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Cultural Perceptions, Emotional Intelligence, and Conflict Resolution Abilities of High School Students: A Study on the Influence of Ghanaian Traditional Culture

Sedem Nunyuia Amedome^{1*}, Sunaryo Kartadinata², Ilfiandra³, Uman Suherman⁴



^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia *Corresponding author: sedemi018@gmail.com

Abstrak

Kesenjangan yang signifikan dalam pemahaman tentang persepsi budaya tradisional Ghana mempengaruhi kecerdasan emosional dan kemampuan penyelesaian konflik di kalangan siswa sekolah menengah. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan tujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh budaya tradisional Ghana terhadap persepsi siswa terhadap budaya mereka sendiri, serta bagaimana hal tersebut berdampak pada kecerdasan emosional dan kemampuan mereka dalam menyelesaikan konflik di lingkungan sekolah. Studi ini menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif dengan model persamaan struktural partial least squares untuk menilai hubungan-hubungan ini. Penelitian ini menargetkan sampel beragam sebanyak 674 siswa berusia 16-18 tahun dari berbagai institusi pendidikan. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan yaitu berupa kuesioner. Dan analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan pemodelan persamaan struktural kuadrat terkecil parsial (PLS-SEM). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kecerdasan emosional secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara persepsi budaya tradisional dan keterampilan penyelesaian konflik. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya mengintegrasikan elemen-elemen budaya ke dalam kerangka pendidikan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan penyelesaian konflik. Implikasi dari penelitian ini termasuk rekomendasi yang dapat ditindaklanjuti bagi para pendidik dan pembuat kebijakan untuk mengembangkan strategi yang responsif secara budaya, sehingga dapat mendorong manajemen konflik yang lebih efektif di sekolah.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi Budaya, Kecerdasan Emosional, Kemampuan Penyelesaian Konflik, Budaya Tradisional Ghana

Abstract

Significant gaps in understanding perceptions of traditional Ghanaian culture affect secondary school students' emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills. This study was conducted to analyze the influence of conventional Ghanaian culture on students' perceptions of their own culture, as well as how it impacts their emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills in the school setting. To assess these relationships, the study utilized a quantitative research design with partial least squares structural equation modeling. The study targeted a diverse sample of 674 students aged 16-18 from various educational institutions. The data collection method used was a questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings showed that emotional intelligence significantly mediated the relationship between perceptions of traditional culture and conflict resolution skills. This study emphasizes integrating cultural elements into the educational framework to enhance conflict resolution skills. The implications of this study include actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers to develop culturally responsive strategies to encourage more effective conflict management in schools.

Keywords: Cultural Perceptions, Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Resolution Abilities, Ghanaian Traditional Culture

History:

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1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in conflict resolution (Lawson et al., 2021; Tweneboah, 2021). Emotional intelligence includes the ability to identify, understand, and manage emotions. This emotional intelligence is critical in resolving conflicts and is closely related to preventing violence in schools (Avivar-Cáceres et al., 2022; Bailen et al., 2019). This relationship points to the potential of emotional intelligence as a tool for creating safer and more harmonious educational environments. The impact of emotional intelligence extends beyond conflict management to academic performance. Some studies show a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement (Mali &

Kumar, 2017; Ojewola, 2022) and learning achievement, specifically in high school students (Daulay, 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2021). These findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a multifaceted attribute that influences not only interpersonal interactions but also academic success, highlighting its comprehensive role in students' lives. Cultural differences, another critical aspect of student development, significantly influence conflict resolution strategies (Gomez & Taylor, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). The way students perceive and handle conflicts is often shaped by their cultural background, as different cultures have varied approaches and styles for managing disagreements (Husaković & Šabanović, 2020; McColl et al., 2017). The development of conflict-resolution competencies is vital for fostering effective teamwork in educational and professional settings (Sarstedt et al., 2021; Usakli & Kucukergin, 2018). Effective conflict resolution skills involve not only resolving disagreements but also understanding and managing diversity, equity, and inclusivity issues, as highlighted by (Schaller & Gatesman-Ammer, 2022; Winardi et al., 2022). Thus, training in negotiation and conflict resolution can play a key role in equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly diverse world (Dampson, 2021; Mali & Kumar, 2017).

It was observed that secondary school education in Ghana offers essential insights into the relationship between cultural perceptions, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution skills. Researchers have found that students' emotional intelligence strongly influences their ability to resolve disputes and maintain healthy relationships peacefully. This research is supported by previous studies that underscore the importance of emotional intelligence in educational contexts (Mercader-Rubio et al., 2022; Nyarko et al., 2020),. In addition, research states that the Ghanaian cultural context significantly influences how children acquire social and emotional intelligence in resolving conflicts (Dampson, 2021; Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019).. The results of this study highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in resolving conflict and improving students' general well-being in Ghanaian secondary schools, underscoring the importance of culturally sensitive teaching strategies.

There is a substantial lack of research on the specific impact of traditional Ghanaian culture on the emotional intelligence and conflict resolution abilities of high school pupils. This is despite the fact that cultural influences on conflict-resolution tactics have been acknowledged. Due to the fact that high school settings are microcosms of multiple cultural origins, they regularly face conflicts that arise from different cultural perspectives and interpretations (Berry & Dasen, 2019; Husaković & Šabanović, 2020). The absence of research that specifically focuses on the intersection of Ghanaian traditional culture and conflict resolution skills among high school students represents a significant gap in our understanding of how cultural nuances shape adolescents' approaches to conflict resolution. This understanding is essential for developing an environment conducive to learning. Although research from around the world has investigated the ways in which cultural factors might affect conflict resolution, there is a dearth of studies that provide particular insights into the Ghanaian setting. The investigation of the ways in which traditional Ghanaian culture, with its numerous linguistic, socioeconomic, and geographical variations, influences the emotional intelligence and conflict resolution abilities of high school students is a topic that is both relevant and unexplored (Avivar-Cáceres et al., 2022; Davis et al., 2019). The novelty value of this study lies in the multidisciplinary approach that combines aspects of culture, psychology, and education to understand how traditional cultural elements may influence the development of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution abilities in students. Based on the above, this study aims to fill the gap by investigating the complex interactions between Ghanaian traditional culture, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution skills among secondary school students. In addition, the study seeks to provide educators and policymakers with actionable recommendations and offer valuable insights into culturally sensitive approaches to conflict resolution in educational contexts.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationships between cultural perceptions, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution abilities among high school students in Ghana. The quantitative approach was chosen for its ability to collect numerical data and perform statistical analyses to test hypotheses and draw conclusions. The research was conducted in several stages. Initially, we obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Ho Technical University. Subsequently, we selected a diverse sample of high school students aged 16-18 from various educational institutions across the Volta Region of Ghana. The selected institutions were contacted, and informed consent was obtained from the participants and their guardians. A total of 674 students participated in this study, with a significant male majority. The sample was drawn from six schools, with the highest participation from Mawuli Senior High (34.4%). The participants' age ranged from 16 to 18 years, and they represented a broad spectrum of linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire distributed to the students during school hours. The questionnaire comprised several sections measuring cultural perceptions, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution abilities, and demographic information. Data analysis techniques were performed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the relationship between constructs. The data analysis process involves several steps, including Measurement Model Assessment and Structural Model Assessment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this study, the respondent profile, as detailed in Table 1, predominantly comprised high school students aged 16-18 (74.3%), with a significant male majority (66.5%). The educational level was well-represented across different high school grades, particularly in Form 3 (45.3%). Diversity in school representation is notable, with the highest participation from the Mawuli Senior High (34.4%). Linguistically, the majority of respondents spoke Ewe (52.5%), and the socioeconomic data revealed a skew towards middle-income backgrounds (58.8%). Parental education levels were notably high, with over half having some college education or more.

Tabel 1. Respondents' Profile

Prof	Count	%	
	13-15	150	22.3%
Age	16-18	501	74.3%
	19-21	23	3.4%
	22+	0	0.0%
	Total	674	100.0%
Gender	Male	448	66.5%
	Female	226	33.5%
	Total	674	100.0%
	Form 1	86	12.8%
Grade	Form 2	283	42.0%
Grade	Form 3	305	45.3%
	Total	674	100.0%
Cabaal	Kadjebi-Asato Senior High	121	18.0%
School	Ahamansu Islamic Senior	50	7.4%

Profile		Count	%
	High		
	Dodi-Papasi T.S.H.S	118	17.5%
	Dzolo Senior High	81	12.0%
	Mawuli Senior High	232	34.4%
	OLA Girls' Senior High	72	10.7%
	Total	674	100.0%
	Akan	157	23.3%
	Ewe	354	52.5%
Primary language	Ga-Dangme	102	15.1%
Filliary language	Guan	57	8.5%
	Others	4	0.6%
	Total	674	100.0%
	Low-income	66	9.8%
Family's socioeconomic background	Middle-income	396	58.8%
rainity's socioeconomic background	High-income	212	31.5%
	Total	674	100.0%
	Less than high school	40	5.9%
	High school	87	12.9%
Parental Education Level	Some college	343	50.9%
	Bachelor's degree and above	204	30.3%
	Total	674	100.0%

In the measurement model assessment of this study, employing PLS-SEM via SmartPLS 4, each construct demonstrated commendable reliability and validity in Tables 2 and Table 3. Construct reliability is confirmed with high Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for conflict resolution abilities, emotional intelligence in conflict resolution, perception of Ghanaian traditional culture, and positive response to conflict, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7. Convergent validity is established as evidenced by AVE values greater than 0.5 across all constructs, and all the loadings are above 0.708. Discriminant validity is adequately supported by HTMT values, which are well below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating that the constructs are distinct and well differentiated from each other.

Tabel 2. Estimation of Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs/Items	Loadings	SE	t-statistics	CA	CR (rho_c)	AVE
Conflict r	esolution abil	0.891	0.920	0.698		
CRA1	0.804	0.016	49.690			
CRA2	0.869	0.012	70.068			
CRA4	0.851	0.015	56.287			
CRA5	0.830	0.015	56.384			
CRA6	0.820	0.016	51.798			
Emotional intellig	ence in conflic	et resoluti	ion (EICR)	0.960	0.964	0.627
EICR1	0.788	0.018	43.677			
EICR2	0.834	0.015	57.420			
EICR4	0.819	0.016	50.466			
EICR5	0.810	0.015	54.117			
EICR6	0.798	0.017	46.998			
EICR7	0.792	0.018	45.172			

Constructs/Items	Loadings	SE	t-statistics	CA	CR (rho_c)	AVE
EICR8	0.816	0.017	47.585			
EICR9	0.796	0.017	46.815			
EICR10	0.778	0.020	38.724			
EICR11	0.805	0.016	51.806			
EICR13	0.775	0.020	39.083			
EICR14	0.808	0.018	45.216			
EICR15	0.783	0.020	39.298			
EICR16	0.781	0.019	42.092			
EICR17	0.762	0.020	38.566			
EICR18	0.717	0.025	28.657			
Ghanaian tradit	ional culture j	perception	n (GTC)	0.905	0.927	0.681
GTC1	0.852	0.013	64.290			
GTC2	0.871	0.012	72.046			
GTC4	0.718	0.028	25.350			
GTC5	0.824	0.016	50.488			
GTC6	0.855	0.013	66.023			
GTC7	0.822	0.017	47.109			
Positive re	esponse to cor	ıflict (PR	C)	0.960	0.966	0.780
PRC1	0.894	0.013	70.187			
PRC2	0.899	0.011	84.177			
PRC4	0.812	0.017	48.713			
PRC5	0.876	0.013	66.366			
PRC6	0.900	0.011	80.096			
PRC7	0.888	0.013	69.463			
PRC8	0.914	0.010	94.924			
PRC9	0.881	0.012	74.081			

Note: GTC = Ghanaian traditional culture perception; EICR = Emotional intelligence in conflict resolution; CRA = Conflict resolution abilities; PRC = Positive response to conflict; CA = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite reliability (rho_c); AVE = Average variance extracted.

Tabel 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	CRA	EICR	GTC	PRC
CRA				
EICR	0.661 [CI: 0.588; 0.721]			
GTC	0.735 [CI: 0.656; 0.801]	0.688 [CI: 0.622; 0.744]		
PRC	0.468 [CI: 0.384; 0.543]	0.418 [CI: 0.339; 0.491]	0.474 [CI: 0.394; 0.550]	

Structural model assessment for hypotheses testing evaluates the hypothesised paths within the model to determine the extent to which the data supports the proposed theoretical framework. As reported in Table 4, the VIF analysis in this model indicates no multicollinearity concerns, as all paths exhibit VIF values (ranging from 1.000 to 2.119) well below the threshold of five, suggesting that the predictor variables in the model are not excessively correlated. The model fit, evaluated using the SRMR and NFI, revealed an SRMR value of 0.052, indicating a good fit, and an NFI of 0.849, which, despite being slightly below the preferred threshold of 0.90, suggests an acceptable fit. The model's explanatory power, as indicated by the R² values in Figure 1 and Table 4, shows that 49.7%

of the variance in conflict resolution abilities is collectively explained by Ghanaian traditional cultural perception and emotional intelligence in conflict resolution. In addition, 41.5% of the variance in emotional intelligence in conflict resolution was accounted for by students' cultural perceptions. Lastly, Ghanaian traditional cultural perception, emotional intelligence in conflict resolution, and conflict resolution abilities collectively accounted for 25% of the variation in students' positive responses to conflict.

Examining the direct effects, students' perception of Ghanaian traditional culture had a moderate positive effect on their positive response to conflict ($\beta = 0.223$, p < 0.001). This suggests that cultural perceptions can moderately influence how students respond to conflict. Similarly, a more substantial impact is observed in the Ghanaian traditional culture perception's effect on emotional intelligence in conflict resolution ($\beta = 0.644$, p < 0.001), which is both statistically significant and strong ($f^2 = 0.708$). This indicates that cultural perceptions significantly enhance students' EI in conflict management. Ghanaian traditional culture perception also showed a significant positive effect on conflict resolution abilities (B = 0.455, p < 0.001), with a moderate effect size (f^2 = 0.241). This underscores the importance of cultural perceptions in shaping students' ability to resolve conflicts. Emotional intelligence in conflict resolution influences conflict resolution abilities ($\beta = 0.320$, p < 0.001), and students' positive response to conflict ($\beta = 0.143$, p = 0.008) demonstrated statistically significant but varying magnitudes of effect, with a moderate effect on conflict resolution abilities ($f^2 = 0.119$) and a smaller effect on students' positive response to conflict ($f^2 = 0.119$) 0.014). These findings highlight the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing conflict resolution skills as well as more positive responses to conflict among students. Additionally, students' conflict resolution abilities exhibited a moderate positive effect on their positive responses to conflict ($\beta = 0.205$, p < 0.001), indicating that better conflict resolution skills lead to more positive conflict responses ($f^2 = 0.028$).

We also tested the mediating effects of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution and conflict-resolution abilities. From Table 4, the influence of traditional Ghanaian cultural perception on positive conflict responses via emotional intelligence in conflict resolution (β = 0.092, p = 0.008) and via conflict resolution abilities (β = 0.094, p = 0.001) indicate significant pathways. This shows how cultural perspectives are crucial to improving students' emotional intelligence and skills in conflict resolution, leading to more constructive reactions to conflict. In addition, the effect of traditional Ghanaian cultural perception on conflict resolution abilities, mediated by emotional intelligence in conflict resolution ($\beta = 0.206$, p < 0.001), suggests a notable mediating role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution. This suggests that the traditional culture of Ghana aids in the development of students' emotional intelligence, which is crucial for teaching them how to effectively resolve conflicts. Furthermore, the path from emotional intelligence in conflict resolution to positive conflict responses through conflict resolution abilities ($\beta = 0.066$, p = 0.002) indicates a significant indirect effect. This illustrates the mediating effect of students' conflict resolution abilities on the emotional intelligence-positive conflict response relationship. Finally, the sequential mediation path from Ghanaian traditional culture perception to positive conflict responses via emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and conflict resolution abilities ($\beta = 0.042$, p = 0.003) demonstrates a significant effect. This demonstrates that positive cultural perceptions result in increased emotional intelligence and enhanced conflict resolution abilities among students which positively contributes to positive conflict responses.

Tabel 4. Estimation of hypotheses-Testing of the Research Model

Relationship/Path	VIF	β	SE	t-statistics	<i>p</i> -values	f^2	
Direct effects							
GTC -> PRC	2.119	0.223	0.062	3.607	0.000	0.031	

GTC -> EICR	1.000	0.644	0.030	21.822	0.000	0.708	
GTC -> CRA	1.708	0.455	0.055	8.268	0.000	0.241	
EICR -> CRA	1.708	0.320	0.049	6.476	0.000	0.119	
EICR -> PRC	1.911	0.143	0.053	2.666	0.008	0.014	
CRA -> PRC	1.987	0.205	0.059	3.503	0.000	0.028	
Indirect effe	ects (Med	diating e	ffects of I	EICR and C	(RA)		
GTC -> EICR -> PRC	N/A	0.092	0.035	2.641	0.008	N/A	
GTC -> CRA -> PRC	N/A	0.094	0.029	3.212	0.001	N/A	
GTC -> EICR -> CRA	N/A	0.206	0.035	5.942	0.000	N/A	
EICR -> CRA -> PRC	N/A	0.066	0.021	3.066	0.002	N/A	
GTC -> EICR -> CRA ->	NT/A	0.042	0.014	2.052	0.003	NI/A	
PRC	N/A	0.042	0.014	2.953	0.003	N/A	
Model fit						_	
SRMR			NFI				
0.052			0.849				
Model's explanatory power							
Constructs		\mathbb{R}^2		I	R ² adjusted		
CRA		0.497	•		0.495		
EICR		0.415			0.414		

Note: VIF = Variance Inflation Factor; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; NFI = Normed Fit Index.

0.247

0.250

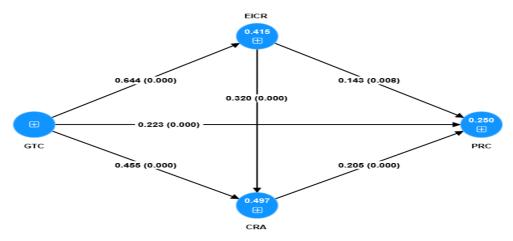


Figure 1. Estimation of hypotheses-testing

Discussions

PRC

This study investigated the relationships between cultural perceptions, emotional intelligence, and conflict-resolution abilities among high school students in Ghana. The findings provide valuable insights into the interplay between these variables within the context of traditional Ghanaian culture. The results support the hypothesis that traditional Ghanaian cultural perceptions positively influence students' responses to conflict. This aligns with previous literature emphasizing the significance of cultural background in shaping attitudes and behaviors toward conflict resolution (Gomez & Taylor, 2018; Zuure et al., 2020). Previous research highlights the importance of cultural identity in fostering constructive approaches to conflict, which is directly supported by the findings of this study (Tweneboah, 2021; Victor, 2021). The direct effects observed underscore the critical role of cultural identity in developing effective conflict resolution strategies among students. The results of this study are in line with previous research showing that cultural identity plays a

vital role in how students manage and resolve conflict, suggesting that a solid artistic foundation can result in more positive conflict outcomes (Sarstedt et al., 2021; Tweneboah, 2021). Similarly, research showing that students with a deep understanding of their cultural heritage are better equipped to handle conflict constructively supports the findings of this study (Lim et al., 2021; Victor, 2021).

This study's confirmation that perceptions of traditional Ghanaian culture positively influence students' emotional intelligence in conflict resolution is consistent with assertions that emphasize the role of culture in developing emotional intelligence, especially in conflict situations (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021; Berry & Dasen, 2019). Cultural understanding fosters emotional intelligence, which is critical for effective conflict management. Similarly, the finding that cultural perceptions positively influence conflict resolution ability is in line with research that underscores the importance of cultural background in shaping conflict resolution skills (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021; Zuure et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence, which is shaped by cultural factors, is crucial for managing interpersonal conflict (Adham, 2023; Berry & Dasen, 2019). This view is supported by the results of a previous study which found that cultural background significantly influenced students' conflict resolution strategies (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021; Zuure et al., 2020). The significant indirect effects through emotional intelligence on conflict resolution and conflict resolution abilities further emphasize the role of cultural perceptions in enhancing these skills. This suggests that traditional Ghanaian cultural perceptions not only directly enhance conflict resolution skills but also do so indirectly by fostering emotional intelligence. This finding is supported by research showing that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more adept at understanding and managing emotions, thereby enhancing their conflict-resolution skills (Lim et al., 2021; Winardi et al., 2022).

Emotional intelligence is a key factor in conflict resolution, as it enables individuals to better understand and manage their emotions (Lim et al., 2021; Vietze et al., 2019). This conclusion aligns with the current study, suggesting that fostering emotional intelligence through cultural understanding can enhance students' conflict resolution abilities (Schaller & Gatesman-Ammer, 2022; Thangavelu & Rajesh, 2020). This study confirmed the hypothesis that emotional intelligence in conflict resolution positively influences students' positive responses to conflict, which is in line with research emphasizing the role of emotional intelligence in encouraging constructive conflict responses. The observed direct effect highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in promoting positive responses to conflict. In addition, the indirect effect mediated by conflict resolution ability suggests that emotional intelligence contributes to positive conflict responses by enhancing conflict resolution ability. This is consistent with the opinion that underlines the importance of conflict resolution ability in encouraging constructive approaches to conflict (Adham, 2023; Mali & Kumar, 2017). Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in how students respond to conflict, encouraging more constructive outcomes (Asad Ali Shah et al., 2018; Murugan, 2017).

Previous research supports this opinion, emphasizing that solid conflict resolution skills, enhanced by emotional intelligence, lead to more effective conflict management (Adham, 2023; Zuure et al., 2020). Finally, the results support the hypothesis that emotional intelligence has a significant sequential mediation effect on conflict resolution and conflict resolution abilities in the relationship between Ghanaian traditional culture perception and students' positive response to conflict. This novel finding demonstrates that positive cultural perceptions lead to increased emotional intelligence and enhanced conflict-resolution abilities, collectively contributing to positive conflict responses (Dampson, 2021; Mercader-Rubio et al., 2022). This finding can be generalized within the established theoretical framework that integrates cultural perceptions, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution

(Davis et al., 2019; Thangavelu & Rajesh, 2020). This research has the merit of having shown that integrating cultural values into the educational framework can significantly improve students' emotional competence and conflict resolution, resulting in more positive conflict responses. These insights can inform the development of culturally responsive educational policies and practices that promote a more harmonious and inclusive learning environment (Lawson et al., 2021; Winardi et al., 2022). The implication is that education that pays attention to local culture can improve students' ability to manage emotions and resolve conflict effectively, which in turn can create a more harmonious learning environment. However, this study certainly still has shortcomings, such as the limited sample that may not represent the entire population of high school students in Ghana, as well as the lack of longitudinal analysis to see long-term changes. Suggestions for future research include expanding the sample and conducting a longitudinal study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of traditional culture on emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between traditional cultural perceptions and conflict resolution ability. This research highlights the importance of incorporating cultural integration, emotional intelligence development and conflict resolution training in educational settings. By improving these areas, educators and policymakers can make a valuable contribution to the creation of a more harmonious and inclusive educational environment. Implementing programs that focus on improving students' emotional intelligence in conflict situations is highly recommended, as it can result in more successful conflict management. Schools should provide regular training to students on conflict resolution to enable them to effectively navigate and resolve conflicts.

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