

# Locus of Control and Self-Concept in Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Approaches

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## Abstract

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self-concept and locus of control in interpersonal conflict resolution approaches and to determine the predictors of conflict resolution approach choices.

**Method:** The study included 345 students aged between 18 and 28 years that were studying at universities in Ankara. Data were collected using the Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Approaches Scale to measure conflict resolution approaches, the Social Comparison Scale to measure self-concept, and the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale to measure locus of control.

**Results:** It was observed that confrontation approach to interpersonal conflict was predicted by self-concept ( $\beta = 0.396, P < 0.001$ ). Moreover, self-concept was related to self-disclosure ( $\beta = 0.180, P < 0.01$ ) and emotional expression ( $\beta = 0.196, P < 0.001$ ) approaches. Locus of control played a role in the choice of all resolution approaches. In addition to these findings, it was observed that females used self-disclosure ( $\beta = -0.163, P < 0.01$ ) and emotional expression ( $\beta = -0.219, P < 0.001$ ), while males used approach ( $\beta = 0.395, P < 0.001$ ) and public behavior ( $\beta = 0.270, P < 0.001$ ) approaches in the resolution processes.

**Discussion:** Self-concept and locus of control were related to the behaviors adopted in the interpersonal conflict resolution process. Individuals with a positive self-concept and an internal locus of control adopted solutions to interpersonal conflict resolution that were more effective and constructive.

**Key Words:** Interpersonal Relations, Conflict Resolution, Self-Concept, Locus of Control

## INTRODUCTION

Individual differences, increased with changes and developments in social life, can also be a source of interpersonal conflict. This conflict, reflecting disharmony, disagreement, or discord (Deutsch, 1973; Hocker & Wilmot, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Barki & Hartwick, 2004), can be a result of different needs and interests, discord and tension, the structure of conflict, individual values, communication processes, restrictions, history of conflict, anxiety, hostility, or negative statements (Chan, 1990; Dökmen, 1994; Canary et al., 1995; Wall & Callister, 1995; Cupach & Canary, 2000; Mayer, 2000; Barki & Hartwick, 2001).

Generally, interpersonal conflict is considered a negative and undesirable situation; however, it can also be a source of creativity and development. From this perspective, conflict that occurs in the context of social/individual change and development fulfills a function that leads to positive change as a natural result of the interactions and choices in these processes (Lulofs & Chan, 2000). This understanding, crucial for conflict resolution, views conflict not as an undesirable situation, but as a normal process in the first step of change and development. Conflict resolution may bring many positive results improved interpersonal relations, creativity, new ideas, better choices, mutual understanding, improved work performance, and more positive and constructive

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personal attributes (Deutsch, 1973; Pelled et al., 1999; Rahim, 2002; Chen et al., 2005; Kurtzberg & Mueller, 2005; Pitt, 2005; Chen, 2006).

Conflict can have negative or positive consequences, depending on how the conflict is dealt with and which conflict resolution approaches are adopted. This addresses the importance of obtaining constructive and positive results, and emphasizes the conflict resolution strategies concept. Conflict resolution is a term meaning that the resolution of conflict is based on compromise, which brings into focus strategies related to working through the disagreement and discord that exists between the involved parties (Rahim et al., 1992; Jandt & Pedersen, 1996).

One strategy for interpersonal conflict resolution is negotiation in which both parties are confronted (Crawford et al., 2002). There are several approaches to interpersonal negotiation reported in the literature (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Deutsch, 1973; Philips & Cheston, 1979; Knudson et al., 1980; Sillars, 1980; Putman & Wilson, 1982; Rahim, 1983; Billingham & Sack, 1987). These approaches focus on the results of the communication process or the interests of the involved parties, and are generally used in organizational settings to enhance the managerial process and improve dysfunctional relationships within organizations. Interpersonal conflict is a natural development in the interaction process and is influenced by many factors, such as culture, situation, or personality, rendering the communication process very important to the cause and resolution of conflict.

These approaches, however, don't provide any information about the mediation process, which is defined as a third party intervention for reaching a mutually approved result between parties (Moore, 2003). Many studies report that the mediation processes has an important role in constructively solving interpersonal conflict (Johnson et al., 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Lindsay, 1998; Lane-Garon, 2000; Carter, 2002). The success of the mediation depends on the attitudes of both parties involved in the process. Knowing the attitudes of the parties in this process is also important in reaching win-win resolutions.

In this respect, confrontation, public/private behavior, approach/avoidance, self-disclosure, and emotional expression are other conflict resolution approaches that use the mediation process, focusing on the communication process by taking into account cultural and personal differences in the conflict resolution process (Goldstein, 1999).

Confrontation, the first step in solving a disagreement, refers to the desire to come together with the other party in conflict. Public behavior refers feeling comfortable in every situation and behaving naturally, while private behavior refers to either restricting behaviors or behaving normally only in certain situations (Goldstein, 1999). Approach/avoidance, which is a dimension directly related to the perception of conflict in general, addresses personal attitudes towards conflict. Approach shows accepting conflict situations as normal and regarding conflict as constructive and positive. Avoidance shows escaping from conflicts and considering conflict destructive and negative. Self-disclosure indicates the extent to which people disclose themselves to others by presenting their roles, history, wishes, and desires about the future in the conflict processes. Emotional expression emphasizes that displaying emotions comfortably in the conflict process can contribute to more constructive resolutions (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001).

The adoption of the above mentioned approaches can vary with personal characteristics. There are differences in the choices of conflict resolution approaches between people that perceive themselves as positive or negative when comparing themselves to the others. There are also differences between those that accept the consequences of their behaviors as rewards and punishment, and those that do not (Canary et al., 1988). We can argue that these variables, self-perception and locus of control, may have a role in predicting the choices adopted in the conflict resolution process.

Self-perception is one's own point of view about self, shaped by feedback from others. Reinforcements and attributions, along with experiences and interpretation of the environment also play a role (Shavelson et al., 1976). Including self-esteem, self-perception, or self-concept, can also be thought of as an organized and learned response pattern, which is obtained and sustained with one's responses to several impulses in the environmental context (Crain et al., 1994). The behavioral approach argues that self-concept is composed of academic, social, family, competency, physical, and emotional dimensions, and that these interacting dimensions embody a general self-concept. Thus, self-concept, theoretically, becomes a feature at the intersection of these dimensions (Bracken & Howell, 1991).

In the literature, self-concept and several of its components (academic self, self-esteem, etc.) are generally handled together with a person's academic and performance aspects. In this respect self-concept is associated

with motivation, career aspirations, educational achievement, psychic performance, and mental and psychical health (Wigfield & Karpathian, 1991; Hay et al., 1998; Özbay et al., 2002; Baumeister et al., 2003; Marsh et al., 2005; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh et al., 2006; Wang, 2006; Brunner et al., 2008). When considered from a social perspective, self-concept has a relationship with a person's social capabilities and success, and the duration of interpersonal relationships. People with a positive self-concept are more popular, collaborative, self-assertive, talkative, and dominant. Those with a negative self-concept are silent and introverted. Moreover, a negative self-concept is associated with depression, while a positive self-concept is associated with happiness and good feelings (Comer et al., 1986; Keefe & Berndt, 1996; Neuringer & Wandke, 1966; Hay et al., 1998; Baumeister et al., 2003). During an extensive search of the literature we did not find any study on the relationship between conflict resolution approaches and self-concept, yet the studies mentioned above suggest there may be a relationship between self-concept and the behaviors displayed in interpersonal relationships.

Locus of control refers to an expectation that a behavior will have the desired affect, and that these expectations are significant indicators of what the person has done (Rotter, 1954; Rossier et al., 2005). In other words, locus of control is related to reinforcements, i.e. the results obtained are attributed to one's own behavior or to some other outside sources. Some people suppose that there is a relationship between their own behavior and reinforcements, while others believe that there is no such relationship and assume that reinforcements are controlled by an external power. Those that believe there is a relationship between their behaviors and reinforcements or consequences are said to have an internal locus of control; those that believe that there is no such relationship are said to have an external locus of control (Rotter, 1954; Twenge et al., 2004; Oliver et al., 2006).

People with an external locus of control think that reinforcements are a function of fate, luck, or powerful others (Rotter, 1954). Believing they have no control over the environment, externals are reported to be inactive, have low self-esteem, and not trusting of others (Silvester et al., 2002; Loosemore & Lam, 2004). These people also feel generally incompetent, passive, skeptical, and dogmatic, and as a result they have higher levels of anxiety, stress, and depression (Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Ashby et al., 2002; Yağışan et al., 2007; Baydoğan & Dağ, 2008). Moreover, those with an external locus of control have problems with self-perception and view themselves nega-

tively (Yağışan et al., 2007). With an increase in depression and schizophrenia, their level of self-esteem is also lowered (Goodman et al., 1982).

People with an internal locus of control view themselves as responsible for the consequences of their actions and think that they have control over reinforcements (Rotter, 1954). They are reported to be successful, effective, aggressive, enterprising, trusting, and independent (Silvester et al., 2002; Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Loosemore & Lam 2004). In addition, they are more successful academically, superior in a competitive context, and more socially active (Diesterhaft & Gerken, 1983; Anderson et al., 2005). Moreover, it was argued that internals have a positive self-perception (Silvester et al., 2002; Loosemore & Lam, 2004), feel they are healthier (Ozolins & Stenstrom, 2003), have better coping skills (Elise et al., 1998), and have more internal motivation (Fazey & Fazey, 2001).

Considering the interpersonal relationship domain, people with an external locus of control are reported to be less capable in interpersonal relationships and weaker in social skill than internals (Martin et al., 2005). While internally controlled individuals are said to adopt more compromising strategies, externally controlled people are said to use more avoidance strategies in conflict situations (Canary et al., 1988). Studies on marital problems report that those with an internal locus of control display more active behaviors, while those with an external locus of control believe that their behaviors are not important and display more passive behaviors in resolution process (Doherty, 1981). In addition, internally controlled individuals are said to strive to form new interpersonal relationships and to solve their interpersonal problems with more active methods. In contrast, externally controlled individuals are said to have no concern about establishing new interpersonal relationships and use more passive strategies in solving personal relationship problems (Morry, 2003).

All these findings indicate that people determine the behaviors to use in interpersonal processes in accordance with the expectations of their consequences and their self-perception. From this point of view, the purpose of the present study was to determine the roles of self-perception and locus of control in the choice of conflict resolution approaches. Rather than the resolution approaches reported in the literature, which focus directly on the results of the communication process or interests of the involved parties, the present study concentrated on the conflict resolution approaches related to mediation and

communication processes. It is hoped that the findings can be of use by providing effective and constructive personality profiles for use in conflict resolution situations.

## METHOD

### Sample

Data were collected from 352 students that were studying at universities in Ankara. Surveys were administered with supervision in classrooms and the data from 7 participants were excluded from the data set based on the result of extreme value analysis. Thus, the sample was composed of 345 university students (209 female [60.6%] and 136 male [39.4%]) aged between 18 and 28 years (mean:  $21.54 \pm 5.76$  years).

### Instruments

#### Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Approaches Scale

The Conflict Resolution Approaches Scale was developed by Goldstein (1999) and adopted for use with the Turkish population by Arslan (2005). The scale consists of 5 sub dimensions: confrontation, public/private behavior, approach/avoidance, self-disclosure, and emotional expression, each containing 15 items. A high score on the 5 point Likert-type scale indicates that a person puts more emphasis on confrontation, opens his/her self, expresses their emotions, displays public behavior, and approaches conflicts. The scale's reliability and validity for use in Turkey were established by Arslan (2005). In the present study the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranged between .72 and .81 for the sub scales.

#### Social Comparison Scale

The Social Comparison Scale was developed by Gilbert, Allan, & Trent (1991), and was adopted for use in Turkey by Şahin & Şahin (1992). It is used to measure self-concept or self-perception. The scale measures how a person rates his/her self in various dimensions in comparison to others. The scale includes 18 items and each bipolar item is evaluated according to 6 point scores. High scores indicate a positive self-concept and low scores indicate a negative self-concept. The scale's reliability and validity for use in Turkey were established by Şahin & Durak (1994). In the present study the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .83.

#### Locus of Control Scale

Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale was used in the present study to determine each

participant's locus of control. The 29-item scale, translated into Turkish by Dağ (1991), was developed for the purpose of measuring generalized control expectations on internality and externality dimensions. High scores indicate external locus of control, low scores indicate internal locus of control. The scale's reliability and validity for use in Turkey were established by Savaşır & Şahin (1997), Basım et al. (2006), and Basım & Şeşen (2006). In the present study the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .74.

### Procedure

A survey battery that included a demographic data form, along with the aforementioned scales, was administered to volunteer students that were studying at several universities in Ankara. Completion of the form took 20-30 minutes and the data were analyzed using SPSS v.15.0.

### Statistical Analysis

First, correlation analysis was conducted in order to determine the relationship between the study variables—interpersonal conflict resolution approach, self-concept, and locus of control. Next, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted for the purpose of determining the roles of self-concept and locus of control in predicting the choice of interpersonal conflict resolution approaches. Gender (female = 1; male = 2 encoded) was entered in the first step, locus of control was entered in the second step, and self-concept was entered in the third step of the regression analysis. The dependant variable was confrontation in the first regression analysis, and then public/private behavior, approach/avoidance, self-disclosure, and emotional expression, in successive analyses.

## FINDINGS

Correlation analysis results are presented in Table 1. Significant positive correlations were observed between self-concept and the following conflict resolution approaches: confrontation ( $r = 0.404, P < 0.01$ ), self-disclosure ( $r = 0.213, P < 0.01$ ), and emotional expression ( $r = 0.237, P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, locus of control (external locus of control) was negatively correlated with confrontation ( $r = -0.143, P < 0.01$ ), public/private behavior ( $r = -0.135, P < 0.05$ ), approach/avoidance ( $r = -0.135, P < 0.05$ ), self-disclosure ( $r = -0.131, P < 0.05$ ), and emotional expression ( $r = -0.194, P < 0.01$ ) approaches.

Regression analysis results are presented in Table 2.

**TABLE 1.** Correlations between the variables.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Self-Concept	1						
(2) Locus of control	-.205*	1					
(3) Confrontation	.404**	-.143**	1				
(4) Public/Private Behavior	-.053	-.135*	.033	1			
(5) Approach/Avoidance	-.009	-.135*	.207**	.457**	1		
(6) Self-Disclosure	.213**	-.131*	.387**	.063	.050	1	
(7) Emotional Expression	.237**	-.194**	.465**	.036	.098	.446**	1

n= 345, (\*) p<.05, (\*\*) p<.01

The predictors of the confrontation approach were locus of control ( $\beta = -0.149$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), which explained 2.2% of total variance ( $F_{(1,341)} = 4.598$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and self-concept ( $\beta = 0.396$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), which explained 16.1% of total variance ( $F_{(1,340)} = 19.088$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). These variables jointly explained 18.3% of the total variance for this approach.

Table 2 also shows that the predictive variables of the public/private behavior approach were gender ( $\beta = 0.270$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), which explained 7.6% of total variance in the first step ( $F_{(2,342)} = 14.129$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), and locus of control ( $\beta = -0.133$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), which explained 1.8% of total variance in the second step ( $F_{(1,341)} = 11.786$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Together they explained 9.4% of this approach's total variance.

The predictors of the approach/avoidance approach to conflict were gender ( $\beta = 0.395$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), which explained 16.3% of total variance in the first step ( $F_{(2,342)} = 33.248$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), and locus of control ( $\beta = -0.131$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), which explained 1.7% of the total variance in the second step ( $F_{(1,341)} = 24.932$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). The 2 variables combined explained 18% of the total variance for this approach.

When the self-disclosure approach was examined as the dependent variable, predictors were gender ( $\beta = -0.163$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), which explained 3.8% of total variance in the first step ( $F_{(2,342)} = 6.687$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), locus of control ( $\beta = -0.140$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), which explained 1.9% of total variance in the second step ( $F_{(1,341)} = 6.878$ ,  $P <$

0.01), and self-concept ( $\beta = 0.180$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), which explained 3.2% of total variance in the third step ( $F_{(1,340)} = 8.271$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). This model explained 8.9% of the total variance for the self-disclosure approach to conflict.

Finally, the predictors of the emotional expression approach were gender ( $\beta = -0.219$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), which explained 5.1% of total variance in the first step ( $F_{(2,342)} = 9.150$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), locus of control ( $\beta = -0.191$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), which explained 3.6% of total variance in the second step ( $F_{(1,341)} = 10.869$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), and self-concept ( $\beta = 0.196$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), which explained 3.8% of total variance in the third step ( $F_{(1,340)} = 12.126$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Together they explained 12.5% of the total variance.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to determine if locus of control and self-concept have a role in explaining the choice of interpersonal conflict resolution approaches. One of the findings was that self-concept was predictive of the confrontation approach to conflict. It was observed that an increase in positive self-concept was related to an increase in confrontation behaviors, and that 16.1% of the total variance of the confrontation approach was explained by self-concept. Another study that looked at self-concept reported that there was a positive relationship between the success and duration of interpersonal relationships, and a positive self-concept (Neuringer & Wandke, 1966). Another study reported that increasing positive self-concept improves social capabilities (Comer et al., 1986). Yet, another study that

**TABLE 2.** Summary of hierarchal regression analysis of the variables that predicted the choice of conflict resolution approaches.

	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
<u>Confrontation</u>					
1			.129	.017	2.900
Gender	-.077	-1.400			
2			.197	.039	4.598**
Locus of control	-.149	-2.807**			
3			.428	.183	19.088***
Self-concept	.396	7.970***			
<u>Public/Private Behavior</u>					
1			.276	.076	14.129***
Gender	.270	5.073***			
2			.307	.094	11.786***
Locus of control	-.133	-2.576*			
3			.309	.096	8.997***
Self-concept	-.043	-.816			
<u>Approach/Avoidance</u>					
1			.403	.163	33.248***
Gender	.395	7.801***			
2			.424	.180	24.932***
Locus of control	-.131	-2.667**			
3			.424	.181	18.668***
Self-concept	.014	.280			
<u>Self-Disclosure</u>					
1			.194	.038	6.687**
Gender	-.163	-2.995**			
2			.239	.057	6.878***
Locus of control	-.140	-2.651**			
3			.298	.089	8.271***
Self-concept	.180	3.434**			
<u>Emotional Expression</u>					
1			.225	.051	9.150***
Gender	-.219	-4.066***			
2			.295	.087	10.869***
Locus of control	-.191	-3.692***			
3			.353	.125	12.126***
Self-concept	.196	3.820***			

((\*) < 0.05; (\*\*) P < 0.01; (\*\*\*) P < 0.001.

considered self-esteem as an aspect of self-concept reported a positive relationship between self-esteem and the quality of friendship relations (Keefe & Berndt, 1996). All these findings support the results of the present study. It can be stated that people with a positive

self-concept use the confrontation approach in conflict situations, because they want to obtain constructive results in conflict situations.

Although the confrontation approach plays a part in effective and constructive conflict resolution, it can be in-

fluenced by many factors, such as culture, context, and personality. It was posited that avoidance of confrontation might be due to a perception of conflict as a disaster or insult, along with the anxiety of losing face which might be experienced by both parties (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Carter, 2002.). In this respect, a positive self-concept can be thought to reduce the anxiety of losing face; therefore, it is possible that educational programs aimed at improving self-concept may contribute to constructive and positive results in conflict situations.

Even though confrontation between individuals is supported by positive and constructive mediation, the success of the mediation process is based on the quality of communication (Nix & Hale, 2007). Consequently, educated mediators are important for successful conflict resolution (Harris, 2000). Considering the findings that communication plays an important role in the conflict resolution processes, the findings of the present study related to the correlation between confrontation and self-concept, are important to be helpful in the mediation process by revealing a personality dimension.

Locus of control was another variable that was predictive of the confrontation approach to conflict resolution. It can be stated that people with an internal locus of control adopt more confrontation strategies, whereas those with an external locus of control prefer avoidance strategies. The preference of externals for avoidance strategies is due to their passivity in interpersonal relationships (Doherty, 1981), lack of confidence, inadequate self-perception (Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Ashby et al., 2002), and low self-esteem (Goodman et al., 1982).

Locus of control was predictive of the use of the public/private approach to interpersonal conflict resolution, in such a way that internals, making contact between their own behavior and reinforcements, adopt public behaviors. On the other hand, externals, assuming that reinforcement is controlled by such external factors as luck and fate, exhibit private behaviors. The related findings in the literature concerning high-level self-confidence and independence among internals (Silvester et al., 2002; Loosemore & Lam, 2004), and inactivity and passivity traits among externals (Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Ashby et al., 2002) support results of existing research and indicate that people with an internal locus of control are more comfortable with the conflict resolution processes.

The present study also shows that locus of control was a predictor of the approach/avoidance approach to conflict. We suggest that people with an internal locus of control, who are reported to be effective, aggressive, and

enterprising (Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Silvester et al., 2002), prefer approach strategies to conflict, whereas those with an external locus of control, who are reported to be inactive, nonassertive, and to perceive themselves as inadequate (Ashby et al., 2002, Loosemore & Lam, 2004), prefer the avoidance approach to conflict. Another study that reported results that support the present study's results observed that internally controlled people use integration, while externally controlled individuals use avoidance strategies in conflict situations (Canary et al., 1988).

Self-disclosure, as a conflict resolution approach, is related to self-concept. Self-disclosure that indicate parties' disclosure regarding their roles, history, wishes and desires about the future, plays an important role in obtaining positive solutions to conflict (Goldstein, 1999). When conflict arises, it is important to be open, to share attitudes, behaviors and knowledge, and to avoid fear and self-defense behaviors, so as to obtain a constructive solution.

The present study shows that people with a positive self-concept exhibited more self-disclosure behaviors during the conflict resolution processes. Individuals with a high level of self-esteem are more enterprising and ambitious about conveying their thoughts (Baumeister et al., 2003). Moreover, individuals with a positive self-concept were reported to disclose themselves easily, behave more comfortably about self-concept matters, and have better quality personal relationships (Swensen, 1973; Shapiro & Swensen, 1977). These people are also reported to be more popular, compromising, demanding, talkative, and active, whereas individuals with a negative self-concept are silent and introverted (Hay et al., 1998). All of these studies are considered to support the present study's findings.

Locus of control was also a predictor of the self-disclosure approach to conflict. In consideration of previously reported findings that people with an external locus of control have a more negative self-concept and have higher levels of anxiety, stress, and depression (Yeşilyaprak, 2000; Ashby et al., 2002; Yağışan et al., 2007), whereas those with an internal locus of control have inner motivations and more positive self-perceptions (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Silvester et al., 2002), the present study's finding that internals exhibited more disclosure behaviors than externals did is expected.

Finally, the emotional expression approach to conflict is characterized by comfortably communication one's emotions during the conflict resolution process in an effort to reach a constructive resolution (Bodtker & Jame-

son, 2001). Emotions, being the source of conflicts and the energy feeding conflict resolution, can ease, prevent, or bring conflict under control. The current study shows that there was a positive relationship between emotional expression and positive self-concept. Many researchers have argued that emotional expression can also differ according to the personality characteristics (Kokkonen & Pulkkinen, 2001; Trierweiler et al., 2002; Mehl et al., 2006). This observation supports the finding regarding the weak power of self-concept to explain the variance in the emotional expression approach to conflict. The literature contains reports of the positive correlation between good friendship relationships and positive self-concept and emotional support (Cauce, 1986; Vernberg, 1990), as well as a positive correlation between low self-esteem and depression, and between high self-esteem, happiness and positive emotions (Baumeister et al., 2003). Considering these results, we think that a positive self-concept can provide comfortable behaviors in conflict situations and can contribute to displaying emotions in order to obtain more constructive resolutions.

Locus of control was observed to be predictor of the emotional expression approach to conflict. The finding that people with an internal locus of control exhibited more emotional expression complies with attributes of internals as being self-confidence, activeness, and positive self-concept (Loosemore & Lam, 2004; Anderson et al., 2005).

Gender was also determined to affect the choice of conflict resolution approaches. Females exhibited more self-disclosure, emotional expression, avoidance, and private behavior approaches to conflict than did males. Previous studies reported that females avoid from conflict at work, but approach at home, adopting a com-

promising approach. In contrast, males are reported to be more compromising in the workplace (Chusmir & Mills, 1989). Another study reported that females adopted the approach and that males adopted the dominance approach to conflict resolution (Brewer et al., 2002). Moreover, another study reported that females behaved more problem solving and compatible manner during the conflict resolution processes, as compared to males (De Wied et al., 2007). All these findings support the present study's result that females used more avoidance, self-disclosure, and emotional expression approaches to conflict resolution.

In conclusion, the present study shows that individuals with a positive self-concept and internal locus of control adopted more effective approaches for obtaining positive and constructive results to conflict. Considering the fact that there is an interactive relationship between self-concept and internal locus of control (Marsh et al., 2005; Marsh & Craven, 2006), it can be stated that developing skills to improve one's self-concept might also increase their beliefs in internal locus of control, which, in turn, might improve conflict resolution skills. Hence, increased internal locus of control beliefs can help to increase the positive self-concept judgments.

The present study has some limitations. One is the observed correlations between the conflict resolution approaches and self-concept is limited to the selected sample. The other is that resolution approaches can be more effectively explained by determining the cultural, situational, and relational factors that affect these approaches. In addition, in order to obtain more generalizable results, it is essential to compare the existing findings with qualitatively and quantitatively different samples.

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