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Gender, ethnicity, use, and effectiveness of conflict management : an analysis of adolescent school based mediation

Pamela Jean Oleson Kreiser
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An analysis of adolescent school-based mediation**

Kreiser, Pamela Jean Oleson, M.A.

San Jose State University, 1990

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GENDER, ETHNICITY, USE, AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:
AN ANALYSIS OF ADOLESCENT SCHOOL BASED MEDIATION

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

GENDER, ETHNICITY, USE, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF ADOLESCENT SCHOOL BASED MEDIATION

by Pamela Jean Oleson Kreiser

This thesis reports findings from a study on a conflict management program involving adolescents. Participants ($N = 137$) completed a questionnaire about various aspects of conflict management. Results indicated that there is a significant difference among perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management according to gender. Females perceive conflict management to be more effective than do males. Implications are discussed in an ontogenetic framework.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The potentially damaging impact of suspension on a child's self concept has proved that suspensions often do much more harm than good. Public school educators have, therefore, realized the need for alternatives to suspension. During the past two decades, some educators have begun to deal with this problem creatively. They have implemented school based mediation programs (commonly called conflict management programs) to help reduce suspension of students who were involved in conflicts and often fighting.

In 1988, Roderick reported that student mediation programs had been established in over 300 schools around the country. "Many of them report that student mediators help solve large numbers of disputes, that the agreements remain intact in the vast majority of cases, and that the numbers of suspensions drop dramatically" (Roderick, p. 90).

Typically, conflict management programs train students to act as third-party mediators for their peers. Students who are conflict managers at elementary schools and sometimes middle schools wear brightly colored T-shirts that identify themselves as conflict managers. When there is a conflict on the playground, a conflict manager will help out.¹ On the high school level, conflicts are often managed in a specified room where disputants and the conflict manager meet to discuss the conflict. In these programs,

"the mediator does not play the role of police officer, judge, or counselor, but facilitates communication so that the disputants themselves can find a solution" (Roderick, 1988, p. 90).

Many educators have found conflict management programs to be a viable alternative. Some advantages of a conflict management program include the reduction of incidences of suspension, releasing administration time spent intervening in conflicts, placing more responsibility on students, and teaching students conflict management and communication skills.

However, since the implementation of these programs in schools across the nation, few studies have empirically explored perceived effectiveness of conflict management programs. Beyond this, several important variables have remained unexplored, such as gender, ethnicity, use of conflict management programs, and the importance of the conflict issue. As a result, little is known about much of the underlying mechanisms of the programs.

This research was designed to empirically examine conflict management program at a public middle school that enrolls approximately 500 students. By addressing the aforementioned concerns, knowledge about adolescent's perception of the effectiveness of the conflict management program will be expanded. The first chapter will review current literature about interpersonal conflict, conflict

management, school-based mediation, a theoretical framework, key concepts in conflict management programs, hypotheses and the research question. Survey research used to test perceived effectiveness will be delineated in the second chapter. The third chapter will report data analysis. The last chapter will explore results and provide a discussion.

Literature Review

Differences Between Interpersonal Conflict and Conflict Management Programs

There are mainly three central differences between research on interpersonal conflict and research on conflict management programs. First, researchers in the area of interpersonal conflict have been traditionally concerned with the examination of communication between members of a dyad in conflict, whereas the study of conflict management programs is concerned with the examination of communication involving the dyadic disputants and a third party. This distinction is important because the introduction of a third person changes the dynamics of the interaction itself. Next, researchers in the area of interpersonal conflict have primarily focused on the participants' point of view, whereas in conflict management programs the few studies conducted have concerned themselves with the administrator's perceptions of conflict management. This makes research from interpersonal conflict and conflict management less than compatible. Finally, a large majority of research in

the area of interpersonal conflict has focused on adults, whereas conflict management programs are instituted in public schools where children and adolescents are the primary participants. This distinction promotes an ontogenetic viewpoint of the conflict management process. The ontogenetic viewpoint will be discussed further in this chapter and in the final chapter.

Review of Interpersonal Conflict Research

Researchers have tended to be less interested in what a person perceives to be a conflict, and more interested in what a person will do when faced with a conflict. This is reflected in the various definitions developed for interpersonal conflict. Hocker and Wilmot (1985) contend that, "conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals" (p. 23). Teger (1970) states, "Conflict typically begins with a hostile act on the part of one party which imposes or threatens to impose costs on another party" (p. 187). Deutsch (1973) defines conflict more broadly as a situation where, "incompatible activities occur." Waln (1982) defines conflict in terms of values, "an interaction that occurs between individuals when salient values of self interests are threatened or challenged" (p. 557). A review of these definitions does not afford a clear, precise definition of interpersonal conflict, nor

does it advance our understanding of what participants perceive to be conflict. In most cases, these definitions are provided by researchers and then studies are conducted about what people do when they face conflict situations.

There are differing attitudes toward conflict management² within interpersonal conflict. Often, these attitudes are communicated through a discussion of myths or misconceptions about conflict. Yet, basic attitudes toward conflict management can be categorized. A review of basic speech communication textbooks (Doolittle, 1977) showed four classifications of the coverage of conflict: 1) conflict is not discussed (conflict is not covered in the textbook); 2) "conflict is a disease" (conflict is negative and should be avoided); 3) "conflict is positive, resolution" (conflict can be positive, but it is best if resolved expeditiously); and 4) "conflict is positive, management" (conflict is positive and positive results can come from the conflict and the management of the conflict). These same categories are useful in looking at current research. Most articles generally fit into "positive, resolution", the third category (Blake & Mouton, 1970; Conrad, 1983; Donohue, Weider-Hatfield, Hamilton, & Diez, 1985; Fisher, 1983; Miller, Brehmer, & Hammond, 1970; Ray & Ray, 1986; Rubin, 1980; Sereno & Mortensen, 1969; Sillars, 1980; & Waln, 1984). Research articles classified in this category tend to hold the viewpoint that conflict is positive, but it

should be eliminated if possible or as soon as possible. Other articles fit into "positive, management," the fourth category (Fahs, 1981; Hocker & Wilmot, 1985; Johnson, 1974; Saine, 1974; and Wall, 1981). In this classification, these articles tend to hold the viewpoint that conflict is positive and the management may also be positive. Here the goal is not avoidance like it often is in the third category.

Research Methods. Self report measures have been commonly used to measure the perceptions of the disputing persons (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Conrad, 1983; Teger, 1970; Richmond, Wagner, & McCroskey, 1983; Sillars, 1980). Conrad (1983) used questionnaires distributed to managers of 35 units of a 70-unit hotel chain. Managers reported demographic information, perceptions of job performance, and "typical" strategies used in resolving conflicts. Sillars (1980) used questionnaires for 140 randomly sampled first-year dormitory residents at a single university. In these cases, Conrad and Sillars were attempting to tie perceptions in with actual communication behavior.

Like many research methods, self report measures have advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of a self report measure is that it does gauge human perceptions. This is useful in understanding perceptions of disputants in interpersonal conflicts. An obvious disadvantage is that this method of measurement does not observe actual

conflicts. The limitation in the Conrad and Sillars studies is that they rely on self report measures and do not look at actual communication behavior specifically.

Other common research methods in interpersonal conflict have been simulated games (Miller, et al., 1970; Steinfatt, et al., 1974) and mock negotiations (Donohue, 1981; Waln, 1984). Simulated games and mock negotiations also have advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that these research methods do observe and record actual human behavior. This is beneficial because in this method humans are involved in communication. Yet, while researchers who use this method do examine actual behavior, they fail to observe authentic communication as it might take place in a natural setting. The limitation is that simulated games and mock negotiations are laboratory-contrived communication events.

While very few actual conflicts have been observed and recorded, one way researchers have attempted to account for methodological limitations has been to utilize a combination of both self report measures as well as simulated games or mock negotiations (Brann & Foddy, 1987; Donohue, et al., 1985; Fahs, 1981; Papa & Natalie, 1989; Teger, 1970). Perhaps this combination is one of the best if the naturalistic setting is unavailable.

Conflict Management. Conflict management is a specific area of interpersonal conflict. The focus of this area is

on strategies that are used by disputants as they deal with interpersonal conflict.

There are few definitional perspectives of conflict management. Researchers tend to discuss conflict management in terms of goals and overall objectives. Walton (1987) provides a logical way to categorize conflict management in terms of two types of goals: resolution and control. Walton (1987) explains:

One can distinguish between resolution and control as different goals of conflict management. The principals [disputants] themselves or a third party may attempt to gain resolution, so that the original differences or feelings of oppositions no longer exist; or they may attempt to merely control conflict, so that the negative consequences of the conflict are decreased, even though the opposing preferences and antagonisms persist (p. 4).

It should be noted that there is some disagreement about main objectives of conflict management. For example, Walton (1987) further explains that the most general objective in conflict management is to "interrupt a self-maintaining or escalating cycle and to initiate a de-escalating cycle" (p. 78). He essentially advocates either resolution or control, whereas, McCroskey, Richmond, and Stewart (1986) state that "clearly, the superior method of conflict management is to prevent it from occurring in the

first place" (p. 212). They consider four conflict management techniques: leaving the field, restoring trust, reinstating communication, and compromise and negotiation. Each technique appears to be aimed at resolution with some consideration for control. Still resolution is implicitly advocated over control in their research.

Review of School-Based Mediation Research

California has been recognized as a leader in the statewide effort to implement conflict management programs. Support has been seen in schools, public organizations like Community Boards³ who have largely been responsible for training conflict managers and school administrators in California, and even in the state legislature. "In February 1986, Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig, the state's highest education official, sent a [favorable] letter to every public school District Superintendent on the subject of conflict resolution" (Lynch, 1988, p. 1).

Many schools have found that utilizing a conflict management program has brought about beneficial outcomes for the school as well as for the students. Decreases in student suspension and incidences of fighting have been directly linked to conflict management programs. Koch (1988) provides these examples:

For example, at William Cullen Bryant High School in New York City, after the first year of the MDR

[Mediated Dispute Resolution] program, suspensions for fighting dropped 50 percent; 93 of 116 mediations resulted in agreements. In a multi-ethnic high school in Hawaii, fighting incidents dropped from 83 to 19 in the program's first two years (p. 16).

In Massachusetts, a report prepared by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center made this claim: "Indeed, schoolyard mediation has a proven track record as a means of reducing conflict and improving school climate in settings where conflicts among students often escalate into suspendable offenses" (Mediation: An Alternative, 1986, p. 1). Beyond suspensions and fighting, these programs also have the potential to help students learn and develop useful skills. "In fact, its major value appears to be the learning it evokes among students, particularly problem-solving skills, language development, and communication skills in general" (Koch, 1988, p. 17). In addition to specific skills development, many students have become aware of available alternatives through conflict management programs. Roderick (1988) clearly identifies this outcome:

With all their variety, school-based conflict resolution programs share a common goal: to show young people that they have many choices besides passivity or aggression for dealing with conflict and to give them the skills to make those choices real in their own lives (p. 90).

Finally, the use of conflict management has often saved time and helped to expedite resolution. "Using peer mediators is not only less costly (unlike experts, they are typically unpaid) but often provides someone on the spot to intervene informally before the dispute has a chance to escalate" (Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988, p. 420). So, it is clear that conflict management is beneficial because it reduces suspension and fighting, helps students to learn and develop useful skills, helps students become aware of available alternatives, and saves time as it helps to expedite resolution.

Theoretical Framework

There are theoretical reasons to believe that conflict management can be beneficial for adolescents. Vygotsky (1987) contends that adolescents (ages 12-14) use conceptual thinking to resolve problems that face them. "It is precisely this emerging task, need, or goal that is posed for the adolescent by the surrounding social environment that impels and forces him to make this decisive step in the development of his thinking" (Vygotsky, p. 132).

In current literature on conflict, there have been few connections made between research and theory. In his review of trends in negotiation and mediation, Pruitt (1986) distinguishes between theory and maxims. His compelling argument suggests that most research in negotiation and mediation "subsists largely on a diet of maxims -

prescriptive rules of thumb, succinct statements about what to do and not to do" (p. 237). Pruitt's claim appears to be true not only for third party mediation, but also for conflict management and interpersonal conflict. While, there have been some attempts to expand research, there is still much inconsistency in definitions of interpersonal conflict and conflict management and few theoretical explanations. Vygotsky's theoretical perspective based on his research in Thinking and Speech (1987) provides as useful theoretical framework for research in the area of conflict management.

Vygotsky

Vygotskian theory primarily examines the relationship between thinking and speech by looking at speech as a medium that facilitates higher levels of thinking. The relationship between thinking and speech is seen by Vygotsky as a crucial theoretical issue. According to Vygotsky, to examine only one of these, only thinking or only speech, would be to ignore half of this fundamental relationship. Vygotsky offers this foundation for the examination of communication.

Vygotsky's theory is based on three stages of development in thinking that relate directly to speaking. The first stage of thinking, syncretic, is characterized as having the most basic patterns of thought. In the syncretic stage the thoughts of the individual are irrational,

emotional, and subjective. The second stage, complexive, is characterized as a higher level of thinking than syncretic. In this stage, thinking is spontaneous and based upon that which is concrete rather than abstract. In this level the individuals behaviors may be correct when observed, but the individuals thinking is not conceptually correct. The third stage is the stage of conceptual thinking. It is characterized by a true conceptual understanding that is both rational and logical. Here, there are two sub-levels: spontaneous (where objects can be conceptually differentiated) and scientific (where relationships among objects are considered). It is in the scientific level of thinking that a meta-level understanding can be reached by the individual.

Speech is used to mediate thinking. There are various forms of speech according to Vygotsky: inner speech, oral speech, and written speech. Each of these forms can be differentiated in terms of structure (degree of abbreviation) and in terms of function (utility). Structurally, "inner speech is maximally contracted, abbreviated, and telegraphic" (Vygotsky, p. 204). It is the form of speech that is least elaborated. Vygotsky points out that, "even if inner speech were made audible to the outsider, only the speaker would understand it. No one else would know the mental field in which it flows. Inner speech is, therefore, completely idiomatic" (p. 204). Inner speech

functions as self adaptation. Oral speech varies in terms of structure. It can range from moderate abbreviation to moderate elaboration. The more elaborated the oral message the more effective the oral message will be in conveying meaning to others. Oral speech functions as adaptation to others and is "regulated by the dynamics of the situation" (p. 203). "Written speech is the most expanded form of speech" (p. 204), in terms of structure. Written speech is abstract. Functionally, "it is speech without an interlocutor" (p. 202). This form of speech is useful in conveying meaning to a non-specific audience. As a result, "written speech must be maximally comprehensible" (p. 204).

At this point, it is necessary to provide a definition of conflict and conflict management by specifying the relationship between two underlying mechanisms, thinking and speech. Interpersonal conflicts usually manifest when thinking declines to the spontaneous level (perhaps even the complexive level) and when speech becomes progressively abbreviated. This is augmented by overestimated intersubjective knowledge of the situation. Consequently, conflict management is the facilitation of accurate shared knowledge through the use of elaborated oral speech.

The examination of thinking and oral speech in conflict management is intriguing. As individuals communicate using oral speech, a mediational tool, there is great potential for thinking development. This appears to be particularly

apparent in disputants who are challenged by the mediator to use elaborated (unabbreviated) speech and thus reach a higher level of thinking, perhaps even a meta-perspective (scientific level) of the conflict situation. Because of the "tendency of oral speech toward abbreviation" (Vygotsky, p. 271) it is important to consider abbreviation as a potential barrier for the disputants and mediator in conflict management. Vygotsky reports, "thus, we have identified two features that facilitate abbreviation, that is, the interlocutors' shared knowledge of the subject and the direct transfer of thought through intonation" (p. 272). This "shared knowledge" facilitates abbreviation because it assumes that the disputants hold the same knowledge of the subject, when in reality this knowledge may only be partially shared. As a result, the mediator must carefully address and move away from any potential abbreviation that would limit understanding and effective management.

Conflict management involving adolescents is particularly rich in light of Vygotsky's scientific observations:

The most important conclusion of our investigation is that it is only in the transitional age that the child completes the third stage in the development of his intellect, that he reaches the point where he is thinking in concepts. In experiments with adolescents, it became apparent that the primitive forms of

syncretic and complexive thinking (as well as potential concepts) begin to appear less frequently in their thinking and they begin to use true concepts in thinking (p. 160).

Because adolescents (ages 12-14) are at this transitional age, various exercises in thinking seem to be particularly beneficial. Vygotsky contends that adolescents use conceptual thinking to resolve problems that face them.

Summary

A Vygotskian theoretical framework provides a broad foundation for the understanding of basic communication processes (thinking and speech) as well as adolescent conflict management. This perspective yields three primary benefits. First, this framework incorporates thinking and speech into the understanding of conflicts. Next, this framework allows for explanations that are more theoretically informed than much of the previous communication research. Finally, this framework has important pedagogical implications. Skills used and developed in conflict management programs help to facilitate thinking development in adolescents at the scientific level. Ultimately, there is a great potential for long term benefits for the adolescents because "scientific concepts restructure and raise spontaneous concepts to a higher level, forming their zone of proximal development. What the child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able

to do independently tomorrow" (p. 220).

Review of Key Concepts

Educators overwhelmingly agree that conflict management is effective. "School mediation program administrators and participants have made fantastic claims for the success of their programs, asserting that students' lives have been changed dramatically, as have school climates" (Lam, 1988, p. 1). Yet, it is clear that while we suspect that conflict management is effective, we have made limited progress toward understanding what comprises an effective conflict management program. Up to this point, most evaluations have been intuitive and from the teacher or administrator's perspective rather than the perspective of the adolescent participants. The following section will focus on a discussion of key concepts from the students' perspective.

Perceptions of Effectiveness

While some have argued that the true test of effectiveness of conflict management programs is the number of suspensions that have existed before and after the implementation of the program, others have argued that effective conflict management rests in the perceptions of the students. This position is supported by the argument that no matter what program has been implemented, unless the students themselves (disputants and mediators) are satisfied and believe that it works, then the program cannot be considered entirely effective.

Various instruments have been used to examine student attitudes toward conflict styles, students' use of specific conflict styles, and students' perceptions of school climate (Lam, 1989). However, most instruments do not attempt to measure perceptions of effectiveness per se. Consequently, little is known about student perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management and there is a need to develop such an instrument so that effectiveness can be specifically explored.

Use of Conflict Management

At this point, few studies have been conducted that specifically examine actual use of conflict management. It is not clear whether students who are actually exposed to conflict management or students who merely have opinions about conflict management differ in their perceptions of effectiveness.

Ethnicity

Few studies have been conducted that specifically look at ethnicity as a variable in conflict management. Davis and Porter (1985) report that "several mediation programs have been designed specifically to bring together students of diverse backgrounds to further multicultural understanding. The results have been positive and students report growth in their ability to understand other peoples' points of view" (p. 128). Yet, what remains unknown is whether a student's ethnic background makes a difference in

how that student perceives effectiveness of conflict management or whether that student will use conflict management more or less, based on their ethnic background. With the growing diverse population in the United States, an investigation into this area is warranted.

Gender

Researchers have been concerned with understanding gender and conflict. A study conducted by Papa and Natalie (1989) explored the influence of gender composition of a dyad, selection of strategy and discussion satisfaction in interpersonal conflict. They found that gender had a significant effect on the participant's selection of influence strategies. Rosenthal and Hautaluoma (1987) found that "females reported accommodating more and competing less than did males" (p. 700). Canary, Cunningham, and Cody (1988) found that females were more likely to use personal criticism and strategies involving anger than males. In addition, males were more likely to use denial tactics. Conversely, Shockley-Zalabak (1981) found that there were no differences due to gender. Collectively, most research on gender is inconclusive. Perhaps gender differences and similarities can be detected more conclusively in studies that examine conflict in an ontogenetic framework.

Differences in gender can also be seen in research that has been conducted specifically in school based mediation research. For example, one research project (Araki,

Takeshita, & Kadomoto, 1989) reported there were significantly more female disputants than male disputants using their conflict management program. Similarly, records from a public middle school located on the central coast of California revealed that out of 115 cases, 74.5% involved were females, and 25.5% involved were males. More research is needed to increase the generalizability of these findings. Furthermore, it is important to investigate whether perceptions of effectiveness differ according to gender.

Perceived Importance of the Conflict Issue

Several researchers have investigated disputants' perceptions of the importance of the conflict issue. A study by Papa and Natalie (1989) investigated conflicts where participants discussed a topic that was personally relevant in their work environment. In this study, each participant was selected and paired with another participant who had a significantly different view on the topic of discussion. Although they investigated perceptions of discussion satisfaction, they did not examine perceptions of the importance of the conflict issue directly with discussion satisfaction. In another study, Sereno and Mortensen (1969) investigated ego involvement. They defined ego involvement as "the importance or relevance of the topic to an individual as revealed by the person's commitment or stand on an issue" (p. 8). They found that "dyads

consisting of subjects who were slightly involved reached public agreement with greater frequency than did dyads consisting of subjects who were highly involved (p. 10). In addition, they found that "dyads consisting of slightly involved subjects exhibited greater changes between private pretest and posttest responses than did dyads consisting of subjects who were highly involved" (p. 11). While researchers have acknowledged issue importance as a variable worthy of consideration, it is not clear whether perceptions of importance influence how people perceive effectiveness of the conflict management.

This section has specifically reviewed perceptions of effectiveness, use, gender, ethnicity, and perceived importance of the conflict issue in conflict management situations.

Hypotheses

The review of literature leads to the following hypotheses and research question:

1. Perceptions of effective conflict management will be significantly different among ethnic groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis is: $H_0 \mu_1 = \mu_2$
2. Use of conflict management will be significantly different among Asian respondents, white respondents, Hispanic respondents, and African American respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis is:
 $H_0 \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$

3. Females will perceive conflict management as more effective than males. Therefore, the null hypothesis is: $H_0 \mu_1 \leq \mu_2$
4. Females will use conflict management more than males. Therefore, the null hypothesis is: $H_0 \mu_1 \leq \mu_2$

Research Question

What factors influence effective conflict management?

Chapter II

Methods

Survey research was conducted to examine the effectiveness of a conflict management program. Because an instrument was not available to measure effectiveness of the program, initial efforts were devoted to the construction of an index measuring adolescent's perceptions of program effectiveness. The instrument was pretested in order to assess reliability and validity. A four-step process was used to conduct the pretest. First, various preliminary on-site interviews were conducted with the principal, program coordinator, dean of counseling, and several conflict managers. Second, a pretest questionnaire was constructed and examined for face validity by administrators in an auxiliary department of the school district, the school principal, the program coordinator, and students. Third, the pretest questionnaire was administered to three student groups to test for reliability and validity. Fourth, the questionnaire was revised and data were collected.

On-site Interviews

On-site interviews were informally conducted in order to understand the conflict management program. The principal provided demographic information about the student population (18.5% Hispanic, 9.3% White, 0.6% Japanese, 9.1% Chinese, 1.2% American Indian, 0.2% Korean, 39.3% Black/African American, 13.5% Filipino, 13.5%

Other/Non-White).

The program coordinator provided background information for the study of the program. The dean of counseling provided background information about the history of the program. Five conflict managers were interviewed. Each expressed a high level of satisfaction about the program.

Pretest

Subjects. Subjects were drawn from a population of students in a public intermediate school that operates a conflict management program. All subjects (disputants and mediators) were between the ages of 11 and 14 (average age was 12.23), 47.1% male and 52.9% female, and either in sixth (55.9%) or seventh grade (44.1%). The sample ($N = 34$) was drawn from three different advisory classes during their homeroom periods. Two respondents did not complete the questionnaire, so they were not included in the sample.

Questionnaire Construction. Several school officials were asked to help generate items for the pretest questionnaire. Items were constructed in an open-ended and closed-ended format. After the questions were developed they were examined by school officials and communication experts for face validity. Several words that were judged to be unintelligible were replaced with more appropriate words. For example, the question "Are you satisfied with conflict management?" was changed to say, "Are you happy with conflict management?" In another case, the question

"Do you think conflict management is effective?" was changed into two questions: 1) "Do you think conflict management works for you?" and 2) "Do you think conflict management works for others?" A 24-item questionnaire containing closed-ended Likert-type five point scales and open-ended questions was constructed. It contained eight demographic questions, and sixteen questions to measure program effectiveness (see Appendix A).

Procedure. The pretest was administered to 32 students during a designated time period at school. The following instructions were read to the respondents: "Please do not put your name on your paper. You are about to complete a questionnaire about the conflict management program at this school. Please be as honest as you can. All responses will remain anonymous. You may begin." Participants responded to the questionnaire items. It took the respondents approximately twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The results of the pretest were analyzed using a SPSS/PC+ program (Norusis, 1988). Two models were used to compute reliability: Cronbach's alpha and a split model.

Closed-ended Questions. Reliability for all closed-ended question items was acceptable (coefficient alpha=.82; Guttman split-half=.74). A split half model revealed mixed results (alpha for part 1 =.88 and alpha for

part 2 =.32), therefore correlation analyses were conducted (see Table 1).

Table 1
Correlation Matrix of Preliminary Measure of Effectiveness (12-items)

	WORKS	OTHERS	ATSCHOOL	LIKE	TRUST	FAIR
WORKS	1.0000					
OTHERS	.5504	1.0000				
ATSCHOOL	.5345	.6430	1.0000			
LIKE	.5506	.6954	.7380	1.0000		
TRUST	.5837	.5301	.6020	.7688	1.0000	
FAIR	.4795	.6043	.3958	.5216	.5355	1.0000
UNHAPPY	.3278	.6071	.4712	.5385	.4674	.4145
DIFGRADE	-.3320	-.1018	-.1631	-.1339	-.4849	-.2673
OPPSEX	-.0868	-.0632	-.0450	-.0763	-.2257	-.3183
BETTER	.4897	.5604	.5926	.6321	.6292	.6853
LEARN	.5462	.5226	.6536	.6282	.6376	.7040
HOME	.3313	.2104	.0399	.1450	.2637	.3662
	UNHAPPY	DIFGRADE	OPPSEX	BETTER	LEARN	HOME
WORKS						
OTHERS						
ATSCHOOL						
LIKE						
TRUST						
FAIR						
UNHAPPY	1.0000					
DIFGRADE	-.0643	1.0000				
OPPSEX	-.2586	.2460	1.0000			
BETTER	.2461	-.3203	-.3004	1.0000		
LEARN	.3986	-.2125	-.0986	.7742	1.000	
HOME	.3089	-.0849	-.1937	.2963	.3606	1.000

It was suspected that the first seven items exercised the respondents' ability to think about the conflict management program at a lower level of thinking than the last three items. These three items may have been too

difficult to respond to because they exercised the respondent's ability to think at a higher level. So, split models were used to investigate this possibility (see Table 2 and Table 3).

Table 2
Split Model Correlations (First Set of Items)

	WORKS	OTHERS	SCHOOL	LIKE	TRUST	FAIR
WORKS	1.0000	.5620**	.5196**	.5180*	.5404**	.4344*
OTHERS	.5620**	1.0000	.6329**	.6706**	.5000*	.5686**
SCHOOL	.5196**	.6329**	1.0000	.7365**	.5993**	.3945
LIKE	.5180*	.6706**	.7365**	1.0000	.7714**	.5283**
TRUST	.5404**	.5000*	.5993**	.7714**	1.0000	.5454**
FAIR	.4344*	.5686**	.3945	.5283**	.5454**	1.0000

Note. * $p < .01$, one-tailed ** $p < .001$, one-tailed

Table 3
Split Model Correlations (Second Set of Items)

	UNHAPPY	DIFGRAD	OPPSEX	BETTER	LEARN	HOME
UNHAPPY	1.0000	-.0643	-.2586	.2461	.3986	.3089
DIFGRAD	-.0643	1.0000	.2460	-.3203	-.2125	-.0849
OPPSEX	-.2586	.2460	1.0000	-.3004	-.0986	-.1937
BETTER	.2461	-.3203	-.3004	1.0000	.7742**	.2963
LEARN	.3986	-.2125	-.0986	.7742**	1.0000	.3606
HOME	.3089	-.0849	-.1937	.2963	.3606	1.0000

Note. * $p < .01$, one-tailed ** $p < .001$, one-tailed

After a close examination of the correlation matrices, a principal component factor analysis was conducted.

Three factors emerged that accounted for 69.2% of the

variance (see Table 4). A varimax rotation was performed to get a more parsimonious factor structure. Factors were named based upon factor loadings of .50 or better. Factor 1 was named Effectiveness, Factor 2 was named Flexibility, and Factor 3 was not named (see Table 5).

Table 4
Factor Analysis of Preliminary Measure of Effectiveness
(12-items)

Variable	Communality	* Factor	Eigen- value	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
WORKS	.53890	* 1	5.83297	48.6	48.6
OTHERS	.73718	* 2	1.37053	11.4	60.0
SCHOOL	.77386	* 3	1.09986	9.2	69.2
LIKE	.81213	*			
TRUST	.76017	*			
FAIR	.67276	*			
BETTER	.70790	*			
LEARN	.69763	*			
HOME	.63116	*			
UNHAPPY	.61667	*			
DIFGRAD	.78349	*			
OPPSEX	.57152	*			

Table 5
Factor Matrix of Preliminary Measure of Effectiveness
(12-items)

	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3
WORKS	.72316	.00200	-.12626
OTHERS	.78466	.30165	.17463
SCHOOL	.77110	.39006	-.16470
LIKE	.83943	.32345	-.05346
TRUST	.83492	-.07439	-.23987
FAIR	.77364	-.23009	.14592
BETTER	.81664	-.14740	-.13878
LEARN	.83493	.02097	-.00903
HOME	.38840	-.41882	.55217
UNHAPPY	.61789	.11664	.47041
DIFGRAD	-.36159	.53478	.60560
OPPSEX	-.26845	.68346	-.17981

A Scree test was conducted to further examine the Effectiveness factor (see Table 6).

Table 6
Scree Test of Preliminary Measure of Effectiveness
(12-items)

After close examination of the factor analysis, it was determined that three items (difgrade, oppsex, and home) should be removed because they were not directly measuring the effectiveness of the conflict management program. The reliability for these nine-items was high (coefficient $\alpha = .91$; Guttman split-half = .86). A split model revealed high reliability (alpha for part 1 = .87 and alpha for part 2 = .82). The remaining nine items were correlated to ensure high correlations among items (see Table 7).

Table 7
Correlations of Measure of Effectiveness (9-Items)

	WORKS	OTHERS	ATSCHOOL	LIKE	TRUST
WORKS	1.0000	.5620**	.5196**	.5180*	.5404**
OTHERS	.5620**	1.0000	.6329**	.6706**	.5000*
ATSCHOOL	.5196**	.6329**	1.0000	.7365**	.5993**
LIKE	.5180*	.6706**	.7365**	1.0000	.7714**
TRUST	.5404**	.5000*	.5993**	.7714**	1.0000
FAIR	.4344*	.5686**	.3945	.5283**	.5454**
BETTER	.4240*	.5080*	.5824**	.6353**	.6382**
LEARN	.5398**	.5201**	.6527**	.6227**	.6284**
UNHAPPY	.2094	.4843*	.4369*	.5279**	.4778*

	FAIR	BETTER	LEARN	UNHAPPY
WORKS	.4344*	.4240*	.5398**	.2094
OTHERS	.5686**	.5080*	.5201**	.4843*
ATSCHOOL	.3945	.5824**	.6527**	.4369*
LIKE	.5283**	.6353**	.6227**	.5279**
TRUST	.5445**	.6382**	.6284**	.4778*
FAIR	1.0000	.6946**	.6919**	.4369*
BETTER	.6946**	1.0000	.7491**	.3129
LEARN	.6919**	.7491**	1.0000	.3521
UNHAPPY	.4369*	.3129	.3521	1.0000

Note. * $p < .01$, one-tailed ** $p < .001$, one-tailed

Next, a principal component factor analysis was conducted. One factor emerged that accounted for 60.2% of the variance (see Table 8).

Table 8
Factor Analysis of Dependent Measure of Effectiveness
(9-items)

Variable	Communality	* Factor	Eigen- value	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
WORKS	.45976	* 1	5.42145	60.2	60.2
OTHERS	.60762	*			
SCHOOL	.64551	*			
LIKE	.75675	*			
TRUST	.67935	*			
FAIR	.57730	*			
BETTER	.65112	*			
LEARN	.69766	*			
UNHAPPY	.34638	*			

The one factor was named Effectiveness (Table 9).

Table 9
Factor Matrix of Dependent Measure of Effectiveness
(9-Items)

	FACTOR 1
WORKS	.67806
OTHERS	.77950
SCHOOL	.80343
LIKE	.86992
TRUST	.82423
FAIR	.75980
BETTER	.80692
LEARN	.83526
UNHAPPY	.58854

A Scree test was conducted to further examine the Effectiveness factor (see Table 10).

Table 10
Scree Test of Dependent Measure of Effectiveness (9-items)

Open-ended questions. The open-ended questions did not yield useful results. Teachers who administered the questionnaires found that most respondents were unable to answer the open-ended questions without assistance. When the results were analyzed nearly all responses were irrelevant or unintelligible. As a result, the open-ended questions were discarded.

Measuring Ethnicity. It was thought that ethnic background would be measurable. However, because the school is highly integrated in ethnic composition, many students marked several categories of ethnicity. For example, many students have one parent of one ethnic background and another parent of another background. As a result, ethnic

background could not be clearly determined from the question item. So, the question item was revised and split into two questions that read: 1) "What is your Mother's ethnic background?" and 2) "What is your Father's ethnic background?" With this change, the elimination of open-ended questions, and the elimination of three items mentioned earlier, the questionnaire was revised (see Appendix B).

Procedure for Data Collection. Directions were given to teachers who administered the revised questionnaire. The following directions were read by each teacher before students responded to the questionnaire during a class period: "Please do not put your name on your paper. You are about to complete a questionnaire about the conflict management program at this school. Please be as honest as you can. Mark only one answer for each question. All responses will remain anonymous. You may begin."

Data Collection. Subjects ($N = 137$) responded to the revised questionnaire during a class period. All subjects (disputants and mediators) were between the ages of 12 and 15 (average age was 13.32), 48.2% male and 51.8% female. Ten respondents did not complete the questionnaire, so they were not included in the final sample. The ethnic backgrounds of the respondents were generally consistent with school averages (41.6% African American, 9.5% white, 18.2% Asian, 16.1% Hispanic, and 14.6% non-white/mixed).

Chapter III

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed and hypotheses were statistically tested using a SPSS/PC+ program. First, reliability of the dependent measure was tested. Second, hypotheses were tested. Third, the research question was investigated. Fourth, a post hoc analysis was completed. For all statistical tests the alpha level for significance was set at .05.

Reliability of Dependent Measure

First, the reliability of the dependent measure was tested. Reliability among the nine question items was deemed acceptable (coefficient alpha=.88; Guttman split-half=.87). A split model revealed consistent results (alpha for part 1 =.81 and alpha for part 2 =.77). Correlation analyses were conducted and results indicated that all items were highly correlated (see Table 11).

Table 11
Correlations of Dependent Measure

	WORKS	OTHERS	ATSCHOOL	LIKE	TRUST
WORKS	1.0000	.3993**	.3779**	.6136**	.5277**
OTHERS	.3993**	1.0000	.4941**	.3724**	.3016**
ATSCHOOL	.3779**	.4941**	1.0000	.4254**	.5078**
LIKE	.6136**	.3724**	.4254**	1.0000	.6194**
TRUST	.5277**	.3016**	.5078**	.6194**	1.0000
FAIR	.3332**	.3236**	.3513**	.3980**	.4730**
HAPPY	.5277**	.3441**	.5376**	.6318**	.6676**
BETTER	.4950**	.3545**	.3796**	.5189**	.5163**
LEARN	.4728**	.3557**	.4324**	.4475**	.5599**

Table 11
Correlations of Dependent Measure (continued)

	FAIR	HAPPY	BETTER	LEARN
WORKS	.3332**	.5277**	.4950**	.4728**
OTHERS	.3236**	.3441**	.3545**	.3557**
ATSCHOOL	.3513**	.5376**	.3796**	.4324**
LIKE	.3980**	.6318**	.5189**	.4475**
TRUST	.4730**	.6676**	.5163**	.5599**
FAIR	1.0000	.5759**	.3006**	.3757**
HAPPY	.5759**	1.0000	.5099**	.5481**
BETTER	.3006**	.5099**	1.0000	.4882**
LEARN	.3757**	.5481**	.4882**	1.0000

Note. *p < .01, one-tailed; **p < .001, one-tailed

Factor Analysis of Dependent Measure

A principal component factor analysis was performed on the nine items that compose the dependent measure. One factor emerged accounting for 52.5% of the variance (see Table 12).

Table 12
Factor Analysis of Dependent Measure

Variable	Communality	*	Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
WORKS	.54034	*	1	4.72654	52.5	52.5
OTHERS	.33764	*				
ATSCHOOL	.47120	*				
LIKE	.61638	*				
TRUST	.65621	*				
FAIR	.39193	*				
HAPPY	.69595	*				
BETTER	.49513	*				
LEARN	.52175	*				

The factor, previously named Effectiveness, was

unidimensional and parsimonious in structure (see Table 13).

Table 13
Factor Matrix of Dependent Measure

	FACTOR 1
WORKS	.73508
OTHERS	.58107
ATSCHOOL	.68644
LIKE	.78510
TRUST	.81007
FAIR	.62604
HAPPY	.83424
BETTER	.70365
LEARN	.72232

A one factor solution was obtained. As a result, the factor could not be rotated. A Scree test was produced to further examine the Effectiveness factor (see Table 14).

Table 14
Scree Test of Dependent Measure

Hypothesis 1

Mean scores for perceived effectiveness were calculated for each ethnic group (see Table 15).

Table 15

Mean Scores of Perceived Effectiveness by Ethnic Groups

Ethnic Group	Mean Score
<hr/>	
Hispanic	27.55
Non-White Mixed	28.35
White	29.77
Asian	30.00
African American	30.51

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted in order to detect significant differences in perceptions of conflict management effectiveness among ethnic groups. The null hypothesis was retained. Results indicated there were no main effects for dominant ethnic groups (see Table 16). Results suggest that perceptions of effectiveness are not significantly different among ethnic groups.

Table 16
ANOVA: Perceived Effectiveness by Dominant Ethnic Group

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Ethnic Group	175.282	4	43.820	.879	.478
Residual	6578.558	132	49.838		
Total	6753.839	136	49.661		

Hypothesis 2

A chi-square was computed in order to detect significant differences in the frequency of use of conflict management among ethnic groups. The null hypothesis was not rejected. Results indicated no significant differences among ethnic groups for use of conflict management ($\chi^2(4, N = 137) = 7.454, p < .11$).

Hypothesis 3

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted in order to detect significant differences in perceptions of conflict management effectiveness between gender groups. The null hypothesis was rejected. Results indicated a main effect for gender ($F [1,135] = 9.897, p = .002$). Results suggest that perceptions of effectiveness is significantly different according to gender and that females perceive conflict management as more effective than males (see Table 17).

Table 17
ANOVA: Perceived Effectiveness by Gender

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Gender	461.305	1	461.305	9.897	.002
Residual	6292.534	135	46.611		
Total	6753.839	136	49.661		

Hypothesis 4

A chi-square was performed in order to detect significant differences in the frequency of use of conflict management between gender groups. The null hypothesis was retained. Results indicated that frequency of use is not significantly different between gender groups.

Research Question

The research question was explored through three different factorial designs and a regression model in order to determine what factors influence perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management.

Factorial Designs. A three-way analysis of variance (see Table 18) revealed main effects for gender ($F [1,118] = 8.865, p = .004$), low importance ($F [4,118] = 10.263, p = .001$), and use ($F [1,118] = 14.450, p = .001$).

Table 18
ANOVA: Effectiveness by Gender, Use, and Low Importance

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	2452.308	6	408.718	12.743	.001
Gender	284.337	1	284.337	8.865	.004
Low Import	1316.683	4	329.171	10.263	.001
Use	463.451	1	463.451	14.450	.001
2-way Interactions	260.170	9	28.908	.901	.527
Gender by Low Import	129.979	4	32.495	1.103	.404
Gender by Use	39.297	1	39.297	1.225	.271
Low Import by Use	83.475	4	20.869	.651	.628
3-way Interactions	256.771	3	85.590	2.669	.051
Gender by Low Import by Use	256.771	3	85.590	2.669	.051
Explained	2969.249	18	164.958	5.143	.001
Residual	3784.590	118	32.073		
Total	6753.839	136	49.661		

There were no significant two-way interaction effects. However, there was a significant three-way interaction effect for gender, low importance and use ($F [3,118] = 2.669$, $p = .051$). A multiple comparison procedure was conducted to investigate specific differences between group means for perceived effectiveness and low importance. Results identified significant differences for five pairs of groups (see Table 19).

Table 19
Multiple Comparison: Perceived Effectiveness by Low Importance

			PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS				
			G	G	G	G	G
			r	r	r	r	r
			p	p	p	p	p
L	Mean	Group	1	2	3	4	5
O							
W	23.6667	Grp 1					
	28.2778	Grp 2					
I	29.3966	Grp 3	*				
M	33.5882	Grp 4	*				
P.	34.8000	Grp 5	*	*	*		

Note. * $p < .05$

A similar three-way analysis of variance was conducted using high importance (see Table 20). The three-way analysis of variance revealed a main effects for gender ($F [1,119] = 5.548, p = .020$), a main effect for high importance ($F [4,119] = 21.002, p = .001$), and a main effect for use ($F [1,119] = 16.891, p = .001$). Higher order calculations revealed no other significant interaction effects.

Table 20
 ANOVA: Effectiveness by Gender, Use, and High Importance

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	3322.823	6	553.804	21.271	.001
Gender	144.455	1	144.455	5.548	.020
High Import	2187.198	4	546.800	21.002	.001
Use	439.788	1	439.788	16.891	.001
2-way Interactions	263.240	9	29.249	1.123	.352
Gender by High Import	160.320	4	40.080	1.539	.195
Gender by Use	4.342	1	4.342	.167	.684
High Import by Use	38.054	4	9.514	.365	.833
3-way Interactions	69.486	2	34.743	1.334	.267
Gender by High Imp. by Use	69.486	2	34.743	1.334	.267
Explained	3655.549	17	215.032	8.259	.001
Residual	3098.291	119	26.036		
Total	6753.839	136	49.661		

A multiple comparison procedure was conducted to investigate specific differences between group means for perceived effectiveness and high importance. Results identified significant differences for seven pairs of groups (see Table 21).

Table 21
Multiple Comparison: Perceived Effectiveness by High Importance

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS				
			G G G G G	
			r r r r r	
			p p p p p	
H	Mean	Group	2 1 3 4 5	
I				
G				
H	19.5714	Grp 2		
	20.1111	Grp 1		
I	27.5625	Grp 3	* *	
M	30.8889	Grp 4	* *	
P.	34.2174	Grp 5	* * *	

Note. * $p < .05$

Next, a four-way analysis of variance was computed for perceived effectiveness by gender, use, and relative importance (see Table 22). There were main effects for gender ($F [1,126] = 4.615, p = .034$), low importance ($F [4,126] = 3.944, p = .005$), high importance ($F [4,126] = 12.937, p = .001$), and use ($F [1,126] = 16.541, p = .001$). Due to empty cells high order interactions were suppressed.

Table 22
ANOVA: Effectiveness by Gender, Use, High Importance, and Low Importance

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	3704.640	10	370.464	15.308	.001
Gender	111.695	1	111.695	4.615	.034
Low Import.	381.817	4	95.454	3.944	.005
High Import.	1252.332	4	313.083	12.937	.001
Use	400.288	1	400.288	16.541	.001
Explained	3704.640	10	370.464	15.308	.001
Residual	3049.199	126	24.200		
Total	6753.839	136	49.661		

Regression. A regression model was used to further investigate the research question. First, categorical items were dummy coded. Next, three stepwise multiple regressions were performed to investigate relationships among perceived effectiveness of conflict management, use, high importance, and low importance. In all regressions, perceptions of effectiveness served as the criterion variable. The first stepwise procedure indicated that high importance ($R = .6230$, $R^2 = .3882$, $F = 85.652$, $p < .001$), low importance ($R = .6702$, $R^2 = .4496$, $F = 54.727$, $p < .001$), use ($R = .7060$, $R^2 = .4984$, $F = 44.053$, $p < .001$), and gender ($R = .7234$, $R^2 = .5233$, $F = 36.220$, $p < .001$) were entered in the regression equation in that order (see Table 23).

Table 23
Multiple Regression: Perceived Effectiveness, Gender, Use,
High Importance, and Low Importance

Step	Variable	MultR	Rsqr	F(Eqn)	SigF	BetaIn
1	High Imp.	.6230	.3882	85.652	.001	.6230
2	Low Imp.	.6705	.4496	54.727	.001	.2740
3	Use	.7060	.4984	44.053	.001	.2240
4	Gender	.7234	.5233	36.220	.001	-.1599

The second stepwise procedure investigated relationships among perceived effectiveness, gender, use, low importance, and calculated interactions (gender X use; gender X low importance; use X low importance; gender X use X low importance). Results indicated that low importance ($R = .4899$, $R^2 = .2400$, $F = 42.630$, $p < .001$), use ($R = .5488$, $R^2 = .3012$, $F = 28.872$, $p < .001$), and gender ($R = .5907$, $R^2 = .3489$, $F = 23.760$, $p < .001$) were entered into the regression equation in that order. The calculated interactions were not entered in the equation (see Table 24).

Table 24
Multiple Regression: Perceived Effectiveness, Gender, Use,
and Low Importance

Step	Variable	MultR	Rsqr	F(Eqn)	SigF	BetaIn
1	Low Imp.	.4899	.2400	42.630	.001	.4899
2	Use	.5488	.3012	28.872	.001	.2502
3	Gender	.5907	.3489	23.760	.001	-.2195

The third stepwise procedure investigated relationships among perceived effectiveness, gender, use, high importance, and calculated interactions (gender X use; gender X high importance; use X high importance; gender X use X high importance). Results indicated that high importance ($R = .6230$, $R^2 = .3882$, $F = 85.652$, $p < .001$), the third calculated interaction ($R = .6713$, $R^2 = .4506$, $F = 54.956$, $p < .001$), gender ($R = .6909$, $R^2 = .4774$, $F = 40.497$, $p < .001$), and the second calculated interaction ($R = .7070$, $R^2 = .4999$, $F = 32.988$, $p < .001$) were entered into the regression equation in that order. All other variables were not entered in the equation (see Table 25).

Table 25

Multiple Regression: Perceived Effectiveness, Gender, Use, and High Importance

Step	Variable	MultR	Rsq	F(Eqn)	SigF	Beta
1	High Imp.	.6230	.3882	85.652	.001	.6230
2	Inter3	.6713	.4506	54.956	.001	.2586
3	Gender	.6909	.4774	40.497	.001	-.1659
4	Inter2	.7070	.4999	32.988	.001	.4993

Post Hoc Analysis

A one-way analysis of variance was computed to investigate differences between perceived effectiveness by use (see Table 26). Results indicated a significant difference between groups ($F [1,135] = 15.287$, $p = .001$).

Table 26
ANOVA: Perceived Effectiveness by Use

Source	Sum of Squares	D.F.	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Use	686.993	1	686.993	15.287	.001
Residual	6066.847	135	44.940		
Total	6753.839	136	49.661		

Chapter IV

Results and Discussion

Ethnicity

It was hypothesized that perceptions of effectiveness would be significantly different among ethnic groups. As previously stated, the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference among ethnic groups as they perceived effectiveness of conflict management. It was also hypothesized that use of conflict management would be significantly different among dominant ethnic groups. Results indicated there was no significant difference among ethnic groups in terms of use of conflict management.

One possible explanation is that this school is highly integrated and ethnic composition and differences among students are deemphasized by teachers, administrators, and the students themselves. As a result, in this school statistical differences could not be detected because differences are very slight or non-existent. However, it is speculated that other schools, which have significant ethnic divisions, might encounter significant differences in perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management among ethnic groups. This may occur in schools where there is a significant imbalance in the actual percentages of students in a particular ethnic group or in schools where the social divisions are emphasized and significantly different among ethnic groups.

Gender

It was hypothesized that females would perceive conflict management as more effective than males. The results indicated the null hypothesis was rejected. It appears that females believe conflict management is more effective than males.

One explanation of this finding is that females may simply believe in a systematic, more formalized approach to conflict management than males. It is possible that females are more verbal and less physical in their resolution of conflict than males. This may help to explain why males do not perceive conflict management to be as effective as females. These differences also may occur because of differences that exist in the verbal skills of male disputants who are in this age group. Males may simply be less comfortable with the conflict management process because they do not communicate as effectively as females.

It was hypothesized that females would use conflict management more than males. However, the null hypothesis was retained. As a result, no significant difference was detected. It appears that, at this school, gender does not influence the students' use of conflict management.

This finding is quite inconsistent with previous studies that have specifically examined this aspect of their conflict management programs. Perhaps this finding is explained by the fact that conflict management, at the

school examined in this study, was conducted immediately on the scene of the conflict, whereas, in the other studies, students requested conflict management through a formalized process. This has implications for the nature of the process that schools use to carry out conflict management. It is possible that females will pursue conflict management even through a formal process, whereas, males may not pursue conflict management unless it is available at the scene of the conflict. Perhaps the system of conflict management will be used more frequently and perceived as less threatening to the males when it is available on the scene of the conflict.

The research question was: What factors influence effectiveness of conflict management? Results indicate that gender, high importance, low importance and use each has some amount of influence.

When perceived effectiveness of females is analyzed independently of other variables, it is clear that their perceptions are significantly different than males. Furthermore, when gender is considered with use, low importance, and high importance, gender accounts for significant differences.

Issues of high and low importance have an influence on perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management. When analyzed independently, issues of low importance account for a significant difference in perceptions of effectiveness.

This is also true for high importance. However, when low importance was paired with either gender or use, it did not account for a significant difference. This is also true for high importance.

The regression model revealed additional findings about factors that influence perceptions of effectiveness. Females perceive conflict management as more effective, particularly involving issues of low importance. In these matters they are more willing to use conflict management. However, when an issue of high importance is introduced, perceptions of effectiveness decline and ultimately there is no detectable difference between females and males. This appears to indicate that females will take virtually anything to conflict management, whereas males don't perceive it to be a good idea with issues of low importance.

Additional Findings

Use has an influence on perceptions of effectiveness. The post hoc analysis showed that, independently, use accounted for significant differences in perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management. When analyzed with low importance and gender, use accounted for a significant difference in perceptions of effectiveness of conflict management. In simple terms, these findings suggest that those who value conflict management use it.

Theoretical Implications

The main theoretical implications gained from this

study are in the area of ontogenetic development. First, these results help us to understand fossilized behavior in an ontogenetic framework. These results begin to tap into the differences between males and females at the adolescent stage of development and their use of conflict management. This may illustrate differences between males and females in their communication development, particularly in communication tasks involving problem solving or conflict. Second, this has implications for understanding communication by adolescents and adults as a process. Because we often study fossilized or "snap-shot" research in regards to conflict, we miss much of the communication phenomenon that is played out in a process. If communication scholars can begin to understand conflict management developmentally and ultimately study processes (thereby, departing entirely from the study of fossilized behavior), then a better understanding of interpersonal conflict, conflict management, and the role of the third party mediator in that process can be gained.

Limitations

Common criticisms levied against research that incorporates self-report measures is that these measures do not collect data in the natural setting as they might occur. This is a critical limitation of much of the research in the area of conflict and this study is no exception to that limitation.

To increase generalizability at this school, a larger sample size is needed. This would help reduce the number of incomplete cells in this study and allow for higher order calculations in data analysis.

The pretest was conducted with students in sixth grade and seventh grade. However, the final revised questionnaire was conducted with students in seventh and eighth grade. It is possible that this inconsistency had an effect on the results.

From these research findings it is not possible to draw causal conclusions about the conflict management program. Future research is needed to advance arguments that make causal claims.

Future Research

Future research is needed to investigate differences among ethnic groups in school where divisions are more defined and emphasized. This would help conflict management researchers to better understand the utility of such a program in an effort to manage conflict between or within various ethnic groups.

Another area worth consideration is the area of actual use of conflict management. Because this study revealed different results than previous studies, a follow-up examination is needed to confirm or disconfirm these findings.

Researchers may want to explore the effectiveness of

conflict management on a microlevel. In this type of study, a researcher would investigate the actual thinking and speaking that occurs in the mediation session. This would reveal results that would add to our general understanding of communication as well as add to our understanding of conflict management and the role of third-party mediator.

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Footnotes

¹Conflict management programs may vary from school to school. This will often depend on the training and the school's plan to implement the program according to their needs. Furthermore, conflict management programs may also vary according to cultural settings.

²The terms "conflict management" are used in this section and the following two sections as a reference to the general area of communication study. In these three sections it does not mean the particular programs of study.

³Community Boards, Inc. is a non-profit organization located in San Francisco. Together with the Department of Integration, Community Boards has worked to train hundreds of mediators in the San Francisco Unified School District.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please place a check mark in the appropriate blank. Check only one blank for each question.

1. SEX: _____ MALE _____ FEMALE

2. AGE: _____10 _____11 _____12 _____13 _____14 _____15

3. GRADE IN SCHOOL: _____6TH _____7TH _____8TH

4. ARE YOU A CONFLICT MANAGER? _____YES _____ NO

IF NOT, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE TRAINED IN CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT? _____ YES _____ NO

5. DO YOU THINK CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WORKS FOR YOU?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

6. DO YOU THINK CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WORKS FOR OTHER PEOPLE?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

7. DOES CONFLICT MANAGEMENT HELP TO SETTLE CONFLICTS AT SCHOOL?

- ☐ ALWAYS
- ☐ MOST OF THE TIME
- ☐ SOMETIMES
- ☐ ONCE IN A WHILE
- ☐ NEVER

8. DO YOU LIKE THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

- ☐ I REALLY LIKE IT
- ☐ I LIKE IT
- ☐ NOT SURE
- ☐ I DISLIKE IT
- ☐ I STRONGLY DISLIKE IT

9. DO YOU TRUST THE CONFLICT MANAGERS?

- ☐ DEFINITELY
- ☐ VERY MUCH
- ☐ NOT SURE
- ☐ NOT VERY MUCH
- ☐ DEFINITELY NOT

10. DO YOU THINK THE CONFLICT MANAGERS ARE FAIR?

- ☐ ALWAYS
- ☐ MOST OF THE TIME
- ☐ SOMETIMES
- ☐ ONCE IN A WHILE
- ☐ NEVER

11. ARE YOU UNHAPPY WITH THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

- ☐ ALWAYS
- ☐ MOST OF THE TIME
- ☐ SOMETIMES
- ☐ ONCE IN A WHILE
- ☐ NEVER

12. HAVE YOU EVER USED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT?

_____ YES (IF YES, NOW MANY TIMES?)

_____ NO

13. DOES IT MATTER IF YOU WORK WITH A CONFLICT MANAGERS WHO IS IN A DIFFERENT GRADE THAN YOU?

_____ DEFINITELY MATTERS

_____ SOMETIMES MATTERS

_____ NOT SURE

_____ DOESN'T MATTER VERY MUCH

_____ DEFINITELY DOESN'T MATTER

14. DOES IT MATTER IF YOU WORK WITH A CONFLICT MANAGER WHO IS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX?

_____ DEFINITELY MATTERS

_____ SOMETIMES MATTERS

_____ NOT SURE

_____ DOESN'T MATTER VERY MUCH

_____ DEFINITELY DOESN'T MATTER

15. WHAT KIND OF CONFLICT WOULD YOU BRING TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT? (WRITE YOUR ANSWER)

16. WHAT KINDS OF CONFLICT WOULD YOU NEVER BRING TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT? (WRITE YOUR ANSWER)

17. AFTER A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SESSION, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN SETTLE CONFLICTS BETTER?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

18. DO YOU THINK CONFLICT MANAGEMENT HAS HELPED YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

19. HOW DOES CONFLICT MANAGEMENT HELP YOU TO FOCUS ON SCHOOL WORK? (WRITE YOUR ANSWER)

20. DO YOU USE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AT HOME?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

21. DID YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAVE A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

_____ YES (IF YES, WHERE? _____)
(WERE YOU A CONFLICT MANAGER THERE? _____)
_____ NO

22. WHAT ETHNIC BACKGROUND DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?

_____ HISPANIC	_____ KOREAN
_____ WHITE	_____ BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN
_____ JAPANESE	_____ FILIPINO
_____ CHINESE	_____ OTHER, NON-WHITE
_____ AMERICAN INDIAN	

23. IS ENGLISH YOUR SECOND LANGUAGE? _____ YES _____ NO

24. WHAT LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN AT HOME? _____

APPENDIX B
REVISED QUESTIONNAIRE

REVISED QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please place a check mark in the appropriate blank. Check only one blank for each question.

1. SEX: _____ MALE _____ FEMALE

2. AGE: _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____ 13 _____ 14 _____ 15

3. GRADE IN SCHOOL: _____ 6TH _____ 7TH _____ 8TH

4. WHAT IS YOUR MOTHER'S ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

_____ HISPANIC	_____ KOREAN
_____ WHITE	_____ BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN
_____ JAPANESE	_____ FILIPINO
_____ CHINESE	_____ SAMOAN
_____ VIETNAMESE	_____ OTHER _____
_____ AMERICAN INDIAN	

5. WHAT IS YOUR FATHER'S ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

_____ HISPANIC	_____ KOREAN
_____ WHITE	_____ BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN
_____ JAPANESE	_____ FILIPINO
_____ CHINESE	_____ SAMOAN
_____ VIETNAMESE	_____ OTHER _____
_____ AMERICAN INDIAN	

6. ARE YOU A CONFLICT MANAGER? _____ YES _____ NO

IF NOT, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE TRAINED IN CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT? _____ YES _____ NO

7. DO YOU THINK CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WORKS FOR YOU?

- ☐ ALWAYS
- ☐ MOST OF THE TIME
- ☐ SOMETIMES
- ☐ ONCE IN A WHILE
- ☐ NEVER

8. DO YOU THINK CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WORKS FOR OTHER PEOPLE?

- ☐ ALWAYS
- ☐ MOST OF THE TIME
- ☐ SOMETIMES
- ☐ ONCE IN A WHILE
- ☐ NEVER

9. DOES CONFLICT MANAGEMENT HELP TO SETTLE CONFLICTS AT SCHOOL?

- ☐ ALWAYS
- ☐ MOST OF THE TIME
- ☐ SOMETIMES
- ☐ ONCE IN A WHILE
- ☐ NEVER

10. DO YOU LIKE THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

- ☐ I REALLY LIKE IT
- ☐ I LIKE IT
- ☐ NOT SURE
- ☐ I DISLIKE IT
- ☐ I STRONGLY DISLIKE IT

11. DO YOU TRUST THE CONFLICT MANAGERS?

- ☐ DEFINITELY
- ☐ VERY MUCH
- ☐ NOT SURE
- ☐ NOT VERY MUCH
- ☐ DEFINITELY NOT

12. DO YOU THINK THE CONFLICT MANAGERS ARE FAIR?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

13. ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

14. AFTER A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SESSION, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN SETTLE CONFLICTS BETTER?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

15. IF A CONFLICT WAS NOT VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU, WOULD YOU BRING IT TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT?

_____ DEFINITELY
_____ VERY MUCH
_____ NOT SURE
_____ NOT VERY MUCH
_____ DEFINITELY NOT

16. IF A CONFLICT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU, WOULD YOU BRING IT TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT?

_____ DEFINITELY
_____ VERY MUCH
_____ NOT SURE
_____ NOT VERY MUCH
_____ DEFINITELY NOT

17. DO YOU THINK CONFLICT MANAGEMENT HAS HELPED YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS?

_____ ALWAYS
_____ MOST OF THE TIME
_____ SOMETIMES
_____ ONCE IN A WHILE
_____ NEVER

18. HAVE YOU EVER USED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT?

_____ YES (IF YES, NOW MANY TIMES?)
_____ NO

19. DID YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAVE A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

_____ YES (IF YES, WHERE? _____)
(WERE YOU A CONFLICT MANAGER THERE? _____)
_____ NO

20. IS ENGLISH YOUR SECOND LANGUAGE? _____YES _____NO

21. WHAT LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN AT HOME? _____