

# PORTUGUESE VS INTERNATIONAL MILLENNIALS: HOW DO THEIR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES DIFFER?

Pedro Falcão <sup>1</sup>; Ana Ferreira <sup>2</sup>; Renato Costa <sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to analyze how conflict management styles are valued and used differently by Portuguese and International Millennials.

**Methodology:** A sample of 158 Portuguese people aged between 21 and 35 years old answered an online questionnaire comprehending demographic variables and validated questions using the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling answered in a 5-point Likert scale.

**Originality/value:** The proposed model is original in the sense that it assesses the preference of conflict management styles of Portuguese millennials, using the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling and complemented by Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions.

**Findings:** The results show that the Portuguese Millennials prefer conflict styles that show concern both for themselves and for other individuals. The order in which styles are preferred by the Portuguese Millennials is the following: Problem-Solving, Compromising, Yielding, Avoiding, and Forcing. These results were compared with the results of India and the U.S.A. If, on the one hand, the Styles of Conflict Management preferred by the Portuguese are like those of the Indians, on the other we cannot say that they have similar cultures. An Individualistic culture tends to use conflict management styles as Forcing or Yielding and in the case of a Collectivistic the preferred styles are Problem-Solving or Avoiding. This information is in accordance with the results presented for Portugal – a Collectivistic society in which the style that appears as the most scored is Problem-Solving – and for the U.S.A. – an Individualistic culture where Forcing comes first. However, in the case of India, no conclusions were derived as it is a society with both sides (Individualist and Collectivist).

**Practical implications:** In a growing multi-cultural working setting, knowing more about the preferred Portuguese millennials' conflict styles can help executives to better manage millennials and to better understand potential team performance and dynamics in teams composed of only Portuguese millennials or with elements of different nationalities, considering their approaches to conflict situations. This study can also help to anticipate how conflicts may arise and how they may be differently addressed between people of different generations and/or millennials of three different cultures.

**Research limitations:** While the comparison between millennials from Portugal and the U.S.A. was made based on the same instruments, the Indian millennials study used was not based on the DUTCH Test for Conflict Handling, which may limit the comparison between the other countries with India.

## References

Clements, A. (2016). Generation me: millennial intercultural sensitivity and conflict management style in the group setting. University of Oregon, Oregon.

---

<sup>1</sup> University Institute of Lisbon, (ISCTE-IUL), Business Research Unit (BRU-IUL). E-mail: pfontesfalcao@iscte-iul.pt

<sup>2</sup> Business Research Unit (BRU-IUL). E-mail: astfa@iscte-iul.pt

<sup>3</sup> University Institute of Lisbon, (ISCTE-IUL), Business Research Unit (BRU-IUL). E-mail: renato\_jorge\_costa@iscte-iul.pt

Gupta, P., Bhattacharya, S., Neelam, N., & Kunte, M. (2016). Boomers like to confront, generation Y is okay with withdrawal, but they all love to negotiate in India. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 33(4), 403-435.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture*, 2(1), 2307-2329.

Holt, J. L., & DeVore, C. J. (2005). Culture, gender, organizational role, and styles of conflict resolution: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(2), 165-196.

Rahim, M. A. (2002), Toward a Theory of Managing Organizational Conflict, *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(3), 206-235.

**Keywords:** Millennials; Conflict management; Styles of conflict management.