



Personality Traits, Perceived Stress, and Conflict Management Styles among Early Career Professionals: A Correlational Study

Jahanavi Pandey¹, Prof. (Dr.) Nandita Tripathi², Dr. Rajeev Semwal³

Student M.A. Clinical Psychology ¹, Professor ², Associate Professor³

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied sciences

Amity University Greater Noida (U.P.)

Abstract

The present study examines the relationship between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles among young adults in the early stages of their professional careers. The transition into professional life introduces significant psychological and interpersonal challenges; however, limited research has explored the combined influence of these variables within early career populations.

A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design was employed, involving a sample of 100 young adults aged 18–26 years. Data were collected using standardized instruments, including the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), and the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI).

The findings revealed that neuroticism was positively and significantly associated with perceived stress ($r = .331, p < .01$), indicating that individuals with higher emotional instability reported greater stress levels. Openness to experience ($r = .262, p < .01$) and agreeableness ($r = .236, p < .05$) were also positively related to perceived stress, whereas extraversion and conscientiousness showed no significant associations. In terms of conflict management, conscientiousness demonstrated a significant positive relationship with the compromising style ($r = .207, p < .05$). However, perceived stress was not significantly related to any of the conflict management styles.

Overall, the findings suggest that personality traits—particularly neuroticism—play a stronger role in shaping perceived stress than in influencing conflict management behaviour among early career professionals. The study highlights the importance of personality awareness, stress management interventions, and conflict resolution training in supporting employee well-being and workplace adjustment.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Perceived Stress, Conflict Management Styles, Young Adults, Early Career Professionals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work plays a central role in shaping an individual's economic participation, identity, psychological well-being, and social relationships. In contemporary organizational settings characterized by globalization, technological advancement, and evolving work structures, employees are required to adapt to dynamic roles, increasing performance expectations, and complex interpersonal interactions. For young adults entering their first professional roles, this transition can be particularly challenging, as they often encounter role ambiguity, limited autonomy, performance pressure, and uncertainty regarding workplace expectations.

These early career challenges may elevate perceived stress and influence how individuals respond to interpersonal conflict in organizational settings. While personality traits and perceived stress have been extensively studied in isolation, limited research has examined their combined influence on conflict management styles, particularly among early career professionals in the Indian context.

The present study is grounded in the Transactional Model of Stress proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which conceptualizes stress as a result of cognitive appraisal processes, wherein individuals evaluate environmental demands in relation to their coping resources. Early career professionals may perceive workplace demands as overwhelming due to limited experience and coping capacity, thereby increasing stress levels.

Personality traits, as explained by the Five-Factor Model (McCrae & Costa, 1999), play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to workplace demands. The five major dimensions—extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience—are associated with distinct emotional and behavioural tendencies. For instance, neuroticism is linked to emotional instability and heightened stress sensitivity, whereas conscientiousness is associated with self-regulation and adaptive coping. Extraversion, agreeableness, and openness influence social interaction, cooperation, and flexibility in interpersonal contexts.

Perceived stress refers to the extent to which individuals appraise situations in their lives as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overwhelming. Unlike objective stressors, perceived stress emphasizes subjective interpretation, meaning that individuals exposed to similar conditions may experience different levels of stress depending on their appraisal processes. In early career settings, factors such as workload, role ambiguity, and performance expectations may significantly influence stress perception.

Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable aspect of organizational life, arising from differences in goals, values, and communication styles. The Thomas–Kilmann framework identifies five conflict management styles—competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating—based on varying levels of assertiveness and cooperativeness. The choice of conflict style may be influenced by both personality traits and situational factors. Early career professionals, due to limited experience and hierarchical constraints, may be more inclined toward avoidance or accommodation rather than assertive conflict resolution strategies.

Despite the theoretical relevance of these constructs, limited empirical research has examined the combined relationship between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles among early career professionals. The present study seeks to address this gap by exploring how these variables interact, thereby contributing to a better understanding of workplace behaviour and adjustment among young employees.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles has been widely explored in psychological and organizational research. However, these constructs have often been studied independently, with limited attention to their combined influence, particularly among early career professionals. The present review synthesizes existing literature across three major domains: (1) personality traits and perceived stress, (2) personality traits and conflict management styles, and (3) perceived stress and conflict behaviour.

Personality Traits and Perceived Stress

A substantial body of research indicates that personality traits play a critical role in shaping how individuals perceive and respond to stress. Among the Big Five traits, neuroticism has consistently emerged as a strong positive predictor of perceived stress. Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, (2007) found that individuals high in neuroticism reported significantly higher stress levels, whereas traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness were negatively associated with stress. Similar findings were reported by Guan et al. (2024), who demonstrated that perceived stress mediates the relationship between personality traits and health outcomes, with neuroticism increasing vulnerability to stress-related conditions.

Research by Jisna (2025) further supports this relationship, indicating that individuals high in neuroticism tend to engage in maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance and rumination, thereby amplifying perceived stress. Likewise, Moberg, (2001) observed that individuals with higher neuroticism and stress levels exhibited poorer psychological well-being. In contrast, extraversion and conscientiousness are often associated with better stress management due to their links with positive affect, social engagement, and self-regulation.

However, not all findings are consistent. Some studies have reported that openness and agreeableness may also be positively related to stress under certain conditions, particularly when individuals are exposed to unfamiliar environments or interpersonal pressures (De Dreu et al., 2001). These variations suggest that the relationship between personality and stress may be influenced by contextual factors, including life stage and environmental demands.

Personality Traits and Conflict Management Styles

Personality traits have also been widely studied in relation to conflict management behaviour. The Big Five framework provides a useful lens for understanding individual differences in conflict response patterns. Research consistently shows that conscientiousness and agreeableness are associated with constructive conflict resolution strategies. For instance, Gurung and Sethi (2025) found that individuals high in these traits were more likely to engage in cooperative and problem-solving approaches, leading to better interpersonal outcomes.

Similarly, Soomro et al. (2023) reported that traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were positively associated with integrating and compromising conflict styles. Verwey et al. (2023) also observed that neuroticism was linked to avoidance, while agreeableness predicted accommodating behaviour. These findings highlight that personality traits influence both assertiveness and cooperativeness in conflict situations.

However, some studies suggest that the relationship between personality and conflict management is not always strong or consistent. Völker et al. (2025) found that cognitive ability and situational judgment may play a more significant role than personality in determining effective conflict resolution. Additionally, Espinoza et al. (2023) emphasized that personality facets may provide a more precise understanding of conflict behaviour than broad trait dimensions.

Importantly, much of this research has been conducted among experienced professionals, students, or individuals in relational contexts. There is limited evidence focusing specifically on early career professionals, whose conflict behaviour may be influenced by additional factors such as organizational hierarchy, role ambiguity, and lack of experience.

Perceived Stress and Conflict Management

The relationship between perceived stress and conflict management has also been examined, although findings remain mixed. High levels of stress are generally associated with reduced emotional regulation, lower patience, and increased likelihood of defensive or avoidant responses to conflict. Yosza and Sovitriana (2025) found that higher perceived stress was linked to less constructive conflict resolution and poorer relational outcomes among dual-earner couples.

Similarly, Patil and Babu (2024) reported that perceived stress negatively influenced conflict management effectiveness and work–life balance, particularly among IT professionals. These findings suggest that stress can impair individuals' ability to engage in collaborative and solution-oriented conflict behaviours.

However, these studies are largely based on experienced professionals or relational contexts rather than early career populations. In organizational settings characterized by strong hierarchies and defined norms, individuals—especially those at the beginning of their careers—may regulate their conflict behaviour in accordance with external expectations, regardless of their stress levels. This indicates that the influence of stress on conflict management may be moderated by contextual and organizational factors.

Research Gap

Although previous research has established significant relationships between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles, these constructs have rarely been examined together within a single framework. Moreover, most existing studies have focused on students, clinical populations, or experienced professionals, with limited attention given to young adults in the early stages of their careers.

Early career professionals represent a unique population characterized by transition, uncertainty, and adjustment to organizational environments. Their stress experiences and conflict behaviours may differ from those of more experienced individuals due to factors such as limited autonomy, hierarchical constraints, and evolving professional identity.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the combined relationships between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles among early career professionals. By integrating these variables, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of workplace behaviour during the initial stages of career development.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aim of the Study

The primary aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles among young adults in the early stages of their professional careers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between perceived stress and conflict management styles among young adults in their initial professional roles.
2. To examine the relationship between personality traits and conflict management styles among young adults in their initial professional roles.
3. To examine the relationship between personality traits and perceived stress among young adults in their initial professional roles.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between perceived stress and conflict management styles among young adults in their initial professional roles.

H2: There is a significant relationship between personality traits and conflict management styles among young adults in their initial professional roles.

H3: There is a significant relationship between personality traits and perceived stress among young adults in their initial professional roles.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationships among personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles. A correlational approach was considered appropriate as the study aimed to identify the direction and strength of relationships between variables without manipulating them.

Data were collected at a single point in time, and Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was used to examine associations between variables. The study does not establish causality, and findings should be interpreted as indicative of relationships rather than cause-and-effect mechanisms.

Participants

The sample consisted of 100 young adults aged between 18 and 26 years who were in the early stages of their professional careers. For the purpose of this study, early career professionals were defined as individuals who had recently entered the workforce (within the first 1–3 years of employment), including full-time employees, part-time workers, interns, and trainees.

Participants were recruited from diverse educational and professional backgrounds to ensure variability in workplace experiences. All participants voluntarily consented to participate in the study.

Sampling Technique

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed. Participants who met the inclusion criteria and were accessible to the researcher were recruited through educational institutions, professional networks, and online platforms.

While this method was practical and suitable for exploratory research, it may introduce sampling bias and limit the generalizability of findings.

Inclusion Criteria

- Young adults aged between 18–26 years
- Individuals currently engaged in early career roles (within the first 1–3 years of employment)
- Participants willing to provide informed consent

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals outside the specified age range
- Participants not currently engaged in any professional role
- Incomplete or invalid questionnaire responses

Data Collection Instruments

Three standardized psychological instruments were used to collect data for the study:

1. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)

Perceived stress was measured using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983). The scale assesses the degree to which individuals perceive situations in their lives as stressful, unpredictable, and uncontrollable over the past month.

Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from: 0 = Never to 4 = Very Often

Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived stress. The scale has demonstrated good reliability and validity across diverse populations.

2. Big Five Inventory – 10 (BFI-10)

Personality traits were assessed using the Big Five Inventory–10 (BFI-10) developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). The instrument measures five personality dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience.

The scale consists of 10 items, with two items representing each personality trait. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from:

1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree

Certain items are reverse scored prior to analysis. Trait scores were computed by averaging the two items corresponding to each personality dimension.

3. Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)

Conflict management styles were assessed using the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument developed by Thomas and Kilmann (1974). The instrument identifies five conflict management styles:

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Participants select responses that best reflect their typical behaviour in conflict situations. Scores are computed to determine dominant conflict management tendencies.

Reliability of the Instruments

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Perceived Stress Scale demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .81$). The Big Five Inventory showed acceptable reliability for a brief measure ($\alpha = .71$). The Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .76$).

These values indicate that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for use in the present study.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using an online survey administered through Google Forms. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by not collecting any personally identifiable information. The survey included sections on perceived stress, personality traits, and conflict management styles, along with clear instructions for completion.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical guidelines for psychological research. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Means, standard deviations, and reliability coefficients were computed for all variables.

Pearson's product–moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between:

- Perceived stress and conflict management styles
- Personality traits and conflict management styles

- Personality traits and perceived stress

The level of significance was set at $p < .05$.

4. RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Prior to examining the relationships outlined in the research objectives and hypotheses, descriptive statistics for the key variables were computed. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's α) for personality traits (Big Five Inventory; BFI), perceived stress (Perceived Stress Scale; PSS), and conflict management styles (Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument; TKCI).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Personality Traits, Perceived Stress, and Conflict Management Styles (N = 100)

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's α
Perceived Stress	100	19.22	5.02	.81
Extraversion	100	3.93	1.04	.72
Agreeableness	100	5.94	1.14	.69
Conscientiousness	100	5.67	1.28	.74
Neuroticism	100	5.54	1.34	.77
Openness to Experience	100	5.97	0.98	.70
Competing	100	3.42	1.97	.71
Collaborating	100	3.13	1.46	.74
Compromising	100	3.63	1.44	.79
Avoiding	100	6.55	2.01	.73
Accommodating	100	3.41	1.47	.72

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the levels of perceived stress, personality traits, and conflict management styles among early career professionals. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for all variables.

The results indicated that the mean perceived stress score was 19.22 (SD = 5.02), suggesting a moderate level of stress among participants. The Perceived Stress Scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$).

Among personality traits, openness to experience (M = 5.97, SD = 0.98) and agreeableness (M = 5.94, SD = 1.14) showed the highest mean scores, followed by conscientiousness (M = 5.67, SD = 1.28) and neuroticism (M = 5.54, SD = 1.34). Extraversion had a comparatively lower mean (M = 3.93, SD = 1.04). All personality dimensions demonstrated acceptable reliability.

With respect to conflict management styles, avoiding emerged as the most frequently used style (M = 6.55, SD = 2.01), followed by compromising (M = 3.63, SD = 1.44) and accommodating (M = 3.41, SD = 1.47). Competing (M = 3.42, SD = 1.97) and collaborating (M = 3.13, SD = 1.46) were less frequently

used. These findings indicate a tendency among early career professionals to avoid direct confrontation in conflict situations.

Table 2

Correlation between Perceived Stress and Conflict Management Styles (N = 100)

Variables	N	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived Stress – Competing	100	-0.138	.171
Perceived Stress – Collaborating	100	-0.168	.095
Perceived Stress – Compromising	100	0.045	.658
Perceived Stress – Avoiding	100	0.085	.400
Perceived Stress – Accommodating	100	0.036	.726

To examine the first objective, Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between perceived stress and the five conflict management styles.

The results indicated that perceived stress was not significantly related to any of the conflict management styles. The correlations with competing ($r = -.138$, $p > .05$) and collaborating ($r = -.168$, $p > .05$) were weak and negative, whereas the relationships with compromising ($r = .045$, $p > .05$), avoiding ($r = .085$, $p > .05$), and accommodating ($r = .036$, $p > .05$) were weak and positive.

Since all p-values exceeded the threshold of significance ($p < .05$), the findings do not support Hypothesis 1. This suggests that perceived stress does not significantly influence the choice of conflict management styles among early career professionals.

Although the relationships were not statistically significant, the direction of correlations suggests that higher stress levels may slightly reduce assertive and collaborative behaviours while marginally increasing avoidant tendencies. However, these associations are too weak to draw meaningful conclusions.

These findings differ from earlier studies by Yosza and Sovitriana (2025) and Patil and Babu (2024), which indicated that higher stress was associated with less constructive conflict management. The absence of significant relationships in the present study may be due to the characteristics of early career professionals, who may rely more on organizational norms, hierarchy, and workplace expectations than on their immediate stress levels when responding to conflict.

Table 3

Correlation between Personality Traits and Conflict Management Styles (N = 100)

Variables	N	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Extraversion – Competing	100	0.069	.496
Extraversion – Collaborating	100	-0.021	.839
Extraversion – Compromising	100	0.030	.768
Extraversion – Avoiding	100	-0.044	.661
Extraversion – Accommodating	100	-0.074	.466
Agreeableness – Competing	100	-0.060	.551
Agreeableness – Collaborating	100	-0.019	.848
Agreeableness – Compromising	100	0.023	.819
Agreeableness – Avoiding	100	-0.179	.075
Agreeableness – Accommodating	100	0.099	.328
Conscientiousness – Competing	100	-0.013	.901
Conscientiousness – Collaborating	100	-0.074	.464
Conscientiousness – Compromising	100	0.207	.039
Conscientiousness – Avoiding	100	-0.078	.440
Conscientiousness – Accommodating	100	0.046	.651
Neuroticism – Competing	100	-0.006	.949
Neuroticism – Collaborating	100	-0.067	.506
Neuroticism – Compromising	100	0.094	.350
Neuroticism – Avoiding	100	-0.082	.419

Neuroticism – Accommodating	100	0.020	.845
Openness – Competing	100	-0.035	.727
Openness – Collaborating	100	-0.153	.130
Openness – Compromising	100	-0.137	.174
Openness – Avoiding	100	0.091	.369
Openness – Accommodating	100	-0.012	.902

To address the second objective, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between personality traits and conflict management styles.

The results revealed that most personality traits were not significantly associated with conflict management styles. However, conscientiousness showed a statistically significant positive correlation with the compromising style ($r = .207, p < .05$). This indicates that individuals with higher levels of conscientiousness are more likely to adopt a balanced and solution-oriented approach to conflict.

No significant relationships were observed between extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, or openness to experience and the conflict management styles.

Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is partially supported, as only one significant relationship was identified.

This finding is consistent with previous research by Gurung and Sethi (2025) and Soomro et al. (2023), which indicated that conscientiousness is associated with constructive approaches to conflict resolution. However, the absence of significant relationships for the remaining personality traits suggests that conflict management among young adults in their initial professional roles may be influenced more strongly by contextual factors such as organizational hierarchy, workplace culture, and lack of professional experience than by personality alone.

Table 4

Correlation between Personality Traits and Perceived Stress (N = 100)

Variables	N	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Extraversion – Perceived Stress	100	-0.022	.826
Agreeableness – Perceived Stress	100	0.236	.018
Conscientiousness – Perceived Stress	100	-0.070	.487
Neuroticism – Perceived Stress	100	0.331	.001

Openness – Perceived Stress	100	0.262	.008
--------------------------------	-----	-------	------

To examine the third objective, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between personality traits and perceived stress.

The findings indicated that neuroticism was positively and significantly correlated with perceived stress ($r = .331$, $p < .01$), suggesting that individuals with higher emotional instability tend to experience greater levels of stress.

Openness to experience also showed a significant positive relationship with perceived stress ($r = .262$, $p < .01$), while agreeableness demonstrated a smaller but significant positive correlation ($r = .236$, $p < .05$).

In contrast, extraversion ($r = -.022$, $p > .05$) and conscientiousness ($r = -.070$, $p > .05$) did not show significant relationships with perceived stress.

These findings support Hypothesis 3, indicating that certain personality traits—particularly neuroticism—are significantly associated with perceived stress among early career professionals.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the relationships among personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles among young adults in the early stages of their professional careers. This phase of career development is characterized by adjustment to new roles, evolving expectations, and complex interpersonal dynamics, making it a critical context for understanding workplace behaviour.

The descriptive findings indicated a moderate level of perceived stress among participants, suggesting that early career professionals commonly experience psychological pressure while adapting to workplace demands. This aligns with the transitional nature of early employment, where individuals often encounter role ambiguity, performance expectations, and limited decision-making authority. In terms of personality traits, higher mean scores for openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness reflect adaptability, cooperation, and responsibility among participants. However, the presence of relatively elevated neuroticism is noteworthy, as it indicates susceptibility to emotional instability and stress.

A key finding of the study was that avoiding emerged as the most frequently used conflict management style. This suggests that early career professionals may prefer to withdraw from or delay conflict situations rather than engage directly. This tendency can be explained by organizational hierarchy, lack of experience, fear of negative evaluation, and the desire to maintain workplace harmony. Unlike experienced professionals, early career individuals may lack the confidence or authority required to assert their viewpoints, leading to greater reliance on avoidance or accommodation strategies.

Contrary to expectations, perceived stress was not significantly associated with any of the conflict management styles. This finding suggests that conflict behaviour in early career contexts may be influenced more by situational and organizational factors than by immediate emotional states. Workplace norms, power dynamics, and role expectations may constrain how individuals respond to conflict, regardless of their stress levels. This finding diverges from earlier studies conducted in relational or managerial contexts, where stress has been shown to influence conflict behaviour more directly. The result highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping workplace interactions among young professionals.

With regard to personality traits and conflict management styles, the study found a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and the compromising style. This indicates that individuals who are organized, responsible, and goal-oriented are more likely to adopt balanced and practical approaches to conflict resolution. Conscientious individuals may prioritize long-term outcomes and professional relationships, making compromise a preferred strategy. However, the absence of significant relationships for other personality traits suggests that personality alone may not strongly determine conflict behaviour in early career settings. Instead, situational constraints such as hierarchy, organizational culture, and limited professional experience may play a more dominant role.

The most robust finding of the study was the significant positive relationship between neuroticism and perceived stress. This result is consistent with the Transactional Model of Stress, which emphasizes the role of individual appraisal processes in stress perception. Individuals high in neuroticism are more likely to interpret situations as threatening, uncontrollable, or overwhelming, thereby experiencing higher levels of stress. This finding is also strongly supported by previous research, which consistently identifies neuroticism as a key predictor of stress vulnerability.

In addition, openness to experience and agreeableness were found to be positively associated with perceived stress. While these relationships are less consistently reported in the literature, they may be explained by the characteristics of these traits. Individuals high in openness may be more sensitive to new and complex environments, which can increase stress during the transition into professional life. Similarly, agreeable individuals may experience higher stress due to their tendency to prioritize interpersonal harmony and avoid conflict, leading to internalized pressure in challenging situations.

In contrast, extraversion and conscientiousness did not show significant relationships with perceived stress. This suggests that, during the early stages of career development, external workplace demands may override the protective effects typically associated with these traits. Even individuals who are socially confident or highly organized may experience comparable levels of stress due to unfamiliar work environments and adjustment challenges.

Overall, the findings suggest that personality traits play a more significant role in shaping internal psychological experiences, such as perceived stress, than external behavioural responses, such as conflict management styles, among early career professionals. While neuroticism emerges as a key predictor of stress, conflict management behaviour appears to be more strongly influenced by contextual and organizational factors.

The study contributes to the existing literature by integrating personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles within a single framework, particularly in the underexplored context of early career professionals. It highlights the need to consider both individual differences and situational influences when understanding workplace behaviour, thereby offering valuable insights for organizational psychology and human resource practices.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationships between personality traits, perceived stress, and conflict management styles among early career professionals and found that individuals experience moderate stress during the transition into professional life. Neuroticism emerged as a significant predictor of perceived stress, while openness and agreeableness also showed positive associations, indicating that personality plays a key role in shaping internal psychological experiences. Avoidance was identified as the most commonly used conflict management style, suggesting that young professionals tend to avoid direct confrontation due to factors such as limited experience and organizational hierarchy. Conscientiousness was positively associated with a compromising approach to conflict, reflecting a balanced and solution-oriented tendency. Notably, perceived stress was not significantly related to conflict management styles, indicating that workplace behaviour in early career stages may be influenced more by situational and organizational factors than by individual emotional states. Overall, the study highlights the importance of personality awareness, supportive work environments, and targeted interventions to enhance stress management and conflict resolution among early career professionals.

REFERENCES

1. Connor-Smith, J. K., & Flachsbart, C. (2007). Relations between personality and coping: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(6), 1080–1107.
2. De Dreu, C. K. W., Harinck, F., & Van Vianen, A. E. M. (2001). Conflict and performance in groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 382–392.
3. Espinoza, J. A., Johnson, M., & Smith, L. (2023). Personality facets and conflict management styles: A large-scale examination beyond the Big Five domains. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 203, 112034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2022.112034>
4. Guan, Y., Zhang, H., Li, Q., & Wang, X. (2024). Personality traits, perceived stress, and suboptimal health status: Evidence from a national survey across Chinese cities. *BMC Public Health*, 24, 1045.
5. Gurung, S., & Sethi, R. (2025). Big Five personality traits, conflict resolution styles, and relationship satisfaction among young adults. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 42(2), 315–329.
6. Jisna, M. (2025). Big five personality traits, perceived stress, and coping strategies among older adults. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 101(2), 210–223.
7. Moberg, P. J. (2001). Linking conflict strategy to the Five-Factor Model. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 12(1), 47–68.
8. Naheed, S. (2025). Personality traits, emotional intelligence, and servant leadership as predictors of conflict management styles: Evidence from the telecom sector. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 14(1), 52–67.
8. Patil, R., & Babu, S. (2024). Emotional intelligence, conflict management, perceived stress, and work–life balance among IT professionals. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 35(6), 1102–1121.
9. Soomro, B. A., Shah, N., & Baloch, M. (2023). Personality traits and conflict management styles among academic leaders in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 37(5), 1041–1055.
10. Verwey, J., Haupt, T., & Smallwood, J. (2023). Personality traits and conflict management styles among quantity surveyors in South Africa. *Journal of Construction Economics and Building*, 23(2), 65–80.
11. Völker, M., Schmid, J., & Kauffeld, S. (2025). Cognitive ability, personality, and conflict management: Examining situational judgment in workplace conflicts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 110(2), 315–329.
12. Yosza, R., & Sovitriana, R. (2025). Constructive conflict resolution, perceived stress, and marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 39(1), 56–67.