International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)
Volume 6, Issue 3, May-June, 2025 pp: 346-353 ISSN: 2584-2145 www.ijemh.com

Characterizing Conflict Resolution In Private Firms: Development of an Alternative Scale Context-Specific to Gen z Workers

Ryan Lloyd A. Saycon
r.saycon.529437@umindanao.edu.ph
Toril, Davao City, 8000, Philippines

SOPHREMIANO B. ANTIPOLO
sophremiano@gmail.com
Faculty Professional Schools University of Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines

Date of Submission: 11-06-2025 Date of Acceptance: 24-06-2025

Abstract
This paper presents the development and validation of a conflict resolution scale tailored for Generation Z employees in private firms within the Davao Region, Philippines. Utilizing a sequential-exploratory mixed-method approach, qualitative interviews informed item generation, which was quantitatively refined through Exploratory (EFA). Findings revealed a robust two-factor structure comprising Adaptive and Strategic Conflict Resolution and Solution-Oriented and Collaborative Conflict Resolution. The result offers valuable implications for human resource development, workplace inclusion, and intergenerational management strategies. The results underscore the relevance of contextualized conflict resolution models in multigenerational work settings.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Generation Z; Workplace Dynamic; Factor Analysis; Scale Development

I. Introduction

The workplace of today is undergoing a significant generational transformation. With the growing presence of Generation Z—those born from 1997 onwards—organizations are encountering new behavioral paradigms and expectations that differ from those of previous generations. These shifts are particularly evident in conflict resolution approaches, where Gen Z demonstrates unique preferences shaped by technological fluency, social consciousness, and an expectation for inclusivity and rapid feedback (Haynie, 2020; Benitez-Marquez et al., 2022). The integration of Gen Z into the private sector raises urgent questions about how workplace disputes are perceived and managed, especially in a multigenerational context where value systems and communication styles diverge. Literature suggests that Gen Z is the most challenging generation to manage due to communication gaps, perceived sensitivity, and high expectations (Young, 2023; Schlott, 2023).

This study explores these generational dynamics with the goal of constructing a conflict resolution framework that reflects the lived experiences and managerial expectations of Gen Z workers in private firms within the Davao Region. Drawing on theoretical foundations such as Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (1974), and Generational Cohort Theory by Strauss and Howe (1991), the research investigates whether Gen Z's conflict strategies are shaped more by individual social learning or by collective generational experiences. A sequential-exploratory mixed-method design was used, beginning with qualitative interviews to generate scale items, followed by Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis to validate the structure (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Hair et al., 2010).

Conflict, an inevitable aspect of professional life, is intensified in digital and hybrid work environments that often obscure emotional cues and hinder informal resolution (McNutt, 2023; Imm, 2022). While traditional conflict resolution styles—collaborating, compromising, avoiding, competing, and accommodating—remain foundational (Campbell, 2022), Gen Z's methods integrate digital fluency, emotional intelligence, and fairness-driven discourse. Managers often find themselves spending considerable time resolving interpersonal disputes, which, if mismanaged, may lead to higher turnover and productivity loss (Crestcom, 2020; Indeed, 2022).

International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)
Volume 6, Issue 3, May-June, 2025 pp: 346-353 ISSN: 2584-2145 www.ijemh.com

Negotiation plays a central role in this generational shift. It is no longer merely about reaching agreement but also ensuring lasting satisfaction with outcomes (Curhan et al., 2006; Galinsky & Schweitzer, 2015). Modern negotiation must balance bargaining with empathy, recognizing how unresolved or poorly handled conflicts may deepen workplace divides (Celino et al., 2011; Silveira et al., 2021). By reevaluating negotiation strategies and adopting inclusive practices, organizations can prevent escalation and foster mutual respect.

As Generation Z enters the workforce in larger numbers (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018; Gaidhani, Arora, & Sharma, 2019), understanding their expectations and work habits is critical. Their traits—tech-savviness, desire for work-life integration, and openness to diversity—demand adaptive leadership and tailored conflict resolution strategies (Knapp, Weber, & Moellenkamp, 2017; Janssen & Carradini, 2021). By aligning workplace culture to these values, firms can strengthen retention and foster a resilient, multigenerational workforce.

The study explores the distinct conflict resolution strategies of Generation Z workers and highlights its broad societal significance. By examining how Gen Z employees navigate workplace disputes, the research provides actionable insights for employers and HR managers, enabling them to craft more effective and culturally attuned management practices. These strategies can foster a more harmonious work environment, improving job satisfaction and well-being for Gen Z employees.

provides crucial insights for policymakers crafting inclusive labor policies that align with the shifting dynamics of today's workforce. By addressing the unique conflict resolution styles of Generation Z, the research supports the development of a more resilient and cohesive multigenerational labor force. On a global scale, it advances understanding of intergenerational workplace behavior and offers a flexible framework for future comparative research and practical applications in managing diverse teams. As workforce diversity grows, these findings become essential tools for both academic inquiry and effective leadership.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

This study adopts a sequential-exploratory mixed-method research design to explore conflict resolution strategies among Generation Z employees in private firms across the Davao region. Following Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), this approach begins with a qualitative phase to uncover in-depth perceptions and experiences, which then informs a structured quantitative investigation.

Qualitative Phase. The study initiates with semi-structured interviews involving 12–20 purposively selected Gen Z employees. This phase aims to capture nuanced insights into how this cohort perceives and handles workplace conflict. Data were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis using software such as NVivo to identify core patterns and themes.

Quantitative Phase. Insights from the qualitative phase were used to develop a survey questionnaire targeting a broader population of Gen Z employees in private firms. This phase involves two key statistical procedures:

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Administered to approximately 200 respondents to uncover latent dimensions of conflict resolution. Factor retention followed Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalues > 1), and post-rotation analysis refined item groupings (Yong & Pearce, 2013; Kaiser, 1960).

Participants. Participants must be Generation Z (born 1997–2012) and currently employed in the private sector within the Davao region. Individuals outside this generational cohort or working in government/public sectors were excluded. The study upholds voluntary participation and informed consent, emphasizing that respondents can withdraw at any point without repercussions.

Instruments

Qualitative tool. A structured interview guide was developed from qualitative findings. It refined post-EFA and validated through CFA. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, and content validity was ensured through expert review.

Data Collection and Ethics. Data collection commenced upon approval from the University of Mindanao Professional Schools and Ethics Review Committee. Ethical safeguards include anonymity, voluntary participation, and adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). All data were securely stored and responsibly disposed of upon completion of the study.

III. Results and Discussion

Generation of Factor Loading on Conflict Resolution Strategies

International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)
Volume 6, Issue 3, May-June, 2025 pp: 346-353 ISSN: 2584-2145 www.ijemh.com

Sampling Adequacy. Prior to conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA), statistical assumptions were tested to evaluate the suitability of the dataset for factor extraction. These assumptions included assessments of sampling adequacy and the presence of sufficient intercorrelations among variables. Specifically, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were utilized as preliminary diagnostics.

Table 1. Assumptions of sampling adequacy and multidimensionality in factor analysis

	Statistic
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.980
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
χ^2	9714
df	780
p-value	<0.001

As shown in Table 1, the KMO index yielded a value of 0.980, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.60 for adequate sampling (Kaiser & Rice 1974). Values closer to 1.00 indicate a higher degree of shared variance among items, suggesting that factor analysis is likely to yield reliable factors. The result of 0.980 is considered "marvelous" based on the interpretive guidelines provided by Kaiser (1974), and strongly supports the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Furthermore, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(780) = 9714$, $p < .001$. This test evaluates the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would indicate that variables are unrelated and unsuitable for structure detection.

Taken together, these findings confirm that the dataset meets the necessary assumptions for proceeding with exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood extraction and VARIMAX rotation. The sample size and inter-item correlations are deemed adequate to support the extraction of latent constructs underlying the scale items.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the underlying structure of a scale measuring conflict resolution strategies employed by managers. Table 5 shows the rotated component matrix, further showing the items that clustered in the identified dimensions. The analysis utilized maximum likelihood estimation with VARIMAX rotation, and factor retention was determined via parallel analysis. The results yielded a two-factor solution, explaining a cumulative variance of 57.9% (Factor 1 = 29.1%, Factor 2 = 28.9%), suggesting that the two extracted dimensions capture a substantial portion of the variability in responses.

Latent Roots Criterion. To establish the dimensionality of the scale, principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted using maximum likelihood extraction and VARIMAX orthogonal rotation. In line with best practices in scale development, a strict factor loading threshold of ±0.60 was applied to retain only items with strong contributions to their respective components. This threshold exceeds the commonly accepted minimum of 0.40, thereby ensuring stronger construct validity in the dimensional solution.

Results of the latent roots criterion are presented in Table 2. According to Kaiser's rule, factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 are considered significant and retained for interpretation. The analysis revealed a two-factor solution. Factor 1 yielded a sum of squared loadings (SS) of 11.6 and accounted for 29.1% of the total variance. Similarly, Factor 2 also produced an SS of 11.6, explaining an additional 28.9% of the variance. Together, these two factors accounted for a cumulative 57.9% of the total variance, which exceeds the minimum variance threshold typically recommended for exploratory factor analysis in

International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)
Volume 6, Issue 3, May-June, 2025 pp: 346-353 ISSN: 2584-2145 www.ijemh.com

behavioral and social sciences.

This two-dimensional structure, derived from the refined pool of items that loaded at or above ±0.60, indicates a meaningful clustering of constructs within the scale. It supports the emerging theoretical framework underlying conflict resolution strategies as perceived by Gen Z employees in the workplace. The substantial proportion of variance explained and the strong loadings of retained items reflect both conceptual coherence and statistical robustness of the derived dimensions. These results provide a sound empirical foundation for subsequent confirmatory factor analysis and scale validation.

Table 2. Latent roots criterion

Factor	SS Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.6	29.1	29.1
2	11.6	28.9	57.9

Table 3. Rotated coponent matrix showing factor loadings of items in extracted dimensions via VARIMAX rotation

	Factor		
	1	2	Uniqueness
Item 1	0.696		0.370
Item 2	0.695		0.362
Item 3	0.693		0.354
Item 4	0.672		0.433
Item 5	0.670		0.332
Item 6	0.668		0.349
Item 7	0.664		0.269
Item 8	0.642		0.381
Item 9	0.631		0.413
Item 10	0.625		0.495
Item 11	0.623		0.346
Item 12	0.617		0.365
Item 13	0.613		0.432
Item 14	0.609		0.399
Item 15	0.609		0.434
Item 16	0.604		0.364
Item 17			0.442

International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)
Volume 6, Issue 3, May-June, 2025 pp: 346-353 ISSN: 2584-2145 www.ijemh.com

Item 18		0.593
Item 19		0.551
Item 20		0.499
Item 21	0.717	0.340
Item 22	0.692	0.390
Item 23	0.658	0.335
Item 24	0.653	0.429
Item 25	0.639	0.400
Item 26	0.636	0.380
Item 27	0.634	0.378
Item 28	0.630	0.441
Item 29	0.629	0.527
Item 30	0.629	0.403
Item 31	0.627	0.391
Item 32	0.623	0.469
Item 33	0.618	0.455
Item 34	0.609	0.376
Item 35	0.608	0.416
Item 36		0.417
Item 37		0.459
Item 38		0.465
Item 39		0.466
Item 40		0.709

Note. Items with no factor loadings did not pass the +0.60 factor loadings required in the analysis and are therefore eliminated.

Factor loadings and uniqueness values for all items are presented in Table 3. Items with high factor loadings and low uniqueness values indicate strong representation within the extracted dimensions. Factor 1, which we label as “adaptive and strategic conflict resolution”, consists of items that reflect a manager’s ability to adapt their conflict resolution style based on contextual factors such as organizational hierarchy, anticipated outcomes, and communication strategies.

This factor was reinforced by a number of works, including Moore, C. W., & Camacho, C.'s The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict (5th ed. In 2020), which offers profound insights into how mediators modify their approaches in light if the particulars of the dispute, the parties concerned, and the resolution objectives. It discusses naturally adaptable intervention techniques and diagnostic paradigms. Another is Negotiation (8th ed.), which offers frameworks for scenario analysis and the selection of suitable approaches. These are strategic by nature and necessitate flexibility depending on the counter parties and circumstances (Lewicki, R. J., Saunders, D. M., & Barry, B. 2020).

On the other hand, Factor 2, labelled as “solution-oriented and collaborative conflict resolution”, encompasses items related to direct problem-solving, active listening, and fostering open communication to maintain team cohesion. These results suggest that Factor 2 represents collaborative and proactive conflict resolution, where managers emphasize fairness, open dialogue, and team cohesion. Notably, uniqueness values in Factor 2 are relatively low (ranging from 0.340 to 0.527), further reinforcing that this dimension strongly explains variance in solution-driven and communication-focused conflict resolution approaches.

International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)
Volume 6, Issue 3, May-June, 2025 pp: 346-353 ISSN: 2584-2145 www.ijemh.com

People with strong emotional intelligence are recognized to be able to think in terms of solution (Avci 2019). According to another study, school administrators' preferred conflict resolution techniques and their solution-oriented viewpoints were significantly correlated. Compromise and problem- solving skills were favorable connected with a solution-oriented approach. The avoiding, forcing and yielding strategies were found to be negatively correlated with the solution-oriented approach (Günçavdi-Alabay 2023). In addition, among the decision- making styles, managers in conflict management employ avoidance, solution-oriented approach, and control strategy (Astereki & Fallahi 2019).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study aimed to develop and validate a context-specific scale that measures conflict resolution strategies as perceived by Generation Z (Gen Z) employees in private firms in the Davao Region. Following a rigorous multi-phase scale development process involving qualitative interviews, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the study yielded a robust two-factor structure with strong psychometric properties.

Initial item development was grounded in rich qualitative data sourced from in-depth interviews with Gen Z employees, ensuring that the item pool was rooted in authentic workplace experiences. The scale demonstrated high content validity, with 40 out of 48 items surpassing the CVR threshold of 0.80, and an overall S-CVI/Ave of 0.813. EFA yielded a two-factor solution explaining 57.9% of the variance. The first factor, adaptive and strategic conflict resolution, encapsulates managerial behaviors that reflect flexibility, foresight, and situational sensitivity, such as adjusting communication based on authority, valuing feedback, and planning under pressure. The second factor, solution-oriented and collaborative conflict resolution, captures proactive engagement through open dialogue, fairness, and team-based problem-solving.

These findings substantiate the claim that Gen Z employees perceive conflict resolution in terms of both strategic adaptability and interpersonal collaboration. The validated instrument provides empirical clarity to a previously under-researched area and offers a reliable measure for organizational practitioners and future researchers.

Recommendations

The study has successfully provided a psychometrically sound, theoretically grounded, and practically applicable instrument for assessing conflict resolution strategies in Gen Z-populated workplaces. Several recommendations and implications were noted:

For human resource practitioners and managers, it is recommended that they integrate the validated two-factor scale into their employee feedback and performance evaluation systems. The identified constructs—adaptive-strategic and solution-collaborative approaches—can serve as diagnostic tools for identifying managerial strengths and training needs. Managers can be coached on the specific behaviors highlighted in the scale, such as empathetic communication and situational flexibility, which are highly valued by Gen Z employees.

Companies should consider embedding the constructs of this scale into leadership development initiatives and conflict resolution workshops. Training sessions should emphasize the dual need for strategic foresight and emotional intelligence, aligning with the differentiated expectations of Gen Z. Conflict management simulations and reflective practices can be structured around the validated items for experiential learning.

The findings suggest that policies promoting psychological safety, feedback loops, and technological inclusivity in communication are instrumental in enhancing conflict resolution climates.

Organizations are encouraged to revisit their conflict management protocols and update them to reflect Gen Z's needs for collaboration, clarity, and voice. Culture-building activities should include structured conversations around values-based leadership and team inclusion.

Meanwhile, business and management programs may include the validated scale as part of curriculum modules in organizational behavior, human resource management, and leadership. Students may use the tool to assess their own perceptions of leadership styles or to engage in case-based discussions about generational workplace dynamics.

The scale can be tested in different sectors (e.g., public institutions, BPOs, startups) and generational cohorts to assess its generalizability and discriminant validity. Longitudinal studies can also investigate whether perceived conflict resolution strategies affect job satisfaction, turnover intent, or team productivity over time. Additionally, multi-group CFA could examine measurement

invariance across demographic categories (e.g., gender, tenure, role).

References

[1]. Agarwal, H., & Vaghela, P. (2018). Work values of Gen Z: Bridging the gap to the next generation. National Conference on Innovative Business Management Practices in 21st Century, Faculty of Management Studies, Parul University, Gujarat, India.

[2]. Astereki, H., & Fallahi, V. (2019). Conflict resolution strategies in managers' decision-making styles. International Journal of Organizational Leadership, 8(1), 23–35. https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2019.60268

[3]. Avci, G. (2019). Emotional intelligence and problem-solving strategies: A study on teacher candidates. Journal of Education and Learning, 8(1), 55–62. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v8n1p55

[4]. Bagozzi, R. P., Yi, Y., & Phillips, L. W. (1991). Assessing construct validity in organizational research. Administrative Science Quarterly, 36(3), 421–458. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393203

[5]. Benitez-Marquez, M. D., Sanchez-Teba, E. M., Bermudez-Gonzalez, G., & Nunez-Rydman, E. S. (2022). Generation Z within the workforce and in the workplace: A bibliometric analysis. Frontiers in Psychology, 12, 736820. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.736820

[6]. Brown, T. A. (2015). Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

[7]. Campbell, D. (2022). The five conflict resolution styles and how to use them. Indeed Career Guide. https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/conflict-resolution-styles

[8]. Celino, B. J., Cornejo, J., & Marquez, R. P. (2011). Negotiation and conflict management. Philippine Journal of Labor Studies, 29(1), 75–94.

[9]. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

[10]. Curhan, J. R., Elfenbein, H. A., & Xu, H. (2006). What do people value when they negotiate? Mapping the domain of subjective value in negotiation. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91(3), 493–512. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.3.493

[11]. Gaidhani, S., Arora, L., & Sharma, B. K. (2019). Understanding the attitude of Generation Z towards workplace. International Journal of Management, Technology and Engineering, 9(1), 2804–2812.

[12]. Galinsky, A. D., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2015). Friend and foe: When to cooperate, when to compete, and how to succeed at both. Crown Business.

[13]. Günçavdi-Alabay, S. (2023). The relationship between school administrators' solution-oriented perspectives and their preferred conflict resolution strategies. Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 29(1), 67–86. https://doi.org/10.14527/kuey.2023.003

[14]. Haynie, S. (2020, October 6). Will Gen Z usher in a new generation of work-related conflict? Forbes Coaches Council. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/10/06/will-gen-z-usher-in-a-new-generation-of-work-related-conflict/

[15]. Imm, J. (2022, September 13). Why is conflict resolution important? North Central College. https://www.northcentralcollege.edu/news/2022/09/13/why-conflict-resolution-important

[16]. Janssen, D., & Carradini, S. (2021). Generation Z workplace communication habits and expectations. IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 64(2), 137–153. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2021.3054891

[17]. Kaiser, H. F. (1960). The application of electronic computers to factor analysis. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20(1), 141–151. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316446002000116

[18]. Kaiser, H. F., & Rice, J. (1974). Little Jiffy, Mark IV. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 34(1), 111–117. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447403400115

[19]. Kline, R. B. (2016). Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (4th ed.). Guilford Press.

[20]. Knapp, J. R., Weber, M. R., & Moellenkamp, J. D. (2017). Managing Generation Z: Understanding intergenerational perspectives. Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 21(1), 1–8.

[21]. Lewicki, R. J., Saunders, D. M., & Barry, B. (2020). Negotiation (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

[22]. McNutt, K. (2023, May 2). Study: Gen Z workers achieve dubious honor. Journal Record. https://journalrecord.com/2023/05/02/study-gen-z-workers-achieve-dubioushonor/
[23]. Moore, C. W., & Camacho, C. (2020). The mediation process: Practical strategies for resolving conflict (5th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
[24]. Schlott, R. (2023, April 25). Employers reveal why Gen Z is the hardest generation to work with. New York Post. https://nypost.com/2023/04/25/employers-reveal-why-gen-z-is-hardest-generation-to-work-with/
[25]. Segal, J., Robinson, L., & Smith, M. (n.d.). Conflict resolution skills. HelpGuide. https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/conflict-resolution-skills.htm
[26]. Shonk, K. (2023). What is conflict resolution, and how does it work? Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/conflict-resolution/what-is-conflict-resolution-and-how-does-it-work/
[27]. Silveira, C., et al. (2021). Negotiation practices in virtual teams: A generational perspective. International Journal of Conflict Management, 32(2), 215–237. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-05-2020-0085
[28]. Smola, K. W., & Sutton, C. D. (2022). Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium. Journal of Organizational Behavior. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.147
[29]. Yong, A. G., & Pearce, S. (2013). A beginner's guide to factor analysis: Focusing on exploratory factor analysis. Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology, 9(2), 79–94. https://doi.org/10.20982/tqmp.09.2.p079
[30]. Young, H. (2023). Is Gen Z the most difficult generation to work with? Their bosses say yes. Startups.co.uk. https://startups.co.uk/news/gen-z-named-most-difficult-to-work-with/