

## Mediating Effect of Communication Behavior Between Tolerance for Ambiguity and Conflict Management Style

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Conflict emerges from a diverse range of communication behaviors that give rise to interpersonal issues. Employees exhibit diverse conflict management styles, shaped by individual tolerance for ambiguity. Recognizing tolerance for ambiguity helps predict employees' preferred conflict resolution style, although this depends on their specific communication behaviors. This study examines whether communication behavior mediates the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and conflict management styles among Malaysian employees. Using a cross-sectional design, data from 109 employees were analyzed with PROCESS Macro for mediation effects. Validated questionnaires were self-administered by includes Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory – II, Multiple Stimulus Type Ambiguity Tolerance – II and the Workplace Communication Behaviour Inventory.

While no indirect effects were found across four conflict management styles, a notable result emerged for the compromising style, which showed a significant direct and indirect effect. Communication behavior was found to reduce the influence of tolerance for ambiguity on the use of the compromising style. These findings suggest that improving communication skills may help Malaysian employees handle conflicts more effectively in ambiguous situations, fostering a more productive work environment. The significance of this study is that communication behavior reduces the effect of tolerance for ambiguity on one's tendency to use the compromising style of conflict management. Malaysian organizations should train employees to enhance their communication skills for managing conflicts more effectively in ambiguous situations, thereby fostering more productive and conflict-free environments.

*Keywords:* conflict management style, tolerance for ambiguity, communication behaviour, organizational conflict, organisation

Every company aspires to create a work atmosphere where its staff members feel empowered to take on obstacles and navigate ambiguity with grace. Every individual employee in your company, though, will approach the situation differently and think about it in their own way. This will inevitably lead to disagreement on a variety of topics. In any institution, conflict is an inevitable phenomenon. Conflict in an organizational sense is defined as the process by which one party believes that its interests are being

opposed by another through disagreements or incompatible choices (Champoux, 2021). Conflict is shown to be affected by factors such as job role, personality, cultural values (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006), communication behaviour and tolerance to uncertainty. It is possible to teach employees how to handle conflict strategically and train them to adopt various approaches that may work better in particular circumstances. We also need to examine our ingrained or taught tendencies,

which determine our behaviour in many circumstances.

Thomas and Kilman (2020) proposed that empathy and assertiveness played a key role in determining the style of conflict management individuals opted for, identifying five main styles, namely, Collaborating, Competing, Accommodating, Avoiding, and Compromising. Individuals working in organizations are frequently encouraged to handle conflicts using a variety of Conflict Management Styles. These include forcing, which involves using aggressive and competitive tactics to manage the conflict when people are primarily focused on their own gain, avoiding, which involves choosing not to engage in the conflict and purposefully avoiding its management, and problem solving, which addresses the cooperative and collaborative motives people have when attempting to balance their own interests with the interests of others (e.g., Thomas, 1992). Certain outcomes, including job performance (Alper et al., 2000; Tjosvold, 2006), leader effectiveness (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012), organizational and network success (Bradford et al., 2004; Celuch et al., 2011) have all been found to be influenced by these conflict management styles that have been identified as having an impact.

Competing is a power-focused style that is forceful and uncooperative. Collaborating is working together where they try to work with the other person to discover a solution that completely addresses their issues. Compromising is to arrive at a quick, amicable solution that meets half of the needs of both sides. Avoiding is a lack of confidence and cooperation when someone avoids, they do not pursue their own problems or the other person right away. Accommodating is cooperative and unassertive. It is a self-sacrificing aspect to accommodating someone else's concerns over one's own. The collaborating style was shown to be ideal in a creative

environment and in cross cultural communications as it allows for access to different ideas and perspectives (Chua & Jin, 2020). A Singaporean study revealed that business students, who had the characteristics of being independent, assertive, achievement-oriented and rational opted for a competing style of conflict management, a behaviour that was reflected in CEOs (Wee et al., 2021). Furthermore, individuals with a collectivist mindset adopted avoiding style of conflict management to prevent direct confrontation (Caputo et al., 2018). Various factors influence one's conflict management style ranging from personality traits to cultural backgrounds and beliefs (Kay & Skarlicki, 2020; Qian, 2020). For example, Chinese cultural beliefs emphasize on the importance of harmony-seeking, causing many to adopt a conflict avoidant management style (Tabassi et al., 2019).

In a cross-cultural analysis involving business students from five distinct countries, it was observed that East Asian students displayed a higher inclination towards adopting the Accommodating style of conflict management to steer clear of corporate conflicts (Hamelin et al., 2018). Similarly, when comparing negotiation tactics between Philippine Chinese and Taiwanese business contexts, it was found that Philippine Chinese tended to favor a more accommodating conflict management style, whereas the Taiwanese leaned towards the competing style (Chang, 2011). This illustrates the substantial variation in cultural contexts, even within ethnic groups, and emphasizes the significant influence of cultural factors on individuals' preferred conflict management styles. Moreover, personality traits play a pivotal role in determining one's approach to conflict management. Managers who exhibit transformational leadership behaviors were observed to lean towards obliging and integrating styles, whereas those with transactional leadership

behaviors tended to adopt a compromising style (Saeed et al., 2014).

Tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to respond to uncertainty, ambiguous situations, and confounding stimuli, plays a pivotal role in shaping both communication behavior and conflict management styles (Gibson et al., 2021). This capacity is honed through interactions with ambiguous stimuli, fostering attempts to interpret and analyze them (Bentwich & Gilbey, 2017). Research indicates a positive correlation between higher tolerance for ambiguity and prosocial behavior, reflecting a greater concern for others according to the Dual Concern Model (Vives & Feldmanhall, 2018). Individuals with inflated tolerance for ambiguity demonstrate increased cooperation, a willingness to collaborate with unconventional partners, and a propensity to seek creative solutions to problems (McLain et al., 2015; Runco, 2014). Those adept at holding multiple interpretations and meanings of experiences exhibit a high tolerance for ambiguity (Gard & Leung, 2020).

This trait fosters openness to multiple possibilities, facilitating effective cooperation with individuals who may appear eccentric or unconventional, thereby promoting workplace communication and cooperation (Runco, 2014). Research contends that tolerance for ambiguity is partially contextual, meaning that an individual's inclination and reaction to unclear circumstances rely, to some extent, on the life area in which they arise. This viewpoint holds that although people have a wide general propensity towards tolerance for ambiguity, the particular context matters, hence some people may have high tolerance for ambiguity in one area of their lives and low tolerance for ambiguity in another (Herman et al., 2010). Both the context-dependent and stable components of tolerance for ambiguity have been discovered, and as a result, some researchers have categorized tolerance for

ambiguity as a stable individual difference with the capacity to vary slightly across several life domains (McLain et al., 2015).

Communication is fundamental to conflict resolution, and the degree of tolerance for ambiguity significantly influences communication behavior. While effective communication is essential for ensuring employee well-being, excessive communication may be perceived as demanding and induce stress (Bordi et al., 2018). Communication behavior, defined as a set of frequently used behaviors to convey messages in workplace settings (Keyton et al., 2013), is strongly correlated with tolerance for ambiguity. For instance, a study on elementary school teachers revealed a strong correlation between tolerance for ambiguity and willingness to communicate (Vahedi & Fatemi, 2016). Moreover, a study on medical students in the United Kingdom demonstrated that integrating programs to encourage tolerance for ambiguity within the instructional design led to improved communication and reduced conflict between students, patients, and colleagues (Bleakley, 2021). This underscores the existing link between tolerance for ambiguity and communication strategies in addressing workplace conflicts. The utilization of technology to bridge communication gaps among employees has proven instrumental in mitigating the negative impacts of workplace conflict (Pitafi et al., 2020).

It is not feasible to envision organizational communication without conflict (Spaho, 2013), yet communication is absolutely necessary in resolution of conflict (Mukhtar et al., 2020). An individual's interactions and interpersonal relationships in the working environment have a profound effect on conflict management styles as it affects how one identifies and handles problems in the workplace. There are many studies on tolerance for ambiguity conducted in Western context with only a

few from Southeast Asia. A cross cultural comparison has shown significant differences in European and Asian attitudes toward conflict management (Qian, 2020), which may limit the applicability of Western studies. There is a general lack of research on the effect of tolerance for ambiguity on conflict management styles in the Asian context, and this study is undertaken to address this lacuna in the Malaysian context.

This study seeks to explore the impact of tolerance for ambiguity and inclination towards each of the five conflict management styles. This ambiguity tolerance will be related to conflict management style which refers to the approach that an individual adopts when a conflict arises to minimize the negative repercussions and maximize the positive outcomes. Since adoption of communication behaviour to clarify ambiguities can have a significant impact on conflict management styles, this suggests the necessity of a mediation analysis between tolerance for ambiguity and the five conflict management styles. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

A total of 109 employees participated through a convenient sampling from International Medical University. Participants were comprised of lecturers and corporate staff. Engaging workforce population comprising of working adults is essential to ensure accurate assessments of organizational communication (Walter & Meluch, 2019). Participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and the right to withdraw. Ethics approval (BPS I-2022(06)) was sought from the University Ethics Committee prior to data collection.

### Instruments

Multiple Stimulus Types Ambiguity Tolerance-II (MSTAT-II). The MSTAT-II served as an instrument to measure one's tolerance for ambiguity. While this 13-item scale with items measured on a 5-point Likert scale is general and applicable to multiple aspects of one's life, participants were asked to answer the questionnaire within the context of their workplace behaviour. This instrument was shown to have good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$ ) (McLain, 2009), indicating high reliability. A higher score on this inventory would indicate a higher tolerance for ambiguity. Tolerance for ambiguity is operationally defined as one's score on the MSTAT-II.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). The ROCI-II measures one's conflict management style pertaining to the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. This 28-item questionnaire indicates responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). There are 5 domains i.e. Collaborating, Accommodating, Competing, Compromising, and Avoiding styles of conflict management. This instrument was shown to have good internal consistency across domains (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .72 - .77$ ) indicating high reliability (Rahim, 1986).

Workplace Communication Behaviour Inventory (WCBI). The Workplace Communication Behaviour Inventory serves as a 33-item behavioural checklist consisting of workplace communication behaviours. The number of items one ticks, gauge the quantity of workplace communication one engages in, with a higher score being indicative of greater quantity of workplace communication. This instrument had good internal consistency across subscales (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .73 - .95$ ) indicating high reliability (Keyton et al., 2013),

**RESULTS**

A total of 109 responses were collected from employees at International Medical University. The sample size comprised of 26 males (23.85%) and 83 females (76.16%). The participants were further categorized by their age, race, nationality, marital status, years of service in IMU, and

whether they had a managerial role in the workplace. Most of our participants were aged 31-40 years old (34.86%). However, there was racial diversity as 42.20% were Chinese, 31.20% were Indian, 21.10% were Malay, and 5.50% indicated they were of another race. Most participants were married (57.80%) and had over 10 years of service in IMU (36.70%) (refer to Table 1).

*Table 1*  
Demographic of participants

Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	26	23.85
Female	83	76.16
<b>Age</b>		
21-30	20	18.35
31-40	38	34.86
41-50	35	32.11
51-60	12	11.01
61+	3	2.75
Prefer not to answer	1	0.92
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	43	39.45
Married	63	57.80
Divorced	3	2.75
<b>Race</b>		
Chinese	46	42.20
Malay	23	21.10
Indian	34	31.20
Others	6	5.50
<b>Years of Service in IMU</b>		
Less than 1	25	22.93
1-3	23	21.10
4-6	12	11.01
7-9	9	8.26
10+	40	36.70

Table 2 shows a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), which states that 5.71% of the Collaborating style of conflict management is explained by tolerance of ambiguity. Similarly, 8.82% of the Accommodating style, 6.24% of the Competing style, and 5.62% of the Compromising style is explained by tolerance for ambiguity. However, 29.57%

of the Avoiding style can be explained in this manner, with all the above findings being significant at the 95% confidence interval ( $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly in Table 3, the relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and communication behaviour for the Compromising style of conflict management is significant ( $b = 0.6492$ ,  $p = .0131$ ;  $CI = 0.1392$  to  $1.1592$ ).

Table 2

Linear regression analysis of direct effect of tolerance for ambiguity and conflict management style (5 domains)

Variable	R	R Square	Mean Error	Square F	p
Collaborating	.2389	.0571	59.4016	3.2084	.0444
Accommodating	.2969	.0882	57.4429	5.1251	.0075
Competing	.2498	.0624	59.0661	3.5277	.0329
Avoiding	.5437	.2957	44.3723	22.2468	<.0001
Compromising	.2370	.0562	57.4598	6.3680	.0131

Table 3

Regression and significance values for tolerance of ambiguity – communication behaviour pathways

MSTAT-II	b	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	17.1004	5.1007	3.3526	.0011	6.9888	27.2120
Collaborating	.2248	-.5753	1.2710	.2065	-.1258	.5754
constant	26.7425	4.5691	5.8529	.0000	17.6848	35.8002
Accommodating	-.1490	.2080	-.7161	.4755	-.5613	.2634
constant	24.8904	2.3906	10.412	.0000	20.1514	29.6294
Competing	-.1080	.1784	-.6058	.5459	-.4616	.2455
constant	28.8149	3.4798	8.2806	.0000	21.9166	35.7131
Avoiding	-.2655	.1710	-.15587	.1220	-.6054	.0724
constant	14.0390	3.8245	3.6708	.0004	6.4573	21.620
Compromising	.6492	.2573	2.5235	.0131	.1392	1.1592

Table 4

Regression and significance communication behaviour – conflict management style pathways (5 domains)

MSTAT-II	b	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Collaborating	.1932	.1773	1.3381	.1837	-.1153	.5942
WCBI	.2056	.0962	2.1369	.0349	.0149	.3963
Accommodating	-.1490	.2080	-.7161	.4755	-.5613	.2634
WCBI	.2041	.0941	2.1680	.0324	.0175	.3907
Competing	-.1080	.1784	-.6058	.5459	-.4616	.2455
WCBI	.2109	.0954	2.2111	.0292	.0218	.4000
Avoiding	-.2655	.1710	-.15587	.1220	-.6054	.0724
WCBI	.1422	.0835	1.7041	.0913	-.0232	.3077
Compromising	.6492	.2573	2.5235	.0131	.1392	1.1592
WCBI	.2006	.0986	2.0354	.0443	.0052	.3961

In Table 4, it is seen that the direct effect of tolerance for ambiguity and the compromising style of conflict management is significant ( $p = .0131$ ), and the indirect effect of this relationship through communication behaviour is also

significant ( $p = .0443$ ). Similarly, the indirect effect of the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and conflict management style mediated by communication behaviour is significant for the domains Collaborating ( $p = .0349$ ),

Accommodating ( $p = .324$ ), and Competing ( $p = .0292$ ).

To investigate the mediational hypotheses, we employed the Preacher and Hayes (2004) process macro on the variables in study. This method has been reported in literature to be the more superior approach for this study due to its advantages such as the bootstrapping method that is more suitable for smaller sample sizes, as well as its ability to detect partial mediations. The PROCESS Macro v.4.2 was used to determine if communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and collaborating conflict management style. The total effect model was found to be not significant,  $b = -.005$ , BCa CI [-.26, .25],  $p = .97$ . The direct effect was also found to be not significant,  $b = .03$ , BCa CI [-.23, .29],  $p = .85$ . Finally, the indirect effect of tolerance for ambiguity towards collaborating conflict management style through communication behaviour was found to also not be significant,  $b = -.03$ , 95% BCa CI [-.07, .01]. Therefore, the hypothesis that communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and collaborating conflict management style is not supported.

To analyse if communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and accommodating conflict management style, the PROCESS Macro v.4.2. was used. The total effect model was found to be significant,  $b = .47$ , BCa CI [.23, .70],  $p < .001$ . The direct effect was also found to be significant,  $b = .03$ , BCa CI [.22, .71],  $p < .001$ . However, the indirect effect of tolerance for ambiguity to accommodating conflict management style through communication behaviour was found to be not significant,  $b = .0007$ , 95% BCa CI [-.04, .05]. Therefore, the hypothesis that communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for

ambiguity and accommodating conflict management style is not supported. To analyse if communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and competing conflict management style, the PROCESS Macro v.4.2. was used. The total effect model was found to be significant,  $b = .74$ , BCa CI [.41, 1.07],  $p < .001$ . The direct effect was also found to be significant,  $b = .17$ , BCa CI [.41, 1.08],  $p < .001$ . However, the indirect effect of tolerance for ambiguity to competing conflict management style through communication behaviour was found to be not significant,  $b = -.004$ , 95% BCa CI [-.08, .07]. Therefore, the hypothesis that communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and competing conflict management style is not supported.

To analyse if communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and avoiding conflict management style, the PROCESS Macro v.4.2. was used. The total effect model was found to be significant,  $b = .78$ , BCa CI [.51, 1.05],  $p < .001$ . The direct effect was also found to be significant,  $b = .76$ , BCa CI [.48, 1.04],  $p < .001$ . However, the indirect effect of tolerance for ambiguity to avoiding conflict management style through communication behaviour was found to be not significant,  $b = .02$ , 95% BCa CI [-.02, .08]. Therefore, the hypothesis that communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and avoiding conflict management style is not supported. The PROCESS Macro v.4.2 was used to determine if communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and compromising conflict management style. The total effect model was found to be not significant,  $b = .25$ , BCa

CI [-.05, .55],  $p = .10$ . However, the direct effect was found to be significant,  $b = .32$ , BCa CI [.03, .62],  $p = .03$ . The indirect effect of tolerance for ambiguity to conflict management style through communication behaviour was also found to be significant,  $b = -.07$ , 95% BCa CI [-.16, -.005]. The

results indicate that a partial mediation has occurred. Therefore, the hypothesis that communication behaviour would significantly mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and compromising conflict management style is supported.

Table 5

Total and direct effects of tolerance for ambiguity, and indirect effects of communication behaviour mediating the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and conflict management style

Collaborating Outcomes						
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	-.005	.131	-.04	.97	-.26	.25
Direct Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.03	.13	.20	.85	-.23	.29
Indirect Effect	<i>b</i>	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Communication Behaviour	.02	.021	-.07	.01		
Accommodating Outcomes						
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.47	.12	3.85	.0002	.23	.70
Direct Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.47	.12	3.77	.0003	.22	.71
Indirect Effect	<i>b</i>	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Communication Behaviour	.0007	.02	-.04	.05		
Competing Outcomes						
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.74	.17	4.48	<.001	.41	1.07
Direct Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.75	.17	4.41	<.001	.41	1.08
Indirect Effect	<i>b</i>	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Communication Behavior	-.004	.03	-.08	.07		
Avoiding Outcomes						
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.78	.14	5.70	<.001	.51	1.05
Direct Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.76	.14	5.47	<.001	.48	1.04
Indirect Effect	<i>b</i>	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		

Communication Behaviour	.02	.02	-.02	.08		
Compromising Outcomes						
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.25	.15	1.66	.10	-.05	.55
Direct Effect of Tolerance of Ambiguity	.32	.15	2.16	.03	-.03	.62
Indirect Effect	<i>b</i>	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Communication Behaviour	-.07	.04	-.16	-.005		

### DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to determine if communication behaviour acts as a significant mediator of the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and conflict management styles. From the findings, the results revealed that tolerance for ambiguity predicted conflict management styles, indicating that individuals with varying levels of ambiguity tolerance tended to approach conflicts differently. Through these findings, tolerance for ambiguity showed significant prediction towards all the five conflict management styles. Conflict management, attempt resolution, or handling styles are the patterns of behaviour or approaches that people choose when confronted with an incompatible circumstance (Shih et al., 2010). Different individuals prefer to resolve conflict in different ways (Shih et al., 2010) and this indicates that tolerance for ambiguity can be used to significantly predict conflict management styles decisions (Nicotera et al., 2009).

The current findings have also been supported by past research which has shown that tolerance for ambiguity is associated with collaborating and accommodating style (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2011; Tsirikas et al., 2012; Wittenberg & Norcross, 2001). This is due to collaborating and accommodating techniques are embraced by those who

value the opinions and viewpoints of others highly. In these situations, someone who is more accepting of opinions that may differ from their own may adopt an accommodative or integrative style. This suggests that they might be more receptive to novel concepts and actively consider their colleagues' input when there is disagreement and they are open to any discussions (Chan et al., 2003). Additionally, other studies have indicated that tolerance for ambiguity is important for innovative work behaviour and confidence in one's capacity to solve problems creatively (Afsar and Masood, 2018). Conversely, low levels of tolerance for ambiguity are linked to a variety of unfavourable stress and coping outcomes, including burnout, perceived stress, depression, and poor change management (Hancock & Mattick, 2020; Iannello et al., 2017).

However, one of the five conflict management styles were mediated by communication behaviour. Communication behavior encompasses various aspects, such as active listening, clarity in expression, assertiveness, and empathy. The finding posits that the way individuals communicate plays a crucial role in how they handle conflicts, particularly when they have varying levels of tolerance for ambiguity, but only for the compromising conflict management style.

The compromising conflict management style entails pursuing solutions that offer

satisfaction to both parties engaged in the conflict, typically achieved through negotiation and mutual concessions (Shih & Susanto, 2010). This conflict management style has been seen in literature to be the style that takes both individual and other's needs into consideration (Rahim et al., 2002). In the that a mutually agreeable solution can be reached. In addition, these employees may be better fortified to navigate uncertainty and ambiguity in communication, that can lead to a greater likelihood of adopting compromising conflict management styles. Effective communication can facilitate compromise in many situations at work, thus easing conflicts to reach a resolution (Vahedi & Fatemi, 2016). Workers who possess higher compromising behaviour will also tend to have more constructive dialogues, open-mindedness, and the willingness to explore alternative perspectives, promoting conflict management via compromising (Shih & Susanto, 2010).

To put it simply in this mediation model, generally, tolerance for ambiguity did not influence the other four domains of conflict management styles independently of communication behavior. This hints at the existence of other influential factors in shaping how individuals navigate conflicts. These findings can be attributed to the fact that various extraneous variables in the working environment were not accounted for in this study. Possible extraneous factors include emotional intelligence, empathy, and multicultural competence, which were shown to play a major role in conflict management (Beitler et al., 2018; Caputo et al., 2018; Gonçalves et al., 2016).

Recognizing the presence of these unaccounted extraneous factors in the work environment, the study acknowledges their potential impact on conflict management styles. Previous research has emphasized the significance of these variables, and their exclusion in the current study could elucidate why communication behavior

present study, the importance of communication within the compromising conflict management style is therefore amplified in the research findings. In order for one to compromise in the management of conflict, the relevant parties have to communicate their needs so

didn't mediate the link between tolerance for ambiguity and conflict management styles except for compromising domain. Therefore, while this hypothesis proposes a compelling relationship between tolerance for ambiguity, communication behavior, and compromising conflict management style, further empirical research is needed to validate and explore the intricacies of this relationship in different organizational and cultural contexts. In summary, the findings underscore the intricate nature of factors influencing conflict management in professional settings and highlight the necessity for a more holistic approach considering multiple variables concurrently.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that communication behaviour does not mediate the relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and any styles of conflict management. This can be explained by the Asian tendency to value harmony being reflected through communication behaviour and conflict management. These findings also suggest that organizational conflict may be tackled by training employees to improve their tolerance for ambiguity as it has a significant role in facilitating desirable styles conflict management. Although the role of tolerance for ambiguity is steadily growing but few studies have investigated the moderating role of communication behaviour in the link between individual tolerance for ambiguity and the decision to engage in a specific conflict management style. Most of the research in conflict

management adopts a comparative approach in describing and explaining tolerance for ambiguity among different samples. Specifically, we believe that a more complex and globalized world calls for more nuanced and integrated research approaches with a potential to contribute toward the integration of different communication approaches and increased effectiveness in conflict management styles. The practical ramifications of our study's conclusions are numerous. In organizations, conflict is inevitable. Although people have varying thresholds for ambiguity and communication styles, managers have a need to handle conflict decisively to prevent it from negatively impacting workers' output. In times of disagreement, it is crucial for managers to support employees in starting to solve problems. Our findings imply that in order for managers and staff to effectively

manage conflict, training and comprehension of the various facets of communication behaviour will be essential.

### LIMITATION

The present study has several limitations. First, the study sample was selected from a private university in Malaysia, the chosen sample size was small and limited to staff in the university. Therefore, the results of this research cannot be generalized to all the other employees from another organization or to those from other countries. The lack of an indirect effect for variables can be explained by the fact that obtaining a self-reported measure of communication behavior's one has engaged in may not be reflective of effective communication.

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