The Relationship between Conflict-Communication Values and the Relationship between Principals' Conflict Management Effectiveness and Involvement of Teachers in Decision Making in Small High Schools in Michigan

Michael Kenneth Ryan
Western Michigan University

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AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND INVOLVEMENT OF
TEACHERS IN DECISION MAKING IN SMALL
HIGH SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN

by

Michael Kenneth Ryan

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
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Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1984
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT-COMMUNICATION VALUES
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Michael Kenneth Ryan, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 1984

Due to the ever-increasing complexity of the social, financial, technical, and political environment in which schools must function, teachers have become more and more involved in the decision-making process in many schools. As teachers participate more in decision making, conflicts may arise. As these conflicts are managed, conflict-communication values may be an integral part of such management.

The primary purpose of this investigation was to determine the relationship between principals' effectiveness when dealing with conflicts and the principals' willingness to involve teaching staff in decision making. Investigations regarding the relationships between opposing communication values were also conducted.

The methodology used for this investigation was an ex post facto field study with questionnaires used to gather data to constitute both the independent variables and the dependent variables. The basic sampling units were principals and teachers in class C high schools in Michigan.

It was hypothesized that principals who were more effective at conflict management involved their staffs more in decision making.
than did principals who were less effective at conflict management. To test the corresponding null hypothesis, a $t$ test for differences between the means of staff involvement in decision making by a group of principals less effective at conflict management and a group more effective at conflict management was used.

A beginning body of theory concerning the relationship between opposing communication values as they relate to conflict management predisposition indicates that the opposing values must be of equal strength for constructive conflict management to occur. Therefore, a positive correlation within the population between the opposing values was hypothesized. Coefficients resulting from the use of the Pearson $r$ were used to test the null hypotheses.

The results of the data analysis led to the following conclusions:

1. High school principals who are more effective at conflict management involve their teaching staffs in decision making more than do principals who are less effective at conflict management.

2. There is little, if any, relationship between opposing communication values as they relate to conflict management predisposition.
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Michael Kenneth Ryan

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Conflict in schools, especially that between administrators and teachers, appears to be on the rise. It is manifested by symptoms such as teacher militancy, strikes, and increased absenteeism (Frey & Young, 1978). One can witness the almost unbelievably rapid growth of teacher unions during the past decade that has made the National Education Association second only to the Teamsters in membership (Methvin, 1978).

This growth, it seems, can be attributed to teachers' need for a greater voice in their affairs within the schools. As Jessup (1978) pointed out, these feelings of powerlessness in decision making were an important motivating factor underlying this widespread teacher support for unionization. Lieberman (1960), as early as 1960, wrote, "It (collective bargaining) will mean that the professional opinion of teachers as a group will receive consideration, not at the whim of school boards or administrators, but as a respected part of the educational enterprise" (p. 178). And as the balance of power continues to shift to include teachers and teacher groups in decision making areas once considered to be only within the realm of the administrator, antagonisms and conflicts result (Sebring, 1978).

However, it is believed that involvement of staff members in decision making should be looked upon as desirable, and even
necessary. According to Best (1975), individuals want to be involved in making decisions that affect them. As Flynn (1975) pointed out:

More and more, they (teachers) are demanding a greater voice in decisions that affect their welfare; they are organizing, in fact, to insure that their voices will be heard and their demand negotiated. Administrators can either look upon this movement as a threat, or they can attempt to minimize the hostility that comes about through antagonistic roles. A move toward more collaborative decision making and sharing of power voluntarily is one option that is well worth exploring. (p. 2)

Statement of the Problem

There seems to be no organizational reason why staff members should not be consulted during decision making. "Man is primarily self-motivated and controlled and there is no inherent conflict between self-actualization and more effective organizational performance" (Flynn, 1975, p. 7). Indeed, there seems to be widespread concern that staff members are not involved in decision making that affects them and, in many cases, this may effectively and wrongly separate the decision making from the implementation (NEA, 1977). It seems that this kind of participative decision making, identified here as the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process within the schools, can be implemented readily and quite often by the school principal.

Even though participative decision making is desirable, principals may not often use it because principals may lack the skills to deal with conflicts which often arise when staffs are consulted (DeWitt, 1970). In fact, principals tend to use their positional
authority and an independent action approach to decision making which may, in turn, generate more conflict (Hatly & Pennington, 1975).

Many of these initial readings in the areas of conflict management and participative decision making led the researcher to surmise that conflict management skills are important for secondary principals to possess if they are able to feel comfortable allowing staff involvement in decision making. It was further surmised that effectiveness at conflict management differs greatly among secondary principals and that some principals may involve their staffs in relatively much more decision making in the school than do other principals.

It appears that the management of conflict is an art, but it can be learned. The skills, the tactics, and the strategies effective in managing various types of conflict in a host of situations can be identified and learned and used effectively (Blake & Mouton, 1965; Trusty, 1976). As C. Brown, Yelsma, and Keller (1981) said, "If conflict is indigenous to human life, good communication is not the elimination of conflict, but the consequence, at least in part, of the character of the approach to stress" (p. 1107).

Inductively (and intuitively) one is led to conclude that there may be a direct relationship between a supervisor's effectiveness in the area of conflict management and the supervisor's willingness to involve subordinates in decision making.

Since conflict should work for, rather than against, the school, and since participation in decision making is viewed as
desirable, it seems that there will be a difference between how often principals less effective at conflict management and principals more effective at conflict management will involve their staffs in decision making.

The primary problem, then, addressed by this research can be presented by the question, "Will the involvement, by principals, of staff in decision making differ with the principals' effectiveness at conflict management?"

Furthermore, most authors have generally used two-dimensional schemas to illustrate management behavior. For example, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1971) denoted a whole chapter of their book to "The Components of Supervisory Practice" in which they summarize leadership dimensions posited by 11 authors, and in which they embrace Blake and Mouton's "Managerial Grid" as a "descriptive attempt to conceptualize the task dimension and the people dimension of supervisory behavior" (p. 91).

Little, however, has been found in the research which indicates the use of more than a two dimensional approach to leadership behavior. Kilman and Thomas (1975) made the point that theirs is an "initial investigation into this area" (p. 973). They said:

While several research studies have explored the relationship between the five conflict-handling modes and social organizational situations (e.g., Blake and Mouton, 1964; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Burke, 1970; Aram, et al., 1971; Thomas, 1971; Thomas and Walton, 1971; Renwick, 1972; Ryan and Clemence, 1973; Jamieson and Thomas, 1974) the deeper psychological basis of these conflict-handling modes has been largely unexamined. (p. 973)
A personal interview with P. Yelsma (January 25, 1983) confirmed that the six dynamic predispositions approach to conflict management used in the Communication-Conflict Instrument (C. Brown, Yelsma, and Keller, 1979) was unique in a relatively young field of research, and that much data gathering was still being done on the instrument itself. Yelsma went on to say that virtually no data had been gathered specifically from high school administrators; and thus, no comparisons had been made and no specific conclusions had been drawn regarding the interaction of the six dynamic predispositions as they relate to that population.

More specific information, then, regarding the interaction of the six dynamic predispositions as they relate to high school principals will enhance the further use of the Communication-Conflict Instrument with that population.

Therefore, using the premises cited for the development of the Communication-Conflict Instrument, it seems there should be a positive correlation between the subscale scores other and control and between the subscale scores community and self on the Communication-Conflict Instrument for all principals.

The secondary problems addressed by this research can be presented by the questions, "Is there a relationship between the communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition?" and "Is there a relationship between the communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition?"
The purpose of this study, then, was to obtain answers to the research questions posed. To do this, what was needed principally were determinations of whether there is, indeed, a relationship between the variable of staff involvement in decision making and the potentially related variable of conflict management and of whether there is, indeed, a relationship between the communication values other and control and between the communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition. It was to these ends that this study was undertaken.

Limitations of the Study

Conflict Management Effectiveness

Effectiveness at conflict management will be defined and operationalized from the Communication-Conflict Instrument.

Different instruments that purport to measure conflict management define it in different ways. There are, then, several definitions for effectiveness at conflict management. This study was limited by the use of only one definition of conflict management, that definition used in the Communication-Conflict Instrument.

Participation in Decision Making

Participation in decision making can occur at many different levels within a school or school system. Participation in decision making was limited in this study to the involvement of teachers at only one level, that of within the school.
Selected Michigan School Districts

The scope of the study was limited to principals and teachers in class C school districts, as defined for the current year by the Michigan High School Athletic Association. It was believed that, generally, class C districts would not be so big as to have more than one high school and not too small so as not to have department heads, chairpersons, or other similar classifications.

Overview of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows: In Chapter II the pertinent literature is reviewed. The chapter begins with a look at conflict and conflict theory. Next, the development of conflict management theory is treated. Thirdly, the chapter looks at participative decision making, both from an historic and a contemporary perspective. Finally, possible relationships between conflict management and participative decision making are treated.

The specifics of the research design are found in Chapter III. The chapter provides a description of the sampling and research techniques, instrument choices and justifications for the choices, and methods of statistical analysis employed in the study. Hypotheses are stated in null form with nondirectional and directional alternates.

Chapter IV delineates an analysis of the results of the research. In Chapter V the results are summarized with a statement and discussion of conclusions reached. This final chapter also includes
suggestions for further research related to the topic.

Appendices are included to appropriately organize pertinent documentation and statistical information.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What is conflict? Can it be managed? What part, if any, does participative decision making play in conflict in schools? These questions have often been asked, and much has been written on these topics. Since the focal point of this investigation is the relationship between conflict management and participative decision making, an examination of conflict, its management, and participative decision making is germane.

This chapter provides a review of pertinent literature in four topical areas. It begins with an historical look at conflict, including its evolution to its concept as used in this investigation. Secondly, the chapter provides a review of conflict management theory. Thirdly, participative decision making is discussed historically, theoretically, and practically. Fourthly, a description of how the observations relate specifically to the relationship between conflict management and participative decision making is given. The chapter culminates with a summary of the literature review.

Conflict: An Overview

Much classical conflict theory can be traced to Marx and Engles's use of Hegelian philosophy. As Duke (1976) pointed out, "Conflict theory and Marxian theory are sometimes thought of as
synonymous" (p. 11). "Marx's works were full of dialectical reasoning; he constantly compared one thing to another, drawing insights time and again from the contrasts between two opposite points of view" (p. 13).

Weber is another classical conflict theorist who discussed conflict in various situations. He believed power was the basis on which conflicts were realized. Weber's (1947) definition of power gives insight into why power is the basis for all conflicts.

"'Power' is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (p. 152). That is, when someone in a social relationship meets resistance in carrying out an act, conflict is the result. As Duke (1976) said, "The central core of what we call conflict theory is not conflict at all, but rather power" (p. 159).

Weber discussed conflict in light of different kinds of relationships. Duke (1976) explained about one kind: "Many stable relationships in a society clearly contain elements of conflict. This is especially true of those we normally call secondary relationships, and which Weber called "associative relationships" (p. 40). He went on to say of these associative relationships, "Conflict, however it is masked, is always present in their interactions, and frequently provides the basis of their relationship" (pp. 45-46). It is this communication-interaction type of conflict within associative relationships that will be the basis for further discussion in this study.
Simmel is responsible for much of the contemporary orientations regarding conflict.

Simmel's contribution was an analysis of the positive and integrative effects of conflict, thereby bringing a balance to the study of conflict which had previously been lacking. While not ignoring the disruptive effects of conflict, Simmel took it upon himself to study the positive contributions which conflict makes to social life and produced some profound insights which are increasingly being incorporated into the body of sociological thought. (Duke, 1976, p. 98)

Simmel distinguished conflict from indifference or rejection. "Since conflict occurs as a reflection of concern and interest, its effects are far different from indifference and lack of concern" (Duke, 1976, p. 99). Simmel (1955) treated conflict as a kind of "sociation," a form of interaction in groups because of close association of members of the group. Following these lines then, one must presuppose the existence of communication as inherent in the conflict relationship.

Coser (1956) used Simmel's theories to present a number of basic propositions related to social conflict. His concern was mainly with "those consequences of social conflict which make for an increase rather than a decrease in the adaptation or adjustment of particular social relationships or groups" (p. 8). Duke (1976) said:

Coser showed that conflict leads to integration in a number of different ways, including the establishment of group boundaries, the drawing off of hostility and tension, the development of more complex group structures to deal with conflict and its accompaniments, the creation of alliances with other parties, and the cultural and functional unity achieved among enemies. (p. 164)
Conflict has been defined in various ways, all of which seem to carry the same themes. Coser (1956) said conflict is "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (p. 8). Frost and Wilmont (1978) defined conflict as "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals" (p. 9). C. Brown and Keller (1979) defined conflict as "differences involving real or perceived incompatible positions" (p. 243).

Blake and Mouton (1965) provided a very usable explanation of conflict. Conflict, they explained, means any circumstances—emotional or substantive—which are brought about by the realization of differences between people who are, for whatever reason, in contact with one another. Conflict, they say, may also describe the feelings or climate that may characterize a particular encounter, or it may even denote outright warfare. They go on to explain that conflict may exist whenever there are important differences between people or groups which, if they persist, serve to keep the people involved apart in some way.

Conflict may arise for several different reasons. Blake and Mouton (1964) said:

Conflict may be caused by rational, logical disagreements in points of view and ideas as to the best way of two or more directions to go. It can range to the extreme of bitter antagonistic interpersonal friction. In the latter, real issues are minimized. Differences in basic values, differences in knowledge, status, the competition of two people for one available slot, procedural barriers
to effective communication that result in misunderstanding and "personality," all can be regarded as containing sources of disagreement and conflict. (p. 162)

In other words, the holding of different values may create the potential for conflict. Motivation as a result of striving to meet different objectives may enhance the chances for conflict. Desiring the same goal when it seems there is enough for only one party may cause conflict dynamics to be set in motion. Differing ideological, philosophical, or strategic orientations may lead to conflict.

In virtually all the literature dealing with conflict, it is presented as natural and inevitable. Duke (1976) stated, "There are ample data that conflict is found in almost every type of social condition and social relationship" (p. 16). Blake and Mouton (1964) said, "From a practical point of view, then, conflict might as well be accepted as inevitable" (p. 162). Coser (1956), speaking of the works of many earlier sociologists, said, "Conflict is ranked among the few basic forms of human interaction" (p. 19).

Kelley (1970) suggested the following assumptions regarding the elements of conflict:

1. Conflict is inevitable.

2. Permanent suppression of conflict is impossible (unless one has omnipotent power in a setting).

3. Conflict can be destructive or productive. A conflict-free setting is likely to stagnate while a setting which is overloaded with conflict will be dysfunctional. A degree of conflict is necessary as a stimulus to creativity and vitality for individuals or organizations.

4. People initiate conflict to effect a structural change; people respond to conflict initiated by others to maintain the status quo.
5. A conflict can only be explained or analyzed in relation to the context, or setting, in which it occurs.

6. The potential for conflict increases when there are increases in other factors; e.g., increased interdependence between individuals or agencies, increased interest in the behaviors and actions of an individual or organization by individuals and agencies external to the setting, and increased variety in the number or type of individuals and agencies impacted upon by the actions of an individual or organization. (p. 12)

Conflict theory, then, has evolved from one concerned mainly with warfare and struggles between classes of people and groups to one including concepts of interpersonal conflict. It has evolved from being considered only destructive and negative to embracing concepts of integration, cooperation, and planned conciliation. It has evolved from a theory rooted mostly in action to one whose basis includes, as a primary part, communication among and between people and groups. And conflict theory has come to be of great importance to individuals and groups who are primarily people oriented. As Coser (1956) pointed out:

While early American sociologists addressed themselves primarily to an audience of conflict-oriented groups—lawyers, reformers, radicals, politicians—later American sociologists have found their audience largely among groups and professions concerned with the strengthening of common values and the minimizing of group conflict: social workers, mental health experts, religious leaders, educators, as well as administrators, public and private. (p. 29)

It can safely be said that circumstances for conflict are certainly present in schools and that those circumstances can certainly affect the effectiveness of that organization.

On the one hand, conflict can delay or prevent the achievement of organizational objectives and personal goals, and from that standpoint it is bad. But at the
other extreme, conflict can promote innovation, creativity, and the development of new ideas which make organization growth possible, and from that standpoint, conflict is good. The issue, then, is not whether conflict is present. It will be present. The key is how conflict is managed. (Blake & Mouton, 1964, p. 163)

From the standpoint that conflict is integrative, acceptable, necessary, and even desirable, the management of conflict, then, is germane to organizational effectiveness. Following is a treatment of the concept of conflict management.

Conflict Management

The effectiveness of any organization depends largely upon the people who make up the organization and how those people act or are caused to act. One aspect or component of an effective organization is the way conflict within is managed. As Likert (1959) noted, "Effective organizations are characterized by extraordinary capacity to deal constructively with conflict and resolve it" (p. 204).

Himer (1980) said that conflict resolution can be defined as processes of communication and exchange between collective actors engaged in nonlegitimate conflict, which are initiated with or without an inter­mediator, and which seek to terminate nonlegitimate conflict and to restore social relations between the actors to some level of legitimacy under specific normative terms. (p. 236)

Conflict management, however, is more than this. The contemporary use of conflict management skills involves the treatment of all conflicts as inherently good and attempts to channel all resolutions of conflict toward constructive ends.
Communication and trust play a primary role in this, as is evidenced by a review of the three characteristics Likert (1961, p. 117) believed necessary for the creative and effective handling of conflict. He listed them as: (1) Procedures exist for dealing with conflict. These procedures are designed to foster communication and interaction between individuals and groups in the setting. (2) Individuals, especially those in leadership positions, are skilled in interaction processes; e.g., group formation, group leadership, and group maintenance functions. (3) A climate of trust exists, or is developed, between and among individuals.

Simmel (1955) listed four ways in which conflict can be brought to termination: (1) disappearance of the object of conflict, (2) victory, (3) compromise, and (4) conciliation. Contemporary conflict management orientations espouse a form of conciliation (win, win) as best because this kind of termination of conflict has integrative effects on the parties to the conflict.

The different ways one can use to manage conflicts are called styles or strategies, and there are several methods for delineating conflict management styles.

In most behavioral classifications for conflict management there are, generally, two variables that can be classified into a two dimensional schema: those behaviors related to task orientation and those which are relationship oriented. McGregor (1960) had "Theory X" as one dimension and "Theory Y" as the other dimension. Blake and Mouton (1964) used "Concern for Production" and "Concern for People" as the two dimensions. Similarly, Carron (1964) labeled...
the variables "Structure" and "Consideration." Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) called the two variables "Initiation" and "Guidance." Getzels and Cuba (1957) used the terms "Nomothetic" and "Idiographic" to name the two dimensions. Stogdill and Coons (1957) in the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire created "Consideration" and "Initiating Structure" as the two dimensions.

Reddin (1967) illustrated this two dimensional schema of certain authors by the use of Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Task Orientation</th>
<th>Relationships Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blake-Mouton</td>
<td>Concern for production</td>
<td>Concern for people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGregor</td>
<td>Theory X</td>
<td>Theory Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carron</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewin-Lippitt-White</td>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 1**

**Two Underlying Variables**

Blake and Mouton (1965) used the two dimensions and arranged them on a grid to name five primary styles for the management of conflict. They named the styles 9,9 win,win; 5,5 compromise; 1,9 yield,lose; 9,1 win,lose; 1,1 lose,leave; and arranged them from research in an ideal ordering of use from 9,9 to 1,1 as they are
listed above (see Appendix A).

C. Brown et al. (1981), although they began with a two dimensional schema, have carried the model further. They have evolved, from research, a theory stating that the "dynamics of communication-conflict are the range from positive to negative feelings, the degree of purposive energy, and four values about human relationships related to the four behaviors that emerge from the continuum of feelings and the continuum of energy" (p. 1106). That is, even though the two dimensions of feelings and task energy are present, each is on a continuum from high to low (or from positive to negative); and thus the range of the two become the dimensions of action in their schema, as illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative action</td>
<td>positive feelings and high task energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive action</td>
<td>negative feelings and high task energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawing action</td>
<td>negative feelings and low task energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>positive feelings and low task energy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since behavior (action) is oriented in value, C. Brown et al. (1981) went on to suggest that four values are associated with the four kinds of actions (behaviors) listed. Using the research of Bales and Couch (1969) which ended with four factors labeled: (1) acceptance of authority, (2) need-determined expression versus value determined restraint, (3) equalitarianism, and (4) individualism, C. Brown et al. called the factors, respectively, "community value,"
"control value," "respect for the other person," and "the value of the self as a unique individual." They illustrated the association of the four values with the four kinds of behaviors in the following way (p. 1106).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Unique individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Respect for the other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since community and unique individual are viewed as opposing values, as are control and respect for the other, and since each is either a social value (feelings) or a self-assertive value (task), then following the Eastern view (Stiskin, 1972), each must be of equal strength for constructive conflict management predisposition.

C. Brown et al. (1981) said that, "constructive conflict among the values is the symmetry of equal strength of opposing values. Destructive conflict among values is the consequence of the relative weakness in one of two opposing values" (pp. 1107-1108).

As a consequence of this analysis, C. Brown et al. conceived the six dynamics of conflict management used in their Communication-Conflict Instrument and stated that "each of the dynamics contributes positively to conflict management. Destructive conflict management results from weakness of one or more of the six dynamic predispositions" (p. 1108).

These six dynamic constructs are presented in the Communication-Conflict Instrument as:
Feelings—one's feelings about interaction with self and others.

Task—one's task energy present in interaction with others.

Community—concern for community.

Other—respect for others in the interaction.

Control—desire for control of others in the interaction.

Self—self-concern for one's self-uniqueness.

The literature is replete with references to the need for managers to use conflict management strategies. For example, Likert (1959), as noted earlier, said, "effective organizations are characterized by extraordinary capacity to deal constructively with conflict and resolve it" (p. 204). C. Brown and Keller (1979) said one of the primary reasons for chapter 10 of their book is to "show how conflict works and how to manage it constructively, personally, and socially" (p. 242). Frost and Wilmont (1978) partially prefaced their book by saying, "We end the book by suggesting that you can effectively intervene in your own conflicts" (p. xii). Sexton and Bowerman (1979) suggested that "the secret to successful conflict-handling is to use an appropriate style and to intervene at the appropriate time" (p. 8).

Conflict management skills are important because intuitively inherent in any classification where task and relationship are considered as mutually exclusive dimensions is the inevitability of conflict. That is, when tasks are seen as primarily important, relationships usually suffer, and conversely. Managers, then, need
the skill to manage these conflicts toward constructive ends.

If conflict is neither unusual nor undesirable, and will be made more common by the developing pluralistic power structures, and by influence diffusion, with which administrators increasingly must deal, then learning to "manage" conflict is an essential new skill for the senior administrator. (Coleman, 1976, pp. 14-15)

The literature reviewed in the preceding two sections has provided evidence of an evolving theory of conflict management. It is evolving from a theory which included only two interacting dimensions to one which includes the dynamic interaction of feelings and task energy with several opposing communication values, all of which contribute equally to effective conflict management predisposition.

From this review, two research hypotheses were derived:

Hypothesis 1. There is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

Hypothesis 2. There is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

The next section of this chapter treats with one aspect of the pluralistic power structures mentioned above, that of participation in decision making.

Participative Decision Making

Sparkes (1981) listed three reasons for employing shared decision making in the educational setting:

(1) to satisfy the teachers' desire for increased participation in organizational life; (2) to combat the
conflict between the teachers' professional aspirations and the bureaucratically operated school system; and (3) to achieve desirable organizational outcomes that are associated with increased participation. (p. 36)

The discussion that follows will expand on each of these reasons.

In recent years, teachers have made known their desire to have more of a say in the decisions that affect their lives and their professions. For example, studies conducted by Alutto and Belasco (1972) and by Crockenberg and Clark (1979) indicated much desire by teachers to participate in many school decisions. The major goals of teachers, Keef (1979) stated, are to "have some control over their jobs and profession, and to be professionally consulted on matters that affect children in their classrooms" (p. 410).

To overcome the schools' reluctance to allow teachers this desired voice in the operation of the education system, teachers have used collective organization. As several authors (e.g., Flynn, 1975; Jessup, 1978; Lieberman, 1960) have pointed out, teachers have organized so that their professional opinion will be heard and will be considered, as was often not done in the past.

Before collective bargaining, teachers were relatively weak and dependent upon being "selected" to be included in decision making. They could not compel things to happen—just recommended. . . . It was and is this sense of powerlessness combined with a change in the teacher population which prompted the rise of teacher unions. (Hoyle, 1978, p. 206)

Participative decision making within organizations has, however, become more and more accepted by administrators as being not only necessary but desirable. For instance, in Sweeney's (1980) study involving a survey of 203 elementary and secondary principals
in Georgia who were asked 10 questions intended to assess their attitudes toward group decision making, nearly 90% reported that such decision making was a desirable activity in which to engage.

The reasons for this increased acceptance vary, but many authors (e.g., Healey, 1980; Sousa, 1982; Staven, 1982) agreed that increased shared decision making should increase the effectiveness of the school. The American Association of School Administrators put it this way in their 25th yearbook published back in 1947:

Their (teachers') competency in many areas is as great as, and in some greater than, the administrators'. For them to participate in the study of any problem that concerns them will almost certainly produce a policy which best meets the actual needs, for they are in actual daily contact with the child for whom the school exists. (p. 147)

Studies undertaken to address the topics of shared decision making and school organizational effectiveness (e.g., Alutto & Belasco, 1970; Conway, 1977; Russell, 1982) have supported the contention that increased shared decision making means increased effectiveness. For example, Piper (1974) demonstrated that group consensus decisions are more correct than decisions made using the "one-man-deciding-alone" model; studies by Coch and French (1948) indicated that participation in decision making was positively associated with productivity and significantly reduced resistance to change; and Likert and Likert (1972) stated that the closer a situation approaches participative, the greater the likelihood of superior performance. Likert and Likert went on to say that "schools characterized (a) by more participative organizational processes,
(b) by decentralized decision-making structures for classroom and curriculum policy . . . are the most effective" (p. 24).

Relationships

Little was found in the literature that treated with a relationship between conflict management and participative decision making. Much, however, has been written concerning the conflict inherent in the role of school principal. Much, too, has been written concerning the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and principals' leadership behavior (e.g., Ambrosie & Heller, 1972; Nebgen, 1979). Recognizing that the possession of conflict management skills is one aspect of a principal's leadership ability, and that participative decision making is desirable, one can then intuitively relate conflict management and participative decision making.

The potential for conflict is inherent in the principalship. Lipham and Hoeh (1974) summarized the importance of role conflict in the principalship as follows:

All institutional roles, particularly those in public institutions, are subject to numerous sources and types of disagreement or conflict. But few seem so fraught with conflict potential as that of the public school principal. The major types of role conflict in the principalship are as follows: (1) inter-role conflict or disagreement between two or more roles simultaneously fulfilled by the principal—from the principal "wearing many hats"; (2) inter-reference-group conflict or disagreement in two or more reference groups in their expectations for the role of the principal—"the man in the middle"; (3) intra-reference-group conflict or disagreement within a reference group in their expectations for the role of the principal—"caught in group crossfire"; and (4) role-personality conflict or disagreement between the expectations for the role of the principal and his
personality need-dispositions—"the man vs. the job." (pp. 132-133)

The type of conflict a principal seems most likely to encounter is inter-reference-group conflict or, simply, inter-group conflict. Inter-group conflict itself can have many sources. Sebring (1978), for example, talked of three major sources:

The data generated from these exercises demonstrated that the three most important sources of intergroup conflict were the lack of time for administrators and teachers to talk and plan, lack of teacher and administrator personal and inter-group confrontation and problem-solving communication skills to deal with the conflict, and the conflict caused by increased teacher demand for inclusion in the school decision-making process. (p. 38)

Bailey (1971) identified three types of conflict situations encountered by administrators: (1) subordinate conflict (between administrator and subordinate); (2) superordinate conflict (between an administrator and supervisors); and (3) lateral conflict (between an administrator and equals). Ziegler and Associates (1980) indicated that unresolved subordinate disputes may result in a broadening of conflict to either the superordinate or lateral levels.

Clearly the implication here is that the administrator must be concerned about subordinate conflict because the goals of the school will be disrupted if subordinate conflict is poorly handled.

The literature in recent years suggests that much conflict in schools is caused by teachers' desire to be included in the decision making process but that this does not happen often enough.

The literature supports the contention that shared decision making increases organizational effectiveness, increases staff job satisfaction (Lipham & Associates, 1981), and is viewed as desirable
by administrators (Sweeney, 1980). Why then is there so much conflict surrounding the implementation of participative decision making? Sebring (1978) provided an answer: "Distrust and attempted manipulation have become characteristics of many teacher-administrator intergroup relations. Administrators are aware of the conflict; however, very few administrators know ways to alleviate the conflict and its negative consequences" (p. 37).

Principals must recognize the need of teachers to become involved in decision making (Ambrosie & Heller, 1972), and they must exhibit a willingness to handle the conflict involved.

The essence of school administrative functions is to calculate the point of potential conflict between organizational expectations and teacher needs and systematically move between the two poles (6). This necessitates a willingness to negotiate conflicted issues or decisions. (Sweeney, 1980, p. 312)

A recognition by principals of the need to involve staffs in decision making is not enough, however.

Since the school administrator cannot avoid conflict, it is imperative that he or she be prepared to cope with it when it arises. More than simple coping with conflict, an administrator needs to know how to channel conflict toward constructive ends. (Schofield, 1975, abstract)

The research reviewed in the preceding two sections seems to imply that managers who are more effective at the management of conflict will involve their subordinates more in decision making. However, since little was found in the literature dealing specifically with a relationship between conflict management effectiveness and participative decision making, a nondirectional research hypothesis was derived as a proposed answer to the primary research
The hypothesis is that there is a difference between how often high school principals less effective at conflict management and high school principals more effective at conflict management involve their staffs in decision making.

Summary

The literature was reviewed to ascertain whether or not there is support for the legitimacy of the research questions that were posed in Chapter I after initial readings and study.

Specifically, the conclusions drawn as a result of the literature review in each of the topical areas presented are stated as:

1. Conflict is inevitable in human interaction and is especially inherent in the role of the principalship.

2. Participative decision making in schools is desired and demanded by teachers, and is looked upon as desirable by principals.

3. Conflict management theory is evolving from one which includes only two interacting dimensions to a theory, the basis of which is the dynamic interaction of feelings, energy, and several communication values, all of which may play an equal part in conflict management.

4. Principals must recognize the desire of teachers to be involved in decision making and must exhibit a willingness to deal with the conflict involved.

5. Conflict management skills are essential for the principal to possess to be able to deal with the conflicts that are concomitant with shared decision making.
Generally, these conclusions lend support to the appropriateness of the research questions.

From the review and conclusions, research hypotheses were then derived as proposed answers to the questions raised in Chapter I. The research hypotheses are listed below.

1. There is a difference between how often high school principals less effective at conflict management and high school principals more effective at conflict management involve their staffs in decision making.

2. There is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values **other** and **control** as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

3. There is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values **community** and **self** as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

The next chapter contains a description of the method of study used to test these hypotheses.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The literature clearly suggests that there may be a relationship between conflict management and participative decision making. It also suggests that there is a relationship between the two opposing communication values in two pairs of values associated with an evolving theory of conflict management predisposition. The purpose of this investigation was to examine the nature and extent of those relationships.

This chapter contains a description of the method of study used to conduct the investigation. Specifically, this chapter presents statements of the research hypotheses and a description of and rationale for the research design, including the research setting, the research population and sample, the research instruments, and the general research procedures.

Hypotheses

Based on the support found in the review of the literature as stated in Chapter II, the following three research hypotheses were derived as proposed answers to the three research questions posed in the problem statement in Chapter I.
Research Hypothesis 1

There is a difference between how often high school principals less effective at conflict management and high school principals more effective at conflict management involve their staffs in decision making.

Research Hypothesis 2

There is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

Research Hypothesis 3

There is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

Research Design

This section contains a description of the design of the research, including the variables involved, the instruments used, the type of study conducted and rationale for it, the research population and sample, the general research procedures, and the statistical analysis procedures employed.
Variables

The independent variable in this investigation for Research Hypothesis 1 was the degree of effectiveness at conflict management exhibited by high school principals. The dependent variable was a measure of the frequency of involvement by those principals, of teaching staffs in decision making.

The independent variables for Research Hypotheses 2 and 3 were measurements of the strengths of the communication values other, control, community, and self possessed by high school principals.

Questionnaires were used to gather data to constitute both the independent variables and the dependent variables as given above.

Instruments

The research instruments chosen, rationale for the choices, and validity and reliability data for each is contained in this section.

Communication-Conflict Instrument. Initial readings about the development of a theory of communication-conflict predisposition (C. Brown et al., 1981) gave rise to two of the research questions presented in Chapter I and, subsequently, to the corresponding Research Hypotheses 2 and 3 presented above. Since this theory development culminated in the development of the Communication-Conflict Instrument (C. Brown et al., 1979) to measure communication-conflict predisposition as developed within the theory, the Communication-Conflict Instrument provided an excellent means with
which to measure the independent variables in Research Hypotheses 2 and 3.

The Communication-Conflict Instrument was also selected to be used to measure the relative conflict management effectiveness of high school principals for Research Hypothesis 1. The relative score (lower-higher) on the instrument indicates lower or higher constructive management of conflict. The definition of effectiveness at conflict management given by the authors contains the elements listed by other authors (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1964; Burke, 1970; Kilman & Thomas, 1975) as being essential for effective conflict management. The Communication-Conflict Instrument can be found in Appendix B.

The instrument, according to the authors,

measures the degree to which you are inclined to meet conflict situations in a constructive way, in a way that leads to interactions that bring resolutions that are agreeable to both you and the others who are involved. The higher the conflict management score the more your behaviors lead to constructive management. The lower the score the more your behaviors lead to frustrating prolongation of conflict and the deterioration of relationships. (C. Brown et al., 1979, p. 1)

The conflict management score is the total of the scores from each of the six constructs of the Communication-Conflict Instrument. That is, each of the constructs of the instrument—task, feelings, community, other, control, self—yields a separate score, all of which are then totaled to yield a score for conflict management.

Data gathered by C. Brown et al. (1981, p. 1115) using 51 undergraduate college students yielded a mean for the management of conflict score of 284.54 with a standard deviation of 37.13. No
norms for the instrument have been obtained for any populations, so the relative terms **higher** and **lower** are used.

Reliability coefficients using the Cronbach reliability correlation for the 10 items in each of the six constructs of the Communication-Conflict Instrument ranged from $r = .91$ to $r = .94$. Total score correlation was $r = .96$.

Test-retest reliabilities were computed using the Pearson product-moment correlation, and ranged from a low of $r = .64$ on the "Self-Uniqueness Value" construct to $r = .84$ on the "Community Value" construct. The "Conflict Management" correlation was $r = .76$.

External validity for the Communication-Conflict Instrument was established by comparing the conflict management score with four other measures of conflict. The instrument correlated with the Hamra (1971) Susceptibility to Conflict Instrument ($r = .54$), with the Moos and Moos (1976) Conflict Instrument ($r = -.37$), with the Thomas-Kilman (1974) Conflict Mode Instrument collaboration scores ($r = .33$) and with the Locke (1951) Marital Adjustment Instrument ($r = .61$). All correlations were in the predicted direction.

In general, the Communication-Conflict Instrument meets the demands of a data gathering instrument for this study because it operationalizes the measurement of conflict management in individuals, and it provides a means to **measure** the strength of the four, given communication values held by individuals.
**Decision Point Analysis.** The Decision Point Analysis (Eye, Lipham, Gregg, Netzer, & Francke, 1966) was selected to be used to measure participation in decision making for Research Hypothesis 1. The Decision Point Analysis instrument as used in this investigation can be found in Appendix C.

Content validity for the Decision Point Analysis was established by the authors by refining the decision items comprising the instrument from a list of over 400 tasks in the supervision or the administration of the instructional program. This refinement process consisted of rational judgments by the researchers and reactions of a panel of expert practitioners who could be expected to make valid judgments about the appropriateness of the items. The refinement process continued until the basic list contained 30 items and was organized into a working draft.

The working draft was administered in a pilot school system that was "about average in the 100 to 700 teacher systems" (Eye et al., 1966, p. 24). An analysis of the data from the pilot administration resulted in a decrease in the number of decision items to 25 and an agreement as to the content of the instrument.

In its original form, the Decision Point Analysis contained two columns for decision item responses. Column I would contain responses to two questions: (1) Who makes this decision; and (2) what other persons participate in making this decision? Column II would contain responses for each decision item to the question: What is the nature of your participation in making this decision?
The Decision Point Analysis was modified for this investigation to include only Column II answers to each decision item.

Test-retest reliability studies were conducted using an index of consistency scoring scheme. The observed index of consistency for Column II, which is of primary importance here, was .77. According to the authors, "the Indices of Consistency obtained appear to be significantly greater than would be achieved by chance-assignment. Hence, the Decision Point Analysis Instrument was considered to be highly consistent in its measurement" (p. 36).

In general, the Decision Point Analysis Instrument meets the demands of a data gathering instrument for this study because it is designed to measure actual perceived participation in decision making by those using the instrument and because it yields a set of responses which can be categorized into participation or non-participation in decision making.

Type of Design

This investigation can best be described as an ex post facto field study because all respondents were categorized using previously established role identities and not controlled or manipulated by the investigator.

A primary criticism of ex post facto research designs has been the danger of the "post hoc assumption," because "it can, and often does, lead to erroneous and misleading interpretations of research data" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 379). While it is true that in ex post facto research the inability to manipulate independent variables and
the lack of the power to randomize may lead to the post hoc fallacy, complete control of variables involved in related complex social situations is virtually impossible, so generalizability is impossible to obtain. Many important educational research problems, then, would not lend themselves to experimental studies, but many do lend themselves to ex post facto research design.

Kerlinger (1973) described ex post facto research as "systematic, empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulatable" (p. 379). Because of this lack of control, inferences are made, according to Kerlinger, "without direct intervention, from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables" (p. 379).

This indicates that attempts to simulate social phenomena with their complex and interrelated variables, are often not successful. Because of this, ex post facto research, done within a framework of specified hypotheses and related theory, is highly acceptable (Hillway, 1969; Stanley & Hopkins, 1972; Thorndike & Hagen, 1969).

Since questionnaires were used as the primary method of data collection in this ex post facto investigation, the perceptions of the respondents were of primary importance. As we are all aware, though, it is a person's perception of a situation that affects his or her behavior involving it, not necessarily the situation itself (Stogdill, 1959, 1974). Therefore, the use of perceptual judgments was accepted here as valid.
Population and Sample

Principals and teachers in class C high schools in Michigan were chosen to participate in the study. This limitation on the scope of this study was utilized to minimize much of the variability that would have been found if all of Michigan's high schools had been studied. Student population is one variable which affects several related variables within a school district (Lieberman, 1977). For example, a perusal of the personnel lists in the Michigan Education Directory (1983) indicates clearly that job responsibilities may vary with size of districts. The smaller districts often have only one principal for both the junior high and high schools, while the larger districts often have not only separate principals for the junior high and high schools, but also often have one to several assistant principals in each area.

Also, the Michigan State School Code of 1976, along with its Administrative Rules, lists varying requirements for the operation of schools based solely on school district size. Schools of the same or similar size are generally administered the same and, so, operate in like manner.

The use of principals and teachers in class C high schools, then, produced similar administrative structures and methods of operation. By assuring this kind of homogeneity, generalizability to all schools within the general range of study was enhanced and the internal validity of the study was enhanced by controlling the accompanying variables associated with different school size. For
example, most of the schools responding did, indeed, have department heads, chairpersons, or other similar classifications, as was assumed to be the case.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association Bulletin (1982), School Directory edition, defines class C high schools as those having student enrollments in grades 9 through 12 of at least 319 students but not more than 626 students. This listing, which is a complete list of all high schools and principals in the state of Michigan as provided by the Michigan High School Athletic Association included 164 high schools in the Lower Peninsula and 16 high schools in the Upper Peninsula for a total population of 180 class C high schools in Michigan for the referent year of 1983.

Since ex post facto research design precludes random assignment of subjects, random selection of subjects is necessary. Simple random sampling without replacement, that is, sampling in which selection is independent and all possible samples have an equal probability of selection, was used to determine the research sample for this study. Sample high schools were selected from the listing of the population through the use of the table of 10,000 random numbers and the method given for its use by Gay (1976, pp. 69-70, 325-328). Sixty schools were selected from the total population of 180 class C high schools in Michigan.

General Research Procedures

The basic sampling unit for this investigation was the high school. High school principals and five high school teachers from
each of the 60 sample schools were asked to complete questionnaires. A complete data set for each high school consisted of a completed questionnaire from the principal and a completed questionnaire from a minimum of two teachers.

A research packet was sent to the principal of each high school via the United States Postal Service. Each packet contained a cover letter addressed to the principal, a Communication-Conflict Instrument, and five envelopes, one each addressed to a department head in each of five academic areas.

Appendix D is a sample of the cover letter sent to each principal. As can be noted, because of the potential sensitivity of the investigation, the cover letter sought to assure the respondents that:

1. All responses would be held in the strictest confidence.

2. The results of the study would be reported in such a way that no individual responses could be identified.

3. The results of the study would be reported in such a way that no school district could be identified.

4. Questionnaires were coded only to enable the researcher to manage data and identify nonrespondents for follow-up purposes.

In addition, the principal cover letter explained the general purpose of the study, provided instructions to the principal for distribution of the department head envelopes, and thanked each in advance for participation and a prompt reply.

The department head envelopes each contained a Decision Point Analysis questionnaire and a cover letter addressed to the teacher.
(See Appendix E for the teacher cover letter.) The teacher cover letter was essentially the same as the principal cover letter, except the instructions to the principal for distribution were, of course, omitted.

Three weeks after the initial mailing, reminder postcards were sent to the 28 principals of the schools whose data sets were not complete. Because of the nature of the research packets sent, three different messages were mailed depending on the following categories of nonresponse:

1. Principal's data complete, teachers' not complete.
2. Teachers' data complete, principal's not complete.
3. Principal's data not complete, teachers' data not complete.

All of the messages indicated which response or responses were not complete, a sincere need for the data, and an offer to send duplicate questionnaires if needed.

Three weeks after the second request, because the response by the sample was judged to be insufficient (less than 80%), 12 of the remaining 24 principals were contacted by telephone in a final attempt to secure completed data sets from their schools.

At the time these principals were contacted by telephone, they were also questioned as to why they or the teachers did not respond. This was done to identify whether or not a systematic reason for nonresponse existed.

The reasons given for nonresponse were of three types. Stated reasons with frequencies shown in parentheses follow:
1. The reason for nonresponse is unknown but will check and have them (or it) sent in. (2)

2. The questionnaire (or questionnaires) was (were) misplaced but will respond if sent a duplicate (or duplicates). (8)

3. Won't respond. Principal and teachers are too busy for questionnaires. (2)

Ultimately 40 of 60 data sets were completed in usable form.

Hypotheses and Statistical Analysis Procedures

The null form of each research hypothesis was subjected to statistical analysis in order to infer the truth of the research hypothesis. The null hypothesis for each research hypothesis is listed below along with corresponding alternate hypotheses.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** No difference will be found between the mean score of staff involvement in decision making of high school principals considered less effective at conflict management and the mean score of staff involvement in decision making of high school principals considered more effective at conflict management.

**Alternate Hypothesis 1:** A difference will be found between the mean score of staff involvement in decision making of high school principals considered less effective at conflict management and the mean score of staff involvement in decision making of high school principals considered more effective at conflict management.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** There will be a correlation of zero between the subscale scores for *other* and *control* on the Communication-Conflict Instrument for all high school principals.
Alternate Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive correlation between the subscale scores for other and control on the Communication-Conflict Instrument for all high school principals.

Null Hypothesis 3: There will be a correlation of zero between the subscale scores for community and self for all high school principals on the Communication-Conflict Instrument.

Alternate Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive correlation between the subscale scores for community and self for all high school principals on the Communication-Conflict Instrument.

After the data were collected as outlined above, the principal respondents were assigned either to a more effective conflict manager group or to a less effective conflict manager group. Principals were considered more effective at conflict management if their scores for conflict management on the Communication-Conflict Instrument were at or above the median for all scores; they were considered less effective if their scores were below the median.

The responses for each item on the Decision Point Analysis were tabulated for each principal's staff members. Each of the scores was placed in one of the two groups according to whether the principal involved placed in the more effective group or the less effective group.

The mean scores for each group were then computed. The $t$ test for independent samples was then used with these means to test the null hypothesis for Research Hypothesis 1. The assumptions underlying the use of this test statistic as outlined by Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1979, pp. 199-202) were considered during the analysis.
The result of this test was considered significant at the .05 level.

The responses by principals to the Communication-Conflict Instrument questions yielded separate scores for each of the six constructs of the instrument. The scores for the two opposing communication values other and control provided the data used to test the null hypothesis for Research Hypothesis 2. The scores for the two opposing communication values community and self provided the data used to test the null hypothesis for Research Hypothesis 3.

Since the basic assumption underlying these two hypotheses is that the relationship between the two variables in each is linear, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and the procedures for its use outlined by Hinkle et al. (1979, pp. 181-183, 476) were used to test them. The results of these tests were considered significant at the .05 level.

**Background Data**

In addition to being asked to complete the participation in decision making portion of the Decision Point Analysis questionnaire, teachers were asked to provide some personal background data. These data were used simply to construct a profile of all department heads in the schools involved.

Also, in addition to being asked to complete the conflict management portion of the Communication-Conflict Instrument questionnaire, principals were asked to provide personal background information. These data were used to construct a profile of all principals in the schools involved.
Background data, then, as indicated above, were collected to provide respondent profiles and information for use in any future research on the same topics.

Summary

The methodology used for this investigation can best be described as an ex post facto field study where the primary methods of data collection used were questionnaires.

The basic sampling units for this study were the class C high schools in the state of Michigan. There were 180 such high schools in Michigan when data for this study were collected, 60 of which were selected randomly as sample schools.

The independent variables in this investigation were: (a) the degree of effectiveness at conflict management exhibited by high school principals, (b) measurement of the strengths of the communication values other and control held by high school principals, and (c) measurement of the strengths of the communication values community and self held by high school principals. The dependent variable was a measure of the frequency of involvement of teaching staffs in decision making by high school principals.

Questionnaires were used to obtain data from the sample schools to provide statistical representation for both the independent variables and the dependent variables. Background data were also collected from each respondent.

Specifically, this investigation examined the relationships as set forth in the hypotheses, and provided profiles of the
respondents to the questionnaires used in this study.

Chapter IV reports a statement of the research findings as outlined above. A summary of the results, and conclusions and recommendations regarding the investigation, are given in Chapter V.
CHAPTER IV

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The initial portion of this chapter presents a descriptive look at the respondents who provided data for analysis in this investigation. The results of the data analysis as stated in Chapter III are then presented with references to each of the research hypotheses. The data were analyzed through hypothesis testing.

Profile of the Respondents

The information presented here includes, first, some pertinent characteristics of the school districts represented in the investigation and a general profile of questionnaire respondents. Next, more specific information is provided relative to the demographic data obtained from principal and teacher respondents.

General Profile

The research population for this investigation consisted of high school principals and high school teachers of 180 high schools in the state of Michigan which were designated by student population size as class C by the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Sixty of those high schools were included in the research sample using random selection.
The data for this investigation were gathered through the use of the Communication-Conflict Instrument and the Decision Point Analysis instrument.

The basic sampling unit for the investigation was the class C high school. The primary levels of the independent variable were the principals and five teachers designated as department heads in those high schools. Because of the sampling procedure, a complete data set for analysis purposes was considered to be a completed Communication-Conflict Instrument from the principal and a completed Decision Point Analysis questionnaire from at least two department heads in that school.

After having followed the general procedures set forth in Chapter III, questionnaires were returned by 194 (53.9%) of the 360 potential individual respondents. Within that number of respondents there were 40 complete data sets out of a potential 60 data sets (66.7%). Data sets consist of completed questionnaires from the principal and at least two department heads. These 40 complete data sets were used in data analysis for this investigation.

During the data gathering process, nonrespondents were contacted in an attempt to secure their participation in the study. At that time, the nonrespondents who were contacted were asked why they had not responded. There was no systematic reason for nonresponse demonstrated by the replies except, perhaps, simple negligence. Most indicated a willingness to respond and gave various excuses for not already having done so. Only two nonrespondents contacted indicated an unwillingness to participate. None of those contacted
indicated any hesitation to respond because of the nature of the investigation or the questionnaire items.

After having evaluated the reasons given for nonresponse and finding no evidence to indicate a systematic reason for nonresponse or any bias by the nonrespondents, it was concluded that the respondents' schools did adequately represent the population under investigation in this study.

**Demographic Profiles**

As previously indicated, principals and teachers (department heads) involved were asked to provide specific demographic data. Tabular presentation and discussion of these data are given here to provide the reader with a profile of pertinent characteristics of respondents and to provide information for use in any future research on the same topics.

**Principal Profiles**

**Sex.** Of the 40 principals responding, 39 (97.5%) were male and 1 (2.5%) was female. Table 1 presents these data.

**Years in system.** Principals were asked to indicate the number of years in their present school system. The responses are presented in Table 2 and ranged from 2 to 33 years with a mean of 13.65 years and a standard deviation of 8.25 years.

**Years in school.** Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years in their present school. The responses are presented in
Table 2 and ranged from 1 to 33 years with a mean of 12 years and a standard deviation of 8.3 years.

### Table 1

#### Sex of Principal Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

#### Experience Profiles of Principal Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in system</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in school</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in position</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of teaching experience</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>16.20</td>
<td>8.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Years in position.** Principals were asked to indicate the number of years in their present position. The responses are presented in Table 2 and ranged from 1 to 23 years with a mean of 6.95 years and a standard deviation of 6.0 years.
Years of teaching experience. The number of years of teaching experience indicated by the principal respondents are presented in Table 2 and ranged from 4 to 33 years with a mean of 16.2 years and a standard deviation of 8.1 years.

Level of professional preparation. The principals in the sample were asked to indicate their highest level of professional preparation. The majority (53.8%) had a master's degree plus 15 credits or less. More than a quarter (25.7%) of the principals had an educational specialist degree. These data are presented in more detail in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's + 15 credits</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's + 30 credits</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational specialist degree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 39 100.0

Note. Missing cases = 1.

Last year enrolled. The sample principals were asked to indicate in what year they were last enrolled in one or more college
courses. A great majority (69.3%) were enrolled within the last 5 years. See Table 4 for a more detailed listing of these data.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last year enrolled</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-77</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-83</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>N = 39</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Missing cases = 1.

The average principal in this study has a little over 16 years of teaching experience. He/she has been in his/her present school system almost 14 years and in his/her present school 12 years. She/he has been a principal for 7 years, has earned a master's degree plus 15 credits or less, and has been enrolled in at least one college credit course during the last 5 years.

Teacher Profiles

Sex. Of the 144 teachers responding, 94 (65.3%) were male and 50 (34.7%) were female. This data is presented in Table 5.
Table 5
Sex of Teacher Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 144 100.0

Years in system. The sample teachers were asked to indicate the number of years in their present school system. The responses are presented in Table 6 and ranged from 3 to 31 years with a mean of 14.03 years and a standard deviation of 5.5 years.

Table 6
Experience Profile of Teacher Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in system</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>14.03</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in school</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in position</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of teaching experience</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Years in school. Teachers were asked to indicate the number of years in their present school. The responses are presented in
Table 6 and ranged from 1 to 31 years with a mean of 13.2 years and a standard deviation of 5.8 years.

**Years in position.** Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years in their present position. The responses are presented in Table 6 and ranged from 1 to 31 years with a mean of 11.8 years and a standard deviation of 6.2 years.

**Years of teaching experience.** The teachers in the sample were asked to indicate their number of years of teaching experience. Table 6 presents a tabulation of these responses, which ranged from 3 to 34 years with a mean of 16.1 years and a standard deviation of 6.2 years.

**Level of professional preparation.** The teacher respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of professional preparation. Almost three-fourths (74.3%) had a master's degree or less while the largest group (38.9%) had earned a master's degree. Table 7 presents these data in more detail.

**Last year enrolled.** The respondents indicated in what year they were last enrolled in one or more college credit courses. The largest group (48.9%) had been enrolled within the last 3 years (1981-1983), while the rest had been enrolled ranging from 4 to 20 years ago. These data are listed in more detail in Table 8.

**Department head areas.** Department heads were defined in this study as faculty members in each building who were identified as
department heads or chairpersons of the department or who were
classified similarly in the areas of English, math, science, busi-
ness, and social studies. The responses were about equally divided
among the five academic areas, ranging from 17.4% responding from
the social studies area to 22.9% from the area of math. The areas
and accompanying data are presented in Table 9.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's + 15 credits</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's + 15 credits</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's + 30 credits</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational specialist degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 144 100.0

Hypothesis Testing

The data analysis technique used for Research Hypothesis 1
consisted of testing the null hypothesis for a difference between
means. The test statistic used was the t-test for independent
Table 8
Last Year in Which Teacher Respondents Were Enrolled in College Credit Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last year enrolled</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963-65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-68</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-71</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-77</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-80</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-83</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 143 100.0

Note. Missing cases = 1.

Table 9
Profiles of Department Heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department head area</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 144 100.0

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sample means. A probability of committing a Type I error was set at .05.

Prior to evaluating the result of the $t$ test, an $F$ test of sample variance was used to determine on which variance estimate (pooled or separate) to base the $t$ test. This procedure involved the use of the sample variances to test the null hypothesis that the population variances are equal. A probability of .10 of committing a Type I error was used. If the probability for $F$ is greater than .10, the null hypothesis is not rejected and the $t$ test will be based on the pooled variance estimate. If the probability is less than alpha, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the separate variance estimate will be used.

Research Hypothesis 1

The first research question addressed by this investigation had to do with the probability of there being a differing degree of involvement, by high school principals, of staff in decision making, concomitant with the principals' effectiveness at conflict management. The null hypothesis stated that there would be no difference between the mean score of staff involvement in decision making of high school principals considered less effective at conflict management and the mean score of staff involvement in decision making of high school principals considered more effective at conflict management. The nondirectional alternate hypothesis indicated a difference would be found between those mean scores.
The statistical analysis data for the F test of sample variance shown in Table 10 indicate that the probability for F (.99) is greater than alpha (.10); hence, the two sample groups are assumed to have the same variance. Therefore, the t test is based on the pooled variance estimate.

The t value of -2.72 resulting from the t test is greater than the critical value of approximately ±2.03 (Hinkle et al., 1979, p. 466). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference between the mean scores of staff involvement in decision making by principals less effective at conflict management and the mean score of staff involvement in decision making by principals more effective at conflict management was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was supported.

These data demonstrate that principals involved in this study who are more effective at conflict management involve their staffs in decision making more (mean score over all items = 75.66) than principals who are less effective at conflict management do (mean score over all items = 71.08). The probability (p = .007) that the observed difference between the means (4.58) is greater than would be expected by chance, is less than alpha (.05).

These data demonstrate support for Research Hypothesis 1, that there is, indeed, a difference in how often high school principals less effective at conflict management and high school principals more effective at conflict management involve their staffs in decision making.
### Table 10

**F Test for Sample Variance and t Test for Difference Between Means for Research Hypothesis 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Stand. error</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department heads supervised by principals less effective at conflict management</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71.08</td>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>-2.72</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>.007*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department heads supervised by principals more effective at conflict management</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>75.66</td>
<td>10.08</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alpha = .05.*
The data analysis technique used for Research Hypotheses 2 and 3 consisted of ascertaining the linear relationship between two scores representing two communication values. The test statistic used was the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The resulting coefficients were used to test the null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance for a one-tailed test using tabled values.

Research Hypothesis 2

The second research question addressed by this investigation sought to ascertain whether there was a relationship between the communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition. It was hypothesized that there is a direct relationship between the two. The null hypothesis stated that the correlation between scores on the Communication-Conflict Instrument that represent the two values would be zero. The alternate hypothesis indicated there would be a positive correlation between the two scores. Alpha was set at .05.

The statistical data for the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for Research Hypothesis 2 are shown in Table 11.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for the scores for other and control was -.0978. Using the procedures outlined by Hinkle et al. (1979, pp. 181-183, 476) to test the null hypothesis that ρ = 0, a correlation coefficient of greater than or equal to .268 would be needed to reject the null hypothesis using an alpha of .05 for a one-tailed test with degrees of freedom equal to 38.
Table 11
Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Communication Value Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community with self</td>
<td>.0606</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>.355*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other with control</td>
<td>-.0978</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>.274*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Probabilities are for one-tailed tests.

Since the observed coefficient of -.0978 was less than the critical value of the coefficient, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The probability (p = .274) that the sample coefficient \( r = -.0978 \) would be observed by chance if \( \rho = 0 \), is greater than .05.

These data do not demonstrate support for Research Hypothesis 2. That is, there is no evidence that there is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

Research Hypothesis 3

The third research question addressed by this investigation sought to ascertain whether there was a relationship between the communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition. It was hypothesized that there was a positive relationship between the two. The null hypothesis stated
that the correlation between scores on the Communication-Conflict Instrument that represent the two values would be zero. The alternate hypothesis indicated there would be a positive correlation between the two scores. Alpha was set at .05.

The statistical data for the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for Research Hypothesis 3 are shown in Table 11.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for the scores for community and self was .0606. Using the procedures outlined by Hinkle et al. (1979, pp. 181-183, 476) to test the null hypothesis that \( \rho = 0 \), a correlation coefficient of greater than or equal to .268 would be needed to reject the null hypothesis using an alpha of .05 for a one-tailed test with degrees of freedom equal to 38.

Since the observed coefficient of .0606 was less than the critical value of the coefficient, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The probability (\( p = .355 \)) that the sample coefficient \( r = .0606 \) would be observed by chance if \( \rho = 0 \), is greater than .05.

These data do not demonstrate support for Research Hypothesis 3. That is, there is no evidence that there is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition for all high school principals.

Summary

This chapter presented a profile of the respondents who participated in this investigation and a report of the statistical
analyses of the results with reference to each of the three basic research questions.

An evaluation of the reasons given for nonresponse by potential respondents contacted resulted in no evidence to indicate that a systematic reason existed for nonresponse or that any bias on the part of the nonrespondents was involved.

Hypothesis testing for a difference between the means was used for data analysis for the first research hypothesis. The analysis indicated the difference was statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis. Support for the research hypothesis was indicated.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used for data analysis for the second and third research hypotheses. These analyses indicated little if any correlation between the scores involved in each case, the probability that the sample coefficient would be observed by chance if the null hypothesis were true was greater than alpha in each case, and therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected in each case. No evidence, then, was found to support the second and third research hypotheses.

The next and final chapter provides a summary of the entire investigation, statements and discussion of conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the investigation from its beginning through the analysis of data, the conclusions drawn as a result of data analysis, discussions about the conclusions, and some recommendations for future research.

Summary

Initial readings and studies in the areas of conflict management and participative decision making led to the conclusion that there would be a relationship between the two areas. That is, the increasing complexity of the social, financial, technical, and political environment in the schools has practically mandated more involvement of teachers in the decision-making process. And as this involvement continues to grow, antagonisms and conflicts result (Sebring, 1978).

Principals can either look upon this increased participative decision making as a threat, or they can try to minimize the conflict that arises (Flynn, 1975). One way to do this is through the use of effective conflict management skills.

Inductively, then, one is led to conclude that there will be a direct relationship between a principal's effectiveness at conflict
management and the principal's practice of involvement of staff in decision making. It is this relationship that was the primary focal point of this study.

Little research has been done using more than a two-dimensional approach to leadership behavior and conflict management (Kilman & Thomas, 1975). Therefore, subsequent to a personal interview with P. Yelsma (January 25, 1983), one of the instrument's authors, it was decided to use the Communication-Conflict Instrument for this study so that more information could be gathered specifically from high school principals regarding the interaction of the six dynamic predispositions to conflict as presented in the instrument.

Consequently, using the theory development which preceded the development of the Communication-Conflict Instrument, two secondary research questions were posed and research hypotheses developed regarding the relationship between each of two sets of opposing communication values measured by the instrument.

More specifically, the purpose of this investigation has been to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. Will the involvement, by principals, of staff in decision making differ with the principals' effectiveness at conflict management?

2. Is there a relationship between the communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition?

3. Is there a relationship between the communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management
The methodology used for this investigation was an ex post facto field study with questionnaires used as the primary method of data collection. The basic sampling units for this study were class C high schools (319-626 students) in Michigan. There were 180 such high schools in Michigan, and 60 of those were included in the research sample by random selection. The high school principals and five teachers designated as department heads in each of those high schools were asked to complete questionnaires.

Research hypotheses were developed for each of the research questions. The null hypotheses and their alternates proposed the testing of the research hypotheses. The test statistic used was the standard $t$ test for independent sample for Research Hypothesis 1 and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for Research Hypotheses 2 and 3. Alpha was set at the .05 level for each test.

A research packet containing a cover letter and a Communication-Conflict Instrument for the principal and a cover letter and a Decision Point Analysis instrument for each department head to complete was sent to each high school principal in the sample. Analysis of data for the investigation was based on a complete data set response rate of 66.7%. A data set was considered complete when the principal and a minimum of two teachers responded.

A general profile of respondents was constructed, and a survey of nonrespondents revealed no evidence of a systematic reason for nonresponse or any bias by the respondents toward the questionnaire items or the investigation.
Conclusions

This section provides the conclusions which were drawn as a result of testing the hypotheses for Research Questions 1, 2, and 3.

Research Question 1

The first and primary research question dealt with the probability of there being a differing degree of involvement, by principals, of staff in decision making. The null hypothesis predicted no difference would be found between staff involvement in decision making by high school principals less effective at conflict management and high school principals more effective at conflict management. The alternate hypothesis predicted a difference would be found.

Data analysis established a sample mean of 75.66 for involvement for department heads supervised by principals more effective at conflict management and a sample mean of 71.08 for involvement for department heads supervised by principals less effective at conflict management. When tested for significance, the difference was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference was rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis.

Conclusion 1. High school principals who are more effective at conflict management involve their teaching staffs in decision making more than do high school principals who are less effective at conflict management.
Discussion. Since the relationship between conflict management effectiveness and the use of participatory decision making was not found to be directly addressed in the literature, this specific conclusion serves as an initial direct statement on the topic.

Acknowledging the limitations of this investigation, the data presented here constitute a beginning body of literature regarding the relationship between conflict management effectiveness and involvement in decision making.

Research Question 2

The second research question dealt with the topic of the relationship between the communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition.


The null hypothesis predicted a correlation of zero between the subscale scores on the Communication-Conflict Instrument that measure the values other and control. The alternate hypothesis predicted a positive correlation. Alpha was set at .05.

Data analysis established a correlation coefficient of -.0978 between the scores. When this coefficient was used to test the null hypothesis, the coefficient was found to be less than the critical value needed to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.
Conclusion 2. No supporting evidence was found to indicate that there is a direct relationship between the opposing communication values other and control as they relate to conflict management predisposition.

Discussion. Since Research Questions 2 and 3 both involve the examination of the relationship between opposing communication values, the discussion of conclusions drawn from this investigation for these two questions will be combined and is found following the statement of the third conclusion.

Research Question 3

The third research question dealt with the relationship between the communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition.


The null hypothesis predicted a correlation of zero between the two subscale scores on the Communication-Conflict Instrument that measures the values community and self. The alternate hypothesis predicted a positive correlation between the two scores. Alpha was set at .05.

Data analysis established a correlation coefficient of .0606 between the scores. When this coefficient was used to test the null
hypothesis, the coefficient was less than the critical value of the coefficient, so the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Conclusion 3.** No evidence was found to indicate a direct relationship between the opposing communication values community and self as they relate to conflict management predisposition.

**Discussion.** C. Brown et al. (1981) have developed a theory of communication-conflict predisposition which indicates that communication values which they labeled other and control are opposing values, as are those they labeled community and self; and that based on the reasoning of Eastern thought, each opposing value must be of equal strength to have constructive management of conflict. The basis, then, on which part of the theoretical framework of their Communication-Conflict Instrument is constructed is embodied in the statement, "constructive conflict among the values is the symmetry of equal strength of opposing values. Destructive conflict among values is the consequence of the relative weakness in one of two opposing values" (C. Brown et al., 1981, pp. 1107-1108).

An examination of the data obtained for Research Questions 2 and 3 in this study shows, however, that there appears to be little if any linear relationship between the two values and, therefore, leads to the conclusion that the position taken by C. Brown et al. (1981), "that the intuition of Eastern thought may be a better theoretical base for conceiving the relationship among values" (p. 1107), is, perhaps, incorrect.
Kerlinger (1973) indicated that negative results, like these obtained for Research Questions 2 and 3, "can be due to any one, or several, or all of the following: incorrect theory and hypotheses, inappropriate or incorrect methodology, inadequate or poor measurement, and faulty analysis" (p. 154).

Upon further consideration of these reasons as they might pertain to this study, inadequate or poor measurement was ruled out because the measurement instrument used was the one developed directly from the theory. Faulty analysis seems unlikely to be the problem because the Pearson r is the correctly indicated test statistic for use and its derivation from the already provided subscale scores of the instrument used was straight-forward in each case. Inappropriate or incorrect methodology was also ruled out as a reason because the data involved were simply taken from an instrument used in another research question.

The reasoning points toward incorrect theory—and, therefore, incorrect hypotheses—as being the reason for the negative results obtained. But since the theory involved is relatively new (Kilman & Thomas, 1975; P. Yelsma, personal communication, January 25, 1983), more research will, of course, have to be done before a definitive statement can be made regarding the correctness or incorrectness of the theory.

Recommendations for Future Research

It has been stated in this dissertation that little has been found in the literature which specifically indicates a relationship...
between conflict management effectiveness and participative decision making. This investigation, then, has provided data and conclusions to constitute a beginning body of literature regarding the relationship between those two variables.

It has also been stated in this dissertation that little has been found in the literature indicating the use of more than a two-dimensional approach to conflict management theory development. The theoretical development by C. Brown et al. (1981) using six dynamic predispositions for conflict management effectiveness is relatively new. This investigation sought to provide more information regarding that theoretical development.

Suggestions for related research in three general areas are given here for consideration: (1) investigation of the relationship between supervisors' conflict management effectiveness and their involvement of subordinates in decision making using other populations, (2) further investigation into the relationship between communication values as they may relate to constructive conflict management, and (3) investigations into whether the use of values enhances a theory of conflict management.

Conflict Management-Decision Making Involvement Relationship

This investigation revealed that high school principals in class C high schools who were more effective at conflict management involved their teaching staffs in decision making to a greater degree than did principals who were less effective at conflict management. The literature which treated with any relationship
between conflict management and participatory decision making was sparse. This relationship within many other populations needs to be ascertained and the implications of the findings evaluated.

Communication Values Relationships

This investigation showed that there was little if any relationship between opposing communication values as they relate to the measurement of constructive conflict management for high school principals of class C high schools. The development of a theory of communication-conflict predisposition and the subsequent development of an instrument to measure it was based, in large part, on the premise that opposing communication values were directly related. This premise needs to be much more fully investigated before any definitive statements can be made regarding the truth of the premise.

Enhancement of Theory by Values

It was stated previously in this dissertation that the literature is sparse regarding the use of more than a two-dimensional approach to conflict management theory development. This investigation examined part of a theory of conflict management which was based on using the interaction of six dynamic predispositions, two of which were the two dimensions used in most other theories.

The theory examined here indicated that, based on Eastern thought, there must be a direct relationship between opposing communication values for constructive conflict management to take place. This investigation showed no evidence of such a relationship.
It can be surmised, using previous theories of conflict management, that constructive management of conflict has occurred and has been measured using only two dimensions. Since no relationships between the opposing values postulated by C. Brown et al. (1981) were found, perhaps the "intuition of Eastern thought" is not a "better theoretical base" for understanding the relationships among values and, perhaps, the values themselves are not germane to a theory of conflict management.

This investigation, however, examined only one postulated relationship between the opposing communication values. C. Brown et al. (1979) have postulated five additional relationships among the communication values which "are comparisons of the tensions within that bear upon one's ability to handle conflict" (p. 4). These comparisons are essential to the development of their theory of conflict management and of the Communication-Conflict Instrument, and must be examined thoroughly before any definitive statements can be made regarding the enhancement of theory by values.

It is suggested that future research be conducted to investigate the desirability and need for the inclusion of communication values and the relationships among them, in theories of conflict management.
Appendix A

Blake and Mouton's Five Styles for the Management of Conflict
### Blake and Mouton's Five Styles for the Management of Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>win-win</td>
<td>All goals must be served if the relationship is to endure; working through the conflict may lead to a better solution than could any other way; tolerate differences and realize that all feelings have legitimacy; all relationships and goals will profit from effective resolutions of conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>compromise</td>
<td>Soften the effect of losing by limiting the gains; a little bit of winning and a little bit of losing serves the common good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>yield-lose</td>
<td>Human relationships are so fragile that they cannot endure trauma associated with conflict; ignore, deny, or avoid conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>win-lose</td>
<td>There is only one of two possible outcomes, winning or losing; win at all costs; protect your personal goals, even at the cost of the relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>lose-leave</td>
<td>Hopelessness; don't get involved because you can't win; leave the conflict; comply without committing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

The Communication-Conflict Instrument
PLEASE NOTE:

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been filmed at the request of the author. They are available for consultation, however, in the author's university library.

These consist of pages:

78-82
Background Data

1. Write the title of your position

2. Sex:
   1 Male
   2 Female

3. Number of years in present school system

4. Number of years in present school

5. Number of years in your present position

6. Total years of teaching experience

7. Highest level of professional preparation:
   1 Less than Bachelor's Degree
   2 Bachelor's Degree
   3 Bachelor's + 15 credits
   4 Master's Degree
   5 Master's + 15 credits
   6 Master's + 30 credits
   7 Educational Specialist Degree
   8 Doctor's Degree

8. In what year were you last enrolled in one or more college credit courses?
Appendix C

The Decision Point Analysis
Decision Point Analysis

Please complete this instrument as indicated. As you consider each of the questions, think and respond from the viewpoint of your present position.

On the next page, please provide the background data requested by writing the appropriate number or response on the line to the left of each question. All responses will remain confidential and none will be identified by person.

When you have provided the background data, please go on to the directions for completing the instrument.
Background Data

1. Write the title of your position

2. Sex:
   1 - Male
   2 - Female

3. Number of years in present school system

4. Number of years in present school

5. Number of years in your present position

6. Total years of teaching experience

7. Highest level of professional preparation:
   1. Less than Bachelor's Degree
   2. Bachelor's Degree
   3. Bachelor's + 15 credits
   4. Master's Degree
   5. Master's + 15 credits
   6. Master's + 30 credits
   7. Educational Specialist Degree
   8. Doctor's Degree

8. In what year were you last enrolled in one or more college credit courses?
Decision Point Analysis

Directions:

This instrument contains twenty-five decision items. For each decision item, answer the question, "WHAT IS THE NATURE OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MAKING THIS DECISION?"

Select one of the four following choices which best describes your participation in making this decision and circle the letter of this choice to the left of the decision item number.

A. I make the decision.
B. I recommend the preferred decision to the principal.
C. I provide information only to the principal; he makes the decision.
D. I have no input; the principal makes the decision.

Example:

A B C D 12. The decision on how to discipline children in your class.
DEcision items

A B C D 1. The decision on the selection of curriculum problems for study.
A B C D 2. The decision on the ways to group pupils by classes.
A B C D 3. The decision on the priority for the use of unscheduled rooms and multipurpose areas.
A B C D 4. The decision on the orientation activities for new staff members.
A B C D 5. The decision on the appointment of teachers to curriculum committees.
A B C D 6. The decision on the educational specifications for a new or remodeled building.
A B C D 7. The decision on the instructional aids to be included in the budget.
A B C D 8. The decision on the means for increasing community understanding of curriculum developments.
A B C D 9. The decision on the content of pupil's cumulative records.
A B C D 10. The decision on the selection of teachers for participation in experimental instructional programs.
A B C D 11. The decision on how to report pupil progress to parents.
A B C D 12. The decision on the retention of pupils.

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A B C D 14. The decision on the regulations concerning
lesson plans.
A B C D 15. The decision on which community drives and
activities merit school participation.
A B C D 16. The decision on the rules governing pupil
conduct.
A B C D 17. The decision on the selection of textbooks.
A B C D 18. The decision on the procedure for obtaining
instructional supplies.
A B C D 19. The decision on how to evaluate the curricu-
ulum.
A B C D 20. The decision on the activities for in-service
development of the staff.
A B C D 21. The decision on the practices for assigning
homework.
A B C D 22. The decision on the assignment of teaching
and non-teaching loads.
A B C D 23. The decision on who will participate in the
formulation of the school budget.
A B C D 24. The decision on the content of local news
items to be released.
A B C D 25. The decision on the use of citizens committees.
Appendix D

Principal Cover Letter
Dear High School Principal,

I am in the process of collecting data to be used in my doctoral dissertation at Western Michigan University. It is my hope that you, as a colleague, are willing to help in this process. It should take about twenty minutes of your time.

Due to the ever-increasing complexity of the social, financial, technical, and political environment in which schools must function, teachers have become more and more involved in the decision making process in many schools. As teachers participate more in decision making, conflicts may arise. It is the relationship between a supervisor's effectiveness when dealing with conflicts and the supervisor's willingness to involve subordinates in decision making that is the focal point of my investigation.

I assure you that all questionnaire responses are strictly confidential. Data gathered via this instrument and similar ones will be reported only in summary form and in no way will any individual respondents or their school districts be identified. Questionnaires are coded for data management and follow-up purposes only.

In addition to the Communication-Conflict Questionnaire for you to complete, you will find enclosed five other envelopes. Please give one envelope to each of the five faculty members in your building identified as "department heads" for English, mathematics, social studies, business, and science. (If your school does not have identified "department heads" or other similar classifications, please choose five teachers at random to receive the five envelopes.) Please instruct each to complete the questionnaire and mail it back.

Your help is very important to me. Thank you in advance for your assistance and a prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Michael Ryan
Elementary Principal
Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

Richard E. Munsterman, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational Leadership
Appendix E

Teacher Cover Letter
Dear Teacher,

I am in the process of collecting data to be used in my doctoral dissertation at Western Michigan University. It is my hope that you, as a colleague, are willing to help in this process. It should take about ten minutes of your time.

Due to the ever-increasing complexity of the social, financial, technical, and political environment in which schools must function, teachers have become more and more involved in the decision making process in many schools. As teachers participate more in decision making, conflicts may arise. It is the relationship between a supervisor's effectiveness when dealing with conflicts and the supervisor's willingness to involve subordinates in decision making that is the focal point of my investigation.

I assure you that all questionnaire responses are strictly confidential. Data gathered via this instrument and similar ones will be reported only in summary form and in no way will any individual respondents or their school districts be identified. Questionnaires are coded for data management and follow-up purposes only.

Your help is very important to me. Please take the time to complete the Decision Point Analysis instrument, seal it, and mail it back today.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and a prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Michael Ryan
Elementary Principal
Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

Richard E. Munsterman, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational Leadership


