

1-1-1994

# Communication Apprehension As A Determinant Of Conflict Management Style

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This research is a product of the graduate program in [Speech Communication](#) at Eastern Illinois University.

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DETERMINANT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE

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Communication Apprehension As A Determinant

Of Conflict Management Style

(TITLE)

BY

Jennifer C. Eikenberg

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1994

YEAR

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Communication Apprehension As A Determinant  
Of Conflict Management Style  
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Running Head: CA/Conflict

## Abstract

Communication Apprehension (CA), the fear associated with real or anticipated communication, is the most common fear of adult Americans today. Studies indicate that high levels of CA negatively affect many behavioral and social factors and predispose individuals to practice avoidance tactics to reduce anxiety. Because those with CA fear and avoid communication, it would seem that their conflict management styles would be affected. Still, the relationship between CA and conflict management style has yet to be studied empirically. Therefore, 566 subjects were asked to complete measures of CA and conflict. It was hypothesized that those with high levels of CA would choose avoidance strategies in conflict with greater frequency than those with low CA. In addition, it was hypothesized that those with low CA would choose solution-oriented or controlling conflict strategies with greater frequency than those with high CA. Results confirm that individuals with high CA choose a non-confrontational conflict style while those with low CA choose a solution-oriented style. The impact of CA on conflict style is substantial and warrants further research.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who made my thesis possible... Dr. Mason, my chair and support, Dr. McKee and Dr. Perkins, committee members, and Dr. Dodd, statistical wizard.

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## Chapter One

Introduction and Literature ReviewIntroduction

Past and present theory confirms the importance of effective communication in all aspects of our lives. For many though, the thought of communicating produces fear; a feeling of apprehension. This notion of Communication Apprehension (CA) has prompted more research than almost any other variable in the communication field. This research typically addresses the effects of CA on a wide range of variables such as performance, achievement, and anxiety. Because of the typically negative consequences of the presence of CA, studies have also examined methods of reducing CA.

According to Richmond and McCroskey (1992) CA influences individuals both internally in the form of discomfort, and externally, in the form of communication avoidance, withdrawal, and disruption. Given CA's impact on individuals and their communication behavior, it is possible that CA also affects other communication behaviors, such as choice of conflict management style. According to Sternberg and Soriano (1984) conflict management styles are consistent and can be predicted by personality traits. Therefore, because choice of conflict style is based upon individual traits, the presence of CA may affect that choice. While

much research exists concerning both CA and conflict separately, the two have yet to be integrated. Therefore, this study will focus on this unexplored relationship.

Communication Apprehension Conceptualized. Based upon the work of Phillips (1968), McCroskey (1970) originally conceptualized CA as, "a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication" (p. 270). Further research highlighting the complexity of the construct led McCroskey to reconceptualize CA as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1978, 1982, 1984, Richmond & McCroskey, 1992).

Considerable attention has been given to viewing CA as either an enduring personality trait of an individual (trait-CA) or a response to a specific situation (state-CA). According to McCroskey (1984) this is a false distinction. He states, "To view all human behavior as emanating from either a traitlike, personality orientation of the individual or from the statelike constraints of a situation ignores the powerful interaction of these two sources" (p. 15). Richmond and McCroskey (1992) state that, due to this interaction, it is much more likely that a person who is high in traitlike CA will have high CA in more generalized contexts. CA is now seen as existing on a continuum ranging from trait-CA to state-CA.

Conflict Management Style Conceptualized. Conflict involves participants making choices about alternative behaviors by considering their own goals and the anticipated goals of the other person. Therefore, conflict style is defined as the actual choices made in the conflict situation (Putnam & Wilson, 1982). According to Putnam and Poole (1987), "Communication underlies the sources, goals, strategies, tactics, relationships, and contact systems that shape the nature of conflict and conflict management" (p. 550). In other words, if one were to fear communication, one's conflict management style may be altered, thus altering the conflict as a whole. Given this connection, the presence of CA must be examined in relation to conflict management style.

The literature review regarding CA will first address measurement and impact of CA and will then report additional effects of CA discovered by the noted instrument. However, given the diversity of the instruments used to measure conflict management style, the second half of the literature review will explore conflict style research first, followed by conflict measurement research.

#### Review of Literature

Communication Apprehension: Measurement. One of the most frequently used methods for measuring CA is a self-report instrument, the Personal Report of Communication

Apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982). The instrument is constructed to predict a person's anxiety when forced to communicate, based on his/her general predisposition to experience anxiety in general. Since McCroskey's original work (1970, 1978) which indicated the PRCA's reliability and validity, many studies have challenged the measure. Levine and McCroskey (1990) provided support for the use of the PRCA-24 in their study designed to test three rival measurement models of the PRCA-24. These include the Guttman Simplex, the Second-order Factor Model, and the Linear Unidimensional Model.

In three, large-sample data sets, 8879 college and non-college student subjects completed a questionnaire comprised of the PRCA-24 and a five-item semantic differential-type immediacy scale. A variety of statistical procedures show that the data best fits the second-order model, which allows for all items to be summed up as a measure of trait CA. The solid support found for this model disproves the other models, and in turn, proves the validity of the CA construct.

Earlier research conducted by Beatty and Andriate (1985) challenged the instrument, measuring the predictive power of the PRCA-24 against the State-trait Anxiety Inventory. Ninety-two college-level undergraduates enrolled in a public speaking class were given the PRCA-24 three

times throughout the semester prior to delivering a required speech. Immediately after the speeches, the State-trait Anxiety Inventory was administered. Comparative results show that the PRCA-24 is effective in the prediction of performance anxiety.

Lederman (1983) deviated from strictly quantitative procedures of testing the reliability and validity of the PRCA-24, using the focus group interview technique. First, she administered the PRCA-24 to 191 college freshman and asked that they indicate how they feel talking to people, participating in a small group, and discussing feelings in a small group. Twenty eligible subjects with high CA were then placed into three focus groups guided by the researcher. Coded responses indicated that the high CA's reached consensus on the following issues: (1) fear was related to talking, (2) talking was not a pleasurable activity, and (3) avoiding talking was the preferred behavior. In addition, subjects all agreed that PRCA scores reflected an accurate picture of their communication fear. These findings provide a qualitative indication of the accuracy of the construct and the reliability and validity of the PRCA-24.

While the PRCA was developed as a traitlike measure of CA, recent studies have established that it can indeed measure the continuum of CA. This line of research has

clarified both the instrument and the nature of CA. An example of this type of research is provided by Biggers and Masterson (1984) who tested the cross-situational consistency of the PRCA to clarify the trait nature of CA.

To conduct this research, 100 college students completed the PRCA. Three weeks later, subjects were asked to imagine that they were in each of six supplied situations and were instructed to fill out anxiety, pleasure, arousal, and dominance scales for each situation. Results indicated significant differences in the amount of anxiety felt by high CA's in all communication situations, indicating that CA does predispose individuals to higher levels of anxiety and that the traitlike instrument does measure situational-CA.

McCroskey and Beatty (1984) also hypothesized that the PRCA should be able to predict the level of state anxiety one will experience in a given situation. Subjects included 120 college students who participated in public speaking, class discussion, small group discussion, and dyadic interaction as a course requirement. Upon completion of all four activities, subjects were given the PRCA-24 and a state anxiety measure. McCroskey and Beatty found that state anxiety responses for each context correlated significantly with CA scores on the PRCA-24, indicating that the PRCA-24 is indeed a cross-situational predictive instrument.

The aforementioned studies indicate that the PRCA-24 is a valid and reliable instrument that can measure the continuum of CA. Using this instrument, the impact of CA can be assessed.

Communication Apprehension: Impact. To examine the impact of CA, Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) explored the extent to which patterns and state-anxiety are consistent across time and situation. Procedures included having 50 undergraduate college students enrolled in a basic speech course take the PRCA-24 in their first class meeting. After their first and last speech of the semester, students were asked to list their thoughts and feelings during the speech and to complete a measure of state-anxiety. Authors found that if responses are negative for the first speech, they will be proportionately negative for additional speeches, supporting CA's consistency over time and situation.

Relationships of this type encouraged Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1986) to discover what had the most influence on communication behavior and state-anxiety. Therefore, these researchers investigated the influence of CA, reticence, task structure, and evaluation level on these variables in dyadic settings. Seventy-nine college subjects were selected and instructed to complete the PRCA-24 and a measure of reticence. Each subject was then individually



contacted and assigned to a dyad, where they were given a task to complete with their partner and a measure of state-anxiety. Trained observers coded the video-taped interaction by identifying and quantifying behavioral disruption and state-CA. Results indicated that trait-CA was a greater predictor than task structure or evaluation in examining the experience of situational anxiety, accounting for 31% of the 48% variance in the model.

Also interested in examining communication behavior and apprehension, Beatty, Dobos, Balfantz, and Kuwabara (1991) sought to determine any causal relationships existing among CA, state-anxiety, and behavioral disruption. Seventy-three undergraduate college students enrolled in a basic public speaking course were given a measure prior to speech performances consisting of six items from the PRCA-24 and five items from Spielberger's State Anxiety Inventory. In addition, two trained observers coded subject's behavior during performances. Data analysis found that behavioral disruption and state-anxiety were predictive of high levels of CA, and that CA is a causal factor of state-anxiety.

Given CA's relationship to state anxiety, it is not surprising that those with high CA would choose to avoid communication. This notion was explored by Beatty (1987) who examined the impact of CA upon avoidance, withdrawal, and anxiety in communication contexts. Sixty-three college

students enrolled in a communication course were given the PRCA-24 early in the semester. Throughout the semester, subjects were allowed to choose among writing an essay, public speaking, or taking a multiple-choice test to prove their mastery of the subject. All choices were recorded, with those choosing the public speaking option given a measure of state-anxiety. Results indicated direct support that those with high CA avoid communication. All high CA's avoided the speech option and exhibited a greater tendency to avoid, withdrawal, or experience anxiety than their low CA counterparts.

Neer (1990), who extended this research by exploring CA in the classroom, hypothesized that those with higher CA in the classroom will record higher avoidance strategies in three presented classroom-scripts than those with lower classroom CA. In the first week of the semester, 206 college undergraduates enrolled in a basic speech class were given a 25-item Likert-type scale derived from the PRCA-24 and revised to measure CA specifically in a classroom setting. Students were also given three scripts defining various classroom situations and asked to rate their anxiety level if enrolled in these courses. Results of the study indicate that students with high levels of classroom CA had significantly higher levels of avoidance behavior than those with low classroom CA.

Results of the aforementioned studies show that the PRCA is a valid and reliable instrument superior to others in measuring trait and state CA as well predicting performance anxiety. Clearly, they indicate that Communication Apprehension does exist on a continuum, predicting anxiety and therefore causing avoidance. CA however, also influences other aspects of life.

Communication Apprehension: Behavioral/Social Effects.

Even at an early age, effects of CA can be discovered. Monroe and Borzi (1988) explored early effects, examining the relationship between CA and a student's decision to attend college. Using a stratified, random sample of high schools in West Virginia, researchers administered the PRCA-24 to 437 high school seniors. School counselors indicated whether or not the students planned to attend college. Correlations indicated that low CA's are more likely to attend college after graduation than their high CA counterparts.

To assess CA's impact at the college level, McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne (1989) investigated CA's effect on grade point average (GPA) and persistence. A longitudinal study was conducted using 1884 incoming college freshman at a southern university. Subjects were given the PRCA-24 at freshman orientation, and cumulative GPA's were analyzed for eight consecutive semesters. When no GPA's

were available, authors assumed that the student had dropped out. Results indicate that students with high levels of CA have a higher drop-out rate and lower GPA's than those with lower levels of CA.

In a similar, but more recent study, Ericson and Gardner (1992) also hypothesized that high levels of CA among college freshman would be associated with high drop-out rates and low GPA's. This study utilized the same methodology as McCroskey et al. (1989), using 1302 college freshman enrolled in a different university. To strengthen reliability and validity, the study was repeated the following year using 1623 incoming freshman from the same university. Results supported findings of McCroskey, et al. (1989), adding that students with high CA were significantly more likely to drop-out after completing one year.

Findings of this type prompted Frymier (1993) to hypothesize that a student's CA will be significantly and negatively associated with a student's general motivation to study for university courses. Two hundred and ninety-eight college undergraduates enrolled in a basic speech course were tested for levels of motivation and CA using Richmond's (1990) motivation scale and the PRCA-24. Results were coded and compared, finding support for the hypothesis that as level of CA increases, general motivation to study decreases.

A study undertaken by Rubin, Graham, and Mignerey (1990) examined the development of communication competence in college students and how communication factors are related to college success. Fifty college freshman were given the PRCA-24, measures of communication competence, and interaction involvement. Scores of these, as well data from GPA's, the ACT, and the SAT were analyzed, indicating that those with lower CA had more extracurricular communication experiences, higher GPA's, and were viewed as more communicatively competent.

These findings, that CA negatively influences success at the college level, suggests that there may be a connection between CA and cognitive performance. This relationship was examined by Bourhis and Allen (1992) who gathered 23 manuscripts containing 30 experiments on the subject. Information was coded and quantified. Results showed that as CA increases, cognitive performance decreases.

In addition, levels of CA can also affect interpersonal interaction and relationships. For example, CA's link to uncertainty in initial interactions was studied by Wheelless and Williamson (1990). To determine the relationship of uncertainty to state-CA, 168 undergraduate college students were paired with someone that they had never met. Pairs were divided into three groups. The procedure for the first

group included five steps: (1) taking the PRCA-24 and the Receiver Apprehension Test, (2) interacting with a pair member for eight minutes, (3) taking a confidence measure and the Form State scale, (4) interacting again for eight minutes, and (5) taking the Relational Conformational Scale and repeating scales taken in step three. Group two took no pretests while group three took pretests, but interacted with no scale interruptions. Results indicated that CA leads to high uncertainty in initial dyadic interactions.

Another study conducted by Hawkins and Stewart (1991), examines the impact of CA on perceptions of leadership and intragroup attraction in task-oriented groups. Procedures included studying 12 groups of 62 college students over consecutive semesters. At the beginning of the first semester, each group was assigned a research project and each member was given the PRCA-24. In addition, two sets of measures of task and social attraction were administered. Upon completion of the project, students rated themselves and others on a leadership continuum. Researchers found that members with high levels of CA were rated by themselves and others to be lower in emergent leadership and lower in both task and social attractiveness.

Also was interested in how those with CA are perceived, Porter (1982) hypothesized that differing levels of CA will significantly affect others' perceptions of communicator

style. To test this hypothesis, a sample of 186 college students enrolled in a small group communication course were given the PRCA-24. At the end of the semester, after subjects had met in groups at least four times in and out of class, subjects were asked to rate each other's communicator style. Results indicated that those with high CA were judged to be less relaxed and less dominant in their messages than those with low CA.

When perceptions of this type are held, it would seem that interpersonal relationships would be affected by CA. Beatty and Dobos (1992) investigated the relationship between adult sons' CA (regarding their fathers) and satisfaction with that relationship. One-hundred and nine male college students were given the dyadic component of the PRCA-24 and a modified version of the state-anxiety scale to measure intensity and frequency of father-related apprehension. Satisfaction was measured using a five-item semantic differential scale. Results indicated that the frequency and intensity of CA in the relationship contributed to the satisfaction of the relationship. When high levels of CA were experienced, the satisfaction of the relationship significantly decreased.

Although all effects of CA are too numerous to be explored here, Richmond and McCroskey (1992) highlight many of the effects in a comprehensive summary of CA research.

They state that a person with high CA has general anxiety, low tolerance for ambiguity, low self-esteem, low tolerance for disagreement, and is noninnovative, unadventurous, and unassertive. Research clearly indicates that CA has a negative effect on college success, motivation, leadership, perceptions of competence, cognitive performance, and interpersonal interactions and relationships. Level of CA has been found to be a consistent factor over time; an anxiety that pervades many situations. As noted by Beatty (1987) and Neer (1990), those who have CA often choose avoidance behaviors.

These findings suggest that CA may affect other variables as well. For example, someone who uses avoidance strategies in the classroom due to high CA might choose similar strategies in interpersonal contexts, such as during conflicts. The next section of this literature review explores conflict management and measurement of conflict management style.

Conflict Management Styles: Use and Effects. In all conflict situations, individuals are faced with choices concerning conflict management. Because there are so many strategies available, it becomes necessary to explore these options, their use and effectiveness. In addition, this method will allow for later discussion concerning the significance of high and low CA's conflict style selection.



A study undertaken by Sternberg and Soriano (1984) explored whether individuals' conflict management styles are consistent across situations and whether the styles can be predicted from intellectual and personality characteristics. Thirty-six Yale undergraduates were given nine conflict situations containing three conflicts in each of the following areas: interpersonal, interorganizational, and international conflict. Participants were asked to evaluate the desirability of seven possible solutions for solving each conflict and given both mental ability and personality tests. Results indicated that one's mode of conflict resolution can be predicted from certain intellectual and personality characteristics such as need for order, dominance, and endurance. Sternberg and Soriano state that, "individuals do have more and less preferred styles of conflict resolution and these styles reveal cross-situational consistencies both within and across interpersonal, interorganizational, and international domains of conflict" (p. 125).

Carrocci (1985) expanded on the notion that intellectual traits may predict responses to conflict by investigating the relationship between cognitive complexity and individuals' responses to interpersonal conflict. Ninety-five subjects were given a measure of cognitive complexity which asked them to describe in detail one peer

who they liked, and one peer who they disliked. Participants were also given a transcript of interpersonal conflict and instructed to put themselves in the place of the person in the conflict and to respond as they would in the situation. They then rated how likely they would be to respond to the conflict as they had indicated. Coding responses indicated that cognitive complexity is a factor in responding to interpersonal communication; cognitively complex individuals were able to generate more responses to conflict.

In another study, Rosenthal and Hautaluoma (1987) examined the effects of importance of conflict issues on an individual's use of conflict style. Authors administered two quantitative measures to 114 college students that required them to remember a recent conflict concerning a minor issue and a recent conflict concerning a major issue. Participants described in detail the nature of the conflict, the importance of the issue, and how they handled the conflict. Coding revealed that when conflict was important, the use of collaboration and competition was high and the use of accommodation and avoidance was low. When conflict was seen as unimportant, individuals practiced avoidance and accommodation styles most often.

Canary, Cunningham, and Cody (1988) extended this research, studying the effect of conflict goals upon

conflict management strategies. In addition, authors investigated the effects of locus of control on strategy use. To conduct this research, 434 students at three western universities were asked to describe a recent conflict and mark the degree to which they used integrative tactics (cooperation), distributive tactics (competition), and avoidance tactics on a 47-item scale. Participants also filled out an instrument measuring external and internal locus of control. Authors found that an internal locus of control was positively associated with integrative tactics, while an external locus of control was positively associated with avoidance strategies. In addition, results indicated that distributive strategies were used more often when defending oneself and integrative tactics were used more to change one's relationship.

When assessing the appropriateness and effects of conflict styles, many researchers use the strategies mentioned above--integrative, distributive, and avoidance. For example, Canary and Spitzberg (1987) examined the effects these three strategies may have on perceptions of communicator effectiveness and appropriateness. Three scripts that operationalized these strategies were given to 361 undergraduate students who were instructed to record the appropriateness and effectiveness of the strategy using a 40-item Likert-type scale. Findings suggest that avoidance

was seen as slightly effective, but inappropriate. The integrative strategy was seen as the most appropriate and effective strategy across episodes.

Building on this research, Canary and Spitzberg (1989) sought to explore which conflict strategy is perceived as most competent. One-hundred and forty subjects were administered measures of conflict style and four measures of competence. Subjects also were instructed to recall a recent conflict they had with another individual and complete the questionnaires regarding this person. Findings indicated that integrative strategies were positively linked to competence while avoidance strategies were negatively linked to competence.

Once again, Canary and Spitzberg (1990) continued this line of research, examining which conflict strategies are relied on by both parties to assess appropriateness, effectiveness, and competence. Authors selected 97 college students who indicated that they had experienced a conflict with another person within the last two weeks. Subjects and the partners with whom they experienced the conflict were placed into dyads and each asked to complete a questionnaire that measured communication behavior during the conflict and perceived competence of that behavior. Results confirm earlier findings, adding that both parties relied mostly on integrative tactics to assess competence and relied mostly

on distributive tactics to assess appropriateness.

Along with assessments of competence, effectiveness, and appropriateness, much research focuses on the impact of one's conflict strategy on interpersonal relationships. Canary and Cupach (1988) investigated the effects of the three tactics on personal communication and relational satisfaction. These effects were tested by giving 244 college students a packet of two questionnaires, a survey for them and one for a relational partner. Each participant and partner were asked to recall a recent conflict and individually complete relational measures of trust, control mutuality, intimacy, relational satisfaction, and communication satisfaction. Results indicated that (1) integrative tactics lead to communication and relational satisfaction, (2) distributive tactics are associated with a decline in relational trust and satisfaction, and (3) avoidance tactics directly and negatively affect relational satisfaction.

Another study (Witteman, 1988) examined the relationship between conflict strategies and fourteen perceptions of the problem situation, such as problem complexity, goal importance, relationship uncertainty, and feelings toward the other party. Four hundred and eighty-four college students were asked to report an interpersonal problem situation that they were presently

experiencing or had recently experienced. They then rated the value of that relationship before and after the problem and completed measures of conflict, perceptions, and communication messages. Researchers found that distributive strategies lead to causal attributions to the other (blaming) and negative feelings for the other. Integrative tactics were found to relate positively to goal importance and goal mutuality, while avoidance was found to relate negatively to goal importance and mutuality, causing uncertainty about the relationship.

Christensen and Shenk (1991) investigated how conflict strategies affect relationships by examining whether divorcing couples and couples seeking therapy have different conflict strategies and patterns than married couples who indicate satisfaction. Selected for comparison were 25 happily married couples, 25 divorcing couples, and 15 couples seeking marital therapy. Each couple participating met the criteria of (1) being from age 25-50, (2) being married for at least two years, and (3) having at least one child (age 6-13) living at home. Each participant was given measures of relational satisfaction, relational issues, and communication patterns. Results indicated that both divorcing and distressed couples experienced more avoidance of conflict, and more demand/withdrawal communication during problem discussions than non-distressed couples.

While conflict style may affect present relationships, it may also influence memories of past relationships. Miller (1989), investigated individuals' memories of peer acceptance in relation to their imagined styles of conflict management, labeling the styles aggressive (distributive), assertive (integrative) and acquiescent (avoidance). Forty college students who were categorized by coders as using one of the three conflict styles were selected from a pool of 133 to be interviewed. Questions concerning peer acceptance and conflict management style revealed that assertive responses to conflict (integrative tactics) are preferred to acquiescent ones (avoidance tactics).

Wanting to expand on these findings, Miller then administered questionnaires, in lieu of interviews, to 118 undergraduate psychology students who were asked to respond to 10 hypothetical conflict situations and to complete a measure of relational history. Coding responses supported earlier findings, adding that assertive styles are associated with positive memories of peer acceptance while acquiescent styles are associated with negative memories.

As this review of literature indicates, the use of specific conflict strategies has specific effects on effectiveness, appropriateness, competence, and ultimately, interpersonal relationships. Integrative strategies were found to be most appropriate, effective, and most beneficial

to relationships. Further, distributive strategies were perceived as less competent and effective, thus harming relationships. Avoidance strategies were seen as slightly effective, but harmed relationships, as did distributive strategies.

As indicated by Sternberg and Soriano (1984) conflict styles are consistent across situations and can be predicted by personality and intellectual traits. Carrocci (1985) added that cognitive complexity is also an intervening factor in conflict strategy selection. Given that CA is a personality trait linked to cognitive complexity that affects numerous behavioral aspects and also tends to be consistent, it seems logical to suggest a link between CA and conflict.

Conflict Management Styles: Measurement. Earlier in the literature review, it was established that CA can be measured reliably and validly. In order to investigate the relationship between CA and conflict, a valid and reliable instrument measuring conflict management must also be found. Unlike CA, as indicated in the aforementioned studies, much research in conflict utilizes qualitative questionnaires to tap into conflict management styles. While effective, the purpose of this thesis is to utilize a reliable and valid quantitative means for measuring conflict management styles. This method will allow for CA and conflict management style



to be linked, which may extend research in the communication field. Therefore, the next section of this literature review will explore quantitative measurement of conflict management.

Blake and Mouton (1964) were the first to propose a five-category scheme for the management of conflict. These researchers argued that conflict management styles could be measured along two managerial attitudes, concern for people and concern for production. From these dimensions, the following five conflict management styles emerged: forcing (competition; using power to win an argument), confronting (problem solving; examining possible solutions), smoothing (accommodating; playing down differences), avoiding (physical withdrawal; refusal to discuss the conflict), and compromising (finding a middle-ground solution).

According to Newell and Stutman (1991), the popularity of Blake and Mouton's scheme of conflict style prompted many researchers to examine the effectiveness of these styles and therefore, create new conflict style instruments. By 1978, the four predominant scales used, were those designed by Blake and Mouton (1964), Hall (1969), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), and Thomas and Kilmann (1974).

Research undertaken by Thomas and Kilmann (1978) tested the reliability and validity of these four instruments. In order to complete the analysis, 86 graduate students took

each scale two times with a four week interval between administration. Statistical analyses indicated that reliability measures for all four instruments fell within the low to moderate range and that later developed scales fared slightly better. In addition, the two earlier scales were found to lack validity. Both the Lawrence and Lorsch scale and the Thomas and Kilmann scale were found to be somewhat valid, but correlations were weak.

While researching conflict management scales, Kilmann and Thomas (1977) were in the process of creating a new scale called the Management of Differences Scale (MODE). This instrument, which measures preference for five conflict resolution styles (competition, collaboration, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating), was challenged by Kabanoff (1987), who sought to assess the predictive validity of the MODE.

Kabanoff (1987) recruited 63 students enrolled in consecutive Master's of Business Administration courses. At the onset of the semester, subjects were given the MODE. After a year of group projects, subjects were instructed to rate each classmate's conflict strategy on a Likert-type scale. Findings report that correlations between MODE scores and behavior ratings show little association. Kabanoff reports that, "these results cast doubts on the predictive validity of the MODE instrument" (p. 162).

A newer measure of conflict management, Rahim's (1983) Organizational Conflict Instrument (ROCI) was used by Conrad (1991) to examine the relationship between scores on the ROCI and predictions of conflict strategies that people would actually utilize. After taking the ROCI, 106 professional university staff members were given four case studies concerning organizational conflict. They were asked to describe what they would say if they were the supervisor in the case. Data were coded and correlated, finding that scores of the ROCI do not significantly predict choice of conflict strategies or practices utilized. Therefore, this measure becomes invalid in the determination of conflict strategies.

Faced with a need for a predictable and reliable conflict strategy measure, Putnam and Wilson (1982) offered the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI), designed to assess employees' conflict strategies. The scale, which can also be used to assess interpersonal conflict strategies, encompasses three strategies similar to previously mentioned integrative, distributive, and avoidance strategies. These include non-confrontation, solution-oriented, and control styles of conflict management. A non-confrontational style is one using avoidance and smoothing as indirect strategies for dealing with conflict. Solution-oriented styles encompass direct

confrontation, open discussion of alternatives, and acceptances of compromises. The control style of conflict is characterized by direct confrontation that leads to persistent argument and nonverbal forcing.

In total, 820 subjects were recruited to test the OCCI. The study evaluated the OCCI's internal reliability, social desirability, and concurrent-predictive validity. Findings demonstrate that the OCCI has high discriminatory power, moderate construct validity, and strong predictive validity.

A study undertaken by Witteman (1992) also utilized the OCCI. To examine the relationship between situational perceptions and conflict style measures, 264 undergraduate college students were given the OCCI and instructed to complete an open-ended questionnaire. This measure asked subjects to recall and write down a recent or present interpersonal conflict, the communication exchanged, and feelings about the conflict. Results showed that situational perceptions were positively correlated to measures developed from the OCCI. Witteman's findings provide further support concerning the validity of the measure.

Wheless and Reichel (1990) used the OCCI to examine the relationship between general communication styles, conflict management styles, and task attraction. Two

hundred and twenty-seven individuals from numerous organizations were given the OCCI and measurements of management communication style, social style, and interpersonal attraction. Researchers found that solution-oriented strategies are related to positive task attraction and were recorded as most efficient. Control and non-confrontational strategies were negatively related to task attraction, with control found to be least efficient. For purposes of their study, Wheelless and Reichel rechecked the factor structure of the OCCI, finding alpha reliabilities of .89 for non-confrontation, .86 for control, and .90 for solution-oriented. A study conducted by Morrill and Thomas (1992) found similar OCCI reliabilities; .90 for non-confrontation, .77 for control, and .88 for solution-orientation.

The aforementioned studies provide support for a valid and reliable instrument that measures conflict management. Although devised to measure conflict management style within organizations, Putnam and Wilson indicate that the OCCI can be used to assess interpersonal conflict. Witteman (1991) indicates that using the instrument to assess interpersonal conflict may be more accurate in determining conflict management style, due to the premise that if individuals are asked to indicate how they would respond to conflict with a supervisor (e.g. Putnam & Wilson, 1982), responses may be

influenced by restrictive norms in organizations that constrain behavior in subordinate roles. Therefore, hypotheses and directions used in this study did not specify conflict management in an organizational setting. This use of the OCCI also becomes appropriate for use with a college sample that would, more than likely, experience more conflict at an interpersonal level than at an organizational level.

#### Hypotheses

Studies reviewed indicate that CA can be measured with a valid and reliable instrument, McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension. Using this measure, researchers found that CA negatively affects college success, motivation, leadership, perceptions of competence, cognitive performance, and interpersonal relationships and interactions. Levels of CA are consistent over time and situation, causing anxiety and avoidance behavior.

Like CA, conflict management style can be measured reliably and validly using Putnam and Wilson's Organizational Communication Conflict Management Instrument. Studies indicate that conflict management styles have specific effects upon effectiveness, appropriateness, competence, and interpersonal relationships. Integrative strategies were identified as most effective and beneficial, while distributive and avoidance strategies were perceived

as less competent and most harmful to relationships.

Conflict styles are consistent across situations and can be predicted by personality and intellectual traits. In addition, selection of a conflict strategy is altered by one's level of cognitive complexity. Given that CA is a personality trait linked to cognitive complexity that affects many behavioral and social aspects and tends to be consistent, it seems logical to suggest a connection between CA and conflict. Also, given the fact that CA produces anxiety and avoidance behaviors, level of CA may influence one's choice of conflict strategy.

Because those with high CA practice avoidance behaviors, it would seem that their level of CA would prompt them to choose non-confrontational conflict strategies which Putnam and Wilson (1982) characterize as avoidance and smoothing. Using avoidance would make controlling the conflict impossible. In addition, it is logical to assume that those who do not possess high levels of CA are much more likely to choose a solution-oriented or controlling conflict strategy. Those with low CA do not fear communication and therefore, are more likely to make efforts toward integration or confrontation. This study identifies the following three hypotheses:

H1: Subjects with high CA will choose a  
non-confrontational conflict style with

greater frequency than subjects with low CA.

H2: Subjects with low CA will choose a solution-oriented conflict style with greater frequency than those with high CA.

H3: Subjects with low CA will choose a controlling conflict style with greater frequency than those with high CA.

As indicated in these hypotheses, predictions are based upon level of CA (high or low) and frequency of scores on each individual conflict style category (non-confrontation, solution-orientation, control). For the purpose of this study, high and low CA were defined as the top and bottom fourth of scores on the PRCA-24. This operationalization of high and low CA provides an assurance that subjects in the top and bottom 25% of PRCA scores do indeed experience extremes of CA.

In addition, to determine which conflict strategy was chosen with greater frequency, the number of scores in each conflict style category of the OCCI were compared. This method indicated conflict management style chosen by those possessing high and low CA and therefore, allowed for an assessment of which strategy high and low CA's use most



often.

Testing these hypotheses served at least two functions. First, the relationship between CA and choice of conflict style was tested empirically, which has not been done previously. Second, research results may extend our knowledge on CA to encompass conflict strategies, specifically identifying CA as a predictor of successful conflict management in both organizational and interpersonal contexts.

## Chapter Two

MethodologyPilot Study

In Fall, 1993, a pilot study was conducted to test the relationship between level of CA and choice of conflict management style. The following hypotheses were tested: (1) individuals with high CA will score high on the non-confrontational conflict style category, (2) individuals with high CA will score low on the solution-oriented conflict style category, and (3) individuals with low CA will score high on the control conflict style category. One hundred and twenty-four college students enrolled in a basic public speaking course were given the PRCA-24, the OCCI, and asked to identify gender and year in school. Correlations and t-tests, based on the top and bottom third of PRCA scores, indicated strong support for hypothesis number one. In addition, results indicated strong support for the second hypothesis.

While correlation procedures indicated a significant, negative relationship between CA and control, t-tests did not support the third hypothesis. Given that subjects in this pilot study were from a relatively small, non-diverse sample, it was determined that a larger and more diverse sample would be necessary in order to test adequately the hypotheses, provide more significant statistical analysis,

and allow for generalization of results.

### Subjects

Participants were selected from a pool of 31 courses at Eastern Illinois University. The majority of courses were core university requirements in the speech communication discipline, such as basic public speaking courses, and senior seminar courses. These courses were selected due to their enrollment of both male and female students at all academic levels and a wide variety of majors.

At the onset of spring semester, January 1994, 573 subjects were told that participation was voluntary. No one refused participation, but responses from seven subjects were discarded due to incomplete questionnaires. Of the 566 subjects, 56.2% were female and 43.4% were male. The sample consisted of 35.9% freshman, 17.6% sophomores, 18.7% juniors, 27.4% seniors, and .4% graduate students.

### Instruments

In order to assess CA, the PRCA-24, a 24-item Likert-scale was administered. To assess conflict management style, the OCCI, a 30-item Likert scale was administered. Subjects were also asked to identify gender and year in school to acquire necessary sample composition information. All participants were instructed to record their responses on a computerized form. Instructions were provided in both oral and written form in order to ensure

consistency of administration (see Appendix A for the instrument administered). Included in these instructions was an assurance that all answers were anonymous and would not effect any aspect of the course in which they were enrolled.

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-24. The PRCA was chosen on the basis of previously found validity and reliability (Beatty & Andriate, 1985; Levine & McCroskey, 1990; McCroskey, 1970, 1978, 1982, 1984). The scale is scored by computing four subscores; positive items are added and negative items are subtracted. Subscores measure CA in each of four communication contexts: group discussion, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking. The top fourth of the sample, who scored from 5 to 48, were identified as having high CA (n=139, 24.6%). The bottom fourth, who scored -22 or lower, were said to have low CA (n=144, 25.4%). Moderate scores (n=283, 50%) ranging from 4 to -21 were only considered for correlation purposes (see Appendix B for mean scores for each item).

Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument.

Based upon the original work of Putnam and Wilson (1982), the OCCI contained 13 non-confrontation items, 13 solution-oriented items, and 9 control items. Because factor loadings were unacceptable for five items in Putnam

and Wilson's original study, these items were eliminated for this study, forming the 30-item scale comprised of 12 non-confrontation items, 11 solution-oriented items, and 7 control items. The OCCI was scored based not upon a total score, but upon individual frequency of response in each subscale. For example, if a subject were to indicate that he/she strongly agrees to all or most items in the non-confrontation category, while strongly disagreeing with all or most items in the other two categories, it would be stated that this person chooses non-confrontation at a greater frequency than they choose control or solution-orientation.

While past studies have indicated the OCCI's high reliability (e.g. Putnam & Wilson, 1982; Wheelless & Reichel, 1990; Morrill & Thomas, 1992; Witteman, 1992), a reassessment was necessary due to deviation from original work. Therefore, reliability tests were conducted on data collected for this study. Chronbach alpha reliability was calculated due to its ability to produce the most conservative and accurate reliability estimate. Chronbach alpha's for subscales are as follows: .85 non-confrontation, .76 for solution-orientation, and .75 for control. While subscale reliability measures are lower than previously found levels, they indicate acceptable levels for analysis.

### Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study, missing data (<.01) in the scale items were given a value of three, indicating an undecided response. Missing data in the demographic items of gender (1.05%) and year in school (<.001%) could not be recoded. In order to test the three hypotheses, recoded data were subject to general statistical analyses. First, correlation coefficients, determined through a Pearson's r correlation based upon the entire sample, were utilized to find the type and strength of relationships between each variable. In an effort to strengthen correlation findings and to test hypotheses, independent t-tests were conducted between groups of high and low CA and individual conflict strategies. Although not hypothesized, gender was also compared to individual conflict strategies using this method. Third, a one-way Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) was used to determine if each group of CA (high, low, and moderate) did indeed have differing conflict styles. This served as a post-hoc analysis of hypotheses. Finally, a chi-square was utilized to provide additional information concerning differences between year in school and level of CA.

## Chapter Three

ResultsCorrelation Coefficients

Correlation coefficients indicate support for hypothesis one, that those with high CA will choose a non-confrontational strategy with greater frequency than those with low CA. The null hypothesis was also rejected for hypothesis two, which stated that those with low CA will choose a solution-oriented strategy with greater frequency than those with high CA. The null was retained for hypotheses three, which predicted that low CA's unlike their high CA counterparts, will choose controlling strategies with greater frequency.

As seen in Table 1, correlation coefficients revealed that the strategy of non-confrontation is significantly related to CA ( $r=.41, p<.01$ ). Solution-orientation and CA were negatively correlated with a score of  $-.2049$  ( $p<.01$ ). In other words, as CA increases, the use of a solution-oriented style decreases. While a controlling strategy was not related to CA, control was significantly related to both non-confrontation and solution-orientation. Both yielded a negative relationship; control/non-confrontation ( $r=-.14, p<.01$ ) and control/solution-orientation ( $r=-.27, p<.01$ ). Therefore, while level of CA does not directly influence use of control, one is less likely to use controlling strategies

Table 1

Correlation Matrix

	Gender	Year	PRCA24	Noncon	Solut	Control
Gender	1.000	-.0050	.014	.0316	.1002*	-.1711**
Year		1.000	-.1539**	-.0181	.0303	-.0582
PRCA24			1.000	.4052**	-.2049**	.0018
Noncon				1.000	-.0079	-.1146**
Solut					1.000	-.2694**
Control						1.000

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

if he/she is predisposed to using non-confrontation and/or solution-orientation. These results provide support for hypotheses one and two. Those with high CA will choose non-confrontation in conflict with greater frequency than those with low CA. Unlike high CA's, low CA's will choose solution-orientation with greater frequency when faced with conflict.

Correlating demographic information also yielded significant results. Gender was significantly related to both solution-orientation ( $r = -.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and control ( $r = -.17$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, males and females differ in their choice of conflict management style. In addition, year in school was significantly correlated with CA ( $r = -.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that year in school influences an



individual's level of CA.

t-tests

Independent t-tests served to strengthen correlation findings (see Table 2). Results of the analysis indicated support for hypothesis number one, stating that subjects  
Table 2

CA and Conflict Style: t-test Results

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>Probability</u>
Noncon	High CA	26.32		
	Low CA	34.12	-9.46	.000**
Solut	High CA	40.88		
	Low CA	38.27	4.33	.000**
Control	High CA	20.40		
	Low CA	20.33	.13	.901

\*\* $p < .001$ .

with high CA will choose non-confrontation with greater frequency than those with low CA. That is, CA and non-confrontation were found to be statistically significant ( $t = -9.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, t-test indicated support for hypotheses two, showing that those with low CA choose solution-orientation in conflict with greater frequency than those with high CA. That is, CA and solution-orientation were found to be statistically significant ( $t = 4.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). T-tests indicated no support for hypothesis three which

suggested that low CA's will choose a controlling style with greater frequency than high CA's.

Although not hypothesized, t-tests calculated on gender and conflict management style yielded significant results (See Table 3). Females were found to use a

Table 3

Gender and Conflict Style: t-test Results

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>Probability</u>
Noncon	Female	30.56		
	Male	30.22	-.55	.581
Solut	Female	40.04		
	Male	38.95	-2.53	.011*
Control	Female	19.96		
	Male	21.39	3.68	.000**

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

solution-oriented style more often than males ( $t = -2.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while males were found to use a controlling style more often than females ( $t = 3.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Because t-tests compare two groups, the analysis is not the most appropriate when comparing year, which has four groups of classes, and conflict style, which has three groups of strategies. Therefore, year and conflict style were not subject to t-tests and will be discussed in the next two analyses.

One-Way Analysis of Variance

One-way ANOVA's were conducted as a post-hoc analysis, providing further evidence as to differences among low, moderate, and high CA's choice of conflict style (see Table 4). In other words, correlations and t-tests found support Table 4

CA Level/Conflict Style Differentiation: Analysis of Variance

<u>Conflict Style</u>	<u>CA Level</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Noncon	Moderate	30.57	6.50	
	High	26.32	6.63	
	Low	34.12	7.25	.0000**
Solut	Moderate	39.58	4.77	
	High	40.88	5.38	
	Low	38.27	4.70	.0001**
Control	Moderate	20.63	4.30	
	High	20.40	4.82	
	Low	20.32	4.88	.7724

\*\* $p < .001$ .

for hypothesis number one, which stated that high CA's will choose non-confrontation with greater frequency than low CA's. Analyses also found support for hypothesis two, which stated that low CA's will choose solution-orientation with greater frequency than high CA's. ANOVA's confirmed these

findings, indicating that as level of CA differs, so does one's use of a solution-oriented or non-confrontational conflict style.

Results of this analysis indicate that choice of both non-confrontation ( $f=47.90$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and solution-oriented conflict styles ( $f=9.92$ ,  $p<.001$ ) are related to level of CA. However, regarding the choice of a controlling strategy, level of CA is not statistically related ( $f=.77$ ,  $p>.05$ ). When one-way ANOVA's were conducted for year and conflict style, no significance was found; indicating year in school does not predispose one to use a specific conflict style.

#### Chi-Square Analysis

Because correlations found year in school to be significantly related to CA, a chi-square analysis was utilized to clarify this relationship (See Table 5).

Table 5

#### Chi-square Results: Group By Year

Year in <u>School</u>	Moderate CA <u>Percent</u>	Low CA	High CA
Freshman	49.5%	18.3%	32.2%**
Sophomores	48.5%	24.2%	27.3%
Juniors	56.2%	35.2%	8.6%**
<u>Seniors</u>	47.4%	28.6%	24.0%

\*\* $p<.0001$

Results indicated a significant difference between the level of CA between freshman and juniors. Freshman were most likely to have high CA (32.2%) whereas juniors were the least likely to have high CA (8.6%). These findings were significant at the  $p < .001$  level.

## Chapter Four

Discussion and Conclusions

This study was designed to determine if levels of CA affect an individual's specific choice of conflict style. Strong support was shown for the hypothesis number one, that individuals with CA choose a non-confrontational strategy with greater frequency than individuals with low CA. Correlations indicated this relationship exists and t-tests confirmed a dependable relationship. In other words, those with high CA almost always choose this strategy when faced with conflict.

Past research puts this finding into perspective. Richmond and McCroskey (1992) note that those with high CA tend to be introverted, unassertive, and have a low tolerance for disagreement. Porter (1982) adds that high CA's are seen as less dominant. Beatty (1987) and Neer (1990) found that those with high CA avoid communication and that CA is indeed consistent over time and situation (e.g. McCroskey & Beatty, 1984; Biggers & Masterson, 1984; Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991).

Results of the present study extend these findings to a context that is perhaps more crucial than public speaking or classroom discussion, as conflict is an inevitable aspect of life, pervading all contexts. Just as academic success is hindered by high CA, so are interpersonal relationships

(e.g. Beatty & Dobos, 1992; Wheelless & Williamson, 1990). Perhaps relationships suffer because high CA's avoid problems, and when one has problems establishing and holding relationships, other aspects of life also suffer, such as college success.

Not only does this finding present new research in the communication field, but it helps to explain why many choose avoidance or smoothing-over tactics in a conflict situation. McCroskey (1984) states that, "high CA is highly associated with ineffective communication" (p. 37). This study found that this is true specifically in conflict situations; communication apprehension keeps individuals from reaching an integrative solution. As our society becomes more and more dependent upon communication, the prevalence of CA hinders future problem solving. CA may cause a spiral of avoidance behavior that lessens chances of productive problem solving.

Findings also indicated strong support for hypothesis two; those who are not apprehensive will be more likely to encompass a solution-oriented conflict style. This conclusion has clear implications on the interpersonal, organizational, and classroom level. Since those who are apprehensive are more likely to be productive conflict managers and problem-solvers, it would seem that those with low CA would be more ideal as group members, employees, and

relational partners. While it is unlikely that anyone would screen a potential relational partner's CA, employers may find it beneficial to administer the PRCA-24 before hiring. In addition, teachers may find it beneficial to place those with high CA and low CA together in groups, so in every group, at least one member will take an integrative approach to problem solving.

Hypothesis three stated that those with low CA would choose a controlling strategy with greater frequency than those with high CA. Because those with high CA are likely to choose non-confrontation over other conflict styles, it seems illogical that they would choose controlling strategies at an equal or greater frequency than those with low CA. Still, no support was found for this hypothesis.

This finding may be explained due to the limited number of control conflict items present in the OCCI. The control subscale contained only seven items compared to the 12 in non-confrontation and 11 in solution-orientation. While reliability levels were acceptable, the control subscale yielded the lowest reliability. Perhaps if more valid control items were added, frequency of control answers would have increased, finding support for the hypotheses.

Perhaps the lack of support for hypothesis three can be further explained by results in this study showing that low CA's are more likely to use solution-oriented conflict



styles. Even though this hypothesis was not significant, correlations indicated that control had a significant and negative relationship with both non-confrontation and solution-orientation. Therefore, those who choose non-confrontation (high CA's) and those who choose solution-orientation (low CA's) are less likely to use a controlling strategy.

The present study has suggested that CA does play a major role in one's choice of conflict management style. High CA's avoid the conflict, while low CA's seek an integrative solution. As research has indicated, avoidance has been found to be ineffective, inappropriate, and harmful to relationships (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987; Canary & Cupach 1988; Witteman, 1988; Christensen & Shenk, 1991). Integrative strategies on the other hand, have been found to be appropriate, effective, viewed as competent, and helpful to relationships (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989, 1990, Canary & Cupach, 1988; Witteman, 1988; Christensen & Shenk, 1991). Therefore, those with high CA put themselves at considerable disadvantage when faced with conflict; a situation in which no one will benefit.

Although not hypothesized, conclusions may be drawn concerning gender and year in relation to CA and conflict style. First, all analyses supported the notion that females tend to choose a solution-oriented strategy to

conflict, while males tend to choose a controlling strategy. These findings may be due to society encouraging females to be peace-makers while encouraging males to be competitive. Because both females and low CA's choose a solution-oriented style, future researchers may want to investigate whether or not females in general have lower levels of CA than males and how this, as well as the difference in male and female style, affects opposite-sex conflict. In addition, because of the negative effects of distributive tactics and because of the negative relationship found between control and solution-orientation and control and non-confrontation, it would be heuristic to explore whether or not males are less successful in conflict than females.

Year in school was found to have a significant relationship with CA, with freshman having the highest CA and juniors having the lowest CA. While it seems logical that freshman have the highest CA, the fact that juniors, instead of seniors, have the lowest CA warrants discussion. Perhaps this finding can be explained by uncertainty felt by seniors. Just as freshman face uncertainty, so do seniors as they prepare to leave their safe environment and join the real world. On the other hand, perhaps juniors are at a stable point, adjusted to their environment while not yet concerned about their new life to come. An exploration into this relationship would also prove beneficial.

Future study may explore CA and conflict strategies with a revised version of the OCCI that has an equal number of valid items in each subscale. In addition, because of high CA's strong link to non-confrontational conflict strategies, future researchers may want to investigate the implications of this on the interpersonal, organizational, and classroom level. If an individual chooses avoidance-type strategies in conflict due to high CA, this may cause a spiral of non-productive communication at all levels. Finally, because high CA has been found to be a predictor of non-productive and low CA is associated with productive conflict, additional research in the area of treatment is warranted.

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APPENDIX A  
Survey Instrument

DIRECTIONS: This survey is composed of 24 statements concerning feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking in pencil on the computerized form whether you (A) strongly agree, (B) agree, (C) are undecided, (D) disagree, or (E) strongly disagree. Work quickly; record your first impression.

1. I dislike participating in group discussion.
2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.
3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.
4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
5. Engaging in group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
8. Usually, I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.
9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at meetings.
10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.

11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
19. I have no fear of giving a speech.
20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while I am giving a speech.
21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Directions Items 25-54 deal with how one approaches conflict. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking in pencil on the computerized form whether you (A) strongly agree, (B) agree, (C) are undecided, (D) disagree, or (E) strongly disagree.

25. I blend my ideas with others to create new alternatives for resolving a conflict.
26. I shy away from topics that are sources of disputes.
27. I insist my position be accepted during a conflict.
28. I suggest solutions that combine a variety of viewpoints.
29. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.
30. I give in a little on my ideas when the other person also gives in.
31. I avoid a person I suspect of wanting to discuss a disagreement.
32. I integrate arguments into a new solution from issues raised in a dispute.
33. I stress my point by hitting my fist on the table.
34. I will go fifty-fifty to reach a settlement.
35. I raise my voice when trying to get another person to accept my position.
36. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.

37. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements.
38. I frequently give in a little if the other person will meet me halfway.
39. I downplay the importance of a disagreement.
40. I reduce disagreements by saying they are insignificant.
41. I meet the opposition at a midpoint of our differences.
42. I assert my opinion forcefully.
43. I dominate arguments until the other person understands my position.
44. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements.
45. I try to use everyone's ideas to generate solutions to problems.
46. I offer tradeoffs to reach solutions in a disagreement.
47. I argue insistently for my stance.
48. I withdraw when someone confronts me about a controversial issue.
49. I sidestep disagreements when they arise.
50. I try to smooth over disagreements by making them appear unimportant.
51. I stand firm in my views during a conflict.
52. I make our differences seem less serious.
53. I hold my tongue rather than argue.
54. I ease conflict by claiming our differences are trivial.

55. Please indicate your year in school by marking either  
(A) Freshman, (B) Sophomore, (C) Junior, (D) Senior,  
or (E) Graduate.

56. Please indicate your gender by marking either  
(A) Male or (B) Female.



APPENDIX B

Survey Questions: Mean Scores

CA/Conflict

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Questions

Mean Scores

1. I dislike participating in group discussion.	3.60
2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.	2.17
3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.	3.58
4. I like to get involved in group discussions.	2.30
5. Engaging in group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.	3.17
6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.	2.59
7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.	3.30
8. Usually, I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.	2.52

9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at meetings. 2.71
10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings. 3.58
11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable. 3.48
12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting. 3.48
13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous. 3.43
14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations. 2.51
15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations. 3.88
16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations. 2.16
17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed. 2.62

CA/Conflict

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18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.

3.79

19. I have no fear of giving a speech.

3.45

20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense  
and rigid while I am giving a speech.

2.46

21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.

3.39

22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled  
when I am giving a speech.

3.13

23. I face the prospect of giving a speech  
with confidence.

2.84

24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous  
I forget facts I really know.

3.20

QuestionsMean Scores

25. I blend my ideas with others to create new alternatives for resolving a conflict.	2.05
26. I shy away from topics that are sources of disputes.	3.60
27. I insist my position be accepted during a conflict.	3.26
28. I suggest solutions that combine a variety of viewpoints.	2.22
29. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.	3.47
30. I give in a little on my ideas when the other person also gives in.	2.43
31. I avoid a person I suspect of wanting to discuss a disagreement.	3.48
32. I integrate arguments into a new solution from issues raised in a dispute.	2.58
33. I stress my point by hitting my fist on the table.	4.15
34. I will go fifty-fifty to reach a settlement.	2.68
35. I raise my voice when trying to get another person to accept my position.	2.74
36. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.	2.28

37. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements. 3.82
38. I frequently give in a little if the other person will meet me halfway. 2.44
39. I downplay the importance of a disagreement. 3.25
40. I reduce disagreements by saying they are insignificant. 3.38
41. I meet the opposition at a midpoint of our differences. 2.71
42. I assert my opinion forcefully. 2.83
43. I dominate arguments until the other person understands my position. 3.24
44. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements. 2.17
45. I try to use everyone's ideas to generate solutions to problems. 2.22
46. I offer tradeoffs to reach solutions in a disagreement. 2.63
47. I argue insistently for my stance. 3.07
48. I withdraw when someone confronts me about a controversial issue. 3.81
49. I sidestep disagreements when they arise. 3.69
50. I try to smooth over disagreements by making them appear unimportant. 3.40
51. I stand firm in my views during a conflict. 2.22

## CA/Conflict

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52. I make our differences seem less serious. 2.97
53. I hold my tongue rather than argue. 3.56
54. I ease conflict by claiming our differences  
are trivial. 3.20
55. Please indicate your year in school by marking  
either (A) Freshman, (B) Sophomore, (C) Junior,  
(D) Senior, or (E) Graduate. 2.39
56. Please indicate your gender by marking either  
(A) Male or (B) Female. 1.57