The Relationship between Managerial Experience and Conflict Management Styles of Men and of Women in Community College Administration

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERIAL EXPERIENCE AND
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES OF MEN AND OF WOMEN
IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

by

Betty Pritchard

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 1985
Conflict management is a vital component of the manager's function. It is also assumed that men and women manage conflict differently, and therefore perform differently as managers. This assumption, along with many other sex-role stereotypes, has restricted the entrance of women into management, and especially into top level management.

This study investigated differences in the conflict management styles of men and women managers, and specifically of men and women administrators in 2-year colleges across the United States. It utilized the self-administered Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument to measure conflict management on five modes determined by the dimensions of cooperation and assertiveness. These modes are identified as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating.

The results of analysis of the data were inconclusive. No differences were found between men and women, or among levels of supervisory experience, or as a result of the interaction of these two variables. Nor was the conflict management style of women administrators found to relate to the proportion of administrative
staff that is female.

Further research is recommended to address possible differences in conflict management style as a characteristic of level of authority.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of so many people in the completion of this study.

Dr. Uldis Smidchens, Professor of Educational Leadership, served as the chair of my committee and provided patient guidance and advice. Dr. Carol Sheffer and Dr. Martha Smydra also served on my committee and offered both constructive criticism and encouragement.

Daniel Jaksen, James Cambridge, Mary Ann Adam, and my husband, Mike Pritchard, were my classmates throughout the doctoral program. The process of pursuing our goals in concert diminished the struggles and lent enjoyment and comraderie to the endeavor.

My fourth hypothesis evolved, in part, from my own experiences with the supportive network of women in community college administration. The sisterhood of the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges (AAWCJC), and especially of those associated with the Leaders for the 80's project, has lavished me with encouragement, ideas, and assistance. I would like to thank these women, including my dear friends, Martha Smydra and Margaret MacTavish, who provided critical support in data collection throughout the nation. Their names include but are not limited to:

Mary Ann Adam     Joan Edward
Catherine Arcure   Kate Fenton
Cora Blair         Beth Henry
Mildred Bulpitt    Jackie Ireland
Betty Chang        Edith Jacques
Eunice Cooper      Betty Jones
Carolyn Desjardins Harriett Kessinger
Marilynn Liddell        Linda Schmidt
Doris Lux              Beverly Simone
Jerrilee Mosier        Cheryl Sypneiski
Beverly Nelson         Tessa Tagle
Joanette Patterson     Jill Wakefield
Mary Prunty

Most of all, I wish to express sincere thanks to my husband, Mike; my sons, Matt and Greg; and my mother, Mrs. Jewell Loftin. Their sacrifices were made out of love, and their unlimited support and understanding has made this accomplishment possible for me.

Betty Pritchard
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Conflict management has increasingly become one of the most important competences in modern management and administration. A survey by the American Management Association found it to be rated as a topic of equal or greater importance than planning, communication, motivation and decision-making (Lippitt, 1982).

Participative management practices and the management of professionals are two aspects of educational institutions that make conflict management especially critical in their administration. Educational administrators may devote as much as 49 percent of their working time to conflict management--twice the amount reported by corporate executives (Lippitt, 1982). Furthermore, most private organizations are not expected to fulfill a representative function as educational institutions are, and they are not responsible for making authoritative value decisions or for the management of social conflict (Zeigler, Kehoe, Reisman, and Polito, 1981).

Women have only recently entered the ranks of educational management in noticeable numbers. Empirical data is slow in becoming available to assess the organizational implications of women entering into leadership positions. As Bartol (1974) noted:

Most available materials are based mainly on conjecture and opinion; they do little to lay a foundation for further research to assist organizations in evaluating and adapting to changes in the role of women. Hence there is a vital need for research on
leadership issues related to women in all levels, and especially in administrative levels, of organizations. (p. 225)

Although much research has been carried out to support differences between men and women in their conflict behavior, relatively few studies have addressed the differences as a function of managerial experience as well as gender (Shockley-Zalabak, 1981). Likewise, few studies have related those differences to the acceptance of women in managerial roles. It is the purpose of this study to investigate the relationship between managerial experience and conflict management styles for both men and women in educational administration, and to assess the effects of the minority status of women in management on their conflict management styles.

Statement of the Problem

The standards for appropriate conflict management behavior have evolved through years of managerial experiences. Until recently, however, managers were predominantly male, so that those standards may or may not be appropriate for women. Women are still under-represented in managerial occupations, but the Census has revealed a dramatic increase from 18 percent of the 1970 managerial labor force to 31 percent in 1980 (Rytina & Bianchi, 1984).

Sex stereotypes prevail regarding differences in the behavioral and management styles of men and women (Biles & Pryatel, 1978). The implication of these stereotypes is that women inherently do not meet the established managerial standards. This is subtly revealed in the male-oriented language and jargon of management and adminis-
tration, and overtly shown through a large discrepancy in median salaries (Spain & Bianchi, 1983). Differences in management styles of men and women, including conflict styles, must be explained and understood before solutions to such societal injustices can be sought.

Significance of the Study

Research has been conducted to analyze sex differences in conflict behavior in games and simulations (Rubin & Brown, 1975) and in the work environment (Renwick, 1977; Shockley-Zalabak, 1981; Day & Stogdill, 1972), but inconsistent results tend to indicate that existing differences may be linked to variables other than gender. In light of these inconsistent findings, the question arises as to whether differences in conflict management styles are a function of gender, of management experience, or of the interaction between gender and experience. Shockley-Zalabak (1981) reports that the management perspective does reveal a difference in conflict behavior, but recommends that further studies should be done to consider its relationship to experience. Other factors, including institutional characteristics, may also influence conflict behavior. This study addresses the influence of other factors on conflict management styles, as well as that of gender.

Research Questions

The variables addressed in this study are conflict management style, gender, managerial experience, and acceptance by the employer.
of women into management. "Conflict management style" is defined as the self-reported tendency toward particular behavior modes in conflict situations. These modes are described as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, or accommodating. "Managerial experience" is the reported number of years in a paid position as a supervisor of other people. The terminology of "managerial experience" will not indicate intensity or type of managerial participation. The institutional acceptance of women into management will be measured as the proportion of administrative staff that is female.

The specific questions researched are as follows:

1. Is there a difference in the conflict management styles of women administrators compared to male administrators?

2. Is there a difference in conflict management styles among managers with different amounts of managerial experience?

3. Is there a difference among managers in their conflict management styles that is not explained by either gender or amount of managerial experience?

4. Is there a relationship between the conflict styles of women managers of an institution and the proportion of management staff that is female?

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. The most important of these is the distinction that must be made between self-reported conflict management style and actual behavior. Observations of managerial behavior in conflict situations are too diverse...
and too costly to gather for the scope of this study. Data regarding self-reported style has been gathered under the assumption that a positive correlation exists between such data and actual behavior, and therefore do address the problem statement.

Another limitation of the study is that it only provides information at a single point in time. The status of women in management is currently in a state of flux, so that knowledge gained through this study may only be applicable for a short time. In fact, the situation is expected to change as the socialization of young women changes, and it becomes more acceptable for them to pursue non-traditional careers.

Overview of the Report

This chapter has provided an introduction to the study. It presents a statement of the problem, the significance and limitations of the study, and outlines the research questions. Chapter II presents a review of related literature to provide a theoretical basis for the study. It also includes descriptions of related research studies that contribute to the analysis of the data. Chapter III specifies the research design and methodology of the study, including the population and the instrumentation. Chapter IV presents the results found in the data with an analysis of significant differences. The conclusions and implications of the study are discussed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Related literature has been reviewed to provide a framework for this study. The focus of this study is to link the concepts of conflict management to the differences between men and women managers. Conflict management is reviewed in the first section of this chapter without gender-specific implications. The next section describes the male domination of management as an occupation. It is intended to promote an understanding of the depth of the gender concern of this study. Finally, a review of the existing research on the differences between men and women managers builds the basis for the hypotheses.

Conflict Management

The productive functioning of an organization is dependent upon the ability of its members to work together. Conflict management is the process used to ensure that differences among members are not detrimental to the work group, department, or organizational unit. Even people who spurred revolutions in Western thought, including Machiavelli, Hegel, Marx, and Freud, recognized the vital role of conflict in the relations among persons or in the ambivalences within them (Burns, 1979).

Farace, Monge, and Russell (1977) list four characteristics
that are critical to each unit's survival. They are (1) adaptation; (2) control and coordination of resources; (3) expression and management of feelings; and (4) the development and maintenance of the integration of members as it leads to group cohesiveness. These characteristics are all closely related to conflict management.

Conflict is also related to unit or organizational survival by Labovitz (1980). He promotes the creative use of conflict, stating, "Conflict leads to change, change leads to adaptation, and adaptation leads to survival" (p. 30). Negative results of conflict, however, include the disruption of communication, cohesiveness, and cooperation (Wexley & Yukl, 1977). Hence, there is a critical need for its effective management. This responsibility falls on the leader of the unit. Leaders shape, express and mediate conflict by influencing its intensity and scope. They use it in establishing boundaries, channeling hostility, counteracting social ossification, invigorating group interests, encouraging innovation, and defining and empowering the leader role. Leaders do not shun conflict, but rather confront it, exploit it, and ultimately embody it (Burns, 1979).

Definition of Conflict

The meaning of conflict can be associated with scales as broad as international hostilities and war, or as intimate as personal role inconsistencies. For the purposes of this study, however, conflict is defined relative to organizational interactions between persons or groups within the work setting.

Conflict can be defined as "a dispute or struggle between two
parties that is characterized by overt expression of hostility and/or intentional interference in the goal attainment of the opposing party" (Wexley & Yukl, 1977, p. 172). Thomas (1976) defines conflict as "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his" (p. 891). Kilmann and Thomas (1977) summarize definitions, citing conflict as "the condition of objective incompatibility between values or goals, the behavior of deliberately interfering with another's goal achievement . . ." (pp. 59-60). A generally accepted definition of conflict is that of a situation in which two or more parties perceive that their goals are incompatible (Zeigler et al., 1981).

According to Thomas (1976), conflict episodes are composed of four key elements: (1) frustration, (2) conceptualization, (3) behavior, and (4) outcome. Feelings of frustration resulting from interference with the achievement of some goal lead to awareness of a conflict situation. It is then conceptualized and the problem becomes defined. One's perception of the conflict situation determines the behavior of that individual, resulting in an outcome.

Causes of Conflict

Conflict management is accomplished by altering the antecedent conditions leading to conflict as well as by regulating the way conflicts are handled by the involved parties or by third parties (Wexley & Yukl, 1977). These antecedent conditions, or causes of conflict, are inherent in the social process, and in organizations as
Causes of organizational conflict can usually be categorized as (a) competition for resources, (b) task interdependence, (c) jurisdictional ambiguity, (d) status problems, (e) communication barriers, and (f) individual traits (Wexley & Yukl, 1977). Among these causes, competition for resources and communication problems are cited most consistently throughout the literature.

James Madison (cited in Burns, 1979, p. 39) summarized his list of causes of conflict, saying, "The most common and durable source of factions, has been the various and unequal distribution of property." In an organization, "property" translates to materials and resources. Acquisition of resources such as funding, space, supplies, personnel, and support becomes more important when these resources are scarce. With scarce resources, competition is more intense and conflict is more likely to develop.

Misunderstandings are a major cause of conflict. They often develop when communication flow is hampered, either in amount or in accuracy. Typical communication barriers include noise or distractions, and distortions (Farace, Monge, & Russell, 1977).

Task interdependence is more likely to be a contributor to conflict when the parties or departments have disparate goals and priorities. If responsibilities and jurisdictional boundaries are unclear or challenged, conflict can easily occur. Zeigler et al. (1981) state that conflict may develop because parties disagree on the delegation of authority. This is similar to status problems resulting from unaccepted lines of authority. Status problems,
however, can also result from perceived inequities.

Individual traits, personality needs, and individual values affect the way conflict is encountered and escalated. These traits are particularly important with regard to compatibility with the traits of other co-workers.

Labovitz (1980) listed the sources of conflict as (a) the structure of an organization, (b) communication distortion, and (c) interpersonal or behavioral factors. Lebell (1980) found major causes of organizational conflict among professionals to be (a) external forces, such as the environment and protagonists' behavior, (b) organizational forces such as the structure, climate, or the nature of the work, (c) interpersonal problems, including differing values, goals, commitment, expectations, or intrinsic differences between employers and employees, and (d) faulty communication. Burns (1979, p. 37) listed (a) disparate rates of change, (b) technological innovation, (c) mass deprivation, (d) competition for scarce resources, (e) other ineluctable social forces, and (f) ambivalences, tensions, and personality differences as reasons why the smooth interaction of people is continually threatened.

Schmidt (1974) postulated three common causes of differing conceptualizations of a situation, thus leading to conflict: (1) information, (2) perceptions, and (3) roles. The two parties in conflict may receive different information, different perceptual processes may lead to different conceptualizations of the same information, or differing roles in the organization may necessitate different positions.
The subjective interpretations of reality are central to conflict situations. Thomas (1976) identifies the components of subjectivity to be (a) the egocentricity of the issue, (b) insight into all underlying concerns, and (c) the size of the issue. Other aspects that escalate or subdue conflict include the awareness of salient alternatives and the perceptions of the stakes.

Schellenberg (1982) interprets the works of Adam Smith to establish that humans are motivated simultaneously by self-interests and empathy for others. These two motivations are often incompatible, resulting in conflicting behaviors.

**Conflict Management as a Management Function**

Knowing how to manage conflict is becoming an increasingly important skill for managers at all levels. Research has revealed that managers spend about 20% of their time dealing with conflict, either as a participant or as a mediator (Schmidt, 1974). The management of conflict within the organization is clearly the responsibility of the manager. When there are divergent views or interests between groups, a leader's statements and actions can be vital in resolving conflict or in preventing the resolution of conflict. Managers need to establish expectations for the group as to how they will handle conflict (Hollander, 1978).

The contemporary view of the management of conflict does not prescribe its elimination, but rather encourages a channeling of energies and focus toward productive outcomes. Thomas (1976) promotes the use of conflict in an organization to (a) reduce boredom,
stimulate interest, and help in testing and assessing reality; (b) provide for the confrontation of divergent views, often leading to superior ideas and a free and collegiate exchange; and (c) stimulate progress to improve conditions for all involved.

Dennis King (1981) proposes that the process of conflict management may result in positive associations or coalitions and as a force to increase cohesion. He presents conflict as a functional part of the social process, providing it is positively handled. Other potential benefits of conflict include the fostering of internal cohesiveness and unity of purpose. "The recognition of such benefits has lead to a concern about how to manage, rather than eliminate, conflict" (Howat and London, 1980, p. 172).

Suggestions for managing conflict are presented by Lebell (1980). They include selective confrontation, clarification of roles, and accountability through a consultant. Farace et al. (1977) promote the use of communication rules to manage conflicts that arise over issues of control. Interdepartmental conflicts can be reduced to objective action plans through a procedure of listing, prioritizing, and acceptance of issues, followed by the development of activities and timetables to change the behaviors that caused the problems (Livingston, 1977).

Bargaining is one approach that can be used in the management of conflict. It is said to occur when (a) two parties have substantial common interests as well as conflicts of interest, (b) both parties believe an agreement can be reached which has potential gain for themselves, and (c) communication is initiated to search for such an
agreement (Schellenberg, 1982).

Role reversal, where one party presents the opponent's viewpoint, is another conflict management tactic (Johnson & Dustin, 1970). It is a communication device that results in greater understanding. This greater understanding increases competition when the positions are mutually exclusive, and decreases competition when they are compatible. Johnson and Dustin pointed out that research with negotiating experiments has shown role reversal to result in more agreements in a shorter period of time when the bargaining positions are compatible.

Conflict Management Models

Many models have been developed as tools to understanding the alternatives and uses of conflict management strategies.

Kleiner's Model

A simplified description of conflict management is presented by Kleiner (1978). The classifications include (a) fighting to win, (b) negotiating a compromise, or (c) problem solving. The choice of these methods should include consideration of the focal person, the other party, and the overall situation. Situations needing a competing or fighting approach to win occur when quick, decisive action is vital, when an unpopular course of action must be implemented, or when protection is needed. Compromising is appropriate when two equal powers are committed to mutually exclusive goals, and as a failsafe when no other method will work. Collaboration, or problem
solving, is best when commitment is needed for implementation, when hard feelings exist among the parties, or when different perspectives are needed for innovative solutions.

**Schelling's Model**

Schelling (cited in Baldridge, 1971) argues that conflict can be viewed as an interaction on a continuum between complete conflict and complete cooperation, as displayed in Figure 1.

![Schelling's conflict continuum.](image)

Schelling's concept of "strategic conflict" represents management of conflict within the middle ground, and most readily reflects the behavior that occurs in an academic community--struggling to cooperate. Baldridge (1971) believes that the political model of academic organizational structure incorporates a strategic conflict orientation in which the parties have "at the same time common interests and points of conflict" (p. 203).

**Katz and Kahn's Model**

Katz and Kahn (1978) discuss the concepts of conflict, competition and cooperation as behavioral processes observable within or-
ganizational structures and roles. Conflict and cooperation are viewed as opposite conditions, while competition is described as the "engagement in activities that are, in some sense, incompatible" but do not interfere with the ongoing actions of each other (p. 613). They recognized the following as variables of prediction and control of conflict within the organization: (a) the organizational properties and dynamic tendencies of the interacting units, (b) conflicts of interests, or interactional incompatibilities, (c) role expectations, especially in relation to boundary positions, (d) personali-ties and other predispositions of the actors, (e) external norms, rules and procedures, and (f) the history of prior conflicting and cooperative interactions.

Stepsis's Model

Stepsis (1974, p. 139) also describes conflict resolutions strategies in terms of a continuum, classifying approaches as avoidance, defusion, and confrontation (see Figure 2). Confrontation is further subdivided into power strategies and negotiation strategies. The use of power presents a situation where one party wins and the other loses, often leaving negative by-products. The aim of negotiation is to reach a compromise that is mutually satisfying.

![Stepsis's continuum of responses to conflict situations.](image)

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Whereas avoidance is presented as removal from the conflict situation, defusion is temporary removal, or a delaying action. Both are attempts to diminish the emotional effects of conflict. Confrontation is a direct approach to conflict resolution.

**Blake and Mouton's Model**

A taxonomy of methods for dealing with conflict presented by Blake and Mouton (1964) describes behavioral dispositions on two perpendicular continuums or dimensions. These dimensions represent a manager's concern for people as opposed to their concern for production or task. As shown in Figure 3, it includes (a) denial or withdrawal, (b) suppression or smoothing over, (c) forcing or use of power, (d) compromise, and (e) confrontation or integration.

![Figure 3: Blake and Mouton's two-dimensional model of conflict behavior.](image)

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Filley ordered these methods, placing confrontation as the highest level of resolution and forcing and withdrawal respectively at the lowest levels (Labovitz, 1980). Smoothing, compromise and confrontation are grouped as strategies that require working with others (Zammuto, London, & Rowland, 1979).

**Thomas and Kilmann's Model**


Schmidt (1974) proposes the five approaches to the management of conflict to be lying along the two perpendicular behavioral continuaums of assertiveness and cooperation. These dimensions are further described by Thomas (1976) and by Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman (1983) as a person's desire to satisfy other's concerns (cooperation) and a person's desire to satisfy their own concerns (assertiveness).

Research on competition-cooperation situations indicates that a number of factors influence the level of cooperation brought into a conflict situation (Hellriegel et al., 1983). When the situation involves repeated trials or a series of decisions, cooperation tends to be low or to decline at first, and then show a rise. Also, a person tends to respond more cooperatively to changes in another's strategy that to fixed strategies. Communication and opportunities for feedback tend to increase the level of cooperation.

Thomas (1971) found that ratings of cooperativeness negatively
correlated to ratings of behavior associated with competition and avoidance, and positively varied with behaviors of collaboration and accommodation. Whereas cooperation is a function of identification with the other party, competition and avoidance involve movement away from the other party.

The second dimension, assertiveness, is described as the active-passive dimension, and is related to the amount of energy expended toward the conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1964). It is described by Thomas (1976) to represent the extent to which a party is interested in satisfying their own concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competing</th>
<th>Collaborating</th>
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<td>Assertiveness</td>
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<td>Avoiding</td>
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**Figure 4. Two-dimensional model of conflict behavior.**

These dimensions, taken in combination, describe five conflict management styles, or modes. The utility and appropriateness of each depends on the situation of the conflict, providing that a true incompatibility of goals exists and not just misinformation. These
five approaches are labeled as (1) competition, (2) accommodation, (3) avoidance, (4) compromise, and (5) collaboration. Schmidt (1974) emphasizes that conflict management requires the choice of approach be made deliberately, well informed, and appropriate for the situation.

**Competing.** Competition involves achievement by one party at the expense of another. It often involves the elements of power and dominance, and is characteristically described as a win-lose strategy. It is best used as an option when one is cognizant of the overriding importance of the objectives and thoroughly understands the parameters of desired goals and consequences.

**Accommodating.** The behavior that is cooperative but lacks assertiveness concerning one's own outcomes is referred to as accommodation (Hellriegel et al., 1983). It is the forsaking of one's objectives so that the opposing party may achieve their objectives. It is most appropriate when the maintenance of the relationship between the two parties takes precedence over a lesser concern. Accommodation may represent an altruistic act, a long-term strategy to encourage cooperation, or submission to another's wishes.

**Avoiding.** Avoidance is the choice not to confront the issue. It is neither assertive nor cooperative, serving to sidestep the issue or to withdraw from a threatening situation. It is best used when satisfactory resolution of the conflict is not possible at the time, but may be under different conditions. Sometimes avoidance can
minimize the possibility of escalating a conflict, but it often leads to frustration for the other person (Hellriegel et al., 1983).

**Compromising.** This mode is a midway approach, based on give-and-take, negotiations, and concessions. The objective is to find a mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). It involves the acceptance of lesser objectives under the reality of existing circumstances, and is particularly pragmatic when funding is limited or restricted.

**Collaborating.** Collaboration is both assertive and cooperative. It is integrated or mutual problem solving whereby each party accepts the others' goals and strives to develop the best approximation possible. Collaborative tactics serve to increase joint satisfaction (Thomas, 1976). Cohen, Fink, Gadon, and Willits (1980) describe this integrative approach as a method of subsystem conflict resolution consisting of two phases: (1) differences are first brought out and made explicit to enable a thorough understanding of each party's position, and (2) opposing subsystems point out perceived inaccuracies in the other group's perceptions. One major advantage of this approach is that it identifies genuine differences and separates them from those that result from misperceptions or poor communication.

**Summary**

Conflict in organizations has been defined as a condition of incompatible goals characterized by frustration. It is most commonly caused by competition for resources and by communication problems.
Conflict management is one of the major functions of a manager. A number of approaches are possible, typically including competition, compromise, or cooperation. Other strategies are avoidance and accommodation. The most effective strategy choice depends upon the specific situation.

Management as a Male Occupation

Women have made great strides in work force participation and in the number of occupations open to them (Dziech, 1983; Rytina & Bianchi, 1984). Top level management, however, remains a male occupation, both in membership and in attitudes.

Career Choice

Sex stereotypes have been shown to influence satisfaction with one's career choice. With perceived affect defined as happiness with successful entry into an occupation or unhappiness with unsuccessful entry, Feather (1982) reports occupational status and sex linkage of the occupation to be significant factors. The male-dominated managerial positions of company director and of school principal were shown to have greater perceived affect for men than for women. He concluded that consistency with sex-role expectations may have an effect on the desirability of a career. Super, Crites, Hummel, Moser, Overstreet, and Warnath (1957) designed research to address vocational development under the assumption that vocational choices were made as the implementation of one's self-concept. The self-concept is derived through the socialization process and the emulating of
sex-role models. This research, however, did not include the career choices of girls, presumably because the sample would have to have been unwieldy, because women did not have clear occupational roles, and because women did not have continuous work patterns.

Promotion and Status

There is evidence of sexual inequality in the workplace, particularly among positions of authority and power (Wolf & Fliqstein, 1979). Ascending levels of authority were identified with (a) supervision of others, (b) determination of the rate of pay of others, and (c) the responsibility to hire and fire others. Women are discriminated against less in the acquisition of lower supervisory positions than in their attainment of positions of higher authority.

Stogdill and Day (1972) conducted a study of civilian employees at three Air Force bases to compare the leader behavior and effectiveness of women to that of men. Descriptions of leader behavior were obtained from subordinates on twelve subscales, along with an effectiveness rating. The results indicated that the relationship between time in grade and leadership is different for men and women supervisors in parallel positions. Men rated as low in the leadership dimensions of (a) Reconciliation of Conflicting Demands, (b) Accuracy of Prediction, (c) Influence with Superiors, and (d) Effectiveness, spent the most time in their grade classification. For women, however, these dimensions were unrelated to their time in grade. These findings suggested that the lack of advancement was not related to deficiencies in these leadership dimensions, but was
related to their gender.

In research based on longitudinal data from 5,613 high school graduates at midlife, it was found that sexual differences exist in levels of authority (Wolf & Fligstein, 1979). Men and women receive differential returns on educational investments for positions of high levels of authority. Men increase their probability of being responsible for the hiring and firing of others about three times as much as women do for each year invested in post-secondary education (Wolf & Fligstein, 1977). In fact, when all the qualification components of education, experience, tenure with the company, and family constraints are accounted for, that proportion of sex differences in authority due to women's inferior qualifications is smaller than that due to differential returns on individual characteristics. The higher the level of authority, the smaller the percentage of sex differences explained by women's inferior qualifications.

Analysis was also done by Wolf and Fligstein (1979) to determine compositional differences between the sexes on human capital and family factors, and to determine differences due to differential rates of return on the human capital and family factors. The component due to composition could result from either women's or employers' behaviors, but the differences due to rates of return on job characteristics reflected the behaviors and policies of employers. It was found that sex differences in authority resulted from behaviors and policies of employers, more so than from attitudes and behaviors of the women or from differences between men and women in job qualifications.
Differential treatment of women in masculine positions appears to be influenced by sex-role stereotypes, although such stereotypes seem most likely to influence behavior toward a woman in situations where little information about the woman is available (Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, & Smith, 1977). Nilson (cited in Nieva & Gutek, 1981) found that both men and women who violated sex-role occupational stereotypes were held in lower social standing than persons who were expected to have such an occupation. Hamilton (1976) has added research on "illusory correlation," whereby distinctive characteristics are perceptually paired. He found that people who were different from the majority of the group were associated with an over-estimation of undesirable characteristics. This helps to explain why women, as a minority in management, might be thought to be inferior to male managers.

Women have been excluded from top level management positions on the basis that no "qualified" women were available. Harragan (1977) noted that, in a sense, this is accurate. Women have been excluded from the types of experiences necessary for top administrative or managerial levels. Most of the progress that women have made in business has been in lower level management. Women in management have not attained similar or equal positions as men in management.

Harragan (1977) recalled that ten years ago, women were excluded from many arenas. In particular, they were absent from senior academic posts in colleges and universities. Recent interviews by Business Week Magazine (1984) reveal that overt discrimination against women in management is almost gone, but the underlying belief

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that women are not equivalent to men in management blocks progress into the top positions. This viewpoint is further supported by Fraker (1984). The problem seems to be that selection into high level positions is more subjective than selection into lower level management, so that the personal attitudes and values of those selecting are a greater factor in such decisions.

Although differences between men and women have been found to exist in job experience and in behavior on the job, a far greater barrier to equality in the workplace is the sex-role stereotyped assumptions that prevail (Moore & Wollitzer, 1979). Terborg and Ilgen (1975) claim that "pervasive and persistent sex-role stereotypes" are the single most important barrier to the integration of women into management and scientific positions. In a Gallop survey of 722 female executives, as reported in the Wall Street Journal (Rogan, 1984), over half of the managerial "pioneers" cited their most serious career obstacles to be related to their sex, including "male chauvinism, attitudes toward a female boss, slow advancement for women and the simple fact of being female" (p. 29).

**Summary**

Although women have increased their career options and participation, top management remains a male-dominated occupation. Women still struggle with a set of expectations different than those for men from themselves, their employers, and from society. These expectations, or sex-role stereotypes, bar them from top management.
Differences Between Men and Women Managers

Many of the differences in employment patterns between men and women are often explained as appropriate or necessary due to differences between men and women in their personality and individual traits, differences in their qualifications, including experience, or differences in their acceptance into certain work roles.

Traits

A common rationale given for the lack of representation of women in high level management is the assumption that many women would not like positions of high responsibility and authority. This is often characterized as a lack of achievement motivation or as a "fear of success." Shapiro (1979) tested 80 undergraduate students and found the fear of success to be an anxiety about engaging in activities considered to be inappropriate for one's sex-role. This finding applied to both sexes. The basic conclusion was that the primary source of anxiety for women in achievement situations is not excellent performance, but the decision to engage in a masculine activity.

Management personnel, and the public in general, tend to accept stereotypical attitudes that hinder the acceptance of women into management roles. A commonly held belief is that women are less aggressive than men. Women executives recognize the need for young women managers to be more assertive and aggressive than they are (Rogan, 1984). Women are also more willing to defer to authority and to yield their positions rather than hurt other people's feelings.
(Loring & Wells, 1972). Sex-role stereotypes also imply that men are active and competitive whereas women are passive and uncompetitive (Terborg, 1979), although evidence exists that men and women are similar in cooperative and competitive behavior (Litzman & Wahba, 1972). Men are seen to be "more independent, objective, competitive, and otherwise better suited to handle management and scientific responsibilities than are women" (Terborg & Ilgen, 1975, p. 354). Vance (1984) noted that one of the most significant problems for women in an academic setting is that they simply don't speak up as much as men do.

Shaevitz (1984) summarized the generally accepted findings regarding the personality differences between men and women. He noted that (a) men are more aggressive than women, (b) men are less nurturing, (c) men's self-esteem is more career-related, (d) men are less expressive than women, (e) men have greater needs for both power and control, (f) men are more vulnerable and dependent upon their marriages than women are, and (g) most men are more macro-oriented and less detail-oriented than are women.

A study of professional women in banking, law and architecture shows that the male-dominated executive culture sets the norms for behavior (Milwid, cited in Bernikow, 1984). It supports Gilligan's (1982) contention that feminine behaviors are viewed as deviant. Women are isolated, and become sensitive to their visibility. They have not adopted the male behaviors into their personalities, and their feminine behaviors are restricted by the male norms. "A choice is not really a choice in the presence of strong norms that limit the
types of behavior considered appropriate" (Nieva & Gutek, 1981, p. 13).

In her landmark study of executive women, Hennig (1970) noted that women who were successful in management had recognized the stereotype that women were to be passive and emotional, and had dealt with the stereotype in their early career development by separating themselves from their identification as a woman. They chose a behavioral style that was "direct, factual, business and task oriented, and rather distant" (p. VI-22). It wasn't until these women were well established in their careers that they could integrate their feminine characteristics into an acceptable management style.

Conflict management is a management function that incorporates personality traits of the manager. It is the arena most likely to involve emotionalism and conditioned responses. Since women appear to have different orientations than men, perhaps these differences affect the way they handle conflict in the work setting. Are there differences between men and women in their conflict management modes?

Length of Management Experience

Work patterns of women have been detrimental to advancement in their careers. Nieva and Gutek (1981) reviewed numerous studies, noting that underemployed, interrupted or discontinued careers were usually caused by interference from the women's family roles. The modal pattern of professional women appears to be career preparation, marriage and children, and then the assumption of a career. Such employment patterns have left women with outdated skills and less work experience in comparison to men.
Hennig (1970) found that career maturity was related to a woman's conflict management style. In early career stages, women tend to avoid conflict. As they become experienced in management and rise to top level positions, they learn to manage conflict, and eventually to confront conflict situations and to develop integration as a conflict management style.

For the most part, women are still viewed as inexperienced in management. As a result, they may still have to live up to a higher standard of performance than men do. This situation is likely to continue until the number of women managers reaches a critical mass, whereby individual women will no longer have to be seen as representing their whole sex (Kanter, 1983).

Work experience, tenure with the company, education, and geographic mobility are aspects designated to be relevant in determining the qualifications for positions of authority (Wolf & Fligstein, 1979). Experience was found to have a substantially important, statistically significant effect in the attainment of supervisory positions for women. The effect lessens, however, in conjunction with positions of higher levels of authority (Wolf & Fligstein, 1977). The qualifications for higher level positions, such as administration in educational institutions, may not be as dependent upon experience as are lower supervisory positions.

Management styles change with the amount of experience gained by the manager. Over time, a new manager's performance is evaluated by coworkers. Deviations from expected behaviors may result in pressure on the new manager to conform, alteration of the expectations, or
both (Graen, as cited in Terborg, 1977). This raises the following questions: Are differences among managers in their conflict management modes related to the amount of management experience they have gained? Are the differences in the conflict management modes of men and women administrators related to an interaction between the amount of management experience and gender?

Acceptance of Women as Managers

Harragan (1977) maintains that the socialization of boys and girls affects their respective ability to assume management roles. The competitive behaviors and the team concept are taught to boys at a very young age, preparing them for corporate life. On the other hand, Kanter (1983) argues that it is not the lack of team experience that is keeping women out of management, but rather the fact that others do not accept them in management roles. Role acceptance remains a problem, even among women who have obtained management positions. Rogan (1984) supports this notion, reporting that 41% of 722 female executives responding to a Gallop survey have had a male subordinate who resisted taking orders from them because he felt threatened by a female boss.

Differences in the way men and women approach conflict situations may be attributable to the sex role stereotypes about appropriate and acceptable behavior.

Sex role stereotypes refer to widely held beliefs concerning appropriate male and female behavior. For example, it may be acceptable for a supervisor who is a man to verbally chastise a recalcitrant subordinate, whereas the same behavior by a woman supervisor may be perceived as out of role and unacceptable.
The ability of the person to display the behavior is not an issue. (Terborg, 1977, p. 650)

Thus, some differences in the behaviors of male and female managers are not attributable to differences within the managers, but rather to differences in acceptability of their behaviors by others. Since conflict management involves interaction with others, the perceptions of others are key factors in the effectiveness of any approach.

A study of 106 residence hall advisors and their supervisors examined the impact of gender on conflict resolution strategies, commitment, and their interaction (Zammuto, London, & Rowland, 1979). Findings revealed that males reporting to males were less likely to confront than males or females reporting to females. It was conjectured that male supervisors inhibit male subordinates' aggressive responses to conflict, invoking a tendency to conform to authority. This further supports the concept that a woman manager's conflict strategies are at least in part necessitated by the fact that she is seen by others to be a woman.

These studies suggest that there are, in fact, differences among managers in their conflict-handling behaviors that are related directly to the attitudes, norms, policies and practices of the organization. The proportion of women in high level management positions within an organization is a reasonable measure of the organization's receptivity of women in that role.

It is worth noting here that often women or members of various minority groups are at an automatic disadvantage in organizations because their visible physical "difference" from the white male majority makes some majority members uncomfortable or less trusting. The fewer the minority members in the organization at managerial levels, the greater the difficulty they are likely to
have in being perceived as trustworthy, i.e., as similar enough to be "one of us" where there are sensitive issues. (Cohen, Fink, Gadon, & Willits, 1980, p. 14)

If women have been openly accepted into management roles in the organization, the conflict management behaviors of these women may be affected. That is, they may be in a better position to incorporate feminine behaviors into their management styles. Are the conflict management modes of women administrators who work in institutions that have accepted more women administrators different from those who work in institutions that have relatively few women administrators?

Summary

Several differences are thought to exist between men and women managers. Women are thought to be less assertive, less aggressive and less competitive than men. They are also considered to be more passive, dependent and emotional. More empirical evidence indicates that women managers, as a group, have less experience in their careers. Acceptance into management roles also appears to be different for men and women.

Statement of the Research Hypotheses

With commonly held beliefs indicating that differences exist between men and women managers, questions arise as to management style differences between men and women community college administrators. Conflict management styles in particular, as an important part of a manager's function, might be susceptible to such differences.

This study therefore conjectures the following research hypoth-
eses to be tested and analyzed:

I. There is a difference between men and women administrators in their conflict management styles.

II. There is a relationship between the conflict management styles of administrators and the amount of management experience they have obtained.

III. There is a difference among the conflict management styles of administrators that is related to an interaction between the gender of the manager and the amount of management experience they have obtained.

IV. There is a relationship between the conflict management styles of women administrators and the proportion of women on the administrative staff where they work.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a review of literature related to conflict management, management as a male-dominated occupation, and differences thought to exist between men and women managers.

Conflict is defined as a situation in which two or more parties perceive that their goals are incompatible, characterized by frustration. Conflict management is described as one of a manager's most important functions. Several models are presented to provide a framework for understanding conflict management options. Modes of conflict management include (a) competing, (b) collaborating, (c) compromising, (d) avoiding, and (e) accommodating.

Behavioral norms for management are based on male behaviors and...
experiences, while women are thought to have different characteristics and behaviors. These perceived differences set expectations for access and promotion into top management positions.

Differences are considered to exist among the management styles of men and women. These are possibly due to differences in gender traits, amount of experience, and acceptance into the management role. This study is designed to test these conjectures.

Chapter III will discuss the specific methodology of this study.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III presents (a) the overall research design of the study, (b) the population under study and the sampling procedures, (c) the instrumentation, (d) procedures used in data collection, (e) data processing techniques, and (f) the statistical analysis of the data.

Research Design

This study was completed through survey research methods. It was based upon a self-administered mailed questionnaire that determines an individual's approach to conflict management on five modes, or predispositions. The analysis of the data compared these conflict measures for men and for women community college administrators, with consideration of their years of experience. Statistical tests were used to determine if differences in conflict management modes among administrators occur between men and women, or among levels of management experience, or occur as an interaction of these two variables. Further analysis was conducted to determine the correlation that exists between the conflict management modes of women administrators and the proportion of administrative staff at their institutions that is female.
Population and Sample

Target Population

The results of this study are generalizable to all administrators of the community colleges which participated. Although statistical inferences to non-participating colleges cannot be made, implications for other institutions are reasonable. In a broad sense, this is a study of the conflict styles of community college administrators. In 1981, this population consisted of 11,849 men and 5,887 women, essentially a two to one ratio (Dziech, 1983).

Accessible Population

For this study, 22 two-year colleges were selected from across the United States. This is a convenience selection, although national geographic stratification is used as a criterion. The major consideration in college choice, however, was a commitment from a member of the college's staff to serve as a local contact and liaison for data collection at that site. Local volunteers accepted the responsibility to provide an accurate listing of the administrative staff for sample selection, to personally deliver the instrument to designated respondents and request its completion, and to monitor those completions.

Sampling Procedures

The sample design was structured to create matched pairs of respondents from each participating institution. The sample was
selected from lists of all administrators at each college, with indication of their sex and administrative level. Administrative level was controlled in the sample selection to ensure that it was not a variable in the study. Literature has indicated that women tend to be relegated to lower level positions (Terborg & Ilgen, 1975; Dziech, 1983; Bernikow, 1984). Simple random sampling would reflect similar proportions, thereby allowing level to become a factor in any differences in conflict management modes that might be found between men and women. The random selection of matched pairs offered an alternative that controlled for level.

After stratification by administrative level within each college, the sample was randomly drawn to include equal numbers of male and female managers from each level at each college. The smaller of the two numbers (the number of men or the number of women) at each level determined the size of that portion of the sample. If this procedure resulted in a sample size greater than ten pairs from a single college, then a random selection of ten pairs was made.

This sample design, if strictly followed, would have excluded all college presidents and other positions that are unique in level at any one college. The design was altered so that, for such positions, subsamples were drawn using the same procedures, but were drawn at large from all participating colleges rather than from within a single institution.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was the Thomas-Kilmann...
Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Written permission to duplicate and use this instrument had been obtained from Xicom, Inc., and appears in Appendix A. The instrument, as a copyrighted publication, does not appear in this document but can be obtained from the publisher. Additional data on gender, years of management experience, and the number of women in administration at each respondent's institution was collected, the format of which appears in Appendix B.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (or MODE instrument) is designed to measure each respondent's tendency to use each of five conflict handling modes. These modes are labeled as (a) competing, (b) collaborating, (c) compromising, (d) avoiding, and (e) accommodating. They represent combinations of two behavioral dimensions—assertiveness and cooperation. Assertiveness deals with the extent to which individuals attempt to satisfy their own concerns, while cooperation refers to the extent to which they attempt to satisfy the concerns of others.

Validity of the Instrument

Although conflict retains considerable popularity as a research topic, valid and reliable instrumentation is not as prevalent as the number of studies might suggest. Concurrent validity of self-assessment conflict instrumentation with behavioral criteria is often low. Measurements of on-going behavior are difficult to gather and code. With limitations of empirical data on observed behavior, self-assessment of conflict behavior does not have a strong referent system.
Thomas (1971) supports this view, and discusses the problems of self-assessment of conflict behaviors. These include response bias due to social desirability, and difficulties experienced by respondents in understanding and distinguishing behavioral categories.

An in-depth study of the validity of the MODE instrument was undertaken by Kilmann and Thomas (1977). It specifically addressed substantive validity, structural validity, and external validity of the instrument in comparison to three other widely accepted conflict questionnaires, namely those of Blake and Mouton (1964), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), and Hall (1969).

**Social Desirability Bias**

The research of Kilmann and Thomas provided information for revisions of the MODE instrument to diminish the bias in such instruments due to social desirability of the responses. For the resulting questionnaire, it was found that only 4% of the variance over aggregate self-ratings on the items and 17% of the variance among aggregate scores on the five modes could be accounted for by the social desirability of the items on the MODE instrument. These percentages compared to averages for the other three competing instruments of 80% and 90% respectively.

**Concurrent Test Validity**

Intercorrelations between the MODE instrument and the other three conflict style instruments provide evidence of convergence on each of the five modes. There is considerable agreement between the
instruments on scores for the competing mode, with modest agreement on the other modes. For collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating, the MODE instrument appears to assess somewhat different aspects than those recorded by the other instruments.

**Structural Validity**

The format of the instrument and the calculation of individual scores is described as consistent with the intended definition of the conflict management modes. The primary use of these instruments by researchers has been to assess the relative frequencies of conflict-handling preferences, rather than the absolute frequencies. The MODE instrument utilizes a mandatory 30 points to be spread across the five modes, with a maximum of 12 on any single mode. This forced-choice format guarantees that a higher score on any one mode will necessarily decrease the scores of some or all of the other modes. Because of this scoring format, the MODE instrument avoids the influence of perceptions of the amount of conflict present, and minimizes errors in using the response scales.

**External Validity**

Determination of the external validity of the MODE instrument is an ongoing process. The results of this study will add to the validity data for applying the instrument to management in educational settings. Currently, the external validity of this instrument can be shown by (a) mean scores on the five modes, across different levels of education and across sex differences, (b) empirical studies of the
behavioral dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness, and (c) meaningful correlations of the MODE instrument with existing personality tests.

Validity studies have found the instrument to discriminate expected differences between male and female respondents. In the analysis of mean scores on the five modes, Jamieson and Thomas (1974) found significant differences between male and female students to be consistent with differences found in unrelated studies. If differences in conflict handling preferences do exist among the respondents of this study, it is expected that they will be reflected in the scores obtained on the MODE instrument.

A second measure of external validity is verification of the meaningfulness of the underlying two-dimensional classification scheme upon which the MODE instrument is based. Ruble and Thomas (cited in Kilmann and Thomas, 1977) conducted two research studies on semantic differentials in response to conflict handling behaviors. Both studies found assertiveness to correlate with a dynamism factor, while cooperativeness correlated with an evaluative factor. Thus assertiveness and cooperativeness had relatively independent connotational meanings for the subjects.

Finally, correlation with scores obtained by 76 graduate students on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and scores on the MODE instrument showed conflict modes to be consistent with expected personality indicators (Kilmann & Thomas, 1975). The cooperation (or integration) scores correlated positively with the MBTI introversion-extraversion dimension (r = .29, p < .01). Likewise, the assertive-
ness (or distribution) scores correlated negatively with the thinking-feeling dimension of the MBTI ($r = .38, p < .001$).

**Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability of the instrument is measured and verified according to internal consistency and test-retest reliability.

**Internal Consistency**

Internal consistency of the MODE instrument was tested with a sample size of 86 and found to have .60 as an average alpha coefficient. Each mode is considered to be in the moderate range for internal consistency, except for the accommodating mode. The coefficients compare favorably with the three other conflict instruments under discussion.

**Test-Retest Reliability**

Test-retest reliability coefficients are moderately high across all modes, ranging from .61 to .68 and a mean of .64 (based on a sample of size 76). Again, this measure is higher than those found on similar tests. The average test-retest reliability coefficient for the Lawrence and Lorsch instrument was found to be .50, the Blake and Mouton instrument was .39, and the Hall instrument was .55 (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977).

**Administration of the Instrument**

A cover letter was provided to each respondent to explain the
purpose of this study (attached in Appendix C).

The instrument was self-completed, with instructions to consider situations in which the respondent's wishes differ from those of another person. The respondent circled their choice of two statements as the one that is most characteristic of their own behavior as they would usually respond in such situations. Administration of the 30 item instrument is thought to have taken approximately 10 minutes, not including time for self-scoring and self-analysis. An additional sheet was enclosed requesting personal data on the sex of the respondent and total years of managerial experience, defined as years in a paid position supervising the work of others.

**Scoring Procedures**

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument provided self-scoring instructions in an easy-to-use format. Responses could be recorded in columns under the appropriate mode heading, and tallied to obtain a total between 0 and 12 inclusive for each mode. Each respondent would then have five total scores, one each for competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Respondents had the option of scoring their own results. Data for the study, however, was tallied by computer from the returned answers to each question.

**Interpretation of the Scores**

The instrumentation provided an explanation for interpretation of the scores and personal considerations for each respondent's own use.
A self profile could be developed, based upon percentiles in relation to the scores of 339 practicing managers at middle and upper levels in business and government organizations. The upper quartile is designated as "high" for each mode, the semi-interquartile range is "middle", and the lower quartile is interpreted as "low".

Throughout the presentation of the results of this study, it will be necessary for the reader to associate scores of this instrumentation with the corresponding percentile score. The relationship of a particular raw score to the median and percentiles are not consistent across modes. Raw scores considered to be "low" range from 0 to 3 on the accommodating mode, and from 0 to 5.8 on the collaborating mode. Likewise, raw scores considered to be "high" range from 6 to 12 for accommodating, and from 9 to 12 for collaborating. It is helpful to remember that raw scores run lowest for the accommodating mode and higher for compromising and collaborating. The median is associated with a raw score of (a) 4.8 for accommodating, (b) 5.6 for competing, (c) 5.9 for avoiding, (d) 6.9 for compromising, and (e) 7.7 for collaborating.

Data Collection Procedures

Each completed instrument was returned to the researcher by mail. Each instrument had been numbered for tracking and follow-up on non-returned questionnaires. After three weeks, the local liaison at each college was given the names of non-respondents, and personally requested completion of the instrument. A second follow-up was undertaken by mail two weeks later. After a total of eight weeks and
two follow-up attempts, data collection was terminated.

Data Processing

Each respondent's answers were entered into a data file for computer processing, along with numerical codes for sex, years of managerial experience, the number of women in administration at their institution, and the number of male administrators. Years of managerial experience were then re-coded into low, medium, and high categories. The number of women and men administrators at each institution was translated into a ratio of women to the total number of administrators at that institution. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software program was used to compile and analyze the data.

Data Analysis Procedures

Each conflict handling mode was analyzed separately, so that differences in conflict management styles were sought for each mode. Differences in mean scores on each mode obtained for subgroups were tested using a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). In each analysis, the respondents' scores on the MODE instrument was the dependent variable, interpreted on an interval scale. The independent variables were gender and amount of supervisory experience.

Additional analysis used Pearson's correlation coefficient to test the relationship between institutional mean scores of women on each conflict handling mode and the proportion of women in administration at the institution. Significance was determined at the .05
alpha level.

Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses tested in this study were replicated for each of the conflict handling modes of (a) competing, (b) collaborating, (c) avoiding, (d) compromising, and (e) accommodating. They are as follows:

I. There is no difference between the mean conflict mode score of male administrators and the mean conflict mode score of female administrators.

II. There is no difference in mean conflict mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience.

III. The differences in mean conflict mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience is the same for female administrators as for male administrators.

IV. There is a zero correlation between the mean conflict mode score of women administrators and the proportion of women in administration at the institution.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study of conflict management styles of men and women administrators at 22 selected community colleges across the nation. The sample was randomly selected at each college, stratified by sex and administrative level, to produce matched pairs of subjects controlled for level.
The study is based upon a self-administered questionnaire, The Kilmann-Thomas Conflict Mode Instrument, that measures conflict management styles as (a) competing, (b) collaborating, (c) compromising, (d) avoiding, and (e) accommodating. The instrument has been shown to be both valid and reliable. Additional information regarding the respondent's sex and years of managerial experience was also gathered.

Data analysis utilized a two-way analysis-of-variance to determine if differences in conflict styles exist between men and women managers, among managers with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience, or as an interaction of these two variables. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test for a relationship between the mean scores on the conflict management modes of women at an institution and the proportion of administration that is female.

Chapter IV presents the results of these tests, giving insight into the existence of differences in conflict management styles based on gender, and the relationship of conflict management style to factors other than gender, including managerial experience and the acceptance of women into administration.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in the way men and women manage conflict. This chapter includes the results of analysis of the data and summarizes the significant findings relative to those differences.

The first section of this chapter presents demographic characteristics of the respondents of the survey, including gender, administrative level, and years of supervisory experience. The second section displays the statistical computations and the results of tests of the hypotheses regarding each of five modes of conflict management. It identifies any differences among the means scores of the modes that might be attributable to (a) gender, (b) supervisory experience, or (c) an interaction between these two factors. Finally, the data is analyzed to determine if the proportion of women in administrative positions at an institution might be related to the conflict management scores of women at that institution.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The sample was drawn from 22 community and technical colleges across the United States. The sampling design established the specific criteria for selection to be an equal number of men and women, to be matched on administrative level, from each institution.
matched pairs design is necessary to control the gender differences among levels of authority, as found to exist by Wolf and Fligstein (1979).

A maximum of 21 respondents was allowed for each institution, including 10 matched pairs and the response of an unmatched chief executive officer. The actual number selected from an institution was determined by the number of people available to meet the established criteria. Table 1 shows the population size at each institution, the number of people selected for the sample from each institution, and the number of questionnaires that were returned.

Response Rate

From a sample size of 262, 230 questionnaires were returned. Two were returned blank by people who chose not to participate in the study, leaving 228 usable questionnaires for an effective response rate of 87%. Ten of the 22 institutions contributed with 100% response, while 65% was the lowest institutional response rate. All 228 questionnaires contributed data to the conflict management scores, although six did not provide the number of years of supervisory experience of the respondent.

An equal number of men and women were selected for the sample. The number of returned questionnaires maintained the original balance for gender, with 114 men and 114 women participating in the study (see Table 1).
Table 1

Response Rates from Participating Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Total Number of Administrators</th>
<th>Number of Completed Returns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative Levels

As shown in Table 2, 93% of the respondents to the survey are within three reporting levels of the chief executive officer (CEO) of their institution. Over half of them (116) report to someone who, in turn, reports to the CEO. This portrays the two-year colleges as...
relatively flat organizations with respect to their management hierarchy.

Table 2
Administrative Level of Respondents by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels Below Chief Executive</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Level 2.06 2.11 2.09

The selection of the sample was designed to control for differences in level between men and women administrators. A t-test procedure was run to ensure that the implementation of the design accomplished this objective. The results did not find the mean levels of 2.06 and 2.11 to be different. With a t value of .39 and a probability of .70, no statistical difference was found between the mean level below the chief executive officer for men and the mean level for women, even at the .25 alpha level.
Supervisory Experience

Supervisory experience was measured as defined in the questionnaire to be the number of years in "a paid position that involved the supervision of others." It is one of the independent variables of this study, along with gender. Table 3 presents a frequency distribution of the years of managerial experience reported by respondents. The range is from 1 year to 42 years, with an overall mean of 12.66 years of experience.

The literature supports the relatively recent entrance of women into management roles, suggesting they have fewer years of experience than their male counterparts (Harragan, 1977; Shockley-Zalabak, 1981; Rytina & Bianchi, 1984). The data from the survey show a mean of 15.63 years of experience for men administrators and 9.63 years for women. A $t$ test on the data results in a $t$ value of -6.38 and a probability of .0001. At an alpha level of .05, the data supports that a difference in supervisory experience exists for the men and women in this study.
Table 3
Number of Years of Managerial Experience of Respondents by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Years 15.63 9.63 12.66
Median Years 15 8 12
The differences in years of experience between men and women are more readily identifiable in Figure 5, where the data have been grouped into five-year intervals for a smoother distribution. It shows that the peak entry period for the women administrators into supervisory positions has been in the past five years, whereas the greatest number of male community college administrators in the sample entered supervisory positions 11 to 15 years ago.

Figure 5. Years of managerial experience of men and of women community college administrators in the sample.

For the purposes of this study, respondents have been grouped into three categories of supervisory experience. The criteria for

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establishing these groups was drawn from the distribution presented in Table 3, so as to form three groups of comparable size. These groups are labeled as (1) low, (2) medium, and (3) high.

"Low" includes those respondents with a relatively low number of years of supervisory experience, from 0 years to 8 years. This group consists of 21 men and 55 women (N = 76). "Medium" designates those who have 9 to 15 years of experience, forming a group of 42 men and 42 women (N = 84). "High" represents 49 men and 13 women (N = 62) who have 16 or more years of supervisory experience.

Results Concerning Differences in Mean Scores

This study has presented hypotheses regarding differences between men and women with various levels of supervisory experience. The differences are proposed to exist in the way they manage conflict situations, and is measured by their self-reported tendencies to act within a framework of five conflict management modes, or predispositions. The following section reports the results of statistical tests of these hypotheses.

Competing Mode

Table 4 displays the summary statistics of the competing mode scores. The overall mean of the responses is 4.77 on a scale of possible scores from 0 to 12. This is at the 40th percentile on national norms established for the instrument, based upon scores of 339 practicing managers in business and government organizations (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).
The community college administrators who are women appear, from preliminary observation, to have a higher mean competing score than the men (4.80 compared to 4.74), and those with less experience appear to score higher on this mode than those with more supervisory experience (5.16 for low, 4.67 for medium and 4.44 for high). This is not supported, however, as a result of testing the hypotheses.

Table 4
Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Cell Sizes of the Competing Mode of Conflict Management by Gender and Managerial Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-8 Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (9-15 Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (16+ Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses regarding differences in the competing mode scores due to gender and
experience. The results of this procedure are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Competing Mode of Conflict Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.63</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Cells</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A .05 probability for committing a Type I error was used.

**Null Hypothesis A-I**

There is no difference between the mean competing mode score of male administrators and the mean competing mode score of female administrators.

With an $F$ value of .02 and a corresponding probability of .88 of obtaining such a value with random scores, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. This study does not find a difference between the competing scores of men and women. The research hypothesis proposing that there are differences between men and women in their conflict management styles is not supported by the data for the competing mode.
Null Hypothesis A-II

There is no difference in mean competing mode scores among administrators with low, medium and high amounts of managerial experience.

Analysis of variance among the groups based on amount of experience results in an $F$ value of 1.14 and a probability of .32. The null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. This does not support the research hypothesis that there is a relationship between the conflict management styles of administrators and the amount of management experience they have obtained.

Null Hypothesis A-III

There is no difference in mean competing mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience that is dependent upon the sex of the administrator.

An $F$ value of .61 results from analysis of the interaction between experience and gender on the competing mode scores. With a corresponding probability of .54, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. This result does not support the third research hypothesis, which states that there is a difference among the conflict management styles of administrators that is related to an interaction between the gender of the manager and the amount of management experience obtained.

The competing mode scores do not support the research hypotheses of this study. No differences are found in the data on the competing
Table 6 displays the summary statistics of the collaborating mode scores. The overall mean of the responses is 6.93 on a scale of possible scores from 0 to 12. This is also at the 40th percentile on national norms established for the instrument.

Table 6
Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Cell Sizes of the Collaborating Mode of Conflict Management by Gender and Managerial Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Row Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-8 Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>7.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (9-15 Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (16+ Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>6.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The community college administrators who are women appear to have a higher mean collaborating score than the men (7.08 compared to 6.78), with no trends appearing on this mode with respect to supervisory experience (7.06 for low, 6.83 for medium and 6.89 for high).

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses regarding differences in the collaborating mode scores due to gender and experience. The results of this procedure are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Collaborating Mode of Conflict Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Cells</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A .05 probability for committing a Type I error was used.

Null Hypothesis B-I

There is no difference between the mean collaborating mode score of male administrators and the mean collaborating mode score of female administrators.

With an $F$ value of .58 and a corresponding probability of .45 of
obtaining such a value with random scores, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. There is no support in the collaborating mode results to show a difference between men and women in their conflict management styles.

**Null Hypothesis B-II**

There is no difference in mean collaborating mode scores among administrators with low, medium and high amounts of managerial experience.

Analysis of variance among the groups based on amount of experience results in an $F$ value of 0.28 and a probability of .75. The null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. There is no support for the research hypothesis proposing that a relationship exists among the conflict management styles of administrators with varying amounts of managerial experience.

**Null Hypothesis B-III**

There is no difference in mean collaborating mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience that is dependent upon the sex of the administrator.

An $F$ value of .40 results from analysis of the interaction between experience and gender on the competing mode scores. With a corresponding probability of .67, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. There is no evidence of an interaction between gender and experience to result in differences in conflict management styles.
No differences are found in the data of this study on the collaborating mode scores of conflict management. The collaborating mode, therefore, cannot support the research hypotheses I, II, and III of this study.

**Compromising Mode**

Table 8 displays the summary statistics of the compromising mode scores. The overall mean of the responses is 7.35, again on a scale of from 0 to 12. This is at the 60th percentile on national norms established for the instrument.

The women community college administrators appear to have a higher mean compromising score than the men (7.44 compared to 7.26), with no consistent trends appearing on this mode with respect to supervisory experience (7.41 for low, 7.19 for medium and 7.48 for high).
Table 8
Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Cell Sizes of the Compromising Mode of Conflict Management by Gender and Managerial Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-8 Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (9-15 Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>7.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (16+ Yrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>7.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>7.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses regarding differences in the compromising mode scores due to gender and experience. The results of this procedure are presented in Table 9.
Table 9
Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Compromising Mode of Conflict Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.25</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Cells</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A .05 probability for committing a Type I error was used.

**Null Hypothesis C-I**

There is no difference between the mean compromising mode score of male administrators and the mean compromising mode score of female administrators.

With an F value of .34 and a probability of .56, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level, and the research hypothesis is not supported.

**Null Hypothesis C-II**

There is no difference in mean compromising mode scores among administrators with low, medium and high amounts of managerial experience.

Analysis of variance among the groups based on amount of experience results in an F value of 0.34 with a corresponding probability
of .71. At the .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is not rejected. There is no support for the research hypothesis that a relationship exists between conflict management style and length of experience.

**Null Hypothesis C-III**

There is no difference in mean compromising mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience that is dependent upon the sex of the administrator.

An $F$ value of 2.96 results from analysis of the interaction between experience and gender on the compromising mode scores. With a corresponding probability of .054, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. The small difference between the probability of .054 and the .05 alpha level set for this study suggests that this compromising mode is the conflict management mode most likely to show differences between men and women if a more sensitive instrument were used. No differences are found in the data of this study, however, on the compromising mode scores of conflict management. The compromising mode results cannot offer support to the research hypotheses.

**Avoiding Mode**

Table 10 displays the summary statistics of the avoiding mode scores. The total mean of the responses is 5.80. This is at the 50th percentile on national norms established for the instrument.

The male community college administrators might appear to have a higher mean avoiding score than the women (5.96 compared to 5.63),
with a trend appearing for males to increase with supervisory experience (5.49 for low, 5.94 for medium and 5.98 for high).

Table 10

Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Cell Sizes of the Avoiding Mode of Conflict Management by Gender and Managerial Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Row Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-8 Yrs)</td>
<td>\bar{x}</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (9-15 Yrs)</td>
<td>\bar{x}</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>5.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (16+ Yrs)</td>
<td>\bar{x}</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>\bar{x}</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses regarding differences in the avoiding mean scores due to gender and experience. The results of this procedure are presented in Table 11.
### Table 11

Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Avoiding Mode of Conflict Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Cells</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: A .05 probability for committing a Type I error was used.*

**Null Hypothesis D-I**

There is no difference between the mean avoiding mode score of male administrators and the mean avoiding mode score of female administrators.

With an F value of 1.02 and a corresponding probability of .31 of obtaining such a value with random scores, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. Differences are not found between the avoiding style of men and that of women administrators.

**Null Hypothesis D-II**

There is no difference in mean avoiding mode scores among administrators with low, medium and high amounts of managerial experience.

Analysis of variance among the groups based on amount of experience results in an F value of 0.91 and a corresponding probability
of .41. The null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level, and the research hypothesis is not supported.

**Null Hypothesis D-III**

There is no difference in mean avoiding mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience that is dependent upon the sex of the administrator.

An $F$ value of 0.00 results from analysis of the interaction between experience and gender on the avoiding mode scores. With a corresponding probability computed to be 1.00, this null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. No interaction effect is identified.

These results do not support the research hypotheses. No differences are found in the data of this study on the avoiding mode scores of conflict management.

**Accommodating Mode**

Table 12 displays the summary statistics of the accommodating mode scores. The overall mean of the responses is 5.06, again on a scale of from 0 to 12. This is at the 55th percentile on national norms for the instrument.

The male administrators appear to have a higher mean accommodating score than do the women (5.14 compared to 4.98), with no consistent trends appearing on this mode with respect to supervisory experience.
Table 12
Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Cell Sizes of the Accommodating Mode of Conflict Management by Gender and Managerial Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Row Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-8 Yrs)</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (9-15 Yrs)</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (16+ Yrs)</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses regarding differences in the accommodating mode scores due to gender and experience. The results of this procedure are presented in Table 13.
Table 13
Two-way Analysis of Variance of the
Accommodating Mode of Conflict Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Cells</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A .05 probability for committing a Type I error was used.

**Null Hypothesis E-I**

There is no difference between the mean accommodating mode score of male administrators and the mean accommodating mode score of female administrators.

With an $F$ value of .29 and a corresponding probability of .59 of obtaining such a value with random scores, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. Again, the research hypothesis stating that a difference exists between the conflict management styles of men and women administrators cannot be supported by this study.

**Null Hypothesis E-II**

There is no difference in mean accommodating mode scores among administrators with low, medium and high amounts of managerial
experience.

Analysis of variance among the groups based on amount of experience results in an $F$ value of 1.33 and a probability of .33. The null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. There is no evidence of a relationship between conflict management style and length of experience.

**Null Hypothesis E-III**

There is no difference in mean accommodating mode scores among administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience that is dependent upon the sex of the administrator.

An $F$ value of .17 results from analysis of the interaction between experience and gender on the accommodating mode scores. With a probability of .85, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the .05 alpha level. The possibility of a difference in conflict management styles due to an interaction between gender and experience is not supported.

No differences are found in the data of this study on the accommodating mode scores of conflict management. Of all five modes, none support the research hypotheses I, II, and III, proposing that differences exist in some aspect of conflict management style.

**Summary of Gender Differences Analysis**

Table 14 summarizes the results of the analysis of variance procedures used to test each of the previously stated null hypotheses.
Table 14

Summary of Results of the Analysis of Variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Mode</th>
<th>No Difference Between Men and Women</th>
<th>No Difference Among Amounts of Experience</th>
<th>No Interaction Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competing</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A .05 probability for committing a Type I error was used.

As indicated, the results of this study do not reject any of the null hypotheses. The data is inconclusive. No support is found to suggest that differences exist in the conflict management styles of community college administrators based on gender, on experience, or resulting from an interaction between gender and experience.

Results Concerning Correlations

This study has presented a conjecture that there is a relationship between the women administrators' mean scores on the conflict management modes and the proportion of administrative staff that is female. A non-zero correlation is proposed to exist for each of the conflict management modes. The following section reports the results of the statistical tests of these hypotheses.
Description of the Data

The mode scores of women at each participating institution were averaged to create an institutional value on each of the five modes. Another institutional characteristic, the proportion of administrative staff that is female, was also determined. The values of these variables for each institution form the set of data presented in Table 15.

Compromising is shown to have the highest mean of the institutional mean scores for the female community college administrators in this study (7.64 on a scale from 1 to 12). The ranking of the conflict management modes in order of preference from highest to lowest is then (1) compromising, (2) collaborating, (3) avoiding, (4) accommodating and (5) competing. This rank order is the same for women in the sample as it is for men.

The percentage of administrative staff that are women ranges from a low of 9% at one institution to a high of 57% at another. For all participating institutions, the overall mean proportion of administrators that are women is .32, or approximately a ratio of 1 to 2.
Table 15
Institutional Data for Correlation:
Mean Scores for Conflict Management Modes
and the Proportion of Administrators That are Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Competing</th>
<th>Collaborating</th>
<th>Compromising</th>
<th>Avoiding</th>
<th>Accommodating</th>
<th>Proportion That are Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>.4667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.1579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.3077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.3333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.2830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>.2857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.2381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>.3478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>.3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.5143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>.4211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>.2190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>.2414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>.1719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.3529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>.3196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
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<td>6.50</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.0909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.5676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>.2542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>.3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>.3425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>.3171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Correlation Analysis

It has been suggested in this study that there is a non-zero correlation between the institutional mean scores on the conflict management modes and the proportion of administrative staff that is female. The null hypothesis to be tested in the investigation of this concept is as follows:

Null Hypothesis IV

There is a zero correlation between the mean conflict mode score of women administrators and the proportion of women in administration at the institution.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test this null hypothesis on institutional data for each of the conflict management modes. The corresponding probability of obtaining a larger absolute value for \( r \) at random is presented in Table 16. The probability ranges from .31 to .87. At the .05 alpha level, this null hypothesis is not rejected for any of the conflict management modes. These results do not support the research hypothesis that states a relationship exists between the proportion of women at an institution and the conflict management styles of those women.
Table 16

Correlation Coefficients for Institutional Proportion of Administrators That Are Women With the Institutional Mean Scores of the Conflict Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Mode</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competing</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromising</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Results are based upon a two-tailed test and a .05 probability for committing a Type I error.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It has shown the level of position to be controlled by the sampling design, so that there is no difference between the administrative levels of the men and women chosen for this study. Supervisory experience, however, was an independent variable of this study, and is supported to be of different amounts among men and women administrators.

The null hypotheses of this study state that there are no differences in the mean conflict management mode scores of administrators based upon their gender, and no differences in mean conflict mode scores among administrators with high, medium and low amounts of
supervisory experience. They also state that there is no difference among the mean conflict management mode scores of administrators with low, medium or high amounts of managerial experience that is dependent upon the gender of the administrator. These hypotheses were not rejected based upon the data of this study. There is no support found to suggest that differences do exist in conflict management styles between men and women, among administrators with varying amounts of experience, or as a result of interaction.

It was also stated that there is a zero correlation between the mean conflict management mode scores of women administrators and the proportion of women in administration at their institution. None of the null hypotheses were rejected. There is no support in the results of this study to suggest that there is such a relationship.

Chapter V will discuss these results in context of the literature, and suggest the implications of this study.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the investigation of differences and relationships of the conflict management styles of college administrators. It includes a discussion of the findings of the study relative to the literature, and the possible implications of such results. Recommendations are made for future research to follow from these results.

Conclusions and Implications

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. They refer to the possible influence of a management perspective and the environment of the organization on one's conflict management style.

The Management Perspective

Much research on gaming simulations has found differences in the way men and women deal with conflict (Rubin & Brown, 1975). Conflict studies in the work environment, however, have produced other results. Renwick (1977) found differences in the perceptions of the constructive use of disagreement between men and women, but no differences in the likelihood with which male and female subordinates would use various methods to deal with disagreement. Howat and
London (1980) found management styles related to perceptions of conflict frequency, but found no significant differences on these variables between men and women. Zammuto, London and Rowland (1979) found the relationship between commitment to an issue and conflict resolution strategies to be dependent upon the sexual composition of the supervisor-subordinate dyad. These studies seem to indicate inconsistent results in the relationship between gender and conflict management style.

Shockley-Zalabak (1981), however, surmised that gender was not the determining variable. She explained these inconsistencies as an interaction with the management perspective, and found no differences between men and women managers in strength of preference for conflict styles. Differences between men and women previously found could then be explained in light of the discrepancies in employment of men and women in management roles.

This study supports the work of Shockley-Zalabak, finding no differences between men and women administrators in their conflict management styles. The implication of this conclusion is that real differences in the management styles of men and women will tend to disappear as women integrate management ranks. Perceived differences and stereotypes, however, may not be relinquished easily, even though this and other studies show no support for gender as a basis for management style differences.

This study also analyzed the possibility that supervisory experience could be a factor in conflict management preferences, but finds no differences among varying amounts of experience, or as an
interaction between gender and experience. It suggests that the management perspective, unrelated to length of experience, determines strategies of conflict management. It is possible that the tendency of a manager to handle conflict situations in a particular way is not a style that is developed over time as a result of repeated conflict experiences, but rather is part of a role that is assumed with positions of responsibility.

This implies that it may not be necessary for women, or for men, to serve in a supervisory capacity a long period of time to acquire the behaviors of a manager. The level of authority and responsibility that they accept appear to have a greater influence on behavior and orientation than the length of supervisory experience.

**Institutional Acceptance of Women**

Cohen et al. (1980) noted the disadvantages brought upon managers of minority status, including women, as not being "one of us" in management ranks. The suspected effect was a change in behavior of the minority members to adjust to the established norms. A hypothesis was tested in this study suggesting that conflict management styles of women would correlate with the proportion of management staff that is female. The results did not support this conjecture.

It is possible that "minority status" does not lie on a continuum, but rather is determined by a "critical mass" or a certain number of women beyond which the effect is not changed. In this case, a correlation would not be the appropriate test, and differences in behavior or management styles would best be analyzed between
those in institutions with the number of women below the critical number and those above. This critical number, however, is not known.

Another possibility is suggested by the work of Zammuto et al. (1979), whereby differences in conflict management behavior of men and women were found when the sexual composition of the management staff was confined to the supervisor-subordinate dyad. The composition of the immediate work group may have more influence than that of the composition of the entire institutional staff. In other words, the institutional proportion of management staff that is women may not be the appropriate measure of the work environment. Other measures of the acceptance of women are needed to test the influence of this factor on the conflict behavior of women managers.

The Population Under Study

In discussing the implications of the results, it is important to note the unique aspects of the population from which the sample was drawn.

First, the work environment of the respondents is an educational institution. The collegiate atmosphere, although not researched or documented in this study, may provide an environment different from other organizations, particularly with respect to a competing mode of behavior. Both the men and women who work in this environment may choose to do so because they enjoy it more than other settings. There may be personality characteristics or past experiences that set them apart from other managers as a group. It seems reasonable that some aspects of education, whether it be the nurturing role, the type
of societal contribution, or even the pace of work, attract both men
and women who may be different than other groups, who perhaps ap-
proach their work with a more androgynous attitude.

Secondly, only two-year colleges were included in the study. These are a relatively new concept in educational institutions, having experienced tremendous growth during the 1960's and early 1970's, during a period when substantial change was occurring in opportunities for women in the workforce. The administrators who work in community and technical colleges may have accepted a more modern attitude toward the roles of men and women due to the external social forces at the time of the establishment of their organization and extensive recruitment of the staff. Organizations that have long established traditions have a great deal more difficulty in the acceptance of change into the organizational norms.

Thirdly, the population under study is a highly educated one. The credentials necessary to serve at a college in an administrative capacity often dictate a Master's degree, if not a doctorate. It is possible that educated people tend to be more open minded and aware of societal changes.

Finally, the data of this study supports the possibility that this population is different from the one which established the normative scores for the instrument. Figure 6 suggests differences between the mean scores of this population and those of other populations based upon comparisons to the medians and percentiles developed from responses of business and government managers.
With these points made, it is appropriate to add caution about extending these results to other populations. They may not apply to other work environments and other types of managers.

**Sensitivity of the Instrument**

If it is accepted that the population under study is somehow different from other groups of managers, then the instrument used in this study might not be an appropriate one. The instrument was validated on managers in business and government settings. If community college administrators are, in fact, somehow more androgynous in their conflict management styles, then an instrument is needed that is sensitive to smaller differences. A conclusion of this study must necessarily be that no differences were found in the conflict management styles of men and women administrators as measured by the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.
Recommendations

Two recommendations can be derived from the results of this study. They deal with (1) the need for awareness of the injustice of sex-role stereotypes and (2) the need to identify the factors causing inconsistent results in studies on conflict style.

Sex-role stereotypes that portray women as different than men in management orientations need to be recognized. Not only are they highly suspect in validity, based upon the results of this study, but they can cause great harm to the management ranks, to the individual women, and to their male counterparts. The skills and abilities that any good manager can bring to an organization should not be underutilized. The worst part about such stereotypes, as with any form of discrimination, is that they go unrecognized. Studies that address the issue in any facet are needed to heighten awareness of the problem. Further research is recommended to expose the lack of differences in the performance of men and women managers.

Clarification of the cause of inconsistent results is needed to prevent erroneous conclusions from being made about such studies. In studies where men and women are found to have different management or leadership styles, extraneous factors that affect men and women differently need to be identified, and controlled or studied. In this research, the level of the administrator was controlled to prevent an influence on the result. With the management perspective identified as a unifying factor, perhaps the level of authority is a determining factor in conflict management style, regardless of sex. Further re-
search is needed to study conflict style as a function of level of authority.

Summary of the Study

Conflict management is a vital component of the manager's function. It is often assumed that men and women manage conflict differently, and therefore perform differently as managers. This assumption, along with many other sex-role stereotypes, has restricted the entrance of women into management, and especially into top level management.

This study was undertaken to investigate any differences in the conflict management styles of men and women managers, and specifically of men and women administrators in two-year community and technical colleges across the United States. A random sample was drawn in each of 22 colleges to include an equal number of men and women, matched on administrative level so as to control for level as a variable.

This study was also designed to determine if the amount of supervisory experience was a factor of differences in conflict management style, perhaps interacting with gender, and collected data on years of experience as an independent variable. Further, this study proposed to explain any differences as institutional characteristics based upon the gender composition of the administrative staff.

It utilized the self-administered Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument to measure conflict management on five modes determined by the dimensions of cooperation and assertiveness. These modes are
identified as (a) competing, (b) collaborating, (c) compromising, (d) avoiding, and (e) accommodating.

The results of analysis of the data were inconclusive. No differences were found between men and women, or among varying amounts of supervisory experience, or as a result of the interaction of these two variables. Nor were the conflict management styles of women administrators found to relate to the proportion of administrative staff that were female.

It is believed that this research has added to the body of knowledge to bring insight into the myths about women in management. Even without conclusive results, it can raise the awareness of the misconceptions that prevail. It is also hoped that this research will initiate further study on the issue, and provide direction to those aspects where clarification is needed.
APPENDIX A

Letter of Permission to Duplicate the Instrument
February 20, 1985

Ms. Betty J. Pritchard
486 Maple Street
Algonac, MI 48001

Dear Ms. Pritchard:

Pursuant to your request, XICOM, INC. consents to your use of
the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument under the
following terms and conditions:

(1) That the maximum number of Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode
Instruments you reproduce will not exceed 300 copies and that
the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument be identified and
XICOM be identified as the creators and owners thereof.

(2) You will use the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
only for your thesis entitled "The Relationship Between
Managerial Experience and Conflict Management Styles of Men and
Women in Community College Administration." It is further
understood that if the above titled thesis is reproduced, a copy
of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument may not be
enclosed.

(3) You will provide XICOM with a copy of the results of
this study and a copy of any articles produced as a result of
this study.

(4) For the limited rights conveyed herein, you will pay
XICOM, INC., Ninety Dollars ($90.00).

(5) It is understood that the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode
Instrument and all reprints of articles written will credit
Xicom as the owner/originators of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict
Mode Instrument.

(6) That you further agree that the use of any reference to
promotional materials, any publications written as the result
of this study will refer to the "Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode
If the above terms and conditions are agreeable, please sign on the line designated and return with a check for $90.00.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

Betty Fritchard

XICOM, INC.

Arthur D. Blazek

Vice President-Sales

HOME ADDRESS:

486 Maple Street
Algonac, MI 48001

HOME PHONE NUMBER:  

COMPLETION DATE OF THESIS  

7-1-85
APPENDIX B

Demographic Information Sheet
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Are you...
   [ ] Male
   [ ] Female

2. Please indicate the approximate number of years you have held a paid position that involved the supervision of others:
   _______ years

3. How many levels is your position removed from the Chief Executive Officer?
   [ ] None, I am the CEO.
   [ ] One, I report to the CEO.
   [ ] Two, I report to someone who reports to the CEO.
   [ ] Three
   [ ] Four
   [ ] Five
   [ ] Six or more

4. At your institution, what is the ratio of women administrators to men administrators?
   _______ women: _______ men
February 18, 1985

Dear

You have been selected as part of a national sample of community college administrators to participate in a study of conflict management styles. It will take about ten minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope.

This research is part of a doctoral study, the purpose of which is to determine the influence of gender and supervisory experience on the way we manage conflict situations, and to promote the understanding of the management of conflict in educational organizations. The instrumentation being used, though brief, has been shown to differentiate among various styles of management. Scoring instructions and interpretation have been included for immediate feedback and your personal use.

As this sample includes only a limited number of institutions, your participation is extremely important to the success of the project. Please be assured that confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Neither you nor your institution will be identified with the results in any way. If you wish a copy of the final results when completed, please mail a request to me separately, including your name and address.

Thank you so very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Betty Pritchard
Western Michigan University
March 25, 1985

Dear

About a month ago, I wrote to you requesting your support in a research project designed to determine the influence of gender and supervisory experience on the way community college administrators tend to manage conflict situations. There may be many reasons why you have not yet responded, but please let me urge you to participate in this study. The responses of upper level administrators are extremely important to the validity of the study, and it only requires about 10 minutes from your busy schedule.

The project is being conducted with the approval of the Educational Leadership department at Western Michigan University, where I am a doctoral candidate. Confidentiality will be maintained for all respondents, and neither you nor your institution will be identified with the results in any way. A copy of the final results of the study will be made available to you upon request.

In addition to the survey instrument and a return envelope, I've also enclosed my business card. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions regarding this project, or if perhaps I could be of assistance to you in some way.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Betty J. Pritchard
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