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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE STYLES OF
HANDLING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT AMONG
STUDENTS, FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS

presented by

Franklin Cardona

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

PH. D degree in HIGHER EDUCATION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Franklin Cardona", written over a horizontal line.

Major professor

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ABSTRACT

The researcher's purpose in this research was to identify and compare the differences, if any, that exist among graduate students, faculty members, and administrators with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Inventory II, Form A, B, and C.

Form A measured conflict management styles in relationship to superiors, Form B measured conflict management styles in relationship to subordinates, and Form C measured conflict management in relationship to peers.

The population for this study consisted of graduate students, faculty members and administrators recruited from Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University, and Vanderbilt University.

The total population was 137 respondents, employed or enrolled during the Summer/Fall term of 1994. Data was collected by personal visitation, appointments and referrals. Each participant was given a letter of transmittal with the questionnaire, ROCI II, with complete instruction and assurance of anonymity and confidentiality.

An interview was additionally conducted to elicit responses from the various groups on their perception of conflict management styles.

Data was analyzed with a one-way analysis of variance to test the hypothesis. Interviews were also analyzed by individual answers and compared to the ANOVA findings.

Statistical significance was found in six sub-hypotheses.

Faculty were found to be more compromising and avoiding in their conflict management style than students.

Students were found to be more obliging and avoiding in their conflict management style than faculty members.

Females were found to be more avoiding in their conflict management styles than males.

The results of the statistical data and interviews rendered support for further research in the following areas:

(1) studies to predict choice of conflict style among faculty members dependent upon decisional variables such as (a) desire to remain, (b) superior-subordinate congruence, and (c) protection from arbitrary action;

(2) further research to find out the kinds of conflict management training among Administrators, Faculty members and Students;

(3) since the research rendered an additional finding on gender differences, further research on conflict management styles among males/females with follow-up interviews is encouraged, and

(4) studies could be conducted to incorporate direct observation of administrators, faculty members, and students in actual conflict situations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Colleges and universities, like other public and private organizations, are in need of individuals who can deal effectively with conflict. It appears from the literature that administrators, graduate students, and faculty members often deal with conflict poorly.

This research is designed to explore and compare the conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members and administrators.

According to M. J. Williams, Jr. (1976), the real point of divergence between managers in business and industry and managers in colleges and universities appears to be conflict. It has been further observed that most administrators in higher education feel that conflict is destructive and that it should be avoided if at all possible.

College teachers have always experienced conflict with their students. Hocker (1986) describes a typical interaction between a teacher and student:

Student: Could I talk with you about my grade on the
 first paper?

Professor: Sure, come on in.

Student: I'd like to know your criteria for an A.
I worked really hard.

Professor: Well, it was a good paper but it had some
flaws. For instance, you had a lot of
proofreading errors, and you didn't follow
the assignment fully.

Student: I didn't know we had to use outside
sources.

Professor: I covered that in class. You must have
missed it.

Student: Oh well, thanks.

Professor: Sure, anytime.

The professor will likely assume that the above interaction was a routine inquiry about a grade, in which the student went away satisfied. The student might report to friends that the professor was unclear in class, unfair in applying standards, inconsistent in interpretation of requirements, did not read the paper carefully or conducted the interview in an arrogant, demeaning manner. For the professor, no important conflict may have occurred; for the student, who may be boiling inside, the episode may be considered a serious conflict.

In a somewhat different scenario, Connie, Sharon and Lisbedth share an old house near the campus where they are seniors at a university. They have been acquainted with each other for years; they

grew up together in the same town. Their roommate relationship has been fairly smooth thus far, although a recent issue has resulted, since Lisbedth eats two meals a day on campus at the food court. Connie and Sharon like to cook, so they prepare their meals at home.

They have invited Lisbedth to share the evening meal several times and Lisbedth has accepted it. It's Thursday night, Lisbedth is rushing to get to the food service before it closes, and the following dialogue occurs:

Connie: Hey, Lisbedth, you might as well stay and eat with us.
It's late. You'll never make it.

Lisbedth: No big deal. If I miss it, I'll get a hamburger or something. (Lisbedth rushes out the door).

Connie: (to Sharon) That's the last time I'm going to ask her to eat with us. She thinks she is too good to be bothered with staying around here with us.

Later, Lisbedth informs the other two women that she will be moving out because she feels that she has been excluded, and that Connie and Sharon would rather not have her around. They begin to try to talk about the decision, since each person interprets the events of the last few weeks differently.

The expression of conflict through the communication process is carried out through content and relationship information (Wilmont 1979).

When Lisbedth said, "No big deal....," the content was fairly clear. "No, I'll go ahead, and if I miss the food service, I'll get a hamburger."

However, the content was not the problem. Instead, various relational meanings were communicated by the two women – meanings that led them into a protracted conflict. Connie might have been communicating any of the following relational messages: "We feel sorry for you. Please stay." "I feel guilty when you miss dinner. I don't want you to stay, but I'd rather you stay than I continue to feel guilty."

Obviously, Lisbedth and Connie needed to clarify the relational level of their communication about food. Without discussing what is meant on the relationship level, this particular conflict will not be resolved in a productive manner.

Williams (1976) categorizes certain key factors in resolving conflict situations:

Factual Material: In a question of fact, conflicts are easy to resolve, because simple research can provide the needed information. Little or no energy is expended. For example, Stan Musial either hit over .300 in 1950, or he did not. A little initiative and a reliable sports guide can solve the problem.

Methodology: In deciding how to handle a particular issue or work situation, Mary and John may differ over the approach. Both individuals want to achieve the same results, and they usually do. The question is one of how to get there. Mary's experiences may make one method much more familiar and comfortable for her, and therefore, it is preferable in her mind.

Goals: In some cases, a difference arises over the purpose of a specific activity or task. The goal of the activity becomes more important than getting it done. The presumed goal often defines deadlines and sets the priority given to specific activities or approaches. Conflict about these issues can give rise to disagreement about methodology.

Values: Scales of value vary significantly, and they can be a particularly troublesome source of conflict. What is offensive to one person may be perfectly acceptable to another, and the issues are often emotional. The more strongly assailed one's values are, the greater the intensity of one's feelings.

Although it is clear that different types of conflict create different situations, three elements are common to effective resolution of four kinds of conflict:

Commitment to Other's Values

Regardless of how different their values, approaches, or perception of the problem, all individuals involved in the conflict must clearly see or be willing to understand that values are held strongly by both parties.

If there is no acceptance that individuals hold different values, there can be no commitment to resolve the conflict.

Communication

Once there is a commitment to resolve the conflict, open and straightforward communication must follow. In most cases, it is initiated

by the participant who first becomes aware that there is a proper atmosphere of commitment and that communication is needed.

Common Interest In Resolution

There must be a willingness to believe that all participants are interested in resolving the conflict. Resolution may be impossible, but both sides must be willing to discern or believe that the others are willing to work toward resolution.

Conflict Styles

Having considered the general types of conflict and the general principles of resolutions, this particular research emphasis is directed to the study of conflict management styles in higher education. M. Afzalur Rahim, developed the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II. The five different conflict management styles are: Integrating, Obliging, Dominating, Avoiding, and Compromising.

The obliging style occupies one end of the continuum. This style is evident when a person is willing to be cooperative as possible and to accept whatever solution another individual or the group suggests.

On the opposite end of the continuum are those who carry assertiveness to its full measure. The dominating or autocratic style fits this category.

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Part cooperative and part assertive, the compromising style must aptly describe the effective form of conflict resolution, which seeks the area of compromise that will satisfy both parties. The integrating, or collaborative, style pushes both assertiveness and cooperation as far as possible. It requires both finesse and maturity on the part of the participants.

Finally, neither cooperative nor assertive, the avoiding style avoids conflict by neither cooperating nor pushing for solutions.

The Purpose of the Study

The researcher's purpose in this study was to identify and compare the differences, if any, that exist among graduate students, faculty, and administrators with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Inventory II, Form A, B, and C. Form A measures the conflict management style in relation to superiors. Form B measures the conflict management style in relation to subordinates. Form C measures the conflict management style in relation to peers.

Additionally, an interview was conducted to ascertain the individual responses to questions pertaining to self-perception, perception of others, and ideal manner or preferences in conflict management style, among graduate students, faculty members, and administrators.

The interview section of this study was conducted for the following purposes:

- (1) to gather additional data from the experiences of those interviewed;
- (2) to identify any differences from the survey instrument and actual verbatim discussion of conflict management style;
- (3) to gain insight from the interview process for enhancing skills for future conflict management intervention strategy, and
- (4) to acquire information that will facilitate ideas for further projects and research.

The following study identified the conflict management style of graduate students, faculty members and administrators in higher education.

Research question I:

Is there a significant difference between graduate students, faculty members and administrators with respect to conflict management styles?

Sub-research questions:

- A. Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of integrating among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?

- B. Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of compromising among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?**
- C. Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of avoidance among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?**
- D. Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of obliging among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?**
- E. Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of dominating among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?**
- F. Is there a significant difference in gender with respect to conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?**

The following hypotheses were generated for this study:

Hypothesis I

There is a significant difference between graduate students, faculty members, and administrators with respect to conflict management styles.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference among graduate students, faculty members, and administrators with respect to conflict management styles.

Sub Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference among graduate students and faculty members with respect to conflict management styles.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between graduate students and faculty members with respect to conflict management style.

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between faculty members and administrators with respect to conflict management styles.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference with respect to conflict management style between faculty members and administrators.

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference with respect to conflict management style between graduate students and administrators with respect to conflict in management style.

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Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between graduate students and administrators with respect to conflict management style.

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference among male and female graduate students, faculty members, and administrators with respect to conflict management style.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between male and female graduate students, faculty members and administrators with respect to conflict management style.

Research question II:

Is there a difference in self-perception, others' perception and ideal preference of conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members and administrators?

Hypothesis II

There is a difference in self-perception, others' perception, and ideal preference of conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members, and administrators interviewed.

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference with regard to self-perception, others' perception, and ideal preference of conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members and administrators interviewed.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to:

- 1 Graduate students at Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University, and Vanderbilt University.**
- 2. Faculty: full-time members of the faculty at Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University, and Vanderbilt University.**
- 3. Administrators: Administrators will consist of vice-presidents, deans, associate deans, chairpersons, and directors at Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University, and Vanderbilt University.**
- 4. Five conflict management styles as measured by Rahim's organizational Inventory II, Form ABC.**
- 5. Students enrolled in the summer-fall term of 1994.**

Assumptions

This researcher assumed that:

- 1. The students, faculty, and administrator's answers on the Rahim's Organizational Inventory II would be a true reflection of their conflict management style.**
- 2. There are varied contrasts and discernible preferences for conflict management styles among students, faculty and administrators in higher education.**

Significance of the Study

Conflict management is an inevitable and indispensable tool for effective leadership in today's universities. The student, faculty member, or administrator must be astutely conscious to make the adjustments needed to meet the rapid change and conflicts that will be forthcoming (Kerr, 1973).

Erikson (1968, p. 39) states,

The most widespread expression of the discontented search of youth is the craving for locomotion, whether expressed in a general "being on the go," "tearing after something" or "running around," or in locomotion as in vigorous work, in absorbing sports, in rapt dancing. . . . Their need for locomotion also finds expression through participation in the movements of the day. . . . He further states . . . youth . . . must often test extremes before setting on a considered course. These extremes, particularly in times of biological confusion and widespread marginality of identity, may include not only rebellious, but also deviant, delinquent and self-destructive tendencies.

According to Wilmot (1976), most conflicts between teacher and students can be reduced to win-lose, with the conflict being managed via high-powered coercive tactics. Students reflect that teachers typically escalate the conflict, then use their power to force students to back down.

Consequently, students report that they feel anxious, dumb, helpless, disturbed, mad, sorry, and revengeful. Recent evidence suggests a need for exploring conflict management styles among students, faculty, and administrators in higher education.

Too often administrators have managed conflict poorly because, as Wilson and Jerrill (1981) delineate concerning administrators:

1. they do not want to deal with conflict that cannot be controlled;
2. they fail to make plans for conflict producing situations because they do not view conflict as potentially productive;
3. they fail to accept conflict and are threatened by it; and
4. they find conflict difficult to accept in part due to implications that conflict is equated with change.

The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 6, 1987, referred to a student who was caught in a dilemma. Two faculty factions at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst were in a conflict concerning course requirements and whether the student indeed satisfied them. The student's Ph.D. was at stake. After 48 hours of intense confrontations among faculty, administration, and the student, a settlement was finally established.

February 24, 1986, the Chronicle of Higher Education disclosed that some 200 Black, Hispanic, and American Indians staged a sit-in over racial problems on the campus at the University of Massachusetts.

"Students, teachers, administrators . . . are a product of this competition oriented society . . . whose historical interaction among groups necessitates proper conflict management" (Trusty, 1978). Thus, this study was focused on conflict management style in higher education. Conflicts have escalated and mediation continues to rise. Individuals who

were not at first connected to conflict found themselves drawn and involved as conflicts expanded. Historically, every major student conflict originated between administration and the students, and faculty were almost immediately caught up in conflict (Baldrige, 1971).

Conflict is inevitable and managing conflict through effective communication and styles will be a useful tool for anyone interested in maintaining satisfying and productive relationships (Hatfield, 1984).

In accordance with Filley (1975, p. 25) a chairperson, or academic dean, who may say to a faculty member, "You must do that because I am telling you to do so," is indeed utilizing a power conferred by the university. This exerting influence is quite evident, and its utilization leaves no alternative but for the receiver to respond to the directive. The faculty member usually has a feeling that he/she has lost. This represents a domination style, or win-lose situation, where the administrator wins and the faculty member loses.

The avoidance style, or lose-lose, usually finds all of the individuals in conflict, leaving the situation dissatisfied. Compromise is a lose-lose method, particularly when it is pivoted on the assumption that to win part is better than to lose all. Another avoidance technique, or lose-lose, may involve side payments. The faculty member agrees to a problem-solution for a favor from the administrator. Universities are users of side payment to an extent of high cost, providing faculty members with additional resources to do disagreeable tasks. The results depict that both sides in the conflict are partial losers.

The win-lose and lose-lose styles of conflict management in the university setting have some distinctive common characteristics. Both sides perceive the issue only from their own perspective, rather than defining the problem in terms of mutual needs. Robbins states, "The academic administrator who desires to manage a conflict as a positive force for effective change must recognize the existence and utility of conflict, . . . and consider the management of conflict as a major responsibility."

This study led to an awareness of conflict management style, and promoted an avenue for more dialogue, seminars, and education concerning interdependent relationships in higher education. In view of the foregoing, students, faculty, and administrators may have an overall style of conflict management and this study was designed to survey those styles and compare the differences.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used throughout this study:

Conflict: An interactive state in which perceived incompatibility or opposition exists between individuals, groups, or organizations (Robbins, 1974; Rahim, 1986). Interpersonal conflict is a dyadic process (Thomas, 1976) that occurs over the issues pertaining to the control of scarce resources, of opposing behavioral preferences, of values held by one individual but not shared by the other, of different beliefs or perceptions of reality, and of the nature of the relationship between the two parties

(Deutsch, 1973). Overt behaviors depicting conflict situations include "tension, frustration, verbal abuse, annoyance, anxiety, interference, rivalry, etc." (Rahim, 1986).

Conflict Management: A process which is primarily focused on handling conflict in such a manner that is at best productive for the organization and for the individuals involved, or at least not destructive to management's objectives (Thomas, 1976; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979).

Conflict Management Style: The way in which a person handles conflict is measured on two factors, concern for self and concern for others (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Ruble & Thomas, 1976).

In combining these two dimensions, five conflict management styles have resulted as defined by Rahim and Bonoma (1979). The five styles studied are:

1. **Integration** is the problem solving ideal. The relationship is fully preserved while new approaches are suggested which allow both parties to achieve their goals.
2. **Obligation** generally means "giving in." The party feels that the relationship is so important that achieving the personal goal is not worth fighting for. This conflict management style results in a win/lose situation with the obliging party or "friendly helper," the loser.
3. **Domination** involves achieving one's goals at all costs, regardless of the consequences for others.

4. Avoidance often stems from the perception that all conflict is unpleasant and destructive and must be avoided at all costs. Avoiders remove themselves from conflict whenever possible.

5. Compromise allows both parties to accept that something is better than nothing. If both parties truly feel that they get the best of the deal, it may work out to be a win/win situation. Frequently, however, neither party is satisfied and each side views the resolution of the conflict as a lose/lose situation.

Higher Education: Institutions for education above the secondary school level that identify teaching, research, and service as their primary missions; and that offer baccalaureate and graduate-level programs of study.

Higher Education Administrator: An administrator is defined as any person occupying one of the following positions: president, vice president, dean of a school/college, department chair, assistant to the chair, associate dean, assistant dean, specialists, administrative assistant, and project directors.

Graduate Student: One who is currently enrolled in a master's level program or doctoral program at a university.

Faculty: The body of persons responsible for instruction in a college or university.

Tenured System Faculty: Faculty members who have been hired as assistant professors, or associate professors with three-year periods of review, at which time tenure may be granted.

Tenured Faculty: Faculty members who have been granted tenure after a maximum of seven years of experience.

Theoretical Framework

The literature appears to suggest that students tend to be more dominating in conflict situations (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1987), faculty more compromising with administrators (Lupton, 1984), more dominating with students (Hocker, 1986), and administrators more avoiding in their conflict management styles (Wilson & Jerrill, 1981).

The reality of avoiding conflict is an integral component of the ethos of modern management theory.

Although there are various alternatives in dealing with a conflict situation, an administrator who intentionally avoids a conflict, wishing that it will go away, is probably lacking strength of leadership, for ignoring a problem does not solve it (Griffin, 1984, p. 14).

Lupton (1984) mentions a number of schisms in academia, such as faculty grievances against superiors because of inadequate pay raises, lack of being promoted, and lack of respect.

Other evidence, such as the recent sit-ins at Ferris State, Michigan State, and University of Michigan campuses and in South Africa, indicates that students are confronting racial tensions and targeting their demands to administrators who have avoided dealing with their concerns (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1987).

The university president who wishes to perform effectively must be knowledgeable and cognizant of the sources and styles of conflict management (Vogt, 1975). According to Glenny (1975), the key to institutional survival in the next two decades will be the emergence of new administrative conflict management styles to deal effectively with inevitable conflict.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

Historically, the phenomena of conflict have fallen within the domain of the historian, the novelist, the philosopher, and the theologian, and have been treated and investigated in all of the biological and social sciences. Conflicts between nations, political parties, and ideologies have been studied by political scientists; conflicts in the market place have been explored by economists; group conflicts of such diversity as familial, social and social class have been investigated by sociologists, and the struggle for survival by species of differing genetic endowments has been studied by biologists (Nightingale, 1974).

The following is an overview of classical conflict philosophy, social conflict theory strategies and styles, higher education conflict styles, conflict style schema, the two-dimensional model, social conflict escalation, and organizational change and empowerment as each relates to conflict management.

The philosophers Plato and Aristotle did not write a separate treatise on social conflict. Both discussed at length the necessity for order in society. Plato maintained that both in the individual and in the state, justice rests in order.

Aristotle, on the other hand, differed with the Platonic thesis, which called for "extreme unification" or communism, arguing that it was neither

practical nor possible. Although differing with Plato on the form of government, Aristotle shared and sympathized with the Platonic view of a need for order in society and the state.

Plato and Aristotle stressed that the absence of conflict is a *sine-qua-non* for the attainment of the just form of life in the city-state. To them "strife is a sign of imperfection and unhappiness." Order is the essence which makes for a good life and disorder the opposite. Conflict is a threat to the success of the state and should be kept at an absolute minimum, and removed altogether if possible (Sipka, 1969). The conclusion of the classical philosophers was that they ascribed to social conflict a pathological status.

Hegel's philosophical treatise is depicted as a notion of the dialectic, which has evolved throughout the years and obtained different meanings such as:

- (a) arriving at the truth;
- (b) dialogue or dialectics;
- (c) process of ascertaining the unrestricted truth, and
- (d) process of change through the conflict of opposing forces (first doctrine).

To overcome the opposition one is required to reconcile the opposing concepts by coming to a third position (synthesis, or third doctrine). The dialectical method thus affects a synthesis of opposites. The synthesis in turn becomes a new thesis.

The dialectics of Marx and Hegel are quite different. Marx viewed human history as resplendent with conflict between classes, which is the mechanism of change and development. Marx contended that the class struggle (between the "haves" and "have nots") would ultimately result in

a classless society which would be devoid of oppression where human beings would be, for the first time, truly free. This new society would be free from conflict and the individuals would be perfectly reconciled to themselves and their fellows.

Charles Darwin (1809-1822) was a scientist and naturalist who formulated the theory of evolution, which indicated that biological species survive and grow by confronting environmental challenges. Darwin wrote, "All nature is at war, one organism with another, or with external nature. Seeing the contented face of nature, this may at first be well doubted, but reflection will inevitably prove it is true" (Darwin, 1871). These concepts called for a re-investigation of the classical views of the role of social conflict in human development.

Darwin (1871) and his followers (the Social Darwinists) found and recognized the role the environmental conflict plays on human growth, which engendered the advancement and evolution of the doctrine of "the survival of the fittest." Darwin (1871, p.16) stated, "Man has no doubt advanced to his present high condition through a struggle for existence consequent on his rapid multiplication, and if he is to advance still higher it is to be feared that he must remain subject to a severe struggle. Otherwise, he would sink into indolence, and the more gifted men would not be more successful in the battle of life than the less gifted."

Darwin believed that the growth of human beings is a function of their response to conflict with the environment. If conflict were altogether absent, as appears to be the ideal in much of classical philosophy, progress of human beings would be retarded.

The evolutionary emphasis on the essential role of conflict in human development is a hallmark of the nineteenth century. Through Darwin it found its way into virtually all facets of science.

Sociological Philosophical Theory

Georg Simmel is among the classical sociologists who have made significant contributions to the study of conflict theory. Simmel's hypothesis was that "a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy is organically tied up with essential elements that ultimately hold the group together; it cannot be separated from the unity of the sociological structure." Simmel believed that the conflict would therefore be significant for small groups and marital couples.

Similarly, Park (1921) and Burgess (1929) concluded, "Only where there is conflict is behavior conscious and self-conscious; only here are the conditions for rational conflict." And Talcott Parsons (1949) later added to his structural-functional theory a contrasting point of view when he indicated that society is inherently stable, integrated, and functional, and as a result, conflict is viewed to be abnormal and dysfunctional. Sipka (1969) states that Parson's "model is thoroughly an equilibrium model and the dynamics are relegated to the level of 'deviation.' All this stems, perhaps from Parsons' extraordinary, Hobbesian preoccupation with the natural tendency of men to hostility, and the difficulty of controlling them adequately."

During the 1950's a number of theorists arose and presented positions which opposed Parsonian Analysis. Lewis Coser (1956), focused on the productive potential of conflict, had much to do with this renewal of interest. A realistic position is that conflict has productive as

well as destructive potentials (Assael, 1969; Deutsch, 1969; Wilson Jerrell, 1981). The functional and dysfunctional outcomes of conflict in organization are as follows:

Functional Outcomes:

organizational decision making may be improved;
alternative solutions to a problem may be formed;
people may be required to articulate and clarify their positions; conflict may stimulate innovation, creativity and growth, and individual and group performance may be enhanced.

Dysfunctional Outcomes:

conflict may cause stress and job burnout;
communication between employees may be reduced;
a climate of distrust and suspicion can develop;
job satisfaction of performance may be reduced;
resistance to change can increase, and
organizational commitment and loyalty may be affected.

Social Conflict Theory Strategies and Styles

Webster (1983) expressed that the term "conflict" originally meant a fight, struggle, or battle. The significance of the word "conflict" conveys a physical confrontation between parties. The meaning of this term has broadened to include psychological motivation for physical confrontation as well as emotional confrontation (Rubin, Pruitt, Kew, 1994).

One way social psychologists have dealt with the broadening of the meaning of the word "conflict" is to define it more concisely. Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) define conflict as perceived divergence of interest or a

belief that opposing parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. By defining conflict as *perceived* rather than a true divergence of interest, the social psychologists are departing from a tenet of the social sciences.

The rationale for this departure is that perceived divergence of interest is more useful in predicting what people actually will do. This is because perceptions ordinarily have an immediate impact on behavior (that is, in the case of conflict, on the choice of strategies) whereas, reality works more slowly and with less certainty. Social psychologists including Rubin, Pruitt and Kim identify three basic conflict strategies, contending, problem solving (or integrating), and yielding.

Contending, (expressed by Rubin as dominating conflict management strategy) the first of these basic conflict strategies, involves attempts to resolve a conflict with respect to each other's interests. When people deal with conflict by contending, each is trying to do well at the other's expense. The parties involved tend to engage in a set of moves and countermoves that potentially intensify the conflict.

When a party utilizes a strategy of contention, that party maintains its own position and tries to persuade or force others to yield. Various tactics may be used by a party when it selects this style. These tactics include threats and imposing penalties with the understanding that the penalties will be withdrawn if the opposing party concedes. If a party is trying to reach a negotiated settlement of the controversy, contending may also involve persuasive arguments, making demands that far exceed what is actually acceptable, committing itself to an "unalterable" position or imposing deadlines.

The second conflict strategy "problem solving" or "integrating," attempts to clearly identify issues toward a solution that appeals to both sides. When one side employs this strategy, attempts are made to maintain both side's aspirations. There are various tactics which are implemented in this problem-solving approach.

These tactics include risky moves, such as conceding the expectation of receiving a return concession. Tactical maneuvers such as mentioning possible avenues of compromise are talking points and reveal one party's underlying interests. Problem solvers also seek other means to negotiate a possible solution including, hinting possible compromise, sending intermediaries to discuss the issues, communicating through back channels, and using a mediator.

Yielding, the third conflict strategy defined by social psychologists involves lowering the aspirations of the parties involved in conflict. Yielding need not imply total capitulation; it may simply imply having to make some concessions in arriving at an agreement.

Pondy (1967) provided more support for being able to predict the conflict management behavior of subordinates. He declared that it is the imposition of rules which defines relationships with superiors. These theories are viewed as the key in robbing subordinates of any autonomy. The main issues, then, is the high value that organizations placed on control over subordinates.

Musser (1982) examined conflict management styles among subordinates and provided a model for predicting the choice of style by subordinates in high stake conflict. He hypothesized that the preferred choice of managing conflict among subordinated depended upon three decisional variables that they employ: (1) desire to remain, (2) superior /

subordinate congruence, and (3) protection from arbitrary action. Thus, based on these three variables, it was proposed that it was possible to anticipate the subordinate's choice of managing conflict.

If a faculty member does not have a desire to remain in a particular organization, for example, there is a low risk in taking chances; that is, low risk in being competitive. On the other hand, if there is an interest in remaining in the organization, high risk would be involved and one of the non-competitive modes of managing conflict, such as yielding or obliging, would be preferred.

As to which of these three conflict strategies is best, Rubin, Pruitt and Kim (1994) suggest that selecting a single strategy from among the three basic strategies eliminates the possibility of choosing the other two. At times these three strategies may need to be combined. The strategies are somewhat compatible, because each is an alternate means of moving toward the same goal – agreement between conflicting parties.

Rahim (1993) appears to be in agreement with social conflict scholars. It is Rahim's contention that to have effective management of conflict, one's involvement must match the style of conflict resolution with the situation presented. To determine the appropriate form of conflict resolution certain the following criteria should be considered:

1. contribution to the effectiveness of the organization;
2. satisfaction of social needs, and
3. fulfillment of the moral and ethical needs of the organizational member.

Rahim (1993) also reported results from twenty workshops among managers in industry which revealed how the five conflict management styles were effective in certain situations.

Integrating Style

The integrating style was found to be most useful in dealing with variety of complex problems. If a party simply cannot solve the problem (i.e., a synthesis of views needed to come up with a solution to the problem) then, integration should be considered. The integrating style is also quite useful in that the opportunity is available to utilize the skills, information and resources possessed by the various parties to define and re-define the problem. This style engenders an alternative solution and offers an adequate blending of collaborative effort.

The integrating style was also less effective in certain situations. For example, it is inappropriate when the task or problem is simple or trivial. When there is not time for problem-solving, immediate action is required. There is also the problem that one party may not have sufficient training or sufficient experience to problem-solve.

Obliging Style

The obliging conflict management style is very useful when a party is not familiar with the issues, or the other party is correct in their stance and it appears to be quite important for the other party to win. The appropriateness of this style is most useful when a party is willing to give-up something with the hope of obtaining some reward or benefit. This style is also appropriate when a party is dealing from a strategic position of weakness. The incentive to oblige or concede is motivated by a desire to preserve the relationship.

The obliging style is inappropriate when a party is dealing from a strategies position of weakness. The incentive to oblige or concede is motivated by a desire to preserve the relationship. This style is also inappropriate if a party believes they are right, and the issues in a conflict are important. Obliging is also inappropriate to use when a party appears to be convinced that the other party is wrong, or acting unethically.

Dominating Style

The dominating conflict management style is considered most useful when the issues in a conflict are important to a party. It is also significant to use this style when an unfavorable decision by the other party may be harmful or damaging to this other party. The utilization of this style by a supervisor becomes pragmatic when the issues are rather routine and some speedy decision is required. A supervisor may be compelled to use this style when subordinates are especially assertive, or do not have the experience or expertise to make technical decisions.

The dominating style is inappropriate when facing some complex issues. There may be very little time to make a good decision. When two parties of equal power use this style, a stalemate may result. It is only by changing the style of conflict that such a stalemate may resolve.

Avoiding Style

The avoiding style is of conflict management may be useful in presenting a negative result in an open confrontation. If one party views the potential dysfunctional effects of the confrontation, then that party may decide it is best to avoid the confrontation.

This style is useful when dealing with some minor issues and problems which may require a "cooling off" period. The leveling off period may provide useful preparation time for dealing with more complex problems.

The avoiding conflict management style is inappropriate when the conflict issues are deemed important to a party. The style is also considered inappropriate when it is the responsibility of the party to make straight-forward decisions and the parties are unwilling to stall or wait. It is also inappropriate to use this style when prompt action is needed.

Compromising Style

The compromising conflict management style is utilized when two parties which are equally powerful have become "gridlocked." The two parties cannot reach a consensus, and some kind of tentative solution to a more complex-compound problem is demanded. The other conflict management styles may have been employed, but were ineffective with the issues. The compromising style may also be useful to avoid a prolonged conflict. This style, however, seems to be inappropriate in dealing with issues of a complex-mature nature.

Too often, management practitioners often resort to compromise in dealing with complex problems. The result of misusing this style has led to ineffective long-term solutions. Compromising style may also be inappropriate if a party is more powerful than another and has a strong conviction that they are right. This style has also proved inappropriate when dealing with conflicts involving values.

The strategies or conflict styles purviewed are supportive of the contingency theory of conflict management. There is consistency and

support to theories of leadership in organizations including, Fieldler's contingency theory of leadership (1967), House's path-goal theory of leadership (1971), and Vroom and Yetton's normative theory of leadership (1973). According to these various theories of leadership, there is no best style for dealing with different situations effectively. Whether a particular leadership style is appropriate or inappropriate depends on the situation.

Higher Education Conflict Styles

According to Yates (1985), an emerging problem in higher education is for students, faculty, and administrators to identify their conflict management style. Educational conflicts are reported in direct reference to conflict between students, between students and faculty, and between faculty and administrators, which is often an extension of conflicts that have existed in society (Mudd, 1967).

Hocker (1986) refers to an incident when a professor reported that a graduate student submitted an unsatisfactory plan for his thesis research. The professor indicated in the report the following dialogue:

Student: So what do you want me to do to make it
 acceptable?

Professor: If you don't know by now, I don't know why
 we are having this meeting. Produce a
 valid and reliable design and then I'll see
 if it's okay.

This graduate student and professor were using two different styles for their conflict, styles which were learned as rational (if not desirable) for that situation (Shuetz, 1975). Conflict styles are not an inherent part of

personality; instead, they are learned as people encounter life experiences which put them into conflict. Rahim (1986) maintains that the management of personal conflict involves enabling the members of an organization to learn the five styles of handling conflict. Thus, the purpose of analyzing one's conflict management style is not to discover underlying personality dynamics, but to gain information about what one's repertoire of styles contains.

In the college community, there are a number of issues with respect to civil disputes, student and faculty interpersonal conflicts, dormitory problems, fraternity concerns, and conflicts ranging from racial to sexual tension (Rifkin, 1980). Kerr (1973) indicates that among the strains and tensions in higher education, the following are included:

1. a desire on the part of students for more influence outside their sphere of control of extracurricular activities;
2. a tendency for students to become hostile as they make their choices of academic and vocational specialization, while faculty are becoming less adaptable with higher average age and higher percentage of tenure;
3. a desire on the part of the faculty to be more sympathetic to collective bargaining and unionization;
4. a desire on the part of some faculty members to insist on divergent views about essential academic matters;
5. a desire on the part of women and members of ethnic minorities to break into and move up within faculty ranks on a large scale at a time of declining opportunities, and
6. a desire on the part of younger faculty to work and face the increasing numbers of middle and older faculty.

Griffin (1984) maintains that conflict situations are a fact of life, and must be contended with in a positive and realistic manner. Administrators who adopt an avoidance style consistently will aggravate, and jeopardize students and faculty alike. For example, a seeming inability to manage conflict successfully led to sit-ins at the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, and Michigan State University. This situation is the product of racial tension and lack of equity in faculty employment (*The Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 1989).

From another perspective, Marx and Schulze (1991) studied interpersonal problem solving among depressed and non-depressed college students. The study supported the hypothesis that depressed students have been less effective in handling conflict situations than non-depressed students. The authors suggest that training in problem solving may be useful to counteract the negative problem solving orientation among depressed college students.

It appears that communication is central to both the development and resolution of conflict (Hoche and Wilmot, 1985). These authors seem to suggest that basic study in the resolution of conflict among college students can be a most effective means for educational discussion of how to best handle conflict and to prevent violence of any kind.

While management of conflict has been considered as the pivotal basis of success in administration, there are few studies which have focused on conflict management in higher education. The literature documents that, in essence, there are a number of conflict-producing issues resulting from economic conditions, changing demographics, and skepticism about the value of higher education (Alm, Ehrle & Webster,

1977; Bailey, 1983; Behrens, 1972; Cheit, 1971; Jelleman, 1972). Bower (1986) has indicated that as an organizational management tool conflict management styles are considered crucial in higher education, but often overlooked.

Conflict Management Styles Schema

Blake and Mouton (1964) first presented a schema for classifying the styles for handling interpersonal conflict, which includes: forcing; withdrawing; smoothing; compromising; and problem solving. Their description conveys the five modes for handling conflict on the ground of attitude of the manager.

They believed that the goals of production and a concern for human relations were not incongruent. Instead they proposed that managers could be taught to identify different styles of management and the context in which those styles were appropriate. They defined a continuum from "concern for production" to "concern for people." The grid measured the two concerns on the horizontal (production) and vertical (people) axes and was divided into nine possible positions or combinations of those two concerns.

The extremes ranged from total concern for production with no concern for people and vice-versa to the 9/9 position in which the manager is able to maximize both production and human relations. Blake and Mouton concentrated on five positions on the grid, each of which represented a major management theory, although they admitted that there were many other positions. It is important to state that in each of the theories, some conflict is considered by the authors to be one of the important management functions.

Position 1/1 on the grid represents a minimal amount of concern for both production and people to get the job done. A manager who uses the 9/1 style is most concerned with the efficiency of the operation and with arranging the working conditions so that human elements interfere as little as possible. The 1/9 position reflects the opposite concern; the emphasis on creating the most comfortable and happy atmosphere for the workers. The 5/5 marks a compromising position, stemming more from a concern for the sake of appearance than from a committed concern for either end of the scale; it is a balancing act to achieve adequate organizational performance by getting work out and maintaining satisfactory morale. The ideal position, 9/9, is based on the idea that "work accomplishment is from committed people; interdependence through a 'common stake' in organizational purpose leads to relationship of trust and respect" (Blake and Mouton, 1964).

Conflict, for Blake and Mouton, was one of the most important elements of management. In their description of each major position on the grid and the personality associated with it, the authors devoted a section to the predictable method of managing conflict. Their assumption is that conflict is positive, and that it promotes innovation, creativity, and the development of new ideas that enhance organizational growth.

Two-Dimensional Model

The two-dimensional model or dual concern schema was originally developed as a theory of individual differences in conflict style (see Figure 1) (Blake and Norton 1964; Filley, 1975; Rahim, 1983; Rahim and Bonoma 1979; and Thomas 1976). Conflict style is the way a person most commonly and precisely deals with conflict (Pruitt and Carnevale,

1993). The two-dimensional model indicates that the conflict style or strategy is determined by the strengths of two variables, concern for self outcomes, and concern for other outcomes. The results of this model has led to two lines of research.

The first track of research traditionally was to perform a multi-dimensional scaling analysis on a party's self-report about the methods it utilizes in dealing with conflict (Van de Vhert, 1990; Van de Vhert and Prein, 1989). The findings of these scholars have indicated with significant consistency the predictions of the two-dimensional model.

The model depicts that the greatest distance lies between dominating and obliging, and between obliging and integration, or problem solving. There appears to be a discrepancy in that yielding and avoiding, or as Rahim (1993) would denote, accommodation and avoiding, are closer to each other than the model predicts.

The second track of research tradition emerges from organizational settings, focuses on the development of instruments to measure a party's distinctive preferences for various conflict styles such as: problem solving; contending; yielding; avoiding; and compromising (Hall 1969; Kilmann and Thomas, 1977; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; and Rahim, 1983).

These various instruments have been utilized across various studies. They have been used to show the relationship between personality characteristics, and conflict styles (Kabriniff, 1987). Musser (1982) studied the impact of status differences on conflict styles (Putnam and Poole, 1987; Rahim, 1986).

Rahim (1986) found that managers use different styles for handling interpersonal conflict with superiors and subordinates. A study which further illustrates this differentiation was done by Steinherz and Dobson in

1987. College students were asked to describe recent interpersonal conflict situations with the same sex peer, opposite sex peer, and a parent. After completing their descriptions, the survey participant rated the extent to which each of the several styles of conflict resolution was characteristic of their own style. The subjects demonstrated strong preferences for certain styles of conflict resolution, but they also demonstrated strong consistency in their styles across different interpersonal conflicts.

The management of conflict will also require anticipation of different positions taken in the conflict, dispersal of conflict over a period of time and place in order that conflicts do not ignite and inflame each other, agreement in advance of the game, and incorporation of all significant groups into a political process so that each may have a part in a peaceful, constructive conflict management. Conflict, if allowed to escalate, can become much more intense (Kerr, 1973).

Social Conflict Escalation

The escalation of conflict is indicated by Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) to indicate results from a vicious cycle of action and reaction. They refer to this as Spiral Model of Escalation. Much research on aggression (Baron, 1977; Berkowitz, 1993; Green, 1990) has been interpreted with sources and outcomes of anger.

According to Meyer (1994) this escalation of conflict has produced a vicious cycle of violence throughout the United States and the rest of the world. It appears that a growing number of people are afraid and that fear leaves them feeling helpless. They feel there is little that can be done to change their situation.

The current dilemma has created a demand among college students for more coursework in conflict management. It appears that education and training will fill the dire need for change in society and in the cultural milieu of the university.

Sometimes fear results from other's harsh actions, threats and defensiveness (Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim, 1994). Threats to a party's image, the notion of "how it looks" for this party as an administrator is an important source of escalation. Escalation of conflict is particularly likely when a party's image of power, status, forcefulness, adequacy, autonomy, loyalty or integrity is threatened.

Organizational Change / Empowerment

Today, across the spectrum of management in organizations is the concept of high involvement or empowerment. Bylan (1993) has described empowerment as a source of energy that drives continuous improvement behavior in critical areas such as quantity, quality, and customer service, or cycle time reduction. It becomes imperative in the diagnosis of an organization to assess the ability to change its culture. The initial step is to start with the administrators of the organization. The questions include: Do they live their values?; Are they too forward on the bottom line to make decisions to increase student satisfaction and loyalty?; Do they act as a team with other administrators, or is team work something they expect from other lower levels?

Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) have suggested that in handling interpersonal conflict, the importance of interest produces high, moral aspirations, which is the same thing as having a strong concern for a party's outcome. Interest in the outcomes of conflict may result

in the ability of administrators, faculty members, and students to align and bring about some high involvement in the cultural arena of the university.

Integrative and Distributive Dimensions of the Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict

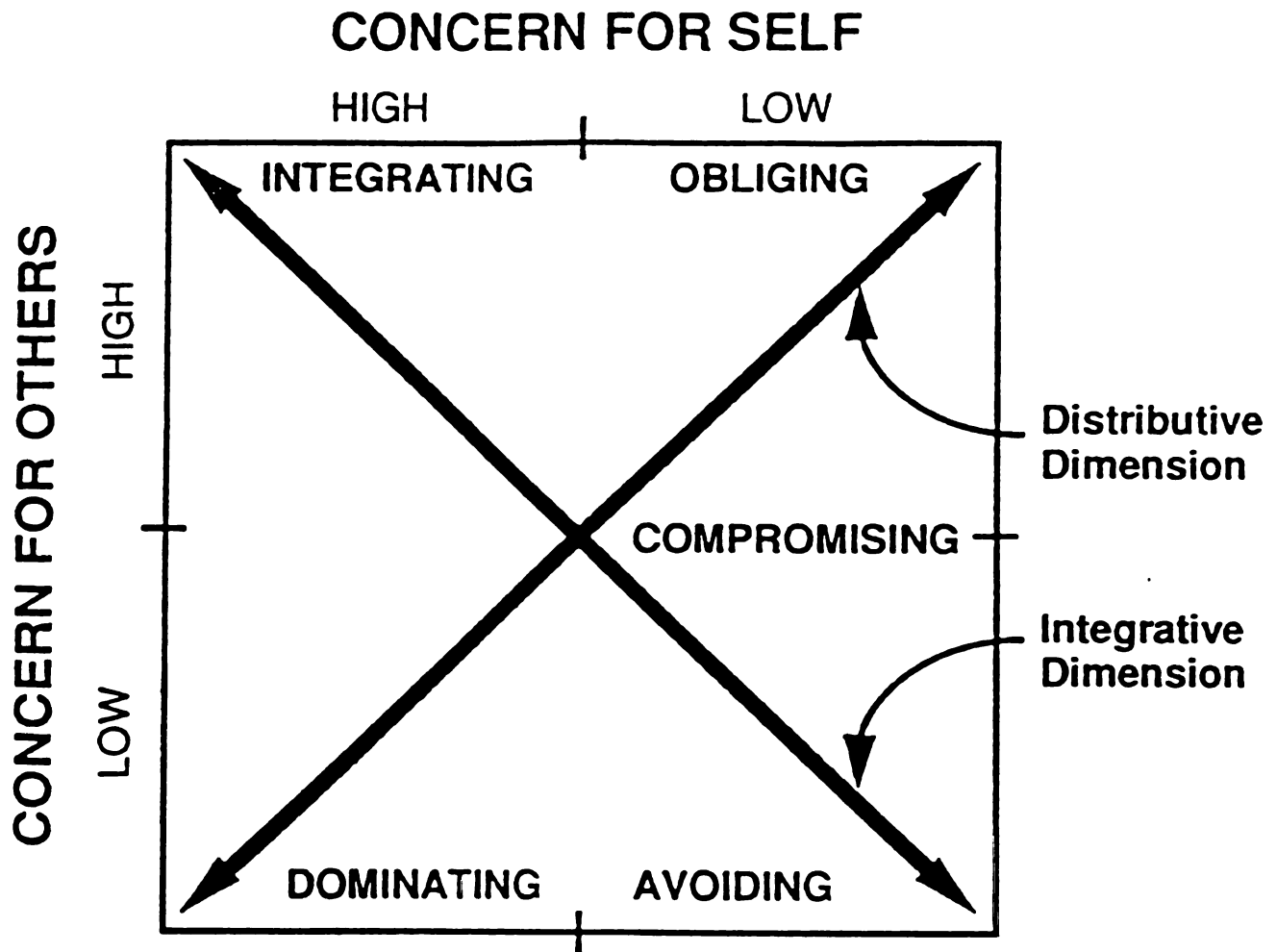


Figure 1:

A two-dimensional model of styles of handling interpersonal conflict

(Rahim and Bonoma, 1979).

Conclusion

Summarily, conflict has historically permeated into various disciplines and had an impact upon higher education. As Wilson Jerrell, one of few experts in conflict and conflict management in higher education states, "Conflict is often the process for evaluating and restructuring roles and prescribed behavior systems – it is like a lubricant. Thus they concluded that it could be a means to enrich and improve productivity" (1981).

Chapter III

Methodology

This study was descriptive and comparative and used a survey research design. The study included an on-site or phone interview of the subjects. Conflict management styles were identified between graduate students, faculty members, and administrators in higher education. This chapter describes the Population, Sample, Procedure, Instrumentation, and Data Analysis.

Population

The population for this study was graduate students, faculty members, and administrators at Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University, and Vanderbilt University. The population consisted of graduate students, faculty members, and administrators. The total number of respondents was 137.

Sample

The sample methodology consisted in recruiting volunteers to participate in the survey. This convenient sample solicited graduate students, faculty members, and administrators to complete the questionnaire and participate in an interview. The sample of volunteers was recruited from Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University and Vanderbilt University.

Procedure

Administrators and faculty members were recruited by personal visitation, appointments, and referrals. The names and locations were obtained from on-site visits, and university directories.

Graduate assistants were solicited to help in recruiting graduate students to complete the questionnaire. Permission of the faculty was requested to allow time for students to engage in this study and complete the instrument during or after classes.

Graduate students were recruited at various student unions and received personal invitation to participate in the research survey. Appointments were made and interviews conducted on a one:one or phone interview.

Each participant received a transmittal letter with the ROCI-II (see Appendix B), describing the purpose of the study and instruction on how to complete the questionnaire. The letter contained a permission clause and a statement declaring the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality.

All participating graduate students, faculty members or administrators wishing to mail back their survey were given a self-addressed stamped envelope to facilitate that procedure. The date by which all data was to be completed and returned was September 30, 1994.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used was the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II, Form A, B, & C (Rahim, 1983). ROCI-II was developed to identify the styles of handling interpersonal conflict with a superior (Form A), with subordinates (Form B), and with peers (Form C).

The final instrument contained 35 items, and was sent to 4000 executives randomly selected from the Denton/IPC list of 1.3 million management organizational members: Form A, handling conflict with a superior; Form B, handling conflict with a subordinate; and Form C, handling conflict with peers.

The instrument was mailed out together with a letter explaining the purpose of the study, and a demographic questionnaire; 1219 usable responses were returned. The responses were factor analyzed using principal factoring iteration and varimax rotation. The final instrument was reduced to 28 items (Appendix C). Test-retest reliability was completed with 119 part-time MBA and undergraduate students from Youngstown State University who took the test twice within each week. The reliability scores ranged between .60 and .82 ($p < .001$) (Rahim, 1983).

Reliability of the instrument was further tested using the Cronbach alpha, the Spearman-Brown reliability, Guttman Lambda, and Kristof's unbiased estimate of reliability. The internal reliability estimates were satisfactory. The coefficient alphas ranged from .72 to .77. These results were quite high when compared to the Cronbach alpha for the instruments developed by Hall, which ranged between .39 and .73; Lawrence-Lorsch between .37 and .59; and Thomas-Kilman, between .43 and .71.

Content Validity

Nunnally (1978) submits two major standards for safeguarding that test items adequately represent the sampling domain, namely item representativeness and sensible test construction. The items that compose the five conflict style subscales appear to be representative of the constructs they aim to assess. Rahim's approach appears to be

selective in item choice, careful and methodical. Additionally, the items are worded in a manner that facilitates ease in understanding and completing the questionnaire.

Construct Validity

Evidence indicates that a Rahim's measure of conflict styles is related to similar and communication-related theoretical constructs (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Specifically, there were significant positive relationships found between dominating scores and respondents' self-reports of engaging in assertive behavior (Richardson & Hancock, 1987. Young (1984), correlating 253 respondents' scores on the ROCI-II with their scores on the Rhetsen Scale (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980), observed that dominating is negatively related to rhetorical reflectiveness (concern for others' wishes) and positively related to noble-self (concern for one's own wishes) scores. Thus individuals who select a dominating style for handling conflicts show high tolerance for conflict, self-reports of assertiveness, and concern for self in interactions.

For the avoiding style, Richardson and Hancock (1987) found a significant negative relationship between avoiding and comfort with self-assertion, while Hodges (1987) found negative relationships between tolerance for conflict and both avoiding and obliging. In a similar fashion, passive, indirect orientations to conflict were positively related to rhetorical reflectiveness.

For the integrating style Young (1984) observed, counter to her hypothesis, that integrating was significantly negatively related to rhetorical sensitivity and positively related to a noble-self orientation. Also, a problem-solving style (represented by combining integrating and

compromising) correlated positively—respondents' self-reports of engaging in assertive behavior and their tendencies to empathize with others (Richardson & Hancock, 1987). Therefore, integrating seems to parallel dominating in conflict situations of frequent self-assertion. The two constructs differ in that integrators exhibit a high degree of empathy that is not characteristic of dominating style.

As a whole, these students presented convincing evidence that Rahim's five conflict styles were linked to other relevant constructs in the conflict domain.

Interview

An interview was conducted as a second phase to the study. The purpose of these individual interviews was to elicit responses from the groups on self-perceptions on conflict management style.

The questions were:

1. What is your present manner in handling of a conflict situation?
2. How do you believe others perceive your present manner in handling a conflict situation?
3. What is your preference in handling a conflict situation?

These interviewed persons selected from among five conflict management styles and discussed why they made the selection. The styles offered were:

(1) Dominating; (2) Compromising; (3) Avoiding; (4) Integrating; and, (5) Obliging.

Data Selection

Data was entered for a one-way analysis of variance for each style, to test the hypothesis. The interviews were studied from a *Gestalt* approach.

The interviews were examined as a whole. Further study of these interviews indicated individual and idiosyncratic differences among the groups surveyed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify and compare the differences in conflict management styles among administrators, faculty members and graduate students. A one-way analysis of variance was presented in order to identify the differences in conflict management styles among the three groups. The various styles were integrating, obliging, avoiding, compromising and dominating. Each style was presented and analyzed for differences among the three groups in relationship to superior, subordinates and peers.

This chapter presents the research questions, tables and discussion. There is an analysis of the interview process as it relates to the research question. This chapter is divided by presenting the significant results and discussion first. The following section presents the results that were not significant at the $< .05$ level. In the last section the second research question is stated and followed by a discussion of the results.

Research Question I

Is there a significant difference between graduate students, faculty members and administrators with respect to conflict management styles?

Sub-Research Question A

Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of integrating among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?

Table 1

Measurement of Integrating Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Superiors
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	18	4.14	.30	.04
Faculty (2)	53	4.23	.51	
Students (3)	43	3.99	.43	

*Group 2 was significantly different from group 3.

Table 1 presents a one-way analysis of variance of the integrating conflict management style among administrators, faculty members and students. A significant main effect was obtained among the three groups.

The integrating conflict management style was greater among faculty members than the other two groups when relating to superiors at a <.05 level of significance.

Interview Analysis

The research included some thirty interview from among administrators, faculty members, and students. The research also included an interview survey from among administrators, faculty members, and students. Herein are presented some excerpts with verbatim questions and answers. There is an analysis drawn from those interviewed as well .

For example, administrators indicated an interest in wanting to be perceived in a positive way and maintain a favorable image. In one particular interview with a female Vice President of Financial Management and a former manager in industry, the statement was made, "I feel everyone has an opinion—we need to talk them out of it. They'll need to give in or give up. My perception is that I have an integrative conflict management style." It appears that administrators tend to want to be perceived as integrating and compromising. However the comments generated from faculty is that they tend to be dominant and controlling. By contrast, faculty appear to be integrating and compromising on the one hand, but express having no recourse but to be obliging to administrators. One administrator when asked "How do others perceive your present manner in handling a conflict?", the answer was, "It would have to be domineering." Why? The answer: "I am just perceived that way."

Sub-Research Question B

Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of compromising among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?

Table 2
Measurement of Compromising Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Superiors
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	19	3.82	.44	.04
Faculty (2)	54	3.98	.59	
Students (3)	43	3.67	.56	

*Group 3 was significantly different from group 2.

Table 2 presents the one way analysis of variance of the compromising conflict management style among administrators, faculty members, and students. A significant main effect was obtained.

The compromising conflict management style was greater among Faculty than the other two groups when relating to superiors at < .05 level of significance.

Interview Analysis

Among those who were interviewed there appears to be a difference based on perception. The first interview question, "Is there a difference in the conflict management styles of faculty members and administrators as indicated by the interviews?" was applied to the interviews conducted. It appears that there was a difference with respect

to conflict management styles between faculty members and administrators.

For example, administrators indicated an interest in wanting to be perceived in a positive way and maintain a favorable image. In one particular interview with a female Vice President of Financial Management and a former manager in industry, the statement was made, "I feel everyone has an opinion—we need to talk them out of it. They'll need to give in or give up. My perception is that I have an integrative conflict management style."

In another interview conducted with a physics professor and chair, the professor described the style in these terms: "I generally tend to be extremely assertive—domineering." Why? "I wouldn't have survived in a field dominated by men. I started out in engineering. I had to be assertive as a manager." But compromising is the key to get what you want without creating enemies. It was asked, "Are you saying that you prefer to be compromising?" "My chair has told me, 'You're aggressive.' I wish I were a little more flexible. But I don't think others need to see me as a pal. I see people afraid to be disliked. They feel that it won't be a popular thing to do this or that. It's not that important to be a pal. Why not?"

"I learned in a sorority. I came up in the fifties. I wasn't very assertive. My roommate would ask, 'What do you want to do tonight?' I answered, 'Let's do this...' She would say okay. The next day, I would come around and she would ask again, 'Where would you like to go tonight?' I would answer, 'Let's go here, to this place.' The answer would come back, 'Okay.' The next few days would be very similar, except this one okay, my roommate became withdrawn and isolated. I asked, 'What

is wrong?' 'I'm sick and tired of doing what others want me to do, and not what I want to do.' I told my friend, 'If you wanted to do something different, why didn't you say so?' I'm accused of not including others."

It appears that so much depends on human perception and that is impacting administrator and faculty relations. It was asked how others perceived her conflict management style. The professor answered, "Some see me as domineering and yet others see me as compromising. I'm stuck between the two. I have to be firm in the final analysis."

It appears that perception again plays a major role in making decisions about who is in control and who is subservient. The sense of power and need for self-esteem are the basic goals which can enhance and inspire people in leadership roles, teaching roles or learning roles.

In another interview, a University Chancellor stated, "I would try to listen to the problem and look at the policy and see how we could meet a happy medium—deal with the hostility..." How would others perceive your most likely manner of handling a conflict?

"Because I like to communicate with an individual about their conflicts or problems, they, I believe, often perceive me as dominating. I come across as dominating with people who don't know me." There is an element of the "incognito" leader. Faculty members too often are unknown to each other in the great maze of the university activity. This is another important aspect to conflict management productivity. If the team doesn't know the coach, can the team win the game?

Faculty members appeared to be more conciliatory, more obliging. In several interviews, faculty members expressed a sense of low power and thus feeling a need to be obliging to administration. The statement: "I prefer obliging – what else can you do? I also like integrating – I like to see both sides."

It is therefore evident that although faculty members have been shown to be more integrative and compromising. There is also the additional aspect as brought out in the interviews that they often feel powerless and become obliging to their superiors.

Interestingly, one professor who had become a chair felt a need to be dominant. Administrators are often perceived as being dominant in their conflict management style by faculty members. Faculty members who become administrators may have a tendency to change their conflict management style. It seems that a change of jobs within a university setting may produce a change of conflict management style as well.

Sub-Research Question C

Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of avoidance among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?

Table 3
Measurement of Avoiding Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Subordinates
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	16	2.97	.66	.03
Faculty (2)	46	2.81	.85	
Students (3)	36	3.27	.68	

*Group 3 was significantly different from group 2.

Table 3 presents the one-way analysis of variance of avoiding conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students when relating to subordinates.

It appears that the avoidance conflict management style was greater among students than the other two groups at .05 level of significance.

Interview Analysis

The sub-research question was applied to the interviews.

Is there a difference in the conflict management styles between faculty and students? Both faculty and students appeared to express similarities of opinion when it came to their particular conflict management styles. One faculty member stated, "I'm a student of Ghandian Conflict Resolution. Truth seeking is not win/lose, it is to see things new and liberating."

In a similar sense a student expressed a preference to be integrative: "I like the idea of not having to give up anything in reaching a solution to a problem."

Another faculty member was asked about the most likely manner in handling a conflict. The answer was "Compromising." "It's a give and take. You have to respect the ideas of others. Listen to others—reach common ground." Similarly, other faculty members expressed compromise as a preferential conflict management style. One student, with not much experience, simply stated, "Working in a research project involving other people has given me the impression that I'm compromising."

As a student, what would your preference or ideal conflict style be in handling a conflict? Answer: "I think that the best way is to work out a compromise."

Students and faculty members appear to be quite similar from the interviews conducted. It seems that both want to be integrative and compromising in order to achieve their goals or pursuits for an education or tenure. The significant difference is that the avoidance mode was depicted to be highest among the students. In the sense that this avoidance prevails, it may prove to be ineffective and destructive in future conflict situations.

The avoidance style is useful, but if pervasive may curtail the enhancement of interpersonal relationships.

Sub-Research Question D

Is there a significant difference in the conflict management style of obliging among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?

Table 4

**Measurement of Obliging Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Superiors
One-Way Analysis of Variance**

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	19	3.52	.61	.02
Faculty (2)	53	3.48	.71	
Students (3)	43	3.85	.53	

***Group 2 was significantly different from group 3.**

Table 4 presents the one-way analysis of variance of the obliging conflict management style among administrators, faculty members and students when relating to superiors. A significant main effect was obtained among the three groups.

The obliging style was greater among students than the other two groups at <.05 level of significance.

Interview Analysis

In the third research question applied to the interviews conducted, the question was, "Is there a difference in the conflict management styles among students and administrators?"

There appear to be more obliging-compromising inferences drawn from the student population than administrators.

Student comments were stated: "If you're able to work out a solution, why be dominating?" Administrators appear to desire to maintain a positive image and seek out problem-solving, but in the final analysis, "We have to maintain the policy of the institution."

Students appear to be more obliging than administrators. There appears to be some influence in the kind of conflict style one chooses with status. It inevitably resides with the individual and the conflict situation as to which style will be most effective.

The literature had suggested that students were more dominant and administrators more avoidance. In this research, the obliging-avoidance style seems to be utilized by students.

Sub-Research Question F

Is there a significant difference in gender with respect to conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members and administrators in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers?

Table 5

**Differences in Avoiding Style Due to Main Effects
of Sex, Group, and Interaction Effects of Sex
and Group Across All Targeted Groups:
Two-way Analysis of Variance**

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
SEX			.19
Females	182	3.13	
Males	122	2.99	
GROUP			.001
Administrators	50	2.90	
Faculty	155	2.96	
Students	99	3.34	
TWO-WAY INTERACTIONS			.001
Sex & Group			

*Significant group effect and significant interaction effect for sex and group.

An ANOVA was performed, and there was a main effect among male and female. An interactive effect was also found. It appears that

females had a greater use of the avoiding conflict management style than males.

There was an interactive effect with regard to gender among the three at the $<.05$ level of significance among the groups when relating to superiors. Further research is encouraged.

Additional Tables

The following tables denote results which were found to not be significant at the .05 level.

Table 6

Measurement of Dominating Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Superiors
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	19	3.37	.65	.76
Faculty (2)	53	3.24	.79	
Students (3)	43	3.21	.78	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 6 presents the one-way analysis of variance of the dominating conflict management style among administrators, faculty members and students when relating to superiors.

There was no significant difference among the three groups when relating to superiors at a .05 level of significance.

Table 7
Measurement of Avoiding Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Superiors
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	18	3.01	.78	.01
Faculty (2)	53	2.98	.84	
Students (3)	43	3.45	.61	

*Group 3 was significantly different from group 2.

Table 7 presents the one-way analysis of variance of avoiding conflict management style among administrators, faculty members, and students when relating to superiors.

The avoiding conflict management style was greater among students than faculty at < .05 level of significance.

Table 8
Measurement of Integrating Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Subordinates
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	15	4.19	.30	.12
Faculty (2)	46	4.30	.45	
Students (3)	36	4.12	.33	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 8 presents the one way analysis of variance of the integrating conflict management style among administrators, faculty members and students.

There was no significant difference among the groups when relating to subordinates at the .05 level of significance.

Table 9
Measurement of Obliging Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Subordinates
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	16	3.52	.42	.09
Faculty (2)	46	3.29	.60	
Students (3)	36	3.53	.44	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 9 presents the one-way analysis of variance of obliging conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students.

There appears to be no significant difference among the three groups at a .05 level of significance when relating to subordinates.

Table 10
Measurement of Dominating Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Subordinates
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	15	3.21	.55	.90
Faculty (2)	46	3.31	.76	
Students (3)	36	3.29	.79	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 10 presents the one-way analysis of variance of dominating conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students when relating to subordinates.

There appears to be no significant difference among the three groups at a .05 level of significance.

Table 11
Measurement of Compromising Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Subordinates
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	16	3.95	.33	.68
Faculty (2)	46	3.92	.62	
Students (3)	36	3.84	.39	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 11 presents the one-way analysis of variance of compromising conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students when relating to subordinates.

There was no significant difference among the three groups at the .05 level of significance.

Table 12
Measurement of Integrating Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Peers
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	18	4.21	.46	.34
Faculty (2)	59	4.32	.52	
Students (3)	40	4.18	.43	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 12 presents the one-way analysis of variance of integrating conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students when relating to peers.

There was no significant difference among the three groups at the .05 level of significance.

Table 13
Measurement of Obliging Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Peers
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	19	3.26	.42	.12
Faculty (2)	59	3.38	.62	
Students (3)	40	3.56	.51	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 13 presents the one-way analysis of variance of obliging conflict management style.

There was no significant difference among the three groups when relating to peers at the .05 level of significance.

Table 14
Measurement of Dominating Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Peers
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	18	3.32	.47	.82
Faculty (2)	59	3.19	.78	
Students (3)	40	3.22	.86	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 14 presents the one-way analysis of variance among administrators, faculty members and students when relating to peers.

There appears to be no significant difference among the three groups at the .05 level.

Table 15
Measurement of Avoiding Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Peers
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	18	2.81	.83	.37
Faculty (2)	59	3.06	.80	
Students (3)	38	3.14	.87	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 15 presents a one-way analysis of variance of avoiding conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students when relating to peers.

There appears to be no significant difference among the three groups at the .05 level.

Table 16
Measurement of Compromising Style of Administrators,
Faculty and Students when Relating to Peers
One-Way Analysis of Variance

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>*Sig. Level</u>
Administrators (1)	18	3.94	.39	.15
Faculty (2)	59	4.06	.55	
Students (3)	40	3.87	.42	

*No two groups are significantly different at the .05 level.

Table 16 presents the one-way analysis of variance of compromising conflict management style of administrators, faculty members and students when relating to peers.

There appears to be no significant difference among the three groups at the .05 level of significance.

Research Question II

Is there a difference in self perception, others perception or ideal preference of conflict management styles among graduate students, faculty members and administrators. The three questions which were asked in the interviews are:

- (1) What is your most present manner in handling a conflict?

- (2) What do others perceive your most present manner in handling a conflict?
- (3) What is your idea manner or preference in handle a conflict situation?

Administrators as a whole perceived themselves in a positive manner whether or not in conflict with superiors, subordinates or peers. It seems that the impression conveyed in dealing with conflict was crucial to their status and authority. Administrators felt that they were compromising and integrating in their approach with faculty disputes. It appeared from the interview that the impression or image was upper most in administrative minds. When queried about what others thought about their conflict management style, comments were often made conveyed of dominance. But as the administrators stipulated, it is a misperception. If faculty members actually knew them better, their opinion would be different. Faculty members had a dual attitude towards conflict management style. It appeared that with students, they would be willing to set down the rules and procedures for course requirements and plan accordingly. If matters got conflicting, dominance would be used to settle the issues. It was the opposite effect when dealing with administration. The faculty to often felt a sense of needing to oblige or give into the desires of administration. Faculty members thought of themselves as being powerless in many of the situations that evolved. It was further elaborated that in many instances compromise was the idea style for handling most of the disputes.

In summary, one's self-perception of conflict management styles, perception by others of one's conflict management style and one's ideal preference for conflict management are quite dissimilar. The dissimilarity

of perceptions has an impact on conflict management style in interpersonal relationships.

The most evident conclusion is that there is some data that would indicate a need to clarify interpersonal misperceptions. When the conflict management styles of administrators decry a need to "look good," and are too often perceived as "aloof" or "dominating," there is a problem.

It appears that at some point a further analysis is required to clarify certain misperceptions and induce further communication and conflict management among those in turmoil. The concept of perception and conflict management styles is encouraged to be a basis for further research.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Treatment, Strengths and Limitations of the Study, Future Directions, Recommendations, Conclusion

Summary

The researcher's purpose in this study was to identify and compare the differences, if any, that exist among administrators, faculty members, and graduate students with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II, Forms A, B, and C. Form A identified any differences in conflict management style in relationship to superiors. Form B identified any conflict management style in relationship to subordinates. Form C identified any conflict management style differences in relationship to peers.

The following hypotheses were presented for this research. Hypothesis I stated that there would be differences in conflict management style among administrators, faculty members and graduate students. Hypothesis II stated that there would be a difference with respect to conflict management style between students and faculty members. Hypothesis III stated that there would be a difference between faculty members, administrators and graduate students with respect to conflict management style in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers. Hypothesis IV stated that there would be a difference among male and female among administrators, faculty members and students with

respect to conflict management styles in relationship to superiors, subordinates, and peers.

Treatment

The subjects for this research were drawn from Tennessee State University, Western Kentucky University, and Vanderbilt University. This was a convenient sample and volunteers were invited to participate in completing the self-report inventory. An additional interview was conducted with a sub sample of the population. There were 137 cases which were tested with a one-way analysis of variance.

Sub Hypothesis A was supported. There were differences among the three groups with respect to conflict management styles. Hypothesis B was also supported. There were significant differences between faculty members and graduate students. Faculty members had a greater use of the integrating conflict management style than students when relating to superiors.

It appears that graduate students were more obliging in their conflict management style than faculty members when relating to superiors. It was also found that graduate students were additionally more avoiding in their conflict management style than faculty members when relating to superiors. The compromising conflict management style was used more among faculty members than graduate students when relating to superiors.

Additionally, Hypothesis C was supported. There was significant difference in conflict management styles between administrators, faculty members, in relationship to superiors, subordinates and peers.

Hypothesis D was supported. There were significant differences between administrators and students in conflict management style in relationship to superiors, subordinates, and peers. Hypothesis E was also supported. There appears to be a significant main effect by sex and group.

It appears that females were more avoiding in their conflict management style than males. It also appears that this interactive effect was greater among the graduate student group.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The researcher was able to conduct and complete this survey with several strengths and limitations. The positive results included:

1. the utilization of a highly respected, valid and reliable conflict management instrument, The Rahim Organization Inventory, II;
2. this was original research. This was the first time that this kind of research was ever conducted. The research will generate further studies and new research;
3. there was formal statistical significant differences among the six sub-hypotheses, and
4. the more subjective interview research engendered additional insights and support to the ANOVA results.

The limited results of the study revealed that:

1. this was not cause/effect research. This was survey research;

2. this research allowed the researcher to make some assumptions from the five conflict management styles and the three groups surveyed.

Future Directions

There appears to be a need for more open dialogue and communication between administrators, faculty members, and students. The creation of a new culture within higher education will enhance and facilitate communication and encourage empowerment.

Conflicts will continue to be part of university settings. It will be to the benefit of administrators, and faculty for management training seminars which explore the conflict management to be conducted periodically. Faculty members need to create courses to in conflict management and encourage students to take them. Students are involved in many situations in which the knowledge of conflict management strategies would be tremendously helpful.

Recommendations for Further Research

In view of this research, the following recommendations are submitted:

- (1) Studies to predict choice of conflict style among faculty members dependent upon decisional variables.
- (2) Further research to find out the kinds of conflict management training among administrators, faculty members and students.
- (3) Since the research rendered an additional finding on gender differences, further research on conflict management styles

among males/females with follow-up interviews is encouraged.

- (4) Studies could be conducted to incorporate direct observation of administrators, faculty members, and students in actual conflict situations.

Conclusion

The primary conclusion drawn from this research is that administrators, faculty members and students need to be empowered. As indicated by Bylam (1993) empowerment is a source of energy that drives – and can affect vital changes in academia.

It is the conveyance of empowerment that instills the idea that it is beneficial for the university community to speak up for students' rights, faculty rights and administrators' rights. Empowerment is the tool that can strengthen self-concept, create positive mental health, and help to shape life goals.

Empowerment suggests that administrators and faculty members and students no longer need to persist in their mutual misperceptions of one another. The implementation of empowerment of the community is designed to facilitate open communication. Empowerment promotes the notion that students and faculty alike can make a difference in the cultural dynamics of universities across the country.

To determine whether or not a university community is empowered, administrators must ask the following important questions:

1. How is conflict handled?
2. Are we seeking diverse opinions actively, or are we not?

3. Are we listening?
4. Are we discussing conflicts rationally or are conflicts stifled or avoided?
5. How open are faculty and administrators to new ideas about policy?
6. Is there a freedom to disagree with or even challenge the power structure?

There is a need to have a clear message sent that it is possible to disagree with the higher levels of administration, and the everyone's opinion is valued and respected. If there is a diagnosis of the university and the preceding questions are answered affirmatively, then empowerment/higher involvement may take place within academic circles.

There may be some who do not want to become empowered / higher involved. It is part of empowerment to know how far and how fast one can change. It is, however, imperative that the choice to become, or not to become, empowered be available. It is important for colleges and universities to address the challenge of future conflict and issues of empowerment in a proactive fashion.

The University of Tennessee is an institution of higher learning which seems to understand the need for a proactive position. The University of Tennessee implemented a program which was designed to improve the performance of academic and middle-management staff. An eight day workshop called the Institute for Leadership Effectiveness was held.

The scope of the institute addresses such topics as the formation of networks. The institute seeks to offer information about the personnel

and environment of an institution. Participants must complete self-assessments which provide insight into their communication strategies, leadership abilities and conflict management styles.

The participants are given an opportunity to exchange views with state legislators, community officials and recognized leaders in higher education. The participants are additionally exposed to a variety of reading materials and case studies which enable them to examine pertinent higher education issues, the diversity of roles, and the conflicts and rewards of leadership. The institute explores topics that are generally ignored in professional management workshops. The institute has fostered, and continues to foster, excellence in management throughout the University of Tennessee. It is a model program that can be transferred to other college and universities to facilitate future conflict management.

To underscore the importance of addressing this issue and to show that it moves beyond the classroom and into the broader community, it is necessary to turn to two pioneers in the area of conflict management, Mary Parker Follett and John Dewey (1922, 1937).

Mary Parker Follett wrote: "We can often measure our progress by watching the nature of our conflicts. Social progress in this respect is like individual progress; we become spiritually more and more developed as our conflicts rise to higher levels." Dewey elaborates this further when he contends that conflict is a "gadfly" to human thought and inventiveness. He further states the conflict is a means to shock us out of more passivity; it moves us to be more observing and contriving. Dewey maintains that when conflicts interrupt the flow of life, it is then that individuals must use their intelligence to readapt and even change their

mode of conflict management. It is at the point of conflict when one needs to utilize the choices among conflict management styles. The right choice, or combination of choices, can effectively make a difference in the situations that arise inside and outside the classroom.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Major Professor's Letter of Introduction

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1034

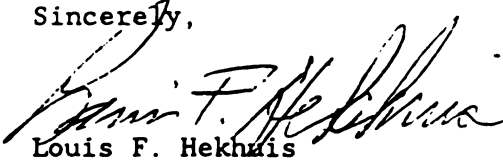
December 17, 1990

To Whom It May Concern:

Franklin Cardona is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration at Michigan State University and is one of my advisees. Your assistance in helping Frank with his dissertation research would be greatly appreciated. As a part of his research he is conducting a survey of conflict management styles among faculty and administrators in higher education. The purpose of this research is to identify and compare the differences (if any) among faculty and administrators with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Inventory II.

If you have any questions about the above research, please feel free to call or write to me. Again, any help or assistance you can give Frank would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Louis F. Hekhuis
Professor
Higher Education

APPENDIX B

Letters of Transmittal

Tennessee State University
3500 John Merritt Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37209

March 1, 1994

Dear _____:

By way of introduction, my name is Frank Cardona and I am a doctoral student in education at Michigan State University. I am presently conducting a survey on conflict management styles among faculty, administrators and graduate students. The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the differences, if any, that exist among faculty and administrators and graduate students with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Inventory II, form A, B, and C. Form A measures the conflict management style in relationship to superiors. Form B measures conflict management styles in relationship to subordinates. Form C measures conflict management styles in relationship to peers.

In filling out and returning this questionnaire you are indicating your desire to participate in this survey. Please be assured of your complete anonymity and confidentiality.

Please return by March 30, 1994. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Cardona, M.Div., M.A.

Western Kentucky University
1526 Russellville Road
Bowling Green, KY 42101

March 1, 1994

Dear _____:

By way of introduction, my name is Frank Cardona and I am a doctoral student in education at Michigan State University. I am presently conducting a survey on conflict management styles among faculty, administrators and graduate students. The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the differences, if any, that exist among faculty and administrators and graduate students with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Inventory II, form A, B, and C. Form A measures the conflict management style in relationship to superiors. Form B measures conflict management styles in relationship to subordinates. Form C measures conflict management styles in relationship to peers.

In filling out and returning this questionnaire you are indicating your desire to participate in this survey. Please be assured of your complete anonymity and confidentiality.

Please return by March 30, 1994. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Cardona, M.Div., M.A.

Vanderbilt University
Dept. of Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 330
Peabody
Nashville, TN 37203

February 25, 1994

Dear Ms. Mackey:

By way of introduction, my name is Frank Cardona and I am a doctoral student in education at Michigan State University. I am presently conducting a survey on conflict management styles among faculty, administrators and graduate students. The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the differences, if any, that exist among faculty and administrators and graduate students with respect to conflict management styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Inventory II, form A, B, and C. Form A measures the conflict management style in relationship to superiors. Form B measures conflict management styles in relationship to subordinates. Form C measures conflict management styles in relationship to peers.

In filling out and returning this questionnaire you are indicating your desire to participate in this survey. Please be assured of your complete anonymity and confidentiality.

Please return by March 30, 1994. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Cardona, M.Div., M.A.

APPENDIX C

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory

You may have incompatibilities, disagreements, or differences (i.e., conflict with your superior. If you are a student, your superior would be your teacher, administrator, etc.; if you are a faculty member, a chairperson, dean, etc.; if you are an administrator, your next level superior, etc. . . .). Try to recall as many recent conflict situations as possible in ranking these statements. Fill in your responses in the appropriate circle on your data sheet. There are no right or wrong answers. The response which is most characteristic of your behavior, in a situation of conflict with your superior, is the best answer. Any other answer, which may be considered as more desirable or acceptable will simply be misleading. Fill in the most characteristic manner of your behavior: Place data sheet under each question and fill in the circle that applies: 0 = strongly agree, 1 = agree, 2 = undecided, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree.

- 1. I try to investigate an issue with my boss to find a solution acceptable to us.**
- 2. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my boss.**
- 3. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my boss to myself.**
- 4. I try to integrate my ideas with those of my boss to come up with a decision jointly.**
- 5. I try to work with my boss to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.**
- 6. I usually avoid open discussions of my differences with my boss.**
- 7. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.**

8. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
9. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.
10. I usually accommodate the wishes of my boss.
11. I give in to the wishes of my boss.
12. I exchange accurate information with my boss to solve a problem together.
13. I usually allow concessions to my boss.
14. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
15. I negotiate with my boss so that a compromise can be reached.
16. I try to stay away from disagreement with my boss.
17. I avoid an encounter with my boss.
18. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.
19. I often go along with the suggestions of my boss.
20. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.
21. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
22. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.
23. I collaborate with my boss to come up with decisions acceptable to us.
24. I try to satisfy the expectations of my boss.
25. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.
26. I try to keep my disagreement with my boss to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
27. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my boss.
28. I try to work with my boss for a proper understanding of a problem.

Fill in your response in the appropriate circle on your data sheet. There are no right or wrong answers. The response which is most characteristic of your behavior in a situation of conflict with your subordinate is the best answer. Examples of subordinates include, if you are an administrator, your subordinate would be a teacher; if you are a teacher, your subordinate would be a student; and if you are a student, your subordinate would be someone who has worked for you. If you have never had a subordinate, stop here, and fill in the information on the demographic data sheet at the end of this questionnaire.

- 29. I try to investigate an issue with my subordinates to find a solution acceptable to us.
- 30. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my subordinates.
- 31. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my subordinate to myself.
- 32. I try to integrate my ideas with those of my subordinates to come up with a decision jointly.
- 33. I try to work with my subordinates to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.
- 34. I usually avoid open discussions of my differences with my subordinates.
- 35. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.
- 36. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
- 37. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.
- 38. I usually accommodate the wishes of my subordinates.
- 39. I give in to the wishes of my subordinates.

- 40. I exchange accurate information with my subordinates to solve a problem together.
- 41. I usually allow concessions to my subordinates.
- 42. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
- 43. I negotiate with my subordinates so that a compromise can be reached.
- 44. I try to stay away from disagreement with my subordinates.
- 45. I avoid an encounter with my subordinates.
- 46. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.
- 47. I often go along with the suggestions of my subordinates.
- 48. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.
- 49. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
- 50. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.
- 51. I collaborate with my subordinates to come up with decisions acceptable to us.
- 52. I try to satisfy the expectations of my subordinates.
- 53. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.
- 54. I try to keep my disagreement with my subordinates to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
- 55. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my subordinates.
- 56. I try to work with my subordinates for a proper understanding of a problem.

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