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Teacher Perceptions of Parent Conflict Styles

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Teacher Perceptions of Parent Conflict Styles

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ABSTRACT

As administrators in international schools become more familiar with theory and research in intercultural relations, they are compelled to examine what they are doing to support their teachers in managing cultural differences so that teachers and host-country parents can work closely together in partnership to support student learning. Conflicts may be triggered when members of one cultural group hold different perceptions about how they and members of another culture may handle interactions (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). A sample of 355 teachers from American and British international schools located across the Middle East was surveyed using a modified version of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (Rahim, 1983a; 2004) that asked respondents to rate 28 items grouped according to five conflict styles; Integrating, Compromising, Dominating, Obliging and Avoiding. The teachers were classified into three groups: western teachers with western education (WW, $n = 219$), Arab teachers with Arab education (AA, $n = 107$) and Arab teachers with western education (AW, $n = 29$). The teachers generally responded in ways consistent with the predictions of their expected cultural group choices. However, the results also showed that their responses were at times contrary to expectations. Specifically, teachers' ratings of the IN and DO styles for themselves, and parents, were opposite from what was predicted. IN was the highest reported self-rating mean for Western teachers - a result that may result from the nature of the teaching profession. A significant majority of all three groups of teachers attributed DO to the Arab parents. Power-distance is credited for this finding. The study also explored the perceptions of Arab teachers with western educational backgrounds in order to investigate whether or not western-based education affected their conflict style choice. Tukey HSD pair-wise

comparisons indicated that AW teachers were not significantly different from AA

teachers whereas the means of both AW and AA teachers were often significantly

different from WW teachers. The results of this study provide evidence for schools to

conceptualize a cultural-based training program to assist teachers about their own

cultural awareness and how to communicate effectively in their host country cultures.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The benefits of developing strong parent-school relationships are well-documented and firmly grounded in research (Epstein, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Fehrmann, Keith & Reimers, 1987; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Wilkins, Green & Closson, 2005; Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008). These benefits are both numerous and wide-ranging when parents are involved in schools. Such behavior not only strengthens the family unit, but also improves student performance (Jeynes, 2007; Epstein, 2001).

However, the task of developing parent-school partnerships in schools whose students comprise a mix of cultures can be challenging (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008). Throughout the world today fewer ethnically and culturally homogeneous societies exist. While a number of reasons underlie this global change, immigration is certainly one of the key factors. In the United States, for example, more and more communities are ethnically, socially, and economically diverse (Epstein, 2001). American families representing a variety of cultures are a rising demographic in the United States. In 2000, 2.4% of American families labeled themselves as biracial or multi-racial (Brown, 2009). By 2050, 21% of families in the United States are expected to represent different cultures (Brown).

Due to the rise in immigrant families, more students are identifying themselves as biracial and multiracial. In light of these changing student demographics, schools are being forced to reassess policies and practices through the lens of culture. For example, western teachers who traditionally value independence and self-reliance may sometimes encounter conflicts when communicating with the families of

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Hispanic students, whose cultural value systems typically value interdependence (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008). Teachers who work with students from different cultural backgrounds may find that they must adjust their instructional practices, behavioral management plans and communication styles in order to develop positive and productive relationships with students and their families (Morine-Dershimer, 2006; Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull). Cultural values can influence the ways in which a person communicates, interacts and resolves conflict with others (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Ting-Toomey, 2004; Ting-Toomey, Yee-Jung, Shapiro, Garcia, Wright & Oetzel, 2000). Understanding cultural values, and how these values influence communication may have a positive impact on teacher-parent interactions and ultimately benefit students in schools (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Guo, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated how teachers perceive the way parents from a culture different from their own handle conflict. Specifically, three culturally distinct groups of teachers working in international schools located in the Middle East were asked about their perceptions of their students' parents' style for handling conflict. If we can determine teacher expectations for their interactions with parents from another culture, we may be able to help them become more interculturally aware and sensitive in these interactions.

In this study, international schools, which are located throughout the world, are defined as private, independent, accredited schools using western curricula and instructional approaches. These schools hire a large percentage of western teaching staff and meet a set of standards acceptable to North American and western European

accrediting agencies. They may either have quite culturally diverse student populations or student bodies that comprise mainly host country nationals. A common feature of most international schools is that they have teachers and families with different cultural backgrounds and values, working together to educate children.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the following question: how similar or different are teachers' conflict styles from what they believe are those of Arab parents? Three types of teachers were investigated. Group A was composed of western teachers with western educational degrees. Group B will consist of Arab teachers with Arab educational degrees. Group C was composed of Arab teachers with western educational degrees.   Groups A and B provided a distinct separation of cultural membership. Group C provided an opportunity to test whether an educational degree from a western university influences how teachers from Arabic cultures choose their conflict styles and perceive those of the parents in their schools with similar cultural backgrounds.

The following research questions are proposed.

RQ1:   Do teachers from different backgrounds (western, Arab, and Arab with western education) differ in their self-ratings of conflict styles?

RQ2:   Do teachers from different backgrounds (western, Arab, and Arab with western education) differ in their perceptions of parent conflict styles?

RQ3:   Do teachers from the same background rate their own self conflict styles differently from their perceptions of parent conflict styles?

RQ4:   Do teachers from different backgrounds (western, Arab, and Arab with western education) prefer one conflict style over another conflict style?

Theoretical Perspective: Conflict Face-negotiation Theory

Conflict face-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985, 1988, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) provides an explanatory mechanism to understand how culture influences conflict style (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001; Oetzel &Ting-Toomey, 2003). The concept of "face" represents a person's core identity and self-worth and is related to self-image. When that self-image is threatened, the individual who wants to "save face" chooses a particular conflict style to do so (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). A chosen style is thought to help mitigate and manage the negative feelings and consequences engendered by a particular situation (Ting-Toomey, Trubisky & Lin, 1991) although they can also trigger or even worsen conflict (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Some conflict styles are defensive, confrontational and direct, whereas others are based on avoidance and compromising behaviors (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Conflict style choices are influenced by the cultural value patterns in which people subscribe. The extent to which this occurs is discussed in the next section.

Conflict styles have their roots in the cultural value patterns of the society in which a person lives. These patterns are usually defined along two related constructs: (a) individualist or collectivist and (b) small or large power distance (Hofstede, 1980; Ting-Toomey, 2004). People subscribing to individualism are typically concerned with their own face (self-face) while those who subscribe to collectivism are concerned with both their own face and the face of the group (mutual face). The power distance construct determines how much people value equality in a relationship and influences the degree of self-face preservation over mutual face. In individualistic societies in which the power distances between people are small, respect for equal rights and equal treatment regardless of status, age, wealth and connections is expected. In such societies, a tendency to be concerned with one's

own face is prevalent (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Research suggests that people who subscribe to individualism prefer more direct, confrontational and assertive behaviors and communication strategies to defend their position. Alternatively, in collectivistic societies in which the power distances between people are large, a lack of equal treatment across the society may be observed. In large power distance societies, connections, networking and relationships within the group are highly important; the preservation of mutual face-saving behaviors in conflict situations is highly valued (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel). In such societies, individuals may avoid conflict by seeking a third party, compromise or show relational solidarity to save their own face and the face of others (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel). These people tend to favor more indirect, other-oriented, face-saving behaviors (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel). Thus, conflict-face negotiation theory argues that certain cultural constructs such as power distance, individualism and collectivism determine the communication styles that individuals will adopt when engaging in conflict.

Five assumptions (Ting-Toomey, 2004) underlie conflict face-negotiation theory: (a) people from all cultural backgrounds have face concerns during conflict situations; (b) cultural value patterns of individualism, collectivism and power distance shape conflict styles; (c) face is related to identity concerns; (d) cultural value patterns in combination with individual, relational and situational factors influence conflict styles; and (e) facework aptitude (the ability to know when to use certain facework behaviors) depends on the ability to assimilate into the culture successfully and then use cultural knowledge, mindfulness and communication skills in future interactions. In this study assumptions a, b and d will be examined. Assumption c, will not be investigated because it has already been tested in previous research and does not

relate to the research questions. Assumption e could be explored as implications for future research.

Face-negotiation theory underscores this study because it provides a framework for conceptualizing the ways in which people from western and Arab cultures may behave as they negotiate through difficult situations. Individualism, collectivism and power distance constructs that exist within these cultures have been described in the literature and will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Individualism and Collectivism

An extensive body of intercultural research has found that cultural values are embedded in the constructs of individualism and collectivism (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994; Bond, 1991; Casas & Pytluk, 1995; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hofstede, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c; Lee & Rogan, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Smith, Dugan, Peterson & Leung, 1998; Sodowsky, Kwan & Pannu, 1995; Triandis, 1995; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). Individualistic societies, found primarily in the western world in places such as North America and Western Europe, include cultural patterns that tend to value the "I" over the "we." They place more significance on the rights of the individual than on those of the group. The norm in these types of societies is to defend a position and to value individually-based decision-making that may not be consistent with that of the group (Ting-Toomey, 2004). In contrast, societies found in the Arab world, Africa, Asia, Central and South America value the "we" over the "I" and place greater significance on the collective rights of the group and group harmony (Ting-Toomey). In these societies, collectivism, the consideration of groups and relationships with them, and valuing interdependent-based decision-making, are more common (Ting-Toomey).

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Hofstede's (1980) large-scale study of national cultures described four dimensions found across cultures: individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity versus femininity. His study sampled 116,000 employees of companies in 50 countries and three regions of the world who answered questions about their outlook on life, values and work. An index was created to show the position of each country compared with others for each dimension. Hofstede's study was one of the first studies to measure cultural differences comprehensively.

Hofstede's individualism-collectivism (I-C) index measured cultural differences from one society to another. Hofstede conducted a factor analysis of the participating countries standardized scores to determine an "individualism" score for each country. Hofstede produced an individualism index (IDV) that ranged from six to 91 and a power distance index (PDI) that ranged from 11 to 104 (Hofstede, 1980). He assigned a high IDV score to any country that showed individualistic tendencies and a low IDV score to any country that showed collectivistic tendencies. Hofstede reported that the United States, Australia, Great Britain and Canada scored high on the individualism measure. The United States received the highest IDV score of 91 and the highest rank of 50 out of 50 countries. Australia was ranked next with an IDV score of 90 and rank of 49, followed by Great Britain, 89 with a rank of 48, and Canada, 80, with a rank of 47. A low score of 39 was assigned to a group of Arab countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) resulting in a rank of 25. Ranked at the bottom were Peru with a score of 16, Columbia (13), Pakistan (14), Venezuela (12), Panama (11), Ecuador (8), and Guatemala (6). While the individual country scores show only tendencies (Hofstede, 2001, 2002), the rankings are relevant in this study as they highlight the notable difference between western and Arab countries.

Power Distance

Power distance, a related variable to individualism and collectivism, measures how people value and relate to others according to their particular social class, position power and status level (Hofstede, 1980). Power distance in a society can be categorized as either small or large. Small power distance societies are typical of individualistic societies such as North America and Western Europe. In these societies, people value equality, rights, independent thinking and democratic decision-making (Hofstede). Large power distance cultures are generally found in collectivistic societies, such as the Arab and Middle Eastern countries, Africa, Asia and Central and South America (Hofstede; Badawy, 1980; Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996; Kozan, 1989; Kozan & Ergin, 1999). People in large power distance societies usually value unequal distribution of power and support hierarchy and status. Rank and role, age, experience, title, and sometimes even gender, matter greatly and are rewarded accordingly (Ting-Toomey, 2004). Although power distance was not tested in this study, this variable helped conceptualize the cultural construct of individualism and collectivism and its primary influence on conflict styles.

As stated above, Hofstede's (1980) study assigned power distance scores (PDI) ranging from 11 to 104 in which, high PDI scores revealed extreme, or large power distance tendencies and low PDI scores indicated an absence of power distance. Arab countries attained a high score of 80, with a rank of 44, fifth highest out of 50 countries, whereas the United States, Australia, Great Britain and Canada had power distance scores of 40, 36, 35 and 39 with ranks of 16, 13, 15, and 10, respectively. Israel, Denmark and Austria had the lowest PDI scores possible: 18, 13 and 11, with respective ranks of 3, 2 and 1. Many countries such as Argentina and Jamaica had more moderate profiles of mid-range scores for both individualism and power

distance. Hoststede's findings help illustrate a correlation between the constructs of individualism-collectivism and power distance. Small power distance cultures tend to be associated with individualistic societies, while large power distance cultures are most often collectivistic societies (Hofstede, 1990). Together, the cultural constructs of individualism-collectivism and power distance provide an understanding why certain members of a culture behave during a conflict. The constructs also provide a cultural lens to the logic that motivates people to choose a conflict style in a conflict situation.

Even though Hofstede's (1980) study is one of the largest and most extensive cultural surveys in the literature, it has limitations in terms of generalizations (Morris, Williams, Leung, Larrick, Mendoza, Bhatnagar & Hu, 1998). Value scores are based on each country as a whole, ignoring individual or intra-cultural (sub-cultural) value differences. A second limitation is that survey questions were developed in western countries and then translated into the applicable country language. It is possible that certain questions relating to values were omitted from the original instrument because they were difficult or impossible to translate adequately (Morris et al., 1998). If these omissions occurred, then the types of values used in the survey would have been incomplete. Triandis (1995, 1996) and Schwartz (1992, 1994) address these concerns in the following section.

Triandis's Horizontal and Vertical I-C Construct

Since Hofstede's landmark study, researchers have acknowledged that categorizing a person's value system as either individualistic or collectivistic may be too broad. For example, although Hofstede (1980) categorized the United States as individualistic, sub-culturally, the U.S. would likely have a number of combinations

or degrees of individualism (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Several more recent studies have addressed this issue. Triandis's horizontal and vertical I-C construct (1995, 1996) and Schwartz's value inventory (1992, 1994) conceptualized the various degrees of individualism and collectivism within a country's population, and thereby addressed the Hofstede study limitations.

Triandis (1995, 1996) argued that the I-C construct should be analyzed at the individual level. He combined the I-C construct and power distance and referred to the result as the vertical and horizontal tendencies of individuals within the I-C spectrum. Vertical relationships indicate larger power distance tendencies, and horizontal relationships indicate smaller power distance tendencies. Triandis (1995, 1996) suggested that the following variations within the I-C spectrum can exist: Vertical Individualists (VI), Horizontal Individualists (HI), Vertical Collectivists (VC) and Horizontal Collectivists (HC). People who subscribe to values represented on the individualism scale, for example, can also have horizontal tendencies (HI), attaching less importance to social class and status (Oishi, Schimmack, Diener & Eunkook, 1998). In this case (HI), individualists will value the collective rights of the group and respect group harmony over autonomy or self-interest. On the other hand, people subscribing to collectivism can also demonstrate vertical tendencies (VC) representing an interest in self-direction and hedonism (Oishi et al., 1998). In this case, people who subscribe to collectivism will place more significance on their own personal rights than those of the group.

Schwartz's Value Scale

Schwartz and colleagues (Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) suggested integrating all western and non-western values in

order to create a new model representing ten universal human values types (Morris et al., 1998). They conducted large-scale, cross-cultural studies to generate a new scale to create universal values types. The data confirmed that people across cultures can be categorized under ten universal values types: benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction and universalism (Schwartz, 1992). In order to arrive at the ten universal values, 56 values were selected to represent each universal value type. These 56 values were selected from other instruments developed in other cultures, from examinations of other cultures, in review of texts comparing religions and from consulting religious scholars (Schwartz). The researchers also judged the inclusion of the values based on what was presumed important to most cultures. For example, intelligence and self-respect were chosen (Schwartz). The sample population was drawn from 20 different countries, embodying eight major religions, including atheism, and representative of 13 languages (Schwartz). Professional teachers and university students were the main participants sampled in the survey (Schwartz).

The values were rated by participants using a nine-point scale in order to determine their compatibility across cultures. Two sets of criteria were used to decide which sets of values were associated with a geographical region. In Set A, the first criterion was that the region must include 60% of the values. The second criterion was that no more than 33% of the values could constitute a universal value, and the last criterion was that 70% of all the values in the region had to reflect the goals of that kind of value. In Set B, one criterion was that the geographical region contained 50% of the values and that 70% of the values in the geographical region reflected the universal value type. Overall, the data confirmed that the majority of cultures were able to recognize the ten universal value types when assessing the

importance of specific values as guiding principles in their lives, suggesting that the ten universal values are found across a large number of cultures (Schwartz, 1992). Furthermore, the data did not support additional universal value types missing from the universal set (Schwartz). Thus, the study points out that unless evidence is found to the contrary, the universal types of values should be taken as exhaustive value types. Returning to the perceived limitations in Hofstede's study then, and according to Triandis and Schwartz, values are not necessarily delineated as western or non-western but can be combined within a culture or considered universal.

Despite the fact that varying levels of individualism, collectivism and power distance value constructs exists across all cultures, studies have suggested that particular tendencies have emerged according to geographical regions. People from Europe, North America and Australia tend to be more individualistic and value small power distance relationships while people from the Middle East/Arab world typically identify with collectivistic and large power distance values (Hofstede, 1980). These tendencies may affect how people act and behave during conflict. Outcomes may include face-saving strategies and choosing a particular kind of conflict style. The differences in conflict styles may, in fact, further ignite conflict if they are not understood as simply differences based on cultural values. To explain how people with different cultural value patterns interact when engaged in conflict, a review of conflict styles follows.

Cultural Values Related to Conflict Styles

The literature suggests a strong relationship between cultural values and conflict styles. The research further indicates that conflict styles vary not only across cultures but even within cultures (Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996; Hofstede, 1980; Kagan, Knight &

Martinez-Romero, 1982; Kochman, 1981; Komarraju, Dollinger, & Lovell, 2007;

Kozan, 1989; Kozan & Ergin, 1999; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ozkalp, Sungur &

Ozdemir, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 1988, 2004; Ting-Toomey, Trubisky & Lin, 1991;

Ting-Toomey, Yee-Jung, Shapiro, Garcia, Wright & Oetzel, 2000). Although little

empirical research has been conducted regarding conflict styles in primary and

secondary schools in which people with different cultural values and styles interact

frequently, literature from the corporate world, colleges, and universities informs how

we may conceptualize conflict styles. To conceptualize conflict styles in the context

of cultural value constructs, we must first define them.

Conflict Styles

Choosing a conflict style is one of the crucial factors that can influence the

direction of an existing conflict situation (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). According to

Ting-Toomey et al. (1991), conflict is the incongruity of needs or interests between

people. Individuals consciously manage conflict by using routinely patterned

responses in the effort to minimize miscommunication, misunderstandings and stress

(Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).   Since the 1960s, research has examined conflict

resolution using a two-dimensional style model based on concern for self and concern

for others (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1985; Thomas,

1976; Thomas & Killman, 1974; Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991;

Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996). Concern for self is the extent to which a person satisfies his

or her own need during a conflict; concern for others prioritizes the conflict needs and

interests of the other person. In 1985, Rahim used the two-dimensional approach to

produce a model that describes five-conflict interaction styles: dominating, avoiding,

obliging, integrating and compromising. The dominating style, high for self and low

for others, is characterized by behaviors that strive to meet one's own needs above those of anyone else. The avoiding style, low for self and low for others, minimizes dealing with conflict or eliminates it altogether although the conditions for conflict remain. The obliging style, low for self and high for others, is concerned with minimizing differences to the point of neglecting one's own concerns in order to place the other person's goals higher. A person with an integrating style strives for closure by solving the problem so that everyone is satisfied with the outcome. The compromising style, intermediate concern for self and others, strives for consensus so that everyone's needs are met. Since 1985, the vast majority of intercultural studies examining organizational conflict use Rahim's inventory to measure conflict styles between peers, supervisors and subordinates.   In a review of the cross-cultural literature in the next section, most studies employed the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 2004), or a modified version of the instrument (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

Intercultural Studies

Intercultural studies support the belief that different cultural values affect how people communicate when engaged in conflict. For example, empirical evidence has shown that Asian cultures, typically collectivistic according to Hofstede (1980), prefer non-confrontational conflict styles because such communication strategies are associated with relational harmony and face-saving potential (Ting-Toomey, Gao, et al., 1991). Specifically, a number of studies using the ROCI-II to measure the conflict styles of a large sample of western and non-western university students in China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, found that students from the host country cultures (i.e., non-western cultures) preferred obliging and avoiding styles over direct or

confrontational styles (Ting-Toomey, Gao, et al., 1991; Ting-Toomey, Trubisky & Lin, 1991; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). The same research indicated that the Americans and Germans sampled in these studies exhibited a higher degree of dominating conflict styles than students from Asia (Oetzel et al.). These studies support the view that conflict style choice is influenced by cultural values patterns found in countries that are either more individualistic or collectivistic.

The Morris, Williams, Leung, Larrick, Medoza, Bhatnagar, Li, Kondo, Luo & Hu (1998) study is another study suggesting that a person's subscription to certain values influences their conflict style. The study investigated Schwartz's (1992, 1994) dimensions of societal conservatism, namely the universal values of tradition, conformity and security typically found in collectivistic cultures, as well as self-enhancement dimension which includes the universal values of power and achievement typically found in individualistic cultures. This study sampled American, Chinese, Philippine and Indian university students in their respective countries and compared their conflict styles using a variety of instruments: the Kilmann-Thomas (1974) self-report conflict style scale, the Schwartz (1994) instrument for measuring universal human values and the Triandis (1996) scale measuring individual analyses of the individualism-collectivism construct. Results indicated that students rated the dimensions of social conservatism higher in China and the Philippines, and lower in the United States consistently across all of the instruments. The United States students rated achievement and universal values relating to power typically associated with individualistic value patterns higher than the Chinese, Indian and Philippine students did. The preferred conflict style in the non-western groups was avoidance. These studies, however, have limitations. For example, some students in the sample populations may have been enrolled in

communications classes which could have sensitized them to the purposes of the study. Nonetheless, these studies show that certain cultural groups, namely those framed by individualism and collectivism, have preferred ways of interacting in conflict situations. The next section reviews studies the role and influence of power distance on conflict styles.

A number of studies have confirmed the relationship between power distance and conflict styles. Results from several studies from the Middle East and Turkey have supported the hypothesis that people associated with collectivistic cultural patterns and large power distance tend to use less confrontational conflict styles than people from societies associated with individualist cultural value patterns and low power distance (Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996; Kozan, 1989; Ozkalp, Sungur & Ozdemir, 2009). These studies measured conflict management styles of Middle Eastern and American executive managers using the ROCI-II. The first two studies surveyed Middle Eastern executives, (779 Egyptian, 215 Turkish, 134 Jordanian, 134 Gulf state citizens) and 144 Americans. The executives from Middle Eastern countries preferred to avoid direct confrontation when they were engaged in interpersonal conflict in the workplace, while the Americans favored dominating, obliging and compromising styles. In Kozan's study (1989), however, the Jordanian and Turkish groups differed according to their preference for specific conflict styles. The Turkish managers' preference was first collaborating, then forcing, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. The Jordanians' preference was first collaborating, then compromising, accommodating, avoiding; their last style of choice was forcing (Kozan, 1989).

Similarly, Badawy (1980) found that managers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates relied on highly authoritarian

styles of communication typical of a large power-distance society. When sampling 248 Middle Eastern managers, Badawy did not use the ROCI-II but developed his own set of questions that focused on four areas of conflict: capacity for leadership and initiative, sharing information and objectives, participation and internal control as well as needs satisfaction and demographic information. His findings suggested that Middle Eastern managers favored an authoritative managerial style approach typical of their collectivist culture, socioeconomic regions and histories. Badawy (1980) attributed their managerial style to authoritarianism and organizational power which are concepts consistent with large power-distance cultures. Furthermore, interdependence with others and group solidarity were found to be of great importance to Arab and Middle Eastern managers. Although Badawy's (1980) participants were not representative of all countries in the Middle East, his findings support the relationship between the cultural value pattern of collectivism and large power-distance characteristics.

Finally, Glowacki-Dudka, Usman & Treff (2008) analyzed the relationship between two women (American and Saudi Arabian) working together in a private woman's college in Jeddah in terms of their cultural values and how those values affected the women's personal and professional relationships. The authors observed that conflicts were associated with cultural values, specifically differences in their associations with individualism and collectivism and power-distance (Glowacki-Dudka et al., 2008). Moreover, the I-C and power distance constructs appeared to affect the relationship greatly between the two women. For example, the American woman valued individualism, exercised initiative, direct communication, and collaborative decision making. She was accustomed to small power distance and relaxed relationships within the workplace. She did not understand what was wrong

with talking with other colleagues and inviting their suggestions on how to strengthen their department within the university. This approach was in direct conflict with the Saudi woman who clearly valued collectivism and group-loyalty mentality and exercised indirect communication. She was accustomed to large power-distance relationships in the workplace. She felt she was losing "face" when the American she hired did not consult with her, and instead reached out to other colleagues in the university. Their conflicts and subsequent dissolved relationship were attributed to their incompatible communication behaviors and conflicting assumptions on work-place governance and power structure. This case study highlights the influence of culture on the constructs of I-C and power-distance and furthermore reveals how cultural differences can heighten conflict in personal and professional relationships.

These studies suggest a strong relationship between conflict style preference and cultural value patterns as a result of living in various regions of the world. However, cultures within nations are hardly ever static. With the effects of globalization, many nations populate subcultures representing a mixture of values.

Intracultural Studies

Although the literature supports a relationship between cultural value patterns and conflict styles of people cross-nationally, significant differences may be found within the same country since cultures within nations are rarely homogeneous (Kozan & Ergin, 1999). One variable or a combination of them may be influencing these results such as westernization, education, immigration, cultural heritage, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status and language as well as individual, relational and situational variables (Kozan & Ergin; Ting-Toomey, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).

The United States is one example of a nation composed of diverse ethnic groups. Numerous studies examining the conflict styles of the various ethnic groups within the United States have revealed certain general patterns for each group. Research has shown that European Americans more often have individualistic values while (Kagan, Knight & Martinez-Romero, 1982; Komarraju, Dollinger, & Lovell, 2007; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000) African Americans have collectivistic values (Kochman, 1981; Ting-Toomey et al.) as do Hispanics and Asian Americans (Kagan et al., 1982; Komarraju et al.; Ting-Toomey et al.).

One of these studies, Komarraju et al. (2007) examined the constructs of horizontal and vertical individualism. The researchers measured these constructs within and between the various cultural groups found in the United States. As mentioned earlier, the horizontal-vertical tendencies when applied to both the individualist and collectivist dimensions yielded four constructs: horizontal-individualism (HI), vertical-individualism (VI), horizontal-collectivism (HC) and vertical-collectivism (VC) with each construct comprising a unique set of attributes (Komarraju et al.). Komarraju used the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) and the Individualism-Collectivism (I-C) Scale (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995) to sample 640 students with varied backgrounds: 67% European Americans, 22% African Americans, 4% Hispanic Americans and 7% comprised of Asians, Native Americans and other international students. Despite the added specificity of vertical/horizontal categorization in the study, Komarraju found conflict styles to be consistent with the expected relationship tested with the I-C construct only. He also found that the students who measured as individualists, with either horizontal or vertical tendencies, still preferred a dominating conflict style over avoiding or obliging styles. Students who measured as collectivists, with either

horizontal or vertical tendencies, still considered group needs as a priority and preferred an integrating style. Specifically, students found to be collectivists with vertical tendencies preferred avoiding styles, and collectivists with horizontal tendencies preferred obliging styles. Although the findings in this study were significant in demonstrating alignment with the I-C construct, it is important to note that the research design used a convenience sample and was not fully representative of all subcultures.

A Turkish study (Kozan & Ergin, 1999) used the Schwartz cultural value measure and a modified version of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) to test for a relationship between individual cultural values and conflict styles including third party involvement. The study sampled 425 Turkish workers spread over 40 organizations in Turkey. The study included questions to identify if the workers or their managers asked a third party to become involved during conflict episodes (Kozan & Ergin). Results indicated that Turkish employees who subscribed to traditional and conformity values preferred avoidance conflict styles whereas Turkish employees who subscribed to values concentrating on large power distance characteristics preferred forcing conflict styles (Kozan & Ergin). A significant finding in this study is that third party conflict styles were used considerably less by Turkish employees who were reported to value individual achievement. Although every participant in this study was Turkish, individual conflict style choice varied depending on his/her reported value system classified according to Schwartz's model.

Intercultural and intracultural studies both revealed a tendency among people to choose a conflict style based on their cultural background. Although individual factors can lead to exceptions, the general tendency is compatibility between conflict style choice and cultural background.

Communication between Teachers and Parents in Schools

A growing body of literature from North America suggests that pre-service teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing teachers for communicating effectively with parents from different cultures (Mujawamariya & Marhouse, 2004; Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008; Li, 2006; Guo, 2006, 2007; Wamba, 2006; Eberly, Joshi & Konzal, 2007). The current practice of offering classes in multicultural education may not be sufficient to prepare teachers for culturally sensitive communication with families from different backgrounds (Lenski, Crumpler, Stallworth & Crawford, 2005). Instead, teachers may need to be taught to consider their own values, assumptions and beliefs, and how they may be different from families from other cultural backgrounds (Lenski et al.). In today's rapidly changing world in which homogenous cultural populations are becoming a thing of the past, effective intercultural communication in schools is an area deserving urgent attention. Two key studies that target this subject are an investigation of teacher perceptions and practices in working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds (Eberly et al., 2007) and a longitudinal study of seven American teachers working in public schools in the United States who agreed to be reflective about their own cultural awareness in order to improve their teaching practice with culturally diverse students (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fish & Hernandez, 2003).

Eberly et al.'s (2007) study revealed nuances in teacher beliefs and practices. It provided an understanding of the challenges teachers face when they communicate across cultures. The study examined the beliefs and practices of teachers working with students and parents from different cultural backgrounds. The study consisted of a focus group of 21 American teachers working in public and private elementary

schools in New Jersey. The participants own ethnicities and backgrounds varied: 16 were European American; 2 African American; 1 Asian; 1 Hispanic; and 1, West Indian. The researchers interviewed the sample of teachers in the focus group. Four areas of questioning led the study: the ways in which family beliefs and value patterns affected learning; how teachers communicate with and involve parents from different cultures; cultural practices; and teachers' needs for professional development in learning how to communicate effectively with parents from a different culture (Eberly et al.). Although the sample size of the study was small, a number of issues emerged relating to challenges the teachers faced in successfully communicating across cultures. The areas included judgments teachers made regarding child rearing, difficulties they had in dealing with differences about race and class, and tensions they experienced in confronting their own cultural biases (Eberly et al.). One significant finding was the difficulty in examining another culture without judging it against one's own beliefs. The teachers' biases affected their teaching practice because, although they understood it was important to accept the practices and beliefs of parents from a different culture, they negatively judged them against their own (Eberly et al.). The study showed that the teachers had difficulty maintaining an open mind about parent practices that conflicted with their own personal values, beliefs and practices (Eberly et al.). Furthermore, the study revealed that teachers' beliefs were difficult to change. Researchers drew this conclusion based on teacher responses reflecting their need to adjust parent beliefs to reflect western-centered beliefs and practices (Eberly et al.). The implications of this study signal the need for professional development or training to help teachers reflect on their own beliefs and cultural biases so that they may better understand and effectively communicate with parents from other cultures.

The second study (Trumbull et al., 2003) was a six-year three-phase longitudinal study called the Bridging Cultures Project. Focused on seven U.S. elementary school teachers who volunteered to receive professional development training on the construct of individualism-collectivism, the study assessed whether and how the training changed the teachers' own practice and styles of communication with Hispanic immigrant parents. The study aimed to demonstrate a relationship between teacher sensitivity to cross-cultural understanding and openness, and parent involvement.

The overall results of teacher responses on pre- and post-tests revealed that the professional development training on the individualism-collectivism construct led to newly acquired cultural awareness and understanding. In phase one of the study, participating teachers attended a series of workshops about the constructs of individualism and collectivism as well as research relating to conflict in schools (Trumbull, et al., 2003). Researchers then tabulated the results of pre-and post-test measures as well as interviews and surveys.

In phase two, the participating teachers applied what they had learned to the classroom. In this teacher-researcher role, teachers met 24 times, for four hours each time. The meeting time was used to discuss and document changes they made to their teaching as a result of the training they received in phase one. The researchers in this phase observed the teachers and interviewed them to collect data on their changing practices. Data collection strategies included open-ended interviews with teachers, video recording as well as descriptions of interactions between teachers and parents involved in some form of conflict.

The third phase of the study focused on the participating teachers offering professional development workshops on the construct of individualism and

collectivism to teachers in their own schools with the hope of influencing their practice. Overall, all participating teachers gained new perspective and acquired new cultural awareness (Trumbull, et al., 2003). Areas of gain included developing closer relationships and proximity to the families as well as enhanced classroom practices and strategies, and taking on new roles as cultural ethnographers. Teachers reported more informal interactions with families and a better ability to understand parents' perspectives on the roles teachers and parents should take in education. Teachers also reported using new classroom practices to reach students who were reared in families framed by collectivism. They found new ways to accommodate and conference with parents through creative scheduling opportunities. Finally, participating teachers adopted a non-judgmental position. They took on the role of ethnographer by interviewing families in order to get to know them better. Through their observations they were able to become better advocates for students and their families. This role improved the teacher's ability to explain the importance of the school culture to parents, and initiated new parent roles in the classroom. Although the amount of change observed varied, change did occur as a result of teachers receiving professional development.

This study is significant for its finding that success with increasing teacher involvement with parents from a different cultural group went beyond teaching parents how to be better parents, or inviting parents into schools. With professional development on cultural value systems, the teachers in this study changed their behavior, became more skilled in working with parents from different cultures, deepened their relationships with parents and improved their ability to communicate cross culturally with the parents in their classroom. These changes brought about an

improvement in parent involvement in school which ultimately had positive effects on students (Trumbull et al., 2003).

Although both the Eberly and Trumbull studies were limited by their small sample size, these studies found that teachers can learn how to build effective relationships and use more culturally sensitive communication skills with parents from different backgrounds. Although both studies took place in schools located in the United States, the results have implications for international schools across the world, since they tend to bring different cultures together. In such schools, cross-cultural awareness and understanding may be an antecedent to sensitive and conflict-free intercultural communication between teachers and parents.

Intercultural Communication in International Schools

The literature has shown that avoidance is a style of handling conflict in collectivistic societies such as those in the Arab world (Kozan & Ergin, 1989, 1999; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991, 2000) in which third party, intermediary involvement may be invoked in order to avoid direct confrontation (Ting-Toomey, 2004). Such avoidance may occur in international schools when host country parents encounter differences of opinion with their child's classroom teacher. For example, parents who are concerned about their children's lack of homework may hesitate to confront the teacher directly for fear of reprisal (e.g., an overload of homework in the future). In this case, parents may turn to an administrative member in the effort to handle the problem. This behavior can lead to teachers feeling marginalized and can affect how they relate to parents. Teachers may also feel that their status in the school has been demeaned and their authority and responsibility diminished which may result in face-loss and strain trust between teachers and parents.

In addition, the role of power may play a part. Some parents may feel that they will get what they want by addressing their concerns to individuals at the top of the organization. They may be using their wealth and status to engage the Principal or Director of the school. Hierarchy, status and power are significant cultural variables in Arab societies (Hofstede, 1980). However, western teachers may interpret using status and power as professionally disrespectful to them, in Ting-Toomey's terminology, face-loss. However, parents may simply be trying to avoid direct conflict. Determining whether avoidance is a result of using one's power or is used to maintain harmony depends on the parent and the situation.

Because of potential cultural differences related to conflict resolution, schools with diverse student populations have a responsibility to provide professional development for teachers to manage intercultural conflict effectively. As Trumbull et al. (2003) argued, it is vital that teachers examine their own personal culture and history before engaging in intercultural communication; so must also be the case with conflict styles.

The present study aims to contribute to the understanding of how ones' own culture influences the perception of their own conflict styles and of those with whom they communicate. Understanding others and being aware of the reasons for the behavior of other cultural groups may help teachers become more sensitive when communicating interculturally and may lessen the potential for developing negative perceptions and stereotypes. Schools may conduct intercultural training programs to help teachers learn about their own culture and conflict styles and prepare them for the variations in cultural patterns and conflict styles in their international school communities. However, the first step in developing such programs is to establish the

extent of perceived differences between teachers' conflict styles and the parents with

whom they communicate.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Population and Sample

The entire population of teachers employed in the Educational Services

Overseas Limited (ESOL) family of schools was invited to participate in the study on

teacher perceptions with the exception of its school located in Cyprus. The ESOL

organization is comprised of 10 American and British accredited international schools

located in the Middle Eastern/Mediterranean region: Cyprus (1 school), Egypt (4

schools), Lebanon (1 school), Saudi Arabia (1 school), and The United Arab Emirates

(3 schools).   The school in Cyprus was not included because Cyprus was not a part of

Hofstede's (1980) earlier research, nor is it considered geographically or culturally a

part of the Middle East or Arab world. However, the teachers from the school in

Cyprus participated in a pilot test of the instrument in April 2011. The total number

of teachers employed in the population of the remaining nine schools was 775. The

population was estimated to consist of three teacher groups based upon demographic

data from the ESOL human resource office: 561 western teachers with western

university degrees, 188 Arab teachers with university degrees earned in the Arab

world, and 26 Arab teachers with university degrees earned in the western world.

Eight out of the original nine ESOL schools took part in the study. After the

Egyptian revolution in February 2011, one of the four schools in Cairo, Egypt, was

not included because of its immediate closure and evacuation of teaching staff. As a

result, the total number of teachers surveyed was reduced from 775 to 766 of which

362 responded, resulting in a 47.3% response rate.

In order to confirm the assignment of ethnic background, the respondents answered three questions: (1) indicate your citizenship; (2) indicate your primary spoken language; and (3) indicate your strongest ethnic identification. Two out of three responses on the three questions as Arab or western resulted in a classification as either Arab or Western. These questions were constructed after a careful review of the literature on conflict styles across cultures in order to determine how researchers measured ethnic identification in their studies (Elsayed–Elkhouly, 1996; Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Komarraju et al., 2007; Kozan, 1989; Lee & Rogan, 1991; Morris et al., 1998; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Trubisky et al., 1991). These studies indicated that ethnic identification was achieved through self-reporting measures that included questions such as citizenship, strongest ethnic identification and primary language.

In order to provide further confidence in the assignment to ethnic/cultural group, Hofstede's individualism scores (IDV) were used. A high IDV score means the country has individualistic tendencies, while a low IDV score means the country has collectivistic tendencies. All 219 teachers self-identified as "western" came from countries with a high IDV score: 84% came from Canada, Great Britain and/or the United States combined (IDV= 80, 89 and 91 respectively), 8% from Australia and/or New Zealand combined (IDV=90 and 79 respectively), 3% from South Africa (IDV = 65) and 5% from other Western European countries (IDV > 60). The 136 teachers self-identified as "Arab" had a collective IDV group score of 39 (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede's study attributed one IDV score to a group of countries in the Arab world (Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates), and did not separate them. The largest respondent group came from Lebanon, 60%, followed by Egypt, 29%, while "Arab country" – not otherwise specified - resulted in a 7%

participation rate. The smallest representation of teachers categorized as Arab came

from Jordan, 3%, and Syria, 1%. Jordan and Syria do not have IDV values, as they

were not included in Hofstede's study (1980). However, Jordanian and Syrian

teachers who participated in the study reported their strongest ethnic identification as

Arab/Middle Eastern, and thus, were included in the Arab teacher sample.

These responding teachers were categorized into three cultural groupings:

teachers with a western ethnic background (W), teachers who self-reported as having

an Arab ethnic background (A), and non-western/non-Arab teachers who fell outside

of these two categories (O). They were also classified geographically according to

their self-report about the location of their educational degrees/teacher certificate and

training: teachers with western educational degree/training (W), teachers with an

Arab educational degree/training (A), and teachers with non-western/non-Arab

educational degree/training (N).   These two classifications permitted cross

categorizations. For example, teachers who self-reported as having an Arab

background with an educational degree from the United States were classified as an

AW.

Once the responding teachers' ethnic and educational backgrounds were

confirmed as either western or Arab, the final number of teachers eligible for the

analysis was 355. Seven participants self-reported from Asia (1), Brazil (1), India (2),

Pakistan (1), Panama (1), Romania (1) were not included in the final sample because

they could not be classified as either western or Arab.   Western teachers with western

educational backgrounds (WW) comprised 219 respondents, Arab teachers with Arab

educational backgrounds (AA), 107 respondents, and Arab teachers with western

educational backgrounds (AW), 29 respondents, respectively.

Instrument: ROCI-II

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)[1] (Appendix A) was the instrument used in this study. The ROCI-II is a frequently used instrument for conceptualizing and measuring conflict, and in recording perceptions of respondents (Rahim, 2004), including conflict across cultures (Boonsathorn, 2007; Cai & Fink, 2002; Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996; Gilani, 1999; Kim & Kitani, 1998; Kim, Wang, Kondo & Kim, 2007; Komarraju et al., 2007; Kozan & Ergin, 1999; Kozan, 1989; Morris et al., 1998; Rahim, 1985; Ting-Toomey, Gao, et al., 1991).

The original standardization group for the ROCI-II included 1,219 managers and 2,000 business students (MBA students, either working or not working). The managers were randomly selected from a list of 1.3 million managers, and the students were selected from Rahim's university classes (Rahim, 2004). An average score for each style ranges between the 55th and the 75th percentiles. Scores above or below the range of average percentiles is interpreted as the participant making above average use, or below average use, of this style when communicating during a conflict (Rahim, 2004).

The ROCI-II measures the styles of conflict within an organization in three ways: Form A (conflict with a superior), Form B (conflict with a subordinate) and Form C (conflict with a peer). All forms of the ROCI-II use a five-point Likert scale to measure the amount of conflict present and within the five styles (Rahim, 1985). A modified version of Form C was used for this study because it represented the interpersonal relationship between teachers and parents in a school. Placing both the teacher and the parent at the same level, as opposed to subordinates or supervisors,

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[1] ROCI-II: Used with permission from the © Center for Advanced Studies in Management. Further use or reproduction of the instrument without written permission is prohibited.

defines their roles as partners working together in a coordinated effort to ensure student success.

A number of studies support the validity of the ROCI-II, Form C (Keenan, 1994; Lee, 1990; Levy, 1989; Neff, 1986; Persico, 1986; Pilkington, Richardson & Utley, 1988; Ting-Toomey, Gao, et al., Ting-Toomey, Trubisky et al., 1991; Wardlaw, 1988). The 28 items in the ROCI-II, Form C, were selected after factor analyses of the responses to an earlier version of the survey with 35 items from the national sample of 1,219 managers (Rahim, 1983a; Rahim, 2004). The first set of factors was derived from a principal-factors solution. The final set of factors was reached through varimax rotation (Rahim,1983a). This analysis yielded eight factors. Rahim selected the final five ROCI-II conflict styles based on factor loading larger than or equal to .40, eigen values larger than and equal to 1.00, and the scree test. Those factors with 28 items were as follows: Integrating (IN), Avoiding (AV), Dominating (DO), Obliging (OB), and Compromising (CO), were selected. Rahim reports test-retest reliability coefficients for the five conflict styles in the ROCI-II, Form C to range between 0.60 and 0.83 and Cronbach's alpha coefficients from 0.72 to 0.83. Table 1 presents the five conflict styles, Rahim's definition of each style, and a listing of the 28 items categorized according to conflict style.

In order to maximize participation from the Arab teacher groups whose primary language was Arabic, the ROCI-II, Form C was translated into Arabic by a professional translation company in the United States and then back-translated into English by an experienced bilingual teacher to ensure reliability. The back-translator was originally from Egypt and is a teacher and a native speaker in both Arabic and English. The translation company and the bilingual teacher worked together to resolve any differences in wording until a common understanding was reached.

Cronbach alphas were estimated for each factor for both the English and Arabic versions of the modified instrument. Table 2 reports the reliability coefficients for the two surveys. The reliability coefficients are comparable to or higher than those Rahim (1983a) reported except for two factors in the Arabic version that were significantly below .70: Self-rating DO (.60); and Self-rating AV (.50). Although removing one item from the Self-rating DO could have raised the alpha to .71, the deletion was not performed in order to retain the items from Rahim given that the other three alphas were acceptable. The self-rating AV alpha could not be improved with any item deletion.

Table 1. Definitions and Corresponding Items in ROCI-II, Form C

Style	Definition	Items
Integrating (IN)	High concern for self as well as others involved in the conflict. Collaborates with others to reach a solution.	1, 4, 5, 12, 22, 23, 28
Obliging (OB)	Low concern for self and high concern for others involved in the conflict. Plays down differences; emphasizes common ground.	2, 10, 11, 13, 19, 24
Dominating (DO)	High concern for self and low concern for others involved in the conflict. Forces to win the position; a win-lose orientation.	8, 9, 18, 21, 25
Avoiding (AV)	Low concern for self as well as the other party. Associated with passing the buck, side-stepping or turning one's head away.	3, 6, 16, 17, 26, 27
Compromising (CO)	Intermediate concern for self and others. Strives to bring others into a consensus when there is conflict; offers a give and take solution.	7, 14, 15, 20

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of the Modified Rahim Factors for Teacher Self-Ratings and Parent Perception Ratings, English and Arabic Language Versions

Factors		Teacher Self-Ratings		Parent Perception Ratings	
		English ($n = 304$)	Arabic ($n = 58$)	English ($n = 304$)	Arabic ($n = 58$)
IN:	Integrating	.86	.78	.84	.90
CO:	Compromising	.72	.80	.84	.89
DO:	Dominating	.78	.60	.79	.81
OB:	Obliging	.79	.83	.87	.87
AV:	Avoiding	.75	.50	.79	.68

Procedure

Two electronic survey links (English and Arabic) were distributed to all teachers in the participating ESOL schools in May 2011. Participants chose either the English or Arabic link to complete the survey. All three groups of teachers were asked to respond to the 28 ROCI-II items to record how they would approach conflict and then to determine their perceptions of how Arab parents with whom they interact with would approach conflict. Other than the demographic data about ethnic and educational background, no other personally identifiable data were collected.

Data Analysis

Two sets of analyses were conducted. A 3 (Background: WW, AA, AW) x 2 (Rating of Conflict Style: Teacher's Self-rating and Perception of Parents) repeated measures Analysis of Variance was conducted for each of the five conflict style factor scores. The Post Hoc Tukey, HSD pair-wise comparison test, was used to determine the source of differences for Background and the Background X Rating interactions if significant mean differences were found. After the ANOVA was performed, the scores for each teacher's ratings of the five conflict styles, self and perception of

parents, were used to assign a preferred conflict style for self and parents. For each respondent, the highest reported mean from the five conflict styles became the style that was said to be the preferred conflict style (Rahim, 2004). For each teacher group (WW, AA, and AW), a chi-square analysis was then conducted to compare the frequency of observed and expected teachers' preferred conflict styles and the parents' preferred conflict styles based upon their ratings given to the parents. A contingency coefficient was used to express the magnitude of the relationship for each chi-square value. An alpha level of .05 was set for all tests conducted.

RESULTS

Table 3 presents results of the 3 X 2 repeated measures ANOVA for each of the five conflict styles as well as the means and standard deviations for Factor A, three levels of teacher background (WW, AA, and AW), Factor B, two levels of the target of rating for all teachers (teachers' self-ratings and teachers' parent perception ratings), and A X B, the six interaction cells of the teacher by target of rating combinations. The main effects of both Factors A and B were significant for four conflict styles (IN, CO, DO, and AV). The Effect Sizes estimated with Partial Etas that express the variance accounted for by each variable were the largest for Factor B, the target of rating: IN (.40), CO (.31), DO (.24), and AV (.10). Inspection of the means and standard deviations for the four variables shows that the teachers as a group rated themselves higher than parents on IN, CO, and AV and the opposite for DO. Furthermore, for Factor A (type of teacher), the Partial Etas were lower IN (.13), CO (.10), DO (.08), and AV (.05). The A X B interaction was significant for IN ($F = 5.00$, $p < .01$), DO ($F = 5.70$, $p < .001$), and OB ($F = 12.64$, $p < .001$).

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, *F*-tests, Effect Sizes, and Post-Hoc Comparisons of Conflict Styles according to Type of Teacher, Target of Rating, and Interaction

Source	Conflict Styles				
	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
Factor A – Type of Teacher					
WW – Total (n = 219)					
M (SD)	3.63 (.58)	3.45 (.61)	3.31 (.69)	2.93 (.64)	2.82 (.88)
AA – Total (n = 107)					
M (SD)	3.81 (.59)	3.66 (.69)	3.10 (.75)	2.89 (.68)	2.94 (.86)
AW – Total (n = 29)					
M (SD)	3.66 (.53)	3.45 (.67)	3.44 (.70)	3.01 (.72)	2.62 (1.11)

Factor B – Target of Rating

	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
All Teachers – S (n = 355)					
M (SD)	4.15 (.48)	3.95 (.53)	2.85 (.72)	2.98 (.63)	2.88 (.06)
All Teachers – P (n = 355)					
M (SD)	3.21 (.69)	3.08 (.76)	3.66 (.73)	2.87 (.69)	2.80 (.65)

A X B Interaction

	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
WW – T (n =219)					
M (SD)	4.07 (.51)	3.87 (.52)	2.91 (.71)	3.05 (.56)	3.09 (.70)
AA – T (n = 107)					
M (SD)	4.27 (.43)	4.09 (.55)	2.79 (.71)	2.82 (.66)	3.34 (.59)
AW - T (n = 29)					
M (SD)	4.24 (.38)	3.99 (.40)	2.74 (.70)	2.83 (.65)	3.32 (.67)
WW – P (n – 219)					
M (SD)	3.04 (.66)	2.92 (.76)	3.83 (.62)	2.79 (.69)	2.72 (.66)
AA – P (n = 107)					
M (SD)	3.54 (.68)	3.35 (.72)	3.31 (.83)	2.99 (.68)	2.94 (.59)
AW – P (n = 29)					
M (SD)	3.31 (.54)	3.23 (.56)	3.55 (.66)	3.03 (.61)	2.97 (.61)

F –tests

	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
Type of Teacher (A)	27.25***	18.74***	15.20***	.48	9.36***
Target of Rating (B)	232.84***	159.36***	110.76***	.04	37.30***
A X B	5.00**	2.38	5.70***	12.64***	.07

Effect Size (Partial Eta)

	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
Type of Teacher (A)	.13	.10	.08	.00	.05
Target of Rating (B)	.40	.31	.24	.00	.10
A X B	.03	.01	.03	.07	.00

Tukey HSD within Subject

	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
WW-T/WW-P	1.03**	.94**	.91**	.26**	.37**
AA-T/AA-P	.73**	.73**	.53**	.18**	.40**
AW-T/AW-P	.93**	.75**	.81**	.21**	.35**

Tukey between Subjects

	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV
WW/AA – T	.20*	.22**	.13	.24**	.25**
WW/AW– T	.17**	.11	.17*	.23**	.23**
AA/AW – T	.04	.11	.04	.01	.02
WW/AA – P	.50**	.43**	.51**	.21**	.22**
WW/AW– P	.27**	.31**	.28**	.24**	.25**
AA/AW – P	.23**	.12	.23**	.03	.03

Note: AA = Arab teachers with Arab educational background; AW = Arab teachers with Western educational background; WW= Western teachers with Western educational backgrounds.   IN= Integrating; CO=Compromising; DO=Dominating; OB=Obliging; AV=Avoiding; T = Teacher Self-Ratings; P = Parent Perception Ratings. Tukey HSD results are reported as absolute values. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Four of the five conflict styles (IN, CO, AV and DO) presented ordinal interaction patterns. The IN, CO and AV styles consistently showed higher teacher self- ratings compared to the teachers' parent perception ratings. However, only the IN style reported significant differences for Factors A, B and the A X B interactions. Furthermore, the IN style reported the highest Tukey within subjects result compared to any other conflict style, meaning that the IN style yielded the greatest difference between the teachers' self-ratings and their parent perception ratings. Tukey HSD results for the IN style indicated that WW teachers reported the greatest differences between self and parent perception ratings compared to the AA and AW teacher groups (WW-T/WW-P = 1.03, AA-T/AA-P = .73, AW-T/AW-P= .93, all $p < .001$). Figure 1 displays the pattern consistency of the ordinal ratings for IN, CO and AV.

Figure 1. Consistency of Teachers' Self-Rating (T) and their Parent Perception Ratings (P) for IN, CO, and AV
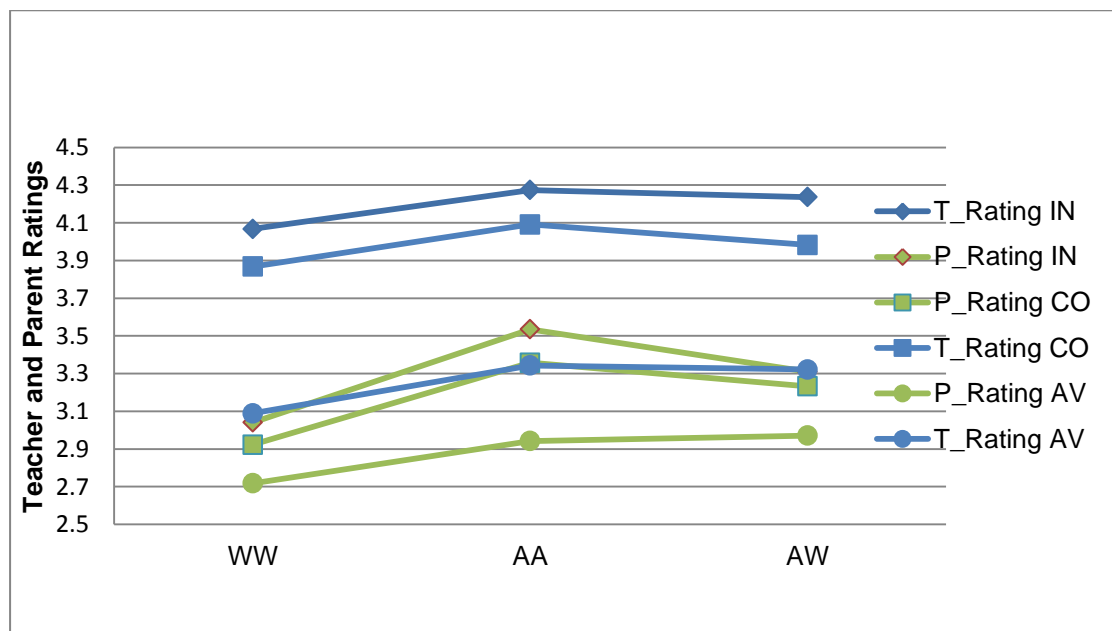
The DO style, while resulting in an ordinal interaction, was the only style in which teacher parent perception ratings were higher than teacher self-ratings. The

WW teacher group produced the highest DO parent perception rating. Significant differences for Factors A, B and the A X B interaction were also found. The DO, Tukey HSD within subjects results, yielded significant differences between teacher self and parent perception ratings across all three teacher groups; again, the western teacher group reported the highest result (WW-T/WW-P = .91, AA-T/AA-P = .53, AW-T/AW-P = .81, all $p < .001$). Figure 2 displays the Factor A X B interaction plot for DO.

Figure 3 displays the plot showing the disordinal interaction pattern for OB. Factor A and Factor B reported no significance differences, while the A X B interaction was significant ($F=12.64$, $p < .001$). The Tukey within-subjects tests were significant for all pairwise comparisons meaning that within each group of teachers (WW, AA, and AW), the means of the teachers' self-rating and parent ratings were significantly different. The WW teachers scores had the greatest difference between their self-ratings and parent perception ratings (WW-T/WW-P = .26, AA-T/AA-P = .18, AW-T/AW-P = .21, all $p < .001$).

Figure 2: Interaction Plot for DO
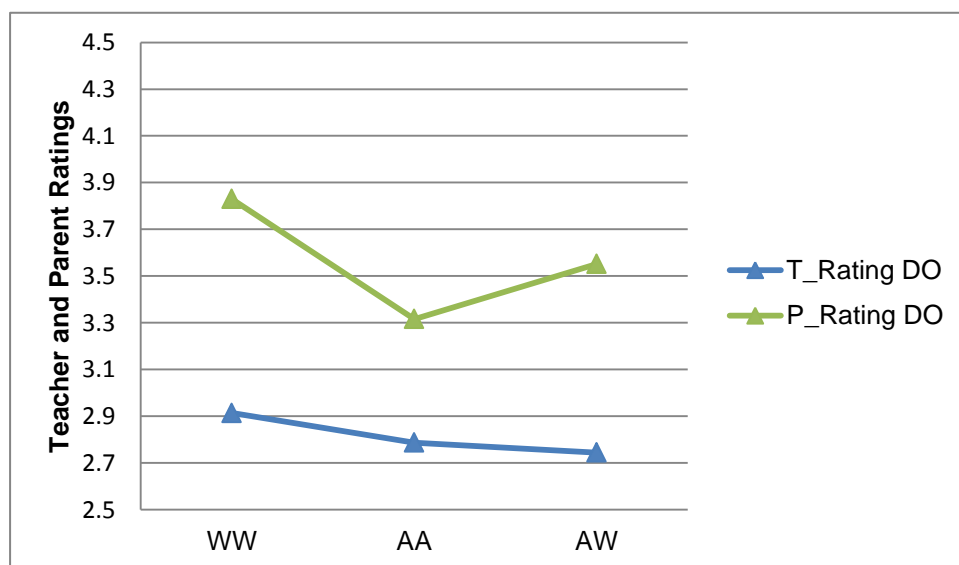
However, the WW teachers rated themselves higher than the parent ratings whereas the AA and AW teachers rated themselves lower than the parent ratings. The Tukey between subjects HSD test found that WW teachers rated themselves and the parent differently from the AA-HSD (self = .24, $p < .01$; parents = .23, $p < .01$) and AW-HSD (self = .21, $p < .01$; parents = .24, $p < .01$) whereas no differences were found between the means of the AA and AW teachers on their ratings.

Figure 3. Disordinal Interaction for OB
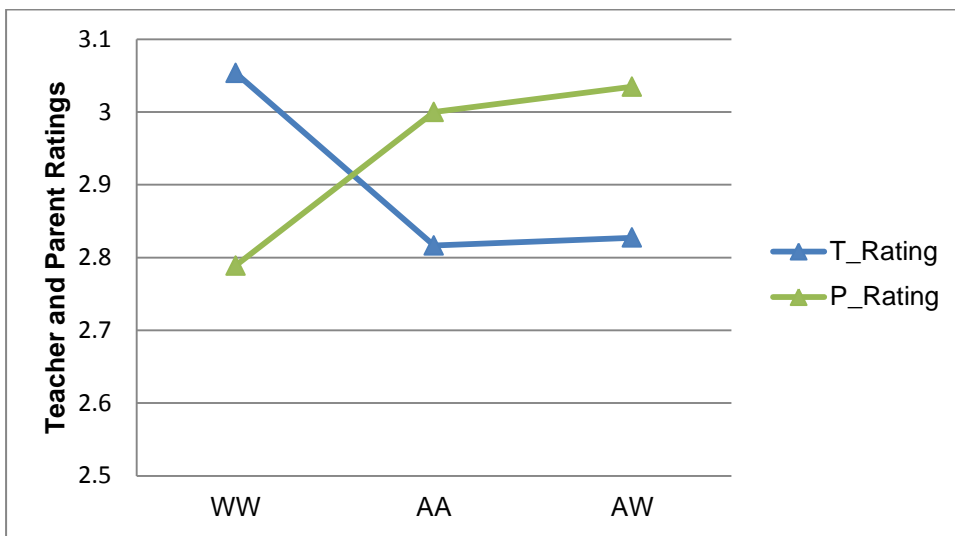
Overall, the IN, DO and OB styles were the only three styles that demonstrated interactions. The IN and DO styles produced the most significant results for Factor A, B and the A X B interactions. The AV and CO styles did not produce a significant interaction indicating that the ratings between the self-ratings and the parent perception ratings were not significantly different between the three teacher groups.

Table 4 presents another perspective in describing the relationships of the teachers' self-ratings and those they attributed to the Arab parents. The table shows the observed frequencies of the teachers' preferred conflict style and what they perceived were those of Arab parents. The table includes the responses that resulted

in the assignment of two or more preferred styles. However the chi-square analysis

was conducted only on the five single conflict styles because the multiple preferred

styles were only 7.9% of the total possible categorizations of the entire sample for

both self and parent attributions. A significant majority of teachers, whether they

were WW (55.7%), AA (53.4%), or AW (62.0%), were classified as expressing a self-

preference for the IN style over any other conflict style. The next highest preferred

conflict style was CO for all three background groups: WW (16.9%), AA (21.8%),

and AW (17.2%).   In terms of what the teachers perceived were the parents'

preferred style, the WW and AW teachers attributed a DO style to Arab parents,

67.1% and 55.1%, respectively. The AA teachers presented a somewhat mixed view

of Arab parents' conflict styles. IN (29.0%) and DO (33.6%) were the most

frequently categorized preferred conflict style and almost equally so. For all teacher

groups, the OB and AV were preferred 10.3% or less regardless of self-rating or

parent perception rating. The relationship between the teachers' preferred conflict

styles and their attribution about parents' preferred conflict styles were significant and

moderately to very strong for each teacher group: WW ($\chi2 = 161.00$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$),

C=0.54; AA ($\chi2 = 34.90$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$), C=0.40; and AW ($\chi2 = 626.00$, $df = 4$, $p <$

.001), C = 0.96.

Table 4. Teachers' Preferred Self-Ratings and Perception Ratings of Arab Parents'
Conflict Styles

Type of Teacher/ Type of Rating	Conflict Styles							Total
	IN	CO	DO	OB	AV	2 styles	≥3 styles	
WW/Self								
N	**122**	37	6	4	17	30	3	219
%	**55.7**	16.9	2.7	1.8	7.7	13.7	1.4	

WW/Parents								
N	14	24	**147**	8	10	12	4	219
%	6.4	11.0	**67.1**	3.6	4.5	5.5	1.8	
AA/Self								
N	**58**	23	5	0	4	17	0	107
%	**53.4**	21.8	4.6	0.0	3.6	15.5	0.0	
AA/Parents								
N	31	12	**36**	4	4	12	8	107
%	29.0	11.2	**33.6**	3.7	3.7	11.2	7.5	
AW/Self								
N	**18**	5	1	0	2	3	0	29
%	**62.0**	17.2	3.4	0.0	6.9	10.3	0.0	
AW/Parents								
N	4	4	**16**	3	2	1	0	29
%	13.8	13.8	**55.1**	10.3	6.9	3.4	0.0	

_____

Note: WW = Western ethnicity with western education; AA = Arab ethnicity with Arab education; AW = Arab ethnicity with western education; IN= Integrating; CO=Compromising; DO=Dominating; OB=Obliging; AV=Avoiding. Bold numbers indicate the most frequent conflict style. Chi-square analysis was conducted on only the five single conflict styles.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Although the results generally supported the intercultural conflict management

literature on expected group tendencies and intergroup predictions, this relationship

was not found to be a simple one-to-match between members of collectivist and

individualist societies and styles consistent with their ethnocentric standards (Oetzel

& Ting-Toomey, 2001). Rather, that relationship was found to be complex with some

significant crossovers between cultural values and selected conflict styles. In terms of

correspondence between cultural values and conflict styles, the Arab teachers,

whether Arabic or western trained, self-rated themselves the highest on IN, CO, and

AV styles that was consistent with the way people from collectivistic societies are

expected to manage conflict. The Arab teachers also rated themselves higher on these

three styles than western teachers who are thought to hold more individualistic values.

Furthermore, the Arab teachers, more than western teachers expected Arab parents to

use IN, CO, and AV styles.

However, other key findings do not neatly follow the match between values

and styles. For four of the five conflict styles, the majority of teachers held

significantly different sets of perceptions between themselves and the parents in

which the Partial Etas expressing the variance accounted for between self-ratings and

teacher ratings were: .40, IN; .31, CO; .24, DO; and .10, AV, respectively. These

coefficients are very high in terms of a single variable's relationship to another.

Teachers identified themselves more than parents with IN, CO, and AV styles; the

DO style revealed the opposite relationship in which parents were thought to use that

style more often than teachers. The close association between the IN and CO styles

for teachers, especially western teachers, may be that the two styles are similar to one another because both represent an intermediate to high concern for self and others that is associated with a collaborative and solution-oriented approach towards conflict resolution. The differences between the teachers' ratings and the parents' ratings may be a corollary of situational and relational factors found in schools. Situational factors such as parent-teacher conferencing and relational dynamics, such as expected roles and responsibilities, may present challenging scenarios compelling teachers to manage conflict in ways that express a high regard for others as well as themselves. Teachers' may have been professionally conditioned to respond to conflict in one manner and do not perceive the parents to match them with the same styles because of past experiences.

Furthermore, the results for two conflict styles, IN and DO, were completely opposite from what the literature would predict. IN and DO were found to have not only significant main effects but they also had significant but opposite ordinal interaction patterns. The IN means of all three teacher groups were the highest self-rating means among the five conflict styles whereas the means for the DO were the highest parent perception rating means for the three teacher groups. For the IN style, the means of the AA and AW teachers' self-ratings (M = 4.27, M = 4.24, respectively) were significantly higher than that for the WW teachers (M = 4.07) while the parent mean ratings were significantly higher for the Arab teachers than western teachers: AA, 3.54; AW, 3.31; and WW, 3.04, respectively. The DO means for teachers' self-ratings were: AA, 2.79; AW, 2.74; and WW, 2.91 whereas the parental mean ratings were: AA, 3.31; AW, 3.55; and WW, 3.83. Western teachers who are assumed to value individualism and are expected to prefer a direct, high concern for self and low for others, the characteristics of the DO style, reported IN as

their highest self-rating mean. Arab teachers who are assumed to value collectivism, and are expected to prefer and perceive parents as IN, reported DO as the Arab parents' highest mean.

These results for IN and DO are particularly noteworthy because they were not consistent with what was expected of the preferred group tendency. Such findings support the view that within cultures numerous individual, situational and relational factors may affect a person's expected pattern of behavior (Bennett, Bennett & Landis, 2004; Ting-Toomey, 2004). In the case of IN, the high western teachers' self-rating's mean was not predicted and was inconsistent with general intercultural Conflict Management Theory. Why did western teachers rate IN as their preferred style when the literature and previous studies have found that North Americans and western Europeans who come from individualistic societies prefer a direct DO conflict style? The IN rating for the Arab teachers, both the AA and AW, was expected given the consistent findings from the literature on how people from collectivistic cultures handle conflict. Nevertheless, they too as western teachers, rated the parents significantly lower than themselves in terms of using the IN style.

Perhaps the high IN ratings across all three teacher groups may be the result of their professional identification as teachers that relies heavily on methods of cooperation, teamwork and support (Fenstermacher, 1990). Teachers must exert a great deal of effort, reciprocity and collaboration in order to motivate their students to cooperate in the learning process (Dewey, 1933; Fenstermacher, 1990). In terms of classroom management, teachers generally strive to create harmonious environments, well-disciplined and respectful behaviors in their classrooms rather than competitive, argumentative ones (Trumbull et al., 2008). The nature of the teaching profession is one in which no one would suggest that teachers should engage in confrontational

strategies, or use humiliation tactics, that can heighten conflict rather than resolve it. Instead, teachers are expected to be calm and composed in order to create an environment towards collaborative work skills, and a community in which students' self-worth and dignity is valued. Teachers generally engage in mutual face-saving behaviors when adverse classroom conditions are presented. Mutual face-saving behaviors allow both teachers and students to preserve self-dignity and self-worth in moments of dysfunctional interactions. These values and behaviors are the same ones that are typically found in collectivistic cultures in which teamwork and consideration for all members are necessary for the healthy functioning of the group (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995; Ting-Toomey, 2004). Thus, one explanation for the high teacher self-ratings for the IN style may be the result of adhering to professional norms that expect teachers to manage conflict in the same manner as what would be expected by members in a collectivistic society. The IN style is defined as having a high concern for both self and others, in which a person satisfies his or her own needs, and the needs of others during a conflict.

In contrast, mean parent perception ratings for the three teacher groups were the highest for the DO in which 67.1% of the WW teachers attributed DO as the preferred conflict style for Arab parents (M = 3.83). The AA teachers also rated the DO style the most preferred for Arab parents, 33.6% (M = 3.31) as did 55.1% (M=3.55) of the AW teachers. These findings raise questions about why teachers, especially the westerner group, perceived the Arab parents as direct and forcing, with a high concern for themselves and low for others, when the literature has found that collectivists tended to prefer non-combative, IN, CO, OB, and AV styles. One explanation for the high DO parent rating may be found in how teachers interpret the concepts of respect and power (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). The Arab world is

classified as a collectivist culture characterized with large power distance elements and a place where wealth, status, power and connections are vitally important to the way things are accomplished (Badawy, 1980; Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996; Hofstede, 1980; 1980a). Furthermore, a large number of studies have found that members of collectivist societies are expected to avoid direct confrontation when resolving conflict in order to preserve group solidarity, maintain relationships and save face (Elsayed-Elkhouly; Kozan, 1989; Ozkalp, Sungur & Ozdemir, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 2004). In international schools that enroll mostly Arab students, their parents may blend both power distance and avoidance tactics when attempting to manage conflict with their children's teachers. This avoidance/use of power-distance strategies may unveil itself when parents skip dialogue with teachers and immediately seek interventions from school administrators or owners. When these "going around" behaviors occur, western teachers may interpret these actions as disrespect and an abuse of power that activate negative stereotypes because these actions are not consistent with their cultural standards. This ethnocentric stance likely develops into loss of face that insults the teachers. From an ethnocentric point of view and given the norms of the teaching profession, teachers, especially western teachers, want conflict to be dealt with openly and directly at the level at which it occurred. When Arab parents go directly to administrators to resolve conflicts, they are not affording western teachers an opportunity to present and defend their positions to them in order to save face. From their perspective, Arab parents may simply be avoiding direct conflict with teachers and using what they consider to be a commonly practiced power-distance strategy in their culture to resolve conflict and to save face.

Even though the DO style was perceived by all teacher groups to be the preferred style for the way Arab parents might handle conflict with them, the Arab

teachers, both Arab and western trained, appeared to have a somewhat more complex set of parent perceptions than western teachers. Arab teacher, AA and AW, mean ratings of parents on IN, CO, AV and OB styles were significantly higher and more similar to one another when compared to western teachers. The Arab teachers' mean DO parental ratings though higher than what they assigned to themselves was significantly lower than the parental ratings of western teachers. Perhaps the Arab teachers have a more nuanced understanding of their cultural counterparts than do the western teachers. Their cultural backgrounds may have blurred differences between the roles that they and the parents play in the school setting because they must function in both worlds of individualism and collectivism in their daily lives.

Contributions to Research and Practice

The findings in this study offer contributions to the intercultural conflict literature and international school research. First, this study supports the general assumptions in Ting-Toomey's Conflict Face Negotiation Theory that proposes the constructs of individualism, collectivism and power-distance as significant influences on the choice of conflict styles (Ting-Toomey, 1985, 1988, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). In general, the results of the teacher self-rating means for each conflict style between the three teacher groups support the relationship between the values of a society, individualism and collectivism, and choice of preferred conflict style.   The power-distance construct provides the logic behind why a significant majority of all three teacher groups perceived the Arab parents as having a tendency to use the DO style. Conflict Face Negotiation Theory theorizes that people who come from collectivistic societies, such as the Arab parents in this study, may use their power-distance strategies to save face during a conflict (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel). In this

study, power-distance strategies such as pulling-rank and status, which are so widely

used in the Arab world, may be why the teacher groups repeatedly attributed DO to

the Arab parents - teachers may have interpreted power-distance as an overuse, or an

abuse, of power. The theory also supports an explanation of the differences from the

expected norms by members of specific cultural groups.   Context, situational,

individual and relational factors may alter expected cultural group tendencies (Ting-

Toomey & Oetzel). The nature of the teaching profession and the teachers'

interpretation of the concepts of respect and power within the school context may

explain why all teachers groups including western teachers rated their preferred

conflict style as IN and the Arab parents as DO.

Second, this study was the first to survey samples of teachers with western and

Arabic ethnic identity and education working together as teachers in international

American and/or British schools located in the Arab world. The sample also included

Arab teachers with western educational backgrounds. The findings of the study

indicated that all three teacher groups saw themselves highly IN compared to the DO

conflict style the majority of teachers attributed to the Arab parents.   Why did so

many teachers think that the parents would use the DO style? Is the power-distance

construct causing the teachers to perceive Arab parents as DO, rather than AV?   A

suggested answer to these questions was made in the previous paragraph. However,

this study looked only at what teachers thought were the Arab parents' styles. What

are the Arab parents' true conflict styles? Do Arab parents in actual situations have a

high tendency to use the DO style when managing conflict? Arab parents should be

surveyed directly and their responses compared to the teacher perception ratings

found in this study is a next step in trying to get insight into this intercultural

dynamic.   Naturalistic studies could be conducted in order to observe actual

interactions between teachers and parents with follow-up interviews about how they each perceived how they and their counterparts approached the situations. Finally, variations to the purpose of this study could also be explored. Could differences in teachers' self-ratings or parent perception ratings be found based on the number of years they have taught overseas, or even more specifically, taught in the Middle East? Could sensitization to cultural value patterns in the Arab world affect the results? What about comparing teachers' perceptions of Arab mothers and Arab fathers, do differences exist between perceptions of genders? This study has a number of possible extensions, and future studies could investigate several variations to the research questions proposed.

Third, the study explored the perceptions of an Arab teacher group who have a western education in order to investigate whether or not a western-based education affects an ethnic group's conflict style choice. The results of the AW teachers' self and parent perception ratings were more similar to the AA teacher group than the WW teacher group. The Tukey HSD between subject comparison for the AW-AA groups were non-significant 8 out of 10 times for teachers' self and parent perception ratings while AW-WW comparisons were significant 9 times out of 10. These results clearly indicate the prevailing effect of ethnicity, early socialization and subscription to cultural value patterns may be difficult to modify even in a school setting that promotes a western style education.

Study Limitations

The results of this study should be considered a first step in understanding how teachers perceive conflict styles in themselves and for others with whom they interact. Given the nature of the sample, some cautions must be made in generalizing

the findings. First, the sample was limited to a group of teachers who work in a private school setting from a specific geographic region. The findings must be carefully generalized when applied to groups such as United States public school teachers, or other international schools teachers of different ethnic backgrounds. For example, the high IN result for all three teachers groups may be a result of the kind of school culture cultivated in the ESOL schools organization, or the type of teacher the ESOL organization sought to hire during their recruitment period. The nature of the ESOL schools should also be considered. ESOL schools are private and generally are comprised of high socio-economic status families.   How would the results of this study compare with the perceptions of public school teachers in the United States where the parents' socio-economic status are considerably more varied? However, several hundred schools exist with similar characteristics as the international school population in which this study took place. Thus, this study can be generalized to teachers working in similar overseas, western accredited schools in the Arab world. Additional studies should be conducted in other international locations and with teachers and parents from schools with different socio-economical compositions and/or other variables which may affect how teachers perceive parents.

Second, the sample sizes for all three teacher groups were not equal and the size of the sample for the Arab teachers with western education was small. Results and generalizations drawn from the AW sample must be made cautiously and may change with larger samples and the resulting increase of power. Third, the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983a) items used in the instrument were designed to measure organizational conflict at three relationship levels: (A) Supervisory, (B) Subordinate, and (C) Peers. This study chose level (C) in which the items were phrased with the assumption that parents and teachers are working as partners rather than in a superior or subordinate

role. Although the ROCI-II was not specifically designed for teachers and the questions were not specific to a school setting, a modified version was created to provide school-based context for teachers participating in the study. The results of the pilot study, the reliability estimates for the modified instrument, and responses of the participants, indicated that the items appeared to be applicable to this group of respondents but further testing of its psychometric properties should be conducted. Finally, in order to assure anonymity in responding to the survey, no identifiers were used; thus, the demographic characteristics of the respondents cannot be compared with the total population who were sent the survey. Although bias cannot be determined, almost half of the population did respond including a few more AW teachers than was estimated in the population.

Nevertheless, the results have provided evidence that Conflict Face Negotiation Theory may be very useful for school leaders as they conceptualize the variables that may be creating conflicts between teachers and parents in their schools. As administrators in international schools become familiar with theory and research in intercultural relations, they are compelled to examine what they are doing to support their teachers in managing cultural differences and build cultural competencies so that teachers and host country parents can work closely together in partnership to support student learning. Teacher preparation programs and international school induction programs tend to emphasize technical skills such as instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and educational and web-based software programs and resources. However, this study points out the need for school leaders to introduce intercultural communication training for teachers who are required to work with cultures different from their own. Are school leaders thinking about, or providing, any intercultural training for teachers so that they know how to relate to their host

country parents, and understand how parents from other cultures operate and communicate?

This study has provided evidence for how teacher perceptions about parents can go undetected in international schools. This study is a starting point for schools to conceptualize a cultural-based training program to assist teachers about their own cultural awareness and how to communicate effectively in their host country cultures. Cultural-based training programs should include assessment instruments and inventories to increase teachers' self-awareness of the individualism and collectivism construct in order to develop teachers' basic intercultural knowledge, skills and behaviors required in successful relation-building and mediation with parents and families from cultures different from their own (Landis et al., 2004). Training methods for such programs may include lectures, discussions, role- play, readings, cultural contact simulation, group exercises, cased studies and contact with locals in the community (Landis et al., 2004). In American, or overseas international schools located in the Arab world, school leaders can positively engage the participation of host country teachers (the local teachers in the community) whose contribution to the school can often get side-lined, or ignored because they are not necessarily as highly valued by the parent community. The local teachers are experts in their culture and can be trained to deliver components of the intercultural training program and provide indispensable knowledge for western teachers about their local culture and about the parents and families enrolled in the school; valuable information in which only the locals can share.   Thus, Intercultural programs may be used in schools as mechanisms to help teachers better understand their own responses and biases to conflicts and challenges of working with parents from another culture – those of which they may

not otherwise readily examine on their own. Doing so may further create school communities that use their valuable time and energy on improving the learning opportunities for students rather than on dealing with behaviors that distract and detract from this primary reason for schooling.

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Footnotes

[1] ROCI-II: Used with permission from the © Center for Advanced Studies in Management. Further use or reproduction of the instrument without written permission is prohibited.

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II, Form C, Original Survey

ROCI-II: Used with permission from the © Center for Advanced Studies in Management. Further use or reproduction of the instrument without written permission is prohibited.

To fulfill the copyright conditions of the Center for Advanced Studies in Management, only 1 item per subscale from the 28 item ROCI-II instrument is replicated below.

1. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my peers.
2. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my peers to myself.
3. I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peers to come up with a decision jointly.
4. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
5. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

APPENDIX B

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II, Form C, Modified Survey

(English Version)

ROCI-II: Used with permission from the © Center for Advanced Studies in Management. Further use or reproduction of the instrument without written permission is prohibited.

To fulfill the copyright conditions of the Center for Advanced Studies in Management, only 1 item per subscale for both self-ratings and teacher perceptions-ratings from the modified ROCI-II instrument is displayed. The modified ROCI-II instrument has 56 items in total: 28 items to measure the teacher's own conflict style and 28 items to measure the teachers' perceptions on how parents handle conflict.

Letter of Invitation and Consent to Participate in the Study

Dear ESOL Colleague,

Understanding how people from different cultures handle conflict is a very important topic for international schools. As a Doctoral student at Lehigh University, I am conducting a study to understand the conflict styles of parents and teachers in our ESOL schools. Clicking the link at the end of this email will allow you to enter the survey to participate in the study. Your participation will help me gather data to learn more about conflict in international school environments, including conflict that may occur in our schools. Your participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. You can exit from the study at any time. If you consent to participate, the process will be as follows:

1. Follow the link provided below to the Zoomerang website. The survey has three parts that can be completed in less than 20 minutes.

2. Your participation is anonymous. Your responses will be collected by Zoomerang website software. Responses to the survey will be analyzed, but anonymity will be strictly preserved.

3. This survey instrument that you will fill out is called The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II and has been used in other published research studies.

If you have any questions about this study please contact me at mgk205@lehigh.edu. Dr. Ron Yoshida of Lehigh University is also available to answer questions if desired rky2@lehigh.edu. If you would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you are encouraged to contact Susan E Disidore at (610)758-3020 (sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondences will be kept confidential.

I hope you will take a moment to help us in this effort! I appreciate your support.

Michelle Kleiss

Doctoral Candidate at Lehigh University

Director of the American International School in Cyprus

By opening the drop down box and clicking on "Yes, take me to the survey" you demonstrate your consent to participate in this study.

After clicking yes, you will be taken to the first page of the survey.

○ Yes, take me to the survey

Section 1: What Could Be Your Conflict Style?

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. Try to recall as many conflict situations as possible while rating these statements. Please mark only one bubble per statement.

1. During a conflict I generally try to satisfy the needs of the other person.

2. During a conflict I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with the other person to myself.

3. During a conflict I try to integrate my ideas with the other person to come up with a decision jointly.

4. During a conflict I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.

5. During a conflict I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

Section 2: How Do You Believe Arab Parents Handle Conflict With Teachers?

Please indicate your level of agreement for each statement in answering how you think Arab parents (Egyptian, Lebanese, GCC, or any other Arab country national) in your school handle disagreement or conflict with teachers. Use your own experiences to draw from, or try to recall any situation in your respective school.

Even if you are not sure, please make your best guess on the rating options. Please only mark one bubble for each statement.

1. Arab parents generally try to satisfy the needs of the teachers.

2. Arab parents attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep their conflict with the teachers to themselves.

3. Arab parents try to integrate their ideas with the teachers to come up with a decision jointly.

4. Arab parents use their influence to get their ideas accepted.

5. Arab parents use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

Section 3: Demographics and Background Information

Please answer all the questions to help us have the data we need to analyze the survey.

Please indicate your citizenship (click all that apply).

American OR Canadian Or British

Another Country in Western Europe

Australia OR New Zealand

Egyptian

Lebanese

Another Country in the Middle East/Arab World/GCC

Other, please specify

Please indicate your primary spoken language:

English

Arabic

French

Fluently Bilingual: English and Arabic

Fluently Bilingual: Arabic and French

Fluently Trilingual: Arabic, French and English

Other

Please indicate your strongest ethnic identification:

African American

Anglo-American

European-American

Hispanic-American

Native-American

Western European

Egyptian

Lebanese

Arab/Middle Eastern

South American/Caribbean/Central American

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other

Please indicate where you obtained your college or university degree:

A university in North America

A university in Western Europe, Australia or New Zealand

A university in the Middle East or Arab world

Other, please specify

Please indicate where you obtained your teaching certification or teacher preparation/training:

North America

Western Europe, Australia or New Zealand

Middle East or Arab world

Other, please specify

Please indicate the number of years you have lived, or taught and worked, in a Middle Eastern country, or country in the Arab World:

0-2

2-5

5-10

10 or more

Ever since I became a teacher

All my life

Please indicate your age range:

20-30 years old

31-40 years old

41-50 years old

51 years old or older

Please indicate your gender:

Male

Female

APPENDIX C

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II, Form C, Modified Survey
(Arabic Version)

To fulfill the copyright conditions of the Center for Advanced Studies in Management, only 1 item per subscale for both self-ratings and teacher perceptions-ratings from the modified ROCI-II instrument is displayed. The original modified ROCI-II instrument has 56 items in total: 28 items to measure the teacher's own conflict style and 28 items to measure the teachers' perceptions on how parents handle conflict.

خطاب دعوة وموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة

زميل ESOL العزيز،

إن فهم الطريقة التي يتعامل بها الناس من مختلف الثقافات مع الصراع هو موضوع هام جداً للمدارس الدولية. نظراً لأنني طالبة في مرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة ليهاي فإنني أقوم بإجراء دراسة لفهم أساليب الصراع عند الآباء والمدرسين في مدارس ESOL. سوف يسمح لك النقر على الرابط الموجود في نهاية رسالة البريد الإلكتروني هذه بالدخول إلى استطلاع الرأي للمشاركة في الدراسة. سوف تساعدني مشاركتك في جمع البيانات لكي أعرف المزيد عن الصراع في بيئات المدارس الدولية، بما في ذلك الصراع الذي قد يحدث في مدارسنا. إن مشاركتك هي تطوعية تماماً ولن يتم الكشف عن اسمك. ويمكنك أن تخرج من الدراسة في أي وقت. إذا وافقت على المشاركة فإن العملية ستتم كما يلي:

1- اتبع الرابط الموجود أدناه للوصول إلى موقع Zoomerang على الإنترنت. استطلاع الرأي مكون من ثلاثة أجزاء يمكن استكمالها في أقل من 20 دقيقة.

2- لن يتم الكشف عن هويتك إذا شاركت في الدراسة. وسيتم جمع إجاباتك بواسطة برنامج Zoomerang على شبكة الإنترنت. سيتم تحليل الإجابات على استطلاع الرأي ولن يتم بأي طريقة الكشف عن هويتك.

3- أداة استطلاع الرأي هذه التي ستقوم بملئها تسمى The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II وقد تم استخدامها في دراسات بحثية منشورة أخرى.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة عن هذه الدراسة يرجى الاتصال بي على mgk205@lehigh.edu. وسوف يكون الدكتور "رون يوشيدا" من جامعة ليهاي متاحاً أيضاً للإجابة على أسئلتك إذا رغبت في ذلك وعنوان البريد الإلكتروني الخاص به هو rky2@lehigh.edu. وإذا أردت التحدث إلى شخص آخر من الباحثين فإنني أشجعك على الاتصال بـ "سوزان ديسيدور" على (sus5@lehigh.edu) 758-3020(610) أو "تروي بوني" على (tdb308@lehigh.edu) 758-2985(610) من مكتب البحوث والبرامج المدعومة بجامعة ليهاي. وسيتم الحفاظ على سرية جميع التقارير أو المراسلات.

آمل أن تعطينا لحظة من وقتك لمساعدتنا في هذا المجهود! مع شكري وامتناني

ميشيل كليس

طالبة في مرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة ليهاي

مدير المدرسة الأمريكية الدولية في قبرص

بفتح المربع المنسدل والنقر على Yes, take me to the survey (نعم، خذني إلى استطلاع الرأي) فأنت تبدي موافقتك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.
بعد النقر على yes (نعم) سيتم أخذك إلى الصفحة الأولى من استطلاع الرأي.

نعم، خذني إلى استطلاع الرأي

القسم 1: ما هو أسلوب الصراع لديك؟

يرجى الإشارة إلى مستوى موافقتك على كل عبارة. حاول استرجاع أكبر عدد ممكن من مواقف الصراع أثناء تقييم تلك العبارات. يرجى وضع علامة على دائرة واحدة لكل عبارة.

1. أثناء حدوث أي صراع، أحاول بوجه عام تلبية احتياجات الشخص الآخر.
2. أثناء حدوث أي صراع، أحاول أن أتجنب ممارسة الضغوط على شخصي وأحاول الإحتفاظ بالصراع لنفسي.
3. أثناء حدوث أي صراع، أحاول دمج أفكاري مع الشخص الآخر للوصول إلى قرار مشترك.
4. أثناء حدوث أي صراع، أستخدم نفوذي لكي يقبل الطرف الآخر أفكاري.
5. أثناء حدوث أي صراع، أستخدم سياسة "الأخذ والعطاء" حتى يمكن التوصل إلى حل وسط.

القسم 2: ما هو رأيك في الطريقة التي يتعامل بها الآباء العرب في الصراع مع المدرسين؟

يرجى توضيح مستوى موافقتك على كل عبارة عند الإجابة على الطريقة التي ترى أن الآباء العرب (المصريين أو اللبنانيين أو الخليجيين أو أي مواطن عربي آخر) في مدرستك يتعاملون بها في الخلاف أو الصراع مع المدرسين. استخدم خبراتك للاستنتاج من أو استرجاع أي موقف في مدرستك.

حتى وإن كنت غير متأكد يرجى تقديم أفضل تخمين لديك في عملية التقييم. يرجى وضع علامة على دائرة واحدة لكل عبارة.

1. الآباء العرب عادة ما يحاولون تلبية احتياجات المدرسين.
2. الآباء العرب يحاولون تجنب أن يمارس ضغط عليهم ويحاولون الاحتفاظ بصراعهم مع المدرسين لأنفسهم.
3. الآباء العرب يحاولون دمج أفكارهم مع المدرسين للتوصل إلى قرار مشترك.
4. الآباء العرب يستخدمون سلطتهم لاتخاذ قرار لصالحهم.
5. الآباء العرب يستخدمون سياسة "الأخذ والعطاء" حتى يمكن التوصل إلى حل وسط.

القسم 3: معلومات ديموغرافية وأساسية

يرجى الإجابة على جميع الأسئلة لمساعدتنا في الحصول على البيانات التي نحتاج إليها لتحليل استطلاع الرأي.

يرجى تحديد جنسيتك (انقر على كل الإجابات المناسبة).

أمريكي أو كندي أو بريطاني
دولة أخرى في غرب أوروبا
أستراليا أو نيوزيلندا
مصري
لبناني
دولة أخرى في الشرق الأوسط/ العالم العربي / الخليج

آخري، حدِّدها

يرجى تحديد لغتك الأولى.

الإنجليزية
العربية
الفرنسية
أتحدث لغتين بطلاقة: الإنجليزية والعربية
أتحدث لغتين بطلاقة: العربية والفرنسية
أتحدث ثلاث لغات بطلاقة: العربية والفرنسية والإنجليزية
أخرى

يرجى تحديد أقوى هوية عرقية لك

أمريكي أفريقي
أمريكي إنجليزي
أمريكي أوروبي
أمريكي أسباني
أمريكي أصلي
من أوروبا الغربية
مصري
لبناني
عربي/الشرق الأوسط
من أمريكا الجنوبية/ من منطقة الكاريبي/ من أمريكا الوسطى
آسيوي/جزر الباسيفيكي
أخرى

يرجى تحديد المكان الذي حصلت منه على مؤهلك الجامعي:

جامعة في أمريكا الشمالية
جامعة في أوروبا الغربية أو أستراليا أو نيوزيلندا
جامعة في الشرق الأوسط أو العالم العربي
آخر، حدِّده

يرجى تحديد المكان الذي حصلت منه على شهادة التدريس أو شهادة إعداد المعلم

أمريكا الشمالية
أوروبا الغربية أو أستراليا أو نيوزيلندا
الشرق الأوسط أو العالم العربي
آخر، حدِّده

يرجى تحديد عدد السنوات التي عشتها أو قمت بالتدريس والعمل فيها في إحدى دول الشرق الأوسط أو العالم العربي.

0 - 2
2 - 5
5 - 10
10 أو أكثر
منذ أن أصبحت مدرساً
طيلة حياتي

يرجى تحديد مرحلتك العمرية

20 إلى 30 سنة
31 إلى 40 سنة
41 إلى 50 سنة
51 سنة أو أكثر

يرجى تحديد نوعك

ذكر
أنثى

APPENDIX D

Proposal Letter to the ESOL Organization

Dear Mr. Walid Abushakra, Superintendent of ESOL Schools

Since beginning my career with ESOL 10 years ago, I have developed an interest in understanding the complexities of intercultural conflict in the American and international school setting. As a Doctoral candidate at Lehigh University, under the Supervision of Dr. Ron Yoshida, I am now conducting a study that will investigate how teachers perceive the way parents from a culture different from their own handle conflict. Specifically, I will be asking three culturally distinct groups of teachers working in ESOL schools about their perceptions of their host country students' parents' style for handling conflict. If I can determine teacher expectations for their interactions with parents from Egypt, Lebanon and other places in the Arab world, we may be able to help them become more interculturally aware and sensitive in these interactions.

I am requesting the assistance of ESOL in this study by providing me access to all the Heads of Schools in the organization (with the exception of Cyprus), and your encouragement of your teachers' and Heads of Schools' voluntary participation.

I am requesting that all teachers in the ESOL schools participate. I will email the Heads of Schools with the purpose of the study, directions for how to participate, how to communicate my study with their respective teachers, and two versions of the electronic surveys (one in English and one in Arabic). ESOL Teachers' participation to complete the survey will require approximately 18-20 minutes. Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study in accordance with the *Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects* (Federal Register, 1991) and the *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants* (APA, 1982).

Data will be reported with no identification of individuals or ESOL schools. ESOL teacher participation is strictly voluntary and completely confidential. To indicate your willingness to participate in the study, please email me at mgk205@lehigh.edu. Your positive response by email will serve as your consent to provide me with access to the ESOL Heads of Schools and ESOL teachers. Please retain this letter for your reference and information about informed consent.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me directly in Cyprus on my mobile phone 357.97671793. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Ron Yoshida at Lehigh University 610.758.6249. Any problems or concerns that may result from ESOL's participation in this study may be reported to Office of Research, Lehigh University 610.758.3024.

With sincere appreciation,

Michelle Kleiss
Director of the American International School in Cyprus (ESOL)
Candidate for Doctor of Education, Lehigh University

APPENDIX E

Superintendent's Letter to all ESOL Heads of Schools

Dear ESOL Heads of Schools

Our ESOL colleague, Mrs. Michelle Kleiss, Director of the American International School in Cyprus, is conducting a Doctoral dissertation study in May 2011. I am writing to communicate my support for her request to use the ESOL teachers as her sample population.

Under the Supervision of Lehigh University, she will be conducting a study investigating how teachers perceive the way parents from Egypt, Lebanon and other countries in the Arab world handle conflict. Teachers working in ESOL schools will be asked about their perceptions of their host country's students' parents' style for handling conflict. The benefits of participating in this study are many. If we are able to determine teacher expectations for their interactions with parents from the Middle East and Arab region, we may be able to help our teachers become more interculturally aware and sensitive in their interactions.

Please support Michelle by providing her with full access to all your teachers and by encouraging them to voluntarily participate in her study.

Michelle will be contacting you to communicate the instructions and directions for your teachers' participation. She has assured ESOL that strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study in accordance with the *Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects* (Federal Register, 1991) and the *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants* (APA, 1982).

Data will be reported with no identification of individuals or particular ESOL schools. ESOL teacher participation is strictly voluntary. Please retain this letter for your reference and information about informed consent.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Michelle Kleiss directly in Cyprus on her mobile phone 357.97671793. You may also contact her advisor Dr. Ron Yoshida at Lehigh University 610.758.6249. Any problems or concerns that may result from ESOL's participation in this study may be reported to The Office of Research, Lehigh University 610.758.3024.

With sincere appreciation,

Mr. Walid Abushakra, Superintendent of ESOL Schools

APPENDIX F

Email letter to all ESOL Heads of Schools

Dear ESOL Heads of Schools Colleagues

The topic of inter-cultural conflict is very important for all of us to better understand the complexities of our international school culture and environment. By now you have received Mr. Walid Abushakra's consent letter providing the purpose of this study and his permission carry out my study with the ESOL teacher sample population. I thank you in advance for your support with my study.

Over the next two weeks I will be contacting you to determine a date in May when you will be able to read aloud a brief statement written by me at the completion of one of your faculty meetings. The statement will take 2-3 minutes to read.

The following day, I will ask that you email the following links to your faculty:

(link to be provided) in English
(link to be provided) in Arabic

Upon entering the site, my cover letter will appear. The cover letter will explain the purpose of and directions needed for participating in my study. An agreement box will appear at the end of the cover letter. The box will state that the participant agrees she/he has read the instructions, understands the study and consents to participate in the study. Upon clicking the agreement box, the teacher participant will be taken to the online survey.

The survey will take approximately 18-20 minutes to complete. Teachers will be given 10 school days to participate in the survey. At the end of that time period, I will be asking you to send out a reminder that the survey will remain available for 5 additional school days. At the conclusion of 15 school days (approximately 3 weeks), I will close the survey and begin data analysis.

Thank you once again for your support and assistance in allowing me access to your teachers.
If you have any questions about the study please feel free to contact me in Cyprus at 357 97671793, or by email at mgk205@lehigh.edu

I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Michelle Kleiss
Director of the American International School in Cyprus (ESOL)
Candidate for Doctor of Education, Lehigh University

APPENDIX G

Read-aloud Statement for Faculty Meeting

Heads of Schools will read aloud the following statement:

"*Michelle Kleiss, the Director of the American International School in Cyprus (ESOL) is a Doctoral candidate at Lehigh University. She has designed a dissertation study investigating different styles of conflict found in our ESOL American and British International Schools. She is requesting our participation. She would like ALL teachers to participate.*

ESOL is consenting to the study. However, the study is voluntary and you can wish to decline to participate if you like.

Your role in this study will be to complete a three-section survey. At no time will your name be requested.

1) *The first section of the survey asks you questions about your own personal conflict style.*
2) *The second section of the survey asks you to respond the way you think a parent from the Arab world, such as Egypt, Lebanon, the Gulf States, or other ethnically Arab countries, would respond.*
3) *The third section asks you to answer some basic demographic questions.*

Your participation in the survey will require approximately 18-20 minutes.

The topic of inter-cultural conflict is very important for all of us to better understand the complexities of our international school culture and environment. Thus, the benefits of this study are many. I encourage you to participate and assist Michelle in her research.

As of tomorrow [date to be entered], two surveys will be available to you (1) in English, (2) and one in Arabic. You may choose your language preference. The survey will be open for 15 school days."

Michelle Germaine Kleiss
AISC, 11 Kassou Street, Nicosia
PO Box 23847, 1686, Cyprus
michellekleiss@hotmail.com

Personal Information

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Date of Birth: August 15, 1970
Place of Birth: Toronto, Canada
Citizenships: Canadian/Dutch
Parents: Johannes & Germaine Kleiss

Degrees

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Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership
Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA., USA   January, 2012

Master of Education, School Administration and Supervision K-12
Bowie State University, University System of Maryland, MD., USA   June, 2003

Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education
The American University, Washington DC., USA   May, 1994

Professional Experience

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Head of School
The American International School in Cyprus   2009 - Present

Middle School Principal
The American International School in Egypt   2007 - 2009

Head of School
Asir Academy, Khamis Mushayt, Saudi Arabia   2003 - 2007

Director of Early Childhood Center
The American International School in Egypt   2001 – 2003

International Teaching Experience:
Bavarian International School, Munich, Germany   1999 - 2001
American School of Campinas, Sao Paulo, Brazil   1997 - 1999
International School of Sosua, Dominican Republic   1994 - 1997