

HARPER, CORA ELAINE. The Conflict Management Styles, Strength Of Conflict Management Self-Efficacy, And Moral Development Levels Of School Counselors. (Under the direction of Stanley Baker.)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the conflict management styles, strength of conflict management self-efficacy, and moral development levels of school counselors.

Eighty school counselors from a large public school system in a southeastern state participated in this study. The instruments administered were the Thomas-Kilmann Management of Differences Exercise Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974), which assessed conflict management styles; Conflict Management Self-efficacy Scale, which measured conflict management self-efficacy; and the Defining Issues Test (Rest, 1976), which examined moral development levels. In this descriptive study, percentages, means, standard deviations, and rankings were used to analyze the data.

The results indicated that school counselors have different conflict management style preferences from those of the reference group comprised of business and government managers. In addition, counselors' preferences differed based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of school counseling experience, hours of conflict resolution/management training, grade level of school, and location of school. School counselors had well above average conflict management self-efficacy scores with no real difference in scores across any of the aforementioned categories. The average moral development level of the counselors were high; however, there was quite a bit of variance across P-scores indicating levels of moral development ranging from comparisons to institutionalized adolescents to doctoral students.

This study provided implications for practicing school counselors, local schools, public school systems, and counselor education preparation programs. Recommendations for further research were also provided.

**THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES, STRENGTH OF CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT SELF-EFFICACY, AND
MORAL DEVELOPMENT LEVELS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

by

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DEDICATION

“This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” (Psalm 118:23) I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ because of Him this has been possible for me. It is not unto me but unto the Lord that I give glory, honor, and praise for allowing me to accomplish such a momentous milestone in my life. His grace is sufficient and has sustained me.

And to the loving memory of my grandmother, Cora Jarman Loftin (1899-1996), who was my only grandparent to live during my lifetime. ‘Goodnight, MaCora.’

BIOGRAPHY

Cora Elaine Harper was born the youngest of nine siblings at home into the hands of her aunt, a midwife, in Snow Hill, North Carolina. From the time she was two, her mother, Ina Lee Harper, and her brothers and sisters raised her. At the age of ten, she accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Savior, and continues to be a practicing Christian today. During middle school, she relocated to Kinston, North Carolina.

Upon graduating from high school, she enlisted in the United States Army where she served honorably for three years at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC. Returning home to North Carolina, Elaine later graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant through North Carolina Agricultural & Technical (A&T) State University's Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC). She continued her education at East Carolina University and received her master of education degree in Counselor Education from East Carolina University. For several years, she was an active member in the US Army Reserves and North Carolina National Guard. Professionally, she has been a school counselor at Williamston Primary School, Greene County Middle School, and Smithfield Middle School. Also, she has been a project coordinator with the Center for the Prevention of School Violence where she co-authored a conflict management curriculum for preservice teachers. Currently, Elaine is a student in the Department of Counselor Education at North Carolina State University. In addition, she is a school counselor at Wakefield Middle School in Raleigh, North Carolina, and an inactive reservist maintaining the rank of Captain.

Elaine is a member of the American Counseling Association, and is a National Board Certified Counselor. The author is interested in developing and teaching a required college

course designed for educators, especially school counselors, in the area of conflict resolution/management.

Her motto for life: Let the Lord be your Guide.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

School counselors have an important and unique, although sometimes ambiguous, function in the public school setting. Their opportunities to resolve and/or manage interpersonal conflicts that occur in schools are endless. Counselors can be involved in student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and teacher-to-parent conflicts on a daily basis. As properly trained interveners in conflict situations, school counselors can contribute to making their schools more safe and productive learning environments.

Research regarding the impact that conflict resolution and peer mediation programs and trainings have on K-12 students is prevalent in the literature. In addition, the positive effects that these programs have on teachers, administrators, and schools have also been researched widely. To date, there is little research regarding school counselors and their understanding of conflict and its management. However, as the responsibilities of school counselor continue to include implementation of conflict resolution and peer mediation, training of students and staff in conflict resolution processes, and resolution and management of student conflicts, more attention may need to be given to how school counselors understand and manage conflict in their lives and in the lives of others. Hence, this study investigated conflict management styles of school counselors, their strength of conflict management self-efficacy, and their levels of moral development.

Purpose of the Study

Conflict is an inevitable and a natural occurring event that is present in all significant relationships and environments. In school environments with diverse values, beliefs, and attitudes, conflicts are bound to occur among and between students, parents, teachers, and

staff. According to Messing (1993), conflict resolution, as a field of study, is expanding rapidly, and is one in which counselors need to be more knowledgeable.

In recent years, the responsibilities surrounding conflict resolution and peer mediation programs for students have increasingly become a function of school counselors (D'Andrea & Daniels 1996; Callahan, 2000; Frey, Hirschstein, & Guzzo, 2000; Hovland & Peterson, 1996; Lane & McWhirter, 1992; Messing, 1993; McFarland, 1992). School counselors are asked repeatedly to resolve conflict and mediate between students, oftentimes without any formal training in conflict management or interpersonal conflict in dyadic relationships. Furthermore, the American School Counselor Association's (2003) national model for school counselors includes training of students as peer mediators and conflict managers as one of the counselors' responsive services functions.

Even though conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict styles have been the subject of previous research, minimal research has been conducted regarding the conflict management styles of school counselors and their strength of conflict management self-efficacy and levels of moral development. The purpose of this research study is to investigate how school counselors understand and manage conflict in their lives and in the lives of others. Specifically, the research study wants to describe the different conflict management styles, strength of conflict management self-efficacy, and levels of moral development of school counselors according to their age, gender, race/ethnicity, hours of conflict resolution/management training, years of experience as a school counselor, and the grade of school, and location of school.

Statement of the Problem

Although such programs as conflict resolution, anger management, anti-bias curriculum, and peer mediation, prepare students to find nonviolent responses to conflict, promote social justice, and reduce prejudice, counselors and teachers are not being trained in the same manner that school children are (Girard, 1995; Opffer, 1997). According to Sweeney and Carruthers, (1996), few educators have a theoretical understanding of the principles that are essential to conflict resolutions practices. Nevertheless, McFarland (1992) believes because counselors are trained in human development theory and interpersonal skills that they are “well prepared” (p.18) to teach more effective interpersonal conflict resolution. Arrington (1987) contends that helping teachers manage conflict in schools is the responsibility of school counselors. In addition, he thinks they should act as coordinators of services for managing conflict and create conflict management teams from community resources. Still further, Hovland and Peterson (1996) state that, “no other group of school professionals is better prepared than school counselors to assist teacher, parents, administrators, and staff to manage conflict” (p.71).

Albeit, counselors-in-training are taught many skills such as empathy, attending, and reflective listening, they are not taught about conflict management processes, what their conflict management styles are, how to integrate counseling skills learned into dyadic relationships and interpersonal conflicts, or how to teach conflict resolution skills to others. As a result, counselors may resolve and/or manage conflict ineffectively, being left to draw upon counseling theories designed for individuals or reverting to techniques that may have been used in their families and communities.

Unfortunately, counselors as a group have not been used widely as the targeted group for studies related to conflict resolution or management. A PsycInfo search for “conflict resolution and/or management” conducted in 2003 revealed one empirical study that used school counselors as the targeted audience and one other study that targeted counselors-in-training. Thus, there is little research done to investigate conflict management styles of school counselors and counselors’ conflict self-efficacy needed to manage conflict. In addition, very little research has been conducted to investigate school counselors’ moral development levels to determine how they perceive and resolve dilemmas. From a PsycInfo search performed in 2003, a total of five empirical studies that addressed counselors and moral development and/or reasoning were found, only two were specific to school counselors. Research into the manner in which counselors understand and manage conflict is important due to the increase of violence in schools, the need for accountability to demonstrate the effectiveness of guidance and conflict resolution programs, and the need to develop counselor self-efficacy in managing conflicts.

Significance and Scope of the Study

In the present study, an effort was made to determine whether knowledge about conflict management style, strength of conflict management self-efficacy, and moral development levels of school counselors provided insight into how they understand and manage conflict. Hovland (2000) believes that, in order for school counselors to serve as conflict resolution consultants that assist in conflict resolution within their schools, they must be aware of conflict processes and of their own conflict resolution styles.

First, because conflict resolution/management is continually associated with school counselors, there was a need to explore school counselors’ understanding and knowledge

about managing conflict in their lives and in the lives of others. When facing a conflict, a counselor's conflict management style influences the manner in which he or she addresses and manages the conflict. Generally speaking, an individual's conflict management style can be viewed as a function of the interaction between concern for others and concern for self (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Filley, 1975; Hall, 1969; Thomas, 1976). The interaction of these two factors and the varying characteristics of the individual result in a specific conflict management style. When counselors have the knowledge about and ability to assess their own conflict management style, they can possess a greater sense of control over their responses in conflict situations. Equally important, counselors with this knowledge can assess client's conflict styles and recommend appropriate interventions.

Second, there was a need to examine school counselors' self-efficacy or confidence in their ability to resolve and/or manage productively interpersonal conflict. Self-efficacy theory is one approach to exploring school counselors' self-confidence in the domain of conflict management behavior. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391). Conflict management self-efficacy, as coined by the researcher, is the school counselor's belief that he or she can successfully resolve and/or manage conflict and is situation specific to the act of counselors managing conflict in dyadic conditions. In accordance with the theory, counselors who develop increased confidence in their professional abilities as they gain conflict management training and experience would in turn have enhanced ability to manage conflict effectively.

Third, school counselors' levels of moral development need to be explored since they can model critical thinking skills to aid students in the attainment of a higher moral

development level. Kohlberg (1976) created the moral development model in which a person progresses through six hierarchical stages of moral reasoning. His model has levels of moral development that represent a progressive shift in the individual's moral development. First, in the preconventional level, (Stage 1 and 2) the individual moves from egocentric solutions to moral conflicts. Next, within the conventional level (Stages 3 and 4) the individual shifts to solutions concerned with maintaining social order and conformity. Last, the individual in the postconventional level (Stage 5 and 6) progresses to solutions that offer relativistic values and ethical principles. Counselors' awareness of their own moral development levels may allow them to help students with their moral thinking and resolve dilemmas and conflicts in more productive ways. For the purpose of this study, moral development levels were categorized as being "low" or "high" as ascertained by predetermined cutoff points from participants' DIT scores (Rest, 1986).

Counselors who understand conflict and its management will be better equipped to utilize conflict resolution strategies for themselves and to provide therapeutic interventions to their clients in problem-solving activities. It was anticipated that the data from this study would describe school counselors' preferred conflict style as Collaborating, portray them as having above average conflict management self-efficacy, and reveal that they would have high levels of moral development.

Research Questions

In the current study, a sample of school counselors were asked to provide data about their conflict management styles, conflict management self-efficacy, and moral development levels. An effort was made to assess (a) How they are distributed across the five categories of conflict management styles? (b) What their strength of conflict management self-efficacy

is? and (c) What are their levels of moral development? This information was discussed with regards to how well it provides information about their capacity to understand and manage conflict.

Definitions of Terms

Conflict

Conflict refers to “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference with the other party in achieving their goals” (Hocker & Wilmot, 1991, p. 23).

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is “the process used by parties in conflict to reach a settlement” (Sweeney and Carruthers, 1996, p. 327). Bodine and Crawford (1998) define conflict resolution as “a generic term that covers negotiation, mediation, peer mediation, and collaborative problem solving” (p. xv).

Conflict Management

Conflict management is “a philosophy and a set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives” (Tschannen-Moran, 2001, p. 3).

Conflict Management Style

Conflict management styles are patterned responses to a conflict and are usually assessed in research by having an individual disclose what he or she usually does in a conflict situation. Conflict management style can be viewed as a function of the interaction of two variables: (a) the degree of concern an individual shows for relationships with others and (b)

the degree of concern the individual shows for achieving personal goals (Filley, 1975; Hall, 1969).

Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflict represents conflict between two individuals. Barki and Harwick (2001) define interpersonal conflict “as a phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals” (p. 197).

Mediation

Mediation, one strategy of conflict resolution, is a voluntary process that uses an unbiased third party that helps disputants talk about and handle their problems (Bickmore, 2002). Mediation refers to voluntary participation in a structured process in which a third party assists two or more disputing parties who are trying to reach an agreement (Girard, Refkin, & Townley, 1985).

Moral Development

Moral development is a developmental process of moral thinking; progression through stages which are characterized by organized systems of thought with higher levels of thought incorporating lower levels (Kohlberg, 1958). For the purpose of this study, moral development levels were categorized as being “low” or “high” as ascertained by predetermined cutoff points from participants’ DIT scores (Rest, 1986).

Negotiation

Negotiation refers to voluntary problem solving or bargaining carried out directly between the disputing parties to reach a joint agreement on common concerns. It is not a third-party process (Girard et al., (1985).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Conflict

The better educators understand the nature of conflict, the more able they are to manage conflicts constructively (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Understanding conflict begins with knowing its many meanings. Defining the word “conflict” is a laborious task, in that several definitions exist in the literature, and there seems to be no consensus (Arrington, 1987; Hocker & Wilmot, 1991; Thomas, 1976, 1992). Thomas (1992) identified two broad uses of the term: incompatible response tendencies within an individual and occurrences between different individuals, groups, organizations, or other social units. The focus in the present study is on Thomas’ (1992) latter use, conflict between individuals. One’s definition of conflict is important—according to Tidwell (1998)—because the way in which an individual defines conflict will impact severely the manner in which he or she implements conflict resolution.

Deustch (1973) believes a conflict is manifested when two or more individuals interact and perceive incompatible differences between or threats to their resources, needs, or values. Similar to Deustch’s definition, Thomas (1976) defines conflict as “the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his [sic]” (p. 891). Several years later, Thomas (1992) revised his definition of conflict to mean: “the process that begins when one party perceives that the other has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that he or she cares about” (p. 653.) Hocker and Wilmot (1985) define conflict from a communication perspective to mean “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive

incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference with the other party in achieving their goals” (p. 23). Their definition of conflict focuses on expressed conflicts between at least two people because it is impossible to have conflict without either verbal or nonverbal communication behavior, or both. This communicative perspective of conflict is used throughout this research study; conflicts are recognized, expressed, experienced, and managed through communication behavior. With a clearer definition of conflict situations, individuals can begin to take steps to promote constructive conflict management.

Although conflict is described in the literature as intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup, the focus of this research is interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict represents conflict between at least two individuals. Campbell (2003) believes interpersonal conflict is an uncomfortable subject for many people.

Jandt (1976) wrote:

If we survey people’s attitude toward interpersonal conflict, we might find that conflict—quarreling, arguing, fighting—is disruptive and should be avoided.

However, we must keep in mind that while conflict may be inevitable, it is through conflict that existing norms and practices are challenged and changed, and through conflict that we are frequently most creative and innovative. Since conflict can be either destructive or productive, how to avoid conflict is not the issue. Rather, managing interpersonal conflict for maximum benefits and minimum costs is the skill to be developed. (p. 165)

Barki and Hartwick (2001) define interpersonal conflict “as a phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals” (p. 197). Within

the school environment, interpersonal conflict can occur between the student and teacher, between a student and another student, or between the teacher and the parent. On a daily basis, counselors can become involved easily in the different types of interpersonal conflict that occur. Valuing the constructive processes of conflict, not the destructive ones, affects how conflict is perceived and influences the manner counselors may or may not seek to resolve it.

Conflict Resolution and Management

Conflict resolution, like conflict, has multiple definitions (Thomas, 1992) and variations. Sweeney and Carruthers (1996) define conflict resolution in a most general and concise way: “the process used by parties in conflict to reach a settlement” (p. 327). According to these authors, this process may include methods as diverse as warfare, dueling, flipping a coin, arbitration, and negotiation. Conflict resolution, as defined by Campbell (2003), is a form of disciplined communication built on a process that facilitates speaking and listening skills, a problem-solving component, an expanded understanding of an issue, and the achievement of closure. According to Girard and Koch (1996), conflict resolution, in conjunction with alternative dispute resolution, is used to describe processes to resolve conflict without adjudication or force. They define one of these processes as negotiation: “a voluntary process of problem solving or bargaining between disputing parties” (p. xxi). Negotiation and mediation are the two most widely applied ways to handle conflict in school environments. Mediation is “voluntary participation in a structured process where a neutral third party helps disputing parties identify their concerns and resolve their differences” (Girard & Koch, 1996, p. xxi). Within in a school setting, conflict resolution refers

generally to strategies that enable students to handle conflicts peacefully and cooperatively outside the traditional disciplinary procedures (Girard, 1995).

After recognizing that conflict can be both constructive (positive) and destructive (negative), the emphasis shifted away from its elimination (*resolution*), to its *management*. When conflict is defined as being inevitable, attempts to resolve it may not be necessary, yet the management of conflict seems more practical. Hocker and Wilmot (1991) prefer the term conflict management to conflict resolution because “sometimes the most productive direction to take is to make the conflict bigger, more important, or more crucial so that it can be dealt with. Ultimately conflict ought to be reduced—possibly after a long and intense period of escalation” (p. 8). Rabie (1994) also advocates for the management of conflict. He states: “Conflict can never be eliminated; it can only be managed to minimize its negative impact, reduce its intensity, and facilitate its positive role in human development. Conflicts are seldom resolved but often managed, that is, contained and regulated” (p. 50). Tschannen-Moran (2001) sees conflict management as “a philosophy and a set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives” (p. 3).

For some, conflict management and conflict resolution are two different concepts. For example, Rabie (1994) views conflict management as a process to bring conflict under control, while conflict resolution is a process to end it. He sees conflict management as a possible step toward resolving conflict by making it manageable and as a tool that may keep it from being resolved. Doomenici and Littlejohn (2001) believe that conflict management creates an environment that may effectively diagnose, work through, and perhaps prevent future conflicts. Although the term conflict management is preferred, both conflict resolution

and conflict management will be used interchangeably in the present study. Regardless of the terms used for the process, it is believed that one should maximize the constructive conflict and minimize the destructive conflict.

Conflict Resolution And Management in K-12 Education

Conflict resolution is recognized by some as a legitimate topic of academic study (Opffer, 1997; Tidwell, 1998). According to Girard and Koch (1996), conflict resolution programs in schools began in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of social justice concerns prevalent during that time. They believe conflict resolution, as a field, emerged from several disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, education, and communication. Conflict resolution in education is linked to democracy and citizenship, developing a peaceful world, cooperative learning, multicultural education, prejudice reduction, social justice, violence prevention and intervention, critical thinking and problem-solving, and site-based management (Girard, 1995).

School violence, interpersonal dynamics, culture and conflict, and management of anger have been instrumental in the growth of understanding conflict and conflict resolution. The four most consistent and powerful applications of conflict resolution are: (a) organizational development and management science; (b) problem-solving workshops in international relations; (c) the peace movement; and (d) alternative dispute resolution (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Scimecca, 1991; Tidwell, 1998).

Within the organizational relations area, Mary Parker Follett is credited with recognizing that conflict has a positive place in organizations and fostering ideas of integrative solutions to conflict (Girard & Koch, 1996; Tidwell, 1998). After Follett, Blake and Mouton (1964) are the most notable writers to discuss conflict and conflict management

theory within organizations. The field of labor-management has been instrumental in the advancement of conflict resolution due to having an environment that tests new ways in which to resolve conflict. Additionally, Blake and Mouton's Dual Concern Theory lead to the use of mediators (Scimecca, 1991). Another major contributor to the development of conflict resolution theory, Morton Deutsch (1973), analyzed theoretically and conducted an experimental study on the cooperative and competitive aspects of conflict in-group processes. His book, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Restrictive Processes*, is a standard text in the field of conflict resolution (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Problem-solving workshops in international relations gave birth to the rudimentary processes to conflict resolution. Problem-solving workshops brought representatives of conflicting parties together to engage in face-to-face interactions lead by trained social scientists in conflict theory (Scimecca, 1991). This approach can be considered a major impetus for the growth of conflict resolution in the United States.

The peace movement involved religious leaders being redirected from activist work into peacemaking endeavors. Specifically, the Quakers and the Mennonites, more than any other religious groups, have incorporated conflict resolution into their religious missions (Girard & Koch, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Scimecca, 1991; Tidwell, 1998).

Although Quakers are well known internationally for their promotion of conflict resolution to resolve disputes without resorting to the legal system, they have also been instrumental in introducing conflict resolution at the local level through educational systems.

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) grew out of dissatisfaction with the methods used to administer justice and resolve community disputes (Tidwell, 1998). According to

Scimecca (1991), ADR was created due to criticism of lawyers and court system by the general public.

During the mid-1960s, one of the first conflict resolution programs, Teaching Students to be Peacemakers, was developed to teach students and faculty a set of practical procedures for conflict resolution. The Children's Creative Response to Conflict in 1972, the Community Boards Program in 1977, and the Peace Education Foundation are responsible for the development of the field of conflict resolution in elementary schools.

Several other notable organizations in the field of conflict resolution include Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR), whose focus is nonviolent resolution of community social issues, which began working with schools in the early 1980s examining how students could learn alternative ways to deal with conflict. A few years later, Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), a comprehensive conflict resolution program disseminated by the national ESR office, was developed. In 1982, The Community Board Program (CBP) and the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution were instrumental in advancing peer mediation programs in schools throughout the country.

Through the growth of conflict resolution instruction and programs in schools and alternative dispute resolution services in community agencies, an effort was made to discover how to teach conflict resolution in the schools. In 1984, educators and mediators formed the National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME), a network and clearinghouse for training and information in and about conflict resolution. In 1995, NAME merged with National Institute of Dispute Resolution (NIDR) and became the Conflict Resolution Education Network (CREnet) and is the primary national and international clearinghouse for information, resources, and technical assistance in the field of conflict resolution and

education (Lincoln, 2002). In the meantime, the National Institute for Citizen Education and the Law (now known as Street Law, Inc.) began developing school-based programs and classroom curriculum materials. NAME (1994) estimated there were between 5,000 and 8,000 conflict resolution programs in the United States. “In 1997, there were over 8,500 school-based conflict resolution programs in the United States, located in the nation’s 86,000 public schools” (CREnet, 2000, p. 1).

As stated earlier, the recent growth of violence in schools has fueled interest in conflict resolution (Girard, 1995). As a result, professional educators and counselors have implemented various conflict resolution programs in their schools to help students develop the skills necessary to resolve interpersonal differences more effectively and respectfully. D’Andrea and Daniels (1996) listed the following reasons for interest in this area: (a) national attention regarding the increasing number of conflicts and rising level of violence affecting today’s youth, (b) the rapid cultural diversification of the United States during times of serious race relations deterioration, and (c) the preference by educators for youth to learn how to prevent potential interpersonal problems rather than escalate serious conflicts.

The goal of conflict resolution education in K-12 educational settings has been to reduce the disruption and harm that can arise when conflicts are mismanaged by helping students and educators to develop skills and inclinations that support constructive nonviolent conflict resolution (Bickmore, 2002). The potential impact of conflict resolution in school is described best by Girard and Koch (1996):

The broadest goal of conflict resolution programs in schools has been to teach better problem-solving strategies and decision-making skills. These are life skills that enhance interpersonal relationships, provide the necessary tools for building a climate

within a school that is more cooperative and conducive to learning, and offer a framework for handling differences in ways that may lead to improved communication, greater understanding, and less fear. (p. xxvi)

In K-12 educational settings, enforcing the learning and application of conflict resolution skills by adults as an important component of conflict resolution is often overlooked (Opffer, 1997). According to Opffer, when the adults in a school acquire these skills, stronger collegial relationships can exist. He determined that a strong link exists between the conflict resolution processes used by teachers, staff, and administration and those used by students. Opffer identified several problems that arise when adult educators do not possess adequate conflict management knowledge and skills. First, educators who are void of a strong foundation in conflict resolution will have difficulty attempting to effectively teach a conflict resolution curriculum. When educators have a low comfort level with a conflict resolution curriculum, it creates a secondary problem--a lack of consistency in conflict resolution programming. Another problem is with educators new to the conflict resolution field providing inconsistent modeling while teaching a conflict resolution curriculum. According to Opffer, the lack of effective adult conflict resolution processes and intergroup conflict continue to be the major challenge in today's schools. Continuing research at Stanford University confirms the importance of adult modeling of conflict resolution skills (Opffer, 1997).

Although conflict management education has been used in schools since the mid 1970's, there are relatively few empirical studies that examined its effectiveness (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Opffer, 1997). Johnson and Johnson identified two factors to explain this apparent gap in the research. First, teachers in the field who implement conflict-resolution

and peer-mediation programming do not have the financial resources to engage researchers to attend to the methodological considerations of a study. Second, teachers do not have the professional qualifications or experience to oversee the research protocol. See Johnson and Johnson (1996) for an extended review of the research involving conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in elementary and secondary schools. Several of the studies that do exist suffer from weak methodologies. However, the studies have shown promising results when looking systematically at the effectiveness of such programs, (Bosworth, Espelage, & DuBay, 1998; Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, & Magnuson, 1995; Johnson, Dudley, Mitchell & Frederickson, 1997).

The positive effects of conflict resolution in schools were demonstrated in a study by Vestal (2001). It was revealed that after conflict resolution training, teachers reported an increased level of comfort with handling conflict, greater understanding of conflict, improved use of conflict resolution strategies, and changes in the way they involved themselves in students' conflicts. According to D'Oosterlinck and Broekaert (2003), some school systems have reported positive effects of conflict management with students. In addition, parents and teachers reported positive effects on their self-esteem and conflict resolution skills, both in and out of school. Long and Morse (1996) conducted an analysis of more than 600 student/staff conflict cycles and revealed at least four categories of inappropriate responses by teachers toward student behavior: (a) counter-aggressive reactions (68%); (b) rigid and unrealistic teacher expectations (7%); (c) negative teacher moods (20%); and (d) prejudicial attitudes toward troubled students (5%).

Johnson and Johnson (1996) classify conflict resolution programs in schools into three categories (a) cadre or total study body programs; (b) curriculum based programs and

peer mediation programs; and (c) skills-oriented approaches, academically oriented approaches, and structural change approaches. It is important that school-based initiatives provide effective, long-term conflict-resolution training for all students, teachers, and parents.

Conflict Resolution And Management In School Counseling

As school counselors are asked continually to assist teachers and students in working with conflict resolution in schools, they need to know conflict resolution strategies and be able to implement the necessary processes that will make safer schools a reality (Thorsen-Spano, 1996). Conflict resolution is not a new concept to the counseling profession; however, counselor education programs have not modified their mission and curricula to address issues, strategies, and research topics about conflict into preparing counselors (Gerstein & Moeschberger, 2003). Based on the overwhelming use of conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in schools, preparing counselors with conflict management training in their counselor education programs would seem a natural fit.

Some scholars see a relationship between the fields and skills used in counseling and conflict management. Using mediation as the primary conflict resolution strategy, Messing (1993) believes that conflict resolution shares many common structural elements with counseling. For example, commonalities mediation has with counseling include confidentiality, acceptance, active listening skills, development of rapport and empathy, interpretation of interactive dynamics, role modeling, and emphasis on the present and future, not the past (Kelly, 1983). In contrast, mediation does not require psychological change, view emotions as a major focal point, or the use of exploration skills (Kelly, 1983).

Hovland and Peterson (1996) believe school counselors play important roles as leaders in conflict resolution consultation for their entire school population, providing that they are knowledgeable about conflict processes and of their own conflict resolution styles. Stallings, Holmes, and Butler (1994) visualize school counselors as “powerful role models for children” (p. 17), that have unique opportunities to demonstrate and model appropriate conflict management skills. According to Stallings et al. (1994), school counselors can assist children in obtaining social developmental goals by providing activities that:

1. Encourage children to find creative, non-violent resolutions to their own conflicts arising in play and social interaction.
2. Allow monitoring of escalating conflict among children to protect their well-being.
3. Emphasize explanations to students resolutions implemented by the counselor so they understand the rationale.
4. Assess emerging conflict for its potential value in learning against its potential for excessive aggression or violence.
5. Allow for the coordination of interventions with administrators and teachers.
6. Focus upon utilization of general counseling skills to model socially acceptable, effective resolutions.

In order for counselors to be able to conduct a comprehensive assessment of conflict

Stallings et al. (1994) provide this list of questions for counselors to ask:

1. What is the topic of conflict understood by the participants?
2. Who are the participants and what are their histories in regard to prior conflicts?

3. What are the antecedents to the present conflict as understood by the participants?
4. What do the participants believe is “at stake” in the current conflict?
5. What attempts have participants made toward resolution? Are there alternatives?
6. What is the probable outcome if the counselor does not intervene?
7. How will the continuation of the conflict influence the quality of the school environment and community?
8. How will continuation or resolution of the conflict influence the development of the participants?
9. How would the current conflict be viewed from the current perspective of local school policies?

Counselors’ answers to these questions can help determine the conflict management style and interventions they will use. Being able to conduct a thorough assessment of conflict may enable counselors to develop professionally and strengthen their confidence in their ability to manage conflict.

School counselors trained formally in conflict management have several requisite skills. Deutsch (1994) listed four sets of skills that counselors should possess when involved as a third party in the resolution of conflicts. First, the counselor establishes a working relationship with each of the conflicting parties to establish trust, communicate freely with him/her, and be responsive to her/his suggestions regarding an orderly process for negotiations. Second, the counselor uses skills that establish and maintain a cooperative problem-solving attitude among the conflicting parties toward their conflict. Third, the

counselor uses different skills to facilitate the group process and the decision-making skills. Fourth, the counselor possesses knowledge of the issues surrounding conflict in general.

According to D'Andrea and Daniels (1996), many counselors have responded to the need to promote peace in their schools by developing and implementing numerous innovative dispute resolution projects. Their review of recent professional counseling literature yielded several articles that described the types of conflict resolution projects counselors have implemented in schools and the impact these programs have had on students. In order for counselors to demonstrate accountability and effectiveness for comprehensive guidance programs that include conflict management as a major component, they need time and support to conduct more in-depth research designed to evaluate existing programs; to assess methods to improve attitudes toward conflict resolution; to promote the conflict resolution programs in schools and communities; and to prepare longitudinal studies in a large number of schools (Thorsen-Spano, 1996).

Continuing with the need for more in-depth research, it bears repeating that the research targeting school counselors and conflict resolution/management is almost nonexistent. In a much earlier research study, Swisher (1970) explored the professional behavior of school counselors in relation to the conflicts in which they were involved and found that counselors in general reacted to conflicts by discussing the situation with the parties involved. School counselors are school based professionals who can teach and provide follow-up; therefore, Stickel (1996) designed a workshop for school counselors to conduct staff training in active listening skills, components of trust, group process skills for collaborative decision making, and conflict resolution. For each of these content areas, experiential activities are included. Based on Hovland and Peterson's (1996) experiences,

hands-on conflict demonstrations are rarely provided in counselor preparation programs; instead, school counselors in a conflict experience often rely on what they think might work rather than on experiential knowledge.

As educators, school counselors primarily learn about conflict resolution on their own or through staff development programs. They are oftentimes the implementers of conflict resolution and/or peer mediation programs but the research studies that do exist focus on the impact the programs have on the students, and not on the school counselors.

Conflict Management Styles

According to Arrington (1987), management of conflict is a human relations concept long recognized in business and industry as a necessary component of the developmental process. Within the organizational conflict literature, taxonomic models of interpersonal conflict styles have been delineated (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). An individual's cultural and family traditions, personality, and life experience all shape the ways in which he or she handles conflict (Campbell, 2003). Based on these factors and the fact that the individual responds differently in conflict situations, one's "preferred response or natural inclination when faced with conflict" (Barsky, 2000, p. 41) is his or her conflict style. Several assumptions from the research about conflict management styles include that people develop patterned responses to conflict that make sense to them, no one style is automatically better than another, and people's styles undergo change in order to adapt to the demands of new situations (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985).

Blake and Mouton (1964) were the first to formalize a framework for managing organizational conflict. They developed the managerial grid that is composed of five basic styles of management that characterize an individual's likely behavior in a conflict situation.

The grid model consists of two measurable dimensions that have the greatest effect on ways people work: concern for production and concern for people. Production is “whatever an organization hires people to accomplish” (Blake & Mouton, 1985, p. 10). The orientations are: maximum concern for production combined with minimum concern for people (concentrates on maximizing production by exercising power and authority), (b) minimum concern for production is coupled with maximum concern for people (focuses on good feelings among colleagues and peers at the expense of achieving productions), (c) minimum concern for both production and people (does only the minimum to remain in the organization), (d) middle of the grid (intermediate concern for production and moderate concern for people, gives up half of one in order to obtain the other half), and (e) integrates production and people concerns.

Critique of Managerial Grid

The model Blake and Mouton created (1964, 1978, 1985) specified theoretically the similarities and differences among five styles of conflict management on two dimensions—concern for people and concern for production. They devised a 9-point dimensions grid, with 1 representing minimum concern and 9, maximum concern. Secondly, the two 9-point dimensions were on interval rather than ordinal scales. Using intervals, Blake and Mouton introduced a two-digit coding system such as 9,9 that has been adopted by other authors (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Third, the authors viewed each style as a distinctly different compound resulting from an interaction of the two underlying dimensions. Fourth, the theoretical distances among the five behavioral styles were specifiable geometrically. Also opposites, such as Accommodating and Competing have the same distance apart.

Blake and Mouton's orientations have been renamed and reconceptualized by Thomas (1976) into the following five well-known conflict management styles of Competing, Accommodating, Compromising, Collaborating, and Avoiding. Orientations used by Thomas are: party's desire to satisfy own concern and party's desire to satisfy other's concern. The Thomas-Kilmann Mode Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1975) analyzes conflict management behaviors using assertiveness and cooperativeness dimensions. Assertiveness occurs when the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own needs, while cooperativeness is the result of an individual trying to satisfy the concerns of others.

In regards to instruments constructed to test the validity of the managerial grid, Thomas and Kilmann (1974) and Rahim (1983a) have published the two, best-known questionnaires ever used. Thomas-Kilmann's Management of Differences Exercise (MODE) (TKI; 1974) consists of paired descriptions one of the five conflict styles included in the managerial grid. Although no empirical research documenting the Managerial Grid Questionnaire's psychometric properties was available, Edwards, Rode, and Ayman, (1988) used it in their study to compare its construct validity with three other questionnaires. They discovered significant observed Pearson correlations are found between concern for people and the other worker-orientations measures but concern for production was not significantly related to any of the work-orientations variables. According to Edwards et al, (1988), the managerial grid has been widely used during training for managers even though little empirical research has been published to support its use.

When using Blake and Mouton's (1964) or Thomas' (1976) conflict management styles and/or models, it is important to recognize the implications that culture has upon them. Research has shown that conflict management styles vary according to cultural group

membership (Davidson, 2001; Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee-jung, 2001). For example, Davidson (2001) discovered that, while African Americans may respond to conflict with confrontational behaviors and open expressions of negative emotion, White Americans oftentimes respond by addressing conflict with reserve and low affect.

Another example of the influence of cultural values upon conflict management style involves Asian Americans. Asian Americans generally respond to conflict with Accommodating and collaborative approaches via cultural values of reserved behavior with regard to emotional expression and emphasized concern for preserving “face” (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991). Ting-Toomey et al.’s (2001) research revealed that many Asian and Latin ethnic groups do not usually perceive Accommodating and Avoiding conflict management style as negative, which is the opposite of the Western culture view. In the school community, many instances of interpersonal conflicts based on race will occur between students; therefore, school counselors must have knowledge of cultural implications; influence on conflict in order to understanding students’ reactions.

Conflict management styles are patterned responses to a conflict and are usually assessed in research by having an individual disclose what he or she usually does in a conflict situation. When examining conflict management styles, several models and tools exist. Typically, they have two or more dimensions of conflict behavior and various profiles of conflict responses. In addition to the TKI, other measures that address conflict behaviors such as Hocker and Wilmot’s (1991) Conflict Attitudes Assessment, Putnam and Wilson’s Putnam-Wilson conflict Styles Instrument, (1982), Hall’s (1969) Conflict Management Survey, and Rahim’s (1983a) Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROC-II) also exist.

Thomas' (1976) conflict management styles are discussed here in detail because they are a major component of this research study, but other models are discussed briefly. His two dimensions: party's desire to satisfy own concern and party's desire to satisfy other's concerns are assessed on the TKI as assertiveness and cooperativeness, respectively. Descriptions, actions, and appropriate uses of Thomas' conflict management styles follow (Thomas, 1976; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Firstly, the Accommodating style focuses upon appeasement—attending to the other's concerns without attending to one's own. When Accommodating, an individual neglects his or her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. Although cooperative, he or she is unassertive in satisfying his or her own concerns. According to Thomas and Kilmann (1974), this style is unassertive and cooperative. Alternative labels for this style include cooperating, obliging, yielding, and sacrificing (Barki & Hartwick, 2001). This style may be deemed appropriate when the individual is wrong, preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are extremely important, and the issue is more important to the other person.

Secondly, Avoiding style reflects indifference to or withdrawal from the concerns of either party. This individual is neither cooperative nor assertive regarding his or her concerns or the concerns of others (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). The Avoiding individual does not immediately pursue his or her own concerns or those of the other person or assume physically or psychologically, any responsibility for the solution. Barki and Hartwick's (2001) alternative labels for this style include withdrawing, evading, escaping, and apathy. When faced with trivial or more urgent issues, the perception that one's concerns will not be satisfied, and realizing that others can resolve the conflict more effectively, the individual may benefit from employing this style.

Thirdly, Collaborating represents a desire to fully satisfy and integrate the concerns of both parties. As said by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), this style is both assertive and cooperative and is the opposite of Avoiding. Attempting to work together to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both parties demonstrates the use of the Collaborating conflict management style. Alternative labels of this style include integrating, cooperating and problem solving (Barki & Hartwick, 2001). If both parties' concerns are too important for a compromise, utilizing the Collaborating style would seem proper. Other appropriate uses for this style consist of fusing insights from different perspectives, wanting to obtain a consensual decision, and restoring agreement within interpersonal relationships.

Fourthly, Competing represents a desire to dominate the other person in order to address his or her concerns. A Competing conflict management style person pursues his or her own concerns at the other person's expense. Alternative labels for this style include asserting, dominating, and forcing (Barki & Hartwick, 2001). Competing conflict management style can be useful in an emergency and when the individual knows he or she is right. This style is assertive and uncooperative (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Finally, Compromising involves the parties in a conflict giving up something and keeping something. The Compromising style's objective is to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. Alternative names given to this style include sharing and splitting the difference (Barki & Hartwick, 2001). If individual goals are moderately important or collaboration or competition has not been successful, the use of the Compromising style is permissible. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) put Compromising in an intermediary position between assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Another set of well-known conflict management styles are Rahim's (1983b) categories of dominating, obliging, compromising, integrating, and avoiding. His orientations are concern for self and concern for others. An additional scheme for classifying organizational conflict is Putnam and Wilson's (1982) three dimensions: nonconfrontation, solution-orientation, and control.

Focusing on the school setting, Kreidler (1984) identified five conflict management styles used to respond to classroom conflicts. First, the *no-nonsense approach* tries to be fair and honest with students while providing firm guidance in helping students learn appropriate behavior. Setting up situations in which problems can be solved together by the teacher and students is the *problem-solving approach*. When the teacher listens to the students and helps students to listen to each other to determine things that can be given up, the *compromising approach* is being used. The fourth conflict management style is the *smoothing approach* which views students' conflicts as unimportant and directs students' attention to other things in attempt to keep things calm and peaceful. Finally, *the ignoring approach* allows students to resolve their own problems in order that they may learn the consequences of their behavior. Regarding his conflict management approaches, Kreidler believes there is no single best approach to conflict and each approach has its own appropriate use.

Another model for the school setting, created by Johnson and Johnson (1987, 1991, 1995), categorizes two orientations and five basic strategies that may be used to manage conflict. Their two dimensions are: the value of personal goals and the value of the relationship. Problem-solving negotiations, smoothing, forcing or win-lose negotiations, comprising, and withdrawing are the five strategies. Finally, Augsberger (1973) used two dimensions: concern for goals and concern for relationship, to delineate his five conflict

management stances: I win, you lose; I walk away; I give in because of the relationship; I'll meet you halfway, and I'll hang in till we both win.

Most of these models use at least two dimensions and several different terms for the conflict management styles. All emphasize the importance of being able to use all of the approaches, orientations, and styles. Depending upon the conflict situation, each model has an appropriate response that is more effective than others. Proper conflict management behavior is having the skills required for each style and on and knowing when each style can most effectively be used (Filley, 1975).

Research Studies

No research regarding the conflict management styles of school counselors or professional counselors was found. However, many studies concerning conflict management styles of leaders and managers are well documented in the literature. Instead of using research studies from organizational and managerial settings, a few studies that target either undergraduate or graduate students are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

The Volkema and Bergmann study. Volkema and Bergmann's (1995) tested the hypotheses that there were significant relationships between conflict styles, as measured in terms of assertiveness and cooperativeness and the strategic and tactical use of behaviors in interpersonal conflicts.

The participants were 202 students, enrolled in a graduate organizational theory and behavior course at a university in the eastern United States. They completed the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument (TKI) and a situational conflict questionnaire using the critical incident method.

The results of this study offered some support to the belief that the level of assertiveness measured by the TKI was related to the strategic use of assertiveness in an interpersonal conflict. Particularly, one might expect an individual's assertiveness, as measured by the TKI, to be reflected in the individual's overall behaviors. In addition, an individual's cooperativeness as measured by the TKI was expected to be reflected in one's last response. Assertiveness and cooperativeness' significant relationships with last responses indicated that individuals oftentimes conclude incidents with behaviors consistent with their TKI management style. Although it seems least used, the most dominant first response among participants was "Discuss the issue with the person."

The Bippus and Rollin study. Bippus and Rollin (2003) explored how attachment style affects individual's relationship maintenance behaviors and conflict management behaviors as evaluated by their close friend. Attachment theory is based in the belief that infants form a working mental mode of self and others through their interactions with primary caregivers (Bippus & Rollin). Differences in attachment style can be a reflection of the individual's interactions with significant others, beginning with their primary caregivers. The researchers used Bartholomew and Horowitz's four-category model of adult attachment styles: secures have positive views of themselves and others, and are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy in relationships; preoccupieds have negative views of themselves, but positive views of others, and are dependent on others in relationships; dismissives have positive views of themselves and negative views of others, resist intimacy, and are compulsively self-reliant; and fearfuls have negative views of themselves and others, and are afraid of intimacy and rejection in relationships. The researchers provided hypotheses that addressed the relationship between attachment style and the five following conflict

management styles: integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising (Rahim, 1983a).

To test their hypotheses, the researchers studied 250 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory communication course at a large western university. The participants completed the questionnaire that assessed their attachment style, and their friends completed surveys that addressed the participants' (their friends) use of maintenance behavior and conflict style within the friendship, and their own level of satisfaction with the friendship. Attachment styles were measured using Bartholomew and Horowitz's four descriptions of attachment styles. Participants' typical conflict management styles were rated by using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II (ROC-II). Friends' relational satisfaction with participants was rated using the Relationship Assessment Scale. Relationship maintenance strategies that participants used were rated using Simon and Baxter's' factors of Romance, Assurances, Antisocial, and Avoidance.

The findings revealed that friends reported greater relationship satisfaction, greater use of prosocial maintenance strategies, and more integrating and compromising conflict behavior for securely attached individuals as compared to preoccupieds, dismissives, and fearfuls. Overall, the findings of this study were inconsistent with previous research that found a relationship between attachment styles and conflict behaviors.

The Morris-Conley and Kern study. Morris-Conley and Kern (2003) investigated the relationship between one's conflict resolution style and personality attributes of one's lifestyle. The authors defined lifestyle as own experience a set of convictions that allows the individual to evaluate, manage, and predict events in his or her own experience.

Morris-Conley and Kern (2003) surveyed 173 students in a master of business administration program in urban college setting, of which 73 became participants. The students completed packets that included the following instruments: the Basic Alderian Scales for Interpersonal Success-Adult Form (BASIS-A Inventory), Thomas-Kilmann Instrument MODE (TKI), and a demographic questionnaire. The BASIS-A is a 65-item self-report standardized personality inventory based on Alderian personality theory. The TKI consists of 30 pairs of statement that describes the five modes of Accommodating, Avoiding, Collaborating, Competing, and Compromising. Scores from both instruments were subject to a stepwise linear regression analysis.

The results revealed that the BASIS-A Inventory predicted four (not Accommodating) of the five conflict resolution styles as measured by the TKI. Also, there was a consistent statistical significance between conflict resolution style and four of the 10 BASIS-A scales (Being Cautious, Taking Charge, Liked By All, and Softness). Based on these findings, suggestions were made for managers that would assist them in handling employee workplace conflict situations and implications for training programs were provided.

Self-efficacy

School counselors' knowledge about conflict may determine their conflict management style and the strategies they use when intervening in conflict situations. Their confidence in their abilities to manage conflict effectively is paramount. In order to understand school counselors' confidence in their ability to perform conflict management behaviors the theory of self-efficacy was explored.

Bandura (1977) uses the principle assumption that psychological processes help to create and strengthen expectations of personal efficacy through *efficacy expectancy* (one's judgment that the performance of a given behavior will yield a particular outcome) and *outcome expectancy* (one's estimate that he or she can successfully execute the desired behavior). Self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. Having high assurance in one's capabilities challenges the individual to approach difficult tasks to master them rather than view them as threats to be avoided. In contrast, an individual who doubts his or her capabilities avoids difficult tasks that are viewed as personal threats.

Self-efficacy beliefs are developed from four main sources of influence (Bandura 1977, 1986, 1997). Of these main sources, mastery experience is the most effective way for creating a strong sense of efficacy. Experiences are mastered when individuals perform a task, assess the results of their actions, use the assessment to develop beliefs about their future capabilities, and act in accordance with the beliefs they have created. Repeated successes strengthen one's belief in his or her personal efficacy; conversely, excessive failures undermine self-efficacy, especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy was firmly established (Bandura, 1994). A second and weaker way of creating and strengthening self-beliefs of efficacy is through vicarious experiences that provide opportunities to observe others performing tasks. The effects of social modeling provide a social standard against which individuals could judge their own capabilities and assign a benchmark for their aspirations. Vicarious experience is powerful when an observer sees or visualizes someone

similar to oneself succeeding through perseverance because the observers may then be led to believe that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities. Consequently, watching others, who are believed to be equally competent, fail despite incredible effort can cause observers to believe that they are unable to succeed.

Verbal persuasion is the third way of strengthening individuals' beliefs that they possess the capabilities to succeed. Social or verbal persuasion a person receives from others may be positive, which encourages and empowers the individual or negative, causing defeat and weakness to one's self-efficacy beliefs. Somatic and emotional states—the fourth source—such as anxiety, stress, arousal, and mood reactions are important to self-efficacy beliefs because individuals judge their degree of confidence by the emotional state they experienced as they contemplate an action (Pajares, 2002). In any given situation, normal physical and psychological reactions are inevitable; however, the individual's interpretation and perception of the intensity of these reactions makes the difference.

Self-efficacy affects human functioning through four major psychological processes; they are cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection (Bandura, 1994, 1997). These processes usually operate together to regulate continually human behavior patterns. The effect of cognitive processes effects on self-efficacy includes setting personal goals, organizing courses of action, predicting events and developing control measures, and remaining task oriented. The motivational process is most often generated cognitively. Individuals motivate themselves by forming beliefs about their abilities, anticipating possible outcomes and setting goals for themselves, and planning courses of action to gain positive results. Three principle ways that self-efficacy regulates the nature and intensity of affective processes are through the exercise of personal control over *thought*, *action*, and *affect*

(Bandura, 1997). By selecting activities and environments, individuals can shape the course of their lives based on beliefs regarding their personal capabilities. Selection processes allow one to embrace or avoid activities and situations believed to match or exceed one's capabilities.

Critique of Self-efficacy Theory

Bandura (1997) advocates for a relationship between self-efficacy and psychological and behavioral change. Efficacy expectations are based on four sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. According to Bandura, repeated personal success and social comparison contribute to a strong sense of self-efficacy. On the other hand, expectations caused by verbal persuasion and emotional arousal are temporary and may quickly dissipate when one's experiences are not confirmed.

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy has experienced monumental support over time due its practical application to various academic fields and situations (see Stajkovic & Luthans 1998 for a meta-analysis on the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and achievement outcomes). A PsyInfo search in 2003 for the term "self-efficacy" in academic databases revealed that over 4,000 research articles had been written on this significant psychological construct. The research is from diverse areas such as medicine, athletics, media studies, business, social and political change, psychology, psychiatry, and education. In psychology, self-efficacy has been the focal point in studies concerning clinical problems such as anxiety and phobias (snake, spiders), depression, eating disorders (e.g. obesity, bulimia), alcohol and drug use, social skills, assertiveness, smoking behavior, and moral development. In the educational arena, self-efficacy has been used prominently in studies that related it to such

constructs as academic achievement, attributions of success and failure, goal setting, social comparisons, memory, problem solving, career development, and teaching and teacher education.

To date, there is no single measure of self-efficacy. Many measurements and scales have been created to assess self-efficacy; different domains require different instruments. The creation of various instruments has operationalized the construct of self-efficacy. Bandura (1982, 1997) has only created scales for the investigation in the context of fearful situations. A 2003 PsyInfo search revealed over 500 articles using self-efficacy scales and measures.

Oftentimes in the literature, self-efficacy theory is discussed in conjunction with social learning theory; leaving one to assume that self-efficacy theory is a component of social learning or social cognitive theory. Bandura (1997) himself considers it a component of social learning theory. In addition, key theoretical concepts have varying definitions throughout its evolution. For example, the constructs of self-efficacy and perceived self-efficacy are synonymous. Also, the construct of verbal persuasion and social persuasion are used interchangeably, although they appear to have distinct differences.

Research Studies

Within in the literature, no research regarding school counselors, conflict management, and self-efficacy was found. According to Sipps and Sugden (1988), self-efficacy studies have been generally designed to alter the client's coping behavior and those that dealt with therapeutic situations have typically focused on the client rather than the counselor. However, studies on the topic of counselors and their counseling self-efficacy have been conducted. Some of that research is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Friedlander and Snyder study. Friedlander and Snyder (1983) tested Stoltenberg's developmental theory using 82 trainees in part-time practica or full-time internships in New York, Ohio, and Utah. The model implies that trainees at various stages who perceive their skills and needs differently may expect different supervisory environments. Testing this theory, Friedlander and Snyder sought to identify factors that predicted trainees' general expectations for the supervisory process. Trainees completed the Self-Efficacy Inventory (S-EI), Training Experiences Questionnaire (TEQ), Supervisor's Rating Form (SRF), and Supervisor Questionnaire (SQ). The TEQ developed for use in this study, used items that reflected general outcome expectancies.

Differences were found in counseling self-efficacy among beginning master's-level students, doctoral students, and interns that seemed to be significant, but no test for differences between the groups was reported. Trainees at each experience level emphasized the relative importance of supervisors' trustworthiness (to expertness), expertness (to attractiveness), and evaluation (to support). They expected attractive, trustworthy, evaluative supervisors to influence their personal development; conversely a supportive supervisory relationship was expected to impact their actual counseling behavior.

The Sipps, Sugden, and Favier study. Sipps, Sugden, and Favier (1988) examined the relationship between graduate training and counselor trainees' self-efficacy in using basic counseling skills. The researches expected intervention outcomes to rise in relation to experience level, a curvilinear relation between level of graduate training and efficacy expectations for use of basic counseling skills, and a relation within year level across response categories for efficacy expectations.

Seventy-eight trainees from four graduate counseling programs (i.e., counseling psychology, community counseling, guidance and counseling, and marriage and family counseling) at two midwestern universities participated in this study. After viewing a videotape of a client, participants recorded their selected responses in a provided response booklet. Responses were previously categorized using the Hill Counselor Verbal Response Category System (HCVRS). Specifically, the verbal response categories were minimal encourager, information, probe, restatement, reflection, self-disclosure, interpretation, and confrontation.

The findings revealed that first-year students exhibited efficacy expectations of competence in making responses that were significantly higher than those of second-year students. In addition, self-efficacy scores for third- and fourth-year graduate students were higher than first- and second-year students, possibly due to performance accomplishments provided by extended supervised experience. These differences in scores implied that graduate counselor trainees are not a homogeneous group and future research attempts should examine them longitudinally or cross-sectionally. Although anticipated by Sipps et al., an interaction between year of training and response type with level of efficacy expectation was not found.

The Johnson, Baker, Kopala, Kiselica, and Thompson study. Johnson, Baker, Kopala, Kiselica, and Thompson (1989) was the first study that examined the relationship between counseling efficacy and performance in a graduate training class in counseling skills over an extended time. Using Bandura's (1977) theory and Munson, Zoerink, and Stadulis's (1986) previous research, they hypothesized that (a) expected self-efficacy to increase during training, (b) students receiving counseling to have greater gains in efficacy than those who

did not, (c) posttraining efficacy to correlate significantly with generalized efficacy, and (d) posttraining efficacy to correlate with posttraining performance.

To test their hypotheses, 50 master's degree candidates in counseling who were enrolled in a graduate prepracticum class at a large eastern land grant university were participants. The Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale, developed for this study, was administered at the beginning of the graduate course, which allowed students to be divided into high-efficacy and low-efficacy groups. Selected students were provided counseling during the completion of the courses while others were given the opportunity to receive counseling after completion of the course. Students also completed the Responding Proficiency Index (RPI) which assessed competence in basic counseling skills. To assess classroom evaluation of advance skills of empathy, self-disclosure, confrontation, immediacy, and information giving, students were given the Challenging Skills Rating Form (CSRFB). Pretraining efficacy was measured on the first day of class and posttraining efficacy was assessed during the eighth week of the course.

Johnson, et al. (1989) found that counseling self-efficacy increased over the course of a master's-level prepracticum in counseling. This finding was supported by at least two other studies that found higher counseling self-efficacy was associated with greater clinical experience. Significant differences in the two groups' (high and low) confidence scores remained persistent when later assessed. Receiving counseling had no effect on participants' efficacy. The fact that posttraining and performance was not related was inconsistent with previous research (Munson et al., 1986).

The Larson, Suzuki, Gillespie, Potenza, Bechtel, and Toulouse study. Larson, Suzuki, Gillespie, Potenza, Bechtel, and Toulouse (1992) conducted five studies in order to develop the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE).

In Study One, 213 students enrolled in graduate-level introductory counseling courses at one of two midwestern universities or one university in Hawaii participated. The following seven measures were used: the COSE, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the Problem Solving Inventory (PSI), Social Desirability Scale (SDS), Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Undergraduate grade point average (GPA), and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The results of all analyses produced a 53-item COSE to be used in subsequent studies

Study Two's purpose was to establish test-retest reliability of the COSE. A total of 60 counselor education trainees and prepracticum counselor trainees from universities in the midwest and Hawaii were the participants. They completed the COSE-Short Form (COSE-SF). The purpose of Study Three was to expand the population to include master's level counselors and counseling psychologists. The participants were the 213 counselor trainees from Study One, 42 master's-level counselors with masters of arts degrees in counseling psychology, and 57 counseling psychologists. They too, completed the COSE-SF. Information regarding level of training, counseling experience, semesters of supervision, and theoretical orientation for the different groups of participants was reported. This study's results provided support for Sipps et al.'s findings.

Study Four was to show that COSE scores increased over the course of a semester because of exposure to performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, and verbal persuasion. During Semesters 1 and 2, 10 and six, respectively, master's practicum students

participated in the study. The COSE was completed at the beginning, midpoint, or at the end of both semesters. For both groups, most students' scores increased dramatically from the beginning of the semester to the midpoint of the same semester.

The purpose of Study Five was to provide evidence that prepracticum student's COSE scores would increase significantly after one mock counseling interview. In addition, convergent validity estimates and initial criterion validity estimates were used to determine the effects of anxiety and counseling self-efficacy as predictors of counselors' microskills. The participants were 26 graduate students enrolled in a graduate level prepracticum course at a large midwestern university. They completed the COSE, STAI, Satisfaction with Course Performance (SCP), Mock Interview Outcome Expectations (MOE), and Behavioral Rating Form (BRF). The results showed no significant increase in COSE scores after a mock interview, that other measures such as the SCP and MOE correlated positively with the COSE, and that anxiety and counseling self-efficacy made significant contributions to counseling performance.

The overarching purpose of the study was met because it produced a reliable and valid measure of counselors' self-estimates of their counseling activities that occur during a counseling session. Each of the five studies had different limitations; yet, they provided initial reliability and validity estimates for the COSE.

The Sutton and Fall study. Sutton and Fall (1995) examined the influence of school climate, counselor role, staff relationships, and selected demographic variables on school counselors' efficacy and outcome expectancy. The researchers hypothesized that school climate, counselor roles, and selected demographic variables would influence the efficacy expectancy of school counselors as well as the outcome expectancy of their actions.

The participants, 316 public school counselors in the state of Maine, responded to the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSS) and the School climate Scale (SCS) of which 383 copies were mailed (return-rate of 83%). The CSS was a modified teacher efficacy scale that measured aspects of a school counselor's self-efficacy. The SCS was designed to reflect the attitude and influence of others in the school toward the counselor and the school counseling program.

The results that indicated school counselor self-efficacy may be influenced by school climate were supported by previous research. Support of staff and administration were the strongest predictors of high counselor efficacy expectancy. In addition, outcome expectancy for school counselor behavior was influenced by administrative support for the counselor and the school counseling program. Although not surprising, school counselors who performed nonrelated counseling activities had lower expectancy for the outcome of their counselor related behaviors. The sample size and the setting of a rural state limit the generalizability of the study's findings. As advocates for their profession, school counselors efforts to develop effective methods for working with administrators, parents, and school boards in order that school counseling services and programs were supported and encouraged.

The Melchert, Hays, Wiljanen, and Kolocek study. Melchert, Hays, Wiljanen, and Kolocek (1996) developed a counseling self-efficacy instrument and used it to test hypotheses based on self-efficacy theory and models of counselor development. Information regarding nine developmental models of counselor training and supervision was presented. Because these models had not received consistent empirical support, the researchers designed a research project to examine change in counselors across a broad range of training and

experience when using self-efficacy theory. Melchert et al. predicted that self-efficacy for performing counseling increases as professional training and experience are acquired.

One hundred and thirty-eight students enrolled in counseling psychology courses at a large midwestern university and licensed professional psychologists working at or consulting for the counseling center at the same university were surveyed. The Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) was developed and consisted of items regarding knowledge and skill competencies related to the practice of individual and group counseling and therapy. The Self-Efficacy Inventory measured the same construct as the CSES and was used to examine the convergent construct-related validity of the CSES. The participants completed both the CSES and the Self-Efficacy Inventory.

The study's results yielded considerable empirical support for the CSES in terms of reliability and validity. Evidence of validity was ascertained by substantial correlations between CSES scores and level of training, as well as between CSES scores and amount of clinical experience. The results also suggested that the four groups of graduate students and professionals differed significantly in terms of counseling self-efficacy. These groupings correspond generally to other groups identified in stage models of counselor development; they provide support for the validity of stage models. Even though more research is needed to examine other factors that influence counselor and therapist development, this study provided innovative support for models of counselor development.

The Leach and Stoltenberg study. Leach and Stoltenberg (1997) conducted an empirical investigation of counselor self-efficacy using two theoretical domains: Intervention Skills Competence and Individual Differences of the Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of supervision. According to the IDM, counselors progress through three

primary developmental levels (Levels 1, 2, 3) as a function of three structures: (a) Self and Other Awareness, (b) Motivation, and (c) Dependency-Autonomy. They hypothesized that Level 2 counselors would exhibit significantly greater perceptions in all five domains (microskills, process, difficult client behaviors, cultural competence, and awareness of values) than Level 1 trainees. In addition, they theorized that trainees who reported more relevant clinical experience with a targeted clientele would indicate greater self-efficacy in dealing with the specific clients than trainees with less relevant clinical experience.

The participants were 142 master's-level and doctoral-level counseling students from four geographically diverse universities who completed the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) and the Supervisee Levels Questionnaire-Revised (SLSQ-R). The COSE measured a counselor's beliefs in his or her self-efficacy estimates for counseling behaviors, and the SLSQ-R was a questionnaire that delineated counselor-trainee's developmental level. Trainees completed the SLQ-R, read scenarios of depressed or sexually abused clients, imagined that they were assigned the clients from the scenarios, and finally completed the COSE regarding their reactions to working with the clients

The results revealed a significant difference between Level 1 and Level 2 trainees existed on all five domains, and Level 2 trainees reported greater efficacy of microskills than Level 1 trainees. When controlling for previous counseling experience, trainees who had seen at least seven sexually abused clients reported greater efficacy with potentially difficult client behaviors than trainees with one or three sexually abused clients seen previously. However, no significant efficacy differences based on trainee experience were found for the reactively depressed client. Thus, the hypotheses were partially confirmed. Overall, the

results provided more evidence for the validity of the IDM because Level 2 trainees reported greater self-efficacy across the five counseling areas.

The previous studies addressed counseling self-efficacy; the following study shall review conflict efficacy.

The Alper, Tjosvold, and Law study. Alper, Tjosvold and Law (2000) examined how conflict efficacy might mediate between conflict approach and team performance.

The study's findings suggested that the manner in which team members managed conflicts affected their sense of efficacy in dealing with conflicts and overall team performance. In other words, team members managing conflict for mutual benefit determined the strength of their beliefs regarding handling various conflicts and their supervisor's conclusions about their team's effectiveness.

Moral Development

D'Andrea and Daniels (1996) believe that school counselors underutilize Kohlberg's moral development theory even though its guidelines can be used to plan services and programs that match students' levels of psychological and moral maturity. As is reflected in the research literature, the use of this theory is underutilized when assessing the moral reasoning of school counselors. However, several studies (Bowman & Allen, 1988; Reeves, Bowman, & Cooley, 1989; Bowman & Reeves, 1987; Evans & Foster, 2000; Welfel & Lipsitz, 1983a; Welfel & Lipsitz, 1983b) have addressed the moral development of counselors-in-training but the research regarding practicing counselors, such as school counselors is limited. In 1983b, Welfel and Lipsitz reported that there was only one published study in the literature that explored professional counselors' moral reasoning ability. Years later, very little has changed.

Zahner and McDavis (1980) defined moral development “as the ability of an individual to think through and make good ethical decisions” (p. 243). By understanding the characteristics associated with these stages and accurately assessing their own levels of cognitive development, counselors may be better able to understand conflicts and moral dilemmas by taking on the role of others.

In accordance with the cognitive-developmental approach, Kohlberg (1976) focused on morality and the development of universal stages of moral thinking. Using this approach Kohlberg elaborated on seven key terms and assumptions: structuralism, phenomenism, interactionism, cognitive stages, self, role-taking, and the concept of equilibrium. For Kohlberg, moral development precedes moral reasoning; he further believed that norms, modal elements, and value elements are universal categories of moral reasoning. These universal elements provided the basis for which a person’s moral philosophy is formed.

Similar to Piaget’s delineation of stages of cognitive growth, Kohlberg (1969) identified six qualitatively different stages of moral development. These stages represent how people think about and deal with moral questions. Within the stages of moral development are three levels: Level 1-Preconventional, Level 2-Conventional, and Level 3-Conventional. Kohlberg believes that everyone passes through these stages of moral reasoning, going from simple to complex. One’s rate of moral development is determined by attaining the appropriate levels of cognitive development and being exposed to appropriated sociomoral experiences.

Stages of Moral Development

Descriptions of the levels and stages follow. First, the preconventional level, Stages 1 and 2, is usually comprised of children. During this level, individuals’ moral value of rules

and social expectations are external to themselves. In Stage 1, Punishment and Obedience, the person's thoughts are related to a concern for the self and associated with fear of punishment, particularly physical consequences. He or she has an unquestioning obedience to authority figures and an avoidance of punishment by not breaking rules. However, the individual has no appreciation of values behind rules and authority. In Stage 2, Individualism, Instrumental Purpose, and Exchange, rules are followed only when one's personal interests and desires are satisfied. The individual is only concerned occasionally about satisfying the needs of others.

Next, in the conventional level, individuals are interested in performing good or right roles, maintaining the conventional order, and meeting the expectations of others. Late adolescents and adults are primarily found at this level. In Stage 3, Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity, individual interests are no longer the focal point. More attention is given to the needs of the majority and towards meeting the expectations of others. In particular, interpersonal relationships and concern for the opinions and feelings of others, is demonstrated. There is an overwhelming desire to conform to group norms and to be accepted by the group. For the first time, behavior is frequently judged by its intention. Individuals in Stage 4, Social System and Conscience, are concerned with maintaining social order and preserving the society or group's welfare by employing a sense of duty and obedience to the law. One has been moved beyond acceptance from specific peer group to the consideration of society at large. One's concerns center on rules and responsibility.

Finally, the postconventional level (Stage 5 and 6) is where individuals begin thinking of themselves in terms of self-chosen principles in order to distinguish themselves

from the rules and expectations of others. Only a small minority of adults function at this level. In Stage 5, Social Contract or Utility and Individual Rights, the person defines his duty in terms of mutual agreements, compliance with the will or the rights of others, and the will and welfare of society as a whole. The greatest good for the greatest number is the motivating concern for this stage. In Stage 6, Universal Ethical Principles, a person becomes aware of the discrepancies between what is moral and what is legal; this may lead to inner conflicts over following one's moral conscience as opposed to unquestioningly obeying the law.

Critique of Moral Development Theory

Kohlberg has created a cognitive-developmental process of moral development that is divided into three basic levels: (a) preconventional, (b) conventional, and (c) postconventional. His stage model is sequential, thus, an individual has to pass through the previous stage in order to progress to the next higher and more complex stage. In addition, moral development changes as cognitive development changes. Using moral dilemmas can assess these changes.

A PsyInfo search performed in 2003 for moral development and/or reasoning yielded results of approximately 1500 empirical studies. Only two of Kohlberg's more than 100 articles have been written directly to counselors (Hayes, 1994). Longitudinal studies have given support to Kohlberg's contention that most people move through stages in the order that he had prescribed.

Two major criticisms regarding the comprehensiveness and consistency of this theory are its assumed ethnocentric viewpoint and bias toward women. Based on the all European-American, adolescent male sample, the theory and methodology would seem more favorable

to individuals with identical characteristic of the sampled group. The ethnocentric bias of the theory has been said to be incompatible with non-western cultures. However, existing research gives strong support for the stage model and demonstrates the applicability to a wide variety of cultural contexts (Kuhmerker, 1991). Still others, particularly Gilligan (1982), believe Kohlberg's approach misinterprets the moral experience of women. Gilligan claims that the distinctively feminine voice of care, connection, and responsibility in human relationships has been suppressed in the male-oriented account of justice reasoning. Additionally, she claims that Kohlberg's methods and theories misrepresent the moral development of women, which leads to artificially depressed scores by women on his Justice Reasoning scale.

In response to criticism regarding his theory, Kohlberg tightened up his scoring system, provided more precise and focused theoretical discussions, worked out in considerable detail the philosophical assumptions underlying his theories, and conducted an enormous amount of empirical research (Kuhmerker, 1991). Other criticisms concerning moral development theory are: (a) the relationship between moral reasoning and moral behavior is not easily found, (b) moral dilemmas used in his research may not have been appropriate for the populations (children do not typically encounter these dilemmas), (c) years of education are related to stage placement, and (d) the post-conventional highest level stages are rarely attained.

Research Studies

According to Lewis and Young (2000), numerous research studies have used traditional stage models to explore moral development, yet few have examined issues related to moral reasoning in counseling. As mentioned earlier, several studies have addressed the

moral development of counselors-in-training but little research exists that addresses the moral development of professional counselors. Hayes (1994) determined that only two of Kohlberg's more than 100 articles have focused on counselors.

The Zahner and McDavis study. In the one study that actually used professional counselors as part of the sample, Zahner and McDavis (1980) compared the moral development of professional and paraprofessional counselors and trainees and examined the effects that training programs had on their moral development. Specifically, the study's two purposes were to determine if differences existed between the two groups regarding moral development and to measure the effects that both groups' counselor training programs had on the cognitive moral development of their students.

Present and former students of the University of Florida's Counselor Education and current and former students in the Human Services Aid Program at Santa Fe Community College participated in this research investigation. A total of 176 participants were administered the Defining Issues Test (DIT) to assess their moral development.

The results revealed that professional counselors and trainees had higher levels of moral development than paraprofessional counselors and trainees. One might infer that the professional group of counselors would possibly make better ethical decisions than the paraprofessionals. The professional groups' higher scores may be due to their greater understanding of the higher levels of moral development. In addition, the results revealed that counselor training had minimal effect on moral development of either group. When interpreting these results, consideration should be given to other factors such as verbal or intellectual ability that may have caused the differences in the scores, Kohlberg's belief that

one stage is better than another, and whether the implicit cultural values allow for universality.

Turning now to studies that addressed counselors-in training, many of them examined moral development in relation to empathy. Ivey and Ivey (1999) defined empathy as the ability of counselors to understand and experience clients' internal world and to communicate their understanding to clients. The Empathic Understanding Scale (EU) was most widely used in the following studies as the measure that assessed empathy.

According to the Bowman and Reeves (1987), in counselor training programs that are interested in improving their effectiveness, a special emphasis must be placed on variables related to empathy. More specifically, role-taking empathy, which "emphasizes the counselor's ability to understand the client's frame of reference or point of view," (Bowman & Reeves, 1987; p. 293) should be a major focus due to its importance in establishing rapport and developing the counseling relationship. This capacity to take and share the perspectives of others is an important prerequisite for the process of moral development and is essential to conflict management.

The Bowman and Reeves study. Bowman and Reeves (1987) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine the relationship between empathy and moral development in beginning masters' level students from counseling and psychology programs. The researchers found it conceivable to think that counselors who possessed high-level moral reasoning capacities would likely respond empathically to clients.

The 35 participants were beginning master's level students in counselor education, educational psychology, and psychology programs enrolled in three sections of a counseling practicum facilitative skills development class. After participants completed the Defining

Issues Test (DIT) in a class session prior to making their first counseling audiotape, they immediately began participation in a 12-week facilitative skills training course based on the three-stage model of exploration, understanding and goal setting, and facilitative action (Egan, 1985). Using the DIT and the Empathic Understanding Scale (EU), judges rated the facilitative level of the counseling responses of counselors-in-training. Another empathy measure, in which counselors-in-training provided written responses to client statements recorded during a videotaped counseling interview, was used.

The results suggested a direct relationship between the moral development levels of counselor trainees and their ability to empathize with clients. There was a significant correlation between moral development and the two measures of empathy: supervisor's ratings of final audiotapes and DIT. In addition, the two measures of empathy were significantly related to each other. Overall, the results were consistent with Kohlberg's (1969) theory that the capacity for role-taking is central to and a precondition for the process of moral development.

The Bowman and Allen study. Bowman and Allen (1988) investigated their prediction that counselor trainees with high moral judgment scores would receive higher empathic understanding ratings after training than trainees with low moral judgment scores. They were looking for a possible link between moral judgment and the demonstration of empathic understanding.

The Defining Issues Test (DIT) was administered to 20 graduate students with no previous counseling experience but were enrolled in an introductory counseling course. Two groups were formed based on P-scores, or preference for principled moral reasoning. Group 1 members' scores were in the highest level of moral judgment quadrant and Group 2 was

comprised of individuals with the lowest level of moral judgment. After completion of the DIT, all students participated in 10 weeks of facilitative skills training and provided audiotapes of counseling sessions for practice and evaluation. The students' final tapes were rated for empathy using the Empathic Understanding Scale (EU).

In accordance with their prediction, they found a significant difference after training between students with high and low moral development levels. The mean for the high moral development group was 2.196, while the low moral development group yielded a mean of 1.895. In other words, moral development level can influence the counselor trainee's ability to benefit from facilitative skills training. It was believed that moral judgment may be means for identifying individuals who could benefit from empathy training. Despite the significant findings, the results are limited because the participants' average empathy ratings of high moral judgment group were below Carkhuff's minimal facilitative level.

The Reeves, Bowman, and Cooley study. (Reeves, Bowman, & Cooley, 1989), in a third study regarding empathy and moral development, the empathic responses of counseling students who demonstration high and low levels of moral development were compared. The purpose of the study was to determine whether empathic responses were a function of both the counselor's and the client's moral development level.

Reeves et al. (1989) surveyed 27 upper-level undergraduates and beginning master's level students in counselor education, educational psychology, psychology, and child development. They were administered the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which measured the degree that principled moral reasoning is used to resolve moral dilemmas. The Empathic Understanding Scale (EU) was used in order to determine the facilitative level of counseling responses. Two groups, low-moral-development and high-moral-development, were formed.

At the end of training, participants completed a second empathic measure that involved written responses to the audiotaped statements of clients. After the students completed the DIT, they began participating in a 12-week facilitative skills training based on Egan's (1986) model.

The findings revealed no differences in expressed empathy between the high-moral-development and low-moral-development groups in response to clients' statements that represented higher and lower levels of moral reasoning. Yet, it was discovered that both groups responded more empathically to clients whose moral development were lower than their own. When observing the significantly higher empathy ratings for the high-moral-development group's responses to lower-level Kohlbergian client statements, it appeared that counselor empathy was related to both the counselor' and the client's level of moral development. Age and gender of participants were identified as characteristics of participants that are critical factors to consider when interpreting the study's results. Another factor to consider was that the groups did not differ in moral development to Rest's (1979) recommended degree.

The Lewis and Young study. Another study of empathy and moral development research, Lewis and Young (2000) examined the relationship between the moral reasoning style (care vs. justice orientation) and empathetic expressions of counselors. They hypothesized that counselors with moral reasoning styles similar to those of their clients would demonstrate higher levels of empathy than counselors whose moral reasoning styles differ from those of their clients. Additionally, it was hypothesized that care-oriented counselors would demonstrate higher levels of empathy than would justice-oriented counselors, regardless of moral reasoning style. According to Lewis and Young, this study

was believed to be the only one that had directly examined the impact of moral reasoning style on counselors' use of empathy.

To test their hypothesis, Lewis and Young studied 44 undergraduate educational psychology students and graduate counselors-in-training at a midsized southern public university. A series of eight vignettes written by the researcher and consisting of client statements—four vignettes representing a care-oriented moral reasoning style and four representing a justice-orientation style—were developed. The Empathic Understanding Scale (EU) was used to determine the facilitative level of a counselor's response and to measure participants' responses to the vignettes. In addition, the Measure of Moral Orientation (MMO) was utilized to assess an individual's predominant moral orientation style (i.e., care and justice modes of moral reasoning). According to Lewis and Young, the MMO is the only known instrument developed specifically to measure both care and justice moral reasoning styles and provide a self-description of moral reasoning style.

The results indicated that counselors' styles of moral reasoning had no significant impact on their ability to respond empathically to clients of either their own or differing moral reasoning style. In other words, being able to respond empathically was not based on a care orientation or justice-orientation. The results did not provide support for the assertion that moral reasoning styles are an important factor in counselors' ability to function effectively. Finally, the results provided information about the use of the relatively new MMO as it applies to moral reasoning style. Although the hypotheses were not supported, the results of the study added to the literature regarding moral reasoning styles.

The remaining studies reviewed here address other topics such as moral development and ethical orientation, level of training and counseling experience, and multicultural training.

The Welfel and Lipsitz study. Welfel and Lipsitz (1983a) conducted a study to examine the relationship between stage of ethical orientation and stage of moral reasoning. Van Hoose and Paradise's (1979) model of ethical decision making, which was based largely on Kohlberg's (1969) stages of moral development, was described in the paper. Their five-stage model was the first conceptual model in the literature to explain how counselors reason about ethical issues (Van Hoose & Paradise, 1979). The researchers three purposes for the study were: (a) to investigate the relationship between Ethical Judgment Scale (EJS) scores and scores on the Defining Issues Test (DIT), (b) to explore how undergraduate human development majors intending on counseling careers compared with master's and doctoral level counseling students, and (c) to explore how certain counselor attributes related to stage of ethical orientation.

The participants in this study included 63 counselors matriculating at Boston College who represented four levels of training: undergraduate seniors in human development majors intending on careers in counseling and human services, beginning master's students in counseling, advanced master's students in counseling, and doctoral students in counseling. The EJS was used to measure stage of ethical orientation, while the DIT was used to assess moral development.

Overall, the findings revealed that ethical orientation was significantly related to moral reasoning, counseling experience, and number of contributions to professional and social action organizations. Based on the significant association found between the DIT and

the EJS, it was determined that the EJS assessed a similar but not identical construct to moral reasoning. Students who had higher scores for the EJS were also students with higher levels of training in counseling. In addition, significant differences were found between doctoral students and undergraduates and between the doctoral students and beginning master's students. These significant differences lend support to the stages of ethical orientation representing a developmental continuum. Because the correlations were moderate and provided no information regarding the causes of the patterns, the results of the study were interpreted with caution.

The Welfel and Lipsitz study. Welfel and Lipsitz (1983b) explored the relationships among level of training in counseling, work experience, and the individual's capacity to make mature moral judgments. They hypothesized that both level of training and work experience would be significantly related to stage of moral reasoning and that the moral reasoning scores of counselors would be comparable to those of students in other forms of undergraduate training.

To test their hypothesis, Welfel and Lipsitz investigated 63 counselors matriculating at Boston College who represented the following four levels of training: undergraduate seniors in human development majors intending on careers in counseling and human services, beginning master's students in counseling, advanced master's students in counseling, and doctoral students in counseling. The Defining Issues Test (DIT) assessed students' moral development.

The findings supported the belief that moral reasoning is associated with level of training within graduate education. This contributed to the findings of Zahner and McDavis (1980). Counselors-in-training with more experience in the field scored higher on the DIT

than their less experienced counterparts, which supported the researchers' prediction. In addition, the findings were consistent with trends in moral reasoning research reporting that education is positively associated with Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Rest, 1979). It appeared as if individuals enrolled in graduate and undergraduate study in counseling have similar moral reasoning capacity to those entering other professions.

The generalizability of these findings is limited because the sample was small and nonrandom. Nevertheless, the researchers were encouraged by the results and believed that the study served as a reminder that developmental psychology and basic psychological research may have practical uses for practitioners and counselor educators.

The Evans and Foster study. Evans and Foster (2000) conducted an exploratory study of the relationship between multicultural training and the moral and racial identity development of European American counselors-in-training. A review of the literature regarding moral development and racial identity theory (contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion, and autonomy) was provided. The researchers asked three questions: (a) Is there a relationship between a student's racial identity development and moral development scores? (b) Is multicultural training or experience in the counseling field related to moral and racial identity development? and (c) What demographic factors are related to racial identity development?

Sixty-eight European American masters and educational specialties students in a counselor education program at a southeastern university participated in this study. Two instruments, the Defining Issues Test (DIT, Short Version) that appraised moral reasoning and the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRAIS) that measured racial identity, were used.

The findings showed no relationship between higher levels of moral development and higher levels of racial identity development. However, the findings revealed a significant relationship between the number of multicultural training hours and the variables of reintegration and autonomy. When a counselor-in-training had a large number of hours of multicultural training, he or she more likely had a lower WRAIS reintegration score and a higher Autonomy score. Regarding the researchers' third question, it seemed that the older respondent was the more likely he or she would obtain higher scores on the Pseudo-Independence subscale.

Based on the small sample size and nonrandom selection, applying the study's findings to general populations is not prudent. The lack of effectiveness of the multicultural training on the moral development of counselors-in-training was due possibly to the fact that specific elements to the enhancement of moral reasoning were not included in the training.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

Research Questions

The present study was descriptive in nature. The goal of the study was to learn more about school counselors and conflict management. More specifically, the following questions were addressed in the data collection and analysis: (a) How are the participants distributed across categories of conflict management styles? (b) How strong is their conflict management self-efficacy? and (c) At what levels of moral development are they? Learning more about the conflict management styles, conflict management self-efficacy, and moral development of school counselors is important because school counselors are increasingly responsible for the implementation of conflict resolution programs in their school settings. Therefore, it is important to know how they understand the role of conflict in their lives and in the lives of others so that they model effective conflict resolution skills and provide appropriate interventions for clients.

Research Design

This quantitative descriptive study involved the collection of factual information that describes how school counselors understand conflict in their lives and in the lives of others. This descriptive study followed an epidemiological or survey research design. According to Isaac and Michael (1995), the purpose of descriptive research is “to describe systemically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest, factually and accurately” (p. 50). Therefore, no hypotheses, predictions, or explanations for relationships are included in this research study. Heppner, Kivlighan, and Wampold (1999) believe that oftentimes it is

useful for counselors to carefully describe the occurrence of a variable, and as a result, survey research has made important contributions to the counseling profession.

The population of respondents comprised all of the school counselors in a large school district in a southeastern state. Other counselors within the district who were identified as transitional counselors were excluded from the study. The data for the present study were collected using four different instruments: demographic questionnaire, Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument (TKI), Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CMSES), and the Defining Issues Test (DIT). Development of the CMSES is part of the research study, which was validated using select members of the dissertation committee.

Participants and Setting

The participants in the present study were school counselors in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS). Eighty school counselors in the 25th largest school district in the United States and second largest school system in North Carolina behind Charlotte-Mecklenburg were the participants in this descriptive study. They were employed in a school within the system's 129 schools that serve approximately 109,000 students. There are 80 elementary, 27 middle, 16 high, and six specialty/optional schools within this school system. Of the 129 schools in Wake County, 47 are magnet and/or year round schools (Creative Arts and Sciences, Gifted and Talented, International Studies, Global Communications, International Baccalaureate, Language Exploration, Community Model, Leadership, Montessori, Museums, University Connections, Accelerated Studies and Year-Round).

The population included 236 school counselors: 85 at elementary, 74 at middle, and 67 at high school levels. The sample for this study consisted of a cross section of school counselors from urban, suburban, and rural schools within this school system. The

participants were recruited through interoffice correspondence, inter-county email, and school counselors meetings.

Variables

Demographic Information

A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed in order to collect the following information: age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience as a school counselor, the hours of training in conflict management, grade level of school (elementary, middle, or high), and location of school (rural, suburban, and urban). Years of experience as a school counselor were categorized into the following four groups: novice, tenured, experienced, and veteran. In addition, hours of conflict resolution/management training were grouped into the following categories: brief, moderate, significant, and extensive.

Conflict Management Style

The Thomas-Kilmann Management of Differences Exercise (MODE) (TKI, 1974) assessed the conflict management styles. It assessed assertiveness and cooperativeness as determined by one of the following conflict management styles. The five styles are: (a) Accommodating, (b) Avoiding, (c) Collaborating, (d) Competing, and (e) Compromising (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Thomas, 1974, 1976). The Accommodating style focuses upon appeasement—attending to the other’s concerns without attending to one’s own. When accommodating, an individual neglects his or her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. The Avoiding conflict style is indifferent to or withdraws from the concerns of either party. In the course of avoiding, an individual does not immediately pursue his or her own concerns or those of the other person. The Collaborating style desires to fully satisfy and integrate the concerns of both parties. Through collaborating, an individual attempts to

work with the other person to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. The Competing style desires to dominate the other person in order to address his or her concerns. When competing, an individual pursues his or her own concerns at the other person's expense. The Compromising conflict management style gives up something and keeps something. While compromising, the objective is to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties.

The TKI is the most widely used questionnaire of its type in both research and training in North America (Volkema & Bergmann, 1995). It consists of 30 forced-choice questions from which the respondent chooses between two paired statements, each describing one of the five conflict styles included in the managerial grid. First, participants are asked to consider situations in which they find their wishes differ from those of another person. Then, they chose from two paired statements the one that is more characteristic of their behavioral response. Using the score sheet, with columns labeled as: Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating, the participant's answers that correspond to their answers on the questionnaire are circled. The range of possible scores for each style is from 0 (for very low use) to 12 (for very high use). Scoring the TKI is accomplished by totaling the number of items circled in each column. Graphing the items in relation to the scores of managers who have already taken the TKI yields a profile of conflict management skills a person uses in conflict situations. Across studies, the TKI's Cronbach alphas have ranged from .34 to .91 with a mean of .58. The test-retest reliability scores range across studies from .37 to .90 with a mean of .63. Validity support for the TKI's includes demonstrated correlations between the five styles of conflict management and the two underlying dimensions and demonstrated correlations between TKI scores and

scores on other related instruments (Van de Vliert & Kananoff, 1990). A description of the TKI is found in Appendix B.

The TKI has been criticized for its inability to distinguish between the Compromising and Collaborating conflict management styles. Another problem is that the Avoiding conflict management style has been categorized as low concern for self and low concern for the other, when in actuality the individual may be showing a high concern for self by avoiding an argument. Finally, general research supports only three main styles: avoidance, competitive, and integrative and not the five styles.

Conflict Management Self-efficacy

The Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CMSES) was developed using Bandura's (1997) guidelines for scale construction in order to assess school counselor's self-efficacy in managing conflict. It was designed to measure school counselors' level and strength of conflict management self-efficacy. According to Raider, Coleman, and Gerson (2000) there is very little systematic research on the pedagogy of conflict resolution or on the models and methods used to teach conflict management skills to adult or student learners. Despite the lack of research, Girard and Koch (1996) have outlined values, beliefs, attitudes, and skills that are essential prerequisites for conflict resolution. They designed their manual, *Conflict Resolution in the Schools: A Manual for Educators*, for educators who prepare elementary and secondary school teachers, administrators, and counselors, and those who provide in-service training to these professionals. Similar to Girard and Koch's manual, the Coleman Raider model (Raider et al., 2000) teaches negotiation and mediation skills to adult learners in a workshop format.

Using Girard and Koch's (1996) Module 2: The Concepts and Skills of Conflict Resolution and Coleman Raider Workshop Design's objectives and pedagogy (Raider et al., 2000), the researcher developed objectives and items for the Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CMSES). The objectives were delineated into four categories: conflict management knowledge (CMK), conflict management skills (CMS), conflict management awareness (CMA) and conflict management relationship (CMR). First, *Knowledge* measures theoretical orientations of conflict and its management. Second, *Skills* measure general counseling and specific conflict management skills. Third, *Awareness* measures general understanding of the aspects of conflict. Finally, *Relationship* measures the counselor's interaction process with the individuals in conflict.

After development of the scale, it was reviewed and critiqued by the chair of the advisory committee and then revised by the researcher. Then, the scale was given to the "experts" (select members of the dissertation committee) to determine whether the objectives represented their respective categories of CMK, CMS, CMA, or CMR. In addition, the experts were to determine if the items described specific conflict management behaviors and to provide suggestions for revisions if they did not. This review of the CMSES provided the content validity process that determined whether objectives and items represented appropriate conflict management behaviors. Upon receipt of feedback from the experts, the researcher revised the scale to reflect the recommendations. As a result, the original 33-item scale was reduced to 22 items because items that did not meet the above-mentioned criteria from eliminated. More specifically, items that did not receive all "yeses" from the committee were eliminated and suggested items were revised. The revised scale was re-submitted to the experts for a final critique; however, no additional corrections were recommended or made.

The scale's items are a combination of skills specific to counseling and conflict management. Respondents were instructed to imagine that were about to provide counseling for two students who were in a conflict with each other. Then, they were to indicate with a check mark the items that they were confident they could perform "right now." Counselors' level of conflict management self-efficacy is obtained by counting the total number of check marks they provided. Levels of conflict management self-efficacy scores on this scale can range from 0 to 22. Finally, respondents were asked to rate how confident they think they are to perform the behaviors in the items that were checked. This estimation known as strength of their conflict management self-efficacy ranged from 0 (no confidence) to 100 (complete confidence). Totaling the strength ratings and then dividing the sum by 22 (number of items on the CMSES) obtained the strength scores. A copy of the CMSES is in Appendix C.

Moral Development

The Defining Issues Test (DIT) was used to determine the counselor's level of moral development. Rest (1979) developed the DIT to measure moral judgment based on Kohlberg's (1976) six stages of moral reasoning. The test uses six moral dilemmas and demonstrates how individuals at different stages of moral development perceive moral dilemmas differently. The six-dilemma version's test-retest reliability ranges from .70 to .80, and internal consistency reliability is also between .70 and .80. Correlations with age are in the .60's and .70's (Rest, 1988). The shorter 3-dilemma (see Appendix D) version includes stories of Heinz, Escaped Prisoner, and the Newspaper has the highest correlation of any three-story set with the six-story version (Rest, 1986).

For the purpose of this study, moral development levels were categorized as being “low” or “high” as ascertained by predetermined cutoff points from participants’ DIT scores (Rest, 1986). The most frequently used score from the DIT, the P-score, was computed for this study. Rest (1990) defines the P-score as the “sum of weighted ranks given to Stage 5 and 6 items” (p. 4.2). Further interpretation of the P index is the degree of importance that participants place on the DIT items found in Stages 5 and 6. P-scores are calculated by summing the amount of times that Stage 5 and 6 items are chosen as the first, second, third, or fourth important consideration, and weighting these ranks with points of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively (Rest, 1986). Final P-scores are written as percentages and can range from 0 to 95. The P-score for the shorter three-dilemma test correlates at .93 with the P-score for the longer version. From the six-dilemma version, test-retest reliability ranges from .70 to .80, and internal consistency reliability is also between .70 and .80. Correlations with age are in the .60’s and .70’s (Rest, 1988). This study compared the P-score averages of the participants to the norm–referenced group (Rest, 1988, p. ii):

- 65.2 Moral philosophy and political science doctoral students
- 59.8 Seminarians in a liberal Protestant seminary
- 53.2 Advanced law students
- 49.5 Practicing medical physicians
- 42.3 Average college student
- 40.0 Average of adults in general
- 31.8 Average senior high student
- 21.9 Average junior high student
- 18.9 Institutional delinquent boys, 16 years old

The participants were instructed to read each of the three dilemmas, decide upon a course of action, rank each of the 12 statements, and then choose and prioritize the four most important courses of action. The shorter version of the DIT that was used in this investigation required approximately 15-30 minutes for participants to complete. When scored by hand, calculating the P-scores (percentages of principled reasoning of Kohlberg's stages 5 and 6) took approximately 10 minutes per test.

Procedure

Data Collection

School counselors were identified through the Counseling and Student Services (CASS) Department who are in charge of counselors within the school system. The researcher completed the requirements for the school system's internal review board and the research study was approved. As part of the review process, the researcher met with members of the CASS department to address questions and concerns regarding the research study. School assignments, counselors' names, email addresses, and telephone numbers, and additional information were obtained from the counseling department.

The researcher distributed survey packets via interoffice correspondence during the spring semester. Prior to sending the packets, the researcher contacted the respondents via email (see Appendix E) to request their participation in the research study and cooperation in completing the forthcoming survey packets. Several respondents contacted the researcher via email to express their willingness to participate in the research study. Approximately two weeks later, survey packets containing the following items: the informed consent letter (see Appendix F), a demographic questionnaire developed by the researcher, TKI, CMSES, and DIT were either given to respondents or mailed to them through interoffice correspondence.

The researcher contacted respondents again via email (Appendix G) to inform them that the survey packets had been forwarded to them by courier service and gave a deadline to have packets returned. The survey packets were returned to the researcher via interoffice correspondence in provided envelopes with the researcher's name and school name already affixed. Due to the response rate and a number of invalid DITs, the researcher contacted respondents via email (see Appendix H) to request that they reconsider completing the survey. No further solicitation for surveys were requested once the predetermined return rate of 25% was met.

Complying with detailed instructions provided in the test manuals, the researcher scored the TKI, CMSES, and the DIT by hand upon receipt of them from the respondents. None of the test instruments were particularly difficult to score, but the scoring of the DIT did require a substantial amount of time in comparison to the other two.

Data Analyses

Data from the conflict management styles, conflict management self-efficacy and moral development instrument were analyzed descriptively. Means, standard deviations, and percentages were derived for the overall sample and categorized by age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience as a school counselor, and of hours of conflict management training of the counselors. Information regarding grade level (elementary, middle, or high) and location (rural, urban, or suburban) of schools were also analyzed.

The remaining three variables were conflict management styles, conflict management self-efficacy, and moral development. Conflict management styles were measured using the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument (TKI). The results of the TKI categorized counselors into one of the five styles: Accommodating, Avoiding, Collaborating, Competing, or

Compromising. Conflict management self-efficacy was measured utilizing the Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CMSES). Based on their responses, counselors were assigned mean strength scores that ranged from 0 to 100. The Defining Issues Test (DIT) measured moral development using P-scores and its results determined whether counselors possessed low or high levels of moral development.

In sum, the TKI produced categorical data, means, and standard deviations; the CMSES generated mean strength scores and standard deviations; and the DIT yielded P-scores (principled score), standard deviations, and rankings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Quantitative Analyses

Demographic Information

Survey packets were mailed out to 236 school counselors in a large public school system. The advisory committee set the predetermined response rate for returned surveys at 25%; however, 34% of the survey packets were returned. From the initial mailing, 25% of the surveys were returned; nonetheless, a follow-up email was sent to the participants because several of the Defining Issues Test (DIT) questionnaires were invalidated due to high M scores. Following this email, another 20 additional surveys were returned. As a result, only 63 of 80 survey packets contained DIT questionnaires that were valid and/or completed.

Brief discussions of demographic findings follow. Eighty school counselors participated in this study of which 80% were females and 16.25% were males while the remaining 3.75% of the sample did not identify their gender. The mean age of school counselors in this study was 41.80 with a standard deviation of 10.44 (Table 1). In this study, European Americans at 77.5% formed the racial category with the most school counselors, 11.25% were African American, 1.25% were Hispanic American, 1.25% were Asian American, 1.25% were Native American, and 0% were Multiracial. Two participants identified themselves as “Caucasian” but were categorized as “European American,” because the racial categories used on the demographic questionnaire are those used by the United States Census 2000. Six (7.5%) others either did not respond, did not return the demographic

questionnaire, or simply put “American” as their racial category, thus, they were grouped together in a category entitled “Unknown.”

The mean years of experience of 9.0 years with a standard deviation of 6.30 falls into the tenured category. Years as a school counselor were delineated into four categories: (a) novice (0-3 years), (b) tenured (4-10 years), (c) experienced (11-20) years, and (d) veteran (21+ years). The average for hours of conflict resolution/management training of 12.92 was in the significant category. Hours of conflict resolution/management training was comprised of four groups: (a) brief (0-8 hours), (b) moderate (9-18 hours), (c) significant (19-39 hours), and (d) extensive (40+ hours). Thirty-seven and one half percent of the participants were elementary school counselors while 32.50% and 30% were middle and high school counselors, respectively. Suburban schools counselors at 60% comprised the largest location category. When participants did not respond, did not return the demographic questionnaire, or simply put a question mark for their answer, their scores were grouped together in a category entitled “Unknown.”

Table 1

Age, Years of Experience, and Hours of Training

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age Range	41.81	10.44
Years of Experience	9.01	6.30
Hours of Training	12.97	12.08

N=77

Conflict Management Styles

The Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument (TKI) was used to identify the preferred conflict management style that participants use when in a conflict situation. According to the

TKI (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974), the individual's preferred style employed in conflict situations can be described as assertiveness (the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns) and cooperativeness (the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns). These two dimensions of behavior provide the framework to understand the following five conflict styles: Accommodating, Avoiding, Collaborating, Competing, and Compromising. Individuals have the capability to use each style; however, many have a single preferred style that may depend on personal predispositions and the requirements of the conflict situation (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

There are no universally correct answers to this instrument. A participant's score on each of the five conflict management styles was obtained by counting the number of times which statements representing a particular conflict style were selected over other statements. Each of the five conflict management styles was paired with each other three times. The score for a given style could range from 0 to 12.

Eighty-seven and a half percent of the participants' scores categorized school counselors as preferring one of the original five conflict styles. However, in order to account for the remaining 12.50% of the conflict styles' scores, another style termed as "Mixed" was created. Although the TKI is said to use ipsative scoring (a person cannot score highly on all styles, and a higher score on one style would mean a corresponding decrease on the scores of the remaining styles), 10 participants' conflict management styles were not absolutely defined. In other words, they rated two or more of the styles the same. Perhaps they were choosing too many socially desirable responses, or made errors in using the response scales (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Table 2 presents a summary of the conflict management style findings as they relate to certain descriptive information regarding the participants.

Table 2

Summary of Conflict Management Style Findings

	Accommodating N=14	Avoiding N=20	Collaborating N=7	Competing N=4	Compromising N=25	Mixed N=10	Total 100	N=80
Age Range								
20s	12.50	25.0	0	25.0	25.0	12.50	100	8
30s	14.29	42.86	17.89	0	21.43	3.57	100	28
40s	16.67	5.56	11.11	5.56	50.00	11.11	100	18
50+	21.74	21.74	0	4.35	30.43	21.74	100	23
Unknown	33.33	0	0	0	33.33	33.33	100	3
Sex								
Female	13.75	26.56	6.25	6.25	31.25	12.50	100	64
Male	15.38	23.08	23.08	0	30.77	7.69	100	13
Unknown	33.33	0	0	0	33.33	33.33	100	3
Race/ Ethnicity								
African American	11.11	33.33	0	0	55.56	0	100	9
Asian American	0	0	100	0	0	0	100	1
European American	19.35	24.19	9.68	6.45	27.42	12.90	100	62
Hispanic American	0	100	0	0	0	0	100	1
Native American	0	100	0	0	0	0	100	1
Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
Unknown	16.67	0	0	0	50.00	33.33	100	6

Table 2 (continued)

	Accommodating N=14	Avoiding N=20	Collaborating N=7	Competing N=4	Compromising N=25	Mixed N=10	Total 100	N=80
Years of Experience								
Novice	29.41	29.41	5.88	11.76	11.76	11.76	100	17
Tenured	8.82	32.35	17.65	2.94	29.41	8.82	100	34
Experienced	14.29	19.05	0	4.76	47.62	14.29	100	21
Veteran	40.00	0	0	0	40.00	20.00	100	5
Unknown	33.33	0	0	0	33.33	33.33	100	3
Hours of Training								
Brief	7.69	38.46	11.54	7.69	26.92	0	100	27
Moderate	20.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	40.00	15.00	100	20
Significant	29.41	41.18	0	0	17.65	11.76	100	17
Extensive	20.00	0	20.00	0	40.00	20.00	100	5
Unknown	18.18	9.09	9.09	9.09	36.36	18.18	100	11
Level of School								
Elementary	13.33	26.67	6.67	10.00	30.00	13.33	100	30
Middle	11.54	23.08	7.69	0	42.31	15.38	100	26
High	29.17	25.00	12.50	4.17	20.83	8.33	100	24

Table 2 (continued)

	Accommodating N=14	Avoiding N=20	Collaborating N=7	Competing N=4	Compromising N=25	Mixed N=10	Total 100	N=80
Location of School								
Rural	26.67	40.00	6.67	6.67	6.67	13.33	100	15
Suburban	18.75	22.92	4.17	2.08	41.67	10.42	100	48
Urban	0	15.38	30.77	15.38	23.08	15.38	100	13
Unknown	25.00	25.00	0	0	25.00	25.00	100	4
Total	17.50	25.00	8.75	5.00	31.25	12.50	100	80

Note. Numbers in table are percentages except for *N* columns.

The mean scores (Table 3) of the participants' responses for each conflict management style were used to determine how school counselors compared to the norm-referenced group of middle and upper level managers from business and government organizations (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Generally speaking, preference for the Compromising style seemed similar in the two cohorts. On the remaining conflict management styles, school counselors appeared to prefer the Accommodating and Avoiding more and Collaborating and Competing less than the managers. A profile of these scores can be seen graphically in Figure 1. First, the school counselors' mean score for the Accommodating conflict management style was higher than the scores of 90% of the reference group. Compared to this group, participants' preference of Accommodating is high. Second, the sample's mean Avoiding score translates roughly to the 70th percentile in reference group. In comparison to this group, the sample's use of Avoiding is about average. Third, the school counselors' mean Collaborating score is below approximately 80% of the norms population. Compared to the reference group, the samples' use of Collaborating is

deemed to be low. Fourth, the mean score for the Competing conflict management style is below 88% of the norms referenced group. When compared to this group, participants' preference for Competing was low. Finally, the average score for the Compromising style is approximately at the midpoint of the reference group. This means that the sample's partiality to Compromising is about average when compared to this group.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Conflict Management Styles

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Accommodating	8.35	9.45
Avoiding	7.26	2.39
Collaborating	5.29	2.28
Competing	2.29	2.10
Compromising	7.76	1.87

N = 80

Table 4 presents a rank of conflict management styles for the school counselor sample across age, sex, race, years of experience, hours of training, grade level of school, and location of school.

		Accommodating	Avoiding	Collaborating	Competing	Compromising
High 25%	100%					
		12	12		12	12
		11	11			
		10	10	12	11	11
	90%	9	9	11	10	10
	8 8.35 (SC)					
	80%	7	8	10	9	9
		6		9		
Middle 50%	70%		7.26 (SC)		7	8
			7			
	60%					
		5		8	6	
	50%		6			7.76 (SC)
				7		7
	40%				5	
		4				6
30%		5		4		
					5	
				6		
		3				
Low 25%	20%		4	5.29 (SC)	3	
				5		4
	10%		3		2.29 (SC)	
				4	2	
				3		3
	2	2	2		2	
	1	1	1	1	1	
0%	0	0	0	0	0	

Figure 1. Profile comparing school counselors with government managers on the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument.

Scores designated with SC are the mean scores for the school counselor participants (See Table 3).

Table 4

Rank Order of Conflict Management Style Preferences For School Counselors

	Accommodating N=14	Avoiding N=20	Collaborating N=7	Competing N=4	Compromising N=25	Mixed N=10
Age Range						
20s	4	1	6	1	1	4
30s	4	1	3	6	2	5
40s	2	5	5	5	1	3
50+	2	2	6	5	1	2
Unknown	1	4	4	4	1	1
Summary	13	13	24	19	6	15
Sex						
Female	3	2	5	5	1	4
Male	3	2	2	5	1	4
Unknown	1	4	4	4	1	1
Summary	7	8	11	14	3	9

Table 4 (continued)

	Accommodating N=14	Avoiding N=20	Collaborating N=7	Competing N=4	Compromising N=25	Mixed N=10
Race/ Ethnicity						
African American	3	2	4	4	1	4
Asian American	2	2	1	2	2	2
European American	3	2	5	6	1	4
Hispanic American	2	1	2	2	2	2
Native American	2	1	2	2	2	2
Multiracial	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unknown	3	4	4	4	1	2
Summary	5	12	18	20	9	16
Years of Experience						
Novice	1	1	3	2	2	2
Tenured	4	1	3	6	2	5
Experienced	2	4	6	5	1	2
Veteran	1	3	3	3	1	2
Unknown	1	2	2	2	1	1
Summary	9	11	17	18	7	12

Table 4 (continued)

	Accommodating N=14	Avoiding N=20	Collaborating N=7	Competing N=4	Compromising N=25	Mixed N=10
Hours of Training						
Brief	4	1	3	4	2	6
Moderate	2	4	4	6	1	3
Significant	2	1	5	5	3	4
Extensive	2	5	2	5	1	2
Unknown	2	4	4	4	1	2
Summary	12	15	18	24	8	17
Level of School						
Elementary	3	2	6	5	1	3
Middle	4	2	5	6	1	3
High	1	2	4	6	3	5
Summary	8	6	15	17	5	11
Location of School						
Rural	2	1	4	4	4	3
Suburban	3	2	5	6	1	4
Urban	4	3	1	3	2	3
Unknown	1	1	5	5	1	1
Summary	10	7	15	18	8	11

Note. Numbers indicate rank. Lower scores = higher rank.

According to the results, there appeared to be differences among the groups. These results for the rank orderings will be discussed according to the following categories: age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of school counseling experience, hours of conflict resolution/management training, grade level of school, and location of school. Counselors seemed to have different rank order of preferences by age group. In the 20s, they seemed to favor Avoiding, Competing, and Compromising. In the 30s there was a strong preference for the Avoiding style. For the 40s, there was a strong preference for the Compromising style. For the 50s, Compromising was the preferred style, with Accommodating, Avoiding, and Mixed also being relatively popular. In the age unknown group of which there were only three people, the findings were one Accommodating, one Compromising, and one Mixed. In looking at the summary data, Compromising seemed to be the most popular style with Accommodating, Avoiding, Competing, and Mixed clustered relatively close to each other, and Collaborating being the least favored.

School counselors appeared to have different preferences according to sex. Females seemed to favor Compromising and the Avoiding styles. Males, on the hand, gave the impression that they preferred Compromising, and then Avoiding and Collaborating equally. The sex unknown category preferred equally Accommodating, Compromising, and Mixed. The summary data showed that all of the styles are clustered closely together with the exception of Compromising.

African Americans seemed to strongly favor the Compromising conflict management style. Additionally, African Americans had a somewhat moderate preference for Avoiding. European American counselors had a fairly similar partiality for the Compromising and Avoiding styles. Counselors in the race/ethnicity unknown group had the strongest

preference for Compromising; however, their preference for the Avoiding, Accommodating, and Mixed conflict styles was fairly close. The summary data revealed that the Compromising style was most preferred and the Competing style least.

School counselors appeared to have different conflict management style depending upon their years of experience. Novice counselors seemed to favor mutually the Accommodating and Avoiding conflict management styles and to also prefer equally Competing, Compromising, and Mixed styles. Counselors in the experienced group had an overwhelming partiality to the Compromising style. For tenured counselors, the most popular style was Avoiding with Compromising being relatively close. Veteran school counselors favored equally the Accommodating and Compromising styles. In the years of experience unknown category with only three participants, there were one Accommodating, one Collaborating and one Mixed. The summary data for the experienced category indicated the most popular conflict style was Compromising with Accommodating being fairly close.

There also seemed to be differences in the ranking order of preferences by hours of conflict management training. Counselors with brief conflict resolution/management training chose the Avoiding conflict management style most often. Counselors in the moderate training category liked the Compromising style best, with Accommodating, Avoiding, Collaborating, and Mixed styles clustered together. School counselors in the significant hours of training group preferred the Avoiding conflict style with a close preference for the Accommodating style. In the extensive training category, the Compromising style was favored with Avoiding, Collaborating, and Mixed styles chosen equally thereafter. The unknown category for hours of training favored the Compromising style. The summary data

showed an unambiguous preference for the Compromising style and lack of preference for the Competing style.

The levels of school in which school counselors work appeared to yield differences in the rank order of preferences for conflict management styles. Elementary school counselors seemed to favor the Compromising style although the preference for the Avoiding style was fairly close. Middle school counselors, they favored the Compromising style. High school counselors liked the Accommodating style better with the Avoiding and Compromising styles clustered relatively close. According to the summary data for level of school, the Compromising, Avoiding and Accommodating styles were grouped reasonably close together.

Counselors in the sample gave the impression that they differed in their ranking order of preferences by location of school. Rural counselors preferred the Avoiding style the most. Suburban counselors' preferred the Compromising style. Urban counselors favored the Collaborating style with the Compromising style being close. In the unknown group, Accommodating, Avoiding, Compromising and Mixed conflict management styles were clustered together. When looking at the summary data, the Avoiding and Compromising styles were the two most often chosen conflict management styles.

Conflict Management Self-efficacy

As stated previously, conflict management self-efficacy is the school counselor's belief that he or she can successfully resolve and/or manage conflict between two other individuals in interpersonal conflict situations. In order to measure this construct, the researcher developed the Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CMSES). Scores were based on participants' responses on the CMSES. First, their levels of conflict management

self-efficacy were determined, and then their strength scores were also obtained. Consistent with previous research using self-efficacy, strength scores were used because they provide more variance than the level of self-efficacy scores. Strength scores on the CMSES ranged from 0 to 100, with a score of 50 considered average.

In Table 5, a summary of the descriptive information of participants in conjunction with their strength scores of conflict management self-efficacy is provided. This information is divided into subcategories of participants based on various characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.). Because the level and strength scores provided overlapping information, a consistent procedure was used when the scale was not completed correctly. According to the directions, participants were to check the items on the CMSES that they felt confident in doing *and* then they were to rate, with a number from 0 to 100, the strength of that confidence. When a participant checked an item, but did not give it a strength score, then that item was not counted in the total number of checked items. However, if a particular item was not checked but was given a strength score, then that item was treated as if it had been checked.

The following results for mean strength scores on the CMSES will be reported according to participant subcategory: school counselors as a group, age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of school counseling experience, hours of conflict resolution/management training, grade level of school, and location of school. School counselors as a group had a mean strength score on the CMSES of 85.43 with a standard deviation of 8.96. For these findings, there was an extremely high range of strength scores: 80.15 to 100 (on a scale of 0-100). Consequently, all participants had quite high averages

and scored well above the average score of 50. It seems safe to assume that school counselors' conflict management self-efficacy was well above average.

Individuals in the 50+ age category had the highest average—88.40—of known ages on the CMSES. Conversely, school counselors in their 30's had the lowest average of 82.69 although the difference may not have been enough to make a difference. On average, the female participants' strength scores were 86.35 and the males' scores were 80.14. This does not seem to be a difference of any significance. When looking more closely at the gender scores, it was discovered that the highest strength score of 100 belonged to a female while the lowest score of 57.27 belonged to a male. These findings that were specific to gender differences could be due to the small sample size (13) of male participants, making the average for males more likely to be influenced by a low score.

Of the two largest racial groups, there was a minimal difference between their strength of conflict management self-efficacy scores: African American – 85.49 and European American – 85.13. School counselors who were identified as veterans had the highest average of strength scores (90.48). The remaining three categories of years of experience were clustered close together although they were relatively high to begin with. It appears that conflict management self-efficacy increased as years of experience increased.

Surprisingly, participants who had extensive conflict resolution/management training did not have the highest average of strength scores (82.60) but the lowest when compared to the other categories. However, all averages were very close. Elementary school counselors' average strength of conflict management self-efficacy was a bit higher than the scores of both middle and high school counselors; however, all levels of counselors were quite close together. Urban rural, and suburban counselors generated averages that were similar.

Table 5

Summary of Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Findings

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N=80
Age Range			
20s	86.54	5.46	8
30s	82.69	10.37	28
40s	84.87	9.31	18
50+	88.41	7.61	23
Unknown	88.63	3.44	3
Sex			
Female	86.36	8.12	64
Male	80.15	11.97	13
Unknown	88.63	3.44	3
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	85.49	10.43	9
Asian American	82.22	82.22	1
European American	85.14	9.15	62
Hispanic American	100	--	1
Native American	--	--	1
Unknown	86.60	5.02	6

Table 5 (continued)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N=80
Years of Experience			
Novice	84.48	9.72	17
Tenured	84.0	9.02	34
Experienced	86.87	7.65	21
Veteran	90.49	12.91	5
Unknown	88.63	3.44	3
Hours of Training			
Brief	83.36	9.78	27
Moderate	87.20	8.74	20
Significant	86.96	8.70	17
Extensive	82.61	8.27	5
Unknown	86.24	8.26	11
Level of School			
Elementary	87.46	7.53	30
Middle	85.40	7.78	26
High	82.94	11.25	24

Table 5 (continued)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N=80
Location of School			
Rural	82.19	11.48	15
Suburban	85.84	8.75	48
Urban	86.10	7.33	13
Unknown	87.67	3.41	4

Note. Scores in table are presented as percentages.

Overall, there seemed to be little or no real difference in conflict management self-efficacy across any of the following categories: age, sex, race/ethnicity, years of experience, hours of training, level of school, and location of school.

Moral Development

The shorter version of the DIT consisting of three moral dilemmas was used to determine the levels of moral development of school counselors. These levels were based on participants' P-scores (principled morality) that ranged from 0 to 95. For the purpose of this study, moral development levels were categorized as being "low" or "high" as ascertained by predetermined cutoff points from participants' DIT scores (Rest, 1986). Scores ranging from 0 to 34 are considered as low moral development scores; scores ranging from 35 and higher are high moral development scores.

From the 80 surveys returned, four of the DITs were not completed and another 13 DITs were invalidated based on having an M score higher than four. According to Rest (1986), the M items were included as a reliability check, and were not written to mean anything but written to sound "lofty and pretentious" (p. 4). In other words, they do not

represent any stage of thinking rather the participant's tendency to endorse statements for their pretentiousness and not their meaning. He suggested that, for the short form, if a participant's raw M score is greater than four, then the questionnaire is to be invalidated.

Table 6 summarizes school counselors' levels of moral development in relation to their demographic information. Figure 2 recapitulates the frequencies of school counselors' P-scores by the norms group's P-scores subcategories. Results for mean P-scores as they relate to the norms reference group are reported below for the entire sample, and for the following subcategories: age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of school counseling experience, hours of conflict resolution/management training, grade level of school, and location of school.

Of the qualifying 63 Defining Issues Tests, the average P-score was 39.55 with a standard deviation of 15.63. This mean score of the sample compared closely to the average score (40.0) of adults in general from the norm-referenced group (Rest, 1986). The range of P-scores in the age category was from 10.0 (a counselor in 50+ category) to 76.70 (a counselor in the 30's category). Individuals in their 30's had the highest average of P-scores (41.89). Male and female mean scores were similar: 37.12 for males, 39.77 for females. Both were fairly close to the average of adults in general at 40.0. African American average scores at 35.43 were slightly above the average junior high student at 31.8 while European Americans at 40.43 was almost equal to the average adults in general. This was probably due to the size of each sub sample, seven and 50, respectively.

Within their category, veteran school counselors with only two participants had the highest average P-score of 51.00; this score compared closely with advanced law students at 52.2. Counselors with brief (42.52) and extensive (42.90) hours of conflict

resolution/management training had average moral development scores similar to the average for adults in general and average college students. By comparison, middle and high school counselors' mean scores of 41.88 and 41.36 were close to the average of an average college student. However, the elementary counselors' average score of 35.67 was below the average for the average adults in general (40.0). Similar to adults in general, counselors in suburban schools scores were 41.20.

Rest (1986) advised against separating the total sample into different levels of moral judgment development so that an individual can be typed as a Stage 3 participant, or a Stage 4 participant, and so forth; instead, he suggested creating groups on the basis of P-scores. His position was determined by previous research that indicated stage typing methods of grouping individuals are inappropriate for DIT data. Therefore, to form groups, he recommended the cutoff points for participants' DIT scores displayed in Table 7.

The results in this study were divided into two groups: Group 1: 1st and 2nd quartile versus Group 2: 3rd and 4th quartile. Low moral development comprised scores in the 1st and 2nd quartiles and high moral development constituted scores in the 3rd and 4th quartiles. A total of 26 counselors' scores fell into the first group and 37 within the second; hence, more school counselors in the sample appeared to have high levels of moral development than those with low moral development. Overall, it appeared that the entire sample and all subgroups on average were above the cutoff of 35 on moral development. On the other hand, the standard deviations were rather large across the board, indicating that there was quite a bit of variance. Therefore, within all the subgroups and the entire sample there were a number of counselors who scored well below the 35-point criterion as well as well above. In sum, the levels of moral development varied considerably in this sample.

Table 6

Defining Issues Test P-scores Summary

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N=63
Age Range			
20s	35.1	12.15	8
30s	41.89	16.34	19
40s	38.94	18.15	16
50+	38.98	15.40	18
Unknown	44.85	2.62	2
Sex			
Female	39.77	16.22	52
Male	37.12	14.15	9
Unknown	44.85	2.62	2
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	35.43	15.37	7
Asian American	--	--	--
European American	40.43	16.33	50
Hispanic American	40	0	1
Native American	--	--	--
Multiracial	--	--	--
Unknown	38.48	10.64	5

Table 6 (continued)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>N</i> =63
Years of Experience			
Novice	37.91	13.65	16
Tenured	41.21	17.87	25
Experienced	36.85	15.33	18
Veteran	51.00	11.31	2
Unknown	44.85	2.62	2
Hours of Training			
Brief	42.52	15.69	27
Moderate	36.74	17.54	16
Significant	38.85	17.05	11
Extensive	42.90	14.86	3
Unknown	34.64	8.78	7
Level of School			
Elementary	35.68	13.88	22
Middle	41.88	17.25	22
High	41.36	15.53	19

Table 6 (continued)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N=63
Location of School			
Urban	36.15	16.37	13
Rural	41.20	16.39	40
Suburban	34.87	12.76	7
Unknown	43.23	3.36	3

Note. N=63

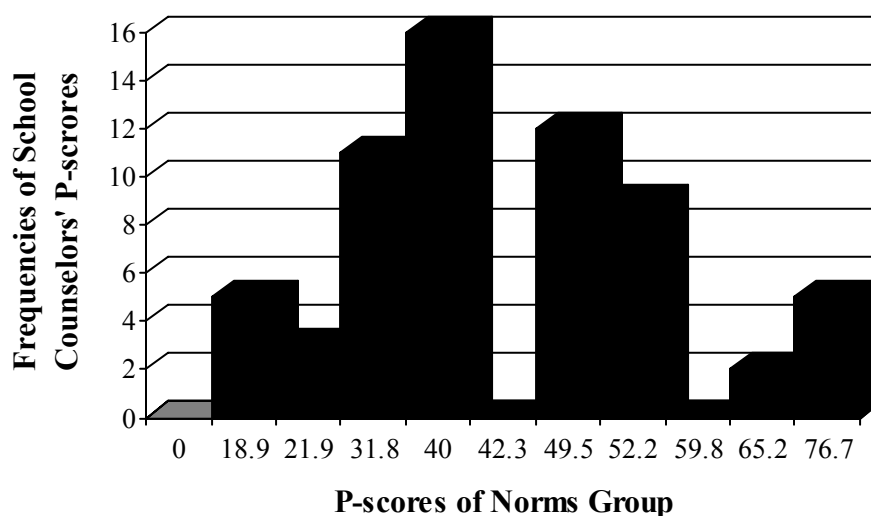


Figure 2: Frequencies of school counselors' P-scores by the norms group categories that follow: 18.9=Institutional delinquent boys, 16 years old; 21.9=Average junior high student; 31.8=Average senior high student; 40.0=Average of adults in general; 42.3=Average college student; 49.5=Practicing medical physicians; 52.2=Advanced law students; 59.8=Seminarians in a liberal Protestant seminary; 65.2=Moral philosophy and political science doctoral students.

Table 7

Summary of Defining Issues Test P-scores for Total Sample

	Group 1		Group 2	
	1 st Quartile	2 nd Quartile	3 rd Quartile	4 th Quartile
P-score	0-22	23-34	35-46	47 and higher
N=63	8	18	14	23

Note. Group 1 = Low moral development scores. Group 2 = High moral development scores.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Implications

Conflict Management Style

The first research question was: How are school counselors distributed across the five categories of conflict management styles? It appears as if the school counselors overall and within the various subcategories are distributed across all of the conflict management styles. However, the distribution for the sample differs from that of the reference group of business and government managers. There were also group differences within the subcategories of school counselor (e.g., sex differences, age differences, race/ethnicity differences).

In the school counselor sample, the conflict management category preferred by the largest subgroup of the sample of 80 participants was Compromising ($N=25$). In order after Compromising was Avoiding ($N=20$), Accommodating ($N=4$), Mixed ($N=10$), Collaborating ($N=7$), and Competing ($N=4$). According to Thomas (1976), Competing and Collaborating are the preferred styles for conflict management, Compromising is the in-between category, and Accommodating and Avoiding are the less desirable styles. These preferences are based upon the degree of assertiveness and cooperativeness attributed to each style.

In the sample, the two conflict management styles most highly recommended by Thomas (1976) were least preferred by the school counselors. The reverse is true for the two least highly recommended styles with the exception of Compromising, the in-between style being preferred the most. Therefore, one might depict the school counselors as primarily in-betweeners with less favored styles ranked ahead of the styles favored by Thomas (1974)

The reference group Thomas (1974) based his position on were government and business managers in the 1970s. The sample in the present study works in different settings with different roles and functions than government and business managers, and the times may have changed in 30 years.

Needless to say, schools are different entities than corporations and governmental agencies. The two environments have different purposes that may be characterized as a concern for production and a concern for people. A school counselor's business is a concern for people, primarily students. Within the business setting, Competing is a power-oriented style, which in a school may be more appropriate for a school administrator rather than a counselor. One major difference between the work environments of the managers and counselors is that within a business or government agency the majority of individuals employed there are adults. On the contrary, within school settings, children and adolescents vastly outnumber the adults. Another difference between the two is the fact that counselors also have to interact with the parents of these children; whereas in business settings, managers primarily interact with colleagues.

Not only are the organizations different, but also counselors and managers' roles and functions are diverse. Within in school settings, counselors have a somewhat in-between position, in that they are not classroom teachers nor are they administrations. Leaders and managers' roles probably are not as undefined nor are they continually re-defined. Counselors' intermediary positions sometimes call for administrative relationships, and at other times, nonsupervisory relationships with teachers. It would seem likely that the preferred conflict style of counselors would reflect the need to be flexible by employing both assertive and cooperative styles. Managers' roles differ from those of counselors, and there

are variations that exist in the role of counselors. Typically, elementary school counselors are the only counselor in their schools, unlike middle and high school levels. Having a team of counselors versus being the only one may have an impact on how conflict is viewed and managed. The inability to consult and collaborate with fellow counselors may have influenced the dominant conflict management styles preferred by some counselors.

Over the course of time, demographic changes have occurred in the workplace and society. The sample of managers from 30 years ago probably did not have a large representation of Latina Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans. Thus, an investigation of today's business and government managers may yield different preferences for conflict styles than the former group. Previous research by Ting-Toomey (1988) has shown that Asian and Latin ethnic groups oftentimes prefer the Accommodating and Avoiding styles because they aid in maintaining harmonious relationships. More representation from these ethnic groups in business and government management samples could reveal a different preference or degree of preference for a particular conflict management style. Additionally, the influx of women in the workplace, especially in corporate America and into managerial positions, may change the viewpoint of how conflicts should be handled. They, too, have been known to perceive Avoiding and Accommodating as appropriate for maintaining relationships.

Despite one's belief about counselors being problem-solvers, the findings of this study serve as a reminder that they too are involved in interpersonal conflict where they are a participant rather than the mediator. The fact that 42% of the school counselor sample preferred Accommodating and Avoiding indicates that their desire or ability to be cooperative is much greater than the desire or ability to be assertive. In fact, counselors are

constantly trying to satisfy the concerns of others (i.e. students', parents', teachers', administrators'). In doing so, providing conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and rapport building may not always provide them with positive outcomes when dealing with teachers, administrators, and parents. Having to master behaviors needed to provide these conditions in their counselor preparation programs may have contributed to their preference of unassertive conflict styles.

According to Thomas (1974), Compromising is the backup style to Collaborating and Competing when the use of the latter styles has failed to resolve the conflict. It is comforting to know that Compromising is the most predominate conflict management style for the school counselor sample because both aspects of assertiveness and cooperativeness are attributed to this style. According to Shamby and Tamminen (1976), assertiveness is a teachable skill that counselors should learn to be able to assert themselves effectively. Counselors without some assertiveness capability may continually have difficulty when colleagues do not meet deadlines, provide incorrect documentation for student accommodations, or do not attend training meetings. For example, counselors assigned to be test coordinators may become frustrated with colleagues who have not provided the correct testing modifications yet choose not to confront those teachers. They may avoid the issue (Avoiding) and find other ways (Accommodating) of obtaining the needed information. In addition, they may prefer to use the Compromising style in these situations because it produces a more expedient solution under limited time constraints.

Several reasons may exist for the school counselors' preference for the less highly recommended styles. First, the sample's preference for the Compromising and Avoiding styles could be due to its consisting largely of women who typically prefer the Avoiding and

Compromising styles according to Valentine (2001). Holt (2000) found that women used Compromising more than men. Other researchers have found that women used a cooperative style more than their male counterparts (Levine & Feldman, 1997; Thompson, 1990). The socialization of women encourages them to build relationships and to bring people together, not to drive them apart. Women are also socialized to be concerned about others; oftentimes making their own interests, preferences, and needs secondary to those of others. Generally speaking, it is believed that cooperativeness is more characteristic of women and assertiveness is more representative of the traits that men possess. As suggested by Van de Vliert and Kabanoff (1990), the study's findings could also mean that the TKI failed to discriminate between Avoiding and Accommodating styles. Both styles are unassertive; therefore, they share the common characteristic of complying with the other parties' wishes.

Second, the school counselors' lack of preference for the Collaborating and Competing styles may be due to the small sample size of men in this research study. Kilmann and Thomas (1978) discovered that men used collaboration more often than women. According to Van de Vliert and Kabanoff (1990), the TKI discriminated poorly between the theoretically and practically important styles of Competing and Collaborating, which may be another reason for these findings. Although counselors have communication skills such as the ability to listen, understand, and empathize, which are generally useful in the Collaborating style, they may not elect to use this style in their interpersonal conflicts because finding a reasonable compromise is more easily obtained.

Finally, the counselors' preference for the Compromising style could mean that they can assess appropriately the value for both the preservation of the relationship and the achievement of goals. Using this style does not require as much work as collaboration and

not much disclosure in order to understand each other. Compromising is quicker and less intense than collaborating and may be more practical when the priorities do not demand as much. Time constraints, job responsibilities, and large caseloads have probably lead to counselors' mastery of the Compromising style as opposed to the Collaborating one.

In sum, these findings may be due to the gender differences that have been noted by researchers and the result of faulty instrumentation. Working in a school setting, counselors' preferences may be reflecting an exposure to a variety of styles of interacting and solving conflicts. The predominance of the Compromising style suggests a healthy balance between assertiveness and cooperativeness.

The overall rankings change when one looks at the various subcategories. For example, in age range category, there were considerable differences. Compromising attracted the largest support across age categories. Yet, older counselors tended to next fall into the Accommodating category while younger counselors actually ranked higher in Avoiding or Avoiding was equal to Compromising for them.

Similar differences occur across the other subdivisions. This indicates that status variables such as age, sex, race/ethnicity, and years of experience lead to differences in conflict management style preferences. That is, the overall rank ordering of conflict management styles was often not the same within the subcategories. The different status variables may be affected by several other factors that are a part of everyday life. School counselors' different family upbringings, cultural traditions, and life and work experiences more than likely are instrumental in the order in which they preferred the conflict management styles.

Family upbringings are not the same across the board and may have influenced the different modes of resolving conflict. How one's family handled and managed conflicts more than likely are the models upon which many individuals pattern their own conflict resolution behaviors. Counselors may possibly have viewed their family's conflict resolution behavior as productive or ineffective and decided to emulate or discontinue it. Having a propensity to rank highly one or more than one conflict management style may be a reflection of these decisions.

Differences in cultural traditions are other factors that possibly are embedded into the status variables and influence one's understanding and management of conflict. Counselors' cultural traditions are sometimes influenced by their family upbringings. Culturally speaking, conflict management behaviors may be different based on one's age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Within given cultures, a variety of expectations and beliefs regarding conflict management are deemed appropriate. For example, in certain instances, children assume that their parents will resolve their conflicts, some wives leave conflict resolution to their husbands, and younger siblings employ older siblings in the management of conflict. The socialization of girls and boys oftentimes determines how they will resolve conflict. If girls are continually socialized to be nurturers that satisfy the needs of others, they will more than likely remain unassertive yet cooperative when addressing conflict. On the other hand, boys who are typically groomed to be assertive will probably continue along that same vein of assertiveness.

Counselors may have acquired the knowledge and the ability to use several of the styles through various life experiences depending upon the conflict situation; therefore, they seem to favor different styles. Conversely, successful conflict resolution incidents are

possibly the reason why some individuals may truly have a predominate style to address conflict situations. Because the conflict management styles have different characteristics and uses, counselors possibly know how to use several of them to effectively manage a conflict. Their ranking ordering may reflect the order in which they are preferred and also the socially acceptable rankings. The variance may also reflect their willingness to try more than one style until they have accomplished successful conflict resolution. Having had conflicts throughout their lives, individuals, perhaps have learned advantages of selecting a conflict management style that depends on the styles that matches what the other person is using; therefore, they adjust the style that they use to the situation.

Regarding their work experiences within their school environments, counselors probably know which conflict management style to use with their colleagues and significant others. For example, counselors may elect to employ the Compromising style with their principal, an Accommodating style with a parent, and the Collaborating style with their peers. The specific types of conflict—professional or personal—that counselors may have imagined when completing the TKI is not known; however, whether they imagined conflicts with family members, friends, or colleagues could have possibly made a difference in the rankings. It seems reasonable to assume that inconsistencies occurred when counselors were imagining conflict episodes, and this inconsistency may have been revealed in their rank ordering of styles. In essence, they may have not indicated one style as more preferred but more appropriate for a particular individual and/or situation.

Conflict Management Self-efficacy

The second research question was: What is school counselors' strength of conflict management self-efficacy? The average score of 85% on the Conflict Management Self-

Efficacy Scale (CMSES) showed that the school counselors' conflict management self-efficacy was above average. Consistent high averages and small standard deviations on the CMSES may mean that school counselors have confidence in their ability to resolve interpersonal conflict between two other parties. Also, the standard deviations indicated that there was not much variance in conflict management self-efficacy among the school counselors in this sample. The findings suggest that counselor's age, sex, race/ethnicity, years of experience, hours of training, grade level of school, or location of school did not have a significant impact on counselors' confidence in their ability to manage interpersonal conflict situations.

The school counselors' high level of confidence may be caused by mastery experiences of successfully resolving conflict situations that have occurred throughout their lives and job-related incidents. Having confidence in one's performance is important for school counselors so that they appropriately use the behaviors and skills related to conflict management. Dement (1998) found that improving the self-efficacy of employees toward using conflict resolution skills improved the way they handled role conflict, job-related-tension, apprehension about communicating with others, and overall job satisfaction. One's beliefs regarding how well they can manage conflict affect their attitudes about attempting to manage conflict. For example, if a counselor were confident in his or her ability to resolve conflict with students in one-on-one conflict situations, but not between two conflicting parties, then he or she would be less likely to engage in conflict resolution behaviors. When counselors have repeated successes with resolving conflict after using a particular conflict management style, they may continue to use it. Conversely, counselors who are not effectively managing conflict with a particular style or strategy may discontinue using it.

In addition to life and job experiences, counselors may have obtained conflict resolution skills from various sources such as conferences, workshops, staff development, and college courses. It was somewhat surprising that hours of training did not have a greater influence on CMSES scores than the other descriptive factors. If certain factors such as age, years of experience, and hours of training showed more of an impact on counselors' confidence, then it would seem that conflict management self-efficacy increases over time and with intervention. Perhaps there are other status categories not involved in the present study that might identify differences greater than the ones herein (e.g., level of education and kind of previous counseling experience). Social desirability may also be an explanation of the high scores.

Moral Development

The third research question was: What are the moral development levels of school counselors? As a result of having an average P-score of 39.55, the majority of the counselors in this study have high moral development levels; however, there is a considerable amount of variance (15.63) among them. In today's society, moral debates over how one should think and/or how one should behave are prevalent. Public opinions regarding current issues such as abortion and gay rights show great variability. The large standard deviations in moral development scores captures a similar phenomenon, in that there is a wide range of ways in which school counselors choose to handle moral issues.

Based on the aforementioned average P-score, school counselors appear to make moral decisions in the same way as adults in general from the norms reference group. However, the sample's ability to use principled moral considerations is lower on average than that of the average college student in this norms group. Perhaps, college students are

constantly being challenged through academic lectures and group discussions about moral issues; whereas, counselors' daily responsibilities may not allow time for them to have moral or philosophical debates. Additionally, college students may have responded based on how they plan to resolve moral dilemmas. On the other hand, the responses of counselors were probably based on how they have actually addressed moral issues.

The variance in scores among school counselors' P-scores allow some of them to be favorably compared to moral philosophy and political science doctoral students and seminarians in a liberal Protestant seminary and others to be less favorably compared to average senior and junior high students and institutionalized delinquent 16-year-old boys. These findings may be somewhat alarming. Further still, longitudinal studies suggest that if students were to continue their education to the next level (e.g, high school to college, college to graduate school) that an average of 10 points increase in P-score is expected to occur (Rest, 1990). What, then, does this mean for the school counselor with low scores after completing graduate school? Within the limits of this descriptive study and small sample size, one cannot reasonably understand the cause for the large variability of scores until more data are available.

In this study, 37 counselors were deemed to have high moral development levels; in contrast, 26 were not. Counselors with high moral development may be better able to help students with their thinking about moral issues and monitor their moral behavior. Many counselors possibly will find it easy for them to provide active learning experiences that may increase the moral development of others. They may be more comfortable in group and classroom guidance settings where they can present moral issues to students that is one level above the students' current functioning. Generating discussions and debates about moral

dilemmas and providing opportunities for art and role-plays about moral issues may not be an overwhelming challenge to counselors functioning at a high moral development level. Their concentration on feelings may be more heightened because they are aware of the importance that feelings have on the promotion of empathy.

On the other hand, counselors with low moral development may be unable to assist students in obtaining higher levels of cognitive and moral ability because they themselves are functioning at a lower level. They may not be instrumental in successfully moving students into increasing levels of moral reasoning. Following their interventions, students may still operate at the conventional level of moral development due to not being challenged to develop enhanced cognitive and moral ability.

Integration of the Three Variables

A summary of the results across the three variables—conflict management style, conflict management self-efficacy, and moral development—reveals unique findings. Although one may have assumed that the school counselors' preferred conflict style might have been Collaborating, their preferred style was Compromising. Collaboration was assumed initially because collaborators try to identify underlying feelings and issues in conflict situations, use self-disclosure and empathy, and confront and brainstorm to find solutions to interpersonal problems.

Finding conflict management self-efficacy averages so high was not anticipated. Based on the similar skills that counselors and collaborators use, it was assumed if there were high self-efficacy scores that there would be more counselors preferring the Collaborating style. Because no particular conflict management style seemed to have an impact on one's

self-efficacy regarding conflict management may lead one to conclude that a preferred style may not be warranted, but rather, one that is mixed.

Another puzzling finding of this study was that, despite a large percentage of counselors preferring to use the Avoiding style for resolving their own personal conflicts, they were above average in conflict management self-efficacy when resolving the conflicts of others. Regardless of their predominant style, they had considerable confidence in their ability to be able to effectively resolve conflict. Typically, avoiders are threatened by conflicts or difficult tasks and choose to evade them. It would seem that low conflict management self-efficacy would be a likely reason why some of them favored using the Avoiding conflict management style. Perhaps, as suggested by Hocker and Wilmot (1985), they are adept at changing styles depending upon the demands of the situation.

Surprisingly, none of the status variables influenced confidence in one's ability to handle conflict. It seemed realistic to say that a counselor who not only believed he or she could resolve conflict *and* had the benefit of counselors who were good models and positive enforcement from principals would be more competent than those counselors who have not had training in conflict management. However, this was not the case in the present study. Perhaps mastery and vicarious experiences are the more important factors influencing counselors' confidence in their conflict resolution ability. Counselors may be receiving needed feedback from individuals within the school environments about that ability to effectively resolve conflicts.

Once counselors have experienced repeated successes in resolving interpersonal conflicts, their beliefs in their personal efficacy are strengthened, leading to a sense of competence as a counselor. Unfortunately, vicarious experiences for school counselors, who

may be the only one in their school, may be difficult to acquire. However, if counselors work with teachers trained in conflict resolution, they then have opportunities to observe teachers as models for managing conflict that provides reinforcement for counselors. Positive verbal reinforcement from administrators, fellow teachers, parents, and students implying they were instrumental in managing conflict incidents in the schools, will also strengthen the counselors' perceived self-efficacy. This belief is supported by Sutton and Fall's (1995) findings that support of staff and administration were the strongest predictors of high counselor efficacy expectancy.

Given that Kohlberg (1976) believed only a few people in the general population achieve such a level, another important finding, is that about 11% of school counselors in the sample seemed to have the high principled morality that is associated with the postconventional level of moral development. It could be that these counselors are more capable than other counselors to aid in moving students to the higher stages of moral reasoning. This level of functioning can be valuable in conflict situations because the counselor focuses on what is good for the conflicting parties and also what is good for the entire school population. Being concerned about the welfare of the entire school population and the welfare of society as a whole motivates counselors to help make the educational learning environment a safe one in order to help students become productive citizens in society. In addition, this perspective will empower school counselors to use conflict management techniques, to model them for students, and to teach them to their colleagues.

In the present study most of the counselors appear to have confidence in their ability to resolve conflict remains above average regardless of their conflict style or level of moral development. One might conclude that one who has a Compromising style, high conflict

management self-efficacy, and a high level of moral development is the hypothetical profile of a school counselor that effectively understands and manages the conflict in their lives and in the lives of others.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this research study. They will be discussed as they relate to the research design, participants, instruments, and other factors. First, the descriptive design provided a few limitations. The survey approach elicited responses from respondents who were accessible and cooperative. Within the literature, there is no consensus concerning an “acceptable” return rate (Keppner, 1999, pp. 205). There were no assurances that the questions were understood. Also, there were no assurances that the addresses actually were the one who completed the surveys.

Second, the sample did not have substantial representation from diverse gender or racial/ethnic groups; this makes it difficult to generalize the findings cross-culturally.

Third, the Conflict Management Self-efficacy Scale (CMSES) was not field-tested. Pilot testing the CMSES with a sample of school counselors could have eliminated ambiguous or biased items and improved the overall format. Interviewing possible respondents to explore conflict management behaviors and to determine how to best phrase the items on the CMSES to reflect their opinions may have proved to be beneficial.

Fourth the items, type, and length of the instruments caused many limitations. The instruments used in this study were self-report measures, which may have lead to participants providing responses that were artificial or slanted. Evidence of this possibility may have been demonstrated when several DITs were invalidated due to high M scores. Because surveys are vulnerable to bias, respondents may have given consistently high or low ratings

may have been the case with some of the responses on the CMSES. In addition to bias, fatigue from completing the surveys may have been a factor. For example, four DITs were returned incomplete; it is assumed that fatigue may have played a role. Because the TKI is a forced-choice measure, it may have caused some participants to give an answer that they were not comfortable with or to give no answer at all. Finally, although the instruments were easy to score, the hand scoring of them was subject to human errors. This may have lead to incorrect calculations of means, standard deviations, percentages and rankings.

Recommendations for Practice

This research adds to the seemingly nonexistent literature concerning school counselors and their conflict management styles. In addition, it introduced a new construct—conflict management self-efficacy—and the CMSES that can be used to assess individuals' confidence in their ability to resolve interpersonal conflict between other people. Finally, it added to the minimal literature regarding the moral development levels of professional counselors and more specifically of school counselors. Based on the findings of this study, there are specific implications for school counselors, schools, public school systems, and counselor education preparation programs.

School counselors need to gain more knowledge about their conflict management behaviors so that they can model them effectively for students. Knowledge of steps in a conflict resolution process can be demonstrated so that students can follow the same steps when the counselor is not present. In the school community, counselors are responsible for resolving interpersonal conflicts among students; therefore, they have to determine the appropriate management style and strategy that will resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of all involved parties. Being able to choose among conflict resolution strategies is possible

when the counselor is aware that several options are available. The most important thing to consider regarding counselors and conflict management is that, in order for school counselors to help students resolve conflicts effectively, they first must learn how to resolve their own conflicts productively (Ragin et al., 2000). In Johnson et al.'s (1989) study, counseling self-efficacy increased over the duration of a counseling course designed to enhance counseling skills. It would seem to follow, that if school counselors were trained in a similar course that addressed conflict management skills, they too would experience an increase in their conflict management self-efficacy.

Local schools administrators who appoint school counselors as coordinators of their conflict resolution or peer mediation programs need to be aware of how school counselors handle conflict situations. Some school counselors may require more in-service and ongoing training in conflict management. Counselors who not only believe they can resolve conflict and have the benefit of vicarious learning (other counselors-in-training) and verbal persuasion (positive comments by school administrators) will be more competent than those counselors who have not had training in conflict management. Counselors with high conflict management will not be threatened easily and will view resolution of conflict from a positive perspective. In addition, said counselor would more than likely attempt to resolve whatever conflict that exists. Highly efficacious counselors would benefit from continual opportunities designed to help them maintain their level of skills in conflict management.

Public school systems may need to ensure that educators have continuous opportunities to improve their conflict management skills. Professional development such as workshops, seminars, and staff training can be instrumental in providing them the additional knowledge or enhancement that is needed. In their commitment to district-wide conflict

management, they could use the CMSES as an assessment to identify the need for conflict resolution training and individuals who could benefit most from the training. Counseling and student services departments may offer professional development that is specific to the needs and job responsibilities of school counselors.

Counselor education preparation programs at the college and university level need to be more cognizant of the various roles and responsibilities that school counselors hold at the school level. In preparing counselors-in-training, a more realistic perspective of what counselors are being asked to do within a school setting is required. If counselors are the most likely coordinators of conflict resolution and peer mediation programs, informing and instructing counselors-in-training about the use of these programs will increase their understanding of conflict and its management prior to becoming practicing school counselors. College and university programs may need to prepare or better prepare and instruct counselors-in-training about conflict management. Counselors-in-training can obtain a better understanding of conflict and knowledge about how to resolve it. In practicum settings, more opportunities to role play conflict management situations in which they are resolving interpersonal conflicts may be warranted. These settings provide opportunities for counselors-in-training to practice and receive constructive feedback.

Recommendations for Further Study

The present study addressed a need for research on how well prepared school counselors are to engage in conflict resolution management activities. The findings in this study reveal that school counselors' most preferred style of handling conflict is Compromising, their strength of conflict management self-efficacy is above average, and their average level of moral development is relatively high and comparable to that of an

average adult. These findings have raised several questions. Examples of questions are: Why do school counselors prefer a Compromising conflict management style? How did they acquire such high levels of conflict management self-efficacy? Why was there so much variance in the moral development scores?

To help answer these questions, suggestions for numerous follow-up investigations follow. First, a study of interest would be to include counselors from across a larger geographical region in the sampling in order to determine whether there is a need for more conflict management training in counselor education preparation programs. Second, a study that has a greater representation of male school counselors and those who are more racially and ethnically diverse is in order. Third, a study to determine the impact conflict resolution/management training has on the conflict management styles, self-efficacy, and moral development of school counselors might be useful. Such a study should include an intervention using a post and posttest design to determine whether conflict management training has an impact on the three variables. Fourth, studies that field test the reliability and validity of the CMSES are needed. The newly created construct, conflict management self-efficacy, once operationalized can also contribute to the literature regarding counselors and conflict management and can be used to identify counselors who need training in conflict management techniques. Finally, a study that investigates the effects that training programs have on counselor-in-training' moral development levels. This too, could utilize a pretest/posttest design where the intervention is a counseling course.

Conclusion

Discrepancies exist between what counselors are taught to believe they will do and what their actual function is within their school settings. If resolution of interpersonal

conflicts and coordination of conflict resolution and peer mediation programs are continually recognized as counselor functions, making conflict resolution/management training a part of counselor preparation is an opportunity to get it right. Within schools, counselors can be the missing link that is needed to add to the literature empirical research that substantiates the claims of effectiveness of counselors and conflict resolution and peer mediation programs. Their use and implementation of conflict resolution/management strategies can help to demonstrate accountability and effectiveness of their guidance programs. Obtaining knowledge regarding conflict and its management in their counselor-preparation programs and having opportunities to conduct research within their school environments, school counselors can advocate for themselves the need for their function and their existence in schools.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: Please read each question carefully, and then write or check your response. Please do not write your name on this form or any of the sheets so that your responses remain anonymous. Thank you so much for your participation in this study.

What is your age? _____

What is your sex? Female _____ Male _____

What is your race? African American _____ Asian American _____
 European American _____ Hispanic American _____
 Native American _____ Multiracial _____

How many years have you been a school counselor? _____

How many hours of conflict resolution/management training have you had? _____

What grade level is your school? Elementary _____ Middle _____
 High _____ Other _____

Where is your school located? Urban _____ Rural _____
 Suburban _____

Appendix B

Description of The Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument

The Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument is a questionnaire consisting of 30 sets of paired items, with each item representing the Accommodating, Avoiding, Collaborating, Competing, or Compromising conflict management styles. Scores for each style are obtained by counting the number of times statements representing a particular style is chosen over the other statements. The instructions ask individuals to consider situations in which they find their wishes differing from those of another person, and to imply how they would usually respond in the given situation.

Examples of items include the following:

1. A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
B. Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things on which we both agree.
2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
B. I attempt to deal with all of his/her and my concerns.

Appendix C

Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale

Instructions: The following statements cover counselor practices in conflict management in counseling. Indicate how accurately each statement describes you as a counselor in a school setting when working in an interpersonal conflict situation between two clients. First, imagine that you are about to provide counseling for two students who are in conflict with each other. Then, in the column labeled “Level,” place a check beside the items you believe you are able to perform right now. Finally, rate your level of confidence for the items checked by recording a number from 0 to 100 in the column labeled “Strength.” (For example, if you checked item 1 and believe you have complete confidence in performing that task, record “100” in the Strength column.)

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
No Confidence				Moderate Confidence			Complete Confidence			

Level	Strength	
	1. Resolve and/or manage productively my own conflicts	
	2. Address responsibly issues of conflict and teach conflict management skills	
	3. Respond to conflict in a manner that the outcomes are positive, not negative	
	4. Use active and reflective listening skills when managing conflicts	
	5. Ask open-ended questions to determine individual’s needs, feelings, and values when managing conflicts	
	6. Summarize neutrally what both parties in conflict have said	
	7. State clearly the rules for the discussion of the conflict	
	8. Utilize role-playing to convey differences in perspectives in the conflict	
	9. Lead disputants to resolutions that bring about mutually satisfying results from the conflict	
	10. Consider and explore a wide variety of choices and potential solutions to the conflict	
	11. Use brainstorming to generate multiple ideas to address the problem	
	12. Avoids reacting to emotional outbursts	
	13. Evaluate my own emotional state	

	14. Am aware of the influence of cultural factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, or religion on my own understanding of conflict	
	15. Watch for differences in communication styles such as physical proximity, eye contact, and posture influence what is said and/or understood	
	16. Recognize my own cultural cues and their influence on the conflict and its resolution	
	17. Foster a collaborative climate versus a competitive one	
	18. Help appraise options and reduce threats during the negotiation process	
	19. Establish rapport in with the parties involved in conflict	
	20. Identify the common ground between disputants	
	21. Perceive the conflict from the clients' worldviews	
	22. Demonstrate a comfort level when discussing conflict	

Appendix D

Defining Issues Test

General Directions For The Defining Issues Test (DIT)

Opinions about Social Problems

This questionnaire is aimed at understanding how people think about social problems. Different people often have different opinions about questions of right and wrong. There are no “right” answers in the way that there are right answers to math problems. Tell us what you think about several problem stories.

In this questionnaire you will be asked to give your opinions about several stories. Read the first story.

- a) Answer the question which follows the story.
- b) Then decide how important the 12 statements are to the story.
- c) Then select the four most important of the 12 statements and write the number of those questions in order of their importance.

Read the second story. Follow the directions used for the first story

Read the third story. Follow the directions used for the first story.

First Story -- Heinz And The Drug

In Europe a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and began to think about breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

A) Should Heinz steal the drug? (Check one)

	Should steal it		Can't decide		Should not steal it
--	-----------------	--	--------------	--	---------------------

B) Importance: (Check one per row)

Great	Much	Some	Little	No	
					1. Whether a community's laws are going to be upheld.
					2. Isn't it only natural for a loving husband to care so much for his wife that he'd steal?
					3. Is Heinz willing to risk getting shot as a burglar or going to jail for the chance that stealing the drug might help?
					4. Whether Heinz is a professional wrestler, or has considerable influence with professional wrestlers
					5. Whether Heinz is stealing for himself or doing this solely to help someone else.
					6. Whether the druggist's rights to his invention have to be respected.
					7. Whether the essence of living is more encompassing than the termination of dying, socially and individually.
					8. What values are going to be the basis for governing how people act towards each other?
					9. Whether the druggist is going to be allowed to hide behind a worthless law which only protects the rich anyhow.
					10. Whether the law in this case is getting in the way of the most basic claim of a member of society.
					11. Whether the druggist deserves to be robbed for being so greedy and cruel.
					12. Would stealing in such a case bring about more total good for the whole society or not.

C) From the choices above (lines 1 through 12), select the four most important:

<i>Most important</i>	<i>2nd most important</i>	<i>3rd most important</i>	<i>4th most important</i>

Second Story – Escaped Prisoner

A man had been sentenced to prison for 10 years. After one year, however, he escaped from prison, moved to a new area of the country, and took on the name of Thompson. For 8 years he worked hard, and gradually he saved enough money to buy his own business. He was fair to his customers, gave his employees top wages, and gave most of his own profits to charity. Then one day, Mrs. Jones, an old neighbor, recognized him as the man who had escaped from prison 8 years before, and whom the police had been looking for.

A) Should Mrs. Jones report Mr. Thompson to the police and have him sent back to prison? (Check one)

	Should report him	Can't decide	Should not report him
--	-------------------	--------------	-----------------------

B) Importance: (Check one per row)

Great	Much	Some	Little	No	
					1. Hasn't Mr. Thompson been good enough for such a long time to prove he isn't a bad person?
					2. Everytime someone escapes punishment for a crime, doesn't that just encourage more crime?
					3. Wouldn't we be better off without prisons and the oppression of our legal systems?
					4. Has Mr. Thompson really paid his debt to society?
					5. Would society be failing what Mr. Thompson should fairly expect?
					6. What benefits would prisons be apart from society, especially for a charitable man?
					7. How could anyone be so cruel and heartless as to send Mr. Thompson to prison?
					8. Would it be fair to all the prisoners who had to serve out their full sentences if Mr. Thompson were let off?
					9. Was Mrs. Jones a good friend of Mr. Thompson?
					10. Wouldn't it be a citizen's duty to report an escaped criminal, regardless of the circumstances?
					11. How would the will of the people and the public good best be served?
					12. Would going to prison do any good for Mr. Thompson or protect anybody?

C) From the choices above (lines 1 through 12), select the four most important:

<i>Most important</i>	<i>2nd most important</i>	<i>3rd most important</i>	<i>4th most important</i>

Third Story--Newspaper

Fred, a senior in high school, wanted to publish a newspaper for students so that he could express many of his opinions. He wanted to speak out against the war in Viet Nam and to speak out against some of the school's rules, like the rule forbidding boys to wear long hair. When Fred started his newspaper, he asked his principal for permission. The principal said it would be all right if before every publication Fred would turn in all his articles for the principal's approval. Fred agreed and turned in several articles for the principal's approval. The principal approved all of them and Fred published two issues of the paper in the next two weeks. But the principal had not expected that Fred's newspaper would receive so much attention. Students were so excited by the paper that they began to organize protests against the hair regulation and other school rules. Angry parents objected to Fred's opinions. They phoned the principal telling him that the newspaper was unpatriotic and should not be published. As a result of the rising excitement, the principal ordered Fred to stop publishing. He gave a reason that Fred's activities were disruptive to the operation of the school.

A) Should the principal stop the newspaper? (Check one)

	Should stop it	Can't decide	Should not stop it
--	----------------	--------------	--------------------

B) Importance: (Check one per row)

Great	Much	Some	Little	No	
					1. Is the principal more responsible to students or to the parents?
					2. Did the principal give his word that the newspaper could be published for a long time, or did, he just promise to approve the newspaper one issue at a time?
					3. Would the students start protesting even more if the principal stopped the newspaper?
					4. When the welfare of the school is threatened, does the principal have the right to give orders to students?
					5. Does the principal have the freedom of speech to say "no" in this case?
					6. If the principal stopped the newspaper would he be preventing full discussion of important problems?
					7. Whether the principal's order would make Fred lose faith in the principal.
					8. Whether Fred was really loyal to his school and patriotic to his country.
					9. What effect would stopping the paper have on the student's education in critical thinking and judgments?
					10. Whether Fred was in any way violating the rights of others it) publishing his own opinions.
					11. Whether the principal should be influenced by some angry parents when it is the principal that knows best what is going on in the school.
					12. Whether Fred was using the newspaper to stir up hatred and discontent.

C) From the choices above (lines 1 through 12), select the four most important:

<i>Most important</i>	<i>2nd most important</i>	<i>3rd most important</i>	<i>4th most important</i>

Appendix E

Email Requesting Participation

Hello, Fellow Counselors:

My name is Elaine Harper and I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department at North Carolina State University. I am emailing you to ask you to be a participant in my research study. The study is entitled: The Conflict Management Styles, Strength of Conflict Management Self-efficacy, and Moral Development Levels of School Counselors. My research study has been approved both by North Carolina State University and Wake County Public Schools System's Internal Review Boards.

In the coming weeks, you will receive a survey packet that contains the items for you to complete and return to me via interoffice correspondence mail. You will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and 3 other instruments the: Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument, Conflict Management Self-Efficacy Scale, and Defining Issues Test; it should take you approximately 45 minutes to complete them. In addition to my overwhelming appreciation for your participation, a school counselor at the elementary, middle, and high school level will each have an opportunity to win \$100.00.

I thank you in advance and am grateful for your attention, participation and cooperation. If you have any immediate questions, please contact me using the contact information below.

Thanks again,

Elaine Harper
6th Grade Counselor
Wakefield Middle School
Raleigh, NC 27614
919-562-3511 office
919-562-3527 fax
charper@wcpss.net

Appendix F

Email about Survey Packets

Hello Again, Fellow Counselor:

This week you should have received a packet from me containing the surveys that I would like for you to complete for my research study entitled: The Conflict Management Styles, Strength of Conflict Management Self-efficacy, and Moral Development Levels of School Counselors. In trying to complete this arduous task, I am grateful for your time and consideration given to me in completion of my doctoral program. Also, I was encouraged by those of you who responded to my first email to let me know that you participate.

At your earliest convenience, please complete the survey items and return them to me in the provided envelope by February 27, 2004.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and would like to express my appreciation in advance for your participation and support. Please contact me via the information below if I can provide additional assistance.

Thank you,

Elaine Harper
6th Grade Counselor
Wakefield Middle School
Raleigh, NC 27614
919-562-3511 office
919-562-3527 fax
charper@wcpss.net

Appendix G

Follow-up Email

Greetings, Fellow Counselors:

During the past few days, I have received several packets that contained the surveys for my research study entitled: The Conflict Management Styles, Strength of Conflict Management Self-efficacy, and Moral Development Levels of School Counselors. I am truly grateful to each of you for your time, consideration, and patience; the completion of my research study is possible with your participation. However, as of today, I have not received the required number of returned surveys determined by my dissertation committee. Please, reconsider completing the surveys, and return them to me in the provided envelope by March 10, 2004.

If I have already received your survey packet, I appreciate your support. If I have not, I am looking forward to hearing from you and would like to express my appreciation in advance for your participation and support. Please contact me via the information below if I can provide further assistance.

(I apologize for not separating the Informed Consent Letter from the Demographic Questionnaire. As a result, I have received an elementary and a middle school packet without the Demographic Questionnaire (page 2). Please forward me a copy of your page 2.)

Thanks again,

Elaine Harper
6th Grade Counselor
Wakefield Middle School
Raleigh, NC 27614
919-562-3511 office
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Appendix H

Informed Consent Letter

North Carolina State University INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: The Conflict Management Styles, Strength of Conflict Management Self-efficacy, and Moral Development Levels of School Counselors

Principal Investigator: C. Elaine Harper

Faculty Sponsor: Stanley Baker, Ph. D

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore how school counselors understand and manage conflict in their lives and in the lives of others. More specifically, the conflict management styles of school counselors, the strength of their conflict management self-efficacy, and their levels of moral development will be explored.

INFORMATION

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the following instruments: Demographic questionnaire, the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument, the Conflict Management Self-efficacy Scale, and the Defining Issues Test and return them to the principal investigator. The amount of time required to complete the instruments is approximately forty-five (45) minutes, which is the total duration of the study.

RISKS

There are no foreseen risks to participating in this study.

BENEFITS

Your participation is voluntary, and your decision to do so, or not to do so, will not affect your employment with Wake County Public School System. Although you may not benefit directly from this study, you will aid in the process of furthering the knowledge about how school counselors understand of conflict and its management.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will be included in a drawing to receive a monetary gift of \$100. Three separate monetary gifts will be given, one to a(n) elementary, middle, and high school counselor. In order to be eligible, you must return the completed survey and the ticket stub provided by the principal investigator.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Elaine Harper, at 1320-204 Park Glen Drive, Raleigh, NC 27610, or [919-836-5286]. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

Your participation in the study by completing and submitting the survey will indicate whether or not you agree to participate.

Investigator's Signature _____ Date _____