an integrative style in conflict because it creates positive feelings toward the other party, and makes one more persistent in the conflict process (cf., Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Lewicki et al., 2003). Thus, we expect:

Hypothesis 3: Individuals high on motivation, cognition and positive affect will have stronger preference for an integrative style in conflicts than individuals lower on the same ability-oriented personal difference variables.

Method

A total of 298 graduate business students were participants in Study 3. Their average age was 25, and about 45% were women and 55% were men. The study was conducted during class-meetings. The participants first read a conflict scenario similar to the one used in Study

1, followed by the same conflict inventory as in the two first studies (ROCI). We measured the integrative style of all 298 students, and this dependent variable again showed good discriminate validity and satisfactory internal consistency (α = .77). When the participants had finalized ROCI, they received inventories measuring various individual difference variables (cognitive motivation, cognitive style, creativity, achievement motivation, and positive affect). We measured a subset of these individual difference variables in each class.

We measured *cognitive motivation* with the short version of "The Need for Cognition Scale" (Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984). The scale consists of 18 statements (α = .82) such as "I would prefer complex to simple problems" and "I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking". Higher scores reflected higher cognitive motivation (items ranging from 1 to 5). We measured *achievement motivation* with the "Achievement Motivation Scale" (Nygård & Gjesme, 1973), using the 15 items (α = .84) measuring motivation for success. On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much) participants answered questions like "I want to succeed in what I am doing, even if nobody get to know the result" and "I like doing things that I am not sure that I can handle". We measured *creativity* with the "Creativity Personality Scale" (Gough, 1979). This scale consists of several adjectives where the participants indicate which of the adjectives are appropriate for them. Some adjectives (17 in our scale) are indicative of a creative personality (e.g., clever, informal, and self-confident), while others (12 in our scale) are indicative of a non-creative personality (e.g., conservative, cautious, and suspicious). The score are calculated as the difference between the numbers of creative-adjective answers and non-creative-adjective answers. We measured *cognitive style* with the "Assimilator-Explorer Inventory" (Kaufmann & Martinsen, 1992). The scale consists of 30 items (α = .93), some indicative of an explorative cognitive style and some indicative of an assimilative style (reverse coded). The scale ranged from 1 (low) to 5 (high) and example items of an explorative style are "I like to

work without a prearranged plan" and "I am full of ideas when solving problems". Finally, we measured *positive affect* with 8 items ($\alpha = .84$) from Russell (1980). Participants were asked to indicate how they felt (1 = not at all, 5 = extremely) on items like "happy" and "satisfied".

Results

Hypothesis 3 was tested by correlations between integrative style and each of the five suggested predictors. Descriptive statistics for all variables and correlations between integrative style and the predictors are shown in Table 1. Integrative style was positively, and significantly, correlated with cognitive motivation ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), achievement motivation ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), creativity ($r = .20$, $p < .01$), and positive affect ($r = .13$, $p < .05$). Integrative style was also positively – but only marginally significant – correlated with an explorative cognitive style ($r = .20$, $p < .10$). We also checked the bivariate correlations between the five predictors (in those cases where the data subsets overlapped); all correlations were below .50, indicating that each of the predictors have a fairly unique co-variation with integrative style. The data support our Hypothesis 3; individual level variables indicating high motivational, cognitive, and affective stimulation are positively related to an integrative style.

Insert Table 1 about here

STUDY 4 AND STUDY 5

In the two final studies we examine the relationship between integrative behavior and outcomes. From a practical and pragmatic perspective integration is only interesting if it influences outcomes. Of course, we expect that searching for information about facts and interests – and motivated behavior to use this information to create novel solution and mutual gain – will contribute to high quality outcomes (e.g., Bazerman, Curhan, Moore, & Valley, 2000; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Thompson, 1998). We believe this will hold for various

aspects of outcomes such as for decision quality, satisfaction, fairness, and trust. It will hold

for decision quality because it will be easier to identify the integrative potential in a conflict

when one energetically searches for information. It will increase satisfaction, fairness, and

trust because integration implies a balanced process where both parties concerns are more in

focus than in other conflict processes such as power struggles or conflict avoidance.

Hypotheses 4: The more integrative behavior the better outcomes in conflicts.

We tested this hypothesis in two different settings. In Study 4 we examined informal

disputes and in Study 5 deal-making negotiations. We first present the method and the results

from Study 4, followed by the method and the results from Study 5.

Method Study 4

Two-hundred-and-five questionnaires were handed out to employees in several

companies. A total of 58 respondents returned our Study 4-survey. The relatively low

response-rate may be explained by the total length of the survey (of which this study only

refer to a part of the questions), and the fairly sensitive nature of the questions. The

respondents' average age was 32.7, average working experience 12.4, and the sexes were

about equally represented. In the questionnaire, the respondents were first asked to recall a

conflict incident they had experienced recently. They were told that they could choose

whatever type of conflict they wanted. Then – with the chosen conflict in mind – they were

asked several questions about the nature of the conflict and how they had handled it.

Importantly, they were explicitly reminded several times throughout the questionnaire that

they had to refer to the chosen conflict situation when answering the questions.

The independent variable in this study was integrative behavior. We used the "Dutch

Test for Conflict Handling" – DUTCH – (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001)

to measure integrative behavior in this study. The items measuring integrative behavior on a

5-point scale anchored at 1 (very low) and 5 (very high) were: "I examined issues until I

found a solution that really satisfied me and the other party", "I stood for my own and the

other's goals and interests", "I examined ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal

solution", and "I worked out a solution that served my own as well as the other's interests as

good as possible". The integrative items discriminated well from the other conflict

management behaviors items measured in the DUTCH, and the integrative scale had high

internal consistency (α = .87). The dependent variables in this study were four outcome-

variables. All four variables were measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very low) to

5 (very high). *Perceived outcome* was measured with two items (α = .86) regarding the joint

quality of the outcome (e.g., "The outcome of the conflict was good for both parties").

Perceived fairness was measured with three items (α = .84) regarding the process and the

outcome (e.g., "The conflict was handled in a fair way"). *Satisfaction* was measured with four

items (α = .89) regarding liking of the process and the outcome (e.g., "I was satisfied with the

outcome of the conflict"). Finally, *trust* was measured with five items (α = .92) regarding the

relationship between the parties (e.g., "I trust the other party").

Results Study 4

We tested Hypothesis 4 through correlations between integrative behavior and the four

perceptual outcome variables. Table 2 show descriptive statistics for all the variables, and

correlations between integrative behavior and each outcome. We found a positive and

significant correlation between integrative behavior and all four outcome variables; perceived

outcome quality (r = .42, p < .001), perceived fairness (r = .41, p < .01), satisfaction (r = .28,

p < .05), and trust (r = .43, p < .001). Some of the bivariate correlations between the different

outcome variables were high, possibly indicating that these outcome variables measure a

somewhat similar concept. Nevertheless, the data support our Hypothesis 4; integrative

behavior is positively related to several types of outcome.

Insert Table 2 about here

Method Study 5

The participants in Study 5 consisted of 293 graduate business students. Their average age was 25, about equally divided between sexes. The subjects participated in a negotiation exercise as part of a course in negotiation. The students role-played a buyer-seller interaction, and negotiated the delivery of television sets (cf. Pruitt & Lewis, 1975). They negotiated three issues; delivery time, product variations, and financing terms. Each issue had nine alternative settlement points. We used this simulation because it is a commonly used variable-sum negotiation that allows for high joint outcome through logrolling (Pruitt, 1981). That is, the parties can achieve high joint outcome by exchanging concessions on their low-profit issues (rather than making inferior compromises on each issue sequentially). Each student received confidential background information and a profit schedule. The background information contained information about the three negotiation issues, while the profit schedule showed their individual earnings for each possible alternative on each of the three issues. The subjects had 10 minutes for preparation and 30 minutes to negotiate.

The independent variable in Study 5 was integrative behavior. We measured integrative behavior by four questions in the post-negotiation questionnaire (five-point scale where 1 is low and 5 is high). The questions were adopted from the DUTCH-inventory used in the fourth study. The reliability of the scale was satisfactory ($\alpha = .75$). Importantly, the variable was aggregated to the dyadic level by computing the mean of the two negotiator's responses within a dyad. The dependent variables were four outcome variables. *Outcome quality* was calculated as the sum of the individual outcomes achieved by the seller and the buyer in each dyad. The three other outcome variables were measured in the post-negotiation questionnaire (five-point scale with 1 as low and 5 as high). The measures were similar,

although not identical, to the ones used in Study 4. All three variables were reliable –

perceived fairness (four items, α = .83), satisfaction (four items, α = .73), and trust (three

items, α = .77) – and were aggregated to the dyadic level by computing the mean of the two

negotiator's scores within a dyad.

Results Study 5

Hypothesis 4 was tested by correlating the average integrative behavior in negotiation

dyads with the objective and subjective outcome variables. Descriptive statistics for all

variables, and correlations between integrative behavior and outcomes, are shown in Table 3.

Integrative behavior had a significantly positive affect on outcome quality ($r = .37, p < .001$),

perceived fairness ($r = .43, p < .001$), satisfaction ($r = .47, p < .001$), and trust ($r = .37, p <$

$.001$). The correlations among the outcome variables were all below .45, except for perceived

fairness and satisfaction ($r = .55$), suggesting that the outcome variables tap into fairly

different aspects of outcome. Thus, the data in this study – like in Study 4 – are supportive of

our Hypothesis 4; integrative behavior is positively related to outcomes.

Insert Table 3 about here

DISCUSSION

In searching for factors that relates to an integrative approach across five data-sets, we

found several interesting results. In Study 1, we found group-level differences regarding

gender and education to have limited effects on integrative style. Thus, typical stereotypes

regarding gender and type of education should be downplayed. Admittedly though, male

business students were low on integrative style, and should take courses in conflict

management and negotiation!

Study 2 indicates that individuals vary their degree of integration across situations. We have a tendency to be more integrative with opponents we have good personal relations with. Thus, we may expect that conflicts typically reinforce prior relationships rather than change them. Of course, normatively we would wish people that have poor relationships to act integratively towards each other in order to turn their relationship around. This seems, however, not to be the case.

Study 3 demonstrated that individual differences relates to an integrative style. As expected, offensive qualities such as cognitive motivation, creativity and positive affect all predict an integrative style. Positive affect may vary across situations and can be influenced by the situation or by the person. Abilities such as cognitive motivation and creativity are more stable personal attributes. Persons low on these individual difference factors may, for example, gain from being externally stimulated (e.g., goals), and by learning specific techniques for increasing creativity.

Finally, in Study 4 and Study 5 we examined the relationship between integrative behavior and outcome. The two situations differed; in Study 5 the quality of the agreement could be objectively examined, while in Study 4 we relied on personal evaluation. In Study 4 we also tapped into real life conflicts, while in Study 5 we used an experimental design. Regardless of situation, integrative behavior leads to high quality outcomes in terms of decision quality, fairness, satisfaction, and trust.

Implications

The findings presented in this article indicate that proximal and micro-level variables influence the use of an integrative approach more than more "distant" group-level variables. Thus, one's own motivational, cognitive and affective traits and states, and the relationship to the other party, play a critical role in explaining an integrative approach. Other studies have (e.g., Palmer & Thompson, 1995), not surprisingly, found the behavior of the other party also

to be important. Typically, parties in conflict match each others behavior, and non-cooperative behavior typically dominates over cooperative behavior (Kelley & Stahelski, 1970). Behavioral changes toward integration can, however, be achieved by a persistent use of an integrative approach (e.g., Schei, Rognes, & Shapiro, 2006). This may involve sanctioning non-cooperative behavior from the other party, and at the same time use integrative statements to invite the other party to integrate or problem solve (Brett, Shapiro, & Lytle, 1988). Sanctions alone are not enough. Our findings fit the "closeness hypothesis" in organizational psychology (Pierce, Dunham, & Cummings, 1984). The argument is that the factors that are most closely related to a specific response will have the greatest effect on the response. The arguments above does not imply that macro-level structural factors are irrelevant, quite the contrary. But macro-level factors are, primarily, part of the substantial conflict being handled (i.e., the problem and the solution). Macro-level factors may, however, influence an integrative approach indirectly through more proximal causes. When conflicts are handled through dialog, proximal causes to the dialog are most influential in triggering an integrative approach.

When conflicts are settled, the quality of the settlements can be judged from a variety of perspectives. A settlement that is high on one criterion may be low on another. For example, the parties may have expanded the pie to the fullest (i.e., the settlement is of very high joint quality), but the pie may have been divided very unequally between the parties (i.e., the settlement may be seen as unfair). Indeed, several studies of conflict and negotiation show discrepancies between objective and subjective outcome variables (Galinsky, Mussweiler, & Medvec, 2002; Schei, Rognes, & De Dreu, 2006). Thus, behavior that influences one type of outcome well, may be detrimental regarding others. Our findings in studies 4 and 5 indicate that, across different conflict situations, integrative behavior influence various outcome measures – outcome quality, perceived fairness, satisfaction, and trust – equally well. This

may not be a surprise given the content of integrative behavior. It is, nevertheless, important to acknowledge this quality of integrative behavior.

Limitations and Further Research

We suggest here three areas where future research can avoid shortcomings found in the present research. First, in some of our studies we only rely on correlational analyses, Although we believe the directions specified in our model are theoretically justified, our data cannot prove the casual relations between all the variables. Further research using experimental designs should therefore establish the causal directions of the model. Moreover, in our studies, we focused on only one conflict management style (i.e., integration). While we chose to focus on integration – being one potentially important style – others styles (e.g., contending, avoiding, inaction) could also be investigated. Recent studies also suggest that combinatory use of these conflict styles should be examined, not only comparing the styles on a one-by-one basis (e.g., Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro, & Euwema, 1999).

Second, our two last studies relied on self-reports of integrative behavior. Although past research has demonstrated that retrospective memories accurately tap into past events in conflict and negotiation research (Beersma & De Dreu, 2002; De Dreu et al., 2001), further research should assess integration by using other methods such as observation, content analyses (e.g., taping the conflict behavior), and asking other individuals involved in the conflict (e.g., the opponent). Related to this, it might also be questioned if some of the studies may suffer from common method biases (especially Study 3), but we believe this to be less of a problem because the inventories we used were quite distinct from each other.

Third, and finally, the studies in this article pay not enough attention to the fact that conflicts are dynamic processes involving at least two parties. Although our last study touches on this by examining parties in an experimental negotiation setting, we didn't examine the process in detail. This call for further research that is more suited to investigate the conflict

process in detail as it unfolds. Such studies could help us to unravel, more precisely, how

integrative behavior can help conflicting parties to achieve mutually satisfactory settlements.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations in Study 3

Variables	Mean	SD	n	Correlations with Integrative Style
Integrative Style	4.27	0.50	298	1
Cognitive Motivation	3.49	0.46	205	.25 ***
Achievement Motivation	3.15	0.34	90	.30 **
Creativity	2.99	3.45	233	.20 **
Cognitive Style (explorative)	2.99	0.57	85	.20 +
Positive Affect	2.93	0.65	294	.13 *

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations in Study 4

Variables	Mean	SD	Correlations with Integrative Behavior
Integrative Behavior	3.41	0.92	1
Perceived Outcome Quality	3.09	1.13	.42 ***
Perceived Fairness	3.25	1.01	.41 **
Satisfaction	3.01	1.07	.28 *
Trust	3.77	1.12	.43 ***

N = 58.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Negotiation Dyads in Study 5

Variables	Mean	SD	Correlations with Integrative Behavior
Integrative Behavior	3.59	0.55	1
Outcome Quality	9406	896	.37 ***
Perceived Fairness	3.86	0.58	.43 ***
Satisfaction	3.58	0.37	.47 ***
Trust	3.84	0.59	.37 ***

N = 147 dyads.

*** $p < .001$.

Figure 1

The Dual Concern Model
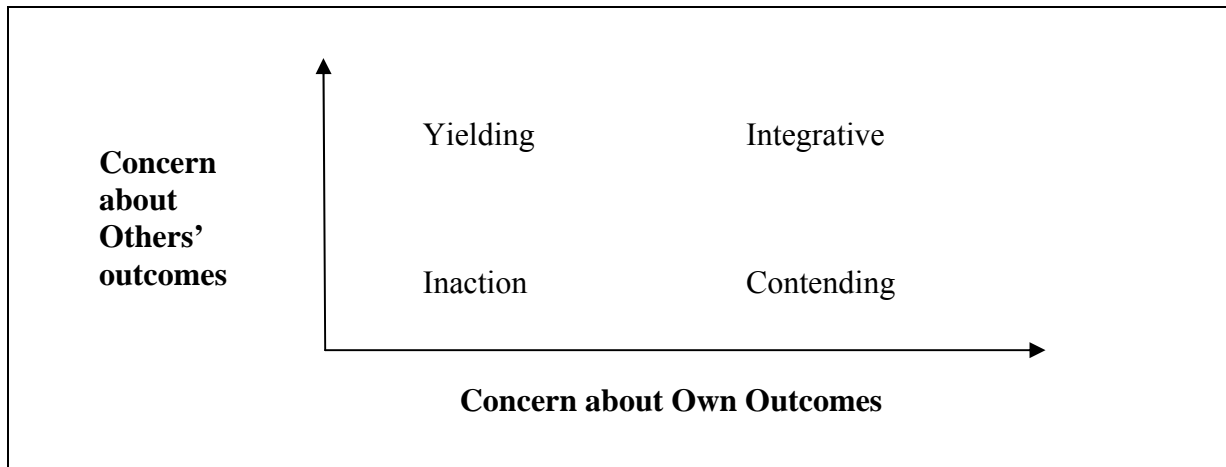
Figure 2
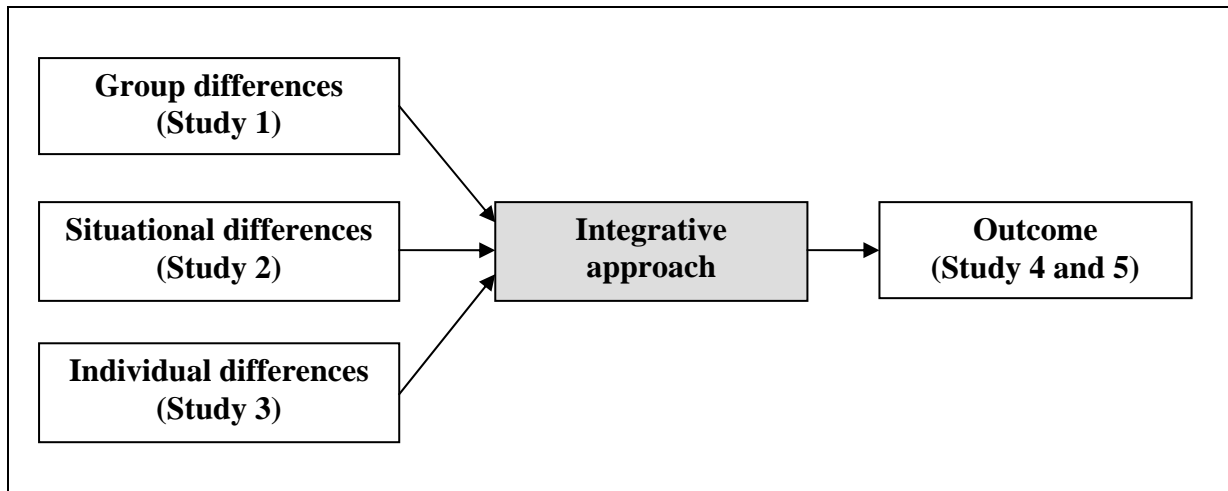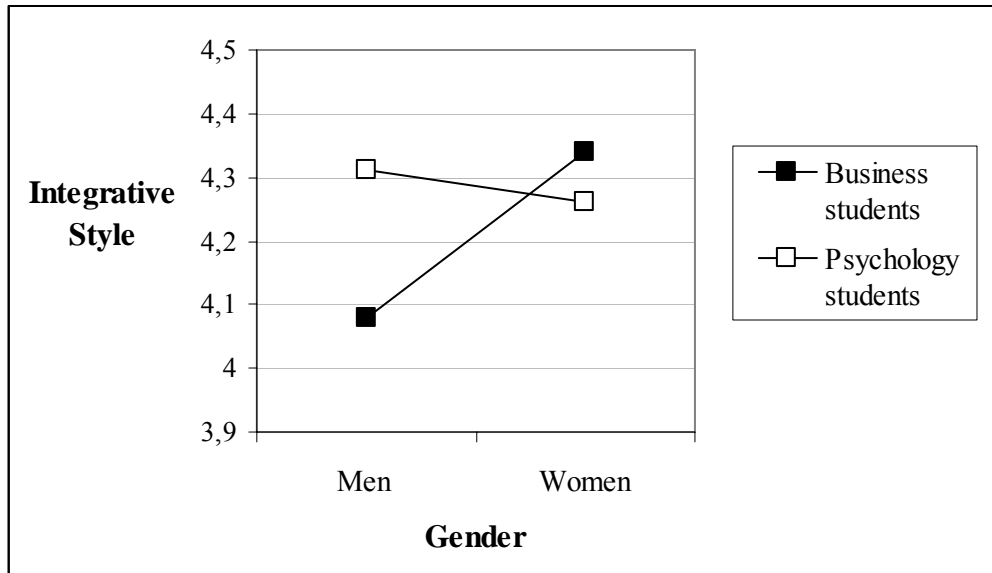
Studies Overview

Figure 3

Interaction Effect of Gender and Education on Integrative Style

Descriptive statistics: Women psychology; M = 4.26, SD = 0.47, n = 244. Men psychology;

M = 4.31, SD = 0.45, n = 72. Women business; M = 4.34, SD = 0.49, n = 91. Men business;

M = 4.08, SD = 0.55, n = 142.

Figure 4

Effects of Relationship Quality on Integrative Style