

**Leader-Follower Conflict in the Workplace: Influence of Leader's Age on Conflict with
Emotion Regulation as a Mediator**

Viviane Preuss

S4013018

Department of Psychology: University of Groningen, Netherlands

PSB3E-BTHO – Bachelor Honours Thesis

Kyriaki Fousiani

June 18th, 2023

Abstract

Leader-follower conflicts in the workplace are prevalent and hold substantial consequences for organisations. Thereby, leaders play an important role as they often possess the most power in such conflicts. Unfortunately, limited knowledge exists regarding how leader characteristics, such as age, influence their approach to conflict resolution. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of age on leader's employment of the conflict management strategies of problem solving and forcing. Additionally, emotion regulation as a potential mediator was examined, since prior research suggests it varies with the leader's age and therefore might influence the chosen conflict management strategy. Consequently, it was hypothesised that older leaders, compared to younger leaders, engage more in the collaborative conflict management strategy of problem solving, due to their higher ability to regulate their own emotions. Similarly, it was expected that younger leaders, compared to older leaders, make more use of the destructive conflict management strategy of forcing, stemming from their low ability to regulate their own emotions. To test these hypotheses, a study ($N=412$) was conducted where age, emotion regulation and conflict management strategies of leaders were measured, while controlling for confounding variables related to age. Contrary to the expectations, the study's results do not reveal any significant result for the effect of age on the employment of conflict management strategies with emotion regulation as a mediator. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: leader-follower conflict, conflict management strategies, age

Leader-Follower Conflict in the Workplace: Influence of Leader's Age on Conflict with Emotion Regulation as a Mediator

Leader-follower conflicts in the workplace are unavoidable in the daily routine of organisations. According to Capobianco et al. (2001), conflicts can be characterised as “any situation in which people have incompatible interests, goals, principles, or feelings”, of which both parties involved are aware of (Boulding, 1963). These conflicting situations occur in diverse settings at the workplace, for instance when a follower has the impression that their ideas and contributions are not valued by their leader, while the leader may not see the value in the follower's suggestion (Runde & Flanagan, 2013).

Numerous studies have revealed that the management of such conflicts in the workplace play a central role in the productivity of employees, teams and even entire organisations, which makes it a crucial factor to consider (Capobianco et al., 2001; Tjosvold, 1998). Conflicts, if handled constructively, can evade the negative light they commonly stand in. Solutions including problem solving in leader-follower conflicts foster more effective teamwork, mutual understanding, and generation of better ideas (Cogburn et al., 2017). If conflicts are dealt with in a destructive way, such as making use of the conflict management strategy of forcing, they might harm the company by followers behaving in a counter-productive way towards the organisation (Cogburn et al., 2017). Additionally, it was found that forcing may lead to poorer quality of work, increased absenteeism, and turnover, as well as reduced productivity (Guttman, 2003; Li et al., 2019). Research by Dana (2005) identified that more than half of the employee retention problems are due to poorly handled conflict. Likewise, the Dutch survey on working conditions (2018) reports that the costs associated with leader-follower conflicts can be

significantly high, especially when considering the expenses related to turnover and absenteeism resulting from such conflicts.

Most important to any conflict in the workplace are the leaders, since they usually possess the most power in a conflict. Additionally, they are responsible for the tone and environment in which employees work in (Guttman, 2003). On average, leaders spend around 20 to 40 percent of their time managing conflict (Anderson, 2002; Center for Creative Leadership, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to understand which leader characteristics facilitate the effective management of conflicts, given that these conflicts have wide-ranging consequences.

Unfortunately, only little research is done on which characteristics of the leaders, especially age, influence the way in which they deal with conflict (Beitler et al., 2018; Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Davis et al., 2009). So far, age was primarily incorporated as a control variable in previous research regarding the factors influencing conflict management strategies (Dijkstra et al., 2011; Salami, 2009; Schlaerth et al., 2013). This leaves us with a striking lack of knowledge about conflict management and age and how to predict the use of conflict management strategies in leader-follower conflicts. The ongoing demographic trends indicate that there is a profound change in the workplace with an increase in age diversity (Birkinshaw, 2019). Past research conducted by Walter & Scheibe (2013) suggests that age-related effects can be significant and consequential for leaders as well. Thus, it is essential to explore how age, as a leadership trait, impacts the approach of conflict management utilised in leader-follower conflicts.

One possible assumption for the impact of age on conflict management strategies might encompass age related changes in emotional functioning associated with conflict. Previous studies have found that the individual's age has consequences for their functioning of emotions (Scheibe & Zacher, 2013). This incorporates emotion regulation, which was identified to

potentially be higher among older individuals. Older adults display higher motivation than younger adults to regulate emotions in a pro-hedonic way, which involves maximising positive and minimising negative effects (Scheibe & Zacher, 2013). Concomitantly, emotion regulation plays a relevant role in conflict management. According to Goleman (1998), individuals who score high on emotion regulation can handle conflicting situations more effectively. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the influence of leaders' age on the conflict management strategies they make use of when being in a leader-follower conflict through their ability of emotion regulation. The hypothesised model can be found in Figure 1.

Concept of Age

Over the last decades, industrialised nations have experienced an unprecedented rise in human life expectancy, as well as extended periods of employment (Burger et al., 2012). This development has significantly increased the share of older employees (Hedge et al., 2012). Additionally, pension regulations are disparately increasing across different countries, and people are choosing to work beyond the mandatory retirement age (Eurostat, 2014). Consequently, the number of older managers and supervisors is also on the rise. Nevertheless, in today's organisations, the age of leaders varies widely, which results in managers being relatively young while others are significantly older (Oshagbemi, 2004).

The present study concentrates on the chronological age of managers and how it may have an influence on conflict management strategies through its impact on emotional abilities. To investigate this issue, the focus lies on literature from developmental lifespan and organisational psychology.

Conflict Management Strategies

During conflicts, literature has identified five types of conflict management strategies that

individuals engage in, namely forcing, problem solving, accommodating, compromising and avoiding. Those are categorised into constructive and destructive conflict management strategies (Lewicki et al., 2020). Constructive strategies are characterised as being cooperative, aiming at the achievements of win-win outcomes by using honest and open information exchange (De Dreu, 2004). According to the Dual Concern Theory (De Dreu et al., 2001), this arises when individuals have a high concern for oneself and additionally a high concern for the other. If this is the case, it is more likely for the individual to engage in compromising, accommodating and problem solving (Breitler et al., 2018). While problem solving, individuals are expected to find solutions and to engage in strategies aiming to maximise the outcome of those solutions. Opposingly, when an individual has a high concern for the self, but low concern for others, the goals and interests of the other person become less important than your own goal and destructive conflict management strategies arise (De Dreu et al., 2001). They are defined as win-lose negotiation and incorporate the strategy of forcing. Hereby, the goal of the individual is to maximise their individual gain and therefore tactics such as threats, bluffs, lying and manipulation are employed (Canary, 2003). Unfortunately, the aim to push the negotiations towards an individual's preferred outcome often leads to more negative results (De Dreu et al., 2001). Lastly, avoiding is an ambivalent conflict management strategy and cannot be put in either the category of constructive or destructive strategies (Beitler et al. 2018). In this study, the concentration is on the strategies of problem solving and forcing, since they were found to be the most active and influential strategies (Birditt et al., 2005; Davis et al., 2009; Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

The Mediating Role of the Ability to Regulate Emotions

According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence refers to an individual's capacity

to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations, control impulses and delay gratification, regulate one's moods and prevent distress from overpowering thinking abilities. The key components of emotional intelligence include the ability to accurately perceive emotions, utilisation of facilitated thinking, comprehension of emotions and regulation of emotions for personal development (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). In this study the focus is on the ability to regulate one's own emotions, since it was found to be a trait that enables leaders to establish high-quality relations with followers and achieve effective outcomes (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Gardner et al., 2009). Regulating emotions can be described as a person's attempt to modify the emotion-generative process such as calming oneself down when being upset or provoked as well as managing others' emotions (Beitler et al., 2018). Thereby, several ways in which emotions can be regulated exist (Gross, 1998). The influential model of emotion identified five different strategies to regulate emotions including situation selection, such as postponing or avoiding an unpleasant situation and situation modification, for example saying something to calm down an angry client (Scheibe & Zacher, 2013). Additionally, it incorporates attentional deployment, which includes ignoring an angry commentary by a client and cognitive change which implies reframing an unpleasant situation as a learning opportunity (Scheibe & Zacher, 2013).

Considerable changes in emotional intelligence were found with increasing age (Gross, 1998; Kessler & Staudinger, 2009; Lawton et al., 1992; Orgeta, 2009). As individuals age chronologically, they also undergo emotional ageing, which can affect their behaviour as well as their psychological well-being. This portrays a complex process that involves changes in emotional intelligence that can be seen as a broader concept including emotion regulation, perception and expression (Charles, 2010; Labouvie-Vief, 2003). Additionally, as age increases,

life experience expands as well, which equips older individuals with better tools and approaches that can be used in conflict situations (Luong et al., 2011). Research by Bar-On (2000) suggests that mature adults score higher on the ability to regulate their own emotions, which might indicate that emotion regulation increases with age and can be learned through life experiences. Especially individuals around the age of 40 years and older seem to be able to regulate and monitor their emotions better (Carstensen, 1992). Hereby, individuals tend to exhibit greater emotional-social intelligence, improved emotional performance, heightened levels of distinct emotional experiences and enhanced regulations of their emotional states (Carstensen et al., 2000).

Previous research has shown that leaders with higher levels of emotional intelligence, thus holding a greater ability to regulate emotions, engage in functional confrontation with employees and groups (Jordan & Troth, 2000). More specifically, Jordan and Troth (2002) argue that the ability to regulate emotions facilitates rather functional than dysfunctional conflict resolution and therefore contributes to a better team performance. Individuals scoring high on emotional intelligence and thus on emotion regulation take their own as well as the emotions of others into account when establishing and managing relationships with others (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). This attribute might cultivate empathy, which encourages individuals to consider the interests of others when searching for solutions in a conflicting situation. With these qualities, individuals exhibiting a high ability to regulate emotions prioritise addressing the needs and interests of others when solving conflicts. This leads to an integration of compromising styles in order to achieve win-win solutions (Fehr & Singer, 2005). Therefore, skills in regulating emotional states seem to be a precondition for successful conflict management and the implementation of the strategy of problem solving (Schlaerth et al., 2013).

Concluding, emotion regulation is expected to serve as a mediator of the relationship between age and conflict management strategies. This implies that older individuals are more likely to have a higher ability to regulate their own emotions leading them to exhibit greater collaboration and problem solving approaches as their preferred conflict management strategy. Oppositely, younger individuals tend to have a lower ability to regulate their own emotions and are thus anticipated to apply forcing.

Hypothesis 1: A leader's age will be positively related to the ability to regulate one's emotion, meaning that older leaders will have a higher ability to regulate emotions compared to younger leaders, who will score lower on emotion regulation.

Hypothesis 2: The ability of emotion regulation will be positively associated with the use of the conflict management strategy of problem solving. Additionally, individuals with a low ability to regulate their emotions will engage more in the conflict management strategy of forcing.

Hypothesis 3: The ability to regulate one's emotion will mediate the relationship between the age of a leader and the type of conflict management strategy that is utilised. Specifically, older leaders will apply more problem solving, due to having a higher ability to regulate emotions. In agreement, younger leaders will engage more in the conflict management strategy of forcing, since their ability to regulate one's own emotions is lower.

Methods

Participants

In total $N=431$ participants completed the study of which 19 were excluded from the data analysis because they indicated not having managerial tasks. For the remaining 412 participants in managerial positions, the age of the participants varied between 18 and 65 years with an average of 40.31 years and a standard deviation of 0.16. The sample consisted of 209 female

participants, 201 male participants and two participants that identified as “Other”. Among all participants, 4.4% were in top management positions, 50.4% were employed in middle management, 37% worked in lower management and 8.2% were in a specialised and qualified function. Additionally, most of the participants, meaning 44.8% had a bachelor’s degree as the highest educational qualification, 20.1% possessed a master’s degree and 18.9% finished High School as their highest degree. Lastly, the sample mainly consisted of British participants, counting 299 individuals, 106 were from America, four came from Ireland and three indicated that they were from other countries.

Procedure

Participants were recruited online via Prolific. Inclusion criteria included working as a supervisor in a company and to be sufficiently fluent in English. For participation, the individuals received one Euro per wave as compensation. The study that participants took part in was designed in Qualtrics and was carried out in three waves with an approximate time gap of four weeks between each wave. Each wave of the survey began with a brief introduction to the topic, followed by a request for informed consent. The first wave encompassed the assessment of age, while the second wave was centred around emotional abilities, focusing on the regulation of emotions, which is the primary subject of research in this study. Lastly, in the third wave, the examination shifted towards the evaluation of conflict management strategies.

In the first wave, participants were asked to complete questionnaires regarding their personal characteristics as well as their interaction with other people at work and in their broader social environment. Additionally, they had to fill out a questionnaire about their demographics. This first segment of the survey took approximately 15 minutes. In the second wave, emotion regulation was measured through the completion of the STEM test questionnaire, also lasting

around 15 minutes. In the final wave, which took about 10 minutes for the participants to complete, conflict management strategies that leaders use in conflicts with their employees were measured. More specifically, the crucial incident technique was implemented. According to this, the participating supervisors were instructed to recall a conflict between themselves and an employee under their supervision that occurred within the last six months. In the next step, they were supposed to reflect on the very conflict they had with their employee and indicate their behavioural responses. At the end of the study participants were debriefed, and an additional open-ended question was implemented to counteract any discomfort resulting from the survey. Here, participants were supposed to write down in two to three sentences what they find the most enjoyable aspect when interacting with their employees.

Design

For the study, a time lagged field study was implemented. Thereby, age, emotion regulation as well as the preferred conflict management strategy were assessed. To measure the age of the participants, the individuals had to indicate their chronological age at the beginning of the survey. To estimate emotion regulation, participants completed the STEM-B test in the second wave of the survey. Lastly, the conflict management strategies the participants tend to use were measured in the last wave by the implementation of the DUTCH test.

Measures

Emotion regulation

To determine the participants ability to regulate emotions, which is a key component of emotional intelligence, a STEM test (MacCann & Roberts, 2008), Situational Test of Emotion Management, was implemented. The STEM test was developed based on qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews and is scored by expert judgement (MacCann & Roberts 2008). In each item, the test-taker is presented with a few brief details about an emotional

situation (MacCann & Roberts, 2008). In the next step, the participants were supposed to try and imagine each situation and think about how the person must have felt and how strong their emotions in those situations were. The long form consisted of 44 items, but in this study the STEM-B, a shorter form including 18 items, was employed. The scoring of the multiple-choice STEM-B was accomplished by using an SPSS syntax. This syntax assumes that the variable names for the items are STEM01, STEM02, STEM03, STEM04 etc. up to STEM18, with response codes assigned as A=1, B=2, C=3 and D=4 (Allen et al., 2014). In Appendix A, the test items used in this study as well as the syntax details can be found. For the STEM-B test, a cronbach's alpha of .64 was measured.

Conflict Management Strategies

To examine the conflict management strategies of problem solving and forcing the participants engaged in, the DUTCH, Dutch Test for Conflict Handling was administered. The DUTCH test is based on the theory-based measures of conflict management strategies in the workplace developed by De Dreu et al. (2001). It was utilised to measure which type of conflict management strategies managers and supervisors tend to use in conflicts with subordinate employees. The test measuring the strategies of problem solving and forcing incorporates a scale of eight questions. For the conflict management strategy of forcing, question one to four in the DUTCH test found in Appendix A¹ are relevant. Those include statements such as “I push my own point of view” or “ I try to maximise my own gains”. Question five to eight of the DUTCH test in Appendix A, containing the statements “I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and my employees.” and “I work out a solution that serves my own as well as my employees’ interests as good as possible.”, aim to examine the conflict management strategy of

¹*For the analysis, only three questions were used and the question “I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and my employees.” was left out.

problem solving (De Dreu et al., 2001). Participants were requested to assess the questions on a 7-point Likert scale, where number one indicates that this certain behaviour was not applied at all. Opposingly, number seven implies a very high use of this type of behaviour. For the problem solving questionnaire a Cronbach's alpha of .75 was examined and for the scale incorporated for forcing a value of .79 was obtained.

Controlling for Gender

In the present study, gender was considered as a controlled variable, due to gender differences in emotion regulation and preferred conflict management strategies. The way men and women experience and regulate their emotion is shaped by both biological and socialisation processes (Tamres et al., 2002). While several research has shown that there are minor gender differences in emotion regulation, some variations have been observed. Compared to men, women were identified as having a higher tendency to employ emotion regulation strategies, indicating the necessity to control for gender in this study (Garnefski et al., 2004; Stanton et al., 2000). Additionally, a study by Rahim & Katz (2019) found that female individuals are more likely than males to apply noncompeting strategies such as avoiding and compromising. Opposingly, male individuals are more prone to use competing and dominating strategies such as forcing, suggesting the need to account for gender as a controlled variable in the present study. The measurement of gender was assessed right at the beginning of the survey in the first wave. Thereby, it was part of the first demographic measurement and was split into three categories, namely male, female and other.

Results

Prior to testing the hypotheses, an analysis of the correlations between the various variables was conducted and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.*Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between the Variables of the Study*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	1	.1	-.03	.02	.07
2. Emotion regulation	.1	1	.01	-.03	.11*
3. Problem Solving	-.03	.01	1	.03	.12*
4. Forcing	.02	-.03	.03	1	-.08
5. Gender	.07	.11*	.12*	-.08	1

Note. * $p < .05$

For the analysis of the three hypotheses, a simple mediation analysis including Process Hayes Model 4 (Process analysis, Hayes, 2013) was used. Thereby, the conflict management strategies of forcing and problem solving were set as dependent variables and age functioned as an independent variable. Additionally, emotion regulation was implemented as a mediator between the dependent and independent variables. Lastly, gender was included as a covariate in order to control for its influence.

Problem Solving

The model with problem solving functioning as a dependent variable was examined to be non-significant with $p = .059$ and $R^2 = .02$. The analysis showed that the effect of age on emotion regulation was non-significant, which can be seen in Table 2, found in Appendix B. Likewise, the results in table 2 revealed that there is no significant effect of emotion regulation on problem solving. Furthermore, the direct effect of age on the conflict management strategy of problem solving did not expose any statistically significant result, which is made visible in Table 2. Similarly, no significant indirect effect of age on problem solving with emotion regulation as an

intervening variable was found, which can also be viewed in Table 2. Summarising, there was no total effect of age on problem solving with emotion regulation functioning as a mediator found.

Forcing

Thereafter, the same analysis with forcing as the dependent variable was administered. The model with the conflict management strategy of forcing was examined to be non significant with $p = .059$ and $R^2 = .02$. Furthermore, the analysis showed that there is no significant effect of emotion regulation on forcing, which can be seen in Table 3, placed in Appendix B. Likewise, the direct effect of age on forcing was examined, but no significant result was found, which is also visible in Table 3. Additionally, no significant indirect effect, which is also observable in Table 3, was examined. Lastly, the results in Table 3 did not yield any significant total effect of age on the conflict management strategy of forcing, with emotion regulation being present as a mediator.

Discussion

In the current study, the effect of leaders' age and the conflict management strategies of forcing and problem solving were analysed. Thereby, the extent to which leaders are able to regulate their own emotions functioned as a mediator. First, it was hypothesised that leaders of high age would have a greater ability to regulate their own emotions compared to younger leaders, who will oppositely score lower on emotion regulation. Additionally, it was expected that the ability of emotion regulation is positively associated with the use of problem solving. In accordance, leaders with a low ability to regulate their emotions engage more in forcing. Lastly, it was hypothesised that the ability to regulate one's emotion mediates the relationship between the age of a leader and the type of conflict management strategy that is utilised. Especially older leaders were hypothesised to apply more problem solving, due to having a higher ability to

regulate emotions. In agreement, younger leaders engage more in the conflict management strategy of forcing, since they have a lower ability to regulate their own emotions.

None of the aforementioned hypothesised effects were found to be significant. Regarding the first hypothesis, contradicting the expectations, no significant effect of age on emotion regulation was examined, intending that there is no difference between the ability to regulate emotions between older and younger leaders. Furthermore, the data suggest that there is no effect of age on the conflict management of problem solving. Thus, the results of the present study imply that leaders that score high on the ability to regulate their own emotions don't necessarily make more use of the conflict management strategy of problem solving, when being in a conflict with a subordinate employee. Concerning the third hypothesis, the results revealed that emotion regulation does not function as a mediator between the age of a leader and the applied conflict management strategy of problem solving. There might be no distinction between older and younger leaders regarding their use of problem solving strategies during conflicts, irrespective of their ability to regulate their own emotions. Next, analysing the results for forcing, it was found that emotion regulation does not have an effect on this conflict management strategy. This indicates that leaders who score high on emotion regulation, compared to leaders with a lower ability to regulate their emotions, may apply a higher or lower amount of forcing. Lastly, the results indicated that emotion regulation does not function as a mediator between the age of a leader and the conflict management strategy of forcing. This demonstrates that contradicting the third hypothesis, leaders of young age do not tend to engage more in forcing, since their ability to regulate one's emotions is not lower.

Those findings are not in line with the expectations of the study. Neither the effect of age on the conflict management strategy of forcing nor on problem solving with emotion regulation

as a mediator were found to be significant in this study. Possible reasons are several limitations of the study that had an impact on the non significant results. Those will be elaborated on in the following section.

Limitations and Further Directions

One of the most predominant limitations of the conducted research was the requirement for leaders to come up with a previous conflict of the last six months between them and a subordinate employee (i.e., critical incident event). Thereby, the absence of face-to-face interactions between participants and their opponents in this setup presented a constraint. This limitation might have influenced the results by creating a sense of reduced engagement with the questionnaire and increased psychological distance from the task. Additionally, the accuracy of participants' recollection of past conflicts, their emotions during those conflicts and actions undertaken to resolve them remain uncertain. Hence, it is not clear to what extent the setting of the present study has influenced the participants and therefore the reliability of the study, necessitating further research. Prospective studies should be careful about the idea that recalling past conflicts differs from real life interactions and that participants are oftentimes not able to remember conflicts from the past correctly. Thus, conducting a study about the effect in a more realistic setting with a real conflict might reveal different effects of age on conflict management strategies. A previous study by Fousiani et al. (2022) made use of a negotiation game which allowed participants to engage in real-time interactions. Hereby, participants had to negotiate in dyads about a specific topic, with their power being manipulated beforehand. For forthcoming research, I would suggest that a similar methodology should be applied to avoid disengagement and falsity of information.

Moreover, a further limitation of this study is its narrow focus on one single leader

characteristic, namely age. It is important to acknowledge that exploring the influence on the conflict management strategy requires considering a broader range of leader characteristics. Therefore, future research should aim to incorporate additional leader traits to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that are shaping conflict management strategies. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) refers to this issue as intersectionality, meaning that multiple marginal and socially constructed identities converge within a single social group, namely the intersection. She emphasises the interconnectedness of social categories and systems of power and how they mutually influence one another (Crenshaw, 1989). By recognizing the complexity and interconnectedness of various social identities, intersectionality aims to provide a framework for addressing and understanding the intersecting systems of society. For the present study this implies that it is not just age that influences the choice of conflict management strategy, but various other factors need to be taken into account, such as gender (Rahim & Katz, 2019), work experience (Drory & Ritov, 1997) and job behaviour (Shih & Susanto, 2010). For future studies, it would be interesting to combine those variables into a more complex and including framework to research leader characteristics influence on the chosen conflict management strategy.

Additionally, a further limitation of the study is that the age of the participants was not distributed equally among the whole sample, meaning that most of the participants were between 27 and 49 years old. Only 19% of the participants were 50 years or older and only 11.5% were younger than 27 years. This might have had an influence on the study outcome, since the study does not contain much information about younger leaders between 18 and 27 as well as leaders of more than 49 years. For future research it would be important to have a sample that is distributed more equally in terms of age.

Another limitation consists of the study including only participants from a westernised

culture. Mainly individuals from Great Britain as well as America took part in the study, which might hamper its generalizability. One may argue that the effect of age on the strategy leaders use in conflicting situations with their employees could be influenced by cultural differences. Major theories about cross-cultural differences in conflicts have been credited to Hall and Hofstede. In Hall's four-factor model, he includes several dimensions such as low vs. high speed of messages, high vs. low context, spatial distance and polychromatic vs. monochromatic approach to time (Tu, 2012). Focusing on low vs. high context cultures, low context cultures are viewed as individualistic and tend to use clear and specific verbal communication that relies on the message. In contrast, high-context cultures seem to be collectivistic and strive for more group harmony, cooperation, feelings, relations, and intuitions (Tu, 2012). Comparing Great Britain and America to, for example Asia, Asian cultures tend to be more collectivistic and Great Britain can be described as a more individualistic society. Therefore, there might be a difference in conflict management styles and outcomes between individuals of both cultures (Tu, 2012). Further research is needed to examine the effects for the different societal constructs and the difference between collectivistic and individualistic cultures regarding the effect of age on negotiation with emotion regulation as a mediator.

Next, the research at hand only focused on the conflict management strategies of forcing and problem solving. For the future it would be interesting to examine whether age has an effect on the three other conflict management strategies examined by the Dual Concern Theory (De Dreu et al., 2001), namely collaborating, avoiding and accommodating, with emotion regulation as a mediator. Previous literature has shown that emotion regulation might lead to the use of more collaborative strategies, and thus might as well have an impact on the conflict management strategies of collaborating and accommodating (Davis et al., 2009).

Lastly, another further direction would be to broaden the field of mediators from only concentrating on emotion regulation to the whole spectrum of emotional intelligence, including emotional understanding. The present study mainly centralised around emotion regulation as a mediator, since literature has suggested it to have a recognizable effect on the way leaders engage with their employees (Jordan & Troth, 2000). Since nothing significant was found for the mediator of emotion regulation, it would be interesting to interrogate whether other aspects of emotional intelligence, such as emotion understanding have a mediating effect on the relationship between age and conflict management strategies. Several research suggests that with increased age, emotion understanding increases, similar to emotion regulation (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Therefore, it would be intriguing for further research to investigate whether there is a mediation of emotion understanding between the effect of age on conflict management strategies.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The conducted study contains some theoretical implications which are discussed hereafter. First of all, so far only little research exists on how age influences the conflict management strategies leaders engage in when being in conflict with their followers. Thereby, the variable age was only incorporated as a control variable until now (Beitler et al., 2018; Davis et al., 2009). Hence, the present study is one of the first ones to incorporate age as an independent variable while investigating conflict management strategies. Next, this study was one of the first ones that researched the mediating role of emotion regulation between age and the conflict management strategies of forcing and problem solving. Previously, research on how age influences emotion regulation (Gross, 1998; Kessler & Staudinger, 2009; Lawton et al., 1992; Orgeta, 2009) as well as impacts of emotion regulation on conflict management strategies

have been published (Beitler et al., 2018; Goleman, 1998). Additionally, it was researched how emotional competence influences conflict management styles regarding leaders age (Beitler et al., 2018), but the specific mediating effect of emotion regulation has not been analysed yet. Thus, it is of great contribution to the academic literature that the mediating role of emotion regulation on the effect of age and conflict management strategy has been examined in the present study.

Moreover, the research design included a time-lagged design, which was particularly beneficial for a mediation analysis. It reduces common method biases, allows to capture dynamic processes and therefore contributes positively to the validity, reliability and interpretability of the findings. It allows us to enhance our understanding of the underlying mechanisms in the mediation model concerning the effect of age on conflict management strategies.

As far as the practical implications are concerned, the current findings of this study may be of great importance to large organisations. Leader-follower conflicts are very common in the interaction between employees and managers and take place on a daily basis. The research gives an important insight into leader-follower conflicts, since the findings suggest that there is no difference between older and younger leaders regarding their behaviour in conflicts with their followers. Understanding that age does not impact the choice of conflict management strategy of leaders can inform decisions related to leadership development, conflict resolution training as well as employee relations. Since leaders and managers play a crucial role in resolving conflicts within their teams, the findings of the study suggest that leaders of different age groups are equally capable of applying effective conflict resolution techniques. Thus, this knowledge can enhance leadership programs and can be seen as a basis for more inclusive and diverse leadership styles. Furthermore, the findings may have an impact on the practices of human

resource professionals. They are responsible for managing employee relations as well as a harmonious work environment (Muchhal, 2014). By recognizing that age does not affect conflict management strategies, HR professionals are able to design policies and interventions that focus on developing conflict resolution skills, not depending on the age of the leader. Additionally, they can assure that the organisation's conflict management practices are fair and unbiased. Lastly, the results can be used in fields of politics and international relations, since various different negotiations between leaders and followers take place that lead to significant decisions in this specific field.

Conclusion

All in all, the results of this study did not reveal any evidence of age affecting the conflict management strategy of forcing or problem solving that leaders engage in when being in a conflict with an employee. Additionally, it was found that emotion regulation does not function as a mediator between those two variables.

References

- Allen, V. D., Rahman, N., Weissman, A., MacCann, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2014, submitted). Development and Validation of the Situational Test of Emotional Management – Brief (STEM-B) Using Item Response Theory and Latent Class Analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*.
- Anderson, N. (2002). *Handbook of Industrial, work and organizational psychology*.
- Bar-On R. (2000) *rand Social Intelligence: Insights From the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I)*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA
- Beitler, L. A., Scherer, S., & Zapf, D. (2018). Interpersonal conflict at work: Age and emotional competence differences in conflict management. *Organizational Psychology Review, 8*(4), 195–227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386618808346>
- Birditt, K. S., Fingerman, K. L., & Almeida, D. M. (2005). Age differences in exposure and reactions to interpersonal tensions: A daily diary study. *Psychology and Aging, 20*(2), 330–340
- Boulding, K. E. (1963). *Conflict and defense: A general theory*. Harper Torchbooks.
- Burger, O., Baudisch, A., & Vaupel, J. W. (2012). Human mortality improvement in evolutionary context. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 109*, 18210–18214. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1215627109>.
- Canary, D. J. (2003), “Managing interpersonal conflict: A model of events related to strategic choices”. In J. O. Greene and B. R. Burleson (Eds.) *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 515-550.
- Capobianco, S., Davis, M. and Krau, L. “Conflict Dynamics Profile - CDP 360 Slide Show.”

2001. www.conflictdynamics.org/cdp/download.php.
- Carstensen, L. L. (1992). Social and emotional patterns in adulthood: Support for socioemotional selectivity theory. *Psychology and Aging, 7*, 331–338.
- Carstensen, L., Pasupathi, M., Mayr, U., & Nesselroade, J. (2000). Emotional experience in everyday life across the adult life span. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*(4), 644–655.
- Center for Creative Leadership. “Leading Effectively e-Newsletter, Conflict Poll Results.” 2003. www.ccl.org/leadership/newsletter/2003/FEBjanpollresults.aspx?pagelid=436.
- Charles, S. T. (2010). Strength and vulnerability integration: A model of emotional well-being across adulthood. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*, 1068–1091. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0021232>.
- Cogburn, J. D., Battaglio, R. P., & Bradbury, M. D. (2017). Employee job satisfaction and organizational performance: The Role of Conflict Management. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior, 17*(4), 498–530. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijotb-17-04-2014-b005>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum, 140*, 139-167
- Dana, D. *Managing Differences*. Prairie Mission, Kans.: Dana Mediation Institute, 2005. Looks at how managers can use simplified mediation techniques to resolve disputes
- Davis, M. H., Kraus, L. A., & Capobianco, S. (2009). Age differences in responses to conflict in the Workplace. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 68*(4), 339–355. <https://doi.org/10.2190/ag.68.4.d>

- De Dreu, C. K. W., Evers, A., Beersma, B., Kluwer, E. S., & Nauta, A. (2001). A theory-based measure of conflict management strategies in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22(6), 645-668. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.107>
- De Dreu, C. K.W. (2004). "Motivation in negotiation: A social psychological analysis." in M. J. Gelfand & J. M. Brett (Eds.) *The handbook of negotiation and culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 114-13
- Dijkstra, M. T., Beersma, B., & Evers, A. (2011). Reducing conflict-related employee strain: The benefits of an internal locus of control and a problem-solving conflict management strategy. *Work & Stress*, 25(2), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2011.593344>
- Drory, A., & Ritov, I. (1997). Effects of work experience and opponent's power on Conflict Management Styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 8(2), 148–161. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb022794>
- Eurostat (2014). Labour force survey statistics – Transition from work to retirement. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=1/4Archive:Labour_force_survey_statistics_-_transition_from_work_to_retirement
- Fehr, E., & Singer, T. (2005). The neuroeconomics of mind reading and empathy. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.747904>
- Fisk, G. M., & Friesen, J. P. (2012). Perceptions of leader emotion regulation and LMX as predictors of followers' job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23, 1–12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.11.001>
- Fousiani, K., de Jonge, K., & Michelakis, G. (2022). Having no Negotiation Power does not Matter as Long as you Can Think Creatively: The Moderating Role of Age.

- International Journal of Conflict Management*, 33(5), 956-990. [33].
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-05-2022-0086>
- Gardner, W. L., Fischer, D., & Hunt, J. G. (2009). Emotional labor and leadership: A threat to authenticity? *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20, 466–482. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.03.011>.
- Garnefski, N., Teerds, J., Kraaij, V., Legerstee, J., & Van den Kommer, T. (2004). Cognitive emotion regulation strategies and depressive symptoms: Differences between males and females. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36, 267-276.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantam.
- Gross, M. A., & Guerrero, L. K. (2000). Managing conflict appropriately and effectively: An application of the competence model to Rahim's organizational conflict styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(3), 200–226
- Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of Emotion Regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 271–299. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271>
- Goleman D. (1998) *Working With Emotional Intelligence*. Bantam Books, New York, NY.
- Guttman, H. M. (2003). The leader's role in managing conflict. *Leader to Leader*, 2004(31), 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ltl.63>
- Hayes, Andrew F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 51(3), 335–337.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jedm.12050>
- Hedge, J. W., & Borman, W. C. (Eds.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of work and aging*.

New York: Oxford.

Kessler E. M. & Staudinger U. M. (2009). Affective experience in adulthood and old age:

The role of affective arousal and perceived affect regulation . *Psychology and Aging* , 24 ,
349 – 362 . doi: 10.1037/A0015352

Lawton M. P. Kleban M. H. Rajagopal D. , & Dean J . (1992). Dimensions of affective
experience in three age groups . *Psychology and Aging* , 7 , 171 – 184 . doi:

10.1037/0882-7974.7.2.171

Jordan, P. J., & Troth, A. C. (2002). Emotional intelligence and conflict resolution:

Implications for human resource development. *Advances in Developing Human
Resources*, 4, 62–79

Julian Birkinshaw, J. M. (2019, May 28). *Older and wiser? how management style varies with
age*. MIT Sloan Management Review.

[https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/older-and-wiser-how-management-style-varies-with-ag
e/](https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/older-and-wiser-how-management-style-varies-with-age/)

Lewicki, R. J., Barry, B. & Saunders, D. M. (2020), *Negotiation*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Li, N., Zhang, L., Xiao, G., Chen, J., & Lu, Q. (2019). The relationship between workplace
violence, job satisfaction and turnover intention in emergency nurses. *International*

Emergency Nursing, 45, 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ienj.2019.02.001>

Luong, G., Charles, S. T., & Fingerman, K. L. (2011). Better with age: Social relationships
across adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 28, 9–23.

MacCann, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2008). New Paradigms for Assessing Emotional
Intelligence: Theory and Data. *Emotion*, 8, 540-551.

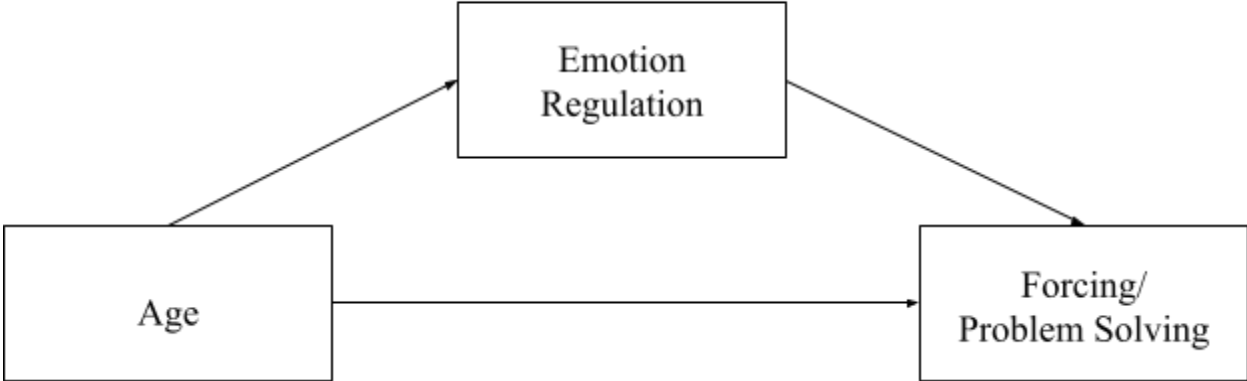
Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1993). The intelligence of emotional intelligence. *Intelligence*,

- 17(4), 433–442. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-2896\(93\)90010-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-2896(93)90010-3)
- Mayer, J., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey, & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Implications for educators* (pp. 3–31). New York, NY
- Muchhal, D. S. (2014). HR practices and job performance. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(4), 55–61. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-19415561>
- Orgeta V. (2009). Specificity of age differences in emotion regulation. *Aging and Mental Health*, 13, 818 – 826. doi: 10.1080/0361073X.2011.590759
- Oshagbemi, T. (2004). Age influences on the leadership styles and behaviour of managers. *Employee Relations*, 26(1), 14–29. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01425450410506878>
- Rahim, M. A., & Katz, J. P. (2019). Forty Years of conflict: The effects of gender and generation on conflict-management strategies. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 31(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijcma-03-2019-0045>
- Runde, C. E., & Flanagan, T. A. (2013). *Becoming a conflict competent leader: How you and your organization can manage conflict effectively*. Jossey-Bass.
- Salami, S. O. (2009). Conflict resolution strategies and organisational citizenship behaviour: The moderating role of Trait Emotional Intelligence. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v5i2.266>
- Scheibe, S., & Zacher, H. (2013). A lifespan perspective on emotion regulation, stress, and well-being in the workplace. *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-Being*, 163–193. [https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-3555\(2013\)0000011010](https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-3555(2013)0000011010)
- Schlaerth, A., Ensari, N., & Christian, J. (2013). A meta-analytical review of the relationship

- between emotional intelligence and leaders' constructive conflict management. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 16(1), 126–136.
- Shih, H., & Susanto, E. (2010). Conflict management styles, emotional intelligence, and job performance in public organizations. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 21(2), 147–168. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10444061011037387>
- Stanton, A. L., Kirk, S. B., Cameron, C. L., & Danoff-Burg, S. (2000). Coping through emotional approach: Scale construction and validation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 1150-1169.
- Tamres, L. K., Janicki, D., & Helgeson, V. S. (2002). Sex differences in coping behavior: A meta-analytic review and an examination of relative coping. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 6, 2-30.
- Tjosvold D. 1998. Cooperative and competitive goal approach to conflict: accomplishments and challenges. *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 47: 285±342.
- Tu, Y.-T. (2014). Cross-cultural equivalence and latent mean differences of the negotiation style profile (NSP-12) in Taiwan and US managers. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 43, 156–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.08.001>
- Walter, F., & Scheibe, S. (2013). A literature review and emotion-based model of age and leadership: New directions for the trait approach. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(6), 882–901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.10.003>

Figure 1

Hypothesised Research Model.



Appendix A***Scoring the multiple-choice STEM in SPSS***

IF STEM01 = 1 STEM_R01 = 0 .
IF STEM01 = 2 STEM_R01 = 0 .
IF STEM01 = 3 STEM_R01 = 0.916666667 .
IF STEM01 = 4 STEM_R01 = 0.083333333 .

IF STEM02 = 1 STEM_R02 = 0.75 .
IF STEM02 = 2 STEM_R02 = 0.25 .
IF STEM02 = 3 STEM_R02 = 0 .
IF STEM02 = 4 STEM_R02 = 0 .

IF STEM03 = 1 STEM_R03 = 0 .
IF STEM03 = 2 STEM_R03 = 0.166666667 .
IF STEM03 = 3 STEM_R03 = 0.833333333 .
IF STEM03 = 4 STEM_R03 = 0 .

IF STEM04 = 1 STEM_R04 = 0 .
IF STEM04 = 2 STEM_R04 = 1 .
IF STEM04 = 3 STEM_R04 = 0 .
IF STEM04 = 4 STEM_R04 = 0 .

IF STEM05 = 1 STEM_R05 = 0 .
IF STEM05 = 2 STEM_R05 = 0.166666667 .
IF STEM05 = 3 STEM_R05 = 0.75 .
IF STEM05 = 4 STEM_R05 = 0.083333333 .

IF STEM06 = 1 STEM_R06 = 0 .
IF STEM06 = 2 STEM_R06 = 0.833333333 .
IF STEM06 = 3 STEM_R06 = 0.166666667 .
IF STEM06 = 4 STEM_R06 = 0 .

IF STEM07 = 1 STEM_R07 = 0.083333333 .
IF STEM07 = 2 STEM_R07 = 0.916666667 .
IF STEM07 = 3 STEM_R07 = 0 .
IF STEM07 = 4 STEM_R07 = 0 .

IF STEM08 = 1 STEM_R08 = 0 .
IF STEM08 = 2 STEM_R08 = 0.25 .
IF STEM08 = 3 STEM_R08 = 0.75 .
IF STEM08 = 4 STEM_R08 = 0 .

IF STEM09 = 1 STEM_R09 = 0.75 .
IF STEM09 = 2 STEM_R09 = 0 .
IF STEM09 = 3 STEM_R09 = 0.166666667 .

IF STEM09 = 4 STEM_R09 = 0.083333333 .

IF STEM10 = 1 STEM_R10 = 0.75 .

IF STEM10 = 2 STEM_R10 = 0 .

IF STEM10 = 3 STEM_R10 = 0.25 .

IF STEM10 = 4 STEM_R10 = 0 .

IF STEM11 = 1 STEM_R11 = 0.916666667 .

IF STEM11 = 2 STEM_R11 = 0 .

IF STEM11 = 3 STEM_R11 = 0 .

IF STEM11 = 4 STEM_R11 = 0.083333333 .

IF STEM12 = 1 STEM_R12 = 0 .

IF STEM12 = 2 STEM_R12 = 0 .

IF STEM12 = 3 STEM_R12 = 0.083333333 .

IF STEM12 = 4 STEM_R12 = 0.916666667 .

IF STEM13 = 1 STEM_R13 = 0.166666667 .

IF STEM13 = 2 STEM_R13 = 0 .

IF STEM13 = 3 STEM_R13 = 0 .

IF STEM13 = 4 STEM_R13 = 0.833333333 .

IF STEM14 = 1 STEM_R14 = 0 .

IF STEM14 = 2 STEM_R14 = 0.083333333 .

IF STEM14 = 3 STEM_R14 = 0 .

IF STEM14 = 4 STEM_R14 = 0.916666667 .

IF STEM15 = 1 STEM_R15 = 0.166666667 .

IF STEM15 = 2 STEM_R15 = 0 .

IF STEM15 = 3 STEM_R15 = 0.833333333 .

IF STEM15 = 4 STEM_R15 = 0 .

IF STEM16 = 1 STEM_R16 = 0 .

IF STEM16 = 2 STEM_R16 = 0 .

IF STEM16 = 3 STEM_R16 = 0.25 .

IF STEM16 = 4 STEM_R16 = 0.75 .

IF STEM17 = 1 STEM_R17 = 0 .

IF STEM17 = 2 STEM_R17 = 0.75 .

IF STEM17 = 3 STEM_R17 = 0.25 .

IF STEM17 = 4 STEM_R17 = 0 .

IF STEM18 = 1 STEM_R18 = 0 .

IF STEM18 = 2 STEM_R18 = 0 .

IF STEM18 = 3 STEM_R18 = 0.916666667 .

IF STEM18 = 4 STEM_R18 = 0.083333333 .

Conflict Management Strategies***The Dutch Test for Handling Conflict***

Whenever I have a disagreement or conflict with one of my subordinate employees, usually...

1. I push my own point of view.
2. I try to maximise my own gains.
3. I fight for a good outcome for myself.
4. I do everything to win.
5. I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and my employees.
6. I stand for my own and my employees' goals and interests.
7. I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution.
8. I work out a solution that serves my own as well as my employees' interests as good as possible.

Situational Test for Emotion Management

Instructions (multiple-choice form)

In this test, you will be presented with a few brief details about an emotional situation, and asked to choose from four responses the most effective course of action to manage both the emotions the person is feeling and the problems they face in that situation.

Although more than one course of action might be acceptable, you are asked to choose what you think the most effective response for that person in that situation would be.

Remember, you are not necessarily choosing what you would do, or the nicest thing to do, but choosing the most effective response for that situation.

Test items

1. 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.

2. Manual is only a few years from retirement when he finds out his position will no longer exist, although he will still have a job with a less prestigious role. *What action would be the most effective for Manual?*

- (a) Carefully consider his options and discuss it with his family.
- (b) Talk to his boss or the management about it.
- (c) Accept the situation, but still feel bitter about it.
- (d) Walk out of that job.

3. Surbhi starts a new job where he doesn't know anyone and finds that no one is particularly friendly. *What action would be the most effective for Surbhi?*

- (a) Have fun with his friends outside of work hours.
- (b) Concentrate on doing his work well at the new job.
- (c) Make an effort to talk to people and be friendly himself.
- (d) Leave the job and find one with a better environment.

4. Andre moves away from the city his friends and family are in. He finds his friends make less effort to keep in contact than he thought they would. *What action would be the most effective for Andre?*

- (a) Try to adjust to life in the new city by joining clubs and activities there.
- (b) He should make the effort to contact them, but also try to meet people in his new city.
- (c) Let go of his old friends, who have shown themselves to be unreliable.
- (d) Tell his friends he is disappointed in them for not contacting him.

5. Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out. *What action would be the most effective for Clayton?*

- (a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
- (b) Tell his family he feels left out.
- (c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
- (d) Reflect that relationships can change with time.

6. Daniel has been accepted for a prestigious position in a different country from his family, who he is close to. He and his wife decide it is worth relocating. *What action would be the most effective for Daniel?*

- (a) Realise he shouldn't have applied for the job if he didn't want to leave.
- (b) Set up a system for staying in touch, like weekly phone calls or emails.
- (c) Think about the great opportunities this change offers.
- (d) Don't take the position.

7. Mei Ling answers the phone and hears that close relatives are in hospital critically ill. *What action would be the most effective for Mei Ling?*

- (a) Let herself cry and express emotion for as long as she feels like.
- (b) Speak to the other family to calm herself and find out what is happening, then visit the hospital.
- (c) There is nothing she can do.
- (d) Visit the hospital and ask staff about their condition.

8. Shona has not spoken to her nephew for months, whereas when he was younger they were very close. She rings him but he can only talk for five minutes. *What action would be the most effective for Shona?*

- (a) Realize that he is growing up and might not want to spend so much time with his family any more.
- (b) Make plans to drop by and visit him in person and have a good chat.
- (c) Understand that relationships change, but keep calling him from time to time.
- (d) Be upset about it, but realise there is nothing she can do.

9. Mina and her sister-in-law normally get along quite well, and the sister-in-law regularly baby-sits for her for a small fee. Lately she has also been cleaning away cobwebs, commenting on the mess, which Mina finds insulting. *What action would be the most effective for Mina?*

- (a) Tell her sister-in-law these comments upset her.
- (b) Get a new babysitter.
- (c) Be grateful her house is being cleaned for free.
- (d) Tell her only to baby-sit, not to clean.

10. Juno is fairly sure his company is going down and his job is under threat. It is a large company and nothing official has been said. *What action would be the most effective for Juno?*

- (a) Find out what is happening and discuss his concerns with his family.
- (b) Try to keep the company afloat by working harder.
- (c) Start applying for other jobs.
- (d) Think of these events as an opportunity for a new start.

11. Mallory moves from a small company to a very large one, where there is little personal contact, which she misses. *What action would be the most effective for Mallory?*

- (a) Talk to her workmates, try to create social contacts and make friends.
- (b) Start looking for a new job so she can leave that environment.
- (c) Just give it time, and things will be okay.
- (d) Concentrate on her outside-work friends and colleagues from previous jobs.

12. A demanding client takes up a lot of Jill's time and then asks to speak to Jill's boss about her performance. Although Jill's boss assures her that her performance is fine, Jill feels upset. *What action would be the most effective for Jill?*

- (a) Talk to her friends or workmates about it.
- (b) Ignore the incident and move on to her next task.
- (c) Calm down by taking deep breaths or going for a short walk.
- (d) Think that she has been successful in the past and this client being difficult is not her fault.

13. Blair and Flynn usually go to a cafe after the working week and chat about what's going on in the company. After Blair's job is moved to a different section in the company, he stops coming to the cafe. Flynn misses these Friday talks. *What action would be the most effective for Flynn?*

- (a) Go to the cafe or socialise with other workers.
- (b) Don't worry about it, ignore the changes and let Blair be.
- (c) Not talk to Blair again.
- (d) Invite Blair again, maybe rescheduling for another time.

14. Michelle's friend Dara is moving overseas to live with her partner. They have been good friends for many years and Dara is unlikely to come back. *What action would be the most effective for Michelle?*

- (a) Forget about Dara.
- (b) Spend time with other friends, keeping herself busy.
- (c) Think that Dara and her partner will return soon.
- (d) Make sure she keeps in contact through email, phone or letter writing.

15. Hannah's access to essential resources has been delayed and her work is way behind schedule. Her progress report makes no mention of the lack of resources. *What action would be the most effective for Hannah?*

- (a) Explain the lack of resources to her boss or to management.
- (b) Learn that she should plan ahead for next time.
- (c) Document the lack of resources in her progress report.
- (d) Don't worry about it.

16. Reece's friend points out that her young children seem to be developing more quickly than Reece's. Reece sees that this is true. *What action would be the most effective for Reece?*

- (a) Talk the issue over with another friend.
- (b) Angrily confront her friend about making such statements.
- (c) Realise that children develop at different rates.
- (d) Talk to a doctor about what the normal rates of development are.

17. Jumah has been working at a new job part-time while he studies. His shift times for the week are changed at the last minute, without consulting him. *What action would be the most effective for Jumah?*

- (a) Refuse to work the new shifts.
- (b) Find out if there is some reasonable explanation for the shift changes.
- (c) Tell the manager in charge of shifts that he is not happy about it.
- (d) Grumpily accept the changes and do the shifts.

18. Julie hasn't seen Ka for ages and looks forward to their weekend trip away. However, Ka has changed a lot and Julie finds that she is no longer an interesting companion. *What action would be the most effective for Julie?*

- (a) Cancel the trip and go home.
- (b) Realize that it is time to give up the friendship and move on.
- (c) Understand that people change, so move on, but remember the good times.
- (d) Concentrate on her other, more rewarding friendships.

Appendix B

Table 2.

Mediating Effect of Emotion Regulation on Age and Problem Solving

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
Mediator: Emotion Regulation					
Age	.001	.001	.070	-.0001; .003	
Gender	.02	.014	.140	-.01; .05	
Dependent Variable: Problem solving					
Emotion regulation	-.0001	.69	.999	-1.36; 1.36	
Age	-.01	.01	.430	-.02; .01	
Indirect effect					
Mediator		<i>B</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>Boot 95% CI</i>	
Emotion Regulation		.0001	.001	-.002	.002
Direct effects					
		<i>B</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>Boot 95% CI</i>	
		-.01	.01	-.02	.01
Total effects					

<i>B</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>Boot 95% CI</i>	
-0.01	.01	-0.02	.01

Table 3.*Mediating Effect of Emotion Regulation on Age and Forcing*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
Dependent Variable: Forcing					
Emotion Regulation	-.38	.72	.592	-1.79; .1.02	
Age	.005	.01	.58	-.01; .02	
Indirect effect					
Mediator		<i>B</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>Boot 95% CI</i>	
Emotion regulation		-.001	.001	-.003	.002
Direct effects					
		<i>B</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>Boot 95% CI</i>	
		.01	.01	-.01	.02
Total effects					
		<i>B</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>Boot 95% CI</i>	
		.004	.01	-.01	.02