

Effect of Personality Traits on Conflict Resolution Styles in Working Men and Women

Khan Bibi¹, Prof.Dr. Alam Tareen²

&

Syed Aziz ud Din Agha³

Abstract

Personality is sum total of a person's different characteristics referred to as traits and these traits help in understanding about individuality of workers. Conflicts among workers originate from perceived contradictions in their preferences, thoughts, and actions. Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness were examined as predictors of conflict resolution styles which included accommodation, avoiding, collaboration, competing, and compromising. The participants were working men and women from private and public organizations in Quetta city. Self-reported Questionnaires of Big Five Inventory and Conflict Management Questionnaire were used to collect the data. Regression analyses were run for each conflict resolution style as dependent variable for personality traits. Results showed extraversion and neuroticism significant positive predictors for accommodation style; extraversion significant negative predictor for avoiding style; neuroticism and openness significant positive predictors for

¹M.Phil Scholar, Balochistan Study Center, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

²Department of Sociology, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

³Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

compromising style of conflict resolution. The results are discussed in context of past studies and conclusion on the basis of the findings is given. Limitations of the present research and suggestions for the future research are also mentioned.

Key words: Personality Traits, Conflict Resolution Styles, Baluchistan

Introduction

According to Rani (2018) personality is sum total of a person's different characteristics referred to as traits and these traits help in understanding about individuality of worker(s). This model of personality is also referred to as OCEAN which stands for openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Goldberg, 1993; Robbins et al., 2008). Conflicts among workers originate from perceived contradictions in their preferences, thoughts, and actions (De Dreu&Gelfand, 2008; Jones, George, &Belkhdja, 2013). Collaboration and compromising are relatively healthier ways of resolving conflicts (Dildar&Yasin, 2013) as compared to other styles of conflict resolution which are usually considered useful for daily life issues but not generally healthy ways of resolving issues (Dildar, Ansari, &Arshad, 2021).

Conflicts are an inseparable aspect of human collective life (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2015; McConnon&McConnon, 2011) and no organization/profession is exception to its occurrence. Conflicts among workers emerge as a result of contradictory preferences and approaches to their goals (Kazimoto, 2013). With the changing work and structure of organizations, conflicts at organizations have intensified (Aula &Siira, 2010).

Association between personality characteristics and preferred conflict resolution styles has been largely investigated and literature has documented large number of empirical evidence about association of personality traits with conflict resolution styles (see (Ahmed, Nawaz, Shaukat, &Usman, 2010; Anbaz, 2013; Anis-ul-Haque, 2003; Anwar, Shahzad, &Ijaz-ul-Rehman, 2012; Asgari, Taleghani, &Gilanpour, 2013; Ejaz, Iqbal, &Ara, 2012; Fatima &Saher, 2012; Gharache, Abbasi, &Mansoorina, 2014; Salimi, Karaminia, &Esmaeili, 2011; Wang, 2010). Priyadarshini (2017)also observed in his study that personality characteristics have strong association with conflict resolution styles and personality characteristics strongly predict conflict resolution styles. However, some studies have observed inconsistent or no

relationship of personality traits with conflict resolution styles (e.g, Pepin, 2005; Whitworth, 2008).

Participants and Design

It was a cross-sectional survey with correlational design for examining the effect of personality traits on conflict resolution styles. Among the participants 71.7% were females and 28.3 % were males whose age was between 20 and 55 years (*Mean* = 32.25 years, *SD* = 8.77). From private organizations participants were 53.3% and public organizations were 46.7%. Data were checked for missing values and extreme values and the skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 .

Objectives

- Exploring correlation between personality traits and conflict resolution styles.
- Examining personality traits as predictors for each of the five conflict resolution styles.

Hypothesis

- Personality traits significantly predict each of the five conflict resolution styles.

Data were collected on Big Five Inventory of 44 items (Goldberg, 1993) with five subscales. Responses to each statement are recorded on five point Likert scale. Extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism subscales consist of 8 items with alpha reliability .59 to .70. Conscientiousness subscale consists of 9 items with alpha reliability .56. Openness subscale is of 10 with alpha reliability .78. *Conflict Management Questionnaire* is a 15 items scale with its responses recorded on four point Likert scale. Each subscale has 3 items with alpha reliability –of .29 to .57.

Results

Table 1. Correlation coefficients between Big Five Inventory subscales and Conflict Management Questionnaire subscales (N = 207)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Extr.</i>	-	.71*	.60*	.65*	.75*	.62*	-.01	.31*	.17*	.29*
		*	*	*	*	*		*		*
<i>Agr.</i>		-	.60*	.64*	.77*	.59*	.10	.34*	.11	.28*

	*	*	*	*		*	*	
<i>Consc.</i>	-	.62*	.66*	.54*	.15	.24*	.15*	.19*
		*	*	*	*	*		*
<i>Neur.</i>		-	.64*	.57*	.13	.35*	.17*	.31*
			*			*		*
<i>Open.</i>			-	.57*	.12	.41*	.16*	.34*
				*		*		*
<i>Acc.</i>				-	.08	.40*	.22*	.27*
						*	*	*
<i>Avo.</i>					-	.97*	.13	.22*
						*		*
<i>Coll.</i>						-	.44*	.45*
							*	*
<i>Comp.</i>							-	.40*
								*
<i>Compr.</i>								-

Note. *Extr.* = Extraversion; *Agr.* = Agreeableness; *Consc.* = Conscientiousness; *Neur.* = Neuroticism; *Open.* = Openness; *Acc.* = Accommodation; *Avo.* = Avoiding; *Coll.* = Collaboration; *Comp.* = Competition; *Compr.* = Compromising.

All five traits of personality significantly positively correlate with the conflict resolution styles. However, correlation of agreeableness trait with completion style of conflict resolution is statistically non-significant. The four traits of personality have no significant correlation with avoiding style of conflict resolution whereas only conscientiousness trait has weak but statistically significant positive correlation with avoiding style of conflict resolution.(Table 1).

Table 2. Regression Analyses of Big Five Traits as predictors for Accommodation Conflict Resolution Style (N = 207)

	Accommodation Conflict Resolution Style				
	Model 1		Model 2		95% CI
	B	β	B	β	
Constant	11.26***		1.19		10.14 – 12.39
Gender	-.79	-.14	-.33	-.06	-1.58 -

				.003
<i>Extr.</i>		.14**	.28	.06 - .22
<i>Agr.</i>		.08	.17	-.001 - .17
<i>Consc.</i>		.06	.13	-.007 - .13
<i>Neur.</i>		.08*	.17	.01 - .16
<i>Open.</i>		.007	.02	-.06 - .07
R^2	.02			.47
F	3.86			29.36***
ΔR^2				.45
ΔF				33.85***

Note. *Extr.* = Extraversion; *Agr.* = Agreeableness; *Consc.* = Conscientiousness; *Neur.* = Neuroticism; *Open.* = Openness.

Extroversion ($B = .14, P = <.01$) and neuroticism ($B = .08, P = <.05$) are significant positive predictors for accommodation variable. Gender as control variable explained 2% variance in dependent variable ($R^2 = .02, F(1,205) = 3.86, p = >.05$) and Five traits of personality in the second step explained 45% additional variance the dependent variable of accommodation conflict resolution style. The model is statistically significant ($F(5,205) = 29.36, p = <.001$).

Table 3. Regression Analyses of Big Five Traits as predictors for Avoiding Conflict Resolution Style (N = 207)

	Avoiding Conflict Resolution Style				95% CI
	Model 1		Model 2		
	B	β	B	β	
Constant	8.58***		7.30***		7.69 – 9.47
Gender	-.50	-.11	-.39	-.08	-1.12 - .12
<i>Extr.</i>			-.12**	-.33	-.21 - -.04
<i>Agr.</i>			.01	.04	-.07 - .10
<i>Consc.</i>			.05	.14	-.02 - .13
<i>Neur.</i>			.05	.12	-.02 - .13
<i>Open.</i>			.04	.15	-.03 - .12
R^2		.012			.074

<i>F</i>	2.53	2.68*
ΔR^2		.062
ΔF		2.68*

Note. *Extr.* = Extraversion; *Agr.* = Agreeableness; *Consc.* = Conscientiousness; *Neur.* = Neuroticism; *Open.* = Openness.

Extraversion ($B = -.12, P = <.05$) is significant negative predictor for avoiding style in this model. The model is statistically significant ($F(5,205) = 2.68, p = <.05$). Gender as control variable in first step explained 1.2% variance ($R^2 = .012, p = >.05$) in the dependent variable and Big Five Traits in the second step explained 7.4% ($R^2 = .074, p = <.05$) variance in the dependent variable of avoiding conflict resolution style.

Table 4. Regression Analyses of Big Five Traits as predictors for Collaboration Conflict Resolution Style ($N = 207$)

	Collaboration Conflict Resolution Style				95% CI
	Model 1		Model 2		
	B	β	B	β	
Constant	8.80***		4.37***		7.83 – 9.77
Gender	-.67	-.13	-.37	-.07	-1.35 - .01
<i>Extr.</i>			-.01	-.02	-.10 - .08
<i>Agr.</i>			.008	.02	-.08 - .09
<i>Consc.</i>			-.05	-.11	-.12 - .03
<i>Neur.</i>			.08*	.19	.004 - .16
<i>Open.</i>			.10**	.35	.03 - .17
R^2		.018		.194	
<i>F</i>		3.74		8.01***	
ΔR^2				.176	
ΔF				8.72***	

Note. *Extr.* = Extraversion; *Agr.* = Agreeableness; *Consc.* = Conscientiousness; *Neur.* = Neuroticism; *Open.* = Openness.

Neuroticism trait ($B = .08, p = <.05$) and openness trait ($B = .10, p = <.01$) are significant positive predictors for collaboration style in this model and the model is statistically significant ($F (5,200) = .7.90, p = <.001$).

Gender as control variable explained 1.8 % variance in dependent variable ($R^2 = .018, P = >.05$). Big Five traits of personality in the second step explained 19.4% ($R^2 = .19, p = <.001$) variance in the dependent variable of collaboration conflict resolution style.

None of the Big Five trait significantly predicted competing style of conflict resolution style nor the overall model showed statistical significance ($F(5,200) = 1.37, p = >.05$) (Table Omitted).

Table 5. Regression Analyses of Big Five Traits as predictors for Compromising Conflict Resolution Style (N = 207)

	Compromising Conflict Resolution Style				
	Model 1		Model 2		95% CI
	B	β	B	β	
Constant	8.67***		5.72***		7.90 - .9.45
Gender	-.53	-.13	-.35	-.09	-1.07 - .02
<i>Extr.</i>			.02	.05	-.05 - .09
<i>Agr.</i>			.000	.002	-.07 - .07
<i>Consc.</i>			-.05	-.14	-.11 - .02
<i>Neur.</i>			.07*	.20	.002 - .13
<i>Open.</i>			.06*	.25	.003 - .11
R^2		.017		.146	
F		3.63		5.68***	
ΔR^2				.128	
ΔF				6.00***	

Note. *Extr.* = Extraversion; *Agr.* = Agreeableness; *Consc.* = Conscientiousness; *Neur.* = Neuroticism; *Open.* = Openness.

In this model with compromising conflict resolution style as dependent variable, neuroticism trait ($B = .07, P = <.05$) and openness trait ($B = .06, P = <.05$) are significant positive predictors and the overall model is significant ($F(5,200) = 5.68, p = <.001$) with gender as control variable in first step explaining 1.7% of variance in dependent variable ($R^2 = .017, p = >.05$) and Big Five traits of personality in the second step explaining 14.6% ($R^2 = .146, p = <.05$) variance in the dependent variable.

Discussion

The present research aimed at exploring relationship of Big Five traits of personality and conflict resolution styles and to examine effect of Big Five traits of personality on each conflict resolution style. It was hypothesized in the present research that personality traits would significantly predict each conflict resolution style.

Findings on relationship between personality traits and conflict resolution styles in the present research are largely in line with findings of past studies. In the present research, extraversion was significantly positively associated with accommodating, collaboration, competing, and compromising style but not associated with avoiding style and past studies have also reported similar findings (e.g, Ahmed et al., 2010). The findings showed agreeableness being significantly associated with accommodating, collaboration, and compromising but non-significantly associated with avoiding and competing styles. Past findings are in line with these findings such as reported by Anis-ul-Haque (2003) and Asgari et al. (2013). These past studies also match the present research findings of significant positive relationship of conscientiousness with accommodation, avoiding collaboration, competing, and compromising styles. The results showed significant positive association of neuroticism trait with accommodating, collaboration, competing, and compromising styles, but having non-significant positive association with avoiding style. Openness appeared as significantly positively associated with accommodating, collaboration, competing, and compromising styles but having non-significant positive association with avoiding style. These findings match the certain results which were reported by research in Pakistan (e.g, Ahmed et al. (2010).

Present research showed extraversion and neuroticism as significant predictors for accommodating style; extraversion significant negative predictor for avoiding style; neuroticism and openness significant positive predictors for collaboration and compromising styles of conflict resolution. Out of the five personality traits, no trait appeared to be significant predictor for competing style of conflict resolution. These findings showed evidence for personality traits to be significant predictors for some conflict resolution styles but not for all five conflict resolution styles implying that the hypothesis of the present research is partially supported. Past research has documented findings on the predicting role of personality traits for conflict

resolution styles which are to a certain extent in line with the findings of the present research (e.g, Forrester &Tashchian. 2013; Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015; Priyadarshini, 2017)

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present research, it is concluded that the type of personality traits somehow affects preference of conflict resolution styles therefore management of organizations need to stay informed of the individual difference of employees and provide training to their employees on the adaptive ways of resolving conflicts at work place.Further research on preferences of conflict resolution styleswith reference to personality traits of workers will be of great worth both for academia and organizations.

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