THESIS

RESIDENCE HALL DIRECTORS' CONFLICT STYLE

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated how experience, personality and culture influence a residence hall director's conflict management style by having RHDs complete self-assessments that were administered through the website Survey Monkey. The participants were RHDs from various colleges and universities from across the United States who were chosen by both purposive and snowball sampling methods. The study hypothesized that RHDs would employ a collaborating approach to conflicts. The results supported the hypothesis, and RHDs predominately do employ a collaborating approach to conflicts. The results show that experience is significantly and negatively related to Avoiding; only Conscientiousness is significantly related to the Dominating conflict style with Neuroticism approaching a significant correlation to Dominating. Finally, culture was shown not to be significantly related to any conflict style. The results are important because they will help in the development of conflict management trainings for university housing employees—particularly RHDs. The more information hall directors have regarding how they are influenced when it comes to conflict the more effective conflict managers they can be. Additional research should look at how RHDs utilize their conflict management styles within their professional relationships as well as with their student staff members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Every day residence hall directors (RHD) are faced with managing conflicts. Whether the conflict arises as a result of resident, staff, or departmental issues, the RHD is responsible for handling each individual situation. RHDs are expected to have knowledge in several areas such as supervisory practices, crisis invention strategies and student development theory and have the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from a vast array of culturally diverse backgrounds (Northern Arizona University, 2009).

In general, RHDs are employed for the full twelve month year and report to area coordinators. They are responsible for the "total administration and operation of a residential community" (NAU 2009 n.p.). RHDs better living environments through student and staff development, resident outreach, community building, administrative organization, and attention to facilities. Specifically, RHDs are responsible for hiring, training, supervising, and evaluating resident assistants (RA), and in some cases, graduate residence hall directors (GRHD). RHDs attend and assist in facilitating departmental training sessions, respond to staff concerns as they arise and provide staff members with positive ongoing constructive feedback. With regards to residents, RHDs are expected to counsel, advise, and provide appropriate referrals if the residents are in need of professional services; they handle emergency or crisis situations and apply conflict management skills and counseling techniques when responding to students in crisis situations. They are also required to be familiar with the rules and regulations of the residence life department for which they work and are expected to carry out the proper sanctions for resident infractions.

RHDs are expected to become acquainted with and interact with students from a variety of age groups and social backgrounds in order to provide them with personal and administrative support when necessary. The initiation of change along with the development and implementation of new ideas and concepts in regards to event planning, creating programs, budget spending, and staff involvement on campus is also an expected duty of the RHD so that the quality of life within their residence hall is improved. RHDs are also responsible for carrying out several administrative tasks such as maintaining office hours, serving as a liaison for the maintenance and custodial staff (where applicable), touring and inspecting the facilities to ensure building safety and security, and providing on-call coverage for the university campus, among other tasks. RHDs preferably have a Master's degree in areas such as Student Affairs, Student Counseling, Higher Education, or other related fields as well as experience working within a residence hall. Specific qualifications are, however, subject to the university's discretion. Despite all of the expectations and job requirements, RHDs spend the vast majority of their time fostering relationships with their staffs and residents and trying to maintain a conflict-free environment.

RHDs are not just "directors." The position encompasses many different roles that play out on a daily basis. They are responsible for keeping their staffs motivated, helping to produce work satisfaction, and cultivating good management-employee relationships among other roles. Understanding how conflict styles affect these job roles is crucial to the overall operation of a residence hall. The residence hall environment fosters conflict as defined by Barki and Hartwick (2004), "a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals" (p. 234). RHDs frequently handle situations in which residents are in clear violation

of housing regulations, such as noise and alcohol infractions, pet violations, and situations as simple as burning a candle. When RAs are unable to manage conflicts between or among roommates, the RHD takes over in an effort to help find common ground for the involved parties. According to Gibson (1995), roommate conflict is "one of the most common experiences college students share" (p. 28). Although seen as a mediator in roommate conflicts, the RHD's role is to foster a setting in which the conflict becomes constructive rather than destructive. This is achieved through conversation and an open forum. Gibson (1995) also states that "the help students do or do not receive and the measure of success they have in resolving roommate conflicts can impact their approaches to future conflicts" as well as help increase their "understanding of the responsibilities inherent to roommate and other interdependent relationships" (p. 28). RHDs are expected to assess the issues at hand in roommate conflicts and utilize a style that will set the tone for the interaction.

Aside from noisy residents and minor roommate disagreements, RHDs handle more serious conflicts that involve residents harming themselves and/or others, drug abuse, or even relational problems that affect other residents such as domestic violence. In the case of residents harming themselves or others, using Barki and Hartwick's (2004) definition of conflict, RHDs represent an interdependent party that experiences a negative reaction to a perceived disagreement and interference with the attainment of their goals. A goal of an RHD is to keep residents as safe as possible while fostering an environment for personal growth. When a resident harms themselves, they essentially interfere with that goal of the RHD and the impending conflict must be managed so as to minimize future situations.

Defining conflict

Conflict is not easily defined because it can be used broadly or specifically. Conflict and the way in which we manage it are fluid processes, and for years, researchers have referred to the subject as "negative and destructive" (Tjosvold, 2006, p 87) thus attaching a tinge of fear to having and/or participating in conflict. Conflict traditionalists believe that not only is conflict negative, but in an organization, a responsibility of managers is to eliminate any and all conflict (Robbins, n.d., p 2) because of the negative connotation and sentiment. Desivilya and Yagil (2005) write that "conflict engenders some degree of stress, frustration, and tension thereby creating unpleasant feelings or disrupting a positive emotional atmosphere" (p. 59).

Traditionally, conflict has been defined as arising from "opposing interests involving scarce resources and goal divergence and frustration" (Tjosvold, 2006, p. 88), and although there are multiple definitions of conflict, many related, they can be separated into two distinct categories: incompatible goals and opposing interests that interfere with goal attainment; the distinction lies with intent to interfere rather than simply holding opposing views. Researchers defining conflict as incompatible goals also note that, while parties care about the involved components or concerns, they are also aware that individual goals cannot be attained simultaneously (Kilmann, 1974; Rubin et al. 1994; K. Thomas, G. Thomas, and Schaubhut, 2007).

Conflict has also been thought to arise in mixed-motive relationships in which people have both competitive and cooperative interests which can lead to the use of intentional interference and allows for the second type of conflict definition. Robbins (n.d.) calls a conflict "any kind of opposition or antagonistic interaction between two or more parties" (p.1). Lewicki, Saunders, and Minton (1997) define conflict as "the interaction of interdependent people who

perceived incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals" (p. 15). Although Tjosvold (2006) argues that involved parties are responsible for deciding if a conflict does in fact exist, rather than a definition deciding, researchers who include interference as a component of conflict also claim that each party *perceives* that there is a disagreement. An important note is that participants in a conflict are interdependent (Thomas, 1976; Donohue and Kolt, 1992; Barki and Hartwick, 2004).

Not only do researchers define conflict as either incompatible goals or having an element of interference, there is also considerable debate regarding whether or not to define conflict on a broader spectrum or to keep the definition as specific as possible. Pondy (1967) argues for defining conflict more broadly because, as he claims, conflict is a dynamic process. He states that conflict is a sequence of episodes that participating parties may not be aware of any involvement in, but at the same time, conflict refers neither to "its antecedent conditions, nor its individual awareness, nor its certain affective states, nor its overt manifestations, nor its residues of feeling, precedent, or structure" (p. 319). While not offering a concrete definition but more of a general understanding, Pondy (1967) says that conflict is "not necessarily good or bad" but that it must be "evaluated in terms of individual and organizational functions and dysfunctions" (p. 319).

Arguing that conflict has been defined too broadly over the years as opposing interests and divergent goals, Tjosvold (2006) identifies two deficiencies with using that definition. First, whether or not people have competitive goals is not realistic because, as Tjosvold (2006) states, "not every conflict involves perceived divergence of interest or goals" (p. 89). He also claims that the involved parties decide if there is opposition, not the definition (p. 89). Second, defining conflict as "opposing interests" makes managing conflict difficult because the assumption that

the conflict "involves incompatible goals" is already made and by making that assumption, creative solutions are more difficult to employ (p. 90).

Aiming for a more specific definition, Deutsch (1973) defined conflict as "incompatible activities; one person's actions interfere, obstruct or in some way get in the way of another's action" (p. 10). According to Deutsch, incompatible activities can happen in both cooperative and competitive circumstances, and conflict management processes that are likely to occur will be "strongly influenced by the context within which the conflict occurs" (p. 10). Tjosvold (2006) writes that "conflict does not just happen nor does conflict escalate by itself" as people often assume (p. 91). He argues that "people control conflict" as opposed to the older view of conflict controlling the people involved (p. 91). Tjosvold also claims that, by assuming people involved in conflict have incompatible goals and incompatible activities, the conflict becomes framed and approached competitively, thus disrupting participants' abilities to cooperatively negotiate their conflict (p. 92). Regardless of how researchers think conflict should be defined many such as Pondy (1967) and Tjosvold (2006) say that not only is conflict inevitable but conflict is also "potentially highly constructive" (Tjosvold, 2006 p. 92). In order to accomplish constructive conflict, Tjosvold calls for organization leaders to step back from being "strong, decisive decision-makers who end conflict" and take on a role that "nurtures cooperative relationships and conflict among employees" (p. 92).

Tjosvold's (2006) approach is particularly important to an RHD's role because, while the RHD position requires firm decision making, they are expected to nurture cooperative relationships (Deutsch, 1973, p. 22) among their staff members and residents.

Types of Conflict

Conflict can be broken down into narrow or broad definitions, but it also can be separated by type: cognitive and affective (Mooney, Holahan, and Amason, 2007). Mooney et al. (2007) define cognitive conflict as discussing and debating various preferences and opinions which generally forces accommodation. These discussions can lead to better team decision making by forcing participants to adapt to and understand other points of view (Schweiger, Sandberg, and Rechner, 1989). Affective conflict, however, involves personal issues such as personality clashes or a struggle for power (Jehn, 1995). Baron (1984) described affective conflict as "what starts as a rational exchange of opposing views deteriorates into an emotion-laden exchange . . . in which strong negative feelings are aroused" (p. 272). Amason (1996) calls affective conflicts dysfunctional in that they distract team members from their goals while simultaneously diminishing the quality of the team's decisions and producing lower satisfaction. Mooney et al. (2007) write that cognitive conflict promotes the exchange of ideas and improves decision making within a team by encouraging team members to understand and accept the decision once it has been made, whereas affective conflict allows for the existence of power struggles and personal incompatibilities on a team (p. 734).

The distinction of cognitive and affective conflict is important because RHDs work with teams comprised of people from different backgrounds and experiences which encourages the formation of team-breaking conflicts. When working with diverse groups, an RHD's style of conflict management can potentially affect the group's dynamics. Mooney et al. (2007) studied how cognitive and affective conflict affect teams. They hypothesized that cognitive conflict would be positively related to team, task and organizational attributes where team attributes include the size, functional diversity and member turnover (p. 737) and where task attributes are

interdependence, clarity of the task and time constraints (p. 738). Organizational attributes are cultural norms and reward-based structures (p. 740). Mooney et al. (2007) also hypothesized that affective conflict would be triggered as a result of a positive relationship to cognitive conflict (p. 742).

The researchers gathered data from 94 project teams. The teams worked for 79 different companies in the New York metropolitan area in eight separate industries. Data was collected through two survey instruments: a team information sheet and a team member survey. The information sheet was filled out by the team leader and was used only for "objective, descriptive data" about the team and the project. The team member survey was filled out by everyone voluntarily participating in the study. The survey was designed to collect information about team dynamics and team member interactions (p. 743), and at the end, the researchers reported a positive relationship between cognitive and affective conflict. Mooney et al. (2007) reported significant positive correlations in the relationships between organization and team based attributes (p. 746). Hypothesis 1 was supported in that the researchers found cognitive conflict related positively to affective conflict, and Hypothesis 2a was also supported showing that team size, functional diversity and member turnover were positively related to cognitive conflict (p. 748). Finally, Hypothesis 5 was also fully supported showing that behavioral integration moderated the relationship between cognitive and affective conflict (p. 750). Mooney et al. (2007) write that past conflict research claimed that cognitive and affective conflict occur together as a result of being supported by common determinants, and while this study's results concur with that view, their results also suggest an additional explanation: "cognitive conflict triggers affective conflict as a result of social judgment and attribution processes" (p. 750). In addition to the hypotheses discussed above, Mooney et al. hypothesized that cognitive conflict

would act as a mediator between affective conflict and the conflict attributes. This particular hypothesis was partially supported, and the researchers assert that their "findings support the view that affective conflict is, in some cases, cognitive conflict gone awry" (p. 751).

Mooney et al. (2007) stress the importance of managing conflict in a better way so that participants are more likely to be able to understand the way in which cognitive and affective conflict influence each other (p. 754). In residence halls, cognitive conflicts, which are discussions and debates about various preferences and opinions, often give way to affective conflicts when personal influences or emotions become involved. Mooney et al. (2007) found that this is, in fact, the case in most conflict situations. Therefore, the RHD should understand the actual cause of the conflict so as to better manage it through one of the conflict styles.

Conflict styles

"Conflict styles can be viewed as trait-like skills that contribute to performance . . . Conflict styles can also be interpreted as learned adaptations to the role demands" (Thomas et al. 2007, p. 152). However, while conflict style is often assumed to be a fixed a state, people are able to and do change their conflict style (Folger, Poole, and Stutman, 2009, p. 108). Nicotera and Dorsey (2006) say that a conflict style is a behavioral orientation that people can utilize when handling different conflict situations.

Thomas and Kilmann (1974) claim that an individual's conflict behavior can be categorized into two basic dimensions: assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness is defined as "the degree to which the style attempts to satisfy the party's concerns with respect to the issues," and cooperativeness is defined as "the degree to which the style attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns" (Folger et al., 2005, p. 214). Although Thomas and Kilmann (1974) discuss conflict styles as being either cooperative or assertive, Sillars, Coletti, Parry, and Rogers

(1982) identify four more characteristics for organizing styles: disclosiveness, empowerment of self or the other, activity and flexibility. Sillars et al. (1982) define disclosiveness as, "the degree to which a conflict style or tactic discloses information to the other party" (p 87). Empowerment is defined by Folger et al. (2005) as "the degree to which they grant the other party some control or power" (p. 214). Activity is defined by Riggs (1983) as the extent to which a person finds themselves involved with the conflict issues. Riggs (1983) also defined flexibility as the amount of movement that one side is willing to give in order to work out the conflict.

The major conflict styles identified by Thomas and Kilmann (1974) are described as follows. Competing is the combination of assertive and uncooperative. Folger et al. (2009) define competing as "the party places great emphasis on his or her own concerns and ignores those of others. This orientation represents a desire to defeat the other and compel him or her to do what the party wants" (p. 105). It is a power-oriented mode in which a person uses whatever power seems appropriate to win their position. To compete means "to stand up for your rights," trying to win, or defending a position that a person believes is correct. A competing conflict style is characterized by "placing an emphasis on one's own concerns and little on those of the other party" (Folger et al., 2009, p.111). Those utilizing a competing style generally attempt to control the situation and are unwilling to back down until their needs and wants are satisfied. A competing approach is considered a closed style. It is low to moderate in disclosiveness, meaning that conflict participants announce what they want but neglect to show their actual motives. Competers are highly active in the conflict and flexibility is relatively low because competers are aggressive when trying to attain their personal goals. Although competing can be used to find a quick resolution, it can cultivate other conflicts in the future (Folger et al., 2009, p. 111-112).

While a competing style is focused on one party achieving its goal, collaborating works to meet the needs of both parties. Collaborating is the combination of assertiveness and cooperativeness. Collaborators are involved with the conflict and actively engage in every aspect of the conflict in order to gain a better understanding of themselves and the other party in order to work toward a solution. Collaborating implies a moderate to high level of disclosiveness because a higher amount of information is needed from both sides in order to successfully manage conflict. Because collaboration requires high levels of information sharing, parties are expected to share "control over the emerging solution" (Folger et al., 2009 p. 117). Sharing control allows the collaborators to "empower others" without giving up their own power or control (Folger et al., 2009 p. 117). Collaboration is described as a party working "to attain a solution that will meet the needs of both parties" (Folger et al., 2009, p. 106). Collaborating people generally explore an issue in order to "pinpoint the underlying needs and wants of the two individuals" and usually involves exploring "a disagreement to learn from each other's insights or trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem (Folger et al., 2009 p. 117).

In order for collaboration to work, however, all parties must trust one another and be willing to relinquish their perceived power in the conflict situation. Although collaboration does not foster a necessarily creative environment for conflict management and because it can take a longer amount of time to reach a solution, the balance of power remains the most important aspect of a collaborating approach (Folger et al., 2009, p. 118).

However, accommodators do not have to balance power because an accommodator relinquishes all power to the other party. Accommodating is a combination of unassertiveness and cooperativeness. Here, an individual disregards their own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of the other person- the accommodator basically gives in to the demands of the other

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side. Accommodating leads to following another person's orders or yielding to another's point of view and this style can be employed when the parties are attempting to "improve a bad relationship or preserve a good one, especially when the issue is less important than the relationship" (Folger et al., 2009, p. 114). Self-sacrifice is also generally present with this conflict mode. Avoiding combines unassertiveness and uncooperativeness, meaning the person does not pursue his or her own concerns or the concerns of the other person. In these situations, the conflict is simply ignored and not dealt with like when an issue is put off until a better time or the person withdraws from a threatening situation (Folger et al., 2009). With this approach flexibility is high as is cooperativeness but self-empowerment, activity, disclosiveness, and aggressiveness are low. Folger et al. (2009 p. 115) describes accommodating as useful when one party is more concerned with a future relationship with the other side as opposed to what is causing the conflict. With the perceived lack of interest in the issues though, a party working with an accommodator runs the risk of assuming that s/he is "weak and compliant" which would allow the other party to take a stronger approach to managing the conflict, such as competing (Folger et al., 2009, p. 115).

Compromising, the fourth style, involves moderate flexibility from one or both parties in order to "rework their position" (Folger et al., 2009, p.115) as necessary but not to the point of being an accommodator or a collaborator. Folger et al. (2009) define compromising as a position that tries to find middle ground or a trade-off deal that both parties can benefit from in exchange for giving up some goals. The object of compromising is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties and can sometimes mean splitting the difference, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground solution (Folger et al. 2009, p. 116). Compromising is said to have moderate levels of both assertiveness and

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cooperativeness and falls between competing and accommodating; it "gives up more than competing but less than accommodating" (Kilmann, 2007) and addresses an issue more directly than avoiding, but does not explore it as deeply as collaborating (Kilmann, 2007). Compromisers show a moderate to high level of activity in the conflict management process as well as moderate to high levels of disclosiveness. In order to have a successful compromise, compromisers must be able to effectively balance power and empower both themselves and the other party. Compromise, however, is not free from faults. A successful compromise requires that parties give up a position in order to please the other side. This may result in dislike or grudges down the road. Another common issue with compromise is falling into the pattern and the expectation of compromise in any and all conflicts that may arise.

The final management style identified by Thomas and Kilmann (1974) is avoiding. Avoiders exhibit low levels of interest in their concerns and those of others involved in the conflict. In general, levels of disclosiveness, flexibility, cooperativeness, assertiveness are low, and activity levels are so low that avoiders may appear to be apathetic. Avoiders do not empower the other side and can, in fact, take power away by "denying the possibility of dealing with the conflict" (Folger et al., 2009 p. 112). Avoiding ignores conflicts, allowing them to become destructive. By skirting around issues, the non-confrontational party, the avoider, is likely to anger the person(s) who views the conflict as important. Although avoidance is negatively associated with conflict, it can actually be a healthier approach to managing situations. "It may enable [a] party to save face by never raising the conflict or when somebody is not ready to confront the conflict" (Folger et al,. 2009, p. 113).

Each conflict management style encompasses different characteristics, and the intensity level of each characteristic: disclosiveness, assertiveness, cooperativeness, empowerment,

activity and flexibility, helps determine which style is which. Depending on the conflict situation and how involved parties are behaving, people may find it easier to pick a style and use it consistently throughout the interaction; however, while utilizing one style may be easier, people are also able to flow seamlessly in and out of styles utilizing multiple styles in order to manage the conflict successfully. An inherent problem with identifying people strictly as "avoiders," "collaborators, "compromisers," "competers," or "accommodators" is that conflict styles can present themselves under the guise of another approach. For example, a roommate may appear to be collaborating when designing a roommate agreement, but she or he may actually be avoiding conflict. Effective and successful conflict managers, however, understand and recognize when and if a shift in approaches is needed.

Kilmann (2007) says that every person is capable of all five conflict-handling modes but that no one is capable of being characterized as "having a single style of dealing with conflict" (Kilmann n.p.). When handling conflict, all parties must be taken into account, but style "represents the 'mind-sets' that parties have in conflict" (Folger et al., 2009 p. 109); it is "not something people simply put on and forget about, but something they must perform" (Folger et al., 2009 p. 109). Kilmann (2007) also claims that the appearance of having only one conflict mode is the result of using a particular mode more efficiently than the others and relying on it more "heavily" than the rest regardless of its effectiveness. However, an individual's conflict behavior is the result of "both personal predispositions and the requirements of the situation" in which a person finds himself or herself (Kilmann, 2007, n.p).

Factors affecting conflict style

A person's conflict style is affected by a number of different factors--some that are developed over the course of time and some that are present situationally. Precursory factors

include experience, personality, culture, and training. Examining these precursory factors, Wood and Bell (2008) studied whether a person's personality type would predict his or her conflict management style, and Komarraju, Dollinger, and Lovell (2008) focused on the relationship between cultural dimensions and various conflict management styles at the individual level. These factors are especially important to look at within the RHD position because they are all fundamental pieces of what an RHD brings to his or her position and can potentially affect how the RHD works.

Precursory Factors

    Experience.

Experience is an important element in any job, but especially in an RHD's role. In a 2009 study regarding the relationship between job experience and the Big Five personality dimensions, Moscoso and Iglesias define job experience as "the number of years of previous experience on the same or similar job" (p. 240). Becker's (1962) Human Capital Theory, however, suggests that experience is not just the number of years but rather the amount of skills accumulated while on the job because the more skills an employee has the better his or her job performance will be. Becker theorized that newer employees would not perform as well due to their lack of skills or job experience.

Human Capital Theory also identifies two forms of human capital: education and organizational tenure; where tenure is the accumulation of experience. Tenure is identified as an implicit knowledge which is gained through amassed experiences while on the job and often leads to a person's success in his or her career (Bird, 1996; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003; Ng and Feldman, 2010). According to Ng and Feldman, (2010) the education aspect of the theory is a more general term because people acquire knowledge from multiple areas such as formal

schooling. The researchers also call organizational tenure "more specific" (p. 209) than education because when a person holds a particular job for longer periods of time s/he gains a more substantial understanding about the organizational setting, enabling employees to gain more practical and hands-on skills. Many researchers describe the term tenure as "one of the most frequently used operationalizations of work experience" (Ng and Feldman, 2010, p. 209; McDaniel, Schmidt, & Hunter, 1988; Quinones, Ford, & Teachout, 1995; Sturman, 2003) because employees with more years of experience tend to be more skilled in multiple duties within their positions.

Other research has identified experience as a means for learning because a person's experience contributes to the cognitive simplification of job routines or behaviors while at the same time allowing task familiarity to flourish (Schmidt, Hunter, & Outerbridge, 1986; Earley, Lee, & Hanson, 1990; Hunter & Thatcher, 2007). Schmidt and Hunter (1998) conclude that not only is experience a means for learning, but experience also measures the amount of opportunities for learning that an employee may have.

Because job experience is a way for employees to accumulate skills, looking at how experience relates to an RHD's conflict management style may also present a possible explanation for why some schools choose more experiential training over didactic. Experiential training is more process-oriented and depends on methods like role-playing, simulations or other structured exercises thereby providing RHDs with a foundation on which to build their knowledge bases. Some schools like Northern Arizona University rely on more experiential training so as to equip their RHDs with skills and experiences they can tap into throughout the duration of their job.

In studies focused on skills immigrants acquire before (pre-migration) and after (post-migration) they migrate, researchers found that an employee's human capital affects their economic incorporation. This is because skills learned on the job add to the education portion of Human Capital Theory, thus increasing a person's chances of being hired in similar roles because having those particular experiences and skills is highly valued by employers (Chiswick and Miller, 2009; Friedberg, 2000).

These studies and Human Capital Theory show us that experience helps an employee's job performance because the longer a person stays in one particular job role, the more opportunities s/he will have to learn new skills. With this in mind, looking at how an RHD's experience relates to his or her conflict management style is worthwhile.

Personality.

Wood and Bell (2008) studied whether or not an individual's conflict resolution style could be predicted from their personality characteristics. They defined personality based on the dimensions of extraversion/introversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and agreeableness based on the Five Factor Model Theory (FFM) known as "the Big Five."

In general, the five factors are defined using adjectives rather than concrete definitions. Hendriks, Hofstee, and De Raad (2002) write that the Big Five characterize a "broad level of personality structure, in which generality is emphasized at the cost of specificity" (p. 10). Characteristics of extraversion are assertiveness, sociability, gregariousness, and friendliness among others. Agreeableness is pleasantness, tenderness, sympathy, and understanding where conscientiousness is described by organization, efficiency, rationality, orderliness, and perfectionism. Neuroticism, often associated with a level of emotional stability, is described using words like impulse control and anxiety. Openness to experience, associated with intellect,

is described as ingenuity, depth, competence, and quickness among others (Hendriks, et al. 2002,

p. 40). Moving away from such broad adjectives, Costa and McCrae (1989) define neuroticism

as including the predisposition to experience negative emotions like anxiety, depression,

vulnerability, impulsiveness, and anger as well as other "cognitive and behavioral manifestations

of emotional instability" (p. 23). Extraversion includes experiencing positive emotions along

with sociability, activity, warmth, and dominance. Openness to experience is defined as

possessing imaginativeness, aesthetic sensitivity, ideas, values, depth of feeling, curiosity, and a

need for variety whereas Agreeableness includes trust, cooperation, altruism, and modesty. The

last of the five factors, conscientiousness, encompasses persistence, self-discipline, dutifulness, a

desire for achievement, organization and scrupulousness (p. 24). The Five Factor Model says that

a person's personality can be described using those five independent dimensions (Costa &

McCrae, 1992).

Wood and Bell (2008) used the four conflict styles laid out by Thomas and Kilmann:

competing, collaborating, avoiding, and accommodating, and hypothesized that collaboration

would be predicted by having high extraversion and high agreeableness; accommodation would

be predicted by low extraversion and high agreeableness; avoidance would be predicted by

predicted by low extraversion and low agreeableness; and competing would be predicted by high

extraversion and low agreeableness. Using a sample of 288 students from Colorado State

University, the researchers measured conflict management styles by utilizing the E (extraversion)

and A (agreeableness) subscales from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (Goldberg,

1999) and the Rosenthal-Hautaluoma Instrument (Rosenthal, 1983). The Rosenthal-Hautaluoma

Instrument measures conflict management styles according to the same dimensions used by the

Thomas-Kilmann mode but focuses on cooperativeness and uncooperativeness and assertiveness

and unassertiveness. Using a 1-5 Likert-type scale, respondents rated how closely the statements on the IPIP questionnaire related to their everyday behavior. On the Rosenthal-Hautaluoma Instrument, respondents were asked to choose one of the two statements which related to them more.

Wood and Bell found that agreeableness and extraversion were predictors for competing and accommodating conflict resolution styles. Agreeableness was found to be a predictor of collaborating but not extraversion, and extraversion was found to be a predictor of avoiding. Wood and Bell also found that as agreeableness increased the respondent's preference for accommodation increased as well and that as agreeableness decreased a preference for a competing conflict resolution style increased.

Knowing and understanding if and how an individual's personality will influence his/her conflict management style is important to RHDs because not only will it help in choosing a conflict management method that will better serve the residents, but it may also help with selecting a more balanced staff. Wood and Bell's study is also important because it shows that some people, while capable of exhibiting all five conflict resolution styles, have personalities that may incline them to choose a style over another, so style does not simply come from the individual's training or experience. With that in mind, it is also important to note that culture plays a role in helping to influence a person's conflict management style.

Individualism and collectivism.

One cultural group's shared values, norms and beliefs that teach members what is appropriate and correct behavior in interpersonal relationships is individualism-collectivism (Triandis, Betancourt, Iwao, Leung, Salazar, Setiandi, Seinha, Touzard, and Zaleski, 1993). Individualist cultures tend to regard self-enhancement, freedom and autonomy as highly

important while creating identities through personal goals, hedonism and achievements. Collectivist cultures, on the other hand, establish identities through an interdependent self as well as group goals. The essence of collectivism lies primarily in the importance of relationships and maintaining those relationships regardless of personal costs (Hui and Triandis, 1986).

Expanding on the research done by Blake and Mouton (1964), Thomas (1976), Rahim (1983a), Rahim and Bonoma (1979), Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995) and Triandis (1995, 1996) and in order to study how conflict management styles are affected by individualism-collectivism societal values, Komarraju, Dollinger, and Lovell (2008) reported that many studies over the years have documented the influence of cultural values in shaping individual's preferences for various conflict management styles. The authors claim that individualism-collectivism "provides a useful framework for identifying the norms guiding social relationships and exchanges across cultures. This is particularly true when trying to understand how individuals and groups handle difficult and unpleasant interpersonal situations experienced during conflicts" (Komarraju et al., 2008, p. 24). Their study also focused on the relationship between cultural dimensions and various conflict management styles at the individual level that involved interpersonal relationships with peers such as colleagues and friends.

Using Triandis (1996), Komarraju et al. (2008) hypothesized that vertical individualism would "explain most of the variance in use of the dominating style because vertical individualists have a greater concern for self and a desire to win" (p. 26). Also using Triandis and Gelfand (1998), Komarraju, et al. (2008) defines vertical as "an individual who is different from others within a group" (p. 22). The individual places importance on "status, competition across levels, achievement, and comparisons with others" (p. 22). Individualism exhibits qualities of

uniqueness, focusing on the costs and benefits of relationships, independence from the group, and fulfilling personal needs as opposed to the needs of the group among other qualities (p. 21), so that vertical individualists prefer to be "autonomous but like competing with others and strive to be the best" (p. 22).

Komarraju, et al. (2008), also hypothesized that horizontal collectivism would explain most of the variance in use of the obliging (accommodating) styles because horizontal collectivists show a great concern for others and almost none for self, where horizontal implies that an individual is like any other person in the group. Importance is given to "equality, egalitarianism between group members and the freedom to be one's self without comparison to others" (p. 22). Collectivism places importance on relationships and maintaining them, establishing identities through groups, having actions be guided by conformity and taking an interest in others among other qualities so that a horizontal collectivist identifies with the "in-group" completely and experiences equality with the other group members (p. 21-22). Vertical collectivism was hypothesized to explain most of the variance in use of the avoiding style because vertical collectivists show a desire to ignore conflict in order to maintain relationships. No specific hypotheses were made about individualism-collectivism as related to the compromising and integrating styles because previous studies provided an inconsistent pattern of results.

The researchers found that correlation results were consistent with their predictions and suggest "an interesting pattern of significant relationships between the four cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism and the five conflict management styles" (p. 27). The four cultural dimensions are individualism-collectivism, power-distance, masculinity-femininity, and uncertainty avoidance (p. 21). In the end, Komarraju et al. (2008) found that individuals from

different cultural orientations are likely to be different in their approach to resolving conflict situations because of the cultural values that people ascribe to that may guide them to a particular conflict management style over another one (p. 31).

Wang, Jing, and Klossek (2007) studied the relationship between demographic characteristics, job stress, and cognitive and affective conflict faced by Chinese top managers and how these types of conflict are resolved over multiple rounds of conflict situations. Using a questionnaire designed by the researchers, top managers ranked the conflict resolution styles they would prefer to employ given a certain conflict situation. Wang et al. (2007) found that age was negatively related to job stress and that more cognitive conflict was experienced with higher education levels. However, the most important finding, according to the researchers, was that the Chinese top managers were inclined to use a more collaboration centered conflict style to handle conflict situations, which was said to be inconsistent with Chinese culture (p. 89). This is because the Chinese tend to avoid conflict in order to maintain relationships. Collectivists feel a sense of duty to the group since identity is formed through group membership and the maintenance of relationships. Having a conflict resolution style that is inconsistent with a culture would appear to contradict the findings of Komarraju et al. (2008) who say that culture plays an important part when deciding what resolution style to use. This shows that while culture is important, it may not be the deciding factor when selecting a conflict management style.

Training.

While one may rely more on only one conflict management style, training can help equip a person with the tools necessary for determining if other styles will be more appropriate to the situation. Goldstein and Ford (2002) define training as "the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment" (p. 1), and in

order to gain all of the necessary skills, a considerable amount of time in training is often required (Whall, 2009). Osman-Gani and Zidan (2001) write that training methods tend to be didactic, experiential or a combination of both and according to Whall (2009), trainers are always looking for new ways to reassess and improve their methods in order to train.

However, training in this context is not easily measured. Blume, Ford, Baldwin, and Huang (2010) demonstrate this issue in their study regarding the effectiveness of training programs. In the study, Blume et al. (2010) discuss the "transfer problem" (p. 1067) associated with gaining knowledge through training programs; where transfer refers to learning how to react to a particular situation or task and how that knowledge influences how somebody would react to another type of situation or task (Blume et al., 2010). The researchers also discuss lateral transfer—skills broadly spread over a set of situations at the same level of complexity or difficulty versus vertical transfers—acquiring a single skill that affects a person's acquisition of more complex skills (Gagne, 1965). Blume et al. (2010) also point out the importance of separating content training from context training.

Although the amount, type, and content of training received by RHDs are important factors to discuss, for the purpose of this study, training will not be measured due to the complexity of the subject.

Precursory factors that influence conflict management style include experience, personality, culture, and training. RHDs, however, also encounter factors in conflict situations that may influence the conflict style the use**.**

Situational factors

While RHDs bring their experience, training, personality, and culture to their conflict management style, in the moment an RHD can also be affected by other influences. Ross,

Fischer, Baker, and Buchholz (1997) looked at the effect a pre-existing relationship would have on the style chosen by an RA, while Desivilya and Yagil (2005) focused on the emotions and perceptions of conflicts experienced by involved disputants.

Pre-existing relationships.

Looking at the use of the conflict resolution tactic mediation by resident assistants (RAs), who are developing their experience, Ross Jr. et al. (1997) hypothesized that high interpersonal hostility between disputants would cause the mediator to alter his/her mediation technique such as using pressing, asking nondirective questions, building rapport, or even utilizing fewer problem solving techniques. Ross Jr. et al. (1997) also hypothesized that having a friendship with one of the disputants would alter the technique used by the mediator. The authors designed their own questionnaire which depicted several versions of the same scenario commonly dealt with by RAs.

Using a final sample consisting of forty-eight responding RAs who worked at an upper Midwest regional university, the researchers found that disputant hostility and complainant-mediator relationship "significantly affected RA mediation strategies" (p. 699). A Chi square test showed that when hostility during the conflict was high, RAs were more likely to use nondirective techniques with both parties as opposed to only using them with the non-complainant when hostility was low. Friendship with the RA and the experience level of the RA had no significant bearing on the effects of the mediation, however, RAs who had friendships with a disputing party tended to avoid mediating the situation (p. 697). In general, the researchers came to three main conclusions. First, RAs do, in fact, mediate disputes rather than avoid them. Second, RAs sought to solve the underlying interests of the disputants while attempting to maintain good interpersonal relations between the disputants. This fits under Thomas-Kilmann's

definition of the conflict resolution mode of collaborating. Third, RAs were less likely to use "pressing" as a main strategy for solving the issues, opting, rather, for discussing interests at hand, building rapport, and suggesting compromises with both the complainant and the non-complainant parties. The researchers also found that, despite their predictions, high disputant hostility did not cause the RAs to hold separate meetings with the disputants.

Although this study looked at a conflict management tactic and its use by RAs, the results pertain to RHDs. RHDs are responsible for training their staffs in conflict management tactics and need to be able to step in when necessary. Understanding how the level of hostility or that of friendship between disputants and the RA is of particular importance to RHDs because part of the job is fostering relationships with residents and making sure that they, as a director, are providing a welcoming environment. With doing so, however, comes the possibility of forming friendships with residents who are part of a conflict that require mediation down the road.

Ross Jr. et al., (1997) came to three conclusions: RAs do mediate conflicts rather than avoid them; RAs looked to solve the underlying issues while maintaining good relationships with both sides of the conflict; and RAs opted for discussing issues and suggesting compromises for both parties. Pre-existing relationships, however, is not the only situational factor that can affect an RHD's conflict style.

Emotions.

Conflict is an emotionally defined and driven process that fundamentally alters a person's approach to managing the conflict (Brodtker and Jameson 2001 p. 263), and according to Desivilya and Yagil (2005) "little attention has been paid to factors guiding the choice of dispute resolution modes" (p. 56). Existing research on conflict management views styles as products of a "purely rational choice, thereby discounting the impact of the disputants' emotional states"

(Desivilya and Yagil, 2005, p. 56) where emotional states are divided into three groups: behavioral, the way in which people express an emotional reaction; physiological, how a person experiences emotion through his or her body; and cognitive, the perception and appraisal of a certain situation that prompted the emotional state (p. 57).

According to Desivilya and Yagil (2005), emotional states are thought to play a central role in a person's preference for a particular conflict management style, and at the same time task and relationship conflict is expected to affect a person's emotional state (p. 59). In a study aimed at trying to identify "factors underlying different preferences for conflict-management patterns" (p. 56), the researchers focused on the emotions and perceptions of conflicts experienced by involved disputants.

They hypothesized that positive emotions will be positively related to a preference for conflict management patterns that are collaborating, compromising, and accommodating; negative emotions will be positively associated with a preference of conflict management patterns that are competing and avoiding; and both task and relationship conflict will be positively associated with negative emotions, however, the association of relationship conflict with negative emotions will be stronger than that of task conflict (p. 59). Using a sample of 331 individuals on 69 different work teams, Desivilya and Yagil (2005) measured conflict management styles using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) (Rahim 1983); positive and negative emotions using the PANAS scale (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988); and conflict types, task and relationship, using a refined version of the Intragroup Conflict Scale (ICS) (Pearson, Ensley and Amason 2002) which was originally developed by Jehn (1992, 1994) (p. 60).

Collaborating and compromising conflict management patterns were positively related to positive emotions, and the first hypothesis was confirmed. Competing and avoiding styles were positively related to negative emotions where a competing style was also found to be positively related to positive emotions, and the second hypothesis was also confirmed. The third hypothesis, however, was only partially supported. Relationship conflict was positively associated with negative emotions, but task conflict was not related to negative emotions. While task conflict was not related to negative emotions, task conflict was directly related to competing and avoiding conflict management styles, and negative emotions were found to "mediate the effect of relationship conflict on conflict management styles" (p. 61). According to Desivilya and Yagil (2005), their results suggest that the type of conflict has a more "significant" effect on the choice of competitive styles than on cooperative styles in that a preference for conflict management styles, in comparison to non-confrontational orientations, are related to different factors. Emotional experiences are shown to be the "sole link" to collaborating and compromising (p. 64).

Although situational factors may influence an RHD's behavior in a specific conflict, this study focuses on the long term or precursory factors of experience, personality and culture and how an RHD's conflict management style is influenced by them.

Focusing on those precursory factors can be beneficial in understanding why people utilize certain conflict styles, and, while personality and culture have been shown to influence a person's conflict management style choice, these connections have not been investigated in a residence hall context.

Residence halls are a large part of a university, and the living experience can make or break a student's college career. With the cultivation of relationships in residence halls conflict

situations arise, and the director's job is to resolve or contain the matter as quickly and as fairly as possible. By studying the styles hall directors employ to handle conflict situations, and how those styles are related to experience, personality and culture we should be able to understand more about why RHDs use the styles they do.

Research question 1: What conflict management style is used more often by RHDs?

Hypothesis 1: Residence Hall Directors will employ predominately a collaborating style approach to conflicts.

Research question 2: What is the relationship between experience and conflict management style employed?

Research question 3: What is the relationship between the personality of the hall director and the director's conflict management style?

Research question 4: What is the relationship of RHD's culture to conflict management style?

METHODS

This study was designed to investigate how experience, personality and culture influence how a residence hall director's conflict management style by having RHDs complete self-assessments that were administered through the website Survey Monkey.

Participants

The participants were RHDs from various colleges and universities from across the United States and were chosen by both purposive and snowball sampling methods. A purposive sample is a group chosen specifically for the purpose of the study, while a snowball sample refers to gathering more participants who have been identified by others (Baxter and Babbie, 2004). Initially, I asked personal contacts at various institutions to complete the survey, if applicable, and then pass it along to their RHD colleagues in order to start the snowball effect. The initial purposive sample included current RHDs, assistant resident hall directors (ARDs) and GRHDs from Colorado State University, University of Northern Colorado, Northern Arizona University, San Diego State University, State University of New York (SUNY) Oswego, and the University of Washington. After a low response rate, I identified 130 more RHDs from twenty-one different institutions including: University of Nevada-Reno, Montana State University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, University of Missouri-Kansas City, University of Kansas, University of Puget Sound, Minnesota State University-Mankato, University of New Mexico, University of Nebraska, Southern Methodist University, and Northern State University and I sent the survey directly to the individual hall directors via email. (See Appendix A for the solicitation letter.)

In total, 135 RHDs were contacted, and 29 completed the survey on Survey Monkey for a response rate of 21.5%.

Of the 29 completed surveys, 10 indicated they were between the ages of 20-24 (34.5%), 13 were between the ages of 25-29 (45%), 3 were between the ages of 30-34 (10.3%), 2 were between the ages of 35-39 (6.8%), and only one identified themselves as being over 45 (3.4%). Sixteen participants were male and 13 were female (55% and 45% respectively). Twenty participants identified themselves as Caucasian (68.9%); four as white, but of Latino(a)/Hispanic descent (14%); three identified as Black/African American (10.3%); 1 as Indian American/Alaska Native (3.4%); and one participant identified as Other Asian (Pakistani, Hmong, Thai, Korean, etc.) *and* white, but of Latino(a)/Hispanic descent (3.4%). Lastly, of the 29 completed surveys, 10 participants had finished only a Bachelor's (34.5%) and 19 had completed their Master's (65.5%).

Measuring instruments

Hall (1969) recognized five separate types of behavior present during conflict: competing, accommodation, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising, and although definitions of conflict are known to change, the five styles identified have "proven to be a set of concepts for understanding conflict" (Folger et al. 2009, p. 106). The styles provide a basic vocabulary for those studying conflict. Even with this common vocabulary, however, researchers have developed at least five separate conflict style measuring instruments which include Hall's (1969) Conflict Management Survey, the Thomas and Kilmann (1974) Management-of-Differences (MODE) Survey, Rahim's (1983) Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (ROCI), and the Ross and DeWine (1988) Conflict Management Message Style Instrument.

Although the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE Instrument (TKI) has been the "leader" in conflict resolution assessment for more than thirty years (Kilmann 2007, n.p.), for the purpose of this study, the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) (1983) was used. Rahim states that the inventory can be used for basic research and for the diagnosis of interpersonal conflict handling styles among members of an organization (Rahim, 1983b, n.p.).

The ROCI–II is a 28 item questionnaire measuring conflict management styles and is designed to measure five independent dimensions of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: Integrating (IN), Obliging (OB), Dominating (DO), Avoiding (AV), and Compromising (CO) (Rahim, 1983b, n.p.) where obliging is the same as accommodating; dominating is the same as competing, and integrating is the same as collaborating. Rahim (1983a) found the ROCI-II to have construct validity within the five scales (IN, OB, DO, AV, CO) that were $\leq .40$ while the intercorrelations among the five scales ranged from -.03 - .33 (Rahim, 1983a, p. 371 & 372). The ROCI-II has internal consistency reliability with coefficient alphas that averaged between .72 and .77, and Rahim (1983a) writes that this reliability "compare[s] favorably with other existing instruments" (p. 375). I electronically administered the ROCI-II (questions 1-28; see Appendix B for the questionnaire) to participating RHDs, which allowed me to categorize the participants and answer research question one.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI-10) (questions 29-38) measures a person's personality in terms of five descriptors identified in the Five Factor Model (FFM): openness to new experiences, introversion/extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. The BFI is a self-report inventory that is designed to measure the personality dimensions and consists of short phrases which are answered using a 1-5 Likert scale. The abbreviated version contains ten items rather than the original 44. Through a series of studies, Rammstedt and John (2007)

determined that the BFI-10 produced sufficient discriminant and convergent validity (.11 and .44 respectively) with retest reliability of .72. According to Rammstedt and John (2007), the BFI-10 "offers an adequate assessment of personality" (p. 210).

The Auckland Individualism and Collectivism Scale (AICS) (Shulruf, Hattie, and Dixon, 2007) measures three dimensions of individualism: responsibility (acknowledging one's responsibilities for one's actions), uniqueness (distinction of the self from the other) and competitiveness (one's primary interest is striving for personal goals) as well as measuring two dimensions of collectivism: advice (seeking advice from persons close to one before making decisions) and harmony (seeking to avoid conflict) (p. 119). Shulruf et al. (2007) developed the AICS in order to combat the problems previous measures had, such as measurement bias associated with reference-group effect, responses dependent on context and even issues with reliability/validity (Seibold, 2009, p. 118).

The AICS (questions 39-68) consists of 30 questions that are answered using a 1-6 Likert scale. The reliability alphas for the dimensions of individualism (responsibility, uniqueness and competitiveness) are .73, .76, and .78 respectively while the dimensions of collectivism (advice and harmony) have reliability alphas of .77 and .71 respectively (Shulruf et al., 2007). Shulruf et al. (2007) report that the AICS showed factors reflective of individualism and collectivism and that the scale was able to differentiate between the two ethnic groups originally studied (Pakeha and Maori), but the scale's validity is restricted to the two ethnic groups sampled. The researchers call for more research to be done on the AICS. Despite this fact, the AICS is the best fit for this particular study because the scale focuses on *frequency* rather than agreement from the participant. By looking predominantly at the frequency of an action the likelihood that the results can be generalized is increased. "Frequency scales relate the prevalence of behavior or thought,

unlike agreement scales, which relate to comparisons of values and beliefs to those dominant in the sociocultural environment" (Shulruf et al., 2007, p. 387).

The questionnaire also included questions measuring years of experience as an RHD. These are closed questions answered using a five-point Likert scale and open questions. The questionnaire also provided two scenarios depicting a conflict situation that may occur with some frequency in a residence hall, and the RHD was asked to answer a series of questions regarding how s/he would manage the conflict situation. Finally, the RHD was asked to provide basic demographic information.

Although the questionnaire had 92 questions total, the questions were presented online in groups in such a way that they were easily and quickly responded to. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Before administering the questionnaire, I pilot tested it to find any issues that might arise and adjusted it accordingly. After data collection, I utilized SPSS programs FREQUENCIES and CORRELATION to analyze the data.

Role of the researcher

Prior to starting this research, I was a Resident Assistant and a Programming Liaison at two different universities, working closely with hall directors as a student staff member. After the completion of this research, I served as an Area Coordinator for Housing at a third university and now work closely with community directors as the Coordinator of Residential Services for Arizona State University. This background contributes to my interpretation of the results.

Research question 1 asked what conflict management style is used more often by residence hall directors and Hypothesis 1 stated that residence hall directors will employ predominately a collaborating style approach to conflicts. RHDs utilize collaborating as their conflict management style more often than others, and Hypothesis 1 was supported by the data collected. Collaborating was the most frequently used style (Mean = 4.1146, Standard Deviation = .44055). See Table 1.

Table 1: Conflict Style Frequency

	Collaborating	Avoiding	Dominating	Accommodating	Compromising
N Valid	36	36	36	36	36
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.1146	2.4063	3.0694	2.7118	3.1528
Std. Deviation	.44055	.64183	.76558	.54594	.67817
Minimum	3.25	1.25	1.50	1.25	1.38
Maximum	5.00	3.75	4.75	3.75	4.50

Research question 2 asked what is the relationship between experience and conflict management style employed. Experience is significantly related only to avoiding (r = -.481, p = .008), a negative relationship; that is the more experience an RHD has, the less likely they are to employ avoiding as their conflict style. See Table 2.

Table 2: Experience by Conflict Style.
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	Collaborating	**Avoiding**	**Dominating**

	Pearson Correlation	.002	-.481**	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.992	.008	.762
	N	29	29	29
How long have you been a residence hall director-in months		**Accommodating**	**Compromising**	
	Pearson Correlation	-.169	-.215	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.381	.263	
	N	29	29	

Research question 3 asked what is the relationship between the personality of the hall director and the hall director's conflict management style. In only one instance, an RHD's personality type is significantly related to his/her conflict management style. Conscientiousness is significantly related to dominating (r = .451, p = .014); however, neuroticism approaches having a significant correlation to dominating (r = -.364, p = .053). See Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Personality by Conflict Style
  *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

		Collaborating	Avoiding	Dominating
Conscientious	Pearson Correlation	.003	-.195	.451*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.986	.310	.014
	N	29	29	29
		Accommodating	**Compromising**	
Conscientious	Pearson Correlation	-.314	-.209	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.097	.276	
	N	29	29	

Table 4: Personality by Conflict style

		Collaborating	Avoiding	Dominating
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	-.053	-.033	-.364
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.786	.866	.053
	N	29	29	29
		Accommodating	**Compromising**	
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	-.006	.180	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.975	.349	
	N	29	29	

Research question 4 asked what is the relationship of a residence hall director's culture to conflict management style. Culture is not significantly related to any conflict style. However, collectivist cultural orientation approaches significance with collaborating (r = .350, p = .063). See Table 5.

Table 5 Culture by Conflict Style

		Collaborating	Avoiding	Dominating
ICAverage	Pearson Correlation	-.205	.157	.240
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.287	.416	.210
	N	29	29	29
		Accommodating		Compromising
	Pearson Correlation	.052		-.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.790		.363
	N	29		29
		Collaborating	Avoiding	Dominating
CCAverage	Pearson Correlation	.350	-.200	-.232
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.299	.225
	N	29	29	29
		Accommodating		Compromising
	Pearson Correlation	.123		.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.525		.507
	N	29		29

DISCUSSION

Collaborating is the conflict management style employed most often by residence hall directors likely because, according to their job descriptions, RHDs are expected to work with people of various backgrounds as well as promote collaborative living/learning environments. If RHDs do not model collaborative behavior themselves—particularly when handling conflict within the residence halls, conflicts among students can create negative and destructive living spaces. As Gibson (1995) states, "the help students do or do not receive and the measure of success they have in resolving roommate conflicts can impact their approaches to future conflicts" as well as help increase their "understanding of the responsibilities inherent to roommate and other interdependent relationships" (p. 28).

The next most frequently used style is Dominating. The nature of an RHD's work requires them to foster a team-centered environment; however, when working alongside students there are situations when an RHD will need to put "his or her foot down." Deutsch (1973) defined conflict as "incompatible activities" in so far as "one person's actions interfere, obstruct or in some way get in the way of another's action" (p. 10), and hall directors are responsible for making sure Resident K's actions do not interfere with Resident B's actions. Hall directors employ a Dominating or "competing" approach to conflict management in order to ensure that they maintain order within their communities. As defined by Folger et al. (2009), this style is power-oriented, and RHDs utilizing it are attempting to control the situation. When handling a policy violation, such as an alcohol infraction or a student's blatant disregard for quiet hours, there is little flexibility in what or how an RHD can remedy the situation.

Due to a director's natural inclination toward collaboration, it was not surprising to see Compromising as the third most used conflict style. Compromisers try to find middle ground, generally by proposing "deals" that parties can benefit from (Folger et al. 2009). The goal of utilizing a compromising style is to find an acceptable solution that will partially satisfy the involved parties, even if only temporarily. When RHDs compromise with residents, more often than not, the RHD is the one proposing or suggesting answers. Rather, a director should allow the student to consider the situation they are in carefully and offer a solution because, although compromising may fix or correct the circumstances momentarily, the student or students may not be committed entirely to the plan. A role of a director is to promote constructive conflict environments rather than destructive ones and, by giving residents the opportunity to participate in open discussions about their responsibilities to their community, RHDs are better able to create those constructive living environments. Residents become invested in their communities when they are able to contribute.

Avoiding was the least utilized management style. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) define avoiders as those who have low levels of interest both in their own interests and those of the others involved. Folger et al. (2009) write that not only do avoiders deny the possibility of dealing with conflicts (pg. 112), but they also allow conflicts to grow into deconstructive situations which can have an adverse effect on the all work hall directors do within residential communities. Although Folger et al. (2009) also claim that avoiding a conflict may actually be helpful for when "somebody is not ready to confront the conflict" (p. 113), a hall director should be the role model for residents.

RHDs are expected to lead by example, and although situations in residence halls are not static, utilizing avoidance as a main conflict management style violates the expectations of hall

directors: bettering living environments through student and staff development; community

building; becoming acquainted with and interacting with students from a variety of social

backgrounds; helping to produce work satisfaction; and cultivating good management-employee

relationships. As a result of this, RHDs are not likely to utilize avoidance in an effort to set an

example.

The results also showed that experience is negatively related to Avoiding. As hall

directors gain more work experience and handle new situations over time, they add to their

knowledge banks which act as resources to draw upon when conflicts arise. If a hall director

feels confident in their experience with policy violations or more situational conflicts, they are

less likely to avoid handling the issue. Experience is also negatively related to Avoiding because

hall directors are more inclined to be collaborators. The study showed, however, that it did not

matter how many years of experience an RHD had, they were most likely to utilize Collaborating

as their style.

Personality was related to conflict style in only one case. Conscientiousness was

significantly related to the Dominating conflict style and is described by organization, efficiency,

rationality, orderliness, and perfectionism. Conscientiousness may be related to the Dominating

conflict management style because a goal of a hall director is to maintain order in their

communities.

This is done by communicating community expectations, holding residents accountable

for actions which violate conduct codes, and building relationships with residents. By definition,

Conscientiousness involves organization, order, discipline, and rationality. Employing a

Dominating conflict style without utilizing Conscientiousness, hall directors risk alienating

residents and appearing too stringent. In a 2008 study using the four conflict styles laid out by

Thomas and Kilmann, Wood and Bell hypothesized that a competing (Dominating) conflict style would be predicted by the person having high extraversion and low agreeableness. Extraversion is defined as experiencing positive emotions, including dominance while agreeableness includes trust and cooperation (Costa & McCrae, pg. 24). Wood and Bell (2008), found that extraversion and agreeableness were predictors for competing and accommodating styles and that as agreeableness decreased, a preference for competing increased. However, exhibiting Conscientiousness allows hall directors to control situations through rationality by explaining the reasoning behind any repercussions for behavioral violations or situational conflicts. Using rationality supports a more dominating style because there is a justified "reason" for the implementation of the conflict style rather than an assumption by residents that the hall director is unsympathetic.

Neuroticism, often associated with a level of emotional stability, is described using words like impulse control and anxiety. Costa and McCrae (1989) define neuroticism as including the predisposition to experience negative emotions like anxiety, depression, vulnerability, impulsiveness, and anger as well as other "cognitive and behavioral manifestations of emotional instability" (p. 23). This personality style approaches having a significant relationship to the Dominating, or "competing", conflict style because, as defined by Folger et al. (2009), competers are active in the conflict and can be aggressive when trying to reach their personal goals. Additionally, a competer will attempt to control situations and will not back down until they are satisfied which may result in a perceived negative emotional environment.

A residence hall cultivates conflict as "a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals" (Barki and Hartwick, 2004, p.

234). Hall directors who identify as Neurotic and employ a Dominating conflict style may appear as overbearing, angry, and determined to make their point which can generate feelings of negativity and anxiety for residents "entering" into conflict with an RHD. Desivilya and Yagil (2005) write that "conflict engenders some degree of stress, frustration, and tension thereby creating unpleasant feelings or disrupting a positive emotional atmosphere" (p. 59). Although seemingly counter-productive to community-building and fostering positive environments, leaning on one's Neuroticism coupled with a Dominating approach may be useful when it comes to an alcohol policy violation, safety violation, or a security violation. In conflict situations such as these, it does not matter what the resident has to say. A hall director can put aside the feelings of the resident to get their point across; and in doing so, a hall director may come across as impulsive, angry, and emotionally unbalanced.

The final factor considered in this study was culture. Triandis et al. (1993) separate cultures into two categories: individualism and collectivism. A group's shared values, norms, and beliefs teach members what is appropriate and correct in interpersonal relationships. Individualist cultures regard self-enhancement, freedom, and autonomy as important whereas collectivist cultures establish members' identities through interdependent self and group goals. Hui and Triandis (1986) claim the core of collectivism is to maintain important relationships regardless of personal costs.

Komarraju et al. (2008) hypothesized that vertical individualism would "explain most of the variance in use of the dominating style because vertical individualists have a greater concern for self and a desire to win" (p. 26). Individualists place importance on "status, competition across levels, achievement, and comparisons with others" (p. 22); individualism exhibits qualities of uniqueness, focusing on the costs and benefits of relationships, independence from

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the group, and fulfilling personal needs as opposed to the needs of the group among other qualities (p. 21).

Komarraju et al. (2008) define horizontal collectivism as showing concern for others and placing importance on "equality, egalitarianism between group members and the freedom to be one's self without comparison to others" (p. 22). As such, collectivists strive toward establishing their identity through groups, having actions guided by conformity, taking an interest in others and identifying with the "in-group" completely by experiencing equality with other group members (p. 21-22). Vertical collectivists, on the other hand, show a desire to ignore conflict in order to maintain relationships.

When managing conflict, the goal of a hall director is not to avoid or ignore conflict in the interest of maintaining relationships nor is the role of a hall director to establish their professional identity through conformity and being a part of the "in-group." Komarraju et al. (2008), hypothesized that individualism would explain the use of a dominating conflict style because of the emphasis placed on a desire to win. Hall directors were found to employ a dominating style almost as often as a collaborative one. When handling conflicts that arise, particularly policy violations, the goal of a hall director is to "win" in the sense that a resident has been educated and understands that how to correct their behavior. Individualism is, in part, defined by evaluating the costs and benefits of a relationship and while upholding one's relationship with a resident is a significant duty for hall directors, the cost of doing so through collectivism as defined above outweighs any benefit to the community.

While hall directors were more likely to identify as an Individualist, they current study showed that there is no relationship between culture and conflict style. Although hall directors focus on building community and creating an environment that thrives on everybody working

together to accomplish goals, when it comes to handling conflict hall directors exhibit a key component of individualism; fulfilling personal needs. In doing so, they accomplish their goal of maintaining order within their halls.

Limitations

Contributing most to the limitations of this study is the sample size. Although the survey was sent to 135 participants, only 29 surveys were completed. This study relied on busy professionals taking enough time to complete a lengthy survey and passing it on to colleagues.

In addition, while there is not always an ideal timeframe for requesting participation in a study, the survey was distributed from November through March, months that tend to be busy for an RHD because halls begin to prepare for final exams, move-out dates, etc. as well as the holiday season starting. In January, halls re-open for the new term, and into February RHDs are often preoccupied with conducting RA placement interviews and other employment-seeking related tasks.

The total length of the survey also proved problematic as 36 surveys were started, but only 29 were completed.

Also contributing to a smaller sample size was the ordering of questions and scenarios. This study utilized conflict situations representing a student policy violation and a situational conflict in order to determine if an RHD's conflict style is strictly policy driven or if their style is flexible. The first time the survey was sent out RHDs were asked to answer both the policy and situational scenarios back to back. After recognizing this as a potential design flaw, the situational scenario was positioned after the questions regarding experience.

Future Research

There are many facets to a hall director's position—they are not only responsible for their residents but also for the social and professional development of their student staff. Future research should consider how hall directors employ their conflict management style when conflict is present with their student staff. Additionally, hall directors are members of their own professional groups and are not limited to only handling student conflict. Future research should look at how personality, culture, and experience may affect a hall director's conflict management style when and if the hall directors themselves are involved in "personal" conflict with colleagues.

CONCLUSION

This study asked which conflict management style was utilized more often by residence hall directors when handling conflict with residents as well as what the relationship is, if any, between conflict management style experience, personality, and culture. The results supported the hypothesis that hall directors employ the Collaborating conflict style most often. The study found that the more experience an RHD has, the less likely they are to use Avoiding as a conflict style. The study also found that, in relation to personality, conscientiousness is significantly related to the dominating conflict style, and cultural orientation is not significantly related to any conflict style.

The results are important to professionals working within the field of Student Affairs/Higher Education—specifically university housing. Recognizing that the more experience a hall director has the more he/she will not employ avoidance as a conflict management tactic will give hall directors confidence to dive into situations they may feel uneasy about. Additionally, knowing that being conscientiousness is related to a more dominating style allows hall directors to adapt their style if the situation requires a shift in order to maintain certain community standards; and recognizing Individualistic tendencies within conflict situations lets hall directors adjust their approach with residents. Understanding how these factors correlate will benefit residence hall directors when managing conflicts within their communities. The conclusions also will aid in the development of training modules for professionals and for professional development within university housing departments. The more information that hall directors have regarding how they are influenced when it comes to conflict the more effective conflict managers they can be.

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Solicitation Letter
Date
Dear Participant,

My name is Rebecca Propes, and I am a graduate student at Colorado State University in the Communication Studies Department. I am conducting a research study on the conflict management styles utilized by university residence hall directors (RHD).

Managing conflict is central to a well-functioning residence hall, and RHDs are a vital part of Residence Life departments, ensuring that conflict situations are well handled and maintained. The aim of this study is to understand how an RHD's conflict management style may be affected by situational and pre-cursory factors. By participating in this study, you will enable both those inside and outside the university housing field to better comprehend the crucial role that RHDs play in establishing and maintaining productive relationships with staff and students. Although there are no tangible benefits, participation in this study may ultimately lead to understanding your own conflict management style in a different way as well as fresh methods in which to utilize your style for building strong residential communities. Participation may also lead to recognizing new approaches to conflict situations thereby giving way to more inventive management of the vast array of conflict cases seen in university housing.

Participation in this study will take approximately 20 minutes and is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

All responses will be anonymous and kept confidential. Only my thesis advisor and I will have access to your answers but the answers will not be identified with you in any way. I have taken all possible steps in order to minimize any known or potential risks even though there are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Please click on this link in order to begin the survey:

Once you have completed the survey, please forward the email and link to the survey onto your fellow RHDs so they also may provide important information needed for the success of this study. By forwarding on the survey, you will help increase representation of RHDs' voices in the results.

If you have any questions or if you would like to see the results of this study, please contact me, Rebecca Propes at (928) 600-5857 or Rebecca.Propes@colostate.edu or Dr. Sue Pendell at (970) 491-6140 or Sue.Pendell@colostate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655.
Best Regards,
Rebecca O. Propes

Questionnaire

Instructions:

Please read the two scenarios provided below and thoughtfully answer the questions that follow according to how you would handle the situations at your university.

Section 1

Resident Tommy and his roommate, Resident Brandon, were written up by Resident Assistant James for underage alcohol possession and violating quiet hours. You are the director in charge of holding the conduct/judicial meeting. During that meeting Resident Tommy says the alcohol found in their room did not belong to them.

Now that you have read this scenario, please select the number that reflects how you would handle this particular situation involving Resident Tommy while in the meeting.

1= Never   2= Rarely   3= Sometimes/Occasionally   4= Frequently   5= Always

1. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I usually accommodate the wishes of my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I exchange accurate information with my residents to solve a problem together.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I usually allow concessions to my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks between myself and my resident.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I negotiate with my residents so that a compromise can be reached.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to stay away from disagreement with my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I avoid encounters with my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5

1= Never   2= Rarely   3= Sometimes/Occasionally   4= Frequently   5= Always

11. I often go along with the suggestions of my residents.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that they issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	1 2 3 4 5
15. I collaborate with my residents to come up with decisions acceptable to us.	1 2 3 4 5
16. I try to satisfy the expectations of my residents.	1 2 3 4 5
17. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.	1 2 3 4 5
18. I try to keep my disagreement with my residents to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.	1 2 3 4 5
19. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my residents.	1 2 3 4 5
20. I try to work with my residents for proper understanding of a problem.	1 2 3 4 5

Please read this next scenario.

Resident Assistant Patricia mentions in passing that Resident Grace has recently put up pictures of scantily clad women, some completely nude. The photos are on both the inside and outside of her door so that whether or not the door is open, passers-by can see the display. The other female residents using the hallway that Resident Grace lives in have expressed to RA Patricia their uneasiness and discomfort when walking through the hall. Resident Josie confronted Resident Grace and was told, "If you don't like it, find a different hall to walk through. It's my door, what are you going to do about it?" You have asked RA Patricia to document, in a continuous incident report, all of the complaints residents have brought to her about Resident Grace's room display. Because there are at least nine residents who have expressed concern, you decide to have a discussion with Resident Grace about the photographs.

Now that you have read this scenario, please select the number that indicates how you would handle this particular situation with Resident Grace.

1= Never   2= Rarely   3= Sometimes/Occasionally   4= Frequently   5= Always

1. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I usually accommodate the wishes of my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I exchange accurate information with my residents to solve a problem together.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I usually allow concessions to my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks between myself and my resident.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I negotiate with my residents so that a compromise can be reached.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to stay away from disagreement with my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I avoid encounters with my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5

1= Never   2= Rarely   3= Sometimes/Occasionally   4= Frequently   5= Always

11. I often go along with the suggestions of my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that they issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I collaborate with my residents to come up with decisions acceptable to us.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I try to satisfy the expectations of my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I try to keep my disagreement with my residents to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my residents.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I try to work with my residents for proper understanding of a problem.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 2

Thinking about past experiences that you may have brought with you to this position and experiences you have had while in your position, please select the number that reflects the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1=Strongly disagree   2=Disagree Somewhat   3=Neither disagree nor agree

4=Agree Somewhat   5=Strongly Agree

1. I use my job experience to help manage conflict.	1 2 3 4 5	
2. More experience will help me handle conflicts better.	1 2 3 4 5	
3. I have enough job experience to handle minor conflict situations.	1 2 3 4 5	
4. I use my life experience to help manage conflict.	1 2 3 4 5	
5. My experience dictates how I manage conflict.	1 2 3 4 5	

Section 3

When answering the following questions, please think about how you would generally behave in your personal life separate from your residence hall director position. Please select the number that most accurately reflects your behavior.

1=Never   2=Rarely   3=Sometimes   4=Frequently   5=Always

1.	I discuss job problems with my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I consult my family before making an important decision.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Before taking a major trip, I consult with most members of my family and many friends.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Even when I strongly disagree with my group members, I avoid an argument.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I hate to disagree with others in my group.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	It is important to make a good impression on one's manager.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	In interacting with my superiors, I am always polite.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	It is important to consider the needs of those who work above me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.	1	2	3	4	5

1=Never   2=Rarely   3=Sometimes   4=Frequently   5=Always

11. I reveal personal things about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I like to live close to my good friends.	1	2	3	4	5
14. To me, pleasure is spending time with my superiors.	1	2	3	4	5
15. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I help acquaintances, even if it is inconvenient.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I define myself as a competitive person.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I enjoy working in situation involving competition with others.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Without competition, it is not possible to have a good society.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Competition is the law of nature.	1	2	3	4	5

1=Never   2=Rarely   3=Sometimes   4=Frequently   5=Always

21. I consider myself as a unique person separate from others.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I see myself as "my own person."	1	2	3	4	5
24. I take responsibility for my own actions.	1	2	3	4	5
25. It is important for me to act as an independent person.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I consult with my supervisor on work-related matters.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I prefer to be self-reliant rather than depend on others.	1	2	3	4	5
29. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.	1	2	3	4	5
30. When faced with a difficult personal problem, it is better to decide for myself than follow the advice of others.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4

When answering the following questions, please think about just yourself personally and select the number that reflects the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree somewhat 3=Neither disagree nor agree

4=Agree somewhat 5=Strongly agree

1. I see myself as someone who is reserved.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I see myself as someone who is generally trusting.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I see myself as someone who is relaxed, handles stress well.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I see myself as someone how has few artistic interests.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I see myself as someone who is outgoing, sociable.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I see myself as someone who tends to find fault with others.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I see myself as someone who does a thorough job.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I see myself as someone who gets nervous easily.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I see myself as someone who has an active imagination.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5

Please answer the following questions:

1. How long have you been a Residence Hall Director (RHD, RD, CD, etc)? _____

2. How long have you worked as an RHD at your particular university? _____

3. How long have you been the director of your hall? _____

4. At what age did you become a director? _____

5. How much prior experience did you have as a Resident Assistant before becoming an RHD? _____

Please select the answer that best fits the following information:

1. Age:
   a. 20-24
   b. 25-29
   c. 30-34
   d. 35-39
   e. 40-44
   f. 45+

2. Gender:
   a. Female
   b. Male

3. Race/Ethnicity:
   a. White
   b. White: Latino(a)/Hispanic
   c. Black/African American
   d. American Indian or Alaskan Native
   e. Hawaiian Native
   f. Pacific Islander
   g. Asian Indian
   h. Chinese
   i. Japanese
   j. Other Asian (Hmong, Thai, Pakistani, Korean, etc)
   k. Other _____

4. Highest Level of Education completed:
   a. Bachelor's degree (ex. BA, BS)
   b. Master's degree (ex. MA, MS, MEd, etc)
   c. Professional degree (ex. DDS, MD, etc)
   d. Doctorate (ex. EdD, PhD)

5. Current Job Location:
   a. University _____

Thank you for your assistance in this research project. If you would like to see the results of if you have questions, please contact Rebecca Propes at (928) 600 5857, Rebecca.propes@colostate.edu or Sue Pendell at (970) 491-6164 or Sue.pendell@colostate.edu.