TRUST, COMMITMENT, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG EMERGING ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

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Trust, Commitment, and Conflict Resolution Styles as Predictors of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction among Emerging Adults in Malaysia

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PREDICTORS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG EMERGING ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

Copyright Statement

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PREDICTORS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG EMERGING ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

Declaration

We declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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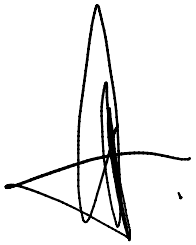
PREDICTORS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG EMERGING ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “Trust, Commitment, and Conflict Resolution Styles as Predictors of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction among Emerging Adults in Malaysia” prepared and submitted by Wong Cheng Xiang and Wong Zi Zheng in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology is hereby accepted.



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Supervisor

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Abstract

Maintaining good romantic relationships is a critical developmental challenge during emerging adulthood, yet many emerging adults find it difficult to establish long-lasting and happy relationships. This study aims to explore how trust, commitment, and constructive and destructive conflict resolution styles influence relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed with 98 participants aged 18–25 years, recruited using purposive sampling. The sample comprised 56.1% females (n = 55) and 43.9% males (n = 43), encompassing Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnicities. Standardized instruments, including the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS), Dedication Subscale of Commitment Inventory (CI), and the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI), were administered. Data collection was conducted through online platforms using Qualtrics, and data were analyzed with IBM SPSS version 24. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that trust (β = .452, p < .001) and commitment (β = .174, p = .049) significantly predicted higher relationship satisfaction, whereas destructive conflict resolution style (β = −.242, p = .004) significantly predicted lower relationship satisfaction. In contrast, constructive conflict resolution style was not a significant predictor (β = .064, p = .446). These findings align with Interdependence Theory, which emphasizes the importance of dependence and correspondence of outcomes in shaping relationship satisfaction. By highlighting the developmental and cultural factors influencing young adults' relationships in Malaysia, the study contributes to the literature and provides practical implications for relationship education, counseling, and youth development initiatives.

Keywords: relationship satisfaction, trust, commitment, conflict resolution styles, emerging adult

Subject area: H1-99, Social sciences (General)

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	
CI	Commitment Inventory
CRSI	Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory
DTS	Dyadic Trust Scale
K-S	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
MLR	Multiple Linear Regression
RAS	Relationship Assessment Scale
SERC	Scientific and Ethical Review Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

Chapter I

Introduction

Background of Study

Emerging adulthood, typically spanning the ages of 18 to 25, is widely recognized as a crucial developmental stage characterized by significant self-exploration, identity formation, and the pursuit of meaningful relational experiences. These experiences play a formative role in shaping future patterns of interpersonal relationships, particularly romantic ones (Arnett, 2000; Kamaluddin et al., 2024). Romantic relationships during this phase are uniquely impactful, influencing not only emotional well-being but also the development of long-term relational trajectories. Research has consistently shown that successfully navigating romantic exploration and establishing intimacy during this transitional period significantly enhances overall well-being (Schulenberg et al., 2004). Furthermore, high-quality romantic relationships have been found to contribute to greater relational satisfaction and promote personal growth, underscoring their importance during this life stage (Collibee & Furman, 2015). Collectively, these findings emphasize the critical role that relationship quality plays in emerging adulthood, with implications for both relational satisfaction and broader psychological outcomes.

Theories of romantic development further suggest that emerging adults are capable of forming intimate and committed relationships. However, these relationships often differ from traditional norms due to the unique challenges and transitions characteristic of this life stage (Shulman & Connolly, 2013). Understanding this demographic is important as romantic relationships during emerging adulthood serve as a foundation for future relational patterns. Moreover, the developmental and cultural contexts of Malaysia, where collectivist values and communication styles influence relational dynamics, provide a unique lens through which to study relationship satisfaction. Among the many factors that influence relationship

satisfaction, trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles have emerged as critical predictors, receiving considerable attention in the literature.

Trust, widely recognized as a foundational element of close relationships, plays a central role in fostering relational satisfaction (Rempel et al., 1985). Its importance extends to both offline and online romantic contexts, where the presence of trust strengthens emotional connections and relationship dynamics (Anderson & Emmers-Sommer, 2006). Similarly, commitment is a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction, as it fosters behaviors that prioritize the couple's long-term well-being over individual short-term desires. High levels of commitment often lead to greater relationship satisfaction by enhancing relational stability and mutual investment (Stanley et al., 2010; Acker & Davis, 1992). Together, trust and commitment significantly contribute to the prediction of relationship satisfaction, highlighting their enduring importance across different relational contexts (Gonzalez, 2011).

While conflict in romantic relationships is a common occurrence, and unresolved conflict often weakens the bond between partners (Overall & McNulty, 2016), it is not the presence of conflict itself that determines the quality of a relationship but rather the way it is managed (Ünal & Akgün, 2022). Thus, conflict resolution styles add another layer of complexity to understanding romantic relationships. In the current study, conflict resolution styles have been categorized into two approaches: constructive and destructive conflict resolution styles. Constructive conflict resolution approaches, such as positive problem-solving, are associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Kurdek, 1994). In contrast, destructive conflict resolution styles, characterized by verbal aggression, avoidance, and hostility, negatively impact relationship satisfaction and can lead to adverse emotional and psychological outcomes (Du Plessis, 2001).

This study aims to investigate trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles as key predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia. This

study employed the Interdependence Theory as a guiding framework to examine and analyze the dynamics within this relationship. By focusing on this specific cultural context, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the unique relational experiences of Malaysian emerging adults.

Problem Statement

Relationships are the foundation for personal well-being and interpersonal growth, and relationship satisfaction plays a critical role in fostering high-quality connections (Gustavson et al., 2015; Fincham & Cui, 2010). In Malaysia, while 90% of couples report satisfaction with their partners (Ipsos, 2024), emerging adults show only moderate levels of relationship satisfaction, highlighting a developmental gap (Teoh et al., 2024). Despite its significance, research on relationship satisfaction in Malaysia has primarily focused on married couples, leaving the experiences of emerging adults that are underexplored (Arnett, 2000; Ng et al., 2008; Yee et al., 2020; Yasmin et al., 2023).

Trust is widely recognized as a fundamental predictor of relationship satisfaction (Sharma & Marwaha, 2023; Kleinert et al., 2020), yet its role among Malaysian emerging adults remains underexamined. Trust in this demographic develops through shared experiences and effective communication (Mullinax et al., 2016) It is one of the key values in romantic relationships and integrates emerging adults' emotional, psychological, and physical aspects (Gala & Kapadia, 2013). However, studies in Malaysia examining trust as a predictor of relationship satisfaction among emerging adults are limited, suggesting a significant gap in understanding how trust functions within this population (Teoh et al., 2024).

Similarly, the role of commitment, a key factor that has a bidirectional relationship with relationship satisfaction, has yet to be thoroughly investigated among emerging adults in Malaysia. While commitment predicts relationship satisfaction (Matotek et al., 2021; Cassepp-Borges et al., 2023), and satisfaction, in turn, influences commitment in romantic

relationships (Emery et al., 2020; Nascimento & Little, 2020), the directional nature of this relationship remains unclear. The connection between commitment and satisfaction involves couples adapting, adjusting, and accommodating one another to build a better relationship (Van Lange et al., 1997). Although emerging adults who engage in long-term committed relationships often feel satisfied with their relationships (Fincham & Cui, 2010), the direct effect of commitment on relationship satisfaction in Malaysia remains unresolved (Teoh et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to confirm the predictive effect of commitment on relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

Furthermore, conflict resolution styles add complexity to the dynamics of relationship satisfaction. Constructive conflict resolution styles, such as positive problem-solving, significantly predict higher relationship satisfaction (Tandler et al., 2020; Gesell et al., 2020). In Malaysia, studies suggest that couples are more likely to see conflict as a problem that needs to be solved and a desire to make quality decisions that actually solve the problem (Nascimento & Little, 2020). Yet, the predictive effect of constructive conflict resolution style on relationship satisfaction remains unconfirmed among emerging adults in Malaysia. On the other hand, destructive conflict resolution styles, such as conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance, negatively predict relationship satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2022; Gesell et al., 2020). Destructive conflict resolution style (e.g., verbal arguments, avoidance, or criticism) can lead to the escalation of issues, adversely impacting relationship satisfaction (Varughese et al., 2023). While the negative impact of destructive conflict resolution has been observed across different cultural groups (Celenk et al., 2019), these patterns have not been adequately studied in Malaysia, leaving a significant cultural gap in the literature.

The study addresses these gaps by examining the influence of trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles on relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia. By exploring these factors in a developmental and cultural context, the study aims to deepen the

understanding of relational dynamics and contribute to improving relationship satisfaction and quality in this population.

Research Objectives

1. To examine whether trust positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.
2. To examine whether commitment positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

3a. To examine whether constructive resolution style positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

3b. To examine whether destructive resolution style negatively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

Research Questions

1. Does trust positively predict relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia?
2. Does commitment positively predict relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia?

3a. Does constructive resolution style positively predict relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia?

3b. Does destructive resolution style negatively predict relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia?

Research Hypotheses

H1: Trust positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

H2: Commitment positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

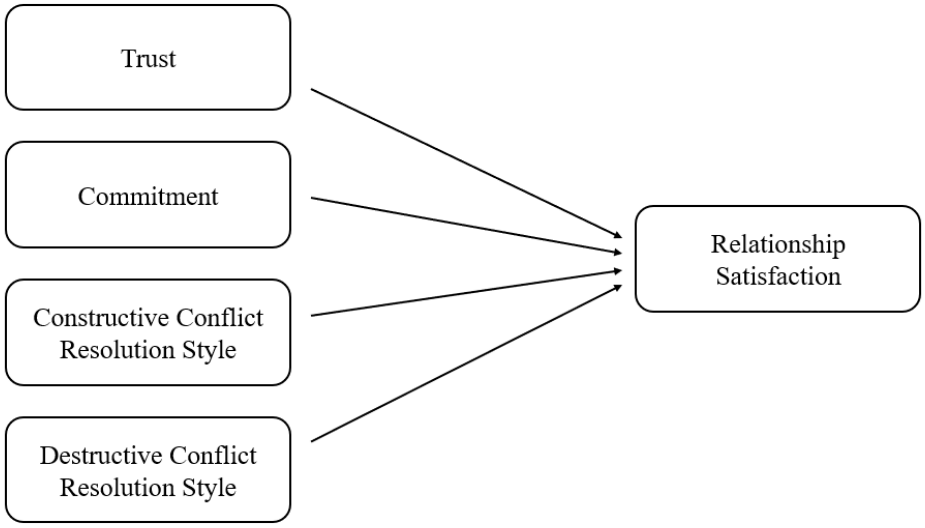
H3a: Constructive resolution style positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

H3b: Destructive resolution style negatively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

Conceptual Framework

In the study, trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles (constructive and destructive) serve as the predictor of relationship satisfaction which is the outcome variable.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of "Trust, Commitment, and Conflict Resolution Styles as Predictors of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Among Emerging Adults in Malaysia".



Conceptual Definition

Relationship Satisfaction

According to Rusbult (1983), relationship satisfaction refers to the degree of positive feelings and attraction that an individual experiences toward their partner or relationship. It encompasses a subjective assessment of relational quality, based on the evaluation of both positive and negative experiences within the relationship (Fallis et al., 2016).

Trust

According to McKnight and Chervany (2000), trust refers to the willingness to depend on and be vulnerable to a partner. This vulnerability is often built on shared, interdependent goals, which create a foundation for mutual understanding and cooperation (Carsel, 2020).

Commitment

According to Stanley and Markman (1992), commitment in romantic relationships comprises two key components: dedication and constraint. Dedication refers to the desire to maintain a long-term relationship, prioritize it in one's life, and develop a shared couple identity; whereas constraint involves the perceived social, emotional, moral, or economic factors that create barriers to ending the relationship (Givertz et al., 2016).

Conflict Resolution Styles

According to Marchand (2004), conflict resolution styles refer to the various interpersonal behaviors individuals use to address disagreements with their partners.

Constructive Conflict Resolution Style. According to Hocker & Wilmot (1985), constructive conflict resolution style involves handling conflicts with a willingness to learn, flexibility, and a focus on maintaining the relationship, rather than defending individual perspectives

Destructive Conflict Resolution Style. According to Perrone-McGovern et al. (2013), destructive conflict resolution style involves handling conflicts with behaviors that are divisive and escalatory, such as avoidance and verbal aggression.

Operational Definition

Relationship Satisfaction

In the current study, the variable of relationship satisfaction will be measured using the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) developed by Hendrick (1988). This is a 7-item

questionnaire to measure individuals' romantic relationship satisfaction using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Poorly) to 5 (Extremely Well). A higher total score indicate that individuals are more satisfied with their romantic relationships.

Trust

In the current study, the variable of trust will be measured using the Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS) developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980). This is an 8-item questionnaire to measure individuals' degree of trust in their respective partners using a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Completely Agree) to 6 (Completely Disagree). A higher total score indicates a higher level of trust in the partner.

Commitment

In the current study, the variable of commitment will be measured using the dedication subscales of the Commitment Inventory (CI) developed by Stanley and Markman (1992). This is a 14-item questionnaire to measure the level of commitment of an individual to a relationship using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). A higher total score indicates a greater personal commitment.

Conflict Resolution Styles

In the current study, the variable of conflict resolution styles will be measured using the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) developed by Kurdek (1994). This is a 16-item questionnaire to measure individuals' style of handling conflict using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). This measure consists of four different conflict resolution styles: positive problem-solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance.

Significance of Study

This study is significant because it examines the main factors that influence romantic relationship satisfaction, including trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles, among emerging adults in Malaysia, a group where research remains limited. By focusing on this

population, the study addresses an existing gap in the literature, particularly in the context of cultural and developmental factors that shape romantic relationships during emerging adulthood.

The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how these predictors influence relationship satisfaction in a Malaysian context. Romantic relationships during this life stage are not only formative for emotional well-being but also establish patterns that can influence long-term relational trajectories. Understanding these dynamics is essential to expand the body of knowledge on relational satisfaction during emerging adulthood.

Furthermore, the study provides a cultural perspective on relational behaviors, highlighting unique aspects of Malaysian emerging adults' experiences. By filling the gaps in existing research, it offers valuable insights that can be used as a basis for future studies, enriching the understanding of relationship satisfaction in diverse cultural settings.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction can be defined as the degree of positive feelings and attraction that an individual has towards his or her partner or relationship (Rusbult, 1983). In the context of romantic relationships, relationship satisfaction is not just a measure of happiness, but a subjective assessment of relational quality based on the evaluations of positive and negative experiences within the relationship (Fallis et al., 2016). It is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions of positive emotional response and perceived quality within a romantic relationship. In addition to this, high levels of relationship satisfaction are associated with equality, mutuality, caring, and supportiveness, which are crucial in fostering a satisfying and stable relationship dynamic (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). A satisfying relationship is important for a partner to feel happy, supported, and meaningful in the relationship (Bühler et al., 2021).

Relationship satisfaction is influenced by several key factors. Studies have shown a strong link between relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction, intimacy, passion, and commitment, suggesting that these relational qualities are central to maintaining and enhancing the feeling of satisfaction within a partnership (Józefacka et al., 2023; Yasmin et al., 2023). Furthermore, individual traits like self-compassion play a significant role in predicting relationship satisfaction (Yildirim et al., 2021). Personality traits are also key predictors of one's own relationship satisfaction but also partner's satisfaction (Orth, 2013). For example, individuals high in agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness generally report higher levels of relationship satisfaction. Conversely, individuals high in neuroticism tend to report lower relationship satisfaction. This interconnectedness

between relational and individual quality highlights how both partners' contributions influence relationship satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction is also deeply associated with other life outcomes. Research indicates that individuals with high relationship satisfaction tend to report higher life satisfaction, greater subjective well-being, and an improved overall quality of life (De Guzman et al., 2024; Gustavson et al., 2015; Mónaco et al., 2021). In contrast, lower levels of satisfaction are linked to increased loneliness and adverse behaviors such as phubbing, which is a phenomenon where one partner frequently ignores the other in favor of their mobile device, which in turn diminishes relationship quality (Zhan et al., 2022).

Over time, relationship satisfaction tends to follow a developmental pattern that may vary throughout a person's life. Research has shown that people first experience high levels of satisfaction, which then gradually decrease from age 20 to 40, reaching a low point around age 40. Satisfaction then rises again until around age 65 and stabilizes in late adulthood (Bühler et al., 2021). The most significant decline in young adulthood may be attributed to unmet expectations and the pressures of life transitions (Bühler et al., 2021).

Trust

Trust is a cornerstone of romantic relationships, defined as the willingness to depend on and be vulnerable to a partner (McKnight & Chervany, 2000). It is built on shared, interdependent goals, creating a foundation for mutual understanding and cooperation (Carsel, 2020). Hancock et al. (2023) found that this willingness to rely on a partner is significantly fostered by closeness within the relationship, emphasizing the importance of intimacy in cultivating trust. Thus, in a healthy romantic relationship, trust is essential as it reflects the closeness and shared goals of the couple.

Various factors can contribute to mistrust in romantic relationships. Research indicates that behaviors such as telling minor lies, withholding parts of the truth, or engaging

in romantic interactions outside the relationship can foster mistrust (Norona et al., 2017). When mistrust arises, individuals with anxious attachment tendencies are particularly vulnerable. They are more likely to experience jealousy, engage in behaviors like snooping through their partner's belongings, and exhibit psychologically abusive tendencies (Rodriguez et al., 2015). These behaviors often lead to conflict and instability within the relationship. Additionally, mistrust significantly contributes to relationship conflict and is positively associated with intentions to break up (Arikewuyo et al., 2020). Such actions undermine the relational foundation, making it difficult to maintain emotional closeness and shared goals, both of which are critical to sustaining trust.

Research also shows that trust extends its benefits beyond romantic relationships, promoting better physical and mental health. Schneider et al. (2011) found that individuals with higher levels of trust tend to experience improved overall health outcomes. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Zhao et al. (2024) revealed that social well-being is strongly influenced by trust, emphasizing its role in fostering a sense of connectedness and belonging. Moreover, trust significantly contributes to life satisfaction and overall well-being (Helliwell & Wang, 2010). These findings suggest that fostering trust not only enhances relational dynamics but also plays a crucial role in improving physical and mental health, positively impacting an individual’s overall well-being.

Commitment

According to Stanley and Markman (1992), commitment in romantic relationships consists of two key aspects which are dedication and constraint. Dedication refers to the desire to maintain a long-term relationship, prioritize it in one’s life, and foster a shared couple identity; whereas constraint refers to the perceived social, emotional, moral, or economic barriers that discourage ending the relationship (Givertz et al., 2016). Both dedication and constraint significantly influence relationship dynamics.

Research indicates that when dedication is low but constraints to leaving are high, individuals often feel trapped, distressed, and anxious, leading to discomfort within the relationship (Knopp et al., 2014). This suggests that dedication plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive relational environment. Furthermore, prior studies highlight the dual importance of dedication and constraint, demonstrating their positive influence on commitment in relationships (Odekerken-Schröder & Bloemer, 2004).

Higher commitment has been associated with reduced uncertainty and improved relationship quality over time (Weigel et al., 2011). Interestingly, negative-direct communication, such as expressions of anger, criticism, and hostility, can paradoxically increase perceptions of a partner's commitment, ultimately contributing to relationship quality (Overall, 2017). Additionally, thoughtful decisions regarding partner selection and relationship milestones positively correlate with higher commitment and enhanced relationship quality (Owen et al., 2013).

Conflict Resolution Styles

Conflict resolution style in romantic relationships refers to the various interpersonal behaviors individuals use to address disagreements with their partner (Marchand, 2004). While conflict is an inherent and natural aspect of all close relationships, it is not the mere presence of conflict but rather how partners handle it that most significantly impacts relationship satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2022). Conflict resolution is important because it can help prevent future confrontations by addressing the root causes of injustice. Unresolved or poorly managed conflict can harm both partners' mental and physical health, contributing to depressive symptoms (Hysi, 2015).

According to Hysi (2015), conflict resolution styles are generally categorized as constructive and destructive. These categories represent two distinct approaches to handling

conflict, helping partners to respond appropriately when conflict occurs in a romantic relationship (Fortin et al., 2020).

Constructive Conflict Resolution Style

Constructive conflict resolution style involves handling conflicts with a willingness to learn, flexibility, and a focus on maintaining the relationship, rather than defending individual perspectives (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985). This style is characterized by the enhancement of self-esteem, cooperative focus, open communication, and problem-solving (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985; Bolze et al., 2017). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in constructive conflict resolution (Schlaerth et al., 2013). It may be due to empathy, a component of emotional intelligence, that allows individuals to consider their partner's perspective before responding and handling conflict more constructively (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2013). Constructive conflict resolution has been found to be critical in maintaining romantic relationships (Shulman et al., 2005).

Destructive Conflict Resolution Style

Destructive conflict resolution style, conversely, involves handling conflicts with behaviors that are divisive and escalatory, such as avoidance and verbal aggression (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2013). This style is characterized by competitive patterns of dominance and subordination, manipulation, inflexibility, and verbal hostility (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985). Destructive conflict resolution style may have adverse consequences for romantic relationships, including depressive symptoms and reduced subjective well-being (Hysi, 2015; Siffert & Schwarz, 2010).

Kurdek (1994) identifies four distinct types of conflict resolution styles that reflect constructive and destructive approaches, including positive problem-solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. The constructive style aligns with positive problem-solving, in which partners compromise and negotiate to reach mutually beneficial

solutions. Destructive styles, on the other hand, include conflict engagement (characterized by personal attacks and aggression), withdrawal (avoiding or refusing to address issues), and compliance (yielding without advocating for one's own needs or perspective) (Bonache et al., 2016; Adriani & Ratnasari, 2021).

These different styles represent more than just behaviors; they also reflect each partner's communication orientation and overall approach to conflict. They can be understood as (a) individual characteristics, where personal traits influence one's preferred style; (b) types of conflict behaviors, which describe the patterns partners exhibit during disagreements; and (c) orientations toward communication, where each style reflects an underlying attitude about the role of conflict in relationships (Hysi, 2015).

Trust and Relationship Satisfaction

Trust is a cornerstone of healthy romantic relationships and has been consistently linked to positive relational outcomes. Studies indicate that higher trust levels in romantic relationships correlate with greater relationship satisfaction, open communication, positive evaluations of partners, and confidence in understanding one's partner (Sharma & Marwaha, 2023; Kleinert et al., 2020). This emphasizes trust as a key predictor of relationship well-being, particularly during emerging adulthood, a period marked by the formation of deeper emotional bonds.

Research highlights that personal trust, defined as the belief in a partner's reliability, honesty, and good intentions, significantly predicts relationship satisfaction (Gonzalez, 2011). This trust extends beyond observed behaviors to encompass an individual's internalized perception of their partner's character, underscoring the psychological dimensions of trust in relational stability and quality (Anderson & Emmers-Sommer, 2006).

Interestingly, gender differences in how trust impacts relationship satisfaction have been observed. For women, the ability to safely share personal information is a stronger

predictor of relationship quality and satisfaction compared to men, indicating that emotional safety and trust play a particularly vital role for women in romantic relationships (Qiu et al., 2022). However, some findings suggest no significant difference between males and females in their levels of trust and its impact on relationship satisfaction, with a strong positive correlation observed for both genders (Jain, 2022).

Commitment and Relationship Satisfaction

Commitment plays a crucial role in shaping relationship satisfaction, though its impact varies across contexts, genders, and stages of a relationship. Research indicates that personal commitment, rather than perceived partner commitment, is a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction (Gonzalez, 2011). Furthermore, gender differences further illustrate the nuanced role of commitment. De Andrade et al. (2015) suggest that for women, commitment is a key predictor of relationship satisfaction, whereas for men, commitment appears to have less influence. Similarly, younger individuals with higher levels of commitment report greater relationship satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of commitment in romantic relationships among emerging adults (Matotek et al., 2021). However, as relationships mature and stabilize, the direct influence of commitment on relationship satisfaction may diminish, even while remaining significant, as other factors such as begin to take precedence in determining long-term relationship quality (Cassepp-Borges et al., 2023).

In contrast, relationship satisfaction itself can act as a predictor of commitment, demonstrating a reciprocal dynamic between the two constructs. High relationship satisfaction tends to strengthen commitment, encouraging individuals to invest resources into maintaining the relationship (Emery et al., 2020; Nascimento & Little, 2020). Both current relationship satisfaction and expectations of future happiness also significantly influence commitment, suggesting the importance of maintaining a positive outlook on the

relationship's future alongside nurturing present experiences (Baker et al., 2017). This highlights the interdependence of satisfaction and commitment in fostering stable and fulfilling romantic relationships.

Conflict Resolution Styles and Relationship Satisfaction

Constructive Conflict Resolution Style and Relationship Satisfaction

Constructive conflict resolution style is widely recognized as a positive influence on relationship satisfaction, particularly in romantic relationships. When partners engage in constructive conflict resolution such as positive problem-solving, open communication, and empathetic engagement, relationship satisfaction tends to improve. For instance, research has found that adolescents who frequently used constructive conflict resolution style experienced higher levels of satisfaction within their relationships (Todorov et al., 2023). Similarly, studies confirm that constructive conflict resolution, particularly positive problem-solving, contributes significantly to relationship satisfaction (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2013; Tandler et al., 2020; Gesell et al., 2020). This pattern is evident across various relationship types, including heterosexual and same-sex couples, as well as parents and non-parents, indicating that constructive conflict resolution fosters relationship satisfaction across diverse populations (Kurdek, 1994).

Constructive conflict resolution is also essential in helping partners navigate disagreements in ways that strengthen the relationship. Positive problem-solving has emerged as the strongest predictor of satisfaction compared to other types, especially in the early years of a marital relationship, where mutual understanding and cooperation are vital for long-term stability (Adriani & Ratnasari, 2021). This strategy not only encourages an atmosphere of open dialogue and understanding but also reinforces the couple's commitment to working through challenges together. Similarly, Du Plessis (2001) reports that couples who engage in

positive problem-solving experience greater satisfaction, emphasizing the approach's importance as an effective strategy for maintaining high relationship quality over time.

Destructive Conflict Resolution Style and Relationship Satisfaction

In contrast, destructive conflict resolution style is often associated with lower relationship satisfaction and poorer relational outcomes. Destructive conflict resolution, such as conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance, emphasizes self-interest and hostile intentions, leading to adverse impacts on relationship satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2022; Gesell et al., 2020; Du Plessis, 2001). These destructive approaches frequently damage relational stability, contributing to a cycle of dissatisfaction and conflict avoidance. However, several studies have shown that there has been a lack of a significant relationship between compliance and relationship satisfaction because it often leads to unmet needs and emotional disconnect (Adriani & Ratnasari, 2021; Kurdek, 1994).

The negative impact of destructive conflict resolution style on relationship satisfaction has been observed across diverse demographic and cultural groups. For instance, studies in the Netherlands involving individuals from Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean, and Indonesian backgrounds—as well as mainstream Dutch participants—consistently report lower relationship satisfaction associated with destructive conflict resolution (Celenk et al., 2019). This suggests that, although cultural dynamics may influence specific relational patterns, the detrimental effects of destructive conflict resolution on relationship satisfaction are widespread and universal across various groups.

Theoretical Framework

Interdependence Theory

The study applies the Interdependence Theory to support the role of trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles on romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia. Initially proposed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959),

Interdependence Theory explains how the dynamics of partner interactions affect individual experiences and the relationship as a whole (Arriaga, 2013). According to this theory, satisfaction is influenced by each partner's perception of this relationship's reward (e.g., affection, support) versus costs (e.g., conflict, unmet needs) in comparison to personal standards (Dainton, 2015). For example, partners are more satisfied with their relationships when the rewards of the partnership outweigh the costs and both the rewards and costs are important to the individual (Kurdek, 1995). As relationships develop, partners increasingly depend on each other to meet their emotional, psychological, and social needs, fostering a shared sense of satisfaction (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Rusbult and Buunk (1993) outline four critical properties of interdependence relationships, including degree of dependence, correspondence of outcomes, mutuality of dependence, and basis of dependence. Degree of dependence refers to the extent to which each partner relies on the relationship to meet personal needs (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993), which is fundamental to both commitment and trust in a romantic relationship. Trust also directly relates to degree of dependence, as greater trust leads partners to become more comfortable with relying on each other (Rusbult et al., 1999). When trust is established, individuals are more willing to be vulnerable and increasingly dependent, enhancing their satisfaction with the relationship. This connection is particularly relevant because trust reduces

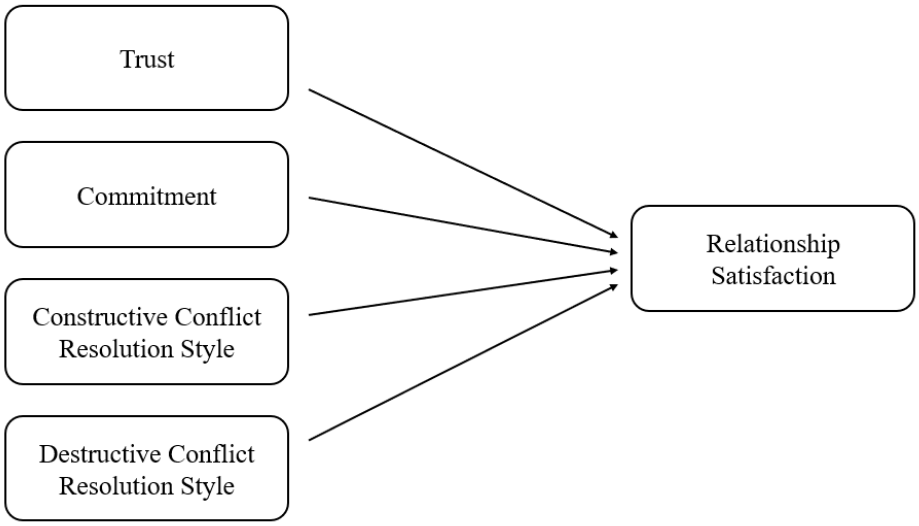
In addition to this, high levels of commitment to the relationship are associated with a high degree of interdependence between partners, and repeated formation of a collective identity is a proximate predictor of relationship satisfaction (Givertz et al., 2015). Commitment encourages individuals to accommodate, sacrifice, and invest in the relationship (Rusbult et al., 1999). This concept is consistent with the extent to which partners are invested in their shared future, and with the idea that strong commitment increases

satisfaction because partners view the relationship as a reliable source of support and fulfillment.

Furthermore, correspondence of outcomes refers to how individuals react when a partner behaves poorly (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). This dimension provides a framework for understanding the impact of conflict resolution styles on satisfaction. Individuals usually reduce conflict by making situational choices to increase correspondences (e.g., constructive conflict resolution), while people may sometimes seek to enhance conflicts of interest (e.g., destructive conflict resolution) (Van Lange & Balliet, 2014). In other words, constructive conflict resolution decreases the 'relational' costs of conflict, whereas destructive conflict resolution increases the 'relational' costs of conflict. Rusbult (1983) and Columbus et al. (2020) noted that if individuals rarely conflict with their partners who share common interests, then their relationship satisfaction increases. This property highlights the role of effective conflict management in aligning partners' outcomes, which ultimately influences relationship satisfaction.

The study focuses on the degree of dependence and correspondence of outcomes as key dimensions influencing relationship satisfaction among Malaysian emerging adults. For emerging adults, academic pressures, evolving identities, and transitional life stages pose unique relational challenges. By focusing on these elements of Interdependence Theory, the study proposes that trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles are key predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction among Malaysian emerging adults.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of "Trust, Commitment, and Conflict Resolution Styles as Predictors of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Among Emerging Adults in Malaysia".



Chapter III

Methodology

Research Design

For the purpose of examining trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles as predictors of relationship satisfaction among Malaysian emerging adults in romantic relationships, this study used a cross-sectional quantitative approach. Data from participants were gathered simultaneously in a cross-sectional research design, which allowed relationships between predictor variables and relationship satisfaction at one specific point in time to be examined (Zechmeister et al., 2014). This design was cost-effective, easy to implement, and served as a foundation for generating preliminary evidence to inform future, more comprehensive studies (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Data collection was conducted through online surveys, as they were a practical and economical method for gathering quantitative data within a short timeframe (Nayak & Narayan, 2017). This method also facilitated access to a diverse participant pool, enhancing the study's generalizability. The survey included validated scales to measure trust, commitment, conflict resolution styles, and relationship satisfaction.

Sampling Procedures

Sampling Method

This study applied a non-probability sampling technique, which offered several advantages, including quicker data collection, reduced survey costs, and easier access to potential participants (Kim, 2022). The target participants were emerging adults in Malaysia who were currently in romantic relationships. To recruit participants, purposive sampling was employed. This non-random approach involved intentionally selecting individuals who met characteristics that are directly related to the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). By

focusing on individuals in Malaysia who met these criteria, purposive sampling ensured that the collected data were both relevant and aligned with the study's goals.

Research Location

The Qualtrics survey platform was used to perform this study online. Instagram, WeChat, Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms were used to distribute the survey link and QR code. This approach was designed to reach Malaysians nationwide who met the study's inclusion criteria. The online format ensured accessibility, allowing individuals from diverse geographic locations to participate conveniently while maintaining anonymity and broadening the potential sample base.

Procedures of Ethical Clearance Approval

This study was approved by the research supervisor, Miss Teoh Xi Yao, before submission to the Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (SERC) of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Ethical clearance was granted after submitting the demographic form and research instruments. Once SERC approval was obtained, the online questionnaire was distributed to the public to ensure the research adhered to ethical standards. The ethical clearance reference number is Re: U/SERC/78-425/2025 (see Appendix A).

Sample Size

G*Power Software version 3.1 was used to calculate the study's target sample size (Faul et al., 2007). A total of 77 participants was determined as the minimum required sample size based on a multiple regression analysis with four predictors, a power level of 0.95, and an alpha error probability of 0.05 (see Appendix B). To account for potential survey incompletion or missing data, the computed sample size was increased by 20%, resulting in a final target sample size of 92 participants.

Data Collection Procedures

Inclusion Criteria and Exclusion Criteria

In this study, participants were chosen based on four inclusion criteria: (a) being emerging adults aged between the ages of 18 and 25, (b) holding Malaysian nationality, (c) currently being in a romantic relationship, and (d) giving their informed consent to participate. Participants who failed to meet the inclusion criteria, such as those who were non-Malaysian, outside the specified age range, not in a romantic relationship, or married, were excluded. Additionally, surveys that were incomplete or contained inconsistent responses were removed during the data cleaning process to ensure data integrity.

Procedures of Obtaining Informed Consent

The research proposal was sent to UTAR's SERC for ethical approval prior to the start of data collection. This step was taken to make sure the study complied with ethical guidelines and safeguarded the rights of participants and the privacy of their data. An informed consent form, which provides clear information about the study's title, objectives, possible risks, and participants' rights, was incorporated into the online survey in order to uphold these standards and encourage ethical responsibility and transparency.

Procedures of Data Collection

Qualtrics, a web-based survey platform, was used to conduct research survey. The questionnaire consisted of five parts: Demographic Information, DTS, Dedication subscale of CI, CRSI, and RAS. To make sure participants fit the inclusion criteria and to gather specific background data, demographic information was gathered, including age, gender, race, nationality, education level, relationship status, and length of relationship. To make sure that participants understood the goal of the study and consented to the use of their data, informed consent was acquired prior to participation. The consent form made clear that participation was entirely optional, that withdrawal was free of consequences, and that all information

would be kept private and anonymous. Instagram, WeChat, Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms were used to distribute the survey link in order to recruit participants.

Pilot Study

Following the approval of ethical clearance, a pilot study was conducted from 2nd February 2025 to 18th February 2025 to assess the suitability of the research instruments and procedures before commencing the actual study. The survey was created and distributed using Qualtrics. The questionnaire included items on demographics, trust, commitment, conflict resolution style, and relationship satisfaction. Participants were asked to provide details such as gender, age, race, nationality, education level, and relationship status and duration, and to rate their responses on the psychological measures.

The target group for the pilot study was emerging adults in Malaysia, aged between 18 and 25, who were currently engaged in a romantic relationship. As suggested by Browne (1995), 30 responses were collected from individuals within the target criteria. Data from the pilot study were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 24. The internal consistency of the scales was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. As shown in Table 3.1, all instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability, with alpha values exceeding the .70 threshold, indicating strong internal consistency (see Appendix C). According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), a Cronbach's alpha value of .70 or above is generally considered acceptable, indicating that the items in a scale reliably measure the same underlying construct. Therefore, all instruments were found to be reliable for use in the actual study.

Actual Study

After the pilot study was finished, the actual study started since there were no significant issues with the tools or processes were found. Once an adequate number of responses were collected, the data were cleaned and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 24. After the data was cleaned, 98 valid responses in all were kept for analysis. With

Cronbach's alpha values above .70, all instruments displayed good internal consistency, as indicated in Table 3.1, confirming accurate measurement (see Appendix D).

Table 3.1

Instruments' Reliability Obtained from Pilot Study and Actual Study

		Cronbach's alpha	
Variables	Number of Items	Pilot Study	Actual Study
DTS – Trust	8	0.832	0.845
Dedication Subscale of CI – Commitment	14	0.731	0.881
CRSI – Constructive Conflict Resolution Style	4	0.721	0.805
CRSI – Destructive Conflict Resolution Style	12	0.811	0.867
RAS – Relationship Satisfaction	7	0.753	0.798

Note. DTS = Dyadic Trust Scale, CI = Commitment Inventory, CRSI = Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory, RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale

Instruments

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

The RAS, introduced by Hendrick (1988), was used to measure how satisfied people were with romantic relationships. It consisted of seven items (e.g., "To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?") with a 5-point Likert-type response format (1 = poorly, 5 = extremely well), where items 4 and 7 were reverse scored. The sum of scores for all seven items, after reverse scoring, was calculated. Total scores ranged from 7 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater relationship satisfaction. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .88 in a sample of emerging adults (Yildirim

et al., 2021). Furthermore, the scale demonstrated good convergent validity in measuring relationship satisfaction (Renshaw et al., 2011).

Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)

The DTS, developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980), was used to measure individuals' trust in their partners. It consisted of eight items (e.g., "I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me.") with a 6-point Likert-type response format (1 = completely agree, 6 = completely disagree), where items 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 were reverse scored. The sum of scores for all eight items, after reverse scoring, was calculated. Total scores ranged from 8 to 48, with higher scores indicating greater levels of relationship trust. The scale showed strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .86 in emerging adults (Myers & Glover, 2007). Additionally, Gabbay et al. (2012) demonstrated its good construct validity in measuring trust within romantic relationships.

Dedication Subscale of Commitment Inventory (CI)

The dedication subscale of the CI, developed by Stanley and Markman (1992), was used to measure the level of commitment of individuals to their relationships. It is a 14-item scale (e.g., "I don't make commitments unless I believe I will keep them.") with a 7-point Likert-type response format (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), where items 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 14 were reverse scored. The sum of scores for all 14 items, after reverse scoring, was calculated. Total scores ranged from 14 to 98, with higher scores indicating greater levels of personal commitment to their relationships. The scale showed high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .83 across emerging adults (Vennum et al., 2015). Additionally, the scale demonstrated good construct validity, with evidence of its association with relationship satisfaction (Stanley & Markman, 1992).

Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI)

The CRSI, developed by Kurdek (1994), was used to measure individuals' styles of handling conflict in their relationships. It is a 16-item scale (e.g., "Negotiating and compromising.") with a 5-point Likert-type response format (1 = never, 5 = always). For conflict resolution styles were assessed by the instrument: positive problem-solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. Items 2, 6, 10, and 14 represented positive problem-solving, items 1, 5, 9, and 13 represented conflict engagement, items 3, 7, 11, and 15 represented withdrawal, and items 4, 8, 12, and 16 represented compliance. The sum score for positive problem-solving was used to represent constructive conflict resolution style, with total scores ranging from 4 to 20. The sum scores for conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance were combined to represent destructive conflict resolution style, with total scores ranging from 12 to 60. Higher scores indicated individuals' greater tendency to use that particular style in romantic relationships. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency across samples, with Cronbach's alpha ranging between .79 and .93 for constructive conflict resolution style and between .73 and .89 for destructive conflict resolution style (Ha et al., 2013). Furthermore, Ramírez et al. (2024) confirmed the scale's validity in measuring conflict resolution across various age groups.

Chapter IV

Results

The analysis of the gathered data using multiple linear regression (MLR) and descriptive statistics was described in this chapter. First, the individuals' demographic characteristics were investigated using descriptive analysis. The predictive relationships between the variables: trust, commitment, constructive and destructive conflict resolution styles, and relationship satisfaction, were then examined using multiple linear regression.

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Characteristics

After performing data cleaning, only 98 valid responses were retained from the initial total of 135 cases.

Based on the findings, participants in the final sample were between the ages of 19 and 25 (M = 22.70, SD = 1.35). Compared to males (n = 43, 43.9%), females were slightly more represented (n = 55, 56.1%). Chinese participants made up the largest group of participnats (n = 76, 77.6%), followed by Malay (n = 13, 13.3%), Indian (n = 7, 7.1%), and others (n = 2, 2%), with one identifying as Bumiputera Sarawak and one preferring not to state their race. In terms of education level, most participants were pursuing an undergraduate degree (n = 81, 82.7%), followed by foundation students (n = 8, 8.2%) and postgraduate students (n = 8, 8.2%). One participant (1%) selected “Other” and preferred not to disclose their education level (see Appendix E).

Topic-Specific Characteristics

Table 4.1 below shows the descriptive statistics for the key variables in the current study, including trust (M = 39.133; SD = 6.366), commitment (M = 74.439; SD = 14.965), constructive conflict resolution style (M = 16.755; SD = 2.788), destructive conflict

resolution style (*M* = 24.010; *SD* = 7.205), and relationship satisfaction (*M* = 29.102; *SD* = 4.311; see Appendix E).

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Topic-Related Variables (i.e., Trust, Commitment, Constructive Conflict Resolution Style, Destructive Conflict Resolution Style, Relationship Satisfaction)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Trust	39.133	6.366	19	48
Commitment	74.439	14.965	24	98
Constructive Conflict Resolution Style	16.755	2.788	7	20
Destructive Conflict Resolution Style	24.010	7.205	12	46
Relationship Satisfaction	29.102	4.311	14	35

Data Diagnostics and Missing Data

Frequency and Percentages of Data Cleaning

Among the initial total of 135 participants, 37 cases (27.41%) were excluded during the data cleaning process. Only 98 cases were retained for the final analysis.

Methods Employed for Addressing Missing Data

All 37 invalid cases were carefully deleted from the dataset to preserve the integrity and completeness of the analysis.

Criteria for Post-Data Collection Exclusion of Participants

Specifically, 27 participants were removed due to incomplete responses, as they did not complete the full questionnaire. Additionally, 3 participants who selected “I disagree, my personal data will not be processed” during the informed consent process were excluded to

ensure ethical compliance. Furthermore, 6 participants were disqualified for indicating "single" under the relationship status item, which did not meet the study's inclusion criteria, and 1 participant was removed for exceeding the designated age range, as they were 28 years old.

Criteria for Imputation of Missing Data

No imputation was conducted for missing data. Participants with incomplete responses (n = 27) were removed entirely from the dataset. Only fully completed responses were retained for the final analysis.

Defining and Processing of Statistical Outliers

Casewise diagnostics were used to evaluate influential cases and multivariate outliers. Three potential outliers were identified based on standardized residuals exceeding ±2, which were Case 41, Case 75, and Case 76. These cases were examined using Mahalanobis distance, Cook's distance, and Centered Leverage Value to determine whether these cases were multivariate outliers or influential cases, as shown in Table 4.2 (see Appendix F).

Table 4.2

Multivariate Outliers Test

Case Number	Mahalanobis Distance	Cook's Distance	Centered Leverage Value
41	8.280	0.110	0.085
75	7.026	0.081	0.072
76	13.849	0.511	0.143

According to Barnett and Lewis (1994), the Mahalanobis distance for a sample size of approximately 100 should not exceed 15. In addition, Cook's distance should be below 1 for

each case (El-Masri et al., 2020). The leverage value should not exceed .103, as calculated by the formula $\frac{2(p+1)}{n}$, where p represent the number of predictors and n represent the sample size (Hoaglin & Welsch, 1978). Although Case 76 had a leverage value higher than .103, it did not exceed the thresholds for Mahalanobis distance and Cook's distance. Therefore, it was not considered an influential outlier. Similarly, Cases 41 and 75 fell within acceptable thresholds across all three diagnostic measures. As a result, all three potential multivariate outliers fell within the acceptable thresholds for the three diagnostic statistics and were retained in the current study.

Assumptions of Normality

Histogram

Histograms were used to assess the distribution patterns of all five variables: trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, destructive conflict resolution style, and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated no significant violations of the normality assumption, as there were no severe abnormalities or notable skewness observed in the data distributions (see Appendix G).

Q-Q Plot

Normality was further assessed using Q-Q plots for all five variables: trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, destructive conflict resolution style, and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated that all five variables closely aligned with the diagonal line in the plots, suggesting that the distributions approximated normality (see Appendix G). Therefore, no violations of the normality assumption were detected based on the Q-Q plot analysis.

Skewness and Kurtosis

According to George and Mallery (2010), if the skewness and kurtosis values are between -2 to $+2$, the data may be considered as approximately normally distributed. Based

on these thresholds, the analysis revealed no significant deviations in skewness or kurtosis across any of the five variables examined: trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, destructive conflict resolution style, and relationship satisfaction. All values fell within the acceptable range, indicating that the data met the criteria for normality assumptions (see Appendix G).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test is used to evaluate normality; a non-significant result (p-value >.05) indicates there is no significant difference between the sample distribution and a normal distribution (Mishra et al., 2019). Among the five variables, only commitment D (98) = .089, p = .053 met this criterion, indicating no significant deviation from normality. In contrast, the other four variables which were trust D (98) = .165, $p < .001$, constructive conflict resolution style D (98) = .178, $p < .001$, destructive conflict resolution style D (98) = .104, p = .011, and relationship satisfaction D (98) = .113, p = .004 produced significant results, suggesting violations of the normality assumption. These findings indicate that, based on the K-S test, only the commitment variable was normally distributed (see Appendix G).

Conclusion for Assumption of Normality

In summary, the histogram, Q-Q plot, skewness, and kurtosis analysis did not reveal any violations. While commitment showed no violation, the K-S test revealed violations of normality for the variables of trust, constructive and destructive conflict resolution styles, and relationship satisfaction. Taking all normality assessments into account, four out of five indicators supported the assumption of normality across all variables. Therefore, the assumption of normality was considered to be sufficiently achieved.

Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

Variable Types

In MLR, the independent variables can be either continuous or categorical, whereas the dependent variable must be measured on a continuous scale (Fein et al., 2022). In the current study, the independent variables (trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, and destructive conflict resolution style) and the dependent variable (relationship satisfaction) were all measured on continuous and quantitative scales. Therefore, the assumption regarding variable types for conducting MLR was considered to be met.

Independence of Error

The Durbin-Watson test was used to evaluate the assumption of independence of error. The Durbin-Watson value should be between 1 and 3, with values closer to 2 indicating a stronger adherence to the assumption (Handayani et al., 2024). In the present study, the Durbin-Watson value was 1.832, which falls within the acceptable range. Therefore, no violation of the independence of errors assumption was detected (see Appendix H).

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is an undesirable condition in multiple linear regression, as it indicates a high correlation among the predictor variables, which were trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, and destructive conflict resolution style. This assumption was assessed using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. Multicollinearity is considered present if the tolerance value is below 0.1 to 0.2 and the VIF value exceeds 5 to 10 (Kim, 2019). The results showed that all tolerance values were above the critical threshold, and all VIF values were below the cut-off range. Therefore, no violation of the multicollinearity assumption was detected in the study (see Appendix H).

Normality of Residual, Linearity, and Homoscedasticity

The scatterplot was used to evaluate the assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and residual normality. The scatterplot suggested that there were no violations of these three assumptions because the residuals were dispersed evenly and randomly along the horizontal zero line (see Appendix H).

Conclusion for Assumptions of MLR

In conclusion, a number of diagnostic procedures were carried out in order to assess the multiple linear regression assumptions. No notable violations were found, and all fundamental assumptions: variable types, independence of error, multicollinearity, normality of residuals, linearity, and homoscedasticity, were adequately fulfilled.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was conducted to investigate how the independent variables, including trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, and destructive conflict resolution style, predict the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction, among emerging adults in Malaysia. A two-tailed test was applied.

The overall model explained 63.9% of the variance and was statistically significant (F (4, 93) = 43.914, $p < .001$) (see Appendix I). As shown in Table 4.3, trust ($\beta = .452$, $p < .001$) and commitment ($\beta = .174$, $p = .049$) were found to significantly and positively predict relationship satisfaction. Destructive conflict resolution style ($\beta = -.242$, $p = .004$) significantly and negatively predicts relationship satisfaction. However, constructive conflict resolution style ($\beta = .064$, $p = .446$) was not a significant predictor. Among all predictors, trust emerged as the strongest predictor of relationship satisfaction.

Table 4.3

Results of Regression Coefficient

Variable	Std.β	t	Sig.
Trust	.452	4.661	.000
Commitment	.174	1.994	.049
Constructive Conflict Resolution Style	.064	.766	.446
Destructive Conflict Resolution Style	-.242	-2.943	.004

Dependent variable: Relationship Satisfaction

In summary, as shown in Table 4.4, the findings supported Hypotheses *H1*, *H2*, and *H3b*, while Hypothesis *H3a* was not supported in the current study.

Table 4.4

Summary of Findings

Hypotheses	Decision
H1: Trust positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.	Supported
H2: Commitment positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.	Supported
H3a: Constructive conflict resolution style positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.	Not supported
H3b: Destructive conflict resolution style negatively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.	Supported

Chapter V

Discussion

Constructive Discussion of Findings

This section discusses how trust, commitment, constructive conflict resolution style, and destructive conflict resolution style predict relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia. It also examines whether the findings support the proposed hypotheses and considers how they relate to previous studies and the theoretical framework.

H1: Trust positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

The study's findings are consistent with Hypothesis 1, showing that among Malaysian emerging adults, trust is a strong predictor of relationship satisfaction. This finding is consistent with prior research, which has shown that higher levels of trust are significantly associated with greater satisfaction in romantic relationships (Sharma & Marwaha, 2023; Kleinert et al., 2020). When individuals feel confident in their partner's reliability and intentions, they are more willing to be vulnerable, which deepens emotional closeness and strengthens relational bonds.

The significant association observed in this study aligns with Hancock et al. (2023), who found that closeness within a relationship fosters greater trust. Emerging adulthood, a distinct developmental stage, is characterized by major life transitions such as leaving home, completing education, and entering the workforce (Arnett, 2000). During this time, individuals explore career identities, experience instability in work roles, and gradually make long-term occupational choices. Research shows that romantic partners often become the primary source of emotional support in this phase, as attachment shifts from parents to partners while individuals navigate identity formation and increasing autonomy (Suh & Fabricius, 2019). This shift may contribute to greater closeness between partners. Conversely,

the absence of trust has been linked to jealousy, controlling behaviors, and conflict, all of which undermine satisfaction (Norona et al., 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2015). The present findings reinforce this by demonstrating that higher trust is associated with greater relationship satisfaction, suggesting that trust serves as both a protective factor and a catalyst for positive relational outcomes.

In the Malaysian context, which is strongly shaped by collectivist cultural values, individuals tend to prioritize interdependence and engage in behaviors that maintain harmony within the relationship (Baptist et al., 2012). Couples in such cultures are more inclined to share responsibilities and make mutual sacrifices, placing relational well-being above personal interests. Trust is likely to grow when partners consistently act in ways that benefit the relationship rather than seeking individual gain (Wieselquist et al., 1999). Among emerging adults, research has found that making sacrifices for shared goals, particularly when driven by genuine care, is associated with higher relationship satisfaction and overall well-being (Gómez-López et al., 2019). Additionally, in collectivist societies, romantic responsibilities and partner selection are heavily influenced by family approval rather than individual preference. Therefore, confidence in the relationship may stem not only from the partner's behavior but also from family validation (Bejanyan et al., 2015). This external approval can further strengthen feelings of security and trust, ultimately enhancing overall relationship satisfaction.

***H2*: Commitment positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.**

The study's findings supported Hypothesis 2, showing that among Malaysian emerging adults, commitment is a strong predictor of relationship satisfaction. This finding is consistent with prior studies that highlight commitment as a key predictor of relationship satisfaction (Gonzalez, 2011; De Andrade et al., 2015; Matotek et al., 2021).

This study highlights that commitment plays a vital role in predicting relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia, especially the aspect of dedication. Dedication reflects a genuine desire to prioritize and invest in a relationship. It has been consistently shown to be a key driver of satisfaction (Givertz et al., 2016). When dedication is viewed as desirable, individuals are more likely to depend on their partner and are less likely to consider ending the relationship, which in turn fosters greater satisfaction (Tan et al., 2019). By reinforcing a sense of security and mutual purpose, dedication deepens partners' emotional bonds and enhances their confidence in the long-term stability of the relationship. Moreover, dedication promotes pro-relationship behaviors such as sacrificing for the partner, investing time and effort, and pursuing shared goals, all of which contribute to higher relationship satisfaction (Stanley et al., 2010). Furthermore, dedication promotes resilience in the face of challenges, as individuals with high dedication are more motivated to accommodate and maintain the relationship, thereby reinforcing both stability and satisfaction.

Individuals with clearer couple identity clarity, meaning a firm sense of "who we are as a couple," display higher commitment levels and are less likely to break up (Emery et al., 2020). This suggests that commitment is not only an internal feeling but also tied to a shared couple identity, strengthening relationship stability. Furthermore, relationship quality among emerging adults is influenced by identity development, especially identity commitment (Grossmann et al., 2023). Narratives from emerging adults show that making romantic commitments leads to closer alignment with internalized values and decreases the influence of external pressures (Larsson et al., 2019), indicating that dedication fosters unity and shared purpose.

This pattern is particularly relevant in the Malaysian context, where collectivist values emphasize family approval, respect, and social expectations in romantic relationships. While

such external pressures may encourage couples to remain together, they do not always guarantee emotional fulfillment. For some emerging adults, commitment driven primarily by social obligation may reduce satisfaction if it lacks genuine emotional engagement. However, when external approval aligns with personal dedication, it can reinforce relationship stability and enhance satisfaction, reflecting the dual role of collectivist norms. Studies among Asian emerging adults suggest that relationship quality is highest when commitment stems from internal emotional investment rather than solely from external forces (Jiao et al., 2024). Similarly, a Malaysian study found that self-compassion enhances romantic satisfaction through greater commitment, underscoring the positive impact of internally motivated dedication (Teoh et al., 2024).

***H3a*: Constructive resolution style positively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.**

The present study found that relationship satisfaction among Malaysian emerging adults was not significantly predicted by constructive conflict resolution style. Thus, Hypothesis 3a was not supported. This result is inconsistent with previous literature, which has consistently shown that constructive conflict resolution style, particularly positive problem-solving, is significantly associated with higher relationship satisfaction (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2013; Tandler et al., 2020; Gesell et al., 2020). While constructive conflict resolution style is often considered beneficial, some studies have shown that positive problem-solving may predict lower relationship satisfaction (Bisht & Tripathi, 2023). In support of this, other research has noted that positive communication during conflict situations does not consistently lead to higher relationship satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2021). Additionally, some research has discovered a non-significant association (Bretz, 2009) and an indirect relationship (Taggart et al., 2018) between relational quality and constructive conflict resolution approach.

One of the possible explanations could be the relational dynamic between partners. If constructive efforts are not reciprocated, where one partner attempts joint problem-solving, but the other does not engage, the effectiveness of the resolution may be diminished. Particularly among emerging adults, individuals may believe they are using a joint strategy when, in fact, they are taking an individualistic approach and viewing their partner's consent as cooperation (Abela et al., 2023). In such cases, the strategy may appear constructive on the surface but lacks the mutual understanding and responsiveness necessary to strengthen the relationship. De Bruyne (2000) also found that constructive conflict resolution requires joint efforts from both partners to achieve higher relationship satisfaction.

Cultural and hierarchical influences must also be considered in interpreting these findings. In Malaysian society, traditional gender roles often involve a clear division of work and authority, where men are expected to be confident, independent, and take the lead, while women are expected to be caring, cooperative, and obedient. These societal expectations can shape how individuals approach and interpret conflict resolution styles. For instance, men may favor a more direct or authoritative communication style, while women may adopt a more indirect or accommodating style (Azmi et al., 2023), leading to mismatches in perceived intention and effectiveness of conflict resolution. In addition to this, cultural values in Malaysian society, such as maintaining harmony and avoiding confrontation, may lead emerging adults to adopt constructive strategies more as a means to maintain surface-level harmony rather than to address deeper relational issues (Wider et al., 2021). In such cultural contexts, open expressions of conflict may be discouraged, limiting the potential benefits of truly constructive conflict resolution.

***H3b*: Destructive resolution style negatively predicts relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.**

The present study found that relationship satisfaction among Malaysian emerging adults was significantly and negatively predicted by destructive conflict resolution style. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was supported. This finding is consistent with previous literature that has consistently demonstrated a negative association between destructive conflict resolution style and lower relationship satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2022; Gesell et al., 2020; Du Plessis, 2001). Siffert and Schwarz (2010) also found that destructive conflict resolution style predicted lower relationship satisfaction and subjective well-being by increasing the likelihood of escalation, miscommunication, and unresolved tension.

In the present study, destructive conflict resolution style was assessed across three components: conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. Conflict engagement, although possibly less common among today's emerging adults (Figueroa & Bishop, 2025), still shows up when arguments become heated and partners start focusing on each other's faults instead of solving the issue. This shift from problem-solving to blame can cause both partners to negatively interpret their partner's intentions and behaviors, reinforcing the perception that the relationship is a source of frustration rather than support (Honeycutt et al., 2014). Such patterns may result in a feedback loop, where the more negatively one partner reacts, the more defensive the other becomes.

Withdrawal is a different but equally harmful pattern. It involves emotionally or physically disengaging from the relationship, sending harmful nonverbal cues, and increasing distance between partners (Riggio & Feldman, 2005). This distancing effect may leave issues unresolved and foster feelings of neglect or rejection, thus reducing relationship satisfaction. Studies have also shown that when one's withdrawal is combined with the other's demand or aggression, it could further decrease relationship satisfaction (Bretaña et al., 2022).

The third component, compliance, often stems from internalized guilt among emerging adults, especially when they feel personally responsible for the conflict (Jayakobi & Mun, 2022). Compliance might involve agreeing to decisions without expressing one's true opinions, accepting blame to end the disagreement quickly, or consistently giving in to avoid confrontation. Although this may temporarily reduce conflict, it tends to prioritize the partner's needs at the sacrifice of one's own, contributing to emotional suppression and reduced relationship satisfaction (Cramer, 2000). When these destructive patterns are present, they interfere with open communication, reduce emotional closeness, and make it harder to resolve problems in a healthy way.

The pattern observed in this study can also be understood in the context of emerging adulthood, a stage in which individuals are forming long-term patterns for managing romantic conflict. This developmental period involves experimentation with different approaches to relationship maintenance, including the degree to which individuals approach in a constructive or destructive conflict resolution style (Watkins & Beckmeyer, 2019). However, many emerging adults are still learning how to resolve disagreements effectively and may rely on maladaptive, destructive styles when faced with relational conflict (Figueroa & Bishop, 2025). Limited interpersonal experience, combined with ongoing development of emotional regulation and communication skills, may make this age group particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of destructive conflict styles.

Cultural factors also play a critical role in shaping how destructive conflict resolution style is perceived and experienced. In Malaysia, cultural values rooted in collectivism emphasize harmony, respect, and consensus, often promoting relaxed communication styles such as attentive listening and indirect expression of disagreement (Azmi et al., 2023). In this context, overtly destructive conflict resolution style may be viewed as culturally inappropriate or disrespectful, violating social expectations around relational harmony and

reducing relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, individuals from collectivistic backgrounds are more likely to avoid direct confrontation or rely on third-party help; thus, destructive conflict resolution style may generate discomfort and further reduce relationship satisfaction (Cingöz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007).

Implications of Study

Theoretical Implication for Future Research

The present study aligns Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) Interdependence Theory, which posits that satisfaction in close relationships is shaped by the balance of rewards and costs, evaluated against personal standards and alternatives (Dainton, 2015). Within this framework, the dimensions of degree of dependence and correspondence of outcomes provide a basis for understanding how trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles operate as predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia.

The study found that trust and commitment significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction, supporting Interdependence Theory's emphasis on the degree of dependence. Trust allows partners to be more willing to share resources, disclose feelings, and take risks for the relationship. High trust enhances the perception of stability in a partner's behavior, which means that individuals believe in their partners and are mutually dependent (Rusbult et al., 1999). Commitment, in turn, reflects the psychological attachment and long-term orientation toward maintaining the relationship despite challenges. It reflects a high degree of dependence because committed individuals integrate their partner into their identity and future plans, making the relationship central to their sense of self. Together, these findings suggest that when rewards such as emotional security and stability are high, and dependence is valued, relationship satisfaction is strengthened.

In contrast, destructive conflict resolution style significantly and negatively predicted relationship satisfaction, reinforcing the correspondence of outcomes dimension. Destructive

conflict resolution styles, such as conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance, may misalign partner interests, increase relational costs, and reduce mutual benefit, thus reducing relationship satisfaction. Interestingly, constructive conflict resolution style did not significantly predict satisfaction, indicating that strategies perceived as constructive in some contexts may not always enhance perceived rewards. This finding suggests that correspondence of outcomes may be moderated by factors such as reciprocity and cultural norms, where direct problem-solving may be less valued than harmony-preserving communication.

However, the current findings also suggest that trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles do not operate in isolation when shaping relationship satisfaction. This supports Interdependence Theory's recognition that perceptions of rewards and costs are dynamic, evolving through continuous interaction between partners over time (Arriaga, 2013). For emerging adults in Malaysia, developmental factors such as limited conflict resolution experience and ongoing identity formation may influence how costs and rewards are evaluated, potentially amplifying the negative impact of destructive conflict. Cultural context also plays a central role in interpreting these findings. In Malaysian society, collectivist values, traditional gender roles, and norms surrounding relational harmony may shape how dependence and correspondence are expressed, further influencing whether relational strategies are experienced as rewarding or costly. These interpretations are reinforced through social learning within broader networks, including peers, family members, and media portrayals of relationships.

Overall, the study extends Interdependence Theory by demonstrating that while the core principles of degree of dependence and correspondence of outcomes are robust, their manifestation is influenced by both developmental stage and cultural environment. This contributes to the literature by addressing the gap identified in prior studies that have largely

focused on Western contexts, showing that Interdependence Theory is also applicable in collectivist, Asian contexts such as Malaysia. In doing so, the findings broaden the theoretical scope of the framework and highlight the importance of situating relationship theories within diverse cultural settings.

Practical Implication for Programs and Policies

The results of the current study carry a number of important practical implications for the development of relationship-focused programs and policies targeting Malaysian emerging adults. The evidence that trust and commitment significantly and positively predict relationship satisfaction underscores the need for interventions that intentionally cultivate these qualities in romantic relationships. Universities, counseling centers, and non-governmental organizations could design programs that include workshops, seminars, or structured relationship education courses emphasizing the importance of trust-building behaviors, such as consistency, honesty, and reliability, as well as practices that foster long-term commitment and couple identity. Such initiatives could be particularly beneficial in higher education settings, where many emerging adults are exploring romantic partnerships while simultaneously managing developmental transitions.

The study also highlights the predictive role of destructive conflict resolution styles on relationship satisfaction, while constructive conflict styles were not found to be significant. This suggests that programs and interventions should prioritize reducing destructive conflict resolution styles such as avoidance, hostility, or passive-aggressiveness rather than focusing exclusively on teaching constructive conflict resolution styles. For practitioners, such as counselors or therapists working with emerging adults, this finding emphasizes the importance of helping couples identify and unlearn maladaptive conflict patterns that may undermine relational well-being. By tailoring interventions toward the reduction of

destructive dynamics, programs can more effectively enhance the quality and stability of romantic relationships among emerging adults.

The findings also suggest the importance of embedding relationship education within broader youth development initiatives in Malaysia. Policymakers could integrate modules on trust, commitment, and healthy conflict management into higher education wellness programs, premarital counseling requirements, or community-based youth empowerment initiatives. In the Malaysian collectivist context, where family and community often play a significant role in romantic and marital decisions, policies might also encourage the inclusion of family members in educational initiatives to strengthen supportive networks. By institutionalizing these components in policies and programs, stakeholders can foster healthier relationships among emerging adults, which may, in turn, contribute to stronger family structures and greater societal stability over the long term.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the current study must be taken into account in order to appropriately interpret and use the results. Firstly, the results' external validity and generalizability may be impacted by sample bias during data collection (Khorsan & Crawford, 2014). The sample was predominantly composed of Chinese participants (n = 76, 77.6%), with smaller representation from Malay (n = 13, 13.3%), Indian (n = 7, 7.1%), and other ethnic groups (n = 2, 2%). Given Malaysia’s multicultural composition, this demographic imbalance may limit the extent to which the findings reflect the experiences, norms, and relationship dynamics of the broader population. An overrepresentation of one ethnic group can skew the results toward relationship values and conflict resolution patterns specific to that group, potentially underrepresenting culturally distinct perspectives from other communities. Consequently, the conclusions may not fully capture the diversity of factors influencing relationship satisfaction among emerging adults across Malaysia.

Another limitation lies in the study's cross-sectional research design. While this design is efficient and allows for the identification of associations between variables, it limits the ability to draw conclusions about causality and the temporal sequence of relationships (Wang & Cheng, 2020). For example, although commitment were found to be significant predictors of relationship satisfaction, the direct of influence cannot be determined, it is equally plausible that higher relationship satisfaction fosters commitment over time (Emery et al., 2020). Additionally, there may be unmeasured third variables, such as relationship length, personality traits, or prior relational experiences. A cross-sectional study cannot capture the evolving dynamics of relationships, which may change over months or years as partners experience both positive and negative life events together.

Lastly, the reliance on self-report questionnaires for all variables introduces potential biases, particularly social desirability bias and recall bias. Social desirability bias may lead participants to present themselves in a favorable light, overreporting positive relational behaviors such as constructive conflict resolution style and underreporting destructive style such as withdrawal or criticism (Blome & Augustin, 2015). Moreover, self-reported measures rely heavily on participants' memory and interpretation of their behavior, which may result in recall bias and produce findings that differ from objective observations. In the context of relationship research, individuals may be unaware of subtle communication patterns or may misinterpret their own intentions, leading to discrepancies between reported and actual behaviors. Therefore, the use of subjective self-assessment may limit the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

First, future studies should aim to recruit more diverse and representative samples to address the issue of sampling bias. As Malaysia is a multicultural society with distinct ethnic groups, ensuring balanced participation from Malay, Chinese, Indian, and other communities

would provide a more accurate understanding of relationship dynamics among emerging adults. This would allow researchers to examine whether cultural norms and values influence trust, commitment, and conflict resolution style differently across groups, thereby strengthening the generalizability of findings.

Second, the use of longitudinal designs is recommended to capture the temporal and developmental nature of romantic relationships. Unlike cross-sectional research, longitudinal studies would allow researchers to track changes in trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles over time and clarify causal directions. For instance, such designs could help determine whether higher levels of commitment lead to greater relationship satisfaction or if satisfaction itself reinforces commitment across different stages of the relationship.

Lastly, future studies may benefit from incorporating multiple methods of data collection beyond self-report questionnaires. The inclusion of observational methods, partner reports, or qualitative interviews could reduce biases such as social desirability and recall bias. These alternative approaches would provide richer insights into relational processes, particularly in identifying subtle patterns of communication or conflict resolution that participants themselves may not recognize. A mixed-methods approach may be especially valuable in capturing both subjective experiences and objective behavioral evidence.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of trust, commitment, and conflict resolution styles in predicting relationship satisfaction among emerging adults in Malaysia. The results demonstrated that trust and commitment were significant positive predictors, highlighting their importance in fostering stability, security, and emotional closeness in romantic relationships. In contrast, destructive conflict resolution styles significantly and negatively predicted satisfaction, while constructive conflict resolution styles were not significant, suggesting that cultural norms and relational dynamics may moderate their impact.

The findings extend Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) Interdependence Theory by illustrating how the dimensions of dependence and correspondence of outcomes operate within a Malaysian cultural context. They emphasize that trust and commitment strengthen satisfaction when dependence is valued, while destructive conflict undermines correspondence of outcomes. At the same time, the non-significance of constructive strategies indicates that the perceived rewards of certain behaviors may vary depending on cultural expectations and the quality of reciprocity between partners.

Beyond theoretical contributions, the study highlights practical implications for relationship education and counseling programs targeting Malaysian emerging adults. By focusing on cultivating trust, reinforcing genuine commitment, and reducing destructive conflict patterns, interventions can promote healthier and more satisfying relationships. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how emerging adults navigate romantic relationships in multicultural and collectivist contexts, while pointing to future directions for more diverse, longitudinal, and multiple-method investigations.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Ethical Clearance Approval

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN DU012(A)
Wholly owned by UTAR Education Foundation Co. No. 578227-M

Re: U/SERC/78-425/2025

2 January 2025

Dr Lee Wan Ying
Head, Department of Psychology and Counselling
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat
31900 Kampar, Perak.

Dear Dr Lee,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to the application for ethical approval for your students' research project from Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) Psychology programme enrolled in course UAPZ3023. We are pleased to inform you that the application has been approved under Expedited Review.

The details of the research projects are as follows:

No	Research Title	Student's Name	Supervisor's Name	Approval Validity
1.	Parenting Styles (Authoritative and Authoritarian) and Childhood Trauma Experience as Predictors of Emotion Regulation Among Young Adults in Malaysia	1. Chin Meng En 2. Tan Hui Wen 3. Wong En	Ms Teoh Xi Yao	2 January 2025 – 1 January 2026
2.	The Relationship Between Commitment, Intimacy, Passion and Relationship Satisfaction Among Young Adults in Malaysia	1. Chong Chi Yan 2. Fion Lee Wan Qi 3. Teoh Yu Qin		
3.	Trust, Commitment, and Conflict Resolution Styles as Predictors of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Among Emerging Adults in Malaysia	1. Wong Cheng Xiang 2. Wong Zi Zheng		

The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

(1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research;

(2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and

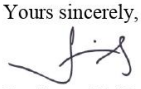
(3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.

(4) Written consent be obtained from the institution(s)/company(ies) in which the physical or/and online survey will be carried out, prior to the commencement of the research.

Should the students collect personal data of participants in their studies, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for records.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Ts Dr Faidz bin Abd Rahman
Chairman
UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee

c.c Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research

Kampar Campus : Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia
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Website: www.utar.edu.my

Appendix B

Sample Size Calculation

Predictor 1: Trust (Jain, 2022)

Table 2: Parametric Correlations (Pearson's r) for Dependent Variables

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1.Trust	186	96.29	10.18	1		
2.Intimacy	186	140.89	17.67	.661**	1	
3.Relationship Satisfaction	186	30.25	3.66	.644**	.671**	1

**. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Effect size for trust and relationship satisfaction (r = 0.644):

$$f^2 = \frac{0.644^2}{1 - 0.644^2} = 0.7086$$

Predictor 2: Commitment (Matotek et al., 2021)

Table 2 Correlations for key variables

	Relationship satisfaction	Relationship commitment	Received sext	Sent sext	Sent sext to partner
Relationship satisfaction	1	0.515***	0.037	0.078	−0.001
Relationship commitment	–	1	0.080	0.064	0.053
Received sext	–	–	1	0.565***	0.469***
Sent sext	–	–	–	1	0.689***
Sent sext to partner	–	–	–	–	1

***$p < .001$

Effect size for commitment and relationship satisfaction (r = 0.515):

$$f^2 = \frac{0.515^2}{1 - 0.515^2} = 0.3610$$

Predictor 3: Conflict resolution styles (Gesell et al., 2020)

Table 1 Partial correlations, means, standard deviations, and internal consistencies of the study variables ($N = 209$)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	*M*	*SD*	α
1 MAAS	−.11	.21**	−.17*	−.29**	.13*	.26**	.29**	.26**	.25**	.21**	.19**	4.09	.75	.88
2 CRSI conflict eng.	–	−.51**	.25**	−.00	−.22**	−.34**	−.31**	−.32**	−.25**	−.19**	−.03	2.00	.83	.79
3 CRSI positive prob.sol.		–	−.38**	−.17*	.31**	.53**	.54**	.40**	.49**	.44**	.18*	3.98	.63	.70
4 CRSI withdrawal			–	.23**	−.20**	−.38**	−.29**	−.28**	−.26**	−.18**	−.19**	2.13	.84	.74
5 CRSI compliance				–	−.11	−.20**	−.25**	−.24**	−.21**	−.16**	−.11*	2.23	.80	.77
6 IOS					–	.53**	.39**	.22**	.40**	.35**	.15*	4.84	1.42	
7 RAS						–	.74**	.50**	.69**	.63**	.45**	4.22	.71	.90
8 PFB-K total							–	.72**	.88**	.87**	.38**	21.22	5.12	.87
9 PFB-K quarreling								–	.43**	.38**	.19**	7.22	1.79	.72
10 PFB-K togetherness									–	.75**	.33**	7.03	1.95	.71
11 PFB-K tenderness										–	.42**	6.96	2.29	.89
12 Sexual satisfaction											–	3.81	1.10	

MAAS, Mindful Attention Awareness Scale; *CRSI*, Conflict Resolution Style Inventory; *conflict eng.*, conflict engagement; *positive prob.sol*, positive problem solving; *IOS*, Inclusion of Other in the Self; *RAS*, Relationship Assessment Scale; *PFB-K*, short form of Partnership Questionnaire

Partial correlations controlling for age, sex, education, immigrant background, relationship duration, marriage, and children. Variables 7–12 represent our dependent variables

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Effect size for positive problem-solving and relationship satisfaction (r = 0.53):

$$f^2 = \frac{0.53^2}{1 - 0.53^2} = 0.3906$$

Effect size for conflict engagement and relationship satisfaction (r = -0.34):

$$f^2 = \frac{(-0.34)^2}{1 - (-0.34)^2} = 0.1307$$

Effect size for withdrawal and relationship satisfaction (r = -0.38):

$$f^2 = \frac{(-0.38)^2}{1 - (-0.38)^2} = 0.1688$$

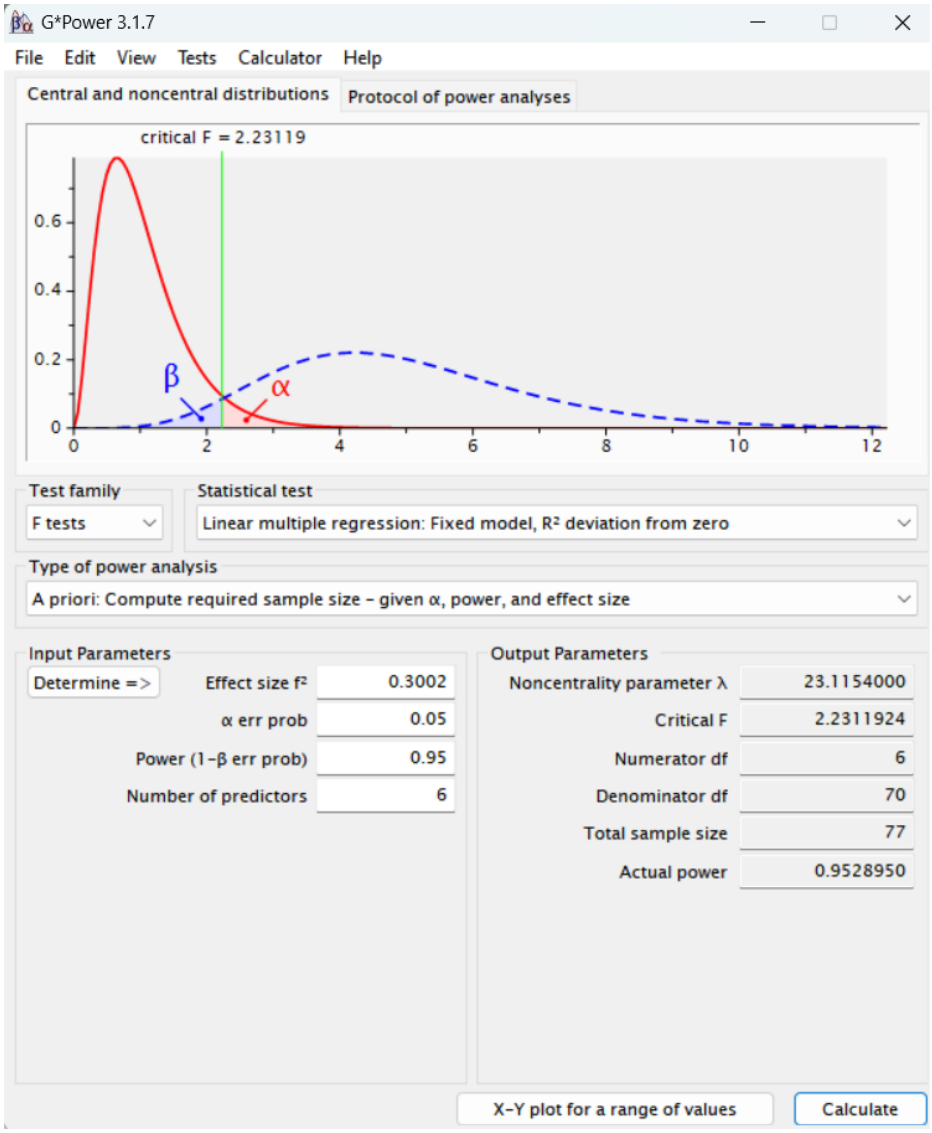
Effect size for compliance and relationship satisfaction (r = -0.20):

$$f^2 = \frac{(-0.20)^2}{1 - (-0.20)^2} = 0.0417$$

Average effect size for the study:

$$f^2 = \frac{0.7086 + 0.3610 + 0.3906 + 0.1307 + 0.1688 + 0.0417}{6} = 0.3002$$

Sample size: 77 participants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Central and noncentral distributions
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critical F = 2.23119
β
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A priori: Compute required sample size – given α, power, and effect size
Input Parameters
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Effect size f²
0.3002
α err prob
0.05
Power (1–β err prob)
0.95
Number of predictors
6
Output Parameters
Noncentrality parameter λ
23.1154000
Critical F
2.2311924
Numerator df
6
Denominator df
70
Total sample size
77
Actual power
0.9528950
X-Y plot for a range of values
Calculate

Appendix C

Pilot Study – Reliability

Trust

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.832	8

Commitment

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.731	14

Constructive Conflict Resolution Style

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.721	4

Destructive Conflict Resolution Style

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.811	12

Relationship Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.753	7

Appendix D

Actual Study – Reliability

Trust

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.845	8

Commitment

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	14

Constructive Conflict Resolution Style

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.805	4

Destructive Conflict Resolution Style

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	12

Relationship Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.798	7

Appendix E

Descriptive Statistics

Age

Age

N	Valid	98
	Missing	0
Mean		22.70
Std. Deviation		1.349
Minimum		19
Maximum		25

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	43	43.9	43.9	43.9
	Female	55	56.1	56.1	100.0
	Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Race - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Chinese	76	77.6	77.6	77.6
	Malay	13	13.3	13.3	90.8
	Indian	7	7.1	7.1	98.0
	Others	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Education Level - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Foundation	8	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Undergraduate	81	82.7	82.7	90.8
	Postgraduate	8	8.2	8.2	99.0
	Others	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

		T	CM	CCRS	DCRS	RS
N	Valid	98	98	98	98	98
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		39.1327	74.4388	16.7551	24.0102	29.1020
Std. Deviation		6.36621	14.96461	2.78827	7.20466	4.31131
Minimum		19.00	24.00	7.00	12.00	14.00
Maximum		48.00	98.00	20.00	46.00	35.00

Appendix F

Multivariate Outliers

Casewise Diagnostics[a]

Case Number	Std. Residual	RS	Predicted Value	Residual
41	-2.172	25.00	30.6272	-5.62723
75	-2.025	23.00	28.2458	-5.24578
76	-3.460	16.00	24.9632	-8.96315

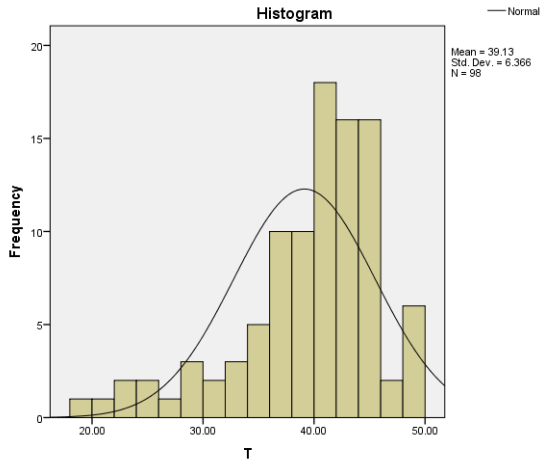
a. Dependent Variable: RS

Appendix G

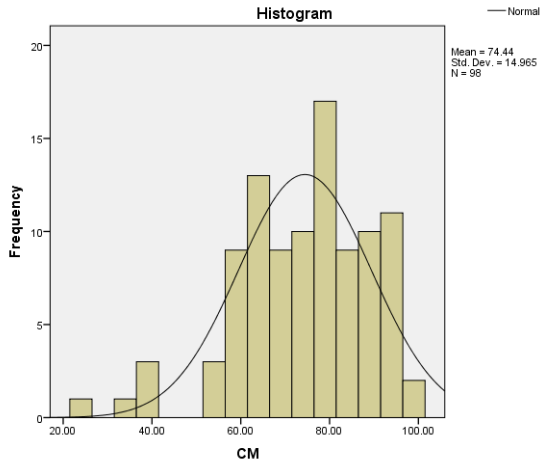
Assumptions of Normality

Histogram

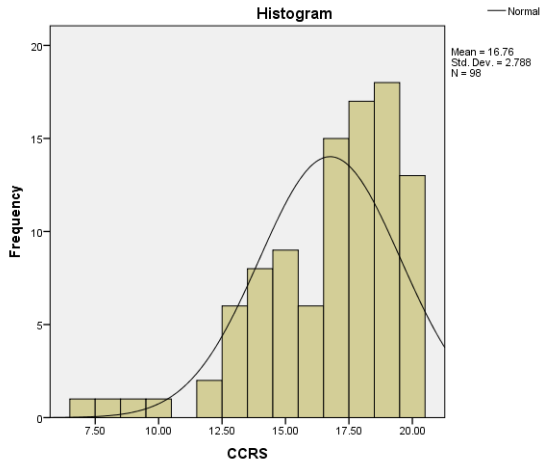
Trust



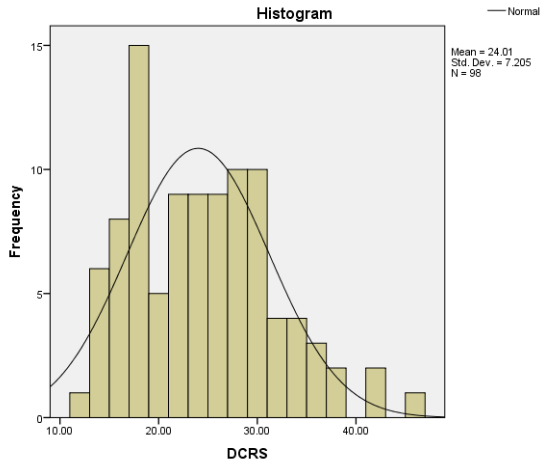
Commitment



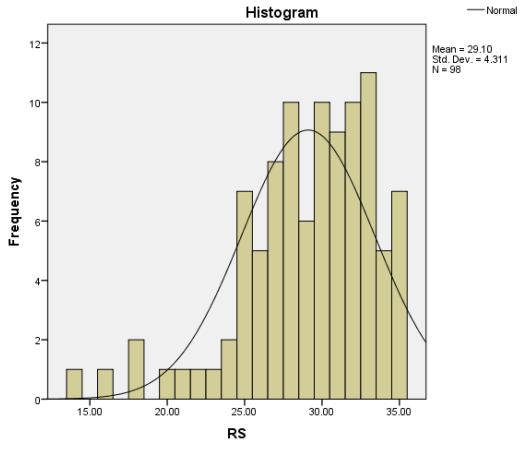
Constructive Conflict Resolution Style



Destructive Conflict Resolution Style

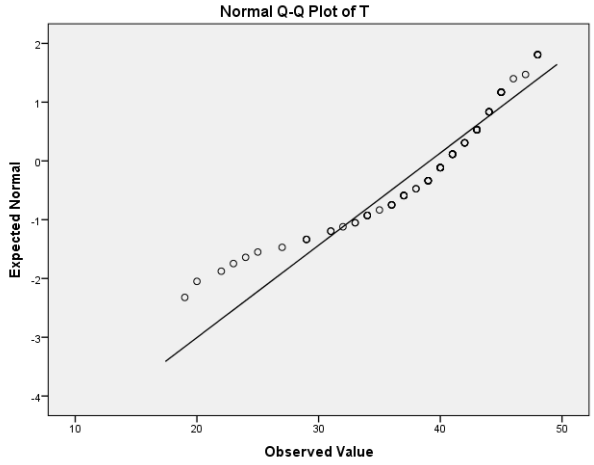


Relationship Satisfaction

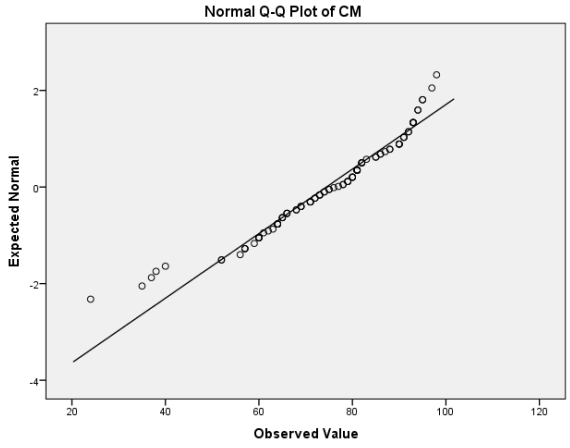


Q-Q Plot

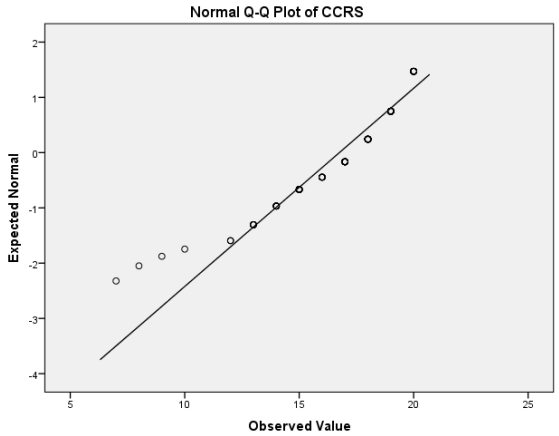
Trust



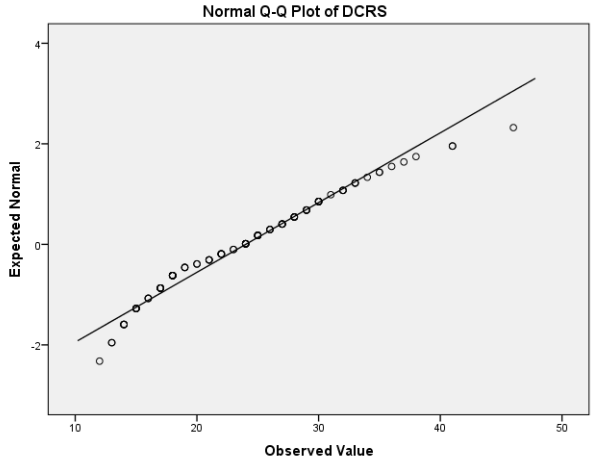
Commitment



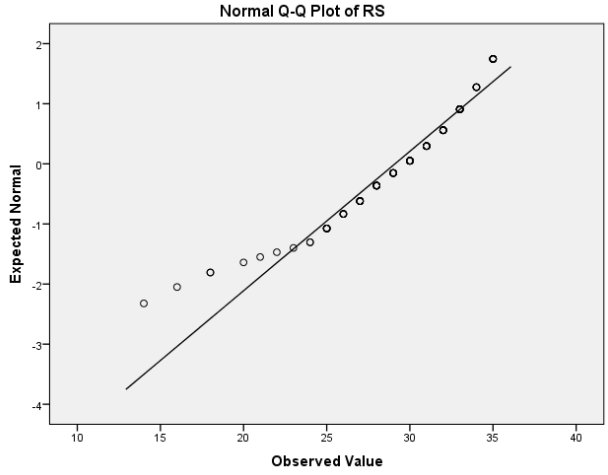
Constructive Conflict Resolution Style



Destructive Conflict Resolution Style



Relationship Satisfaction



Skewness and Kurtosis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
T	98	-1.226	.244	1.411	.483
CM	98	-.825	.244	.839	.483
CCRS	98	-1.187	.244	1.502	.483
DCRS	98	.525	.244	-.087	.483
RS	98	-1.090	.244	1.529	.483
Valid N (listwise)	98				

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
T	.165	98	.000	.898	98	.000
CM	.089	98	.053	.947	98	.001
CCRS	.178	98	.000	.891	98	.000
DCRS	.104	98	.011	.966	98	.013
RS	.113	98	.004	.922	98	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix H

Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

Independence of Error

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.809[a]	.654	.639	2.59058	1.832

a. Predictors: (Constant), DCRS, CCRS, CM, T

b. Dependent Variable: RS

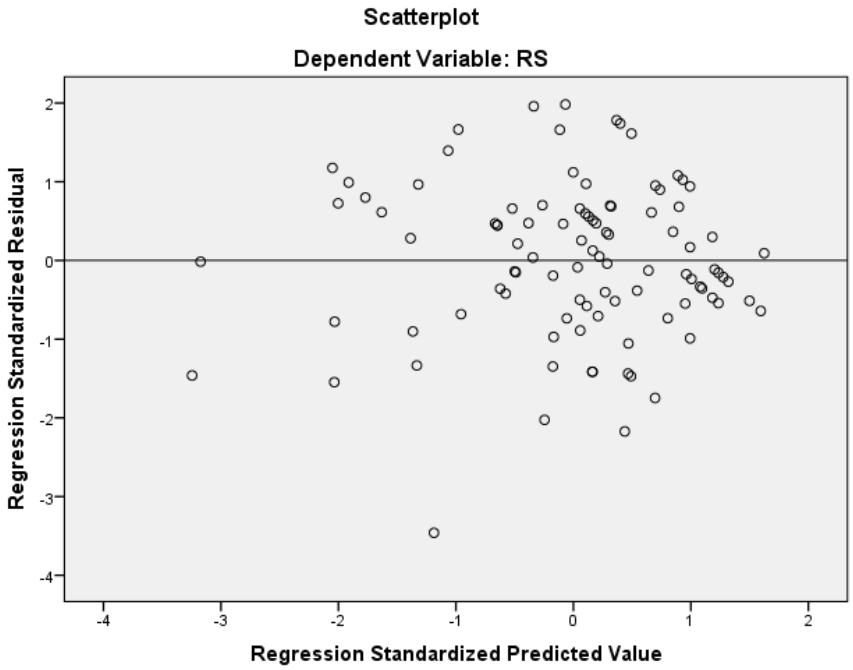
Multicollinearity

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	15.194	3.211		4.731	.000		
	T	.306	.066	.452	4.661	.000	.395	2.531
	CM	.050	.025	.174	1.994	.049	.489	2.044
	CCRS	.099	.129	.064	.766	.446	.531	1.883
	DCRS	-.145	.049	-.242	-2.943	.004	.552	1.811

a. Dependent Variable: RS

Normality of Residual, Linearity, and Homoscedasticity



Appendix I

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.809[a]	.654	.639	2.59058	1.832

a. Predictors: (Constant), DCRS, CCRS, CM, T

b. Dependent Variable: RS

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1178.846	4	294.711	43.914	.000[b]
	Residual	624.134	93	6.711		
	Total	1802.980	97			

a. Dependent Variable: RS

b. Predictors: (Constant), DCRS, CCRS, CM, T

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	15.194	3.211		4.731	.000		
	T	.306	.066	.452	4.661	.000	.395	2.531
	CM	.050	.025	.174	1.994	.049	.489	2.044
	CCRS	.099	.129	.064	.766	.446	.531	1.883
	DCRS	-.145	.049	-.242	-2.943	.004	.552	1.811

a. Dependent Variable: RS