

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MODES OF CONFLICT UTILIZED BY
LARGE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The University of Houston-Clear Lake

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

DECEMBER, 2015

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Santiago, who has always been there for me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am greatly indebted to the support of my family in the pursuit of my doctoral degree. I want to thank my husband of 32 years, Santiago, for always supporting me on this journey and encouraging me all along the way. I know this was a long and stressful journey, but you have ALWAYS been there for me! You supported me 100% of the way, even when I was focused on other life challenges, you always reminded me how important it was to get back on track! I also want to thank my three children, Jessica, Timo and Adela, who kept me going by constantly encouraging me to complete this huge endeavor and to never give up.

I would also like to thank Dr. Simieou for your continued encouragement and patience throughout this process. I appreciate the way you helped motivate me when I needed it, and letting me work on my own when it worked best for my life. Thank you Dr. Morgan for helping me navigate through the statistical journey, numbers have always been a challenge for me. Your assistance and patience was greatly appreciated!

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MODES OF CONFLICT UTILIZED BY LARGE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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This was a study of the investigation of the modes of conflict utilized by large school principals when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between the principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years on current campus, and years of educational experience have on the mode of conflict resolution utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The modes of conflict explored in this study were the following: avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, and collaborative modes. The participants of this study included 39 large school secondary principals employed in Texas during the 2013-2014 school year. The modes of conflict were measured by the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI). The data from the TKI were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r). The results of the analysis indicated a strong, statistically significant mean relationship between the sex of the participant and the collaborating mode of conflict. This finding indicated females tend to utilize the preferred mode of conflict. In addition, a statistically significant negative relationship existed between the principal's years on their campus and the use of the

competitive mode of conflict. Thus as the number of years the principal remains on their current campus, the less likely they were to utilize the competitive mode of conflict when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. No significant relationships were found in the principal's years of education and administration and their use of the modes of conflict when dealing with principal/teacher conflict. The results of this study will help educational leaders gain a better understanding of how conflict can be utilized to bring about change in education. In addition, it provided research to support the need to include conflict resolution training to principal preparation programs in order to retain highly qualified leaders and reduce burnout due to unmanaged conflict. The results of the study also added to current research that males and females approach conflict differently. Ultimately, this study brought an awareness that conflict is not necessarily bad for an organization, and has the potential to help a school make the necessary leaps to achieve academic success.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As educational leaders, principals are charged with the responsibility of ensuring every student is prepared for high stakes testing (Texas Education Code, 1999). Moreover, with the passage of *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001*, state and federal accountability standards have increased every year. As a result, schools have been forced to evolve into high performing organizations in order to meet the increased demands of accountability. As these pressures continue to increase in schools, conflict is becoming ever more prevalent in education (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001; Indelicato, 2005). As the leaders of the campus, principals are charged with meeting these demands as well as managing the conflict that occurs in response to the continued pressures of accountability (Indelicato, 2005). Principals are ultimately responsible for making decisions that guide the campus and the instruction; however, they must rely on input from their primary stakeholders. This collaborative decision-making process provides the perfect setting for conflict.

The implementation of shared decision making is mandated by state education policy and therefor part of campus practices (Texas Education Code, 1999). Shared decision making or collaborative leadership can be defined as all stakeholders working together on the development of goals, priority identification, and selecting educational practices designed to meet campus educational goals (Foley, 2001). This open dialogue has fostered the sharing of thoughts, ideas, and content among and between teachers and

principals. In schools across the state, the collaborative style of decision-making is evident; however, this style quickly may disintegrate during a conflict (Scherer, 1992). In order to understand how conflict impacts a campus, it is important to explore its causes and methods of resolution.

Conflict is a normal part of life; however, in the educational setting it has played an ever-greater role in the lives of public school principals (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Vestal, 2011). In fact, dealing with conflict can take approximately as much as 25% of a principal's work hours (Lang, 2009). Conflict can be defined as a struggle between two or more parties with needs that are incompatible (Cook, 2007). Schools provide a perfect environment for conflict as conflict erupts in daily interactions (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cooper, 2010). Schools provide the perfect setting for conflict "because diversity among members of groups results in differences in goals, perceptions, preferences, and beliefs" (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001, p. 238) and the principal must navigate through the conflict in order to arrive at ultimately what is best for the campus. Teachers are very passionate about their work and typically used to working alone. Moreover, the journey toward collaboration can create conflicts. One issue that has been seen in schools is teachers know how to create conflicts but lack resolution skills. In many situations, teachers look to the principal for help in resolving conflict (Uline, Tshchannen-Moran, & Perez, 2003). Whereas principals are expected to resolve conflict, many have not been taught how to manage the conflict (Anderson, 2005; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Corral-Carlson, 2008). Principals without formal conflict training are left to rely on their interpersonal skills to work through the conflict in order to ensure the situation does not become detrimental to the campus.

Unmanaged conflict has the potential to destroy an organization, school climate, social/working relationships, and/or professional/personal growth. In fact, many school leaders have left the field of education due to their inability to resolve conflicts (Brock & Grady, 2002). If conflicts are not resolved, the effects can be detrimental to the school culture, Cook (2007) concedes unresolved conflict “undermines good feelings and cooperation, divides the group into factions and deepens differences by legitimizing lack of support for the group” (p. 54) thus creating a toxic school. Conflict has the power to negatively impact the school culture and morale; unresolved conflict could potentially damage or bring down the entire organization (Indelicato, 2005). In some extreme cases, conflict has erupted into violence (Blaydes, 2004; Brock & Grady, 2009; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). Conflict exists in every organization; and principals must be able to manage conflict in order for the organization to achieve success and not allow it to become destructive (Cook, 2007; DiPaola & Hoy, 2001; Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001; Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009).

Although principals must manage conflict in order for their schools to be successful; the research stated most principals have not been formally trained to resolve conflict as part of their academic or professional development (Anderson, 2005; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Corral-Carlson, 2008; Donaldson, Marnik, Mackenzie & Ackerman, 2009; Indelicato, 2005). Kajs, Decman, Cox, William, and Alaniz (2002) recommended higher-level educational leaders should consider adding conflict resolution to principal training programs. Principals should receive training in how to successfully resolve teacher conflicts due to the ever-increasing emergence of diversity, increasing standards, and other challenges (Indelicato, 2005). Principals must also be able to resolve

conflicts and mediate between conflicting parties as well as manage the day-to-day operations of a campus (Collins, 2003; Kormanski, 2005). A great deal of research has shown successful principals are skilled at managing conflict and able to transform destructive conflict into constructive conflict (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001).

If handled correctly, the benefits of conflict can include a more open and honest type of communication for all parties involved (Cook, 2007; Corral-Carlson, 2008). For some principals, this skill comes with the natural progression of leadership skill development; however, for others the skill development would require experience or formal training. Another finding indicated principals who have been successful at resolving conflict possessed strong interpersonal skills (Brock & Grady, 2002; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Meadows, 2007). Effective principals are experienced dealing with people, problem solving, and communicating (Brock & Grady, 2002). The research found communication was one of the most important skills a principal needed to be effective at resolving conflicts (Brock & Grady, 2002; Folger et al., 2001). Principals skilled at communication gained the trust and confidence of their staff making them more effective leaders (Brock & Grady, 2002; Meadows, 2007). Meadows (2007) conducted a study of private school principals; he found that great leaders were skilled at persuading others, building teams, and creating relationships. In summary, the art of conflict resolution also depends on the combination of leadership, interpersonal, and communication skills. It is also important to note, formal conflict resolution provides one more way of effectively managing both destructive and constructive conflict. Conflict situations can be very complicated and require a great deal of skill in order to transform the conflict from destructive to constructive.

Conflict management training provides the opportunity to understand conflict and determine the application of the proper mode of conflict to best resolve the situation.

Kilmann and Thomas (1975) are renowned for their work on conflict resolution. They determined the existence of five modes of conflict resolution styles. The five modes are defined below:

1. Avoiding-a person avoids the conflict.
2. Accommodating-a person gives in to the other person in order to resolve the conflict.
3. Competing-a person advocates for his or her own personal needs above everyone else's needs.
4. Compromising-two parties' give and take in order to reach a resolution to the conflict.
5. Collaborating-a person identifies other's needs and then attempts to get everyone to work towards a common goal.

Kilmann and Thomas (1975) studied various levels of management and found all managers wanted to learn how to prevent and manage conflict.

In order to efficiently manage conflict, principals need to consider the entire situation, including the teachers' willingness to follow. This consideration of leading according to the situation was developed by Blanchard and Hersey (2001) in a theory called situational leadership. In order for leaders to be effective, they must assess the situation, including consideration of the "maturity of followers or groups" (Blanchard & Hersey, 2001, p. 304). Broadwell (1996) posited situational leadership style rests on "trust, bonding, knowledge, industry and heart"; all of these concepts are vital in building

and growing successful teachers (p. 23). This theory was applied to education by Walter, Caldwell, and Marshall (1980); they described mature people as those who set goals, held themselves accountable, and had the skills necessary to meet assigned tasks. They added that in order for this style to work, the leader has to continually assess and provide feedback relevant to the task. In addition, the leader is charged with motivating the group with praise and rewards while also providing structure to those who need it. Levy and Johnson (2013) utilized situational leadership in the supervision of physical education teacher candidates. They implemented the model with teacher candidates by providing them with more direction at the start of the program and then progressing them through the coaching, supporting, and delegating stages of the model. If candidates struggled in a particular area, they could reverse back to the appropriate stage in the model until they were once again ready to move forward. The situational leadership model provides a framework for a principal to consider when helping teachers resolve conflicts. It also allows the principal to adapt their leadership style to meet the needs of their teachers. Most importantly, this model heavily relies on the importance of building relationships with followers (Ireh & Bailey, 1999; Walter, Caldwell, & Marshall, 1980).

As more women enter educational administration, one must consider the role sex plays on the preferred modes of conflict (Dillard, 2005). Gender research has been conducted primarily on males and has been generalized to include females (Berry, 1994). Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin (2005) found women were more collaborative than men. They also found men were more accommodating than women. Shockley-Zabalak (1981) found no differences in modes used by male and female managers in the workplace. Blackburn, Martin, and Hutchinson (2006) studied school

leaders and determined no statistical difference in how they managed conflict. In addition, the findings of gender on conflict resolution have provided conflicting results (Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin, & Marx, 2007; Shockley-Zabalak & Morley, 1984). The approach to the preferred modes of conflict utilized by male and females have been studied; nonetheless, the findings varied considerably.

The goal of this research study sought to add information to the current body of knowledge concerning conflict in schools. As history has indicated, state accountability standards have increased, shared collaborative decision-making has become more prevalent in schools, and teachers have become more empowered (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001; Foley, 2001; Indelicato, 2005). These factors blend together and have created an educational setting that is ripe with conflict (Baer, 2010). Research has shown that in order for an organization to flourish, conflict must be effectively managed (Blaydes, 2004; Brock & Grady, 2002; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Cook, 2007; Indelicato, 2005; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Lane 2009). Unresolved conflicts can destroy an organization, negatively impact morale, and cause principal burnout (Cook, 2007; DiPaola & Hoy, 2001; Folger et al., 2001; Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009). In addition, more women have entered the field of educational administration; it is important to understand how female principals approach conflict. There have been numerous studies on conflict in the workplace, but there have been very few on the relationship between conflict and gender of school principals (Barbuto et al., 2007; Berry, 1994; Dillard, 2005; Shockley-Zabalak & Morley, 1984). There is a great deal of information about conflict in schools, but the majority of research has focused on resolving student conflicts within the school setting (Coleman & Fisher-Yoshida, 2004).

Research Problem

There has been a critical need for principals to manage teacher conflict in order for schools to achieve campus goals. Principals have typically not been provided with formalized conflict resolution training principal as a part of their certification/training programs. Furthermore, there has not been sufficient research on the comparison of male/female conflict resolution behaviors in education. In addition, there has been a shortage of research on the examination of the principal's years of educational experience and their respective mode of conflict behaviors. The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between sex and modes of conflict utilized by secondary principals in large schools in Texas. It also attempted to explore the role years as a principal, years as a principal on current campus, and total number of years of educational experience have on the mode of conflict resolution.

Research Questions

The following research questions served as the basis for this study:

1. Is a principal's sex related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
2. Are a principal's years of administrative experience related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
3. Are a principal's years of experience on their current campus related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
4. Are a principal's years of experience in education related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?

Hypothesis

- H₀: There is no relationship between the principal's sex and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.
- H₀: There is no relationship between the principal's years of administrative experience and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.
- H₀: There is no relationship between the principal's years of experience as a principal on their current campus and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.
- H₀: There is no relationship between the principal's years of educational experience and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to large school principals in the state of Texas.
2. The campus principals in this study may or may not be representative of other campus principals in the United States.
3. The instrument used in this study included a self-report form and may not represent the participant's actual conflict resolution behavior.

Definition of Terms

Accommodating is a mode of conflict when a person gives in to the other party in order to resolve a conflict (Goncalves, 2008).

Administrators are the principals who have been hired to manage the school (Levin, 2005).

Assertiveness is a mode of conflict when one of the two basic behavioral dimensions proposed by Kilmann and Thomas (1975) is defined by an individual's attempt to meet their own needs.

Avoiding is a mode of conflict when a person has decided not to deal with the conflict (Goncalves, 2008).

Collaborating is a mode of conflict when a person surveys other people to determine their needs and attempts to get everyone to work together towards a common goal to resolve the conflict (Goncalves, 2008).

Competing is a mode of conflict when a person advocated for his or her personal needs above everyone else's to resolve the conflict (Goncalves, 2008).

Compromising is a mode of conflict when two parties give and take in order to reach a solution to resolve the conflict (Goncalves, 2008).

Conflict comes from the Latin word meaning "striking together with force" (Lansford, 2008, p. 54).

Conflict handling modes are competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating (Harding & Johnson, 2004).

Conflict-management is the actions used to resolve on-going disputes (Vestal, 2011)

Conflict resolution is a systematic set of skills provided to individuals that allows them the ability to successfully resolve conflicts in a peaceful and respectful manner (Goncalves, 2008).

Cooperativeness is one of the two basic behavioral dimensions proposed by Kilmann and Thomas (1975) whereby individuals attempt to meet other people's needs.

Experience is the number of years employed in a professional position (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2013).

Gender is “the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2013).

Large Schools consist of a school district with more than 1,000 students.

Principal is the person who has been employed by a school district to lead or oversee the school or campus (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2013).

Principal induction is a training program for new principals provided by school districts, education service centers, or other educational organizations (Texas Education Code, 1999).

Principal mentoring is a support system provided to new principals where they are assigned a mentor to assist them in their first through third year of employment (Calabrese, 1991).

Teacher is a state certified person hired by a school or district to instruct students (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2013).

University principal preparation programs are formal educational programs provided by universities, which include coursework on principal competencies established by the state educational board (University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2015).

Non-University Principal preparation programs are principal training programs provided by local education service centers across the state (Inspire Texas, 2015).

Summary

This chapter explained how the world of education has changed, and how these changes have set the stage for conflict. In order for an educational organization to

flourish, principals must be able to effectively understand and manage conflict. The goal of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years on current campus, or years of educational experience on the mode of conflict resolution utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. As many women have entered the field of educational leadership, one must also recognize the possible existence of differences in how males and females approach conflict.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conflict is a part of everyday life. Conflict is defined as a struggle between two or more parties with incompatible needs (Cook, 2007). The structure of education provides the perfect setting for conflict. Conflict has the potential to improve or destroy an organization, school climate, social/working relationships, and/or professional/personal growth. Principals, as the leaders of the organization, must manage the conflict before it becomes destructive (Cook, 2007; Foley, 2001; Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001; Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009). The literature indicated principals have not typically received access to formal conflict resolution training and often resolved conflict using their personal skills (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Indelicato, 2005). This created additional issues since conflict is extremely complicated; and effective resolution required extensive knowledge of conflict theory and principles (Crawford & Bodine, 1996; Deutsch, 1973; Foley, 2001).

There has been a lack of literature on conflict management of male and female school principals (Berry, 1994; Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Eckman, 2004; Indelicato, 2005; Shockley-Zabalak, 1981; Vestal, 2011). There have been studies on women in the workplace but results have varied (Barbutto, Fritz, Matkin, & Marx, 2007; Berry, 1994; Dillard, 2005; Eckman, 2004; Shockley-Zabalak, 1981). Much of the applications of conflict theories have been generalized to women in management positions (Blackburn, Martin, & Hutchinson, 2006; Shockley-Zabalak, 1981). Indelicato (2005) stated:

There is little research that discusses the dynamics in teacher-administrator conflict and how principals effectively manage and diffuse the conflict to enable all teachers to remain focused on the academic achievement of their students, which is a large indicator of success in the Texas accountability system (p. 5).

Principals must not only know the craft of managing schools, but also be able to resolve conflicts and mediate between conflicting parties (Collins, 2003; Kormanski, 2005). A great deal of research has shown that the successful principal is skilled at managing conflict and able to transform bad conflict into good conflict (Folger et al., 2001). However, most principal preparation training programs have not provided this training to new principals (Donaldson, Marnik, Mackenzie, & Ackerman, 2009; Foley, 2001). As a result, “a culture of competition, authoritarianism, coercion, and contention still appears to reign supreme in U.S. schools” (Coleman & Fisher-Yoshida, 2004, pp. 31-32).

Conflict Defined

According to Mayer (2000), conflict originated from mankind’s basic needs such as the competition for power and resources, basic structure of society, and the struggle of groups within a societal organizational structure. Folger (2001) stated “conflict is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals” (p. 5). Kelley (1979) explained conflict as an attempt to change the status quo counteracted by the efforts that are made at the continuance of the status quo.

Conflict usually occurred when there was a lack of agreement between parties in reaching a common goal and people perceived their needs as not being met or ignored

(Goncalves, 2008). Katz and Lawyer (1993) described conflict as a situation where two interdependent groups perceived an outcome as a negative one. They go on to state that this conflict can have negative impacts on emotions and behavior as a means to overcome the opposer (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). In a conflict situation, there are three sources of conflicts: (1) individuals with inharmonious goals, (2) those who want an impossible solution, (3) or those who want the same outcome but only one party can attain it (Brock & Grady, 2002). Kelley (1979) found conflict escalates with “increased interdependence, increased pressure by external forces which require compromise on outcome preferences, and increased variety in the groups involved within an organization” (p. 12).

Conflict can be either constructive or destructive for an organization (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). In order for conflict to help an organization, it must be effectively managed (Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Kormanski, 2005). Murphy (1994) listed the following benefits from managed conflict: improved efficiency, creativity, and teamwork. Katz and Lawyer (1993) believed “conflict is one of the engines of evolution that allows us to learn, progress and grow” (p. 2). They went on to describe positive results emerging from conflict, including:

- Reconciliation of the interests of the disputing parties
- Sharpened sense of identity and solidarity
- Interaction
- Internal change
- Clarifying the real problem (Katz & Lawyer, 1993, p. 11)

The authors further added conflicts might increase the effectiveness of an organization and/or improve relationships. Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) stated that conflict can “build

cohesiveness” between people and provide them with the ability to solve other problems they may be experiencing (p. 7). Folger, Poole, and Stutman (2001) explained conflict can create new ideas, release tension, and allow parties to reevaluate an organization’s goals and missions. Kormanski (2005) found that conflict is an important step in the development of a group and the results have fostered growth. Conflict frequently brings out the best in each of the participants as long as they were developmentally ready for the challenge (Kormanski, 2005).

On the other hand, unmanaged conflict can quickly create havoc in a school setting, and the effects have been very damaging to the parties involved (Cook, 2007; Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001; Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009). Katz and Lawyer (1993) stated differences of opinions have intensified into considerable conflicts that have caused severe deficits to organizations. In addition, more issues can surface in the situation that can further complicate the management of the conflict. Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) discovered three conditions have caused conflict to escalate: competition over scarce resources, bullying or posturing, and attacks on personal qualities such as race, gender, and religion. Unresolved conflicts have cost organizations financially by the reduction of employee morale, productivity, and work time (Goncalves, 2008; Lang, 2009). Furthermore, unmanaged conflicts in schools have increased teacher turnover rates, health costs, and lawsuits (Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009). In extreme situations, unresolved conflict can increase frustration levels to the point that the situation can become violent (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2001).

Conflict Management Theory

Morton Deutsch is a social psychologist that is considered to be one of the pioneers of conflict resolution study. Deutsch (1973) found several variables that can affect conflict:

- Characteristics of parties in conflict
- Prior relationships to one another
- Natural issue giving rise to conflict
- Social environment where conflict occurs
- Interested audiences to the conflict
- Each person can act in a unified way toward some aspect of its environment

(pp. 4-6)

Folger, Poole and Stutman (2001) explained conflict could occur in two different settings. Interpersonal is a face-to-face conflict, whereby the group involved several people, and intergroup is a conflict between two or more large groups. Folger et al. (2001) wrote about several other theories of conflict. The social exchange theory is described as one's personal interest drives the conflict; this involved a sort of compromising resolution where rewards and costs are exchanged in order to resolve the conflict. The experimental gaming theory can best be described as conflicts being the result of games or strategy. Folger et al. (2001) found that in spite of the multitude of conflict theories available, one must use the knowledge of all conflict theories and not be compelled to select one theory over the other.

Situational Leadership

In order to efficiently manage conflict, principals need to consider the entire situation and adapt their leadership to fit the situation. Hersey and Blanchard (1981) found that leaders must at times modify their behaviors as they confront problems within their organization. Blank, Weitzel, and Green (1990) wrote the situational leadership model “focuses on only one situational variable (subordinate maturity) as a moderator of two leader behaviors (task and relationship) and leaders effectiveness” (p.579). These variables have been integrated in a model displayed in Figure 1. Through the use of this matrix, leaders can adjust their leadership style. The terms “task and relationship” are also referred to as “structure” and “consideration” (Blanchard & Hersey, 2001). Blanchard and Hersey (2001) define “structure” as creating clear, concise descriptions of how to complete a task, and “consideration” as the degree of the relationship created between the leader and the follower. These terms are plotted in quadrants in Figure 1 and are numbered in order from 1 to 4 for ease of identification by the reader.

In order to understand this model, the term “maturity” must also be discussed. Within this model, maturity refers to “level of achievement-motivation, willingness and ability to take responsibility, and task relevant education and experience of an individual or a group” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981, p. 40). The leader is charged with constantly assessing the maturity of the group and adapting their leadership behavior to fit. In this model, it is the maturity of the follower that drives the leader’s management style (Yeakey, 2002).

In order to better understand when and how the leader’s style should be adjusted to fit the followers maturity, a closer examination of the model is required. Figure 1

presents four quadrants. A leader who is facing followers at a low maturity level would start at the lower right quadrant 1. The followers require high structure and low consideration of their feelings in order to complete a task. As the follower begins to learn their assigned tasks, they would then progress to the next quadrant (2) and require more emotional support and encouragement. If they become mature and very reliable they may move to quadrant 3 and then receive less structure while still needing emotional support. Once they have become very mature they would move to quadrant 4, working with little structure and emotional support (Blanchard & Hersey, 2001).

This model was applied to education by Walter, Caldwell, and Marshall (1980). They surveyed principals in order to examine their perception of their situational leadership style. The researchers found principals least preferred the use of the High Structure, Low Consideration and Low Structure, Low Consideration quadrant. The study results indicated that principals were more effective when they utilized High Structure and High Consideration. Walter et al. (1980) surveyed the teachers about this particular leadership style, and they shared they were more confident in their principal's ability to resolve conflicts. The situational leadership model provides a framework for a principal to consider when helping teachers resolve conflicts. It also allows the principal to adapt their leadership style to meet the needs of their teachers.

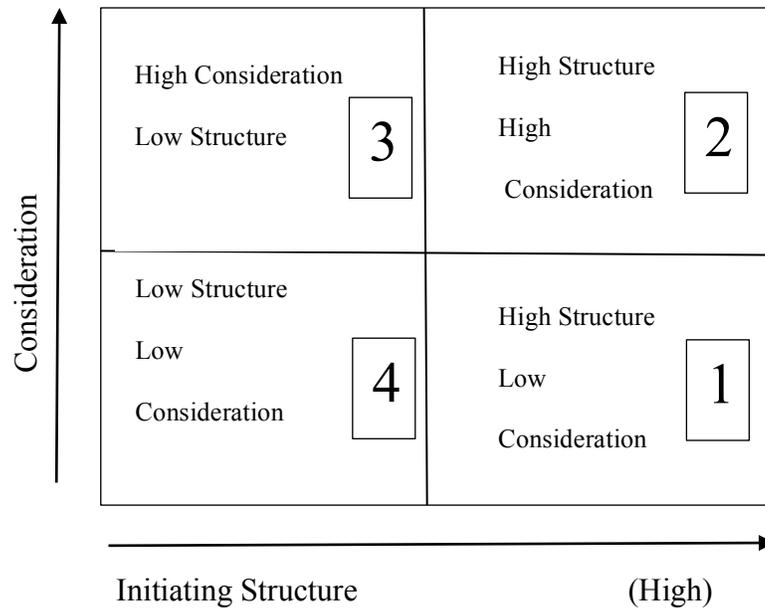


Figure 1. The Ohio State Leadership Quadrants. Adapted from “A Leadership Theory for Educational Administrators,” by K. H. Blanchard and P. Hersey, 2001, *Education*, 90(4), p. 305. Copyright 2001 by the Project Innovation, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Conflict Modes

Many of the conflict theorists have utilized the five modes of conflict to classify styles of conflict resolution (Cook, 2007; Folger, 2001; Girard & Koch, 1996; Goncalves, 2008; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). The categories are “avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, and collaboration” (Cook, 2007, pp. 59-60). Goncalves (2008) stated that when the person only considered their own needs over others in the conflict, they were utilizing the competing style of conflict resolution. According to Katz and Lawyer (1993), this is a win/lose strategy. In this mode, the competitors tend to be more aggressive in their communication and less concerned with relationships (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) found that individuals may set rules designed

to help them achieve their personal goals. They may make threats and use coercion to win the situation (Goncalves, 2008). Brock and Grady (2002) added that one must look out for malicious conflict in this conflict situation, the aggressor's goal is to hurt the other party or organization. Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) add the competing mode is necessary when there is an emergency, deadline is approaching, change is required, or people do not have a vested interest in the situation.

Goncalves (2008) wrote that accommodating is the opposite of competing and is a lose/win strategy. In this style of conflict resolution, the person relinquished his/her needs to the other party (Goncalves, 2008). "Accommodation is a useful strategy when an individual doesn't have a heavy investment in the issue" (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004, p. 52). This style should be used when someone is trying to maintain harmony. Cheldelin & Lucas (2004) warn that sometimes an accommodator will become tired of constantly giving in and may become aggressive.

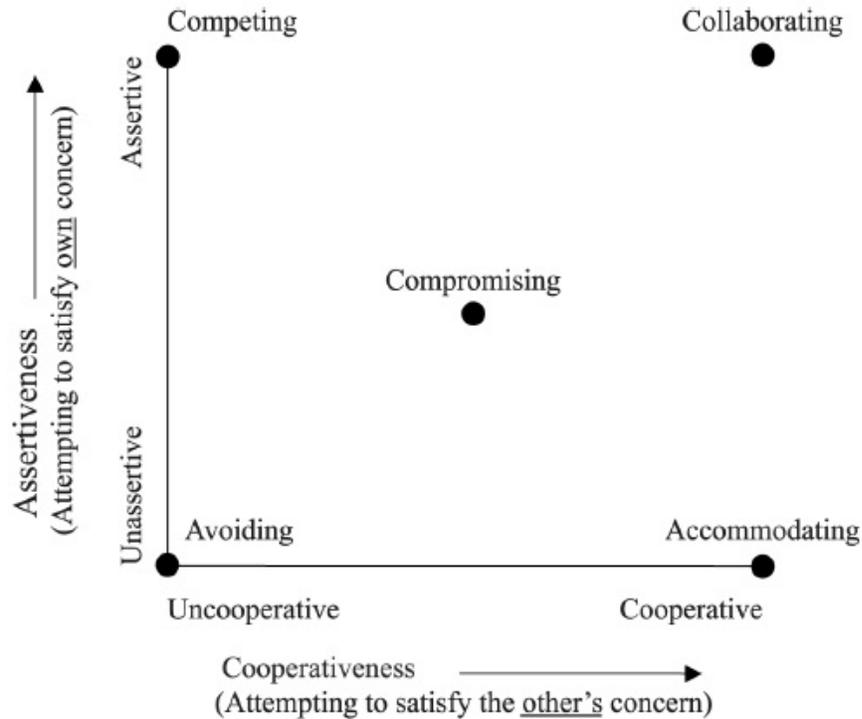
Another mode of conflict similar to accommodating is the avoiding style. The avoiding style is when a party simply ignores the conflict. Similar to accommodating, avoiding is a lose strategy (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). It differs from accommodating in that they win because the conflict has not been resolved. Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) described avoiding as the "physical or emotional withdrawal" where the conflict is realized; however, the argument is not confronted (p. 52). This type may be used when there is a great deal of tension in the conflict, or if more time is needed to resolve the conflict (Goncalves, 2008).

The compromising mode is the opposite of the accommodating and avoiding modes of conflict. The compromising mode is a give and take style of resolution where

both parties work out a deal in order to resolve the conflict (Goncalves, 2008). Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) found this style was the most often used when contracts are being negotiated and works well when both parties are willing to give up something in the negotiations. This is a good type to use when both parties possess a great deal of power and are very committed to their causes. This mode is considered a mini win-win resolution (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). The compromising style is based on give and take and requires both parties gaining in the resolution of the conflict.

The collaborative style differs from the previous modes in that both parties work together to resolve the conflict. The collaborative style is considered a win-win situation (Cook, 2007; Goncalves, 2008; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). Cheldelin and Lucas (2004) explain this style allows parties to work as a team to resolve the conflict. “Using active listening, or paraphrasing what the other party is saying, lets that party know that you hear and understand his or her position” (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004, p. 54). They claimed it was important for people to know the various styles of conflict resolution so one could use the mode that best fits particular situations.

Thomas (1992) depicted the assertive and unassertive and cooperative and uncooperative modes on the spectrum. This figure provided a graphical representation of where the five modes are located on the spectrum and their relationship toward assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas, 1992).



Source: Adapted from Thomas (1976)

Figure 2. The Five Conflict Styles. Adapted from “Conflict Styles of Men and Women at Six Organizational Levels,” by K.W. Thomas, G.F. Thomas, and N. Schaubhut, 2007, International Journal of Conflict Management, 19(2), p.150. Copyright 2008 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Reprinted with permission.

Conflict in the Workplace

Conflict in the workplace has become commonplace, and studies indicate it has taken up as much as approximately 42% of employees' time (Dana, 2001). Unresolved conflict can cost an organization the following: employees, reorganization, theft, damage, lower morale, lost time, and increased health costs (Dana, 2001). In addition, Rahim (1989) found that unresolved conflicts can waste resources and add stress to employees involved in the conflict. Bierwith (2010) added conflicts have led to physical attacks on

other employees. “Conflict is one against the other, like warfare. When there is conflict, feelings of anger and hurt often surface” (Bierwith, 2010, p. 3).

Rahim (1979) attributed the conflict in the workplace has been due to the organization’s “design” (p. 759). He found the design restricts the behavior of the employees and causes differences in opinions, goals, and values among people and groups. Rahim conducted a study of an organization to explore conflict among employees, and his results indicated congruent people had less intergroup conflicts. DiPaola and Hoy (2001) supported this finding in their research. They found that the more diverse the group, the greater chances for conflict. Moreover, it is only obvious conflict has been found in schools today (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001).

It is important to note although unmanaged conflict can reduce the efficiency of an organization, conflict can also be good, bringing about dramatic changes. Murphy (1994) suggested the benefits of conflict have improved the efficiency of organizations by allowing the emergence of creative thinking and teamwork. “Conflict is often a catalyst for much-needed change and can provide a push for creative initiatives and solutions” (Bierwirth, 2010, p. 4). It is important for principals to understand conflict and how it can bring about positive changes in schools (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001).

DiPaola and Hoy (2001) posed the question: “how can we avoid destructive conflict while promoting constructive conflict” (p. 238)? Although conflict was often viewed negatively, managed conflict has the power to revitalize an organization and spur creativity and teamwork. These qualities are necessary in the field of education with the constant challenges facing our schools today.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a process for managing conflict while working towards a solution (Crawford & Bodine, 1996; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). When the conflict is managed, a constructive and emotional state is created that allows the opposing parties an opportunity to communicate their likenesses and differences (Folger, 2001; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). DiPaola and Hoy (2001) wrote “proactive administrators sense when a problem exists, identify it, and move to action” (p. 239). They add the next question: what action should the principal take? Principals should not avoid conflict, but embrace it (DiPaola & Hoy, 2001).

Conflict is a normal part of life, making important to learn to effectively resolve conflicts. Crawford and Bodine (1996) found that one’s response to conflict could transform it into a “competitive, destructive experience or a constructive challenge offering the opportunity for growth” (p. 7). This transformation of conflict begins with learning about conflict and the principles of conflict resolution (Crawford & Bodine, 1996).

In the business world, many managers have been trained in conflict resolution with the goal of making the conflict disappear (Cloke, 2000). Cloke writes “most of the leaders and managers face conflict on a daily basis, spending as much as 80 to 90 percent of their time trying to resolve or contain them” (p. xii).

As principals struggle with increased conflict, they must be given the opportunity to participate in conflict resolution training programs that provides them with the skills needed to manage conflict effectively (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). “Primary stakeholders in schools-students, teachers, administrators, board members,

parents, and community members—are voicing their opinions more strongly and engaging in vigorous struggles in pursuit of their needs and beliefs” (Katz & Lawyer, 1993, p. 1). State principal preparation programs must be reviewed to ensure they have been providing adequate conflict resolution training to help principals further develop their craft (Anderson, 2005; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004). “Most individuals have not been trained to be successful in conflict resolution, either as part of their academic preparation or in their personal development” (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004, p. 44). Anderson (2005) conducted a study of aspiring principals at a university in Texas. He found that few public school leaders had the necessary training to practice effective conflict resolution. This study indicated most subjects had received their training from their local school districts. His recommendations suggested principal preparation programs are missing school-based experiences. Baitland (1992) stated “school districts must communicate with universities about specific characteristics and skills which they desire in administrators” (p. 122). Conflict resolution skills are essential for all college graduates especially for those in managerial positions (Lang, 2009). Training should include real-world simulations that principals are more likely to experience.

Kajs, Decman, Cox, Willman, and Alaniz (2002) researched south Texas principals and mentoring-principals. Their research indicated conflict resolution was one of the top seven lifelong learning components. They went on to add that principals should be familiar with various kinds of conflict resolution strategies to solve problems as they arise. “Conflict management strategies could include taking a preventive approach to problems by establishing relationships with people to reduce the potential for future conflict” (Kajs et al., p. 336). Kajs et al. (2002) recommend educational administration

leaders should consider their findings to reevaluate the current principal educational programs, and consider the addition of courses that would incorporate conflict resolution among other key components.

According to Coleman and Fisher-Yoshida (2004), most of the conflict resolution training programs found in schools have focused on resolving student conflicts. They state the lack of attention on public school employees is a major reason why they have little to no formal conflict resolution training. Collins (2003) wrote principals have been expected to become the “school wide mediator” (p. 17). They are forced to deal with increased violence and as a result are struggling to meet student needs while maintaining school safety. Collins agrees there has been a great need for conflict resolution training in schools. Katz and Lawyer (1993) support training for school leaders and claim “effective conflict resolution skills [are necessary] to inspire themselves and others to create a positive environment of acceptance, mutuality, and autonomy” (p. 2).

Studies of conflict in education have demonstrated managed conflict can have benefits on the organization. Uline, Tschannen-Moran, and Perez (2003) conducted a study of constructive conflict in a Midwestern high school undergoing school reform. They studied 110 teachers using interviews and they found that schools with structures in place to manage conflict were more able to implement reforms. They found the open and honest exchange of ideas led to “divergent and critical thinking” (p. 813).

Another way conflict has been managed is through the establishment of school norms. O’Connor (2005) studied six toxic schools in California. He found that the implementation of school norms significantly reduced school toxicity and increased collaboration among teachers. O’Connor (2005) listed four items that were necessary for

improvement of the school culture: increased principal communication, collaborative decision making, organized staff meetings, and guidelines for handling conflicts. Villani (1999) states conflict and leadership are related in the following quote:

As leaders we must find ways to maintain the vision of our school community, while dealing with the conflicts that inevitably arise among its members. If we find ourselves directly involved in conflict, we have to consider our actions, both as participants and as leader of the school. We may need to take a more global view of the impact of the conflict on others and act accordingly. (pp. 33-34)

Villani goes on to recommend leaders should consider the conflict carefully in relation to the school vision and remind those in conflict of the campus goals.

Principal and Teacher Relationships

The structure of education in general provides the perfect setting for conflict. Teachers are accustomed to working independently, passionate about their work, competing with others for scarce resources, and constantly experiencing effects of school reform (Baer, 2010; Cooper, 2010; Kelley, 1979). Baer (2010) writes, “for much of the week, the only time teachers are in contact with other adults is in the teachers’ lounge or at faculty meetings” (p. 84). Baer adds these two locations tend to be the “centers of complaint” (p. 84).

Walsh (2005) studied teacher-principal conflict in North Carolina Title 1 elementary schools with high numbers of low-socioeconomic students. The study included surveys and interviews of teachers from three schools. The study determined the following recommendations vital to building positive relationships with teachers: principals must foster positive relationships with teachers; principals must understand

teachers teach at different levels and they must adjust their leadership style to meet individual teacher needs; teacher perceptions of principals are important and have an effect on student achievement (Walsh, 2005). As Walsh (2005) examined data collected in the study, five themes emerged that supported positive principal teacher relationships: visible and involved principal, supportive environment, problem and conflict resolution, collegiality, and a sympathetic principal. Walsh (2005) described the importance of principal-teacher relationships in the following quote:

Principals should recognize that teachers expect their principal to solve problems. Problems that have a negative effect on staff members may also negatively affect morale and will not go away unless they are resolved. Principals should demonstrate consistency when resolving these types of conflicts. (p. 116)

Principal Leadership Skills

Research indicates principals successful at resolving conflict possessed strong interpersonal skills (Brock & Grady, 2002; Katz & Lawyer, 1993). Effective principals had experience dealing with people, problem solving, and communicating (Brock & Grady, 2002). Communication is one of the most important skills principals need to be effective in resolving conflict (Brock & Grady, 2002; Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001). Principals, who are skilled at communicating, gain the trust and confidence of their staff thus making them more effective leaders (Brock & Grady, 2002). “The effectiveness of their communication determines the level of satisfaction and trust that is generated among community members” (Brock & Grady, 2009, p. 94).

Meadows (2007) used a panel of experts to identify the leadership skills necessary for future private school principals to achieve success in schools. His study identified 64

skills, which were grouped into four categories: technical, conceptual, human, and spiritual. From these four groups, the panel of experts selected the top 23 skills that were determined to help the principal achieve academic success. The major skills were the importance of creating a leadership vision, communication, consensus building, conflict resolution, systems thinking, networking, organizational culture management, program management, mentoring, change agent, and ability to create interpersonal relationships (Meadows, 2007). “This atmosphere of greater education accountability not only extends to student achievement but to education leaders as well, who are held increasingly accountable for the performance of those under their charge” (Meadows, 2007, p. 1).

Another study conducted by Walters (2008) illustrates the positive relationship between interpersonal skills and school climate. Walters studied five Dallas area high schools in 2006-2007. He used surveys and interviews with the principal and the site based decision-making team at each of the five schools. His research found that successful leaders are more collaborative and work jointly with their teams to make decisions. “The leader of the school is pivotal in creating the context in which teachers teach and students learn” (p. 49).

Price (2011) studied principal teacher interactions at elementary schools. The study was designed to explore the trust in the principal and teacher relationships. Price explored how the principal’s relationship affects teacher’s attitudes as demonstrated by the school culture. She found that trust significantly affects teacher satisfaction, sense of cohesion, and teacher commitment in schools.

Years of Educational Experience and Conflict

Limited research has been conducted on the relationship between a principal’s

years of educational experience and their conflict resolution skills. Are principals with more years of experience in education more adept at resolving conflicts? In a study conducted by Drory and Ritov (2007), they found that people with more experience tended to more collaborative in terms of resolving conflict. They determined that those with more experience were able to modify their modes of conflict resolution to best fit the situation. Those with less experience tended to be more set in their approaches to conflict.

Barbuto et al. (2007) studied 56 leaders and 234 followers from various organizations. They examined the relationships of gender, age, and education to leadership styles and influence. They found very few studies had been conducted on leadership and age and even less on leadership and educational level. They found that participants in the 46+ age group rated higher for transformational leadership (Barbuto, et al. 2007). Transformational leaders are those who demonstrated the following characteristics: visionaries, relationship builders, creative thinkers, inspirational, and motivational (Barbuto, et al. 2007).

Conversely, Berry (1994) studied conflict management styles of 337 male and female principals in Missouri and found no significant difference between principals' conflict resolution skills and years of administrative experience. Berry (1994) found "the variables of age and years of experience did not influence choices of conflict management style" (p. 75). Instead, she attributed the findings to the increased educational skills and requirements for administrative positions in Missouri.

Gender and Conflict

Researchers have expanded the realm of conflict research by attempting to

examine the role of gender and conflict resolution. At this point in time, the results of gender on conflict are varied and present contradictory findings. In a study by Thomas, Thomas, and Schaubhut (2007) on men and women at different organization levels, they found men tended to be higher than women in the competitive mode of conflict resolution. "If they [women] are competitive, they tend to be seen as competent but lacking social skills. If they are not competitive, they may be seen as more socially skilled, but lacking competence or leadership potential" (Thomas, Thomas, and Schaubhut, 2007, p. 163). They went on to state that as a result of this paradox, women get paid less and receive fewer opportunities for promotions.

Shockley-Zabalak and Morley (1984) studied the effects of gender on conflict among both employed and unemployed groups. The study consisted of a sample size of 210 participants with 52% from private industry and 48% from a local university. The authors did not find significant differences between males and female participants in terms of avoiding, collaborating, and accommodating modes of conflict. However, differences appeared in the compromising and collaborating modes. This finding was significant in that there was no evidence that females were more collaborative than males. Additionally, in terms of employed participants, there was no evidence to support previous research findings that males are more compromising and competitive than females (Shockley-Zabalak & Morley, 1984).

In contrast, Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin (2005) conducted a study of male and female information science students at a university. They tried to determine if female students were better at handling conflict than males. They found women were more collaborative than men; however, in terms of the other modes

(accommodating, competing, and compromising), no significant differences were found. Men were found to be more avoiding than women. Brahnam et al. (2005) summarized their findings below:

The results of this study also offer some support for the traditional view that difference in conflict handling behaviors may be based on gender of the subjects involved, and that the emerging I.S. [Information Science] effort was designed to provide some perspective on the possible change in assumptions that may have to be made by managers regarding the conflict handling attitudes of emerging I.S. professionals. (p. 205)

Managers and Conflict

Conflict and gender research has been conducted on managers in the workplace. Chusmir and Mills (1989) looked at the roles of men and women managers. They expanded their study to examine how males and females handled conflict at work and at home. Their study was conducted on 201 managers in southeastern Florida using a survey and the *Thomas-Kilmann Mode of Conflict* instrument. They found no evidence of significant effects in the work conflict handling modes. The home findings were not confirmed. They also found major differences in the competing and accommodating modes and minor differences in collaboration, compromising, and avoiding modes. They concluded most managers approached conflict differently at work than at home. Managers handled conflict more competitively at work while they were more accommodating with conflict at home. "Results of this study tend to confirm the contention of many writers that most sex differences in research are not the results of

workers sex but rather a function of other variable stating nothing to do with sex” (Chusmir & Mills, 1989, p. 161).

Shockley-Zabalak (1981) also studied male and female managers. Their research was conducted on 31 male and female managers. They found no differences in the male and female responses to conflict.

Sone (1981) examined explored the superior-subordinate relationship in a study of 110 graduate students enrolled in business administration. They found female managers were no less competitive than male managers in dealing with superior-subordinate conflict. Male superiors were no less compromising than females. Female managers were more accommodating than male managers when dealing with conflict.

Principals and Conflict

Indelicato (2005) studied teacher-principal conflict in exemplary Texas Title 1 schools. His research was conducted on these two groups due to the limited amount of data available. His study examined the modes of conflict used in teacher-principal conflict. As accountability and increased standardized testing increase, conflict follows. His study found principals at exemplary Title 1 schools used skills helpful in resolving conflict. They helped teachers feel appreciated and allowed them the opportunity to work collaboratively to problem solve while continuing to focus on student needs. “The more methods principals have at their disposal to resolve conflict, the greater chance they have to successfully resolve the situation in conflict” (Indelicato, 2005, p. 89).

Corral-Carlson (2008) studied principals in California, and her study focused on Latino and Latina principals. She used the *Thomas-Kilmann Instrument* (TKI) and compared the findings to the recently renormed TKI (Schaubhut, 2007). Results of the

study indicated the modes of conflict (compromising, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and competing) were the same for both groups. Female Latinas scored the same as the norm group, while Latino males differed in their use of compromising as the least used mode of conflict. This is important because her research showed conflict modes utilized by principals varied by race and gender.

Barbuto et al. (2007) studied leadership qualities used by educational leaders. They looked at gender, age, and educational level of 56 leaders to understand the mixed findings in the study of gender and leadership. They found gender and education explained significant difference in the followers' ratings of leadership behaviors and influence tactics used by leaders. They found differences in the use of pressure among women. Women were perceived to use more pressure than men. The researchers could not conclude if this was due to higher perceptions or the differences in the perception of tactics used by women and men. "If women and men are to be valued equally as leaders, it is imperative that we understand the difference that may occur either as a result of gender or as a result of workers reactions to leaders based on gender" (Barbuto et al., 2007, p. 81).

A study conducted by Vestal (2011) differed from the prior studies reviewed. Vestal looked at the prediction of the preferred mode of conflict used by small school principals when dealing with teacher conflict. His study explored the relationship between gender, level of principal experience, and experience in education. His study found as a principal's years of experience rose, they tended to prefer the competitive mode of conflict and the use of compromising decreased. Vestal's (2011) study found

gender and experience in education did not have a significant predictive ability on the modes of conflict used by principals.

A review of the literature revealed a shortage of studies of conflict had been conducted specifically at the elementary level. Berry (1994) studied conflict and gender of elementary principals. Gender was selected because more and more females were entering public school administration, and most of the current research was conducted on males and expanded to include females. Berry also looked at variables such as age, experience, and level of position of the principal. The sample group was made up of 337 Missouri elementary principals. The TKI instrument was selected to measure the modes of conflict. The findings of the study indicated gender, age, years of experience did not impact the modes of conflict utilized by the principals. "While research indicates a consensus on the inevitability and potentially valuable role of conflict in organization and on types of management styles, it reveals many inconsistencies on how the use of conflict management style correlates with demographics, personality, gender, and situational variables" (Berry, 1994, p. 1). The results indicated more research was necessary in order to fully understand conflict in education.

Two studies have been conducted on secondary principals. One study targeted assistant secondary principals, and the other focused on secondary principals. Dillard (2005) conducted a study of 357 Texas assistant principals from January 2004 to March 2004. Dillard wanted to determine if women leaders handled conflict differently from male leaders. The researcher also looked at variables such as age, size of schools, and salary ranges. Findings did not indicate any significance between conflict modes used by male and female assistant principals. In addition, no significance was found between

conflict and age, school size, and salary.

Another study conducted by Blackburn et al. (2006) examined 30 secondary principals. This study also used 150 teachers to collect information about the school culture that existed at the principal's schools. Blackburn et al. found that secondary principal's conflict management styles and school culture were related in that gender played a role in how the school leader conflict style was perceived. They suggested leadership programs provide leaders with conflict training so they can better understand their preferred conflict styles. "When principals, regardless of gender, begin to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their conflict management styles and understand how it affects school culture, perhaps they will improve individually" (Blackburn et al, 2006, p. 249).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature pertaining to conflict found in education. It also examined the principal and teacher relationship and illustrated the importance the role the principal plays in establishing trust, positive relationships, and resolving conflict. Principal leadership was declared vital to a school's success and skills such as communication, consensus building, collaboration, and trust. The study of gender on conflict provided more questions; in every study that found a relationship between the two variables, another study contradicted the results. Therefore, it was the goal of this study to further examine the relationship between sex, years of administrative experience, years on current campus, or years of educational experience and the modes of conflict resolution utilized by principals when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This was an exploratory study of the mode of conflict resolution utilized by large school principals in Texas when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The methods chapter is divided into six subsections. First, the characteristics of the population and sample were fully described. Second, the research design was defined. Third, the procedures used to collect the data were detailed. Fourth, the instrument psychometric properties was clearly described. The *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* (2014), commonly referred to as the TKI, was used to measure the five modes of conflict principals utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. Fifth, the statistical methods utilized were discussed to evaluate the data. Sixth, limitations that occurred as a result of the study were described.

Population and Sample

The participants for this study came from the population of large school principals employed by Texas public school districts for the 2013-2014 school year. This information was provided by the Texas Education Agency; information about employed personnel was accessed through the Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource Web Site (2013). An open record request was submitted to the Texas Education Agency in order to obtain a detailed list of all principals in Texas. The open record request included information such as district name, principal's name, campus, campus address, campus phone number, county, region, lowest grade, highest grade, grade group, campus

enrollment, district address, district phone number, district enrollment, and superintendent's name. This study utilized a convenience sampling from all large school principals in Texas public schools. There are 1,247 school districts in the State of Texas (TEA, 2015). Of the 1,247 school districts, approximately 686 districts had populations of 1,000 students or more (TEA, 2015). The school districts were ranked according to population size and then contacted for permission to invite principals to volunteer in this study.

Each school district had their own process to request permission to contact principals. The method of application ranged from an email request to submission of an application. The length of time for approval ranged from a week to six months. Out of those districts granting permission to conduct the study, the secondary principals were invited to participate via mail/email of an informed consent form. All participants were assured personal information would not be shared and kept confidential. The districts that approved the research received an executive summary once the study was completed.

Research Design

This exploratory quantitative study sought to determine if there was a relationship between the modes of conflict resolution and a principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years of experience on current campus, or years of experience in education as measured by the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The general hypothesis is that sex, years of administrative experience, years of experience on their current campus, or years of experience in education are related and have a significant difference in the mode of conflict when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed as the basis for this study:

1. Is a principal's sex related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
2. Are a principal's years of administrative experience related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
3. Are a principal's years of experience on their current campus related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
4. Are a principal's years of experience in education related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?

Hypothesis

- H₀: There will be no relationship between the principal's sex and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.
- H₀: There will be no relationship between the principal's years of administrative experience and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.
- H₀: There will be no relationship between the principal's years of experience as a principal on their current campus and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.
- H₀: There will be no relationship between the principal's years of educational experience and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

Procedures

An application was made to the University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects before beginning the study (see Appendix A). Once the study was approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, the school districts with an enrollment of 1,000 students or more were contacted for permission to invite secondary principals to participate in the study.

Each school district had differing methods to request permission to conduct a research study within their district. For example, some of the smaller districts required an email or phone call to a higher-level administrator such as a superintendent designee. Conversely, larger districts required submission of written applications that were submitted to committees for review. The district approval process ranged from one week to six months. Districts approving the research study were assured an executive summary at the completion of the study.

The secondary principals from the approving districts were mailed/emailed a letter requesting their participation and a consent form (Appendix B & C). The consent form also included some basic biographic questions such as the principal's sex, number of years at current campus, in education, and as a principal. Principals were assured their information would be kept confidential throughout and after the completion of the study. The principals who returned a completed consent form were emailed a link to the TKI online assessment available through the CPP, Inc. web site. In an attempt to yield the highest percentages of population, the principals who participated in the study were given the option at the conclusion of the assessment to download their individual TKI scores on the five modes of conflict including a detailed description of each of the modes. Those

who had not completed the online assessment were contacted with a follow up reminder letter, email, and/or phone call.

Instrumentation

The TKI was used in this study to examine the relationship between the principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years of experience on current campus, years of educational experience, and mode of conflict resolution utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) created the TKI to assess an individual's behavior when dealing with a conflict situation. The TKI was originally published by XICOM, Inc. (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). In 2002, CPP (2013) provided the TKI in an online version; and as a result, the collection of larger amounts of data expanded the norm sample. The renorming was completed in 2007, which consists of data from 8,000 participants (CPP, 2013).

The TKI is made up of 30 paired statements, and each pair is related to one of the five conflict handling modes. There are 12 statements for each conflict-handling mode. The respondent must decide which one of the statements in each pair describes their behavior in a conflict situation. At the conclusion of the assessment, the conflict handling modes are circled on the instrument; a score for each mode can range from 0 to 12. A percentile chart is used to pinpoint the scores for each of the five modes into a low, middle, or high area. The range of the percentile scores are the following: low-25% or below, middle-25% to 75%, and high is 75% or above (Harding & Johnson, 2004). Table 1 indicates the updated ranges of scores on the TKI according to Schaubhut (2007).

Table 1

Conflict Management Mode Scores-Low, Middle, and High Usage

Style	Low	Middle	High
Competing	0-2	3-6	7-12
Collaborating	0-4	5-8	9-12
Compromising	0-5	6-9	10-12
Avoiding	0-4	5-7	8-12
Accommodating	0-3	4-6	7-12

(Schaubhut, 2007, p. 4)

Once the instrument was scored, participants were given additional questions that correspond with their specific high and low modes. These questions helped participants determine if there is an overutilization or underutilization of a specific mode of conflict. The goal was for the participants to understand their individual personal conflict mode of resolution and how they move from one mode to another according to the situation (Harding & Johnson, 2004). These data can assist supervisors to help employees understand conflict and provide insight on the mode of conflict that best fits the current situation (CPP, 2013).

Reliability

According to the Mental Measurements Yearbook, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of each conflict handling mode are the following: Accommodating=.43, Avoiding=.62, Compromising=.58, Collaborating=.65, and Competing=.71 (Harding & Johnson, 2004). The coefficients indicate "numerical coefficients of reliability" (Santos, 1999). The test-retest correlations measure for the TKI is .64 (Harding & Johnson, 2004). Thomas, Thomas & Schaubhut (2007) posited the TKI is best suited to the test-retest measure of reliability because of the format of the design. They described the test-retest reliabilities as follows: "competing 0.61, collaborating 0.63, compromising 0.66,

avoiding 0.68, and accommodating 0.62” (p. 153). They went on to add the scores on the TKI are ipsative as the results sum to a constant of 30.

Dillard (2005) supported the reliability of the TKI in her study, she found “the instrument’s substantive, structural, and external validity was tested in addition to comparing it to three other instruments which were designed to assess the same conflict-handling modes” (p. 28). “It [TKI] is the world’s best-selling instrument for understanding how different conflict-handling modes or styles affect personal and group dynamics and for learning how to select the most appropriate style for a given situation” (Corral-Carlson, 2008, p. 70). The TKI is suitable for use and has been used in similar studies (Abbott, 1994; Hanshaw, Williams-Black, Boyd, Jones, Love, & Thompson, 2010; Indelicato, 2005). Schaubhut (2007) states since the renorming of the TKT in 2007, researchers can be confident in the results obtained from the instrument from the general U.S. population.

Validity

A validity comparison of the TKI to the other three major conflict measurement instruments indicate a validity concern due to the “need to control for factors of social desirability” (Harding & Johnson, 2004, p. 5). The Mental Measurements Yearbook review of the TKI conducted by Harding and Johnson (2004) explain there was a 4% variance in the author’s report of validity as compared to the average of 80% variances of the other three assessments. They also found a 17% variance of the total scores on the five modes that are directly related to “social desirability” (Harding & Johnson, 2004, p. 5). However, the reviewers concluded the TKI has a limited value as a research tool in examining modes of conflict. The TKI can be effectively used to help employees quickly

understand how they react to conflict, and provide opportunities to examine explore alternative ways to resolve conflict in the workplace. This understanding can help principals, responsible for supervision of teachers, by providing them with awareness of how they approach and resolve principal-teacher conflict. Kilmann (2010) wrote “Jamieson and Thomas (1974)” and “Ruble and Thomas (1976)” created “two studies using two different designs” and “yielded rather consistent results supporting the two-dimensional model providing some construct validity for the meaningfulness of these two dimensions” (p. 10). In 2007, the TKI was renormed and the population was expanded to include 8,000 people (Schaubhut, 2007). The sample selected in the renorming consisted of 50.0% men and 50.0% women; participants selected also represented ethnic populations of the current work force. “TKI norms are applicable across age, ethnic groups, and gender, and work well at many organizational levels and across a broad range of occupational categories” (Schaubhut, 2007, p. 9).

Data Analysis

In order to answer research question one, the researcher utilized statistical descriptive statistics and in independent samples t-test. The descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the means of the modes of conflict selected by male and female principals. The independent samples t-test provided additional exploration in the significance in the means of the principal’s sex and mode of conflict selected when dealing with principal/teacher conflict.

In order to answer questions two through four, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was conducted to explore the relationship between the principal’s years of administrative experience, years on current campus, and years of educational experience

and the mode of conflict used when dealing with principal/teacher conflict. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was used to calculate the effect size. In addition, a significant value of 0.05 was used for this study.

Limitations of the Study

As with any study conducted, limitations were evident and should be considered. The data collected in participating districts may not have the ability to generalize the results to principals from other populations or states. Another limitation was the instrument reliability. The instrument used in this study was a self-reporting tool used to measure modes of conflict resolution. Harding and Johnson (2004) found that there was approximately 17% variance of the scores related to “social desirability”. Researchers cannot be sure how accurately the study participants will answer questions. In addition, the reliability of the instrument was a major concern; however, several studies have been conducted utilizing the TKI instrument. In addition, in 2007, the TKI was made available online and was renormed. The original norm group included 400 participants and did not accurately represent the diversity of the American workforce (Schaubhut, 2007). The new norm group of 8,000 participants came from a pool of 60,000; the selected group of participants provided a more accurate sample and better represents the workforce than the original group (Schaubhut, 2007).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between a principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years on current campus, and years of educational experience and a particular conflict mode of resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. Each of the participants in this study utilized the electronic *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE* (TKI) Instrument as well as responded to some demographic questions concerning sex, number of years as principal on their current campus, years of educational experience, and years of principal experience. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis for each of the research questions provided below.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

In this study, 65 school districts were contacted and permission was requested to invite secondary campus principals to participate in the study. Of the 65 districts, 26 school districts granted permission to allow contact of their secondary principals. Approximately 474 principals were invited to participate in the study. Fifty principals volunteered for the study and returned the Informed Consent form (see Appendix C). At the conclusion of the study, 39 principals completed the TKI Assessment. Table 2 details the sex of the participating principals. Male participants were in the majority as 53.8% (n=21) of the sample while female participants made up 46.2% (n=18) of the sample.

Table 2

Sex of the Participants

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Female	18	46.2
2. Male	21	53.8

An examination of Table 3 delineates the total number of years each participant had been employed as a campus principal. The results of the study indicate principals with 6-10 years of experience represented the highest percentage with 33% (n=13). It is also important to note the nearly even split of those with 15 or more years of experience of 23.08% (n=9) and those with 0-5 years of 25.64% (n=10).

Table 3

Total Number of Years as a Principal

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. 15 or more years	9	23.08
2. 11-15 years	7	17.95
3. 6-10 years	13	33.33
4. 0-5 years	10	25.64

A review of Table 4 indicates the number of years the participants had been employed as a campus principal at their respective campuses. The largest percentage of the group, 48.7% (n=19) had three to seven years experience. The second largest group had two years or fewer experience and represented 41.0% (n=16). Administrators with eight to 12 years experience at their current campus comprised 7.7% (n=3) of the sample. Finally, administrators with 13 or more years of experience comprised the smallest group, 2.6% (n=1).

Table 4

Number of Years as Principal at Current School

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. 13 years or more	1	2.6
2. 8-12 years	3	7.7
3. 3-7 years	19	48.7
4. 2 years or less	16	41.0

Table 5 illustrates the number of years the principal has been in education. The majority of the principals (92.3%, n=36) had been in education for 15 or more years. This indicates most of the principals are experienced in the field of education. As Table 6 indicates, most of the participants 33.3% (n=13) also lead campuses enrolling 500-999 students.

Table 5

Number of Years Principal has been in Education

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. 15 or more years	36	92.3
2. 11-14 years	2	5.1
3. 6-10 years	1	2.6

Table 6

Enrollment Sizes of Campuses

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. 2,500 Students or More	4	10.3
2. 2,000-2,499 Students	6	15.4
3. 1,500 to 1,999 Students	5	12.8
4. 1,000 to 1,499 Students	8	20.5
5. 500 to 999 Students	13	33.3
6. 500 Students or Less	3	7.7

Research Question One

Does a principal's sex influence the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?, was answered by conducting a statistical descriptive analysis and an independent samples t-test. The data provided an opportunity to further explore the role sex plays in mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The participants in the study were asked to take the TKI instrument online in order to measure their use of one of the five modes of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

The data in Table 7 shows the means for the competitive mode between the sexes. In the competitive mode (males = 3.714; females = 2.833) and the avoiding mode (males = 6.095; females = 5.500), males reported higher mean scores than did the females suggesting that males tend to utilize the avoiding mode of conflict more often than females. The avoiding mode is the least preferred mode of conflict because the conflict is not resolved but simply ignored. Females, however, reported higher means than males in

the collaborating (males = 6.286; females = 7.444), compromising (males = 8.143; females = 8.444), and accommodating (males = 5.762; females = 5.778) modes of conflict resolution. This finding suggests females tend to actively work to resolve conflicts. The collaborative mode is the most preferred mode of conflict resolution because the principal and teacher work together to resolve the conflict. The compromising mode is a “give and take” so both parties gain something in the resolution of the conflict. The accommodating mode is where the principal allows the teacher to win the conflict situation.

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation of Modes of Conflict Resolution Scores by Sex

Mode of Conflict	Sex	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Competing	Male	21	3.714	2.667
	Female	18	2.833	2.307
2. Collaborating	Male	21	6.286	1.901
	Female	18	7.444	1.381
3. Compromising	Male	21	8.143	2.330
	Female	18	8.444	1.423
4. Avoiding	Male	21	6.095	2.508
	Female	18	5.500	1.581
5. Accommodating	Male	21	5.762	3.177
	Female	18	5.778	1.353

A further investigation into the relationship between a principal’s sex and the mode of conflict he or she will use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict was explored by conducting an independent samples t-test for each of the five modes of conflict (see Table 8). The results of the independent t-test indicated a statistically

significant relationship exists between a principal's sex and the collaborating mode when dealing with principal-teacher conflict, $t(37) = -2.144$, $p = .039$, $d = .69$ (large effect size), $r^2 = .10$. Females reported higher mean scores ($M = 7.444$) than males ($M = 6.286$), suggesting females use the collaborative mode of conflict resolution more often than males. Approximately 10% of the variance in the principal's use of the collaborative mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict can be attributed to the principal's sex. However, the variables were not found to be related. The principal's sex and the competing, $t(37) = 1.093$, $p = .281$, compromising, $t(37) = -.495$, $p = .624$, avoiding, $t(37) = .869$, $p = .391$, and accommodating, $t(37) = 0.021$, $p = .984$, modes of conflict suggesting that whether a principal is a male or female does not influence their use of the competing, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating modes of conflict resolution.

Table 8

Independent Samples Test for each Conflict Mode

	t-value	df	p-value	d	r^2
1. Competing	1.093	37	.281	.352	.02
2. Collaborating	-2.144	37	.039*	.692	.10
3. Compromising	-.495	33.7	.624	.155	.00
4. Avoiding	.869	37	.391	.286	.01
5. Accommodating	-.021	27.9	.984	.008	.00

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

Research Question Two

Are a principal's years of administrative experience related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?, was answered by conducting a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) to determine if a relationship existed between a principal's years of administrative experience and the

mode of conflict they will use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The results of the statistical analysis are listed in Table 9. Results of the Pearson's r indicated there was not a statistically significant relationship between principal's years of administrative experience and the mode of conflict they will use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict: (a) Competing: $r = -.183$, $p = .265$, (b) Collaborative: $r = -.022$, $p = .813$, (c) Compromising: $r = -.152$, $p = .355$, (d) Avoiding: $r = .292$, $p = .072$, and (e) Accommodating: $r = .071$, $p = .668$. These results suggest a principal's years of administrative experience does not influence the mode of conflict they will use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict

Table 9

Years of Principal's Administrative Experience and Mode of Conflict

Mode of Conflict	N	r-value	p-value
1. Competing	39	-.183	.265
2. Collaborative	39	-.022	.813
3. Compromising	39	-.152	.355
4. Avoiding	39	.292	.072
5. Accommodating	39	.071	.668

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

Research Question Three

Are a principal's years of experience on their current campus related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?, was answered by was answered by conducting a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) to determine if a relationship existed between a principal's years of experience on his or her current campus and the mode of conflict they will use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict (see Table 10). Results of the Pearson's r indicated that there was a

statistically significant negative relationship between a principal's years of experience on his or her current campus and the use of the competitive mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict, $r = -.422$, $p = .007$, $r^2 = .178$. The more years a principal resides at a particular campus, the less likely they are to use "competition" as a way of resolving principal-teacher conflict. Approximately 18% of the variance in the use of competition as a mode of conflict can be attributed to the years of experience the principal has on his or her current campus. On the other hand, a statistically significant relationship was not found to exist between a principal's years of experience on his or her current campus and the use of: (a) Collaborative: $r = .039$, $p = .815$, (b) Compromising: $r = .070$, $p = .671$, (c) Avoiding: $r = .242$, $p = .137$, and (d) Accommodating: $r = .138$, $p = .403$, modes of conflict. These results suggest that the principal's tenure on their campus does not influence the use of the collaborative, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating modes of conflict when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

Table 10

Years of Principal's Years on Campus and Mode of Conflict

Mode of Conflict	N	r-value	p-value	r ²
1. Competing	39	-.422	.007*	.178
2. Collaborative	39	.039	.815	.001
3. Compromising	39	.070	.671	.000
4. Avoiding	39	.242	.137	.059
5. Accommodating	39	.138	.403	.019

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

Research Question Four

Are a principal's years of experience in education related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?, was answered by

conducting a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) determine if a relationship existed between a principal's years of educational experience and the mode of conflict they will use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The results of the statistical calculations are indicated in Table 11. The results of the Pearson's r indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between the principal's years of educational experience and the mode of conflict they use when dealing with principal-teacher conflict: (a) Competing: $r = -.009, p = .956$, (b) Collaborative: $r = -.018, p = .916$, (c) Compromising: $r = -.065, p = .693$, (d) Avoiding: $r = .190, p = .246$. The results indicate that a principal's years of educational experience do not influence the mode of conflict he or she will utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

Table 11

Years of Principal's Years of Experience in Education and Mode of Conflict

Mode of Conflict	N	r-value	p-value
1. Competing	39	-.009	.956
2. Collaborative	39	-.018	.916
3. Compromising	39	-.065	.693
4. Avoiding	39	.190	.246
5. Accommodating	39	-.091	.584

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

Conclusion

This chapter examined the relationship between a principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years of experience on their current campus, years of experience in education, and their respective mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. A descriptive and statistical analysis of the principal's sex and their mode of conflict was conducted on the data. The descriptive analysis indicated

males scored higher means than females on the competitive and avoiding modes of conflict. Females, however, scored higher means on the collaborating and compromising modes of conflict. Males and females scored nearly equal means on the accommodating mode. The statistical analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between sex and the collaborative mode of conflict.

An examination of the relationship of the principal's years of administrative experience and their modes of conflict revealed no relationships in the competing, compromising, and avoiding, collaborating and accommodating modes. Therefore, the principal's years as a principal did not influence the mode of conflict they used when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. On the other hand, the data correlation of the principal's number of years they have been on their campus and their modes of conflict resolution revealed varied outcomes. A medium relationship was evident in the use of the competing mode of conflict. The relationship was a negative one which indicated new principals were more likely to utilize the competing mode at the beginning of their tenure on campus. As they gained experience, they tended to rely less on this mode. Statistically significant relationships were revealed in the use of the collaborating, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding modes of conflict. Thus as the principal's years on campus does not influence the use of the collaborative, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating modes of conflict.

The investigation of the relationships between the numbers of years the principal has been in education and their use of the five modes of conflict revealed interesting findings. The statistical correlation analysis of the competing, collaborative, compromising, avoiding and accommodating modes indicated that there was no statistical

significant relationships between the principal's years in education and the mode of conflict. Therefore the principal's years of educational experience does not influence the mode of conflict they will utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. In the next chapter, the results will be discussed in greater detail as will the description of the limitations and implications for practitioners.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research. This study was completed during the summer of 2014. Twenty-six large school districts granted permission to invite secondary principals to participate in the study. Approximately 474 principals were contacted and invited to participate in the study; however, only fifty principals consented to participate. Consenting principals were given a link to the online *Thomas-Kilmann Instrument* (TKI), and 39 successfully completed it. The majority of the respondents were males (53.8%, $n=21$) with females 46.2% ($n=18$). The principals with 6-10 years of experience made up the highest percentage of the group (33%, $n=13$). The largest group of years experience on their current campus was 3-7 years (48.7%, $n=19$). Demographic information additionally indicated 93% ($n=36$) of principals had 15 or more years of experience in education.

This chapter describes the results of the quantitative data analysis of this study. The survey results of the TKI instrument were evaluated by examining the mode of conflict and the sex, years as a principal, years on current campus, and total number of years in education. This chapter concludes with recommendations to practitioners and recommendations for further research regarding the importance of conflict resolution in the educational setting.

Statement of Problem

As academic standards continue to increase, the expectations of Texas public schools are also increasing. Principals are responsible for ensuring students are prepared for high stakes testing and have mastered the State curriculum. Teachers are being asked to continually refine and increase the rigor of their teaching, while at the same time differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all the learners. This pressure translates into conflicts as the teachers remain focused on the achievement of their individual students and the principal must ensure all students are prepared for state assessments. The research indicated conflict must be effectively managed in order for the campus to become a high-achieving school. Although conflict resolution is a skill required of a principal, this type of training is not typically a part of the principal's training.

In addition, more women are entering the field of educational administration. There have been varied findings on how males and females approach conflict. Many studies have been conducted but provide contradictory findings. There is also a shortage of research on the relationship between a principal's tenure and their preferred modes of conflict when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between a principal's sex, years of administrative experience, years on current campus, and years of educational experience and particular mode of conflict resolution utilized by secondary principals in large schools in Texas when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Is a principal's sex related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
2. Are a principal's years of administrative experience related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
3. Are a principal's years of experience on their current campus related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?
4. Are a principal's years of experience in education related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict?

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mode of conflict secondary large school principals utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. This study examined the degree of the use of the five modes of conflict: avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, and collaboration when resolving principal-teacher conflict. The primary purpose of this study was to explore the role that sex, years as a principal, years as a principal on a current campus, and total number of years of educational experience have on the mode of conflict resolution utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict.

A statistical analysis of the data was conducted on each of the conflict modes. The results of the independent samples t-test indicated a strong, statistically significant relationship between the sex of the participant and the collaborative mode of conflict. A correlational analysis on the relationship between the principal's years of administrative experience and the competing, compromising, and avoiding mode of conflict indicated a

low to weak relationship; conversely, there were no relationships found in the collaborating and accommodating modes of conflict. Additional correlations were conducted on the number of years the principal has been on the campus and the modes of conflict selected when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The results of the analysis indicated a medium relationship in the competing mode of conflict. There was also a slight relationship in the collaborating, accommodating, and avoiding mode of conflict. No relationship was found in the use of the compromising mode of conflict and the number of years the principal has been on their campus.

The correlation of the principal's years of experience and the competing, collaborating, and compromising modes of conflict indicated no relationship. However, the results of the correlation between the number of years the principal has been in education and their preferred mode of conflict indicated a slight relationship in the avoiding and accommodating modes of conflict.

Research Question One

Research Question One explored whether there was a relationship between the principal's sex and the mode of conflict resolution utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The researcher's hypothesis stated there was no relationship between the principal's sex and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. However, the descriptive analysis of the principal's sex and their conflict mode score on the TKI instrument indicated males scored higher means than females in the competitive mode of conflict. Meanwhile, females scored higher means than males in the collaborative, compromising, and accommodating modes of conflict resolution. Additionally, using the statistical analysis of a t-test of independent further explored this

result by indicating a strong, statistically significant means relationship between sex and the collaborative mode of conflict.

The results of this study did not support the research conducted by Berry (1994), Corral-Carlson (2008), Dillard (2005), Indelicato (2011), Vestal (2011) and Shockley-Zabalak and Morely (1984). These researchers studied male and female leaders and found no significant differences existed between sex and the use of the modes of conflict. This study, however, indicated males utilized the competitive mode of conflict more often than females. Thomas, Thomas, and Schaubhut (2007) supported this finding with their research on employed men and women at six organizational levels. They attribute this to the combination of “personality, sex role socialization, and the enforcement of sex roles within organizations” (p. 160). Thomas et al. (2007) attributed this difference in the competitive mode to women not aggressively standing up for their interests in the workplace. They add that women were just as competitive with men when negotiating on another’s behalf; however, when negotiating for themselves, they scored lower. As a result, women receive less pay and fewer opportunities for advancement. Thomas et al. (2007) described this double standard regarding the use of competitive mode, stating “they [women] tend to be seen as competent but lacking social skills”, but on the other hand, “if they [women] are not competitive, they may be seen as more socially skilled, but lacking competence or leadership potential” (p. 63). The dilemma is becoming more evident in schools as more and more females are entering the field of educational leadership. The research findings support the need to further explore the role sex plays in the principal’s use of conflict. As stated previously, most prior research was conducted on males and then generalized to females.

Conversely, Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin (2004) researched undergraduate information science students. Their findings indicated mean scores for both males and females were not different, and therefore, no significant differences appeared between males and females. Branham et al. (2004) found women were no less competitive than men. Likewise, Sone (1981) studied graduate students in the college of business administration at a major southwestern university. Sone's (1981) results agreed that females were no less competitive than males in conflict resolution.

The competitive mode is considered to be highly assertive and uncooperative on the conflict-handling model (Thomas, 1992). The use of this mode indicates the principal is primarily concerned with their own needs above the needs of others. Leaders utilizing this mode tend to be more aggressive and not concerned with building relationships (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). This mode of resolving conflict is the least productive way to resolve conflicts. According to the research, this style can lead to a negative school climate, reduced morale, division among staff, and ultimately bring down the organization (Cook, 2007; Indelicato, 2005).

In terms of collaboration, the study results indicated a statistically significant mean difference between a principal's sex and than collaborating mode. More female principals utilized the collaborative mode of conflict than men. This finding supports research conducted by Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin (2004) on information science students enrolled at a midwestern university. Their research found female students were more collaborative than males. They concluded that females were more efficient at handling conflict than males; furthermore, understanding conflict modes of subordinates is important because using the wrong mode in a conflict situation can

cause “high stress, high turnover rates, and litigation that can ultimately undermine the overall health of the organization” (Brahnam et al., 2004, p. 204). The research findings supported female principals were more collaborative in their style of resolving conflict. Another factor to explore would be how male principals become more effective at resolving conflict and utilize the collaborative style more often to resolve the conflict.

As more females enter education leadership, they bring a different approach to conflict (Berry, 1994). By nature, females tend to be more nurturing in their leadership styles. This study supported these differences in that females scored higher means than males in the collaborative and compromising modes. The collaborative mode of conflict resolution is high on the assertive and cooperative scale. The collaborative mode is considered to be the most effective way of resolving conflict and provides both parties with a win-win (Cook, 2007; Goncalves, 2008; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Walters, 2008). In this study, the sample was nearly split equally between males and females. Therefore, this study attempted to truly explore the role sex plays in effectively resolving conflict.

The results of the descriptive analysis indicated, females utilized the compromising mode of conflict more often than males but this was not found to be statistically significant. This finding was supported by Chusmir and Mills (1987). Chusmir and Mills (1987) examined the conflict resolution behaviors of men and women both at work and at home. They found that low level and middle managers were more willing to compromise at work than at home. The compromising mode is the second best way to resolve conflicts. It includes a give and take style and produces a mini win-win resolution.

The descriptive analysis of the avoiding mode indicated men were higher than women in their use of the avoiding mode of conflict resolution. Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin (2004) in their research on undergraduate information science students, found the same results. The women in the study utilized the avoiding mode less often than their male counterparts. The avoiding mode is the least productive way to resolve a conflict. It is the lowest on the assertiveness and cooperativeness spectrum of the conflict-handling model (Thomas, 1992). In this style, the principal will not address the conflict with the hopes it will resolve itself. This is considered a lose-lose strategy. The conflict is not addressed and resolved and will most likely result in a hostile environment. In terms of resolving conflict, male principals who avoid the issue all together are not resolving the conflict. The unresolved conflict will continue to increase until it is effectively resolved. The avoidance simply makes the conflict escalate and according to research can be detrimental to an organization, school climate, social/working relationships and professional growth (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cook 2007; Indelicato, 2005). As the research indicated, unresolved conflict can wreck havoc on the organization. Some of the effects include high employee turnover rates, low morale, increased absenteeism due to stress, and health problems (Dana, 2001; Rahim, 1989; Walsh, 2005). As Walsh (2005) states, conflict does not go away on its own the principal is expected to resolve the conflict in order for the organization to flourish.

This study indicated male and female principals may be nearly identical in their use of the accommodating mode of conflict resolution. Females (5.78) were slightly higher than males (5.76). Sone (1981) researched female managers and found they were more likely to utilize the accommodating mode of conflict than their male counterparts

when dealing with conflicts. The accommodating mode of conflict involves giving up one's needs to the other party in order to resolve the conflict. This mode is used to help maintain harmonious relationship with others. This mode is high in the cooperativeness spectrum and low in the assertiveness spectrum of the conflict-handling mode (Thomas, 1992).

The research indicated females utilized the collaborative mode to resolve conflict than males more often than males. This collaborative style of leadership provides the teacher and the principal the opportunity to resolve conflict by working together on the solutions. It also provides the setting for collegial conversations and the opportunity to explore alternative ways to resolve conflict. The collaborative mode is the most preferred method of resolving conflict as it creates a win-win solution for both of the parties in a conflict (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, & Chin, 2004; Cook, 2007; Goncalves, 2008, Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Vestal, 2011; Walters, 2008).

Research Question Two

Research Question Two explored the relationship between the principal's years of administrative experience and the mode of conflict resolution they utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The researcher's hypothesis stated there was no relationship in principal's years of administrative experience and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. However, the quantitative analysis revealed a very low correlation in the competing, compromising, collaborative, and accommodating modes of conflict. A strong correlation did appear in the avoiding mode of conflict. This indicates principals with more experience are more likely to utilize the avoiding mode to resolve conflict. The avoiding mode is the least desirable mode of

resolving conflict. Avoiding the conflict is simply ignoring the conflict and taking no action to resolve the situation; and can result in a negative impact on the organization (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cook 2007; Indelicato, 2005).

The current research on the principal's educational experience is very limited, and the few studies conducted provided varied results (Barbuto, et al., 2007). The research findings were dissimilar with Drory and Ritov's (2007) findings that people with more experience tended to be more collaborative when resolving conflict. Vestal (2011), on the other hand, found principals were less likely to compromise and more likely to be competitive as years of experience increased. Drory and Ritov (1997) added that as experience increased, managers became more accommodating for fear of being perceived as disrespectful.

On the contrary, Berry (1994) studied principals in Missouri and found experience did not influence administrator's choices of conflict. Berry (1994) indicated this finding could be a result of more rigorous educational requirements for principals. Indelicato (2005) in the same way agrees there was no relationship evident between a principal's administrative experience and modes of conflict. This can be attributed to the principal's use of best conflict resolving practices gained from prior experience, training, or professional development.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three examined the relationship between a principal's years of experience on their current campus and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The researcher's hypothesis stated there was no relationship between the principal's years of experience on their current campus and the

mode of conflict resolution utilized when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The results of the correlation of the participant's years on campus with the scores on the TKI instrument was conducted and determined no indicators of correlation in the compromising mode. In addition, a low correlation was indicated in the collaborative, avoiding, and accommodating modes of conflict. However, a moderate correlation was discovered in the competing mode of conflict; this result did not support the hypothesis. Vestal (2011) found principals were more likely to show a preference for the competing mode as a means to resolve conflict as they gained experience.

The results of the no to low correlation in the compromising, collaboration, avoiding, and accommodating modes were supported by Indelicato (2005). He studied principals from Title 1 schools in Texas. His research indicated there was no relationship between years as a principal on a campus and mode of conflict resolution. Berry (1994) in the same way agreed that years of experience did not have an impact on the principal's conflict modes of resolution and adds this is "attributed to the increased educational requirements for school leadership roles and the demand for skills and expertise" (p. 75). Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin, and Marx (2007) also found leaders with more experience were rated higher for transformational leadership. They described transformational leaders as visionaries, relationship builders, creative thinkers, and inspirational leaders.

The competing mode analysis revealed contrary results to current research. The correlational analysis indicated a moderate relationship. These results indicated a principal's time at a campus increased, they were slightly more likely to utilize the competing mode of conflict resolution. The competing mode can best be described by a concern with one's own needs and wants with no regard for others. It is high on

assertiveness and low on the cooperativeness spectrum of the conflict handling model (Thomas, 1992). The competitive mode resolution is used in situations such as emergencies, quick deadlines, change implementation, and with staff who do not have a vested interest in the organization (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004). This finding was a concern to the researcher, because the use of the competitive mode is not considered one of the most effective ways to resolve conflict. It is considered to be ineffective because it does not resolve conflict; instead, it simply dictates or threatens a resolution to the other parties in the conflict (DeTurk, 2010). This authoritarian style of leadership can significantly reduce morale and suppress creative thinking and can be detrimental to the organization (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cook 2007; Indelicato, 2005; Thomas et al., 2007).

Research Question Four

Research Question Four inquired into the principal's years of experience in education related to the mode of conflict resolution they utilize when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The researcher's hypothesis stated there was no relationship between the principal's years of educational experience and the mode of conflict resolution when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The statistical analysis produced no indicators of correlation in the competing, collaborative, and compromising modes of conflict. The accommodating mode had a very small correlation thus indicating little to no variance of the four modes could be explained by the principal's years of experience in education. The avoiding mode showed a slightly higher proportion of variance that indicated a slight correlation to the years of experience in education. These findings were supported by Vestal (2011) in his research on small school principals in Texas; he determined experience in education did not have a significant predictive effect on the

modes of conflict utilized by principals when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. Berry (1994) also found no relationships between experience and conflict styles and related this finding to the higher standards and skill requirements for administrative requirements in Missouri.

On the contrary, Drory and Ritov (1997) in their research of work experience and conflict resolution, found variances in the accommodating, collaborating, and competing modes of conflict. They found the accommodating mode was used more frequently among more experienced participants in their study; in contrast, the experienced participants utilized collaborating and competing modes less frequently. They found that as participants become more acclimated with the organization, they recognized their success depends on their relationship with their superiors, and they worked to not get in the way of their opponent's goals. "Experienced subjects may expect a powerful opponent to consider such behavior as competitive, disrespectful, and undesirable as far as his or her own pursuit of goal attainment is concerned" (Drory & Ritov, 1997, p. 157).

Implications for Practitioners

The findings of this research study will help educational leaders gain a better understanding of the how conflict can be utilized to bring about change in education. The major implications for practitioners are the following:

- Awareness that conflict is not necessarily bad for an organization and can bring about changes to an organization.
- Understanding/managing conflict is vital to an organization because unmanaged conflict can cause destruction to the organization.

- Adding conflict resolution training to principal preparation programs can reduce principal burnout.
- Awareness that males and females approach conflict differently.

Awareness that conflict is not necessarily bad for an organization and can bring about changes to an organization. As educators, we need to reexamine the role conflict plays in education. Conflict is a natural occurrence where two parties have different goals. Conflict provides the opportunity to have great conversations between the two parties. Many times through this dialogue, relationships can be repaired and made stronger. This study has changed the researcher's bias because of the examination of conflict and the benefits to an organization. At the beginning of the study, the researcher assumed that conflict was detrimental to an organization (Cook, 2007; Foley, 2001; Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2001; Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009). At the conclusion of the study, the benefits to conflict were revealed and multiple examples of how school leaders with effective conflict resolution skills were able to make leaps in student achievement. Educational leaders have the talent, skills, and knowledge needed to resolve conflict— with conflict resolution training they can be more effective at managing conflict and using it to improve schools (Bierwith, 2010; Crawford & Bodine, 1996; DiPaola & Hoy, 2001; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Murphy 1994).

Understanding/managing conflict is vital to an organization because unmanaged conflict can cause destruction to the organization. As the literature indicated, conflict can provide the answer to meet the ever increasing standards, however, it must be effectively managed. Principals who are not able to manage conflict effectively are leaving the field

of education (Brock & Grady, 2002; Price, 2012). This burnout causes a shortage of capable, talented, and experienced leaders who with formal conflict resolution training may have been able to stem the conflict (Eckman, 2004; Price, 2011). Schools with unmanaged conflict have high teacher turnover rates, low morale, high absenteeism, and a poor school climate (Kormanski, 2005; Lang, 2009). The ultimate victims of a dysfunctional campus, unfortunately, are the students. They are most significantly impacted because they must meet standards for graduation. If they miss access to quality first-time instruction, they may fall behind, costing years of remediation to fill the gaps in their instruction.

Adding conflict resolution training to principal preparation programs can reduce principal burnout. The findings of this study indicated there has not been a major inclusion of conflict resolution in principal preparation programs (Anderson, 2005; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Corral-Carlson, 2008; Donaldson et al., 2005; Kajs et al., 2002; Lang, 2009; Mackenzie & Ackerman, 2009). Much of the success found in conflict resolution in education can be attributed to the principal's interpersonal skills (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Indelicato, 2005; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Meadows, 2007). These skills for the most part are inherent in the principal's personality. Resolving conflict can be taught through formal conflict resolution training (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Crawford & Bodine, 1996; Duetsch, 1973; Folger, 2001; Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Indelicato, 2005). If top school leaders recognized the value of formal conflict resolution training, they would be able to retain highly qualified principals and reduce principal burnout (Brock & Grady, 2002; Price, 2012).

Principals need to receive formal conflict resolution training as part of their preservice training. If principals are taught what conflict is and how it can be effectively managed to improve a school, they may be less likely to avoid conflict. As the research found, managed conflict holds the key to high performing organizations. In fact, conflict has played such a large role in the business world that it has been included in business training programs throughout the country. Conflict should not be avoided; instead, it should be embraced for needed changes in schools. Teachers want a voice in decision making, and principals can create the environment for rich collegial conversations designed to resolve conflict and develop new ways to help students meet higher standards.

As principals become more proficient at conflict resolution, they will also become more skilled in knowing when to utilize a mode of conflict to best resolve the issue. As the study revealed, some modes of conflict are more effective in certain situations. For example, if one party in the conflict is extremely upset, the avoiding mode would be more appropriate. In addition, if there is an emergency situation, then the competitive mode is best suited since directives must be clear and concise. The knowledge of the best use of the five modes of conflict can further help the principal prepare for conversations with the teacher and become more proactive and less reactive.

Awareness that males and females approach conflict differently. The researcher began the study with the biases that all principals were highly effective at conflict resolution, and that the sex of the principal did not play a role in the resolution of the conflict. It also allowed the researcher to understand how sex plays a role in the management of conflict. At the beginning of this study, the research on the conflict

management styles of male and female school principals was very limited, and a great deal of the theories have been generalized to females in management positions (Berry, 1994; Blackburn et al., 2006; Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Eckman, 2003; Indelicato, 2005; Shockley-Zabalak, 1981; Vestal, 2011).

The results of this study indicated female leaders tended to be more collaborative than males (Blackburn et al., 2006; Brahnham, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin, 2005; Margavio et al., 2004). As more females enter the field of educational leadership, it is important to explore how each of the sexes resolved conflict (Berry, 1994; Dillard, 2005). The results of this study add to the research on the comparison of the male and female conflict resolution behaviors in education. Why are females more likely to utilize the collaborative mode of conflict resolution than males? How can we help everyone become more proficient in the use of the preferred mode of conflict resolution? School leaders have the ability to implement conflict training for principals in their districts. If principals are trained on the collaborative style of conflict resolution, they will be less likely to avoid resolving conflict. The collaborative style of conflict incorporates norms and structures to facilitate open and honest conversations between two opposing parties. These types of conversations can bring in new ideas of improving the school and achieving higher student success.

Recommendations for Future Research

As a result of this study, the following areas of future research are suggested:

1. A longitudinal study on two groups of new principals in a large school district. One group, the control group, would receive formal conflict resolution training; the other would not receive the training. A follow-up session after three years would bring back the two groups to review their experiences with

conflict. This study would provide a closer examination of the benefits of formal conflict resolution. The longitudinal study would provide data on the number of conflicts, school climate, and academic achievement. If the research is correct, the principal with the conflict resolution training would have less conflicts and an improved school climate that fosters open dialogues and clear norms for conflict resolution. This type of study would provide educational leaders with the opportunity to measure the impact of conflict resolution training on a campus. It would provide a comparison of two similar schools and could track the numbers of conflict situations and also the impact of the conflict on the school climate. The most significant impact would be the academic success rates between the two campuses. The bottom line is student success and if conflict is a potential for academic success, this should be evident in the results of the study.

2. A study of the conflict behaviors of principals, which would also include feedback from superiors and subordinates directly involved in conflict situations with the principal. The superiors would have the opportunity to consider teacher complaints, observations, and appraisals. The subordinates would have the ability to provide feedback to the principal on the conflicts occurring on campus. They would help the principal gauge their effectiveness at resolving conflict and with this feedback could seek out additional conflict training as needed. This type of two-way vertical feedback would provide a principal instant feedback necessary to improve their leadership and establish a collegial collaborative campus. The results of this study would allow a

detailed consideration of the principal's conflict resolution behaviors. The constant feedback would be given to the principal in order to self-reflect and refine their individual conflict resolution behaviors. This on the job conflict resolution training is very practical because each conflict would give the principal practical situations to consider in order to most effectively resolve the conflict.

3. A study of the modes of conflict utilized in large elementary, junior high, and high school principals split evenly between males and females in urban Texas schools. This type of study would provide an insight on how male and female urban school principals approach conflict resolution. Urban schools are known for high student population, at-risk, and mobility rates and like all schools are challenged to meet high academic achievement standards. This study might provide a more level playing field in the challenges faced by urban principals. In addition, some of the research stated conflict resolution programs are found in urban schools. If conflict resolution programs are used in the schools, the teachers and principal might have more opportunities to learn about how to formally resolve conflict. This type of study would be an ideal opportunity to examine principals in very similar environments to examine the role conflict plays in their organization. This type of study filters out the differences of past studies conducted in rural and suburban schools and targets only the urban school. This type of study would significantly reduce the variability across the districts in the state.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between the independent variables: sex, years of administrative experience, years on current campus, and years of educational experience; and the dependent variables: modes of conflict resolution--competitive, collaborative, compromising, accommodating and avoiding utilized by principals when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. The results of the quantitative research indicated there were differences between the conflict management styles of males and females.

Females were more likely to utilize the collaborative modes of conflict. The collaborative mode of conflict resolution was the most effective in terms of resolving conflict; it involves the two parties working together to develop a solution to the conflict. This led the researcher to consider female principals may be more effective at resolving conflict than males. Another question is why are females more collaborative than males? Is this due to nature, societal expectations, or simply a gender specific trait?

The results of this study provided additional data on how principals approached conflict. These results varied from many of the previous studies but overall the findings were similar. Conflict plays a large role in the life of a campus principal. No matter what the sex of the principal, years of experience, or time on campus, the principal will work to resolve the conflict. The key is whether or not the conflict is effectively managed for the good of the school. The prior research clearly indicated principals do not typically receive conflict resolution training, and their ability to resolve conflict relies primarily on their interpersonal skills. These skills then provide the principal with the tools to get by; however, the study also revealed conflict is very complicated.

Prior research also showed conflict is often considered negative for a school, but it can be used to improve a school. With the absence of formal conflict resolution training, principals may lack the skills to manage conflict to transform schools into high performers. It is the belief of the researcher that principals need this training to meet the ever-increasing academic standards. As the new generation of teachers enters the workforce, they are collaborative by nature, and want a voice on their campus. This prior research indicates the principal will need to create an environment that will allow teachers to have a voice as well as establish norms on how to effectively resolve conflicts. The research showed principals skilled at managing conflict had higher performing campuses. Educational leaders need to consider the role conflict plays in the lives of their principals and provide them with the skills they need to effectively manage conflict. If schools are going to improve and become high performing organizations, the power of conflict must be acknowledged and embraced. Additionally, principals must be equipped with tools to harness conflict as a driver for school improvement.

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APPENDIX A

EXPLANATION AND INVITATION TO PRINCIPALS

APPENDIX A

EXPLANATION AND INVITATION TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Campus Principal:

My name is Doreen Martinez and I am a graduate student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. I have been given permission to invite you to participate in the study I am conducting as a part of my doctoral requirements. The study is titled "An Investigation of the Modes of Conflict Utilized by Large School Principals." My study investigates the modes of conflict utilized by secondary principals when dealing with principal-teacher conflict. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate in the study, you will not be identified by name or district.

If you agree to participate in the study, all I will need is the return of pages 3 and 4 of the enclosed Informed Consent form. Once the completed forms have been returned, you will be sent an email with a user ID, password, and the link to the Thomas Kilmann Instrument Conflict Mode (TKI) online assessment. The TKI assessment takes approximately 15 minutes or less to complete. The TKI Assessment is made up of 30-paired statements you will consider when dealing with principal-teacher conflicts. At the conclusion of the assessment, you will be given the opportunity to view and download your results. This report will provide you with a detailed explanation of the modes of conflict and suggested uses of each mode for various conflict situations. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX, or by email at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Doreen Martinez
UH-CL Doctoral Student

Dissertation Committee:

Felix Simieou, PhD Committee Chair Associate Professor University of Houston-Clear Lake	Lawrence Kajs, EdD Professor University of Houston-Clear Lake	Bryan Morgan, EdD Director Planning and Assessment University of Houston-Clear Lake	Bettye Grigsby, PhD Associate Professor University of Houston-Clear Lake
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APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully, and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: An Investigation of the modes of conflict utilized by large school principals

Student Investigator(s): Doreen Martinez
Faculty Sponsor: Felix Simieou, Ph.D.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to add information to the current body of knowledge concerning conflict in schools. As history has indicated, state accountability standards are continuing to increase, shared collaborative decision-making is becoming more prevalent in schools, and teachers are becoming more empowered. These factors blend together to create an educational setting that is ripe with conflict. Research has shown that in order for an organization to flourish, conflict must be effectively managed. Unresolved conflicts can destroy an organization, negatively impact morale, and cause principal burnout. In addition, more women are entering the field of educational administration; and, it is important to understand how female principals approach principal/teacher conflict. There are numerous studies on conflict in the workplace and different types of conflict; in contrast, there are very few studies exploring the relationship of conflict and gender of school administrators. There is also a great deal of information about conflict in schools; yet, the majority of research focuses on student conflicts and conflict resolution in schools. This study will focus on the preferred mode of conflict principals utilize when dealing with principal/teacher conflicts in large schools in Texas. It will also seek to determine if conflict modes can be predicted based on gender and years of educational experience.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures are as follows: The participants for this study will come from the population of large school principals employed by Texas public school districts for the 2013-2014 school year. This information will be provided by the Texas Education Agency; information about employed personnel can be accessed through the Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource Web Site. The study will utilize a purposeful sample of secondary administrators from around the state of Texas.

This study will explore the relationship of the independent variables--gender and years of educational experience; and the dependent variables--the mode of conflict utilized by principals. There are five possible modes the principal can select when dealing with teacher conflict (competing, compromise, collaboration, avoidance, and accommodating).

Participants choosing to participate will be emailed the link to the TKI MODE online assessment available through the CPP, Inc. web site.

EXPECTED DURATION

The total anticipated time commitment would be approximately 15 minutes.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) better understand the mode of conflict utilized by large school principals when dealing with principal/teacher conflict; an awareness of the five modes of conflict; opportunity to select the most appropriate mode when dealing with principal/teacher conflict; leadership development; reduced principal burnout; improved school climate; and reduced stress.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Data will be safeguarded throughout the study. Participants will be assured their personal information will not be published. The researcher will work with CPP, Inc. by providing the participants with a unique identifier that will further protect their identity when taking the TKI MODE online assessment. Only the researcher and dissertation chair will have access to data. The names of the participants agreeing to participate will only be kept to send follow up reminders to participants to complete the online assessment. Once the participants have completed the study, their personal information will be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, Doreen Martinez, at phone number [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. The Faculty Sponsor Felix Simieou, Ph.D., University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston, TX 77058 may be contacted at phone number [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED].

PRINCIPAL'S INFORMATION*
(Please Print)

First Name:

Last Name:

Email Address:

Sex: Male Female

Number of years as principal at current school:

Number of years in the field of education:

Total number of years as principal:

Current Campus:

Current District:

Phone:

*Personal information is confidential; you will not be identified by name.

Printed name and title: Doreen Martinez, UHCL Doctoral Student Researcher _____ Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ Date: _____ March 31, 2014 _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE # FWA00004068)

APPENDIX C

APPROVAL FROM INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD

APPENDIX C

APPROVAL FROM INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD



University
of Houston
Clear Lake

**COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
EXPEDITED REVIEW APPROVAL FORM**

2700 Bay Area Blvd.
Houston, TX 77058-1098
281.283.3015 FAX 281.283.2143

CPHS REVIEW DATE: 2-4-14

DATE: February 2014

TITLE: An Investigation of the modes of conflict utilized by large school principals

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Doreen Martinez

IDENTIFY TYPE OF RISK FOR PROPOSAL STUDY.
IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE RESEARCH CATEGORY # FROM FEDERAL
GUIDELINES.
PLACE AN "X" BESIDE ONE TYPE OF RISK.

"X"	Type of risk	Research Category #	Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)	CPHS School Representative's Action
	1. Exempt		45 CFR 46.101 (b) (1) – (6). See Appendix 1.	Review and notify PI or Faculty Sponsor of exempt status; cc: Ofc. of Sponsored Programs [REDACTED].
X	2. <u>Minimum Risk:</u> Research involves minimal risk AND is found on list of allowable research	7, Survey Data	45 CFR 46.110 (a) "list of categories" and 46.110 (b). See Appendices 2 & 3.	Review and notify PI or Faculty Sponsor of review status; cc: Ofc. of Sponsored Programs [REDACTED].

	3. <u>Minimum Risk:</u> involves minimal risk but is not on list of allowable research for expedited review		45 CFR 46, Common Rule	Forward to Ofc. of Sponsored Programs [REDACTED] to coordinate a meeting for full CPHS review.
	4. <u>Above Minimum Risk</u>		45 CFR 46, Common Rule	Forward to Ofc. of Sponsored Programs [REDACTED] to coordinate a meeting for full CPHS review.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE THIS FORM TO STUDENTS.

Faculty Sponsor informs student of recommendation by CPHS rep.



University
of Houston
Clear Lake

**COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
EXPEDITED REVIEW APPROVAL FORM**

2700 Bay Area Blvd.
Houston, TX 77058-1098
281.283.3015 FAX 281.283.2143

SECTION B.

PLACE AN "X" BESIDE EACH OF THE 4 ITEMS BELOW, OR EXPLAIN THE ISSUE IN THE REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATION SECTION BELOW.

"X"	THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:
x	Risks have been minimized and are reasonable in relation to expected benefit of research.
x	Selection of subjects is equitable with safeguards for protecting the rights and welfare of vulnerable subjects.
x	A proper informed consent document is present.
x	Protection of privacy has been assured via a process to safeguard the data.

SECTION C.

PLACE AN "X" BESIDE ONE RECOMMENDATION.

"X"	REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATION
X	1. Approve
	2. Conditional Approval. Need to submit modification(s):

	3. Call a full CPHS meeting for one of the following reasons:
	a. Above Minimum Risk
	b. Minimum Risk but not on allowable "list of categories" for expedited review
	c. Disapproved under expedited review.
	<i>Provide any additional information:</i>
	d. There are unresolved issues to be addressed.
	<i>Provide any additional explanation:</i>
	4. Reject as submitted.
	<i>Provide explanation:</i>

APPENDIX D

CPP, INC. PERMISSION TO USE SAMPLE ITEMS

APPENDIX D

CPP, INC. PERMISSION TO USE SAMPLE ITEMS

CPP Permission Number 19372



Sample Item Request Form

Date March 24, 2014

Name [Redacted]

Address [Redacted]

Telephone Number [Redacted] Fax Number [Redacted]

Email Address [Redacted] CPP Customer Number [Redacted]

Specific title, form, and edition of the instrument for which sample items are needed: (TKI) Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Sample items will be published in: Dissertation Thesis Research Project Other

Title of Project or Article or Publication An Investigation of the Modes of Conflict Utilized By Large School Principals
Terms and Conditions for Research Use

If permission is granted by CPP, Inc. ("CPP") the following terms and conditions will apply:

1. CPP will issue pre-selected sample items for the assessment requested. Only these sample items may be used.
2. Permission is limited to only the one-time use specifically described above.
3. You agree to use a credit line supplied by CPP whenever sample items appear.
4. This permission does not include any commercial or for-profit use of the sample items.
5. There is no fee associated with this permission.
6. You assume responsibility for any misuse of the sample items you use pursuant to this agreement. CPP shall not be responsible for your use or misuse of the sample items.
7. You agree that the sample items as provided by CPP and used by you pursuant to this agreement remain the property of CPP.
8. You agree not to adapt, modify, translate, alter, or change the sample items in any way.

[Redacted] described above and agree to the terms outlined above for such research use:
Date 3/24/14

[Redacted] above for the [Redacted].
CPP Authorized Signature [Redacted]
Date MARCH 25, 2014

APPENDIX E
SAMPLE ITEMS

APPENDIX E
SAMPLE ITEMS

Sample Items

From the

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

By Kenneth W. Thomas & Ralph H. Kilmann

Instructions: Consider situations in which find your wishes differing from those of another person. How do you usually respond to such situations? On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair, please circle the “A” or “B” statement which is most characteristic of your own behavior. In many cases, neither “A” nor the “B” statement may be very typical of your behavior, but please select the response which you would be more likely to use.

8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
 B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
15. A. I might try to soothe other other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.
 B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.
26. A. I propose a middle ground.
 B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.

From the *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* by Kenneth W. Thomas & Ralph H. Kilmann. Copyright 1974, 2002, 2007 by CPP, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction is prohibited without the Publisher’s written consent.

You may change the format of these items to your needs, but the wording may not be altered. You may not present these items to your readers as any kind of “mini-assessment.” This permission only allows you to use these copyrighted items as an illustrative sample of items from this instrument. We have provided these items as samples so that we may maintain control over which items appear in publisher media. This avoids an entire instrument appearing at once or in segments which may be pieced together to form a working instrument, protecting the validity and reliability for the instrument. Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX F

APPROVAL TO USE FIGURES

APPENDIX F
APPROVAL TO USE FIGURES

Sunday, October 18, 2015 at 3:46:05 PM Central Daylight Time

Subject: Re: Permissions Request
Date: Friday, October 16, 2015 at 11:02:17 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Customer Service
To: [REDACTED]

Type your response ABOVE THIS LINE to reply

Microsoft Office User
Subject: Permissions Request

OCT 16, 2015 | 04:01PM UTC
Joshua Johnston replied:

Hi Doreen,

Thank you for your email. Your permission request has been approved by the editor. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance. Thank you and have a great weekend!

Joshua Johnston
e: [REDACTED]

How satisfied were you with the resolution we provided today?

[Poor](#) | [Fair](#) | [Good](#) | [Great](#)

OCT 12, 2015 | 05:33PM UTC
Original message

Microsoft wrote:

Hello,

My name is Doreen Martinez and I am a doctoral student with the University of Houston-Clear Lake. My dissertation topic is AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MODES OF CONFLICT UTILIZED BY LARGE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS. I would like to please request permission to include the "Ohio State Leadership Quadrant" in my paper. The image is attached. This image came from "A Leadership Theory for Educational Administrators" by K. H. Blanchard and P. Hersey. The article came from the Education Journal. The complete citation is

The Ohio State Leadership Quadrants. Adapted from "A leadership theory for educational administrators," by K. H. Blanchard and P. Hersey, 2001, Education, 90(4), p. 303-310. Copyright 2001 by the Project Innovation, Inc.

Thank you,

Doreen Martinez
Doctoral Student

This message was sent to [REDACTED]

Sunday, October 18, 2015 at 3:51:05 PM Central Daylight Time

Subject: FW: Permissions Request
Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 3:16:43 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Chris Tutill
To: [REDACTED]

Dear Doreen,

Thank you for your email.

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Chris Tutill and I am the Rights Assistant here at Emerald.

With regards to your request, providing that the figure is fully referenced and gives credit to the original publication, Emerald is happy for you to include it in your study.

Please note that should you wish to republish the figure elsewhere (i.e. for commercial purposes/in a journal, etc.), you will need to clear permission once more.

I wish you the best of luck with your work.

Kind Regards,

Chris Tutill
Rights Assistant | Emerald Group Publishing Limited



P Please consider the environment before printing this email

From: Microsoft Office User [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 October 2015 18:51
To: Permissions
Subject: Permissions Request

Hello,

I am about to complete my doctoral conflict study, and I would like to know how may I please request permission to include graph on the five conflict styles? This came from page 150 of the article titled "Conflict Styles of Men and Women at Six Organization Levels."

The complete citation is:

"Conflict Styles of Men and Women at Six Organizational Levels," by K.W. Thomas, G.F. Thomas, and N. Shaubhut, 2007, International Journal of Conflict Management, 19(2), p.150.

I have included the image I would like to include. I feel this image would greatly help my readers understand the 5 modes.

Thank you,

Doreen Martinez

RÉSUMÉ

Doreen Martinez

Education

Doctoral Program-Educational Leadership with Superintendent Specialization
University of Houston-Clear Lake, Houston, TX 2008-2015-Overall 3.86 GPA
Dissertation Topic: “An Investigation of the Modes of Conflict Utilized by Large School Principals”

Master of Science-Educational Technology
University of Houston-Clear Lake, Houston, TX 1999

Bachelor of Arts-Historical Studies

University of Houston-Clear Lake, Houston, TX 1989

Honors and Awards

Servant Leader Scholar (SLICE) Silver Award
Student Leadership, Involvement and Community Engagement (SLICE)-UH-CL
Chapter, Houston, TX 2012

President’s Volunteer Service Bronze Award
Corporation for National and Community Service, Points of Light Institute, Washington,
DC 2012

National Excellence in Leadership Award
National Society of Leadership and Success-UH-CL Chapter, Houston, TX 2011

Servant Leader Scholar (SLICE) Bronze Award
Student Leadership, Involvement and Community Engagement (SLICE)-UH-CL
Chapter, Houston TX 2011

Professional Affiliations

- Presidential Member of the University of Houston-Clear Lake Chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success-Sigma Alpha Pi
 - Member of Student Leadership, Involvement and Community Engagement (SLICE)
 - Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP)
 - Texas Council of Women School Executives (TCWSE)
 - Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)
 - Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA)
-

