HOW COMMUNICATION STYLES INFLUENCE CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

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ABSTRACT
Communication styles is linked to social interactions of an individual involving conflict resolution skills. The present study is purported to investigate the link between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills and the moderating function of personality traits between the two constructs. The subset consists of three hundred adults from diverse areas of Pakistan. The instruments included in the study involves Communication Style Questionnaire (CSQ), Conflict Resolution Skills Inventory (CRSI), and Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). Outcomes showed that significant positive link is found between certain communication styles and conflict resolution while personality traits moderate the association between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills. In a nutshell, communication styles as well as personality traits have a profound impact on conflict resolution skills of a person.
Keywords: Communication styles, conflict resolution skills, adults, personality traits

INTRODUCTION
Communication Styles
Communication styles substantially impact human engagement and dispute settlement. The four basic patterns of negotiation involve submissive, confrontational, covertly aggressive, and self-assured each have exclusive tendencies and implications for relational health. Among all assertive communication is often regarded as the most impactful and efficient, as it entails sharing of thoughts and emotions openly while honoring rights of others (Long et al., 2021). This approach promotes shared understanding and teamwork, crucial for strong ties.
While on the other hand, aggressive communication overlooks consideration regarding emotions and necessities of others, typically sparking conflict and discontent (Watson & Hill, 2015). Those employing this method often leads individuals to monopolize discussions and belittle others to validate their viewpoints. This approach may estrange others

and cultivate a hostile setting, obstructing productive dispute resolution.
Passive communication is characterized by avoiding the articulation of one's desires or emotions, often culminating misconceptions and mounting discontent (UMatter, 2023).Although it may appear to offer safety in emotionally charged situations, this communication pattern can hinder efficient constructive solutions and impede relationship advancement. In contrast to this, passive-aggressive communication camouflages anger with a pretense of compliance, often resulting in hidden expressions of dissatisfaction that can bewilder or annoy those involved (Pumble, 2023).
Knowing these communication styles is key to promoting better interaction and understanding among individuals. By using assertive communication, individual can enhance transparency and cultivates respectful interactions, whereas identifying the limitations of aggressive or passive communication enables

individuals to adapt their approaches for optimal outcomes (Steinberg, 2007). By enhancing self-awareness of one's communication style, individuals can encourage more constructive interactions and implement more efficient conflict resolution techniques.

Conflict Resolution Skills

Proficient conflict resolution skills are fundamental to fostering harmonious relationships in diverse settings, including workplaces and educational spaces. These competencies comprise several approaches and methods that empower individuals to approach disagreements in a productive manner. Effective dispute resolution entails understanding the conflict's nature and employing relevant communication methods and emotional acumen to resolve disagreements. (Gonçalves et al., 2016).

One fundamental element of conflict resolution entails the ability to engage in attentive listening, enabling individuals to gain a complete understanding of the perspectives of others involved. Active listening promotes empathy and perspective-taking and can enhance the effectiveness of problem resolution (Davaei et al., 2022). By recognizing and legitimizing the emotions and viewpoints of all parties, individuals can establish a team-oriented atmosphere that aids in resolving disputes.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is vital in conflict management. Those with high EQ can regulate their emotions and engage with others empathetically, which helps to calm tensions during disputes (CPD Online, 2025). Emotional intelligence development programs have demonstrated improvements in conflict handling, contributing to more harmonious interactions within teams and organizations. (North Central College, 2022).

Furthermore, considering various patterns of conflict handling, such as those outlined in the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), can assist individuals in choosing the most well-suited approach for a given situation (Oghenechuko & Godbless, 2018). The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) categorizes five patterns, competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Each conflict resolution style has its merits and demerits depending on the scenario, emphasizing the need for flexibility in one's approach.

Active listening plays a crucial role in conflict handling. It entails completely focusing on the speaker, helping to clarify confusion and fostering compassion. Engaging in active listening helps individuals recognize the fundamental causes of conflicts and handle them in a productive way (Indeed, 2023). This competency fosters clear communication and assures that all parties feel recognized and important during exchanges.

The abilities to solve problems are essential for finding effective solutions in conflict scenarios. Solving problems effectively involves understanding the issues, brainstorming potential solutions, and jointly assessing options with all parties involved (Indeed, 2024). This technique not only resolves the immediate conflict but also mitigates the opportunities of similar issues arising later by dealing with underlying factors.

Lastly, patience and the ability to control one's emotions are crucial for resolving conflicts effectively. Keeping a steady demeanor during conflicts allows for careful thought rather than quick reactions, patience fosters the opportunity to weigh all perspectives before deciding, while self-control helps manage emotional reactions that could increase conflict. (Conflict Resolution Training, 2024). When used together, these abilities help create an atmosphere that encourages harmonious dispute resolution.

Personality Traits

Personality traits are intrinsic characteristics that determine how people perceive, experience, and respond to situations. The most widely acknowledged framework for understanding personality is Big Five Inventory, comprising openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Referred to as OCEAN, this model offers an in-depth way of assessing personality and is confirmed by substantial research evidence (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Gonçalves et al., 2016).

Openness reflects an individual's willingness to embrace new perspectives, imaginative thinking, and eager to explore new experiences. Individuals with high openness are typically more imaginative and inquisitive, frequently searching for novel experiences and concepts (CircleDNA, 2024). This characteristic is connected to a desire for novelty and an inclination to question traditional expectations. Alternatively, people low in openness may be inclined to stick to routines and familiar patterns,

hindering their ability to adapt in dynamic settings (Verywell Mind, 2023).

Conscientiousness is associated with attributes such as careful planning, responsibility, and dedication. High conscientiousness is typically seen in individuals who are generally attentive, goal-focused, and exhibit strong willpower as well as a strong sense of duty toward their responsibilities. (Study.com, 2023). Conscientiousness is integral in professional domains because it is connected to superior job performance and success. Those with high conscientiousness often demonstrate superior planning and task execution, making these individuals valuable team players (Thomas.co, 2024).

Extraversion is defined by a strong inclination toward interpersonal interaction, assertiveness, and a need for stimulation in the presence of others. Extraverts usually draw energy by social engagement and often perform well in group-oriented situations (Verywell Mind, 2023). Introverts, on the other hand, are more inclined toward solitary pursuits or spending time with a limited number of people. Comprehending this trait assists in management of team dynamics, as it impacts both communication approaches s and the extent of involvement in collaborating settings.

Agreeableness is characterized by a person's tendency toward comprehension, compassion and working well with others. People with high levels of agreeableness end to be empathetic and strive to create and maintain harmonious ties with others (CircleDNA, 2024). They are typically perceived as warm and cooperative but may find it challenging to stand up for themselves in situations of conflict. On the flip side, people with low agreeableness are more likely to be confrontational or competitive, which can eventually lead to strain in their interpersonal connections.

Neuroticism involves a tendency for emotional imbalance and a greater susceptibility to anxiety or mood fluctuations. Individuals high in neuroticism are prone to experiencing more intense emotional reactions under stress (Study.com, 2023). This characteristic can affect mental health and overall well-being, so understanding one's level of neuroticism can help in creating effective stress management strategies. Acknowledging these traits within ourselves and others helps improve communication, enrich team dynamics, and build stronger personal relationships.

Conceptual Model

The model comprises of an independent variable having four subscales i.e communication styles and a dependent variable having four subscales that is conflict resolution styles along with a mediator, personality traits.

Moderator Model
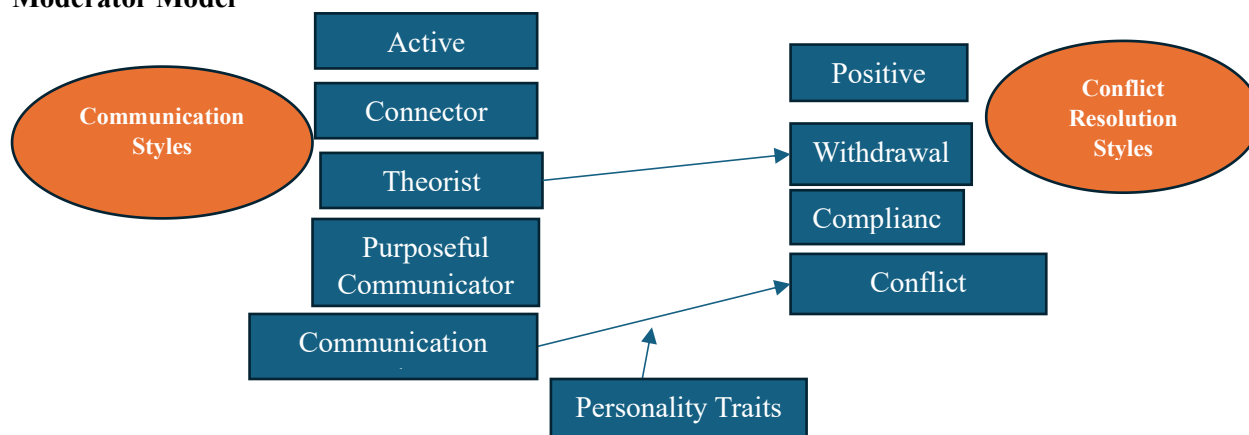
Methods
Aims

1- To evaluate the association between communication styles and conflict resolution styles among adults.

2-To find out the impact of communication styles on conflict resolution skills among adults.

3-To elucidate the moderately function of personality traits between communication patterns and conflict resolution styles among adults**.**

Hypotheses

1-There is negative association between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills among adults.

2- Communication patterns have a substantial impact on conflict resolution skills.

3-Personality traits moderate the relationship between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills.

Instruments of study

Participant Consent Form

The consent form incorporates all the study information and requests participants approval. The subjects were ensured regarding confidential handling of data and data usage for only research purposes.

Communication Style Questionnaire

The Communication Style Questionnaire is an instrument designed to assist individuals in identifying their communication preferences and behaviors. It includes 20 items distributed across four distinct styles: Active Communicator (A), Connector (C), Theorist (T), and Purposeful Communicator (P). Participants evaluate each statement using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire's reliability is demonstrated by internal consistency metrics, while its validity is supported by correlations with related constructs. This tool facilitates understanding of personal communication styles to enhance interpersonal relationships (DLA Piper WIN, n.d.; PDST, n.d.).

Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory

The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI), introduced by Kurdek in 1994, incorporates 16 items designed to evaluate different approaches to resolving conflicts in romantic relationships. This scale is adapted to capture conflict in general, within any relationship. The CRSI's main objective is to identify the strategies individuals employ in conflict management, including positive engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. Respondents rate their answers on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." The inventory has shown strong reliability and validity, with evidence supporting its construct validity and moderate associations with related measures such as marital satisfaction (Kurdek, 1994; Hocker & Wilmot, 2018).

Ten-Item Personality Inventory

The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), introduced by Gosling et al. in 2003, is a brief measure designed to assess the Big Five personality traits: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness. Comprising 10 items, respondents evaluate each statement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Scoring requires reversing the ratings for negatively worded items and combining the scores of the two items corresponding to each trait, with higher totals reflecting a stronger presence of that trait. The TIPI exhibits adequate reliability and validity, with internal consistency estimates typically around .55 or higher and test-retest reliability averaging approximately .72 (Gosling et al., 2003; Rammstedt & John, 2007). This tool is particularly advantageous in situations where time constraints are a factor, taking roughly one minute to administer.

Table 1

Frequency and percentage breakdown of demographic attributes (n=300)

Sample Data		Frequency	Percentage
Age			
	18-28	180	92.7
	29-38	120	7.3
Gender	Men	175	58.3
	Women	125	41.6
Residency			
	Urban	170	56.6
	Rural	130	43.3
Marital Status			
	Unmarried	140	46.6
	Married	160	53.3
Family System			

	Joint	160	53.3
	Nuclear	140	46.6
Family Income			
	Above 60,000	60	33.3
	41,000-60,000	180	60
	20,000-40,000	60	33.3

Note: The demographic data presented in this table reflect the characteristics of the study participants. The data is gathered from a subset of 300 adults (both men and women) from diverse areas of Pakistan. As listed in the table, the age range is from 18 to 38. While gender as men or women, marital status as married or single, family system is mentioned as nuclear family or joint, family income between 30,000 and above 91,000, and residential as urban or rural is displayed.

Table 2
Scales' Psychometric Properties

Scale	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's a	Skewness	Kurtosis
ACS	148.25	8.56	140.54-71.28	.79	.07	.45
CS	168.35	18.26	221.52-116.8	.76	.09	-.17
TS	95.56	8.96	109.6-58.43	.78	.08	-.16
PCS	87.48	7.43	49.46-14.36	.82	.07	-.11
PES	77.89	7.21	47.53-13.62	.80	.09	.19
CS	65.72	6.87	46.75-14.49	.80	.05	-.18
WS	76.34	7.14	49.34-13.55	.79	.06	.25
TIPI	77.36	7.98	50.55-12.46	.77	.06	.19

Note: ACS=Active Communicator Scale, CS= Connector scale, PCS= Purposeful Communicator scale, TS=Theorist scale, PES=Positive Engagement Scale, CS= Compliance Scale, WS= Withdrawal Scale

Psychometric elements of all measures and subscales are mentioned in Table 2. Cronbach's alpha of all scales and subscales is in satisfactory range which depicts that the scales are reliable.

Table 3
Correlation matrix between ACS, CS, TS, PCS, PES, WS, CS, TIPI

Variables	ACS	CS	TS	PCS	PES	WS	CS	TIPI
ACS	-							
CS	.29	-						
TS	.25	.23	-					
PCS	.37	-.26	.13	-				
PES	.45**	.47**	.26	.46*	-			
WS	.33*	.28	.31*	.14	.28	-		
CS	.21*	.34*	.52**	.06	.02	.37*	-	
TIPI	.54*	.51*	.08	.03	.26	.25	.32*	-

Note: ACS=Active Communicator Scale, CS= Connector scale, PCS= Purposeful Communicator scale, TS=Theorist scale, PES=Positive Engagement Scale, CS= Compliance Scale, WS= Withdrawal Scale, TIPI= Ten Item Personality Inventory **p < 0.01 The matrix indicates a strong positive correlation (0.45**) between the Positive Engagement Scale

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and the Active Communicator Scale, suggesting that enhanced active communication correlates with higher levels of positive engagement. Similarly, the Ten-Item Personality Inventory shows significant positive links with several variables, implying that personality dimensions influence engagement tendencies and conflict resolution approaches. Negative relationships are also observed, such as between the Purposeful Communicator Scale and the Compliance Scale (coefficient = -0.26), indicating that higher purposeful communication control may reduce the effectiveness of compliance strategies.

Table 4
Regression Coefficients of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable (Positive Engagement)

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
Constant	15.71	4.75	3.32	.00	5.73- 25.75
ACS	-.17	.35	-.51	.62	-.92- .57
CS	.15	.23	.65	.52	-.34- .65
TS	.23	.31	.72	.47	-.44- .91
PCS	.47	.21	2.21	.04	.02-.93
TIPI	.03	.07	.49	.62	-.12- .19

*Note: N=300, ***p<.05 ACS=Active Communicator Scale, CS= Connector scale, PCS= Purposeful Communicator scale, TS=Theorist scale, PES=Positive Engagement Scale, CS= Compliance Scale, WS= Withdrawal Scale, TIPI= Ten Item Personality Inventory*

The impact of active communicator, connector, theorist and purposive communicator and ten-item personality inventory on positive engagement, a conflict resolution skill is demonstrated in Table 4. The R square value of 0.012 revealed that with $F_{(1, 298)}$ = .253, p>.05, active communication pattern has non-significant impact on the dependent measure which is positive engagement conflict resolution style. So is the case with connector, the second communication style; theorist, the third communication style while the fourth communication pattern has a significant impact that is purposive communication with R square= .219 while $F_{(1, 298)}$ = 4.92, P<.05.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable (Withdrawal)

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
Constant	3.28	5.02	.65	.56	-7.27-13.84
ACS	.77	.37	2.05	.04	-0.1- 1.57
CS	.34	.27	1.25	.22	-.22 - .91
TS	.24	.37	.64	.52	-.54 -1.02
PCS	.12	.28	.44	.66	-.46 - .78
TIPI	.05	.08	.66	.51	-.12 - .23

*Note: N=300, ***p<.05 ACS=Active Communicator Scale, CS= Connector scale, PCS= Purposeful Communicator scale, TS=Theorist scale, PES=Positive Engagement Scale, CS= Compliance Scale, WS= Withdrawal Scale, TIPI= Ten Item Personality Inventory*

The impact of active communicator, connector, theorist and purposive communicator and ten-item personality inventory on withdrawal, a conflict resolution skill is demonstrated in Table 4. The R square value of 0.192 revealed that with $F_{(1, 298)}$ = .425, p>.05, active communication pattern has significant impact on the dependent measure which is withdrawal conflict resolution style. In the case of connector, the second communication style; theorist, the third communication style and the fourth communication pattern a non-significant impact is witnessed.

Table 6

Regression Coefficients of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable (Compliance)

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
Constant	9.19	5.1	1.79	.09	-1.58 – 19.97
ACS	.18	.38	.47	.64	-.62 - .99
CS	.45	.23	1.91	.07	-.04 - .95
TS	.52	.32	1.59	.03	-.16- 1.21
PCS	.07	.26	.28	.77	-.47 - .62
TIPI	.11	.07	1.46	.15	-.04 - .27

Note: N=300, ***p<.05 ACS=Active Communicator Scale, CS= Connector scale, PCS= Purposeful Communicator scale, TS=Theorist scale, PES=Positive Engagement Scale, CS= Compliance Scale, WS= Withdrawal Scale, TIPI= Ten Item Personality Inventory

The impact of active communicator, connector, theorist and purposive communicator and ten-item personality inventory on compliance, a conflict resolution skill is demonstrated in Table 4. The R square value of 0.012 revealed that with

$F_{(1, 298)} = .283$, p>.05, active communication pattern has non-significant impact on the dependent measure which is compliance conflict resolution style. So is the case with connector, the second communication style. Whereas theorist, the third communication style has a significant impact with R square= .194 while $F_{(1, 298)} = 12.52$, P<.05. While the fourth communication pattern seemed to have non-significant impact.

Table 7

Moderating role of Personality traits between Communication Patterns and Conflict Resolution Skills

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Beta	SE	B	Beta	SE
Constant	219.75		97.18	36.163		
CSS	-2.95	.427**	1.64	2.531	.361	.400**
TIPI	-4.87	-.167**	2.28	-1.103	-.157	.388**
CCS * TIPI				-1.103	-.176	.363**
R^2			.180			.209
ΔR^2						.029

Table shows the moderation of personality traits between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills. In Model 1, the R square value of .311 showed that predictor accounted 31.1% variance in the outcome with $F_{(2, 298)} = 3.83$, p<0.05. The outcome showed that personality traits (B=.21, p<0.05) and communication patterns (B=.44, p<0.05) predicted conflict resolution skills. These findings demonstrate the significance of model 1. In Model 2, the R square value 0f .475 revealed that predictors explained 47.5% variance in the outcome with $F_{(3, 297)} =4.81$, p<0.05. The outcomes depicted that personality traits (B=-.05, p<0.05), communication patterns (B=.50, p<0.05), and communication patterns * personality traits predicted conflict resolution skills (B=.45, p<0.05). The ΔR^2 value of .164 revealed 16.4% change in the variance of Model 1 and Model 2 with $F_{(1,299)} =22.49$, p <0.05. Findings showed

that personality traits have moderated the link between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills.

Discussion

The first hypothesis is accepted. Research demonstrates a notable relationship between communication styles and conflict resolution abilities, emphasizing both favorable and unfavorable aspects. Active and assertive communication methods are frequently associated with effective conflict management, as they encourage open discussions and mutual understanding, resulting in positive outcomes (Smith et al., 2019). In contrast, passive or aggressive communication styles can impede resolution efforts. For example, passive communicators may shy away from confrontation, leaving issues unresolved, while aggressive communicators may intensify

conflicts by adopting a domineering approach (Mendes, 2024). This contrast highlights the importance of employing suitable communication techniques for effective conflict resolution.

Additionally, the interaction between various communication styles can impact the success of conflict resolution methods. For instance, collaborative approaches are strongly linked to favorable outcomes, promoting cooperation and compromise (Jackson & Williams, 2018). Conversely, tendencies such as withdrawal or compliance often exhibit a negative association with resolution success, as they may result in avoidance rather than constructive engagement during disputes (Baack, 2012). Recognizing these relationships is essential for designing training initiatives that enhance communication competencies and refine conflict resolution tactics in organizational settings (Mendes, 2024).

As far as impact of communication patterns on conflict resolution skills is concerned, some styles impact specific resolution skills. The influence of a purposive communication style on positive engagement in conflict resolution is substantial. Purposive communicators emphasize clarity and goal-focused dialogue, fostering an atmosphere that supports effective conflict management. This approach encourages active listening and engagement with diverse viewpoints, paving the way for collaborative solutions that meet the needs of all parties (Mendes, 2024). By prioritizing shared goals and ensuring transparent communication, purposive communicators can significantly improve team dynamics and promote a constructive approach to resolving conflicts (Baack, 2012).

Conversely, the active communication style's link to withdrawal tendencies in conflict scenarios reveals a potential limitation. While active communicators are generally assertive, they may exhibit a propensity to retreat when encountering high-stakes disagreements or strong opposition (Smith et al., 2019). This withdrawal could result from a desire to avoid escalation or difficulties in managing emotionally intense discussions effectively. Consequently, such behavior may leave conflicts unresolved and disrupt team cohesion, ultimately undermining the success of conflict resolution efforts.

Moreover, the theorist communication style's connection with compliance in conflict situations adds another dimension of complexity. Theorists often employ logical reasoning and structured problem-solving methods, which can lead to compliance as they strive to maintain harmony and minimize confrontation (Jackson & Williams, 2018). However, this compliance may not always result in meaningful resolution, as it can suppress critical issues that require thorough exploration. While theorists may contribute to a calm and cooperative environment, their tendency toward compliance might inadvertently hinder the deeper engagement needed for truly effective conflict resolution.

The hypothesis that personality traits has moderating function between communication patterns and conflict resolution skills is accepted. Personality traits play a critical role in moderating the link between communication styles and conflict resolution abilities, shaping individuals' approaches to handling disputes. For example, traits like agreeableness and extraversion are strongly associated with collaborative communication methods, which improve the effectiveness of conflict resolution (Tehrani & Yamini, 2019). Individuals high in agreeableness often prefer accommodating styles, promoting harmonious interactions and encouraging positive engagement in conflict scenarios. On the other hand, those with elevated levels of neuroticism may lean toward avoidance behaviors, which can hinder their capacity to manage conflicts effectively (Pollack Peacebuilding, 2024). This interplay underscores the significant influence of personality on both communication strategies and conflict resolution outcomes.

Furthermore, the interplay between personality traits and communication styles can produce diverse outcomes in conflict resolution. Extroverted individuals typically favor assertive communication methods that encourage direct interaction, enhancing their ability to address and resolve issues effectively (Mukhtar & Habib, 2023). In contrast, individuals with lower levels of extroversion may gravitate toward more passive or avoidant approaches, which can hinder their conflict management effectiveness. This variability highlights the need to consider personality traits when evaluating the efficiency of communication in conflict situations (Wang, 2010). By acknowledging these relationships, organizations can customize their training programs to cultivate communication techniques that align with employees' distinct personality profiles (Ejaz et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Communication approaches significantly impact conflict management abilities, with personality characteristics moderating this association. Among the diverse approaches, proactive communicators articulate their thoughts clearly and confidently, promoting constructive interaction during disagreements. Conversely, harmonizers emphasize relationship-building, often prioritizing peace over direct confrontation. Analytical communicators assess scenarios rationally but may struggle with emotional nuances, while goal-oriented communicators focus on achieving specific outcomes, sometimes resulting in withdrawal if objectives remain unmet. These approaches interact with resolution techniques such as constructive engagement, disengagement, and acquiescence. For example, proactive communicators are inclined to engage constructively, aiding resolution, whereas harmonizers might avoid direct conflict, leaving issues unresolved (Smith et al., 2019; Mendes, 2024). Personality traits can impact the efficacy of these communication approaches in managing disputes, as agreeable individuals are more likely to adopt collaborative strategies (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Therefore, understanding these interplays is crucial for crafting effective conflict resolution methodologies (Khosravi et al., 2023).

Strengths and Limitations

Although the current research was genuinely undertaken, it does have certain constraints that should be acknowledged. These limitations are intended to guide future investigations toward improvement. The sample was restricted to adults only. The study sought to explore limited dimensions of the influence of communication styles on conflict resolution skills and the minor role of the moderating factor, personality traits. However, there are other factors, such as cognitive abilities, that could also affect conflict resolution skills. These constraints are intended to steer subsequent research toward further advancement.

Future research can explore the influence of communication styles on conflict resolution skills by gathering data from a broader sample of young and older adults at both national and provincial levels. Drawing from the results of the present studies, individuals can cultivate improved communication practices within themselves, enhancing conflict resolution skills, which may ultimately promote better emotional well-being and stronger interpersonal connections. Programs and strategies should be designed to address these areas, facilitating improved human interactions and relationships..

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