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INCONSISTENCIES IN MANAGEMENT STYLES AND THEIR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

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Abstract: Management style plays a critical role in determining organizational efficiency, employee satisfaction, productivity, and long-term sustainability. Managers shape organizational performance through their leadership methods, communication styles, decision-making mechanisms, and employee supervision approaches. While different management styles can be effective in specific situations, using them in a confusing and inconsistent manner leads to serious issues. This state results in a loss of employee trust, weakening of the internal organizational structure, and a decline in overall performance. This article investigates the problems arising from management style inconsistencies and their negative impact on organizational success. The study analyzes existing leadership and management literature, drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as transformational and transactional leadership, situational leadership, organizational justice, psychological safety, employee motivation, and organizational effectiveness. Findings indicate that managerial inconsistencies lead to uncertainty, feelings of injustice, diminished motivation, disrupted communication, and inefficient resource allocation. Furthermore, the paper delineates the boundary between positive flexibility and negative inconsistency, providing theoretical and practical recommendations in accordance with Higher Attestation Commission (OAK) requirements.

Keywords: management style, leadership inconsistency, organizational culture, employee motivation, managerial communication, organizational performance, organizational justice, psychological safety

.1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Relevance of the Research

Management represents one of the most vital and central elements of any organizational operation. It unifies human resources, financial capital, information flows, and operational workflows toward achieving predefined strategic objectives. For modern organizations, merely possessing strategic plans or financial resources is insufficient; they require skilled managers who can effectively execute these plans and productively lead teams. Managers define core priorities, allocate tasks, guide employees, supervise performance, resolve emerging conflicts, and shape the overall work environment. Their leadership and management styles directly influence employee behavior, organizational commitment, and overall operational outcomes.

Management style refers to the persistent approach a manager employs in directing, controlling, motivating, communicating with, and making decisions regarding employees. Different managers prefer distinct styles based on personal traits, accumulated experience, scope of responsibility, and leadership philosophies. While some managers favor centralized decision-making and strict supervision, others grant autonomy, engage employees in decision-making processes, and foster

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collaborative problem-solving. A third group focuses on inspiring staff, organizational development, setting visionary goals, and supporting professional growth.

In practice, no single management style is universally optimal for every situation. The most suitable approach depends on task complexity, employee knowledge and maturity, required decision-making speed, organizational culture, and external environmental factors. For instance, emergency or crisis situations requiring rapid decision-making may call for an authoritative (command-and-control) style. Conversely, when managing highly qualified specialists handling complex creative tasks, democratic and participative management yields superior results.

The coexistence of diverse management styles within an organization does not inherently cause negative outcomes. Primary issues and conflicts arise when managers exhibit uncertainty, irrationality, and behaviors contradictory to overall organizational goals. This manifests when leaders alter requirements without clear rationale, treat employees performing identical tasks unequally, issue conflicting instructions, or abruptly fluctuate between hyper-surveillance and complete neglect.

Furthermore, inconsistencies frequently occur across different managerial tiers within a single enterprise. For example, executive leadership may advocate for innovation and initiative, while middle management hinders independent decision-making and penalizes minor mistakes. Similarly, an organization may emphasize teamwork while rewarding employees strictly based on individual metrics. Such discrepancies create a profound rift between declared organizational values and actual management practice.

Operating within such inconsistent environments leaves employees uncertain about expectations and evaluation criteria. Consequently, workers redirect their energy from productive tasks toward avoiding managerial criticism. Over time, this environment erodes employee trust in leadership, diminishes motivation, and impairs the organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives. In today's landscape of rapid technological shifts, global competition, and economic volatility, understanding the threshold between constructive flexibility and destructive inconsistency is both a theoretical and practical imperative.

1.2. Problem Statement

The central problem of this study is to identify and evaluate the negative impacts of management style inconsistencies and irrational shifts on organizational productivity, employee psychological well-being, and long-term sustainable development.

While management literature widely acknowledges that managers must adapt evaluation criteria to situational demands, many organizations struggle to maintain the balance between adaptive flexibility and irrational instability. Managers frequently succumb to personal mood swings, favoritism, or transient pressures, abruptly altering leadership styles without communicating the rationale to employees. This leads to convoluted communication channels, unfair evaluations, role ambiguity, and widespread insecurity regarding the future. Where managerial instability becomes chronic, employee trust degrades, extinguishing the desire to propose innovative ideas or accept accountability.

1.3. Research Objectives and Tasks

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the root causes of management style inconsistencies and provide a comprehensive scientific foundation regarding their negative consequences on organizational performance and employee dynamics, alongside actionable mechanisms for mitigation.

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To achieve this objective, the following specific tasks were established:

1. Clarify the core concept of management style and scientifically delineate the boundary between negative inconsistency and positive flexibility;
2. Identify internal and external factors triggering managerial contradictions and instability;
3. Evaluate the impact of management instability on employee motivation, labor productivity, and trust in leadership;
4. Analyze how inconsistent management affects organizational culture, internal communication, and interdepartmental conflicts;
5. Investigate the ultimate organizational consequences of managerial conflicts, including employee turnover, reduced innovation, and financial loss;
6. Formulate practical recommendations and a strategic 4-step framework to maintain management consistency while retaining necessary operational adaptability.

1.4. Research Questions

This study addresses the following key research questions:

RQ1: What are the primary forms and underlying causes of management style inconsistencies and contradictions?

RQ2: How does management style instability negatively impact employee motivation, psychological well-being, and performance indicators?

RQ3: In what ways do managerial contradictions disrupt organizational culture, communication systems, and team collaboration?

RQ4: What mechanisms can organizations employ to balance managerial consistency with adaptability to changing external conditions?

1.5. Scientific and Practical Significance

This research holds substantial theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, it synthesizes core concepts of leadership theory, organizational justice, psychological safety, and motivation, systematically explaining how managerial inconsistency impacts organizational structures. It proves that maintaining logic and fairness in leadership behavior is a foundational prerequisite for organizational stability.

Practically, the findings and recommendations serve as a guide for business owners, executives, HR professionals, and managers. They enable practitioners to diagnose managerial flaws, rebuild employee trust, and foster a healthy organizational climate. Additionally, these materials offer rich pedagogical content for university courses in Management, Organizational Behavior, and Human Resource Management.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study adopts a research design based on literature review and conceptual synthesis. This methodology facilitates a systematic theoretical generalization of managerial relationships, employee psychological experiences, and organizational behavior dynamics.

Rather than relying on primary empirical field data, this paper thoroughly synthesizes internationally and locally recognized leadership theories, empirical studies, and scholarly literature. The objective is to establish the logical and theoretical framework governing management inconsistency mechanisms across organizations generally.

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2.2. Information Sources and Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation comprises classic and contemporary works across leadership, organizational behavior, employee motivation, organizational justice, and psychological safety. Core literature includes research by K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, and R.K. White (leadership styles), J.M. Burns and B.M. Bass (transformational and transactional leadership), P. Hersey, K.H. Blanchard, and D.E. Johnson (situational leadership), J.A. Colquitt (organizational justice), A. Edmondson (psychological safety), E.L. Deci and R.M. Ryan (self-determination theory), and J.P. Kotter (change management).

Table 1. Core Theoretical Concepts and Their Role in the Study

Theoretical Concept	Key Authors	Role and Significance in Study
Leadership Styles Theory	K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, R. White	Explains authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire management styles and their effects on group dynamics.
Situational Leadership Model	P. Hersey, K. Blanchard	Illustrates positive flexibility—adapting leadership behaviors to employee readiness levels.
Transformational & Transactional Leadership	J.M. Burns, B.M. Bass	Analyzes contradictions between inspiration-driven and rule/reward-driven management approaches.
Organizational Justice Theory	J.A. Colquitt	Establishes how distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice impact employee trust.
Psychological Safety Theory	A. Edmondson	Demonstrates that initiative requires a stable environment free from fear of negative repercussions.
Self-Determination Theory	E.L. Deci, R.M. Ryan	Explains how managerial instability disrupts essential needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

2.3. Analytical Framework

To evaluate the structural impacts of management inconsistencies, a four-stage analytical framework was developed:

1. Stage 1: Inconsistency Antecedents (Causes) — Irrational decision-making, contradictory directives, biased evaluations, and unannounced changes.

2. Stage 2: Employee Perception & Organizational Processes (Mediating Mechanisms) — Emergence of perceived injustice, role ambiguity, insecurity, and trust erosion.

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3. Stage 3: Operational Negative Consequences (Behavioral Shifts) — Decline in motivation, breakdown of communication channels, heightened conflict, passivity, and increased turnover intention.

4. Stage 4: Ultimate Organizational Outcomes — Reduced productivity, quality degradation, halted innovation, and direct/indirect financial losses.

2.4. Analysis Procedure and Limitations

Literature was synthesized by mapping theoretical framework elements directly onto operational business scenarios. A core constraint of this study is its reliance on conceptual literature synthesis rather than primary empirical dataset modeling from a specific enterprise. Furthermore, the intensity of management inconsistency impacts may vary across different industrial sectors (e.g., manufacturing vs. IT technology sectors).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The theoretical synthesis revealed eight primary operational and psychological mechanisms through which management inconsistencies impair organizational performance:

3.1. Role Ambiguity and Unclear Expectations

The most immediate consequence of managerial instability is employee confusion regarding core responsibilities and priorities. When managers frequently alter goals without clear rationale, workers lose track of strategic priorities, diverting energy toward deciphering leadership motives rather than execution. This breeds hesitation, task duplication, and organizational paralysis.

3.2. Decline in Employee Motivation and Engagement

According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), optimal psychological functioning depends on fulfilling three innate needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Inconsistent management impairs all three: autonomy is crushed when independent decisions are retroactively penalized; competence is undermined when shifting standards invalidate prior work; and relatedness fractures as erratic leadership erodes emotional connection. Consequently, discretionary effort vanishes.

3.3. Erosion of Trust in Leadership

Trust is the foundation of organizational functioning. When leaders break commitments, violate declared policies, or apply double standards, employees perceive managerial actions as arbitrary or self-serving. In low-trust environments, open communication ceases, and employees suppress reporting operational flaws for fear of unpredictable punishment.

3.4. Perception of Organizational Injustice

Colquitt (2001) categorizes organizational justice into distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational dimensions. Management inconsistency breeds systemic perceived injustice across all four domains:

Table 2. Dimensions of Organizational Injustice Caused by Managerial Inconsistency

Justice Dimension	Managerial Inconsistency Manifestation	Employee Reaction & Organizational Impact
Distributive Justice	Allocating rewards and promotions based on shifting, opaque criteria.	Widespread dissatisfaction among high performers; collapse of peer collaboration.
Procedural Justice	Altering decision-making and evaluation rules depending on	Disregard for formal organizational policies;

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	the individual.	devaluation of official standards.
Interpersonal Justice	Exhibiting politeness to favored employees while behaving rudely to others.	Destruction of team harmony; escalation of internal conflict and factionalism.
Informational Justice	Failing to explain reasons behind sudden operational policy shifts.	Proliferation of rumors and gossip; chronic employee anxiety and cynicism.

3.5. Disruption of Communication and Interdepartmental Conflict

Management inconsistency disrupts vertical and horizontal communication channels. When executives and middle managers convey conflicting demands, operational staff become paralyzed. Horizontally, departments interpret organizational strategy differently, shifting from constructive collaboration to defensive blame-shifting.

3.6. Degradation of Organizational Culture

As Schein & Schein (2017) highlight, organizational culture is defined by shared values and practices. When declared values (e.g., transparency and integrity) conflict with managerial actions (e.g., opacity and pressure), the formal culture collapses, replaced by self-preservation behaviors.

3.7. Decline in Productivity and Operational Efficiency

Managerial inconsistency results in wasted labor hours, rework, prolonged meetings, and operational friction. Product defect rates rise, customer service quality degrades, and project deadlines are routinely breached, incurring direct financial losses and long-term brand damage.

3.8. Talent Turnover and Loss of Intellectual Capital

Persistent instability drives high employee turnover, with top talent leaving first. Organizations incur substantial recruitment costs, productivity lags during onboarding, loss of proprietary know-how, and increased burnout among remaining staff.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Interpretation of Results

The findings confirm that management style inconsistency is a systemic risk rather than a simple leadership character defect. It initiates a destructive chain reaction: Managerial Instability -> Role Ambiguity & Injustice -> Loss of Trust & Motivation -> Communication Breakdown -> Operational Inefficiency & Turnover -> Strategic Crisis.

4.2. Delineating Negative Inconsistency from Positive Flexibility

A key contribution of this study is clarifying the distinction between constructive situational flexibility (Hersey & Blanchard) and destructive inconsistency:

Table 3. Comparative Matrix: Constructive Flexibility vs. Destructive Inconsistency

Comparison Criterion	Constructive Flexibility (Situational)	Destructive Inconsistency
Driver of Change	External environment shifts, market dynamics, or changes in employee maturity.	Managerial mood fluctuations, personal interests, or arbitrary factors.
Communication & Transparency	Rationale and expected outcomes of adjustments are	Decisions are altered abruptly without explanation;

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	openly communicated.	feedback is ignored.
Core Values	Fundamental principles of fairness and ethics remain constant.	Declared organizational values and rules are openly violated.
Impact on Workforce	Fosters understanding, alignment, trust, and smooth adaptability.	Creates confusion, frustration, anxiety, and deep cynicism toward leadership.

4.3. Psychological Safety and Organizational Learning

Edmondson (1999) established that psychological safety enables team members to express ideas, admit mistakes, and experiment without fear of interpersonal penalty. Management inconsistency destroys psychological safety, driving self-censorship and halting organizational learning.

4.4. Practical Strategies for Mitigating Inconsistency

Organizations must implement six core measures: (1) Standardized Management Principles & Codes; (2) Transparent HR Processes; (3) Open Managerial Communication Protocols; (4) Leadership Development & Emotional Intelligence Training; (5) Continuous Feedback Systems (e.g., 360-degree evaluations); and (6) Aligned KPI Frameworks.

4.5. The 4-Stage Model for Ensuring Management Consistency

Table 4. Four-Stage Framework for Ensuring Management Consistency and Adaptability

Model Stage	Organizational Actions & Requirements	Expected Outcome
1. Values Consistency	Maintain ethical standards, honesty, and fairness across all management tiers.	Enhanced organizational trust; elimination of systemic perceived injustice.
2. Procedural Clarity	Formally document and consistently enforce evaluation and reward rules.	Substantial reduction in role ambiguity, task rework, and operational friction.
3. Situational Adaptation	Adapt tactics to external changes while transparently explaining reasons to staff.	High organizational agility paired with low workforce resistance to change.
4. Accountability & Monitoring	Continuously audit managerial leadership via employee satisfaction and long-term KPIs.	Sustainable organizational growth, high retention, and elevated productivity.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study comprehensively examined the negative impacts of management style inconsistencies on organizational performance, employee psychological well-being, and organizational culture. The analysis yields the following core conclusions:

1. Managerial inconsistency is a systemic organizational risk that induces operational friction and severe resource dissipation.

2. Instability in leadership behavior creates role ambiguity, stifles intrinsic motivation, and erodes foundational employee trust.

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3. Managerial contradictions breach organizational justice principles and destroy psychological safety, suppressing innovation and organizational learning.

4. A distinct boundary separates constructive flexibility from destructive inconsistency: flexibility adapts tactics transparently while preserving core values, whereas inconsistency alters decisions arbitrarily.

5. Organizations must implement standardized leadership codes, transparent HR procedures, leadership development programs, and robust 360-degree feedback loops.

Future empirical research should test the proposed 4-stage model across specific sectors (e.g., banking, manufacturing, IT) using quantitative survey instruments and structural equation modeling.

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