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The Influence of Self-Compassion, Compassion for Others, and Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Resolution Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Dual concern models of conflict postulate that people employ various conflict resolution strategies based on their degree of concern for the self and others. Previous studies have demonstrated that individual difference variables play an important role in determining what strategies people use. The purpose of the current mixed-methods study was to increase understanding of how individual differences influence both general and situation-specific conflict resolution. A sample of 486 university students completed questionnaires assessing trait emotional intelligence (EI), ability EI, self-compassion, compassion for others, and general conflict resolution strategies. Participants also gave an open-ended response to a hypothetical task conflict scenario to assess what individual difference variables influence situation specific conflict resolution. Results of an exploratory factor analysis suggest the use of a four-factor model of conflict strategies: problem solving (which includes compromise), forcing, yielding, and avoiding. A structural equation model revealed that both compassion and EI components significantly predict conflict resolution strategies. Furthermore, compassion for others mediated the relationship between EI and problem solving. A qualitative content analysis uncovered six themes regarding what individual differences influence conflict resolution: decision-making, acceptance of threatening information, guiding principles, assessment of people, interpersonal behaviours, and emotional response.

KEYWORDS: Self-compassion, compassion for others, trait emotional intelligence, ability emotional intelligence, conflict, conflict resolution strategies, structural equation modeling, qualitative content analysis

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CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

As soon as two individuals meet face to face, the potential for discordant interaction is there. Conflict between people is an area of study that has garnered much interest both as an intellectual question but also one that is of significant human and social importance. With the reality of local and international conflict and the constant media attention focused on these issues, the necessity for increased understanding about the nature of conflict and the means with which to resolve it becomes ever more important.

1.1 Conflict

Conflict can be considered an interactive process that occurs when disagreement, tensions, or disparities arise between social entities (Aubert, 1963; Rahim, 2011). There are many possible issues that can trigger a conflict, including being in a situation where events unfolding or demands placed on the self are incompatible with one's needs or desired behavior, wanting something that is in short supply, or having to work on a joint task with someone who has contrasting preferences (Rahim, 2011). While the present study will focus on conflict that occurs between individuals, conflict can also be an intrapersonal or inter-group process (Rahim, 2011).

There are multiple forms of conflict that one can experience between individuals. The current view espouses the existence of three main types of conflict: task conflict, relationship conflict, and process conflict (Jehn, 1977). Task conflict is disagreement about aspects about a work project or job detail (Jehn, 1977). For example, conflict over what details to include in a group presentation would be an example of a task conflict.

Relationship conflict is conflict regarding the nature of interpersonal interactions (Jehn, 1977). For example, relationship conflict could involve conflict over one person in a group being highly critical in their opinions of others. Finally, process conflict involves conflict about how to proceed with duties and assignment of roles or duties (Jehn, 1977). For example, conflict about who is responsible for what component of a group project is an example of process conflict.

1.1.1 Negative effects of conflict

Conflict is a natural component of everyday life, and can even have functional consequences in the long run (De Dreu, Van Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004; Forgas, 1994; Rahim, 2011). For example, one study found that moderate levels of task conflict was associated with more positive performance outcomes, with possible explanations being that moderate task conflict may reveal ways to enhance performance and help in critical assessment of information (Jehn 1995; 1997). Nevertheless, the actual experience of all conflict (no matter whether it is considered functional or not) is a negative one for individuals (De Dreu et al., 2004; Jordan & Troth, 2004). Due to individual (or group) goals being threatened in conflict situations, negative emotions of anger, disgust, or fear are elicited (De Dreu et al., 2004; Jordan & Troth, 2004). One study reported that conflict was negatively associated with well-being, in that both task and relationship conflict assessed were positively correlated with fatigue and tension (De Dreu et al., 2004). Another study found that conflict was associated with decreased cognitive flexibility and problem solving skills (Carnevale & Probst, 1998).

1.1.2 Management of conflict effects

Conflict resolution (also called conflict management, conflict handling, conflict styles, or negotiation) is defined as both people's intentions as well as their outwards behavior in response to a conflict situation they are experiencing (Van de Vliert, 1997). There are various types of conflict resolution strategies that people can use, that will be expanded on in the subsequent section.

Instead of just accepting the negative experience of conflict, individuals can control the negative effects of conflict by modifying how they manage the conflict situation (Friedman, Tidd, Currall & Tsai, 2000). For example, De Dreu et al. (2004) demonstrated that people who used a more cooperative conflict resolution approach when faced with a conflict situation, experienced less signs of poor physical functioning.

1.2 Conflict resolution strategies

While there are many variations in the depictions of conflict resolution strategies that individuals employ, the principal 'archetype' of conflict resolution models is the dual-concern model (Sorenson, Morse, & Savage, 1999). The dual-concern model (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) proposes that individual's choice of conflict resolution strategy is determined by their position on two concerns: concerns for the self and concern for the other person. The dual concern model's origins can be found in Blake and Mouton's (1964) model, and since then, many other researchers have emulated the model in their depictions of conflict resolution (e.g. De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976).

1.2.1 Models of conflict resolution strategies

It is an undisputable observation that different people respond to conflict in different ways (i.e. they employ different conflict resolution strategies in response to a

conflict situation). Over the course of empirical assessment of conflict resolution strategies, there have been many conceptualizations depicted by researchers of what these strategies are. The following section will present some of these models of conflict resolution strategies.

Blake and Mouton's model

Blake and Mouton's (1964) model is considered to be the origin of the dual concern theory. They developed a Managerial Grid to describe leadership behavior (e.g. managing a conflict) (Blake & Mouton, 1982). This Managerial Grid is composed of two dimensions: concern for production that refers to concerns regarding the achievement of results, and concern for people that refers to attitudes and thoughts about how one achieves production with the use of other people (Blake & Mouton, 1982). Combinations of these dual concerns reveal 5 different styles: country club management (low concern for production, high concern for people), team management (high concern for production, high concern for people), organization man management (medium concern for production, medium concern for people), impoverished management (low concern for production, low concern for people), and authority-obedience (high concern for production, low concern for people) (Blake & Mouton, 1978).

Thomas's model

Thomas (1976) revised Blake and Mouton's model in order to develop a new model of conflict resolution. This revised model went beyond descriptions of leadership styles and leader-subordinate relationships, and proposed a more general description of conflict styles used between conflicting parties (Thomas, 1992). Individual's choice of conflict behaviour is determined by their attempts to satisfy own concerns called

‘assertiveness’, and their attempts to satisfy the concerns of another individual called ‘cooperativeness’ (Ruble & Thomas, 1976). These two independent concern dimensions make up 5 different conflict resolution strategies: competing (more assertive, less cooperative), avoiding (low in assertiveness and cooperativeness), accommodating (less assertive, more cooperative), collaborating (highly cooperative and assertive), and compromise (intermediate cooperativeness and assertiveness) (Ruble & Thomas, 1976).

Operationalization of each of these styles reveals that people use competing attempts to win their stance in the conflict situation (Kilman & Thomas, 1977). Avoiding is reflected in a desire to avoid unpleasantness and worrying about issues related to the conflict (Kilman & Thomas, 1977). Accommodating is showing greater concern for the well-being of the other person in the conflict (Kilman & Thomas, 1977). Compromising is attempting to reach a middle ground (Kilman & Thomas, 1977). Finally, people who use collaborating want to ensure that all parties are involved and have their needs satisfied when solving a conflict (Kilman & Thomas, 1977).

Rahim’s model

Rahim (1983) developed a similar model of conflict resolution by conceptualizing one’s style of handling conflict as being determined by one’s degree of concern for the self and degree of concern for others. These two concern dimensions make up 5 different combinations of conflict resolution strategies (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Integrating (high concern for self, high concern for others) is open discussion of differences and attempting to reach a solution that satisfies everyone (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Compromising (medium concern for self, medium concern for others) involves people having to give in a little in order to reach a satisfactory solution to the conflict (Rahim &

Magner, 1995). Dominating (high concern for self, low concern for others) is forcing one's position and having a view that one individual's win is at the other individual's loss (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Obliging (low concern for self, high concern for others) means attempting to narrow differences between the self and other, as well as making sure the other person's needs are satisfied in the conflict (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Finally, avoiding (low concern for self, low concern for others) involves attempting to withdraw from the conflict situation and the raised issues entirely (Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Van de Vliert's and De Dreu et al.'s model

The current study utilizes De Dreu et al.'s (2001) reworked version of a conflict resolution questionnaire, which was designed by Van de Vliert (1997). De Dreu et al.'s (2001) describes conflict resolution using the dual-concern model, in that conflict resolution strategies are classified according to the degree of concern for self and concern for the other they represent. The five conflict resolution strategies they create are as follows: *forcing* (high concern for self, low concern for others), which is adherence to one's stance in the conflict, often using persuasion or even threats to communicate; *yielding* (low concern for self, high concern for others), which is an acceptance of the preferences of the other person involved in the conflict; *avoiding* (low concern for self, low concern for others), which is aiming to reduce one's focused attention and the importance allocated to the conflict issue; *problem solving* (high concern for self, high concern for others), which is aiming to come to a resolution that satisfies both party's needs; and *compromising* (medium concern for self, medium concern for others), which is both parties involved in the conflict giving in to reach a middle ground (De Dreu et al., 2001).

De Dreu et al. (2001) question whether compromise represents a legitimately distinct conflict resolution strategy. They cite the views of researchers such as Pruitt and Rubin (1986), who claim that compromise is a more apathetic version of problem solving, and not a unique conflict strategy. De Dreu et al. (2001) assessed conflict resolution with and without compromising, and found that both conditions are adequate when it comes to psychometric qualities. While they conclude that conflict theory would benefit from also including compromise, their scale to assess conflict resolution has one version that includes compromise and one that does not (De Dreu et al., 2001).

1.2.2 Evaluation of conflict resolution strategies

While the five conflict resolution strategies espoused by the aforementioned researchers are all means by which an individual can respond to a conflict, there are certain strategies that are considered more beneficial in comparison to other strategies. Integrating is considered to be a highly competent strategy due to the fact that it rates high both in appropriateness of use as well as in effectiveness (Spitzberg, Canary, & Cupach, 1994). Likewise, Gross and Guerrero (2000) found that integrating was deemed the most prosocial and effective strategy. A study of Chinese workers found that cooperative conflict resolution strategies were related to better teamwork (Tjosvold, Law, & Sun, 2006). Lovelace, Shapiro, & Weingart (2001) found that using collaboration is associated with innovativeness, and less of an influence of the negative effects of conflict. Compromising was judged to be a more neutral strategy when resolving a conflict, nevertheless people who used it were considered by some to be more appropriate socially and effective (Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

Jordan and Troth (2002) postulate that competition, accommodation, and avoidance can have negative consequences for both relationships and performance at work. Gross and Guerrero (2000) found similar findings, in that obliging was seen as a neutral but less effective and appropriate strategy, and dominating and avoiding as strategies were generally considered inappropriate. De Wied, Branje, and Meeus (2007) consider conflict engagement to actually be a destructive conflict resolution strategy when it comes to social relationships. De Dreu et al. (2004) found that responding to conflict with the use of yielding, avoiding or forcing was positively associated with poorer physical functioning.

Therefore, summarizing the findings and interpreting them using De Dreu et al.'s (2001) terms for conflict resolution strategies, problem solving is considered the most beneficial and prosocial conflict resolution strategy, compromising is mostly a neutral strategy, and forcing, avoiding, and yielding are usually inappropriate strategies to use when resolving conflicts.

While many researchers believe that some strategies are generally more beneficial than others when dealing with conflict, other researchers believe that the appropriateness of the conflict resolution strategy is situationally determined (e.g. Rahim, 2011). According to Rahim (2011), integrating and compromise are appropriate means to handle a strategic issue, while avoiding, dominating, and obliging can be used to handle day-to-day or tactical issues.

1.2.3 Factors that influence choice of conflict resolution strategies

There is no doubt that situational variables play a role in people's selection of conflict resolution strategies. Papa and Natalie (1989) found that conflict resolution

strategies differed based on the gender composition of dyads. Another study found that cooperation between individuals increased if they were interacting face-to-face (Drolet & Morris, 2000). Finally, mood at the time of negotiation also has been shown to have an effect, with good mood leading to the use of more cooperative and less competitive strategies (Forgas, 1998).

Other researchers, however, view internal psychological characteristics as major influences on people's choice of conflict resolution strategies (e.g. Yarnell & Neff, 2013). For example, individual difference variables like personality traits have been shown to differentially associate with conflict resolution strategy choice (Antonioni, 1998). Jordan and Troth (2002) suggest that individual difference variables lead to preferred styles of handling conflict, which hints at a level of stability in responding to conflict due to individual differences. In fact, in his speculations on workplace conflict resolution, De Dreu et al. (2001) states that stable individual differences (as well as a generally consistent social environment) contribute to stable and predictable usage of conflict resolution strategies. The present study will focus on the influence of individual difference variables on people's choice of conflict resolution strategies.

1.3 Compassion

One of the individual difference variables investigated in this study is compassion. Compassion has been given many definitions, but regardless, a general summary is that it is a response to a person's distress (e.g. Snow, 1991). Compassion is composed of two separate dimensions: self-compassion (i.e. compassion directed at the self) and compassion for others (i.e. compassion directed at other people). These two constructs are similar but distinct (Pommier, 2011).

1.3.1 Definition of self-compassion and its components

Self-compassion originates from Buddhist principles, and is defined as being affected by and nonjudgmental about suffering, failures, and inadequacies that one experiences in life (Neff, 2003 a,b). Furthermore, it is associated with desiring to diminish one's negative state of being (Neff, 2003a,b). While it is generally considered a stable internal trait, situational factors have also been shown to have an influence on it (Breines & Chen, 2013).

Self-compassion is composed of six inter-related components: self-kindness, common humanity, mindfulness, self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification (Neff, 2003a,b). The initial three in this list represent the positive subscales of self-compassion (i.e. representing self-compassionate behaviour), with high levels of these indicative of high self-compassion (Neff, 2003a,b; Neff, 2016). The latter three however, are considered the negative subscales of self-compassion (i.e. representing being uncompassionate towards the self), and individuals higher on these components are considered less self-compassionate (Neff, 2003a,b; Neff, 2016). Self-kindness involves showing kindness and having an understanding attitude about one's negatives, while its conceptual opposite self-judgment involves being critical and coldly judgmental (Neff, 2003a,b). Common humanity necessitates seeing the experiences one has a component of the overall human experience, while its conceptual opposite, isolation, involves feeling like one is isolated due to one's experiences (Neff, 2003 a,b). Finally, mindfulness involves demonstrating a balanced awareness of one's negative thoughts and feelings, while over-identification involves being consumed by them (Neff, 2003a,b). People

differently experience these six components, nevertheless they are related and have a mutual influence on one another (Neff, 2003a).

It is important to note, that while self-compassion represents concern directed at the self, there is usually also an element of concern for others represented as well (Neff, 2003a). However, a study by Neff and Pommier (2013) found that while self-compassion in general is linked to concern for others, this relationship is dependent on where one is in the life course. Unlike older adults, undergraduate university students in the study did not report an association between self-compassion and variables related to concern for others (Neff & Pommier, 2013).

There are some constructs like self-pity, self-indulgence, or self-esteem that are commonly confused with self-compassion (Neff & Germer, 2013). However, the combination of factors that make up self-compassion means that self-compassion is a fundamentally distinct construct (Neff & Germer, 2013). For example, while both self-compassion and self-esteem involve turning attention towards the self, self-compassion (unlike self-esteem) does not involve judging the self through social comparisons and produces a much more stable version of self-worth (Neff & Vonk, 2009).

1.3.2 Definition of compassion for others and its components

Throughout the years of compassion research, there have been numerous versions of how compassion for others is conceptualized. Many researchers view compassion as a complex social emotion, roused by the ill state of another individual (Nussbaum, 1996; Solomon, 1998). Other researchers contend this viewpoint, saying that compassion is more than just an affective reaction like empathy; it goes beyond it by also prompting people to action in response to suffering (vonDietze & Orbe, 2000). Carr (1999) likewise

says that compassion goes beyond being an emotion, and it should also be understood as a social virtue. Compassion can also be conceptualized as an individual difference characteristic, where some people are more compassionate and others are less so (Kanov et al., 2004; Neff, 2003, Pommier, 2011). Finally, a more recent representation of compassion is that it is a dynamic process, where it can be applied to individuals, as well as the feelings and behaviours of collective groups of people (i.e. organizations) (Kanov et al., 2004).

For this study, Neff's (2003a) definition of compassion for others and Pommier's (2011) implementation of compassion will be utilized. Neff (2003a) said compassion for others "involves being open to and moved by the suffering of others, so that one desires to ease their suffering. It also involves offering others patience, kindness and nonjudgmental understanding, recognizing that all humans are imperfect and make mistakes" (p. 224). Pommier (2011) conceptualized compassion for others as sharing theoretical underpinnings with self-compassion, therefore a similar six factor structure was used to represent compassion for others: kindness, common humanity, mindfulness, indifference, separation, disengagement.

Once again, the first three components represent positive subscales of compassion for others, and high levels mean higher compassion (Pommier, 2011). These components share a definition with their self-compassion counterparts, except it is applied to other people instead of directed at the self (Pommier, 2011). The latter three factors are considered the negative subscales of compassion for others, and possessing higher levels represents lower compassion (Pommier, 2011). These negative components are defined differently than their self-compassion counterparts. Indifference means being unmoved

and dismissive of others, separation represents feeling separate from other people, and disengagement is disengaging emotionally from the pain of others, thus avoiding or dismissing their concerns (Pommier, 2011).

1.3.3 Outcomes of self-compassion and compassion for others

Both self-compassion and compassion for others have been associated with numerous beneficial outcomes. Self-compassion has been linked to both physical and mental health through its negative association with neurotic perfectionism, depression, and trait anxiety, as well as its protective influence against inflammation induced by stress (Neff, 2003a; Breines et al., 2014). Other self-benefits related to self-compassion include higher satisfaction with life and general well-being, higher self-esteem, greater levels of intrinsic motivation, and higher mastery goals (Neff, 2003a; Neff & Germer, 2013; Neely, Schaller, Mohammed, Roberts, & Chen, 2009; Bluth & Blanton, 2015; Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005). Even though self-compassion focuses mainly on the self, it nevertheless is associated with numerous interpersonal benefits as well. Studies that inspected brain activity found that higher self-compassion resulted in increased activity in areas related to perspective taking, thus being indicative of higher empathy (Davidson, 2007). Other studies have also linked self-compassion to self-reported perspective taking, more forgiveness, and less issue with attachment anxiety (Neff & Pommier, 2013; Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011).

Compassion for others has been linked to benefits for both the self, and the person at the receiving end of compassionate behavior. With regards to the self, compassion is associated with higher personal wisdom, higher self-esteem, more self-awareness, the feeling of being closer to other individuals, general good feelings, as well as expectations

of positive mood (Pommier, 2011; Sprecher & Fehr, 2006). Compassion for others also leads to positive interpersonal behavior. It has been associated with higher empathetic feelings, more social support and volunteering behavior demonstrated, being more helpful, as well as a greater chance of treating the other person with politeness, dignity, and respect (Pommier, 2011; Sprecher & Fehr, 2005; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). In broader terms, compassionate behavior is theorized to improve relationships both at the level of organizations, as well as improving society as a whole (Snow, 1991; Solomon, 1998).

1.3.4 The relationship of compassion to conflict and conflict resolution

As discussed previously, conflict is a negative emotion-inducing event, thus evoking a certain degree of emotional suffering for all parties involved (e.g. De Dreu et al., 2004). Both self-compassion and compassion for others revolve around possessing feelings of concern and wanting to ease the suffering for the other person and/or the self (Neff, 2003a,b; Pommier, 2011). It therefore stands to reason that compassionate individuals would be more likely to behave in a manner that addresses the concerns and negative feelings of individuals in a conflict, thus leading to more adaptive and prosocial conflict resolution strategies (Yarnell & Neff, 2013).

Self-compassion has been linked with less negative emotions and anxiety experienced in response to hypothetical conflict or socially distressing situations (Neff & Vonk, 2009; Leary, Tate, Adams, Batts Allen, & Hancock, 2007). Similar findings of less negative feelings and anxiety have also been associated with higher levels of self-compassion when faced with social situations where one's ego is threatened (Leary et al., 2007; Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007). One possible reason for this may be that self-

compassion has been theorized to play a role in helping immobilize a person's threat system, leading to less defensive responses and lower autonomic arousal (Gilbert & Irons, 2005). In interpersonal interactions, self-compassion is associated with positive social behavior, including better ratings of a person giving feedback and less domineering and verbal aggression in romantic relationships (Leary et al., 2007; Neff & Beretvas, 2013). In a study assessing the conflict resolution strategies that people use, self-compassion was associated with a greater likelihood to compromise and less of a propensity to self-subordinate one's needs, but the study did not provide definitive conclusions about whether self-compassion is linked to self-prioritizations (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). Despite the overwhelming interpersonal benefits of self-compassion, it is nevertheless important to remember that there may be specific conflict situations in which self-compassion is not adaptive, for example in extreme conflict situations like war where reflecting on personal concerns bears no advantage (Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007).

Compassion for others has likewise been linked with positive conflict behaviours. Compassion for others has been positively connected to agreeableness, less feelings of entitlement, and partial evidence for less avoidance of conflict situations (Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Niiya, Crocker, & Mischkowski, 2013). Highly compassionate individuals are also less likely to believe in zero-sum views, where they believe that gains in an interpersonal situation can only come about at the detriment of the other individual (Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Niiya, Crocker, & Mischkowski, 2013). With relation to compassion for others and conflict resolution strategies, in hypothetical conflict situations, compassion predicts cooperative conflict goals through trust (Liu & Wang,

2010). Those lower in compassion, on the other hand, tend to make less joint gains in hypothetical negotiation scenarios (Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, & Raia, 1997). Finally, a related construct to compassion for others, dispositional affective empathy (e.g. Pommier, 2011), has been positively associated with using problem solving as a conflict resolution strategy, a decreased propensity of purposefully engaging in conflict, and is not related to withdrawal or compliance in conflict situations (De Wied, Branje, & Meeus, 2007). Once again, compassion for others may not always have a positive influence on conflict resolution. For example, empathy, which as Pommier (2011) says shares similarities with compassion, shares a negative relationship with earning individual profit, though it is associated positively with compromise (Alexander, 2001; Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008). Therefore, in conflict situation where achieving personal gain is highly important, being highly compassionate towards others may not serve a person as well.

1.4 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an individual difference variable that is broadly defined as a group of competencies relating to the identification, processing, and management of emotional information (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). The origins of the construct can be traced back to Thorndike's (1920) theory of the existence of different intelligence types, among them being social intelligence. It involved the ability to understand and manage humans (Thorndike, 1920).

The next step on the path towards the development of the construct EI involved Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Among the seven types of intelligences proposed were interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Interpersonal intelligence was conceived of as "capacities to discern and

respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations, and desires of other people” (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p. 6). Intrapersonal intelligence was defined as “access to one’s own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide behavior; knowledge of one’s own strengths, weaknesses, desires, and intelligences” (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p. 6).

Daniel Goleman’s (1995) book was written for the general public, nevertheless, it helped spread the relevance of EI for many dimensions of life, and the importance of recognizing it as a separate construct. Currently EI is conceptualized as being made up of two separate components, trait EI and ability EI.

1.4.1 Definitions of trait and ability emotional intelligence

Trait EI is a person’s self-perception of their emotion related abilities (Petrides, 2011). Findings have shown that trait EI has its own unique position in personality space, and therefore it can be conceptualized as a personality trait (Petrides, 2011; Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007). Trait EI can be assessed using self-report measures (Petrides, 2011).

Ability EI, on the other hand, views EI as a cognitive ability (Petrides, 2011). It is defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 189). Ability EI is thought to be composed of 4 branches relating to different components of emotion related abilities: perceiving emotions, facilitating emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003). It is assessed using maximum performance tests (Petrides, 2011).

While both trait and ability EI are conceptualized as measures of EI, there is not much relationship demonstrated between them in the literature. Only weak to moderate correlations are generally found between trait and ability EI, and studies have shown that they have unique associations with other psychological variables (e.g. coping) (Qualter, Gardner, Pope, Hutchinson, & Whiteley, 2012; Brannick et al., 2009; Davis & Humphrey, 2012). Since trait and ability EI are distinct constructs with unique influences, in order to get a well-rounded assessment of EI, it has been recommended that both measures be used in studies assessing EI (Keefer, 2015).

1.4.2 Emotional intelligence and positive psychological outcomes

Both ability and trait EI have been associated with numerous intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits, some of which are discussed here.

Social interactions

High EI has been empirically demonstrated to have benefits when it comes to its effects on people's social skills and outcomes. Individuals who scored higher on the managing emotions component of ability EI report improved social interactions with people and believe they receive higher levels of social support in the form of companionship, intimacy, aid and affection from others (Lopes, Salovey, & Strauss, 2003; Lopes et al., 2004). Higher levels of trait EI have been associated with a higher likelihood of using prosocial behaviours (Afolabi, 2013). The using emotions component of ability EI and total ability EI have also been shown to relate to improved social interaction quality and feeling more socially competent (Brackett, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006; Lopes et al., 2004).

Not only do higher EI people personally feel more socially adept, peer evaluations also support the notion that higher EI is associated with improved social functioning. Higher scores on the managing emotion component of ability EI in one study was associated with friends reporting a higher quality of interpersonal interaction with the participant when it came to there being more social and emotional support, and less conflict (Lopes et al., 2004). Trait EI similarly has been associated with better peer ratings, with high EI adolescents being more likely to be accredited by their classmates as being cooperative as well as possessing more leadership qualities (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007).

Finally, evidence that EI is linked to social aptitude is reinforced by evidence that EI training increases social functioning. In one study, participants attended 18 hours of EI training, and the resulting increases in trait and ability EI were associated with increases in agreeableness and extraversion (Nelis et al., 2011). A second round of EI training with a different group resulted in self-reported enhancements in social functioning (Nelis et al., 2011).

While the majority of studies link EI with positive social functioning, there is some evidence that counters an interminably positive association between EI and positive social behaviours. Martin-Raugh, Kell, and Motowidlo (2016) found a non-significant (though positive) relationship between EI and prosocial behavior. Another study found that while EI was not directly associated with antisocial behavior, EI skills helped strengthen the relationship between Machiavellianism and interpersonal deviance, but also between moral identity and prosocial behaviour (Côté, DeCelles, McCarthy, Van Kleef, & Hideg, 2011). Another study found that criminal psychopaths reported higher

scores on the perception and regulation of emotions components of EI (Pham, Ducro, & Luminet, 2010). Therefore, this suggests that EI is neither morally positive nor negative (Côté et al., 2011).

Coping

There is also evidence that EI is associated with the use of more adaptive coping strategies. One study with Chinese gifted students found that higher scores on self-relevant trait EI components were associated with a lower likelihood of using avoidant coping, which would otherwise lead to more psychological distress (Chan, 2006). Likewise, higher scores on other-relevant trait EI components predicted the increased use of social interaction coping, which then consequentially predicted lower psychological distress (Chan, 2006). In another study, all components of trait EI were positively related to the use of task-focused coping (Austin, Saklofske, & Mastoras, 2010). Another study, this time assessing ability EI, found that the managing emotions component of ability EI predicted the use of problem focused coping, which was associated positively with the students' GPA (MacCann, Fogarty, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2011).

Well-being

EI has been linked to measures that relate to the well-being of people. Studies looking at the effect of trait EI have found that it is associated positively with self-esteem, positive mood states, better health, and general well-being (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollander, 2002; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002). Trait EI is also negatively linked with psychological distress and self-assessments of stress (Saklofske, Austin, & Minski, 2003; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002).

The association between ability EI and general well-being is less clear. In one study, all associations between dimensions of ability EI measure and subjective well-being were nonsignificant, though in a positive direction (Zeidner & Olnick-Shemesh, 2010). Another study found a significant positive relationship between the managing emotion component of ability EI and satisfaction with life, but not after controlling for personality and a cognitive vocabulary test (MacCann & Roberts, 2008). A follow-up study found that the understanding emotions component of ability EI related negatively to anxiety and stress, while the managing emotions component related negatively to anxiety, stress, and depression (MacCann & Roberts, 2008). Thus, while the findings are mixed, ability EI does appear to have an influence on people's well-being.

1.4.3 Emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies

Conflicts are emotional processes, therefore higher levels of EI should be associated with better handling of the emotional conflict situation (Jordan & Troth, 2004). In fact, a meta-analysis of studies assessing EI and conflict resolution concluded that higher levels of EI are in fact related to more constructive management of conflict situations (Schlaerth, Ensari, & Christian, 2013).

Trait EI and conflict resolution

Despite the use of various trait EI and conflict resolution measures, there is a general consensus across studies that trait EI is positively related to the use of integrating/collaborating conflict resolution strategies (Jordan & Troth, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Der Foo, Anger Elfenbein, Hoon Tan, & Chuan, 2004; Morrison, 2008, Shih & Susanto, 2010, Godse & Thingujam, 2010). Higher EI overall is associated with the acquisition of more joint values, constructive communication, and a more adaptive

approach in conflict situations demonstrated by increased vigilance (Der Foo et al., 2004; Di Fabio & Blustein, 2009; Smith, Heaven, & Ciarrochi, 2008). Not only is this true at the individual level, but also teams with higher EI averages are more likely to use integrating when in conflict (Jordan & Troth, 2004). Some studies have found that all components of trait EI relate to constructive conflict resolution, while other studies specifically found that managing one's emotions, and in some cases understanding emotions, contribute mainly to integrating/collaborating styles (Jordan & Troth, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Godse & Thingujam, 2010; Morrison, 2008).

Both yielding and avoidance as conflict resolution styles were either negatively or non-significantly related to trait EI across studies (Di Fabio & Blustein, 2009; Godse & Thingujam, 2010; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Morrison, 2008). The findings for the conflict resolution strategies forcing and compromising were mixed, with studies revealing positive, negative or non-significant associations with trait EI for each style (Di Fabio & Blustein, 2009; Godse & Thingujam, 2010; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Morrison, 2008; Shih & Susanto, 2010).

Ability EI and conflict resolution

Fewer studies have examined the relationship of ability EI to the preferred conflict resolution styles used by individuals. Nevertheless, similar to trait EI, EI as an ability is positively associated with the use of beneficial conflict resolution strategies (Stolarski, Postek, & Śmieja, 2011; Zeidner & Kloda, 2013). The study by Zeidner and Kloda (2013) found that individuals in romantic relationships who had higher EI were more likely to use constructive communication patterns when dealing with problems in

the relationship. The study also showed that high EI was associated with a decreased likelihood to use demand/withdraw and avoidance as a communication pattern when handling a conflict with one's romantic partner. Stolarski et al. (2011) found similarly that higher EI individuals were more likely to use strategies related to positive problem solving in romantic relationships, though this relationship was mainly evident in women. Higher EI women were also less likely to ignore or avoid their partner when in conflict (Stolarski et al., 2011). Men who were higher in EI were more likely to be viewed by their partner as using positive problem solving during conflict (Stolarski et al., 2011).

1.4.4 Emotional intelligence and compassion

EI has been linked positively with the construct compassion. Total self-compassion and trait EI have been shown to have a moderate positive relationship (Neff, 2003a). Another study analyzing the relationship of trait EI to each of the subscales of self-compassion found that all subscales of self-compassion had a positive relationship with EI (Heffernan, Quinn Griffin, McNulty, & Fitzpatrick, 2010).

With regards to the relationship between EI and compassion for others, there appears to be a deficit in the literature of studies that directly assess the link between EI and compassion. However, the relationship of EI to constructs that are often used synonymously with compassion in the literature or that can be conceived of as a component of compassion for others, like empathy or perspective taking (e.g. Davis, 1983; Leiberg, Klimecki, & Singer 2011; Pommier, 2011) have been assessed. Total trait EI has been demonstrated to have a positive relationship with both empathic concern and perspective taking (Shi & Wang, 2007). Another study assessing the influence of EI training, found that empathy assessed after training was significantly predicted by both

the expression and regulation of emotions (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Finally, Rankin (2013) proposes the existence of a link between EI and compassion for others and associated care, and states that future studies should investigate this relationship.

1.5 Rationale and hypotheses/research questions

The present study is a mixed methods study that aims to assess how individual differences influence the conflict resolution process and the conflict resolution strategies utilized in conflict situations.

The quantitative portion of the study investigates the effects of the individual difference variables self-compassion, compassion for others, trait EI and ability EI on conflict resolution strategies. All of these variables are similar in that they affect how one reacts and responds emotionally to a negative emotional situation (e.g. a conflict situation); compassion invokes feelings and motivations to assist people in negative emotional states, while EI helps one handle (e.g. understand or manage) the negative emotions of self and others (e.g. Neff, 2003a, b; Petrides, 2011; Pommier, 2011). Previous studies have examined the relationship of some of these variables (usually in isolation) to conflict resolution strategies, but to my knowledge no study has previously examined the collective influence of these variables on conflict resolution strategies. The present study is built on the premise that to get a true understanding of compassion's influence on conflict resolution, one needs to assess both self-compassion and compassion for others (e.g. Kraus & Sears, 2009). Likewise, in order to get a true understanding of how EI relates to conflict resolution, one needs to assess both trait and ability EI (e.g. Keefer, 2015). Finally, since both EI and compassion are means of

handling emotional situations, it is important to study them together and see their relative influences on conflict resolution, as well as how they relate.

Therefore, the current study will expand on previous findings by assessing how self-compassion, compassion for others, trait EI, and ability EI relate to the conflict resolution strategies problem solving, compromising, forcing, yielding, and avoiding.

1.5.1 Hypotheses about compassion

Due to the fact self-compassion (which involves feelings of concern directed at the self) and compassion for others (which involves feelings of concern directed towards others) appear to match onto the dual concerns represented by the five conflict resolution strategies assessed in the present study (concern for self and concern for others) (De Dreu et al., 2001; Neff, 2003a, b; Pommier, 2011), the following hypotheses about compassion are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Higher self-compassion will be positively linked to conflict resolution strategies that represent higher levels of concern for the self: problem solving, compromise, and forcing.

Hypothesis 2: Lower self-compassion will be positively linked to conflict resolution strategies that represent lower levels of concern for the self: avoidance and yielding.

Hypothesis 3: Higher compassion for others will be positively linked to conflict resolution strategies that represent higher levels of concern for others: problem solving, compromise, and yielding.

Hypothesis 4: Lower compassion for others will be positively linked to conflict resolution strategies that represent lower levels of concern for others: forcing and avoiding.

1.5.2 Hypotheses about emotional intelligence

Based on findings from previous studies (e.g. Jordan & Troth, 2002; Stolarski et al., 2011), the following hypotheses about EI are proposed:

Hypothesis 5: EI (i.e. trait/ability EI) will be positively linked to problem solving.

Hypothesis 6: EI (i.e. trait/ability EI) will be negatively linked to avoiding and yielding.

Due to inconsistent or lack of findings that assessed the relationship between EI and forcing and compromising, no hypotheses are proposed.

1.5.3 Mediation hypothesis

EI has been established as an antecedent of prosocial behavior (Martin-Raugh, et al., 2016). However, previous studies have also demonstrated that EI by itself does not always lead to prosocial behavior, or that the relationship between them may be non-significant (Côté et al., 2011; Martin-Raugh, et al., 2016).

Martin-Raugh et al. (2016) found that a positive relationship between EI and prosocial behavior is mediated by prosocial knowledge (i.e. knowledge about the value of being prosocial as well as how to behave in interpersonal interactions) (Martin-Raugh, et al., 2016). However, another study assessing a construct similar to prosocial knowledge, moral competence, and measuring it in a similar manner (i.e. by asking people to make evaluations about morally positive and negative social behaviours), found that peers evaluated as bullies were also high in moral competence (Gini, Pozzoli, & Hauser, 2011). Gini et al. (2011) concluded that what made bullies different from non-bullies was not their moral competence, but that they were less motivated to engage in a morally appropriate manner.

Therefore, the current study aims to extend previous research by investigating compassion for others as a mediator between EI and prosocial behavior. Compassion for

others as a construct is associated with both prosocial knowledge (e.g., it is considered an indicator of moral competence), as well as involving a prosocial motivation, since it is linked with a desire to decrease other people's suffering (Jormsri, Kunaviktikul, Ketefian, & Chaowalit, 2005; Neff, 2003a; Pommier, 2011). In support of this proposal, Gilbert (2005) theorized that individual variables that increase compassion would also increase prosocial behavior. Since EI has been positively linked to components that make up compassion like perspective taking (Shi & Wang, 2007), it stands to reason that higher EI would lead to higher compassion for others, which in turn would be associated with higher prosocial behavior. One action associated with prosocial behavior is acting in a cooperative manner (Batson & Powell, 2003). Therefore, problem solving as a conflict resolution strategy (which involves being cooperative) (De Dreu et al., 2001), will be used as an indicator of prosocial behavior in the present study. The following mediation hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7: A positive relationship between trait and ability EI with prosocial behavior (i.e. problem solving) will be mediated by compassion for others.

1.5.4 Qualitative research questions

The qualitative portion of the present study was conducted for two main reasons. Primarily, it was done to reveal whether individual differences pertaining to compassion and EI also emerge during situation-specific conflict resolution. The other reason was more exploratory (i.e. inductive) in nature, in that the present study aimed to uncover what other individual difference variables that influence conflict resolution emerge from the data.

There are a handful of previous qualitative studies conducted in order to gain understanding about interpersonal conflict and conflict resolution (e.g. Asadi et al., 2016; Behfar, Friedman, & Brett, 2008; Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, & Trochim, 2011; Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008; Jehn, 1997; Butler, Gardner, & Bird, 1998; Marks et al., 2008; Nayeri & Negarandeh, 2009; Tuval-Mashiach & Shulman, 2006). A few of these studies have mentioned the influence of individual differences, including personality, moral commitment, negotiation styles, emotion regulation, and conflict behavior in relation to how conflicts may be resolved (e.g. Behfar et al., 2008; Behfar et al., 2011; Nayeri & Negarandeh, 2009; Rivers, Brackett, Katulak, & Salovey, 2007). However, analysis in these studies was limited in scope with regards to the variety of individual difference variables examined. Therefore, the current study expands previous qualitative findings about conflict resolution by assessing the many types of individual difference variables that are mentioned by participants during their descriptions of how they would resolve conflict. In order to evaluate this, the present study will consist of a large-scale qualitative analysis of what individual differences emerge when participants are asked to openly respond to a question asking them how they would resolve a hypothetical task conflict (i.e. conflict with a classmate over details relating to a group project). Two main research questions about individual differences are proposed:

1. Are individual differences indicative of compassion and EI also relevant in conflict resolution regarding a specific conflict situation?
2. What other intrapersonal and interpersonal individual difference variables emerge that influence situation specific conflict resolution?

The present study aims to find answers to these research questions through the themes and categories that emerge from the written responses of participants.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 486 participants recruited from a first-year university undergraduate introductory psychology course. The original sample consisted of 494 participants, of which 8 were removed for time related issues and unwillingness to complete the study. The sample consisted of both males and females (154 males, 329 females, 3 unspecified), with an age range of 16-28 years old ($M=18.19$, $SD=1.344$). The ethnic composition of the sample was 51.4% White, 24.7% East Asian, 13.0% South Asian, 4.1% Middle Eastern, 1.4% Black, 2.1% Mixed and 3.3% Other.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Demographic Information

All participants were asked to fill out a basic questionnaire asking about their sex, age, and ethnic composition as described above.

2.2.2 Hypothetical conflict scenario

Participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical conflict scenario written for the purposes of the present study (see appendix B). The hypothetical scenario describes a task conflict with a university classmate who they are said to barely know, about material required for a group project. The conflict scenario describes conflict over partner feedback and potential changes after editing one another's work. Participants were asked to write a response (approximately 3 sentences long) about how they would resolve the conflict between themselves and their university classmate in the conflict situation.

Prior to the commencement of the study, 2 independent raters were used to assess the conflict scenario. Raters were asked how realistic the conflict scenario was from 1 (not at all realistic) to 5 (completely realistic), whether the scenario was gender neutral, whether the scenario was race neutral, and whether it was evident that that both individuals in the scenario are university students. The raters both demonstrated agreement in stating that the scenario was completely realistic, that it was gender neutral, race neutral, and that it was evident that both individuals involved (i.e. both the role of the participant and the role of the hypothetical classmate) were university students.

2.2.3 Conflict resolution strategies

The Dutch test for conflict handling (DUTCH; De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001) was used to assess general (i.e. not situation specific) conflict resolution strategies that people utilize. The DUTCH is a 20 item scale that assesses five conflict resolution styles (4 items per conflict style) that differ based on where they fall on the concern for self/concern for others dimension: avoiding (e.g. “I avoid a confrontation about our differences”), yielding (e.g. “I give in to the wishes of the other party”), forcing (e.g. “I do everything to win”), problem solving (e.g. “I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution”), and compromising (e.g. “I insist we both give in a little”). The original presentation order of items in the DUTCH questionnaire was scrambled, and all participants received that same altered presentation order of items. The initial study using a sample of Dutch subscribers to an online magazine found lower internal consistency scores, with $\alpha = .65$ for yielding, $\alpha = .66$ for compromising, $\alpha = .70$ for forcing, $\alpha = .68$ for problem solving, and $\alpha = .73$ for avoiding. However, a subsequent study using a North American university sample found that the scale had good reliability,

with alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .82 to .92 (DeChurch, Hamilton, & Haas, 2007).

The instructions given to participants for completing the scale were slightly modified by omitting its relationship to work. “When I have conflict at work, I do the following:” was changed to “When I have conflict with another person, I do the following:”.

2.2.4 Self-compassion

The Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003a) was used to assess the self-compassion levels of participants. The scale consists of 26 items measuring 6 subscales relating to self-compassion: self-kindness (e.g. “I try to be loving towards myself when I am feeling emotional pain”), self-judgment (e.g. “I’m disapproving and judgmental about my flaws and inadequacies”), common humanity (e.g. “When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through”), isolation (e.g. “When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world”), mindfulness (e.g. “When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance”), and over-identification (e.g. “When I’m feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that’s wrong”). Participants were asked to report on a 5-point Likert scale how often they behave in the stated manner (1=almost never to 5=almost always). Items corresponding to the subscales representing negative aspects of self-compassion (i.e. self-judgment, isolation, over-identification) can be reverse scored to get a total self-compassion score. The scale has good internal consistency, both for the overall scale ($\alpha = .92$), as well as for each of the subscales with $\alpha = .78$ for self-kindness, $\alpha = .77$ for self-

judgment, $\alpha = .80$ for common humanity, $\alpha = .79$ for isolation, $\alpha = .75$ for mindfulness, and $\alpha = .81$ for over-identification (Neff, 2003a).

2.2.5 *Compassion for others*

The Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2011) assesses compassion for other individuals. The scale contains 24 items, assessing 6 facets that make up compassion: kindness (e.g. “If I see someone going through a difficult time, I try to be caring toward that person”), indifference (e.g. “Sometimes when people talk about their problems, I feel like I don’t care”), common humanity (e.g. “Everyone feels down sometimes, it is part of being human”), separation (e.g. “I don’t feel emotionally connected to people in pain”), mindfulness (e.g. “I notice when people are upset, even if they don’t say anything”), and disengagement (e.g. “I don’t think much about the concerns of others). Participants were asked to report on a 5-point Likert scale how often they behave in the stated manner (1=almost never to 5=almost always). Items corresponding to the subscales representing negative aspects of compassion for others (i.e. indifference, separation, disengagement) can be reverse scored to get a total compassion for others score. The scale had good internal consistency for the overall compassion scale $\alpha = .87-.90$, however, the internal consistency was lower for the individual subscales with $\alpha = .77-.83$ for kindness, $\alpha = .68-.71$ for indifference, $\alpha = .70-.71$ for common humanity, $\alpha = .64-.68$ for separation, $\alpha = .67-.72$ for mindfulness, and $\alpha = .57$ to $.71$ for disengagement (Pommier, 2011).

2.2.6 *Ability emotional intelligence*

The brief version of the Situational Test of Emotional Management (STEM-B; Allen, Rahman, Weissman, MacCann, & Roberts, 2014) was used to assess the management of emotions component of ability EI. The STEM-B contains 18 items that

describe an emotional situation, and participants are asked to choose what they consider is the most effective response using a multiple choice format. An example test item is: “Wai-Hin and Connie have shared an office for years but Wai-Hin gets a new job and Connie loses contact with her. What action would be the most effective for Connie? (a) Just accept that she is gone and the friendship is over, (b) Ring Wai-Hin and ask her out for lunch or coffee to catch up, (c) Contact Wai-Hin and arrange to catch up but also make friends with her replacement, (d) Spend time getting to know the other people in the office, and strike up new friendships”. The STEM-B has good internal consistency, with $\alpha = .84$. (Allen et al., 2014).

The Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU; MacCann & Roberts, 2008) was used to assess the emotional understanding component of ability EI. The test consists of 42 items, each representing an emotional situation, with participants answering how the individual in the scenario is most likely to feel using a multiple choice format. An example test item is: “An irritating neighbor of Eve's moves to another state. Eve is most likely to feel? (a) Regret, (b) Hope, (c) Relief, (d) Sadness, (e) Joy”. The STEU has adequate internal consistency, with $\alpha = .71$ (MacCann & Roberts, 2008).

2.2.7 Trait emotional intelligence

Trait EI was assessed using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF; Petrides, 2009). The TEIQue-SF can be used to analyze both global trait EI, as well as scores on the 4 factors that make up trait EI: well-being (i.e. having feelings of positivity, happiness, and fulfillment, as well as a having a general feeling of well-being), self-control (i.e. successful at regulating negative states of being like stress, as well as controlling impulses), emotionality (i.e. being good at perceiving own and

other's emotions, as well as expressing emotions), and sociability (i.e. being successful at social interactions and communicating). The TEIQue-SF is composed of 30 items (e.g. "I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions"), which participants answer using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The global trait EI measure has good internal consistency with $\alpha = .88$ (Petrides, 2006), however, the 4 factors tend to have smaller internal consistencies with $\alpha = .66-.74$ for well-being, $\alpha = .59-.64$ for self-control, $\alpha = .63-.66$ for emotionality, and $\alpha = .60-.63$ for emotionality (Petrides, Vernon, Schermer, Ligthart, Boomsa, & Veselka, 2010).

2.3 Procedure

Prior to commencing the study, approval from the University of Western Ontario's Ethics Board was attained. The study was made available on the University's online psychology research participation pool. Individuals interested in participating were directed to the online study. The study was expected to take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Following completion of the study, participants were debriefed and granted 1 course credit for their introductory psychology course.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

3A. Quantitative Results

3.1 Data screening

Prior to commencing standard data screening procedures, data were examined to eliminate participants who completed the study in 10 minutes or under. This time limit was based on the assumption that it is not a feasible feat to complete the study in that time, since a test run-through by the author of this study yielded a time of approximately 18 minutes. The above 10-minute allowance was set to account for possible faster reading speed and skipping of instructions. From a total of 494 participants, 7 participants were removed for time related issues, and 1 participant for selecting the 'not wish to participate' option at the beginning of the study.

Data screening was thus conducted on 486 participants using SPSS Version 21. Listwise deletion was used for preliminary analyses. An examination of missing values indicated that only 0.388% of values were missing. Multivariate normality, by means of skewness and kurtosis, was assessed to test for asymmetry and extreme values in the distribution (Gardner & Tremblay, 2007). According to Kline (2011), skew index values above |3.00| and kurtosis index values above |10.00| are problematic. Descriptive statistics showed low skewness and kurtosis values, indicating that the data did not violate assumptions of multivariate normality.

Multivariate outliers to detect extreme scores or non-normal score patterns were assessed using Mahalanobis distance statistic (Kline, 2011). A significance value of $p < .001$ is considered indicative of the presence of outliers in the data (Kline, 2011). Seven cases were found to have Mahalanobis distance statistics with $p < .001$. When the

outlier is not due to illegitimate data (e.g. due to data errors), it is considered up to the researcher to make determinations about whether or not to keep them in the dataset (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). In fact, some researchers even go so far as to say that it may be inappropriate to remove outliers that are a legitimate part of the data (Orr, Sackett, & Dubois, 1991). Therefore, the seven cases that were outliers were carefully examined, and two groups (i.e. dataset with the outliers included, and dataset with them removed) were compared using correlation tables and multiple regressions using the Fisher's Z test. Since the findings did not indicate significant differences in the data with and without the outliers, the decision was made to retain the outliers.

Collinearity and multicollinearity were assessed in order to ensure that the variables were not measuring similar things (Kline, 2011). Collinearity was assessed by examining the correlations between all the predictor variables used in data analysis. A correlation of $r=|.90|$ was used as a cut-off indicating high collinearity. No correlation exceeded $|.90|$. Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF; Kline, 2011). $VIF>10$ indicates high multicollinearity (Kline, 2011). There was no evidence of multicollinearity in the data set.

3.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conflict Resolution Strategies

The original 20 item DUTCH scale used in this study is based on a 5-factor model of conflict resolution (De Dreu et al., 2001). However, there is debate whether the 5-factor model is a true representation of the strategies people use to resolve conflict, or whether in actuality a 4-factor model is a better representation of conflict resolution strategies (e.g. De Dreu et al., 2001). Therefore, due to the uncertainty of how the factors would load, as well as what and how many items would correspond with each of the

factors, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the items of the DUTCH scale.

The extraction method used for the EFA was principal axis factoring, with varimax rotation. An a priori decision was made to use $|.4|$ as the cut-off for factor loadings, based on previous examples in the literature (e.g. Buss & Durkee, 1957; Matsunaga, 2015).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling accuracy was .813, therefore indicating that there was a sufficient number of items for each of the factors (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2015). Likewise, the Bartlett Test of Sphericity was significant, therefore demonstrating that it is reasonable to perform an EFA due to there being high enough correlations between the variables (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2015).

The rotated factor matrix revealed that the items loaded onto 4 factors instead of 5. An examination of the items that loaded onto these 4 factors revealed that Factor 1 was composed of DUTCH items relating to compromising and problem solving, Factor 2 (apart from DUTCH item 9-problem solving) was composed of DUTCH items relating to forcing, Factor 3 was composed of DUTCH items relating to avoiding, and Factor 4 was composed of DUTCH items relating to yielding. An examination of the correlations between the factors revealed that they were all non-significant, except one that had a small correlation close to zero. Therefore, the factors can be considered orthogonal, and using varimax rotation is justifiable.

After the initial EFA, two items were removed. DUTCH item 6 was removed due to having low communality of .198 since it is indicative of the fact that the common variance might be low (Child, 2006), and DUTCH item 15 was removed because it had

low communality and it failed to load sufficiently onto any of the factors. The final EFA with the 18 remaining DUTCH items was re-run in order to ensure that the previous 4-factor structure could be replicated. The DUTCH items passed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett tests. The rotated factor matrix revealed that the items loaded once again onto a 4-factor model of conflict resolution (see Table 4). Factor 1 called 'Problem Solving' was comprised of 7 DUTCH items assessing problem solving and compromise. Factor 2 contained 5 items and was labeled 'Forcing'. Factor 3 composed of 3 items was called 'Avoiding'. Finally, Factor 4 was called 'Yielding', and consisted of 3 items. Thus, it can be concluded that a 4-factor model of conflict resolution strategies is most suitable for this study, with items relating to compromise and problem solving loading onto one factor. All analyses in this study utilized this 4-factor model, by assessing how variables related to the conflict resolution strategies Problem Solving, Forcing, Yielding, and Avoiding.

Prior to running the EFA, internal consistencies were low for measures of conflict resolution strategies, with $\alpha = .71$ for problem solving, $\alpha = .74$ for compromising, $\alpha = .69$ for forcing, $\alpha = .66$ for avoiding, and $\alpha = .64$ for yielding. Alpha scores for the final four factors post-EFA were $\alpha = .84$ for problem solving (i.e. an amalgamation of problem solving and compromising), $\alpha = .71$ for forcing, $\alpha = .74$ for avoiding, and $\alpha = .6$ for yielding. While alpha for yielding did decrease slightly in the final model, one explanation for this could be the removal of an item, since smaller numbers of items corresponds to lower alpha values (Pallant, 2005). One solution proposed by Pallant (2005) in cases of small alphas possibly due to small item numbers is to assess the mean inter-item correlation for those items. Briggs and Cheek (1986) report that the optimal

homogeneity levels happen when mean inter-item correlation values are between .2 and .4, with .1 and .5 being the upper and lower limit cut-offs for acceptability. The mean inter-item correlation for yielding was .335, therefore indicating optimal levels. While the alpha scores for the other conflict strategies were good, inter-item correlations were nevertheless calculated, since Briggs and Cheek (1986) propose that a scale can have good values for Cronbach's alpha, but can still be heterogeneous. Mean inter-item correlation was .483 for avoiding, .336 for forcing, and .429 for problem solving, thus indicating satisfactory levels for all four factors.

3.3 Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between the assessed variables are all presented in Tables 2 and 3. A series of independent samples t-tests were conducted in order to investigate possible sex differences for the variables used in the study, to assess whether sex differences found in the present study are consistent with previous findings. Significant sex differences were found regarding total self-compassion $t(480)=3.290, p=.001$, with males having higher levels of self-compassion ($M=2.99, SD=.589$) than women ($M=2.79, SD=.633$). Significant sex differences for total compassion for others were also found $t(481)=-4.503, p<.001$, with women having higher compassion for others ($M=3.98, SD=.569$) than men ($M=3.73, SD=.548$). No significant sex differences were found for total trait emotional intelligence and the understanding emotions component of ability emotional intelligence. Sex differences were found with regards to the managing emotions component of ability emotional intelligence $t(469)=-4.090, p<.001$, with women demonstrating higher levels of managing emotions ability ($M=.608, SD=.122$) in comparison to men ($M=.556, SD=.141$). An examination of each

of the conflict resolution strategies revealed no significant sex differences in the utilization of strategies.

3.4 Measurement model

Mplus Version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010) was used to test hypotheses relating to how self-compassion, compassion for others, trait EI, and ability EI relate to the four conflict resolution strategies. Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach was utilized, where a confirmatory factor analysis is performed first to assess the fit of the proposed measurement model, before the structural model is analyzed. This is done in order to fix any specification issues and identify possible sources of poor fit (Kline, 2011). A series of fit statistics were also assessed in order to ensure proper fit of the measurement model. The Model Chi-square test was used to test differences between population and predicted covariances (Kline, 2011). While ideally it should not be significant, it is strongly affected by sample size, and a sample of over 400 cases as in this study means it is almost guaranteed to be significant without indicating poor model fit (Kenny, 2015). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is a badness of fit index (Steiger, 1990; Kline, 2011). In terms of cut-off values indicating good fit, 0.8 is generally considered a sign of mediocre fit, while .05 is considered excellent (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990; Kline, 2011) measures how much the proposed model improves in comparison to the baseline model. Generally, a CFI value of 0.9 or above is considered to have satisfactory fit (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Finally, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR; Kline, 2011; Kenny, 2015) is a measure of how much the observed

correlation matrix compares to the predicted one. In order to reach acceptable model fit, a value below 0.8 must be attained (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Maximum likelihood robust was used to estimate the CFA models. The original model composed of 3 latent variables: self-compassion, compassion for others, emotional intelligence, and the 4 conflict resolution strategies. This model did not have good fit: $X^2(192) = 1286.91$ $p < .001$, RMSEA=.108, CFI=.732, SRMR=.103. A series of modifications were made to the original model (see Table 5).

The final CFA model was composed of 6 latent variables: self-compassion positive (sc_p), self-compassion negative (sc_n), compassion positive (com_p), compassion negative (com_n), trait EI (tei), and ability EI (aei), as well as 4 single indicator variables representing the 4 conflict resolution strategies. Trait and ability EI were separated since they are said to be distinct constructs under the umbrella of EI (e.g. Davis & Humphrey, 2012). Self-compassion and compassion for others were separated into 2 factors each, in line with previous literature that differentiates between the positive and negative subscales that make up both self-compassion and compassion for others (Neff, 2003; Pommier, 2011). High scores on self-compassion positive (i.e. sc_p) represent high self-compassion (i.e. being self-compassionate), while high scores on self-compassion negative (i.e. sc_n) represent lower self-compassion (i.e. being uncompassionate towards the self) (Neff, 2016). Similarly, high scores on compassion for others positive (i.e. com_p) represent high compassion for others (i.e. being compassionate towards others), while high scores on compassion for others negative (i.e. com_n) represent lower compassion (i.e. being uncompassionate towards others) (Neff, 2016). The model also had 4 correlated errors, all of which were supported by theory

rather than being driven by the modification indices. Adequate fit was achieved for this final model: $X^2(164)= 571.22$ $p<.001$, RMSEA=.071, CFI=.900, SRMR=.063.

3.5 Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed in order to test the predictive relationships between the study variables self-compassion, compassion for others, trait EI, ability EI, and the conflict resolution strategies. The full model had adequate fit, with all the indices supporting a close fit of the model to the data: $X^2(164)= 571.22$ $p<.001$, RMSEA=.071, CFI=.900, SRMR=.063 (see Table 6).

The relationship of the predictor variables to each of the conflict resolution strategies was examined separately. Model 1 examined what variables predicted forcing. (see Figure 2) The standardized direct effects of self-compassion negative ($\beta = .587$, $p<.001$), compassion for others negative ($\beta = .474$, $p<.001$), and trait EI ($\beta = .867$, $p<.001$) on forcing were all significant. Therefore, being lower in both types of compassion, and higher in trait EI positively predicted the use of forcing as a conflict resolution strategy. The forcing-only model also had good fit, with $X^2(128)= 472.194$ $p<.001$, RMSEA=.074, CFI=.909, SRMR=.066.

Model 2 examined what variables predicted problem solving (see Figure 3). The standardized direct effects of compassion positive ($\beta = .431$, $p=.001$) and compassion negative ($\beta = .214$, $p<.05$) on problem solving were both significant. While the significance of the direct effect of ability EI on problem solving was above the p-value cut-off employed in the current study (i.e. $p<.05$), the relationship nevertheless was in the hypothesized direction ($\beta = .173$, $p=.058$). Therefore, this demonstrates that high scores on both the positive and negative aspects of compassion for others, and to some part,

higher scores on ability EI may positively predict problem solving. The problem solving-only model also had good fit, with $X^2(128)= 426.197$ $p<.001$, $RMSEA=.069$, $CFI=.920$, $SRMR=.062$.

Model 3 examined what variables predicted yielding (see Figure 4). The standardized direct effects of compassion positive ($\beta = .533$, $p=.003$) and trait EI ($\beta = -.469$, $p=.006$) on yielding were both significant. Therefore, a higher level of compassion for others positively predicts yielding; however, higher trait EI negatively predicts it. The model fit was also good, with $X^2(128)= 455.817$ $p<.001$, $RMSEA=.073$, $CFI=.911$, $SRMR=.064$.

Finally Model 4 examined what variables predicted avoiding (see Figure 5). The standardized direct effects of compassion positive ($\beta = .354$, $p<.05$) and trait EI ($\beta = -.720$, $p<.001$) on avoiding showed they both significantly predicted avoiding. Therefore, higher compassion towards others positively predicts, while high trait EI negatively predicts, the use of avoiding in conflict. This model also had good fit, with $X^2(128)= 460.634$ $p<.001$, $RMSEA=.073$, $CFI=.911$, $SRMR=.064$.

3.6 Mediation Analysis

The hypothesis that compassion for others mediates the relationship between EI and problem solving as a conflict resolution strategy was assessed by examining the significance of indirect effects. Using bias-corrected bootstrapping, a total of 1000 replications were run in Mplus Version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Shrout and Bolger (2002) suggest that using bootstrapping is a practical means of assessing indirect effects when performing a mediation analysis, since it accounts for indirect effects having skewed distributions and it also improves power. The model examined the relationship

between compassion positive, trait EI and ability EI, as well as problem solving. There were significant indirect effects between trait EI and problem solving through compassion ($\beta = .133, p = .001$), and between ability EI and problem solving through compassion ($\beta = .155, p < .001$). Given that the total effect from trait EI to problem solving was $.258 (p < .001)$, the mediated effect of compassion accounted for 52% of the total effect between trait EI and problems solving. Likewise, given that the total effect from ability EI to problem solving was $.260 (p < .001)$, the mediated effect of compassion accounted for 60% of the total effect between ability EI and problem solving. Indirect effects and confidence intervals are presented (see Table 7). The model also had good fit, with $X^2(30) = 98.354, p < .001, RMSEA = .068, CFI = .941, SRMR = .042$. Therefore, these results demonstrate that compassion for others mediates the relationship between EI and problem solving.

3B. Qualitative Results

3.7 Data analytic procedure

The current study analyzed the open-ended written responses of participants to a hypothetical conflict scenario, in order to provide answers to research questions that attempted to uncover what individual difference variables emerged that play a role in influencing how people resolve conflict with a university classmate, as well as whether individual differences indicative of EI and compassion (both towards self and other people) emerge. Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was used to assess the qualitative portion of the data.

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was used to assess the qualitative portion of the data. QCA can be defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of

the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Unlike quantitative content analysis, which focuses on reporting the frequencies of categories, QCA is similar to other qualitative procedures like thematic analysis in that it’s main goal is to uncover themes that emerge from the data (Given, 2008; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). While the quantitative and qualitative means of analysis can be combined in a study, the author has the choice of whether or not to focus on frequencies, and doing so should depend on the research questions and overall purpose of conducting the analysis (Given, 2008; Kracauer, 1952). Since the purpose of the qualitative analysis in the present study was to uncover emerging categories and themes (i.e. not to report the prevalence of those themes), frequencies were not reported. Instead focus was kept on explication of the themes, and only general descriptors of prevalence (e.g. many/a few participants) used by many researchers in qualitative analysis of themes were utilized (Guest & MacQueen, 2008; Neale, Miller, & West, 2014). Such general descriptors are generated by the researcher’s observations of the data (i.e. pattern recognition), and are used to “draw attention to regularities, peculiarities and idiosyncrasies in the data” (Neale, Miller, & West, 2014, p.157; Sandelowski, 2001). It is important to note however, that such ‘semi-quantification’ of data (e.g. many participants) is applicable to the specific study only, and not a generalizable finding that a quantitative study would provide (Sandelowski, 2001). Studies likewise focusing on theme description (e.g. Peel, Parry, Douglas, & Lawton, 2004; Sullivan, 2003) employed similar means of reporting results as the present study.

The unit of analysis in this study was the participant, therefore codes were applied to each participant's paragraph response separately. In order to get a pure sense of the individual differences in situation specific conflict resolution, as well as to present a counterpart to the deductive nature of quantitative analysis, an inductive approach was used in the present study (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Therefore, all codes, categories, and overall themes were drawn purely from the data, without the imposition of previous theories and empirical findings on this topic (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

The QCA process is composed of 3 main steps: open coding, creating categories, and abstraction (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The creation and explanation of categories (i.e. the grouping of meaning units that share some common feature) is one of the main goals of QCA (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Krippendorff, 1980). These categories can then be further abstracted into themes, which are compacted forms of meanings (e.g. categories) (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The current study followed this process layout.

For the open coding portion, two research assistants (who were also in the graduate psychology program) provided assistance with the coding process. Initially, the head researcher of the present study and the 2 research assistants reviewed the entire data set (the research assistants each reading half of the data set), and made notes in the margins of meaning units that were mentioned in the data (e.g. "self-decides whether to change"). Initial reflections about the manner in which meaning units generated by the data could be grouped into categories and emergent themes were also noted by all three of the researchers. The head researcher then compiled a list of all the codes (i.e. meaning units) generated from the notes, totalling 94 codes. In order to create a final list of codes, all three researchers met and discussed which codes overlapped, which codes were

repetitive, and which codes could be condensed. The final codebook was created containing 37 codes and their definitions.

According to qualitative research guidelines, it is important to do coding rounds where the codebook is tested on a small sample of the data in case there are issues with its use or interpretation (Hruschka et al., 2004). Therefore, 20 cases were randomly selected from the data and coded using the codebook. Due to lower than ideal agreement between coders, some of the problematic codebook items were re-defined.

A subsection of the data was then used to assess the degree of interrater reliability (i.e. consistency between coders in what codes they apply to the data) using the re-defined codebook (Burla et al., 2008). The necessity to calculate interrater reliability stems from the fact that different individuals carry within themselves different biases that influence how they view the data, therefore the same unit of text can be interpreted using different codes by different individuals (Hruschka et al., 2004). In line with previous QCA studies, 20% of the dataset was used to calculate inter-rater reliability (e.g. Burla et al., 2008). Participant paragraphs used for this calculation were randomly selected from the dataset using an online random number generator (Furey, 2016). Each research assistant coded separate halves of these (i.e. they each coded 10% of the complete dataset), while the head researcher coded all of the 20%. Due to the codes in this study not being mutually exclusive (i.e. a unit of analysis could be coded with more than one code), a revised version of Cohen's kappa was utilized. Mezzich's kappa assesses the degree of agreement in the usage of codes for each of the units by calculating "the ratio of the number of agreements between specific categories over the number of possible

agreements” (Mezzich, Kraemer, Worthington, & Coffman, 1981. p. 32). A substantial kappa score was achieved.

The negotiated agreement method was then used, with the head researcher and the research assistants negotiating coding discrepancies with the hopes of reconciling some of their differences (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pederson, 2013). For the vast majority of cases, coding discrepancies were a result of simple human oversight, rather than varied beliefs about the application of codes. These were easily resolved. For coding discrepancies that represented a true difference in beliefs, a process of negotiation was employed where both sides gave their reason for utilizing or not utilizing a given code. In most cases an agreement was reached. In cases where the two parties could not reach an agreement, the original discrepancy was allowed to remain. The final kappa score was 86.6%, which is considered an excellent level of agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). In line with other studies that allow for a single coder to code the remaining cases (e.g. Burla et al., 2008), the remaining cases were coded alone by the head researcher.

During the abstraction process, 6 general themes emerged from the data: decision-making, acceptance of threatening information, guiding principles, assessment of people, interpersonal behaviours, and emotional response (see Table 8). Each of these themes was composed of two to four categories, and the corresponding codes that designated each category.

3.8 Decision-making

A theme that emerged was individual differences in decision-making attitudes and behaviours with regards to resolving the conflict situation. Specific to this conflict situation, the decision revolved around whether or not to concede to the changes in the

group project that the partner in the situation insisted were needed, despite the disagreement of the participant. Four categories relevant to this theme emerged: willingness to make changes, change decision basis, consultations, and stepwise conflict resolution.

3.8.1 Willingness to make changes

This category represents the extent to which people are willing to make concessions with respect to the wishes of their conflict opponent. In this conflict situation, this was represented by whether participants were willing to make the changes to their section of the group project.

Many participants expressed a willingness to make changes to their project sections. For some of the participants, this meant a complete willingness to make changes, without any expression of disagreement.

“Thank you for alerting me to the details I left out. I will add them to my writing”

The majority of participants were only partially willing to make changes to their sections. They said that they only wanted to make some or small changes. Other participants said they would make a few changes but wanted to keep most of their original work.

“I will compromise a bit and change a little and take some of their suggestions, but I would never change my entire work...”

A small group of participants were undecided about whether they wanted to make changes. These participants expressed their willingness in ‘if/then’ statements, where they were willing to make changes under specific circumstances, and not willing to make changes in other circumstances. These circumstances appeared to be unique to

participants, with some participants basing it on whether they came to an agreement with their partner, while others based it on personal judgments about the proposed changes.

“I would ask why each thing he says is wrong, and read over his work. If his work is very good and his reasons are valid, change my work. If not, I won't change anything and explain to him why he is wrong and make him change things in his work”

Only one or two participants were not willing to make any changes to their assignment section, and never even contemplated doing so.

“Tell him to re-write his. His thinking is obviously flawed. He probably is just overreacting. I'll just hand it in as is.”

Other participants showcased their unwillingness to make changes through their preferred desire to avoid the conflict situation. This avoidance was directed either at the conflict situation (or conflict situations in general), or at the specific individual with whom they were in a conflict with.

“If nothing can be done, honestly, I would probably avoid the person. It wouldn't be a difficult task to avoid the person because the campus is so large and so many more people to meet.”

3.8.2 Change decision basis

This category represents what factors participants took into consideration when making a decision about what changes to make (or not make). Many participants based their changes purely on their own opinions, as well as their personal judgments about their partner's opinions (e.g. whether they agreed with it or not). Therefore, the partner's voice was only heard in instances where the participant's personal judgment matched theirs, otherwise their personal desires were ignored.

“If I agree that these details were significant than I would rewrite my section of the project.”

Some participants based their changes on the suggestions or wants of their partner.

“- state my opinion on the topic in a firm but respectful manner - point out reasons behind my opinion - adapt some of my partner's suggestions in my work”

For many participants, their change decision was made taking into account both personal and their partner’s opinions. These participants discussed ideas like wanting to reach a compromise with their partner, or to more generally use input from both the self and the other person. For some participants this meant both giving in a little in order to come to a resolution, while other participants talked about working together to ensure both parties are happy.

“This way, the two of us would be able to discuss our conflicts and work together to create a section that both of us are happy with”

A small number of participants based their change decision on external material, for example whether the changes made sense according to the rubric of the class assignment. Other participants based their changes on the opinions of an external member (i.e. a person not involved in the original conflict situation). In most cases, this was based on the opinion of an authority figure relevant to the class project, like the class professor, while other individuals trusted the judgment of a friend enough to base their change decision on.

“I would find a third party like a mutual friend to look over my work. This friend could read my work and critique it giving me feedback. If he or she decided it is as bad as my partner says I would rewrite and if not I would not.”

Finally, time related issues were another factor that influenced whether and what changes participants were willing to make. Participants did not want to make changes or made less changes due to the lack of time before the class project deadline.

“I’ll change some of my mistakes my partner pointed out, but leave some things untouched due to time restrictions.”

3.8.3 Consultations

In order to make decisions about how to proceed with resolving the conflict, many participants chose to go beyond just discussing the issue with their partners. Some participants said they would consult the opinion of a 3rd party. This ranged from an authority figure (e.g. professor, class teaching assistant, a person in the university writing center), to a knowledgeable individual (e.g. another classmate taking the course), to an informal 3rd party opinion (e.g. asking friends). Other participants chose to consult an external resource to get a 2nd opinion. These external resources were assignment requirements, class rubric, or relevant research material (e.g. textbook or journal articles).

“I would suggest that we go through my section of the work together and use trustworthy resources, such as a textbook or class notes, to verify that my information is correct.”

3.8.4 Stepwise conflict resolution

The decision-making process for some of the participants was not a straightforward procedure. These participants took multiple steps in the conflict resolution process, often thus using multiple strategies related to solving the conflict. The

reason for this stepwise manner of solving conflict was attributed by some of these participants to the anticipation of continued partner disagreement, thus requiring the necessity of multiple strategies to be utilized.

“I would initially be insulted and frustrated but in order to keep the peace I would try to meet in the middle. If they continue to criticize and disagree, I would most likely stop checking back with my partner.”

3.9 Acceptance of threatening information

In a conflict situation, people are exposed to opposing viewpoints that threaten own personal stances on an issue. This theme represents the attitude participants had towards receiving contradicting opinions or critique from their partner. While the reception of such information might be personally unpleasant, nevertheless some participants were able to bypass their negative internal state and demonstrate an open attitude towards their conflict partner and the critiques the partner provided. For other participants, hearing threatening information triggered a defensive reaction.

3.9.1 Open

Most of the participants in this study had an open attitude towards receiving their partner's critique of their project section. Regardless of how they felt about the situation, they wanted to know the issues their partner had. This openness was represented by participants actively listening to what their partner was saying, wanting to understand their partner, being accepting of the criticism, asking their partner to further explain, as well as expressing a desire to understand the situation from their partner's perspective. “I would also ask my partner what specific problems she found in the section that I wrote, and which important details I have left out.”

Other participants demonstrated their open attitude by sharing and explaining their own point of view in a non-defensive manner, therefore suggesting a desire to openly discuss conflicting views.

“I would probably try and reason with my partner and get them to understand my perspective of my piece.”

Finally, being open towards threatening information was demonstrated by participants requesting that their partners assist them with re-writing their section, or to provide them with examples of how they want the project. This is an even stronger portrayal of having an open attitude, since not only is it mentally accepting contradictory information, but also shows that they are actively embracing it and willing to associate it with their own reputation (i.e. their section of the class project).

“Lastly, if she still thinks it's bad then I would ask her to correct what she wants if she really thinks it's still bad.”

3.9.2 Defensive

For a small number of participants, hearing information that threatened them (i.e. the work they created) triggered a defensive attitude. These participants strongly expressed their disagreement of their partner's opinion, explicitly stated that they would defend their work, or demanded proof that their section was done incorrectly.

“Lastly I would ask for proof that his or hers' answers are correct or more accurate than mine”

3.10 Guiding principles

Another theme that emerged was individual differences in the guiding principles that motivated behavior in the conflict situation. Regardless of the outcome, these

principles played a big role in how participants thought and acted towards their partner and the situation in general. Two categories of guiding principles were apparent in the study: situation-specific goals and general life views.

3.10.1 Situation-specific goals

This category refers to goals that participants had which were specific to the conflict situation. Achievement related goals were one area that emerged in the study. A main goal driving the actions and beliefs of these participants was getting a good mark on the project or completing a quality piece of work.

“If re-doing my part in the fashion that my partner said results in higher marks, I will re-do my part.”

Other participants had goals relating to interpersonal and intrapersonal satisfaction. Participants in this study very rarely mentioned intrapersonal satisfaction or positive feelings as a goal. For the handful of participants that mentioned it, it was not discussed as a main driving force of their actions, but rather a byproduct. However, it was still relevant to this theme, since feeling satisfied was something that these participants aspired to in the conflict situation.

“Ultimately, it is my work so if I disagree with what they're saying I would tell them that and hand in the work I feel confident in.”

Interpersonal satisfaction or positive feelings as a goal, on the other hand, was frequently mentioned. Many participants based their actions and beliefs around ensuring the happiness or satisfaction of their partners, as well as addressing their concerns.

“Ultimately, I would add some details to the paper to ensure my partner was happy with my work (even if I believed it unnecessary).”

Likewise, a lot of participants had a main goal of achieving the happiness and satisfaction of both the self and the other person. These people wanted to ensure that the concerns of everyone in the conflict situation were alleviated.

“Find out exactly what the problem is. Then adjust the assignment so that everyone is satisfied with the result.”

3.10.2 General life views

Unlike the situation-specific goals disclosed by the previous category, this category represents guiding principles that the participants ascribed to that were not tied to the specific conflict situation. These were general life views that the participant abided by, and appeared to be mottos which the participants behaved according to across interpersonal situations. Each of these general life views were unique to the participant, and included beliefs such as two perspectives are better than one, teamwork is important, anger does not solve anything, and having more information is always better than less. “I think that having more information that is still of quality writing is better than having less.”

3.11 Assessment of people

Another theme that emerged was individual differences in how participants assessed people and the conclusions they drew. These assessments were both intrapersonal (i.e. the assessment of the self) and interpersonal (i.e. the assessment of the conflict partner) in nature. These assessments were often important in setting the tone of the conflict situation.

3.11.1 Intrapersonal assessment

Some of the participants engaged in introspection, where they reflected on the personality characteristics they had, and how it related to the conflict situation.

“If that failed, due to my passive and friendly personality, I would change the way that I completed the work to settle the conflict.”

Another topic relevant to this category that emerged was participants admitting the fact that the self could be wrong in the conflict situation, either to themselves or openly to their partners. Admitting the possibility of personal mistakes was undertaken both as a reflection of the self (i.e. the self is not perfect) or that the work one produced was erroneous.

“If we will found out together that I was wrong, I will admit my failure an redo the work.”

The participants also reflected on the personal effort involved in writing one’s project section. Reflection on one’s efforts was done in an almost defensive manner, and was sometimes a catalyst in refusing compliance with partner demands or demanding recognition.

“I usually spend a lot of time working, so it is important to me that my efforts are recognized.”

Finally, a large number of participants exhibited self-confidence in their work and abilities. Upon evaluating one’s self and one’s work, they exhibited support for themselves, often communicating this to their partner.

“I would be assertive and state that I believe that my work is complete and good.”

3.11.2 Interpersonal assessment

Participants' assessments of their partner were easily divisible into positive and negative views. While all the partners were hypothetical, participants nevertheless made assumptions about the type of person that would be involved in the conflict situation with them, and also assumptions about their partner's beliefs and actions. Positive views about their partner included that their partner was somebody they could learn from, that the partner is not offensive, and that the partner wants them to succeed. Negative views about their partner included things like their partner being bossy, overreacting, being a stubborn person, or having flawed thinking.

Participants also talked about making academic evaluations about their partner, often in order to judge whether the partner's critiques were valid or worthy of attention. They assessed both the quality of their partner's section of the work as well as the academic merit of their partner (e.g. the grades they get).

"If she was a good student, who always did well, then I would consider changing my work."

3.12 Interpersonal behaviours

The individual differences in the interpersonal behaviours that participants anticipated displaying was another theme that emerged in the study. While the predominantly occurring category in this theme was the social nature of the behavior (i.e. prosocial versus antisocial), rationale behavior and physical proximity as important facets of participants' interpersonal behaviors also emerged.

3.12.1 Social behaviours

Participants either acted in a prosocial manner towards their partner, with the intention of securing a warm, friendly relationship, or in an antisocial manner that has the

potential to be a catalyst for escalation in the conflict. Prosocial participants talked about thanking their partner for their feedback, ensuring that they smile at their partner, not using aggressive language, and using their words instead of reacting to the conflict in a physical manner.

“I would tell my partner thanks for the feedback”

Participants behaving in an antisocial fashion was very rarely reported. Anticipated antisocial behavior was either confrontational in nature (e.g. telling off their partner, arguing) or revolved around acting in a deceptive manner towards the partner.

“reword some things so she thinks I changed more than I did”

3.12.2 Rationale behaviour

Rationale behavior was interpersonal behavior that participants anticipated engaging in, where the focus was acting in a mature, logical manner. While not inherently prosocial, the purpose of such behavior was proper conduct between the two individuals involved in the conflict situation, and thus the intent of good interpersonal exchange was similar to prosocial behavior, but without the added warmth.

“I would act rationally and listen to their reasoning”

3.12.3 Physical proximity

For a few of the participants, physical proximity during their interactions with their partners was vital. They believed that the quality of the interaction would be improved by meeting face to face, versus other forms of distant communication (e.g. texting).

“If I were in this situation, I would sit down one-on-one with my partner in order to verbally resolve the issue.”

3.13 Emotional response

Conflict situations are emotion-inducing events, therefore a common theme that emerged was how participants experienced and handled the evoked emotions. Two categories relating to this study discussed by participants were emotional awareness and emotional behavior.

3.13.1 Emotional awareness

Participants were not oblivious to the negative emotions that would come as a result of being in a conflict situation. Many of the participants talked about the negative feelings they would experience, induced either by the conflict situation in general or the disagreement of their partners. Some negative emotions mentioned by the participants included being angry, feeling hurt, and being anxious about the situation.

“I would be insulted if my partner were to say that all of my work was wrong and I would probably get angry.”

While the majority of participants focused inwards when considering the emotional nature of the conflict situation, a few of the participants acknowledged the possible emotions exhibited by their partner as well, or indicated that they would try to become aware of it.

“I would ask my partner what they found was wrong with what I wrote and try and see how they feel.”

3.13.2 Emotional behavior

Needing to manage emotions was a common category that emerged in the study. A number of these participants necessitated controlling their negative emotions, or

maintaining their positive emotions. A few participants indicated that it was a factor that was important for their partner to engage in as well.

“Despite the shock of what my classmate has said, I would remain calm”

Expression of emotions was mentioned both in a positive and a negative light. Some participants indicated that they would actively try to not express their negative emotions. Other participants indicated the exact opposite; that they would express their feelings to their partners.

“However, I will say exactly how I feel and mention things that upset me.”

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

4. Discussion

4.1 Discussion of quantitative findings

The present study delivered a more holistic understanding of how the individual difference variables trait EI, ability EI, self-compassion, and compassion for others relate to general conflict resolution strategy usage.

The current study found that males had higher levels of self-compassion, which is consistent with some of the previous findings in the literature (Neff, 2003a). However, for compassion directed at others, females had higher levels, which is also consistent with previous findings (Pommier, 2010). No significant sex differences were found for trait EI and scores on the STEU; however, women scored higher on the STEM-B. All of the findings match previous findings regarding gender differences in trait and ability EI (Allen et al., 2015; MacCann & Roberts, 2008; Petrides & Furnham, 2006). Finally, no significant gender differences were found for the conflict resolution strategies, also in line with previous findings (Rizkalla, Wertheim, & Hodgson, 2008). Therefore, this provides supporting evidence that participants related to the measures utilized in the present study in a similar manner to previous studies.

There has been some debate about whether the dual-concern model of conflict resolution encompasses four or five conflict resolution strategies. Pruitt and Rubin (1986) supported the notion of there being four strategies, saying compromise was a dimension of problem solving. De Dreu et al. (2001) found that both a four and a five factor model had good fit. An EFA was conducted in the present study on the DUTCH scale items, in order to address this debate. The results of the present study indicate that except for one

item, all the compromising and problem solving items loaded onto one factor, which was named problem solving. The rest of the items loaded as expected, and were appropriately named forcing, avoiding, and yielding. Thus, the findings from this EFA support Pruitt and Rubin's (1986) view that compromising and problem solving do not represent completely separate conflict resolution strategies. A similar finding of problem solving and compromise items loading onto one factor was found in another study, which used EFA to assess the factor structure of another conflict resolution questionnaire (Hammock, Richardson, Pilkington, & Utley, 1990). With regards to the DUTCH questionnaire, a confirmatory factor analysis conducted in a study by Daly, Lee, Soutar, and Rasmi (2010), found similarly that compromise and problem solving items loaded onto one factor, albeit they eliminated a higher number of items than the present study. Other studies (e.g. Rizkalla et al., 2008), have utilized De Dreu et al.'s (2001) four factor version of the DUTCH scale (which does not include compromising), likewise showing that using a four factor version is a valid means of assessing conflict resolution.

Prior to conducting the SEM, a measurement model was conducted. The model initially had poor fit, and thus a series of modifications were conducted. The final measurement model had adequate fit. Primarily, the overall EI factor had to be split up into 2 separate factors that represented trait EI and ability EI, which shared a significant but weak positive correlation. This reinforces the long standing view that EI as currently defined describes the two separate constructs of ability and trait EI (e.g. Petrides, 2011), and that both need to be assessed in order to a more well-rounded conceptualization of EI (Keefer, 2015).

Another finding from the measurement model was that adequate fit was only achieved if the subscales representing the positive and negative aspects of self-compassion were represented on two separate factors. Previous studies (Costa, Marôco, Pinto, Gouveia, Ferreira, & Castilho, 2015; López et al., 2015) have similarly found support for a two-factor model of self-compassion, with the positive and negative aspects loading onto two separate factors. However, they view the negative factor as a separate construct from self-compassion (Costa et al., 2015; López et al., 2015). While in her most recent publication addressing the issue, Neff (2016) acknowledges that the positive and negative aspects can be assessed as distinct factors, in an earlier publication Neff (2016) strongly disagrees with using a two-factor approach. Most importantly, Neff (2016) disagrees with the notion that the positive and negative aspects represent separate constructs, instead saying that one needs to be high on the positive aspect and low on the negative aspect to be viewed as self-compassionate.

While appropriate model fit in the current study was only attained when the two-factor approach was used, the theoretical foundations of self-compassion were well respected, and thus theoretically the two factors (sc_p and sc_n) were both seen as components of the overall self-compassion measure. The factor with the indicators self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (i.e. the positive aspects) was used to represent high self-compassionate behavior, and the factor with the indicators self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification (i.e. the negative aspects) were used to represent high uncompassionate behavior towards the self. The two self-compassion factors were also strongly correlated, indicating that while model fit improved if they were loaded onto separate factors, they are representative of a common shared construct,

which is self-compassion. Therefore, the current study is not arguing that negative aspects of SC should not be included in the overall measure of self-compassion. Merely, this study highlights the possibility that in studies of self-compassion, the positive and negative aspects of self-compassion in relation to other variables can be examined separately, and that they have unique influences on other constructs (e.g. the conflict resolution strategies that people use). A study by Neff (2016) indicates some support for the fact that the positive and negative aspects are related to variables in unique ways. Moreover, the current study only examined how the subscales loaded onto the overall self-compassion factor, and did not examine the loadings of the individual items, therefore this study cannot make comments on the validity of the self-compassion scale.

Similar to self-compassion, compassion for others also loaded onto two separate factors, representing positive and negative aspects of compassion. This is not surprising, considering that the compassion for others scale was in large part based on the self-compassion scale (Pommier, 2011). The factor with the indicators kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (i.e. the positive aspects) was used to represent high compassionate behavior towards others, and the factor with the indicators indifference, separation, and disengagement (i.e. the negative aspects) was used to represent high uncompassionate behavior towards others. The two factors were strongly correlated, indicating that while model fit is best when the compassion subscales are loaded onto two separate factors, they are related in representing the construct compassion for others.

A SEM was conducted in order to assess how the individual difference variables predicted conflict resolution strategies. Most of the proposed hypotheses about these relationships were either partially or fully supported.

Regarding the construct self-compassion, higher self-compassionate behavior (i.e. sc_p; compassionate responses) did not significantly predict anything, and higher uncompassionate behavior towards the self (i.e. sc_n; uncompassionate responses) positively predicted forcing. Therefore, neither of the hypotheses regarding self-compassion (Hypotheses 1 and 2) were supported. However, it is interesting to note that the positive subscales of self-compassion (i.e. higher self-compassionate behaviour) did positively correlate with forcing and problem solving before being included in the model. Likewise, the negative self-compassion subscale isolation (i.e. lower self-compassionate behaviour) did correlate positively with yielding and avoiding before being included in the model. The positive link between high uncompassionate behavior towards the self and forcing was surprising, since showing less concern for the self should not be positively related to a strategy that involves having high concern for the self. One possible explanation is generated by Neff's (2003a) finding that self-compassion is negatively linked to neurotic perfectionism. Blatt (1995) defines neurotic perfectionism as a powerful need to avoid failing, therefore low self-compassionate individuals might be driven by a higher compulsive need to find a perfect solution to a conflict situation. Thus, they might be more likely to use forcing as a conflict strategy, in order ensure that things get resolved in a manner that aids their pursuit for perfection.

High compassionate behavior towards others (i.e. com_p; compassionate responses) positively predicted problem solving, avoiding, and yielding. High uncompassionate behavior towards others (i.e. com_n; uncompassionate responses) positively predicted problem solving and forcing. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 regarding higher compassion for others being positively linked to high concern for others conflict

strategies was fully supported. Since problem solving is considered a constructive conflict resolution strategy (De Wied et al., 2007), it shows that compassion for others predicts better conflict resolution skills. Interestingly, the factor representing high compassion for others was also positively linked with avoiding, which is defined as having low concern for others (De Dreu et al., 2001). While it may appear contradictory that a conflict resolution strategy noted for demonstrating low concern for others is positively predicted by compassion, one proposed explanation is that concern for others may be showcased in different manners. Crocker and Canevello (2008) used items to describe compassionate goals that related to avoiding doing things that have the potential to be harmful for other people. Despite the potential long-term drawbacks of avoiding a conflict (e.g. Gross & Guerrero, 2000), these findings suggest that more highly compassionate individuals might also be driven by short-term concern goals for others, in that they believe it's best to avoid beginning a conflict, since conflict has the potential to cause harm to the other person (e.g. invoke negative feelings). Support for this proposition was found by Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson, and Villareal (1997), who found that avoidance as a strategy was also associated with high concern for others, and suggest it may be used to maintain social relationships by avoiding conflict.

Hypothesis 4 regarding lower compassion for others being positively linked to conflict strategies that are low in concern for others was partially supported. Being lower in compassion was linked positively to forcing (which is in line with the hypothesis), although it was also positively linked to problem solving, as well as the aforementioned positive link of high compassion for others with avoiding. The idea that being both highly compassionate and highly uncompassionate leading to problem solving might seem

counter-intuitive at first. However, it is important to note that the negative components of compassion for others are not the direct opposites of the positive compassion for others components; people can be high in both (Pommier, 2011). It represents unique facets, for example one can be both mindfully aware of other people's suffering, but still be able to disengage from it (Pommier, 2011). Therefore, it makes sense that problem solving, which requires one to be both aware and wanting to help another, but also being able to separate from their suffering and focus on one's own needs (e.g. De Dreu et al., 2001) would be positively predicted by both the positive and negative factors of compassion for others.

Ability EI did not significantly predict any of the conflict resolution strategies. Nevertheless, the direct effect of ability EI on problem solving was in a positive direction. Likewise, correlations show a significant positive relationship between problem solving and both the managing and understanding components of ability EI. Thus, partial support is offered for Hypothesis 5 with regards to EI being positively linked to problem solving. One explanation for this lack of significance at the $p < .05$ level could be that only the understanding and managing components of ability EI were available for assessment in this study, thus not accounting for the predictive influence of the other ability EI components on problem solving. For example, Stolarski et al. (2011) found that the perception component of ability EI was positively and significantly related to resolving conflict using compromise and active discussion tactics. Trait EI positively predicted the use of forcing as a strategy. Trait EI negatively predicted avoiding and yielding. Hypothesis 6 was thus fully supported, in the sense that EI (though only trait EI) was shown to negatively predict avoiding and yielding. The results of the present study

suggest that increased emotional competence with regards to handling emotions that arise as a result of conflict is associated with a less passive response to conflict (i.e. avoiding and yielding), and is positively related to more active means of handling conflict (i.e. forcing and problem solving) (De Wied et al., 2007). Previous studies have shown that passive reactions to conflict have negative consequences for wellbeing (Dijkstra, 2006). The findings of the present study are in line with previous studies assessing general coping behaviours (e.g. Salovey, Stroud, Woolery & Epel, 2002), which found that components of EI are associated with more active coping, and less passive coping. Previous findings also show that EI is associated with a decreased view of a stressor as threatening (Salovey et al., 2002). Thus, the present findings and backing from previous literature lends sustenance to the conceptualization of EI as giving one the skills necessary to deal with the negative and threatening feelings produced by conflict, thus enabling one to react in a manner aimed at achieving active resolutions to the conflict, instead of responding passively.

A previous study found that while EI is an antecedent to prosocial behavior, it affects it through an intervening variable (Martin-Raugh et al., 2016). Findings from Gini et al.'s (2011) study suggested that knowledge about prosocial behavior might not be enough to cause prosocial behaviour, due to a lack of prosocial motivation. The current study therefore aimed to update previous findings by assessing compassion for others as a mediator, which contains an element of prosocial motivation (Neff, 2003a, b; Pommier, 2011). Hypothesis 7 postulated that the positive relationship between EI and prosocial behavior (i.e. problem solving) would be mediated by compassion for others (i.e. com_p). Indirect effects were assessed, and lent support for this hypothesis. Both trait and ability

EI positively predicted higher compassion for others, which in turn positively predicted the use of problem solving. It is important to note that both trait and ability EI did not have a significant direct effect on problem solving, thus the current analysis was not a classic test of mediation, but instead a test of indirect effects. According to Kenny (2016), many researchers agree that the step of there being a direct effect between the causal and outcome variable is not necessary. Therefore, the indirect effect found in the present study supports the idea of prosocial motivations mediating the EI-prosocial behaviour link.

4.2 Discussion of qualitative findings

The qualitative results revealed six general themes for resolving a situation-specific conflict (i.e. conflict with a classmate about a group project): decision-making, acceptance of threatening information, guiding principles, assessment of people, interpersonal behaviours, and emotional response. Each theme is associated with a number of relevant categories, which represent areas of individual differences when it comes to resolving conflict.

The decision-making theme is related to individual's willingness to make changes to their section of the group project, what they based their change decision on, whether they consulted a source external to the conflict, as well as using stepwise conflict resolution. Many participants reported a willingness to make a few changes, and only some participants said they were willing to make changes without any issues or no changes at all. This shows that consideration of partner's needs (i.e. their desire for changes) is not an all or-nothing construct, but should instead be represented by a continuum of consideration. These personal attitudes of whether or not one is willing to

accommodate to the conflict partner's wishes, and to what extent, could be considered another influence on conflict resolution potentials. As a study by Jehn (1997) describes, these conflict resolution potentials describe the degree to which a conflict is deemed resolvable. In the study, some individual differences as influences were considered like status differences and personality (Jehn, 1997). The present study offers individual differences in willingness as another potential variable that needs to be considered when it comes to assessing conflict resolution potential.

Change decision for many people was based on personal judgment (e.g. whether they agreed with their partner), but many others also reported wanting to compromise/reach an agreement, and some participants based changes on partner suggestions. Along with the willingness to change's avoiding conflict code, these individual differences in decision-making appear to map onto De Dreu et al.'s (2001) different conflict resolution strategies of avoiding, forcing, problem solving/compromise, and yielding. An important application of the qualitative findings to the study's quantitative results is that for compromise/agreement, some participants talked about both parties having to give in, while other participants talked about working together to ensure both party's happiness. Currently, De Dreu et al.'s (2001) four-factor version of the conflict resolution scale includes problem solving without any items relating to compromising. The present qualitative findings reveal that compromising and problem solving are separate strategies, and that both are utilized in conflict resolution. This therefore lends support to the four-factor model of conflict resolution used in the present study, that uses both problem solving and compromising items for the problem solving factor.

Many participants mentioned consulting an external source (person or external resource) to assist with conflict resolution. While some conflict resolution researchers mention third party assistance in conflict situations (e.g. Sheppard, 1984), this strategy is not included in the dual-concern representation of conflict resolution. The qualitative findings from this study suggest that the current model of conflict resolution might need to be modified to include consulting an external source as a conflict strategy.

Finally, the results also revealed that some participants considered using multiple conflict resolution strategies, and that some of the participants who anticipate using multiple strategies are doing so based on anticipated partner disagreement. Therefore, this indicates that while participants may have an original preference for a conflict resolution strategy (i.e. the first conflict strategy they mention), they are willing to consider alternatives options if the situation (or in this case anticipated situation) so demands.

The acceptance of threatening information theme represents whether participants were open or defensive when hearing threatening information (i.e. that their writing needed major revisions). Most of the participants were actively open to towards their partner's critiques, desiring to take the other person's perspective and asking them to explain their side. A previous qualitative study similarly found that task conflict was often associated with norms representing open conflict communication, and shows the benefits it has for considering alternatives and task performance (Jehn, 1997). This atmosphere of open attitude and desire to engage in perspective taking reported by many participants may also set the ground work for compassionate responding, since it involves attempting to understand the concerns of one's conflict partner instead of disengaging from it (Pommier, 2011).

The guiding principles theme represented both situation specific goals as well as general life views that served as a motivational basis for participants. Relevant to the situation specific goals category, many participants mentioned wanting to achieve positive feelings and addressing concerns of both the self and the other person, or positive feelings and addressing concerns of only their conflict partner. However, very few participants mentioned wanting to achieve these only for the self. These results suggest individual differences relating to self-compassion as well as compassion for others are relevant for situation specific conflict resolution as well, since in line with those constructs (Neff 2003a, b; Pommier, 2011), participants mentioned the goal of alleviating concerns of self and others, as well as having motivations to achieve both interpersonal and intrapersonal positive affect and satisfaction. The fact that very few participants wanted to address the emotional concerns of just the self is in line with the construct self-compassion, since recognizing common humanity (a subscale of self-compassion) is said to circumvent being self-centered (Neff, 2003a). The general life views category presented a novel finding, since it shows that some participants appear to be motivated by non-situation specific life views that guided their attitudes and behavior in response to the conflict situation.

The assessment of people theme showed that participants made both intrapersonal and interpersonal assessments in the conflict situation. Regarding assessments of the self, the current study found that many participants maintained a positive view of the self, expressing self-confidence and emphasizing personal efforts made. However, some participants were willing to admit the possibility of personal fault, an individual difference that was found in another qualitative study (Butler et al., 1998). The fact that

there were individual differences when it came to interpersonal assessments made was an interesting finding, since the conflict situation was hypothetical, therefore no actual interpersonal interaction on which to base assessments existed. This finding possibly suggests that participants already go into the conflict situation with pre-existing assessment orientations (e.g. the conflict partner needs to be a good student for one to pay attention to their desires). In other words, this suggests social interaction in conflict is not purely situationally-motivated but is instead influenced by pre-existing orientations towards positive and negative anticipated assessments of others, and adds to previous research suggesting that it is important to be aware of biases that one brings into a conflict resolution (Prutzman & Johnson, 1997).

The interpersonal behaviours theme showed that people differed in how they behaved socially, rationally, and their need for physical proximity to their conflict partner. Many participants reported anticipating behaving in a prosocial manner, while few participants reported antisocial behaviour. This suggests that despite the antagonistic situation created by conflict, people nevertheless are likely to behave in a socially positive manner towards their partner. Other participants mentioned rationale interpersonal behaviour, and similar to the present study, participants in others studies also mentioned a desire for rationale, mature behavior (Behfar et al., 2011). Interestingly some of the participants in the present study believed that face-to-face communication was necessary for successful conflict resolution. Previous findings support the views expressed by participants in the present study, since face-to-face contact in negotiation was shown to nurture cooperation (Drolet & Morris, 2000).

Finally, the theme emotional response showed that people differed regarding whether they reported utilizing emotional skills relating to emotional awareness and behavior. Many participants discussed the negative emotions they would experience in conflict, showcasing an understanding of what emotions the situation would evoke. Previous qualitative studies have similarly shown that participants report negative conflict-induced emotions (e.g. Asadi et al., 2016; Butler et al., 1998; Jehn, 1997), thus demonstrating awareness. A few participants also demonstrated awareness, or working towards achieving awareness, of the feelings of their conflict partner. Participants also discussed their plans to manage their emotions, either controlling their negative emotions, or controlling their expression of emotions. Rivers et al. (2007) found regulating negative emotions had benefits both for effective conflict resolution as well as interpersonal relationships. These qualitative findings of the present study regarding emotional responses to conflict lend support to EI also being a relevant individual difference variable in situation specific conflict resolution.

4.3 Limitations and future directions

There are some study limitations that need to be addressed in future studies. A convenience sample of university students was utilized in the present study. One drawback of this is that the use of such a homogenous sample limits the applicability of the present study's results to other populations. Another limitation was the assessment of only two facets of ability EI. The Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002b), another measure of ability EI, assesses four separate dimensions of ability EI: perception, facilitating, understanding, and the management of emotions. Therefore, the current study can only make limited conclusions

about the relationship of ability EI to the other variables in the study. Finally, another limitation is that the participants responded to one specific conflict situation for the qualitative section, therefore the qualitative findings about what individual differences arise in response to conflict might not be generalizable to other conflict situations.

The current study set forth many avenues for future directions. Since the current study addressed some contradictions in the current literature (e.g. the number of conflict resolution factors) as well as making some novel findings, before more definitive conclusions can be drawn about the findings, future studies need to re-test the current study (preferably with different populations) in order to assess the reliability of the findings. Assessing the cross-cultural differences in how the individual difference variables EI and compassion relate to conflict resolution is another possible area of future interest. For example, individuals from collectivistic cultures have a higher preference for conflict resolutions strategies that show high concern for others (Gabrielidis et al., 1997). Therefore, individual differences based on cultural differences may interact with compassion and EI to influence conflict styles. Future studies should also assess responses to a real conflict situation by conducting a laboratory study, instead of just providing a hypothetical conflict situation. An interactive simulation of conflict resolution would provide more authentic responses, which would give a more valid picture of how individuals resolve conflict. Finally, future studies should provide an even more holistic view of conflict resolution by assessing both individual difference and situational influences. Conflict resolution is a complicated process, and by assessing the cumulative influences of both types of influences, one would be able to attain a clearer picture of what factors lead to the use of specific conflict resolution styles. A clearer

picture in turn would give future researchers the knowledge of what factors to target in interventions aiming to increase the usage of more constructive conflict resolution strategies.

4.4 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the present study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze how individual difference variables influence conflict resolution strategies. The primary individual difference variables assessed were self-compassion, compassion for others, trait EI and ability EI. Results from the present study suggest that the current five-factor model of conflict resolution might be better represented using four factors: problem solving (which includes both problem solving and compromise), forcing, yielding, and avoiding. Gender differences regarding the individual difference variables match previous findings in the literature. Model fit for the measurement model was shown to improve when subscales relating to the positive and negative components of self-compassion and compassion for others were allowed to load on separate factors. However, the positive and negative factors were both interpreted as representing the overall construct. The SEM showed that both compassion and EI were significant predictors of conflict resolutions strategies. Both the positive and negative components of compassion for others positively predicted problem solving, indicating that compassion for others is important for constructive conflict resolution. The negative components of both self-compassion and compassion for others positively predicted forcing, indicating that those lower in compassion are more likely to use forcing. The positive components of compassion for others also positively predicted avoiding and yielding, indicating that higher compassion is also linked with the usage of more passive conflict strategies.

Finally, partial support was given for EI positively predicting the active conflict resolution strategies problem solving and forcing, and negatively predicting the passive strategies avoiding and yielding. An analysis of indirect effects showed that compassion for others mediates the relationship between EI and problem solving, suggesting that EI influences prosocial behavior partly through one's prosocial motivations. The qualitative findings revealed six themes (and their subsequent categories) that showcased areas of individual differences in how people resolved situation-specific conflict: decision-making, acceptance of threatening information, guiding principles, assessment of people, interpersonal behaviours, and emotional response. Qualitative analysis also showed that individual differences relating to compassion and EI were also relevant for situation-specific conflict resolution in the present study.

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Table 1.
Explanation of abbreviations used in study

Abbreviation	Explanation
1. Forcing (DUTChr_f)	DUTCH items corresponding to forcing as a conflict resolution strategy
2. Problem solving (DUTChr_ps)	DUTCH items corresponding to problem solving as a conflict resolution strategy
3. Yielding (DUTChr_y)	DUTCH items corresponding to yielding as a conflict resolution strategy
4. Avoiding (DUTChr_a)	DUTCH items corresponding to avoiding as a conflict resolution strategy
5. STEU	Total score on STEU scale, measures understanding emotions component of ability EI
6. STEM	Total score on STEM scale, measures managing emotions component of ability EI
7. well-being	Well-being subscale of the TEIQue-SF scale; component of trait EI measure
8. self control	Self-control subscale of the TEIQue-SF scale; component of trait EI measure
9. emotionality	Emotionality subscale of the TEIQue-SF scale; component of trait EI measure
10. sociability	Sociability subscale of the TEIQue-SF scale; component of trait EI measure
11. Com_k	Kindness subscale of the Compassion Scale
12. Com_i	Indifference subscale of the Compassion Scale
13. Com_ch	Common Humanity subscale of the Compassion Scale
14. Com_s	Separation subscale of the Compassion Scale
15. Com_m	Mindfulness subscale of the Compassion Scale
16. Com_d	Disengagement subscale of the Compassion Scale
17. SC_sk	Self-kindness subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale
18. SC_sj	Self-Judgment subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale
19. SC_ch	Common Humanity subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale
20. SC_i	Isolation subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale
21. SC_m	Mindfulness subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale
22. SC_oi	Over-identification subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
1. Forcing	3.4756	.66871	-.048	-.202	.71
2. Problem solving	3.8619	.63697	-.673	.684	.84
3. Yielding	3.1386	.63697	-.148	.306	.60
4. Avoiding	3.0849	.94239	-.080	-.521	.74
5. AEI: STEU	.5683	.14018	-1.166	1.395	.78
6. AEI: STEM	.5918	.12983	-.933	.926	.67
7. TEI: well-being	5.27	1.091	-.734	.454	.84
8. TEI: self control	4.14	.952	-.046	-.373	.62
9. TEI: emotionality	4.74	.891	-.055	-.312	.64
10. TEI: sociability	4.84	.985	-.206	-.354	.72
11. Com_k	4.10	.732	-.767	.380	.75
12. Com_i	2.33	.812	.462	-.184	.76
13. Com_ch	4.07	.681	-.670	.131	.68
14. Com_s	2.30	.813	.425	-.204	.75
15. Com_m	3.99	.629	-.556	.048	.60
16. Com_d	2.12	.804	.728	.392	.74
17. SC_sk	2.90	.801	.067	-.340	.78
18. SC_sj	3.37	.806	-.255	-.328	.77
19. SC_ch	3.12	.879	-.021	-.622	.78
20. SC_i	3.34	.897	-.306	-.607	.76
21. SC_m	3.23	.762	-.009	-.523	.72
22. SC_oi	3.43	.840	-.234	-.525	.70

Table 3.
Bivariate correlations between study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Forcing	1										
2. Problem solving	.06	1									
3. Yielding	-.11*	.21*	1								
4. Avoiding	-.16*	-.01	.37*	1							
5. AEI: STEU	-.10*	.15*	-.06	-.05	1						
6. AEI: STEM	-.11*	.22*	.01	-.10*	.48*	1					
7. TEI: well-being	.20*	.20*	-.11*	-.17*	.06	.13*	1				
8. TEI: self control	.03	.11*	-.03	-.11*	-.01	.05	.47*	1			
9. TEI: emotionality	-.06	.26*	0	-.21*	.06	.12*	.47*	.36*	1		
10. TEI: sociability	.31*	.13*	-.30*	-.39*	.06	.12*	.44*	.27*	.37*	1	
11. Com_k	-.12*	.32*	.19*	.03	.28*	.24*	.22*	.04	.37*	.13*	1
12. Com_i	.27*	-.17*	-.08	.10*	-.23*	-.27*	-.18*	-.08	-.47*	-.15*	-.61*
13. Com_ch	.09	.28*	.02	-.04	.24*	.25*	.26*	.15*	.13*	.12*	.33*
14. Com_s	.14*	-.21*	-.04	.11*	-.23	-.20*	-.22*	-.11*	-.49*	-.18*	-.53*
15. Com_m	-.05	.32*	.18*	-.02	.24*	.22*	.23*	.16*	.36*	.22*	.61*
16. Com_d	.23*	-.23*	-.08	.10*	-.27*	-.26*	-.22*	-.09	-.43*	-.15*	-.64*
17. SC_sk	.14*	.15*	0	-.01	-.17*	-.09	.45*	.41*	.30*	.12*	.07
18. SC_sj	.02	-.08	.09	.09	.06	-.02	-.42*	-.39*	-.32*	-.16*	.03
19. SC_ch	.11*	.24*	.05	-.03	-.11*	.01	.33*	.28*	.28*	.12*	.16*
20. SC_i	.06	-.10*	.12*	.16*	.13*	.01	-.44*	-.43*	-.37*	-.24*	.01
21. SC_m	.08	.15*	.01	0	-.09	-.05	.37*	.48*	.27*	.15*	.08
22. SC_oi	.10*	.01	.08	.08	.03	-.03	-.33*	-.54*	-.23*	-.10*	.12*

* $p < .05$

(CONTINUED)

Table 3. (Continued)

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Forcing											
2. Problem solving											
3. Avoiding											
4. Yielding											
5. AEI: STEU											
6. AEI: STEM											
7. TEI: well-being											
8. TEI: self control											
9. TEI: emotionality											
10. TEI: sociability											
11. Com_k											
12. Com_i	1										
13. Com_ch	-.14*	1									
14. Com_s	.72*	-.21*	1								
15. Com_m	-.48*	.34*	-.40*	1							
16. Com_d	.81*	-.19*	.73*	-.51*	1						
17. SC_sk	.02	.19*	-.05	.06	0	1					
18. SC_sj	.07	-.06	.09	-.02	.08	-.58*	1				
19. SC_ch	-.02	.34*	-.08	.13*	-.03	.52*	-.27*	1			
20. SC_i	.09	-.07	.11*	-.04	.11*	-.49*	.65*	-.33*	1		
21. SC_m	.01	.23*	-.01	.16*	.02	.61*	-.33*	.61*	-.41*	1	
22. SC_oi	.04	-.07	-.04	.03	-.02	-.40*	.62*	-.29*	.63*	-.45*	1

*p<.05

Table 4.

Final EFA factor loadings and communalities:

based on a principal axis factoring with varimax rotation for 18 items (DUTCH6 and DUTCH15 were removed due to low communalities) of the DUTCH scale (N=486)

	Factor 1 Problem- solving	Factor 2 Forcing	Factor 3 Avoiding	Factor 4 Yielding	Communalities
DUTCH 1	-.085	-.089	.383	.453	.367
DUTCH 2	.634	-.001	-.032	.142	.423
DUTCH 3	.067	.540	-.192	-.094	.342
DUTCH 4	.678	.074	-.012	-.035	.467
DUTCH 5	-.015	-.158	.758	.025	.600
DUTCH 7	.669	.053	-.053	.062	.457
DUTCH 8	.063	.598	.031	.176	.394
DUTCH 9	.334	.470	-.102	.103	.353
DUTCH 10	-.035	-.031	.512	.251	.328
DUTCH 11	.320	.027	.130	.529	.400
DUTCH 12	.606	.049	.059	.099	.383
DUTCH 13	.086	.726	-.018	-.167	.563
DUTCH 14	.736	.087	.000	.068	.554
DUTCH 16	.131	-.068	.148	.600	.404
DUTCH 17	.630	-.160	-.013	.173	.452
DUTCH 18	-.172	.598	-.059	-.125	.406
DUTCH 19	.636	.121	-.039	-.040	.422
DUTCH 20	.020	-.043	.774	.131	.618

Note. Factor loadings above |.4| cut-off presented in bold

Table 5.
Goodness of fit indices for different measurement models

Model	$X^2_{(df)}$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR	AIC
1. Original model	1286.91(192) p<.001	.108	.732	.103	18887.378
2. Split latent variable EI into 2 factors	1102.037 (185) p<.001	.101	.775	.082	18697.875
3. Split latent variable compassion into 2 factors	931.403 (177) p<.001	.094	.815	.075	18525.689
4. Split latent variable SC into 2 factors	668.329 (168) p<.001	.078	.877	.065	18257.151
5. Correlated errors-SC_sk with SC_sj	605.353 (167) p<.001	.073	.893	.065	18190.672
6. Correlated errors-SC_m with SC_oi	593.596 (166) p<.001	.073	.895	.064	18178.041
7. Correlated errors- SC_ch with Com_ch	577.482 (165) p<.001	.072	.899	.063	18161.681
8. Correlated errors- SC_m With Com_m	571.222 (164) p<.001	.071	.900	.063	18157.945

Table 6.
Structural Equation Models

Model	$X^2_{(df)}$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR	AIC
Full Model	571.222 (164) p<.001	.071	.900	.063	18157.945
Model 1: Forcing	472.194(128) p<.001	.074	.909	.066	15165.045
Model 2: Problem Solving	426.197(128) p<.001	.069	.920	.062	15103.581
Model 3: Yielding	455.817(128) p<.001	.073	.911	.064	15225.480
Model 4: Avoiding	460.634(128) p<.001	.073	.911	.064	15530.533

Table 7.

Bootstrapping indirect effects and confidence intervals (CI) for the mediation model

Model pathways	Indirect effect	CI	
		Lower .5%	Upper .5%
Trait EI→Compassion→PCRS	.133	.043	.274
Ability EI→Compassion→PCRS	.155	.046	.288

Table 8.
Qualitative findings: themes, categories, and codes

Decision-making	Willingness to make changes	Willing make changes without issues Willing make small changes only Undecided about making change Not willing make changes Avoids conflict
	Change decision basis	Personal judgment Partner suggestions Compromise/agreement Outside input Time issues
	Consultations	Consults 3 rd party Consults external resource
	Stepwise conflict resolution	Stepwise conflict resolution
Acceptance of threatening information	Open	Open to other's POV Non-defensive sharing of own POV Requests partner assistance
	Defensive	Defensive attitude
Guiding principles	Situation-specific goals	Project achievement Positive feelings/concerns addressed of self Positive feelings/concerns addressed of others Positive feelings/concerns addressed of both parties involved
	General life views	General life views
Assessment of people	Intrapersonal assessment	Introspection Admission of self mistakes Self-confidence
	Interpersonal assessment	Personal effort emphasized Positive views about conflict partner Negative views about conflict partner Evaluation of partner
Interpersonal behaviours	Social behaviours	Prosocial behaviours Antisocial behaviours
	Rationale behaviour	Rationale behaviours
Emotional response	Physical proximity	Desires personal meeting
	Emotional awareness	Negative emotions Considers feelings of others
	Emotional behaviour	Emotional control Expression of emotions

Figure 1.
Full SEM model showing significant pathways

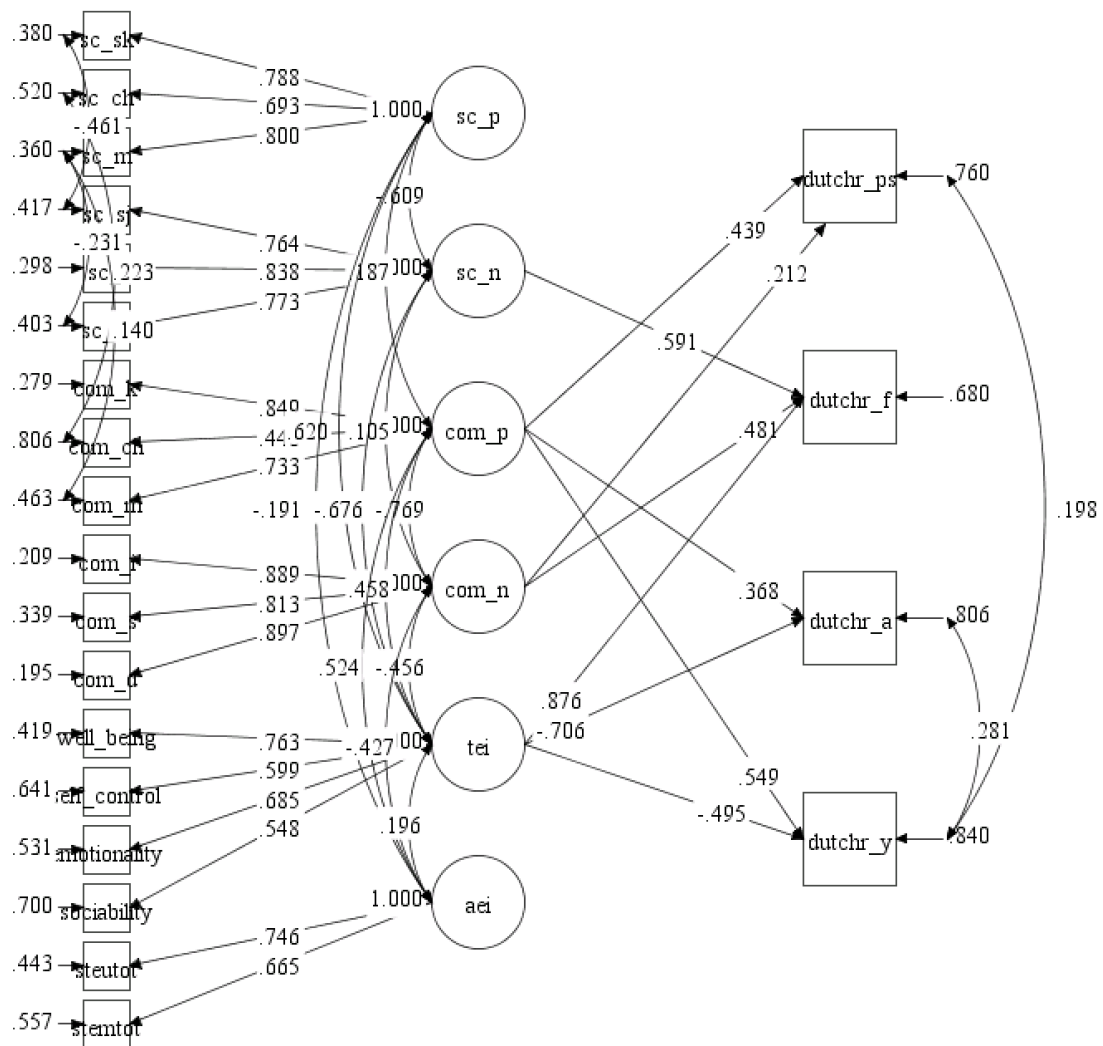


Figure 2.
SEM model for forcing showing significant pathways

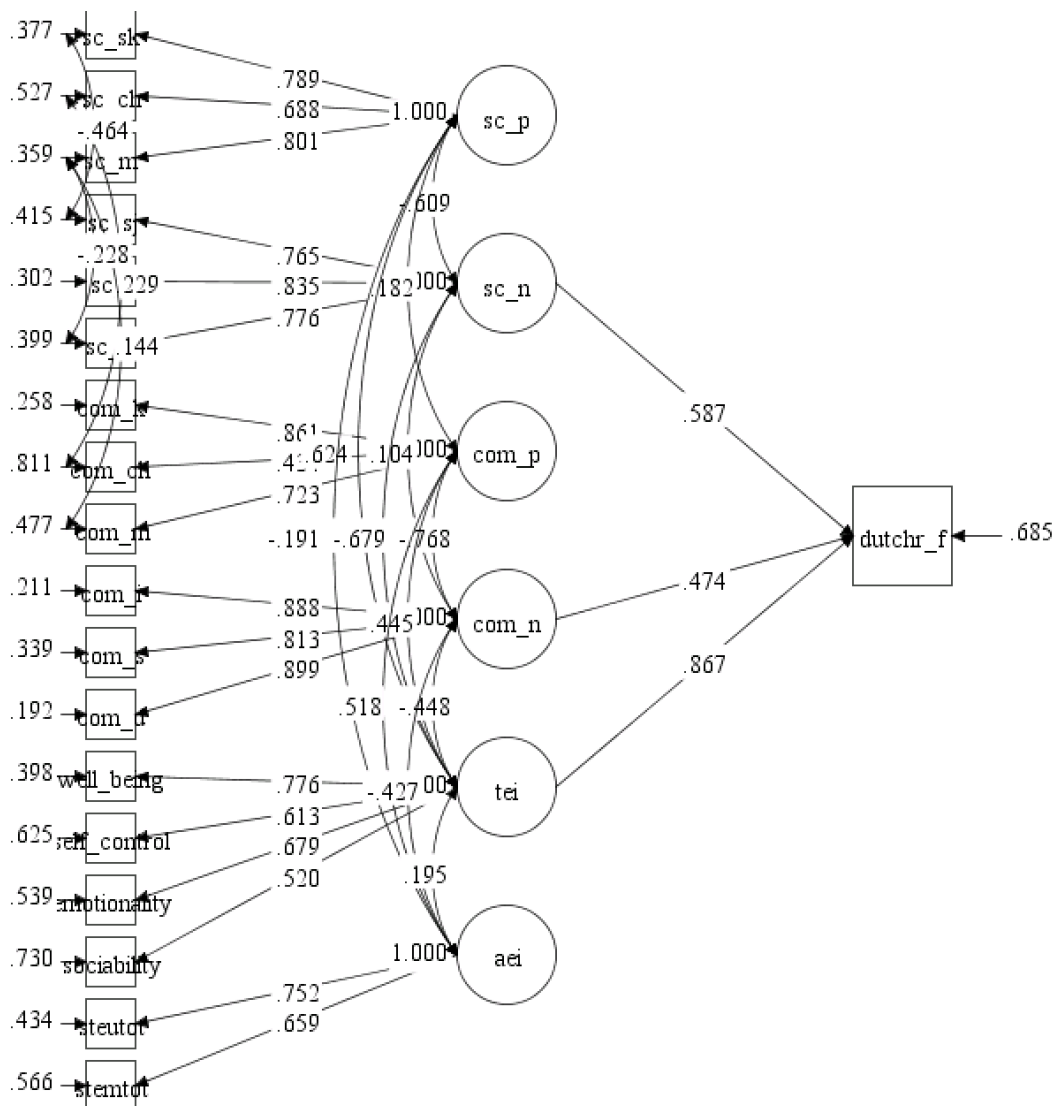


Figure 3.
SEM model for problem solving showing significant pathways

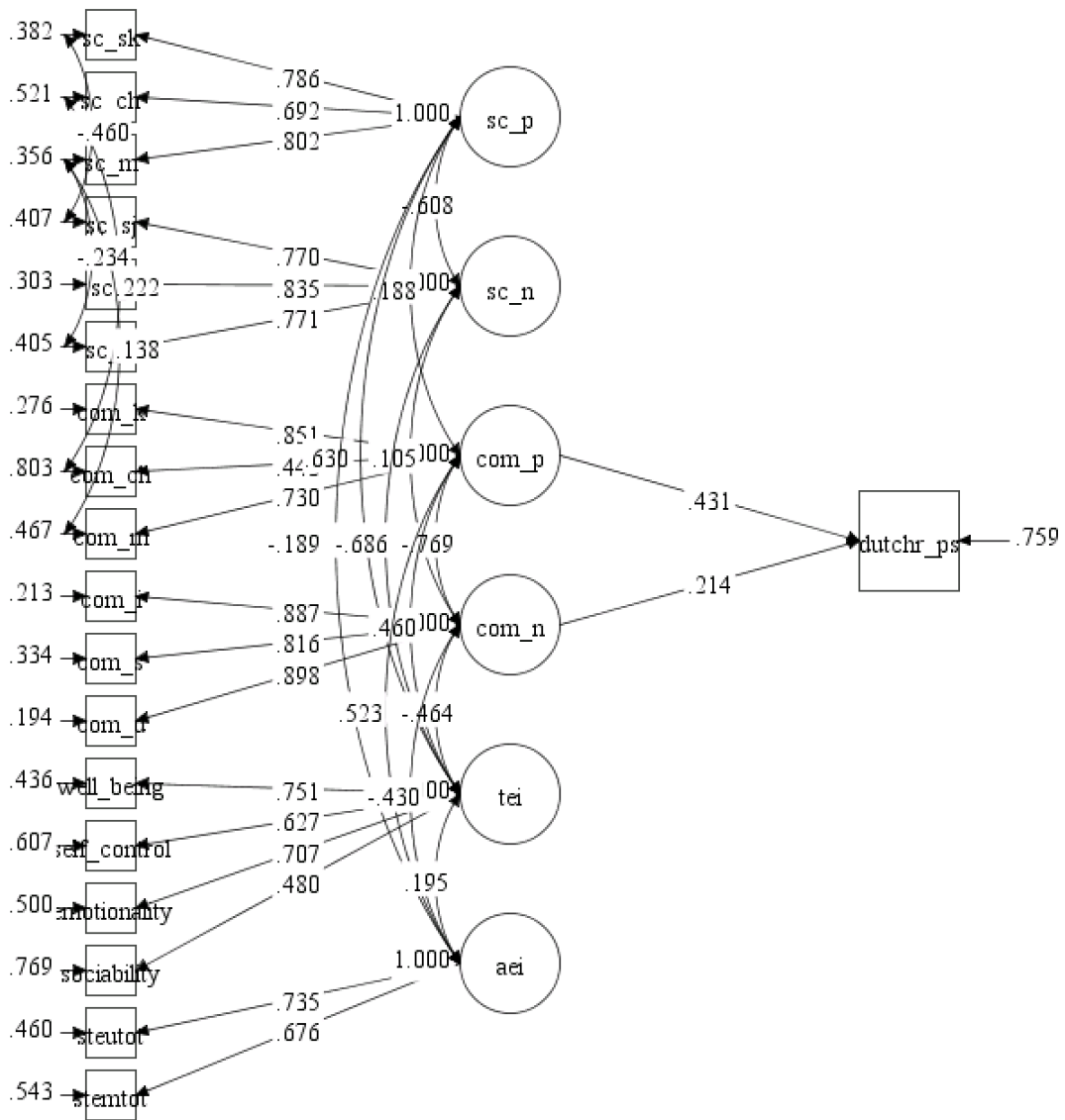


Figure 4.
SEM model for yielding showing significant pathways

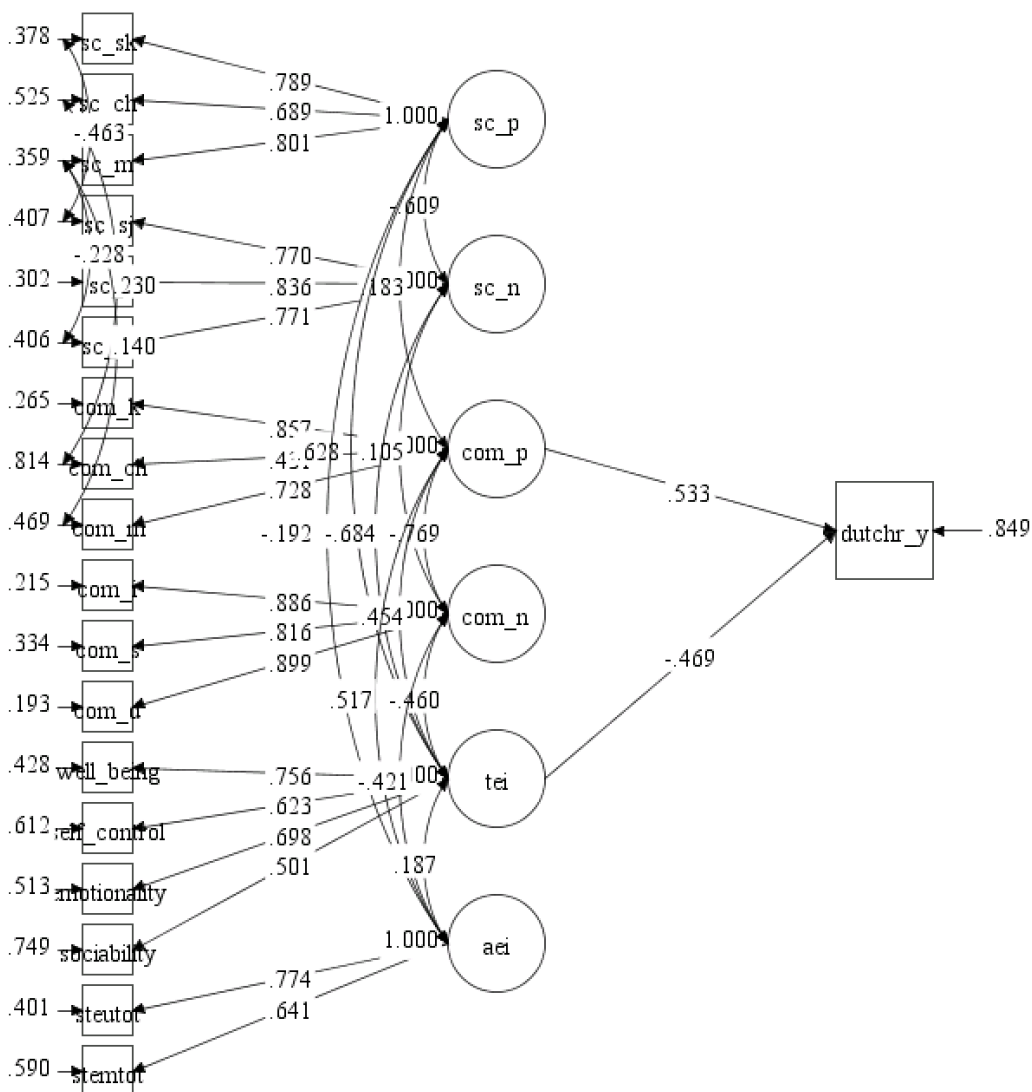


Figure 5.
SEM model for avoiding showing significant pathways

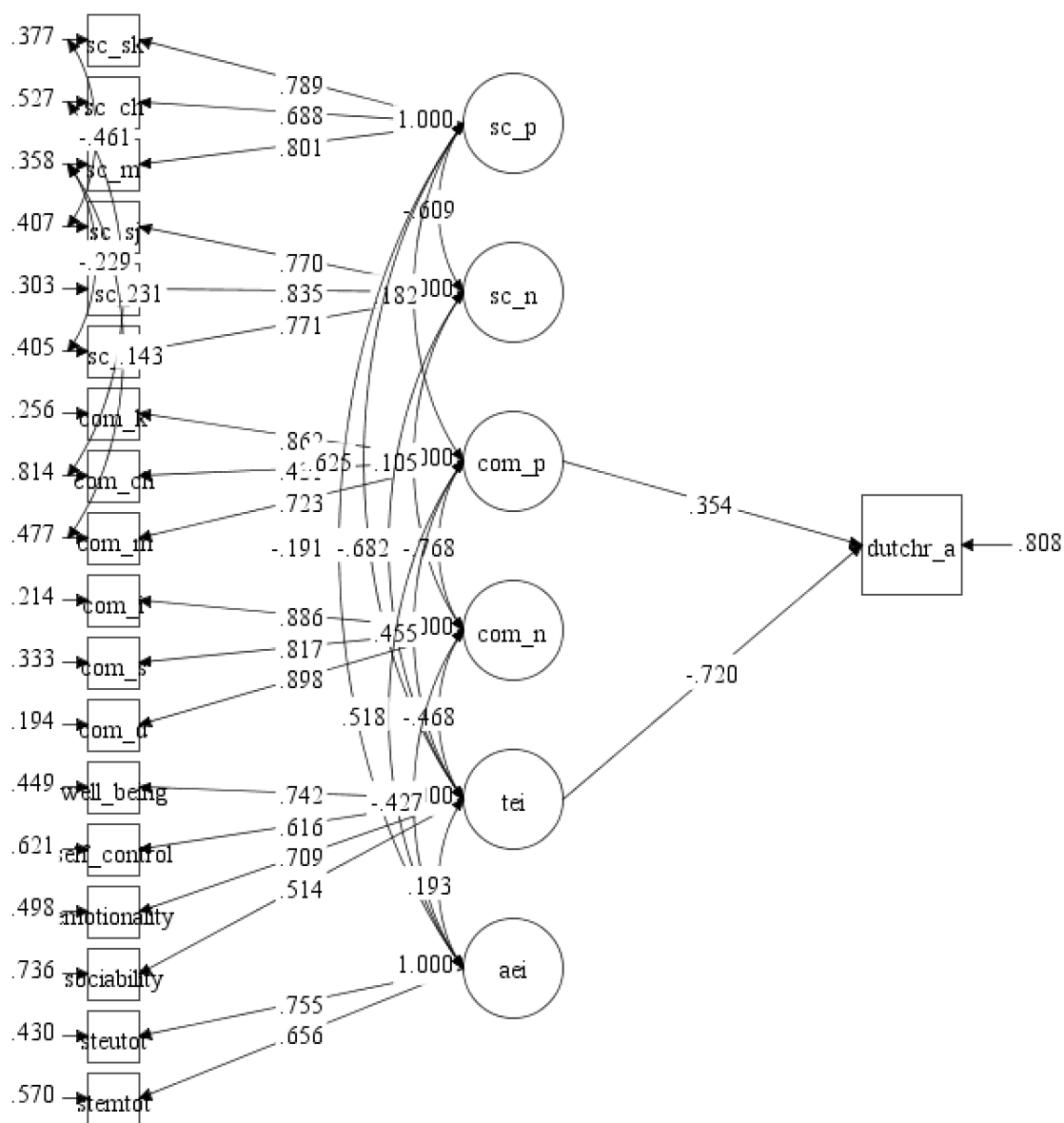
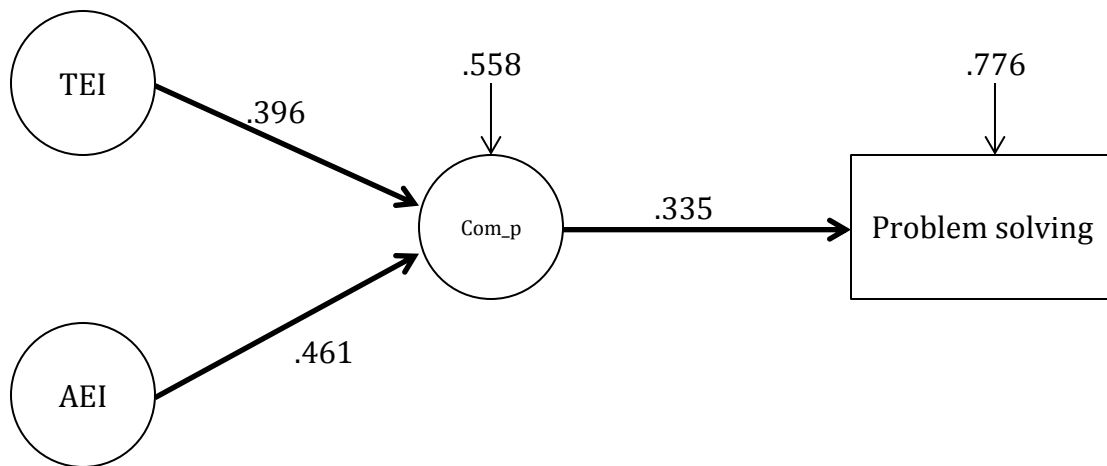


Figure 6.
Indirect pathways



Note: TEI =trait emotional intelligence, AEI =ability emotional intelligence, Com_p =compassion for others positive

APPENDIX A Ethics Approval



Research Ethics

Western University Health Science Research Ethics Board NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Donald Saklofske
Department & Institution: Social Science\Psychology, Western University

NMREB File Number: 106994
Study Title: The influence of self-compassion and emotional intelligence on conflict resolution strategies
Sponsor:

NMREB Initial Approval Date: August 25, 2015
NMREB Expiry Date: August 25, 2016

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Other	Demographic Information Questions	2015/07/21
Instruments	Conflict Scenarios Questionnaire	2015/07/21
Instruments	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form	2015/07/21
Instruments	Situational Test of Emotional Understanding	2015/07/21
Instruments	Situational Test of Emotion Management-Brief	2015/07/21
Instruments	Dutch Test of Conflict Handling	2015/07/21
Instruments	Self-compassion Scale	2015/07/21
Instruments	Compassion Scale	2015/07/21
Recruitment Items	SONA/Participant Pool Recruitment Form	2015/07/21
Other	Debriefing Form	2015/07/21
Letter of Information & Consent	Letter of Information and Consent Documentation	2015/07/21
Western University Protocol		2015/08/04

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.



Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

<input type="checkbox"/> Erika Basile ebasile@uwo.ca	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grace Kelly grace.kelly@uwo.ca	<input type="checkbox"/> Mina Mekhail mmekhail@uwo.ca	<input type="checkbox"/> Vikki Tran vikki.tran@uwo.ca
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APPENDIX B
Conflict Scenario

Imagine that the following conflict situation is actually happening to you:

You are assigned to work on a group project with a university classmate, who you barely know, as your partner. You and your partner split the work equally, and each agrees to work on their separate section. A couple of days before the project is due, you and your partner agree to look over each other's work. When you get your partner's feedback, you find that your partner has found problems with nearly everything you wrote. Your partner insists that you re-write your section, saying you left out important details. However you believe what you wrote is good, and don't agree with most of the changes your partner made.

In the space below, write approximately 3 sentences about how you would resolve the conflict between you and your university classmate. Write about how you would act and/or what you would say:

Curriculum Vitae:
ANITA FEHER

EDUCATION

2014/9-2016/8

Master of Science

Psychology (Personality and Measurement area), University of Western Ontario, London, ON

2009/9 - 2013/6

Honours Bachelor of Science

Psychology, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

2015/1 - 2015/4

Research Assistant

Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, University of Western Ontario, London, ON

2013/10 - 2014/10

Research Assistant

Injury Prevention Research Office, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, ON

2013/9 - 2014/8

Research Assistant in Laboratory of Cognitive Neuroscience and Women's Health

Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

2009/10 - 2014/6

Research Assistant

Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

2012/5 - 2014/3

Research Assistant for Tri-Hospital and Toronto Public Health Equity Data Collection Pilot Project

Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, ON

2012/3 - 2012/8

Research Assistant for Emotional Intelligence Research Group

Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2016/1 - 2016/4

Teaching Assistant

Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, University of Western Ontario, London, ON

2014/9 - 2014/12

Teaching Assistant

Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, University of Western Ontario, London, ON

PRESENTATIONS

Sinclair, V., Feher, A., & Saklofske, D. H. (2016, June). *The Influence of Self-Oriented and Other-Oriented Mindfulness on Emotional Intelligence*. Poster presented at the Canadian Psychological Association conference, Victoria, BC.

Forchuk, C., Feher, A., & Saklofske, D. H. (2016, June). *Linking Compassion And Emotional Intelligence: A Preliminary Study*. Poster presented at the Canadian Psychological Association conference, Victoria, BC.

Feher, A., Vesely, A., Saklofske, D., & Nordstokke, D. (2015, June). *Increasing Teacher Self-Compassion Through Emotional Intelligence Training: A Contributing Factor To Decreasing Stress?* Poster presented at Canadian Psychological Association's 76th Annual Convention, Ottawa, Canada.

PUBLICATIONS

Au, A., Feher, A., McPhee, L., Jessa, A., Oh, S., & Einstein, G. (2016). Estrogens, inflammation and cognition. *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology*, 40, 87-100.

Feher, A. (2015). Aggression. *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Tohver, G., & Feher, A. (2015). Health Effects of Personality. *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

FUNDING

2015/5 - 2016/4

Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Value: \$ 17,500

2012/11

Chancellor's Scholarship (Trinity College in-course scholarship)

University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

Value: \$400