Conflict management styles and personality: The effects of dominance at the individual and group level

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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AND PERSONALITY:
THE EFFECTS OF DOMINANCE AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP LEVEL

A Thesis
Presented to the
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Bernadette Maria Babasa
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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between need for dominance with assertiveness and cooperativeness as conflict management styles at the individual and group levels. The study was conducted in two sessions. In the first session, sixty one subjects were given the Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Need for Dominance) and the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument. In the second session, subjects were placed into groups based on level of dominance need. Each group participated in a group conflict situation. Subjects were then given a revised version of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument (for groups) in order to assess the conflict style of the group. They were also asked to rate their personal conflict style by utilizing an assertiveness and cooperativeness measure. Subjects were then rotated into groups of mixed dominance levels and identical procedures were applied. As hypothesized, dominance was positively correlated with assertiveness as a conflict management style, at the individual level. No relationship was found between dominance and cooperativeness at the individual level. No hypothesized relationships were found at the group level (for both homogeneous and mixed dominance groups). Implications of the results, limitations of the study, as well as future recommendations, are discussed.
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LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed the rise of conflict management as a major organizational behavior research area. Behavioral researchers are intrigued with small group conflict and have attempted to identify critical variables associated with high quality solutions. According to Wall, Galanes, and Love (1987) the presence or absence of conflict and the style of conflict management are but some variables considered important in helping us understand processes in problem-solving groups that lead to high quality solutions. However, little has been established in conflict research by way of group composition.

Conflict management styles have been traditionally approached from a perspective that emphasizes individual level constructs and processes. For example, Blake and Mouton (1984) address the significance of differential personal orientations or styles in the resolution of conflict. Others have questioned the connection between an individual's personality and style of handling conflict (Baron, 1989; Bell & Blakeney, 1977; Jones & Melcher, 1982). Research has addressed the question of how interpersonal conflict is managed when a situation involves individuals who want to dominate or compete, rather than cooperate.
This is demonstrated with leaders' or managers' authoritarian disposition for a need to control and their method of handling conflict (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Braxston-Brown, 1991). Furthermore, some studies reported a significant relationship between dominance and the tendency to assume a leadership role in groups (Smith & Cook, 1973; Megaree, 1969). However, this relationship is not well-established in the conflict management arena, especially in the area of small group conflicts. For this reason, need for dominance in conflict situations itself warrants further examination.

The researchers in this area believe the knowledge of what leads individuals to favor and select one way of handling conflict over others has great practical and theoretical value. The present study will attempt to extend this construct further by finding support for this relationship at the individual level and examining the transferability of these constructs to the group level. In particular, I will use this perspective to derive hypotheses that relate individual personality characteristics to conflict management styles and their applicability to groups. Few, if any, studies to date examine the transferability of this relationship to a group conflict situation. Thus, a major purpose of this study is to
consider how these relationships apply to groups in hopes that this study contributes to a better understanding of conflict management and group processes.

**Definition of Conflict**

Conflict has been defined in various ways depending on the context in which it occurs. For example, Jean (1995) defined intragroup conflict as "perceived perceptions by the parties involved that they hold discrepant views or have interpersonal incongruities." Wall and Nolan (1986) differentiated between relationship-focused people conflicts and conflicts about the substantive content of the task. Similarly, Pinkley (1990) defined conflict in terms of task and relationship differentiation.

Kelley (1987) provided a taxonomy of conflict into three aspects: 1) the structure, 2) the content or topic, and 3) the process. The conflict structure distinguishes between situation and persons. Situation includes conflict situation, competitive social situation, scarce resources, competitive marketplace, and conflicting group interests. One focus of the present study involves the person conflict structure in which incompatible differences in objectives, competing desires, and more specifically, personalities, are issues. The second aspect, content, involves the variety of factors that stimulate conflict, that give rise to
annoyance, and leads to active argument (Kelley, 1987). This concept centers around the communicative aspect of conflict which consists of the "disagreement" end (Wall, et al., 1987) of conflict and "interference or disruption."

While conflict is inevitable in groups and organizations, perspectives on the nature of conflict has differed between researchers. Based on research in communication (Cohen, 1992), group interactions (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990; and Unger, 1990), and diversity in groups (Watson, Kumar, & Michaelson, 1993) and organizations (Phillips & Cheston; and Rahim, Garrett, & Buntzman, 1992), conflict can be both beneficial and detrimental (Wagner, Pfeffer, & O'Reilly, 1984). Some researchers suggested how a conflict is managed makes a difference as to whether conflict is productive or destructive (Wall et al, 1987).

Conflict is harmful if it "escalates beyond initial causes, takes on a life of its own, drains a group of needed energy, or motivates any of the involved parties to try to destroy the other" (Wall et al, 1987, p.33). On the other hand, conflict can be beneficial if it opens up ideas, initiates thought, helps clarify issues, or prevents a group from arriving at a premature decision. For example, Jehn (1995) addressed the benefits of intragroup conflict and noted that conflict could be beneficial depending on the
type of conflict and the structure of the group in terms of task type, task interdependence, and group norms. This trend emphasizes the acceptance of conflict as an organizational phenomenon, and as a result, a greater concern with how conflict is managed.

**Conflict Management Styles**

Dealing with conflict is a difficult challenge for most people. The literature is abundant with terminology for conflict behavior. Although "style" is usually used for predisposition (Conrad, 1991), some use "style" as a behavioral term (Wall, et al, 1987). Others refer to conflict behaviors as "strategies" (Conrad, 1991), or "modes" (Ruble & Thomas, 1976). In addition to these classifications, taxonomies are often used interchangeably (Nicotera, 1994). For example, early research by Follett (1940) identified three main approaches for dealing with conflict: domination, compromise, and integration as well as other secondary ways, avoidance and suppression. Still other researchers classified the modes for handling interpersonal conflict into five types: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving (Blake & Mouton, 1964). This theme was refined by Thomas (1976) who considered the intentions of a party (assertiveness and cooperativeness) in classifying the modes.
of handling conflict into those five types. The two dimensions that Thomas and Kilmann (1978) refer to are defined as 1) **assertiveness**, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his/her own concerns, and 2) **cooperativeness**, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person’s concerns. People are classified into the five styles based on which of the five two-dimensional locations on the grid they psychologically occupy (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Thus, the combination of these two basic dimensions results in five styles of handling conflict (see Figure 1).

A frequently used method of assessing conflict management styles is Thomas and Kilmann’s (1974) measure. The five modes have been defined by the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (1974). **Competing** is high on the assertiveness dimension and low on the cooperativeness dimension. An individual pursues his/her own concerns at the other person’s expense. They describe this as a power-oriented mode of managing conflict and, as a result, power is used to argue a point of view, defend a position which an individual believes to be correct, or to simply win. “Let’s do it my way” is an example of this style (Kabanoff, 1987).

**Accommodating** is low on the assertiveness dimension and high on the cooperativeness dimension. It involves low
concern for self and high concern for others because the person plays down the differences and emphasizes commonalties to satisfy the concerns of the other party. This is a self-sacrificing method of handling conflict and would mean yielding to another person’s point of view. “I see your point of view” is an example of this orientation (Kabanoff, 1987).

**Avoiding** is low on both the assertiveness dimension and on the cooperativeness dimension. It involves a low concern for self as well as for others. It is associated with withdrawal, passing-the-buck, sidestepping situations. It includes keeping disagreements to oneself or staying entirely away from the conflict situation. “Better let the situation cool down before we act” is an expression of this mode (Kabanoff, 1987).

**Collaborating** is both high on the assertiveness dimension and high on the cooperativeness dimension. It involves high concern for self as well as others involved in the conflict. It is the opposite of avoiding. The integrating individual is concerned with collaboration between parties to reach a solution acceptable to both even if it means digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals and to find an alternative which meets both sets of concerns. It is associated with
problem solving behaviors which can lead to creative solutions (Rahim, Garret, & Buntzman, 1992). "Maybe we can work this one out" describes the collaborating mode of handling conflict (Kabanoff, 1987).

**Compromising** is moderate on both assertiveness and cooperativeness. It is associated with finding a middle course or negotiating a solution by each giving in a little to reach a mutual decision or finding some solution that partially satisfies both parties. It falls on middle ground between competing and accommodating and gives up more than competing but less than accommodating. However, it addresses issues, unlike avoiding but does not explore issues as much as collaborating. For example, "Split the difference" expresses this mode (Kabanoff, 1987).

Thomas and Kilmann (1974) recommended that any individual is capable of using all five modes of managing conflict, and no one can be characterized by having a single style of dealing with conflict. However, some individuals rely on some modes more than others, whether it be a result of temperament or habit (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). When interpreting the scores, they also mentioned conflict handling choices may also be a result of a combination of their personal predisposition and the requirements of the situation.
Wall, Galanes, and Love (1987) found mixed research regarding which style is most effective. The prevailing assumption supports that a collaborative (or integrative) conflict-management style promotes superior problem solving and higher quality solutions (Deutsch, 1969; Thomas, 1976; Lippitt, 1982). Similarly, Thomas (1976) argued for the integrative (win/win) style as opposed to the distributive (win/lose) style of conflict resolution. According to Thomas, both parties in conflict are more highly motivated to ensure that their own concern, as well as the concerns of the other, are ultimately met in the outcome of the conflicting situation. Based on this concept, communication will generally be more complete and accurate, issues will be fully explored and a genuine attempt is made to include suggestions from all members of the parties in the solution (Wall et al, 1987).

Seiler (1967) adds that facing conflict is more effective than avoiding it. The problem with avoidance is that individuals try to use it to keep a healthy relationship, yet it actually undermines a relationship and leads to distancing and isolating oneself from others. Continued avoidance often times leads to denial and all its negative effects (Bolton, 1979). Therefore, this style of
conflict management inevitably guides individuals towards a win-lose situation and ultimately a "lose-lose" situation.

A common approach to handling conflict is competing by imposing one’s own solution on the other person. This solution involves an individual getting his/her way at the offset, but causes relationships to suffer needlessly. Phillips and Cheston (1979) examined the benefits and obstacles of competing, or in their terms “forcing” to resolve conflict. The benefit of forcing the solution is seen when conflict situations have become delayed. This delay permits the situation to deteriorate, so forcing a solution in this case is more efficient than problem solving. Although problem solving is the most satisfactory method used among managers, forcing was used most often. Forcing opens itself up to a perceived lack of fairness from other members involved in the conflict, yet many managers and supervisors use their power and influence to resolve situations, regardless of the outcome. Finally, the use of a dominating or a competing mode of handling conflict is related to the question of whether conflict is productive or destructive with regards to outcome quality (Phillip & Cheston, 1979).

Since current research and theory acknowledge conflict as something that must be “encouraged, tolerated, and
creatively channeled into effective problem-solving" (Lippitt, 1982, p.67), we need to understand what predisposes an individual to choose one conflict management style over others. Sternberg and Soriano (1984) demonstrated that people seem to have a preferred and consistent conflict-resolution style across interpersonal, organizational, and international domains of conflict. They further tested the predictability of conflict resolution preferences with personality and individual difference inventories. Terhune (1970) reported that such personality characteristics as aggressiveness, dominance, and suspiciousness tended to intensify a conflict, while trust and open-mindedness tended to mitigate conflict. He concluded that personality effects were stronger than situational effects.

**Need for Dominance and Conflict Management Styles**

Several researchers call attention to the potential importance of personal characteristics or predispositions in the initiation, intensity, and persistence of organizational conflict (Daft, 1986). Thomas (1976) acknowledged that behavioral tendencies and personal traits play a role in many conflict episodes. Additionally, Blake and Mouton (1984) addressed the significance of differential personal
orientations or styles in both the initiation and resolution of conflict.

The role of personal traits or predispositions in organizational conflict is supported by a growing body of empirical evidence. For example, need strengths have been identified as correlates of conflict management styles. Bell and Blakeney (1977) and Jones and Melcher (1982) investigated four needs: need for achievement (n Ach), need for affiliation (n Aff), need for dominance (n Dom), and need for aggression (n Agg). Results from Jones and Melcher's study, however, did not support Bell and Blakeney's findings. That is, Bell and Blakeney only found support for the positive relationship between n Ach and collaborating, whereas Jones and Melcher did not. In addition, the latter found a positive relationship between n Aff and accommodating and a negative relationship between n Aff and competing.

Inconsistencies between Bell and Blakeney's (1977) and Jones and Melcher's (1982) findings led Schneer and Chanin (1987) to examine the need strengths and conflict handling modes more carefully. Their study attempted to address the problems of the previous research by using a larger sample and by utilizing stronger measurement instruments within a controlled context of conflict. However, only three of the
needs (achievement, affiliation, and dominance) were examined due to the past nonsignificance of findings with aggression. Consistent with Jones and Melcher's findings, the relationship between need for achievement and collaborating was not supported, nor was achievement related to any of the conflict handling modes. Also, the relationship between need for autonomy and avoiding was not supported. However, a significant positive relationship was found between the need for dominance and competing as a mode of conflict management. Individuals with a high need for dominance had a greater tendency to use a competing style of managing conflict. Furthermore, need for dominance was negatively associated with an accommodating style of conflict management. Thus, ample justification exists for continued research in this area to further support these findings.

**Need for Dominance**

Not surprisingly, need for dominance is a characteristic that has been most demonstrated in the research among groups as one of the most reliably measured personality characteristic, especially among peer raters (Mudrack, 1993). An individual's need for dominance has been studied extensively. This need, similar to what Murray (1938) called the dominance motive, has an impact on others,
uses control, desires prestige, and has influence over others (Winter, 1973). It also has influence on the relationships with others. For example, McAdams, Healy, and Krause (1984) examined how the levels of need for power (N Power) correlated strongly with the descriptive content that indicated the subject had taken a controlling and assertive orientation in a peer interaction.

Lamude and Scudder (1992) related personality characteristics of managers to low participative modes of conflict. Their study focused on Type A behavior patterns of managers and found that a strategy of combative, less flexible and aggressive management of conflict is related to scores on the measure of Type-A behavior. Type-A behavior is related to control-related influence, high levels of competitiveness, time urgency, interpersonal hostility, and unmanageable need for control (Glass, 1983; Lamude & Scudder, 1992). Furthermore, Baron (1989) demonstrated that Type A’s report a higher frequency of conflict with subordinates and are less likely to handle conflicts with other organization members.

Dominance has been examined a great deal in organizational research. For example, leadership theories include need for power or dominance as one explanation of leader emergent behavior (Yukl, 1994). Research on managing
interpersonal conflict and employees' participation (Miller & Monge, 1986) demonstrated that controlling or avoiding controversies reduces integrative solutions that satisfy both organizational members. Witteman (1991) makes a distinction between a cooperative motivational orientation and a dominant one. A person with a cooperative motivational orientation is interested in the welfare of others, as well as for him/herself, whereas competitive or dominant individuals desire to do better than others, in addition to doing as well as they can for themselves. Although Witteman's study examined conflict in decision making groups, his perspective was centered on group member satisfaction and perceptions rather than the actual process or impact of individual members' composition on conflict management.

A study by Kabanoff (1987) had MBA students complete the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument to look at the relationship of the five conflict management styles and personality. He found that individuals high in the need for control were rated by their classmates as more competitive and less willing to compromise and scored higher on the competitive aspect of the MODE instrument than those with low need for control. These ratings were based on actual conflict behaviors. Thus, individuals with a high need to
control or dominate would be high on an assertiveness continuum and low on a cooperativeness continuum. Such findings warrant further investigation between need to dominate and actual behavior in conflict situations.

Because conflict is an inescapable feature of organizational life, more emphasis should be placed on evidence of these results in a social or group context. Perhaps one factor that may influence the individual are group norms, particularly when issues involve the relationship of the individual to the reference group. The so-called "frog-pond" effect (or the notion that a big frog may not act the same in a small pond than it would in a big one) can be avoided if further research investigates aggregate or group level data when studying individual-level constructs (Firebaugh, 1980). In other words, it is important to assess the transferability of individual constructs to a group situation.

**Conflict Management and Group Composition**

The inevitability of conflict in groups creates exploratory realms for social psychologists to enter. Foulkes and Anthony (1957) commented, "The living portrait of the group is most uniformly painted in terms of conflict, which is evident in every group situation" (p.118). This statement suggests the salience of conflict in groups. The
dynamics of the group adds to the substantiality of the interpersonal conflict in terms of outcome. For example, Driskell, Hogan, and Salas (1987) suggested looking at the impact of individual variables such as personality on group task behavior as one method for studying small group performance. Golembiewski (1962) acknowledged the importance of personality characteristics in understanding group behavior. Furthermore, Catell (1951) suggested that performance of the group can be predicted based on personality factors, "when properly combined with statements regarding the structure of the group" (p.180).

The composition of a group plays a significant role in determining group processes. For instance, the compatibility of group members such as its homogeneous nature with respect to needs and personality attributes can affect group performance (Shaw, 1981). George (1990) explored personality, affect, and behavior at the group level. Her study was driven by a theory which suggests that people with similar personalities will tend to be attracted to, selected by, and retained in a work environment. Personality characteristics of the group were related to the affective nature (either positive affect or negative affect) of the group. An example of negative affect is when individuals tend to feel nervous, tense, anxious, worried,
upset, and distressed and view the world around them, themselves, and anything ambiguous, negatively (George, 1990). She found a relationship between the affective tone of a group and group behaviors, more specifically, negative affective tone was negatively correlated with the group engaging in prosocial behavior.

Characteristics of group members are essential because the dissimilarities that are likely to emerge are influenced by attributes of individuals who compose the group (Shaw, 1981). Shaw (1981) referred to Aronoff and Messe’s (1971) study, which found that five-person groups composed of members having high safety needs were likely to develop a hierarchical structure, whereas groups composed of individuals with high self-esteem needs created equalitarian structures. This demonstrates the formation of structures in groups based on the motivations of their members. The present study explores a similar concept, but instead will investigate need for dominance in a group and the likelihood of the group to select or prefer a particular structure in conflict situations.

Despite the growing number of studies on the dynamics of groups, the analysis of a group as a unit with regards to mode of conflict management is not always apparent. In other words, there is not a direct source demonstrating a
group's preference or tendency towards a single conflict management behavior as a result of the personality composition of group members. One purpose of this paper is to explore this void.

The present investigation was designed to extend previous research on conflict management in three ways. First, it will examine the impact of an individual's disposition toward a need for dominance on the likelihood of a particular mode of conflict resolution style. Second, it will investigate the transferability of this construct to the group level, and finally it will explore methods of measuring this phenomena in group conflict situations involving both high and low need for dominance individuals. Based on research and theory regarding need for dominance as a personality characteristic, need for dominance is expected to correlate strongly with conflict styles that are assertive and uncooperative in nature. More specifically, five hypotheses are listed in the following section.

HYPOTHESES

At the individual level

Hypothesis 1: need for dominance will be positively correlated with an assertive style of handling conflict (i.e., taking on a more competing rather than an accommodating style).
Hypothesis 2: need for dominance will be negatively correlated with a cooperative style of handling conflict (i.e., taking on an accommodating rather than a competing style).

Based on Blake and Mouton's (1964) two-dimensional matrix, the furthest on the assertiveness dimension is a competing style of handling conflict and the furthest on the cooperative dimension is an accommodating style of handling conflict. Therefore, high need for dominance individuals will be more likely to choose a competing style of handling conflict whereas low need for dominance individuals will choose an accommodating style of handling conflict. Furthermore, it is expected that this relationship (i.e., need for dominance predisposition at the individual level and mode of conflict management style) will transfer to the group level. Therefore, the following hypotheses are given.

At the Group Level

Hypothesis 3: groups composed of high n dominance individuals will be more likely to take on an assertive style of handling conflict than low n dominance groups. Specifically, need for dominance groups will be positively correlated with an assertive style of handling conflict.
Hypothesis 4: groups composed of low \( n \) dominance individuals will be more likely to take on a cooperative style of handling conflict than high \( n \) dominance groups. Specifically, need for dominance will be negatively correlated with cooperativeness.

**METHOD**

**Subjects**

A total of 51 undergraduate and graduate psychology majors and employees from a large utility organization participated in the study. Each subject was assigned into two separate groups (one that was homogeneous in dominance and one that was heterogeneous in dominance) with a total of 16 homogeneous groups and 16 heterogeneous groups comprised of three to four individuals. Of the sample, 17 were males and 43 were females age ranging from 18 to 51 years old. Other demographic information included ethnicity: 62% White, 12.1% African American, 3.4% Asian American, 15.5% Hispanic, and 3.4% Other. As little exists by way of power analysis for groups, a goal was set to have 15 high dominance groups and 15 low dominance groups. This estimate was based on a pilot study which demonstrated the appropriate N size for groups in a similar design (Gilbert & Babasa, 1996). However, an n size of eight high groups and
eight low groups was achieved as a result of a shortage in the subject pool.

**Measures**

**Need for Dominance**

The need for dominance was measured with the Manifest Needs Questionnaire (MNQ), a 20-item instrument intended to measure the needs for achievement, affiliation, autonomy, and dominance in work settings based on Murray's need theories. Reliabilities for the subscales are considered less than optimal, with the exception of dominance. Need for dominance has been found to be both reliable and valid (Chusmir, 1988). Only the five need for dominance items of the MNQ was used in the present study. The remaining 15 items were retained as distracters (see Appendix A for items). Internal reliabilities for the five items yielded an alpha of .73.

As a validity check on the MNQ, another measure of dominance was included to ensure that the MNQ was working. The 10-item need for dominance subscale from Jackson's Personality Research Form was used (see Appendix A for items). Internal reliabilities for this scale was lower than the MNQ with alpha at .63.
Conflict Styles at the Individual Level

Several instruments have been developed to measure an individual's preference for the five conflict resolution styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Hall, 1969). However, research by Thomas and Kilmann (1973, 1975) suggested that many of these instruments are heavily influenced by social desirability of the conflict handling mode and their wording. Therefore, they developed the Management of Difference Exercises (MODE) which is an ipsative questionnaire found to have high reliabilities and is designed to "differentiate between specific intentions for handling conflict" (Thomas and Kilmann, 1978, p.1144 - see Appendix A for scale). The items in this scale can be used to either identify which mode of conflict management each individual selects over other modes or as an assessment of assertiveness and cooperativeness. The present study uses the measure to identify assertiveness and cooperativeness. These two dimensions are the core means of identifying the five conflict modes (see Figure 1). Internal reliabilities for the assertiveness measure yielded an alpha of .72. Internal reliabilities for the cooperativeness measure yielded an alpha of .74.
Conflict Styles at the Group Level

A revised version of the MODE scale was used to reflect responses of individuals based on the entire group’s mode of conflict management. Each item reflected the individual’s perception of the group. For example, “In general, individuals in the group tried to win their position” or “In general, members of the group attempted to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open” (see Appendix C for scale). Reliabilities for the group assertiveness measure yielded an alpha of .71. Reliabilities for the group cooperativeness measure was relatively lower than the assertiveness measure yielding an alpha of .62.

Independent Raters

Two independent raters were recruited to observe the groups in the second session. Each rater was assigned to one group at a time. The raters used a 6-point Likert scale to assess each member of the group on assertiveness and a similar scale to measure them on cooperativeness (see Appendix B). The raters also assessed the degree of conflict present within the group on a Likert scale with 1 representing low level of conflict present in the group and 6 representing a high level of conflict present in the group (see Appendix B).
The purpose of having the raters was three-fold. First of all, the data from the rater provided level of conflict initiated in the groups, allowing us to capture the variance in conflict. Secondly, the measure of conflict intensity assessed the validity of the induced conflict scenarios as a manipulation check. Finally, data from the rater provided us with ratings of each group member’s conflict management style on an assertiveness/cooperativeness dimension after each group discussion.

**Participant Ratings**

In addition to the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Group scale, participants were given a 6-point Likert scale (same as raters) to assess each group member and themselves on assertiveness and cooperativeness after each discussion (see Appendix C). The purpose of this was to test consistency between the independent ratings, peer ratings, and self ratings. The reliability analysis yielded interrater reliability for assertiveness in the homogeneous groups (a = .71), reliability for cooperativeness in the homogeneous groups (a = .65), reliability for assertiveness in the heterogeneous groups (a = .59), and reliability for cooperativeness in the heterogeneous groups (a = .56). The measures’ reliabilities were relatively lower for
heterogeneous groups, particularly for cooperativeness, which could potentially impact the final results.

Satisfaction Measures

Additionally, a group satisfaction questionnaire was included (see Appendix C for items). Group members were asked to think about the group they had participated in and to respond to how satisfied they were with various aspects of the group. Reliability analysis for the group satisfaction scale was (a = .82) for the homogeneous groups, and (a = .86) for the heterogeneous groups. Generally, all measures are acceptable and meet Nunnally’s (1967) .50 or above criterion.

Procedure

The data for this study was collected in two sessions. During the first session, subjects were given a questionnaire to assess their level of need for dominance. This portion took approximately 5-10 minutes. Based on the results of the first session, subjects were scheduled to return for the second session where they were assigned to groups. The second session took approximately 1 hour.

Session 1: Relationship between dominance and conflict management at the individual level.

Subjects were given the Manifest Needs Questionnaire (MNQ Dominance) and Jackson’s Personality Research Form
(PRF) Dominance Scale to assess their level of dominance need. They were also given the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument.

Session 2: Relationship between dominance and conflict management style at the group level

Participants were placed either into groups of three or four high “need for dominance” individuals or into groups of three or four low “need for dominance” individuals based on their scores on the MNQ Dominance scale. The criterion for the assignment into groups was based on a median of 4.2 taken from past studies which used the MNQ Dominance scale (Steers & Braunstein, 1976). The group was given a scenario in which a debate type forum was applied (see Appendix D). Group members were asked to come up with a solution for a controversial dilemma and each member of the group was given a position on the issue in which they argued for. For example, one scenario posed a controversial issue involving membership into an “all male” club. The dilemma included other complex issues and positions on each issue. This required each group member to play devil’s advocate, but were also asked to work together in order to resolve the issue. The scenario instructed the group members to discuss the conflict together as a “committee” or “decision making team.” Following the discussions, each individual was given
the Thomas Kilmann MODE instrument (revised for group) to get an assessment of the group's conflict resolution style. Additionally, they were asked to rate each member and themselves on the assertiveness and cooperativeness scale.

The same individuals were then rotated into heterogeneous groups of different group membership. Identical procedures (such as that used with the homogeneous groups) were used. However, a different scenario was given to each group. Scenarios were counterbalanced for each group in the study.

RESULTS

Means, descriptives, skewness, and kurtosis statistics for individual level analyses are reported (see Table 1). Means, descriptives, skewness, and kurtosis for group level data are reported (see Table 2). Normality was tested using an imposed normal curve and a review of the skewness and kurtosis statistic. All variables appear to be normally distributed. The mean of 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 6, indicates intensity of conflict was moderately present among the groups.
Table 1

Means, N, Standard Deviations, Variance, Skewness, and Kurtosis for Individual Level Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
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Table 2

Means, N, Standard Deviation, Variance, Skewness, and Kurtosis for Aggregate Level Data

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Due to the nature of the data between individual and group level, some analysis are run at the aggregate level, thus n sizes change based on the level of measure for each of the analyses. For this reason, n size will be reported
for each analysis. The aggregate data was created by taking the means of each group.

Intercorrelations for the selected variables at the individual level (N = 61) were computed (see Table 3). Correlational analysis revealed a strong inverse relationship between assertiveness and cooperativeness as a personal conflict style \( (r = -0.61, p = .00; N = 61) \) which demonstrates the polarity of the two measures. As a check on the validity of the MNQ dominance scale, the PRF measure was included in the analyses. Correlational analyses revealed a positive relationship between the MNQ scale and the PRF scale \( (r = 0.56, p = .00; N = 61) \). Although the PRF displayed significant correlations with most variables that were related to the MNQ, the reason for using the MNQ was justified from past literature for it's strong validity and reliability (Medcof, 1990).

Significant positive correlations were found between an individual's rating of personal conflict management style (T-K individual level conflict style) on assertiveness and ratings of the individual's assertiveness during the group exercises given by the rater \( (r = 0.47, p < .01) \), self rating \( (r = 0.34, p < .01) \), and group members \( (r = 0.31, p < .05) \) in homogeneous groups. A relationship was also found with assertiveness ratings given by the rater \( (r = 0.33, p < .01) \).
and self ratings ($r = .37, p < .01$) in heterogeneous groups. However, no relationship was found between an individual’s rating of personal conflict on cooperativeness and ratings given by raters, self ratings, and peers in either homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. This indicates convergent validity between the measures of assertiveness, but demonstrates a disconnect between the responses given at the individual level and ratings for each individual at the group level on cooperativeness.

Intercorrelations were used to assess the variance occurring within the groups in comparison to the variance occurring between the groups (Kenny & LaVoi, 1985). A high interclass correlations suggests there is strong agreement within the groups. Interclass correlations demonstrated that individuals in the homogeneous groups ($N = 61$) were responding consistently on assertiveness ($ICC = .39, p = .002$), cooperativeness ($ICC = .67, p = .000$), and group satisfaction ($ICC = .42, p = .001$). Similarly, interclass correlations demonstrated with heterogeneous group members ($N = 61$) were in agreement with assertiveness ($ICC = .28, p = .010$), cooperativeness ($ICC = .44, p = .000$), and group satisfaction ($ICC = .25, p = .02$).
### Table 3

**Intercorrelations for individual level data**

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</table>
Test of Hypotheses

As predicted, a positive correlation was found between need for dominance and assertiveness as a conflict management style (r = .60, p = .00; N = 61). This result indicates the higher the need for dominance, the greater the preference for using an assertive style of managing conflict. However, the second hypothesis was not supported. A significant relationship was not found between dominance and cooperativeness (r = -.18, p = .17; N = 61) (see Table 3).

Participants were placed into high or low need for dominance groups based on their scores on the MNQ. Participants who scored below the mean criterion of 4.2 were placed in the low need for dominance group and those above the criterion were placed in a high need for dominance group. The criterion was taken from Steers and Braunstein (1976) on the validity of the MNQ. The median for the MNQ for the present study was 4.4 and scores ranged from 1.8 to 6.6. However, analyses for the group level correlations were not conducted in a dichotomized (high/low) fashion. The distinction between high and low was made in order to have a full range of dominance levels across a continuum. High and low need for dominance individuals were combined into a single data set in order to achieve a dominance
continuum. Additionally, conflict management scores were aggregated at the group level resulting in an N of 32 groups. The median for the MNQ at the aggregate level was 4.4 and scores ranged from 3.2 to 5.5. By using this method of analysis, the group as a single unit is taken into account rather than assessing individual scores to represent the group. This shows a true reflection of the group as a whole thus allowing an examination of the transferability of the hypothesized relationship at the individual level to the group level. However, as seen in Table 4, no significant correlations were found between the groups’ need for dominance with either assertiveness ($r = .06, p = .74; n = 32$) or cooperativeness ($r = -.09, p = .64; n = 32$).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1.</th>
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<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
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<td>-.36*</td>
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Additional Analyses

To further explore other relationships, additional correlations were conducted. The relationship between need for dominance (MNQ) and group member satisfaction in
homogeneous and heterogeneous groups yielded no significant relationship \((r = .07, p = .62; N = 57)\) and \((r = -.01, p = .92; N = 60)\) respectively.

Correlations were conducted between the intensity of conflict (i.e., conflict present in the group as perceived by the rater) and the group's assertiveness \((r = .36, p = .05; n = 32)\) and cooperativeness \((r = -.36, p = .05; n = 32)\). As one would expect, this relationship shows that intensity of conflict increases as assertiveness of the group increases and intensity of conflict decreases as cooperativeness of the group increases. The relationship between group satisfaction and the group's assertiveness/cooperativeness was also assessed. A positive correlation was found between group member satisfaction and cooperativeness of the group \((r = .75, p = .00; n = 32)\). A negative relationship was found between group member satisfaction and assertiveness \((r = -.62, p = .01; n = 32)\). This indicates that the more cooperative and less assertive the group was, the more satisfied individuals were with their group.

In order to compare intensity of conflict based on the manipulation (conflict scenarios) t-test statistics were utilized. Comparisons between scenarios yielded no
significant differences on intensity of conflict between the scenarios \( t = .85, \ p = .40 \) (see Appendix E).

In order to compare homogeneous groups with heterogeneous groups on intensity of conflict and on group member satisfaction, t-tests statistics were utilized. Comparisons yielded no significant differences on intensity of conflict and no significant difference on group satisfaction (see Appendix F).

In order to compare homogeneous and heterogeneous groups on level of assertiveness and cooperativeness, t-tests were used. Comparisons on both measures yielded no significant differences between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups (see Appendix G).

In order to compare high, low, and mixed need for dominance groups on assertiveness and cooperativeness, analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics were used. Results indicated no significant differences between the high, low, and mixed groups on assertiveness \( F = .35, \ p = .70 \) and cooperativeness \( F = .13, \ p = .88 \).

**DISCUSSION**

In this study we sought to extend previous research on conflict management, that is, the relationship between an individual's need for dominance and the preference for choosing a particular style of handling conflict. Another
purpose was to investigate the transferability of this relationship to the group level. The findings of the study support one out of the four hypothesized relationships. The positive relationship between need for dominance and assertiveness was supported indicating that the higher the need for dominance, the greater the preference for an assertive approach for handling conflict. However, the predicted inverse relationship between need for dominance and cooperativeness as a conflict management style was not supported nor were the hypothesized relationships between the need for dominance and conflict management styles at the group level.

Two explanations warrant further investigation. One plausible explanation is the issue of measurement. One caveat when interpreting this relationship (or lack of a relationship) is the relatively low reliabilities of the cooperativeness measure. It is difficult to test true relationships between cooperativeness and the other variables with low confidence in the reliability of the measure. However, a compelling explanation for not finding a relationship between cooperativeness and the other variables is that of substantive differences. Although identified a measurement problem, substantive differences may lie within the construct itself. For instance,
cooperative behavior may have been more difficult to observe than assertive behavior. Cooperativeness seems to exist more in the situation that is occurring (e.g., interaction in the group), whereas assertiveness exists in the individual (e.g., a forceful or aggressive individual). For example, during the conflict situations, a participant may have viewed the entire group as cooperative because they are contributing to the discussion, sharing their thoughts and ideas, and presenting their arguments. However, they may not have viewed one particular individual (including themselves) as cooperative, but rather they saw it in the context they were participating in. In contrast, an assertive individual is much easier to identify and rate because of assertive behavior that the individual displays in the group. The reactions of an assertive individual or group member is much more salient than that of a cooperative individual. As the result indicates, assertiveness had stronger reliabilities, as well as correlations, with other variables than did cooperativeness.

Additional analyses revealed an expected strong inverse relationship between an individual's assertive conflict management style and their cooperative conflict management style. This demonstrates the distinctness between the assertiveness/cooperativeness dimensions of the Thomas-
Kilmann MODE Instrument. Also found was a relationship between intensity of conflict and the group’s assertiveness/cooperativeness conflict management style. Intensity of conflict was perceived as greater among more assertive groups and perceived less among cooperative groups. Not surprisingly, the relationship between group member satisfaction and the group’s assertiveness/cooperativeness revealed that individuals were more satisfied with groups that were more cooperative in managing conflict and less satisfied of the groups that were assertive in managing conflict. Pood (1980) also found that when all members of a small group had equal impact on a decision, the result was higher satisfaction. Thus, when group members worked cooperatively, they were more satisfied with their groups.

The ratio between the effects within the group and the effects between groups demonstrated a significant amount of variance accounted for by the groups. This indicates that individuals within their groups were responding consistently to how they perceived the assertiveness and cooperativeness of their group, and their level of group satisfaction. Thus responses and perceptions may be situationally driven by what was happening in the group rather than the personality of the individuals. Individuals for example, in a high
dominance group, were responding consistently with each
other on the measures of assertiveness, cooperativeness, and
satisfaction regardless of what their own individual level
of dominance was.

Comparison statistics on several variables yielded no
significant differences. When comparing the conflict
scenarios ("Membership has its Privileges") and ("Your
Friend the Embezzler"), there was no difference in the level
of conflict. This indicates that both scenarios are
producing similar levels of conflict intensity among the
groups. However, level of conflict did not differ
significantly between homogeneous groups and heterogeneous
groups.

A higher level of conflict was anticipated for the
homogeneous (high need for dominance) groups. Perhaps one
explanation for this non-significance is a result of
measurement issues which can be accounted for in a few ways.
For example, during the group exercises, there were a few
instances in which very assertive (dominant) behavior of
individuals was apparent in the low need for dominant
groups. Therefore, one can speculate that either 1) those
individuals in the low dominance group were placed in the
wrong group, or 2) behavior in an actual group was not
consistent with the individual scores on the Manifest Needs
Questionnaire (Need for Dominance). Since individuals were assigned to their respective need for dominance group based on the Manifest Needs Questionnaire alone, the observations of some groups would lead me to believe that the criterion for separating high and low need for dominant individuals must be re-visited. Perhaps, several criteria for assignment into the group is warranted.

Another measurement issue can be accounted for by the conflict rating scale. The level of conflict is measured by both the individuals in the group and the rater. However, only one scale (on a 6-point continuum) measures conflict in the group. Having a single method of measuring conflict may not be enough to get a true assessment of the intensity of conflict in the groups. In addition, conflict may been interpreted differently from different individuals. Therefore, a caveat must be taken when interpreting conflict intensity in the present study.

Although significant relationships between dominance needs and conflict management style were not found at the group level, the attempt made in assessing the transference of individual level constructs to the group was not in vain. The dynamics of the group can impact its members significantly. The most significant contribution of the present study was to establish that conflict can be measured
at the group level. Moreover, conflict management style of a group can be identified and empirically measured. Perhaps the attempt to capture the transferability of the dominance and conflict management style relationship was not successful due to several limitations.

**Limitations of the Study**

As mentioned previously, one potential explanation for the study's nonsignificant findings is its relatively low N size. Response rate was approximately 50% below the expected criteria. Initially, a projected N of 132 (or 33 total groups) was set as the goal of achieving a medium effect size. As there is little or no appropriate N size published for group level data, the sample size estimation was based on Cohen's (1977) power table on individual level data. To reject the probability of the null hypothesis at least about 15% of the time at the .05 level, it would require an N of about 85 subjects at the individual level (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991). Thus, if this were translated for groups, it would require approximately 85 groups (or 340 subjects for the present study). However, because of the relative stability and nature of group data (i.e., its mean), a more realistic expectation was to set the sample size to 40 groups or approximately 160 subjects. In spite
of that, only 16 groups (about 61 subjects) were obtained due to a shortage in the subject pool.

**Threat to the Validity**

The potential lack of motivation subjects had was a significant threat to the validity of the study. Because most subjects were students who volunteered to participate on the basis of obtaining extra credit class points, the motivation of really “being” in the conflict situation was not true for all subjects. For example, even though subjects were asked to get their point of view across, the motivation for asserting themselves may not have been there. While most subjects debated their issue and demonstrated persuasive arguments, some were not actively participating in the discussions. Some perceived the exercises as a game and although they role played their positions, a few participants stated that they wouldn’t have taken the position they were given in “real life,” and so their arguments were not as convincing as it would have been had they strongly believed in their position. This leads me to believe that some participant’s true conflict management style was not demonstrated in their group exercises.

Admittedly, the external validity or “real-world” validity of the study was a concern. The present study provides useful information of conflict style in groups in a
contrived "lab" situation, however, it does not take into account the aspects of an everyday conflict situation, such as in a work office, staff meeting, a union negotiation, and ranks of group members, etc. However, the study demonstrates how conflict is managed by observing how each individual decides to handle or approach a conflict situation in a group. For example, the issues were handled differently. Some groups took a very collaborative approach. In the cooperative groups, conflict was present but at a minimum because participants took turns discussing their positions, they waited to respond to a question when the other member was finished, and participants voluntarily asked each other for their opinions. On the contrary, the non-cooperative group, was very argumentative. In these groups, conflict was escalated because individuals spoke out of turn, their tone of voice was accusatory, and the volume of the conversation was significantly louder than that of a cooperative group. The differences in the conflict present between a cooperative and a non-cooperative group can be translated in a real-work setting in terms of how groups decide to manage the conflict, however, the present study does not take into account many other extraneous variables in a real-life setting (e.g., rank of each group member).
At the very least, it provides a starting point for measuring conflict styles in a group.

Perhaps one of the biggest threats to the validity of the present study was the issue of typical versus situational assessment. At the individual level, participants were asked to respond to the items based on their experience in general. However, during the group level sessions, individuals were asked to respond based on the specific situation of the conflict within the group.

**Implications for Future Studies**

One obvious implication from this study is the importance of the sample size. In order to gather a better understanding of the given relationships in this study, future studies should obtain a larger sample of the population. Given that the effect size is not large, a goal of at least 33 groups would produce an adequate level of representation.

A major caveat to interpreting the results of the present study is in the methodology. Future studies should include a better definition of the hypotheses in terms of individual level assessment of conflict management and group level assessment. For example, as previously mentioned, the issue of typical assessment versus situation-specific assessment of conflict styles. When subjects were asked to
assess their personal conflict style, they were asked to think in terms of their usual approach in handling conflict on a day to day basis, whereas at the group level, they were asked to think about the group they were in. From a methodological standpoint, perhaps the design could include both a "typical" and a situation-specific assessment of conflict management style at the individual and the group level. For example, at the individual level, subjects would be asked the generalized questions ("In general, I am concerned with satisfying everyone's wishes") along with situational items (When I'm in a major debate and it turns into an intense argument, I am concerned with satisfying everyone's wishes"). This way, we can be more certain that individuals are responding either as a result of their personality characteristics or to the influence of the situation.

Given the concern for maximizing internal validity, external validity of the present study was an issue. The combination of conducting a lab study and using college students, in general, presents researchers with several vulnerabilities, one being low external validity. For example, due to a possible lack of motivation that students as participants have in providing a true assessment of their conflict management styles in a group, one cannot be
confident that the findings will generalize to other samples. It is necessary now to conduct field research or use work groups as subjects. The motivation for using employees would be greater if presented as an assessment of their interpersonal ability and conflict management style. This would offer employees a developmental opportunity while providing evidence of it's real world applicability. It would also be useful for future research to examine the extent to which these relationships generalize to different work populations (e.g., managers versus administrative employees).

CONCLUSION

In summary, the present study offers a method of successfully measuring group level conflict management style. In the past, studies have extensively studied conflict management style of individuals, but fall short of extending such phenomena to the group. The present study attempted to assess the transferability of the need for dominance and conflict management style relationship from individual to group. Despite the limitations of the study (mainly the limited sample size), we were able to successfully develop a method of assessing the group's conflict style and were able to learn several group processes along the way. Furthermore, the present study
assessed conflict style along two dimensions offered by Thomas-Kilmann as the basis of their five highly measured conflict styles. Using the two dimensions of handling conflict as a measure provides a unique approach in conflict management research. Many researchers have theoretically identified these two dimensions as the core of conflict management styles, but have not empirically tested it into their model as in the present study.
APPENDIX A - Survey for Individual Level Data

MANIFEST NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE (MNQ)

Instructions: Below are listed 20 statements that describe various things people do or try to do in various activities. We would like to know which of these statements you feel most accurately describe your own behavior. Please circle the letter which best describes your own actions. Circle A for “Always,” AA for “Almost Always,” U for “Usually,” SO for “Sometimes,” SE for “Seldom,” AN for “Almost Never,” and N for “Never.” Remember: There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer all questions frankly. Your responses will be held in strict confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Almost always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I do my best work when my job assignments are fairly difficult.</td>
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<td>2. When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself.</td>
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<td>3. In my work assignments, I try to be my own boss.</td>
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<td>4. I seek an active role in the leadership of a group.</td>
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<td>5. I try very hard to improve on my past performance at work.</td>
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<td>6. I pay a good deal of attention to the feelings of others at work.</td>
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<td>7. I go my way at work, regardless of the opinions of others.</td>
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<td>8. I avoid trying to influence those around me to see things my way.</td>
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<td>9. I take moderate risks and stick my neck out to get ahead at work.</td>
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<td>10. I prefer to do my work and let others do theirs.</td>
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<td>11. I disregard rules and regulations that hamper my personal freedom.</td>
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<td>12. I find myself organizing and directing the activities of others.</td>
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<td>13. I try to avoid any added responsibilities on my job.</td>
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<td>15. I consider myself a “team player” at work.</td>
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<td>16. I strive to gain more control over the events around me at work.</td>
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<td>17. I try to perform better than my co-workers.</td>
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<td>18. I try my best to work alone on a job.</td>
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<td>19. I find myself talking to those around me about non-business related matters</td>
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<td>20. I strive to be “in command” when I am working in a group.</td>
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**JACKSON'S PRF - DOMINANCE**

Instructions: Please respond to the following statements by circling **true**, if you believe the statement is characteristic of you, or **false** if you believe the statement is not characteristic of you. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to each statement as honestly and accurately as possible. Your responses will be held in strict confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would like to be an executive with power over others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I feel uneasy when I have to tell people what to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The ability to be a leader is very important to me.</td>
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<td>4. I would rather follow than lead.</td>
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<td>5. In an argument, I can usually win others over to my side.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I don't like to have the responsibility for directing the work of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I am quite effective in getting others to agree with me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I am often reluctant to express my ideas publicly for fear that they may be criticized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. If I were a salesman, I would probably convince most people to buy what I was selling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. When I go somewhere with another person, I let her/him do most of the talking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I would like to participate in making laws.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. When people are arguing, I keep out of it.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I would like to be a judge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I usually let others take the lead and go along with their ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I would make a powerful military leader.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I avoid positions of dominance.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. At a party, I am the one who usually organizes the games and other activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. When I don't like what someone is doing, I try to keep my complaints to myself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. My friends think of me as being forceful.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. I don't force my opinions on other people.</td>
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</table>
Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument

Instructions: Consider the situation in which you find your wishes differing from those of another person. How do you usually respond to such situations? On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair, please circle the “A” or “B” statement which is most characteristic of your own behavior. In either cases, neither the “A” nor the “B” statement may be very typical of your behavior; but please select the response which you would be more likely to use.

1. A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
   B. Rather than negotiate the things we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.

2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
   B. I attempt to deal with all of his/her and my concerns.

3. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
   B. I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

4. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
   B. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

5. A. I consistently seek the other’s help in working out a solution.
   B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tension.

6. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
   B. I try to win my position.

7. A. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.
   B. I give up some points in exchange for others.

8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
   B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

9. A. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
   B. I make some effort to get my way.

10. A. I am firm in pursuing my goals.
    B. I try to find a compromise solution.

11. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
    B. I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve the group’s relationship.

12. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create
    B. I will let the other person have some of his/her positions if he/she lets me have
controversy.

13. A. I propose a middle ground.

14. A. I tell the other person my ideas and ask for his/hers.

15. A. I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

16. A. I try not to hurt the other’s feelings.

17. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.

18. A. If it makes other people happy, I might let them maintain their views.

19. A. I attempt to get all concerns immediately out in the open.

20. A. I attempt to immediately work through our differences.

21. A. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.

22. A. I try to find a position that is intermediate between his/hers and mine.

23. A. I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.

24. A. If the other’s position seems very important to him/her, I would try to meet his/her wishes.

25. A. I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position.

26. A. I propose a middle ground.

27. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.

28. A. I am usually firm in pursuing some of mine.

B. I press to get my points made.

B. I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position.

B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.

B. I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.

B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tension.

B. I will let other people have some of their position if they let me have some of mine.

B. I try to postpone the issue until I have some time to think it over.

B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.

B. I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.

B. I assert my wishes.

B. There are times when I let others in the group take responsibility for solving the problem.

B. I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise.

B. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.

B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.

B. If it makes the other people happy, I might let them maintain their views.

B. I usually seek the other’s help in
my goals. working out a solution.

29. A. I propose a middle ground. B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

30. A. I try not to hurt the other’s feelings. B. I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.
APPENDIX B - Rater Packet

CONFLICT RATING FORM

Please rate the current group on the following:

Recall the discussion between the group members of this group. Please assess the group based on conflict. “Conflict Situations” are situations in which the concerns of two [or more] people appear to be incompatible. This incompatibility can range from low conflict (little degree of tension and disagreement) to high conflict (high degree of tension and disagreement). To what degree was conflict present in the group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low level of conflict between group members</th>
<th>Mild to moderate conflict between group members</th>
<th>High level of conflict between group members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Please rate the individual group members by their level of assertiveness. Please be as honest as possible (your responses are strictly confidential).

**Assertiveness:** the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his/her own concerns.

**Member A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unassertive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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**Member B**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unassertive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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**Member C**

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<tr>
<th>Unassertive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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**Member D**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unassertive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
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</table>
Please rate the individual group members by their level of cooperativeness. Please be as honest as possible (your responses are strictly confidential).

**Cooperativeness:** the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy other persons' concerns.

### Member A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncooperative</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
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<tbody>
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### Member B

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<tr>
<th>Uncooperative</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
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<td>6</td>
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### Member C

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<th>Uncooperative</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
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### Member D

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<th>Cooperative</th>
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Consider the situation in which the group may have differed from other groups in similar situations. How did this group respond to the previous situations?

On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair, please circle the “A” or “B” statement which is most characteristic of the behaviors you have just seen.

In some cases, neither the “A” nor the “B” statement may be very typical of the behaviors of the group; but please select the response which was most like the group. Please do not leave any statements blank. Please be as honest and accurate as possible.

1. A. There were times when group members took responsibility for solving the problem.  
   B. Rather than negotiate the things we disagreed on, group members tried to stress those things upon which we all agreed.

2. A. In general, the group members tried to find a compromise solution.  
   B. In general, the group members attempted to deal with all the concerns including their own.

3. A. In general, group members were usually firm in pursuing their goals.  
   B. In general, group members tried to soothe other’s feelings and preserve the group’s relationship.

4. A. In general, group members tried to find a compromise solution.  
   B. In general, group members tried to sacrifice their own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

5. A. In general, group members consistently sought the other’s help in working out a solution.  
   B. In general, group members tried to do what was necessary to avoid useless tension.

6. A. In general, group members tried to avoid creating unpleasantness for themselves.  
   B. In general, group members tried to win their position.

7. A. In general, group members tried to postpone the issue until they had some time to think it over.  
   B. In general, group members gave up some points in exchange for others.

8. A. In general, group members were usually firm in pursuing their goals.  
   B. In general, group members attempted to get all concerns and issues
A. It seemed as if group members felt that differences were not always worth worrying about.

9. A. In general, group members were firm in pursuing their goals.

10. A. In general, group members attempted to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

11. A. In general, group members would avoid taking positions which would create controversy

12. A. In general, group members proposed a middle ground.

13. A. In general, group members told the group their ideas and asked for other members’ ideas.

14. A. In general, group members tried to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve the group’s relationship.

15. A. In general, group members tried not to hurt the other’s feelings.

16. A. In general, group members were firm in pursuing their goals.

17. A. In general, group members let others maintain their views if it made them happy.

18. A. In general, group members attempted to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

19. A. In general, the group members attempted to immediately work through their differences.

B. Group members made some effort to get their own way.

B. In general, group members tried to find a compromise solution.

B. In general, group members tried to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve the group’s relationship.

B. In general, group members let the other person have some of his/her positions if they were able to have some of theirs.

B. In general, group members pressed to get their points made.

B. In general, group members tried to show the logic and benefits of their position.

B. In general, group members tried to do what was necessary to avoid tensions.

B. In general, group members tried to convince the others in the group of the merits of their position.

B. In general, group members tried to do what was necessary to avoid useless tension.

B. In general, group members let the other person have some of his/her positions if they were able to have some of theirs.

B. In general, group members tried to postpone the issue until they had some time to think it over.

B. In general, the group members tried to find a fair combination of gains and losses for everyone.
20. A. In approaching negotiations, group members tried to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.

21. A. In general, group members tried to find the position that was intermediate between theirs and the groups.

22. A Group members were very often concerned with satisfying everyone’s wishes.

23. A. In general, when a position seemed very important to one member of the group, group members would try to meet his/her wishes.

24. A. In general, group members tried to show the logic and benefits of their position.

25. A. In general, group members proposed a middle ground.

26. A. In general, group members would avoid taking positions which would create controversy.

27. A. In general, group members were firm in pursuing their goals.

28. A. In general, group members proposed a middle ground.

29. A. In general, group members tried not to hurt the other’s feelings.

B. In general, group members always leaned toward a direct discussion of the problem.

B. In general, group members asserted their wishes.

B. There were times when group members let others in the group take responsibility for solving the problem.

B. In general, group members tried to get others in the group to settle for a compromise.

B. In approaching negotiations, group members tried to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.

B. In general, group members were nearly always concerned with satisfying everyone’s wishes.

B. In general, group members let others maintain their views if it made them happy.

B. In general, group members usually sought other member’s help in working out a solution.

B. In general, group members felt that differences weren’t always worth worrying about.

B. In general, group members shared the problem with other members so that they can work it out.
CONFLICT RATING FORM

Please rate the current group on the following:

Recall the discussion between the group members of this group. Please assess the group based on conflict. "Conflict Situations" are situations in which the concerns of two [or more] people appear to be incompatible. This incompatibility can range from low conflict (little degree of tension and disagreement) to high conflict (high degree of tension and disagreement). To what degree was conflict present in the group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low level of conflict between group members</th>
<th>Mild to moderate conflict between group members</th>
<th>High level of conflict between group members</th>
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<tr>
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Please rate the individual group members by their level of assertiveness. Please be as honest as possible (your responses are strictly confidential).

**Assertiveness:** the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his/her own concerns.

**Member A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unassertive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
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**Member B**

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<th>Assertive</th>
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**Member C**

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<tr>
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<th>Assertive</th>
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**Member D**

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<th>Assertive</th>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>
Please rate the individual group members by their level of cooperativeness. Please be as honest as possible (your responses are strictly confidential).

**Cooperativeness:** the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy other persons’ concerns.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member A</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cooperative</strong></td>
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**Assertiveness Dimensions**

Person does not express his/her needs and is more concerned about the needs and feelings of others in the group.

Person expresses his/her ideas to meet his/her needs, but also considers the needs of others in the group when expressing ideas.

Person defends his/her rights and personal space, pursue his/her own needs, stands up for own rights and expresses, values, concerns, and ideas to meet his/her needs. Considers own needs before others.

1 2 3 4 5 6

**Cooperativeness Dimensions**

Person is not concerned about the needs and feelings of others in the group. He/she does not work cooperatively with others.

Person tries to gain approval from others, but also considers the needs of him/herself when expressing ideas.

Person constantly tries to get approval from others, works cooperatively with others in order to please them. He/she considers the needs of others before his or her own needs. Yields to others point of views.

1 2 3 4 5 6
**GROUP MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

Think about the group you had just participated in. Please respond to the following questions as honestly as possible.

**How satisfied are you with the group discussion?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not satisfied</th>
<th>Slightly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
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</table>

**How satisfied are you about the decision(s) made by the group?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not satisfied</th>
<th>Slightly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
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**How satisfied are you with the group members?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not satisfied</th>
<th>Slightly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
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**How satisfied are you with your own contribution to the group’s decision?**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not satisfied</th>
<th>Slightly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
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Comments (optional):

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

62
APPENDIX D - Conflict Scenarios

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PROBLEMS: IS THE CUSTOMER ALWAYS RIGHT?

This is a story of two companies. Clean Life is a giant corporation in the consumer products industry. Place and Payton (P&P) is an advertising agency. They will be getting their largest account from Clean Life for its "Pure Innocent" Soap Products. This is probably the biggest account that P&P has ever obtained. The CEO of P&P has chosen Alex Alert, whom he feels has the qualities this account requires. He is bright, he seems to fit the image of the company, and the account seems to be going just fine. That is, until one day, the CEO of P&P receives a phone call from Samantha Sentinel. Samantha was the one who gave P&P the account in the first place and "she who giveth can also taketh away."

Samantha Sentinel is very active in the feminist cause. She was protesting outside of the Centennial Club, an establishment that consists of 100% males (they don't even let women in for lunch). This is where very important contacts are made in your city. She was carrying placards and chanting feminists rights. When she was there, she saw Alex Alert. He left the club from the "members only" door. She was outraged. She cannot work with anyone who is a member of this club. In fact, she refuses to work with someone associated to this "type" of membership. Should this company allow Alex the account? Explain what your group would do.

As a group, you must discuss this dilemma. Each member must contribute their own arguments, but the group must come up with a decision together. Please take 5 minutes now to read your positions. Then discuss/debate this with each other.

POSITION 1: CUSTOMER RELATIONS MANAGER

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a "devil's advocate" role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. It will take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you've had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- You have the company's interest at heart.
- You feel that in order to be competitive, the customer is always right.
- You know the CEO has never worked directly in customer relations or with customer service, so he doesn't understand what is truly at stake here.
- You are very experienced with dealing with clients and are successful in having them come back with their business.
- You believe that with the clients you have, you must accommodate them even if it means creating a position or replacing Alex Alert in order to make the client happy.
Other Reasons:

- You also feel that Samantha Sentinel has the support from her superiors and peers at Clean Life.
- You will ultimately lose the account if you do not meet their expectations.

POSITION 2: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGER

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- You feel that if you say it’s wrong to be in this club, what would happen if you weren’t allowed to be in your sorority or fraternity.

- You believe that they are setting a dangerous precedent by not allowing Alex Alert to determine what organization he should or should not belong to.

- You feel that if they don’t allow Alex to choose where he wants to be a member of, will they then start dictating what movie you are allowed to see, what magazines you are allowed to read, or which friends you are allowed to associate with?

- You feel that there are other alternatives to take without taking Alex Alert off this case. One alternative would be to involve other members from Clean Life to see your point of view. Maybe you can get them to understand the importance of this account and that personal matters and opinions should not dictate its success.

Other Reasons:

- By discussing this issue with Samantha’s superiors, you may be able to get them to change Samantha’s mind.
- The corporate bottom line has some legal obligations. The customer cannot always be right because what if the customer was uncomfortable with minorities. We must have someone who services the client, but if the reason for this is because of the client’s prejudice, for example, the client is prejudice of women executives, African Americans, or homosexuals, then that is something we should not respect either.
**POSITION 3: ALEX ALBIZ**

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- You have been a member of this club for years.
- Your father, your grandfather, and your great grandfather were all prestigious members of this establishment.
- You cannot quit something that has been a part of you and part of your tradition for so long.
- You are being forced to resign from the Centennial Club in order to keep this account.
- You feel that it is not fair to evaluate your personal life. You never take this into your professional/business life with the client. You’ve always been very objective and you’ve never given any reason to be otherwise.
- You also feel that they are not basing their evaluation of you on any professional (job related) reasons.

Other Reasons:
- The Centennial Club is an old and upstanding private club. This establishment actually has contributed a great deal to the community. Members have taken a proactive role in the city’s development and has given substantial charity to the city’s hospital.
- You feel that they have every right to choose who their members are. Why can’t they have their own membership just like other groups?

**POSITION 4: PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can
use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- You know that if you take Alex Alert off this account, he will go public. This will make a statement in the long run, BUT, you also think that by not taking him off this account will affect the company in the long run because of the image that Alex holds.

- You disagree with the generalizations being made that being a member of the Centennial Club is the same as minority groups. Being a member of a minority group is not making a choice as to what type of statement they make.

- You feel that the agency has the responsibility of working on the client’s business reflecting their values and the client’s values.

- You believe that the Centennial Club does not take minorities as members. You feel that during this time in our society, the corporation must be sensitive to the rights of other individuals to belong, to participate, and to be involved.

- Because Alex Alert is a member of a club that excludes women and minorities, you do not want this to be reflective of your group.

- You are sympathetic to Samantha’s point of view. You don’t completely agree with her approach, but you understand the potential for conflict.

Other Reasons:
- Because you and your company feel strongly against this, you think Alex should be taken off this account.
- The fact that your company will be selling its products to women and Alex is unsympathetic to women, by virtue of what he does and says, then you believe by weighing both sides, it may be more costly to keep him on this account.
Your company Clean Life has just recently discovered that an employee managed to divert $150,000 from one account into another account. The money subsequently disappeared. This is embezzlement and the company does not know who did it. Since this incident, employees are not given the same amount of trust and confidence as before.

At Clean Life, Steve and Jerry are very good friends. They’ve been friends since high school, they’ve been “best man” at each others weddings and both went into this company together 10 years ago. Even their families have grown to be very close. They’ve known each other over 20 years. One of the reasons why they both stayed at Clean Life for so many years was because they had the chance to work together.

It has been two years since the embezzlement has been discovered and there’s been no sign of further criminality in the computer system. Both Steve and Jerry were at Jerry’s summer cabin (which Steve also uses frequently during off seasons). Jerry starts to get nostalgic and reminisces about old times. He decides to look up their old high school yearbook. He pulls the yearbook off the shelf and along comes with it was a bunch of computer printouts with account numbers, names, and Steve’s handwriting. Steve’s not known to use computers a lot so Jerry, with some suspicion, questioned what he was doing with this. Jerry asked Steve if he was responsible for embezzling the company’s money two years ago. Steve admits to it. Steve explains that he was in big trouble financially and really needed the money. He could have lost his house. He has not embezzled anymore since that one time and the insurance has already covered the lost money. Explain what your group would do.

As a group, you must discuss this dilemma. Each member must contribute their own arguments, but the group must come up with a decision together. Please take 5 minutes now to read your positions. Then discuss/debate this with each other.

POSITION 1: JERRY THE JOB

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- Your loyalties are to your job. You are angry and hurt by Steve’s deception because you are an employee of Clean Life also and because this company has always been good to the both of you.

- You feel that one should not make a distinction between just another co-worker or friend. You must turn him in whether he’s your friend or not. You believe it’s the right thing to do.

- You feel that Steve has hurt a lot of people in this company by causing mistrust in the organization. After the embezzlement, many managers and employees began distrusting each
other. Every transaction was questioned and the atmosphere at Clean Life was not the same as it use to be.

- You believe that not only should he pay back the money, but he should also confess that he did it so that trust can be re-established in this company.

- You feel that Steve needs to own up to this somehow.

**POSITION 2: JERRY THE JUST**

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- You would give Steve an ultimatum, either he tells the company that he was responsible for embezzling or you will tell the company everything.

- You believe that to keep him from going to jail, you will do anything to help. If he has to make restitution (pay back the money) you are willing to lend him money to avoid going to jail. But, you believe that the company should know either way.

- You think he’s a thief and it hurts you to discover this. You don’t believe that what he did was right.

- You have a duty and a loyalty to your company, but you also feel that you have a loyalty to your best friend which is why you present Steve with the ultimatum.

**POSITION 3: JERRY THE GENEROUS**

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

- The love you have for your best friend is far greater than any money or anything he has done. You feel that the company does not own your friendship.
• You are loyal to your friend through and through. What are friends for?

• You feel that he trusts you and you cannot betray that trust now.

• You can see yourself in his position. You wouldn’t want him turning you in. You know how sorry he is to do it because you know Steve very well. He would never have done anything like this unless something so severe pushed him to his limits.

• You truly believe that he regrets this and this shame has been eating him up inside. Having his best friend find out is bad enough for punishment.

• You can’t imagine facing his wife (your dear friend) and his kids (your children grew up with) with them knowing that you were responsible for turning him in.

POSITION 4: JERRY THE GENUINE

The following statements describe your position. You may or may not agree with it. So, this will require a bit of a “devil’s advocate” role playing. However, please try to argue your point to the group. The descriptions below are for you to use. Take about 5 minutes to read this. You will get a better idea of what your position will be. You can use the arguments below or add to it as you wish. For example, if you’ve had a personal experience or have dealt with a similar issue, you can use your own examples to defend your arguments. Defend it any way you can. Your arguments are not limited or censored in anyway.

• You believe that what Steve did was wrong. He deceived everyone including you. But, you would never turn your friend in.

• You feel that he must turn himself in. He should take the responsibility upon himself. If he doesn’t turn himself in, his own guilt will haunt him. How can he face his wife and kids knowing that what he did was not only illegal, but very immoral. “Thou shall not steal” is one of the basic commandments which he decided to break.

• Does he want his kids to follow his footsteps? You believe that you can convince him to turn himself in. If he does not, you can only hope that his guilt is strong because you, as one of his closest friends, could not turn him in.

• You do not feel that it is right to turn in your friend - it’s stabbing him in the back. You don’t want to see him in trouble.

• This is the friend who you’ve known for nearly half your life. How could you betray him?

• You also believe that he should look for advice on this matter.
APPENDIX E

Assertiveness/Cooperativeness Dimensions and the Five Styles of Handling Conflict.

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Assertiveness dimension

Cooperativeness dimension

Unassertive

Assertive
APPENDIX F

Boxplot Comparisons between Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Groups on Satisfaction
APPENDIX G

Boxplot Comparisons between Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Groups on Intensity of Conflict
APPENDIX H

Boxplot Comparisons between Scenarios on Intensity of Conflict

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