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Exploring the Connection between Interpersonal Needs and Conflict Resolution Styles

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between interpersonal needs and the preference for conflict resolution styles or modes. While previous studies have examined the relationship between manifest needs (or personality traits in the form of needs) and conflict resolution modes, this study specifically investigates interpersonal needs as defined by the Fundamental Interpersonal Orientations Behavior theory and the Thomas-Kilmann conflict modes. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to explore the relationship between the various constructs. Results indicate that expressed control has a significant positive relationship with preference for the competing conflict resolution mode and a significant negative relationship with preference for the accommodating conflict resolution mode. No additional significant relationships were found between the interpersonal needs and conflict resolution modes. Implications and recommendations for future research on this topic are discussed.

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Chapter I: Introduction and Review of Literature

Conflict can be defined as an event that occurs when different parties have incompatible views or goals (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). Conflict in the workplace can take many forms and may result in either a positive or negative outcome for individuals and organizations. Research on the subject in recent years has highlighted the positive outcomes of conflict in particular, such as sparking creativity and innovation or increasing team effectiveness (Bradley, Anderson, Baur, & Klotz, 2015; De Dreu, 2008). However, the positive outcomes of conflict often occur under a narrow set of circumstances and are frequently outweighed by the negative outcomes of conflict (De Dreu, 2008). Workplace conflict can produce a variety of negative outcomes, which could include increased incidents of bullying, occupational stress, and reduced productivity and job satisfaction (Ayoko, Callan, & Härtel, 2003; De Dreu, 2008; Montoro-Rodriguez & Small, 2006; Nixon, Bruk-Lee, & Spector, 2017). Thus, it is in the best interest of organizations to examine how individuals tend to resolve conflict and apply that information to resolve conflicts in the best manner possible. Organizations that take a more constructive approach to conflict resolution may be able to reduce or prevent harm from workplace conflict (De Dreu, 2008; Leon-Perez, Notelaers, & Leon-Rubio, 2016). To take such an approach, it is important to understand individual and group dynamics surrounding conflict resolution. Specifically, understanding how individuals typically behave in a conflict situation (and why) may be crucial for reducing the negative functions and enhancing the positive functions of conflict. Assessing and understanding one's own preferred conflict style has been shown to reduce distress when in a conflict situation and to ease the management of conflict (Leon-Perez et al., 2016; Reich, Wagner-Westbrook, & Kressel, 2007; Waite & McKinney, 2014).

In order to understand how individuals typically behave when confronted with conflict, we need to understand the motivating factors behind that individual's behavior. Among those motivating factors is an individual's interpersonal needs. Conceptually, interpersonal needs may determine an individual's degree of interaction with others and conflicts in the workplace often involve interactions with others. This relationship between interpersonal needs and workplace behavior is supported empirically as well, as research suggests that interpersonal needs may influence an individual's behavior in a conflict situation (Bell & Blakeney, 1977; Bhowan, 1998; Jones & Melcher, 1982; Schneer & Chanin, 1987).

The purpose of this study is to examine the potential relationships among interpersonal needs and conflict resolution styles. Exploring the connection between these two domains could prove useful in terms of potentially using them both to provide further insight into an individual's behavior and preferences, which could help individuals overcome or prevent negative outcomes of conflict. Despite the potential relationship between the two areas, little to no research to date has directly examined the relationship between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution style preference. However, one can draw on studies that have examined the relationship between interpersonal needs and conflict behavior in general to theorize how these two more specific domains may be related.

Conflict Resolution Styles

Conflict resolution style refers to the strategies that individuals may employ in situations where their concerns or needs are incompatible (Thomas, Fann Thomas, & Schaubhut, 2008). Conflict resolution styles have been studied in a variety of different contexts. Bing-You, Wiltshire, and Skolfield (2010) assessed program directors at an annual retreat and identified

connections between conflict resolution styles and situational leadership. Several researchers have studied the conflict resolution styles of adolescents in an effort to understand and improve their relationships with their peers and parents (Branje, van Doorn, van der Valk, & Meeus, 2009; De Wied, Branje, & Meeus, 2007; Moed, Gershoff, Eisenberg, Hofer, Losoya, Spinrad, & Liew, 2015). Kim, Wang, Konda, and Kim (2007) surveyed 275 employees from large companies to identify cultural differences in preferred conflict resolution styles among Korean, Chinese, and Japanese employees. Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) evaluated the influence of factors related to individualism and collectivism and preferences for conflict resolution styles. As noted by Macintosh and Stevens (2008), the term "style" has been used in previous research to refer to the behavioral reaction in a conflict situation (contextual) or to a general disposition or trait of an individual (Daly, Lee, Soutar, & Rasmi, 2010). In addition, conflict resolution styles have been shown to have connections with both context-based situations and trait-based constructs, which indicates that both may play a role in determining preferred conflict resolution styles (Daly et al., 2010; Ogilvie & Kidder, 2008).

The majority of conflict resolution style research is derived from Blake and Mouton's (1964) Managerial Grid, which originally identified styles of leadership based on two interrelated motivations: obtaining one's own goal and maintaining interpersonal relationships (Holt & DeVore, 2005). These two motivations are derived from Blake and Mouton's (1964) dual concern theory, which posits that individuals tend to consider both the people involved in the situation (concern for people) and the process of getting to a resolution (concern for production) (Holt & DeVore, 2005). Blake and Mouton (1970) later applied the dual concern theory to conflict and problem solving in the form of the Conflict Grid. In other words, the

researchers theorized that the nature of the resolution of a conflict will be determined by the emphasis that individuals place on factors related to concern for the people involved in the conflict and concern for the outcome of the situation. The Conflict Grid identifies five general conflict management styles that vary on the two dimensions of concern for people and concern for production (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990).

Prominent conflict resolution style researchers have reconceptualized the dimensions of Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1970) work with similar dimensions, such as concern for self and concern for others (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001; Rahim, 1985) and satisfying one's own concerns and satisfying the concerns of others (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Empirical support has also been found for varying numbers and conceptualizations of conflict styles along these dimensions (Daly et al., 2010). For the purposes of this study, Kilmann and Thomas' (1977) model of conflict resolution styles will be examined.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes

Early research on conflict behavior frequently defined it as a unidimensional variable, such as a single dimension of cooperativeness and competitiveness (i.e., cooperativeness and competitiveness on opposite ends of a single dimension (Ruble & Thomas, 1976)). However, further research indicated that a single dimension is not sufficient in capturing the complexity of conflict behavior and is less meaningful for individuals across various conflict situations (Ruble & Thomas, 1976). Ruble and Thomas (1976) reinterpreted Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1970) work and developed a two-dimensional model of conflict behavior along two independent dimensions of cooperativeness and assertiveness (Ruble & Thomas, 1976). Support for the two-dimensional model has been found through further research on conflict and negotiation behavior

(Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990; Rhoades & Carnevale, 1999; Sorenson, Morse, & Savage, 1999).

Ruble and Thomas' (1976) two-dimensional model was used to identify five conflict resolution styles (referred to as "modes") of conflict handling behavior: competing (assertive and uncooperative—satisfying your own needs at the expense of another's), collaborating (assertive and cooperative—working towards a solution that satisfies everyone's concerns), compromising (intermediate assertiveness and cooperativeness—working towards a solution that partially satisfies everyone's concerns), avoiding (unassertive and uncooperative—sidestepping conflict without satisfying anyone's concerns), and accommodating (cooperative and unassertive—satisfying others concerns at the expense of your own) (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Ruble & Thomas, 1976). Based on this model, Kilmann and Thomas (1977) later developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) to assess the five conflict resolution modes. This was done in an effort to create a valid and reliable measure and reduce social desirability bias, which was a pitfall of previous measures of conflict behavior (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Conflict resolution modes as defined by Kilmann and Thomas have since been researched within a variety of fields including healthcare (Leever, Hulst, Berendsen, Boendemaker, Roodenburg, & Pols, 2010; Pines, Rauschhuber, Cook, Norgan, Canchola, Richardson, & Jones, 2014), education (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015, 2016) and culture (Mohammed, White, & Prabhakar, 2009; Ndubisi, 2010).

Needs Theories and the Workplace

Numerous theories on the various facets of human motivation and need have been developed and proposed over the last century. Needs are commonly defined as "desires that

people differentially hold and that motivate behavior across situations" (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 657). In general, theories on needs attempt to identify factors that energize or drive behavior (Ramlall, 2004). Two of the most well-known theories on need are Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory and McClelland's Need Theory (Ramlall, 2004; Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004). Maslow's theory suggests that individuals will work their way up through a hierarchy of prioritized needs, which included physiological, security, affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Steers et al., 2004). Organizations used this framework in an effort to develop their employees to their fullest potential (Ramlall, 2004). However, while some needs were easy to pinpoint and inexpensive (e.g., physiological need – drinking fountain), satisfying needs higher up the hierarchy could prove to be difficult and expensive (e.g., self-actualization – encourage creativity) (Ramlall, 2004).

McClelland's Need Theory is derived from Murray's 1938 theory of needs, which identified psychological needs rather than physiological needs and represents an array of acquired and innate motives not necessarily conducive to functioning (as cited in Deci & Ryan, 2000). McClelland's Need Theory contrasted with Maslow's in terms of abandoning the hierarchical structure of needs and instead focused on three clearly defined needs–needs for achievement, power, and affiliation (Ramlall, 2004; Steers et al., 2004). McClelland argued that individuals often had several competing needs that motivate behavior (Steers et al., 2004). This conceptualization of needs provided practitioners with a framework that was more relatable to workplace behavior and less abstract than Maslow's conceptualizations of need (Steers et al., 2004). Thus, McClelland's Need Theory became a popular avenue for research on individual differences regarding work motivation (Steers et al., 2004).

As evidenced by the application of Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory and McClelland's Need Theory in the workplace, certain theories on needs are more applicable to the workplace than others. Another example of a needs theory that has been applied in organizations is the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation theory, which specifically focuses on how interpersonal needs influence employee behavior.

FIRO Theory

One of the most prominent and recent theories of interpersonal behavior is known as the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation or FIRO theory. The FIRO theory was originally developed by Dr. William Schutz in 1958 in an effort to understand how high performing military teams work together (Hammer & Schnell, 2000). The FIRO theory is rooted on the premise that individuals will seek to develop relationships that are analogous with their interpersonal needs (Bertolini, Borgia, & Siegel, 2010). In other words, the FIRO theory suggests that individuals will "strive for compatibility in interactions," which leads to the development of interpersonal needs that must be fulfilled (Furnham, 2008, p. 31). Schutz (1958, as cited in Liddell & Slocum, 1976) proposed that all individuals have three interpersonal needs that drive and predict behavior: need for inclusion, need for control, and need for affection. All three needs were defined by the level of comfort, magnitude, and initiating direction of each need (Liddell & Slocum, 1976). Specifically, each interpersonal need is defined by the extent of preference for expressed behavior (preference to initiate behavior towards others) and the extent of preference for wanted behavior (preference to have other initiate behavior towards you) (Furnham, 2008; Liddell & Slocum, 1976).

The first interpersonal need, need for inclusion, refers to the need to maintain relationships with others and the want to either include or the want to be included in social groupings or activities (Furnham, 2008). Expressed inclusion refers to the need to include or invite others and wanted inclusion refers to the degree to which one wants others to include or invite them (Bertolini et al., 2010; Furnham, 2008). The second interpersonal need is the need for control, which refers to the need to have an acceptable balance of power and influence in one's relationships with others (Bertolini et al., 2010; Furnham, 2008). Thus, expressed control refers to the need to influence others and wanted control refers to the need to be influenced or controlled by others (Furnham, 2008). The third interpersonal need is need for affection. Need for affection relates to an individual's need for intimacy and close personal relationships (Bertolini et al., 2010; Furnham, 2008). Thus, expressed affection refers to the need to like others and wanted affection refers to the need to be liked by others (Bertolini et al., 2010). The FIRO theory constructs are measured with the FIRO-B assessment (a self-report measure of behaviors derived from interpersonal needs), which yields scores for total behavior (combined expressed and wanted scores), total need (combined inclusion, control, and affection), and individual wanted and expressed scores (expressed inclusion, wanted inclusion, expressed control, wanted control, expressed affection, and wanted control) (Hammer & Schnell, 2000).

The FIRO-B scale scores can provide great insight when examining interpersonal compatibility and may be particularly useful in group or team settings (Furnham, 2008). Empirical evidence suggests the team satisfaction and performance is improved when team members are compatible (DeRue & Morgeson, 2007; Furnham, 2008). Interpersonal compatibility has also been shown to help teams manage conflicts internally, which in turn

improves trust and performance (Hempel, Zhang, & Tjosvold, 2009). Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, and Trochim (2008) specifically examined the role of conflict resolution in teams and suggested that teams who expect the need for conflict resolution and develop appropriate conflict resolution strategies for their team members will be more successful over time. The results of Hempel et al. (2009) and Behfar et al. (2008) indicated that both interpersonal compatibility and conflict resolution styles may impact the success of a team, which provides further evidence that interpersonal dynamics and conflict resolution style preferences warrant further investigation.

Interpersonal Needs and Conflict Resolution Styles

Although little research has been conducted directly analyzing the relationship between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution styles, early research on the topic analyzed the relationship between conflict resolution and personality as defined by Murray's 1938 theory of needs (as cited in Wood & Bell, 2008). In other words, authors primarily examined conflict resolution styles and enduring individual differences in need strength (which they considered a personality variable) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, Bell and Blakeney (1977) examined the correlation between conflict resolution modes and personality by exploring four personality variables, achievement (need to succeed, overcome obstacles), dominance (need to control others and environment), aggression (need to overcome opposition), and affiliation (need to make friends). The researchers found a positive relationship between the need for achievement and a 'confronting' conflict mode ($r = .37$, $p < .01$). The authors suggested that when in a conflict situation, those who are more likely to challenge themselves may be more likely to collaborate with others to break down and redefine a conflict in order to work towards a solution (Bell & Blakeney, 1977). Results also indicated a positive relationship between the need for aggression

and a ‘forcing’ conflict mode ($r = .29$, $p < .05$), suggesting that those who have a need to compete with others will also prefer a competitive conflict mode with others in a conflict situation (Bell & Blakeney, 1977).

Jones and Melcher (1982) expanded on Bell and Blakeney (1977) in an effort to replicate the results of the previous study and to examine the relationship between conflict modes and additional personality variables (also defined in accordance with Murray’s 1938Theory of Needs). The additional personality variables in this study included deference (need to follow an admirable leader), succorance (need to receive support from others), nurturance (need to express affection towards others), dogmatism (need to adhere to a strict set of personal beliefs) and Machiavellianism (ability to separate oneself and manipulate others) (Jones & Melcher, 1982).

Contrary to Bell and Blakeney (1977), Jones and Melcher (1982) found no support for the hypothesized positive relationship between need for achievement and the confronting conflict mode ($r = -.03$, *ns*). The researchers suggested that a possible explanation for this result is that individuals with a high need for achievement may also be highly task-oriented, leading them to prefer any conflict mode that elicits positive task results (Jones & Melcher, 1982). Consistent with Bell and Blakeney (1977), a positive relationship was found between the need for affiliation and the smoothing conflict mode, $r = .17$, $p < .05$ (Jones & Melcher, 1982). This indicated that individuals with a high need to develop and maintain friendships with others were more likely to prefer cooperating with others in a conflict situation to maintain those friendly relationships and avoid negative outcomes (Jones & Melcher, 1982). Need for affiliation was also found to have a significant relationships (negative) with the forcing ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$) and confronting conflict modes ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$) (Jones & Melcher, 1982). Thus, those with a high need for affiliation

will be less likely to prefer conflict modes that may be threatening to friendly associations (Jones & Melcher, 1982).

Regarding the additional personality variables included in the study, need for deference was found to have a significant positive relationship with the forcing conflict mode, $r = .17$, $p < .05$ (Jones & Melcher, 1982). This makes intuitive sense, as those with a strong need for deference will prefer to follow and accept the leadership of others will also prefer to accept the decisions of others in a conflict situation (Jones & Melcher, 1982). The study also found strong support between the need for succorance and the need for nurturance and the smoothing conflict mode ($r = .25$, $p < .01$; $r = .23$, $p < .01$, respectively) (Jones & Melcher, 1982). This indicates that individuals with a high need to receive and express affection will prefer a conflict mode that maintains positive interpersonal relations (Jones & Melcher, 1982). Overall, the results of this study demonstrated that needs and conflict modes were theoretically related in meaningful ways.

Schneer and Chanin (1987) attempted to further clarify the relationship between needs and conflict handling modes by addressing limitations in the previous studies by Bell and Blakeney (1977) and Jones and Melcher (1982), such as small sample size. The researchers examined the correlational relationships between need for achievement, affiliation, dominance, and autonomy and the five conflict handling modes as defined by Thomas and Kilmann (1977) (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating). Need for dominance was shown to have a significant positive correlation with competing ($r = .37$, $p < .01$) and significant negative correlation with accommodating ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$) (Schneer & Chanin, 1987). Thus, those who have a need to control others and the environment will prefer to compete in an effort to establish or maintain control. This is in direct contrast with the accommodating

conflict mode, as suggested by the negative correlation. Significant positive and negative relationships were also found between the need for affiliation and accommodating (r = .19, p < .01) and competing (r = -.24, p < .01) respectively (Schneer & Chanin, 1987). Based on these results, it appears that those with a strong need to build relationships with others are more likely to make sacrifices to satisfy others' concerns before their own (Schneer & Chanin, 1987).

Bhowan (1998) also investigated the relationship between needs and conflict handling styles. Data were collected for the study using a personal attribute assessment measuring need for achievement, autonomy, affiliation, and dominance, and a conflict style assessment measuring an integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating, and avoiding conflict style preference (Bhowan, 1998). A factor analysis was then conducted with the data from each assessment. Results revealed three personal attributes (need for power, need for achievement, and need for independence) and five conflict styles (integrating, avoiding, compromising, obliging, and dominating) (Bhowan, 1998).

The relationship between the personal attribute factors and the conflict style factors were examined by conducting a stepwise multiple regression analysis (Bhowan, 1998). Results indicated that the need for power, independence, and achievement were predictors of the dominating, integrating, and obliging conflict handling styles (Bhowan, 1998). Of those relationships, the need for power was the best predictor of the dominating style (β = .37, p < .01) and the need for independence was the best predictor of the obliging style (β = .30, p < .01) (Bhowan, 1998). These results indicated that those with a strong need to express control of others would also prefer to push or force their solutions onto others in a conflict situation and that those with a strong need to work on their own would tend to use an obliging conflict style in

an effort to avoid commitments to others (Bhowan, 1998). A negative relationship was found between need for independence and the integrating style ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$) and need for achievement and the dominating style ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$) (Bhowan, 1998). The researchers theorized that this result may be due to the degree of emphasis that those with a strong need for independence and achievement may place on task success. In a conflict situation, those with a strong need to be independent may feel held back or limited if they perceive that they would be more effective in completing a task themselves as opposed to working with others (Bhowan, 1998). Similarly, those with a strong need for achievement may view others who force views or procedures upon them as a barrier to completing a goal within a conflict situation (Bhowan, 1998).

More recent research has shifted away from examining the relationship between individual differences in need and conflict resolution styles. Specifically, research on the topic shifted with the field of personality towards exploring the relationship between conflict resolution styles and the five-factor theory of personality (Antonioni, 1998; Ma, 2005; Wood & Bell, 2008). Thus, the previously mentioned research is the most relevant to this topic despite length of time between our current study and the previous research on conflict resolution styles and enduring individual differences in need strength. This gap in the research on needs and conflict resolution styles demonstrates the necessity of our current study, as we attempt to clarify the relationship between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution styles with recent data.

Hypotheses

Drawing on the previous research on needs and conflict resolution, we can infer several relationships between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution mode preference. For the

purposes of this study, the interpersonal needs as defined by the FIRO theory and conflict resolution modes as defined by Thomas and Kilmann (1977) will be used to investigate these relationships. Six hypotheses were developed to test these relationships.

We can expect expressed control to have a positive relationship with the competing conflict mode. This is supported by Bell and Blakeney (1977) and Schneer and Chanin (1987), who found significant positive relationships between need for aggression and a forcing conflict style ($r = .29$, $p < .05$) and need for dominance and a competing conflict mode ($r = .37$, $p < .01$). This is also supported by Bhowan (1998) who found that need for power predicted a dominating conflict style ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 1. Expressed control scores will be positively related with a preference for the competing conflict mode.

We can also hypothesize that expressed control scores will be negatively related to the accommodating conflict mode. This is supported by Schneer and Chanin (1987) who found a significant negative relationship between need for dominance and accommodating ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$)

Hypothesis 2. Expressed control scores will be negatively related with a preference for the accommodating conflict mode.

We can expect a positive relationship between wanted control and the avoiding conflict mode. This is supported by Jones and Melcher (1982), who found a significantly positive relationship between need for deference (need to admire and follow others) and a forcing conflict style ($r = .17$, $p < .05$). This indicates that when conflicts arise, those who have a need for others to take control will prefer to let others take on the situation and avoid responsibility.

Hypothesis 3. Wanted control scores will be positively related with a preference for the avoiding conflict mode.

We can expect expressed inclusion scores will be positively related to the competing conflict mode. A positive relationship was found between need for achievement and the confronting conflict mode ($r = .37$, $p < .01$), which indicates that those who seek recognition may view resolution as a challenge and may seek others as a means of gaining access and resources to overcome that challenge (Bell & Blakeney, 1977).

Hypothesis 4. Expressed inclusion scores will be positively related with a preference for the competing conflict mode.

We can infer that there will be a positive relationship between expressed affection and the collaborating conflict mode. This is supported by the results of Jones and Melcher (1982), in which significant positive relationships were found between need for nurturance (need to show affection towards others) ($r = .23$, $p < .01$) and a smoothing conflict style (parties provide mutual support and appeal to work together).

Hypothesis 5. Expressed affection scores will be positively related with a preference for the collaborating conflict mode.

We can hypothesize that expressed affection will be negatively related to the competing conflict mode. This supported by a previous finding which a significant negative relationship was identified between need for affiliation (need for friendly associations) and the competing conflict mode ($r = -.24$, $p < .01$) (Schneer & Chanin, 1987).

Hypothesis 6. Expressed affection scores will be negatively related with a preference for the competing conflict mode.

We can expect that wanted affection will have a positive relationship with the collaborating conflict mode. This is also supported by the results of Jones and Melcher (1982), in which a significant positive relationship was found between need for succorance (need to receive support) and a smoothing conflict style ($r = .25$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 7. Wanted affection will be positively related with a preference for the collaborating conflict mode.

Chapter II: Method

Participants

Archival data were obtained from DRI Consulting, in which approximately 450 individuals completed both the FIRO-B and TKI assessments. The data was collected as part of the regular work with clients of an external consulting firm based in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Participants were working adults whose organizations were contracted with DRI Consulting for various purposes including career planning, professional or leadership development, selection, and team building as required by clients. It should be noted that only FIRO-B and TKI scales scores were provided and item-level data from each participant was not provided. Thus, we were unable to perform an exploratory factor analysis or reliability analysis with the data provided. Although this is a limitation in the present study, both the TKI and FIRO-B have demonstrated adequate reliability (Lifton, 1985; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Demographic information was not available for the individuals in this archival dataset.

Materials

TKI

The TKI was used to gather data from this sample. The TKI is an ipsative measure that consists of 30 sets of paired items. Each of the 60 items correspond with one of the five conflict modes in the TKI model (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating) (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Each of the paired items is answered through a forced-choice between two possible behavioral responses, in which participants are asked to select the statement that is most characteristic of their own behavior (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). The selected statements receive a score of 1 for the corresponding conflict mode

and the statements that are not selected in each pair receive a score of 0. In total, 12 statements are associated with each conflict mode. This yields a score of 0 to 12 for each conflict mode. An individual's score on each mode represents their preference for that mode in a conflict situation (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990).

Sample items for the TKI include: "I sometimes avoid positions that would create controversy" (avoiding), "if it makes other people happy, I might let them maintain their views" (accommodating), "I am firm in pursuing my goals" (competing), "I try to find a compromise solution" (compromising), and "I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution" (collaborating) (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Thomas et al., 2008).

The TKI has been shown to have acceptable reliability, as demonstrated by test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .61 to .68 for each of the conflict mode scales and a mean of .64 for the instrument (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). The TKI has also been shown to acceptable internal consistency reliability with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .43 to .71 (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Internal consistencies estimates were not computed as part of the present study because item-level data were not available. Although internal consistencies below .70 are considered low in most situations, it is not unusual to find lower values when scales are comprised of a very small number of items. However, future research need to continue to explore the psychometric properties of the TKI as low internal consistency may indicate that a construct is complex and thus measuring it requires items varying in content (in which case, test-retest reliability may still be adequate) or may indicate that the items in general may not demonstrate adequate consistency over time due to their divergent nature.

Several studies have demonstrated the validity of the TKI as a measure of conflict resolution style. Specifically, the TKI has been shown to have adequate convergent and construct validity (Rahim & Magner, 1995; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978; Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Thomas and Kilmann (1978) compared the TKI with three other instruments that measured conflict behavior and found convergent validity across the instruments. When comparing the two most recently developed conflict behavior instruments at the time (the TKI and the Hall Instrument), there were significant correlations with each of the five conflict modes and related constructs in the Hall Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). Van de Vliert and Kabanoff (1990) evaluated the construct validity of the TKI through reanalyzing six studies that used either the TKI or Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI), which were both formulated based on Blake and Mouton's (1964) theoretical framework. A validity assessment was conducted via Spearman rank correlations which indicated the validity of each instrument in terms of the similarity between empirical patterns among the five conflict modes and the theoretical pattern of the grid proposed by Blake and Mouton (1964) (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Results of the assessment indicated that overall the TKI (and the ROCI) was a valid measurement of the constructs proposed by Blake and Mouton (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990).

FIRO-B

The FIRO-B was used to gather data from this sample for analysis. The FIRO-B is a self-report measure, consisting of 54 items, with nine items relating to each of the six subscales (Athanasiou, 2003). Each of the items is answered on one of two 6-point scales, one ranging from 1 (*most people*) to 6 (*nobody*), the other from 1 (*usually*) to 6 (*never*) (Griffin, 2000). As

indicated by the FIRO scoring key, the responses are keyed dichotomously as either receiving a score of 1 or receiving a score of 0. This yields a score of 0 to 9 for each of the six subscales. The subscales include Expressed and Wanted scores for: Inclusion (IE and IW, respectively), Control (CE and CW), and Affection (AE and AW) (Lifton, 1985). Inclusion can be defined as the need to have positive interactions with others. Control is a person's comfort with power and responsibility (Athanasiou, 2003). Affection refers to the need for closeness with others (Furnham, 1996). Sample items include: "When people are doing things together, I tend to join them" (IE), "I like people to ask me to participate in their discussions" (IW), "I try to have other people do things the way I want them done" (CE), "I let other people control my actions" (CW), "I try to have close relationships with people" (AE), and "I like people to be close and personal with me" (AW) (Griffin, 2000).

The FIRO-B has been shown to have acceptable reliability, as demonstrated by test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .71 to .82 for the various subscales. In addition, efforts to reproduce responses based on the resulting subscale scores were largely successful, yielding reproducibility coefficients that exceeded .80 with most over .90 (Lifton, 1985).

Schutz (1958) suggested that the content validity of the FIRO measure was at least implied because of the high reproducibility coefficients (as cited in Athanasiou, 2003). Schutz also claimed support for the content validity of the measure because of the Guttman scoring technique employed. The dichotomous keying of responses emphasizes the Guttman scale properties of this measure, which results in high internal consistency (Lifton, 1985). According to Lifton (1985), construct validity is the weakest aspect of the FIRO scales; he stated that the evidence for convergent validity is minimal. This has been demonstrated through low

correlations with similar constructs, which could be problematic as it may point to problems with the theory or measure (Furnham, 2008). However, this could also be seen as a positive indicator that the measure of interpersonal needs captures unique variance beyond other measures with similar constructs. Lifton (1985) also mentioned that there are moderate correlations among the subscales within each of the FIRO measures, which suggests that the constructs measured may not be all that distinct. However, he did state that better evidence of the discriminant validity of this measure exists, especially considering that the FIRO-B is not associated with demographic variables, such as sex and age (Lifton, 1985). Although questions about the construct validity remain, the FIRO-B continues to be a popular assessment used in a variety of contexts, and as mentioned above, may be capturing unique variance beyond constructs that are perceived to be similar (Ahmetoglu, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Furnham, 2010; Furnham, 2008).

Chapter III: Procedure

As noted, all data were part of an archival dataset. This dataset was accumulated by though the concurrent administration of the assessments discussed above to an online sample. Excluding any deadlines that were provided per client needs, participants were free to complete the assessments at the location and time of their choosing. Participants were instructed to complete the assessments in a quiet space where they could focus uninterrupted for the duration of each assessment. Participants were also instructed to take breaks between assessments and that there were no "right" or "wrong" answers to the assessments so they should answer honestly. Instructions were standardized and provided in written and verbal formats. Sensitive biographical data (such as birth date) were removed by DRI Consulting prior to providing data for the purposes of this study. Participant names were removed in place of ID numbers in order to maintain confidentiality. Although using archival data can sometimes be problematic due to a lack of "complete" documentation and potential difficulty detecting errors, typically, using archival data provided from private/public organizations (such as consulting firms) is one of the most legitimate sources of archival data (Shultz, Hoffman, & Reiter-Palmon, 2005). Assessment scale scores were used to perform the necessary analyses as item-level data were not provided for data security reasons. A pre-study power analysis was not conducted as all usable data were included and analyzed and additional data collection was not possible. SPSS software was used to aid in the chosen analyses (IBM Corp., 2013).

Chapter IV: Results

All analyses were preceded by examining the obtained data and removing cases in which participants did not complete the FIRO-B and TKI concurrently. A total of 474 participants completed at least one of the assessments. Of those 474 participants, approximately 50% completed each assessment concurrently (235). Thus, assessment results from 239 participants were removed, which included 13 participants that only completed the TKI (3%) and 226 participants that only completed the FIRO-B (48%). As previously mentioned, demographic data were not made available for analysis, so hypothesis testing only focused on the primary study variables. All analyses were conducted using an alpha level of .05. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations of all of the variables analyzed.

As shown in Table 1, several of the interpersonal need variables were correlated. The strongest correlation was between expressed and wanted inclusion, $r(233) = .58$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .34$. This suggests that there may be little distinction between the two variables and individuals that have a high need for inclusion may want to be involved in groups and be recognized by others regardless of who initiates the behavior. There were no significant correlations found between wanted and expressed affection and wanted and expressed control. According to Arneson (2016), this is to be expected with wanted and expressed control, as the two variables generally do not have significant correlations across samples. However, this is an unexpected result with wanted and expressed affection, as one would expect that those who express the need to be close with others would also want others to reciprocate that closeness. This may indicate that either the variables are more distinct than expected or that another variable may be impacting how participants respond to wanted and expressed affection items. For example, an

individual who works alone versus in a team may respond differently due to the nature of their situation rather than in accordance with their own needs.

There were several intercorrelations between the conflict mode variables; of which, all were significantly negative or had no relationship. This suggests that individuals may have strong preferences for a particular conflict resolution mode and are unlikely to utilize other modes in a conflict situation. For example, those who prefer the competing conflict resolution mode (assertive and uncooperative) would be unlikely to also prefer the accommodating conflict resolution mode (unassertive and cooperative), as suggested by the strong negative relationship between the two variables ($r(233) = -.55$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .30$).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 stated that expressed control would be positively related with preference for the competing mode, where those with a high need to express control would tend to prefer the competing conflict resolution mode. As shown in Table 1, there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables, $r(233) = .38$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .14$. Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that expressed control will have a negative relationship with preference for the accommodating mode. As shown in Table 2, a significant negative correlation was found between expressed control and accommodating, $r(233) = -.22$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .05$. This indicates that those with a higher need to express control are less likely to prefer the accommodating conflict mode. Hypothesis 2 was supported. Hypothesis 3 stated that wanted control scores will have a positive relationship with the preference for the avoiding conflict mode. A weak, positive correlation was found between the two variables; however, it was not

found to be statistically significant, $r(233) = .11$, $p = .103$, $r^2 = .01$. Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated that expressed inclusion will have a positive relationship with preference for the competing mode. No relationship was found between the two variables, $r(233) = -.02$, $p = .815$, $r^2 < .01$. Hypotheses 4 was not supported. Similar results were found when analyzing Hypotheses 5, 6, and 7. Hypothesis 5 stated that expressed affection scores would be positively related to preference for the collaborating conflict mode and Hypothesis 6 stated that expressed affection would be negative related to the preference for the competing conflict mode. Neither hypothesis was supported. As shown in Table 1, correlational analyses for expressed affection and collaborating resulted little to no relationship, $r\ (233) = .09$, $p = .195$, $r^2 = .01$. Also shown in Table 1, correlational analysis for expressed affection and preference for the competing conflict mode revealed little to no relationship, $r(233) = -.05$, $p = .491$, $r^2 < .01$. Finally, Hypothesis 7 stated that wanted affection scores would be positively related to preference for the collaborating mode. As previously noted, no significant relationship was found between the two variables, $r(233) = .08$, $p = .227$, $r^2 = .01$.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Expressed Inclusion	4.99	2.00	-										
2. Expressed Control	3.86	2.58	.26**	-									
3. Expressed Affection	4.35	2.17	.46**	.06	-								
4. Wanted Inclusion	4.21	3.35	.58**	.16*	.45**	-							
5. Wanted Control	3.87	2.11	.14*	.04	.04	.05	-						
6. Wanted Affection	5.39	1.90	.33**	.06	.06	.44**	.02	-					
7. Accommodating	5.50	2.28	.02	-.22**	.05	-.02	.08	.17**	-				
8. Avoiding	5.80	2.59	-.22**	-.37**	-.09	-.08	.11	-.05	.11	-			
9. Collaborating	6.39	2.40	.12	.17**	.09	.01	.01	.08	-.34**	-.50**	-		
10. Competing	4.69	2.78	-.02	.38**	-.05	.08	-.09	-.11	-.55**	-.37**	-.01	-	
11. Compromising	7.63	2.08	.13	-.01	.02	.00	-.11	-.07	-.10	-.30**	-.15*	-.26**	-

Note. N = 235 for all variables
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Additional Analyses

After significant correlation results were identified, multiple regression analyses were conducted to further inspect the relationships between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution modes. Specifically, multiple regression analyses were used to identify how much variance in conflict modes was explained by interpersonal needs and whether specific interpersonal needs (as referenced in our hypotheses) have a predictive relationship with preferred conflict resolution styles. As shown in Tables 2-5, conflict modes relevant to our hypotheses (all except the compromising conflict mode) were regressed on all of the interpersonal need variables.

A multiple regression analysis was first conducted with the competing conflict mode examined as the criterion and interpersonal needs (expressed and wanted affection, expressed and wanted control, and expressed and wanted inclusion) as predictors. As shown in Table 2, interpersonal needs accounted for approximately 20% of the variance in preference for the competing conflict mode, which was significant, $R^2 = .20$, $F(6, 228) = 9.33$, $p < .001$. Expressed control was found to be the strongest predictor of preference for the competing conflict mode ($\beta = .41$, $t(228) = 6.61$, $p < .001$), followed by wanted affection ($\beta = -.17$, $t(228) = -2.32$, $p = .021$), wanted inclusion ($\beta = .17$, $t(228) = 2.22$, $p = .028$), and expressed inclusion ($\beta = -.16$, $t(228) = 2.07$, $p = .040$). These results provide further evidence for the expected relationship between expressed control and the competing conflict mode (Hypothesis 1).

Although expressed inclusion was found to be a significant predictor of the competing conflict mode, there was no significant bivariate relationship found between the two variables ($r(233) = -.02$, $p = .815$). Upon examining collinearity statistics, multicollinearity was not an issue among the independent variables. However, expressed inclusion was found to be

significantly related to all other independent variables, in particular with wanted inclusion ($r(233) = .58$, $p < .001$) and wanted affection ($r(233) = .33$, $p < .001$). Thus, this suppression result could be a result of collinearity or could indicate that there is part of expressed inclusion that is related to the competing conflict mode that is hidden when other needs are not considered. As expected after correlational analyses, expressed affection ($\beta = .03$, $t(228) = .36$, $p = .719$) was not a significant predictor. Thus, no support was found for Hypothesis 6.

Table 2

Regression Analysis with Interpersonal Needs and the Competing Conflict Mode

Variables	B	t	p
Expressed Affection	.03	.36	.719
Wanted Affection	-.17	2.32*	.021
Expressed Control	.41	6.61*	< .001
Wanted Control	-.10	1.67	.097
Expressed Inclusion	-.16	2.07*	.040
Wanted Inclusion	.17	2.21*	.028

Note. $R^2 = .20$, $F(6, 228) = 9.33$, $p < .001$
*$p < .05$

Another multiple regression analysis was conducted with preference for the accommodating conflict mode as the criterion (see Table 3). Interpersonal needs explained a small, but significant amount of variance in preference for the accommodating conflict mode, $R^2 = .10$, $F(6, 228) = 4.27$, $p < .001$. In terms of predictability, both wanted affection ($\beta = .25$, $t(228) = 3.15$, $p = .002$) and expressed control ($\beta = -.23$, $t(228) = -3.57$, $p < .001$) were found to be significant predictors of preference for the accommodating conflict style. These results also

support Hypothesis 2, although it should be noted that expressed control did not produce the largest standardized regression weight as expected.

Table 3

Regression Analysis with Interpersonal Needs and the Accommodating Conflict Mode

Variables	B	t	p
Expressed Affection	-.06	.70	.486
Wanted Affection	.25	3.15*	.002
Expressed Control	-.23	3.57*	< .001
Wanted Control	.09	1.47	.143
Expressed Inclusion	.08	.92	.357
Wanted Inclusion	-.11	1.38	.168

Note: $R^2 = .10$, $F(6, 228) = 4.27$, $p < .001$
*$p < .05$

Next, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with preference for the collaborating conflict mode as the criterion. As shown in Table 4, interpersonal needs only explained approximately 5% of the variance in preference for the collaborating conflict mode and was not significant, $R^2 = .05$, $F(6, 228) = 1.97$, $p = .071$. Neither wanted nor expressed affection were found to be significant predictors of the criterion ($\beta = .06$, $t(228) = .76$, $p = .447$; $\beta = .05$, $t(228) = .57$, $p = .567$, respectively). Similar to the correlational analyses, no support was found for Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 7.l

Table 4

Regression Analysis with Interpersonal Needs and the Collaborating Conflict Mode

Variables	B	t	p
Expressed Affection	.05	.57	.567
Wanted Affection	.06	.76	.447
Expressed Control	.16	2.38*	.018
Wanted Control	-.01	.10	.920
Expressed Inclusion	.12	1.35	.179
Wanted Inclusion	-.13	1.53	.128

Note: $R^2 = .05$, $F(6, 228) = 1.97$, $p = .071$
* $p < .05$

Finally, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with preference for the avoiding conflict mode as the criterion. Interpersonal needs explained a significant amount of variance in the criterion, , $R^2 = .18$, $F(6, 228) = 8.36$, $p < .001$. Thus, interpersonal needs explained approximately 18% of the variance in preference for the avoiding conflict mode. Expressed control was the strongest predictor of the avoiding conflict mode ($\beta = -.34$, $t(228) = -5.48$, $p < .001$), followed by expressed inclusion ($\beta = -.19$, $t(228) = -2.42$, $p = .016$) and wanted control ($\beta = .15$, $t(228) = 2.40$, $p = .017$). Similar to the first multiple regression analysis, wanted control was found to be a significant predictor of the avoiding conflict mode despite the fact that there was no significant bivariate relationship found between the two variables ($r(233) = .11$, $p = .103$), which again indicates a suppression effect. It is possible that the variation in preference for the avoiding conflict mode explained by wanted control may be due to an overlap in explained variation between wanted control and expressed inclusion, as they are significant related ($r(233) = .14$, $p = .028$) along with its relationship with other needs.

Table 5

Regression Analysis with Interpersonal Needs and the Avoiding Conflict Mode

Variables	B	t	p
Expressed Affection	-.04	.53	.594
Wanted Affection	.02	.24	.814
Expressed Control	-.34	5.48*	< .001
Wanted Control	.15	2.40*	.017
Expressed Inclusion	.-.19	2.42*	.016
Wanted Inclusion	.09	1.13	.259

Note. $R^2 = .18$, $F(6, 228) = 8.36$, $p < .001$

*$p < .05$

Chapter V: Discussion

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution styles, as defined by the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation model and Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode model. Primary analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among the variables and test our hypotheses. This was followed by further analysis examining whether interpersonal needs would be predictive of preferred conflict resolution mode. Two of the six total hypotheses were supported.

Findings

Hypothesis 1 stated that expressed control would be positively related to preference for the competing conflict mode. Hypothesis 1 was supported. The stronger a persons' need to influence others and take responsibility, the more likely they will satisfy their own needs at the expense of others in a conflict situation. Hypothesis 2 stated that expressed control would be negatively related to preference for the accommodating mode. Hypothesis 2 was supported. This result is the inverse of Hypothesis 1. The stronger a persons' need to lead and make decisions, the less likely they will satisfy others' needs before their own. Hypothesis 3 stated that wanted control will be positively related with a preference for the avoiding conflict mode. A small positive relationship was found between the two variables, but it was not statistically significant. Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated that expressed inclusion will be positively related with a preference for the competing conflict mode. Hypothesis 4 was not supported, indicating no significant relationship between the two variables. Hypothesis 5 stated that expressed affection will be

positively related to a preference with the collaborating conflict mode. No significant relationship was found between expressed affection and the collaborating conflict mode. Hypothesis 5 was not supported. Hypothesis 6 stated that expressed affection will be negatively related with a preference for the competing conflict mode. Hypothesis 6 was not supported, indicating no relationship between expressed affection and the competing conflict mode. Hypothesis 7 stated that wanted affection will be positively related with a preference for the collaborating conflict mode. Similar to Hypothesis 5, no significant relationship was found between the two variables. Hypothesis 7 was not supported.

Upon completion of the initial analysis, the predictability of preferred conflict modes by interpersonal needs was evaluated. Interpersonal needs accounted for a significant amount of variance in preference for the accommodating, avoiding, and competing conflict modes. Expressed control was found to be a significant predictor of both the competing and accommodating conflict modes, which provides further support for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. Despite the lack of significant bivariate relationships, wanted control was found to be a significant predictor of the avoiding conflict mode and expressed inclusion was found to be a significant predictor of the competing conflict mode. As noted earlier, this indicates a suppression effect that could be due to collinearity or could indicate that there are parts of the predictor variables that are related to the criterion that are hidden when other needs are not taken into account. Thus, this result should not be interpreted as support for Hypothesis 3 or Hypothesis 4. Expressed affection was not a significant predictor of the collaborating conflict mode or the competing conflict mode. As indicated by the correlational analyses, no support was found for Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6. Wanted affection was not a significant predictor of the

collaborating conflict mode. As expected from the previous analysis, there was no support found for Hypothesis 7.

Discussion and Implications

The occurrence of conflict within organizations can result in several negative consequences and furthering understanding of conflict behavior may mitigate those consequences (Ayoko et al., 2003; De Dreu, 2008; Leon-Perez et al., 2016; Montoro-Rodriguez & Small, 2006; Nixon et al, 2017). In this study, we attempted to further our understanding of conflict handling behavior by determining whether a relationship exists between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution style preferences. In line with previous research, those with the interpersonal need to take charge in decision making and exert influence were found to prefer the competing conflict resolution style and not prefer the accommodating conflict mode (Bell & Blakeney, 1977; Bhowan, 1998; Schneer & Chanin, 1987). Counter to our other hypotheses, several other interpersonal needs were not related to conflict resolution style preferences. Thus, only certain interpersonal needs may play a role in determining an individual's conflict resolution preference and other interpersonal needs may not be relevant in regard to conflict. Further research is needed to clarify which needs pertain to conflict resolution styles and whether different contexts or situations can influence which needs are relevant to conflict resolution style preference.

The results of this study reveal several implications. The expressed control interpersonal need was found to have significant relationships with four of the five conflict resolution modes and generally predicted each conflict mode above and beyond the other interpersonal needs. Thus, the degree to which a person needs to initiate and engage in leading and influencing others

and decision making may play a significant role in determining which conflict resolution style is typically employed in a conflict situation. This should be taken into consideration when forming teams. For example, if two individuals are brought onto a team who both strongly attempt to lead and influence decision making, they both may employ a competing conflict style and focus on "winning" rather than the good of the team. This could be harmful for team morale and performance. Alternatively, if two individuals are brought onto a team who both do not feel the need engage in taking any responsibility, they both may employ an avoiding conflict style and reduce the team's ability to resolve problems quickly should they arise.

In addition, several interpersonal needs were found to not be significantly related to preference of each conflict mode. In particular, the lack of relationships between wanted and expressed affection and conflict resolution modes (with the exception of wanted affection and the accommodating conflict mode) was surprising given the empirical support for such a relationship. This suggests that a person's need to get close with others does not indicate which conflict style they will tend to employ. Post hoc power analyses determined that this study had an appropriate sample size and statistical power was not an issue. One possible explanation for the lack of expected relationships between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution modes is that the relationship is trait-based rather than need-based. Several of the studies that our hypotheses are drawn from examined needs as enduring personality traits and further research has found relationships between personality and conflict resolution behavior (Judge, Simon, Hurst, & Kelley, 2014; Moberg, 1998). Another possible explanation is the potential impact of situational or contextual variables on interpersonal needs and conflict resolution mode preferences. For example, Leder and Betsch (2016) found that interpersonal context, in this case

incentive structure, impacted the behavior of participants in a conflict situation. Thus, using archival data and being unable to account for the various contextual or situational variables may have impacted our ability to find significant relationships between several interpersonal needs and conflict resolution modes.

Findings from this research further our understanding of the how interpersonal needs and conflict resolution styles relate. If future research has consistent findings, a strong argument could be made to assess expressed control needs if a given situation that individuals are or will be in may result in conflict. For example, if an important project is due and a team is needed to complete said project, assessing expressed control needs and using the results of the assessment as a determinant in forming teams could be fruitful in terms of the success of the project. Considering the cost of conflict for organizations, taking steps to mitigate the consequences of conflict via compatible team members may give organizations a significant competitive advantage.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study had several limitations to consider. First, archival data were used, which can have some disadvantages. The data provided for this study were not collected specifically for the purposes of doing this study and the dataset does not technically provide a complete picture of the data collected. For example, the archival dataset did not include information such as demographics (e.g., age, occupation, gender) that may have impacted the interpretation of the results of this study. Also, we did not have control over how data were collected in order to take into account situational or environmental impacts on assessment results. This should be considered for future research on this topic, as completing the assessments for different purposes

(i.e., professional development vs. employee selection) may impact how participants respond to each assessment.

Similarly, additional information is needed on the impact of social desirability biases on responses – particularly regarding the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. Kilmann and Thomas argue that the design of the TKI "forces respondents to choose between pairs of statements that were matched by ratings of social desirability, making it more difficult to answer items on that basis" (Thomas et al., 2008, p. 154). However, conflict is a sensitive topic and participants may fear consequences for answering honestly depending on the purposes of the conflict assessment (such as selection) (Nauta & Kluwer, 2004). A possible solution would be to also evaluate conflict behavior from differing perspectives, such as through peer or observer reports (Nauta & Kluwer, 2004). Additionally, all data were self-report and results, therefore, may have been influenced by common method variability (variability due to the method of data collection as opposed to the theoretical relationships among the variables). Collecting data from alternative sources would also alleviate these concerns.

Future research should continue to explore the relationship between interpersonal needs and conflict resolution styles. Although our research did not find strong connections (with the exception of expressed control) between the two domains, needs are a fundamental driver of human behavior, and therefore would seem to inherently impact conflict behavior. Further research on this topic that addresses the limitations of this study may further clarify this relationship. In addition, it may be fruitful to assess needs of participants while in a conflict situation. It is plausible that various needs may emerge for people within a conflict situation depending on the situational and contextual factors of the conflict itself. This could provide a

more accurate picture of how needs (both interpersonal and situational) and conflict behavior are interrelated.

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