Examination of the Relationships Between Diversity Appreciation, Self-Monitoring and Cooperative Conflict Management

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Abstract: This research study examines the mediating influence of self-monitoring (SM) on the relationship between diversity appreciation (DA) and cooperative conflict management (CCM). Two hundred and twenty-one undergraduate business students completed self-assessment measures of DA and SM, and identified a close associate who completed an observer version of the problem-solving component of the Dutch conflict management style scale. Product moment correlations were used to examine the hypothesized relationships between CCM and both DA and SM, and the Hayes process and the Sobel test were used to test the hypothesis that SM mediates the relationship between DA and CCM. CCM was significantly correlated with both DA ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$) and SM ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). DA was significantly correlated with SM ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). Both the Hayes process and Sobel test ($Z = 3.29$, $p < 0.001$) confirmed that SM partially mediated the relationship between DA and CCM. Educators and practitioners need to be aware of the influence of DA and SM on CCM. Development activities that integrate diversity appreciation, sensitive responses toward the expressed behavior of others, and appropriate modification of self-presentation are likely to promote a cooperative approach to conflict management. This is the first study to examine the interrelationships between DA, SM and CCM. The results highlight the importance of promoting both diversity appreciation and self-monitoring as part of the process of encouraging more cooperative conflict management and strengthening the link between diversity and performance.

Key words: conflict management, cooperative conflict management style, diversity appreciation, attitude toward diversity, self-monitoring, self-awareness, self-regulation

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1. Introduction

Research on the diversity-performance relationship (DPR) has produced mixed results suggesting that the nomological network linking diversity to performance has not been sufficiently specified (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Ely & Thomas, 2020; Guillaume, Dawson, Woods, Sacramento, & West, 2013; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Jackson, Joshi & Ehrhard, 2003; Kochan et al., 2003; Webber & Donahue, 2001). The categorization-elaboration model (CEM) (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004) explains the mixed research results by means of two independent but interacting processes. Diversity constrains dysfunctional majority influences and supports

information elaboration which improves decision-making (process 1) (Jackson, 1996; Nemeth & Nemeth-Brown, 2003; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004, Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Diversity may also encourage social categorization, in-out group perceptions, and dysfunctional team dynamics arising from interpersonal resistance, rejection, and exclusion (process 2) (Homan et al., 2008; Mitchell, Parker, & Giles, 2011; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Woehr et al., 2013).

Improved specification of the diversity-performance nomological network depends on identifying key variables that reliably mediate and moderate the DPR (Hofhuis, van der Zee & Otten, 2015; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; Lau & Murnighan, 1998; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Vodosek, 2005). Research suggests that both cooperative conflict management (Jehn, Bezrukova & Thatcher; 2007; Kooij-de Bode et al., 2008; Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen, 1993) and diversity appreciation (attitude toward diversity) (Hofhuis, van der Rijt & Vlug, 2016; Nakui, Paulus, & Van der Zee, 2011) are influential within the nomological network linking diversity to performance. Both appear to improve engagement and knowledge sharing while preventing or constraining socially disruptive emotional experiences of differences (Hofhuis, van der Rijt & Vlug, 2016; Homan et al., 2007; Nakui, Paulus & van der Zee, 2011; Van Dick et al., 2008). Research also suggests both a link between diversity appreciation and cooperative conflict management (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Ayub & Jehn; 2014; Brazzel, 2003; Lui et al., 2020; Samarah, Seetharaman & Mykytyn, 2004), and a relationship between self-monitoring and both cooperative conflict management (Jang, Han & Hur, 2007; Ohbuchi & Fukushima, 1997; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991) and working effectively with dissimilar others (Anderson, 1987; Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982; Kurpis, 2012; Milliken, Bartel & Kurtzberg, 2003; Roberson & Williamson, 2012). This research study integrates the theory of expressive control into the categorization-elaboration model by examining the mediating influence of self-monitoring on the relationship between diversity appreciation and cooperative conflict management. A search of the popular research publication databases produced no research on the interrelationships between diversity appreciation, self-monitoring, and cooperative conflict management.

1.1 Dependent Variable — Problem-Solving Conflict Management Approach

Conflict is defined as incompatible actions or states, where a person or group's actions or state is experienced as interfering with the preferences of others (Tjosvold, 2006). Conflicts occur in a variety of contexts including both competitive and cooperative situations (Tjosvold & Poon, 1998), and there are various types of conflict including task, process, and relationship conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1997). Conflict participants have a variety of orientations toward the conflict management process, including avoidant, submissive, aggressive, and cooperative approaches (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Klumer & Nauta, 2001). Conflict management orientations are defined as consistent cognitive and behavioral patterns used to frame and manage conflicts (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Thomas, 1976; Van de Vliert, 1997). The identification of conflict management orientations emerged out of dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) and the theory of cooperation and conflict (Deutsch, 1973). These theories argue that conflict management is a function of high or low concern for self, combined with high or low concern for others. High concern for self and others produces a problem-solving style (PSCM) which involves seeking outcomes that satisfy the needs for both parties as much as possible (win-win). An intermediate concern for self and others produces a compromising style which involves making matching concessions to reach agreement. The compromising style has been referred to as half-hearted problem solving (Pruitt & Ruben, 1986).

Research suggests that people have a preferred or default conflict management style (Huang, 2010) which they can adapt to varying degrees depending on both the demands of the situation and their preferences (Ayub et al., 2017). This explains why conflict management is widely treated as both a style and a competency (Guttman, 2009). Conflict management approach has a significant influence on performance at the individual, relational and team levels (Blake & Mouton, 1964; DeChurch et al., 2013; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012; De Dreu, 1997; Morrill & Thomas, 1992; Putnam & Poole, 1987; Rahim, 1983; Ruble & Thomas, 1976). Research conducted by Vodosek (2005) found that conflict fully mediated the relationship between cultural diversity and team outcomes which suggests that conflict management is likely to be an important moderator of the diversity-performance relationship. Problem solving, and to a lesser extent compromising, are traditionally viewed as cooperative problem-solving styles (De Dreu, 2006). Research supports the view that cooperative approaches capture most of the benefits that can be derived from conflict (De Dreu, 2006; Tjvosvold, 1991) and is positively associated with both individual and team performance (De Dreu, Harinck & Van Vianem, 1999, Montoya-Wiess et al., 2001), including performance in socially diverse situations (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Lui et al., 2020; Samarah, Seetharaman & Mykytyn, 2004).

1.2 Independent Variable — Diversity Appreciation

Attitude toward diversity is generally defined as beliefs about the value of diversity (van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003). Research has confirmed that people possess differing attitudes and preferences regarding the dissimilarity of others that influences their social behavior (Strauss & Connerley; 2003, Sheehan & Martin, 2004; Thompson et al., 2002). Research by Miville et al. (1999) described a positive attitude toward diversity as "an attitude toward all other persons that is inclusive yet differentiating in that similarities and differences are both recognized and accepted; the shared experience of being human results in a sense of connectedness with people and is associated with a plurality or diversity of interactions with others (p. 252)." Attitudes are comprised of cognitive, affective, and behavioral intention components (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1973). The cognitive component of attitude toward diversity refers to the recognition, acceptance and valuing of similarities and differences. Behavioral intention is associated with seeking diverse interactions, whereas the affective component refers to the sense of connection with diverse others arising from the shared experience of being human. Research supports these components of diversity appreciation which have been labeled as relativistic appreciation, diversity of contact, and sense of connection with others who are different (comfort with differences) (Fuertes et al., 2000; Kottke, 2011). Research on pro-diversity attitudes have identified a positive effect on social integration (Van Dick et al., 2008; Van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Paltrow, 2007), information elaboration (Homan et al., 2007), creativity (Nakui, Paulus, & Van Der Zee, 2011), prevention of non-productive in-out group perceptions (Homan et al., 2007) and team performance (Homan Van Knippenberg et al., 2007; Nakui Paulus & Van der Zee, 2011; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

1.3 Independent Variable — Self Monitoring

The theory of expressive control suggests consequential differences in the extent to which people observe, evaluate and regulate their self-presentations in public (Riggio & Friedman, 1982; Siegman & Reynolds, 1983; Snyder, 1987). Self-monitoring, which is a form of expressive control, is the process of observing, evaluating and regulating presentations of the self in social settings for the purpose of impressing others (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1987). Research confirms that self-monitoring influences performance within a wide variety of social situations, including performance in the workplace (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982; Kilduff & Day, 1994; Kolb,

1998; Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001; Stevens & Kristof, 1995).

High self-monitors manage their self-presentations to align with the social conditions they are embedded in whereas low self-monitors emphasize congruence between who they are and what they do regardless of situational demands (Day et al., 2002). High self-monitors are more attentive and responsive to social cues as self-presentation guides which increases the likelihood of social and organizational rewards in organizational situations with strong social norms and subjective assessments of performance (Flynn & Ames, 2006). They are more likely to change their behavior across situations in response to perceived requirements for generating a positive impression (Snyder & Copeland, 1989). Low self-monitors are less concerned with how others perceive them and are relatively more consistent across situations regardless of how incongruent their self-expressions may be with the expectations and preferences of others (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). High self-monitors appear to be guided by a form of social pragmatism that acknowledges the likelihood of social appearances becoming social reality, whereas low-self monitors appear to view public displays that are not true to the inner self as false and unprincipled (Day, et al., 2002; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000).

Identification of construct content and structure begins with Synder's (1974) theoretical components of (1) concern with the appropriateness of self-presentation, (2) attention to social comparison information, (3) ability to modify self-presentation, (4) use of self-presentation modification in social situations, and (5) consequent cross situational variability. These components were used to develop the original 25 item measure of self-monitoring (Synder, 1974). Subsequent factor analytic studies using the original measure of self-monitoring mostly revealed three factors referred to as acting ability, extraversion and other-directedness (Briggs, Cheek, & Buss, 1980; Gabrenya & Arkin, 1980). Further research challenged the unitary perspective of the construct and introduced a typology based on separate affective-motivational orientations (Lennox & Wolf, 1984; Wolfe, Lennox and Cutler, 1986).

Psychoanalytic theories of personality distinguish between relatively independent motives to be accepted (get along) and to acquire power, influence and status (get ahead). Arkin's (1981) theory of self-presentation identifies relatively independent protective and acquisitive self-presentations as fundamental components of social repertoire. Protective self-presentation manages avoidance of rejection and is associated with social anxiety, caution and conformity, whereas acquisitive self-presentation manages accumulation of social capital and increased likelihood of future support of personal goals (Lennox, 1988). A similar typology has been suggested using the impression management perspective. Accommodative impression managers seek to align their own behavior and reactions with the goals and expectations of others, whereas assimilative impression managers seek to bring behavioral reactions of others in line with their own preferences and goals (Ickes, Stinson, Bissonnette & Garcia, 1990; Ickes, Reidhead & Patterson, 1986).

Research supports a bimodal model of self-monitoring based on protective and acquisitive orientations (Lennox, 1988; Lennox & Wolf, 1984; Wolfe, Lennox and Cutler, 1986), and Lennox and Wolfe (1984) provided measures of the two self-monitoring styles. The revised self-monitoring scale (13 items) measures acquisitive self-monitoring and is comprised of sensitivity toward the expressed behavior of others and ability to modify self-presentation. The concern for appropriateness scale (20 item measure) measures protective self-monitoring and is comprised of protective cross-situational variability of behavior and protective social comparison. As part of an extensive review of the self-monitoring construct, measurement scales and research; Gangestad and Synder (2000) suggest that traditional measures of self-monitoring appear to predominantly relate to status-oriented impression management motives. Meta-analysis conducted by Day et al. (2002) suggests that the revised 13-item

self-monitoring scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984), which emphasizes acquisitive self-presentation motives, demonstrates higher reliability relative to other self-monitoring scales.

Researchers have predominantly treated self-monitoring as a stable personality trait that has a consistent influence on social performance across a wide range of situations (Day & Kilduff, 2003; Snyder & Ickes, 1985; Synder, 1987). Many social performance practitioners have treated self-monitoring as more of a competency by focusing on enhancing awareness and sensitivity toward both the expressed behavior of others and the impact of the self on others, combined with encouragement to modify self-presentation to better conform with social expectations (Kiselica, Maben & Locke, 1999; Korotitsch & Nelson-Gray, 1999; Ninan, Feitosa & Delice, 2019; Suthakaran, 2011). Diversity training initiatives target a range of outcomes including affective, cognitive and skills (behavioral) based outcomes (Chu, Wippold & Becker, 2022; Bezrukova, Jehn & Spell, 2012). Affective based approaches target underlying attitudes that influence perceptions and experiences of differences, whereas cognitive based approaches focus on informing participants about diversity (awareness and understanding), and skills (behavioral) based approaches emphasize behavioral responses and patterns in relation to human differences (Ashkanasy, Härtel & Daus, 2002; Devine & Ash, 2022). Research supporting the success of awareness and behaviorally oriented diversity and cultural sensitivity training (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008; Engberg, 2004; Kiselica, Maben & Locke, 1999; Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Paluck & Green, 2009; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994) suggests that self-monitoring is somewhat adaptive and possesses the characteristics of both a trait and a competency.

Meta-analysis research conducted by Day et al. (2002) on the relationship between self-monitoring and organizational behavior variables confirmed significant associations with a wide variety of work-related abilities, attitudes, roles, and performance (Anderson & Tolson, 1989; Baron, 1989; Caldwell & Burger, 1997; Caldwell & O'reilly, 1982, Conshaw & Ellis, 1991; Deluga, 1991; Fandt & Farris, 1990; Kilduff & Day, 1994; Sosik & Dinger, 2007; Zaccaro, Foti & Kenny, 1991). Research also suggests a positive relationship with collaborative conflict management approaches (Jang, Han & Hur, 2007; Ohbuchi & Fukushima, 1997; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991) and effectively working with diverse others (Anderson 1987; Caldwell & O'Reilly 1982; Kurpis, 2012; Milliken, Bartel & Kurtzberg, 2003; Roberson & Williamson, 2012).

2. Hypotheses

The general proposition guiding this research is that problem solving conflict management (PCSM) is positively related to both diversity appreciation (DA) and self-monitoring (SM), DA is positively related to SM, and SM mediates the relationship between DA and PSCM. The influence of diversity appreciation within the categorization-elaboration model of the nomological network linking diversity with performance is explained via a variety of elements including culture of engagement, emotional response to dissimilar others, communication, and conflict management (Jehn, Bezrukova & Thatcher, 2007; Hofhuis, van der Rijt & Vlug, 2016; Kooij-de Bode et al., 2008; Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen., 1993; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). Diversity appreciation promotes positive expectations and perceived value regarding engagement with dissimilar others (Nakui, Paulus, & Van der Zee, 2011). It also encourages the suspension of uncertainty related fears, acting in congruence with an appreciative orientation by monitoring and shaping personal responses, being more sensitive and responsive toward the perspectives and preferences of others, and engaging as if some of the requirements of trust have already been established (Jiang, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2013; Homan et al., 2007). This is likely to produce more

cooperative opening gestures that increase the likelihood of a similar response, which in turn support the development of a more cooperative engagement culture, including a more cooperative approach to the management conflict (Tjosvold & Poon, 1998; Tjosvold, 1991). Diversity increases the likelihood of conflict and cooperative conflict management helps translate diversity into performance (Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; (which may be more present under increasingly diverse conditions. These conditions are likely to support performance by constraining unproductive majority influences, promoting information elaboration, and preventing or constraining the emergence of disruptive emotional experiences related to dissimilarity (Hofhuis, van der Rijt & Vlug, 2016; Van Dick et al., 2008; Homan et al., 2007). This suggests that diversity appreciation encourages self-monitoring, and both encourage a cooperative approach to managing conflict, which supports the proposition that self-monitoring has a mediating influence on the relationship between diversity appreciation and cooperative conflict management.

Diversity appreciation encourages greater awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness to the perspective and preferences of others which encourages the use of a problem-solving (win-win) conflict management approach.

Hypothesis 1: Diversity appreciation is positively associated with problem-solving conflict management

People who are more sensitive toward the expressed behavior of others and both willing and able to modify self-presentation for the purpose of satisfying both their own needs and the needs of others (acquisitive self-presentation), are more likely to use problem-solving conflict management.

Hypothesis 2: Self-monitoring is positively associated with problem-solving conflict management

Pro-diversity attitudes encourage people to be more aware, sensitive, and responsive to the perspectives and preferences of others, and are more likely to be sensitive toward the expressed behavior of others and modify self-presentation in service of finding a way of engaging that increases the likelihood of both parties satisfying their preferences.

Hypothesis 3: Diversity appreciation is positively associated with self-monitoring

People with pro-diversity attitudes are more likely to be self-monitoring and use problem-solving conflict management, and self-monitoring is likely to promote problem-solving conflict management. This suggests that self-monitoring mediates the relationship between diversity appreciation and problem-solving conflict management to some meaningful extent.

Hypothesis 4: Self-monitoring mediates the relationship between diversity appreciation and problem-solving conflict management

3. Measures and Methods

3.1 Appreciation of Diversity

The short form of the Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS-S) developed by Feurtes et al. (2000) and further validated by Kottke (2011) was used to measure appreciation of diversity. The M-GUDS-S has been validated across multiple cultures (Kegel & DeBlaere, 2014). The original and long form of the scale was developed and validated by Miville et al. (1999). The M-GUDS-S contains 15 items with 5 items measuring diversity of contact (e.g., "I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries"), 5 items measuring relativistic appreciation (e.g., "Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship"), and 5 items measuring sense of connection and comfort with differences (e.g., "I am only at ease with people of my own race"). Items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly

disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree). The total score for appreciation of diversity was derived by adding up the scores on each of the questions.

3.2 Self-Monitoring (Acquisitive)

The revised version of the original self-monitoring scale (Synder, 1974) was used to measure acquisitive oriented self-monitoring. The revised version was developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984) and further validated by Lennox (1988). The revised scale has been widely used to study relationships with organizational behavior variables and has demonstrated greater reliability relative to other measures of self-monitoring (Day et al., 2002). The scale has 6 items that measure sensitivity toward the expressive behavior of others, and 7 items that measure modification of self-presentation. Example items of sensitivity toward expressive behavior of others include "In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm talking with," and "My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives." Example items of modifying self-presentation include "In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for," and "I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them." Items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree). The total score for appreciation of diversity was derived by adding up the scores on each of the questions.

3.3 Problem Solving Conflict

Problem-solving conflict management style was measured using the Dutch conflict styles instrument developed and validated by De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Klumer and Nauta (2001) and cross-culturally validated (Boa et al., 2019). The instrument has been widely used to measure the five conflict management styles (problem solving, compromising, forcing, avoiding and yielding) (Coetzer & Trimble, 2010; Trudel & Reio, 2011). An observer version of instrument asked the respondents to assess the extent to which the observed person demonstrated the behaviors referred to in the questions within conflict situations. This research study used the four items from the Dutch conflict styles scale that measure the use of a problem-solving conflict management style. Example items include "examines issues until they find a solution that really satisfies both themselves and others," "examines ideas from all sides to find a mutually optimal solution," "works out a solution that serves their own as well as the interests of others, as best they can." The items were measured on a 5-point behavioral frequency scale (1 = not at all, 2 = occasionally, 3 = about half the time, 4 = more often than not, 5 = very much) and the total score for problem-solving conflict management orientation was derived by adding up the scores on each of the 4 items.

4. Results

4.1 Sample and Descriptives

The sample is comprised of two hundred and twenty-one undergraduate business students attending a public university in the northwestern United States. Means, standard deviations and correlations among the research variables are reported in Table 1. The average age of the subjects was 21.94 (low = 18, high = 47), and 51 % identified as male and 49% as female. Each subject completed a self-assessment of diversity appreciation and self-monitoring under conditions of anonymity. Procedures recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee &

Podsakoff (2003) for addressing common method bias were used by administering the surveys at different times, generating psychological separation by associating them with different components and activities within the course, and making use of different scale types. Each subject was also asked to identify someone who knew them well and would be willing to complete an honest assessment of their conflict management style. The identified observers completed an online version of the conflict management style measure developed and validated by De Dreu et al. (2001). This provided additional protection against single source and common method bias.

Table 1   Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Reliabilities and Correlations

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Problem solving conflict management style	14.97	2.73	0.86			
2	Self-monitoring	56.4	9.26	0.37**	0.81		
3	Diversity appreciation	68.2	12.35	0.30**	0.31**	0.83	
4	Age	21.94	4.91	0.06	0.08	0.06	
5	Gender			-0.07	-0.09	-0.08	0.05
Notes: Internal consistency reliabilities are shown in parentheses on the diagonal							
* = p > 0.05 (2-tailed), ** = p > 0.01 (2-tailed)							

4.2 Empirical Tests of Hypotheses

The significance threshold for all the empirical tests was set to $\alpha = 0.05$ (2-tailed). The correlation between DA and PSCM is statistically significant ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$) providing support for the hypothesis that diversity appreciation is positively associated with problem-solving conflict management.   The correlation between SM and PSCM is statistically significant ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$) providing support for the hypothesis that self-monitoring is positively associated with problem-solving conflict management. The correlation between DA and SM is statistically significant ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) providing support for the hypothesis that diversity appreciation is positively associated with self-monitoring. The Sobel test for mediation (Sobel, 1982) is statistically significant ($Z = 3.29$, p = 0.00) and the Hayes bias corrected bootstrap confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.025 and BootUCLI = 0.097; $\alpha = 0.95$) does not contain zero suggesting the presence of mediation (Hayes, 2013). The mediation results suggest that a statistically significant portion of the relationship between diversity appreciation and problem-solving conflict management is transmitted by self-monitoring (direct influence = 0.20 and indirect influence = 0.10) (Figure 1). A significant partial correlation between DA and PSCM (r = 0.20, p < 0.01) remains after including the mediator (SM) and the control variables in the regression. This suggests that SM does not fully explain the association between DA and PSCM, and that other unmeasured factors are helping to transmit the effect.
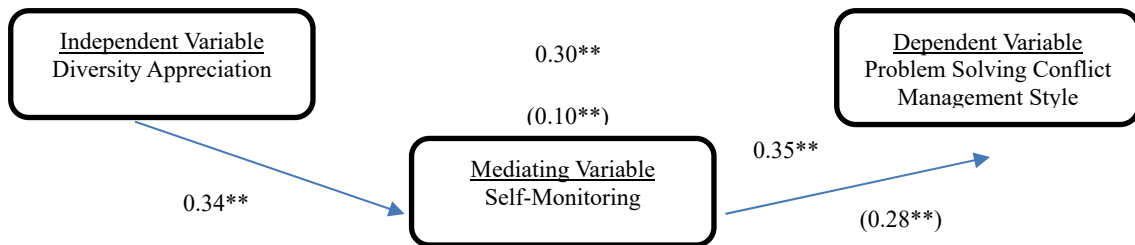

Figure 1   Mediating Influence of Self-Monitoring on the relationship between Diversity Appreciation and Problem Solving Conflict

Notes: Type of mediation: partial. Hayes bias corrected bootstrap confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.0253 and BootUCLI = 0.0969; $\alpha = 0.95$). Sobel Z-value = 3.29, p = 0.00. Direct influence = 0.20, Indirect influence = 0.10. Correlations in parentheses indicate β weights computed after the mediator and control variables were included in the regression equation. * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$. N = 221

5. Discussion

The results suggest that PSCM is positively associated with both DA and SM, DA is positively associated with SM, and SM partially mediates the relationship between DA and PSCM. The directionality of this relationship cannot be confirmed from this research study and both opposite and bi-directional effects are possible. Treating diversity appreciation as a trait-based attitude that is hierarchically prior to behavior styles within the structure of personality supports the temporal position of the variables. However, if diversity appreciation is viewed as more of a state-based personality variable then positioning with the personality hierarchy relative to behavioral styles is less clear.

5.1 Implications for Organizations and Academic Institutions

Research suggests that problem-solving conflict management captures most of the benefits associated with conflict (De Dreu, 2006; Tjvosvold, 1991) and that cooperative conflict management may be a key moderator within the nomological network linking diversity to performance (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Lui et al., 2020; Samarah, Seetharaman & Mykytyn, 2004). This research study confirms that diversity appreciation is positively associated with problem-solving conflict management and that self-monitoring partially mediates the relationship. These results combined with the research supporting the malleability of both conflict orientation and self-monitoring support use of an integrated training, education, and intervention framework that encompasses promotion of diversity appreciation and self-monitoring to encourage greater use of cooperative conflict management. Research supporting the important mediating role of conflict (Vodosek, 2005), and moderating role of conflict management (Kooij-de Bode et al., 2008) within the diversity-performance relationship, suggests that such training, education and interventions may help to strengthen the diversity-performance relationship.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions Future Research

Broader generalization of the results of this research requires the use of samples that extend beyond higher education. Future research should include an examination of both protective and acquisitive forms of self-monitoring in order to identify the relative contribution of both forms of self-presentation. To conclude, this study confirms that diversity appreciation is positively associated with self-monitoring and problem-solving conflict management, and that self-monitoring partially mediates the relationship between diversity appreciation and problem-solving conflict management. The results suggest the need for education, training, and other developmental activities that integrate the promotion of both diversity appreciation and self-monitoring, to enhance problem solving conflict management. Research suggests that this may help to strengthen the link between diversity and performance.

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