

The Effects of Personality and Conflict Handling on Friendship Quality

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Abstract

Friendships play a critical role in emotional and social development, yet they are often challenged by interpersonal conflict. This study investigated how the Big Five personality traits mediate the relationship between conflict-handling styles and friendship quality among university students. Using a quantitative design, data were collected from 133 students at Brandon University through validated scales assessing personality, conflict styles, and friendship quality. Results showed that constructive conflict styles particularly collaborating, accommodating, and compromising were positively associated with higher friendship quality, including closeness, help, and security. In contrast, avoiding and dominating styles were negatively associated with these sub-dimensions. Personality traits, especially conscientiousness and agreeableness emerged as significant mediators, partially explaining the link between accommodating style and increased closeness and security. While conscientiousness mediated the effect of compromising on help and companionship. These were partial mediation effects, as both personality traits and conflict-handling styles contributed independently to friendship outcomes. Demographic factors like age and language spoken at home also influenced specific friendship dimensions particularly closeness, help, and security. These findings underscore the importance of personality in shaping how individuals navigate conflict and maintain meaningful peer relationships. Practical implications include the potential for personality-informed interventions to strengthen conflict resolution skills and enhance social connectedness among emerging adults.