

A Correlational Study of Conflict Resolution Styles, Peer-Teacher Relationships and Academic Performance in High School Students

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Abstract: This quantitative study seeks to determine how conflict resolution styles affect existing peer and teacher relationships in a way that impacts academic performance in Broward County, Florida. With the approval of an Institutional Review Board, data was collected from 33 participants in a two-part survey administered through Google Forms. Conflict resolution styles were categorized as constructive and destructive, and quality of peer and teacher relationships was measured alongside self-reported GPA. Correlational analysis discovered no significant relationship between conflict resolution style and teacher relationships. Unexpectedly, a moderate positive correlation between destructive conflict resolution styles and higher quality peer relationships was found, but constructive conflict resolution styles showed a positive yet statistically non-significant relationship with peer relationships. Teacher relationships displayed a significant positive correlation with academic performance, while peer relationships showed no correlation to academic performance. These findings partially contradict previous research which suggests that destructive conflict resolution styles are in no way beneficial to peer and teacher relationships. On the contrary, the findings regarding teacher relationships and academic performance support the previous literature. These findings suggest that conflict theories might operate differently in the high school setting.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an unavoidable part of adolescent life, where it becomes both more frequent and more formative. During adolescence, defined as the period from ages 10 through 19, the desire for independence increases. With this desire for independence, disagreements and conflict with peers and adults occur more frequently, often with heightened intensity. Although seemingly harmful, conflict during adolescence is not all negative, as it can often serve as an opportunity to develop emotional regulation and coping skills (Smetana & Rote, 2019). Over time, as these regulatory skills develop, adolescents begin to rely more on specific ways of responding to conflict. The repeated use of specific responses to conflict is referred to as one's conflict resolution style (Rahim, 2002).

Rahim (1979) defines conflict resolution style (CRS) as consistent patterns individuals use when responding to conflict. CRS were first studied in the late 1970s with the development of the dual concern model (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Rahim (2002) later summarizes these styles as integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding, and dominating. Integrating and compromising are categorized as constructive, and obliging, avoiding, and dominating are categorized as destructive. These categories refer to whether a response to conflict will strain or strengthen relationship

quality (Rahim, 2002). As adolescents enter school environments, their conflict-related behaviors alter daily interactions with their peers and teachers, where this understanding becomes important because, typically, adolescents engage in frequent social exchanges outside of the home for the first time in this context.

Research highlights that students will experience enhanced academic performance when they display positive relationships with teachers and peers, which is dictated by levels of support and connectedness (Liu, 2024; Ramos-Diaz et al., 2016). Understanding how conflict behavior influences the relationships that support or hinder academic engagement is therefore crucial, as teacher and peer relationships play a significant role in determining levels of support experienced by students in academic settings.

However, scholars disagree on the broader role of conflict in adolescent development. Some view conflict as supportive towards emotional regulation and the development of coping mechanisms by giving adolescents opportunities to practice these skills. In contrast, other researchers argue that conflict hinders the development of interpersonal skills, leading to poorer relationships in life (Smetana & Rote, 2019; Heinze et al., 2020).

Few to no studies examine how adolescents' specific CRS influences both peer and teacher relationships within an academic context and, in turn, the effect on academic performance. This leaves the combined influence of CRS and relationship quality on academic performance unclear. Given this gap in the literature, this study seeks to examine how adolescents' CRS relate to the quality of their peer and teacher relationships, and how these relationships connect to academic outcomes, leading to the research question: "To what extent do high schoolers' conflict resolution styles influence existing peer and teacher relationships in a way that could impact academic performance in Broward County, Florida?"

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Perspectives on Adolescent Conflict*

Researchers widely agree that emotion regulation and CRS have a major impact on adolescents' relational skills. Developmental psychologists Smetana & Rote (2019) concluded that conflict is both normal and crucial for the development of autonomy and communication in adolescents. They explain that these daily disagreements serve as opportunities for adolescents to practice emotional management in a safe setting (Smetana & Rote, 2019). Psychology researchers Fosco & Lydon-Staley (2020) elaborated further on the claim and revealed that the quality of these conflicts and interactions is what determines whether they are positive or harmful towards growth. Collectively, these studies indicate that conflict during adolescence is not inherently negative and can have a positive impact within social settings.

Whereas Smetana & Rote and Fosco & Lydon-Staley both highlight the importance and positive aspects of conflict, some experts argue that the negatives outweigh the positives, arguing that the developmental outcome of conflict depends on how an individual responds to it. Psychology professors Miklowitz et al. (2025) make this distinction by introducing the idea of conflict being perceived as hostile or critical, which may lead to an increase in aggression and a lack of emotional regulation. These findings complicate the perspectives put forth by Smetana & Rote and Fosco & Lydon-Staley that suggest conflict is generally beneficial, by proposing that conflict actually increases aggression rather than resilience and can lead to more hostility in relationships (Miklowitz et al., 2025). These contrasting perspectives reveal a fundamental disagreement in the literature regarding whether conflict serves as a developmental tool, or a factor that can lead to further relational difficulties.

Heinze et al. (2020) extend this further, explaining how these dangers accumulate, and adolescents who are exposed to consistent conflict report lower satisfaction and trust within relationships. These findings suggest that exposure to conflict over time has an impact on how an individual approaches conflict and relationships because of underdeveloped relational skills (Heinze et al., 2020). The perspective put forth by Heinze aligns with Miklowitz et al. (2025), who similarly concluded that usage of hostility during conflict may have negative impacts on relationships. They argue that

this is due to possibly underdeveloped abilities to form healthy relationships and social skills, leading to heightened aggression during conflicts (Miklowitz et al., 2025). When considering Miklowitz et al.'s and Heinze et al.'s arguments together, these sources raise questions about how conflict behavior influences individuals in academic contexts, where relationship quality plays a major role in academic engagement.

Together, the aforementioned findings raise the question of how individuals respond to conflict in the first place. Leading scholar in conflict management theory Rahim (2002), whose work is foundational in conflict theory and understanding CRS, lays out the 5 conflict styles: integrating, compromising, obliging, dominating, and avoiding. Each is defined by the levels of concern for self and others (Rahim, 2002). The styles are further categorized with integrating and compromising as constructive, and obliging, dominating, and avoiding as destructive. Rahim's model provides a foundation for examining CRS. When viewed alongside Smetana & Rote, Fosco & Lydon-Staley, Miklowitz et al., and Heinze et al., Rahim's findings help explain why certain individuals rely more on one CRS. It suggests that varying levels of emotional regulation and prior conflict exposure may shape CRS development, but, it further reveals how it is unclear whether conflict truly falls into the categories of destructive and constructive because there is dissension regarding whether conflict is actually positive or negative in the context of adolescents.

➤ *School Relationships and Academic Outcomes*

Despite being good indicators, knowing an individual's CRS does not fully explain their behavior. Dunn et al. (2022) examined how adolescents' goals during conflict influence how the conflict is handled. They found that individuals often have motives behind their CRS such as preserving friendship, asserting control over the situation, or avoidance of the situation (Dunn et al., 2022). Dunn et al.'s conclusion affirms the work of Rahim regarding his findings on CRS, and together these findings show that conflict management is not impulsive, but a complex set of choices guided by goals for the relationship (Dunn et al., 2022; Rahim, 2002). Together, these findings further emphasize the likelihood that emotional and communicative patterns are formed and then carried into social settings that can have significant impacts on relationships, specifically in the academic context with peers and teachers.

Furthermore, Benner et al. (2019) provides understanding into how student-teacher relationships affect academic performance, highlighting how academic performance is largely influenced by whether students feel understood and supported by those around them, which primarily include their teachers and peers in the academic setting. When viewed alongside Dunn et al.'s (2022) findings that adolescents choose conflict resolution approaches based on relational goals, Benner et al.'s work suggests that CRS may be associated with levels of support felt within classrooms. This conclusion is explained by students' unwillingness to engage with someone they view as unfair and unsupportive. These perceptions can, in turn, affect

motivation and engagement, ultimately shaping academic participation and performance. However, when viewed alongside the work of Rahim (2002), whether certain CRS leads to different perceptions of support and understanding, and therefore willingness to work with someone, remains unknown.

As adolescents' CRS learned at home carry over into social and academic settings, relationships with teachers and peers can be affected, which can have a significant effect on academic success. Liu (2024) researched the effects of teacher-student relationships on academic performance, and found that positive teacher-student relationships lower academic-related stress, and increase the sense of social support felt by the student. Therefore, when students find a teacher to be empathetic and approachable, class participation and persistence increase (Liu, 2024). Liu and Dunn et al.'s work comes together to show that adolescents who have higher-quality teacher-student relationships, likely will experience increased academic performance.

Ramos-Diaz et al. (2016) examined how adolescents' perceived social support from peers and teachers relate to school engagement, finding that students who felt that their teachers and peers were providing them with support, regardless of actual support, had higher levels of motivation (Ramos-Diaz et al., 2016). This aligns with Liu's conclusion that supportive classroom environments lead to higher participation and motivation. Similarly to teacher relationships, Ramos-Diaz et al. does not fully align with Rahim (2002) regarding whether certain CRS leads to different perceptions of support, therefore dictating the engagement. While the prior research explains the importance of positive teacher relationships, it does not fully explain how those relationships are formed.

➤ *Gaps in Literature*

There is a clear gap in the research connecting CRS to relationships and academic outcomes. The majority of studies such as Smetana & Rote, and Dunn et al. study adolescent CRS, and their consequences, while other studies, such as Liu and Ramos-Diaz et al., examine how school-based relationships affect academic performance separate from CRS. The prior studies do not identify the connection from CRS to peer and teacher relationships, and subsequent academic performance. Furthermore, there is disagreement in the literature regarding what CRS is actually destructive in the adolescent setting, as the findings from Dunn et al. say that response to conflict is not impulsive, but calculated choices based on relational goals, while Rahim says that destructive CRS is harmful to relationships by definition, and Smetana says that conflict can be developmental and therefore positive. Without examining these variables together, whether CRS directly affects academic performance through peer and teacher relationships, or whether these effects operate indirectly remains unknown, along with the function of CRS in the school setting. Without this connection, educators and school counselors lack guidance for how students' CRS might be shaping the relationships that drive academic performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Design*

For the research study, I chose to implement a quantitative design. I decided to utilize this method because my research question deals with CRS, peer and teacher relationships, and academics; variables that are easily measured through surveys. I chose a quantitative method over a qualitative one because a quantitative method yields quantifiable numbers that can be used in correlational analysis, whereas qualitative methods do not and objectively interpreting interview results and then converting the results into quantifiable numbers would prove extremely difficult. The data was then analyzed through a correlational analysis where statistics were used to discover correlations in the data between CRS, teacher relationships, peer relationships, and academic performance (Creswell, 2016). Because each variable occurs naturally, and is not manipulated by me as the researcher, a correlational analysis is the best approach to calculate the results once the data has been collected, and therefore is appropriate as it allows for objective measurement and statistical analysis of linear relationships between variables rather than causation.

My method is based on previously published research to ensure that data was effectively collected. Quantitative methods are consistently used in the field of study, and even more often for correlational research, in studies such as those performed by M. Afzalur Rahim, who developed a survey to determine CRS. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II (ROCI-II) is widely used to discover CRS, and it is efficient to complete, and because of its many benefits, such as efficiency and accuracy, I based the CRS determination section of my survey off of it (Rahim, 1983). In the other field of my research -relationships- Robert C. Pianta additionally utilized a quantitative survey to determine teacher-student relationships using Likert Scales, and therefore the numerical data yielded from it could be found and analyzed (Pianta, 1992). For the peer relationship aspect, Christine Malecki and Michelle Demaray additionally utilized a survey to determine student peer relationships using Likert Scales. Because this method to find student-peer relationships also yielded numerical results, I chose it as its best suited for correlational analysis (Malecki & Demaray, 2002). Both of the surveys determining relationships were originally much longer, but I shortened them while still keeping the original construct to keep the survey from becoming excessively long and time consuming for participants, so that fatigue could be minimized while maintaining validity.

The initial hypothesis for this research was that those with more dominant constructive CRS tendencies will have higher quality peer and teacher relationships, and those with more dominant destructive CRS tendencies will have worse teacher and peer relationships. I also expected that those with higher peer and teacher relationships would have higher academic performance, and those with worse peer and teacher relationships would have weaker academic performance.

➤ Method

The survey was split into two parts to clearly distinguish between variables and prevent overlap in responses, and therefore one survey measured participants' CRS, and the other one determined relationships and academic performance. The surveys were administered using Google Forms as opposed to other tools, such as SurveyMonkey, because Google Forms allowed me to include as many questions as I needed. Additionally, it's easily shared through Gmail, and seamlessly transferred to Google Sheets for the creation of graphs (Teachers Tech, 2020). Survey one seeks to determine CRS using the ROCI-II survey. Question 1-3 seeks to determine integrating tendencies during conflict, questions 4-6 obliging, questions 7-9 avoiding, questions 10-12 dominating, and questions 13-15 compromising. Once survey one had been completed, participants completed survey two, which seeks to determine the relationships between teachers and peers. Since survey two measures two relationships, the survey was separated into sections, A (teacher relationship) and B (Peer relationship), in order to distinguish between variables. In section A, questions 1-4 seek to determine if there are healthy and positive aspects to the relationships, and questions 5-8 seek to determine if negative aspects are present, and all questions will be answered on a 1-5 Likert Scale in order to preserve the construct of the original survey. In section B, the survey uses a similar structure where questions 1-5 seek to determine if positive aspects are present in relationships, and questions 6-10 negative, where all questions are answered on a 1-6 Likert scale in order to keep the original surveys construct. While the usage of two different scales might seem inconsistent, this did not affect the validity of the correlational analysis as each variable's mean score was calculated and correlated independently rather than being combined across scales. At the end of survey two section B, there is one question that asks what the students' unweighted grade point average (GPA) is (Appendix B).

Once the data had been collected through the surveys, I transferred the data from Google Forms to Google Sheets to create scatter plots. I used scatter plots because they provide a visual for relationships between variables, including CRS, teacher and peer relationships, and academic performance. Scatter plots are appropriate for correlational research because they can be used to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables, even prior to the correlational analysis (Feild, 2013). In order to perform a correlational analysis, I calculated the mean of the Likert Scale responses from each section, such as the questions searching for integrating tendencies, or positive teacher relationship indicators, and input them into a chart within Google Sheets (Appendix D). This creation of means allows for multiple questions measuring the same construct to be combined into one score, making each variable suitable for correlational analysis. I then used the CORREL function to determine Pearson R-Values, from which I was able to determine Pearson P-Values using the standard Pearson correlation significance equation. Additionally, the inclusion of Pearson P-Values helps determine if relationships may have occurred by chance, which makes the interpretation of the data more reliable (Creswell, 2014).

➤ Subjects of Study

All three of the studies I based my method off of use sample sizes of around 300-500 people (Malecki & Demaray, 2002; Pianta, 1992; Rahim, 1983). Unfortunately this is a limitation for this research study because the study pool is a small high school, so a sample size that large is not feasible. For my research, I aimed for around 50-60 responses, which proved to be enough to measure the relationship of variables through correlational analysis. After conducting my research, I received 33 responses, which is sufficient for correlational analysis, although it proved to be a limitation of the study, which will be discussed in later sections.

As my study is being conducted within a high school, I anticipated that many of the participants, around 75 percent, would be minors. In order to protect myself and my school from any liability, participants and their parents must fill out an informed consent form through Google Forms (Appendix A), which educates them on the purpose, possible risks, and benefits of the study. Additionally, my method has gone before an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to eliminate any ethical concerns. Participants' identities were kept confidential to protect their privacy. As my research question aims to study high school students, all of the participants were in grades 9-12. Participants were both males and females enrolled at one private school in Broward County, Florida.

➤ Procedure

The first step was to create the survey through Google Forms with questions that are answered on a 1-5, and 1-6 Likert scale. The next step was to get my questions approved by my teacher, and school administration. Next, I sent the survey and informed consent form to high school students at my school through Gmail, using contact information made available to me by my school. After I gathered responses, I analyzed the results through correlational analysis, and used Google Sheets to create scatter plots along with bar graphs. Finally, I performed the correlational analysis to determine the relationship of variables.

➤ Findings

Results were recorded from quantitative surveys delivered through Google Forms in order to address the gap regarding CRS, peer and teacher relationships, and academic performance. Data was collected to assess participants' CRS, peer and teacher relationships, and self-reported academic performance. Thirty three survey responses were gathered, and the data is reflected in the charts below.

Figure 1.A. below displays the mean constructive versus destructive conflict resolution scores for all participants. Constructive had an overall higher mean of (3.74), and destructive had a mean score of (3.23). This indicates that a higher number of participants showed constructive tendencies more so than destructive ones.

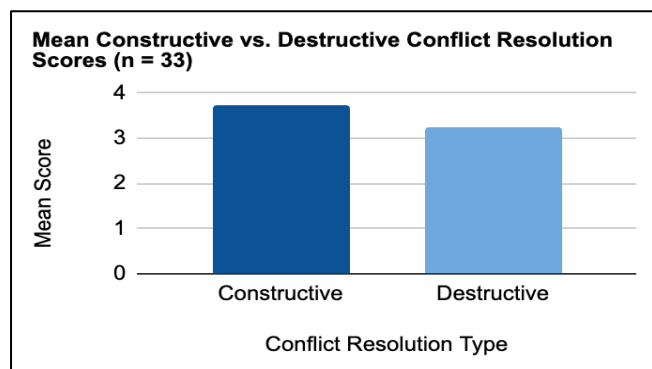


Fig 1 A. Mean Constructive vs. Destructive Conflict Resolution Scores (N=33)

Below, Figure 1.B. shows the distribution of dominant CRS among the participants. Of the 33 participants, 15 (45%) identified integrating as their most dominant style, followed by compromising for 9 (27%) participants, obliging for 4 (12%) participants, dominating for 3 (9%) participants, and avoiding was the least frequent, only being identified as the dominant style in 2 (6%) participants.

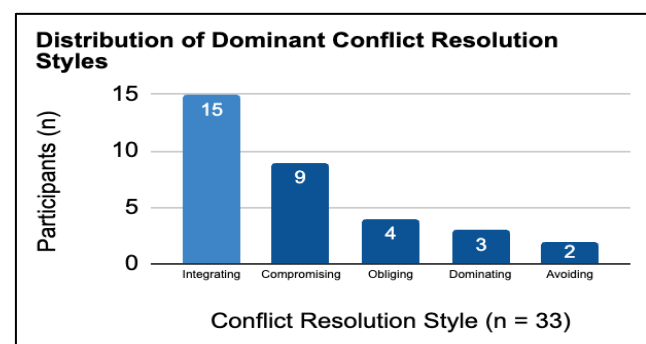


Fig 1 B. Distribution of Dominant Conflict Resolution Styles

Figure 2.A. illustrates the distribution of teacher relationship scores. Only nine participants (27%) scored below 3.60, representing that most participants have a high-quality relationship with their teachers as 3.60 is above the middle of the scale. Twenty four participants (73%), a major majority, of participants scored above 3.60 on the scale.

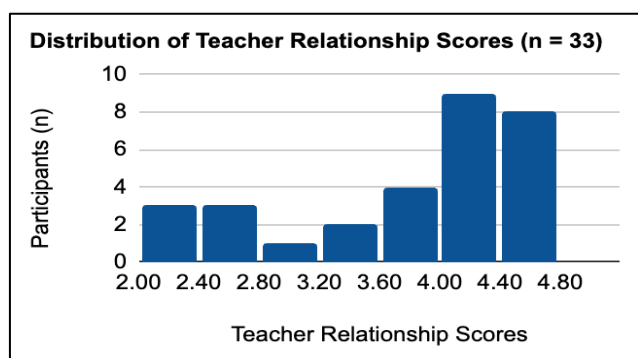


Fig 2 A. Distribution of Teacher Relationship Scores (N=33)

Figure 3.A. presents the distribution of peer relationship scores. Five participants (15%) scored below 3.50 on the

scale. Twenty five, the majority of participants (76%), scored between 3.50 - 5.50, showing that most participants' peer relationship quality is in the middle ranges of the scale. Only three participants (9%) scored above 5.50, therefore most participants scored in the middle ranges of the scale.

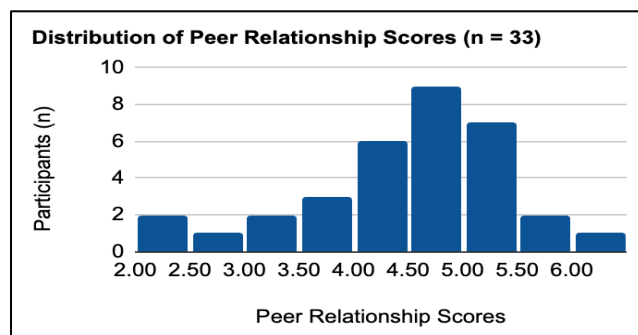


Fig 3 A. Distribution of Peer Relationship Scores (N=33)

Figure 4.A. displays the relationship between destructive CRS scores and peer relationship scores. The data points are distributed across the graphs, with peer relationships from 2.3 - 6, and destructive CRS scores from 2 - 6. A line of best fit is included to represent the trend in the data.

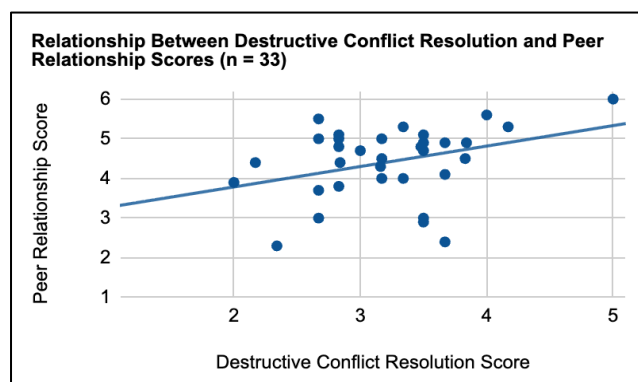


Fig 4 A. Relationship Between Destructive Conflict Resolution and Peer Relationship Scores (N=33)

Figure 4.B. displays the relationship between teacher relationship scores and GPA. The data is distributed across the graph and GPA values range from 3.2 - 4.0, and teacher relationship scores range from 1.4 - 5. A line of best fit is included to show the relationship in the data.

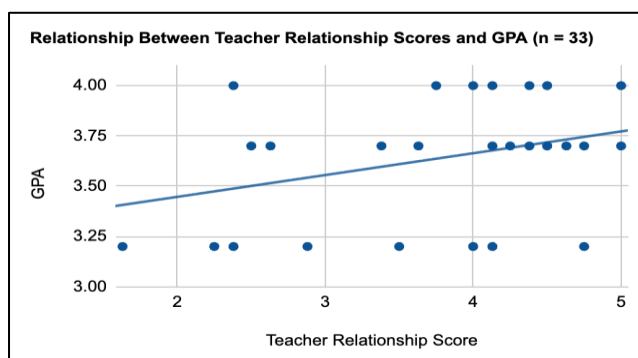


Fig 4 B. Relationship Between Teacher Relationship Scores and GPS (N=33)

Figure 4.C. presents the relationship between peer relationship scores and GPA. GPA values range from 3.2 - 4.0, and peer relationship scores range from 2 - 6. A line of best fit shows the relationship in the data. Further survey response visualizations can be found in appendix C.

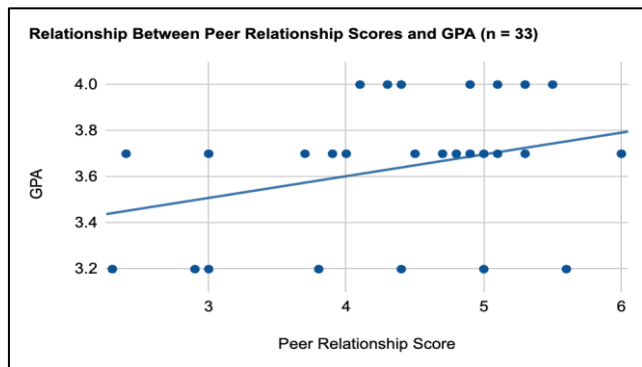


Fig 4 C. Relationship Between Peer Relationship Scores GPS (N=33)

➤ Analysis

Research was conducted using a quantitative questionnaire administered using Google Forms. I hypothesized that students who displayed CRS with prominent destructive tendencies would report weaker teacher and peer relationships and therefore lower academic performance. However, the results did not fully support my hypothesis showing that there was a negligible correlation between CRS and teacher relationship, but there was a partial correlation between CRS and peer relationships. Additionally, the results showed that there is a correlation between teacher relationship and academic performance, and a slight correlation between peer relationships and academic performance.

Unexpectedly, the correlation regarding CRS and teacher relationships appears weak and non-significant. For destructive conflict styles and teacher relationships the results, $r(31)=.141$, $p=.465$, indicate that the correlation is weak and non-significant. Similarly, constructive conflict styles displayed nearly no correlation, $r(31)=.02$, $p=.911$. Combined, this data indicates that CRS likely has very little to no effect on teacher-student relationships. When it comes to peer relationships, the correlation was slightly stronger, though still limited. Constructive conflict styles were found to have a negligible positive correlation with peer relationship quality, $r(31)=.145$, $p=.421$, and are therefore not statistically significant. Surprisingly, a moderate positive correlation was found between destructive CRS and peer relationship quality, $r(31)=.347$, $p=.048$. Furthermore, when it comes to academic performance, a moderate positive correlation was found between teacher relationships and academic performance, $r(31)=.354$, $p=.044$, which indicates a significant correlation. Peer relationships and academic performance additionally had a positive correlation, but it was not as significant, $r(31)=.304$, $p=.085$ (Appendix D).

These correlations partially contradict the initial hypothesis because it predicted that destructive CRS would result in weaker teacher and peer relationships, but this was

not supported by the findings. There is no statistically significant relationship between destructive CRS and teacher relationships, and there was actually a significant positive relationship between destructive tendencies and peer relationship quality. This finding may be explained by the context-specific social norms within the high school social environment. In the high school environment, behaviors that are associated with destructive CRS -such as assertiveness and dominance- may be interpreted as signs of confidence and social status rather than hostility. Dunn et al. (2022) argue that adolescents prioritize relational goals during conflicts, which may suggest that dominant behaviors that are associated with destructive CRS might serve as a social function in peer settings, unlike authoritative teacher relationships, which are far more structured and authoritative, peer relationships are more shaped by social hierarchies where assertiveness might be rewarded specifically in the school setting. This possible explanation could also explain why a negligible correlation between CRS as a whole and teacher relationships was discovered. This more context dependent explanation suggests that Rahim's (2002) categorization of these behaviors as destructive towards relationships may not fully represent how these behaviors function within adolescent contexts, specifically regarding peer dynamics. This explanation may indicate why these findings contradict the previous literature. Additionally, the private school setting may influence these results, as a strong interconnected social network, as are present in small private schools, may lead to an acceptance of assertive behaviors that would not be present in more structured and diverse social settings.

The absence of any relationship between CRS and teacher relationship quality, and constructive CRS and peer relationships is contrary to the conclusions formed by the literature in the field. Rahim's (2002) findings are refuted by my findings that show a lack of correlation between constructive CRS and peer relationships, and CRS effects on teacher relationships overall. Rahim (2002) suggests that those with constructive conflict resolution styles have higher concern for others and this promotes more high-quality social behavior. Moreover, Rahim concludes that those with destructive CRS have less concern for others, and therefore they have more interactions that are harmful towards their relationships. This lack of correlation may indicate that CRS alone is not the primary indicator of relationship quality.

In contrast to CRS effect on relationships, the findings regarding relationship quality and academic performance support the previous research. The significant positive correlation between teacher relationships and academic performance confirm the argument from Liu (2024), that supportive teacher-student relationships are highly conducive towards academic performance. Ramos-Diaz et al. (2016) had a similar argument, stating that perceived support from peers significantly influences student motivation and engagement. The results of this study partially support these previous findings, as the correlation found was not as significant as the previous literature indicated it would be. This discrepancy in between peer relationships and academic performance could be due to simply the low number of statistical variability from

the small sample size, which will be discussed in later sections. The findings overall suggest that teacher-student relationships, and peer relationships, to an extent, play a more direct role in academic performance than CRS alone.

Regarding peer relationship and academic performance, the correlation was not strong enough to be deemed statistically significant, but it still was positive. This indicates there is some correlation, and this somewhat aligns with the research of Ramos-Diaz et al. (2016) who suggest that peer relationships do play a major role in engagement in school, and therefore academic performance. While my study did not demonstrate that the correlation between peer relationships and academic performance was significant, it did observe a trend that indicates peer relationships may influence academic performance.

Together, these findings contribute to the extending of current research regarding CRS, teacher and peer relationships, and academic performance. This difference in the findings of this study and the previous literature may suggest that relationships in school settings are more complex, as students repeatedly interact in structured environments and social hierarchies may influence perceptions of inclusion. Very few other researchers have connected the aforementioned variables together, especially in a high school setting. The results suggest that CRS might not directly predict relationship quality as strongly as the previous literature had implied, but there is a moderate association. Furthermore, the findings that CRS had no negative correlation to relationships whatsoever, indicates that CRS likely functions as a developmental tool more so than a risk factor that negatively affects relationships. Overall, these findings suggest that interpersonal dynamics play a more direct role in student outcomes than individual CRS do in structured academic settings.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of this study suggest that CRS may not influence peer and teacher relationships as strongly as previous literature has suggested. This study did not find a statistically significant relationship between CRS and teacher relationship quality, or constructive CRS and peer relationships. However, destructive CRS display a moderately strong positive correlation with peer relationships, and the findings regarding teacher-student, and somewhat peer, relationships and academic performance are consistent with prior research, displaying a positive correlation. Together, these results imply that interpersonal dynamics within school settings may play a larger role in academic success than individual CRS alone do.

➤ *Implications*

The results of this study are significant because they provide insight into the effects of peer and teacher relationships in academic environments, and the importance of teacher-student relationships in promoting academic performance. For individuals in the field of education, these findings highlight the value of having a school environment, where healthy teacher-student interactions, that promote high

quality relationships, occur. Furthermore, this research may indicate to school counselors that CRS intervention programs that revolve around Rahim's framework might not accurately reflect how adolescents function in peer contexts. The unexpected positive relationship between destructive CRS and peer relationships may have implications in the psychological field as the correlation suggests that behaviors usually categorized as negative in terms of peer relationships may not be as detrimental as traditional conflict theories suggest. This finding can help psychologists better understand how adolescents might respond to conflict in specific environments, and for conflict theorists, these findings may indicate that Rahim's constructive/destructive construct may not apply uniformly across all age groups.

➤ *Limitations*

The results of this study were limited by a few factors. The sample size consisted of only 33 participants, which limited the statistical power of the correlations and may have reduced the ability to detect stronger relationships between variables. An additional limitation is that the study relied on Likert scale responses to measure CRS along with peer and teacher relationships. While Likert scales are efficient and viable for research, they often oversimplify behaviors and/or relationships. Participants may be forced to select from fixed responses that might not fully represent their experiences. Moreover, many participants reported somewhat similar GPA values concentrated in the ranges of 3.5 - 4.0. This lack of variability limits the statistical power of the Pearson correlation coefficients, which assume that there is a normal distribution of variables.

➤ *Further Research*

Future studies can build on these findings by examining CRS, relational outcomes, and academic performance in a larger, more academically diverse student population, meaning a larger range of GPAs. Looking at multiple high schools may provide a more accurate and in-depth understanding of how these variables correlate in educational environments, because it would eliminate the aforementioned limitations. Moreover, future studies could examine how conflict behaviors affect relationships across different age groups. Comparing adolescent peer relationships with adult relationships may provide further insight on whether conflict theories apply across all age groups, which this study found some discrepancies in. This could be achieved through a mixed-methods design combining quantitative correlational analysis with qualitative interviews, where interviews are used to further explore the specific mechanisms that might explain why certain behaviors should be categorized as positive and negative differently across contexts. Future studies might also consider perceived social status as a variable, given the findings from this study that social hierarchies may mediate the relationship between CRS and peer dynamics. Ultimately, the deeper understanding from these findings, regarding how CRS affect relationships and therefore academics, may help educators and researchers better support student relationships and improve academic performance within school environments.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent for Participation in Research

I _____ give my permission for myself/my child to participate in a research project conducted by William Costigan in the _____ class at _____ with _____ Teacher at _____ I will be one of approximately 25-30 participants in this research project.

- Participation in this project is voluntary, and participants can withdraw at any time without consequence. They will not be paid for participation in this study.
- Participation involves taking a brief survey, which takes at most ten minutes to complete.
- The survey will consist of questions examining personality styles, and questions regarding the participants CRS, and relationships between family members, peers, and teachers. It will require reading short questions about oneself and answering with the response that best describes you.
- After participants have finished taking the Google Forms survey, they will receive the results of the research findings. Then, they will be debriefed on the research findings.
- All participant information will be kept confidential, and no identifying information will be provided.
- The name of the participant will not be used in the research paper. In the paper, the participant will be referred to as “Participant 1.”
- I have read and understand the explanation provided to me, and I provide my consent to participate in this survey.
- Hold Harmless to the Informed Consent: The sponsoring educational institution shall not be liable for any direct, consequential, or any other damage(s) suffered by the Parties, others, or animals resulting from the use of the research results or experiment in the course of or using the results of the Research. Furthermore, the Parties shall not utilize the name of the sponsoring educational institution or the Principal Investigator. Lastly, the conclusions reached by the research study are the conclusions of the individual researcher and not the educational institution. Throughout the duration of this experiment, _____, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, will be held harmless.

_____ Participant’s signature Date

_____ Parent’s signature Date

Please contact me if you have any questions at: _____

APPENDIX B**➤ Part #1**

All answers will be answered on a 1-5 Likert scale, 1 being strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree
Adapted from the ROCI-II (Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II)

- When I have conflict and or disagreement, I try to work together to find a solution that works for all parties involved
- I try to combine my ideas with other people's ideas to reach the best possible solution during conflict and disagreement
- I try to openly discuss each person's viewpoint and concerns to resolve conflicts and disagreement
- I put others needs ahead of my own to keep peace during conflict and disagreements
- I will give in during a conflict and disagreement to help maintain a positive relationship
- I focus on satisfying others during conflict and disagreements rather than pushing my own position
- I keep my opinions to myself to avoid tension and or conflict
- I stay away from conflict whenever it is possible
- I prefer to ignore conflict and disagreements rather than dealing with them
- I strongly push for my own position during conflict and disagreement
- I stand firm in my views even when others disagree with me
- I focus on winning arguments rather than compromising
- During conflict and disagreement, I try to find solutions where everyone involved gives up something
- I am willing to meet others halfway in conflict and or disagreements
- I look for middle-ground solutions during conflict and or disagreements

➤ Part #2**• Section A**

All answers will be answered on a 1-5 point Likert scale, 1 being strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree
Adapted from the STRS (Student Teacher Relationship Scale) developed by Pianta et al. (1992).

- ✓ My teachers care about me as a person
- ✓ I feel comfortable asking my teachers for help
- ✓ My teachers treat me with respect
- ✓ My teachers support me
- ✓ I often feel misunderstood by my teachers
- ✓ I have frequent conflict and or tension with my teachers
- ✓ I feel frustrated after interactions with my teachers
- ✓ I feel that my teachers and I struggle to understand each other often

• Section B

All answers will be answered on a 1-6 point likert scale, 1 being strongly disagree, 2 disagree , 3 somewhat disagree , 4 somewhat agree, 5 agree, 6 strongly agree
Adapted from the CASSS (Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale) developed by Malecki et al. (2002)

- ✓ Other students treat me in a nice way
- ✓ Other students include me in group activities
- ✓ Other students show consideration towards me
- ✓ I spend time engaging in social activities with other students
- ✓ Other students are willing to help me with schoolwork
- ✓ My peers offer helpful advice when I need it
- ✓ I feel respected by my peers
- ✓ My peers value my input
- ✓ My peers help me learn how to perform skills or tasks
- ✓ My peers encourage me with positive feedback
- ✓ What is your current unweighted GPA (on a 4 point scale)

- 0.0-0.9
- 1.0-1.9
- 2.0-2.9
- 3.0-3.4
- 3.5-3.9
- 4.0

APPENDIX C

➤ Survey 1

Values 1,2,3,4,5 Represent Likert Scale Responses

n=33 for all graphs

• Conflict Resolution Style Item Level Responses

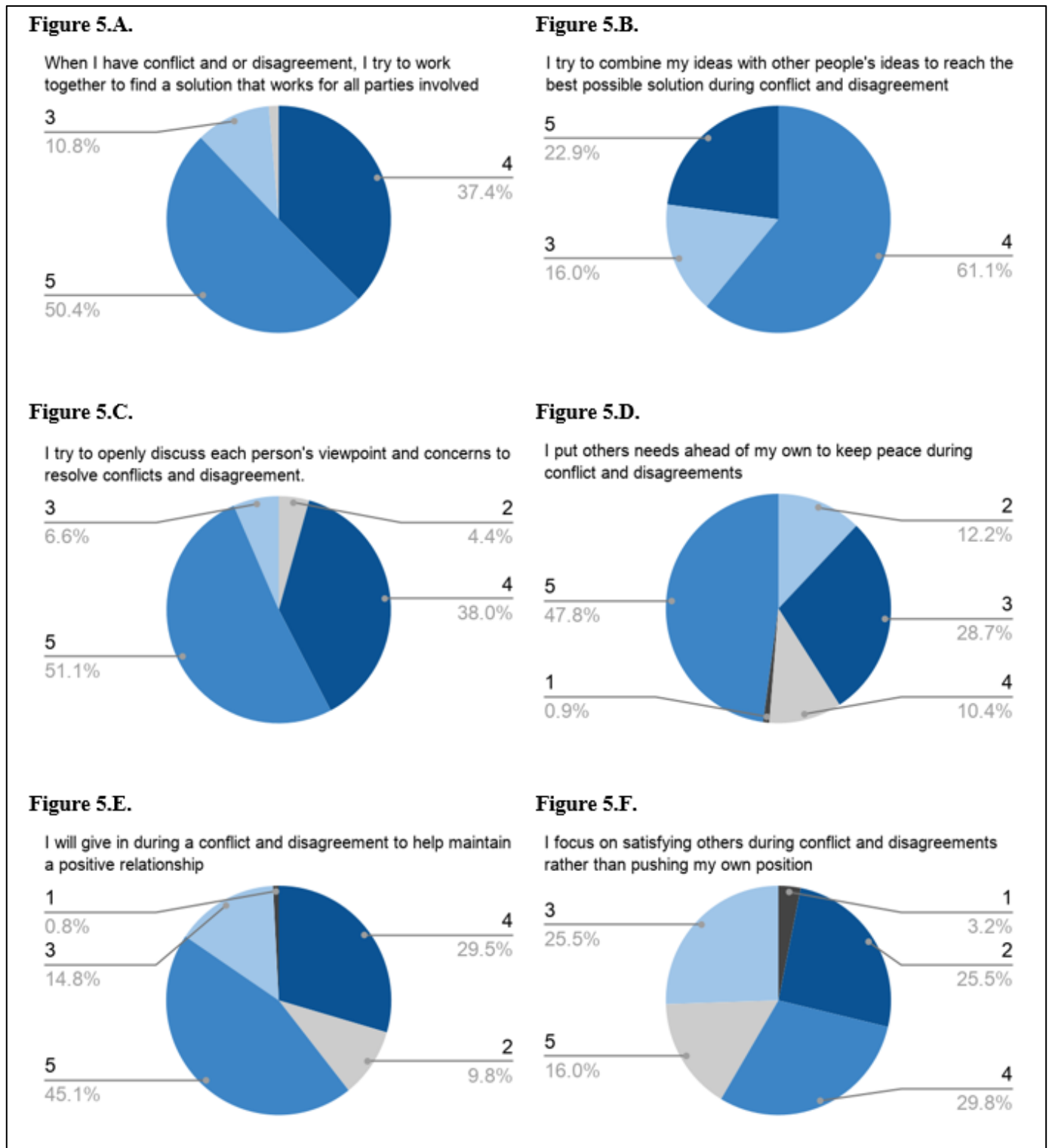
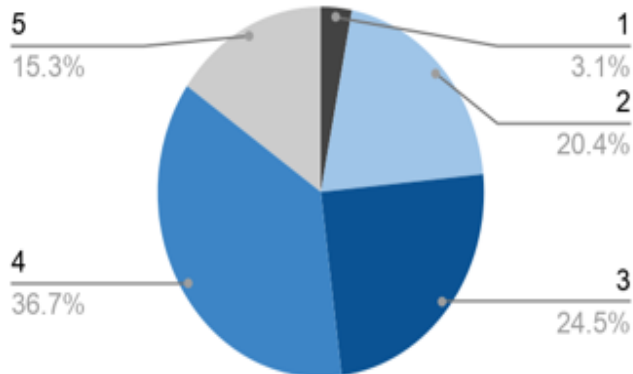
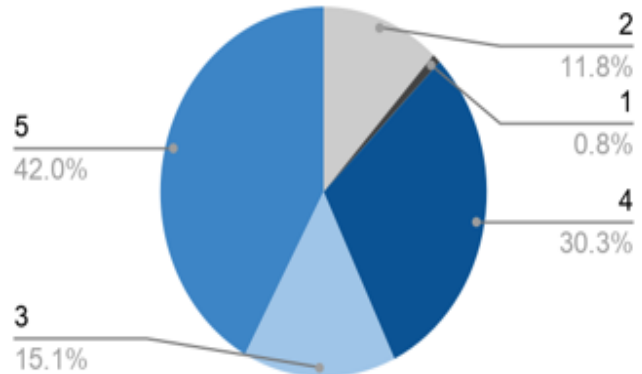


Figure 5.G.

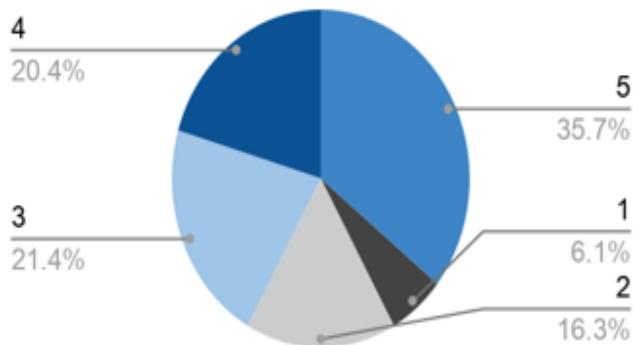
I keep my opinions to myself to avoid tension and or conflict

**Figure 5.H.**

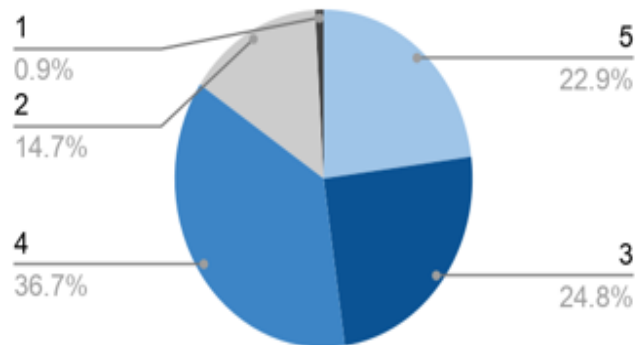
I stay away from conflict whenever it is possible

**Figure 5.I.**

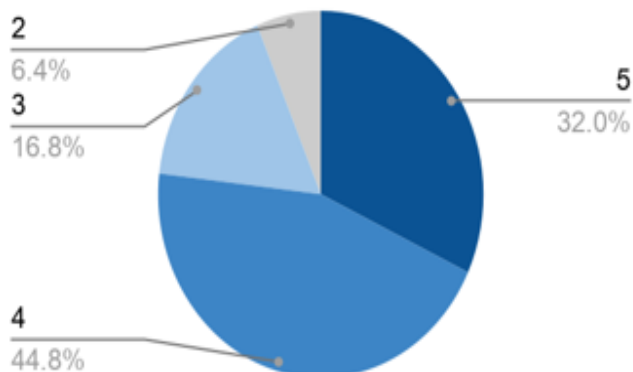
I prefer to ignore conflict and disagreements rather than dealing with them

**Figure 5.J.**

I strongly push for my own position during conflict and disagreement

**Figure 5.K.**

I stand firm in my views even when others disagree with me

**Figure 5.L.**

I focus on winning arguments rather than compromising

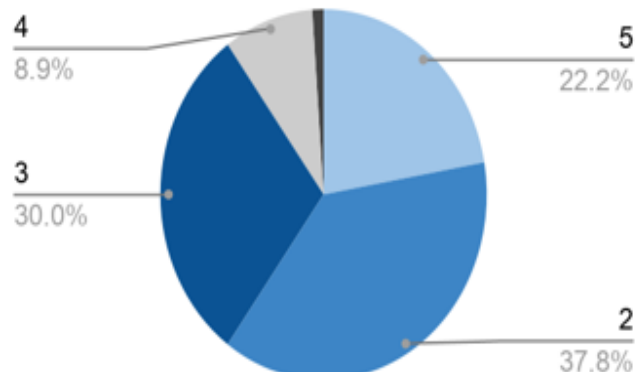


Figure 5.M.

During conflict and disagreement, I try to find solutions where everyone involved gives up something

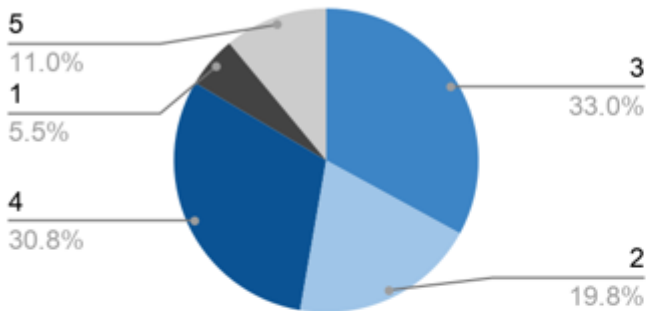


Figure 5.N.

I am willing to meet others halfway in conflict and or disagreements

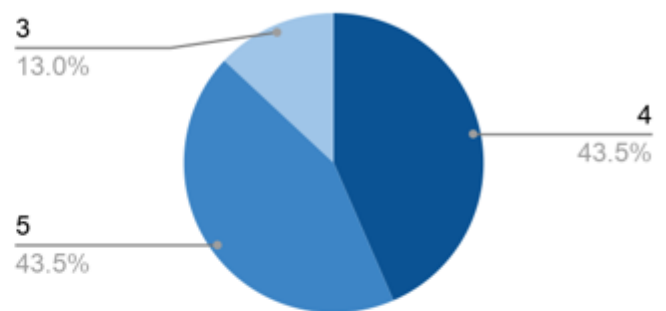
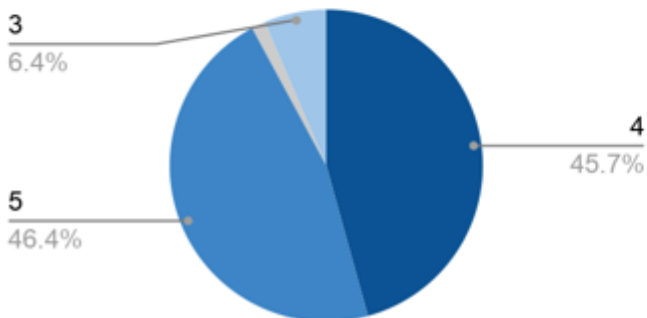


Figure 5.P.

I look for middle-ground solutions during conflict and or disagreements



➤ *Survey 2 Responses*

Values 1,2,3,4,5 (and 6 for peer relationship) Represent Likert Scale Responses

n=33 for all graphs

• *Teacher Relationship Item Level Responses*

Figure 6.A.

My teachers care about me as a person

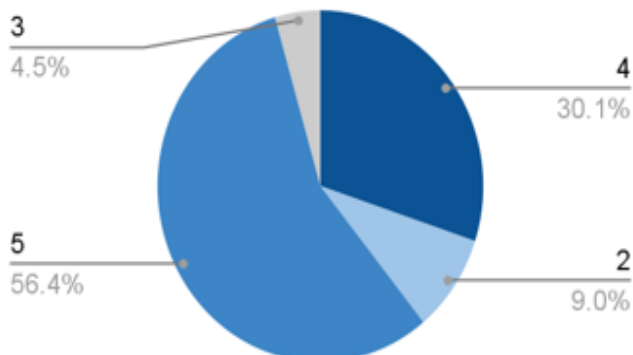


Figure 6.B.

I feel comfortable asking my teachers for help

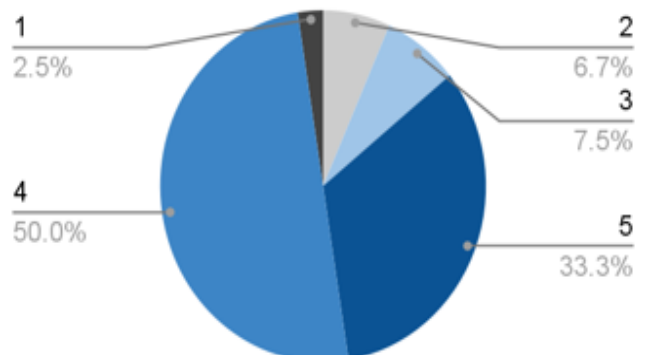
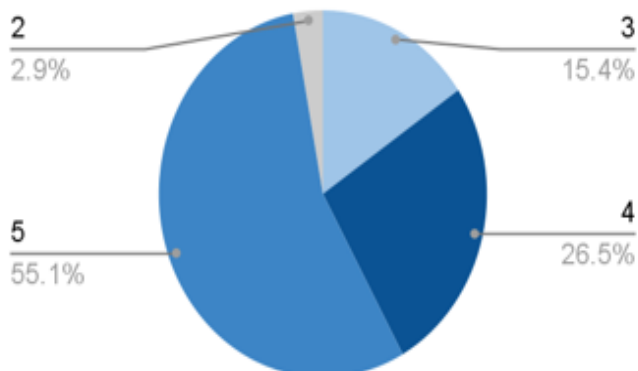
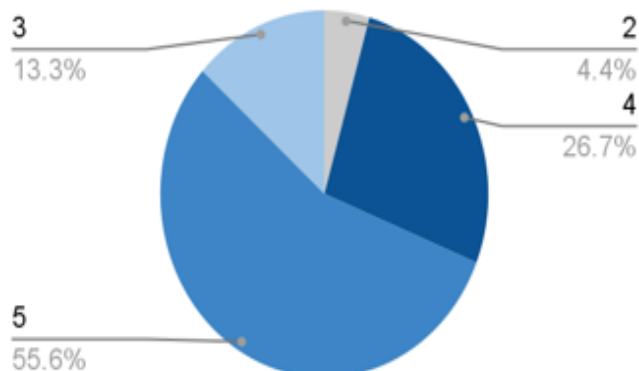


Figure 6.C.

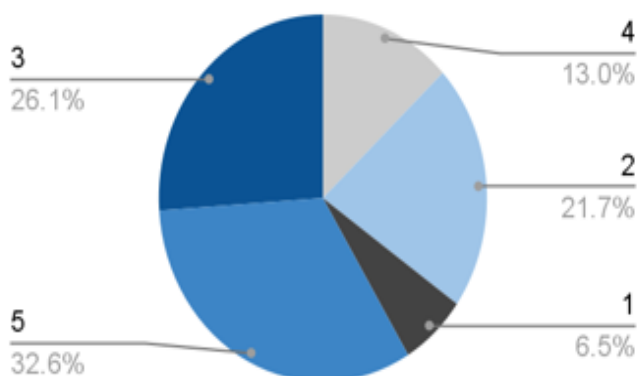
My teachers treat me with respect

**Figure 6.D.**

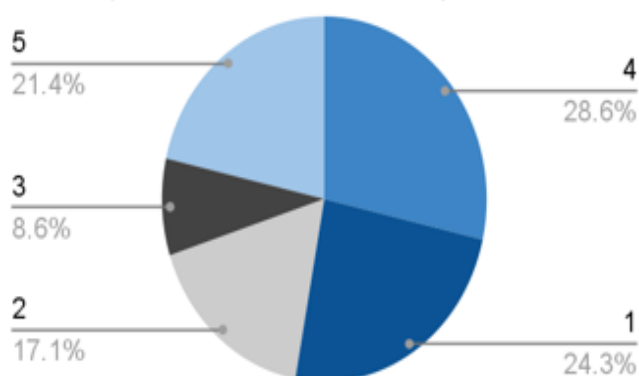
My teachers support me

**Figure 6.E.**

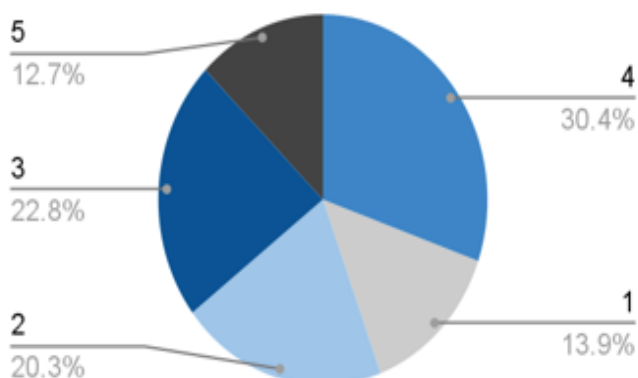
I often feel misunderstood by my teachers

**Figure 6.F.**

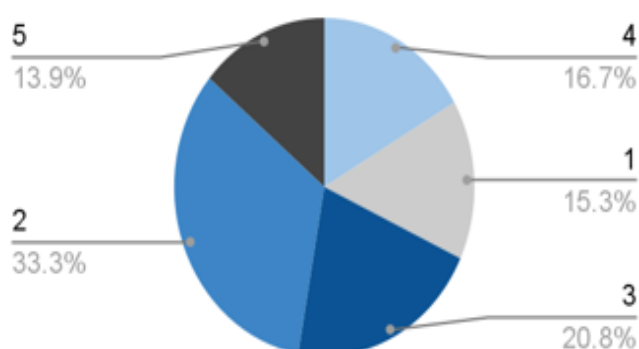
I have frequent conflict and or tension with my teachers

**Figure 6.G.**

I feel frustrated after interactions with my teachers

**Figure 6.H.**

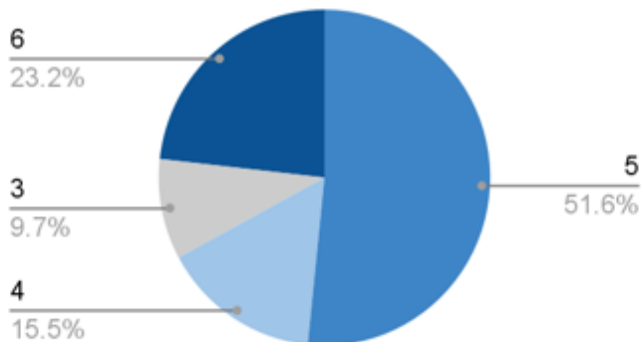
I feel that my teachers and I struggle to understand each other often



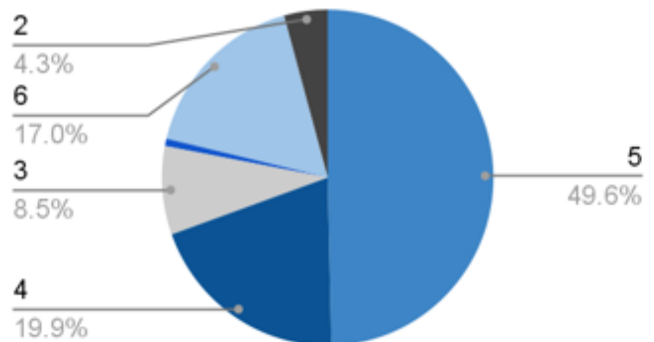
- *Peer Relationship Item Level Responses*

Figure 6.I.

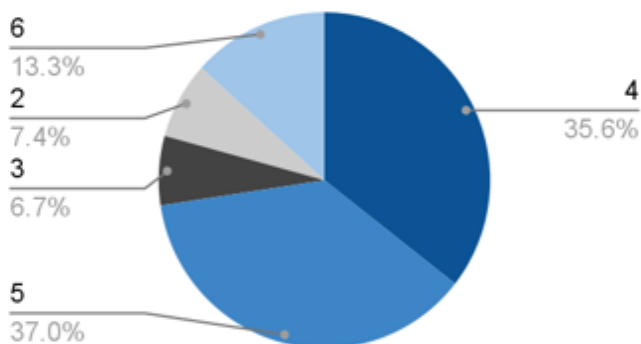
Other students treat me in a nice way

**Figure 6.J.**

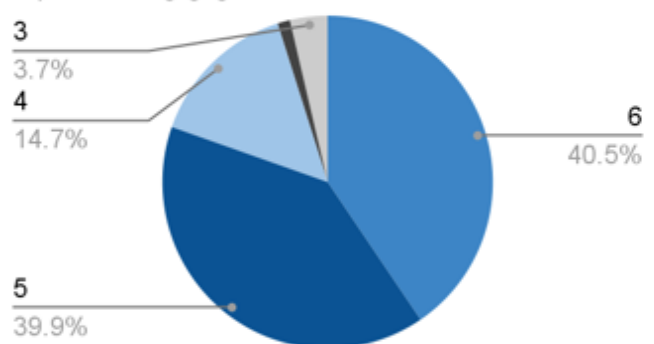
Other students include me in group activities

**Figure 6.K.**

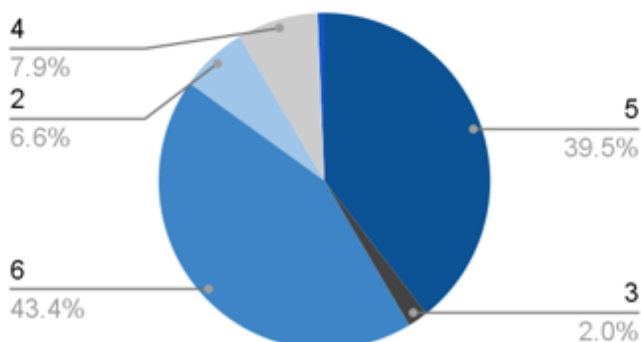
Other students show consideration towards me

**Figure 6.L.**

I spend time engaging in social activities with other students

**Figure 6.M.**

Other students are willing to help me with schoolwork

**Figure 6.N.**

My peers offer helpful advice when I need it

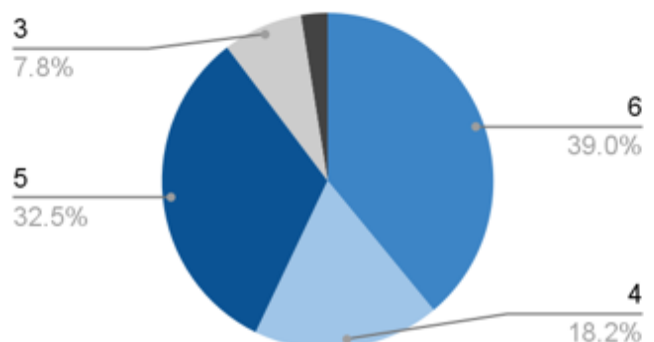


Figure 6.P.

I feel respected by my peers

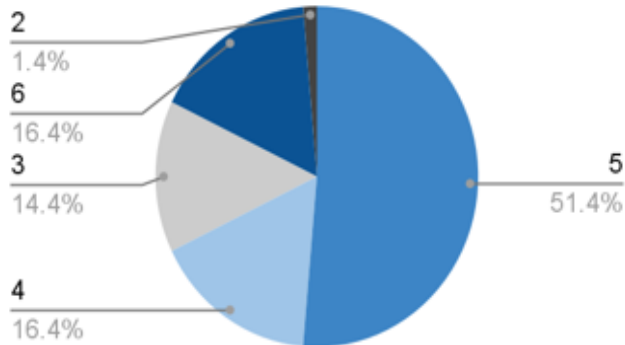


Figure 6.Q.

My peers value my input

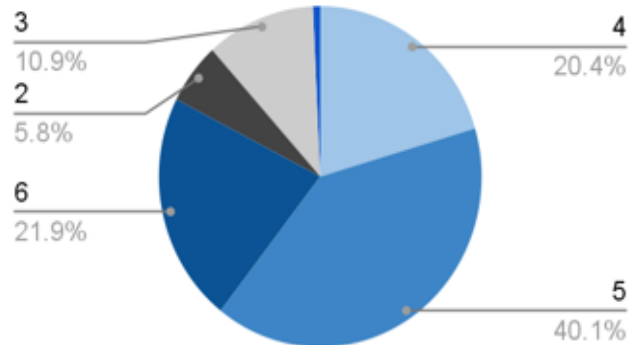


Figure 6.R.

My peers help me learn how to perform skills or tasks

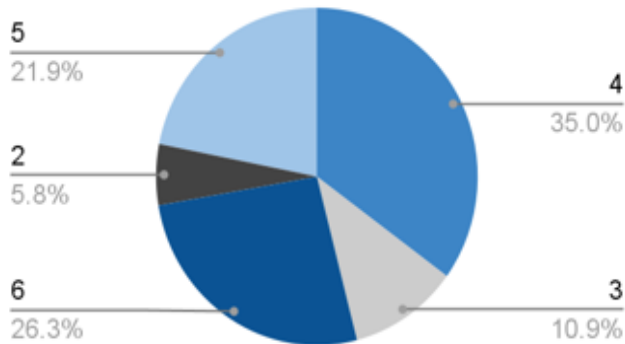
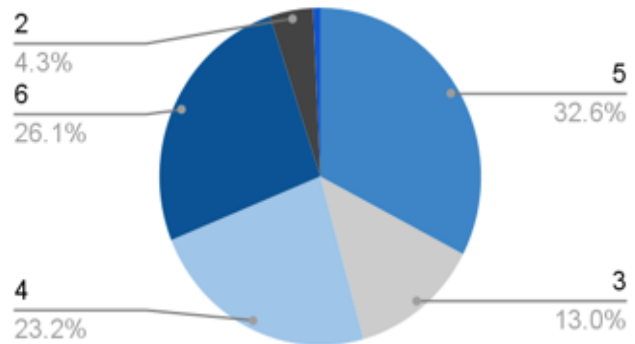


Figure 6.S.

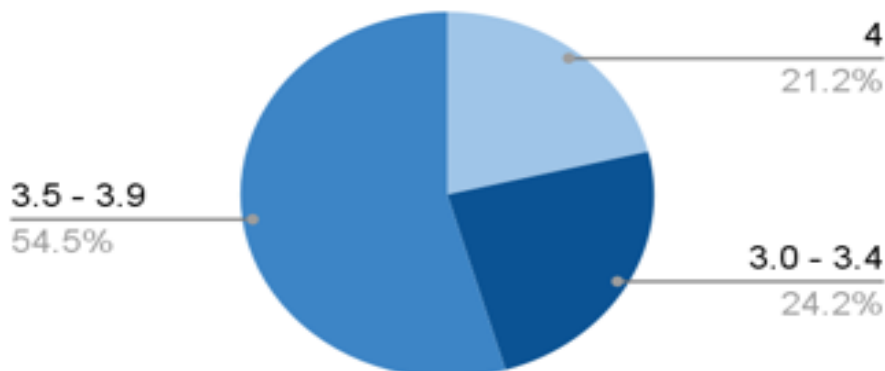
My peers encourage me with positive feedback



• GPA Item Level Response

Figure 6.T.

Count of What is your current unweighted GPA (on a 4 point scale)



APPENDIX D**➤ Mean Composite Scores for Key Variables**

GPA out of 4, Peer relationship out of 6, and the remaining items are out of 5

	Destructive CRS Response mean	Constructive CRS Response Mean	Teacher Relationship Response Mean	Peer Relationship Response Mean	GPA
P1	3.84	3.11	2.38	4.9	4
P2	2.17	3.33	4	4.4	3.2
P3	3.34	4.22	4.38	4	3.7
P4	2.83	3.33	4.63	4.8	3.7
P5	2.83	3.87	4.38	5.1	4
P6	3.17	3.34	4.75	4.5	3.7
P7	3.5	3.11	3.38	3	3.7
P8	3.83	4.56	2.63	4.5	3.7
P9	3.67	3.11	3.75	4.1	4
P10	3.5	4.22	4.25	5.1	3.7
P11	4.17	3	4	5.3	4
P12	3.17	3.67	2.5	4	3.7
P13	2.83	3.33	1.63	5	3.2
P14	3.5	3.89	5	4.9	3.7
P15	2.84	4.23	4.13	4.4	4
P16	2.67	2.56	5	5.5	4
P17	2.34	3.89	2.38	2.3	3.2
P18	5	5	4.5	6	3.7
P19	3.17	4.33	4.75	5	3.7
P20	3.67	4.33	3.63	4.9	3.7
P21	4	3.55	3.5	5.6	3.2
P22	3.5	3	4.75	2.9	3.2
P23	2.83	3.22	4.13	3.8	3.2
P24	3.48	3.67	4.63	4.8	3.7
P25	2	4.33	3.63	3.9	3.7
P26	2.67	3.78	2.25	3	3.2
P27	3.16	4	4.5	4.3	4
P28	2.67	3.33	2.88	5	3.2
P29	3.67	3.44	3.63	2.4	3.7
P30	3.34	3.8	4.63	5.3	3.7
P31	3	4.11	2.63	4.7	3.7
P32	3.5	4.11	4.13	4.7	3.7
P33	2.67	4.11	4.13	3.7	3.7

➤ Google Sheets Correlational Constant Chart

Variable A	Variable B	R-Value	P-Value	Strength
Constructive CRS	Teacher Relationship	0.02	0.911	Nonsignificant
Destructive CRS	Teacher Relationship	0.141	0.465	Nonsignificant
Constructive CRS	Peer Relationship	0.145	0.421	Nonsignificant
Destructive CRS	Peer Relationship	0.347	0.048	Significant
Teacher Relationship	GPA	0.354	0.044	Significant
Peer Relationship	GPA	0.304	0.085	Nonsignificant