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A Study of Culture and Conflict Management Styles of Community College Employees

Jennifer A. Sheridan
St. John Fisher College

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Abstract

This paper looks at the relationship of department culture and the conflict management styles that people possess. An explanation and the different components of culture are described by several researches. Conflict is also explained as well as the different types of conflict, and where conflict stems from. The study focused on three offices at a community college located in Upstate New York. Based on the offices belonging to different college divisions, the assumption was made that these offices would have different subcultures. The participants of the study work directly with students and often deal with confrontational situations. The goal of the study was to see if the three offices had different cultures and to determine if each of the office's culture affected the conflict management styles of the employees in each office. The study used Harrison and Stokes (1992) Diagnosing Organizational Culture Questionnaire and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire (1976) to determine the answers to the research questions.

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Styles of Community College Employees

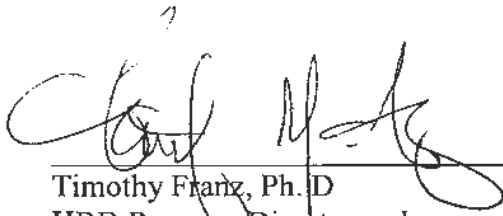
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January 2007


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Dedication

Without any hesitation I dedicate my thesis to my co-workers: Brenda, Kathy, Kerry, Kimberley, Mary, and Loretta. These women I work with are not only co-workers; they are my friends. Everyone has shown great support and understanding over the last two years when I was stressing out about graduate school. One person in particular has been my greatest influence, Kimberley Willis. Without her encouraging me to go back to school, I would not be where I am today. I am extremely thankful to her as well as my director, Loretta Chrzan-Williams. They both have taught me so much, and I value the opportunity I have to work with such exceptional people everyday.

Abstract

This paper looks at the relationship of department culture and the conflict management styles that people possess. An explanation and the different components of culture are described by several researches. Conflict is also explained as well as the different types of conflict, and where conflict stems from. The study focused on three offices at a community college located in Upstate New York. Based on the offices belonging to different college divisions, the assumption was made that these offices would have different subcultures. The participants of the study work directly with students and often deal with confrontational situations. The goal of the study was to see if the three offices had different cultures and to determine if each of the office's culture affected the conflict management styles of the employees in each office. The study used Harrison and Stokes (1992) Diagnosing Organizational Culture Questionnaire and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire (1976) to determine the answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

There are three key offices at a community college located in Upstate New York State – Bursar, Records and Registration, and Financial Aid – which provide services that are essential to students. These three offices work closely together but are part of different divisions within college. The Bursar’s office is part of Administrative Services, Records and Registration is part of Academic Services, and Financial Aid is part of Student Services. Employees in each of these offices regularly respond to conflict with students. However, they sometimes may handle these conflicts differently.

The purpose of this study by the Graduate Human Resource Development Program at St. John Fisher College is to determine what conflict management styles the employees have in each division and what the culture is of each department.

According to Schein (1999), culture is a property of a group, which is formed when enough people involved in one setting practice the same experiences together. As the employees in each of these offices work together everyday, people form the same types of practices. Over time the attitudes and approaches that employees use to handle conflict will typically mimic each other. Since these three offices do not share the same workspace, the employees in the different offices do not view the behaviors of employees in the other offices, and therefore the culture of each office should vary.

Problem Statement

This study determined how these offices differ in their management of conflict. It accomplished this by comparing and contrasting their conflict management style. The

purpose of conducting this study was to see if conflict management styles are attributed to the different cultures of the three offices. The “leaders” of each office described the culture of each department. Harrison and Stoke (1992) developed a questionnaire for diagnosing organizational culture. For the purpose of this study, the directors of the three offices completed the questionnaire and based their answers on what they felt was the culture of their respective office. The questionnaire asked each participant to rank the existing culture and the preferred culture.

Afterwards, employees in each office filled out a questionnaire, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire, to determine their individual conflict management style.

Research Questions

This study focused on the following research questions:

- Do the departments possess different cultures?
- What are the employees’ conflict management styles?
- Does the different culture of each department have an effect on the type of conflict management styles that the employees possess?

Significance of the Study

An organization that is customer-service oriented should want to provide the highest level of service to its customers. For many, attending college for the first time is a change, and it may not always be an easy transition. Therefore, the process of registering for classes, receiving an account statement, and trying to successfully complete the financial aid process while attending classes can be a daunting experience for many. The Bursar, Records and Registration, and Financial Aid offices are there to provide guidance

and support to students. Unfortunately, a minority of these students do not like or understand fully what information is being conveyed to them; an intense confrontational situation may sometimes occur as a result.

This study's findings may be instrumental for the leaders of each of these departments. They may discover new ways for their employees to address conflict when dealing with students. If conflict styles are to meet the expectations of high customer-service standards, it could change the perceptions that students have of these offices.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined from where conflict stems. If conflict originates with the people working for an organization, the culture of the organization or specific department may need to be altered to deal with conflict in a more manageable way. When an organization wants to hire a new employee, their goal would be to hire someone that is a "fit" with the organization and its culture. An organization would want to hire people that hold the same beliefs and values as that particular organization. Schein (1999) states that "to explain individual behavior, we must go beyond personality and look for group memberships and the cultures of those groups" (p.14).

Schein (1999) breaks culture into three different segments. First, there are the external survival issues; mission, strategy, and goals, the means: structure, system, and process, and measurements: error-detection and correction systems. The next issue is internal integration. This issue focuses around common language and concepts, group boundaries and identity, the nature of authority and relationships, and allocation of rewards and status. The last issue is deeper underlying assumptions. These assumptions are human relationships to nature, the nature of reality and truth, the nature of human

nature, the nature of human relationships, and the nature of time and spaces (Schein, 1999).

All of the issues that culture effect in turn influence employee behavior in many ways. Schneider, Goldstein, and Smith (1995) suggest that the person-oriented model of organizational behavior is based on the proposition that it is the collective characteristics of people who define an organization. Over time, organizations become a product of the people that work for them. This is an outcome of Schneider's Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model.

The ASA framework suggests that organizations clearly define what types of people they want to draw to their organization that is attraction. The organization then would pick the specific people they believed were a match and hire them that is, selection. After time these people would either remain with the organization if they had the same attributes of the organization or if not, they would leave the organization hence, attrition. Schneider defined these attributes as personality, attitudes, and values (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995).

In today's changing world, employees at organizations face many different tasks and situations. Often times these task or situations may create conflict for or amongst employees. Conflict is not only a problem for the parties involved but it may also create problems for the organization or the people that are surrounded by the conflict. Collins (2005) reported the results of a survey completed by 150 executives that concluded that 18% of their time per year is spent dealing with conflict.

Researchers have had varying views on whether conflict is good or bad for an organization. Results of prior research suggest that conflict reduces productivity and the

satisfaction of groups (Jehn, 1995). However, other research suggests that conflict can improve a team's decision making quality, strategic planning, financial performance, and increase organizational growth (Jehn, 1995). According to Collins (2005), behind all conflict is a goal. Due to the differences in opinions and past research regarding conflict within organization, the results of this study are needed to continue to find out whether conflict is in the best or worst interest of organizations.

Whether conflict is good or bad, each party that is contributing to the conflict has a goal. Collins (2005) defines these goals as content goals, process goals, relational goals, identity goals, value goals, or multiple goals. According to Collins, conflict is interdependent and people are dependent on each other during conflict situations. Conflict starts off with one party that perceives another party as interfering or potentially interfering with the fulfillment of a need or the achievement of a goal (Collins, 2005). Employees at a community college may be faced with conflict when their behavior in a certain situation interferes with the goals of the student. The different office cultures may directly affect the behaviors of their employees.

The purpose of this study was to explore whether the different cultures of departments or "units" of an organization affect the conflict management styles of the employees within the respective departments. The study focused on three offices at a community college located in Upstate New York. The study results looked at the types of conflict in each department, the amount of conflict in each department, the conflict management styles of the employees in each department, and the culture of each department. The results of the study showed if there is a relationship between department culture and the conflict management styles of the employees in each department.

The Thomas-Kilmann (1974) conflict mode instrument was devised by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann using Blake and Mouton's scheme for classifying the modes or styles for handling interpersonal conflicts (Rahim, 1983). Thomas and Kilmann identified five different "conflict handling modes" that were first defined by Blake and Mouton as problem solving, smoothing, forcing, withdrawal, and sharing (Rahim, 1983). These five modes that Thomas and Kilmann developed are competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire identified two dimensions into which the previous five behaviors fit. These are either assertiveness or cooperativeness. These dimensions deal with the concern for self and the concern for others (Rahim, 1983).

Identifying the different cultures of the offices determined what type of shared behaviors that employees in the offices have. These shared behaviors constitute the employees' reactions in conflict situations. The leaders of the offices established the current atmosphere and the different expectations of the employees. They may not have created the culture but they have allowed the culture to be the way it is. That is why it was important to also find out what each leader's preferred culture was. The difference in the existing and preferred culture can lead to a change in the conflict management styles of the employees.

Terms

Conflict- a clash or disagreement, battle or struggle, antagonism or opposition, incompatibility or interference, and mental struggle (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Competing- is assertive and uncooperative. A person tries to satisfy his or her own concerns at the other person's expense (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Collaborating- is assertive and cooperative. When collaborating, a person tries to find a win-win solution that completely satisfies both parties concerns (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Avoiding- is unassertive and uncooperative. When avoiding, a person sidesteps the conflict without trying to satisfy either person's concerns (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Accommodating- is unassertive and cooperative. A person attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of his or her own (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Compromising- is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. A person tries to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both parties concerns (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Assertiveness- the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Cooperativeness- the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Organizational Culture- the learned, shared tacit assumptions on which people base their daily behaviors (Schein, 1999).

Methodology

Sample

For the first part of this study, the directors of the Bursar's office, Records and Registration office, and the Financial Aid office were given a questionnaire regarding the culture of his or her department. The second part of the study focused on conflict management styles of the employees in each department. The sample used in this part of the study was employees in the Bursars, Records and Registration, and Financial Aid

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Culture and Conflict

As an organization is formed and continues to grow, it develops a system of beliefs, ideas, and a general way of doing business. This chapter reviews research about how culture is formed and why it is important. It will also explain Harrison and Stokes' (1992) four culture orientations. The second part of the chapter will address different conflict styles of individuals as well as different types of conflict that people are confronted with. Thomas and Kilmann's (1974) five different conflict management modes will also be explained. The conclusion of the chapter will make predictions for each of the research questions presented earlier.

Culture

Culture is an amorphous concept that is difficult to define. The term "culture" comes from social anthropology and the studies of "primitive" societies (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). An organization's culture may be difficult for an outsider of that organization to understand. According to Schein (1999), when an organization is first created, the founders of that organization have a great sense of mission and identity. The founders of an organization define an organization's initial culture based on the mission and identity. As different cultures are developed and then remain unchanged over time, the action and behaviors of employees will be consistent. The way an organization's culture is developed depends on its learned, shared, and tacit assumptions on which people base their daily behaviors (Schein, 1999).

It is important to understand culture because others who are not part of a particular group's culture may in fact question the actions or behaviors of individuals within that group. However, as organizations grow and divide into different units or departments, each of these departments may form its own sub-culture. Each division or department in an organization is formed based on the mission and purpose of that organization (Schein, 1999), but also has its own unique mission. Employees, in turn, are hired to support and carry out this mission. Quite often, large organizations have multiple departments or divisions within the organization itself. Thus, each division may form its own sub-culture based upon the people who work in it. Just as it is hard for an outsider of any organization to understand that organization's culture, it may also be difficult for employees that are part of a particular department to understand the culture of other departments.

Understanding Culture

People's cultural identities are based on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of the individual (Schein, 1999). Schein believes the reason that this occurs is because culture arises at the level of the departments, functional groups, and other organizational units due to common occupational core and common experiences. These experiences then lead to what Schein states culture is, "a specific group's property" (p. 13). Within every organization, each department will develop its own culture that is formed by its employees. The different cultures can be thought of as group culture. It is difficult to change group culture once it becomes stable. The fact that this could be difficult is due to the group's accumulated learning. These groups find success in their ways of thinking, feeling, and perceiving the world that they have made (Schein, 1999). When culture is a

constant in people's lives, it gives meaning to them and makes their lives predictable. Strong cultures remain present because new employees adopt the values of the group quickly (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

According to Schein (1999), culture matters because decisions made without awareness of operative culture forces may have unanticipated and undesirable consequences. Schein divided culture content into three components. The table below explains the three components and the key issues for each.

Table 1. Schein: "What is Culture About?" (p.30)

External Survival Issues	Internal Integration Issues	Deeper Underlying Assumptions
Mission, strategy, goals	Common language and concepts	Human relationships to nature
Means: structure, systems, processes	Group boundaries and identity	The nature of reality and truth
Measurements: error-detection and correction systems	The nature of authority and relationships	The nature of human nature
	Allocation of rewards and status	The nature of human relationships
		The nature of time and space

First, an organization's creators need to have a mission or identity. This focuses on their strategic intent, financial policies, fundamental ways of organizing themselves and their work, ways of measuring themselves, and means for correcting themselves

when they are not reaching their target (Schein, 1999). According to Schein (1999), the means (structure, systems, and processes) are the roots of how an organization is formed. He believes that for an organization to succeed, the organization needs a sound way of developing its workforce and this development leads to the creation of a strong culture. The last issues regarding external survival are measurements, or error-detection and correction system. This issue is based on an organization having its own way to determine different variances in processes, as well as having its own set of corrective measures. All of these issues evolve over time as organizations grow and they become deeply rooted in the operation of day to day activities (Schein, 1999).

The second part of Schein's (1999) culture content is a process called integrating the human organization. He gives the popular view of culture, which is the focus on the relations among people in an organization. This focuses on the incentive and reward systems, the degree of teamwork, superior-subordinate relationships, communication, and all other processes that make the workplace more or less productive and pleasant. As employees learn about an organization's culture, they become in tune with the ways that employees communicate with one another. For example, an organization may have an email system that is capable of scheduling meetings, and the culture of the organization is to schedule meetings through this system, not through face to face discussions. This is a communication style as well as a work concept that has been embedded in the way employees do their daily job functions.

With groups there are boundaries that are formed as well as membership identity. New employees are often introduced to the group, and Schein (1999) states that "the

shared tacit assumptions about membership and its obligations make up a significant portion of what we think of as the culture of the organization” (p.43).

The next issue focuses on how relationships are defined. The formulation of relationships with bosses and coworkers are based on the predefined culture of what the appropriate level of closeness amongst employees should be. Reward levels are also part of the internal culture of organizations. The ways and means of rewarding or allocating status to employees often differs in an organization because of its different cultures.

The last part of culture content looks at the different assumptions regarding relationships of human nature, human nature itself, human relationships, the nature of reality or truth, and time and space. According to Schein (1999), the assumptions of an organization are based on the assumptions of its creator. Assumptions are formed by the national culture of the country in which the organization operates.

Kotter and Heskett (1992) explain culture in an organization by breaking culture into two categories. First are shared values. These are the “important concerns and goals that are shared by most of the people in a group, that tend to shape the group behaviors, and that often persist over time even with changes in the groups’ membership (p.5)”. Examples that Kotter and Heskett provide to explain shared values include managers caring about customers, and executives’ concern for long-term debt. The second category is what Kotter and Heskett call group behavior norms. Kotter and Heskett explain group norms as the “pervasive ways of acting that are found in a group and that persist because group members tend to behave in ways that teach these practices to new members, rewarding those that fit in and sanctioning those that do not (p. 5)”. Examples that Kotter and Heskett give to illustrate group behavior norms include employees being quick to

respond to requests from customers and managers involving lower-level employees in decision making.

After describing shared values and group behavior norms, Kotter and Heskett (1992) further explain how shared values are invisible and harder to change, whereas group behavior norms are visible and easier to change. Kotter and Heskett's explanation of culture identifies with how Schein (1999) defined culture. The characteristics that Kotter and Heskett explained were similar to Schneider's Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). A shared value refers to a group having the same ideas and beliefs and that they can be linked to the attraction a person may have towards an organization. Kotter and Heskett's definition of group norms states that group members that fit in with the group are rewarded, which Schneider would refer to as selection. Schneider's explanation of attrition resembled what Kotter and Heskett described as sanctioning of group members that did not "fit in" with the group as a whole.

Diagnosing Organizational Culture

Harrison and Stokes (1992) explain culture as a:

Pattern of beliefs, values, rituals, myths, and sentiments shared by the members of an organization. It influences the behaviors of all individuals and groups within the organization. Culture impacts most aspects of organizational life, such as how decisions are made, who makes them, how rewards are distributed, who is promoted, how people are treated, how the organization responds to its environment, and so on (p.13).

Schein (1999), Kotter and Heskett (1992), and Harrison and Stokes (1992) all define culture in a similar way. The different definitions all include the idea that culture is comprised of beliefs, values, and behaviors. From all three definitions it is obvious that culture is an important part of an organization and how that organization operates. Harrison and Stokes created an instrument that is used to help organizations determine their existing culture and their preferred culture. Each question has four choices for the participant to rank on a scale, with four being the dominant view, to one, being the least dominant view. The results show that there are four cultural profiles: power, role, achievement, and support. An organization may be a combination of cultural profiles. The results of the instrument look at how people treat one another, what values they live by, how people are motivated to produce, and how people use power in the organization (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

Explanations of the Culture Profiles

This section explains the four cultural profiles of the Harrison and Stokes (1992) methodology and what types of organization typically represent these profiles. An explanation of each profile leads to the understanding of why Harrison and Stokes developed this instrument and the different characteristics that are represented in each profile.

The Power Orientation

According to Harrison and Stokes (1992), power orientation is based on inequality of access to resources. They refer to resources as anything one person controls that another person wants. The best scenario of the power orientation is that leadership is "based on strengths, justice and paternalistic benevolence" (p.14). There is a sense of

obligation to subordinates, and they use their power for the good of the organization. The worst scenario is an organization that is ruled by fear, with power being abused at any expense. Harrison and Stokes state that the power orientation is best for entrepreneurial and start-up situations in which leaders have the vision, intelligence, and will to manage the business and assume personal direction of the activities of its people.

The Role Orientation

Described by Harrison and Stokes (1992), "the role orientation substitutes a system of structures and procedures for the naked power of the leaders" (p.15). The duties and rewards of members' roles are defined, and are subject to explicit or implicit contract between the organization and the employee. The values of role orientation are order, dependability, rationality, and consistency. Role orientation is an example of a bureaucracy, in which structures and procedures are a well-designed system. The best scenario of role orientation is stability, justice, and efficient performance. The weakness that Harrison and Stokes provide is that the very strength of the role orientation is its weakness. People are not given complete autonomy because they are not fully trusted. A role-oriented organization demonstrates a stable combination of technology, supplies, and markets that were characterized by the period between 1850 and 1950 (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). These organizations do not adapt to change quickly. This may be due to the fact that typical role oriented organizations were formed many years ago and are not willing to give up control as easily as organizations having a different type of culture.

The Achievement Orientation

Each orientation that Harrison and Stokes (1992) identified has its own specific profile; however, they have indicated that achievement orientation can be a combination

of power and role orientation. This profile takes on characteristics of the other two profiles, but also has its own unique characteristics, which put it in a separate category. Members of achievement oriented organizations are expected to contribute their personal energy in return for rewards. These organizations are dependent on how much energy an employee is willing to put into his or her job. They do not provide much intrinsic satisfactions, and an employee's presence is either the result of chance or through the person's occupational choice. Examples of these types of organizations are start-up businesses, new plant start-ups, nuclear test shots, intensive care units, and political and community organizing campaigns (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

Harrison and Stokes (1992) state that the achievement oriented organization has been called "aligned" because it "lines people up" (p.17). Its mission is used to attract and release the personal energy of the members. Members are working towards a shared purpose. The people that hold the power are the ones who developed the mission and decisions are made to fulfill this mission. The enthusiasm of this hands-on, value driven approach is typical of "excellent companies" according to Harrison and Stokes. But this feeling can also be negative, due in part to the inability to sustain the high energy of the members. The achievement organization can also be under-organized and needs to make up for weaknesses regarding structures, systems, and planning by using its members' high motivations.

The Support Orientation

The support orientation maintains an organizational climate that is based on mutual trust between the individual and the organization (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). Members of support oriented organizations like to come to work due in part to the

warmth and love fostered by the organization. Harrison and Stokes (1992) explain this feeling that members have because of the human interaction with others, including customers, suppliers, the public, and their fellow workers. (p.20).

The support orientation is based on human needs and it balances and moderates the single pointed task focus of the achievement orientation. The weaknesses of the support culture are negative sides of its humanistic strengths (Harrison & Stokes. 1991). When there is a strong and unbalanced support culture, it tends to avoid conflict. It may also ignore the differences in employees' skills and abilities.

Culture Orientations

After completing the questionnaire, the results are tallied. One may expect that the highest score is the department's culture orientation; however, according to Harrison and Stokes (1992) it is not. The authors explained that including a culture index to determine what type of culture orientation an organization has was a better way to identify the extent of how empowered and supported employees feel, as well as how controlled and constrained they may feel. From Harrison and Stokes' definition of culture orientation it may seem that either the support or achievement orientation would be ideal for an organization and organizations that were role or power orientated are less than ideal. The authors recognized that, to counter what may seem to be a bias towards achievement and support cultures, the authors tried to show the positive sides to power and role orientations. As explained previously, all organizations are different. The culture orientation for one organization may not be right for another. There really is no way to say that one orientation is better than another orientation.

The different profiles that Harrison and Stokes (1992) have identified support Schein's (1992) explanation as to "what culture is all about". Each culture profile explains the relationship that an organization has with its employees. The different characteristics are based on the fundamental principles that Schein explained as external survival issues, internal integration issues, and deeper underlying assumptions. The component of each profile identifies how an organization, or even departments within the organization, formed its culture. All three of Schein's issues of culture, external survival issues, internal integration issues, and deeper underlying assumptions, can influence the conflict management style of employees. This relationship is explained further after the next section, which deals with conflict.

Conflict

Levi (2001) states that conflict is normal. He lists the different sources that conflict may stem from: "confusion about people's positions, personality differences, legitimate differences of opinion, hidden agendas, poor norms, competitive rewards systems, and poorly managed meetings (p. 117)". Collins (2005) defines conflict as "a situation in which interdependent people express differences in satisfying their individual needs and interest, and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals" (p.4). According to Collins, goals can be content goals or process goals. Content goals "involve the choices that people make that are literally outside of us" (p.5). These goals concern the idea of how a particular act should be completed. Process goals are "about how communication should happen" (p.5). This can be thought of as a difference in opinion. Levi is in agreement with Collins, "that one of the most common types of organizational conflict in a team is the conflict between the team's goals and the

goals of the other groups to which the team members belong to” (p. 117). Knowing the sources of conflict and what conflict is, it is easy to see why people are confronted with conflict.

There are positive and negative aspects to conflict. According to Medina, Munduate, Dorado, and Martinez (2005), conflict can break personal and professional relationships and reduce effectiveness. However, some believe that conflict can be good for an organization. For conflict to be present between people, the parties involved in the conflict have to be dependent on one another in some way (Collins, 2005). Conflict is a part of life and people may be surrounded by conflict but not be aware of it. In addition to Levi’s (2001) sources of conflict, Collins (2005) states that conflict can confront a person in a variety of ways: a clash or disagreement, a battle or struggle, antagonism or opposition, incompatibility or interference, or mental struggle (p. 4). Levi provides a description of healthy conflict and unhealthy conflict shown below:

Table 2: Levi's Sources of Conflict (p. 118)

Healthy Conflict	<p>Focused on task issues</p> <p>Legitimate differences of opinion about the task</p> <p>Differences in values and perspectives</p> <p>Different expectations about the impact of Decisions</p>
Unhealthy Conflict	<p>Competition over power, rewards, and resources</p> <p>Conflict between individual and group goals</p> <p>Poorly run team meetings</p> <p>Personal grudges from the past</p> <p>Faulty communications</p>

It is clear that conflict can benefit teams as well as disrupt or destroy teams. After understanding what conflict is and where it stems from, including what is healthy and what is unhealthy, finding ways to deal with conflict is important.

Ways of Dealing with Conflict

Collins (2005) breaks conflict into its different types. Conflict can be intergroup, between two groups; intragroup, between members of a group; interpersonal, between two individuals; or intrapersonal, one individual having two competing desires or goals (p. 29). People are confronted with conflict in multiple ways but it is important to understand how they actually deal with it. Interpersonal conflict can be a confrontation

between coworkers, employee and customer, supervisor and subordinate, or any two people that feel that the other person is being thwarted. Whether a goal is a process or content goal, the way a person actually deals with the conflict may depend on the culture of that person's group. According to Rahim (1983), Blake and Mouton were the first to develop a conceptual scheme for classifying conflict modes for handling interpersonal conflict. The five modes were problem solving, smoothing, forcing, withdrawal, and sharing. Blake, Mouton, and Thomas (1964) used differentiating styles of handling interpersonal conflict that consist of two basic dimensions: concern for both one's self and for others (Rahim, 1983). The figure below illustrates these dimensions:

Figure 1: Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict

		Concern for Self	
		High	Low
Concern For Others	High	<u>Integrating</u>	<u>Obligating</u>
	Low	<u>Dominating</u>	<u>Avoiding</u>

Compromising

Rahim (1983) used this model to explain the two dimensions of interpersonal conflict. The first dimension shows the importance of satisfying a person's own concerns or goals. The second dimension shows the degree to which a person wants to satisfy the concern or goal of another person. According to Rahim, a combination of the two dimensions results in the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict. If a person scored high for concern for self and also scored high for concern for others, he or she would be considered integrating. Someone who scored low for concern for others and scored high for self would be considered dominating. An obligating person would score low for

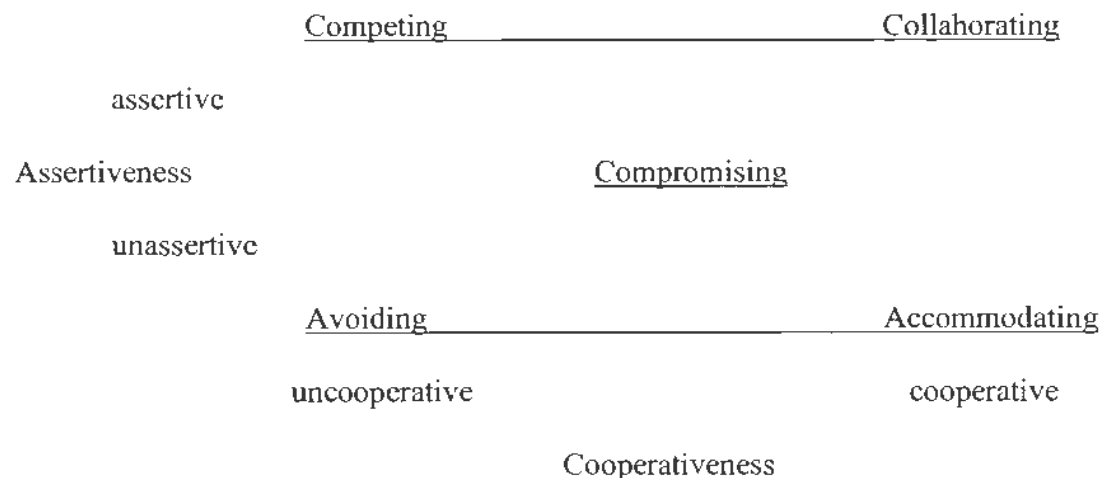
concern for self and high for concern for others. A low score for both self and others' concerns would be considered avoiding. In contrast, both a high and a low score for self and others would be considered compromising. How a person satisfies a goal can be the mode of that person's conflict management style.

There are several different instruments that have been available to measure conflict modes. The instrument that was chosen for this study was the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire. In 1974 Thomas reinterpreted Blake and Mouton's modes. Also, where Rahim used concern for self and concern for others, Thomas and Kilmann used cooperativeness and assertiveness.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management

The conflict management styles that Thomas and Kilmann (1974) developed are competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising. Figure 2 below illustrates the five methods of dealing with conflict.

Figure 2: Thomas-Kilmann: Conflict Handling Modes



The assertiveness of a person's conflict handling mode depends on how high or low they are on the vertical axis and how cooperative a person is depends on how far to

the right or left they fall on the horizontal axis. Each mode is considered to be part of a dimension that identifies assertiveness and/or cooperativeness. According to Thomas and Kilmann (1974), assertiveness is the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns and cooperativeness is the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns.

The first mode of Thomas and Kilmann's model is competing. The dimensions of competing are being assertive and uncooperative. A person that is competing will pursue his or her own concerns at the other person's expense. This mode is power oriented, and someone in this role will use whatever means they can to win over the other person. The next mode is collaborating, and incorporates both assertive and cooperative dimensions. A collaborating person will make an attempt to work with the other person to find a solution that will fully satisfy both parties' needs. The avoiding mode consists of unassertive and uncooperative dimensions. An avoiding person does not pursue the individual's needs or the needs of the party. Next is the accommodating mode, which is considered to be unassertive and cooperative. This mode will allow an individual to neglect his or her concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other party involved. The last mode is compromising; this dimension is to find a middle ground between cooperativeness and assertiveness. This mode is based on finding a mutually acceptable solution, which partially satisfies both parties.

An individual may not fall into one particular conflict management mode. The way a person deals with conflict may in fact be a combination of two or more modes. According to Thomas and Kilmann (1974), changes in the conflict management styles of a person could depend on the situation that person is in at a given time. The Thomas-

Kilman Conflict Management Questionnaire asks individuals to choose between two situations that they provided. Each question is designed to give an answer corresponding to one of the modes. Each mode consists of different behaviors and there is a meaning to scoring high or low in a particular mode. Below are Thomas and Kilman's explanation of each mode, what the uses of the modes are and what it means if the participant scored high or low for that particular mode.

Competing

There are several different uses for the competing mode. One example would be when a quick and decisive action is needed. Another would be when there is an important issue that is comprised of unpopular courses of action that need to be implemented.

Thomas and Kilman (1974) also explain that the competing mode is typically present when a person is surrounded by "yes" people or if subordinates are afraid to admit ignorance or uncertainties to the person that possesses this mode.

Collaborating

Some of the uses for collaborating are when an integrative solution needs to be found and both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised. It also can be used to combine insights from different perspectives. Collaborators feel that conflict is neither good nor bad. Collaboration takes a lot of time and energy. The authors state that people exhibiting collaborating behavior may neglect finding collaborative responses from others. These people who are collaborating could indicate the presence of defensiveness, strong feelings, impatience, competitiveness, or conflicting interest.

Compromising

According to Thomas and Kilmann (1974), compromising is useful when two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals. It can also be used when goals are moderately important and they are not worth the effort of potential disruption of more assertive modes. In addition, this mode can be used when settling temporary complex issues or when there are time constraints. If a person scored high, he or she may be the type of person that concentrates greatly on practicalities and tactics of compromise that can lead to larger issues, principles, values, long-term objectives, and company welfare being lost. Compromising also indicates that bargaining and trading often create a cynical climate of gamesmanship between parties (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Avoiding

Avoiding can be used for issues that are trivial when there are more important issues with which to deal. In addition, avoiding is often used when a person recognizes that there is no chance of satisfying his or her own concerns (Thomas and Kilmann, 1974). Another use could be when more information needs to be obtained to make a critical decision. Typically with people who score high on avoiding, coordination suffers because they have trouble getting input from others. Another characteristic would be that important issues are often made by default (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Accommodating

Accommodating is used when a person realizes that something is wrong, wants to learn from others, and allows for the better position to be heard. As stated by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), this mode also identifies that if one person recognizes that the issue at

hand is more important to another person, as a goodwill gesture he or she will maintain a cooperative relationship. Accommodating would also be used when a person sees that continued competition would only damage the cause. Preservation of harmony and avoiding disruption is also deemed important. People who score high often feel that their opinions or feelings are not being heard or discipline is lax for the person or the organization.

These different modes show characteristics that would classify each under Thomas and Kilmann's assertiveness and cooperativeness dimensions. In different situations, a person's typical conflict mode may adjust to suit the situation. This reflects Rahim's styles of handling interpersonal conflict.

The Importance of Understanding Culture and Conflict

After reviewing how culture is formed, what its dimensions are, and the different types of conflict and conflict management styles that people possess, there is clearly a potential link between culture and conflict management style. Specifically, an organization's culture can contribute to employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors such as conflict management styles. As different parts of an organization develop specific group norms, and thus specific cultures, it is likely that these groups also respond differently to conflict (Schein, 1999). The style of individual interaction may vary from each department, including how a person deals with confrontation. The different actions portrayed by employees in specific departments of an organization may be different than actions of employees at the same organization who work in another department, including how employees deal with conflict.

Conflict can be considered by many as a communication problem within an organization and its departments. As stated previously by Schein (1999), communication is part of the internal integration issue. As employees are hired at an organization, they will adapt to that organization's way of communication. If conflict is a constant occurrence within the organization or department, new employees will recognize that as part of the workplace culture and will find that it is acceptable to be confrontational.

The benefits of conflict are increased creativity, innovation, performance, quality of decisions, and communication between group members (Medina, Munduate, Dorado & Martinez, 2005). Jehn (1995) states that empirical research on the effects of group and team conflict contradicts findings of theoretical literature. In agreement with Medina and colleagues, Jehn also states that conflict within teams can improve decision quality and strategic planning, financial performance, and organizational growth. In addition to what the previous researchers stated, Levi (2001) continues the list of benefits that conflict can produce for an organization. He states that conflict helps teams reduce conformity and unhealthy agreement, solve problems better, and overcome the obstacles to group progress. If a team can recognize the sources of conflict and resolve it successfully, the team will benefit (Levi, 2001). Levi also identifies the negative effects that conflict has on a team. Conflict can create negative emotions and stress, interfere with communication and coordination, and take attention away from tasks and goals (Levi, 2001). Members of groups will react to conflict based on shared beliefs that they have from the learned behaviors that were defined from the organization's culture.

If culture has a direct effect on the way conflict is dealt with, then organizations need to find ways to deal with conflict in a positive manner. This may include a change in

culture. According to Kotter and Heskett (1992), group behavior norms are easier to change. Katz (2006) developed ways of creating positive confrontation, which would involve changing group norms. First, Katz addresses shared responsibility. This is when both parties involved in the confrontation need to share the responsibility to solve the problem or issue at hand. Next would be to never attack the person. Employees need to remain professional and keep in mind that the goal of confrontation is a positive outcome. Also, when a manager and a staff member have a confrontation, discipline should not be the first resort. Both parties need to be clear on what the problem is. Each party should share and listen to the other party regarding the facts of the problem. Keeping emotions under control is also important. Another suggestion made by Katz is that when emotions run high, take a break and cool down. Lastly, people should listen and learn to create positive confrontation that can be a learning opportunity for future problem solving. It is important to note that Katz does not suggest removing conflict from an organization but changing the approach to conflict to a positive experience for all parties involved. This approach is a change in behavior and an organization's culture is developed by shared common behaviors of employees.

Gitlow and McNary (2006) agree with Katz (2006) and developed steps to create a "win-win" process when addressing conflict. First, define the problem, gather all the facts and explore them as a group. Review the problem or issue; this could lead to finding additional facts. Group members should then develop and debate all alternatives. The next step would be to look for solutions. Last, weigh and choose the best alternative solution; by ranking the alternatives an agreed upon solution that works best for everyone can be chosen. Katz, Gitlow, and McNary are not suggesting ways to remove conflict

due to the benefits that conflict may have; they suggest ways to manage conflict in a productive way. When conflict creates a positive outcome it supports the researchers mentioned above. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire is an alternative that may be used to identify group members' conflict management modes. Having an understanding of individuals' modes can lead to creating a process to handle conflict in a positive manner.

In reviewing the presence of conflict and the positive and negative effects it has on organizations conflict can be related back to Schein's (1999) internal integration issues of culture and how internal integration can be the greatest influence on conflict management styles of employees. Internal integration deals with communication, and many believe that conflict is a communication issue. Shared behaviors are the way that group members act or perform specific job functions. These behaviors become common to the group and these behaviors can have influence over coworkers' conflict management styles. An assumption that people make regarding human nature, instincts, and human nature regarding relationships, can influence conflict management styles, as well as, the nature of reality and truth. By being able to understand how culture is developed as well as its dimensions, an organization has the ability to develop employees' behaviors in a positive manner, including how an employee should react in a confrontational situation.

The Relationship between Culture and Conflict

As previously described, an organization may have a combination of the four different cultures, but one culture orientation will most likely be more prevalent than the other orientations. The same holds true for conflict management modes. People can

manage conflict for different situations in different ways, which is why people may score very high for more than one mode. Identifying the conflict management modes of employees will enable an organization to determine whether the culture that a department versus an organization has defined from its creation has an influence on how people handle confrontational situations. It would be highly unlikely for an organization to have employees that were all the same conflict mode because a person may show a different mode based on the situation he or she is facing at a particular time, but a dominant conflict should be evident. Within different divisions of the organization, the conflict styles should be more consistent based on Schein's (1999) theory that culture is a group's property. Individuals that work closely together share the same occupational core and common experiences and would then share the same conflict management modes of coworkers based on the culture of the group.

The goal of this research project was to determine whether (a) employees from three different offices that are part of three different divisions of a community college share the same culture and (b) whether the employees in the offices have similar conflict management styles. The job functions and duties of all three offices are different, which would suggest that each office may have its own culture. Based on the Schein's theories as well as those from Kotter and Heskett (1992), the culture of an organization may have a direct effect on the sub cultures of the offices. However, even though each office's culture is somewhat different, all three should still have similar characteristics, which stem from the overall culture of the organization. Thus I predict that the three offices will have different sub culture orientations. I also predict that each office will be a combination of support and achievement orientations because it is part of the

organization culture present in the college. Third, I predict that the majority of the employees in each particular office will share similar conflict management modes but the high modes will vary for each office.

I predict that the Bursar's office will have employees that score highest for competing and collaborating. Due the nature of the job, employees are there to collect the tuition and fees for the college. The competing and collaborating conflict management modes identify quick decisive action and also deal with unpopular courses of actions with which Bursar employees often deal. On the other hand, I predict that the Records and Registration employees will have the highest percentage of the compromising conflict management mode. Compromising deals with complex issues and time constraints. Employees in the Records and Registration office register students for classes and need to meet the needs of thousands of students all at once. I would predict Financial Aid to have a high number of avoiding conflict management modes. I predict this not because the employees find students' needs to be trivial but due to the amount of information that one needs to prepare the financial aid packages for students. This is because the Financial Aid office depends on the Federal and State Governments before they can package financial aid for students. This is often a timely process; therefore, these employees rely on others to make decisions.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

There are three questions in this research project. The first question was to determine the similarity in the culture of three college offices. The second question examined whether the conflict management styles of the employees of each office actually differed as expected. The last was to determine if each of the department's culture affects the conflict management styles of the employees in the offices. This chapter outlines the methodology used and how the data were collected.

Sample

The study sample included 27 employees in three offices of a community college located in Upstate New York, including the Bursar, Records and Registration, and Financial Aid. During the first part of this study, the directors of the Bursar's office, the Records and Registration office, and the Financial Aid office were asked to describe the culture of their respective departments. During the second part of the study, employees in each department were asked to describe their conflict management styles. There were eight staff members in the Bursar's office, ten in the Records and Registration office, and nine in the Financial Aid office who were asked to participate in this study. Both the Records and Registration office and Financial Aid office have student aides and seasonal employees. The surveys were not given to these staff members due to their restricted age range and their limited experience in the departmental office in which they might become acculturated.

Procedure

Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher met with the Assistant Director of Human Resources regarding this research project to ensure that the research being conducted was acceptable to the organization and to ensure that the integrity of the college would not be compromised by this study. The Assistant Director consented provided that the researcher excludes the name of the college in any written reports. The researcher also spoke individually with each director to ask whether he or she would be willing to participate in this study for educational purposes. In addition, the researcher sought permission from the directors to distribute the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire to their staff.

Employees were asked to participate in this study for educational purposes and their confidentiality was ensured. They were also told that they had the right to end their participation in the study at any time. Both of the questionnaires were distributed to participants at the same time. The three directors were given a packet that included instructions (Appendix A), consent letters (Appendix C), and both questionnaires (Appendix E & F). Employees were given a packet that included instructions (Appendix B), consent letters (Appendix D), and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire (Appendix F). Each office was color-coded so that responses could remain anonymous but could still be matched to their department (but not employee).

To ensure anonymity, the questionnaires were placed in envelopes that had labels indicating which survey was inside as well as an envelope with the researcher's name and location so that the questionnaires would be returned to the researcher via campus mail. Included with each questionnaire were the instructions, a letter explaining why the study

was being conducted, and two copies of the consent form. Participants were asked to return all questionnaires within one week of distribution.

The Diagnosing Organizational Culture questionnaire given to the three directors had a 100% response rate. For the second part of the study, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire was distributed to a total of twenty-seven employees, including: eight employees (100%) from the Bursar's Office, nine employees (90%) from Records and Registration, and ten employees (100%) from Financial Aid.

Questionnaires

The first questionnaire, which was given only to the directors, was the Diagnosing Organizational Culture that was created by Harrison and Stokes (1992). The purpose of this study was to diagnose the culture of the three individual offices, not the culture of the organization. Therefore, in each questionnaire the word "organization" was changed to "department." The questionnaire had participants rank what he or she felt the existing culture was and what his or her preferred department culture was. There were a total of fifteen questions. Each question had four possible choices ranging from 4 as the dominant view, to 1 as the least dominant view, or least preferred alternative. An example of the questions asked and response choices are shown in the table below.

Table 3: An Example of the Measure of Culture

Question: Members of the department are expected to give first priority to:

Answers:

Existing	Preferred	
Culture	Culture	
___	___	a. meeting the needs and demands of their supervisors and other high level people in the department.
___	___	b. carrying out the duties of their own jobs; staying within the policies and procedures related to their jobs.
___	___	c. meeting the challenges of the task, finding a better way to do things.
___	___	d. cooperating with the people with whom they work, to solve work and personal problems.

Each response was categorized as one of four different types of culture profiles: Power Orientation, Role Orientation, Achievement Orientation, and Support Orientation. However, departments did not have to fit into one specific profile; it was possible for them to have crossed into several different profiles for both existing and preferred cultures.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire consisted of thirty questions. Participants were given a choice of two options to pick. In the instructions participants were encouraged to answer all questions and, if he or she felt that neither statement reflected him or her, to choose the response which was more like him or her.

An example of a Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire question was for a person to choose between either (a) “I try to find a compromise solution” or (b) “I attempt to deal with all of his and my concerns”. The answers to the questions fell into one or a combination of the following five modes: Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating, and Compromising. Each mode would also determine assertiveness or cooperativeness.

Data Analysis

The data used in this study were collected through questionnaires. The first questionnaire was used to measure the department’s existing and preferred cultures, and the second questionnaire was used to identify the conflict management modes of the employees in each department. Data analysis measures were then used to interpret the meaning of the results.

Diagnosing Department Culture

Once all the questionnaires were returned to the researcher, each questionnaire was scored according to the guidelines provided by Harrison and Stokes (1992). The score sheet (Appendix G) for the Diagnosing Culture Questionnaire was a worksheet on which to transfer the rankings that the directors provided for both the existing and preferred cultures. After the data were added they were put into a formula provided by Harrison and Stokes to calculate the culture index (Appendix H) for both the existing and preferred cultures. Those numbers were then summed based on a rubric provided by Harrison (1992).

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire

After the questionnaires were collected, each participant's answers were transferred to a score sheet provided by Thomas and Kilmann (Appendix I). At the bottom of the worksheet there was a space to enter data which then determined the high score for each participant. Once the highest score was determined it was matched to the corresponding conflict management mode provided by Thomas and Kilmann. The results from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire were then entered into a numeric spreadsheet and the percentages for each conflict management mode were calculated. The data were tested using a one-way ANOVA on the scores for all five conflict management modes.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included the availability of college employees to distribute the questionnaires to, as well as limiting the population to only the employees working in the three specified offices, versus all of the employees in the three different divisions; Administrative Services, Academic Services, and Student Services.

Delimitations

Each office had a different number of staff members so there are more results for some offices than others. Also, the small size of the departments decreased the sample size. Each employee was told which questionnaire he or she was being given and several indicated that he or she had previously completed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire. The prior knowledge that some participants had could have affected the way they answered the questions. Another delimitation could have been the actual feelings of the participants at the time of completing the questionnaire. Their

answers may reflect a direct feeling that they were having at that particular moment as opposed to any other time.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The results of the study are discussed in this chapter. The research questions each examined the departments' culture as well as the conflict management styles of the employees in each the departments.

Findings of the Study

Research Question 1:

The first research question asked whether the three departments have different sub cultures. As can be seen in Table 4, the results from the Harrison and Stokes (1992) questionnaire show that the Bursar and Financial Aid offices scored highest in the achievement category, while the Records and Registration office's culture high score fell under the category of role orientation. There were also similarities; all three offices' least evident culture was power. As for the preferred culture of each department, both the Bursar and Financial offices again scored highest for the achievement orientation. Records and Registration, however, demonstrated power as its preferred culture. This would indicate its desire to see a change to the existing culture; whereas the other two offices show contentment with what they currently portray. Despite these differences between the offices, all, however, showed agreement as to what their least evident cultures were, power oriented.

The participants were given fifteen "beginnings" of sentences that described some aspect of the department's functioning and design. There were four possible "endings" for each sentence. The directors had to rank their answers using a range of 4 (most

dominant) to 1 (least dominant). The directors were asked to rank what they felt both the existing culture and preferred culture of his or her department are. The answers were tallied on a scoring sheet provided by Harrison and Stokes (Appendix G). The table below shows, from highest to lowest ranking, each office's culture orientation scores.

Table 4: Office Cultures

	Existing Culture	Preferred Culture
Bursar	Achievement (54)	Achievement (55)
	Support (43)	Support (42)
	Role (38)	Role (38)
	Power (15)	Power (15)
Records and Registration	Role (56)	Power (55)
	Achievement (37)	Support (39)
	Support (29)	Role (37)
	Power (28)	Achievement (19)
Financial Aid	Achievement (54)	Achievement (55)
	Role (39)	Support (43)
	Support (36)	Role (31)
	Power (21)	Power (21)

In addition to computing the highest scores, Harrison and Stokes (1992) created a culture index. The second part of determining the results was to calculate the culture index of each office. The index is calculated by adding the scores for achievement and support orientation and then subtracting the scores for power and role orientation. Even

though the offices had high scores in one particular culture orientation, it did not mean that was the actual culture of the department due to the design of the culture instrument. After the results were tallied they were entered into the formulas below. The formulas determine the actual culture index for the existing and preferred cultures of all three offices.

$$\text{Existing Culture Index} = (A) + (S) - (P) - (R)$$

$$\text{Preferred Culture Index} = (A) + (S) - (P) - (R)$$

Where: A= Achievement

S= Support

P= Power

R= Role

Each office's score shows what the office's actual culture is most like. Harrison and Stokes (1992) explain that the culture index is a way to summarize the four scales. The measure reflects what Harrison and Stokes state as "a general level of empowerment, trust and cooperation with the organization (p. 23)" where higher numbers mean greater levels of each. As can be seen in Table 5, the Bursar office scored 44 for both existing and preferred culture. The Financial Aid office scored 30 for existing culture and 46 for preferred culture. Finally, Records and Registration score for existing culture was -18 and the preferred index score was -38. Thus, the Bursar's office has the highest level of trust, cooperation, and empowerment. The Financial Aid office has a moderate level yet seeks a high level, while Records and Registration has and seeks the lowest level.

Table 5: Culture Index

<u>Culture index</u>	<u>Existing Culture</u>	<u>Preferred Culture</u>
Bursar	44	44
Records and Registration	-18	-34
Financial Aid	30	46

The next step in determining each department's culture orientation was to enter the scores in the culture profile charts provided by Harrison and Stokes (Appendix H). The following set of tables is the department culture profiles showing the sums of the director's scores for the existing and preferred cultures. The design of these charts gives the researcher a visual representation of where each participant scored using a scale to plot the scores. The left half of the chart is used to plot the scores that were tallied in the first part of the results. The scale for this section of the chart is 15 to 60; the maximum points that an orientation could sum was 60, and the lowest score for an orientation is 15. These numbers are plotted on the left side of the y-axis. The right portion of the table graphs the culture indexes that were calculated by the above formulas. For this section of the chart, the scale ranged from +60 down to -60. These values are shown on the right side of the y-axis. Below are the charts for each department.

Chart 1: Bursar Culture Profile

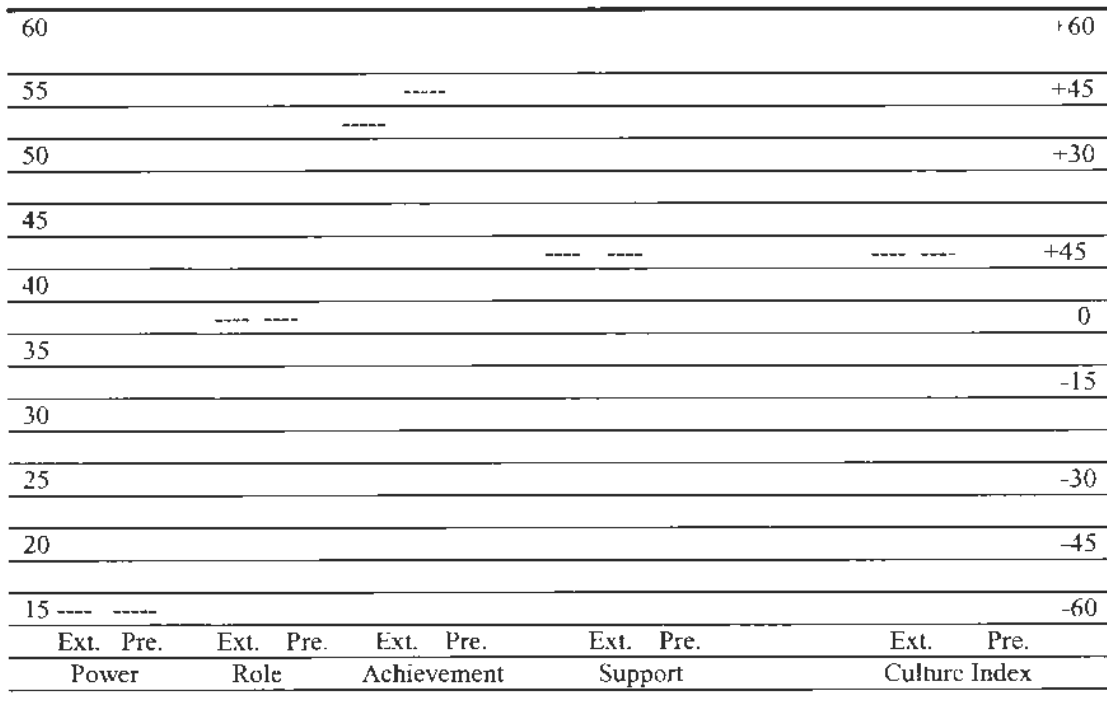


Chart 2: Records and Registration Culture Profile

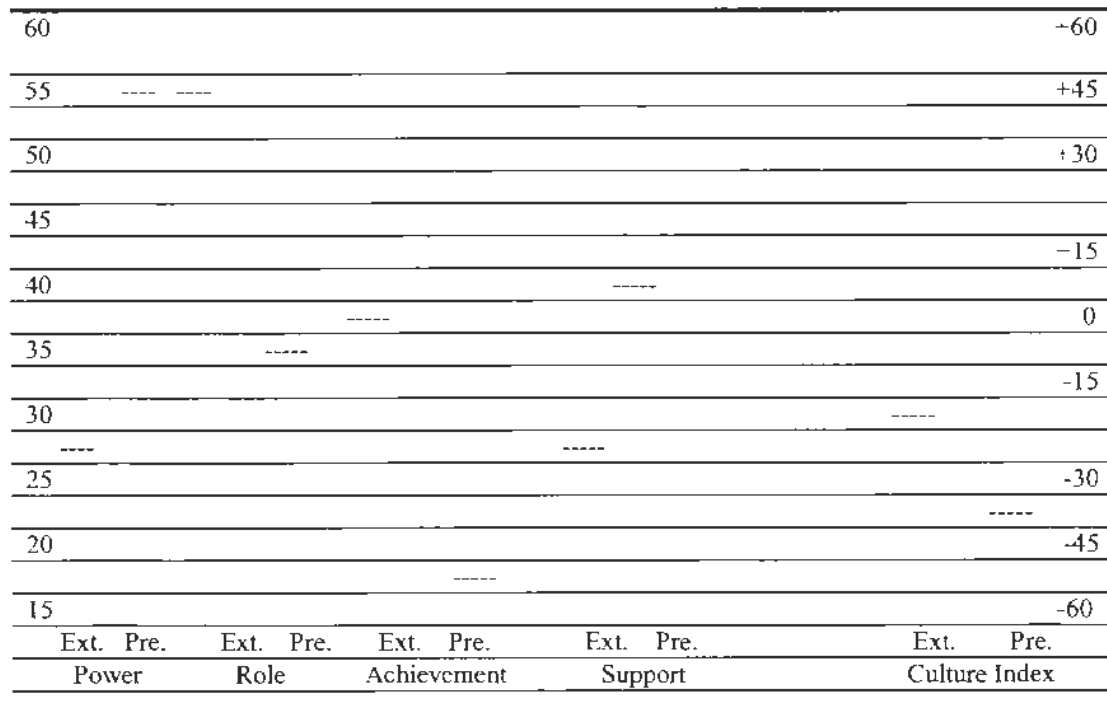


Chart 3: Financial Aid Culture Profile

60										+60
55			----					-----		+45
50			----					-----		-30
45										
40							----			+15
35										0
30										-15
25										-30
20	----	----								-45
15										-60
	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	
	Power	Role	Achievement	Support					Culture Index	

A review of the results as displayed on these charts show that both the Bursar and Financial Aid offices had similar high scores, but the culture index took the variations of the scores and showed what the culture orientation of each office was most like. Because none of the offices scored exactly the same, the findings show that the cultures of the three offices are definitely different. As can be seen in the figures, each office is a combination of different culture orientations.

When comparing the culture indices, both the Bursar and Records and Registration offices are closest to a support culture orientation for their existing culture. Financial Aid's index revealed that its existing culture was closer to an achievement culture orientation. Bursar's preferred culture was consistent with their existing support orientation. Records and Registration preferred culture fell in between support orientation

and achievement orientation. Financial Aid's preferred culture was closest to a support orientation. An office may score very high on one particular culture; this does not necessarily reflect the culture of that office. The results revealed that Bursar's highest score for existing culture was achievement but after computing the culture index, the Bursar's culture orientation was closest to the support culture orientation. Records and Registration also had a different preferred orientation for its high score, role orientation, and culture index, support and achievement orientation. Financial Aid's highest preferred culture score was achievement and its index showed that the department culture orientation was actually the support orientation.

These scores indicate that each office has a different culture or, as Harrison and Stokes (1992) say, "personality". The existing culture is what the directors perceive the actual culture of his or her office to be; it is essentially the true atmosphere of the office. When scoring the answers for the questions, the directors also scored what they would prefer the culture of their offices to be. This was an opportunity for the directors to indicate if he or she felt a preference towards a different answer than the answer he or she chose for the existing culture. A difference between these scores indicates that the directors may want to change the culture orientation of his or her office. It may also show that the combinations of the orientations are not the right combinations for that particular office. The preferred culture scores indicate which culture orientation would be ideal for the offices based on the director's preferences.

Question 2

The next question asked in this study pertained to the conflict management styles of the employees working for the Bursar, Financial Aid, and Records and Registration

offices. Employees were asked to fill out the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire. After adding up the results of each participant's questionnaire, the highest score for each participant was tallied to find which mode was the most popular amongst the participants. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 6: Number of Participants High Score for each Mode

Conflict Style	Collaborating	Accommodating	Competing	Avoiding	Compromising
Bursar	2	2	2	1	2
Records & Registration	2	1	0	3	3
Financial Aid	3	1	0	4	3

This table illustrates that the employees of these three offices do not possess the same conflict management styles. Due to the types of questions asked by the questionnaire, a person may score highest for one or more conflict management style. The frequency of this occurrence can increase the number of high scores for the offices and this also holds true for the lowest scores. Employees in the Bursar's office did not have one distinct popular conflict resolution mode. In fact, there were four modes that were equally popular. The Records and Registration office employees also had more than one popular mode, avoiding and compromising. Financial Aid was the only office with one popular mode among its employees – avoiding.

The following table details the least popular scores, which indicate these styles, are least likely to be possessed by the employees.

Table 7: Number of Participants Low Scored for each Mode

Conflict Style	Collaborating	Accommodating	Competing	Avoiding	Compromising
Bursar	1	3	2	0	2
Records & Registration	1	1	5	2	1
Financial Aid	1	4	4	0	3

The Bursar employees had one most unpopular mode – accommodating. The Record and Registration employees also had one most unpopular mode – competing. The Financial Aid employees’ least popular mode was both accommodating and competing. The same holds true for the unpopular modes as the popular modes; each participant’s lowest score could have been the same, which would then increase the number of unpopular modes. To further evaluate the popular and the unpopular modes, the percentages for each office’s popular scores and unpopular scores were calculated and are illustrated in the tables below.

Table 8: Percentages for Each Office's High Scores

Office	Style	Percentage
Bursar	Accommodating	22.22%
	Collaborating	22.22%
	Compromising	22.22%
	Competing	22.22%
Records and Registration	Avoiding	33.33%
	Compromising	33.33%
Financial Aid	Avoiding	36.36%

Table 9: Mode Percentages for all three Offices

Mode	Percentage
Avoiding	27.59%
Compromising	27.59%
Collaborating	24.14%
Accommodating	13.79%
Competing	6.90%

It is clear that each office had a variety of popular modes and unpopular modes. Therefore, not one conflict management mode can be identified as the single most prevalent mode that employees of these three offices possess. The results also revealed that the dimensions of each office's modes were different. The Bursar's office modes showed a combination of ranges assertiveness and cooperativeness. Their dimensions

were accommodating; cooperative and unassertive, collaborating; assertive and cooperative, compromising, equal balance of assertiveness and cooperativeness, and competing, assertive and uncooperative. The Records and Registration office had two popular modes: avoiding, uncooperative and unassertive, and compromising, an equal balance of assertiveness and cooperativeness. The Financial Aid office had one popular mode, avoiding, which is unassertive and uncooperative.

Research Question 3:

The last research question asked if the different cultures of the three offices have an effect on the type of conflict management styles that the employees of the different offices possess. Table 10 shows the means and standard deviations for the three offices and the conflict management modes.

Table 10: Means and Standard Deviations

Office	Mode	Mean	Standard Deviation
Bursar	Competing	5.25	2.96
	Collaborating	6.38	2.20
	Compromising	6.13	3.09
	Avoiding	6.38	1.60
	Accommodating	5.88	2.70
Financial Aid	Competing	4.22	1.86
	Collaborating	6.67	2.45
	Compromising	6.44	2.46
	Avoiding	7.33	2.00
	Accommodating	5.22	2.53
Records and Registration	Competing	2.78	2.33
	Collaborating	6.78	2.64
	Compromising	8.22	2.99
	Avoiding	6.89	2.98
	Accommodating	5.33	2.40

Tests of Predictions. I predicted that the employees in the Bursar's office would have both greater competing and collaborating modes than those in Records and Registration or Financial Aid. These were both tested using an ANOVA on the scores for competing and collaborating conflict modes. Unfortunately, the results failed to show a

significant difference, competing $F(2, 23) = 2.29, p = .12$ and collaborating $F(2, 23) = .061, p = .94$.

In addition, I predicted that the Records and Registrations office employees would have a more compromising conflict management mode compared to Bursar's or Financial Aid. Using an ANOVA on the scores for the compromising conflict mode was also tested. Unfortunately, again the results failed to show a difference, $F(2, 23) = 1.37, p = .27$.

Finally, I predicted that the employees in the Financial Aid office would have a more avoiding conflict management mode than those in the Bursar's or Records and Registration. Again, this was tested using an ANOVA on the score for avoiding conflict mode. Unfortunately once again, the results failed to show a difference, $F(2, 23) = .37, p = .69$. The results show for all three offices that there is no effect between the two variables for any of the conflict management modes and offices.

There was not a difference for any of the variables for the conflict management styles. Even though there was one or more "most" popular mode for each office, no single mode was significantly dominant over another mode. The different types of subculture orientations for each office showed some similarities but there was no evidence that the subcultures were dramatically different from one another. The three offices had different cultures and the employees of the offices had different conflict management styles. It can be concluded that the culture may have an influence on how an employee deals with culture, but the results of this study did not prove that culture affects conflict management styles.

CHAPTER 5

Summary of Results

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study, which was designed to determine whether three offices at the same community college have different sub cultures based on them belonging to different divisions of the college. The chapter also discusses if the culture affected the type of conflict management mode the employees of the offices possessed. It also gives recommendations for future research, the department directors, and other HRD practitioners.

Key Findings

The Harrison and Stokes Diagnosing Culture Questionnaire (1992) showed that the Bursar's office and the Financial Aid offices had quite similar high scores for both their existing (54) and preferred cultures (55) for achievement orientation. It also revealed that Records and Registration's high score for existing culture was role orientation (56) and their preferred culture high score was power orientation (55). From the high score results, it would seem that Bursar's and Financial Aid had similar preferred and existing cultures. On the other hand, the results of the culture index showed that the existing culture for both the Bursar's office and Records and Registration was the support orientation and Financial Aid's existing culture index revealed that it was closest to achievement orientation, the same as its high score. The preferred culture index revealed that the Bursar's office preferred culture remained the same, support. Records and Registration fell between support and achievement orientations. Financial Aid's preferred culture was also closest to the support orientation.

The second part of the study examined whether the conflict management modes for the employees of each office differed. These results showed that each office had a variety of different conflict modes for their employees. The Bursar's office showed that 22.22% of employees scored highest for accommodating, collaborating, and compromising, as well as competing. Thus employees had a wide variety of styles in the Bursar's office. The Records and Registration office had two high scores: avoiding and compromising, at 33.33% each. Finally, the Financial Aid employees scored highest for the avoiding mode at 36.36%, as expected. Even though the ANOVA test determined that there was no effect between the two variables for each mode, the percentages showed that the employees differed at least somewhat in preferred conflict modes. The percentages for the three offices as a total group revealed that both avoiding and compromising (27.59%) were the two popular modes among the employees. However, this interpretation of the percentages is only tentative because of the lack of statistical significance in the ANOVA results. The popular modes were a combination of assertiveness and cooperativeness. The Bursar's office had the greatest variation with a variety of different dimensions present. The Records and Registration office showed two preferred dimensions and the Financial Aid office only had one dimension. The dimensions are based on satisfying the needs for oneself and others. It is clear that there is not a dominant dimension due to the lack of one mode being more significantly dominant than any other mode.

Limitations for the Study

There were several limitations for this study. The main limitation of this study was the small number of employees available to take the survey. If the sample could have

been expanded then there may have been a significant relationship between the cultures of the offices and the conflict management styles of the employees. The reason for the small sample size is due to the fact that the offices each employed a very small number of employees. A related limitation may have been allowing only the directors to fill out the Diagnosing Culture Questionnaire. Employees were not given an opportunity to express their opinions. If all employees filled out the culture questionnaire, they may have felt that the existing and preferred culture was different than that reported by the directors.

Another limitation would be the prior knowledge that some participants may have had when scoring the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire. The results may have been skewed if participants were answering the way they thought they should, instead of their actual feeling towards each alternative. In addition, a participant's answers may have been influenced by personal emotions that he or she was feeling at the time of filling out the questionnaire. The answer given at that time may not be the answer that the participant would give at another time under different working conditions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Understanding culture and conflict are important not only for directors of these particular departments, but also for the organization as a whole. Future research for this project may include having the President and the Vice Presidents of each of the college's divisions fill out the Diagnosing Organizational Culture Questionnaire and then have each employee fill out a conflict management questionnaire and compare the different division's cultures and conflict management modes. The reason for that is, subculture often do exist within organizations (Schein, 1999). However, it is important to affirm that the divisional cultures are aligned with the overall mission of the college and that each

office is fulfilling the mission. Employees' conflict management styles should also be a reflection of the type of culture that the college has created.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the College Directors

The culture of each department is clearly unique to that department. This paper demonstrated that all three offices do have somewhat different cultures. If the existing culture is the same as what the director's preferred culture is then the directors and it is aligned with the mission of the college, the only recommendation that I could make for the directors to is to write down what they think their office's strongest and weakest components are and work to maintain the strong and develop action plans to work towards changing the culture of the office to address the weak components.

Conflict is an obvious part of people's lives both inside and outside of the workplace. Instructing employees to take the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Questionnaire and score themselves may be an opportunity for employees to learn more about who they are, not only as an employee but also as a person. Discussing the questionnaire results with each employee and comparing their management mode to conflict situations they have been involved in may help the employee to understand which techniques for dealing with conflict are acceptable and which are not.

Recommendations to Human Resource Practitioners

Culture is extremely important for any group of people. There is considerable research done regarding what culture is, how to change culture, and where culture comes from. Continuing to use this prior research in new studies can be valuable when comparing the findings of different research projects. Even if researching culture is not

something of interest to a particular individual, simply developing an understanding the fundamentals of culture is imperative to continue to grow in the Human Resource Development field. The same is true for conflict management. Conflict is a constant just as culture is, and they can affect each other. Knowing how to deal with conflict and different types of confrontational situations can add value to the growth of an organization. It may also help to determine what types of employees are best suited for certain positions within an organization.

Because conflict in organizations is common, every conflict situation should be dealt with in a professional manner that results in a positive reflection of the college. Employees of each office should recognize that confrontation with students is a serious matter and also that the employee's action is a reflection of their organization. There are several possible solutions to responding to conflict. For example, employees should listen to the students, and show that they understand what the student's problem is. In addition, employees need to acknowledge that even if the issue may seem trivial, they should never down play the student's feelings. Employees should then work with the students to find the best possible solution for the problem. Employees should never compete with the student or engage him or her in any type of back and forth shouting. If a confrontation escalates, and the student is not willing to work the issue out rationally, then the employee should seek further help from coworkers, supervisors, and security, as necessary. These suggestions are supported by what Katz (2006) stated as ways to deal with conflict in a positive manner. Gitlow and McNary (2006) also made suggestions for "win-win" process for dealing with conflict situations for groups. All these suggestions

will help employees to learn how to deal with conflict and remain professional when dealing with conflict.

An organization that wants to have employees that represent what the meaning and values of the organization are needs to be able to develop a strong culture. The leaders of new organizations should look to experts in the field of Human Resource Development and consult past researchers, such as Schein (1999), to find ways to determine what type of culture they want to create. Leaders need to first understand what culture is. They need to also determine what type of culture they want their organization to have. The leaders need to identify the external survival issues that Schein described. After the type of culture has been clearly defined an organization should seek out potential employees that have the same type of values. These employees should be able to understand what the mission and vision of the organization are so that he or she can fulfill the goals and objectives of the organization. Schein's internal integration issues define how groups of people share common work experiences and strengthen the predetermined culture that the organization's leaders defined.

Conclusion

This study was designed to first determine whether the sub cultures of three different departments in one organization differed, and second to determine the typical conflict management styles of the employees of each division. The overall objective was to determine whether or not the department culture affected the conflict management styles of employees within the departments. The study was successful in determining the types of culture that each office possessed and was also successful in determining the conflict management modes of employees within departments. Results showed that the

cultures were similar and the similarities would most likely be from a presence of a strong organization culture. The conflict management styles varied amongst employees in each department and a constant mode was not found. It is an indication that people are different and deal with confrontation in different ways.

The focus of this study was to determine if the sub cultures of a community college had an effect on the conflict management styles of the employees in the different divisions. Even though the results showed no significant effect, this study was important to determine if the employees of the college are representative of what the organization's mission is. The subcultures were not the same but there were similarities. The similarities are likely due to the overall college's culture influence on the departments. The differences are likely to be due to the different core job functions of the offices. This study showed that sub cultures could differ from each other even though the overall culture of an organization is present in each subculture. Furthermore, the conflict management styles of employees may have been influenced by their core job functions, but this claim is only tentative because of the mixed results. It is, however, important to understand organizational culture and to be aware of it because it clearly can affect the behaviors of employees. As explained earlier, Schein (1999) believes that employee's cultural identities are based on the beliefs, values and behaviors of individuals. This also agrees with what Kotter and Heskett (1992) stated, "Shared values tend to shape group behaviors". This would mean that the culture of the organization would help to define employee's behaviors and reactions towards conflict.

The participants of the study were employees that work for an institution of higher learning. The College encourages lifelong learning to students, faculty, and staff.

The willingness of the college's Human Resource Department, the three office directors, and the employees of each office to allow this study to be conducted showed that the college employees share in the organization's belief of lifelong learning. This study revealed valuable insight into how important it is to understand culture, where culture comes from, and the different conflict management modes that people possess. It is clear from past research that culture can affect people's behaviors and that there are many different types of conflict with which people deal as well as different ways of dealing with confrontational situations. Understanding that culture and the conflict management styles of the college's employees should align with the college's mission in turn should create the highest level of customer service to the students. In conclusion, studying culture and conflict and determining a link between the two is important for organizations that want to have a positive image to outsiders of the organization and also provide a consistently high level of satisfaction to customers.

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Appendix A

Instructions for Completing and Returning the Questionnaire

Diagnosing Department Culture

Dear Participant,

I would first like to thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire will be used for educational purposes to complete the requirements for the Masters of Human Resource Development Degree at St. John Fisher College. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

At the top of your questionnaire you will find instructions on how to answer the questions. As a participant you have the right at anytime to withdraw from this study. If you chose to do so please discard this packet. Also included in this packet are two consent forms. For your participation in this study to be completed and your answers used in this study you must sign and return the consent form with your questionnaire. The other consent form is for you to keep for your records. Once you have completed the questionnaire and signed the consent form please return your packets to me at the Bursar's Office, bldg. 6 room 201.

I would like to thank you once again and acknowledge my great appreciation to you for cooperation and time. If you have any questions regarding the purpose or procedures of this study feel free to contact me at (585)967-0265 or jsheridan@monroecc.edu or you may contact my advisor Dr. Timothy Franz at tfranz@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Sheridan

Appendix B

Instructions for Completing and Returning the Questionnaire

Conflict Management Styles

Dear Participant,

I would first like to thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire will be used for educational purposes to complete the requirements for the Masters of Human Resource Development Degree at St. John Fisher College. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

At the top of your questionnaire you will find instructions on how to answer the questions. As a participant you have the right at anytime to withdraw from this study. If you chose to do so please discard this packet. Also included in this packet are two consent forms. For your participation in this study to be completed and your answers used in this study you must sign and return the consent form with your questionnaire. The other consent form is for you to keep for your records. Once you have completed the questionnaire and signed the consent form please return your packets to me at the Bursar's Office, bldg. 6 room 201.

I would like to thank you once again and acknowledge my great appreciation to you for cooperation and time. If you have any questions regarding the purpose or procedures of this study feel free to contact me at (585)967-0265 or jsheridan@monroecc.edu or you may contact my advisor Dr. Timothy Franz at tfranz@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Sheridan

Appendix C

**St. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR DIRECTORS**

Title of study: Diagnosing Department Culture and Conflict Management Styles of employees at Monroe Community College's Bursar, Record and Registration, and Financial Aid Offices

Name of Researcher: Jennifer Sheridan

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Timothy Franz

Phone for further information: 585-385-8170

Purpose of study:

The purpose of this study is two fold first is to determine what culture the Bursar, Record and Registration, and Financial Aid office have. Roger Harrison and Herb Stokes created a questionnaire for diagnosing organizational culture. This questionnaire will be used to determine what the cultures of the three above offices are. There are four different culture profiles that Harrison and Stokes determined; power orientation, role orientation, achievement orientation, and support orientation. Participants will be asked to answer the questions and rate what the existing and preferred cultures his or her respected office is.

The second purpose of this study is to find what conflict management mode employees in the Bursar, Record and Registration, and Financial Aid office have. Thomas and Kilmann have determined that based on participants answer to the questions the participants will fit into one or a combination of the following conflict management modes; competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. After completing the questionnaires it will be determined if the conflict modes of employees are affect by the culture of the particular department the employees work for.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Monroe Community College

Length of participation: Completion of the Diagnosing Culture Questionnaire should take no longer than 45 minutes to complete.

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

Risks:

There are minimal risks to participants. As a director you will be determining your department's culture and sharing your thoughts that will be used only for educational purposes.

Benefits:

The benefits of this study are to determine that if the different department cultures determine what conflict management style the employees of the department have. The results can lead to new ideas that may lead to less conflict. As well as possible tools for future training or orientations.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)

Signature

Date

Print name (Investigator)

Signature

Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 385-8280 for appropriate referrals.

Appendix D

St. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR EMPLOYEES

Title of study: Conflict Management Styles of Employees working for Monroe Community College's Bursar, Record and Registration, and Financial Aid Offices

Name of researcher: Jennifer Sheridan

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Timothy Franz

Phone for further information: 585-385-8170

Purpose of study:

The purpose of this study is to find what conflict management mode employees in the Bursar, Record and Registration, and Financial Aid office have. Thomas and Kilmann have determined that based on participants answer to the questions the participants will fit into one or a combination of the following conflict management modes; competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. After completing the questionnaires it will be determined if the conflict modes of employees are affect by the culture of the particular department the employees work for.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Monroe Community College

Length of participation: Completion of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Mode Questionnaire should take no longer than 45 minutes to complete.

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

Risks:

There are minimal risks to participants. All information will be confidential and your identity will not be revealed. Each questionnaire will be color coded by office but will not lead to an individual's identification. Answers to the questions will be tabulated for educational purposes and shared with the directors.

Benefits:

The benefits of this study are to determine that if the different department cultures determine what conflict management style the employees of the department have. As well as, determining what the ideal conflict management style for MCC employees working at Bursar's, Records and Registration, and Financial Aid should be.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)

Signature

Date

Print name (Investigator)

Signature

Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 385-8280 for appropriate referrals.

Appendix E

Diagnosing Department Culture Questionnaire

Please check your answers to be sure that you have assigned only one "4" one "3" one "2", and one "1" for each phrase in the "existing" column for each phrase in the preferred column.

Ranking Key:

4= The dominant view, or your most preferred alternative

3= The next most dominant view or preferred alternative

2= The next most dominant view or preferred alternative

1= the least dominant view or least preferred alternative

Existing Culture	Preferred Culture	
1. _____	_____	Members of the department are expected to give first priority to
_____	_____	a. meeting the needs and demands of their supervisors and other high-level people in the department.
_____	_____	b. carrying out the duties of their own jobs; staying within the policies and procedures related to their jobs.
_____	_____	c. meeting the challenges of the task, finding a better way to do things,
_____	_____	d. cooperating with the people with whom they work, to solve work and personal problems.
2. _____	_____	People who do well in the department tend to be those who
_____	_____	a. knows how to please their supervisors and is able and willing to use power and politics to get ahead.
_____	_____	b. plays by the rules, work within the system, and strive to do things
_____	_____	correctly.
_____	_____	c. is technically competent and effective, with a strong commitment to getting the job done.
_____	_____	d. builds close work relationships with others by being
cooperative,		responsive, and caring.
3. _____	_____	The department treats individuals
_____	_____	a. as "hands" whose time and energy are at the disposal of persons at higher levels in the hierarchy.
_____	_____	b. as "employees" whose time and energy are purchased through a contract, with the rights and obligations for both sides.
_____	_____	c. as "associates" or peers who are mutually committed to the achievement of a common purpose.
_____	_____	d. as "family" or "friends" who like being together and who care about and support one another.

Existing Culture	Preferred Culture
4. _____	People are managed, directed, or influenced by
_____	_____ a. people in positions of authority, who exercise their power through the use of rewards and punishments.
_____	_____ b. the systems, rules, and procedures that prescribe what people should do and the right ways of doing it.
_____	_____ c. their own commitment to achieving the goals of the department.
_____	_____ d. their own desire to be accepted by others and to be good members of their work group.
5. _____	Decision-making processes are characterized by
_____	_____ a. directives, orders, and instructions that come down from higher levels.
_____	_____ b. the adherence to formal channels and reliance on policies and procedures for making decisions.
_____	_____ c. decision being made close to the point of action, by the people on the spot.
_____	_____ d. the use of consensus decision-making methods to gain acceptance and support for decisions.
6. _____	Assignments of tasks or jobs to individuals are based on
_____	_____ a. the personal judgments, values, and wishes of those in positions of power.
_____	_____ b. the needs and plans of the organization and the rules of the system (seniority, qualifications, ect.).
_____	_____ c. matching the requirements of the job with the interest and abilities of the individuals.
_____	_____ d. the personal preferences of the individuals and their needs for growth and development.
7. _____	Employees are expected to be
_____	_____ a. hard-working, compliant, obedient, and loyal to the interests of those to whom they report.
_____	_____ b. responsible and reliable, carrying out the duties and responsibilities of their jobs and avoiding actions that could surprise or embarrass their supervisors.
_____	_____ c. self-motivated and competent, willing to take the initiative to get things done; willing to challenge those to whom they report if that is necessary to obtain good results.
_____	_____ d. good team workers, supportive and cooperative, who get along well with others.

- | Existing
Culture | Preferred
Culture | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 8. | Managers and supervisors are expected to be | |
| _____ | _____ | a. strong and decisive; firm but fair. |
| _____ | _____ | b. impersonal and proper, avoiding the exercise of authority for their own advantage. |
| _____ | _____ | c. democratic and willing to accept subordinates' ideas about the task. |
| _____ | _____ | d. supportive, responsive, and concerned about the personal concerns and needs of those whose work they supervise. |
| 9. | It is considered legitimate for one person to tell another what to do when | |
| _____ | _____ | a. he or she has more power, authority, or "clout" in the department. |
| _____ | _____ | b. it is part of the responsibilities included in his or her job description. |
| _____ | _____ | c. he or she has greater knowledge and expertise and uses it to guide the other person or to teach him or her to do the work. |
| _____ | _____ | d. the other person asks for his or her help, guidance, or advice. |
| 10. | Work motivation is primarily the results of | |
| _____ | _____ | a. hope for rewards, fear of punishment, or personal loyalty to the supervisor. |
| _____ | _____ | b. acceptance of the norm of providing a "fair day's work for a fair day's pay". |
| _____ | _____ | c. strong desires to achieve, to create, and to innovate and peer pressure to contribute to the success of the department. |
| _____ | _____ | d. people wanting to help others and to develop and maintain satisfying working relationships. |
| 11. | Relationships between work groups or departments are generally | |
| _____ | _____ | a. competitive, with both looking out for their own interest and helping each other only when they can see some advantage for themselves by doing so. |
| _____ | _____ | b. characterized by indifferences toward each other, helping each other only when it is convenient or when they are directed by higher levels to do so. |
| _____ | _____ | c. cooperative when they need to achieve common goals. People are normally willing to cut red tape and cross organizational boundaries in order to get the job done. |
| _____ | _____ | d. friendly, with a high level of responsiveness to request for help from other groups. |

- | Existing
Culture | Preferred
Culture | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 12. | | Intergroup and interpersonal conflicts are usually |
| _____ | _____ | a. dealt with by the personal intervention of people at higher levels of authority. |
| _____ | _____ | b. avoided by reference to rules, procedures, and formal definitions of authority and responsibility. |
| _____ | _____ | c. resolve through discussions aimed at getting the best outcomes possible for the work issues involved. |
| _____ | _____ | d. dealt with in a manner that maintains good working relationships and minimized the chances of people being hurt. |
| 13. | | The larger environment outside the department is responded to as though it were |
| _____ | _____ | a. a jungle, where the department is in competition for survival with others. |
| _____ | _____ | b. an orderly system in which relationships are determined by structures and procedures and where everyone is expected to abide by the rules. |
| _____ | _____ | c. a competition for excellence in which productivity, quality, and innovation brings success. |
| _____ | _____ | d. a community of interdependent parts in which the common interests are the most important. |
| 14. | | If rules, systems, or procedures get in the way, people |
| _____ | _____ | a. breaks them if they have enough clout to get by with it or if they think they can get away with it without being caught. |
| _____ | _____ | b. generally abides by them or goes through proper channels to get permission to deviate from them or have them changed. |
| _____ | _____ | c. tend to ignore or by-pass them to accomplish their tasks or perform their jobs better. |
| _____ | _____ | d. support one another in ignoring or bending them if they are felt to be unfair or to create hardships for others. |

Appendix F

Conflict Management Style Questionnaire
Thomas-Kilmann

Different people have different ways of responding to situations where conflict occurs or where one individual's wishes differ from the wishes of another. How do you respond in such situations? That is, what is your conflict management style?

On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair *circle* the "A" or "B" statement depending on which is most characteristic of your own behavior. That is, indicate which of these two responses is more typical of your behavior in situations where you are involved in a conflict.

In some cases the "A" nor the "B" statement may be very typical of your behavior; however select the response which you would be *more* likely to use.

1. A. There are times when I let other take responsibility for solving the problem.
 B. Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.
2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
 B. I attempt to deal with all of his and my concerns.
3. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
 B. I might try to soothe the other feelings and preserve our relationship.
4. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
 B. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.
5. A. I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution.
 B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
6. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
 B. I try to win my position.
7. A. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.
 B. I give up some points in exchange for others.

8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
9. A. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
B. I make some effort to get my way.
10. A. I am firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I try to find a compromise solution.
11. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
B. I might try to soothe the other's feeling and preserve our relationship.
12. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.
B. I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.
13. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. I press to get my points made.
14. A. I tell him my ideas and ask him for his.
B. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.
15. A. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.
16. A. I try not to hurt other's feelings.
B. I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.
17. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tension.
18. A. If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain his views.
B. I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.

19. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
B. I try to postpone the issue until I have had time to think it over.
20. A. I attempt to immediately work through our differences,
B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
21. A. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
B. I always lean toward a discussion of the problem.
22. A. I try to find a position that is intermediate between his and mine.
B. I assert my wishes.
23. A. I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
B. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
24. A. If the other's position seems very important to him, I would try to meet his wishes.
B. I try to get him to settle for a compromise.
25. A. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.
B. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
26. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
27. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.
B. If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain his views.
28. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I usually seek the other's help in working out a solution.
29. A. I propose a middle ground.

Appendix G

Department Culture Scoring Sheet

Existing Culture				Preferred Culture					
1a.	1b.	1c.	1d.	1a.	1b.	1c.	1d.		
2a.	2b.	2c.	2d.	2a.	2b.	2c.	2d.		
3a.	3b.	3c.	3d.	3a.	3b.	3c.	3d.		
4a.	4b.	4c.	4d.	4a.	4b.	4c.	4d.		
5a.	5b.	5c.	5d.	5a.	5b.	5c.	5d.		
6a.	6b.	6c.	6d.	6a.	6b.	6c.	6d.		
7a.	7b.	7c.	7d.	7a.	7b.	7c.	7d.		
8a.	8b.	8c.	8d.	8a.	8b.	8c.	8d.		
9a.	9b.	9c.	9d.	9a.	9b.	9c.	9d.		
10a.	10b.	10c.	10d.	10a.	10b.	10c.	10d.		
11a.	11b.	11c.	11d.	11a.	11b.	11c.	11d.		
12a.	12b.	12c.	12d.	12a.	12b.	12c.	12d.		
13a.	13b.	13c.	13d.	13a.	13b.	13c.	13d.		
14a.	14b.	14c.	14d.	14a.	14b.	14c.	14d.		
15a.	15b.	15c.	15d.	15a.	15b.	15c.	15d.		
Total	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Total	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	P	R	A	S		P	R	A	S

Existing Culture Index = (A)____ + (S)____ - (P)____ - (R) = _____

Preferred Culture Index = (A)____ + (S)____ - (P)____ - (R) = _____

Appendix H

Culture Profile Chart

60						+60
55						+45
50						+30
45						+45
40						0
35						-15
30						-45
25						-30
20						-45
15						-60
	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	Ext. Pre.	
	Power	Role	Achievement	Support	Culture Index	

Appendix I

Scoring and Interpreting the

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

	(9/1)	(9/9)	(5/5)	(1/1)	(1/9)
1.				A	B
2.		B	A		
3.	A				B
4.			A		B
5.		A		B	
6.	B			A	
7.			B	A	
8.	A	B			
9.	B			A	
10.	A		B		
11.		A			B
12.			B	A	
13.	B		A		
14.	B	A			
15.				B	A
16.	B				A
17.	A			B	
18.			B		A
19.		A		B	
20.		A	B		
21.		B			A
22.	B		A		
23.		A		B	
24.			B		A
25.	A				B
26.		B	A		
27.				A	B
28.	A	B			
29.			A	B	
30.		B			A

Total the number of items circled in each column:

(9/1)	(9/9)	(5/5)	(1/1)	(1/9)