

The Conflict Management Types and Strategies of Sport Club Board Rooms: Case Evidence from Jordan

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Abstract: Organisational conflict is an inevitable aspect of any workplace and understanding the different types of conflict while implementing effective strategies is crucial for promoting a healthy and productive work environment. This study aims to identify the types and strategies of organisational conflict management in Jordanian sports organisations, specifically in Amman, the capital. It will examine the perceptions of both board members and club presidents and analyse any significant variations in their views. The study employs a descriptive survey method, using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data. The research population comprises presidents and board members from 114 sports clubs registered with the Ministry of Youth, totalling 1 1,090 individuals. A random sampling technique is utilised to select a sample of 46 sports clubs, representing approximately 400 individuals. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 290 responses were received, consisting of 46 club presidents and 244 board members. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The study finds agreement among sports club board members and presidents that intergroup conflict is the predominant type of conflict occurring in Jordanian sports clubs. Additionally, the results showed agreement between members and club presidents on choosing the cooperative strategy as the best possible approach to resolve organisational conflicts. However, the results indicate the existence of statistically significant differences in conflict management types and strategies between board members and club presidents. The observed differences can be attributed to their distinct roles and responsibilities within the club, as well as variations in their levels of experience. It is recommended that Jordanian sports clubs effectively manage conflicts by combining open communication, strengthening governance, inclusive decision-making processes, and a willingness to collaborate and compromise.

Keywords: Organisational conflict management, Ministry of Youth, Jordan, Sport clubs, Conflict management types, Conflict management strategies

1. Introduction

Organisational conflict is a natural and often unavoidable phenomenon in all types of organisations. It can disrupt normal operations but also has the potential to foster innovation and improved decision-making when managed effectively (Rahim, 2011; Cogburn et al., 2012). In Jordan, sports clubs are registered non-governmental organisations authorised to conduct sports, cultural, and social activities (Al-Daaja & Szabados, 2018). Despite their importance in fostering community engagement and youth development, internal conflicts have increasingly affected the stability and performance of many Jordanian sports clubs. Examples such as Al-Hussein Irbid, Al-Jazeera, and Al-Baqaa illustrate how unresolved conflicts can lead to administrative instability, poor performance, and even the dissolution of clubs.

Drawing from the author's personal experience and official records, it is clear that boardroom conflicts consume a substantial amount of time and energy, often centred around power struggles, unclear roles, or personal disagreements. This study fills a gap in academic literature by being one of the first empirical investigations into conflict management practices within Jordanian sports organisations. It aims to identify the prevalent types of organisational conflict in Jordanian sports clubs, ascertain the primary conflict management strategies employed, examine the differences in perceptions between club presidents and board members concerning the types of conflicts and strategies utilised, and explore the relationship between different types of conflict and their corresponding strategies. By focusing on clubs in Amman—home to the highest number of registered sports clubs—the study offers representative insights into the broader dynamics of conflict within Jordan's sports sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organisational Conflict Management

Conflict management refers to the processes and strategies used to resolve disputes within organisations.

Minimising negative outcomes while leveraging positive factors (Rahim, 2002). Effective conflict management is crucial for sustaining harmony, enhancing productivity, and ensuring organisational effectiveness. In the public administration and non-profit sectors, where decision-making is frequently decentralised and

stakeholder participation is significant, conflict management becomes more intricate (Somech et al., 2009). Conflicts may stem from internal challenges, such as conflicting goals, inadequate communication, and resource distribution problems, or from external influences like regulatory changes and public scrutiny.

Liu & Chen (2002) propose three primary conflict management strategies:

- **Avoidance Strategy:** Defined as ignoring or delaying discussions about conflicts. Although it can help soothe emotions, this method may lead to an escalation of issues.
- **Competition Strategy:** Entails prioritising personal interests over others, frequently resulting in win-lose scenarios. While this approach might be warranted in urgent situations, it risks harming long-term relationships.
- **Cooperation Strategy:** Centres on collaborative problem-solving to attain mutually beneficial outcomes. By emphasising open communication and shared objectives, this approach fosters trust and promotes long-term organisational well-being (Anestaki, 2016).

Of these, the cooperative strategy is increasingly acknowledged for its capacity to create sustainable solutions and strengthen team cohesion (Lee, 2009; Weingart & Jehn, 2009).

2.2 Types of Organisational Conflict

Thomas (2002) categorises organisational conflict into several types:

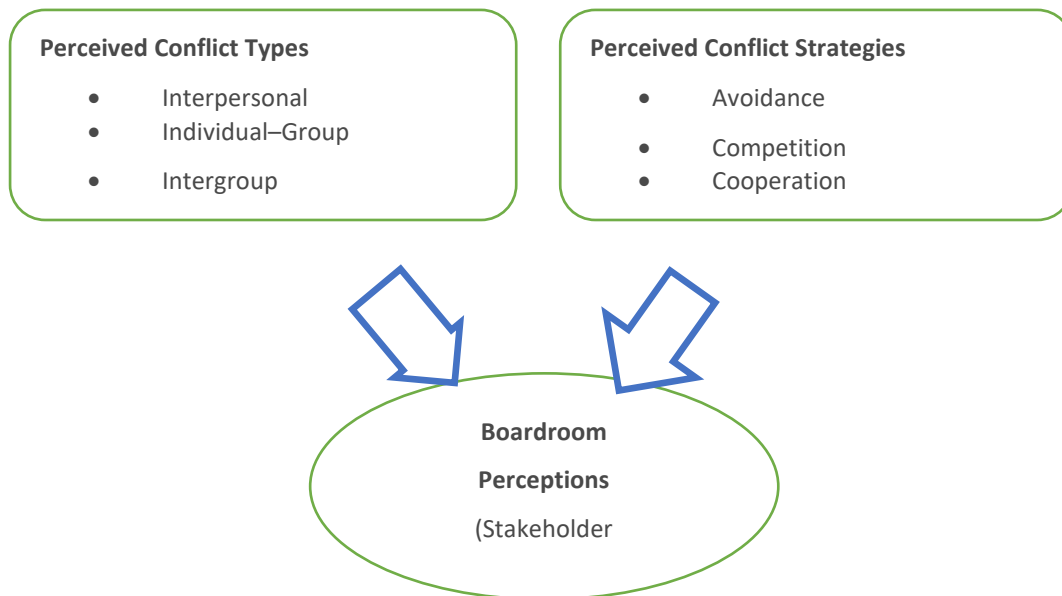
- **Interpersonal Conflict:** Occurs between two individuals.
- **Conflict Between Individual and Group:** A person at odds with a collective.
- **Intergroup Conflict:** Occurs among various groups within the same organisation.

Within Jordanian sports clubs, conflicts between subgroups on the board are prevalent, stemming from varying opinions, historical alliances, and ambiguous leadership structures (Mohamed, 2017). Although interpersonal and intergroup conflicts do occur, they are less common.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study utilises a conceptual model derived from Liu & Chen (2002) that combines conflict types and strategies with the viewpoints of board members and club presidents. The framework consists of three components:

1. **Perceived Conflict Types:** Includes interpersonal, individual-group, and intergroup conflicts.
2. **Perceived Conflict Strategies:** Avoidance, competition, and cooperation.
3. **Boardroom Perceptions:** How stakeholders view and interpret conflict dynamics.



Source: Author's compilation

Figure 1: The research Model

This model enhances comprehension of how different actors view and react to conflict, offering insights into organisational culture and leadership styles.

3. Methodology

This research utilises a descriptive survey approach, integrating quantitative data collection and analysis to examine the conflicts and strategies found in Jordanian sports clubs. The study focused on 114 sports clubs registered with the Ministry of Youth in Amman, representing around 1,090 people (club presidents and board members). A random sample of 46 clubs (approximately 40% of the total) was chosen using the random selection function in Microsoft Excel. Of these 46 clubs, 400 questionnaires were distributed, leading to a response rate of 72.5% and resulting in 290 valid responses: 46 from club presidents and 244 from board members.

A structured questionnaire adapted from Al-Zahrani (1999) was used. It included three sections: 1. Demographic Information: Gender, years of membership, and education level. 2. Conflict Strategies: 18 items measuring avoidance, competition, and cooperation strategies on a five-point Likert scale. 3. Conflict Types: Six items assessing interpersonal, individual-group, and intergroup conflicts.

Data were entered into SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to evaluate the prevalence of conflict types and strategies. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the perceptions of club presidents and board members. Cronbach's alpha values were used to assess internal consistency.

The reliability test was conducted, and the results are presented in Table No. 1. The results indicate that all values in the table below are greater than 0.60, with most exceeding 0.70, suggesting acceptable to high reliability (SANTOS, 1999).

Table 1: Reliability Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha

Main factors	Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Types of Conflict	Interpersonal	3	0.882
	Individual conflict with a group	2	0.731
	Intergroup conflict	1	-
Conflict Strategies	Avoidance	6	0.912
	Competitive	6	0.897
	Collaboration	6	0.886
Overall scale		24	0.867

Source: Author computation

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the respondents (N = 290) reveal several important findings about the study population. Firstly, the gender distribution indicates a significant predominance of male respondents (89.31%), accurately reflecting the current gender composition in Jordanian sports club leadership positions. This aligns with Rouhani's (2022) research, which documents the male-dominated nature of sports governance in Arab countries, where cultural norms have traditionally limited female participation in sports administration roles. Membership duration data suggest that nearly half of the respondents (48.96%) have had over ten years of club membership, indicating that the sample includes many experienced administrators with extensive institutional knowledge. This is particularly valuable for conflict research, as long-tenured members would have witnessed and participated in various conflict situations over time. Regarding education, the majority of respondents (52.75%) held bachelor's degrees, while only a small percentage (1.73%) possessed higher education qualifications.

This distribution may reflect both the educational attainment levels common among sports administrators in Jordan and the relatively limited emphasis placed on advanced academic credentials for sports leadership

positions in the region, as noted by Al-Hussein (2020). The combination of these demographic factors—predominantly male, experienced, and moderately educated—creates a respondent profile capable of providing informed perspectives on organisational conflicts in sports clubs.

4.2 Perceived Conflict Types: Board Members’ and Presidents’ Perspectives

The research examined the types of perceived conflict in Jordanian sports organisations, gathering insights from board members and presidents. This analysis distinguishes between the two viewpoints, emphasising key trends, differences, and implications for governance and conflict management. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Board Members' Conflict Type Perceptions

No	Item(s)	Mean	S. D	Degree
1	President vs. individual member	2.04	0.78	low
2	President vs. a group of members	2.31	0.94	low
3	President vs. vice president	1.66	0.57	low
4	Between groups within the board	2.39	0.78	moderate
5	Between individual members	2.18	0.91	low
6	Individual member vs. group	1.95	0.68	low
Total		2.15	0.60	low

Source: Author computation

The table above shows that board members rated intergroup conflict as the primary concern, with a mean score of 2.39, indicating a moderate level of apprehension. This finding supports Forsyth’s (2019) group dynamics theory, which suggests that coalition building during elections can lead to the establishment of entrenched factions. Conversely, the least conflict was reported between the president and the vice president (M = 1.66), highlighting a strong respect for hierarchy, in line with leadership norms prevalent in Arab cultures (Al-Krenawi, 2021). With an overall average conflict score of 2.15, the findings suggest low overall conflict; nonetheless, the moderate levels of intergroup tension could signal potential issues that, if unattended, might worsen (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). These observations emphasise the importance of proactive governance and strategies to mitigate group-level conflicts that could negatively impact organisational performance.

In contrast to board members, presidents reported a significantly higher level of conflict across all categories, resulting in a total mean score of 3.17, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Presidents' Conflict Type Perceptions

No	Item(s)	Mean	S. D	Degree
1	President vs. individual member	2.80	1.02	moderate
2	President vs. a group of members	3.22	1.13	moderate
3	President vs. vice president	3.28	1.33	moderate
4	Between groups within the board	3.76	1.45	moderate
5	Between individual members	3.02	1.09	moderate
6	Individual member vs. group	2.91	1.19	moderate
Total		3.17	0.84	moderate

Source: Author computation

In the table above, the most notable perceived conflict was found among groups within the board (M = 3.76), emphasising that intergroup dynamics are a key concern for both levels of leadership. This observation aligns with Coleman’s (2021) assertion that organisations should prioritise intergroup mediation. Furthermore, presidents noted heightened conflict between themselves and vice presidents (M = 3.28), which differs from the reports of board members and supports the idea of the “leadership paradox” (Thompson, 2022)—the concept that leaders often recognise tensions that might go unnoticed by others. This discrepancy also

highlights the “leader amplification effect,” which explains how leaders, due to their extensive oversight roles, are more capable of identifying and internalising organisational conflict (Higgs, 2018). Such heightened awareness necessitates specialised leadership development programmes that emphasise conflict management.

A comparison of Tables 2 and 3 reveals significant perceptual differences. Both groups recognised intergroup conflict as the main issue; however, presidents perceived it to be much more severe (3.76 versus 2.39). This discrepancy may stem from their considerable responsibilities and obligation to ensure board harmony. Furthermore, board members generally downplayed hierarchical conflicts, while presidents regarded them as moderate to significant. This disparity suggests possible communication breakdowns or misalignment in addressing and highlighting conflicts within leadership frameworks.

4.3 Perceived Conflict Strategies in Jordanian Sports Organisations

A descriptive analysis was conducted to explore conflict management practices in Jordanian sports organisations, drawing on the views of club presidents and board members. This method provides a comprehensive understanding of existing conflict resolution strategies, incorporating both leadership and administrative perspectives.

4.3.1 Board members’ perspectives on conflict strategies

Table 4 presents the responses of board members regarding the conflict strategies employed by club presidents. The analysis encompasses three primary strategies: avoidance, competition, and cooperation.

Table 4: Board Members’ Perception of Club Presidents’ Conflict Strategies

Strategy	Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Level
Avoiding	7	The president avoids addressing daily disputes among board members.	1.93	1.16	Low
	8	Ignores disagreements within the board.	1.96	1.02	Low
	9	Avoids discontent with board members.	2.07	1.01	Low
	10	Avoids listening to complaints related to disputes.	1.50	0.69	Low
	11	Avoids forming relations with disputing board members.	2.01	1.21	Low
	12	Avoids dialogue with those holding different opinions.	2.07	1.06	Low
Competing	13	Stubbornly sticks to opinions.	1.59	0.75	Low
	14	Treats disputes as win-lose situations.	1.37	0.70	Low
	15	Uses threats in conflicts.	1.37	0.77	Low
	16	Uses internal regulations to resolve disagreements.	2.49	1.37	Low
	17	Intensifies supervision of dissenters.	1.56	1.02	Low
	18	Monopolises conversations.	1.51	0.80	Low
Cooperative	19	Finds appropriate solutions to problems.	4.41	1.17	High
	20	Inquires about problems facing the club.	4.75	0.71	High
	21	Combining experience with others for decision-making.	4.55	0.70	High
	22	Remains impartial in conflicts.	4.46	0.91	High
	23	Understands others’ viewpoints.	4.59	0.68	High
	24	Sets shared goals.	4.64	0.92	High

Source: Author computation

The findings reveal a clear preference for cooperative strategies, which received notably high ratings for inquiry-based engagement (M = 4.75), shared goal-setting (M = 4.64), and understanding others’ perspectives (M = 4.59). In contrast, avoidance (e.g., M = 1.93 for avoiding disputes) and competitive behaviours (e.g., M = 1.37 for using threats) were rarely supported. When the responses are aggregated, the average scores across

the three strategies further emphasise these trends: cooperative strategy = 4.56, competing strategy = 1.81, and avoiding strategy = 1.92. These results indicate a strong inclination towards constructive and inclusive conflict resolution methods among sports club presidents, as seen by their board members.

This aligns with the findings of Al-Sabah (2015), which revealed that cooperative conflict management strategies in Middle Eastern organisations greatly enhance communication and team cohesion. Their findings support the idea that collaborative approaches foster a more constructive environment for decision-making and bolster organisational unity, particularly in team-focused settings such as sports clubs.

4.3.2 Club presidents' perspectives on conflict strategies

Table 5 illustrates the self-reported utilisation of conflict management strategies by club presidents. Unlike board members, presidents assessed their use of both avoidance and competition strategies more positively, although cooperative strategies continued to receive the highest endorsement.

Table 5: Self-reported utilisation of conflict management strategies by club presidents

Strategy	Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Level
Avoiding	7	Avoids addressing daily disputes.	3.74	1.34	High
	8	Ignores and neglects disagreements.	3.96	1.21	High
	9	Avoids discontent from board members.	3.91	1.11	High
	10	Avoids listening to complaints.	4.02	1.29	High
	11	Avoids forming relationships with disputing members.	4.24	1.02	High
	12	Avoids dialogue with opposing members.	4.26	1.27	High
Competing	13	Sticks to opinions until others concede.	4.13	1.24	High
	14	Treats conflicts as win-lose.	4.63	0.90	High
	15	Threatens dissenters.	4.87	0.62	High
	16	Uses regulations in conflicts.	3.93	1.22	High
	17	Increases control over dissenters.	4.17	1.22	High
	18	Monopolises meetings.	3.96	1.19	High
Cooperative	19	Finds solutions collaboratively.	4.91	0.28	High
	20	Inquiries about problems.	4.96	0.21	High
	21	Share experiences for decisions.	4.83	0.49	High
	22	Remains impartial in disputes.	4.89	0.31	High
	23	Understands others' viewpoints.	4.80	0.40	High
	24	Sets common goals cooperatively.	4.89	0.31	High

Source: Author computation

The analysis indicates that all three strategies achieved high average scores, with cooperative behaviours consistently leading. The top-rated item was “inquiring about the problems facing the club” (Item 20, M = 4.96), closely followed by “finding appropriate solutions” (Item 19, M = 4.91) and “setting a common goal with everyone’s cooperation” (Item 24, M = 4.89). These ratings reflect a proactive and inclusive leadership approach.

Interestingly, although cooperative strategies received the highest ranking overall, avoidance and competing strategies also scored notably well. For example, items such as “you threaten others who disagree with you” (Item 15, M = 4.87) and “you avoid discussion with opposing members” (Item 12, M = 4.26) garnered unexpectedly high support. This implies that some club presidents might employ both assertive and avoidant behaviours, depending on the situation. The combined average scores for all strategies were as follows:

- Cooperative strategy = **4.89**
- Avoiding strategy = **4.02**
- Competing strategy = **4.45**

These findings show that club presidents consider cooperation key to resolving conflicts, though they also recognise a considerable reliance on authoritative and avoidance strategies.

This viewpoint largely corresponds with the perspectives of board members discussed earlier, indicating a common preference for collaborative methods. Nevertheless, the presidents' greater self-reported use of competitive and avoidance strategies hints at a potential gap between their intended actions and how others perceive them. These results align with Al-Zahrani (1999), who highlighted that although cooperative methods foster organisational harmony, leadership styles in hierarchical cultures can still include authoritative tactics for conflict resolution.

5. Independent T-Test Analysis

An independent samples t-test was conducted to address the research question and examine whether statistically significant differences exist between the perceptions of club presidents and board members regarding the types and strategies of organisational conflict that occur within sports clubs in Amman, the capital city.

5.1 Conflict Types

Table 6 shows the results of the t-test, which aimed to address the research question: "Are there statistically significant differences between the views of club presidents and board members regarding the types of organisational conflict present in sports clubs?"

Table 6: Independent T-test Results on Perceptions of Conflict Types in Sports Clubs

Conflict Type	Item NO	Respondents	No of Respondents	M	S. D	T-Value	Sig (p-value)
Interpersonal conflict	1	President	46	2.80	1.02	5.74	00.00
		members	244	2.04	0.78		
	3	President	46	3.76	0.57	16.84	
		members	244	1.66	1.45		
	5	President	46	3.02	1.09	5.56	
		member	244	2.18	0.91		
Total	President	46	3.20	0.77	12.24		
	members	244	1.96	0.60			
Individual conflict with a group	2	President	46	3.28	1.33	6.28	00.00
		members	244	2.39	0.78		
	6	president	46	2.91	1.19	7.76	
		members	244	1.95	0.68		
	Total	president	46	3.10	1.04	7.97	
		member	244	2.17	0.65		
Intragroup conflict	4	President	46	3.22	1.13	5.82	00.00
		members	244	2.31	0.94		
Total		President	46	2.83	3.17	9.86	00.00
		members	244	3.91	2.15		

Source: Author computation

As indicated in Table 6, the p-values for interpersonal conflict, individual conflict with the group, and intragroup conflict are all 0.000. This demonstrates statistically significant differences between the perceptions of presidents and board members across all types of conflict examined. The findings reveal that club presidents and board members possess significantly different views regarding the nature and prevalence of organisational conflict types within their respective roles.

5.2 Conflict Strategies

An independent samples t-test was also conducted to address the research question: “Are there statistically significant differences between the views of club presidents and board members regarding the strategies used in managing organisational conflict?”

Table 7: Results of Independent T-test on Perceptions of Conflict Management Strategies in Sports Clubs

Strategy type	Respondent Groups	No	M	S. D	T-Value	Sig (p-value)
Avoidance	President	46	4.02	0.75	16.65	0.000*
	Members	244	1.92	0.79		
Competitive	President	46	4.28	0.34	28.76	0.000*
	Members	244	1.65	0.60		
Cooperative	President	46	4.88	0.15	3.05	0.002*
	Members	244	4.57	0.69		
Total	President	46	0.31	4.39	32.89	0.000*
	Members	244	0.32	2.71		

Source: Author computation

As illustrated in Table 7, there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of conflict management strategies held by club presidents and board members. Specifically, the significance levels for the avoidance strategy, competitive strategy, and cooperative strategy are 0.000, 0.000, and 0.002, respectively. Additionally, the overall evaluation of conflict strategies produced a significance level of 0.000.

These results suggest that board members perceive the application and effectiveness of conflict strategies differently from presidents. The variation in perspectives may be attributed to their differing responsibilities, levels of authority, and direct exposure to conflict within club operations. Overall, the findings confirm that the two groups exhibit significantly divergent viewpoints regarding both the types of conflict and the strategies used to resolve them.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the types of conflict present in Jordanian sports clubs and the strategies employed to manage them, as perceived by board members and club presidents. It also sought to determine whether there were significant differences in their views on conflict types and strategies within sports clubs in Amman, the capital. Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn.

- Conflict Types: From the perspective of club presidents, the most prominent type of organisational conflict in sports clubs is intergroup conflict, followed by interpersonal conflict and individual conflict within a group. Board members agree that intergroup conflict is the most significant, followed by individual conflict within a group, and interpersonal conflict is the least important. This was found to be a continuation of the alliances formed during the electoral stage.
- Conflict Strategies: Club presidents indicate that the primary conflict strategy employed is cooperation, followed by avoidance and competition. Board members similarly view cooperation as the most prevalent strategy, with competition next, while avoidance ranks as the least utilised.
- Consistency in Perspectives: The study found statistically significant differences between club presidents and board members in their perceptions of interpersonal, individual, and intergroup conflict. Additionally, differences in their views on the strategies used to manage organisational conflict are also statistically significant. Board members demonstrate a deeper awareness of conflict management strategies compared to club presidents. These results suggest that the varying perspectives of club presidents and board members may stem from their distinct roles, responsibilities, and varying experience levels within the club.
- Additional research can explore the factors driving intergroup conflict in Jordanian sports clubs and their implications. Additionally, a comparative study could analyse conflict management practices in these clubs relative to those in other regions or countries, pinpointing potential areas for enhancement.
- To improve conflict management in sports clubs, it is recommended to strengthen communication between club presidents and board members. Additionally, offering training programmes on conflict

management for both presidents and board members can enhance their effectiveness in resolving conflicts. It is also crucial to reinforce governance within sports clubs, ensuring inclusive decision-making processes that foster cooperation and support constructive conflict resolution.

Ethical Considerations: This research upheld ethical standards. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, provided their voluntary consent, and strict measures were taken to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. Data was stored securely, and no identifiable personal information was collected. The study received approval from the relevant authority and adhered to both institutional and international ethical guidelines.

AI Declaration: AI tools have been utilised for language editing and grammar checks. The content and analysis remain the author's original work.

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