Effects Of Personality On Conflict Resolution In Student Teams: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

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“Conflict is defined as a situation in which people are aware that their own wishes are incompatible with the wishes of others or when people become frustrated in their efforts to achieve important goals”
Has anyone had conflicts in groups in their classes?
Rahim Model of Conflict Resolution Styles

- Based on two dimensions:
  1. Concern for one’s own position
  2. Concerns for positions of other parties to the conflict

- Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising
Integrating Style

- Show high concern for their positions and the positions of others
- Prefer collaboration and interacting with others in a win-win manner
Obliging Style

- Show low concern for own position and high concern for position of others
- Self-sacrificing style that leads to a lose-win outcome
Dominating Style

• Show high regard for own position and low concern for position of others

• Competitive approach that leads to win-lose outcome
Avoiding Style

- Low concern for one’s own position and position of others
- Withdrawal or sidestepping - do not communicate needs
- Lose-lose outcomes
Compromising Style

• Show high-concern for their own short term interests and the short term interests of other parties, but may not show high regard for long-term interests

• Neither party looses, but neither’s long term interests are met
Personality Dimensions

• The Five-Factor Model: agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience

• Neo Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) - Costa and Macrae (2012)
## Neo-FFI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agreeableness</th>
<th>Openness</th>
<th>Extraversion</th>
<th>Conscientiousness</th>
<th>Neuroticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>warm, understanding, sympathetic and cooperative</td>
<td>reflective, creative, comfortable with abstractions</td>
<td>assertive, gregarious and sociable</td>
<td>well organized, dependable, and hard-working</td>
<td>insecurity, anxiety, depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
<td>harsh, insincere, rude and unsympathetic</td>
<td>conservative, resistant to change, practical</td>
<td>reserved, quiet or timid</td>
<td>lazy, disorganized, unreliable, or indecisive</td>
<td>calm, patient, emotionally stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Methodology

• 216 Participants - Undergraduate business students (46% males)
  • Avg. age 27.2 years
  • Data collected over four-semester span in 7 different marketing courses
• 52 teams ranging 3-7 members
Study Methodology

• 3 Phases of Data collection

• 1st phase: Students assigned to teams, provide baseline personality information using Neo-FFI

• 2nd phase: 6 weeks later. Students provided information about various work characteristics

• 3rd phase: At end of semester. Students indicated perceptions of various aspects of team effectiveness and strategies used to resolve conflicts (ROCI - II)
Table 1
Scale Properties for Measures Used in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Scale Mean</th>
<th>Item Mean</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality Measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreeableness (AGR)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44.81</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.701</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness (CON)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47.25</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.818</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extroversion (EXT)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45.61</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.782</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neuroticism (NEU)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.12</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness (OPN)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41.25</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.711</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict Resolution Styles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding (AVD)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.03</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.825</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compromising (COM)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.705</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominating (DOM)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.854</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating (INT)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.64</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.868</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obliging (OBL)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.08</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale mean and Cronbach’s alpha
Study Methodology

• Relationships among personality variables and conflict resolution styles were tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique
Hypothesis

Impact of 5 Personality Dimensions on 5 Conflict Resolution Strategies
Results

• Of the 25 paths connecting personality to conflict resolution, 9 were statistically significant

• Neuroticism as a personality dimension had no significant impact on any of the conflict resolution strategies (c.r.s)

• Conscientiousness was related to respondents’ integrating c.r.s
Results

• Individuals high in extroversion exercise the dominating approach to conflict resolution when dealing with team members

• Agreeableness was positively related to all c.r.s except dominating

• Individuals high in openness use positivity related to finding middle course of give-and-take to resolve impasses and find compromise
Result

Impact of 5 Personality Dimensions on 5 Conflict Resolution Strategies
Summary and Conclusions

- Students who are aware of links between personality and resolution styles are better able to anticipate behaviors aimed at conflict resolution.
- Can better inform educators who are mediators and guide team processes.
Limitations of Study

- Did not distinguish between minor conflicts and those more serious
- Did not distinguish between task-oriented and people-oriented conflicts
- No consideration given to the effectiveness of preferred c.r.s.
Discussion

• Do you think knowing what personality type and preferred c.r.s. everyone is would help group conflicts?
Questions?