

**A CASE STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION  
STRATEGIES THAT A FILIPINO ORGANIZATION  
USES IN MANAGING  
ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS**

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Prof. Diana R. Agbayani**

**Ma. Luisa Cahibaybayan 96-85001**

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## APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis entitled "A Case Study of the Communication Strategies that a Filipino Organization Uses in Managing Organizational Conflicts" presented by Ma. Luisa Cahibaybayan, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Communication, is hereby presented.



Prof. Diana R. Agbayani  
Thesis Adviser



Prof. Rafael Villar  
Chairman 3-23-2008  
Department of Arts and Communication



Dr. Josefina Tayag  
Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

This research study is about the communication strategies that a Filipino organization uses in managing organizational conflicts.

In this study, conflict is defined as a process and which is further described as an expressed struggle between interdependent parties over perceived limited resources, scarce rewards, incompatible goals or interference.

In brief, the study was conducted to identify the communication strategies that leaders and/or managers in a Filipino organization use in handling conflicts. The Immaculate Conception Parish Youth Council (IC-PYC), a non-profit youth organization that is seriously involved in parochial services and socio-civic activities, was referred in this study as a Filipino organization that was composed of Filipino leaders and members. The adoption of Western theories in Filipino management was, in fact, a jump-off point for this study to address the need to be familiar with the conflict management strategies more attuned to Filipino values. One significant contribution of this study fell on the issue on cultural sensitivity and productive conflict management in the Philippine organization and on intercultural communication. The scope and limitations of the study were discussed in greater detail in the first part of this paper.

The causes and forms of conflicts were discussed to provide valuable concepts to this study. Also, this tackled discussions about the Filipino culture and how Filipinos, in particular, handle conflict situation. Here, the intervention of culture in the management of conflicts was realized.

A case study design was used to gain an in-depth analysis of how certain conflicts were managed the Filipino way. The study population, the sampling procedure, the

instrument, and the method of statistical analysis were described in this study. Briefly, the respondents comprised of the 30 leaders at IC-PYC - the figure corresponds to 20% of the entire population. The samples were chosen purposively. As a means for collecting data, observations, interview and survey questionnaires were used. Frequency distribution tables and percentage served to measure the variables of the study.

The Buchanan Huczynski model of conflict, which explains how a conflict episode occurs and is managed, was used as the theoretical framework for analysis. The conceptual framework showed the integration of the various concepts and theories relevant in the study. Operationalization of the concepts took its form in the operational framework.

Testimonies of key informants, personal narration of the researcher, frequency distribution tables and percentage tables supported the data gathered from the study. The following set of data were presented and analyzed in this chapter: demographic profile of respondents, the IC-PYC leaders' definitions of conflict and their perspectives on conflict, causes of conflict at IC-PYC, devices that prevent conflicts from occurring at IC-PYC, manifestations of conflict at IC-PYC, the culture at IC-PYC and the values, attitudes, and behavior of the leaders, and the conflict management strategies that the leaders at IC-PYC uses.

This study revealed the significant findings and the conclusions and recommendations of the researcher at the last part of this paper. To answer the researcher problem, this research study exposed that the leaders at IC-PYC use collaborative strategies in managing conflicts - a management strategy that maintains the prevailing culture at IC-PYC, which was Filipino.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Conflicts seem to be the inevitable, inescapable truth about organizational phenomenon. Everyday in the organization, conflicts, whether they come in minor or major forms, continue to disturb the normal conduct of operations.

The organization comprises a large number of people working together not only to achieve organizational goals but also to pursue individual ambitions. It is only natural that when the divergent interests of these people collide, conflicts arise. Technically, conflict is an “expressed struggle between interdependent parties over perceived limited resources scarce rewards, incompatible goals or interference.” Not because conflicts arise, the entire organization is in a “state of calamity.” In many organizations, changes in procedures or structures come about primarily because individuals and groups find themselves in conflict with the accepted order and try to resolve conflict. By harnessing the creative results from individual organizational conflict, organizations are able to develop arrangements that better fit the environment in which they operate.

Culture is in fact, a part of an environment that affects the management of conflicts. Leaders and/or managers from all over the globe employ different strategies in resolving conflicts. It is a common observation to see some leaders and/or managers, especially the Americans, confront the person that they come in conflict with. For them, that is the accepted way of how certain disputes can be settled. To the Filipinos, this can be a form of social blunder. Directly confronting someone in public has its deleterious consequences in broken relationships in the workplace or worst, in decreased productivity and quality of output. Studies show that Filipino employees, when engaged in a conflict,

are not good subjects for any form of confrontation. This only indicates that there must be one or two strategies that are appropriate and effective in the Philippine workplace.

Management, which is primarily concerned with the operational activities in the organization, is in the forefront of the struggle to innovate possible ways and means of ensuring success. Managers who have higher levels of competency in communication have a stronger edge in today's management game. Conflicts, when properly utilized, can contribute to a productive life in the organization. It is in the way of how managers can use conflict in its productive nature that they can maximize the use of conflict and transform its negative nature into positive ones. Competence in communication is, in fact, a requisite in doing this. Of course, competence includes one's knowledge of the prevailing culture at his/her organization.

The roles of communication and culture are directly related to the resolution of conflicts. It is through communication activities that members of the organization share their perceptions, feelings, and values about conflict situations already touching various aspects of organizational work. It is also through communication and culture that conflicts can be properly addressed and resolved by leaders and/or managers.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Organizations, because they are constantly changing, operates with dynamism. Leaders and/or managers, too, are required the same dynamic energy especially when it comes to dealing with conflicting situations. Because of environmental uncertainties, different kinds of conflicts occur and bring about changes that shake the very core of organizational life. The structure of the organizations and the interrelationships within

them are enormously affected. The management's ability to handle and manage conflict dictates the kind of fate that may face the organization. Conflicts pose a great challenge to every leader and/or manager's abilities.

Even with the proliferation of discussions about integrating culture in today's management game, emphasis on Filipino values and culture continue to receive scant attention. Seeing more of the inferior potential of Filipino values, managers show very Western biases. Jocano notes:

The problem with many Filipino executives is that they behave in an un-Filipino way. They are more Western than the Westerners. This is the bane of good management.

Culture has a pervasive influence on organizational behavior. Conflicts that normally manifest in the behavior of people in the organization are managed according to culturally accepted ways.

In the Philippines, one of the observed causes of conflicts, which would later lead to industrial strife, is the lack of skills on the part of two partners (management and employees) to positively and productively interact with one another in order to achieve their mutual objectives and further their interests in a cooperative rather than a confrontative manner. Gatchalian, et al, (1990) points this out and adds that the Philippine management system is virtually copied from foreign models and increasingly being found as unworkable because it is not quite suited to Filipino culture and environment. A conflict management approach whose main character center on adversarial, legalistic, and formalistic relationship between leaders/managers and subordinates/members is not quite in consonance with the Filipino cultural values. Thus,

the need to be familiar with the conflict management strategies more attuned to Filipino values.

It is said that American managers are known to use confrontative strategies to effectively resolve conflicts. Studies, that show that Filipino employees, when engaged in a conflict, are not good subjects for any form of confrontation, indicate that there must be one or two strategies that are appropriate and effective in the Philippine workplace. A number of labor-management conflicts that resulted to mass lay-offs and closure of companies in the local setting nowadays reflect a failure in the use of an appropriate and effective strategy. Unmanaged and handled poorly, workplace conflict can take a tremendous financial toll in a number of ways, including the time a company spends dealing with it, diminished productivity, and eventually high personnel costs to replace workers who quit because of it. This worst case scenario has its deleterious consequences in decreased productivity and quality of output. This study is conducted to aid the Filipino manager in managing conflicts and thus, prevent the organization from "breaking into pieces."

Many Filipino leaders and/or managers share the popular belief that conflict is a dysfunctional force that can be attributed to regrettable set of circumstances or causes. Misconception of conflict can become a roadblock to effective management of conflict. This paper opens the Filipino manager to the important purposes conflicts serve. All these make it possible to conduct research in this topic.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How does a conflict episode occurs in a Filipino organization such as IC-PYC?

What communication strategies does a Filipino organization, such as IC-PYC, use in managing organizational conflicts?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

*General Objective:* To be informed about the communication strategies that a Filipino organization, such as IC-PYC, uses in managing organizational conflicts.

*Specific Objectives:*

1. To understand how a conflict episode occurs and is resolved in the IC-PYC
2. To describe the IC-PYC awareness of conflict
3. To find out the causes of conflict in IC-PYC
4. To see what conflict management strategy is prominent at IC-PYC
5. To identify what communication strategy is preferred to be used for managing different causes/kinds of conflict at IC-PYC
6. To identify what Filipino values intervene in the way IC-PYC manages conflicts.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

There are several facts, which must be kept in mind when determining what meaning to attach to the findings. Among the more important limiting considerations are:

The sample is not truly representative of the total population of the leaders at IC-PYC. By reason of the way the researcher selected the respondents, the sample

represents rather those leaders visible in the organization. Further, because the researcher has no access to the inactive sub-organizations, leaders, in this instance, are not represented. Hence, the scope of this study focuses on the active, visible, and incumbent leaders at the IC-PYC.

The study is qualitative; making use of the case study design. Rich descriptive anecdotes, and examples are provided to illustrate generalized statistical findings in this same study.

The variable, culture, is not quantifiable. The researcher resorted to a descriptive narration of the Filipino cultural values present at IC-PYC.

It must be noted too that the focus of this study is on structurally derived conflict, that is, conflict that emerges from the formal interactions or job requirements of individuals within an organization.

The scope of this study is only limited to the communication strategies that IC-PYC uses in managing organizational conflicts. The data and findings from this study do not reflect the views and status of other Filipino organizations. What is true and existing in this particular organization may not be the same with the other Filipino organizations. More importantly, the prominence of particular conflict management strategies that IC-PYC uses will not necessarily hold prominent for the others.

Time is another limitation. An interview with another resource person is not undertaken because of problems with schedule.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A wide array of communication strategies in managing organizational conflicts are presented in this study. From this set of choices, the leader and/or manager is

encouraged to pick among them and use a particular one, which he/she believes is appropriate to the prevailing culture at his/her organization.

This study also exposes the leaders/managers to the values that govern the cultural values, attitudes and behaviors of Filipino employees/subordinates. Basic understanding of Filipino culture will aid the leader/manager in effective and successful management, especially of conflicts. Austin (1990) reminds that:

Being culturally sensitive is essential to ensuring that a business's economic strategy (and conflict management approach) is compatible with cultural dictates. This becomes especially critical for cross-cultural interactions and communication. One first needs to be cognizant of one's own culturally-based values, attitudes, and behavior and then identify how those vary in the other culture and adjust one's actions accordingly. Managers should also search out opportunities for creating cross-cultural synergy by combining positive attributes of different cultures in complementary ways. Being able to discern and interpret underlying shifts in a culture may be critical to ensuring cultural compatibility and to discovering new business opportunities, including effective conflict management strategies.

This study does not only address the issue on cultural sensitivity to foreign leaders/managers. More than anything else, this study opens the Filipino leaders/managers to the use of effective and appropriate communication strategies that can significantly contribute to conflict resolution and management success in the Philippines. This stresses the importance of Filipino cultural values in the use of productive conflict strategies in the Philippine workplace.

Also, this has some implications in intercultural communication. The understanding foreign leaders and/or managers have about conflict management in the Philippine makes it less confusing and easier for them to deal with the Filipino workforce.

This paper aimed to show that the use of appropriate communication strategies can significantly contribute to conflict resolution and management success in the Philippines. Also, this research study aimed to equip the budding communicologists some valuable insights about effective use of communication strategies in conflict management.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conflict is so pervasive that different authors offer as many a dozen separate meanings for the term. Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot (1991) provide a concrete definition of conflict as "an expressed struggle between interdependent parties over perceived limited resources, scarce rewards, incompatible goals, or interference." Extended to the organizational context, conflict is "an expression of dissatisfaction or disagreement with an interaction, processes, product, or service (Hanna and Wilson, 1998)." By this definition, Hanna and Wilson conclude that conflict is not a product; it is a process which flows from human interaction and which shows up in many ways.

A classic study two decades ago suggested that managers devoted up to 20% of their time on conflict management issues. With the proliferation of cross-organizational teams, that figure is now considerably higher and bound to rise even more (Spector, 1995). "We have to make people aware of their interdependencies," Kolb, management expert, insists when talking about building the capacity to manage conflict. He adds, "They need to be aware of not coming to agreement."

Many share the popular belief that conflict is something negative. The truth is, conflicts can be productive or destructive. Conflict, according to Yoder, et al, and (1993), can "signal a need for change and stimulate creative responses." Recent studies suggest that "employees of different departments who believe their goals are cooperative,

compared to competitive and independent, discuss their conflicts openly and constructively, which, in turn, helps them accomplish their tasks efficiently, serve customers, and strengthen their work relationships." On the contrary, Yoder, et al, state that ongoing conflict produces stress that, when it becomes excessive, leads to the following problems:

- > decline in work performance,
- > increase in errors and accidents,
- > moodiness and irritability, ,
- > overly aggressive behavior,
- > apparent loss of concern for others' feelings,
- > feelings of inadequacy or inability to help others or oneself, and
- > despair over the perceived impossibility of getting work done in time.
- > increase in sick days,
- > fatigue
- > loss of enthusiasm,
- > difficulty making decisions,

The book, Communicating in Business and Professional Settings, enumerates some manifestations of organizational conflict. According to this source, learning to identify the early stages of organizational conflict may determine whether or not managers can respond appropriately to it or design an appropriate intervention. The manifestations of organizational conflict (after Constantino and Merchant, 1996) are illustrated in Exhibit 1.

<b>Exhibit 1. SOME MANIFESTATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT</b>
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COMPETITION	When individuals and groups begin to compete instead of cooperate with each other, conflict may be a problem. Of course, not every competition is conflict. However if the individual or group goal of winning becomes more important than the organization's goals, then conflict is definitely a problem.
DISPUTE	Visible manifestations of organizational conflict, disputes include grievances, complaints, lawsuits, disciplinary actions, and the like.
INEFFICIENCY AND LACK OF PRODUCTIVITY	When work is deliberately delayed and output is deliberately decreased, you can be sure organizational conflicts exist. When usually happy and productive employees refuse to participate as part of a team, you've found organizational conflict.
LOW MORALE	Unhappiness and low morale are often the result of hidden conflict. Low morale may show up as inefficiency, loss of motivation, or low energy levels.
SABOTAGE	When someone deliberately interferes with production by attempting to damage the organization or its processes, such as, for example, someone deliberately contaminating raw materials during a labor dispute, you have clear evidence of organizational conflict.
WITHHOLDING INFORMATION	The flow of information is the organization. If someone disrupts the flow of information it withholds it altogether, you have evidence of distrust, frustration with the status hierarchy, and the like. In many cases information is power and thus withholding it is a power play in organizational conflict.

O'Hair, Gustav, and Shaver (1995) note that the ability to recognize, engage in, and manage conflict is an important skill for everyone but especially for those who aspire to succeed in organizations. These authors further add that a major source of conflict, may it be interpersonal or organizational, is misunderstanding and communication failure. The authors continue that conflict erupts from "differences in goals or values, diverse economic or financial interests, role conflict, environmental changes, or even contradictory group loyalties." Exhibit 2 displays the causes of conflict. The illustration is a detailed explanation of Hocker and Wilmot's definition of conflict.

<b>Exhibit 2. SOME COMMON CAUSES OF CONFLICT</b>	
<b>Element in the Definition</b>	<b>Common Cause</b>
Expressed struggle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication problems</li> <li>2. Personal like or distrust</li> <li>3. Organizational communication system dysfunction</li> <li>4. Role specialization</li> </ol>
Interdependent people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Contract violations</li> <li>6. Role conflicts</li> <li>7. Status disagreements</li> </ol>
Perceived scarce rewards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Competition for rewards</li> </ol>
Perceived limited resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Competition for resources</li> </ol>
Perceived incompatible goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Functional conflicts</li> <li>11. Conflicts of values</li> <li>12. Goal differences</li> <li>13. Environmental pressure</li> </ol>
Perceived interference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Hierarchy problems</li> <li>15. Interpersonal relationships</li> </ol>

Having stated clearly what there is to know about conflict, the following discussions in literature provide significant contributions in this study.

The Philippines exposure to multicultural transactions calls to attention a good grasp of Filipino cultural values. One executive has said: "since you are interacting with Filipinos, you better behave in the context of Filipino cultural orientation. Knowing what their values are, how they perceive behavior, and how they should be treated." Basic understanding of Filipino culture and values prepares managers to use appropriate communication strategies and styles in conflict management. Rokeach (1979) mentioned that "conflict occurs more frequently and is resolved with greater difficulty, the greater

the value difference among parties.” This leaves to say that the value system of a particular culture must be taken into account in managing conflicts.

Jocano (1990) shares that the **family, kin group, and barkada (peer group)** are the foci of community organization and responsible for the significant groupings of people of all sectors of the bigger society. These, according to the author,

...constitute the primary groups within which early socialization of Filipinos take place.. the ones that initially shape the personality of the individual and equip him with values for adult participation in community activities before any other agency or institution can affect his social development and psychological growth.

It is the influence of these organizational structures that the central theme of Filipino society and culture has developed. This is seen in the emphasis Filipinos place on **sensitivity, reciprocity, and collectivity** (Jocano, 1990).

Filipinos **sensitivity** is described in the common observation that “Filipinos are easily angered as they are easily appeased; easily moved to tears and easily teased to laughter.” This trait is also the reason why communication is always indirect and non-adversarial.

Jocano notes that **reciprocity** is a cultural principle where social and moral obligations incurred have to be repaid. This is one way of winning social acceptance and strengthening social relationships.

In explaining what collectivity is, Jocano goes to continue:

Most Filipino values appear to idealize group identity more than they emphasize individual independence. To be isolated from the collectivity is often an unthinkable experience; to belong to a group is an ideal most Filipino believe in and a spire to attain.

To concretize the discussion about the Filipino cultural orientation, the Filipino behavior is described in terms of the social, the value, and communication frameworks.

Working on the social framework, Jocano enumerates the three core elements governing the behavior of Filipinos in the social organization. These are: **personalism, paternalism, familism.**

**Personalism.** It refers to the degree of emphasis Filipinos give to interpersonal relations or face to face encounters. "... a personally defined way of sharing a burden," "a feeling of moral obligation to assist someone in trouble," "an expectation for personalized services."

This trait is reflected as Jocano cites:

Problem-solving is effective if handled through good interpersonal relations. Group discussions are valued only insofar as ventilating ideas and getting consensus is concerned. The group generally prefers a low-keyed approach-working things out in personalized ways, and avoiding open debates where public exposure can "make one lose face if he is not as articulate as his opponent."

**Paternalism.** In Filipino cultural context, this refers to concerned leadership, meaning, it is not authoritarian, dictatorial, or coercive. This is unanimously accepted as the "right way of leading" an organization.

In his explanation, Jocano emphasizes that paternalistic leaders may be strict and disciplinarian but they abide by the rule of **consultation, persuasion, and consensus**.

**Familism.** This is based on the principle of group spirit. This points to the value of being group-oriented, with the family as its central unit of concern.

A sense of **familism** is encouraged in corporations to provide management and the workforce a strong sense of belongingness, thereby enhancing the spirit of teamwork and cooperation.

Jumping to another discussion, **ASAL** serves as the value framework of Filipino behavior. This is comprised of *kapwa*, *damdamin*, and *dangal*.

Jocano defines **asal** as “character” which embodies the core values on the basis of which Filipino cognize, express, and evaluate social realities. Jocano expounds the three elements below.

**KAPWA.** This means “being part” or “being in equal terms with others. It is used to emphasize the high premium Filipino give to relations.

A comparison between the Filipinos way of relating with the “kapwa” (others) and that of the Americans is provided.

The ethos of community life, in most Western societies, appears to be: mind your own business. “If people are happy that way (with their lifestyle), why not leave them to it?”

In Philippine society, it is unlikely for one to isolate himself from others.... The integration of the “self” to the other “selves” is reflected in the use of plural pronouns “sila,” “nila,” (they), and “tayo,” and “kami” (we) when addressing someone.

Another indication of the unity of the “self” with the “other selves” is quoted in Jocano’s work.

In the traditional system, resolving conflicts is not premise on who will win and who will lose. It is not winning that is important. It is reconciliation. It is harmony-the sharing of bounty, sorrows, and difficulties-that is highly sought after.

**DAMDAMIN.** As the second element in Filipino *asal*, *damdamin* is defined as emotional standard which accounts for much of the sensitivity Filipino display in almost everything they do and in every situation they are in. As the term implies, it refers to the Filipinos place on feelings or emotions.

*Hiya*, *delicadeza/amor propio*, and *awa* are considered to be the specific rules of conduct that Filipino observe in order to prevent conflicts arising from transgressions of *damdamin*.

*Hiya* is used to define how one should behave in public and in relation to others. It includes politeness, bashfulness, and compassion. It is a norm defining public and private behavior.

*Amor propio* and *delicadeza* put emphasis on highly personalized feelings of self-esteem. *Amor propio* is better translated as “self-esteem” and *delicadeza* as “refinement” or “discriminating.”

*Awa* means pity, compassion, mercy, kind-heartedness, and sincerity. This becomes very evident in times of crisis that one does not need to be called for help. He/she is expected to come.

**DANGAL.** *Dangal*, the third element of *asal*, embodies the moral imperative of the core value system. It is popularity known as personal honor and dignity. The value on *dangal* is manifested in Filipinos attitude towards responsibility, respectfulness, and gratitude.

**Bahala na** is the generic term for the norm governing responsibility and accountability. This is used to describe the Filipinos risk-taking tendencies.

**Galang** which means respect is one of the important moral norm in interpersonal relations. It is the norm used to prevent from losing face or from being *mapahiya* and therefore avoid conflicts.

**Utang na loob**, refers to “debt of gratitude.” Because it is need-oriented, it involves reciprocity-exchange of gifts, services, and goodwill.

In relating to the final framework-the communication framework, Jocano claims that the Filipino communication style involves three processes: *pahiwatig*, *pabatid*, and, *pahayag*.

The cultural style of communication must be understood and appreciated by managers, supervisors, and foremen in order to prevent misunderstanding and other forms of irritation, and eventually of conflicts. Jocano cites three processes involved in the Filipino communication style. These processes include the following:

**Pahiwatig** means to suggest or hint. Filipinos are seldom direct, especially when they want something important. The initial step is to hint or suggest. To be direct is to be considered rude; to be uncaringly rude is to violate the norm of *delicadeza* propriety.

Once the hint is made, the communicator then proceeds to the next step: *pabatid* (to make conscious). At this level, the conversation is brought closer to the original intention without specifying the object desired... Prelocutionary phrases like "sa palagay ko," "sa wari ko," and "sa tingin ko" are commonly used to save one's face. By using these phrases, conversations are politely shifted to topics closer to the original intention, opinions are expressed in a polite way, and disagreements are said in less offending manner. The content of communication is not important at this stage of encounter, the creation of a favorable climate of interaction is more important.

**Pahayag**, which means to reveal or to make known, is realized when positive reactions are given in the cues picked up in the conversation.

Aside from these, Filipinos have the most common formal ways of communicating what they want without offending others and without alienating people as well. Jocano enumerates:

*Pagsangguni* or **consultation** is one of the indirect ways of conveying a message without offending people... making the other person suggest a course of action to take which is favorable to him or to others...involves the participation of the other person in the decision-making.

This, according to the author, "meets the Filipino sensitivity for personalized and reciprocal concern and strengthens individual identity with the group.

*Paghikikayat* or **persuasion**, to be effective in the Filipino cultural context is to begin with being ambiguous at the start. Then the conversation is subtly moved to the original intention by appealing to the experiences, and confirming consent or agreement through post-locutionary question, "*hindi ba?*" (isn't it?).

Through consultation and persuasion, *pagkakasundo* or **consensus** is reached without transgressing any social, ethical, and moral norms. In this way, good relation is maintained; interpersonal and intergroup cooperation is enhanced.

In a word, the concepts of social structures, value structures, and communication framework complement in defining the dynamics of Filipino social behavior.

In the final note, Austin (1990) reminds that "being culturally sensitive is essential to ensuring that business economic strategy is compatible with cultural dictates." He further adds that "being able to discern and interpret underlying shifts in a culture may be critical to ensure cultural compatibility and to discovering new business opportunities."

To complement the previous discussions by Jocano, an undergraduate thesis entitled "How Filipino managers and workers adopt to the policies of a Multinational Corporation (1997)," states that Filipinos have a different hierarchy of needs as compared to Abraham Maslow's. The Filipino Hierarchy of Needs is shown:

1. Familism – need to belong
2. Reciprocity – need to be reciprocated
3. Social Acceptance – need to be accepted in a bigger group
4. Social Mobility – need to climb the socio-economic level
5. “Pagkabayani” – need to be esteemed and revered.

The value system of the Filipinos strongly influences his behavior in the organization, particularly in conflict situations. Strategies based on Filipino values, implied in the recommendation of the researcher, must reshape the conflict management system in the Philippines because Filipinos have their own peculiar concerns and aspirations.

Gloria Chan (1990) presents some cases on cross-cultural communication in face-to-face encounters mostly drawn from the Philippine context. Evident in these situations are the ways in which Filipinos handle conflicts. Chan starts:

“For the American newly arrived in the Philippine, the most striking quality manifested by Filipinos is their pleasantness, and among Filipino getting their first taste of American ways a recurrent complaint is that Americans are often “brutally franks.” These reactions are traceable to a clear intercultural difference for smooth interpersonal relationship (SIR), while valued in both societies, considered relatively more important by Filipinos than Americans.

Chan continues:

SIR, in a more restricted sense, means, “giving in,” following the lead or suggestion of another; in a word, concession. Filipinos exhibit high value on SIR by not openly disagreeing with a boss or leader. When a group decision is made, the Filipino either concedes with the majority or absolves from a decision.

The use of go-betweens is another means of preserving or storing SIR. Chan elaborates:

“When settling disputes between personnel in an office, the Filipino boss usually resorts to a go-between acceptable to both parties to achieve reconciliation instead of having them level with each other directly. For the American, a serious argument between two individuals ordinarily involves only the principal pair. It also means that such a flare-up is contained by a cultural code of non-intervention, thus leveling off with the concerned parties is the means used to settle

differences. Conversely, for the Filipino, the go-between intervenes to smoothen or resolve the conflict.

From what has been presented so far, Chan concludes that “SIR, attained through concession, the use of mediator, and other means is highly and traditionally valued in Philippine society” and proves especially helpful in the proper handling of conflicts.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This is a case study about the communication strategies that a Filipino organization uses in managing organizational conflicts. The researcher chooses this design to gain an in-depth analysis of how certain conflicts are managed the-Filipino way.

#### **STUDY POPULATION**

This study made use of a non-profit Filipino organization, the Immaculate Conception Parish Youth Council (IC-PYC). The IC-PYC is an organization of young people based in the Immaculate Conception Parish in Pasig. It is seriously involved parochial services and socio-civic activities. It mans the 15 sub-organizations under it. Of these 15, 11 are active: 7 are frequently visible and 4 are occasionally visible, and 4 are inactive.

Leaders of these sub-organizations including those from the IC-PYC Executive Board served as respondents for this study.

## **SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

IC-PYC has a population of 136 young leaders 30 of these (or roughly 20% of the population) were used as sample.

This research study made use of purposive sampling. The sampling units were selected subjectively by the researcher on the grounds of their position in the organization. The sample was composed of people at IC-PYC holding leadership positions.

The researcher believes that leaders in the organization are in the best position to provide her data for this study. Furthermore, leaders who have stayed long at IC-PYC can provide her valuable insights about conflict management.

Questionnaires were given out to the sampling units. Key informant interviews with five officers of the IC-PYC executive Board were also conducted.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

As a means for collecting data, this research study made use of the observation process. The researcher, upon initial investigation, followed an observation schedule to allow her to be familiar with the people and the goings-on in the organization. Later, she became a complete observer and was given more freedom to participate in their activities.

During the process, the researcher would come to the IC-PYC office four times a week. The data gathering method was very useful in investigating the people and events in the organization in ways that make it unnecessary for them to even notice the researcher. This provided the researcher with the facts about what the leaders at IC-PYC truly value and what they actually do at the onset of conflicts.

Interview schedule with the five key informants was also undertaken. There was no fixed date as to when regular interviews could be made. Each interviewee was given a set of formal, structured questions. This method enabled the researcher to elicit specific facts, attitudes, and opinions from the leaders of the organization who were believed to share their experiences and knowledge about conflict management. Responses from the interviews served as back-up information from the data gathered from the questionnaires. The culture and values of the leaders were also verbalized through this activity.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to answer survey questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the strategies used by the IC-PYC leader in managing organizational conflicts became very evident.

## **METHOD OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

Variables for this study were measured using frequency distribution tables and percentage.

## Chapter IV

### FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

##### **Stage 1: *Organizing***

Organizing “involves the breaking up of a single task and dividing it among different departments, groups or individuals.” Since this definition implies specialization, meaning, each sub-unit becoming concerned with its particular part in the total objective and work process, there is the creation of conditions in which conflict can potentially arise. This becomes possible because each department, group or individual becomes so attached to their particular function in the organization. Because of this process, different causes of conflict take place.

##### **Stage 2: *Co-ordinating***

The first stage involved the breaking up of the task into bits. This next stage means picking up the pieces again. Co-ordination involves “ensuring that the previously divided tasks which were allocated between departments, groups and individuals are brought together in the right way and at the right time. It also involves synchronizing and making compatible the different aspects of the work process.”

It is said that when the differentiated departments, groups, or individuals are successfully co-ordinated, no conflicts would occur. Co-ordination devices are essentially important to prevent conflict from breaking out in the first place.

### STAGE 3: *Culture*

The Funk and Wagnall dictionary defines culture as “the sum total of the attainments and learned behavior patterns of a specific period or people. Kuczmarski modifies this by saying that culture is a set of mind that gets translated into a set of actions, communications, and responses. In short, culture dictates the way in which people from a particular culture communicate. Linking this to the level of conflict management, leaders and/or managers use a communication strategy based on their perceptions, beliefs, and values that are altogether interwoven in the culture.

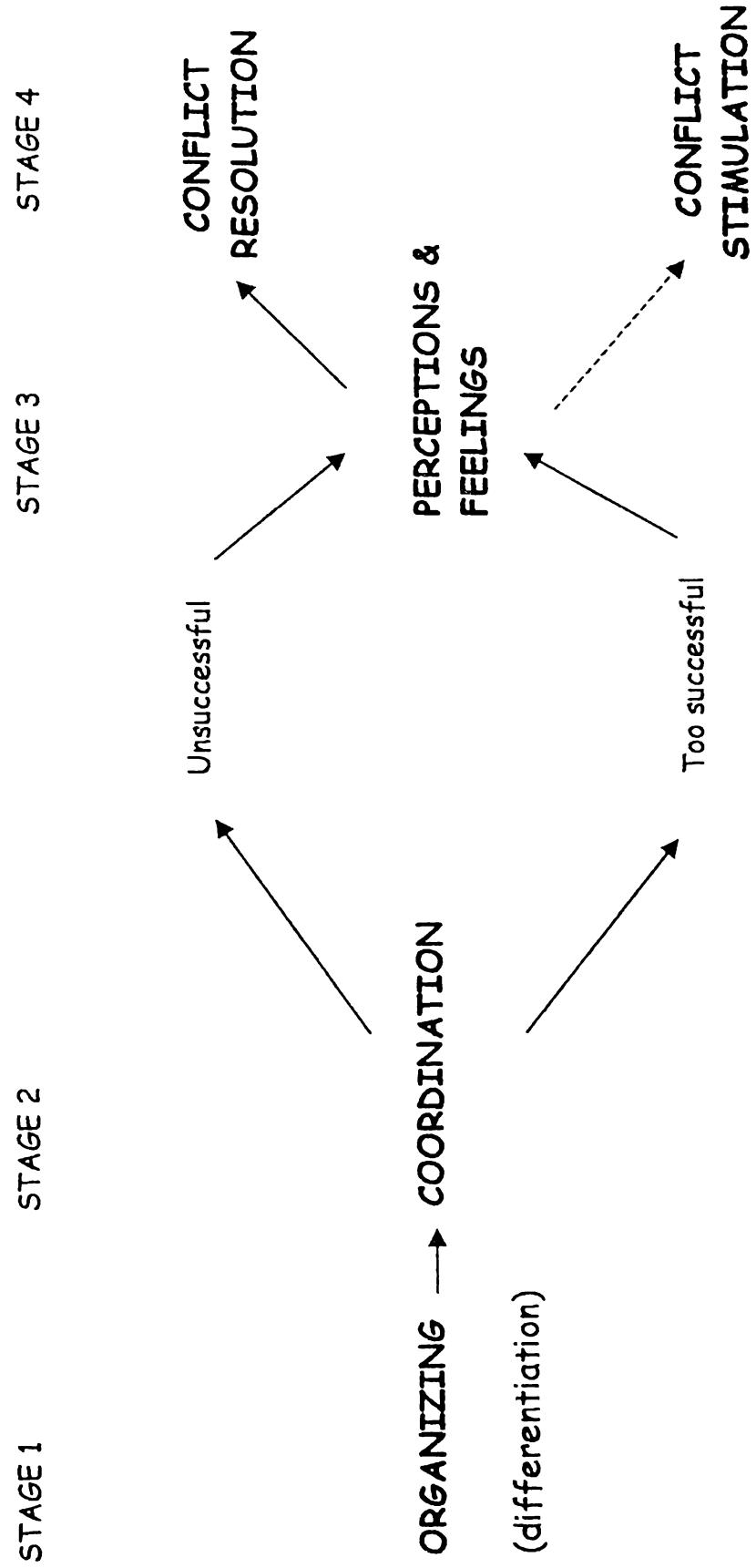
It is upon the culture what conflict management strategy is appropriate or deemed necessary.

### STAGE 4: Conflict Management

The model shows that conflict management happens at two levels namely, conflict resolution and conflict stimulation. In both processes, the leader and/or manager is free to choose from a variety of approaches.

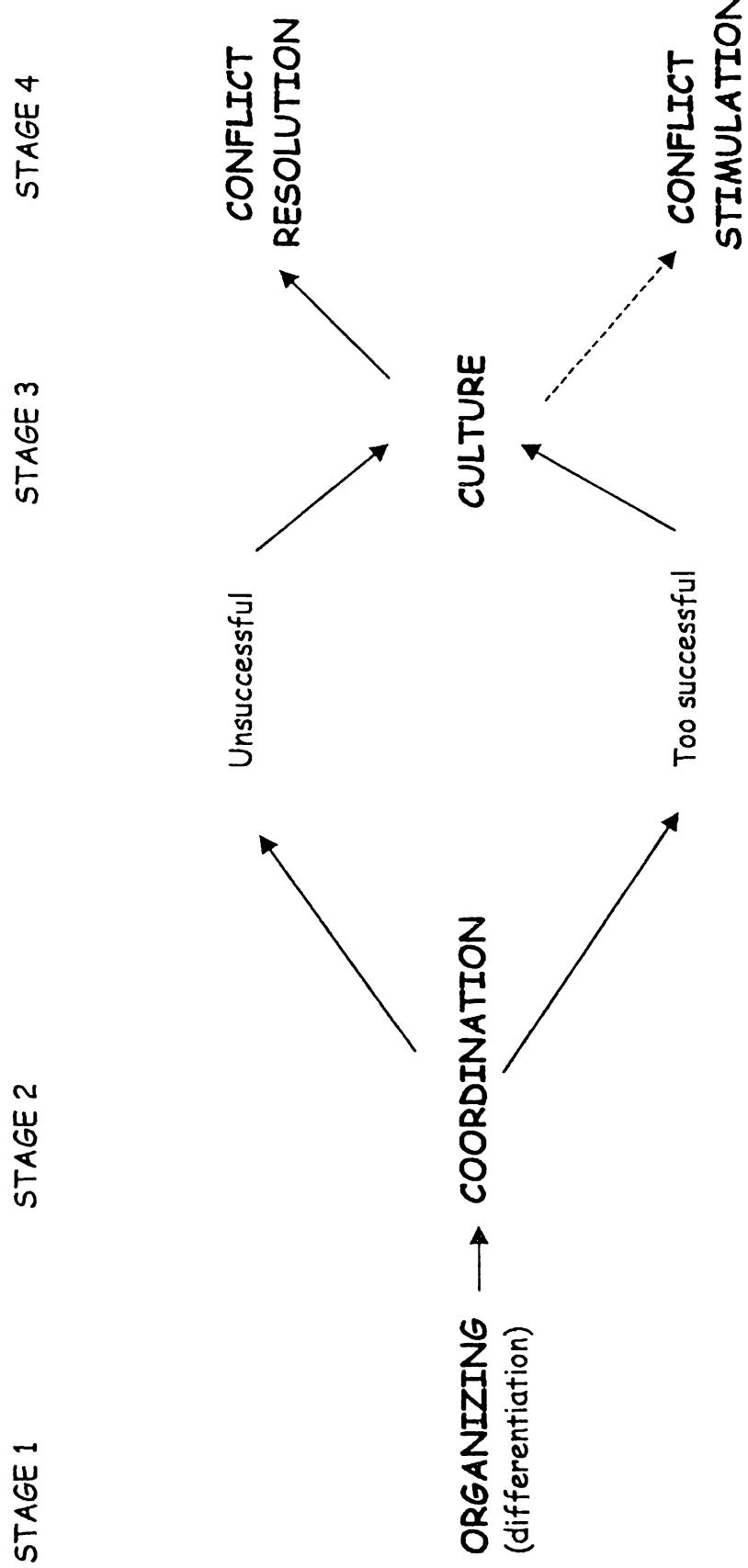
## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(Buchanan-Huczynski Model of Conflict)



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(Modified Version of Buchanan-Huczynski Model of Conflict)



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Perspectives on Conflict

Buchanan and Huczynski (1990) present three perspectives on organizational conflict. These perspectives are important, according to these authors, because whichever of the three is adopted will help the leader and/or manager to determine how people are expected to behave, how his or her reactions affect subordinate's or others' behavior and how he or she chooses methods to change other people's behavior.

*Traditional (unitary) perspective.* According to the authors, this perspective holds that “conflict represents a malfunction within a group, department or organization conflict is seen as bad and harmful, and hence should be avoided and eradicated.” The authors continues that:

This view sees organization as fundamentally harmonious, co-operative structures, where no systematic conflict of interest should exist. Managers holding the unitary perspective see their companies, as analogous to teams, with all the team members-workers and managers- striving towards the achievement of common goals.

Because this perspective stresses oneness, there is the implication that “workers must believe that management knows what is best for organization and for them; that they accept managerial decisions unquestioningly; and generally acknowledge management as the leaders of this supposed team.”

The book about Organizational Behavior adds that the “unitary perspective sees consensus (non-conflict) as the ideal, natural state.” Managers who hold this perspective attributes conflict to poor communication. Conflict is thus seen as being caused by

misunderstandings. Working on this perspective, the manager's job is confined to identify the causes of conflict eliminate them and re-establish industrial peace.

*Pluralist perspective.* This "rejects the view that individual employees have the same interests as the management on the one hand, and that an organization is best seen as one big team on the other." The source elaborates:

It holds that individuals have unique and different interests, that they form into cliques on the basis of these, and that an organization is best seen as consisting of many separate but related interest groups, each pursuing their own objectives.

From this perspective, the "job of management becomes one of keeping the balance between potentially conflicting goals, and managing the differences between these interest groups. It also involves seeking a compromise."

According to experts, acceptance of the pluralist perspective implies that conflict is inevitable and should be accepted since, in certain circumstances, it may even enhance performance. With this, the manager is left to reconcile organizational goals with group interest to the benefit of mutual survival and even prosperity. The manager is to maintain the vitality, responsiveness, and efficiency in the organization.

*Interactionist perspective.* The same source explains that the interactionist perspective goes beyond the pluralist school's toleration and management of conflict. Buchanan and Huczynski state that it actually encourages both conflict stimulation and conflict resolution. Leaders and managers who adopt this perspective are "encouraged to

maintain an ongoing minimum level of conflict which is just sufficient to keep the group viable, self-critical, and creative.”

From the discussions above, it can be gleaned that the traditional view sees conflict as bad while the pluralists and interactionists hold that certain conflicts can be good. Buchanan and Huczynski settle this debate in terms of whether any given conflict is functional or dysfunctional. Functional conflict supports the goals of a group or an organization and improves its performance.

Buchanan and Huczynski mention that this happens when conflict improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovation, encourages interest and curiosity among group members, provides a way of airing grievances, releases tensions and encourages self-evaluation and change. Dysfunctional conflict hinders group or organizational performance.

Conflict is viewed as negative if it breeds discontent, dissolves common ties, leads to the destruction of the group, retards communication, reduces group cohesion, reduces group effectiveness and threatens group survival. Robbins (1996) reminds that what is most important is how any given level of conflict affects a specific group's performance.

### *Major Causes of Conflict*

#### *Goal Orientation and Evaluation*

In the organization each department works very much on attaining its specific goals. In doing so, there are instances when one department's goals interfere with those of the others. Conflict starts to build up when this happens. Also, conflict occurs when departments are evaluated or the extent to which they achieve their goals. The evaluation process can actually reinforce differences. It must be noted that each department's unique goals and evaluation methods leads to its own view about company priorities and how these are best achieved. The marketing and production departments in any organization are usually the ones who/which come in conflict about company goals and evaluation procedures.

#### *Self-Image and Stereotypes*

A group or an individual's self-image may actually start a conflict especially when a group starts to see itself as more vital to a company's operations and believes that it has higher status or prestige. The group who consider themselves as "high" are more likely to "misbehave" and try to achieve their objectives at the cost of others, which in turn may create conflict whenever differences between groups and departments are emphasized. Stereotypes reinforced, relations deteriorate, and conflict develops.

#### *Task Interdependencies*

Specialized groups and departments require a lot of independence to successfully complete the organizing process. Interdependence needs a high degree of coordination of

activities between and among departments. When there is no proper coordination, conflict results.

#### *Time Frame*

People's perception about when and until when their work should be done poses a great difficulty in coordinating activities. Different time frames of groups lead to different priority goals. These different goals are often incompatible, hindering common, impeding coordination, and encouraging conflict.

#### *Overlapping Authority*

The interdependence in an organization can lead to a conflict when central issues over whose authority takes precedence arise. Groups may fight for the control of resources while individual managers may attempt to seize one another's authority.

#### *Scarce Resources*

Since resources are finite, conflict can arise with respect to how personnel, money, space or equipment are shared out. The distribution and allocation of resources in an organization sometimes reach the consequence that one party's gain is another's loss. For this reason, conflicts often arise at times of budget cuts, reduced promo opportunities, and no increases in salaries or wages.

### Inter-party Co-ordination Devices

*Rules, policies, and procedures.* These specify how one party is to interact with one another. Rules and procedures reduce the need for both interaction and information flow between parties.

*Using hierarchy.* This refers to one's use of his or her legitimate authority, based on his/her position in the hierarchy, to resolve the conflict. Resorting to hierarchy is effective in the short run to provide solutions to specific problems.

*Goal clarification and communication.* This is made possible if each party specifies and communicates its specific goals to the others in advance, then resulting in each knowing what the other is attempting to do. At the individual level, this may mean clear job descriptions. Through this, parties can meet to ensure that they do not compete or interfere with the goals of the others.

*Temporary task force.* This is created to solve one specific problem affecting the organization. Once the dispute is settled, members return to their usual duties and departments.

*Permanent project team.* This creates a matrix structure, since each individual retains a responsibility to permanent team leader and to his or her functional department. This solution allows coordination to occur at the team level, thus improving communication and decision-making.

*Liaison roles.* Liaison roles are created if higher-level managers do not successfully resolve differences. For a liaison, he or she needs to be well informed about the status of a conflict situation, and be seen to be unbiased and acting fairly. A liaison has to constantly keep the conflicting parties in touch with each other.

*Integrator roles.* An integrator integrates those departments between whom the conflict potential is highest. This person can assist the departments to coordinate their activities. The integrator may check both parties' objectives to ensure they complement each other so as to see whether differences are resolved. To be effective, the integrator must be able to understand both groups' concerns and be able to develop a mutually acceptable solution.

### Perceptions and Feelings

This stage involves the development of conflict from being latent to becoming perceived and felt. Perceived conflict takes shape when one takes an on-the-spot analysis and interpretation of a conflict episode. In this stage, “ the conflict issue becomes defined and what it is all about gets decided. The way conflict is defined in this stage determines the type of outcomes that the parties are willing to settle for in the later stages.” The proponents remind that this is a crucial stage because by wrongly attributing an intention to the other party’s behavior, one can escalate a conflict.

It is not complete to just perceive that a conflict is occurring; it must be felt. Working on the premise that one's feelings are also perceptions, felt conflict becomes necessarily important because:

Negative emotions may result in an oversimplification of issues, reductions in trust and negative interpretations of other parties behavior positive emotions, in contrast, may increase the chances of the parties taking a broader view, seeing the issue as a problem to be solved and developing more creative solutions.

The intervention of culture occurs at this stage during the attachment and interpretation of meanings of how certain conflicts take shape and what resolution strategies are needed when conflicts become manifest.

### Values

Socio-cultural values are those considered conducive or essential to the welfare of a group. They constitute models or goals of personal behavior in social interaction. They are common to the members of a given social group and are the people's concept of what is desirable; the basis of choice among alternatives; direct interest, attention, or emphasis. They are what people see, hear, perceive, and appreciate.

Value System is a configuration of culture, the dominant motivation and basic principles of people's behavior; the cultural ethics that bind the people together. Presented below are the general discussions about the value system of the Filipinos. These values will prove to be helpful in understanding the choice of a leader and/or manager in managing conflicts.

The following talks about the different levels of existence that govern the Filipinos' values, beliefs and behavior as a group of people.

*Automatic Existence.* Filipino value which is within this level is economic security. At this level the Filipino seeks only the immediate satisfaction of his basic physiological needs. He lives purely on the basis of physiological needs.

*Tribalistic Existence.* Filipino values which are within this level are: *personalistic* view of the universe, *supernaturalistic* world-view, nonscientific and *nonrational* beliefs, cyclic and psychological time-orientation, “*bahala na*,” “*suwerte*,” “*gaba*,” “*awa ng Diyos*.” At this level the Filipino defends a life he does not understand. Notwithstanding this, he trusts that his tribal ways are inherent in things. Here is a life based on myth, tradition, and mystical phenomenon full of spirits, magic, and superstition.

*Egocentric Existence.* Filipino values which are within this level are: “*amor propio*,” “*hiya*,” “*kaulaw*,” “*ka-ikog*,” “*kataha*,” “*tayo-tayo*” system, Filipino subservience, ambivalence, noninterference. At this level, the raw, rugged, self-assertive individualism of the Filipino comes to the fore. Both the authoritarian and the submissive develop standards which they feel will insure them against threat.

*Saintly Existence.* Filipino values which are within this level are “*pagtitiis*,” solidarity, “*utang-na-loob*,” “*bayanihan*,” religiosity. At this level, the Filipino

perceives that living in this world does not bring ultimate pleasure. Obedience to God's rule is the price that one must pay for a more lasting life.

*Materialistic Existence.* Filipino values within this level are economic security, social mobility, "palakasan," nepotism and relation, Filipino concept of property. At this level, the Filipino strives to conquer the world by learning its secrets. He utilizes objective, positivistic, operationalistic, scientific method to meet his materialistic ends.

*Personalistic Existence.* Filipino values within this level are social acceptance, "pagsasarili", acceptance of the person, fear of rejection, sensitivity to personal affront, SIR (Smooth Interpersonal Relations), pleasantness, desire to please and not to hurt, "pakikisama," euphemism, use of go-between, Filipino hospitality, love for affiliations. At this level, the Filipino becomes concerned with belonging, with being accepted, with knowing his inner self and of others for harmony to results and individuals to be at peace with themselves and with the world.

*Cognitive Existence.* Filipino values within this level are love for education and self-development, refinement. At this level, the Filipino aspires to be "all he can be and can continue to be." He uses his intellect, acting with all rationality. He uses knowledge to put his world together and in a systematic way.

*Experientialistic Existence.* Filipino values within this level are family kinship system, "barkada", grading, and general social class, power, region, language, deep

sense of personal worth, self-esteem, love and respect for life. At this level, the Filipino humanness is emphasized. He will do his best to bring balance of nature.

### Conflict Resolution Approaches

Some of the communication strategies in conflict management, which O' Hair, et al, (1995) proposed, are:

*Avoiding.* It shows low concern for production results with low concern for people. In this position, the response to conflict is to simply avoid admitting that it exists by withdrawing from the conflict. This is correlated negatively with constructive conflict resolution because the use of this strategy shows the manager's negative regard for or involvement in some important managerial considerations.

*Smoothing.* It describes managers who try to deal with conflict by making everyone happy. In this situation, a problem is not seen as a problem or it is simply glossed over in the name of maintaining a desirable environment. Smoothing is likely to reduce felt conflict and may minimize also the residual effects of conflict. This may have some long-range effect on conflict management. The feeling towards avoiding certain conflicts temporarily may result in long-range problems in the future.

*Forcing.* This represents a high concern for results and a low concern for people. This is considered a win-lose situation in which the participants personalize their conflict.

This can be described as one using highly coercive approaches that have very negative effects on conflict management.

*Compromising.* This is essentially a bargaining model, which must satisfy one of these conditions: a.) Where the opposing sides are equally balanced with power resources, with either side having resources to overpower the other, or b.) Where one or both sides in a conflict decide not to try to win because of the potential costs, i.e. money, resources, energy, time, moral considerations, and damage to future interpersonal relationships. A more specific communication emphasis in resolving conflict through compromise is that a compromise is often characterized by persuasion and deceit.

*Collaborating.* This shows high concern for both people and results. This is an attempt to create a more positive connotative meaning for this conflict strategy. It actually reflects a friendly, task-oriented approach to conflict, which meets the problem directly, redefines the problem, and deals with the true nature of the conflict situation. This is perceived to be the most constructive and effective form of conflict management. In fact, it is an open communication strategy.

### *Conflict Stimulation Devices*

*Communication.* By intentionally sending ambiguous or threatening messages, managers can regulate the flow of information in the communication system.

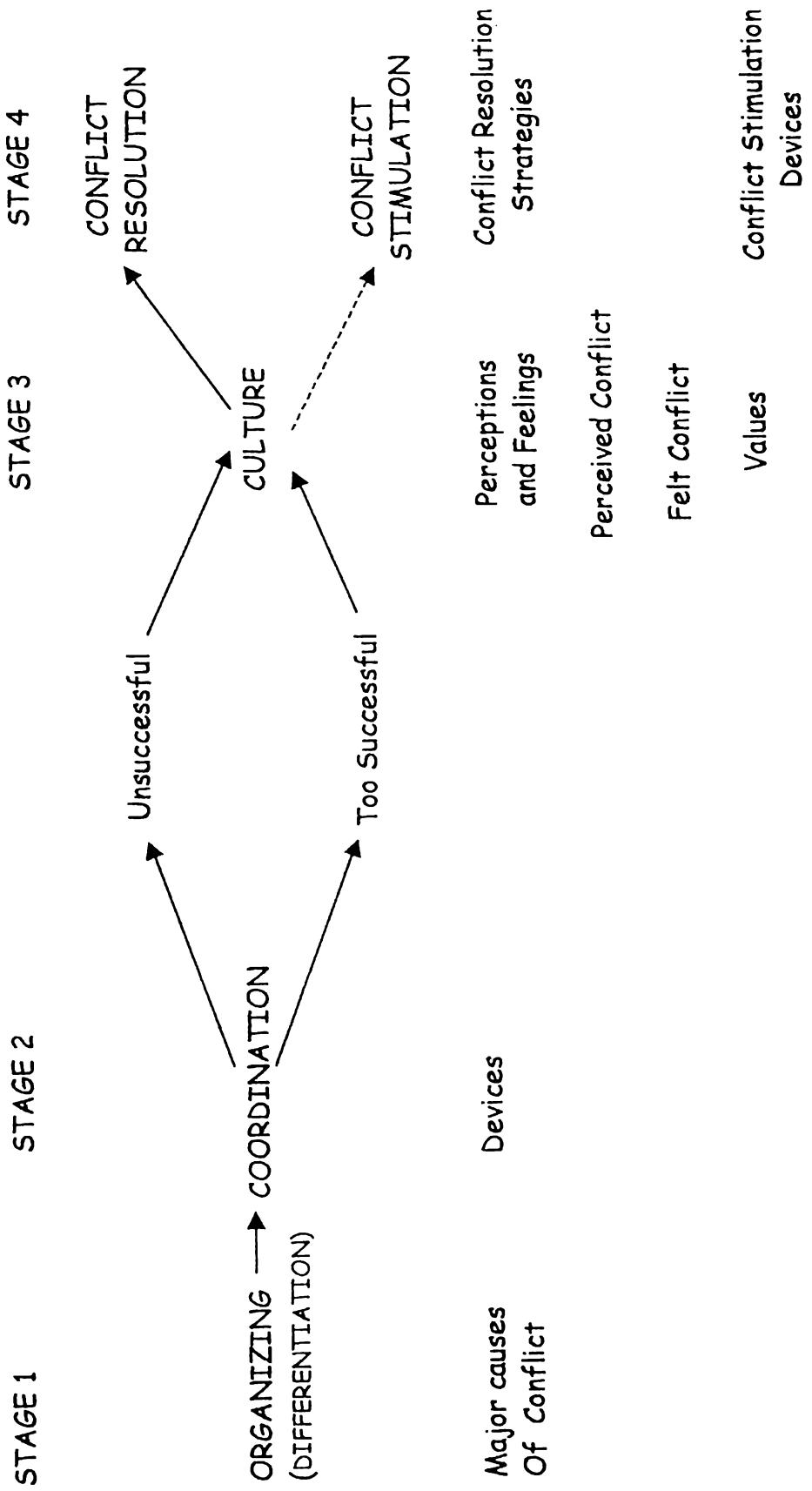
*Restructuring a company.* This may result in conflict because of realigning working groups and altering rules and regulations. This is done primarily to increase or create interdependence between previously independent units.

*Bringing in outsiders.* This means adding employees to a group whose backgrounds; values, attitudes, or management styles differ from those of existing members.

*Appointing a devil's advocate.* Conflict is stimulated when a critic is intentionally sought to go against the majority position held by the group.

*Leadership style.* Too much or too little in one direction can create conflict.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Conflict- expressed struggle between interdependent parties over perceived limited resources, scarce rewards, incompatible goals, or interference; expression of dissatisfaction or disagreement with an interaction, processes, product, or services.

Traditional perspective- holds that conflicts represents a malfunction within a group, department or organization.

Pluralist perspective- implies that conflict is inevitable and should be accepted, since, in certain circumstances, it may even enhance performance.

Interactionist perspective- the modern view about conflict that encourages both conflict stimulation and conflict solution.

Functional conflict- supports the goals of a group or an organization and improve its performance.

Dysfunctional conflict- hinders group or organizational performance.

Organizing- involves the breaking up of a single task and dividing it among different departments, groups, or individuals.

Co-ordinating- involves synchronizing and making compatible the different aspects of the work process.

Felt conflict- the visible and tangible part of conflict where actions and counteractions take place.

Perceived conflict-refers to one's personal, on-the-spot analysis and interpretation of the conflict episode as it is occurring

Manifest conflict- the climactic phase of conflict, is the visible and tangible part of conflict where actions and counteractions take place. It involves any of several varieties of conflictual behaviors. The interface between perceived conflict and manifest conflict and the interface between felt conflict and manifest conflict are the pressure points where most conflict resolution programs are applied.

Forcing- represents high concern for results and low concern for people.

Avoiding- (withdrawal) shows low concern for production results with low concern for people.

Compromising- essentially a bargaining model where accommodations and adjustments lead to "workable" rather than best solutions.

Accommodating- (smoothing) strategy where one manager tries to deal with conflict by making everyone happy.

Collaborating- (optimizing) shows high concern for people and results.

Mediation- process in which a neutral third party to a conflict assists in the achievement of a negotiated solution by using reason, persuasion, and the presentation of alternatives.

Conflict styles- refers to the general predisposition or patterned way in which an individual responds to conflict.

Conflict strategies- conscious plan for dealing with conflict.

Conflict tactics- specific choices made by participants in conflict interactions.

Culture- pattern of beliefs, values, perceptions, and feelings that influence the behavior and attitudes of a certain group of people.

## OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

### STAGE 1

**Conflict of interests**  
**Time schedule**  
**Work, functions & roles**  
**Budget**  
**Personality**  
**Authority**  
**Professionalism vs. close interpersonal relationships**  
**different points of view**  
**politics**  
**communication gap**  
**misunderstandings**  
**lack of coordination**  
**lack of listening**  
**skills**  
**attitude problems**  
**blame**  
**recognition**

### STAGE 2

**IC-PYC**  
**Constitution & By-Laws**  
**Recognition**  
**Face-to face**

### STAGE 3

**Filipino Culture**

### STAGE 4

**Collaborative**  
**Compromising**  
**Accommodating**  
**Forcing**  
**Avoiding**

**Communication**  
**Devil's Advocate**  
**Leadership Style**

## Chapter V

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

A sample of 30 respondents were chosen for this study from a population of 136 young leaders in the Immaculate Conception Parish Youth Council (IC-PYC), a youth organization that is seriously involved in parochial services and socio-civic activities. This sample is equal to 20% of the entire population. All respondents were Filipinos and held leadership positions in the organization. The demographic characteristics of the sample are as follows:

Forty-three percent of the sample were males. Fifty-seven percent were females. There were more female leaders in the organization than there were males.

The age of the respondents ranged from 15-30 years old. Fifty percent of the respondents came from the age bracket 15-20. Thirty-three percent were 21-25 years old. Only 17% belonged to the bracket 26-30 years old. There is an equal 50-50 proportion of the young and old leaders.

Looking into the educational background of the respondents, college students comprised the biggest percentage. Thirty-seven percent were college students, 27% were working and were professionals, 17% were high school students, 13% were working but were undergraduates, and 6% were vocational graduates and were already working. It is

not surprising to find a big percentage of college students in the organization since IC-PYC is a youth organization anyway. The background of the respondents may signify their constant exposure to Western theories taught in school and even in the workplace.

Forty-seven percent of the respondents stayed in the organization and held leadership positions for more than two years, 33% were leaders for a year or two, while only 20% were new and in the IC-PYC for less than a year. The higher percentage of leaders having a longer tenure in the organization can provide this study more valuable data.

The age, sex, educational background, and tenure of leaders at IC-PYC may dictate the kind of outlook they have about conflict and the kind of conflict management strategy that they are about to take later.

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

CHARACTERISTICS		NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
<i>SEX</i>			
	Male	13	43%
	Female	17	57%
<i>AGE</i>			
	15-20 years old	15	50%
	21-245 years old	10	33%
	26-30 years old	5	17%
<i>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND</i>			
Student	High School	5	17%
	College	11	37%
Working	With Degree	8	27%
	Vocational	2	6%
	Without Degree	4	13%
<i>TENURE IN THE ORGANIZATION</i>			
	Less than a year	6	20%
	1-2 years	10	33%
	2 years or more	14	47%

## DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

Interviews with the key informants reveal that all respondents have a thorough understanding and awareness of what a conflict is. The interviewees defined conflict as:

"any form of misunderstanding between two parties, meaning, it coincides with the norms and/or goals of the organization."  
 "differences of opinion, time and energy."  
 "differences in terms of perception, character, strategy, personality, etc,..."  
 "it's like a plot in a movie that gives essence to the entire organizational work."  
 "part of organizational life... without it, organization would not be dynamic."

These definitions come very close to Hocker and Wilmot's definition of conflict as an **"expressed struggle between interdependent parties over perceived limited resources, scarce rewards, incompatible goals, or interference."** The demographic characteristics shown earlier explain the ability of the key informant interviewees to yield these responses. These definitions also show the kind of perspective leaders at IC-PYC hold about conflict.

## PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT

Tables 1 and 2 clearly show that many of the respondents adapt an **interactionist** perspective about conflict. Fourteen of the 30 respondents (47%) believed that conflicts: (a) can be both good and bad, (b) should be encouraged, (c) can be resolved through the leader's unique strategy and (d) that groups within the organization can change from being co-operative to being unresponsive and vice-versa. Twenty-seven were **pluralists**,

meaning, they recognized and accepted conflict as good and thus, could be resolved through compromise. Twenty percent had **traditional perspective** and understood conflict as bad and harmful, and hence, should be eliminated. One respondent expressed both traditional and interactionist perspectives. Another one expressed pluralist and interactionist views about conflict. This proves that a total of 73% have a modern view about conflict, while 20% of the respondents have not let go of their traditional beliefs. The remaining 7% are still in a state of quandary. When asked about whether conflicts serve any functions or not, all of the respondents answered yes. According to them, conflicts are not always dysfunctional; they also "pose solutions to old problems," "strengthen group cohesion," and "encourages self-evaluation and change."

Knowing which perspective is held by the leaders provides a helpful way in looking into the root causes of conflict and implies a conflict management strategy that changes the conflict situation.

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC Perspective on Conflict**

PERSPECTIVE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Traditional	6	0.20	20.0	6
Pluralist	8	0.27	26.7	14
Interactionist	14	0.47	46.7	28
Both traditional & interactionist	1	0.03	3.3	29
Both pluralist & interactionist	1	0.03	3.3	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>N=30</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 2. Percentage Distribution of IC-PYC Perspective on Conflict**

PERSPECTIVE	PERCENTAGE
Purely traditional	20%
Purely pluralist	27%
Purely interactionist	47%
Both traditional & interactionist	3%
Both pluralist & interactionist	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Interviews with key informants showed that most of the conflicts in IC-PYC were usually about the following and stemmed from the following:

- Leadership style
- Conflict of interests
- Time schedule
- Work, functions, and roles
- Budget
- Personality
- Authority
- Professionalism vs. close interpersonal relationships

- Different points of view
- Politics (hidden agenda)
- Communication gap
- Misunderstanding
- Lack of coordination
- Lack of listening skills
- Attitude problems
- Blame
- Recognition

These responses fall under the six major causes of conflict which are shown in the theoretical model. Here is an illustration that groups the responses according to the six major causes of conflict.

**Classification of the Causes of Conflicts at IC-PYC**

CAUSES	FORMS OF CONFLICT
Goal orientation and Evaluation	Work-related conflicts (functions, roles) Professionalism vs. close interpersonal relationships
Self-Image and Stereotypes	Differences in leadership style, differences in personality, attitude problems, different points of view
Task Interdependencies	Lack of coordination, communication gap, misunderstanding, blame, lack of listening skills, "kanya-kanya" system
Time Frame	Conflicts with schedule
Overlapping Authority	Conflicts of interests, politics (hidden agenda)
Scarce Resources	Problems with budget, recognition, and lack of incentives

Though no statistics say about the most common causes of conflict at IC-PYC, the over-all coordinator of IC-PYC reported that: "Basically, most of the conflicts here tackle personality problems." Also, observations of the researcher proved that there were conflicts linked to the organization's goals. Each leader's unique goals and evaluation

methods led him to have his own view about organizational priorities and how these were best achieved.

The emergence of these causes validates that organizing (first stage in the model) creates conditions in which conflict can potentially arise. It does so because, by definition, each group or individual becomes specialized in certain tasks. This kind of specialization results in each group or individual becoming concerned with his/her particular part in the total objective and work process. Key informants said that there were instances of "kanya-kanya" at IC-PYC.

## **CO-ORDINATION DEVICES**

From observations, the researcher encountered the following co-ordination devices that the IC-PYC applied in synchronizing and making compatible the different aspects of the work process previously organized into specialized groups. These were the devices that prevented some conflicts from occurring.

The **use of rules, policies and procedures** was a helpful tool in preventing some conflicts from breaking out. People from IC-PYC would normally refer to these devices to clarify who is going to do which work. In some ways, conflicts about overlapping authority were nipped off the bud through these devices.

There were also instances when a superior would use his/her legitimate authority based on his/her position in the **hierarchy** to resolve conflict. Some leaders at the IC-

PYC would sometimes put their foot forward in trying to arrange for a schedule for everyone in the organization.

**Clarifying specific goals through face to face communication** was another coordination device. In this way, the chances of each party misinterpret the others' abilities, skills, or traits were reduced. The use of IC-PYC Constitution and By-Laws also works towards the need to clarify specific goals as to whether what goal is responsible for which committee.

**Cell-groups**, one form of a **temporary task force**, were used to help individuals come to understand the goals, values, attitudes, and problems of their fellow members. This facilitates the frank and accurate exchange of views and information, thereby resolving differences more effectively.

The success or failure of these devices dictates the kind of conflict management strategy that the leaders are willing to settle in the later stages.

## **MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT**

The data gathered during the interviews explained that conflicts were perceived and then felt during the occurrence of:

- Misunderstandings
- Separate groupings, divisions
- Flare-ups
- Communication gap

- Disregard of leadership
- The attitude of "I don't care"
- Slower pace of operations
- Lack of focus
- Misdirection
- Grapevine messages
- Friction and/or tension in the organization
- Avoiding each other
- Reduction in attendance
- Decline in work output

Cultural explanations for coming up with these data can be traced from **sensitivity**, a cultural trait of the Filipinos. One of the key informants elaborates: "I just know it when there is a conflict or tension in the organization. Others would not seem to notice it but we just know it when a bad thing is coming up. 'Hindi lang yun human instinct,... cultural instinct din.'"

It is during this stage that conflict gets defined and the parties involved in a conflict situation try to determine the type of outcomes they are willing to take.

## **VALUES, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR**

For the purpose of this study, cultural influences have been measured by observing the values, attitudes, and behavior of the people at IC-PYC. Moreover, interviews have provided insights about what the respondents value.

At IC-PYC, an internal value is service- a doctrine codified in the culture. Commitment, people empowerment, and shared leadership keep the organization intact. Moreover, the organization has a strong belief in open supportive communication.

Members, in fact, are able to share intimacy or personal bond with their leaders especially when conflicts arise. Reportedly, everybody is encouraged to engage in open discussions about how certain conflicts can be managed. Special meetings where both parties are present are even called for to settle disputes. "Cell-grouping is one of the processes that provide venue for emotional release. In this way, conflicts are reduced to a minimum level. This openness is a venue that permeates the organization and supports the belief that every individual counts and is valuable to the success of IC-PYC.

The type of leadership present at IC-PYC fosters an effective way of capturing and leveraging the skills and capabilities of individuals across committees and subgroups. The use of teams or cell-groups helps to perpetuate the shared leadership approach throughout the organization. This also empowers the people in the organization with opportunities to become potential leaders.

Leaders and members alike share a sense of commitment by the way they are inspired by the success stories of previous leaders. Incumbent leaders try to emulate the values, attitudes, and behavior of their predecessors. The "to serve" orientation is a push factor why the other young leaders stay in the organization for very long years. The respondents said that it is through serving other people that they get personal satisfaction and contentment.

IC-PYC also puts premium emphasis on unity. One respondent was quoted saying, "Solving the problem together is where our unity is tested... we get to brainstorm about a lot of ideas and seek many possible solutions to the problem."

Aside from unity, the establishment of strong interpersonal relationships is given high value. "We usually let the dusk settle when we're in conflict... so we could face the problem objectively and so we could avoid further escalation of conflict," one of the respondents commented.

All these discussions about the prevailing culture at IC-PYC are relevant in the leader's choice of communication strategies for managing conflicts.

These discussions boil down to one point: the culture at IC-PYC conforms to the social and value frameworks of the Filipino.

The IC-PYC, being service-oriented, is an indication of the **integration of the "self" to the "other selves."** Simply put, it means being part of something and able to belong in order to establish good relationship with people. As one respondent claims, "Serving gives you that feeling of a family." The use of teams and cell groups contribute to that kind of **family feeling**. The high premium given to relationships is obvious in the leader's want for "**personal bonding**" and **shared intimacy** with members. Though openness is more of a Western influence, this is used at IC-PYC to facilitate a more **cohesive environment and stronger personal ties**.

**Paternalism**, unanimously accepted by the Filipino as the “right way of leading an organization” (Jocano, 1990) shows up in the kind of attitude the interviewees have about their previous leaders. The rule of **consultation**, **persuasion**, and **consensus** continues to persist. One of the key informants attests to this by saying: “I always try to be open for consultation. In that way, I can easily suggest solutions my members are willing to take.” The interviewees’ conformity to *dangal*, which Jocano referred to as the moral imperative of the core value system of the Filipino, is present in the respect they have for their contemporaries.

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

Conflict management at IC-PYC happens on two levels: **conflict resolution** and **conflict stimulation**.

### ***Conflict Resolution***

The researcher found out that the respondents used all five **conflict resolution strategies** at different occasions.

In using **collaborative strategies**, 70% of the respondents scored high. Twenty-seven percent scored moderately high and 3% low. None answered moderately low. This only means that the respondents have a high tendency to always use collaborative strategies in managing conflicts. This figure is a validation of the responses incurred from the interviews. Key informants always stressed that at times of conflict, they would

always resort to bring together the parties involved and open the floor for group discussion. The following statements support this contention.

"We make sure to hear both sides, brainstorm,... then we decide together."

"I try to blend with the different personalities of each member... I try to be open for consultation anytime."

"I listen to understand, reflect to seek my role in conflict resolution, then suggest solutions to the problem."

The use of **compromising strategies** became evident when 50% of the respondents scored high. Twenty-three percent scored moderately high, 20% moderately low, and 3% low. These figures reflect a relatively high tendency to use compromising strategies. Because of this, compromising strategies can be considered to be another strategy that is used from time to time at IC-PYC. One of the respondents disclosed: "When there's conflict, I talk to both parties concerned. In that way, I become a mediator." **Mediation**, as described earlier is a tactic in compromising. The researcher has actually witnessed compromising behaviors from the respondents.

One example was when I attended one of their meetings. The coordinator of a sub-organization asked his members if they could change the day of their meetings. The coordinator wanted to move it from Friday to Saturday so he could attend the meeting on time. The decision was fine for some and proved to be inconvenient for the others. A compromise was reached to allow some to absent themselves if it would not be possible for them to attend those meetings.

**Forcing strategies** got 37% of the respondents to score high. 30% scored moderately high, 23% moderately low, and 10% low. Though some of the respondents denied using forcing strategies, these results say otherwise. Forcing strategies were transparent at IC-PYC when some leaders would try to win the other person over or when they would not want to back away from a good argument. Authoritarianism proved this too.

Only 23% of the respondents scored high in using **accommodating strategies**.

Forty percent scored moderately high, 33% moderately low, and 3% low. These explain that **accommodating strategies** are only applied sometimes. Accommodation happens when some leaders would put aside any controversial aspects of an issue for the sake of getting things done.

In using **avoidance strategies**, 23% scored high. Forty percent scored moderately high, 33% moderately low, and 3% low. These say that in times of conflict, avoidance only happens sometimes. One respondent was caught saying, "When two people are in conflict, I just advise them to talk to one another..."

**Table 3. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Forcing Strategies in Managing Conflicts**

RATING	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
High	11	0.36	36.6	11
Moderately high	9	0.30	30.0	20
Moderately low	7	0.23	23.0	27
Low	3	0.10	30.0	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.0	100.0	

**Table 4. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Avoidant Strategies in Managing Conflicts**

RATING	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
High	7	0.233	23.33	7
Moderately high	7	0.233	23.33	14
Moderately low	14	0.466	46.66	28
Low	2	0.066	6.6	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.0	100.0	

**Table 5. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Compromising Strategies in Managing Conflicts**

RATING	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
High	16	0.533	53.33	16
Moderately high	7	0.233	23.33	23
Moderately low	6	0.20	20.0	29
Low	1	0.033	3.33	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.0	100.0	

**Table 6. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Accommodating Strategies in Managing Conflicts**

RATING	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
High	7	0.233	23.33	7
Moderately high	12	0.40	40.0	19
Moderately low	10	0.333	33.33	20
Low	1	0.333	3.33	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.0	100.0	

**Table 7. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Collaborative Strategies in Managing Conflicts**

RATING	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
High	21	0.70	70.0	21
Moderately high	8	0.27	26.7	29
Moderately low	0	0	0	29
Low	1	0.03	3.3	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>N=30</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 8. Percentage Distribution for IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies in Managing Conflicts**

RATINGS	HIGH	MODERATELY HIGH	MODERATELY LOW	LOW	TOTAL
<b>STRATEGIES</b>					
Forcing	37%	30%	23%	10%	100%
Avoiding	23%	23%	47%	7%	100%
Compromising	53%	23%	20%	3%	100%
Accommodating	23%	40%	33%	3%	100%
Collaborating	70%	27%	0%	3%	100%

From the data presented, it can be inferred that there is no single communication strategy that the IC-PYC uses in managing conflict. This is supported by the interviewees' position that there is no single best way to resolve or manage conflicts. Interviews with the key informants reveal that "different kind of conflict require various approaches. One strategy may not be appropriate for a certain kind of conflict."

Because **collaborative and compromising strategies** received the highest scores, it is worth analyzing why this is so. What accounts for the high scores in collaborative and compromising strategies are the values that the IC-PYC holds as an organization. The culture at IC-PYC which reflects much of the Filipino culture explains why its leaders engage in the said strategies. This is because of their constant want for strong interpersonal relationships and because of their desire for collective spirit. The demographic characteristics of the respondents can also explain the prominence of collaborative and compromising strategies.

As stated, there were more female leaders in the organization than there were male leaders. This explains the frequent use of cooperative strategies since women are more collaborative. The age of the respondents did not actually interfere in the use of conflict management strategies since all of the respondents displayed consistent behavior towards collaboration. Only, leaders who belong to the higher age bracket are able to define conflict in concrete terms and have more descriptive ideas of how certain strategies are to work. Those leaders who have longer tenure in the organization, by their experiences, explain why collaborative or compromising strategies are generally favored.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher looked into the different causes of conflict at IC-PYC and found out that there were particular communication strategies for solving each.

Sixty percent of the respondents used **collaborative strategies** in managing conflicts that arise from **goal orientation and evaluation**. Twenty-three percent used accommodating strategies and 17% used compromising strategies. These figures revealed that in managing conflicts that result from differences in goal orientation, collaborative strategies were used.

Problems with **self-image and stereotypes** were resolved through **accommodating strategies**, which yielded 53% vote from the respondents, this percentage being the highest.

**Collaborative strategies**, getting the biggest share at 47%, were also used in conflicts concerning **task interdependency**.

**Time**, also a major source of conflict at the IC-PYC, was managed through the use of **compromising strategies**. Forty-seven percent of the respondents scored high on this aspect.

**Forcing** qualified as the appropriate communication strategy for managing conflict about **overlapping authority**. Fifty percent of the respondents showed this trend.

Problems with scarce resources were managed through collaborative strategies. Fifty percent of the respondents said this so.

These results consistently show that the IC-PYC uses all five communication strategies in managing conflicts. Conflict resolution comes on a case-to-case basis. But still, there is a trend towards the respondents' preference for collaborative and compromising strategies- a behavior confirmed by the prevailing culture at IC-PYC.

**Table 9. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies for Managing Conflict  
About Goal Orientation and Evaluation**

STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Forcing	0	0	0	0
Avoiding	0	0	0	0
Compromising	5	0.16	16.0	5
Accommodating	7	0.233	3.33	12
Collaborating	18	0.60	60.0	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.00	100.0	

**Table 10. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies for Managing Conflict  
About Self-Image and Stereotypes**

STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Forcing	2	0.07	7.0	2
Avoiding	1	0.333	3.33	3
Compromising	7	0.233	23.33	10
Accommodating	16	0.533	53.33	26
Collaborating	4	0.133	13.33	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.00	100.0	

**Table 11. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies for Managing Conflict  
About Task Interdependency**

STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Forcing	7	0.23	23.0	7
Avoiding	0	0	0	7
Compromising	6	0.20	20.0	13
Accommodating	3	0.10	10.0	16
Collaborating	14	0.47	47.0	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	N=30	1.00	100.0	

**Table 12. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies for Managing Conflict  
About Time Frame**

STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Forcing	1	0.03	3.0	1
Avoiding	3	0.10	10.0	4
Compromising	14	0.47	47.0	18
Accommodating	4	0.13	13.0	22
Collaborating	8	0.26	27.0	30
TOTAL	N=30	1.00	100.0	

**Table 13. Frequency Distribution of IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies for Managing Conflict  
About Overlapping Authority**

STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Forcing	15	0.50	50.0	15
Avoiding	0	0	0	15
Compromising	5	0.17	17.0	20
Accommodating	2	0.6	6.0	22
Collaborating	8	0.27	27.0	30
TOTAL	N=30	1.00	100.0	

**Table 14. Frequency Distribution for IC-PYC  
Communication Strategies in Managing Conflict  
About Scarce Resources**

STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	PROPORTION	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Forcing	4	0.13	13.33	4
Avoiding	1	0.03	3.33	5
Compromising	9	0.30	30.0	14
Accommodating	0	0	0	14
Collaborating	16	0.53	53.33	30
TOTAL	N=30	1.0	100.0	

**Table 15. Percentage Distribution for the  
Different Causes of Conflict and  
How IC-PYC Manages Them**

COMMUNI-CATION STRATEGIES	FORCING	AVOIDING	COMPRO-MISING	ACCOM-MO-DATING	COLLA-BO-RATING	TOTAL
CAUSES OF CONFLICT						
Goal Orientation & Evaluation	0%	0%	17%	23%	69%	100%
Self-Image and Stereotypes	7%	3.33%	23.33%	53.33%	13.33%	100%
Task Inter-dependency	23%	0%	20%	10%	47%	100%
Time Frame	3%	10%	47%	13%	27%	100%
Overlapping Authority	50%	0%	17%	17%	6%	100%
Scarce Resources	13.33%	3.33%	30%	0%	53.33%	100%

### *Conflict Stimulation*

The researcher found out that conflict at IC-PYC were stimulated not as a conscious effort from the leaders but out of their daily interactions. The researcher came up with these conflict stimulation devices.

**Communication.** IC-PYC regulated the flow of information in the communication system, providing too much or too little. Information underload and information overload were given out to check some leaders' initiative to take responsibility over certain tasks. The prevailing culture at IC-PYC justified this action. "Service-orientedness" at the organization moved the leaders to constantly assess the behavior of the leaders toward work.

**Devil's Advocate.** A devil's advocate acted to argue against the majority position held by the group. Any member or leader took the role of a devil's advocate to facilitate critical thinking at times when important decisions were sought. Although the presence of a devil's advocate was not generally favored by many of the leaders at IC-PYC, the organization still recognized the advantage of having a devil's advocate around. Cohesive personal ties of the people in the organization did not actually permit a critic to destroy their already established relationships.

**Leadership style.** Unpredictable changes in leadership style created conflict because subordinates were usually driven out of their comfort zones. Minimum levels of conflict materialized at the onset of minor changes in leadership style. A leader might

appear to be accommodating at one instance and authoritative at another. These shifts in approach created several tendencies that would drive away the members from getting active in service obligations. Members could lose interests of outwardly show ill demeanors.

## Chapter VI

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

The key informants displayed a thorough understanding and awareness of conflict. Their personal definitions about conflict showed a modern outlook, meaning, they recognized and accepted the occurrence of conflict and, in fact. Were very open about discussing it.

The interactionist view prevailed as the highly scored perspective on conflict. Forty-seven percent of the respondents signified their interactionist stance. For them, (a) conflicts can be good or bad, (b) conflicts should be encouraged, (c) conflicts can be resolved through the leader's unique strategy, and (d) groups within an organization can change from being co-operative to being unresponsive. This tallies with how the respondents defined conflict.

Causes of conflict at the IC-PYC fell under six general categories: goal orientation and evaluation, self-image and stereotypes, task interdependency, time frame, overlapping authority, and scarce resources.

The IC-PYC also resorted to co-ordination devices that helped prevent conflicts from occurring. These devices included: rules, policies, and procedures; use of hierarchy; goal clarification and communication; and permanent project teams. Successful use of these devices led to stimulate conflict. Unsuccessful use meant conflict resolution.

Conflicts at IC-PYC were manifested in the following situations: misunderstandings, separate groupings, divisions, flare-ups, communication gap, disregard of leadership, the attitude of "I don't care," slower pace of operations, lack of focus, misdirection, grapevining messages, friction and/or tension in the organization, avoiding each other, reduction in attendance, and decline in work output. Perceiving and feeling these conflicts enabled the respondents to define conflict and helped them determine which communication strategies would be appropriate to use in resolving them. Sensitivity was said to be a cultural instinct that guided the organization in perceiving and feeling the occurrence of conflict.

The values, attitudes, and behavior of the respondents were also significant factors in assessing the most important communication strategy in managing conflicts. Interviews with the key informants gave a concrete definition of the prevailing culture at IC-PYC.

One significant finding was that the culture at IC-PYC reflected a Filipino culture.

The IC-PYC, being a service organization, has inculcated in its leaders and members the values that center on personalism, paternalism, and familism. Respondents share the same cultural theme about Filipino sensitivity, reciprocity, and collectivity. Though foreign influences were evident (such as authoritarianism and a high level of

openness), and though the young population of the respondents shows a high tendency towards orientation to Western theories, Filipino values continue to show up.

These sets of values create a great influence on conflict management strategies. In resolving conflicts, the respondents used all five strategies: forcing, avoiding, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating. It was found out that there is no single best way to resolve conflicts. The results from this study showed that these strategies were used on a case-to-case basis. Forcing strategies were found to be appropriate for conflicts about overlapping authority. Problems with self-image and stereotypes were best handled through accommodating strategies. Compromising strategies fit to conflicts involving time. Collaborative strategies proved to be effective in dealing with differences from goal orientation and evaluation and with problems with regard to task interdependency. Although these showed that the organization used all these strategies, testimonies from interviewees revealed that collaborative strategies were preferred over the other four, and were, in fact, generally used for every conflict situation. Results from survey questions showed that 70% of the total respondents scored high in using collaborative strategies.

Culture is said to be a primary reason for this trend. Since the IC-PYC puts a strong emphasis on smooth interpersonal relationships, collaborative strategies serve to maintain the prevailing culture at IC-PYC.

Another significant findings revolve around conflict stimulation. At IC-PYC, conflicts were stimulated through communication, through the presence of a devil's advocate, and through leadership style. It is upon observation that these are drawn. Cultural explanation for this is quite impossible because the organization do not really take any conscious effort to stimulate conflict.

To sum up, the way the respondents defined conflict exactly matches with the kind of perspective they hold- which is that of an interactionist. This modern view about conflict is actually a big factor in recognizing and applying collaborative strategies in managing conflicts, and at the same time, keeping the culture intact.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher comes to the conclusion that:

The leaders at IC-PYC possess a modern outlook about conflict. The high percentage of the respondents who are found to be pluralists and interactionists proves this point. Also, their personal definitions of conflict show this level of awareness.

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon at IC-PYC. The list of causes of conflict and the illustration of the manifestations of conflict provided in this research back this up. Conflict is thus seen as a normal part of organizational life that requires constant check-up. Leaders at IC-PYC view this as a challenge and are, in fact, engaging in the process of effective conflict management.

Though conflict is recognized, there are also established ways in which conflicts can be prevented. Preventive measures come in the form of co-ordination devices. Successful use of these devices leads to the absence of conflict in the organization. In their absence, leaders unconsciously stimulate conflicts. These manifest in the presence of a devil's advocate and in other consequences reported in the earlier part of this research. However, unsuccessful use of these devices requires the leaders at the IC-PYC to take on the challenge of resolving different kinds of conflict.

Conflicts that arise from differences in goal orientation and evaluation and from differences in self-image and stereotypes are found to be the common at IC-PYC. Collaborating strategies are said to be appropriate for resolving problems concerned with goal orientation and evaluation. Accommodating strategies resolve conflicts about self-image and stereotypes.

On the contrary, the general findings show that there is actually no single best way to manage conflicts. The IC-PYC used all five communication strategies: forcing, avoiding, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating. This proves to say that not one strategy is appropriate in managing all the other kinds of conflicts. Different kinds of conflict require various conflict management strategies.

Despite this, there appears to be at least one strategy that is prominent because of the intervention of the culture. Collaborative strategies are considered to be the

prominent ones that the IC-PYC uses in managing conflict. This is because these strategies help maintain the prevailing culture at IC-PYC.

A Filipino culture prevails at IC-PYC on the grounds that its leaders and members share the same cultural theme on sensitivity, reciprocity, and collectivity. Though foreign influences are evident (e.g. authoritarianism and a high level of openness), the IC-PYC leaders still conform and behave according to the values placed on the self, the feelings and on integrity. Not very many differences are seen in the value system of the leaders and members. This makes the organization homogenous.

An organization that has a homogenous culture is more likely to have its leaders agree on the best communication strategy in managing conflicts. Furthermore, an organization whose leaders share the same values with members is more prone to successfully manage conflict situations.

A modern view about conflict helps leaders to develop an open mind about of conflict, its cause, how it manifest, and about the most appropriate communication strategy in managing it.

In the midst of modernity, it still pays to keep a strong culture. This glues together the leaders and members of every organization in the face of environmental contingencies that take their form in conflicts.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has come up with the following implications and recommendations.

The findings of this study imply that effective conflict management is possible with the use of collaborative strategies which are more attuned to Filipino values. This only means that a conflict management strategy must be devised in a way that can be made acceptable not only to the leaders but to the subordinates as well.

It is better that the leaders at IC-PYC share a common modern view about conflict. This has contributed a lot to an appropriate use of conflict management strategy in their organization. However, the organization is advised to take serious efforts on how a conflict episode occurs in their organization so that its leaders, including the members, can be competent enough to face a great number of environmental uncertainties in the future. It must be noted that the leaders at IC-PYC must not remain complacent despite their interactionist views about conflict. Their members must learn to imbibe those views through some communication situations so that, when it is their turn to lead the organization, the management of conflict would be even easier. Seminars, training, workshops, and lectures can be conducted to update the organization with the latest trends in management and leadership. The nature of IC-PYC as a parish organization must not be put into a little or no consideration at all. Just like any business organizations, the IC-PYC operates with great dynamism and must be constantly at par with the requisites of global events.

On a greater scale, future studies about conflict management must be conducted, putting special emphasis on the strategies most commonly preferred by Filipinos. In this way, leaders and managers who direct Filipino subordinates may be able to devise ways appropriate in each conflict situation and appropriate to the distinct Filipino culture.

It is further recommended that similar studies be undertaken but with special emphasis on power relations in a Filipino organization. It is suggested that another research study be conducted to focus on another aspect of conflict, which is that of a structure.

In this regard, leaders and managers belonging to any organization in the Philippines, be it a profit or non-profit organization, are recommended to establish an atmosphere that conforms to the underlying values of Filipino subordinates. In other words, they are advised to learn to romance with the Filipino employees and/or members by putting up a cohesive environment.

A values-based leadership is recommended to work this out. A values-based leadership must take these initiatives.

- build personal relationship
- know the personal goals of each group
- have a feel for group members
- allow for group conflicts
- manage learning
- share responsibility
- use teaming
- communicate two-way
- link internal culture with external performance
- display passion and support diversity

These set of leadership initiatives are taken from the book about Values-based Leadership. It is said that these allow the leader to recognize and address the needs and interests of group members. Furthermore, these allow for group established values and norms to be pursued and cultivated.

According to the source, an organization that injects a lot of values to its people creates a sense of belonging among group members. It gives them an identity. It brings them together and enables them to do far more than they could as individuals. There is internal togetherness that is communicated outward. It turns the group into cohesive energy source and helps them fit externally with the environment. A “values-ful” culture encourages equal participation in decision-making, supported risk taking, confronted change, developed sense of conviction and instilled values that generated self-confidence and a belief in the purpose of the expedition. With these in mind, the creation of a values-ful culture in the Philippines organizations is deemed important.

This study further recommends that while maintaining some traditional beliefs and values, it is also important to develop a level of modernity by being open to new ideas. Managers/leaders and their employees and/or members in the Philippine organizations must not confine themselves to the traditional perspective that conflicts are bad. They must completely understand the advantages of every conflict situation.

Globalization has created major shifts in the organization. Conflict and change will soon become a requisite in the dynamics of organizational life. A famous quotation says: "We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden." This implies that the management of conflict and change is a critical management capability.

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## THE INSTRUMENT

Good day!

I am a fourth year student taking B.A. Organizational Communication at the University of the Philippines-Manila. I am conducting a study about how conflicts are managed the-Filipino way. I would like you to share with me some valuable insights about this topic.

You are requested to answer the questions as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Rest assured that your responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks,

LUWEE

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### Questionnaire

#### I Personal Information

*Please fill in the blanks.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ORGANIZATION (complete name pls.): \_\_\_\_\_  
POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_  
AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: \_\_\_\_\_ CIVIL STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_  
TENURE: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: \_\_\_\_\_ CITIZENSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Perspectives on Conflict

*Encircle the letter that corresponds to your answer.*

1. Conflict is....
  - a. bad
  - b. good
  - c. both good and bad

2. Conflicts should be...

- a. eliminated
- b. accepted
- c. encouraged

3. Conflicts can be resolved through...

- a. consensus
- b. compromise
- c. leader's unique strategy

4. My view about our organization is that...

- a. We are one big happy family; everyone has the same common goals.
- b. There are separate groups within the organization who pursue their own objectives.
- c. Groups within the organization can change from being co-operative to being unresponsive and vice-versa.

### III. How Do You Handle Conflict?

*Everyone has a basic style for handling conflicts. To identify the strategies you rely upon most, indicate how often each of the following statements applies to you. Next to each statement, write 5 if the statement applies often, 3 if the statement applies sometimes, and 1 if the statement never applies.*

When I differ with someone...

- 1. I explore our differences, not backing down, but not imposing my view either.
- 2. I disagree openly, then invite more discussions about our differences.
- 3. I look for a mutually satisfactory solution.
- 4. Rather than let the other person make a decision without my input, I make sure I am heard and also that I hear what the other person says.
- 5. I say, "This is my position. What is yours? I'm committed to finding the best possible solution. What do the facts suggest?"
- 6. I agree to a middle ground rather than look for a completely satisfying solution.
- 7. I admit I am half-wrong rather than explore our differences.
- 8. I have a reputation for meeting a person halfway.
- 9. I expect to get out about half of what I really want to say.
- 10. My stand is: "Let's search for a solution we can get on with our work."
- 11. I give in totally rather than try to change another person's opinion.
- 12. I put aside any controversial aspects of an issue.
- 13. I agree early on rather than argue about a point.

- 14. I give in as soon as the other party gets emotional over an issue.
- 15. I ask, "How can I help you feel good about this? My position isn't so important that it is worth risking bad feelings between us."
- 16. I try to win the other person over.
- 17. I work to come out victorious, no matter what.
- 18. I never back away from a good argument.
- 19. I would rather win than end up compromising.
- 20. I know what's right. I tell him/her not to question my judgment or authority.
- 21. I take a neutral stand.
- 22. I think that he/she has a problem.
- 23. I refer his/her views to somebody else.
- 24. I don't mind him/her.
- 25. I am totally unaffected.

#### IV. WHAT DO YOU DO?

*Encircle the letter that corresponds to your answer.*

- 1. When the goals of my committee come in conflict with those of the other committees, I try to resolve it by:
  - a. believing that its time to exert my authority
  - b. simply avoiding to deal with it
  - c. reaching an agreement to resolve it quickly
  - d. making sure that I don't upset the other person while dealing with the problem
  - e. committing to find the best possible solution
- 2. When clashes in personality occur, the resolution that comes best is:
  - a. believing that its time to exert my authority
  - b. simply avoiding to deal with it
  - c. reaching an agreement to resolve it quickly
  - d. making sure that I don't upset the other person while dealing with the problem
  - e. committing to find the best possible solution
- 3. When there is lack of coordination, the best approach would be based on:
  - a. believing that its time to exert my authority
  - b. simply avoiding to deal with it
  - c. reaching an agreement to resolve it quickly
  - d. making sure that I don't upset the other person while dealing with the problem
  - e. committing to find the best possible solution

4. When there is conflict with schedule, I manage it through the following beliefs:
  - a. believing that its time to exert my authority
  - b. simply avoiding to deal with it
  - c. reaching an agreement to resolve it quickly
  - d. making sure that I don't upset the other person while dealing with the problem
  - e. committing to find the best possible solution
  
5. I believe that problems with overlapping authority are resolved through:
  - a. believing that its time to exert my authority
  - b. simply avoiding to deal with it
  - c. reaching an agreement to resolve it quickly
  - d. making sure that I don't upset the other person while dealing with the problem
  - e. committing to find the best possible solution
  
6. Conflicts that arise at time of budget deficits, reduced promotional opportunities or lack of incentives, I resolve them by:
  - a. believing that its time to exert my authority
  - b. simply avoiding to deal with it
  - c. reaching an agreement to resolve it quickly
  - d. making sure that I don't upset the other person while dealing with the problem
  - e. committing to find the best possible solution

Again, thanks for your cooperation!!!

Interview Schedule  
(Guide Questions)

1. How would you define conflict?
2. In what ways would you know that there is conflict in your organization?
3. Would you kindly cite conflict situations that have occurred in your organization?
4. What are the kinds of conflicts that you encounter most often? Why is this so?
5. Do you seek to know what causes these conflicts? (If yes, go to #6. If no, proceed to #7).
6. Given that you already know why certain conflicts exist, what do you do to solve them?
7. Do you have any program designed to reduce and/or stimulate conflict in your organization? If yes. Kindly describe.
8. In your own opinion, do conflicts serve any functions? If yes, what do they do to you and the organization? If no, why do you think so?
9. Do you believe that there is a single best way to resolve conflicts? Why or why not?
10. Choose from the following the style that you have used in managing conflicts in your organization. Kindly explain the rationale for doing this.
  - a. "Things have to be done my way."
  - b. Must avoid having to deal with conflict.
  - c. Must reach an agreement quickly.
  - d. Would not want to upset the other party.
  - e. "Let's solve the problem together."