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The Confidence to Engage: Conflict Engagement Styles of Academic and Student Affairs Deans in a Large, Midwestern State College and University System

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The Confidence to Engage: Conflict Engagement Styles of Academic and Student

Affairs Deans in a large, Midwestern State College and University System

By

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Deans in a large, Midwestern State College and University System

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This dissertation has been examined and approved by the following members of the
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Abstract

Conflict engagement is an integral part of higher education. Academic and student affairs deans are certainly no exception to this concept. This study examines reported conflict approaches of academic and student affairs deans in a large Midwestern state college and university system using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). There are four hypotheses of the study. The first was that academic and student affairs deans at four-year universities would report a *compromising* style. The second was that academic and student affairs deans at two-year community and technical colleges would report an *integrating* style. The third was that male deans would report a *dominating* style. Finally, the fourth was that female deans would report an *obliging* style. The study finds that training (both formal and informal) is prevalent within the system and that there tends to be a significant reported tendency of an *integrative* style.

Acknowledgements

This process from beginning to end has been a period of small victories and sacrifices. Finishing this journey could not have been possible without many special individuals. It is important to remember that we can do much on our own, but there are times when we need that extra bit of support to really help us achieve great things.

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Finally, I owe immeasurable thanks to my family, especially my incredible wife and awesome boys. To my wife, Heather, you have given me unending support. You encouraged me to write and research even when I did not always feel like it. To William and Henry, thank you for inspiring me. I want you boys to understand the importance of higher education in shaping you to be good, caring, and wise men. I love you all.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Conflict is a part of every person's life. People must choose effective paths on navigating conflict in the hope of finding a potential resolution. This possibility of resolution must be approached with caution. Resolution is not inevitable. This can be for many reasons. It might be that individuals do not want a resolution for fear that it may feel too shallow of a goal, or they might not even think of themselves as being in a conflict (Mayer, 2004).

The study of conflict resolution implies a conceived ending in which all parties involved agree that matters have been resolved (Simerly, 1998). The term *conflict management* has been used to better characterize an approach to conflict that understands the recurring nature of it (Simerly, 1998). This concept can be further refined to *conflict engagement* in which a more holistic view of the conflict process is considered. While resolution is often desired, engagement does not carry this implied connotation as being automatic.

There are numerous identified sources of conflict. Many individuals that experience conflict understand that concepts like communication, emotions, and history are present. However, it might not be fully realized how these items shape and potentially perpetuate the conflict. Mayer's (2000) *Wheel of Conflict* (see Figure 1) provides a logical guide to individuals studying the field of conflict so that the sources of conflict can be conceptualized.

The segments of the wheel are split between five outer categories and one central category. The outer sources of conflict are c*ommunication, emotions, history, structure,* and *values,* with *needs* representing the center of the wheel (Mayer, 2000). Mayer's design for this framework illustrates that the central needs must be addressed in some way in order for conflict to be transformed or resolved. The outer five sources might only have one or all of them present in a given conflict, but needs are always present. Having this framework about conflict makes it possible to better analyze what source is contributing to parties engaging in conflict.

It is additionally important to understand how individuals tend to approach conflict. Although some cultures approach conflict from an individualist (Western) perspective and others a collectivist (Eastern) viewpoint (Cai & Fink, 2002) (Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson, & Villareal, 1997), each person tends to develop certain tendencies as to how he/she engages in conflict. Rahim's (2001) five-style model provides one useful framework through which to view the fundamentals of conflict. This model draws on the concept that concern is a factor when in a conflict situation. This can be illustrated as concern for self but also relative concern for the other in the conflict (see Figure 2).   These traits are *dominating, avoiding, obliging, compromising,* and *integrating* (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). It is possible that a person may exhibit many of the conflict approaches, but often a person tends to gravitate toward one or potentially two different approaches. There is a practical application for this model within the higher education system to see which styles tend to be used, in which situations, and the frequency at which they are exhibited.

Indeed, the field of higher education is certainly familiar with conflict. Conflict can exist between students and faculty, faculty and administration, staff and students, students and students, etc. For example, a student might become frustrated with the lack of financial aid he/she is not receiving, or a certain course that is required is already full and not able to be completed until next term. With conflict originating from different potential sources (Mayer, 2000), it is important to ensure healthy conflict engagement is prevalent. It has even been suggested that it be required to have an established conflict resolution course in all accredited undergraduate business schools (Lang, 2009). Individuals that face situations of conflict must have the knowledge and understanding based on student perceptions and reactions (McClellan, 2005) that lead to healthy conflict engagement and solution-oriented action. This approach of "separat[ing] the people from the problem" (Fischer, Ury, & Patton, 1991, p. 17) must manifest from the administrators that oversee the student services divisions.

Deans are often thrust into situations of conflict due to their unique role in mediating between students and faculty. Deans of student affairs are tasked with student complaints but also typically must manage various student conduct infractions. Similarly, academic deans are the fiscal and procedural conduits through which faculty-led departments and executive leadership interact. As a result, deans have typically developed a unique perspective regarding the conflict they encounter. In many cases, deans are required to follow institutional policy and interpret it so that the student and institution are served. Often a dean's approach to conflict will govern these encounters even if an established conflict engagement protocol is not present. These higher

education leaders are often forced to go forward with the present knowledge they have about conflict management systems when benefits of such systems cannot always be fully appreciated (Lipsky, Seeber, & Fincher, 2003). Because of this inherent position of exposure to conflict, it is imperative to gain better perspective of these higher education leaders. By better understanding this unique perspective, it might be possible to better equip deans of other higher education institutions.

Problem Statement

Research on conflict has not meaningfully addressed how deans of student affairs and academic deans at two-year and four-year institutions to function regarding conflict engagement. There is a significant opportunity to study the conflict styles of deans to discover how their conflict approaches relate to they carry out their duties of dean-ship. Given their constant exposure to conflict situations, deans might benefit from better access to more complete training as it relates to conflict engagement.

Purpose of the Research

There is relevant theoretical research that exists in relation to conflict engagement. There is even evidence of studies within higher education that reflect conflict engagement (West, 2006). However, none of this work addresses the unique role of deans in higher education. There have been studies conducted about educational leaders' preferred conflict styles within the secondary educational system (Radford, 2013). There have also been studies conducted regarding business managers having inadequate undergraduate training in conflict management to effectively lead teams within their respective organizations (Lang, 2009). There have even been studies

conducted on an international level to examine the effectiveness of conflict training amongst higher educational leaders within a United Kingdom institution (West, 2006). It might be possible to extrapolate this data to other four-year and two-year institutions throughout the country.

Hypotheses

Conflict engagement has been extensively studied in an organizational sense. The extent of research on conflict engagement in higher education is minimal, with almost no attention afforded to the role of deans. These mid-level managers are daily asked to resolve conflict situations for which they may not be adequately prepared to engage. Consequently, four hypotheses present themselves as relevant.

It is traditional to find a system of shared governance within state university systems. Such a system typically involves multiple layers of formal negotiation between administration and faculty regarding matters of pay, course assignment, etc. In addition, this multi-layered negotiation process brings with it more people within the often-larger university paradigm. The result is that it is often difficult for either party in negotiations to achieve all of their respective interests.

Hypothesis 1. It is hypothesized academic and student affairs deans at the four-year universities across a large Midwestern state college and university system will report a *compromising* style of conflict engagement.

While many of the same systems are in place at the two-year college level that exist within the four-year institutions, there tends to be a difference in size. This size is often in reference to overall amount of people present within the system. The people are

reflected in administrators, faculty, staff and students. With fewer people within the two-year system, there tends to be less layers that must be navigated when engaged in negotiations.

Hypothesis 2. It is hypothesized that academic and student affairs deans at the two-year colleges across a large Midwestern state college and university system will report an *integrating* style of conflict engagement.

Gender is a point of interest when it involves studying preferred styles of conflict engagement. In the primarily hierarchical system that tends to dominate the higher educational landscape, males tend to have a more dominate presence. Even in a general sense, there is evidence that males tend to exhibit more dominance and less compromising or obliging styles than their female counterparts (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). This can even equate to leadership styles. Studies have indicated that males are viewed as being more visionary leaders because of their communicative traits (Aziz, Kalsoom, Quraishi, & Hasan, 2017). Studying this theme in a higher educational setting may provide further evidence of this style continuing to exist.

Hypothesis 3. It is hypothesized that male deans (both academic and student affairs) will report a *dominating* style for an approach to conflict engagement.

There have been studies conducted on the expectations of women when it comes to engaging in conflict. It has been suggested that women should negotiate much more passively than their male counterparts (Rose, 1995). It has also been suggested that there is an inherent power struggle that exists within male/female negotiations (Barkacs & Barkacs, 2017). Context in any situation is needed in order to fully understand an

individual's preferred choice of conflict style. Even with these inherent barriers in place, women within higher education leadership roles have an opportunity to excel (Turner, Norwood, & Noe, 2013). There is potential insight to be gained within the context of the often hierarchical and historically male-influenced system of higher education.

Hypothesis 4. It is hypothesized that female deans (both academic and student affairs) will report an *obliging* style for an approach to conflict engagement.

Significance of the Research

The landscape of higher education is continually changing. There is a constant need to acquire students and meet quotas by upper-level administrators. Deans are charged with maintaining order within their respective disciplines and thus are bound to encounter conflict. The decisions they make within these situations can have a profound impact on their departments as well as their institutions. By identifying how deans engage with conflict, guidance potentially can be offered to help them be better equipped to handle the situations they will inevitably encounter.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study will focus on academic and student affairs deans across a large Midwestern state college and university system. Although the results will be inherently limited to a single state, the system is the fourth largest in the United States (Minnesota State, 2017). Therefore, it is reasonable that the results of the study could be generalized with care to the other state systems across the United States. Additionally, the measurement of academic and student affairs deans will provide one of many possible perspectives to conflict within their colleges and universities. It is conceivable, if not

likely, that faculty, students, and staff might maintain other attitudes towards conflict engagement on campus.

Definition of Key Terms

Conflict. Conflict occurs along cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Mayer, 2000). Under the cognitive dimension, "conflict is a belief or understanding that one's own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else's" (Mayer, 2000, p. 4). In the emotional realm, conflict consists of an emotional reaction to a situation or interaction that signals some type of disagreement (Mayer, 2000). Finally, "conflict also consists of the actions that we take to express our feelings, articulate our perceptions, and get our needs met in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else's ability to get his or her needs met" (Mayer, 2000, p. 5).

Conflict Resolution. This term is used in a broad overview of the study of scope of conflict. In its truest form, "if the parties to a dispute can agree on an outcome that is mutually acceptable, then the conflict has been resolved" (Mayer, 2000, p. 97). This definition can be somewhat limiting as parties that reach resolution in one instance may again find themselves engaged in conflict in the future.

Conflict Engagement. This term is used to think of the conflict process in a more holistic context. While the process of conflict might include resolution, the concept of engagement focuses on the entire trajectory that might encompass conflict (Mayer, 2004). The use of this term encourages the confidence of the party to engage in the process of conflict with the understanding (and acceptance) that some conflict situations may not reach the resolution stage.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). This term refers to methods of conflict engagement that are an alternative to the litigation process. These methods could be mediation, arbitration, online dispute resolution, and other forms advocacy (Macfarlane, Manwaring, Zweibel, Smyth, & Pearlstein, 2011).

Academic Dean. An individual that is tasked with providing leadership support to a set of academic departments in cognate fields (e.g. sciences, humanities, education, medicine, etc.).

Student Affairs Dean. An individual that is charged with overseeing various student affairs departments that may include (but are not limited to) campus life, advising, and student conduct and disciplinary issues.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The review of literature for this study combines theoretical concepts surrounding conflict engagement as well as various application studies. The theoretical models utilized are fundamental for this study to provide a foundation of knowledge to build on. However, there appears to be limited research on conflict engagement as it pertains to the domain of higher education. There is an even wider gap in research regarding two-year college and university deans and their approach to conflict.

Theoretical Framework

In thinking about conflict in an educational leadership role, it is essential to first identify what it is but equally imperative to identify what it is not. Simerly (1998) wrote that "conflict occurs when there is a disagreement over such things as ideas, goals, methods, and values" (p. 2). This concept of conflict tends to permeate all facets of higher education and is something that must be dealt with by leaders within the field. A concept that becomes intertwined with conflict is *resolution*. Conflict resolution has almost become a common phrase, but resolution is not always the end result. Simerly (1998) wrote that resolution within higher education does not always happen and that *conflict management* is a more appropriate term to use when it comes to speaking about conflict. Simerly attested that successful educational leaders should not merely solve problems for subordinates or resolve every conflict. Rather, leaders should instruct subordinates in being comfortable engaging in the process of conflict.

Simerly (1998) went on to state that successful educational leaders hold four main assumptions about conflict. These assumptions were:

1. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of our daily existence as we interact with other people.

2. Conflict is the main of human and organizational change.

3. Many of us have been enculturated to value change but to devalue conflict.

4. It is possible to learn how to manage conflict for production results.   (p. 3-4)

These four assumptions reiterated that conflict surrounds people every day, but it is necessary to engage in its process in order to become more fulfilled and complete individuals as well as competent leaders.

Another common misconception about conflict studies is that an effective approach to conflict situations is to remain *neutral*. On the surface, remaining impartial may seem prudent, but it can also lead to inaction. It might even be interpreted as dishonest. Mayer (2004) wrote that "people often do not trust our neutrality. They are suspicious of the concept and question, often correctly, whether we can genuinely be as neutral, impartial, and unbiased as we say we are" (p. 17). Leaders that strive to remain solely neutral in conflict may really be doing a disservice to their institutions, their colleagues and subordinates, and especially themselves. They could be denying the possibility of true growth that might arise from conflict.

The term *engagement* is one that goes far beyond the scope of resolution. It also exceeds the meaning of management. Engagement carries with it an empowering quality that truly values not only the process of conflict, but also the parties involved. Mayer

(2004) wrote that "engaging in conflict means accepting the challenges of a conflict, whatever its type or stage of development may be, with courage and wisdom and without automatically assuming that resolution is an appropriate goal" (p. 184). When resolution is the inevitable assumption, something is lost. As Mayer noted "people want to win, to build a movement, to carry on an important struggle, to achieve meaning, to address basic issues, to gain political advantage, or other similar goals. Resolution implies too shallow of an outcome or goal to many" (p. 15). When people choose to engage in conflict they allow themselves and others fulfill this inner desire.

From a very foundational level, there needs to be an appropriate model to illustrate what causes conflict. Conflict can originate from many different sources. To successfully navigate a conflict situation, one must be able to properly identify the source(s). Mayer's *Wheel of Conflict* (See Figure 1) accomplishes this task. Mayer has been a leader in the field of conflict resolution for over 30 years. He has assumed roles globally of mediator, facilitator, teacher, and system designer.   Mayer (2000) described that human needs are at the center of all conflicts. Conflict cannot be engaged or transformed unless these needs are sufficiently met. Mayer identified these central needs into three sub-categories. These sub-categories were identified as *survival needs, interests,* and *identity-based needs*. Survival needs consisted of food, shelter, health, or anything that would be required to sustain life. Interests represent the next level of needs. Mayer (2000) stated that "interests are the needs that motivate the bulk of people's actions" (p. 17). It is imperative to uncover and explore each party's true interests in a conflict, or resolution becomes highly unlikely. Finally, identity-based needs represent

the deepest level on the central needs continuum. These internal needs are explained as

ones that represent what one's purpose in life is and also explores one's requirement for

both autonomy and intimacy within relationships (Mayer, 2000).

Figure 1. Wheel of Conflict
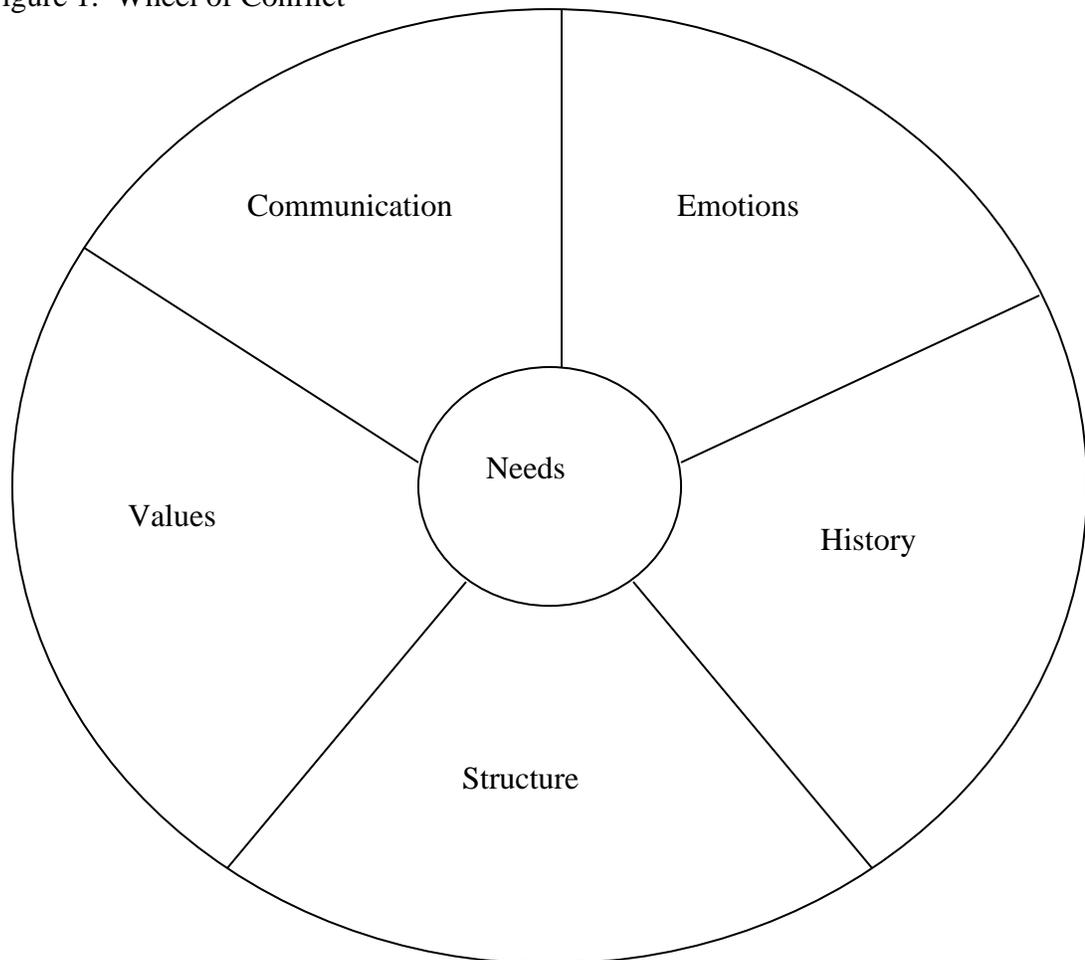
Figure 1. Wheel of Conflict model illustrating the various sources of conflict. Adapted from "The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide," by B. Mayer, 2000, p. 9. Copyright 2000 by Jossey-Bass.

The outer sections of Mayer's wheel represent other sources of conflict. These five sections are not always present in every conflict, although there are typically multiple sources at work. Mayer (2000) identified the five outer sources of conflict as *communication, emotions, history, structure,* and *values.* Mayer argued (2004, 2000) that, contrary to one's own perception, humans are flawed communicators. When the

communication transaction between sender and receiver becomes distorted, the possibility of conflict increases. The next area of emotions also plays a crucial role in determining the path a particular conflict might take. Mayer (2000) characterized emotions as "the energy that fuels conflict" (p. 10). Emotions are often viewed as a source that escalates conflict, however, they can also aid in deescalating them as well. History is another potential source of conflict. Mayer (2000) argued that conflict does not exist within a vacuum or in an isolated point in time. It is important to remember that conflict often resonates from previous actions and manifests itself as a result of these previous encounters. It is equally important to remember that just because a conflict occurred in the past, it is not always indicative it will continue in the future. Structure is another source of which to be aware. Structure is the external framework that a conflict takes place within (Mayer, 2000). The structure might range from the process two parties follow to how chairs are arranged around a table that disputants will gather around. Finally, values represent the last outer source of conflict. Mayer (2000) characterized values as "the beliefs we have about what is important, what distinguishes right from wrong and good from evil, and what principles should govern how we lead our lives" (p. 11). In addition, Rahim developed a working definition for *conflict*. Rahim (2001) wrote that "conflict is defined as an *interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc.)*" (p. 18). Rahim went on to further illustrate that conflict would occur when these social entities:

1. Is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests;

2. Holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences;

3. Wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, such that the wants of everyone may not be satisfied fully;

4. Possess attitudes, values, skills, and goals that are salient in directing one's behavior but that are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, values, skills, and goals held by the other(s);

5. Has partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding joint actions; and

6. Is interdependent in the performance of functions or activities. (Rahim, 2001, p. 18-19)

By defining these requirements of conflict interactions, Rahim helped to more clearly define how conflict can develop. Many of the requirements closely mirror the sources identified by Mayer (2000).

By further examining this theoretical framework as a basis for understanding conflict sources, it becomes clearer how inundated people are every day. One can appreciate the multiple opportunities that exist daily for conflict to arise. Using this framework as a guide allows for further understanding in approaching conflict constructively.

The concept of conflict styles was developed in the 1960's. Blake and Mouton (1964) provided the basis of classifying approaches to interpersonal conflict. The five

styles identified were smoothing, forcing, withdrawal, problem-solving, and sharing.

Blake and Mouton's concept was later re-classified by Thomas and Kilmann (1974).

This adapted version of conflict styles was identified as competing, collaborating,

compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. In addition, this instrument sought to

identify to what degree a person's interpersonal conflict style ranged in both

cooperativeness and assertiveness. The further a given style was on the x-axis, the more

cooperative the style was measured to be (see Figure 2). Rahim (1983a) later developed

a model similar to Blake and Mouton and also Thomas and Kilmann. Rahim added a

distinction that differed from the previous-mentioned models. Rahim (1983a) identified

key factors in styles as they related to both concern for self and concern for others (See

Figure 2). Within this model, Rahim and Bonoma (1979) further classified the five styles

of approaching interpersonal conflict. These styles were identified as *integrating,*

obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Each of the five styles of handling

conflict are further explained below.

Figure 2. Styles of Conflict
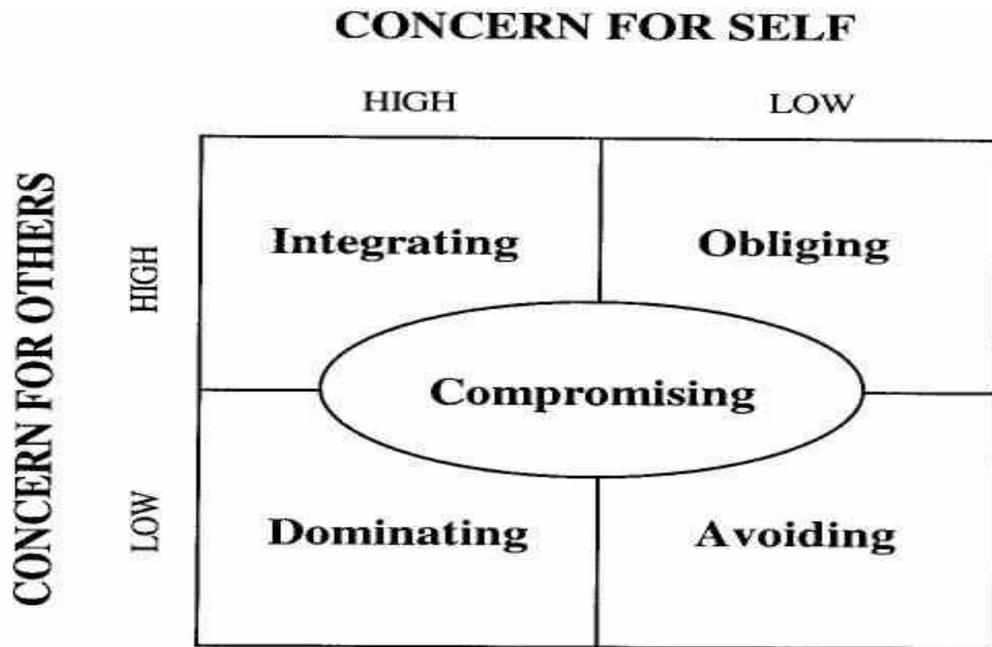
Figure 2. Styles of Conflict model illustrating the styles: *Integrating, Obliging, Dominating, Avoiding,* and *Compromising* as well as their relationship to concern for self and others. Adapted from "A Measure of Handling Interpersonal Conflict," by M. A. Rahim, 1983a, *Academy of Management Journal, 26,* p. 369. Copyright 1983 by the Academy of Management Journal.

The *integrating* style of conflict has a high concern for both self and others. Problem solving tends to be the focal point of this style. Rahim (2001) stated that "it involves collaboration between the parties (i.e., openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach a solution acceptable to both parties)" (p. 28). Integration seeks to fulfill the interests of both parties so neither feels they are giving something up. Prein (1976) added that this style contains two specific elements. These elements are problem solving and confrontation. Rahim (2001) said that "confrontation involves open communication, clearing up any misunderstanding, and analyzing the

underlying cause of conflict" (p. 29). This element of confrontation lays the foundation for problem solving. True problem solving includes identifying and providing a solution to the actual problem. From there, both parties can realize the highest degree of satisfaction for their respective concerns.

The characteristics of the *obliging* style illustrate a low concern for self and high concern for others. A person exhibiting this style tends to downplay the differences between him/her and the other party. Rahim (2001) wrote that "there is an element of self-sacrifice in this style. It may take the form of selfless generosity, charity, or obedience to another party's order" (p. 29). This person can pay a relatively high cost of neglecting their own interests and essentially absorb the conflict.

In contrasting fashion, the *dominating* style exhibits a high concern for self and a low concern for others. Another way to view this style is competing. This style is often referred to as a "win-lose" situation. Rahim (2001) stated that "a dominating or competing person goes all out to win his or her objective and, as a result, often ignores the needs and expectations of the other party" (p. 29). A dominating stance does not always correlate to the somewhat negative light it occasionally is cast in. Standing up for one's rights or defending a position believed to be true are also examples of a dominating style.

The *avoiding* style exhibits a low concern for self and for others. Individuals who utilize this trait might withdraw from a conflict situation, postponing a conflict until a later time, or even acknowledging that a conflict exists. Rahim (2001) reiterated this in that "this style is often characterized as an unconcerned attitude toward the issues or

parties involved in the conflict. Such a person may refuse to acknowledge in public that

there is a conflict that should be dealt with" (p. 29-30). There can be circumstances in

which the avoiding style might be necessary. For instance, a participant may choose to

utilize this style in a dangerous or abusive situation. Physically removing one's self in

these types of situations may be necessary to preserve a component of one's survival

needs (Mayer, 2000).

The final conflict style is *compromising*. This style exhibits partial concern for

both self and others. It includes a give-and-take element where both parties essentially

relinquish part of their overall goals in order to arrive at mutually agreeable solution.

Rahim (2001) wrote that "a compromising party gives up more than a dominating party

but less than an obliging party. Likewise, such a party addresses an issue more directly

than avoiding party but does not explore it in as much depth as an integrating party" (p.

30). This approach tends to focus on the "middle ground" in between both parties.

There are two dimensions that exist within the five conflict styles. These two

dimensions span across the various styles as concern for self and concern for others shift.

They are identified as the integrative and distributive dimensions (Rahim, 2001). The

integrative dimension spans from the *integrating* style down to the *avoiding* style. Since

integration involves finding solutions to both parties' interests, it is logical to conceive

that integrative dimension is high through the *integrating* style and becomes lower the

closer it gets to an *avoiding* style. The distributive dimension, in contrast, represents the

shift in ratio of concerns for both self and others. There is a reciprocal relation present

within the distributive dimension. There is a high concern for self in the *dominating* style

and a low concern for others. As one continues along the dimension, the reciprocal

relationship shifts as the *obliging* style is approached. The distributive dimension

represents the concept that when one party is gaining within a conflict, the other party

must inherently concede (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The Integrative and Distributive Dimensions
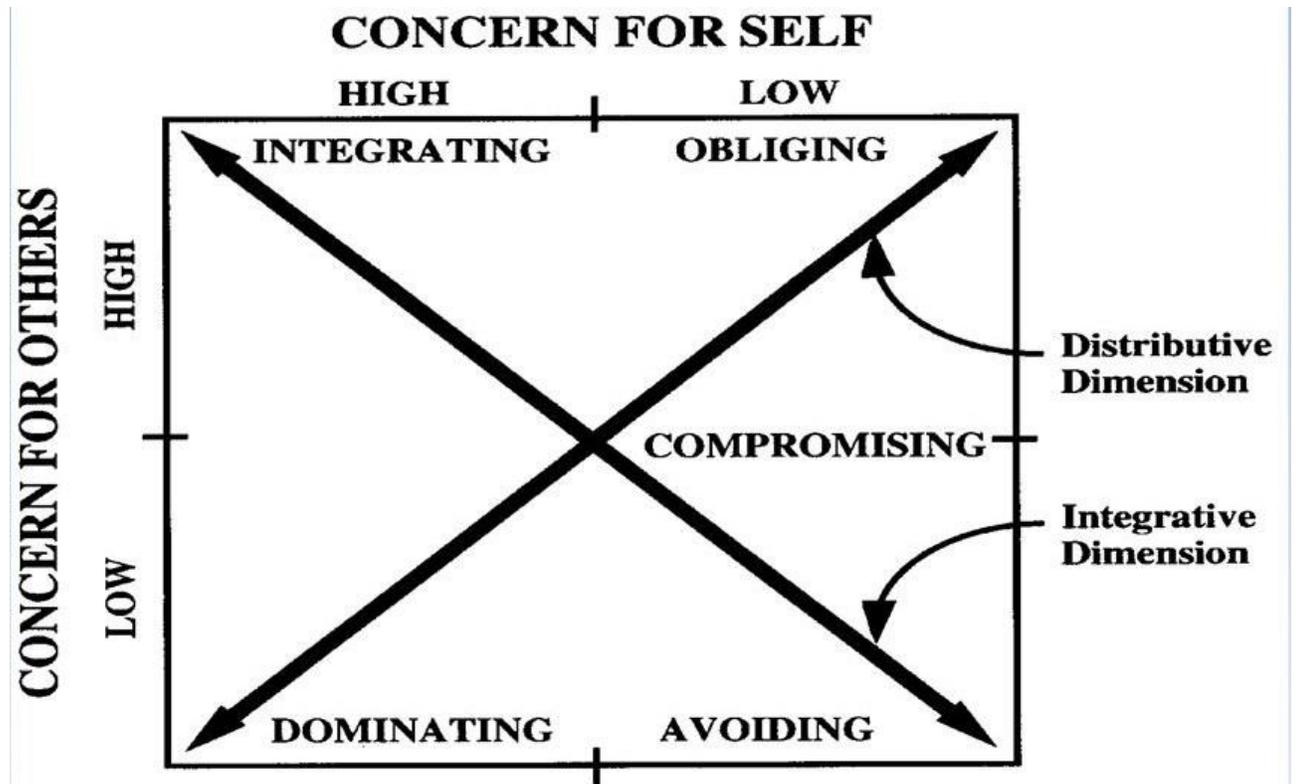
Figure 3. Pathways of both the Integrative and Distributive Dimensions and how they correlate to the five conflict styles. Adapted from "Managing Conflict in Organizations," by M. A. Rahim, 2001, p. 31. Copyright 2001 by Quorum Books.

Development of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI)

Rahim developed two instruments for measuring the amount of conflict and the five styles of handling conflict. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-I (ROCI-I) was built to focus on the three independent dimensions of organizational conflict: intragroup, intrapersonal, and intergroup (Rahim, 2001). This instrument focuses on the perceptions of organizational members to measure the amount of conflict based from

various statements. The participant then responds to these statements utilizing a 5-point

Likert scale. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) was later

designed after much feedback from subjects was received. This instrument contains three

different subsets of questions. These questions still use a 5-point Likert scale, but now

the various questions are asked on three separate forms (A, B, and C). These three

subcategories ask each of the questions from the perspective from a supervisor (Form A),

subordinates (Form B), and peers (Form C) (Rahim, 1983b). This instrument was

initially completed by MBA and undergraduate students ($n = 60$) and managers ($n = 38$)

(Rahim, 1983a). After the subjects completed the questionnaire, each item was discussed

by Rahim. The questions deemed to be inconsistent or difficult were either revised or

replaced. The current ROCI-II utilizes 28 questions geared to help participants identify

prominent conflict styles based on responses (Rahim, 1983b). The questions can be used

in almost any type of organizational setting. The ROCI-II also gathers information

regarding sex, functional areas, tenure, and education (Rahim, 1983a).

It is important to remember that individuals are not merely confined to one

particular conflict style. Even though, one might exhibit a primary conflict style, he/she

often will combine other styles, depending on the situation. Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro,

and Euwema (1999) proposed the concept that "effectiveness in conflict handling

depends on a combination of different styles, not just on the presence or absence of one

behavioral style" (p. 12). The study conducted found that the conflict styles (Rahim,

1983b) are interrelated and do not operate independently. This is of significance, because

higher education leaders must understand that both they, and others they interact with,

may have a primary conflict style. However, it is equally imperative to realize that other

styles are inherently present.

Other Approaches to Conflict

The most though of approach to solving conflict in considering the judicial system

is litigation. Litigation has its drawbacks as it tends to be both expensive and lengthy in

process. A different approach to the formal judicial system is Alternative Dispute

Resolution (ADR). ADR provides opportunity to approach conflict from a different

perspective with the hope of achieving meaningful resolution at a lower overall cost.

Some approaches that fall within the context of ADR are mediation, arbitration, online

dispute resolution, and negotiation.

The first approach presented within ADR is mediation. Moore (2003) said about

mediation that it "involves the intervention of an acceptable third party who has limited

(or no) authoritative decision-making power" (p. 8). The fact that the third party has

relatively no decision-making power allows for the parties in conflict to dictate what the

outcome will be. Moore (2003) continued that "mediation is a voluntary process in that

the participants must be willing to accept the assistance of the intervenor if he or she is to

help them manage or resolve their differences" (p. 8). This illustrates another crucial

component of mediation in that both participants must agree to the process. Without that

agreement, mediation is not possible. Even though the mediator has no actual authority

to decide the outcome, he/she can assist both parties clarify what they want. In actuality,

the mediator has an extremely meaningful role. Moore (2003) stated that the mediator is

to "assist the parties in examining their interests and needs, to help them negotiate an

exchange of promises, and to redefine their relationship in a way that will be mutually

satisfactory and will meet their standards of fairness" (p. 18). The mediator does not

force resolution but acts as a guide to show participants what might be possible.

The next example of ADR is arbitration. Although arbitration is within the scope

of ADR like mediation, it is considerably different. Arbitration does share some

similarities to the litigation process. There are four ways pointed out by Macfarlane et al.

(2011) in which arbitration is similar to the legal system. These similarities are as

follows:

1.   Arbitration is adjudicative by nature.

2.   Arbitration involves an adversarial process.

3.   The decision-maker in arbitration dictates a result designed to provide a remedy to

    the prevailing party.

4.   Arbitration is a binding process. (Macfarlane et al., 2011)

In looking at each of these similarities, it is understandable why it may be hard to

distinguish between arbitration and litigation. They both involve third parties who listen

to cases be presented by each party along with evidence. If one side wins their case, it

inherently means a loss for the other party. Finally, the end result is agreed upon by the

parties that it will be binding. This concept is considerably different than mediation

where the end result may be a suggestion of what course to take. There are also

differences between arbitration and litigation. The first difference is the setting.

Litigation within the court system tends to be a public matter, where arbitration tends to

be more confidential. Another difference is how parties participate in each process. In

litigation, one party can file a lawsuit against the other and require the other party to participate. Arbitration requires both parties to agree to participate (Macfarlane et al., 2011). The next difference deals with representation. In legal cases, parties can usually only be represented by lawyers, where as in arbitration, parties have more flexibility to choose their representation (Macfarlane et al., 2011). Finally, the litigation process is time consuming and can take years to get a trial. Arbitration tends to be a quicker process. Arbitration allows for a more formal setting for ADR to transpire, but still leaves room for a limited amount of flexibility in process.

Another relatively newer form of ADR is Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). ODR essentially takes many components that ADR provides but puts them in an online environment. It also carries the benefits and limitations of an online environment into the ADR realm. Some of the benefits is that it allows participants that may not be able to physically meet a chance to resolve differences at a considerably less expensive cost. Another benefit is the format communication transpires. With asynchronous communication capability (i.e. email format), participants can exercise choice of when and how to craft their responses without feeling compelled to answer immediately in a physical environment. This can create an environment that is less confrontational (Macfarlane et al., 2011). Finally, ODR provides a 24/7 environment. This is similar to previous point. However, it takes it a step further in the sense that it allows participants greater flexibility. If participants agree to mediate in a physical environment, the two parties and mediator must meet during a time where the location is open. In an online environment, communication can take place at virtually any hour as participants respond

to the most recent portion of the dialogue. Having access to this type of ADR and

knowing when to use it provides another tool for educational leaders to approach conflict.

Fisher et al. (1991) introduced another approach within the ADR spectrum that

aligns with the major points of emphasis from both Mayer and Rahim. Their work has

been used in the realm of negotiation in various organizations. They proposed four main

points that help define straightforward negotiation. Each of these points address a basic

element in the negotiation process and what the participant should do about it. The four

points are: *people, interests, options, criteria* (Fisher et al., 1991). The first point

regarding *people* places an emphasis on how the conflict should be approached. Fisher et

al. (1991) stated that one should "separate the people from the problem" (p. 10). By

separating the other person in the conflict from its actual nature (the problem), one can

better assess what is the root cause and what is truly important. The point of *interests*

shifts the focus to these rather than positions. When one focuses on interests, he/she is

being introspective about the intermediary level of *needs* (Mayer, 2000). This helps to

ensure that one remains focused on the tangible piece one hopes to accomplish through

engaging in conflict. This focus lends itself to an integrative approach (Rahim, 2001)

where both parties might be able to obtain their goals. When one focuses on positions,

this takes a more distributive approach (Rahim, 2001). A distributive focus tends to

allow only one party to gain, while the other must inherently concede. The third point

focuses on *options*. Fisher et al. (1991) concluded that many options must be generated

before deciding what should be done. This ensures that all alternatives are explored, and

a premature, shallow resolution is not pursued. The final point of negotiation emphasis is

criteria. Fisher et al. (1991) emphasized that one must insist that the outcome be based on some objective standard. This point helps to maintain order during the negotiation process and provides mutually agreeable guidelines to navigate the process. By including each of these points, educational leaders can help to ensure a better negotiation process.

Conflict engagement can also be examined through the lens of culture. Just as Rahim (1983a) illustrated conflict styles in a general sense, there are certain traits exhibited for approaching conflict based on cultural background. Cai and Fink (2002) highlighted these cultural differences as they pertain to individualists and collectivists. Cai and Fink (2002) wrote that, "individualists value the goals, needs, and rights of the individual over the group. Collectivists value the goals, responsibilities, and obligations of the group over the goals, needs and rights of the individual (p. 70). Often, participants from eastern countries like Korea, Taiwan, China, and Japan are used to represent collectivist cultures, where the United States is often used to represent individualist cultures (Cai & Fink, 2002). In their study, Cai and Fink sampled 188 U.S. and international graduate students in order to determine preferred conflict styles using an adaptation of Rahim's (1983b) ROCI-II. The result was that participants from both cultural approaches (collectivist and individualist) preferred integrating as a conflict style. While this style may have been the preferred approach, it was not always the one that manifested. Cai and Fink (2002) hypothesized that avoiding would be the preferred approach for collectivists, while dominating would be preferred for individualists. They discovered that avoiding, in general, was preferred over dominating. Cai and Fink (2002) discovered that, "individualists preferred avoiding more than midrange persons, and

midrange persons preferred avoiding more than collectivists" (p. 77). There was also no significant trend for individualist-collectivist on the dominating style. Finally, it was discovered that collectivists tend to exhibit compromising more than individualists. These results are significant for educational leaders. Deans may fall into the trap of deriving preconceived ideas of what they believe their staff/faculty may exhibit based on their cultural origins. However, it is imperative to be mindful that cultures may exhibit certain stylistic traits that might differ.

Another example of conflict in the context of culture can be seen within a study that examined the United States and Mexico. This study conducted by Gabrielidis et al. (1997) illustrated that collectivist approaches to conflict are not merely confined to traditional eastern-hemisphere countries. Gabrielidis et al. (1997) suggested that Latin American collectivism does resemble certain aspects of Asian collectivism, but there were still some notable differences. Although Latin Americans tended to show loyalty within their ingroups, they still value the uniqueness of the individual (similar to U.S. Americans). The study conducted used a sample of 194 college students (103 students from a state-funded university in Mexico and 91 students from a state-funded university in southwestern United States; Gabrielidis et al., 1997). The study found that Mexicans showed a higher preference towards traditional collectivist conflict approaches: collaboration and accommodation. Overall, the Mexican sample scored higher in the dimension of interdependence (traditional collectivist view), but they also showed a higher degree of self-knowledge than their American counterparts. The results of the study also showed that both sets of participants tended to avoid dominating as a conflict

style. Both cultures seemed to prefer forms integrating and obliging over dominating and avoiding (Gabrielidis et al., 1997). One possible explanation for this finding was that "Americans are not competitive when resolving interpersonal conflicts, but are competitive in many other contexts" (Gabrielidis et al., 1997, p. 672). This study helped add more emphasis on potential inconsistencies that might exist for cultures. This adds another level of cultural conflict approaches that educational leaders must navigate.

Gender and Conflict Engagement

The role of that gender plays within the field of conflict engagement has also been a point of study. Traditional roles within gender have been previously reinforced for males and females. A study by Kilmann and Thomas (1977) administered their Management-of-Differences Exercise (MODE) Instrument to three levels of students: high school, undergraduate, and graduate. The MODE is similar to Rahim's (1983b) ROCI-II in that it tests five styles of conflict but given different names. The study found that, "males rated competing significantly higher than females ($p < .05$), while females reported compromising significantly more than males ($p < .01$)" (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977, p. 320). The term "competing" would be similar to *dominating* (Rahim, 1983b). This study provides reinforcement to gender expectations as they relate to conflict.

Another study by Rose (1995) suggested that women might be a general disadvantage when it comes to conflict, or more directly, negotiation. It is suggested that this disadvantage manifests in the form of assets, earnings, and even physical well-being. In the study, Rose (1995) showed multiple hypothetical situations that involve characters named "Sam" and "Louise." These monikers were used to represent the male and female

counterparts, respectively. In each account, there were examples of "Louise" being at a disadvantage because she was seen as being too cooperative. As a result, "Sam" would discover several ways to take a distributive approach to ensure he gained more, while "Louise" lost. This study called to attention the general disposition to be compromising or obliging (Rahim, 1983b) and this played out where "Sam" was able to assume a more dominating approach. This study did acknowledge the limitation that there will be exceptions to these scenarios, but if these remain pre-conceived notions of gender power in negotiations (conflict), cooperation might be frowned upon by both genders as being "weak."

A different study was conducted that investigated the role of gender in conflict engagement as it related to leadership qualities. Aziz et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study involving higher educational leaders in Pakistan. The participants consisted of 10 males and 10 females with experience that ranged from six years to over twenty years (Aziz et al., 2017). While all of the male respondents indicated that they believed males tended to be more visionary when it came to leadership, respondents of both genders tended to agree that females had better language skills which helped them to communicate more effectively. This improved communication also lent itself to a better sense of conflict engagement skills.

Negotiation roles and relative power can also be realized through a practical demonstration. Barkacs and Barkacs (2017) conducted a study where a negotiation exercise tested how men and women interact within that arena. The exercise that was developed was named *Budget Time*. Participants were organized into two different

classes: *disadvantaged* and *advantaged*. Participants were then asked to portray roles of the vice president of a company and a department head to negotiate next year's budget (Barkacs & Barkacs, 2017). The difference between being in the *disadvantaged* or *advantaged* category changes with how much information a participant was given at the start of the exercise. The study showed how one could execute the simulation with other participants, but the researchers discovered that when female participants were put into the *disadvantaged* category, the increase for budget negotiation was considerably lower than when males were in the same role. This result suggested that even though participants are not directly told about which category they were placed in, many gender-based attributions manifested themselves. In general, the *advantaged* department heads performed considerably better in their budget requests. It was acknowledged by some male participants that they felt the exercise might not be as accurate when they fulfilled the *disadvantaged* role. This was due to the fact of many of them having realized situations in their professional lives where they were afforded advantages due to their gender.

While there has been evidence of men assuming a more dominating role within higher education leadership, there are studies that continue to emerge that showcase women competently leading. Turner et al. (2013) conducted an overview study that illustrated various ways women can move past the proverbial "glass ceiling" that exists within higher education leadership. Recognizing, tracking, and developing skills, taking on relevant and challenging assignments, making important connections, being one's own

advocate, and getting familiar with desired job were the identified methods that women should focus on in order to be successful (Turner et al., 2013). The study went on to say:

> Women who aspire to lead in the academy need an understanding of the problems that keep them from advancing in numbers proportionate to men, an awareness of the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in administration, practical tactics for acquiring these, and a sense that their goals are attainable, despite difficulties (Turner et al., 2013).

These challenges do exist within higher education, but it continues to be important that both men and women continue to engage confidently and competently in order to bring about effective leadership.

Organizational Applications for Conflict Engagement

Conflict exists in every arena, and organizational setting are no exception. Understanding the effects of conflict (both positive and negative) is imperative for a leader in this environment. Studies have been conducted that illustrate the outcomes of either engaging in conflict completely or not. At a fundamental level, most individuals must interact with other people at work. Even if a person's job involves little contact with others, there will still be opportunity for conflict to arise. Even if work groups are temporary, like in a study conducted by Gross, Guerrero, and Alberts (2004), it is still imperative that individuals know how to competently navigate conflict in order to be productive. Gross et al. (2004) initiated a study that involved 200 students from business-related and management courses being organized into temporary dyads. The students were in dyads of both same-sex and multi-sex partners. The people in the dyads

needed to confirm they had not previously interacted. This was to facilitate a setting similar to being assigned a work group of unfamiliar individuals. The dyads were asked to complete given tasks within a 50-minute time period. After completing the tasks, each person in the dyad was asked to rate both him/herself and his/her partner on both appropriateness and effectiveness. In general, the findings were that nonconfrontational approaches (i.e. avoiding or obliging) to conflict rated lower in the categories of both appropriateness and effectiveness. In contrast, the solution-orientated approach (integrating) was seen as favorable, however, there were examples in dyads where a dominating type approach was rated higher in effectiveness (Gross et al., 2004). This might suggest that people may not find it appropriate to utilize this approach, but they can still appreciate situations where it may be called for.

In addition to factors such as appropriateness and effectiveness, research has been conducted that suggests conflict must be introduced at different stages in order to ensure team viability. Runde and Flanagan (2008) concluded that *task conflict, relationship conflict,* and *process conflict* must occur to sustain effective teams. Task conflict involves disagreements among members about the work they are doing. This type of conflict comes about naturally through the differences and opinions that people have. While there may be initial benefit to not addressing it, the team will inevitably suffer. Runde and Flanagan (2008) noted that "when there is not enough task conflict or if it takes place at too low a level of intensity, the team typically experiences lackluster decision making and performance" (p. 31-32). The next type of conflict is relationship conflict. Runde and Flanagan (2008) wrote that "relationship conflict centers more on

who is to blame than on how to solve the problem" (p. 32). When this occurs, mistrust rises, and the team dynamic is weakened. People often try to avoid this type of conflict, but it invites an opportunity to separate the people from the problem (Fisher et al., 1991). Finally, process conflict deals with how team members should accomplish certain tasks despite their differences. Runde and Flanagan (2008) stated that "if team members cannot make decisions about how they want to go about their business, this impasse can cripple their ability to move ahead effectively" (p. 33). Teams that become comfortable and competent engaging in these types of conflict have a better chance of realizing their collective potential.

With this understanding that organizational teams will inevitably encounter conflict, it becomes more important that managers have adequate knowledge to be able to teach these skills to their subordinates. Lang (2009) hypothesized that there is inadequate training be given within both U.S. and non-U.S. universities to help future managers navigate conflict. Lang (2009) examined the websites of 97 U.S. universities and 69 non-U.S. universities to find evidence of conflict resolution as a point of emphasis in business management coursework. Of the 97 U.S. institutions, only 45.4% specifically identified courses that included components of conflict management and only 18.6% had courses dedicated solely to the subject (Lang, 2009). The results were even worse for the non-U.S. institutions. Of the 69 institutions in this category, only 20.3% specifically identified courses that contained components of conflict management and only 10.1% had courses dedicated solely to conflict management (Lang, 2009). This study reinforces

the idea that while there is training present in conflict engagement, there is a clear need

for improvement in a skill that is so vitally important to organizations and their managers.

With this knowledge of conflict within organizations, it becomes important to

have systems in place to effectively deal with it. Examples have been shown what can

happen to teams and the organizations they represent if competent engagement does not

occur. There is a bottom-line to profitability within organizations. Lipsky et al. (2003)

wrote that, "conflict costs money" (p. 301). This fact cannot be ignored. This can

originate in lack of productivity all the way to time-consuming and expensive litigation

processes. Lipsky et al. (2003) suggested that organizations that invest in Alternative

Dispute Resolution (ADR) approaches have a better chance of effectively navigating

conflict. It was also suggested that too many institutions take a reactive approach when it

comes to incorporating ADR rather than strategically choosing it (Lipsky et al., 2003).

Conflict Engagement and the Field of Education

While the application of designed conflict engagement systems has been

somewhat limited, there are examples of it at present.   The field of education (more

specifically higher education) carries with it some differences from organizations within

the private sector.

Universities function in a "trust market" in which people do not know exactly

what they are buying and may not discover its value for years. The product

is sold at less than the cost to produce it and the value of the produce is

enhanced by the quality of the people who purchase it. Compared with

business firms, universities have multiple and conflicting goals and intangible

outcomes. Staff are motivated by idealism rather than profit.

(West, 2006, p. 191)

This concept illustrates that when an entity deals with more abstract ways of thinking, the same approach to issues like conflict may have to be adapted. West (2006) argued that "it is only by rapidly restoring harmony and shared purpose, wherever disputes occur, that a university's contribution to society can be maximised" (p. 196).

The creation of a culture that approaches conflict in a healthy and meaningful way must be modeled by the top of an organization. This is no different in higher education. Presidents of colleges and universities must ensure that the faculty and staff under them can utilize effective conflict engagement skills. A qualitative study conducted by Zanjani (2012) examined seven community college presidents from different geographic locations to determine any themes in conflict approaches. Zanjani (2012) found that three significant themes emerged from interviews with the community college presidents. These themes were: avoiding personalizing the conflict, staying focused on college mission and the students, and informing and engaging the board of trustees. The themes incorporate general concepts from Fisher et al. (1991), Mayer (2000), and Rahim (1983a). It is suggested that one must separate the people from the problem (Fisher et al., 1991), be committed to the overall focus of the institution and also maintain a level of transparency. A final concept that emerged from the study was to enhance content knowledge (Zanjani, 2012). It was acknowledged that improving training in the field of conflict engagement is imperative to maintain a level of competence.

It is equally important to understand what conflict style one is exhibiting. A study conducted by Radford (2013) examined Nebraska principals' conflict style using the Thomas-Kilmann (1974) MODE instrument. While this study took place within the secondary education level, there is still relevant application that can be used within higher education. The study found that, in general, principals' perceived conflict style differed from their actual conflict management style. Principals initially reported preferring an avoiding approach to conflict. However, the results of the of the Thomas-Kilmann (1974) MODE instrument revealed the referred style as collaborative and avoiding being the least (Radford, 2013). This is of interest because one might utilize a different conflict style depending on a given situation. For instance, one may prefer avoiding conflict with friends or peers, but find him/herself using an integrating approach while working with colleagues and subordinates. This study reinforced the idea that using other conflict styles are necessary to successfully navigate different conflict situations. It is important to be mindful of preferred approaches but also maintain a level of adaptability.

Another way to inject some of this adaptability is to use one's self to change the environment. An effective way to do this is to utilize humor in conflict situations. Humor can help to ease tension that often builds as a result of conflict. McClellan (2005) conducted a study involving academic advisors and their interactions with the students they helped. Suggestions were given on how to navigate conflict during these advisor/advisee situations. While this relationship is slightly different than the focus of this dissertation, many of the same principles can be applied. McClellan made a point to emphasize the benefits of humor but also gave caution. McClellan (2005) wrote that, "in

spite of the benefits of humor, advisors should be careful in using it because the wrong kind of joke at the wrong time will only worsen the conflict. The best time to use humor is when tensions begin to ease" (p. 63). The same concept is true for deans and other academic leaders. Humor can be a useful tool to navigate conflict, but it must be used appropriately.

There are some institutions within higher education that utilize many of the concepts suggested in this review but from a slightly different perspective. Christian, private institutions derive much of their approach to conflict from the Bible. The Bible gives many accounts that illustrate God's expectation for Christian living. Many of these teachings deal with how to interact with others (and navigate conflict) on earth. Ennis (2008) examined different private, Christian, higher education institutions to discover reoccurring themes that relate to conflict. In the spirit of the teachings from the Bible, Ennis (2008) discovered three main approaches to conflict: *inaction, aggression,* and *conciliation*. Inaction mirrors the conflict style, avoiding (Rahim, 1983b). It is where one would prefer to remove themselves from the situation. However, this response was seen as potentially going against the responsibilities of being a Christian and missing an opportunity for positivity to come from conflict (Ennis, 2008). The next choice for conflict engagement is aggression. This form is competitive almost to the point of violence (Ennis, 2008). This form closely resembles the dominating (Rahim, 1983b) style. The final major approach is that of conciliation. Conciliation can be broken down further into three main subcategories. They are mediation, arbitration, and corporate discipline. Mediation and arbitration have been previously discussed. Corporate

discipline involves the institution intervening in a way that brings learning coupled with a Christian foundation. This helps to ensure conflict does not go unresolved. Ennis (2008) wrote that "irresolvable conflict within the body of Christ, which affects the purpose and mission of the church as a whole, is anathema to the core beliefs of Christianity" (p. 352). A study that examined conflict management strategies of Catholic college and university presidents revealed similar results to Ennis (2008). Dee, Henkin, and Holman (2004) studied to see what type of approach to conflict was preferred in interactions with both faculty and trustee members. They discovered that collaboration was the most frequently used style with the sample. Dee et al. (2004) wrote that "these presidents generally preferred solution-oriented approaches where disagreements and role conflicts are negotiated through collaboration and integrative problem solving" (p. 192). Incorporating conflict approaches from institutions different from where one currently is serving can help bring greater perspective.

There is a need for conflict engagement training to become part of preparation for certain leadership roles within higher education. Conflict can be a daunting undertaking even to those that have adequate training. This desire to gain more knowledge surrounding conflict engagement is present. Filippelli (2012) conducted a phenomenological study that examined ways to improve the conflict management skills of administrative staff in higher education. Upon reviewing the interview data, there were four main themes that emerged to improve conflict management processes:

   a. Reviewing the process and protocol for addressing conflict

b. Reviewing the hiring practices to make certain the most qualified individuals were selected

c. Reinforcing the expectations

d. Providing conflict management training to employees. (Filippelli, 2012)

These themes indicate that people want to be educated about conflict as a means of both improving their own knowledgebase but also to improve the competency and credibility of the institutions they represent.

Another study conducted by Kimencu (2011) examined the responses of 93 academic deans at master's degree institutions. This study incorporated the four frames of leadership: structural, political, human resources, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 1991) and how they relate to conflict management styles. The study also used an adaptation of the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983b). The study found that deans with more than ten years of experience in academia were more likely to use a compromising style than deans with less than ten years' experience (Kimencu, 2011). The study added that:

It could therefore be inferred that the compromising conflict management style is more prevalent among deans with more experience because as deans get more acquainted to their deanship role; they realize that most issues do not have clear-cut answers and hence acknowledge the need to find a middle ground.

(Kimencu, 2011, p. 111)

This is of interest because it suggests that conflict styles (particularly those of deans) do adapt or change as experience increases. In addition, this study discovered that many of the conflict management styles were interrelated to each other. Kimencu (2011) wrote

that, "the integrating conflict management style was positively related to the obliging and compromising styles and negatively related to the dominating styles. The obliging and compromising styles were also positively related to the avoiding conflict management style" (p. 113). These findings are significant, because they indicate that a dean utilizing an integrating approach might still realize progress in conflict with others using either an obliging or compromising style. It also suggested that those exhibiting even an obliging or compromising style might still be able to encourage someone using an avoiding style into engaging in the conflict process.

In conducting a study that gathers information from participants, it often becomes essential (for both time and practicality purposes) to use online-based questionnaires. These questionnaires can be created using a myriad of software applications and then distributed to the intended sample. There are many key factors to remember in distributing these questionnaires. Henning (2004) conducted a study identifying some of these factors in relation to distributing conflict resolution questionnaires. The first factor is the unintended provision of misleading data. This can occur when an organization (such as a higher education institution) distributes a questionnaire without properly establishing validity and reliably. This can cause significant problems. Henning (2004) elaborated that "the inexperienced user may consider the questionnaire information to be authentic as they may equate higher education with academic rigor" (p. 253). In this situation, the researcher risks damaging his/her own credibility but also the institution he/she represents. Another potential issue deals with privacy and security. Participants that choose to answer questionnaires what the assurance that their participance in an

exercise will not have negative consequences for them. There are pitfalls that can enter

such as unauthorized use of participant information, wrongful access, and potential for

errors (Henning, 2004). It is crucial the researcher takes the necessary precautions to

maintain transparency to participants as well as take measures to safeguard the

information. By being aware of the possible dangers but also realizing the immense

potential for learning, researchers in this field can conduct meaningful studies with

integrity.

General Leadership Guidelines that Relate to Conflict

There have been specific concepts surrounding conflict engagement that have

been illustrated throughout this review of literature. In thinking of these points, it is also

important to consider some guidelines that specifically relate to educational leaders that

relate to conflict. Higher educational institutions should be places that challenge ways of

thinking, and approaches to conflict should be no different. Gerzon (2006) added that

"the most direct path to learning, and then leading, through conflict is to listen to points

of view that challenge our own" (p. 124). Institutions of education serve no purpose if

they are filled with like-minded individuals that do not wish to push new boundaries.

This complacent line of thinking can often lead to stagnation and possible death for the

institution. The goal should not be to completely eliminate conflict from within the walls

of these institutions. There some conflicts that cannot be resolved (Bolman & Gallos,

2011). Bolman and Gallos (2011) echoed Gerzon's (2006) sentiment when they wrote

that, "the critical task for academic leaders is how to orchestrate disagreements so that

things don't get too hot or too cold for progress" (p. 131). Educational leaders must be

confident in encouraging others to engage in conflict in a productive manner. This will help to ensure the viability of the institutions and the people that comprise them.

Summary of the Review of Literature

This review of literature has included theoretical concepts of conflict as well as applications in various fields. The research has shown that conflict exists in every facet of life. Eventually, it must be confronted in some fashion. Leaders (especially those in higher education) must realize this in order to be effective in their practices. With the proper foundational knowledge of conflict, one can engage in the process in a more confident manner. Essentially, this becomes a paradigm shift in thinking and eventual acceptance that conflict is not good, conflict is not bad, conflict simply is. Leaders that can assist their colleagues and subordinates to this shift in thinking can truly have significant impact.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of the present study was to examine which conflict styles are prevalent among academic and student affairs deans at the community and technical colleges and state universities across a large Midwestern state college and university system. Toward this end, four hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that academic and student affairs deans at the four-year universities across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report a *compromising* style of conflict engagement.

Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that academic and student affairs deans at the two-year colleges across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report an *integrating* style of conflict engagement.

Hypothesis 3.   It was hypothesized that male academic and student affairs deans across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report a *dominating* style for an approach to conflict engagement.

Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that female academic and student affairs deans across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report an *obliging* style for an approach to conflict engagement.

Subjects

All academic and student affairs deans across a large Midwestern state college and university system were recruited for participation in the present study. There were

222 academic deans and 37 student affairs deans in the system across 7 state universities

and 30 community and technical colleges at the time of this study.

Measures

A demographic questionnaire was administered to the subjects. Participants were

asked to identify their age, gender, type of institution (two-year college or four-year

university), whether they were an academic dean or student affairs dean, and number of

years in position. An adaptation of the Rahim (1983b) Organizational Conflict

Inventory-II (ROCI-II) was administered to the sample. The ROCI-II is comprised of 28

questions that identify to what degree a participant might exhibit a particular conflict

style (i.e., obliging, avoiding, integrating, dominating, and compromising). These items

were identified via factor analytic loadings of .40 or higher subsequent to their theoretical

design (Rahim, 1983a). The questions were adapted to provide wording appropriate for

the respective deanships, as opposed to referring to their *subordinates* as such. Thus,

academic deans answered each question in relation to their respective *faculty*. Student

affairs deans answered the questions as they pertained to their *staff*.

Procedure for Data Collection

Academic and student affairs deans within a Midwestern state college and

university system comprised of 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state

universities were recruited via an email letter that invited them to participate in the

present study and directed them via a link to an online survey using Qualtrics

(www.qualtrics.com). The survey began with an informed consent statement. Subjects

indicated their consent to participate by clicking on the button that took them to the

demographic questionnaire. Based on their response to an item regarding current position, subjects were directed either to the items of the ROCI-II adapted for academic deans or deans of student affairs.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Demographic data was analyzed to identify measures of central tendency regarding subject gender, age, years in position, and whether they serve at a community/technical college or state university. Responses to the ROCI-II were analyzed via a series of *t* tests to test the four hypotheses. All statistical analyses were conducted via JASP (www.jasp-stats.org).

CHAPTER IV

Results

There is little in the literature regarding approaches to conflict among deans at institutions of higher education. Yet, research in this area could serve to further practice in academic leadership. Consequently, the present study sought to test which of the five conflict styles as measured by the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II; 1983b) academic and student affairs deans tend to exhibit (See Appendix). From the possible 222 academic deans and 37 student affairs deans serving in a Midwest state college and university system at the time of this study, 52 participants (20%) completed the ROCI-II survey instrument. Out of these subjects, 43 indicated they identified as an academic dean (83%), while 8 indicated they identified as a student affairs dean (15%). One subject did not indicate type of dean, and another failed to indicate type of institution. Consequently, data from these two subjects were eliminated from analysis. The typical subject was a middle-aged (mean = 49.49 years) female (60%) academic dean (83%) serving at a community or technical college (65%).

Subjects completed the ROCI-II via online survey, the specific wording of the instrument's 28 items were adapted in verbiage ("academic dean" versus "student affairs dean") by their identification of role. Due to a clerical error at the time of survey dissemination, subjects that completed the academic dean items were only presented with the first 27 items of the scale. For these subjects, the missing 28th item was constructed by deriving the mean score of the other six *integrating*-based questions in the relevant

ROCI-II scale. This error was not replicated among the items presented to student affairs deans.

Academic Deans

The typical academic dean was a middle-aged (mean = 49.85 years) female (60.0%) serving at a community or technical college (70.0%). A set of four hypotheses was proposed to test the perceptions of academic deans regarding conflict resolution.

Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that academic deans at the four-year universities across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report a *compromising* style of conflict engagement.

In contrast to the hypothesis (see Figure 4), academic deans from four-year universities (n = 15) rated their conflict style as predominantly *integrating* (mean = 4.39, SD = .37). Hypothesis 1 was thus refuted.

Figure 4
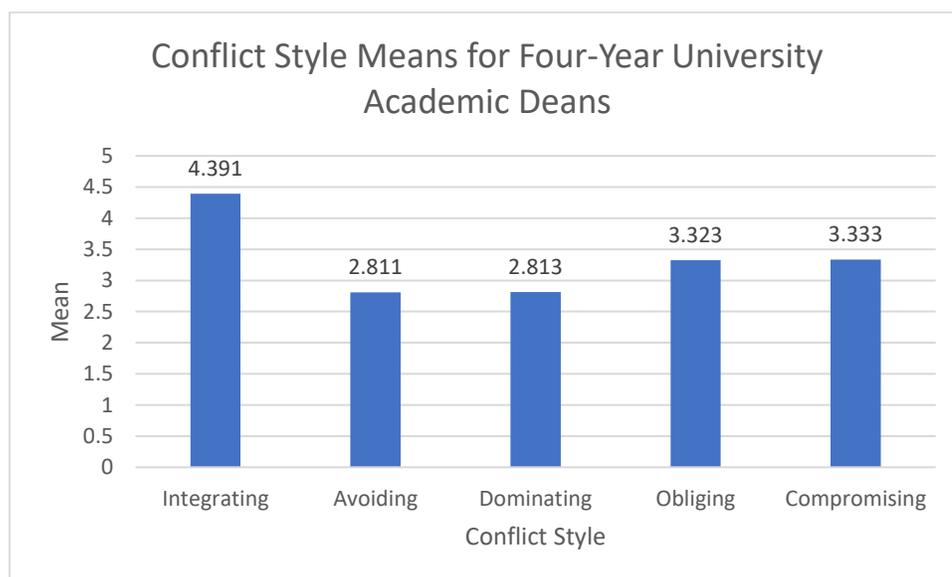
Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that academic deans at the two-year colleges across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report an *integrating* style of conflict engagement.

As demonstrated in Figure 5, academic deans from two-year community or technical colleges (n = 35) rated their conflict style as predominantly *integrating* (mean = 4.58, SD = ..40). Hypothesis 2 was thus supported.

Figure 5
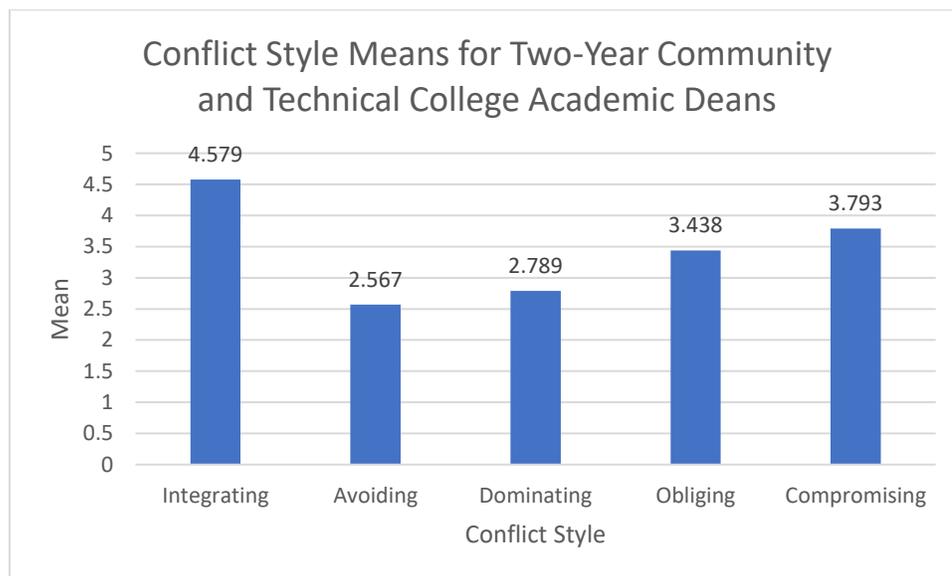
Supplementary analysis (see Table 1) revealed that the academic deans at community and technical colleges as well as universities reported similar levels of usage across four of the conflict styles. The exception was in the *compromising* style; academic deans at community and technical colleges were more likely to engage in this style than their university peers.

Table 1. Independent Samples *t*-Test

Conflict Style	t	p
Integrating	1.558	0.126
Avoiding	-1.138	0.261
Dominating	-0.107	0.915
Obliging	0.978	0.333
Compromising	2.205	0.032

Note. Student's *t*-test reflecting conflict style used for academic deans at two-year community and technical colleges as well as four-year universities. The table shows $p = 0.032$ for the *compromising* style, indicating a higher probability of two-year community and technical college academic deans that use this style.

Hypothesis 3.   It was hypothesized that male academic deans across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report a *dominating* style for an approach to conflict engagement.

In contrast to the hypothesis (see Figure 6), male academic deans from both four-year universities and two-year community and technical colleges (n = 20) rated their conflict style as predominantly *integrating* (mean = 4.39, SD = .34). Hypothesis 3 was thus refuted.

Figure 6

Conflict Style Means for Male Four-Year University & Two-Year Community and Technical College Academic Deans
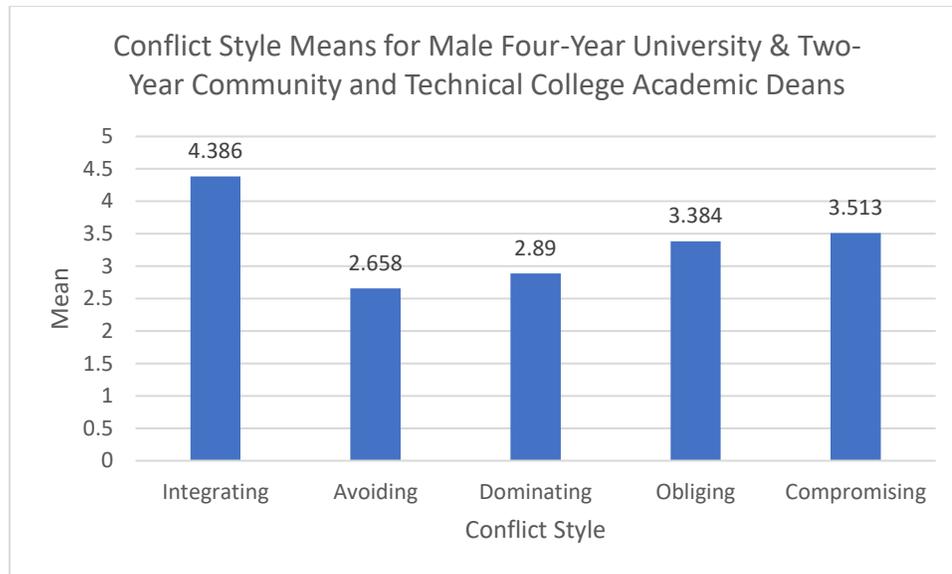
Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that female academic deans across a large Midwestern state college and university system would typically report an *obliging* style for an approach to conflict engagement.

In contrast to the hypothesis (see Figure 7), female academic deans from both four-year universities and two-year community and technical colleges (n = 30) rated their conflict style as predominantly *integrating* (mean = 4.61, SD = .41). Hypothesis 4 was thus refuted.

Figure 7

Conflict Style Means for Female Four-Year University & Two-Year Community and Technical College Academic Deans
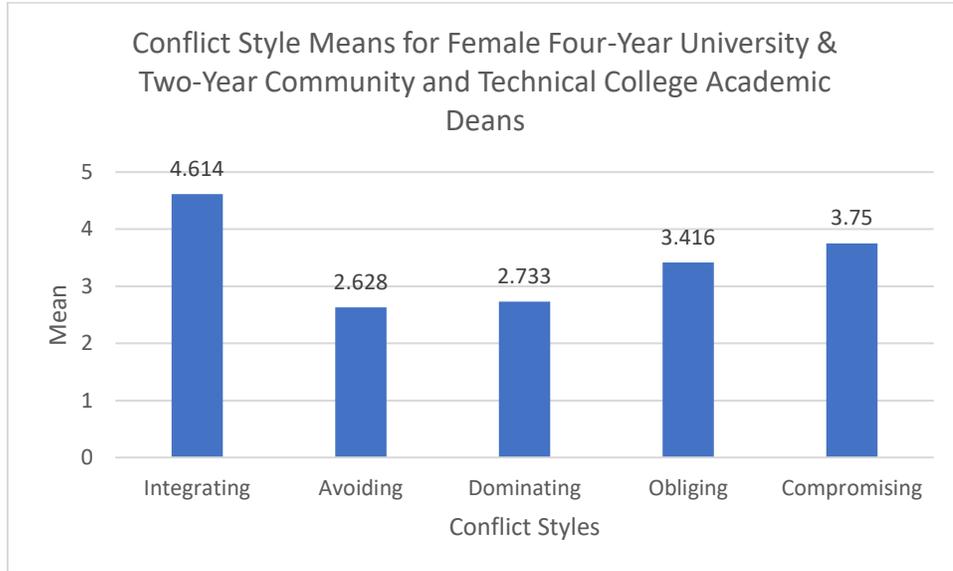
Supplementary analysis (see Table 2) revealed that the academic deans (male and female) at community and technical colleges as well as universities reported similar levels of usage across the five conflict styles. However, there appeared to be no statistical significance between genders on any of the five conflict styles.

Table 2. Independent Samples *t*-Test

Conflict Style	t	p
Integrating	-2.057	0.045
Avoiding	0.149	0.882
Dominating	0.73	0.469
Obliging	-0.296	0.769
Compromising	-1.177	0.245

Note. Student's *t*-test reflecting conflict style used for academic male and female deans at two-year community and technical colleges as well as four-year universities. The table reflects no statistical significance across any of the five conflict styles.

Student Affairs Deans

The typical student affairs dean was a middle-aged (mean = 50.38 years) female (87.5%) serving at a community or technical college (87.5%). The set of four hypotheses were proposed to test the perceptions of student affairs deans regarding conflict engagement. Unfortunately, the small sample size (n = 8) precluded meaningful statistical analysis. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that conflict styles were reported similarly among both community and technical college, and university student affairs deans (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Conflict Styles of Student Affairs Deans at Four-Year Universities & Two-Year Community and Technical Colleges
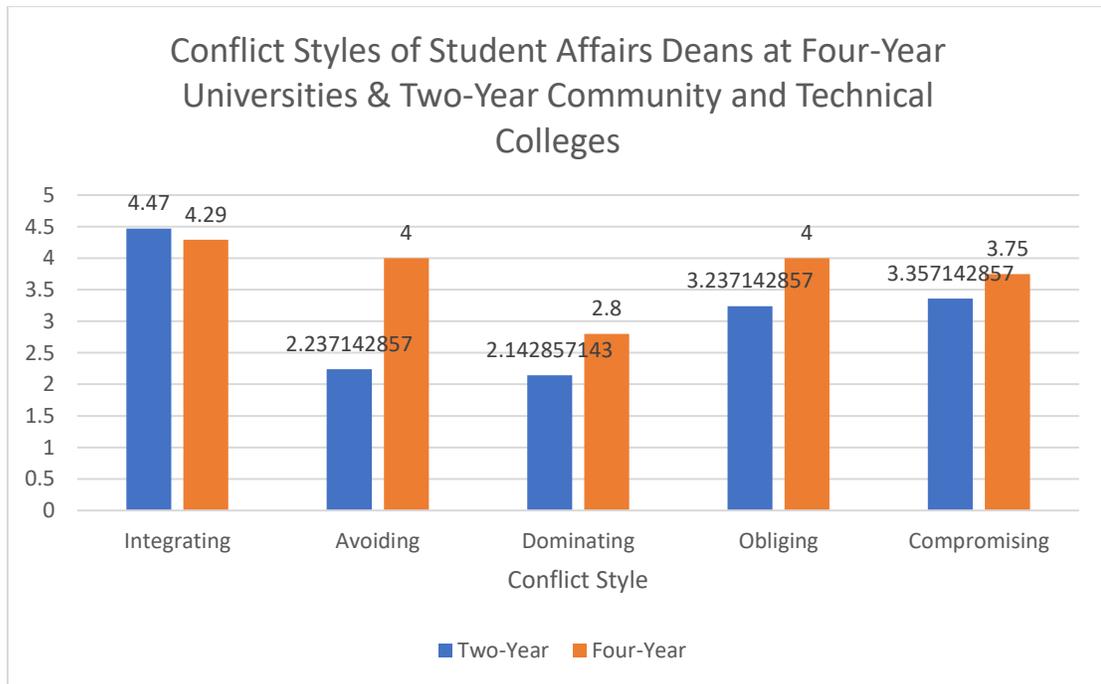
Similarly, student affairs deans across institutional types reported similar trends for conflict style across gender (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

Conflict Styles of Male and Female Student Affairs Deans
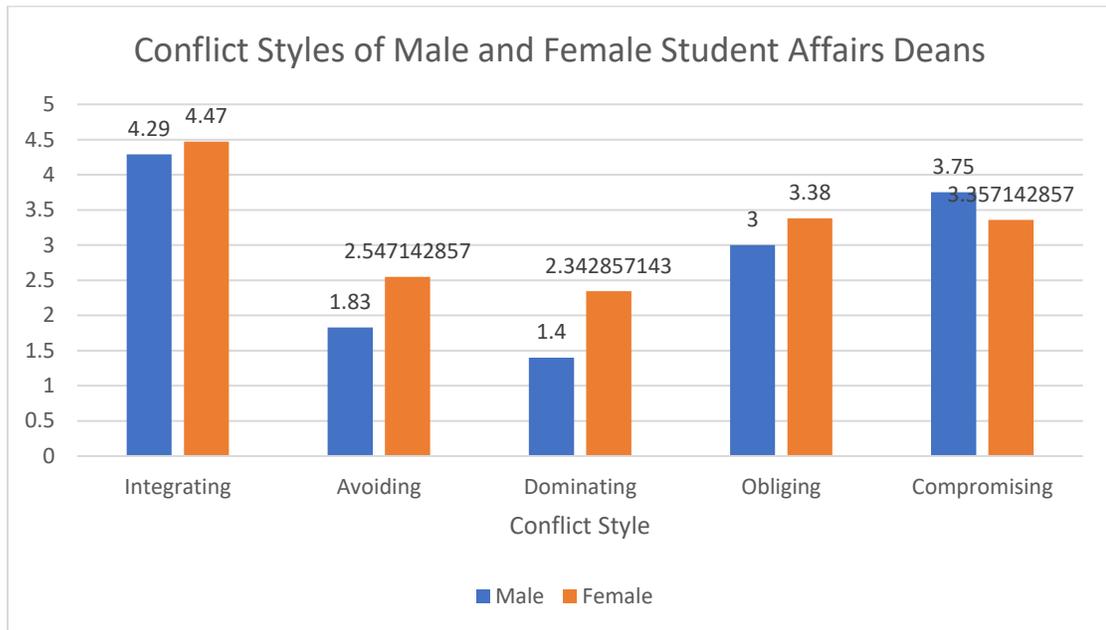
Open-ended Question

Finally, academic and student affairs deans were asked to respond to an open-ended question ("What has been your experience with formal or informal training in conflict resolution?") at the end of their respective surveys. Forty of the total 53 (75.47%) deans answered the open-ended questions (See Figure 10). Of these forty responses, 34 were academic deans (85.0%) and 6 were student affairs deans (15.0%). Their responses revealed five themes, three of them major: (a) training (n = 30, 75.00%), (b) education (n = 9, 22.50%), (c) experience (n = 5, 12.50%), books (n = 1, .03%) and

culture (n = 1, .03%). These responses indicate that the deans that comprise this subject

base have had formal and/or informal education or training experiences around conflict.

Figure 10

Emergent Themes for Academic and Student Affairs Deans
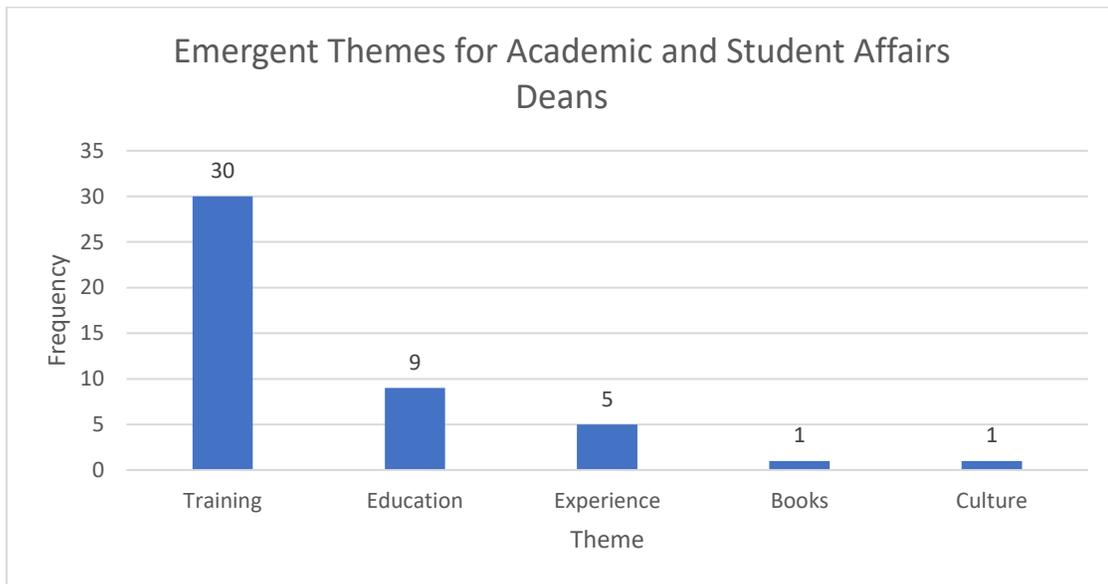
CHAPTER V

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Academic and student affairs deans encounter conflict at all levels, a topic of major potential relevance across leadership in higher education. This study sought to analyze the reported conflict styles of both academic and student affairs deans within a large Midwestern state college and university system in order to better understand how they approached conflict. Insight regarding how academic and student affairs deans address conflict on their campuses might facilitate a better understanding of how conflict is approached within higher education.

Academic and student affairs deans at four-year universities were expected to exhibit a *compromising* style of conflict. This was expected due to the basic structure of a university. The standard university tends to be larger in scope, possessing a greater tendency for more bureaucracy within the structure. Thus, a *compromising* style could be necessary in order to accomplish goals. This style addresses conflict more directly than an *avoiding* style, but it lacks the depth of an *integrating* style (Rahim, 2001). Instead, the results indicated that deans from the four-year universities tended to use an *integrating* style. This was surprising in that it appeared academic deans at these institutions reported an *integrating* style almost a full point ahead of the *compromising* style (*integrating* mean = 4.39, *compromising* mean = 3.33).

It was also expected that academic and student affairs deans at community and technical colleges would report an *integrating* style toward conflict. This hypothesis was

supported by the results and aligned with the concept that two-year community or technical colleges tend to be smaller in scope compared to their four-year university counterparts. With fewer personnel, fewer programs, and generally less bureaucracy, deans in these settings utilized a style that focuses on taking the extra time to collaborate with other across campus. Thus, academic and student affairs deans at both the universities and community and technical colleges reported a primary usage of an *integrating* conflict style. This could be because the typical size of the four-year universities within the system mirrors that of many of the two-year institutions. In addition, some of the smaller four-year institutions have similar student enrollments as many of the two-year community or technical colleges. There could also be much more congruency (at least in the type of dean) between and across institution types within this large Midwestern system.

It also was hypothesized that male academic and student affairs deans would tend to exhibit a *dominating* conflict style, whereas female academic and student affairs deans would tend to exhibit an *obliging* style. Both of these hypotheses were refuted. These hypotheses were congruent with the extant research on gender and leadership. Nonetheless, both genders of the sample indicated a tendency to exhibit an *integrating* style. This was surprising as it appeared that gender played no difference in what the most prevalent style tended to be. It is possible that the male and female deans in this sample happened to comprise a more engaging profile of dean, in that they were willing to participate in expressing their approach to conflict. However, given that the *integrating* conflict style was the most widely reported across all dean demographics, this

could be related to the fact that 75.00 percent (n = 30) of the academic and student affairs

deans revealed they had experienced conflict training.

Implications

The implications from this study reflect that academic and student affairs deans

within a large Midwestern higher education system seemingly address conflict on their

campuses with skill, given the report of conflict engagement training for those that have

assumed the deanship within this sample. This would indicate that deans within the

system reflect a progressive approach to engaging in conflict. This study represents a

promising first step of understanding. However, there is opportunity that exists to

interact further with these deans in order to ensure that training in conflict continues.

Training that exists in conflict reflected from the research in this study as well as others

has been derived primarily from the private sector. While some of these philosophies

have relevance in higher education, there should be a more focused effort. West (2006)

wrote, "the answer is not to be found in borrowing the attitudes and methods of the

private sector but, rather, in finding new ways of reconciling academic and managerial

values" (p. 196). By designing this type of training, it would be the hope that all deans

within this system could have the confidence to competently engage conflict.

Strengths and Limitations

There were several strengths and limitations that were part of this study. One of

the major strengths of this study is that it canvassed one of the five largest state systems

of higher education in the nation. It is conceivable that the findings from the system

under investigation may be relevant to that of other large state systems. Another strength

of the study is that it represented academic deans from across the state and institutional

types. Consequently, the findings may provide a realistic snapshot of conflict engagement

among that population.

There were also limitations that existed within the study. The first limitation is

that the study manifested a small sample size. Of the 259 academic and student affairs

deans contacted for the present study, only 53 (20.46%) deans completed the survey.

Another limitation of the present study is that of the student affairs responses. There

were only 8 responses from that population, a sample size too low to allow for

meaningful analysis. A final limitation within the study stems from the ROCI-II (Rahim,

1983b). The very nature of the instrument is that it is based on the participant's self-

report and may reflect more competent perception than reality dictates. In addition to this

notion, the ROCI-II itself incorporates more *integrating*-based questions (7) than any

other approach. This inherent quality of the instrument could carry a bias more easily

recognized by intelligent or savvy subjects.

Recommendations for Further Research

Upon completion of this study, there are several recommendations that could be

incorporated into further research. The first recommendation is to replicate the study

with a focus on the private higher education institutions within the state. While there

could be overlapping responses between the public system used in this study and those of

private institutions, private institutions might utilize other models (i.e. Christianity etc.)

as the basis of approaching conflict (Ennis, 2008; Dee et al., 2004). Studying the private

institutions could prove valuable in creating a more holistic picture of conflict within higher education.

A second recommendation is to replicate this study but within larger research institutions. The study conducted for this dissertation analyzed colleges and universities within a large Midwestern comprehensive state system. These institutions tend to differ in scope than those that are large research institutions. This study could be done to see if deans at these institutions approach conflict similarly or if there is a different approach.

The third recommendation for further research is to replicate the present study within other states in the region of the state of this study. As mentioned earlier, it appears that deans within this system navigate conflict with a certain degree of skill, largely due to some form of training. It would be most significant to utilize the individuals of this state to create a template or model that could be used to facilitate conflict engagement training to deans at other institutions in states of the surrounding region. This would allow not only for the identification of how conflict is approached currently in these states, but it would also create an opportunity to expand conflict engagement training to better equip future deans.

A final recommendation centers on the very nature of higher education. The field of higher education is certainly a complex phenomenon. In considering this, it could be noteworthy to consider that the role of a dean does not always allow for impartiality in conflict situations. This is especially true as one considers the role from a multicultural perspective. By looking at the role through this lens, further research could explore impartiality to help better prepare multiculturally competent leaders.

The present study offers an improved understanding of how academic deans across a large Midwestern state system of universities and community and technical colleges engage with conflict. These individuals play a crucial role in the institutions they serve but also to the people they interact with. Expanding the understanding of conflict engagement will continue to be a great asset to those in higher education. This understanding could aid in providing confident and competent academic and student affairs leaders.

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Appendix A

Participant Implied Consent and Adapted Rahim Organizational Conflict

Instrument-II (Rahim, 1983b) for Academic and Student Affairs Deans

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Start of Block: SURVEY INSTRUCTION

APPROACHES TO CONFLICT

(MSU IRBNet ID# 1198196)

Introduction

 You are invited to participate as a subject in research on approaches to conflict among academic and student affairs deans.   The goal of this study is to better identify which type of conflict approach deans tend to exhibit and also gain an understanding of the amount of formal and informal conflict resolution training deans have received.
    This research is being conducted by Aaron Peterson, M.S., and advised by Prof. Jason Kaufman, from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Procedure

 If you agree to participate as a subject in this study, you will be asked to respond to a brief series of items in the following survey. The survey should require approximately 15 minutes of your time.

Potential Risks of Participation

 The risks you will encounter as a participant in this research are not more than experienced in your everyday life. However, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. Participants may also experience some discomfort in answering questions relating to conflict situations. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-

6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

Potential Benefits of Participation

 There are no direct benefits for participation in this study.

Statement of Confidentiality

 Participation and the resultant data in this study will be kept confidential. Your
responses to this survey will be anonymous beyond your status as either an academic or
student affairs dean and will be securely stored online by Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com).

Voluntary Nature of the Study

 The decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with Minnesota
State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of
benefits.

Contacts and Questions

 This research project is being conducted by Mr. Aaron Peterson. You can contact Mr.
Peterson at 507-261-5487 or aaron.peterson-2@mnsu.edu about any concerns you
have about this project. Alternatively, you can also contact Prof. Jason Kaufman at 952-
818-8877 or jason.kaufman@mnsu.edu.
 You also may contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Institutional Review
Board Administrator, Dr. Barry Ries, at 507-389-1242 or barry.ries@mnsu.edu with any
questions about research with human participants at Minnesota State University,
Mankato.

Statement of Consent

 By clicking to the next page, you hereby attest that you are at least 18 years of age and
give informed consent to participate in this study with your responses to the
survey. Please print a copy of this consent form for your records if you would like one.
 Thank you!

End of Block: SURVEY INSTRUCTION

Start of Block: Demographics

What is your age?

0   10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Please drag the slider to your age: ()

What is your gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (3)

What type of institution are you employed?

○ 2-Year Community or Technical College (1)

○ 4-Year University (2)

Years in your current position?

0   10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Please drag the slider to your years in position: ()

Were you born in Minnesota?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Years you have lived in Minnesota?

0   10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Please drag the slider to your years
residing in Minnesota ()

What type of Dean are you?

○ Academic Dean (1)

○ Student Affairs Dean (2)

○ I prefer not to answer (3)

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) for Academic Deans

Please answer the following questions to indicate how you handle your disagreement or conflict with your *Faculty*.

Try to recall as many conflict situations as possible in ranking these statements on a scale of 1-5. An answer of 1 would indicate "Strongly Disagree," and an answer of 5 would indicate Strongly Agree.

1. I try to investigate an issue with my faculty members to find a solution acceptable to us.

　　○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

　　○ 2 (2)

　　○ 3 (3)

　　○ 4 (4)

　　○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

2. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my faculty members

　　○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

　　○ 2 (2)

　　○ 3 (3)

　　○ 4 (4)

　　○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

3. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my faculty members to myself.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

4. I try to integrate my ideas with those of my faculty members to come up with a decision jointly.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

5. I try to work with my faculty members to find solutions to a problem that satisfies our expectations.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

6. I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with my faculty members.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

7. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

8. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

9. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

10. I usually accommodate the wishes of my faculty members.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

11. I give in to the wishes of my faculty members.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

12. I exchange accurate information with my faculty members to solve a problem together.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

13. I usually allow concessions to my faculty members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

14. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

15. I negotiate with my faculty members so that a compromise can be reached.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

16. I try to stay away from disagreement with my faculty members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

17. I avoid an encounter with my faculty members.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

18. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

19. I often go along with the suggestions of my faculty members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

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20. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

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21. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

22. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that issues can be resolved in the best possible way.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

23. I collaborate with my faculty members to come up with decisions acceptable to us.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

24. I try to satisfy the expectations of my faculty members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

25. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

26. I try to keep my disagreement with my faculty members to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

27. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my faculty members.

    ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

    ○ 2 (2)

    ○ 3 (3)

    ○ 4 (4)

    ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

What has been your experience with formal or informal training in conflict resolution?

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End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Block 3

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) for Student Affairs Deans

Please answer the following questions to indicate how you handle your disagreement or conflict with your *Staff*.

Try to recall as many conflict situations as possible in ranking these statements on a scale of 1-5. An answer of 1 would indicate "Strongly Disagree," and an answer of 5 would indicate Strongly Agree.

Page Break

1. I try to investigate an issue with my staff members to find a solution acceptable to us.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

2. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my staff members

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

3. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my staff members to myself.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

4. I try to integrate my ideas with those of my staff members to come up with a decision jointly.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

5. I try to work with my staff members to find solutions to a problem that satisfies our expectations.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

6. I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with my staff members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

7. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

8. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

9. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

10. I usually accommodate the wishes of my staff members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

11. I give in to the wishes of my staff members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

12. I exchange accurate information with my staff members to solve a problem together.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

13. I usually allow concessions to my staff members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

14. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

15. I negotiate with my staff members so that a compromise can be reached.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

16. I try to stay away from disagreement with my staff members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

17. I avoid an encounter with my staff members.

  ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

  ○ 2 (2)

  ○ 3 (3)

  ○ 4 (4)

  ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

18. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.

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  ○ 2 (2)

  ○ 3 (3)

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27. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my staff members.

○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

---

28. I try to work with my staff members for a proper understanding of the problem.

   ○ 1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)

   ○ 2 (2)

   ○ 3 (3)

   ○ 4 (4)

   ○ 5 (Strongly Agree) (5)

What has been your experience with formal or informal training in conflict resolution?

_____

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_____

End of Block: Block 3