

GENERATION ME: MILLENNIAL INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND  
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE IN THE GROUP SETTING

by

ALYSSA CLEMENTS

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Student: Alyssa Clements

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in the Conflict and Dispute Resolution Program by:

Elizabeth Tippet	Chairperson
Jane Irungu	Member
Matt Schnackenberg	Member

and

Scott L. Pratt	Dean of the Graduate School
----------------	-----------------------------

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

Alyssa Clements

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The Millennial Generation is a young generation now required to effectively and efficiently navigate the cultural diversity that they encounter in various group settings throughout the United States. Research has examined conflict management styles and intercultural sensitivity, but few studies have investigated these two concepts specifically within the Millennial Generation. The purpose of this study is to fill the gap that exists in the current literature through an examination of the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles within the Millennial Generation in a hypothetical intercultural group setting. The results from 221 participants indicate that positive and negative relationships exist among the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles, Millennials show a preference for conflict management styles that reflect a concern for self, and Millennials report high Interaction Confidence and low Respect for Cultural Difference. Limitations and directions for future research are also discussed.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Alyssa Clements

### GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR  
Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Falls, OR

### DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Science, Conflict and Dispute Resolution, 2016, University of Oregon  
Bachelor of Science, Communication Studies, 2014, Oregon Institute of  
Technology

### AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Intercultural Communication  
Organizational Communication  
Conflict Management Styles  
Mediation  
Facilitation

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Special Projects Intern, Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence, 6 months

Tutor, Services for Student Athletes, 6 months

Library Student Assistant, John E. Jaqua Law Library, 2 years

Mediation Intern, Klamath County Circuit Court, 3 months

Library Technician's Assistant, Oregon Institute of Technology Library, 4 years

Referee, Basin United Soccer Club, 3 years

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Dedicated to

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Millennial Generation, those born between 1981 and 1997, is currently becoming an active part of the melting pot of diverse nationalities, cultures, and ethnicities found in the United States of America. Millennials are now between the ages of 19- and 35-years old, and are taking their positions as functioning members of work and social groups. This new generation, which experiences completely different cultural challenges than previous generations (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001; Moore, 2007; Neuborne and Kerwin, 1999), is constantly experiencing intercultural human interaction at both the individual and group level.

As a generation that is in the middle of rapid changes in technology, social structure, and globalization, Millennials are less likely to be religious (Pond, Smith, & Clement, 2010), but are more likely to engage in social activism and politics (Howe and Strauss, 2007). They also tend to be educated, social, and team orientated (Eisner, 2005; Thau, 1996; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). Even though Millennials have been found to be more tolerant and respectful of diversity than previous generations (Ng & Wiesner, 2007; Ng & Burke, 2006; Buahene & Kovary, 2003), the question arises of what personal skills and abilities Millennials utilize in order to effectively navigate the complex challenges of the culturally diverse environment of the United States. Intercultural sensitivity and conflict management are two skills that are often relied upon during intercultural interactions, and are thus the skills that Millennials must utilize to effectively navigate their culturally diverse world.

Millennials who have high intercultural sensitivity and effective conflict management skills are able to navigate intercultural interactions in productive ways that create sustainable and beneficial outcomes. In addition to more effective intercultural conflict resolution, intercultural sensitivity benefits individuals in such ways as increased interpersonal skills, job satisfaction, and social satisfaction (Sizoo, Plank, Iskat, & Serrie, 2005). The United States are more diverse than ever before (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), meaning that Millennials participate in culturally diverse groups daily, ranging from social groups to work groups, to a higher extent than previous generations have. Heightened exposure to different and diverse cultures raises the question of how Millennials in the United States manage conflict in situations involving intercultural conflict, and how their intercultural sensitivity level affects the outcome of their interaction.

Past researchers have examined the concepts of conflict management and intercultural sensitivity (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 2009; Alnashi, 2012), though very little has looked specifically at the relationship between the two concepts (e.g. Yu & Chen, 2008; Mao & Hale, 2015). Currently, there is no research on the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles within the context of the Millennial Generation. This shows a gap in current research, overlooking the evolving nature of the cultural diversity in the United States and the resulting challenges faced by Millennials due to social and technological changes, which past generations have not experienced.

Intercultural sensitivity has become a vital part of conflict resolution and human communication for Millennials due to the developments in society and technology that

increase cross-cultural contact, shift social dynamics, and change awareness of cultural diversity. It is important to examine intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in the Millennial Generation because it will help to inform future research about how current and future generations will function in a constantly evolving and culturally diverse environment.

The relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in the Millennial Generation is unexplored, leaving a gap in the literature. The aim of this study is to fill that gap by purposefully examining the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles of Millennials within the group setting. Future research will benefit from this exploration because it will provide information that may be instrumental in the understanding of Millennial cultural and conflict resolution behaviors. This study has three primary objectives:

- 1) to identify trends in the intercultural sensitivity of Millennials;
- 2) to identify Millennial preferences for conflict management styles when encountering conflict in the group setting;
- 3) to determine the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in Millennials.

This study seeks to answer the research question, “What is the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in Millennials who experience intercultural conflict in a group?”

It is expected that intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles will positively relate to one another because a Millennial’s ability to effectively navigate an intercultural conflict would require the use of a conflict management style that takes into

account cultural differences. A conflict management style that only takes into account concerns for personal interests would be in tension with high intercultural sensitivity since intercultural sensitivity is positive feelings and concern for someone from a different culture (Chen & Starosta, 2000). A relationship is also expected because culture has an impact on conflict management style. Ting-Toomey and Takai (2006) examined conflict styles through a cultural variability perspective and concluded that an individual's culture influences their preference for how conflict is managed. Culture having an impact on how conflict is managed indicates the potential of intercultural sensitivity having a relationship with the conflict management style that is used when managing a conflict with someone from a different culture. This potential relationship will be examined in the following literature review. It is important to recognize that there are numerous other variables that impact conflict management styles in individuals, and the examination of those variables is beyond the scope of this present study.

Conflict management styles are the method in which a person manages conflict. There are five conflict management styles, which are forcing, yielding, avoiding, problem solving, and compromising. These styles will be discussed in greater detail in the following literature review. Research on the the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles is sparse, and provides only a narrow academic foundation upon which to base hypotheses about the relationship between the two concepts. Understanding the expected relationships between the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles helps to frame and contextualize the following literature review. This study expects to have similar finding to what Yu and



Chen (2008) found in their study on the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style.

It is expected that intercultural sensitivity will positively correlate with yielding, compromising, and problem solving. These are conflict management styles that show a combination of concern for self and concern for others. These hypotheses are based on the proposal that as intercultural sensitivity increases, so will the use of conflict management styles that do not primarily focus on personal needs and interests. These hypotheses are shown in Figure 1.

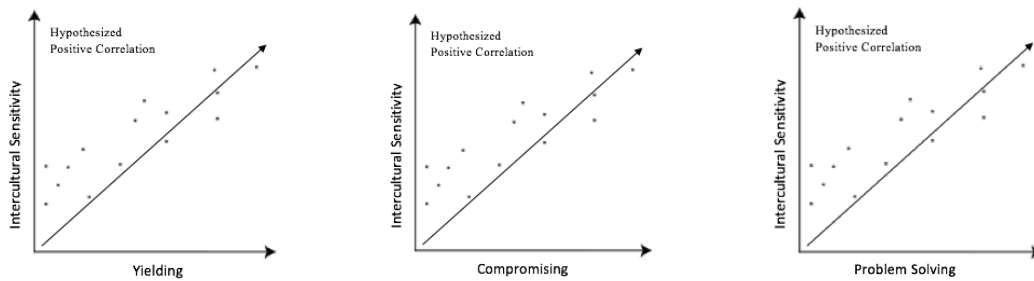


Figure 1: Hypothesized Relationships of Intercultural Sensitivity and Yielding, Compromising, and Problem Solving

It is also expected that intercultural sensitivity will negatively correlate with Avoiding and Forcing. These are conflict management styles that show high Concern for Self and low Concern for Other. It is proposed that as intercultural sensitivity decreases, the use of conflict management styles that primarily focus on personal needs and interests will increase. These hypotheses are shown in Figure 2.

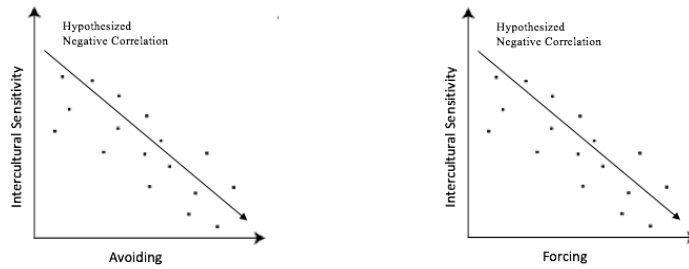


Figure 2: Hypothesized Relationships of Intercultural Sensitivity and Avoiding and Forcing

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in Millennials who experience interpersonal conflict in a group?

**H1:** Millennial intercultural sensitivity will positively correlate with Yielding.

**H2:** Millennial intercultural sensitivity will positively correlate with Compromising.

**H3:** Millennial intercultural sensitivity will positively correlate with Problem Solving.

**H4:** Millennial intercultural sensitivity will negatively correlate with Avoiding.

**H5:** Millennial intercultural sensitivity will negatively correlate with Forcing.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study utilizes a literature review that is interdisciplinary and draws on past research to demonstrate the importance of filling the gap in the literature about Millennials, intercultural sensitivity, and conflict management styles. Literature will be reviewed from several fields of study, including organizational studies, communication studies, psychology, and sociology. This review summarizes literature that describes Millennials, the concept of intercultural sensitivity, intercultural sensitivity in Millennials, conflict management styles, conflict management styles in Millennials, and the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles.

#### **The Millennial Generation**

While examining the behavior of Millennials, it is important to have a clear definition of who qualifies to be included as part of the Millennial Generation. Millennials are those born after 1980, and is named because it is the first generation to reach adult status in the new millennium. Millennials are the generation that was born during the 1980s and 1990s. The exact birthdates defining the beginning and end of the generation, as well as the term to use to label the generation, is not unanimously agreed upon by researchers. Some researchers define Millennials as those born in or after 1980 (e.g. Nimon, 2007), those born between 1982 and 2012 (e.g. Howe & Strauss, 2000), and those born between 1980 and 1994 or 1995 (e.g. Burke & Ng, 2006; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Millennials and the Millennial Generation have also been alternatively called Generation Y, the Net Generation, and the Nexus Generation (Barnard, Cosgrove,

& Welsh, 1998; Burke & Ng, 2006; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Disagreement around these core aspects of defining the Millennial Generation is persistent throughout literature but does not prevent examination of the Millennial Generation. The definition used by the Pew Research Center (Fry, 2015) will be used for the purposes of this study. Millennials will be defined as born between 1981 and 1997, and the terms Millennials and Millennial Generation will be used interchangeably.

Research on Millennials has been sparked by interest in their consumer habits (Bucic, Harris, & Arli, 2012; Fromm & Garton, 2013; Grešková, & Kusá, 2015), political affiliations (Winograd & Hais, 2008; Beaupre, 2015; Novak, 2016), religious affiliations (Smith, Denton, Faris, & Regnerus, 2002; Drumheller, 2005; Ursic, 2014), demographics (Sweeney, 2006; Howe & Strauss, 2007, 2009), workplace habits (Lamm, & Meeks, 2009; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Lancaster, & Stillman, 2010), and cultural identity (Henry, 2008; Bonner et al., 2009). As Millennials begin to actively have an impact on society, research has worked to acquire knowledge about their generational personalities, skills, and abilities. The relationship between the intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style within the United States of America's Millennial generation has not been explored. There is a lack of understanding about how Millennials as a generation manage conflict and there is a gap in the research examining their level of intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style can negatively or positively impact interpersonal relationships and intercultural communication, which highlights the need to understand how they interact with one another.

## **Conflict Management Styles**

While conflict management styles in the Millennial Generation have not been exhaustively studied, how conflict is managed has long been a subject that researchers have been interested in. Conflict management styles have been extensively studied and researchers have often focused on identifying the behaviors that are used in various conflict situations (e.g. Thomas, 1977; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979; Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994; Volkema & Bergmann, 1995). There has also been a focus on finding practical and constructive methods of conflict resolution (e.g. Deutsch, 1994; Stitt, 1998; Pachter, 2007).

It is supplemental to the understanding of conflict management styles to have a foundational definition of constructive and destructive conflict. According to Hocker-Frost and Wilmot (1978),

Most simply, conflicts are destructive if all the participants are dissatisfied as a result of the conflict. . . The key to understanding destructive conflicts is that one party attempts to unilaterally change the structure, restrict choices, and gain one-party advantage in payoffs (p. 16, 17).

In comparison, productive conflicts “. . . can have highly desirable, productive functions in a relationship” (Hocker-Frost & Wilmot, 1978, p. 17). Productive conflicts are related directly to the goal, enable the participants to be honest with one another, and enable participants to judge the power relationships in the conflict (Hocker-Frost & Wilmot, 1978). As research has sought to expand what is known about conflict, it has led to the exploration of how conflict is managed and the conflict management styles that

individuals use (e.g. Kilmann, & Thomas, 1978; Thomas, 1992; Sorenson, 1999; De Dreu, et al. 2001).

Conflict is “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatibility and the possibility of interference from others as a result of this incompatibility” (Folger, Poole, and Stutman, 2005, p.4). Consequently, conflict management styles are how a Millennial chooses to behave in these interactions. Conflict management is “what people who experience conflict intend to do as well as what they actually do” (DeDreu et al., 2001, p. 646). Theorists and researchers have categorized conflict management styles into two dimensions; concern for self and concern for other (Kilmann & Thomas, 1975; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Concern for self is characterized by a primary focus on personal interests and concern for others is characterized by a primary focus being placed on the interests of others.

Pruitt and Rubin (1986) developed the Dual Concern Theory based on these two dimensions. Dual Concern Theory posits that conflict management is “a function of high or low concern for self, combined with high or low concern for others” (DeDreu et al., 2001, p. 646). There are five conflict management styles that emerge from this function. They are forcing, avoiding, compromising, yielding, and problem solving. Figure 3 provides a visual illustration of how these five conflict management styles relate to Dual Concern Theory.

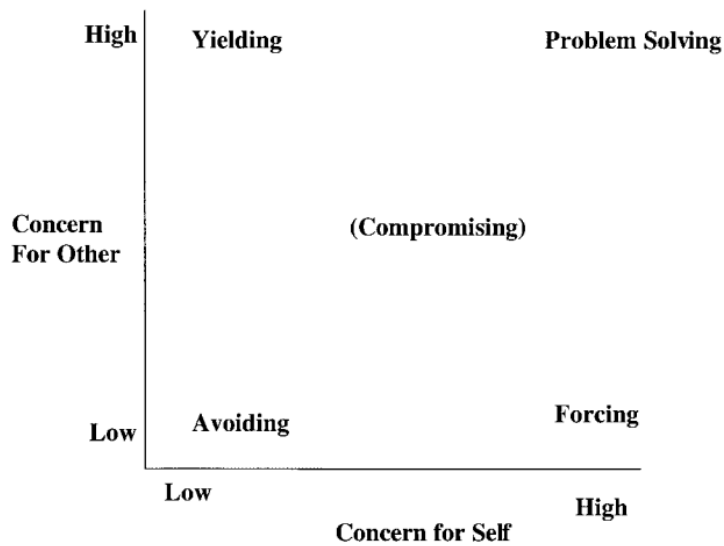


Figure 3: Conflict Management Styles as Function of Dual Concern Theory (deDreu et. al., 2001)

Forcing is a function of high concern for self and low concern for others. Forcing is when Millennials focus on resolving the conflict through accomplishing their own goals without giving consideration to the goals of others. Yielding is low concern for self and high concern for others. With yielding, the Millennials try to meet the needs of the other party without giving consideration to their own personal needs. Problem solving represents high concern for self and high concern for others. When using this style, Millennials find solutions that meet the needs of both themselves and others.

Avoiding is a conflict management style that is both low concern for self and low concern for others, which is associated with the conflict being unaddressed and unresolved. Compromising represents moderate concern for self and concern for others. When using this style, Millennials give in some on their own goals to find a mutually acceptable resolution that partially meets both their own goals and the goals of the other

person. This study seeks to shed light on the preferred conflict management style of Millennials.

### **Conflict Management Styles in Millennials**

Currently, there is a gap in the literature about the conflict management style preferences of the Millennial Generation living in the United States. A limited number of studies have examined this relationship, and those studies have focused on generational differences in conflict management styles in India.

Mukundan, Dhanya, and Saraswathyamma (2013) examined the conflict management styles of Millennials in India. Mukundan, Dhanya, and Saraswathyamma recruited 136 respondents for their study, and found that Millennials did not show a preference for a confrontational method of resolving conflicts, but did have a strong preference for negotiation or withdrawing. The findings of this study indicate that generations have a what could be considered a generational preference for conflict management styles.

Gupta, Bhattacharya, Neelam, and Kunte (2016) found similar results about Millennials when they examined conflict resolution across three generations in the Indian workforce. This study had 503 respondents, with 69% being Millennials, 17% part of Generation X, and 14% belonging to the Baby Boomer Generation. Gupta et al. found that Indian workers show a strong preference for approach-based styles, with negotiation being the most preferred style across generations and gender (2016). Approach-based styles are modes of approaching conflict, which are competing, accommodating, avoiding, compromising, and collaborating (Thomas, 1992). Gupta et al. referred to collaborating as negotiation in their study.



It was found that there was a significant difference between the preferences of Baby Boomers and Millennials. Baby Boomers, those born between approximately 1946 and 1964, had a stronger preference for confrontation than the Millennial respondents did. In contrast, Millennial respondents showed a strong preference for withdrawing and a weak preference for confrontation. Gupta et al. also noted that there was a strong preference regardless of generation for a negotiation approach to resolving the conflict. This is similar to research that has found that members of the same countries show similar preferences for negotiating behavior (Salacuse, 1998).

Even though these studies are based in an India, which has a different culture than the United States, they show that there is a significant difference in conflict management style preferences across generations and that members of the same generations have similar preferences for how to manage conflict. This indicates the importance of examining the preferred conflict management style of Millennials as a way of understanding their tendencies and behavior in conflict in the United States.

### **Intercultural Sensitivity**

Intercultural sensitivity is “the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p.422). Intercultural sensitivity is the affective dimension of intercultural competence, which is “the ability to think and act in interculturally relevant ways” (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p.422). Chen and Starosta (2000) define intercultural competence as “. . . an umbrella concept that consists of a person’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral abilities in the process of intercultural communication” (p. 3). Under the umbrella of intercultural

competence, intercultural sensitivity is the affective dimension and relates specifically to the moods, feelings, and attitudes required to act in interculturally relevant ways. It is connected with emotion (Triandis, 1977), and is characterized by an individual actively seeking to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept cultural differences (Chen & Starosta, 1998).

According to Chen and Starosta (1997), intercultural sensitivity is one of the essential factors for intercultural communication. It consists of five abilities, including (a) interaction engagement, (b) respect for cultural differences, (c) interaction confidence, (d) interaction enjoyment, and (e) interaction attentiveness, that together make up the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity. Table 1 provides descriptions for each of these five abilities.

Table 1: The Five Abilities of Intercultural Sensitivity (Chen and Starosta, 2010)

<i>Self-Esteem</i>	Ability to express confidence and an optimistic outlook in an intercultural interaction.
<i>Self-Monitoring</i>	Ability to consciously regulate behavior in response to situational constraints and to implement conversationally competent behavior.
<i>Open-Mindedness</i>	Ability to openly and appropriately explain oneself and to accept other's explanations.
<i>Empathy</i>	Ability to project oneself into another person's point of view in order to adopt different roles as required by different situations.
<i>Interaction Involvement</i>	Ability to perceive the topic and situation in order to initiate and terminate an intercultural interaction fluently and appropriately.
<i>Suspending Judgment</i>	Ability to avoid rash judgments about the inputs of others and to foster feelings of enjoyment of cultural differences.

## **Intercultural Sensitivity in Millennials**

Even though Millennials are members of a culturally diverse generation, contact with a different culture is not enough for Millennials to increase their intercultural sensitivity (e.g. Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2004). Intercultural communication has been examined within the context of the Millennial Generation (Krajewski, 2011; Lebedko, 2014), but the examination of intercultural sensitivity in Millennials has not been very robust. Hawala-Druy and Hill (2012) were concerned about how to increase cultural competence for Millennials in health professions through the use of course participation and inter-professional educational activities. While this study demonstrated that cultural competence, which Hawala-Druy and Hill defined to include intercultural sensitivity, can be increased through education, it was not focused on looking specifically at the intercultural sensitivity of Millennials. Hawala-Druy and Hill were only interested in increasing intercultural competence, which included intercultural sensitivity by their definition.

Other research on intercultural sensitivity in Millennials has looked at intercultural sensitivity and spending habits while traveling (He & Wei, 2014), evaluating student intercultural sensitivity compared to that of their teachers (Cushner, 2012), and the influence of intercultural sensitivity in the online relationships of service-learning participants (Moeller, & Nagy, 2013). These studies have found that intercultural sensitivity has an impact on behavior, and these findings point towards a relationship between conflict resolution behaviors, specifically conflict management styles, and intercultural sensitivity.

## **Intercultural Sensitivity in Groups**

Groups that encounter conflict often experience negative social and personal impacts as a result. However, when effectively and appropriately managed, conflict can lead to a productive outcome and result in healthy change for groups, often making them more functional and cohesive after the conflict (Amason, 1996; Simons & Peterson, 2000; Tjosvold, 2008). For example, some types of organizational conflict, like task-focused conflicts, improve relationships, increase the effectiveness of task completion, and lead to the adaptation of productive problem solving methods (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Peterson & Behfar, 2003). However, interpersonal relationship conflict often has negative impacts on groups (Jehn & Mannix, 2001), making it especially important for Millennials to effectively manage interpersonal conflicts in the context of groups in order to preserve group stability.

As groups become more culturally diverse, it is inevitable that intercultural conflict will be experienced as different cultural morals, values, and beliefs clash with one another. Intercultural sensitivity has the potential to have an impact on intercultural group communication. Communication is complicated by the lack of information that an individual has about different and unfamiliar cultures. A lack of information about another culture can cause individuals to feel anxious or apprehensive about interacting with different cultural groups (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). The strangeness and unfamiliarity of intercultural interactions increases uncertainty (Gudykunst, 1995).

Anxiety in an uncertain situation usually has a negative impact on communication in an intercultural interaction (Gudykunst, 2005; Kassing, 1997; Kim, 2002). The more uncomfortable an individual becomes in an intercultural interaction, the more anxiety and

uncertainty will hinder effective communication in ingroup and outgroup relationships (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001). Chen (2010) found that individuals who had higher intercultural sensitivity were less apprehensive about intercultural interaction. Millennials are inevitably going to experience intercultural conflict, which leads to an interesting research query into how conflict is managed alongside cultural diversity. Examining how intercultural sensitivity relates to conflict management styles is one of the first steps into this area of research.

As groups experience increased cultural diversity, it becomes clear that individual group members need to use methods that are efficient, productive, and beneficial to the group when experiencing a conflict. Research has shown that there are negative group impacts if individuals are unable to adapt to culture and social environments that are different from their own (Matveev & Milter, 2004; Fantini, 2000). This highlights the benefits that groups experience when members possess high intercultural sensitivity and are able to effectively apply that sensitivity to conflict situations. This indicates that groups with Millennial group members who have high intercultural sensitivity will potentially experience positive benefits and possibly fewer conflicts as a result.

### **Relationship Between Intercultural Sensitivity and Conflict Management Styles**

Conflict management is an amalgamation of several factors that impact how a Millennial may choose to resolve conflict. Research has shown that intercultural sensitivity is one of those factors. Yu and Chen (2008) found that an “individual’s sensitivity to cultural differences is reflected as an important factor that influences one’s preference of particular style for handling conflict” (p. 155). In a study of 253 undergraduate students, Yu and Chen used the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) to

measure intercultural sensitivity and Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventories II (RCI-II) to measure conflict management style (2008). They found that an individual's sensitivity to cultural differences is positively correlated with integrating and compromising strategies, while someone who perceives themselves to be less sensitive was more likely to use avoiding or dominating styles (Yu & Chen, 2008). Similarly, Mao and Hale (2015) found that Chinese employees with a higher level of intercultural sensitivity tended to use collaboration or solution-oriented strategies (2010). Both of these studies indicate that there is a relationship between conflict management style and intercultural sensitivity.

While it has been found that there is a relationship between the conflict management style that someone chooses to use and their intercultural sensitivity, there is currently no research that looks specifically at the relationship between these two concepts within the context of the Millennial Generation. The purpose of this study is to fill that gap in the literature and evaluate the relationship between the preferred conflict management styles and intercultural sensitivity of Millennials.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Participants

Participants in this study were undergraduate students over the age of 18-years old who were actively enrolled at a large northwestern university. A cluster volunteer sample of 5,000 undergraduate students were contacted via email and provided with the voluntary opportunity to take part in the study. A total of 255 students began the survey. 28 surveys were not included due to being incomplete and one was excluded for abnormal<sup>1</sup> answers (n=29). 226 surveys were fully completed, with 220 reporting being born between 1981 and 1997 (n=220). Six surveys were not included because the reported birth years were before 1981 or after 1997 (n=6). It is beyond the scope of this study to examine other generations or to compare other generations to Millennials. 154 participants identified as female, 61 as male, and six as “other<sup>2</sup>” (n=221).

#### Procedures

The researcher obtained 5,000 student emails from the university’s registrar’s office to be contacted for a voluntary opportunity to be part of the study’s sample. To qualify to be part of the sample, the registrar’s office only included emails of currently enrolled undergraduate students who were over the age of 18. Students could be in any

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<sup>1</sup> In the survey removed due to being abnormal, the participant reported unreliable answers, such as listing their gender as “fish” and their ethnicity as “Andromedan.” Additionally, their answers to the remaining 44 Likert-scale statements were answered with an unnatural pattern of 1’s and 5’s, indicating that they were not honestly answering the survey.

<sup>2</sup> Participants were presented with the opportunity to label their gender identity as “other” if they did not identify with either the male or female gender.

major or registered in any class offered through the university to qualify to be randomly selected by the registrar's office. The researcher then contacted participants using a standardized email message. Participants were only contacted by the researcher one time, and did not receive any reminder or follow up emails unless they contacted the researcher for more information. Participants were directed to a link to where the survey was available online. The online survey consisted of an informed consent form, demographic questions, an intercultural sensitivity instrument, and a conflict management styles instrument.

## **Measures**

Basic demographic information was collected, including gender, year of birth, and past education. This study used two instruments. The first was the 24-item Intercultural Sensitivity Scale created by Chen and Starosta (2000). The scale was made up of five different dimensions measuring interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. The combination of these five dimensions reflects the intercultural sensitivity of the subjects. Interaction Engagement measures participants' feeling of participation in intercultural interactions; Respect for Cultural Differences looks at participants' orientation towards or tolerance to another's culture and opinion; Interaction Confidence examines perceived confidence in intercultural contexts; Interaction Enjoyment looks at participants' reaction to intercultural communication; and Interaction Attentiveness tests participants' effort to understand intercultural communication. Interaction Engagement has seven items, Respect for Cultural Differences has six items, Interaction Confidence has five items, Interaction Enjoyment has three items, and Interaction Attentiveness has three items.



Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Chen and Starosta (2000) found the overall scale and all the five factors to have high internal consistency with .86 reliability coefficient separately.

To measure conflict management styles, participants were presented with the hypothetical statement, “When I have a conflict with someone who is a member of the same group as I am, I do the following:” Following this hypothetical statement, participants were asked questions about how they would manage the conflict that they experienced. The DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling was used for measuring conflict management styles. This instrument has been found to be a valid and reliable measure of conflict management style (De Dreu et. al., 2001). It has been used to measure conflict management style in the workforce and was slightly modified for this study. The DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling consists of 20-Likert scale items, with items that measure yielding, compromising, forcing, problem solving, and avoiding. Each conflict management style is measured by five items on the test. Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected was all quantitative. It was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, rates, and measures of central tendency. The data were also analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlations between certain variables in order to assess correlation.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The primary research question of this study sought to clarify the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style in Millennials who experience intercultural conflict in a group setting. In order to answer this question, the data collected was examined using descriptive analysis. This analysis looked at demographics, central tendencies, and the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles. The scores for participants were also examined looking at ethnicity. The majority of participants reported their ethnicity as white (70%), while the remaining 30% reported a variety of other ethnicities. To examine differences found among ethnicities in this study, the scores of the majority (White Millennials) were compared to those of the minorities (Minority Millennials).

#### **Demographics of Participants**

Of the Millennials sampled, 70% identified as female, while 28% identified as male and 2% as “other” (n=221). 97% of participants reported their marital status as single, 2% reported as married, and 1% reported as divorced (n=221). 70% of participants reported their ethnicity as white. The distribution of ethnicity is shown in Figure 4. Forty-five (20%) participants answered affirmative to having studied abroad, and 176 (80%) answered in the negative to having experience studying abroad (n=221). Fifty-two (24%) participants answered in the affirmative to having received formal training on conflict resolution. Of the 221 student participants, forty-eight (22%) answered in the affirmative that they had received formal training about intercultural communication.

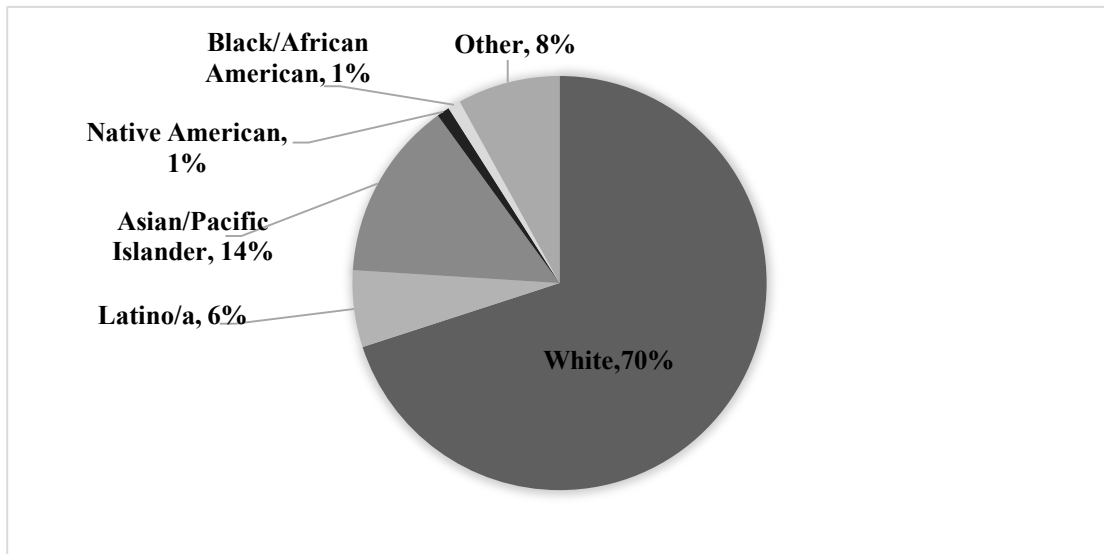


Figure 4: Distribution of Ethnicity

### **Descriptive Statistics of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale**

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.41, SD = 0.71). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.19, SD = 0.66), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.84, SD=0.53) and Interaction Engagement (M = 1.67, SD = 0.59). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.52, SD = 0.48).

Examining only the results of all of the male Millennials sampled, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.34, SD = 0.82), with Interaction Confidence scoring almost the same (M = 2.33, SD = 0.57), Interaction Engagement was the third highest score (M=1.95, SD=0.45), followed by Interaction Enjoyment (M = 1.68, SD = 0.54). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.66, SD = 0.55).

Examining only the results of all of the female Millennials sampled, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.45, SD = 0.82). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.14, SD = 0.64), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.83, SD=0.56) and Interaction Enjoyment (M = 1.68, SD = 0.61). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.48, SD = 0.45).

Among the participants who identified their gender as “other,” the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.47, SD = 0.55). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.00, SD = 0.73), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.74, SD=0.56) and Interaction Enjoyment (M = 1.44, SD = 0.40). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.25, SD = 0.23).

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score among the participants who identified their national origin as the United States (U.S. Millennials) was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.41, SD = 0.71). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.20, SD = 0.67), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.83, SD=0.52) and Interaction Enjoyment (M = 1.67, SD = 0.59). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.52, SD = 0.47).

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score among the participants who reported their national origin as countries other than the United States (International Millennials) was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.47, SD = 0.67). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.17, SD = 0.60), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.92, SD=0.57) and Interaction Enjoyment (M

= 1.72, SD = 0.54). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.63, SD = 0.59).

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale construct with the highest mean score among the White Millennials was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.45, SD = 0.72). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.22, SD = 0.64), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.85, SD=0.54) and Interaction Enjoyment (M = 1.68, SD = 0.58). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.54, SD = 0.49).

Among the Minority Millennials, the highest mean score was Interaction Confidence (M = 2.32, SD = 0.72). The second highest mean score was Interaction Attentiveness (M = 2.12, SD = 0.71), followed by Interaction Engagement (M=1.81, SD=0.51) and Interaction Enjoyment (M = 1.66, SD = 0.61). Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest mean score (M = 1.49, SD = 0.48). These mean scores and standard deviations of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

	Interaction Engagement	Respect for Cultural Differences	Interaction Confidence	Interaction Enjoyment	Interaction Attentiveness
<b>All Millennials (N=221)</b>					
Mean	1.84	1.52	2.41	1.67	2.19
S.D.	(0.53)	(0.48)	(0.71)	(0.59)	(0.66)
<b>Male Millennials (N=61)</b>					
Mean	1.95	1.66	2.33	1.68	2.34
S.D.	(0.45)	(0.55)	(0.57)	(0.54)	(0.68)
<b>Female Millennials (N=154)</b>					
Mean	1.83	1.48	2.45	1.68	2.14
S.D.	(0.56)	(0.45)	(0.75)	(0.61)	(0.64)
<b>Other Millennials (N=6)</b>					
Mean	1.74	1.25	2.47	1.44	2.00
S.D.	(0.56)	(0.23)	(0.55)	(0.40)	(0.73)
<b>U.S. Millennials (N=203)</b>					
Mean	1.83	1.52	2.41	1.67	2.20
S.D.	(0.52)	(0.47)	(0.71)	(0.59)	(0.67)
<b>International Millennials (N=18)</b>					
Mean	1.92	1.63	2.47	1.72	2.17
SD	(0.57)	(0.59)	(0.67)	(0.54)	(0.60)
<b>White Millennials (N=156)</b>					
Mean	1.85	1.54	2.45	1.68	2.22
SD	(0.54)	(0.49)	(0.72)	(0.58)	(0.64)
<b>Minority Millennials (N=65)</b>					
Mean	1.81	1.49	2.32	1.66	2.12
SD	(0.51)	(0.48)	(0.69)	(0.61)	(0.71)

Among the Millennials who reported that they had studied abroad, Interaction Confidence had the highest score ( $M=2.63$ ,  $SD=0.61$ ), while Respect for Cultural Differences had the lowest score ( $M=1.53$ ,  $SD=0.61$ ). Interaction Confidence and Respect for Cultural Differences also scored highest and lowest for participants who reported not studying abroad, having formal conflict resolution training, not having formal conflict resolution training, having formal intercultural communication training, and not having formal intercultural communication training. Table 3 shows the variance of Intercultural Confidence and Respect for Culture grouped by these categories across all participants.

Table 3: Variance of Intercultural Confidence and Respect for Culture by Education and Experience

		Respect for Cultural Differences	Interaction Confidence
Studied Abroad (N=45)	Mean	2.63	1.53
	S.D.	(0.61)	(0.48)
Did Not Study Abroad (N=176)	Mean	2.36	1.52
	S.D.	(0.72)	(0.49)
Formal Conflict Resolution Training (N=52)	Mean	2.77	1.54
	S.D.	(0.55)	(0.40)
No Formal Conflict Resolution Training (N=154)	Mean	2.30	1.52
	S.D.	(0.72)	(0.40)
Formal Intercultural Communication Training (N=48)	Mean	2.73	1.62
	S.D.	(0.62)	(0.45)
No Formal Intercultural Communication Training (N=173)	Mean	2.32	1.50
	S.D.	(0.71)	(0.50)

### Descriptive Statistics of the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling

The conflict style with the highest mean score was Forcing ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ). The second highest mean score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). Problem Solving was the lowest scoring ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ).

Within the male Millennials sampled, the conflict style with the highest score was Forcing ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ). The second highest was Avoiding ( $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.66$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ). Among the female Millennials, the conflict style with the highest mean score was Forcing ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ). The second highest score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.12$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

In comparison, among the participants who identified their gender as “other,” the conflict style with the highest score was Forcing ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). The second highest score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ). Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M = 2.04$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ).

The U.S. Millennials scored the highest on Forcing ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ). The second highest score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ). Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). Similarly, among the International Millennials, the conflict style with the highest score was Forcing ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ). The second highest score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) and Problem Solving ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ). Compromising had the lowest score ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ).

The White Millennials scored the highest on Forcing ( $M = 3.07$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ). The second highest score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M = 1.96$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ). Among the Minority Millennials, the conflict style with the highest score was Forcing ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ). The second highest score was Avoiding ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), followed by Yielding ( $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) and Compromising ( $M = 2.22$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ). Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M = 2.08$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ). The mean scores and standard deviations of the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling are shown in Table 4.



Table 4: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling

	Yielding	Compromising	Forcing	Problem Solving	Avoiding
<b>All Millennials (N=221)</b>					
Mean	2.59	2.11	3.13	2.00	2.74
S.D.	(0.59)	(0.72)	(0.84)	(0.70)	(0.88)
<b>Male Millennials (N=61)</b>					
Mean	2.66	2.09	2.97	1.97	2.73
S.D.	(0.63)	(0.75)	(0.90)	(0.64)	(0.87)
<b>Female Millennials (N=154)</b>					
Mean	2.57	2.12	3.19	2.01	2.74
S.D.	(0.58)	(0.72)	(0.82)	(0.73)	(0.89)
<b>Other Millennials (N=6)</b>					
Mean	2.42	2.00	3.29	2.04	2.88
S.D.	(0.38)	(0.47)	(0.56)	(0.49)	(0.77)
<b>U.S. Millennials (N=203)</b>					
Mean	2.60	2.11	3.12	1.98	2.74
S.D.	(0.58)	(0.73)	(0.85)	(0.71)	(0.89)
<b>International Millennials (N=18)</b>					
Mean	2.54	2.10	3.31	2.14	2.75
S.D.	(0.73)	(0.66)	(0.81)	(0.64)	(0.69)
<b>White Millennials (N=156)</b>					
Mean	2.58	2.07	3.07	1.96	2.71
SD	(0.56)	(0.71)	(0.85)	(0.69)	(0.91)
<b>Minority Millennials (N=65)</b>					
Mean	2.62	2.22	3.27	2.08	2.80
SD	(0.66)	(0.76)	(0.81)	(0.73)	(0.80)

Among the Millennials who reported that they had studied abroad, Forcing had the highest score ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), while Problem Solving had the lowest score ( $M=1.53$ ,  $SD= 0.61$ ). Forcing and Problem Solving also scored highest and lowest for participants who reported not studying abroad, having formal conflict resolution training, not having formal conflict resolution training, having formal intercultural communication training, and not having formal intercultural communication training. Table 5 shows the variance of Forcing and Problem Solving grouped by these categories across all participants.

Table 5: Variance of Forcing and Problem Solving by Education and Experience

		Forcing	Problem Solving
Studied Abroad (N=45)	Mean	3.33	1.97
	S.D.	(0.80)	(0.75)
Did Not Study Abroad (N=176)	Mean	3.08	2.00
	S.D.	(0.85)	(0.69)
Formal Conflict Resolution Training (N=52)	Mean	3.00	1.81
	S.D.	(0.93)	(0.70)
No Formal Conflict Resolution Training (N=154)	Mean	3.17	2.05
	S.D.	(0.82)	(0.69)
Formal Intercultural Communication Training (N=48)	Mean	3.17	1.89
	S.D.	(0.85)	(0.65)
No Formal Intercultural Communication Training (N=173)	Mean	3.12	2.03
	S.D.	(0.84)	(0.71)

### **Pearson Correlation of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling**

In order to determine the relationship between the two concepts, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were calculated between each instrument's respective dimensions. The results of all students sampled (N = 221) showed an insignificant, positive relationship between a person's intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles ( $r = 0.053$ ,  $p = 0.431$ ). Some dimensions of the two concepts showed significant relationships with each other, either positively or negatively. The calculated correlations are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling

	All	Yielding	Compromising	Forcing	Problem Solving	Avoiding
All	0.05	0.09	0.14**	-0.11*	0.05	0.01
Interaction Engagement		0.05	0.16**	-0.14**	0.06	0.01
Respect for Cultural Differences		0.03	0.11	0.02	0.02	-0.02
Interaction Confidence		0.13**	-0.13**	-0.13**	0.04	0.03
Interaction Enjoyment		0.05	-0.11	-0.11	0.17**	0.03
Interaction Attention		0.06	-0.01	-0.01	-0.10	-0.01

\*\*\*p<.01; \*\*p<.05; \*p<.10; N=221

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale scores were significantly and positively correlated with Compromising, and significantly and negatively correlated with Forcing. Interaction Engagement was significantly and positively correlated with Compromising. It was not significantly correlated with Problem Solving, Avoiding or Yielding. It was significantly and negatively correlated with Forcing. Respect for Cultural Differences did not significantly correlate with any of the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling dimensions. Interaction Confidence significantly and positively correlated with Yielding and Compromising, as well as showed a significant, negative relationship with Forcing. Problem Solving, Avoiding, and Yielding did not correlate significantly. Interaction Enjoyment significantly and positively correlated with Compromising, while relating significantly and negatively with Forcing. Interaction Enjoyment did not correlate significantly with Problem Solving, Yielding, or Avoiding. Interaction Attention did not correlate significantly with any of the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling Dimensions.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

This study examined the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles among Millennials, while also identifying trends in intercultural sensitivity of the Millennial Generation and trends in the conflict management styles that Millennials prefer to use.

#### **Relationship Between Intercultural Sensitivity and Conflict Management Style**

This study found an insignificant positive relationship between the scores of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling. The findings of this study do not show that there is a statistically significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles. However, the data shows that there are some weak to moderate relationships between the the two concepts and their dimensions. Even though a strong statistically significant relationship was not found, the trends seen in the results of this study support that intercultural sensitivity is a factor that impacts the preference for a conflict management style among Millennials.

Though it was not a significant relationship, the finding of a positive relationship between these two concepts is consistent with the findings of Yu and Chen (2008), who found a significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style. Yu and Chen authored one of the only previous studies that looked specifically at the relationship between these two concepts. In their study, they found mostly moderate relationships between the two concepts and among the dimensions of each. The results of this present study are also consistent with what Mao and Hale (2015) found in their study

looking at the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style in China. Mao and Hale found significant correlation, which corroborates that intercultural sensitivity impacts how some individuals choose to handle conflict. This raises the important question of why a significant relationship between the two concepts was not found when looking at Millennials.

A possible explanation may be that Millennial conflict management styles are more fixed and less impacted by intercultural sensitivity. It is also possible that Millennial intercultural sensitivity is not high enough to significantly impact behavior. It is often sighted that experience and exposure are required to increase intercultural competence, and Millennials in this study reported their intercultural sensitivity as averaging 1.93 out of 5. It may be that Millennials are too young to have the life experience, exposure, and education required to be influenced by and aware of their intercultural sensitivity. This is something that should be studied in more depth.

Yu and Chen (2008) concluded that the more sensitive a person is, the more likely they are to use a problem solving and compromising conflict management style. This is also consistent with the findings of this study, which found positive relationships between these two conflict management styles and intercultural sensitivity. Within the sample of Millennials, increased sensitivity was positively related to compromising and problem solving. Compromising is the moderate middle ground of concern for self and concern for others, while problem solving is the intersection of both high concern for self and high concern for others. It is interesting to finding that compromising had a significant relationship but problem solving did not. A possible explanation of this may have a connection to Millennials having the lowest preference for problem solving as a conflict

management style. A positive relationship between these concepts is congruent with the characteristics of both intercultural sensitivity and the Dual Concern Theory behind conflict management styles. Also consistent with the characteristics of these two concepts is the finding of avoiding, forcing, and yielding not having a significant, positive relationship with intercultural sensitivity.

Behaviors associated with intercultural sensitivity indicate that an interculturally sensitive Millennial would have a preference for conflict management styles that show a concern for others. Low self-esteem is correlated with whether a person uses harsh tactics in a social interaction (Kipnis, 1976; Tedeschi, 1990). High self-esteem may result in the use of less harsh tactics, like problem solving, being used to manage conflict. A person who perceives themselves to be sensitive to other cultures also shows a tendency towards self-monitoring, which often leads to low interpersonal conflict (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982). Low interpersonal conflict also indicates a concern for others because it can mean that either the person does not create conflict or does not engage in it. Open-mindedness and empathy are traits of interculturally sensitive person that predict that conflict would be managed in a constructive manner (Hakansson & Montgomery, 2003). The positive relationship between conflict management styles and intercultural sensitivity should be explored in more detail, as it may provide valuable insight into the kind of intercultural interactions Millennials experience.

### **Hypotheses of Correlations between Intercultural Sensitivity and Conflict Management Styles**

Hypothesis 1 stated that Millennial intercultural sensitivity would positively correlate with yielding. This hypothesis was not supported. There was not a significant

relationship between intercultural sensitivity and yielding observed in the data collected for this study. While there was not a significant relationship found, the positive correlation trend observable in the data shows that there is possibly a positive correlation between intercultural sensitivity and yielding. These findings are consistent with other findings in this study, and further research looking specifically at this relationship is required in order to obtain statistically significant support.

Hypothesis 2 stated that Millennial intercultural sensitivity would positively correlate with compromising. This hypothesis was supported. A significant and positive relationship was found between intercultural sensitivity and compromising. While the significance of the relationship found was weak, it provides evidence to support the hypothesis. This conclusion, based on the findings of past research, supports that conflict management styles that reflect a concern for others are correlated with an individual's intercultural sensitivity. This relationship also sheds potentially interesting light onto how the conflict resolution behaviors of Millennials relate to their intercultural sensitivity.

Hypothesis 3 stated that millennial intercultural sensitivity will positive correlate with problem solving. This hypothesis was not supported. The results of testing the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and problem solving found a weak and insignificant, positive relationship. The observed trend towards a positive relationship points toward the potential of this hypothesis being true, but it also raises the question of why the relationship is not significant. Millennials reported problem solving as their least preferred conflict management style, which may be why the correlation was one of the weakest found in this study. This would be an interesting line of research to expand on,

exploring both why problem solving is the least preferred style and why it is not significantly correlated with intercultural sensitivity among Millennials.

Hypothesis 4 stated that Millennial intercultural sensitivity would negatively correlate with avoiding. This hypothesis was not supported. Avoiding was not found to negatively correlate with intercultural sensitivity. Contrary to what was expected, a weak insignificant positive relationship was found. This is not consistent with the findings made by Yu and Chen (2008). However, avoiding was the second most preferred conflict management style among the Millennials in this sample. This finding raises the intriguing question of how the strength of a preference for a conflict management style impacts intercultural sensitivity. This is something that should be further explored by future research.

Hypothesis 5 stated that Millennial intercultural sensitivity will negatively correlate with forcing. This hypothesis was supported. The data showed that forcing significantly and negatively correlated with intercultural sensitivity. This is consistent with the findings made by Yu and Chen (2008), and supports their conclusion that intercultural sensitivity increases concern for other. Forcing was the most preferred conflict management style reported, and this finding helps to provide understanding about how the preferred style of conflict management relates to the intercultural sensitivity of Millennials. Further research should explore if the preference for a forcing conflict management style can be influenced by increasing the intercultural sensitivity of Millennials.

The findings that did not support hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 are in contention with the conclusion that intercultural sensitivity increases the use of conflict management styles



that show a concern for others. The lack of support for these hypotheses is consistent with the seemingly fixed intercultural sensitivity found in this Millennial sample. Even though the hypotheses were not supported, the findings shed light onto how the conflict resolution preferences of Millennials relate to their intercultural sensitivity. The implications of the observed trend in the data is that intercultural sensitivity is positively correlated with conflict management styles that show moderate to high concern for self. The support of hypotheses 2 and 5 also indicates this. However, these findings show that intercultural sensitivity does not have the direct and positive relationship with conflict management styles that was expected to be found. The question of what effect intercultural sensitivity has on conflict management styles within Millennials remains largely unanswered due to the observed trends towards positive relationships lacking statistical significance.

### **Trends in Intercultural Sensitivity in the Millennial Generation**

Evaluating the different dimensions of the reported intercultural sensitivity of Millennials provides valuable insight. The Millennials in this study scored the highest on the dimension of Interaction Confidence ( $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). Interaction Confidence is essentially perceived self-esteem during intercultural interactions and the Millennial's self perceived confidence in intercultural contexts. This finding is consistent with research that has found confidence to be a prominent characteristic of Millennials (DeBard, 2004; Howe, & Strauss, 2007; Eisner, 2011). Confidence and self-esteem in intercultural interactions means that Millennials are willing to communicate, which could mean they have lower communication apprehension. Fear of communication results in people being less willing to communicate (Daly & Stafford, 1984; Edelman, 1986;

Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1991). Lu and Hsu (2008) found that if someone is apprehensive about talking with someone from a different culture, they also tend to be less willing to communicate cross-culturally. Millennials reporting Interaction Confidence as their highest ranked dimension of intercultural sensitivity can be extrapolated to mean that they are willing to communicate with people from different cultures. This is important in groups that are culturally diverse and could be a fruitful area for future research to explore.

The second highest scoring dimension was Interaction Attentiveness ( $M = 2.19$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ), and Interaction Engagement ( $M = 1.84$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ) had the third highest score. A possible explanation for this may be found when considering that the sample was made up of college students. It is possible that being in college has an impact on these scores because college students have to be attentive to and engage with a diverse population of professors, administrators, and students. As Millennials learn to effectively and productively interact with different people, the higher these levels should increase. It would be interesting to further explore these dimensions and determine why Millennials tend to score high in them.

The second lowest scoring dimension was Interaction Enjoyment ( $M = 1.67$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). Interaction Enjoyment pertains to the participants' positive or negative reaction towards communicating with someone from a different culture. This result shows that Millennials scored low in reacting positively to intercultural communication. Chen's (2010) research on the impact of intercultural sensitivity on ethnocentrism and intercultural communication found that a lack of intercultural communication apprehension was predicted by intercultural enjoyment. Chen argued that the

characteristics of intercultural enjoyment will lead to ethnorelativism rather than ethnocentrism. A low score in this dimension indicates that Millennials are not moving in the direction of ethnorelativism, which would have a positive impact on their intercultural interactions. Further research should be done to find out why Millennials are not scoring higher on Interaction Enjoyment since it is an important part of intercultural communication.

An unexpected finding for the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was that Respect for Cultural Differences ( $M = 1.52$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) was the lowest scoring dimension. McMurray (2007) completed research on non-Millennials and found Respect for Cultural Differences to be higher ranked than Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence, and Interaction Attentiveness. Deardoff (2004) conducted research on non-Millennials and found Respect for Cultural Differences to be one of the highest ranked components in her research on intercultural competence and internationalization. Respect for Cultural Differences is orientation towards or tolerance to other cultures and opinions. The vast variety of variables that may impact tolerance of other cultures makes it difficult to determine why the participants in this study reported it as their lowest scoring dimension of intercultural sensitivity.

It was notable to find that there was very little variance in the scores of the White Millennials and the Minority Millennials. Both groups scored approximately the same with each dimension and ranked them the same from lowest to highest. The White Millennials scored slightly higher on each of the dimensions, but the difference in score is minute and not statistically significant. This indicates that ethnicity may not be predictive of intercultural sensitivity, and that other variables are more impactful. It is

beyond the scope of this study and sample to make conclusive statements about how ethnicity impacts intercultural sensitivity within Millennials. Exploring differences in intercultural sensitivity with the different ethnicities living in the United States would provide insightful information about how ethnicity impacts intercultural interactions and should be looked at in more depth by future research.

Additionally, it was interesting to find that the U.S. Millennials had lower scores in each of the intercultural sensitivity dimensions compared to the International Millennials. The International Millennials had higher scores in each of the dimensions, with the exception of Interaction Attentiveness. The differences in scores between the two groups were not statistically significant in this study, but the difference in preferences shows that it should be explored in more detail by future research. It is both beyond the scope of this study and not possible to make conclusive statements based on the sample in this study due to its small size, which would not accurately represent International Millennials. However, the observed beginning of a trend towards Millennials from other cultures having higher intercultural sensitivity indicates that there may be something unique to U.S. Millennials that is resulting in lower scores. This should be explored in more depth as it would produce valuable information about variables that impact intercultural sensitivity among Millennials.

The implication that the Millennials in this study have low tolerance of other cultures or cultural opinions is interesting when put in juxtaposition to the highest scoring dimension of Interaction Confidence. It implies that Millennials have high regard for their own actions and behaviors but not for others from different cultures. It is also consistent with the finding of the second lowest scoring intercultural sensitivity

dimension being Interaction Enjoyment. The areas of Millennial respect for other cultures and intercultural interaction enjoyment should be studied in greater detail so the cause and implications can be better understood.

### **Impact of Experience on Intercultural Sensitivity**

Previous research has found that studying abroad was related to increased intercultural competence (Salisbury, 2011; Williams, 1999). These previous findings provided reasonable cause to believe that intercultural sensitivity would also be impacted by studying abroad. However, the findings of this study were interesting because they did not support this assumption about the impact of studying abroad. Among the Millennials who participated in this study, there was almost no difference between the intercultural sensitivity scores of those who had reported studying abroad and those who reported never studying abroad. This finding is intriguing because it shows that even though studying abroad may impact intercultural competence, as shown by Salisbury and Williams, it has a negligible impact on intercultural sensitivity. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale scores of the participants who had studied abroad and those who had not were analogous with one another, with the biggest difference in score being less than 0.05.

It appears that intercultural sensitivity is not as impacted by experiences as intercultural competence may be. It also indicates that intercultural sensitivity is more fixed and remains unchanged by immersion in a new country and culture. Based on this supposition, it may be extrapolated that exposure to a single distinctive culture potentially does not have the necessary weight to shift and change a Millennials ability to interact in an interculturally relevant way. It also indicates that studying abroad as an isolated

experience is not enough to significantly change a Millennial's moods, feelings, and attitudes enough to effect their intercultural sensitivity. Studying abroad was not found to increase the Millennials' orientation towards or tolerance of another's culture and opinion. In fact, Respect for Cultural Differences was the lowest scoring dimension among those who studied abroad, which was also found for those who did not study abroad.

These findings also raise the question of how chronological age and developmental age impact intercultural sensitivity. It is reasonable to assume that being young is also associated with less experience and education compared to someone who is older. The participants in this study were predominately towards the younger range of the Millennial Generation. Would these findings be the same in a study of Millennials who are part of the older age range of the generation? While no research has looked specifically at how age impacts intercultural sensitivity, intercultural competence is associated with increased experience and education.

Intercultural competence, the umbrella concept that encompasses intercultural sensitivity, has been shown to be acquired through experience and reflection, without the need for the intervention of teachers, mentors, and formal education. However, it would seem that intercultural sensitivity is more fixed and dependent upon some other, currently unidentified, individual variables personal to the Millennial. Indicative of this is the additional finding that Millennials who reported having formal training on intercultural communication also had strikingly similar scores as those who did not report having formal intercultural communication training. In both cases, experience and training did

not significantly change the intercultural sensitivity of the Millennials, and this is something that should be further explored and investigated.

### **Conflict Management Styles in the Millennial Generation**

Similar to understanding the intercultural sensitivity of Millennials, it is helpful to identify Millennial preferences for conflict management styles to understand their conflict resolution behavior. In this study, the highest scoring conflict management style was Forcing ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ). Forcing is a dominating style of conflict management and indicates a high concern for self and low concern for others. Forcing had a significant, negative relation to intercultural sensitivity and the dimension Respect for Cultural Differences. It is not surprising to find a relationship between low concern for others and low respect for others. This finding also is consistent with Respect for Cultural Differences being the lowest scoring intercultural sensitivity dimension. A preference for a conflict management style that shows a high concern for self supports commonly expressed perceptions of Millennials by other generations. Millennials are mockingly called “Generation Me,” with research showing that Millennials tend to have individualistic traits and generally show a low concern for collective interests, even ones that they care about (Twenge, Campbell & Freeman, 2012).

The second highest ranking conflict management style was Avoiding ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). Similar to Forcing, Avoiding shows low concern for other. However, Avoiding also shows low concern for self. There was no significant relationship found between Avoiding and any of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale dimensions. A possible explanation of the lack of a relationship is that intercultural sensitivity is a balance of both concern for self and concern for others. Yu and Chen (2008) argued that an

interculturally sensitive individual should have a concern for both their own needs and the needs of the other person. It is logical for an interculturally sensitive person to recognize that they should not disregard their own needs in order to accommodate the other person's need. Avoiding being the second highest conflict management style may indicate that Millennials prioritize maintaining group cohesion over other concerns when they have a conflict with a group member. The motivation behind why Millennials prefer to avoid should be studied in more detail since it can provide useful information about the goals that Millennials are trying to achieve while resolving conflict.

Yielding ( $M=2.59$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ) scored the third highest among the conflict management styles. There was a significant positive relationship found between Yielding and Interaction Confidence. Yielding is an asymmetrical intersection of high concern for others and low concern for self. De Dreu et al. (2001) described Yielding as being oriented towards acceptance and incorporation of others will making unilateral concessions, unconditional promises, and offering help. Based on this description, and Yu and Chen's assertion that an interculturally sensitive individual should have a concern for both their own needs and the needs of the other person, it is interesting that Yielding was not found to have a significant relationship with any of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale items. For comparison, Yu and Chen (2001) found a significant relationship between Yielding and most of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale items in their non-Millennial sample. Similar to Avoiding, this finding may indicate that Millennials value group concerns over their own concerns when they have a conflict with a group member.

Compromising ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) was the second lowest scoring conflict management style. Compromising is theoretically an even balance of concern for self and



concern for others. Druckman (1994) found that compromising is effected by attitude, experience, time pressure, and the initial distance between positions of the people in conflict with one another. Forcing and Avoiding scoring the highest indicates that Millennials have the necessary concern for self to use a Compromising style in conflicts, but they lack a balance of concern for others. This finding is made further intriguing since Compromising was found to have a significant, positive relationship with intercultural sensitivity. Yu and Chen's (2008) argument that an interculturally sensitive individual should have a concern for both their own needs and the needs of the other person supports that compromising should be correlated with intercultural sensitivity. It would seem that the lower a Millennial's intercultural sensitivity, the less likely they are to use a conflict management style that balances concern for self and concern for others.

It was unexpected to find that Problem Solving was the least preferred conflict management style ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ). Problem Solving is a style of managing conflict that is produced by a balanced combination of high concern for self and high concern for others. It is orientated towards reaching an agreement that satisfies the needs of both parties with the use of open communication (De Dreu et al., 2001). In this study, Problem Solving did not have a significant relationship with intercultural sensitivity, which was surprising. Problem Solving is similar to Compromising and it's lack of preference among Millennials should be examined. It is not surprising to find both Compromising and Problem Solving as the least preferred styles of conflict management.

It was interesting to find that the preferences for conflict management styles were similar for both the White Millennials and Minority Millennials. The scores were close to one another, and the differences were not statistically significant. This may indicate that

ethnicity is not a predicative variable for preference of conflict management styles, similar to how this study did not find it to be predictive of intercultural sensitivity. It can be observed that the Minority Millennials should a trend towards having a stronger preference for each of the conflict management styles, and finding out why would be beneficial for understanding the impact of ethnicity on conflict management styles preferences. It is beyond the scope of this study and sample size to draw conclusions about how ethnicity influences conflict management styles.

Another interesting finding was that the International Millennials reported a higher preference for problem solving and a stronger preference for forcing than the U.S. Millennial. The differences in scores were small and not statistically significant, and found that the International Millennials had higher scores in each of the dimensions, with the exception of Interaction Attentiveness. This difference in preferences should be explored in more detail. It is both beyond the scope of this study and not possible to make conclusive statements based on the small sample in this study, which would not accurately represent International Millennials. However, the observed beginning of a trend towards Millennials from other cultures having higher preference for problem raises questions about whether Millennials from other individualistic cultures also show the same tendencies in conflict management as the U.S. Millennials. This should be explored in more depth as it would produce valuable information about cultural differences that exist in preferences for conflict management styles among Millennials.

Overall, it would seem that Millennials tend to have a lower preference for strategies that include adapting to the concerns of the other party. However, the positive relationship between Compromising and intercultural sensitivity provides hope that this

can be changed through increased contact with different cultures, education, and training. Future research will benefit from exploring why Problem Solving has such a low preference among Millennials.

### **Implications of Preferred Conflict Management Style**

It was unexpected to finding that forcing was the preferred conflict management style for all Millennials, regardless of experience or gender. Anecdotally, many people perceive men and women to have different approaches to resolving conflict. However, the Millennials within this study reported almost identical preferences for forcing with gender not having a noticeable impact. It was equally interesting to find that studying abroad, formal conflict resolution training, and formal intercultural communication training also had negligible impacts on the preference for Forcing. These results call into question how Millennials are able to effectively navigate intercultural conflict since they prefer a conflict management style that does not take into consideration the needs of others or possibly cultural differences. However, knowing the conflict management styles that Millennials prefer to use provides valuable information about how to approach teaching, training, and interacting with Millennials. Understanding that there is a strong preference for Forcing provides the opportunity to adjust and calibrate interactions to have realistic expectations about Millennials in terms of expected conflict resolution behaviors.

The difference in Millennials from the United States compared to those studied in India also provides some insight into how culture impacts preferences for conflict management styles. Ting-Toomey and Takai (2006) argued that culture impacts an individual's conflict resolution preference, and that is seen in the differences in

preference seen in this study. In India, which is a collectivistic culture, Millennials tended to prefer a more collaborative approach to conflict resolution (Mukundan, Dhanya, and Saraswathyamma, 2013; Gupta, et al., 2016). Comparatively, the Millennials in this study showed a preference for individualistic approaches that show low concern for others and a tendency towards low respect for others. These also reflect the individualistic culture of the United States. It would seem that Millennials from the United States tend to have a lower preference for strategies that include focusing on the interests of others. Being independent and self-reliant are hallmarks of individualism, and appear to show through in the conflict management styles of Millennials. A more thorough look into how the culture of the United States impacts the preference of conflict management styles among Millennials would be a provocative line of research.

### **Implications for Group Conflict**

The findings of this study reveals that Millennials prefer to use strategies for conflict management that are low in concern for other. They also show that Millennial's intercultural sensitivity tends to be highest around their own perception of how they interact in an intercultural encounter and not their perception of the different culture. Though it was not statistically significant, the finding of a relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles is hopeful. It indicates that when intercultural sensitivity is increased, Millennials prefer to use conflict management styles that tend to be moderate to high in duality of concern for self and concern for others.

These findings provide some hope for increasing effective and beneficial conflict management in groups through the increase of intercultural sensitivity. Looking at the trends of the data, it can be seen that if intercultural sensitivity is increased, so are

conflict management styles that benefit groups, while decreasing destructive conflict management. However, there still remains the question of how to increase intercultural sensitivity since this study indicated that singular events of experience or education were enough. Future research focused on cultural awareness within groups should focus on determining what is required to increase intercultural sensitivity, whether that is accessibility of training, education, or exposure to diverse cultures.

### **Limitations**

As with most research, this study had a number of limitations. First, the findings may not be generalizable due to the sample not being representative. The sample was small and limited to being selected only from one university, which excluded anyone who was not actively attending the university. It should also be noted that not all students attending the university were provided with an equal opportunity to participate in the study because only 5,000 randomly selected students were contacted to be part of the study. The participants who were willing to take the time and effort to autonomously complete the survey may not be representative of typical Millennials.

Second, the sample was also predominately made up of participants who identified as white, and did not have a representative sample of minorities. Future research should include a representative sample of all ethnicities so that accurate information about each can be obtained. While research on intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles tend to examine cultural or national differences, it is possible that race may have an impact on these behaviors and should be examined further.

Third, the majority of the participants in this study reported their year of birth towards the end of the Millennials generation, with less than half being older than 25.

This may not be representative of the entire Millennial Generation ranging from 1981 to 1997. This should be corrected in future research by obtaining a uniform number of participants throughout the entire span of the Millennial Generation.

Fourth, this study used a volunteer sample, which presents the possibility of participant bias. There is very little evidence to suggest that the volunteer sample, or any of these other limitations, significantly impacted the results in such a way that rendered them useless. It would be ideal to repeat this study using a random sample to remove this concern. Despite this limitation, this study still provides valuable insight into the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in Millennials.

Fifth, the study used a self-report survey, which means that participant bias is likely to be present. This study relied on participants to accurately evaluate their own perceptions of how interculturally sensitive they are and how they react to conflict. Both of these concepts have social connotations attached to what is socially acceptable, and this may have influenced how participants reported their answers. The inability to independently or objectively verify answers given by participants means that there is no way to safeguard against participant bias influencing the data. Selective memory, attribution error, and exaggeration may have impacted the information reported. Direct and objective observation of participants would provide more accurate results about what kind of conflict management styles someone is using or how interculturally sensitive their behavior towards someone else is.

Sixth, there is a narrow foundation of existing literature available on the relationship of intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles. Without a solid

foundation of past research to help provide an understanding about the relationship between the two concepts, it is difficult to determine if the results that have been obtained are abnormal or consistent for Millennials. A lack of shared knowledge around the relationship of these concepts makes it difficult to make generalizations based on what has been found in this study alone. This can only be remedied by more research looking at these concepts within the context of the Millennial Generation.

Finally, the measure used to collect data on conflict management styles, The DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling, is a measurement that was developed in a foreign language and then translated into English. As a result, some of the statements were worded strangely and may have confused participants. It would be ideal for future research to use a measurement of conflict management style that has been specifically developed for use in the United States.

### **Future Research**

This subject is very heuristic and this study is just a stepping stone used to examine the relationship between cultural knowledge and how people manage conflict. There is a plethora of future directions for research on this subject. Organizations, education institutions, and researchers in social behavior all can gain valuable insight into navigating conflict management in culturally diverse settings by further researching this subject. Future research can expand this present study to use more intensive and in-depth measures of intercultural sensitivity while looking at each individual conflict management style. Future research should also examine the same relationship between conflict management styles and intercultural sensitivity in the new generation, Generation Z, which is made up of those born in the late 1990s.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

In order to contribute to the intercultural sensitivity literature, the study aimed to fill various research gaps in the literature about Millennials, intercultural sensitivity, and conflict management styles. So far it was unknown within the literature what kind of relationship existed between intercultural sensitivity and Millennials preference for conflict management styles. The findings of this study demonstrated that there is not a statistically significant relationship, but a positive relationship between the two concepts was observed. The trends observed among the Millennials in this study also provides valuable insight into their behaviors surrounding conflict management styles and intercultural sensitivity.

The United States is a fast-paced country that is quickly developing as technology transforms the way that people live. Technology cannot replace the face-to-face and interpersonal interactions that individuals have on a day-to-day basis. The findings of this study are important to organizations, sports teams, and researchers looking to understand social behavior among the Millennial Generation. It shows that there is a possibility that increased intercultural sensitivity can result in conflict management styles that show a concern for others rather than a focus on the concerns of the individual. Understanding Millennials conflict management is beneficial to those interested in changing how conflict is managed and developing a more culturally aware group. Employers, teachers, and parents alike have an invested interest in understanding the social behaviors of younger generations.



Because of the increasing cultural diversity occurring throughout society, it is important that conflict is effectively and constructively managed. Generational differences impact interactions, influence communication, and have an effect on interpersonal relationships. Misconceptions about how different generations behave compared to one another can negatively influence how someone interacts and communicates with someone who they perceive to be different. This complexity is further compounded with the added dimension of cultural differences.

Seeking knowledge and information about Millennials is one of the first steps to avoid negative misconceptions and improve interactions. Understanding similarities and differences between generations and cultures is beneficial to everyone involved. As Millennials are entering into higher education and the workforce, their interpersonal and group interactions are becoming more meaningful. Millennials are now becoming adults and parents in one of the most culturally and generationally mixed societies. It is an instrumental piece of information to know that increasing intercultural sensitivity may have an impact on preferences for how conflict is managed.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY SCALE

Below is a series of statements concerning intercultural communication. There are no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Thank you for your cooperation.

5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree (Please put the number corresponding to your answer in the blank before the statement)

- \_\_\_ 1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.
- \_\_\_ 3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
- \_\_\_ 12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.
- \_\_\_ 17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.
- \_\_\_ 19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.
- \_\_\_ 20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.
- \_\_\_ 21. I often give positive responses to my culturally-different counterpart during our interaction.
- \_\_\_ 22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
- \_\_\_ 23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.
- \_\_\_ 24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.

(Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 are reverse-coded before summing the 24 items.

Interaction Engagement items are 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24, Respect for Cultural Differences items are 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20, Interaction Confidence items are 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10, Interaction Enjoyment items are 9, 12, and 15, and Interaction Attentiveness items are 14, 17, and 19.)

## APPENDIX B

### THE DUTCH TEST FOR CONFLICT HANDLING

When I have a conflict at work, I do the following:

#### **Yielding**

1. I give in to the wishes of the other party.
2. I concur with the other party.
3. I try to accommodate the other party.
4. I adapt to the other parties' goals and interests.

#### **Compromising**

5. I try to realize a middle-of-the-road solution.
6. I emphasize that we have to find a compromise solution.
7. I insist we both give in a little.
8. I strive whenever possible towards a fifty-fifty compromise.

#### **Forcing**

9. I push my own point of view.
10. I search for gains.
11. I fight for a good outcome for myself.
12. I do everything to win.

#### **Problem solving**

13. I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and the other party.
14. I stand for my own and other's goals and interests.
15. I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution.
16. I work out a solution that serves my own as well as other's interests as good as possible.

#### **Avoiding**

17. I avoid a confrontation about our differences.
18. I avoid differences of opinion as much as possible.
19. I try to make differences loom less severe.
20. I try to avoid a confrontation with the other.

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