



International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management

Conflict resolution styles and personality: The moderating effect of generation X and Y in a non-Western context

Leila Canaan Messarra, Silva Karkoulian, Abdul-Nasser El-Kassar,

Article information:

To cite this document:

Leila Canaan Messarra, Silva Karkoulian, Abdul-Nasser El-Kassar, (2016) "Conflict resolution styles and personality: The moderating effect of generation X and Y in a non-Western context", International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, Vol. 65 Issue: 6, pp.792-810,

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2016-0014>

Permanent link to this document:

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2016-0014>

Downloaded on: 13 October 2017, At: 14:24 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 63 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 4413 times since 2016*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

(2014), "Leadership styles: relationship with conflict management styles", International Journal of Conflict Management, Vol. 25 Iss 3 pp. 214-225 <[a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-12-2012-0091"](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-12-2012-0091)><https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-12-2012-0091>

(1998), "RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY FACTORS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES", International Journal of Conflict Management, Vol. 9 Iss 4 pp. 336-355 <[a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/eb022814"](https://doi.org/10.1108/eb022814)><https://doi.org/10.1108/eb022814>



Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:234115 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Conflict resolution styles and personality

The moderating effect of generation X and Y in a non-Western context

Leila Canaan Messarra, Silva Karkoulian and
Abdul-Nasser El-Kassar

*Adnan Kassar School of Business,
Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon*

Abstract

Purpose – Conflict in the workplace creates a challenge for many of present day managers. The purpose of this paper is to explore the moderating effect of generations X and Y on the relationship between personality and conflict handling styles.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is conducted using a sample of 199 employees working in the electronic retail sector in a non-Western culture. The five-factor model of personality traits is used to measure personality, while conflict styles are measured using Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory II.

Findings – Results indicate that generations X and Y moderate the relationship between specific personality traits and conflict handling styles.

Research limitations/implications – This study investigated the moderating effect of generations X and Y on a sample of employees within the electronic retail service sector in Lebanon. It is recommended that future research examine such a relationship in other sectors and cultures for generalizability. Since generation Z (born in the late 1990s) will soon be entering the job market, further studies should include this cohort when investigating the relationships. Finally, for a deeper understanding of the relationship, it is advisable to use both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

Practical implications – The understanding of what influences an individual's choice regarding his/her choice of conflict resolution styles is of great use to supervisors in general and human resource managers in particular. This will assist in developing training programs that help employees acquire the appropriate skills necessary to control their impulses in a conflict situation. Training should comprise conflict resolution and communication skills that could help bridge the gap between generations. Effectively managing generational conflict in the workplace can positively contribute to the level and frequency of future conflicts, which in turn, can lead to favorable organizational outcomes.

Originality/value – Earlier research that examined the relationship between personality and conflict management styles have found varying results ranging from weak to strong relationships. The understanding of what influences an individual's choice of which management style he/she chooses is of great use for managers in general and human resource managers in particular. This study showed that the inconsistency could be the result of some factors that moderate this relationship. The age of individuals contributes to the strength or the weakness of the various relationships between personality and conflict handling styles. Findings suggest that generations X and Y do not moderate the relationships among the personality traits and the dominating and obliging conflict styles. They do, however, have varying moderating effects on the relationships between specific personality traits and the integrating, avoiding, and compromising styles.

Keywords Conflict management, Conflict, Personality, Five-factor model, Generation Y, Generation X

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Conflict creates a challenge for many managers, an issue very common in today's workplace. These conflicts are likely to arise between individuals or groups because of differences in values, expectations, needs, workplace practices, and personalities, which,

in turn, could produce conflicting actions and preferences. However, poorly managing such conflicts in the workplace can have adverse effects on the level and frequency of future conflicts and can negatively affect productivity, job performance (Meyer, 2004; Trudel and Reio, 2011), and organizational commitment (Thomas *et al.*, 2005). Workplace conflict has also been shown to have a positive relationship with absenteeism and employee sickness (Giebels and Janssen, 2005). On the other hand, properly managing such conflicts has been shown to decrease stress, improve long-term relationships, and reduce emotional defensiveness (DeChurch *et al.*, 2007). Nevertheless, the conflict management style that the individual chooses to adopt may largely influence the outcome of the conflict.

The conflict handling styles favored by individuals in a certain situation depend on factors such as personality (Ejaz *et al.*, 2012; Anwar *et al.*, 2012), emotional involvement, and the prevailing circumstances (Wilmot and Hocker, 2000). When choosing which conflict management style to adopt, researchers sometimes suggest a contingency approach. This approach recognizes that many conflicts happen without warning, and, as such, a reactive approach is inescapable (Zia and Syed, 2013). Critics of this perspective argue that some individuals are not adaptable enough to alternate conflict management styles. Their personalities factor in and largely dictate one style over another (Antonioni, 1998; Thomas, 1976). According to Carlson (2010), genetics and environmental factors are both equally important in personality formation. Personality has been shown to be instrumental in conflict management styles to different extents (Ejaz *et al.*, 2012; Wang, 2010; Whitworth, 2008), having an impact on “how employees interpret their organizational environment, and hence shaping the behaviors in light of those interpretations” (Hong and Kaur, 2008, p. 4). However, no research has been conducted with regards to generational differences moderating the relationship between personality and conflict management styles.

Generations X and Y are characteristically different as they were brought up at different times. Previous research proposes that intergenerational differences happen as a result of people developing their social identities around technological developments and other important social events (Lyons and Kuron, 2014; McMullin *et al.*, 2007). Generation X includes those born between the years 1965-1980, while those born between 1981 and 2000 comprise the Millennials or Generation Y.

Conflict

Organizational conflict may befall parties because of contradictory emotions about a certain issue, limited resources, incompatible ideologies, different values, lack of communication, and workplace practices, etc. Such conflicts are likely to occur between individuals or groups since each have their own beliefs, attitudes, and values. Jones *et al.* (2013, p. 880) define it as “the discord that arises when the goals, interests, or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible, and those individuals or groups block or thwart one another’s attempts to achieve their objectives.” Nevertheless, if a conflict is properly managed, it can lead to both personal and organizational benefits (Silverthorne, 2005). Otherwise, it can negatively affect organizational outcomes such as productivity, absenteeism, commitment, and job performance (Meyer, 2004; Thomas *et al.*, 2005; Giebels and Janssen, 2005; Trudel and Reio, 2011). Still, managing these conflicts is no easy process; a wide range of organizational actions must be taken, including understanding positions, communicating, and problem solving as well as dealing with emotions (Brett, 2001; Behfar *et al.*, 2008).

Many scholars have proposed conceptual models for classifying interpersonal conflict management styles (see, e.g. Blake and Mouton, 1964; Thomas, 1976). However, Rahim (1992) developed a conceptualized classification into two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others (this classification will be the basis for our

research). The first dimension, concern for self, describes the degree (high or low) to which a person aims to satisfy his/her own motives. The second, concern for others, describes the degree (high or low) to which a person aims to satisfy others' concerns (Rahim, 1992; Rahim and Bonoma, 1979). Combining these two dimensions renders five interpersonal conflict management styles:

- (1) Integrating style, also known as collaborating style, is characterized by great concern for both one's own and the other party's goals. Both parties carry out a win-win interaction; they solve the problem by clarifying differences, maximizing joint gains, ultimately reaching a mutually acceptable solution. While some consider it to be the most constructive conflict management style (Rahim, 1983; Blake and Mouton, 1984), others feel it is misleading because it is time and energy consuming, and therefore unsuitable when solving low-priority conflicts (Shetach, 2009). Rahim (1992) considers this style potentially inappropriate in situations when immediate decisions need to be made or when the concerned parties lack problem solving skills.
- (2) Obliging style, also known as accommodating style, is characterized by low concern for one's own goals and high concern for others' where individuals may neglect their own needs to satisfy the other party's – a sacrifice to maintain the relationship. This style holds a self-sacrifice element, and can therefore be dubbed a lose-win situation (Rahim, 1983, 1992).
- (3) Dominating style, also known as competing style, is characterized by high concern for one's own goals and low concern for others' where individuals use power to complete their objective and ignore others' interests and needs. Individuals in management positions are likely to use the power their position affords them. If they hold no such power, they are likely to "yield" power by bluffing or involving a superior (Rahim, 1992). The outcome of this style is win-lose; only one person comes out of it as a winner.
- (4) Avoiding style is characterized by low concern for both self and others. In this style, an individual acknowledges the existence of a conflict, but suppresses or withdraws from it – failing to satisfy both his/her own needs and the other's needs and giving the impression of an "unconcerned attitude" (Rahim, 1992). It is considered a lose-lose situation.
- (5) Compromising style is characterized by intermediate concern for both one's own and others' goals. It involves using give-and-take strategies to reach a happy medium (middle ground position). Unlike integrating style, in this style, the problem is not explored fully and neither party's needs are fully satisfied; both have given something up in exchange for something from the other. The object of the conflict is rationed to reach a solution that provides incomplete satisfaction for both parties' concerns. A compromising person is more willing to forgo his/her needs than a dominating person, but less than an obliging person. This style culminates in a no-win/no-lose situation (no clear winner or loser).

Personality

Personal features primarily define and forecast human conduct. These personal characteristics also designate different individualities, which can contribute to implications about behavioral consequences (Liao and Lee, 2009).

There are several scholars who believe that personality is fundamentally unchangeable (Ferrer-i-Carbonell and Frijters, 2004). Nevertheless, according to Boyce *et al.* (2013), the assumption that personality is fixed is problematic for several reasons. The chief reason is that this belief condenses the interest in personality to practical economists and policy makers. It would not be a valuable target or specific aim for micro- or macro-level intercession. Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2005) asserts that even though personality is an imperative interpreter of a person, it might only be attention-grabbing if it is a phenomenon that actually changes. Economists, ever more, look at personality as a form of non-cognitive skill, which may have essential penalties for the economic decisions that people make and the upshots that they achieve. On the other hand, Almlund *et al.* (2011) avow that the traits of personality react to parental actions, level of education, and policy intrusions. This makes personality change a possibility even throughout adulthood.

Additionally, in the psychology field, the stance of personality change has been mixed throughout the years. The traditional view in psychology is that an individual's personality is fairly permanent and enduring. At the outset, personality was thought to be stable especially after the age of 30 in which it has been described to be "set like plaster" (Costa and McCrae, 1988). Further studies claim that personality is actually "set like soft plaster" since it does change, although in a slow pace after the age of 30 (Srivastava *et al.*, 2003).

According to Robbins *et al.* (2008), personality traits are an accepted means for elucidating people's behavior. Current theoreticians approve of the five central personality dimensions, repeatedly referred to as the "Big Five" or "five-factor model," composed of a few qualities used to describe individuals (Durupinar *et al.*, 2009). The five-factor model of personality suggests that there are five factors to an individual's personality. The Big Five personality traits, also referred to with the acronym OCEAN, are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Goldberg, 1993; Robbins *et al.*, 2008). Openness to experiences is the personality attribute that is stalwartly related to the intelligence facet (Fumham *et al.*, 2008). It demonstrates to which extent a person has artistic affinity, and it is merely associated to one's attractions to new things (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al.*, 2009). Individuals who are highly open to experience are creative, imaginative, inspired, and sensitive. Individuals low on openness to experience are conformists and tend to be more at ease with familiar surroundings (McCrae and Costa, 1987; Sodiya *et al.*, 2007).

Pertaining to the second dimension of the five-factor model, conscientiousness is a propensity to exhibit strength of mind, behave devotedly, and show self-control. Conscientiousness designates that individuals are highly motivated and goal oriented (Judge and Ilies, 2002). Highly conscientious people are responsible and organized, and therefore are more likely to attain their objectives (Robbins and Judge, 2007). Individuals who are low in conscientiousness are plainly disorganized and easily distracted.

In addition to this, extroversion is allied to a person's easiness with external relationships and situations (Laney, 2002). Extroverted people, generally, enjoy socializing with others and tend to be more positive, energetic, friendly, and outgoing (Srivastava *et al.*, 2008). Nonetheless, introverts are typically shy, quiet, and distant as they possess lower energy levels and social interactions than extroverts.

Regarding the fourth element of the five-factor model, the agreeableness trait displays people's general concern for social concord. It shows how much an individual is apt to behave in harmony with the interests of others. Highly agreeable people are pleasant, kind, trusting, and warm. They are usually willing to compromise with others

and are more reliable (Rothmann and Coetzer, 2003; Clarke and Robertson, 2005). Individuals low in agreeableness are time and again forceful, disagreeable, and cold (Graziano and Tobin, 2009).

Lastly, the fifth dimension of the five-factor model, neuroticism is the proclivity to experience adverse feelings, such as anger, nervousness, or despair, especially in threatening situations and loss (Lahey, 2009). People high in neuroticism are more likely to be depressed, worried, and anxious. This personality trait is sometimes reversed and denoted as emotional stability (Jeronimus *et al.*, 2014). People who mark low in neuroticism tend to be emotionally stable and calm. They do not show evidence of obstinate negative emotions (Dolan, 2006).

Personality and conflict management styles

Several researchers have, for decades, intended to expose the nature of the relationship between personality and conflict style (Anwar *et al.*, 2012). Pepin (2005) affirms that findings of these studies have been inconsistent, where some found a weak relationship between personality and style of conflict, while others found a strong relationship between them.

Wang (2010) found a correlation between the five-factor model and conflict management styles. His study showed a positive relationship between integrating conflict style and openness to experience, but a negative one between integrating style and neuroticism. In addition, the obliging conflict style was positively associated with neuroticism, but negatively with extroversion. Furthermore, the avoiding conflict style was positively correlated to neuroticism, but negatively correlated to extroversion. Wang (2010), correspondingly, established the existence of a positive correlation between the compromising style and agreeableness, and a negative correlation between the dominating style and agreeableness.

Ejaz *et al.* (2012) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between the different conflict handling styles and personality traits. Their study comprised call center representatives in Pakistan and revealed significant connotations among the diverse conflict handling styles and the Big Five traits. The results displayed that both the integrating and obliging conflict styles were positively correlated to openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, while the compromising and dominating conflict styles, were positively linked to openness and extroversion. Additionally, the avoiding style was positively associated with neuroticism.

On the other hand, Whitworth (2008) found no association between preferred conflict handling styles and personality factors among female nurses in Southern Mississippi.

Generations X and Y

Born between the years 1965-1980, ranging in age from 35 to 50, Generation X, otherwise known as the Baby Busters, was the first generation to really have to deal with the dramatic shift in workplace paradigms brought about by the technological revolution. They were the first to own personal computers, and the first to modernize. They are seen as generally driven by the mantra “work to live” (Fraone *et al.*, 2008) This generation has witnessed many crises in its time. They are “accustomed to recurring economic recessions,” and familiar with “oil shortages, terrorist attacks, and soaring inflation.” According to Saleh (2008), generation X developed skepticism and independence, which helped them succeed in an entrepreneurial setting. They are considered to have a great work ethic and unflinching loyalty when it comes to their workplace.

Also known as Millennials, generation Y ranges in age from 15 to 34, born between 1981 and 2000. Unlike their Baby Busters counterparts, the Millennials were born into an already hi-tech environment. Their time experienced its fair share of violence, particularly with regards to terrorist attacks (Mukundan *et al.*, 2013). Respectively, their mantra, “work my way,” can be seen as resulting from a career-driven personality that characterizes the generation. Millennials are considered “special, sheltered, confident, team oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving” (Howe and Strauss, 2000) who in addition to being “high maintenance and high risk” can also be “high output” (Fraone *et al.*, 2008). They are highly networked and are in constant search of instant gratification.

Millennials see work as elective, if only to further their personal goals; they have a different definition of loyalty than their predecessors and are sometimes described as self-centered. They are contentious to the systems of hierarchy widely accepted by generation X, and rather, expect more of a mentoring role from their supervisors. They would not mind leaving their employer if they find a better opportunity elsewhere for themselves. They expect to be included in intellectual talk and in management decisions (Mukundan *et al.*, 2013, p. 83). They respect positions and titles, and want a good relationship with their boss. This does not always mix well with generation X’s independent nature and hands-off style, and can cause conflict.

Hypothesis development

Several previous research studies explored the relationships between the Big Five personality traits and the different conflict management styles, which led to identifying some significant associations among them. This study, however, intends to take things further by investigating a possible moderator of the various relationships. Thus, the main research question of this paper is the following:

RQ1. Do generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between each of the Big Five personality traits and the five conflict management styles?

A main characteristic of the dominating conflict style is the use of power to achieve results. Since the characteristics of both generations X and Y do not comprise power use, the relationship between the personality traits and the dominating style is supposedly independent on X and Y. Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and the dominating conflict style.

Additionally, the integrating conflict style is characterized by a large concern for both one’s own and the other party’s objectives. Unlike generation Y, generation X is known for joining gains and ultimately reaching an acceptable solution. This, in turn, will result in easiness to deal with external relationships and situations, a portrayal of being extroverted. For this reason, it is theorized that generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between extroversion and the integrating style, and that the strength of this relationship is greater for generation X than for generation Y. Nevertheless, not sufficient common characteristics are found between the remaining personality traits and the integrating conflict style. Therefore, the following three hypotheses are formed:

H2a. Generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between extroversion and the integrating conflict style.

H2b. Generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism, and integrating conflict styles.

H2c. The moderating effect of generation X on the relationship between extroversion and the integrating conflict style is greater than that of generation Y.

Moreover, the central characteristic of the avoiding style is the withdrawal from a conflict. Generation X tends to suppress from conflict more than generation Y as these individuals are usually more responsible (a feature of conscientiousness), more at ease with their surroundings (a feature of extroversion), and more likely to behave in harmony with others' interests (a feature of agreeableness). Because of this, it is expected that generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, and the avoiding conflict style, and that the strength of this relationship is greater for generation X than for generation Y. Unlike the common characteristics between conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, and the avoiding conflict style, such commonalities cannot be pinpointed for the two remaining personality traits, openness, and neuroticism. Consequently, the next three hypotheses are developed:

H3a. Generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, and the avoiding conflict style.

H3b. Generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between openness and neuroticism, and the avoiding conflict style.

H3c. The moderating effect of generation X on the relationship between conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, and the avoiding conflict style is greater than that of generation Y.

Furthermore, a main characteristic of the obliging conflict style is a low concern for one's own goals. Both generations X and Y are concerned for their objectives and do not neglect their desires. For that reason, the association between the personality factors and the obliging style is expected to be independent on X and Y. Therefore, the subsequent hypothesis is developed:

H4. Generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and the obliging conflict style.

In addition, a fundamental characteristic of the compromising conflict is reaching middle ground position where give-and-take strategies are applied to satisfy both one's own and others' objectives. Contrasting to generation Y, generation X seems to be more willing to compromise as they show self-control and behave devotedly, known features of being conscientious. As a result of this, it is hypothesized that even though generations X and Y may have a moderating effect on the relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style, the effect of generation X is expected to be larger than that of generation Y. Unlike the common characteristics between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style, such similarities cannot be found for the remaining personality traits, openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Thus, the following three hypotheses are formulated:

H5a. Generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style.

H5b. Generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, and the compromising conflict style.

H5c. The moderating effect of generation X on the relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style is greater than that of generation Y.

Research design and data collection

The aim of this research is to test whether generations X and Y, as separate cohorts, moderate the relationship between conflict handling styles and personality.

For the purpose of collecting data for this study, the top electronic retail companies in Lebanon were contacted. The Lebanese electronic retail sector is one of the most developed sectors, and is a major contributor to the Lebanese economy. This sector was chosen for its popularity across generations; it largely employs members of the newer generations, who grew up surrounded by technology, while holding onto members of the older generation as well.

In order to carry out the data collection process, e-mails were sent to the HR departments of ten selected companies. The addressed e-mail contained a brief introduction about the purpose of the study and asked whether they would like to participate by completing it. The questionnaire was then sent to the HR departments of the eight companies that agreed to take part in it, which distributed it to their employees across all levels. All participants were assured complete anonymity.

The questionnaire was initially piloted by three management professors and five professionals in the field during the first week of June 2013. Then, it was amended where needed to ensure content validity. The final questionnaire was administered between July 2013 and December 2013, culminating in a total of 214 responses from the participating companies, in which 199 were usable.

The questionnaire collected demographic data regarding age, gender, education, years of work experience, and position. Also, it contained a section with questions regarding the conflict handling styles (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising), and another section pertaining to personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability).

Construct measures

The question relating to age asked about date of birth, divided into the following categories: 1981-2000, 1965-1980, and 1964 or before. These categories were chosen in order to identify generations X and Y. The answers of participants born before 1965 were removed from consideration.

The conflict resolution styles were measured using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II, constructed by Afzalur Rahim in 1983 and based on the five items depicted in the present survey: dominating style (Q1-Q4); integrating style (Q5-Q8); avoiding style (Q9-Q12); obliging style (Q13-16); and compromising style (17-Q20). This scale was used to accurately measure the conflict resolution styles of the employees. To this end, the effect of generations X and Y on conflict resolution can be accurately studied as this instrument has been proven valid and reliable (Hopkins and Yonker, 2015; Rahim, 1983).

The personality traits were measured using the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), constructed and developed by Costa

and McCrae (1992), and based on the five items depicted in the present survey: openness (Q1-Q5); conscientiousness (Q6-Q10); extraversion (Q11-Q15); agreeableness (Q16-20); and emotional stability (Q21-Q25). The above mentioned scale was used to accurately measure the personality traits of the employees working in the electronic retail industry in Lebanon. To this end, the moderating effect between generations X and Y, and conflict resolution can be accurately studied as this instrument has been proven valid and reliable (Oshio *et al.*, 2014; Karkoulian *et al.*, 2009).

Both instrument statements were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree).

Results

Demographics

Pertaining to the participants' generation, 51.3 percent belong to generation Y while 48.7 percent belong to generation X. Regarding the gender of the respondents, 56.8 percent are females and 43.2 percent are males. Additionally, concerning the level of education, the majority of the participants (43.2 percent) are holders of a bachelor's degree and 38.6 percent hold a degree higher than bachelor. Relating to the years of work experience, 41.2 percent of the participants had zero to five years of experience, 21.6 percent had six to ten, 12.1 percent had 11-15, 12.1 percent had 16-20, and 13.1 percent had above 20 years of work experience. Moreover, the majority of the respondents occupied non-managerial positions (49 percent), 21.2 percent occupied middle-level management positions, 20.2 percent occupied operational management positions, while only 9.6 percent occupied top-level management positions.

Correlation

To test for relationships between the five personality traits and the different styles of conflict, a correlation matrix was conducted. The results are displayed in Table I.

| | Openness | Conscientiousness | Extraversion | Agreeableness | Neuroticism |
|---------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| <i>Dominating</i> | | | | | |
| Pearson correlation | -0.054 | -0.028 | 0.051 | -0.028 | 0.040 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.445 | 0.700 | 0.479 | 0.698 | 0.576 |
| <i>Integrating</i> | | | | | |
| Pearson correlation | 0.326** | 0.242** | 0.354** | 0.236** | -0.0182* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.010 |
| <i>Avoiding</i> | | | | | |
| Pearson correlation | 0.271** | 0.099 | 0.179* | 0.177* | -0.056 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.164 | 0.011 | 0.012 | 0.428 |
| <i>Obliging</i> | | | | | |
| Pearson correlation | -0.021 | -0.157* | -0.059 | 0.023 | 0.174* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.766 | 0.027 | 0.408 | 0.751 | 0.014 |
| <i>Compromising</i> | | | | | |
| Pearson correlation | 0.331** | 0.235** | 0.404** | 0.152* | -0.030 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.032 | 0.677 |

Table I.
Personality traits
and conflict styles

Notes: *,**Significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively

The outcomes show that no significant relationships exist between the dominating style and the Big Five personality traits. This is in line with neither the study of Wang (2010), who found that the dominating style and agreeableness have a significant negative relationship, nor the study of Ejaz *et al.* (2012) who found that dominating style is positively related to openness and extroversion. The integrating conflict style, however, is positively correlated to openness (consistent with both the findings of Wang, 2010 and Ejaz *et al.*, 2012), conscientiousness (unfailing to Ejaz *et al.*, 2012), extroversion, and agreeableness (similar to Ejaz *et al.*, 2012) at a significance level of 0.01, and negatively correlated to neuroticism (unfailing to Wang, 2010) at a 0.05 significance level. Moreover, the avoiding conflict style is significantly related to openness at a 0.01 significance level, and significantly related to extroversion and agreeableness at a 0.05 significance level, which are not in line with Wang's (2010) and Ejaz *et al.*'s (2012) study. In addition to this, the obliging conflict style is negatively correlated to conscientiousness, but positively correlated to neuroticism (consistent to Wang's, 2010 results but not to Ejaz *et al.*, 2012 results) at a 0.05 significance level. Also, the compromising conflict style is significantly related to openness, conscientiousness, and extroversion at a 0.01 level of significance and to agreeableness (unfailing to Wang's, 2010 research) at a 0.05 significance level.

Regression analysis

To assess probable generational differences in the intercept and slope for prediction of conflict style, a regression was conducted to predict conflict style from generations (dummy coded 1 = generation X, 0 = generation Y), personality traits, and a product term to represent a generation-by-personality traits interaction. Thus, the regression model is applied to test the moderating effect of generations X and Y on the relationship between each personality trait and each conflict handling style.

In relation to the dominating conflict style, results reveal that the regression models to predict the dominating style from the generation with respect to the Big Five personality factors are not statistically significant. In other words, no significant interaction was found between any personality traits moderated by generations X and Y with the dominating conflict style. This supports *H1* that generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and the dominating conflict style. The output is shown in Table AI.

Furthermore, relative to the integrating conflict style, the overall regression model to predict the integrating style from the generation with respect to extroversion is statistically significant with $R=0.4302$, $R^2=0.1851$, $F=25.3956$, and $p\text{-value}=0.0000$. The interaction of generations on the relation between extroversion and the integrating style is statistically significant with $b_3=0.5348$ and a corresponding $p\text{-value}=0.0016$. Additionally, the effect of generation X (0.7511) on the stated relationship is greater than the effect of generation Y (0.2163). No other significant relationships were found between the remaining personality traits and the integrating conflict style. This provides evidence to support *H2a* and *H2b*, which state that generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between extraversion and the integrating conflict style, but not between openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and the integrating conflict style. Also, *H2c* which states that the moderating effect of generation X on the relationship between extroversion and the integrating conflict style is greater than that of generation Y is supported. The results are illustrated in Table II.

Table II.
Moderating effect
on the integrating
conflict style

| Personality trait | R | Model | | F | a | Coefficients | | | Moderator | |
|-------------------|--------|----------------|---------|--------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|
| | | R ² | | | | b ₁ | b ₂ | b ₃ | Y | X |
| Openness | 0.3750 | 0.1406 | 9.6363 | 2.9605 | -0.0733 | 0.2940 | 0.3871 | 0.2940 | 0.6810 | |
| p-value | | | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.0738 | 0.1007 | 0.0738 | 0.0738 | 0.0001 | |
| Conscientiousness | 0.3407 | 0.1161 | 6.6831 | 3.4292 | -1.6411 | 0.1456 | 0.3835 | 0.1456 | 0.5292 | |
| p-value | | | 0.0003 | 0.0000 | 0.0391 | 0.4002 | 0.0796 | 0.4002 | 0.0001 | |
| Extraversion | 0.4302 | 0.1851 | 25.3956 | 3.2137 | -2.0352 | 0.2163 | 0.5348 | 0.2163 | 0.7511 | |
| p-value | | | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.0011 | 0.1261 | 0.0016 | 0.1261 | 0.0000 | |
| Agreeableness | 0.2780 | 0.0773 | 4.7099 | 3.1046 | -0.7608 | 0.2541 | 0.1645 | 0.2541 | 0.4185 | |
| p-value | | | 0.0034 | 0.0000 | 0.3665 | 0.1758 | 0.5215 | 0.1758 | 0.0177 | |
| Neuroticism | 0.2550 | 0.0650 | 4.9923 | 4.6863 | -0.2637 | -0.2587 | -0.0101 | -0.2587 | -0.2688 | |
| p-value | | | 0.0023 | 0.0000 | 0.6773 | 0.0693 | 0.9632 | 0.0693 | 0.1076 | |

In turn, the overall regression equation to predict the integrating style relative to extroversion is as follows:

$$\text{Integrating} = a + b_1 \times \text{XYgeneration} + b_2 \times \text{Extroversion} + b_3 \times (\text{XYgeneration} \times \text{Extroversion})$$

Replacing the variables into the expression, the equation becomes:

$$\text{Integrating} = 3.2137 - 2.0352 \times \text{XYgeneration} + 0.2163 \times \text{Extroversion} + 0.5348(\text{XYgeneration} \times \text{Extroversion})$$

The nature of this interaction can be comprehended by substituting the dummy variable score values into the above regression equation.

For generation Y:

$$\text{Integrating} = 3.2137 - 2.0352(0) + 0.2163 \text{ Extroversion} + 0.5348(0 \times \text{Extroversion})$$

Thus:

$$\text{Integrating} = 3.2137 + 0.2163 \times \text{Extroversion}$$

For generation X:

$$\text{Integrating} = 3.2137 - 2.0352(1) + 0.2163 \text{ Extroversion} + 0.5348(1 \times \text{Extroversion})$$

Simplifying the expression, the equation becomes:

$$\text{Integrating} = 1.1785 + 0.7511 \times \text{Extroversion}$$

Furthermore, the overall regression model to predict the avoiding conflict style from the generation with respect to the personality traits is performed. Results show that the interactions of generations on the relation between the integrating style and conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness are statistically significant with p-values of 0.0145, 0.0455, and 0.0282, respectively. The moderating effect of generation X on each relationship is greater than the effect of generation Y, as illustrated in Table III. However, no significant interactions are found between the remaining two personality

Table III.
Moderating effect
on the avoiding
conflict styles

| Personality trait | <i>R</i> | Model | | <i>a</i> | Coefficients | | | Moderator | |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| | | <i>R</i> ² | <i>F</i> | | <i>b</i> ₁ | <i>b</i> ₂ | <i>b</i> ₃ | Y | X |
| Openness | 0.2924 | 0.0855 | 7.1099 | 2.6154 | -0.8326 | 0.2020 | 0.2578 | 0.2020 | 0.4598 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.0001 | 0.0000 | 0.1100 | 0.0565 | 0.0912 | 0.0565 | 0.0000 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.1765 | 0.0312 | 3.3749 | 3.2810 | -0.9578 | 0.0028 | 0.2595 | 0.0028 | 0.2623 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.0195 | 0.0000 | 0.0117 | 0.9646 | 0.0145 | 0.9646 | 0.0022 |
| Extraversion | 0.2214 | 0.0490 | 6.5972 | 3.1107 | -0.9531 | 0.0534 | 0.2772 | 0.0534 | 0.3306 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.0003 | 0.0000 | 0.0409 | 0.6445 | 0.0455 | 0.6445 | 0.0000 |
| Agreeableness | 0.2361 | 0.0558 | 4.1456 | 3.3316 | -1.3373 | -0.0123 | 0.4142 | -0.0123 | 0.4019 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.0071 | 0.0000 | 0.0317 | 0.9338 | 0.0282 | 0.9338 | 0.0006 |
| Neuroticism | 0.1166 | 0.0136 | 0.7940 | 3.1658 | 0.5769 | 0.0436 | -0.2161 | 0.0436 | -0.1725 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.4985 | 0.0000 | 0.1999 | 0.6791 | 0.1723 | 0.6791 | 0.1439 |

traits moderated by generations X and Y and the avoiding conflict style. This provides evidence to support *H3a* and *H3b*, that there is a moderating effect of generations X and Y on the relationship between conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, and the avoiding conflict style, while there is no such moderating effect on the relationship between openness and neuroticism, and the avoiding conflict style. Additionally, *H3c* is also supported since the moderating effect of generation X on the relationship between conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, and the avoiding conflict style is greater than that of generation Y.

By this, the overall regression equation to predict the avoiding style relative to conscientiousness is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Avoiding} = & 3.2810 - 0.9578 \times \text{XYgeneration} \\ & + 0.0028 \times \text{Conscientiousness} \\ & + 0.2595(\text{XYgeneration} \times \text{Conscientiousness}) \end{aligned}$$

Replacing the dummy variable score values into the above expression, the equation becomes.

For generation Y:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Avoiding} = & 3.2810 - 0.9578(0) + 0.0028 \text{ Conscientiousness} \\ & + 0.2595(0 \times \text{Conscientiousness}) \end{aligned}$$

Thus:

$$\text{Avoiding} = 3.2810 + 0.0028 \times \text{Conscientiousness}$$

For generation X:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Avoiding} = & 3.2810 - 0.9578(1) + 0.0028 \text{ Conscientiousness} \\ & + 0.2595(1 \times \text{Conscientiousness}) \end{aligned}$$

Simplifying the expression, the equation becomes:

$$\text{Avoiding} = 2.3232 + 0.2623 \times \text{Conscientiousness}$$

Likewise, the regression equation to predict the avoiding style relative to extraversion is as follows.

For generation Y:

$$\text{Avoiding} = 3.1107 + 0.0534 \times \text{Extraversion}$$

For generation X:

$$\text{Avoiding} = 2.1576 + 0.3306 \times \text{Extraversion}$$

Similarly, the regression equation to predict the avoiding style relative to agreeableness is.
For generation Y:

$$\text{Avoiding} = 3.3316 - 0.0123 \times \text{Agreeableness}$$

For generation X:

$$\text{Avoiding} = 1.9943 + 0.4019 \times \text{Agreeableness}$$

Moreover, in relation to the obliging conflict style, no significant interactions were found between any personality traits moderated by generations X and Y. This supports *H4* that generations X and Y do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and the obliging conflict style. The output table is shown in Table AII.

Finally, relative to the compromising conflict style, the overall regression model to predict this style from the generation with respect to conscientiousness is statistically significant with $R = 0.3327$, $R^2 = 0.1107$, $F = 6.3057$, and p -value = 0.0004. The interaction of generations on the relation between conscientiousness and the compromising style is significant with $b_3 = 0.4321$ and a corresponding p -value = 0.0236. Also, the moderating effect of generation X (0.5228) on the relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style is greater than that of generation Y (0.0907). No significant interactions were found between the remaining personality traits moderated by generations X and Y with the compromising conflict style, as illustrated in Table IV. This provides evidence to support *H5a* and *H5b* that generations X and Y have a moderating effect on the relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style, but no moderating effect on the relationship between openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, and the compromising conflict. In addition to this, *H5c* is supported as the moderating effect of generation X on the relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising conflict style is greater than that of generation Y.

| Personality trait | <i>R</i> | Model | | <i>F</i> | <i>a</i> | Coefficients | | | Moderator | |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------------|--|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| | | <i>R</i> ² | | | | <i>b</i> ₁ | <i>b</i> ₂ | <i>b</i> ₃ | Y | X |
| Openness | 0.3476 | 0.1208 | | 8.5520 | 2.5680 | -0.8137 | 0.3226 | 0.2211 | 0.3226 | 0.5437 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.1817 | 0.0044 | 0.2218 | 0.0044 | 0.0002 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.3327 | 0.1107 | | 6.3057 | 3.3268 | -1.6794 | 0.0907 | 0.4321 | 0.0907 | 0.5228 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | | 0.0004 | 0.0000 | 0.0135 | 0.5221 | 0.0236 | 0.5221 | 0.0000 |
| Extraversion | 0.4232 | 0.1791 | | 10.7212 | 2.3909 | -0.8967 | 0.3723 | 0.2330 | 0.3723 | 0.6052 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.1590 | 0.0012 | 0.2209 | 0.0012 | 0.0001 |
| Agreeableness | 0.1829 | 0.0334 | | 1.8255 | 3.3009 | -0.6328 | 0.1048 | 0.1568 | 0.1048 | 0.2616 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | | 0.1438 | 0.0000 | 0.4342 | 0.5561 | 0.5135 | 0.5561 | 0.1050 |
| Neuroticism | 0.1201 | 0.0144 | | 0.9404 | 3.7812 | -0.2332 | -0.0467 | 0.0236 | -0.0467 | -0.0231 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | | 0.4222 | 0.0000 | 0.6876 | 0.6838 | 0.9052 | 0.6838 | 0.8865 |

Table IV.
Moderating effect on
the compromising
conflict style

Thus, the regression equation to predict the compromising style relative to conscientiousness is as follows.

For generation Y:

$$\text{Compromising} = 3.3268 + 0.0907 \times \text{Conscientiousness}$$

For generation X:

$$\text{Compromising} = 1.6474 + 0.5228 \times \text{Conscientiousness}$$

Discussion

The results indicated no moderating effect of generations X and Y between the dominating conflict handling style and the Big Five personality traits. This seems in line with the characteristics of generations X and Y, which do not comprise the use of power to complete any objectives. This is true especially for generation Y who prefer to work in teams instead of dominantly leading as they are more team oriented (Howe and Strauss, 2000).

Moreover, the results showed no moderating effect of generations X and Y between the obliging conflict handling style and the Big Five personality traits. Both generations X and Y do not sacrifice their own needs or goals to satisfy others. On the contrary, individuals of generation Y believe in empowerment, are achievement oriented, and acquire career-driven personalities. They are also considered self-centered enough not to abide by other people's desires (Mukundan *et al.*, 2013).

On the other hand, results revealed that generations X and Y moderated the relationship between the integrating conflict style and extraversion. However, X had a greater moderating effect than Y. Individuals of generation X are most likely to prefer an integrating style for conflict handling since it is the most constructive among the conflict styles and may lead to joint gains for both parties. Generation X is known for joining gains and eventually reaching a suitable solution. They also acquire a great concern for their own as well as another party's best interest. They are flexible and usually more loyal than generation Y. All of these characteristics ease their dealings in relationships and situations, a description of being extroverted. Generation Y individuals, nonetheless, like to work their own way and tend to leave when something better comes along (Mukundan *et al.*, 2013).

Additionally, generations X and Y moderated the relationship between compromising conflict style and conscientiousness. Conversely, X had a larger moderating effect than Y. This stems from the independent and reliable character of generation X, who are more devoted and responsible, two of the characteristics of the compromising handling style (Borges *et al.*, 2010; Saleh, 2008). Individuals of generation X are more willing to give up something in exchange for something else, unlike individuals of generation Y, who are regarded as more selfish and sheltered (Howe and Strauss, 2000). Contrasting to generation Y, individuals who belong to generation X seem to be more willing to compromise as they show self-control and behave dutifully, known features of being conscientious.

Finally, generations X and Y moderated the relationship between the avoiding style and conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, X having a greater effect than Y. Individuals of generation X aim to achieve and plan behavior rather than react spontaneously, and they are more willing to withdraw in order to find a solution that is acceptable to all (or to simply avoid the confrontation). They are more adrift and

pleasant. Individuals of generation Y, however, are willing to take more risks (Fraone *et al.*, 2008). Their attitudes are influenced by today's increased violence and numerous hollow reality shows (Mukundan *et al.*, 2013). Unlike generation Y, generation X tends to suppress from conflict more than generation Y, as these individuals are usually more responsible (a feature of conscientiousness), more at ease with their surroundings (a feature of extroversion), and more likely to behave in harmony with others' interests (a feature of agreeableness).

Conclusion, limitations, and future research

Earlier research that examined the relationship between personality and conflict management styles have found varying results ranging from weak to strong relationships. The understanding of what influences an individual's choice of which management style he/she chooses is of great use for managers in general and human resource managers in particular. This study showed that the inconsistency could be the result of some factors that moderate this relationship. The age of individuals contributes to the strength or the weakness of the various relationships between personality and conflict handling styles. Findings suggest that generations X and Y do not moderate the relationships among the personality traits and the dominating and obliging conflict styles. They do, however, have varying moderating effects on the relationships between specific personality traits and the integrating, avoiding, and compromising styles.

This study investigated the moderating effect of generations X and Y on a sample of employees within the electronic retail service sector in Lebanon. It is recommended that future research examine such a relationship in other sectors and cultures for generalizability. Since generation Z (born in the late 1990s) will soon be entering the job market, further studies should include this cohort when investigating the relationships. Finally, for a deeper understanding of the relationship, it is advisable to use both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

References

- Almlund, M., Duckworth, A.L., Heckman, J.J. and Kautz, T.D. (2011), "Personality psychology and economics", No. w16822, National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Antonioni, D. (1998), "Relationship between the Big Five personality factors and conflict management styles", *International Journal of Conflict Management*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 336-355.
- Anwar, M., Shahzad, K. and Ijaz-ul-Rehman, Q. (2012), "Managing conflicts through personality management", *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol. 6 No. 10, pp. 3725-3732.
- Behfar, K.J., Peterson, R.S., Mannix, E.A. and Trochim, W.M.K. (2008), "The critical role of conflict resolution in teams: a close look at the links between conflict type, conflict management strategies, and team outcomes", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 1, pp. 170-188.
- Blake, R. and Mouton, J. (1964), *The Managerial Grid*, Gulf, Houston, TX.
- Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J.S. (1984), *Solving Costly Organizational Conflicts*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Borges, N.J., Manuel, R.S., Elam, C.L. and Jones, B.J. (2010), "Differences in motives between Millennial and Generation X medical students", *Medical Education*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 570-576.

- Boyce, C., Wood, A. and Powdthavee, N. (2013), "Is personality fixed? Personality changes as much as 'variable' economic factors and more strongly predicts changes to life satisfaction", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 111 No. 1, pp. 287-305.
- Brett, J. (2001), *Negotiating Globally: How to Negotiate Deals, Resolve Disputes, and Make Decisions Across Cultural Boundaries*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Carlson, N. (2010), *Psychology the Science of Behaviour*, ISBN 978-0-205-64524-4, Pearson Canada, p. 438.
- Chamorro-Premuzic, T., Reimers, S., Hsu, A. and Ahmetoglu, G. (2009), "Who art thou? Personality predictors of artistic preferences in a large UK sample: the importance of openness", *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 100 No. 1, pp. 501-516.
- Clarke, S. and Robertson, I.T. (2005), "A meta-analytic review of the Big Five personality factors and accident involvement in occupational and nonoccupational settings", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 1, pp. 355-376.
- Costa, P.T. and McCrae, R.R. (1988), "Personality in adulthood – a 6-year longitudinal-study of self-reports and spouse ratings on the NEO Personality-Inventory", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 853-863.
- Costa, P.T. Jr and McCrae, R.R. (1992), *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) Professional Manual*, Psychological Assessment Resources, Odessa, FL.
- DeChurch, L.A., Hamilton, K.L. and Haas, C. (2007), "Effects of conflict management strategies on perceptions of intragroup conflict", *Group Dynamics*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 66-78.
- Dolan, S.L. (2006), *Stress, Self-Esteem, Health and Work*, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 76.
- Durupinar, F., Pelechano, N., Allbeck, J.M., Gudukbay, U. and Badler, N.I. (2009), "How the ocean personality model affects the perception of crowds", *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 22-31.
- Ejaz, S.S., Iqbal, F. and Ara, A. (2012), "Relationship among personality traits and conflict handling styles of call center representatives and appraisal of existing service model", *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 27-36.
- Ferrer-i-Carbonell, A. (2005), "Income and well-being: an empirical analysis of the comparison income effect", *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 89 No. 1, pp. 997-1019.
- Ferrer-i-Carbonell, A. and Frijters, P. (2004), "How important is methodology for the estimates of the determinants of happiness?", *Economic Journal*, Vol. 114 No. 1, pp. 641-659.
- Fraone, J., Hartmann, D. and McNally, K. (2008), "The multi-generational workforce: management implications and strategies for collaboration", Boston, MA, available at: www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/pdf/MultiGen_EBS.pdf
- Fumham, A., Swami, V., Arteché, A. and Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2008), "Cognitive ability, learning approaches and personality correlates of general knowledge", *Educational Psychology*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 427-437.
- Giebels, E. and Janssen, O. (2005), "Conflict stress and reduced well-being at work: the buffering effect of third-party help", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 137-155.
- Goldberg, L.R. (1993), "The structure of phenotypic personality-traits", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 26-34.
- Graziano, W.G. and Tobin, R.M. (2009), "Agreeableness", in Leary, M.R. and Hoyle, R.H. (Eds), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior*, Guilford Press, New York, NY.

- Hong, L.C. and Kaur, S. (2008), "A relationship between organizational climate, employee personality and intention to leave", *International Review of Business Research Papers*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 1-10.
- Hopkins, M.M. and Yonker, R.D. (2015), "Managing conflict with emotional intelligence: abilities that make a difference", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 226-244.
- Howe, N. and Strauss, W. (2000), *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, Vintage Books, New York, NY.
- Jeronimus, B.F., Riese, H., Sanderman, R. and Ormel, J. (2014), "Mutual reinforcement between neuroticism and life experiences: a five-wave, 16-year study to test reciprocal causation", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 107 No. 4, pp. 751-764.
- Jones, G., George, J. and Belkhdja, O. (2013), *Contemporary Management*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York, NY.
- Judge, T.A. and Ilies, R. (2002), "Relationship of personality to performance motivation: a meta-analytic review", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 1, pp. 797-807.
- Karkoulian, S., Messarra, L. and Sidani, M. (2009), "Correlates of the bases of power and the big five personality traits: an empirical investigation", *Journal of organizational Culture, Communication and Conflict*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 71-82.
- Lahey, B.B. (2009), "Public health significance of neuroticism", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 241-256.
- Laney, M.O. (2002), *The Introvert Advantage*, Thomas Allen & Son Limited, pp. 28-35.
- Liao, C. and Lee, C. (2009), "An empirical study of employee job involvement and personality traits: the case of Taiwan", *International Journal of Economics and Management*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 22-36.
- Lyons, S. and Kuron, L. (2014), "Generational differences in the workplace: a review of the evidence and directions for future research", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 35 No. S1, pp. S139-S157.
- McCrae, R.R. and Costa, P.T. (1987), "Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 81-90.
- McMullin, J.A., Duerden Comeau, T. and Jovic, E. (2007), "Generational affinities and discourses of differences: a case study of highly skilled information technology workers", *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 297-316.
- Meyer, S. (2004), "Organizational response to conflict: future conflict and work outcomes", *Social Work Research*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 183-190.
- Mukundan, S., Dhanya, M. and Saraswathyamma, K.P. (2013), "A study on the conflict resolution styles of Generation Y students in indian context", *International Journal of Global Business*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 81-90.
- Oshio, A., Abe, S., Cutrone, P. and Gosling, S.D. (2014), "Further validity of the Japanese version of the ten item personality inventory (TIPI-J)", *Journal of Individual Differences*, Vol. 35, pp. 236-244. doi: 10.1027/1614-0001/a000145.
- Pepin, J. (2005), "An investigation of whether coping mechanisms mediate the relationship between personality traits and conflict management styles", Dissertations and Theses Database No. AAT MR06973, St Mary's University.
- Rahim, M.A. (1983), "A measure of styles of handling conflict", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 368-376.
- Rahim, M.A. (1992), *Managing Conflict in Organizations*, 2nd ed., Praeger, Westport, CT.

- Rahim, M.A. and Bonoma, T.V. (1979), "Managing organizational conflict: a model for diagnosis and intervention", *Psychology Reports*, Vol. 44 No. 3c, pp. 1323-1344.
- Robbins, S.P. and Judge, T.A. (2007), *Organizational Behavior*, 12th ed., Pearson Education Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Robbins, S.P., Judge, T.A. and Sanghi, S. (2008), *Organizational Behavior*, Pearson Education, NJ.
- Rothmann, S. and Coetzer, E.P. (2003), "The big five personality dimensions and job performance", *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 68-74.
- Saleh, K. (2008), "Managing to manage across generations at work", available at: www.psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/publications/GenerationsAtWork.pdf (accessed June 16, 2015).
- Silverthorne, C.P. (2005), *Organizational Psychology in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New York University Press, New York, NY.
- Shetach, A. (2009), "The four-dimensions model: a tool for effective conflict management", *International Studies of Management & Organization*, Vol. 39 No. 3, pp. 82-106.
- Sodiya, A.S., Longe, H.O., Onashoga, S.A., Awodele, O. and Omotosho, L.O. (2007), "An improved assessment of personality traits in software engineering", *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 163-177.
- Srivastava, S., Angelo, K.M. and Vallereux, S.R. (2008), "Extraversion and positive affect: a day reconstruction study of person-environment transactions", *Journal of Research in Personality*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 1613-1618.
- Srivastava, S., John, O.P., Gosling, S.D. and Potter, J. (2003), "Development of personality in early and middle adulthood: set like plaster or persistent change?", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 84 No. 1, pp. 1041-1053.
- Thomas, J.L., Bliese, P.D. and Jex, S.M. (2005), "Interpersonal conflict and organizational commitment: examining two levels of supervisory support as multilevel moderators", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 35, pp. 2375-2398.
- Thomas, K.W. (1976), "Conflict and conflict management", in Dunnette, M.D. (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, RandMcNally, Chicago, IL, pp. 889-935.
- Trudel, J. and Reio, T.G. Jr (2011), "Managing workplace incivility: the role of conflict management styles – antecedent or antidote?", *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 395-423.
- Wang, X. (2010), "The relationship between the five-factor personality and conflict management styles in a manufacturing setting", University of Phoenix, AZ, 271pp.
- Wilmot, W.H. and Hocker, J.L. (2000), *Interpersonal Conflict*, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Whitworth, B.S. (2008), "Is there a relationship between personality type and preferred conflict-handling styles? An exploratory study of registered nurses in Southern Mississippi", *Journal of Nursing Management*, Vol. 16 No. 8, pp. 921-932.
- Zia, Y.A. and Syed, P.H. (2013), "An exploratory study into the causes of conflict and the effect of conflict management style on outcome in a competitive workplace", *Journal of Managerial Sciences*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 299-314.

Further reading

- Heinstrom, J. (2003), "Five personality dimensions and their influence on information behavior", *Information Research*, Vol. 9 No. 1, p. 165, available at: <http://InformationR.net/ir/9-1/paper165.html> (accessed June 16, 2015).
- Reich, W., Wagner-Westbrook, B. and Kressel, K. (2007), "Actual and ideal conflict styles and job distress in a health care organization", *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 141 No. 1, pp. 5-15.

810

Table AI.
Moderating effect
on the dominating
conflict style

| Personality trait | <i>R</i> | Model <i>R</i> ² | <i>F</i> | <i>a</i> | Coefficients | | | Moderator | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| | | | | | <i>b</i> ₁ | <i>b</i> ₂ | <i>b</i> ₃ | Y | X |
| Openness | 0.0824 | 0.0068 | 0.4654 | 3.1519 | 0.6416 | -0.0029 | -0.1942 | -0.0029 | -0.1971 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.7067 | 0.0000 | 0.3655 | 0.940 | 0.3896 | 0.9840 | 0.2559 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.0333 | 0.0011 | 0.0492 | 3.2858 | -0.0805 | -0.0407 | 0.0299 | -0.0407 | -0.0108 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.9855 | 0.0000 | 0.8917 | 0.7385 | 0.8581 | 0.7385 | 0.9250 |
| Extraversion | 0.0707 | 0.0050 | 0.4414 | 2.6595 | 0.4790 | 0.1430 | -0.1342 | 0.1430 | 0.0088 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.7237 | 0.0000 | 0.4011 | 0.2603 | 0.4197 | 0.2603 | 0.9344 |
| Agreeableness | 0.0297 | 0.0009 | 0.0448 | 3.3211 | -0.0365 | -0.0542 | 0.0165 | -0.0542 | -0.0377 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.9874 | 0.0000 | 0.9673 | 0.8310 | 0.9551 | 0.8310 | 0.7984 |
| Neuroticism | 0.0455 | 0.0021 | 0.1721 | 2.8943 | 0.1722 | 0.0863 | -0.0515 | 0.0863 | 0.0349 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.9151 | 0.0000 | 0.7539 | 0.5190 | 0.7699 | 0.5190 | 0.7599 |

Table AII.
Moderating effect
on the obliging
conflict style

| Personality trait | <i>R</i> | Model <i>R</i> ² | <i>F</i> | <i>a</i> | Coefficients | | | Moderator | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| | | | | | <i>b</i> ₁ | <i>b</i> ₂ | <i>b</i> ₃ | Y | X |
| Openness | 0.1515 | 0.0230 | 1.9249 | 2.7116 | 0.9157 | 0.0872 | -0.3164 | 0.0872 | -0.2292 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.1269 | 0.000 | 0.0960 | 0.4788 | 0.0569 | 0.4788 | 0.0391 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.1762 | 0.0310 | 0.4476 | 3.4945 | -0.0438 | -0.1391 | -0.0181 | -0.1391 | -0.1571 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.2409 | 0.0000 | 0.9571 | 0.5127 | 0.9390 | 0.5127 | 0.1263 |
| Extraversion | 0.1042 | 0.0109 | 0.5945 | 3.3614 | -0.3108 | -0.1061 | 0.0601 | -0.1061 | -0.0460 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.6193 | 0.0000 | 0.5809 | 0.4291 | 0.7117 | 0.4291 | 0.6167 |
| Agreeableness | 0.1070 | 0.0114 | 0.6913 | 3.3707 | -0.7806 | -0.1113 | 0.2108 | -0.1113 | 0.0996 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.5584 | 0.0000 | 0.2705 | 0.5036 | 0.3287 | 0.5036 | 0.4684 |
| Neuroticism | 0.2067 | 0.0427 | 2.8690 | 2.9538 | -0.1090 | 0.2163 | -0.1881 | 0.3080 | 0.1199 |
| <i>p</i> -value | | | 0.0377 | 0.0000 | 0.2512 | 0.0099 | 0.2553 | 0.0205 | 0.2277 |

Corresponding author

Leila Canaan Messarra can be contacted at: imasara@lau.edu.lb

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com