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# What Do Organizations Learn From Conflict? A Grounded Meta-Analysis Approach to Developing an Integrated Conflict System Roadmap

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What Do Organizations Learn From Conflict? A Grounded Meta-Analysis Approach  
to Developing an Integrated Conflict System Roadmap

by

Raquel Perez

A Dissertation Presented to the  
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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This dissertation was submitted by Raquel E. Perez under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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## Abstract

Organizational systems from a variety of fields and industries have begun to investigate and evaluate the skills, strategies, and lessons learned from conflict. Yet, many of the findings are isolated to their specific organizations or industries, decreasing the impact of the newly emerging knowledge. Due to the lack of interconnectedness in the fields and industries, this study poses the following research question: How do organizations develop skills and strategies to respond to internal and external conflict within systems? The purpose of this grounded meta-analysis was to discover what skills and strategies organizations learn through the process of managing conflict and to utilize the findings to develop a comprehensive integrated conflict development model to aid organizations in the development of their systems. The study utilized Hossler and Scalese-Love's (1989) grounded meta-analysis methodology. Theories such as systems theory, social constructivism, and frame analysis were used to inform the development of the new theoretical framework: the roadmap for organizational conflict management systems (ROC framework). From an initial sample of 33 reports from 1990 to the present indicating conflict, I reviewed 12 executive reports and publications relating to conflict in organizations (before, during, or after conflict). Data analysis produced a framework including a holistic, transparent, and innovative context for learning, using strategies of communication, knowledge sharing, support, and collaboration. The resulting ROC framework is presented in the form of a chart to assist organizations in developing an integrated conflict management system resulting in organizational effectiveness, cooperative conflict management, and a culture of openness and trust.

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Justification

*Organizations are rife with conflict that takes many forms and wears many faces. They can hide it, quash it, control it, fight it, deny it, or avoid it, but whatever they do, they cannot make it disappear: conflict is an organizational fact of life. (Costantino & Merchant, 1996, p. 3)*

Organizations have confronted an overabundance of difficulties over recent decades. With the fluctuation of global economies, sustainability demands, and expanding networks, organizations have been grappling with the unique challenges of internal and external organizational conflicts. Although organizations acknowledge conflict within their systems, the processes designed to manage conflicts are often developed as an avoidance method that leads to a loss in learning opportunities (Crowe, 2009; De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997; P. C. Stern, 1991). The lack of conflict dialogue, assessment, and constructive systems causes organizational environments to suffer from a lack of productivity, increased frustration, plummeting motivation, and wasted resources (CPP, 2008).

Though modern organizations are facing a *mélange* of challenges, organizational conflict has been the focus of research studies for over a century. The initial documented investigation began during the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s–1900s (USHistory.org, 2014). During the establishment of factory systems, organizations experienced conflicts that arose from outwork systems, factory systems, wage labor, gender issues, mounting racial issues, economic setbacks, and a rapidly shifting political landscape (Jaffee, 2008; USHistory.org, 2014). In response to organizational conflicts, Frederick Winslow Taylor

designed *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jaffee, 2008). The concept of Taylor's principle was to diffuse conflict by focusing on productivity, control, and soldiering (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jaffee, 2008). According to Jaffee (2008), at its most fundamental point, "scientific management represented an engineering solution to a human problem" (p. 11).

Taylor's system was met with opposition because it lacked an account for human behavior; however, this led researchers to examine the role that human factors play within an organization. From the early 1900s to the 1970s, researchers such as Mary Parker Follett, Elton Mayo (noted for the Hawthorne experiments), and Abraham Maslow (noted for creating the hierarchy of needs) shifted their focus to understanding the patterns and needs of the individual worker in order to reduce organizational conflict by improving employee satisfaction (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jaffee, 2008). The challenge with the humanistic approach was that at times the lines of authority were blurred and responsibilities were easily shifted, leading to the escalation of conflicts. As emphasized by Reuss (2009), at the end of the decade the external factors impacting organizations were "rising international competition, spiking energy prices, declining productivity and profitability, and soaring inflation and unemployment" (p. 14). As explained by Jaffee (2008), the humanistic approach was not designed to regroup and restructure a system based on external issues, but rather to build internally. Thus, "the recognition of environmental constraints, organization theory and practice remained seduced by the compelling attraction of formal structure and instrumental rationality" (Jaffee, 2008, p.

18). Based on the information, researchers acknowledged that organizational conflict systems needed to work from within the organization but respond to the external factors.

By the 1980s, organizational conflict systems clearly needed a formal structure that focused on production, a human system that centered on employee satisfaction, and a process that responded to external factors. These valuable lessons gave way to the bureaucratic (political) approach to organizational conflict (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jaffee, 2008). The approach allowed employees to focus on interests, tasks, and power (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jaffee, 2008). The interconnectedness between goals and interest created a productive work environment. The unique challenge for this time span was the inception of the information technology revolution. Unlike the decades before, organizations now had the ability to exchange information at lightning speeds and experience a heightened level of globalization (Levin Institute, 2015). However, conflict often would arise during decision-making situations. According to Jaffee (2008), the decision-making process exposed hidden motives, aggressive competition, plays for power, and conflicting interests “stemming from the fundamental organizational tensions related to the human factor and the differentiation of tasks and interests” (p. 25). Organizations with a wealth of information still experienced organizational conflict, because employees were not equipped on the utilization of information.

Gleaning from previous models, the postbureaucratic (symbolic) model emerged. Unlike its predecessors, this approach focused on “dialogue, persuasion, and trust” (Jaffee, 2008, p. 25), viewing organizations as more “serendipitous than linear” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 254). The organization’s culture was comprised of information sharing,

goal-centered operations, and vested responsibility; during this phase, the concept of the *learning organization* grew in popularity. Learning organizations provided the opportunity for individuals to learn and to create and present innovations based on the information they received or experienced (DiBella, 1995; Senge, 2006; Smith, 2007). However, employees often would become frustrated by the misuse of information, unmet goals, and unevenly distributed tasks. Externally, organizations were shaken by economic recession, global information threats, political clashes, and sustainability. Though the postbureaucratic (symbolic) approach did embrace a learning culture, organizations still treated conflict as a negative event that was avoidable and preventable (De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997; Jaffee, 2008; Middleton, 1983; P. C. Stern, 1991). The system posed challenges because organizations could not skillfully train employees on learning from conflict and crises; the system in place had not been developed to learn from conflict, but rather to reduce and eliminate conflict. The postbureaucratic approach did not provide the organizational balance in production and human satisfaction that is constantly being pursued.

Learning systems motivated conflict practitioners and researchers to begin the development of conflict-management systems that would evolve to be known as integrated conflict systems within organizations (to be further discussed in the literature review). The integrated conflict system provides organizations with a multivaried process for managing and resolving conflict. The goal of integrated conflict systems is to provide organizations with tools to examine current conflicts in order to develop preventative, de-escalation, and management procedures (Costantino & Merchant, 1996).

In the postbureaucratic (symbolic) era, integrated conflict systems are growing in popularity because they go beyond the concept that one conflict-management style fits all situations and provide room for understanding, growth, and innovation. However, the integrated conflict system also has challenges that may impede progress, such as inadequately developed systems, organizational resistance to the organizational cultural shift in the management of conflict, limited or undertrained individuals to implement and manage the change process, and lack of communication between organizations to discuss best practices. Thus, continuing to examine organizational conflict systems remains vital (Bordone & Moffitt, 2005; Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Lynch, 2001).

Spanning from the 1800s to the present, effective organizational conflict-management systems have been in high research demand. The building blocks of past findings allow researchers in the field to examine the current causes of organizational conflict with a multifaceted lens. Yet the modern-day organization faces a set of unique challenges. Conflict provides a unique learning experience by challenging skill sets, fostering collaboration, and enhancing resourcefulness (Bass, 2000; DiBella, 1995; Novelli & Taylor, 1993; Senge, 2006). However, organizations have been unable to fully connect to the benefits of both internal and external conflicts. This lack of connection between benefits of conflict and organizations is evident, regardless of industry, years of establishment, and systems (Serieyx, 1993).

The information revolution, the globalization of economies, the proliferation of events that undermine all our certainties, the collapse of the grand ideologies, the arrival of the CNN society which transforms us into an immense, planetary



village—all these shocks have overturned the rules of the game and suddenly turned yesterday’s organization into antiques. (Serieyx, 1993, pp. 14–15)

The untapped potential of learning through conflicts ignited the concept for the research question: What skills and strategies do organizations develop to respond to internal and external conflict within systems? The research findings led to the development of the roadmap for organizational conflict-management system, also referred to as the ROC framework.

### **Need for Study**

Conflict is a primitive form of human interaction that can be traced back to the earliest of historical documentation. Yet in recent times organizational systems have been grappling with the impact of conflict on both financial and human capital gain and losses within the systems. The CPP (2008) reported, “U.S. employees spend 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict, equating to approximately \$359 billion in paid hours” (p. 3). In an era of fluctuating job markets and organizations in consistent pursuit of lowering costs and increasing productivity, the evaluation of the cost of conflict is vital to the creation and sustainability of jobs. Understanding that the world will never be free of conflict, leaders of organizational systems are becoming aware of a new level and a need for a deeper comprehension of conflict and the skills gained from the conflict experience (Burton, 1998; Conflict Research Consortium, 2005). In the current trend, leaders of organizational systems from a variety of fields and industries have begun to investigate and evaluate the skills, strategies, and lessons learned from conflict. Yet, many of the findings are isolated and coded to their specific organization or industries, decreasing the

impact of the newly emerging knowledge. Due to the lack of interconnectedness in the fields and industries, I asked the following research question: How do organizations develop skills and strategies to respond to internal and external conflict within systems?

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this grounded meta-analysis was to discover what skills and strategies organizations learn through the process of conflict and to utilize the findings to develop a comprehensive development model for integrated conflict-management systems to aid organizations in the development of their systems. By consolidating the findings into one study, practitioners from diverse fields can expand positive conflict learning skills, strategies, and experiences to strengthen the development of integrated conflict systems for their organizations and also have a model for immediate practical application. For the purpose of this research, grounded meta-analysis is defined as “examining and integrating a group of qualitative research findings into one explanatory theory, model or description” (P. N. Stern & Harris, 1985, p. 152). I utilized journal databases including EBSCOhost, JStore, and ProQuest. At this stage of the research, the phenomena were defined as follows (Creswell, 2007).

1. An *organization* is defined as “a collection of individuals working interdependently within a relativity structured, organized, open system to achieve common goals” (Richmond, McCroskey, & Powell, 2012, p. 1)
2. *Organizational conflict* is “an expression of dissatisfaction or disagreement with an interaction, process, product, or service” (Costantino & Merchant, 1996, p. 4), including internal and external organizational conflict. Rahim (2010) defined

organizational conflict as an “interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc.)” (p. 20).

### **Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this study was to discover what skills and strategies organizations learn through the process of conflict and to utilize the findings to develop a comprehensive development model for integrated conflict systems to aid organizations in the development of their systems. Following Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides an in-depth literature review highlighting organizational conflict and organizations. Chapter 3 presents a detailed explanation of Hossler and Scalese-Love’s (1989) grounded meta-analysis employed for the study. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the data derived the grounded meta-analysis. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study, its findings, the rationale for the roadmap for organizational conflict-management systems (ROC framework), and areas for further research opportunities.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides an analytical survey of the cornerstones of the study: organizational behavior, organizational learning and learning organizations, organizational conflict, integrated conflict systems, and theoretical frameworks. Each of the topics provided an in-depth understating of the issues, contributions, and theoretical frameworks that informed the theory development. This strategy provided the study with a scaffolding awareness of theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and practical contributions to each area.

### **Organizational Behavior**

In order to fully appreciate the growth within the study of organizational conflict, one must examine the contributing factors that researchers have established as the constitution of an organization. The concept of organizations has been an innate component of human existence stemming from the need to belong, create, compete, or simply survive (Hatch, 2011; W. R. Scott & Davis, 2007). W. R. Scott and Davis (2007) explained that at its fundamental core, an organization begins as a rational, natural, or open system. A rational organizational system is goal driven and primarily structures communication in a task-oriented pattern. The natural system acknowledges the collective force but also embraces the behavioral aspects of the organization's members, creating an environment that supports the value of informal communication. An open system promotes the concept that organizations operate as a large system but also have subsystems that assist in the processes and procedures. The complexity of an open system requires communication to be constantly evolving within the environment to

ensure effectiveness and support. Regardless of the type, organizations provide individuals with the opportunity to connect and network with others to accomplish a larger goal.

Nadler and Tushman (as cited in W. R. Scott & Davis, 2007) determined that all organizations have six fundamental elements: environment, strategies and goals, people, work or technology, formal organization, and informal organization. The environmental component is the physical existence of the organization. This encompasses the virtual, physical, and sociocultural conditions in which an organization operates. These external factors can positively or negatively impact the internal functioning of the organization.

The tactical strategies employed by organizations determine how the organizations operate and exist within their selected environments. Formulation of goals determines the internal and external benefactors of the organization's goals (De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997; Hatch, 2011). However, as organizations experience conflict, whether stemming from change, procedural incompatibly, or external political forces, the formulation of the goals, benefactors, or outcomes can be negatively impacted. Understanding how organizations shaped and implemented goals before, during, and after conflict was a feature of the current study, which examined organizations' desired outcomes through the process of conflict.

The formal and informal organizations coexist but embody differing components of organizations. The formal aspect of organizations focuses on the operational, procedural, and established structure of the organization. Within this realm, the field of organizational design emerged. Organizational design creates a plan of action to

construct a system of scaffolding procedures to obtain organizational goals (Carus, 2011; Shockley-Zalabak, 2011). The informal aspect of the organization is the manifestation of attributes that directly impact the functionality of the organization (Shockley-Zalabak, 2011). The major focus of research within the informal realm is organizational culture. Organizational culture includes the norms, values, and traditions that become day-to-day expectations (Richmond et al., 2012).

However, in the initial 1985 publication of *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Schein (2010) presented the insightful awareness that organizational culture can be examined in three varying levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions (see Figure 1). Schein brought to the forefront the immediate need to understand organizational culture as a valuable component of the functionality of an organization. The health of the elements on a day-to-day basis when encountering conflict determines the effectiveness of an organization.

Artifacts	Espoused Beliefs and Values	Underlying Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Visible organizational structures and process</li> <li>•Hard to decipher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strategies, goals, philosophies</li> <li>•Espoused justifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings</li> <li>•Ultimate source of values and action</li> </ul>

*Figure 1.* Three levels of organizational culture. *Note.* Based on *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (4th ed.), by E. H. Schein, 2010, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schein's (2010) description of organizational subcultures is also relevant to this study of integrated conflict-management systems. Schein described three levels of

common subcultures that function within an organization: operator culture, engineering culture, and executive culture. Members of the organization design and drive the operator culture, the engineering culture focuses on the functionality and productivity of the organization, and the executive culture represents the financial and leadership activity of the organization (Schein, 2010). Although an organization operates as one system, it also can be fragmented by the daily roles and responsibilities of individuals in subcultures, creating a disconnect in possible conflict solutions and procedures.

### **Organizational Learning and Learning Organizations**

The overall objective of this study was to provide organizations and conflict-resolution practitioners with fresh insights and a solid framework to aid in the development of integrated conflict-management systems. Although the conceptual development and research of organizational conflict began in the 1800s, the scientific desire to understand how organizations acquire and apply experiential knowledge has been a lingering research question (Dodgson, 1993; Yeo, 2005). To fully understand how this study could contribute effectively to the transforming arena of integrated conflict systems design and development, I first examined how an organization responds and learns as an entity (Schein, 2010; Senge, 2006). Initially, the common conception was that organizations operated similarly to mechanical robotic systems that focused on inputs, outputs, and hard data and would monitor systematically for “repair and upgrading” (Yeo, 2005, p. 368). With a mechanical infrastructure, the organizational expectation was a function based on “authority-obedience relationships and ridged delegation of responsibilities” (Yeo, 2005, p. 369). Yet, the mechanical representation of

an organization lacked the consideration of internal and external factors (global economic markets, human dynamics, technology, environment, sustainability, etc.) that an organization could experience.

As the study of organizations evolved, researchers shifted their focus to evaluating organizations as multifaceted systems, with an increasing interest in the process of learning within the establishments. The directional variation accelerated with the introduction of Bennis's (1969) concept of organizational health (Yeo, 2005). Organizational health provided the framework that organizations were "organic systems rather than mechanical ones" (Yeo, 2005, p. 369). Viewing an organization as an organic system provided researchers with the opportunity to examine how organizations responded to both internal and external factors and to evaluate their responses. More importantly, researchers were able to identify learning patterns within organizations (Cangelosi & Dill, 1965; March & Simon, 1993).

Within these learning patterns, two distinctions in knowledge acquisition emerged: organizational learning and learning organizations (DiBella, 1995). According to DiBella (1995), "Organizational learning is a construct used to describe certain types of activity (or processes) that may occur at any one of several levels of analysis or as a part of an organizational change process" (p. 287). Organizational learning is a management process implemented for instilling methods and procedures (Cangelosi & Dill, 1965; Dodgson, 1993; Levitt & March, 1988). Organizational learning focuses on the actual process, whereas learning organizations are structures. DiBella stated,



The learning organization is a system level concept with particular characteristics or a metaphor for organizations and organizing. The learning organization has been characterized as having the capability to adapt to changes in its environment or to encode inferences from history into routines that guide behavior. (p. 287)

Learning organizations have the aptitude to respond to external and internal situations (Bass, 2000; Dilworth, 1996). The opportunity to learn, grow, and change is a collaborative effort by all members of the organization.

However, the systematic procedure for creating a learning organization was not effectively outlined and recognized until the 1990 initial publication of Senge's (2006) breakout book, *The Fifth Discipline*. Senge (2006) maintained that learning organizations are "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). Senge's definition was established on the idea that people innately want to learn. A natural desire is to seek new knowledge and to discover innovative applications (Senge, 2006).

Through Senge's (2006) framework, a learning organization requires five key elements: shared vision, mental models, personal mastery, team learning, and systems thinking. First, Senge's concept of shared vision is the collaborative goal-setting phase in an organization. Through the process of meaningful dialogue, organizational members can determine the organization's commitment, learning outcomes, and objectives. In the mental model aspect of the framework, the organization's members begin to

acknowledge, challenge, and reshape existing assumptions, values, and mind sets that directly impact how employees interact and respond as well as organizational challenges (Senge, 2006). Self-awareness is the main focus of personal mastery. Personal mastery activates organization members' personal reflective process in examining their actions towards themselves and others. Team learning provides organizations the opportunity to exchange thoughts and experiences that promote a collaborative and engaging thinking process.

Finally, systems thinking enables members to examine the interconnectedness of the organizations. This holistic view encourages the identification of covert influences, consequences of process and procedures, and open discussions for solutions (Senge, 2006). Each of the five pillars allows members of the structure to discover and enhance learning together as a system. Senge's (2006) blueprint enabled organizations to transform their day-to-day operations to ensure that learning opportunities were the foundational component of the organization (Bass, 2000; Senge, 2006; Yeo, 2005).

As organizations began to evaluate how to shift from organizational learning to learning organizations, three dominating perspectives developed: the normative perspective, the development perspective, and the capability perspective (DiBella, 1995). The normative perspective views learning organizations as a systematic design (DiBella, 1995). The organization would build in the process to facilitate learning throughout the organization (DiBella, 1995; Senge, 2006). The development perspective holds that learning organizations exist within a life cycle and must mature into the process rather

than a structural framework (Cameron & Whetten, 1983; DiBella, 1995). The third perspective, and the one utilized for this research, is the capability perspective.

In contrast to the first two perspectives, DiBella (1995) stated, “Presuppose that learning is not indigenous to organizational life, that it happens only under certain prescribed conditions” (p. 288). The capability perspective acknowledges that by nature, organizations are multidynamic social systems with varying levels and forms of learning and interactions. As DiBella effectively explained,

Organizations develop and learn from experience by strategic choice or by aging. As organizations develop and solve problems of survival, they create culture which becomes the repository for lessons learned. They also create core competencies which represent collective learning. Through organizational socialization, a learning process, knowledge and competence are transferred between generations of employees. How new experiences are perceived and shape new learning is affected by the simultaneous adaptive capabilities of groups and organizations which goes on continuously. (p. 288)

As learning organizations face conflict both internally and externally, they organically and collectively respond and learn. The organization creates new processes and identifies new skill sets for development and improvement. Members of the organization understand that these learning experiences will be passed on throughout the organization’s life cycle. The learning experiences are valued for their ability to shape, teach, and be the catalyst for change.

Yet, despite the growth within this field of study, concerns have emerged over the true validity of learning organizations. Some researchers have argued that the learning organization is a theoretical concept rather than a practical one, it lacks the blueprint to transform into action, and the organization cannot achieve transformative change with learning initiatives alone (Milway & Saxton, 2011; Örténblad, 2007; Smith, 2007). Yet even within these arguments, researchers have agreed a greater understanding of learning organizations is mandatory for organizations to maneuver through the challenges of the global market (Milway & Saxton, 2011; Smith, 2007).

This identified concern regarding learning, organizational outcomes, and the development of integrated conflict-management systems was a driving force for this study. Capturing the learning outcomes was a fundamental key to the current study. Often, the action of learning is separated from the possible contribution to the system to mitigate conflict. By building a stronger connection between these often separate entities, organizations would have a framework that would give new insight to modes of implementing of learning within their integrated conflict-management systems. With the support of the findings, the goal of this study was to provide practitioners with the insight and framework necessary to skillfully fuse learning into their integrated conflict-management system.

### **Organizational Conflict**

Internal and external organizational conflicts are an unavoidable reality within organizations (Butler, 1973). Conflict at its basic level can be best defined as a “perceived divergence of interest, a belief that the parties’ current aspirations are

incompatible” (Pruitt, 2004, p. 7). With the complexity of global demands, organizations are striving to amalgamate with the changing economic landscape while reducing the amount of conflict that change often generates (Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988). Yet, conflicts can be beneficial for organizations because they provide the opportunity for dialogue that allows for an open systematic approach to find meaningful solutions to problems (Conflict Research Consortium, 2005; De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997). As change is an anticipated constant within organizations, Coser (1957) stated,

It is obvious, moreover, that conflict may be a result just as much as a source of change. A new invention, the introduction of a new cultural trait through diffusion, the development of new methods of production or distribution, etc., will have a differential impact within a social system. (p. 203)

Yet whether the catalysis is an incompatibility of goals or a wave of change, conflict can be beneficial for organizations by providing the opportunity for dialogue that allows for an open systematic approach to find meaningful solutions to problems (Conflict Research Consortium, 2005; De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997). These meaningful solutions often lead to creativity and possibilities that are only ignited through the process of conflict. The uniqueness of conflict is its ability to be present in all forms of human interactions, to embody change, and to expand into a diversity of fields. Yet, the mechanism to ignite and absorb the innovation resulting from the process of conflict is often lost in the procedural and systematic approaches that are implemented (De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997). An organization encouraging innovative solutions should employ a component in the conflict-management system to facilitate innovation.

The examination of organizations before, during, and after conflict provided the insight needed to address this element of integrated conflict-management systems.

In the desire to understand conflict's impact on organizations, researchers began to focus on organizational behavior and conflict patterns that emerged within the study of organizational conflict (Butler, 1973; Pondy, 1992; Schein, 2010; P. C. Stern, 1991). Initially, organizational conflict was seen as a negative incident that took place within the organizational system (Corwin, 1969; Pondy, 1992). Conflict was a component signaling that the organization was in distress and unproductive. Yet according to Pondy (1992), as the field continued to mature, evidence began to emerge solidifying the concept that "far from being a 'breakdown' in the system, conflict is the very essence of what an organization is. If conflict isn't happening, then the organization has no reason for being" (p. 259).

Accepting that conflict was a normative behavior within organizations, researchers were still divided on the function of conflict within the organization and formed two differing theoretical schools. One conceptual view of conflict is that it is destructive and should be avoided and resolved (Pondy, 1992). An example of conflict as a signal of organizational distress is the Equifax data breach (CSR, 2017). In 2017, Equifax experienced one of the largest data breaches in U.S. history. With approximately 143 million Americans affected by the data hack, Equifax faces its largest organizational conflict. However, the organization showed a lack of transparency by delaying communication of the data breach to consumers until 6 weeks after the breach was

detected. Further, with the firing of key members in the organization, Equifax has created an environment where conflict has a negative perspective.

The second conceptual view of conflict is as a productive learning experience. This study employed the productive view of conflict in the aim of providing organizations the opportunity to view issues not as a gridlock or a standstill, but rather as a moment to explore innovative options and strategies to improve productivity, build awareness, enhance the work environment, and promote growth (De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997). This productive view was evident in the 2016 Samsung technology issue with the Galaxy 7 (Wiggers, 2017). The Galaxy 7 had a faulty battery that would cause the phones to melt or explode. Once the issue was reported, Samsung began the recall process. They provided up-to-date information to their consumers. In addition, they created internal task force systems dedicated to finding short- and long-term technical solutions. Samsung took full responsibility and focused on learning from mistakes. This approach assisted in creating an environment where conflict can be viewed as an opportunity for growth.

Senge's (2006) examination of learning organizations provided researchers with the understanding that the structure of the organization affects how participating individuals respond to conflict. The inclusion of values, norms, and practices is equally as vital as organizational rules and principles as well as the advantages organizations have in comprehending the influence organizational systems have on organizational behavior (Senge, 2006; Shariff, 2003). As organizations are human driven, naturally

responsive, and learning conveyers, organizational conflict is inherently a catalyst and participant of the process.

### **Integrated Conflict-Management Systems**

The origins of integrated conflict systems are well rooted in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). As early as 1800 B.C., the use of mediation and arbitration in Syria by the Mari kingdom with other kingdoms was documented (Barrett & Barrett, 2004). Yet the concept of integrated conflict systems gained popularity after Ury et al. (1988) published *Getting Disputes Resolved: Designing Systems to Cut the Costs of Conflict*. Until that point, many organizations operated with the approach that one conflict-management style fits all. Organizations noted a level of dissatisfaction with how internal and external conflicts were being resolved (Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Ury et al., 1988).

Organizations' ineffective approach to conflict led them to evaluate the successful ADR systems employed in the legal system (Barrett & Barrett, 2004; Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Shariff, 2003). Within the legal ADR process, disputants were allowed to make a neutral selection of which ADR method they preferred. The opportunity to select the ADR method led to an increase in both parties' commitment and positive satisfaction with the process. Further, Ury et al. (1988) utilized a best practices approach to understand integrated conflict systems. They effectively presented three key phases: power, rights, and interests (Ury et al., 1988). The power phase heavily relies on upper management to resolve the disputes. In the rights phase, employees access organizational



processes such as grievance procedures, whereas the interest phase focuses on interest-based negotiations and mediation (Ury et al., 1988).

The early works on this topic opened the floodgates of opportunity for conflict-management systems to operate in organizations. This later led to Gosline et al.'s (2001) *Designing Integrated Conflict Management Systems: Guidelines for Practitioners and Decision Makers in Organizations* and Costantino and Merchant's (2006) *Designing Conflict Management Systems*. Costantino and Merchant provided the blueprint to build conflict-management systems. However, as the economic and political climates shifted and organizations continued to move to a more human-centered approach, a fourth phase emerged: integrated conflict management (Lynch, 2001). Building on Ury et al.'s (1988) early work on power, rights, and interest, integrated conflict management utilized all three components and went beyond to deal with root causes without sacrificing the flexibility of options for dealing with internal and external conflict. Integrated conflict systems provide organizations with the advantages of housing an all-encompassing process (Lynch, 2001). Fewer conflicts are displaced or simply not dealt with. Additionally, an integrated conflict system provides the opportunity to exam the root cause of the conflict and whether an internal or external force is involved, in order to properly understand the conflict process.

Though integrated conflict systems are trending, early research established some of the best practices for optimizing these systems. Researchers have noted a looming concern regarding successful training and support development for integrated conflict systems (Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Shariff, 2003; Ury et al., 1988). The challenge

presented is the actual action plans and sustainability of an integrated conflict-management system. The implementation of any new organizational process or procedure requires a high level of support and monitoring; organizations may not have knowledgeable staff to guide the system. This understanding led me to examine opportunities for a fresh perspective by examining the practices of current organizations and their methods for managing organizational conflict. Built on the concerns presented in the literature review, the study was designed to identify skills and strategies that practitioners and organizational leaders may use to enhance or develop integrated conflict systems to ensure sustainability. In order to maintain the growth and practicability of integrated conflict systems, organizations' best practices must be identified and measured to continue the evolution of the process.

### **Contributing Theoretical Frameworks**

The research methodology for this study was grounded meta-analysis. Due to the framework of theoretical sensitivity of the grounded meta-analysis approach, I utilized systems theory, social constructivism, and frame analysis as instruments of data awareness and development throughout the research. To ensure the relevancy of the selected theories, they were examined and determined to have a direct correlation with the organizational experience of conflict (Creswell, 2007; Glaser, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Systems theory, social constructionism, and framing allowed the study to concentrate on key connections and generate equitable results. At the base of the relevant and modern perspective is systems theory.

Though originally originating from the hard sciences, systems theory has become an instrumental concept within the social sciences. By combining components from Ludwig von Bertalanffy's early works of concepts of systems in biological sciences (Brennan & Wildflower, 2011) and Talcott Parson's action system, which focuses on varying levels of "social analysis as well as their interrelationship" (Ritzer, 2010, p. 232), Niklas Luhman designed a systems theory with a sociological approach (Jaffee, 2008). Systems theory creates the conceptual connection between varying levels within an organization and simultaneously takes into account the organization's external factors. According to Brennan and Wildflower (2011), the theory provides the opportunity to view the area of focus as "an open system being one that has both internal coherence and connections with the larger structure of which it forms a part" (p. 119). Organizations, though independent, are entities still operating within a level of interconnectedness with markets, competitors, and the general public. Additionally, intraorganizational conflicts are created, impacted, escalated, and de-escalated by both external and internal factors; thus, management of and resolutions to these conflicts should operate effectively without disrupting or negatively impacting the organizational system. By utilizing systems theory, I could examine organizational conflicts through the lens of social, cognitive, political, and structural variables (Pondy, 1966). However, the postmodern concept of social constructionism creates the awareness of the learning experience.

Utilizing social constructionism as a key point of reference within this study allowed me to examine what skills and strategies were learned and attained in organizations during conflicts. Derived from symbolic interaction and first introduced by

Berger and Luckmann (1966), social constructionism fosters the concept that learning “occurs as people wrestle with the intricacies of real world challenges and improvise a way to a solution. Here, one’s veridical knowledge becomes valuable only as it is employed, combined, and consumed” (B. B. Scott, 2011, p. 5). As discussed by Brennan and Wildflower (2011), in reviewing organizational conflicts I focused on chronicling the “broad set of ideas, characteristics, and conversations” (p. 81) by examining organizational conflicts in learning organizations and analyzing the learning process derived from the experience.

The concept of framing was initially presented in Goffman’s (1974) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Frames provide individuals with an understanding of the world around them. They supply categories for complex concepts and interpretations of events (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Kaufman, Elliott, & Shmueli, 2013; Moore, 2003). However, reframing provides the opportunity to deconstruct a perception and reconstruct the frame to build a collaborative and productive view of a conflict, experience, or concept. By utilizing frame analysis as a theoretical framework, I had the opportunity to examine how organizations shift employees’ perceptions, craft messages, and shift organizational conflict to navigate through conflicts and create systemic solutions.

The literature review provided the opportunity to analyze existing findings and determine the areas in which the current study could provide insight and contributions. Based on assessment of the literature, the areas of contribution are in the interconnectedness of organizational subcultures, learning outcomes, support, and

sustainability and the application to the development and design of integrated conflict-management systems. In addition, the literature review examined systems theory, social constructivism, and frame analysis, the theories utilized to inform the study's framework development. Organizations are established and operated by people, whose behavior, responses, and learned insights likely will be varying and complex, making it difficult to catalog learned outcomes such as skills and strategies. The information and outcome gained from this study shed light on specific areas detrimental to building an effective integrated conflict-management system, so organizations can begin to tailor a system to their unique needs built on prior research and expanding on effective approaches.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an in-depth examination of grounded meta-analysis as the methodology of the study and the underlying reasoning for its utilization. The discussion consists of the key components of research ethics, the grounded meta-analysis, the contributing features of the meta-analysis, the analytic procedure of grounded theory, and the collaborative process of the methodology.

#### **Methodology and Rationale**

A grounded meta-analysis was the methodology utilized for this study because it allows the researcher to assess growing trends and establish new models within organizations, and then to establish and appraise new developments generated from data (Creswell, 2007). The grounded meta-analysis approach implemented for this study was originally designed by Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989), who developed the methodology to “study research findings about the effects of rational planning systems (e.g., goal-based planning, management-by-objectives, and strategic planning) on organizational effectiveness, an organizational culture (e.g., culture, climate, philosophy) on organizational effectiveness” (p. 6). Given that the nature of the study was to identify and analyze the skills and strategies organizations extracted from conflict, the methodology provided the platform to examine components of an organization and their response to conflict.

The specific procedural component employed derived from Hossler and Scalese-Love’s (1989) grounded meta-analysis. Based on the Glaser and Strauss (1967) framework, Hossler and Scalese-Love explained that the grounded meta-analysis

methodology allows researchers

to appraise new developments in a field, to verify existing theories or develop new ones, to synthesize knowledge from different lines of research, [and] to infer generalizations about substantive issues from a set of studies directly bearing on those issues. (p. 2)

Though Hossler and Scalese-Love's (1989) application focused on data drawn from case studies, in this study I expanded the data pool to include articles and publications. The grounded meta-analysis methodology is advantageous for exploring trends in organizations when dealing with organizational conflicts because of the need to analyze findings from a diversity of disciplines. Stall-Meadows and Hyle (2010) reinforced this prime utilization of grounded theory, stating, "This method offers a way to overcome the limitation of individual, data-burdensome case studies bounded by context. It extracts conceptual trends across individual case study and eliminates these contextual boundaries" (p. 412). By utilizing the framework of the meta-analysis component, I could complete a qualitative content analysis based on the findings of organizations. According to Hyle and Stall-Meadows (2013), the uniqueness of this approach is that it "synthesizes qualifying qualitative research and contributes to the development of hypotheses grounded in data" (p. 4). Additionally, utilizing Hossler and Scalese-Love's grounded theory techniques as an analytical tool allowed me to examine findings and create an applicable theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989). The methodology would allow the findings to contribute to scholarly resources and enhance the development of conflict models, programs, curriculum, and trainings.

Qualitative meta-analysis is also referred to as content analysis, qualitative metasynthesis, qualitative meta-data-analysis, and metaethnography (Barroso & Sandelowski, 2007; Sandelowski, 2004). Barroso and Sandelowski (2007) noted qualitative meta-analysis “is an interpretive integration of qualitative findings that are themselves interpretive syntheses of data, including the phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theories, and other coherent descriptions or explanations of phenomena, events, or cases that are the hallmark findings of qualitative research” (p. 18). The varying terminology of the methodology does not deter from the fact that it is an effective procedure utilized to conduct systematic reviews of established studies, to determine consistency in findings, and to present new interpretations or theories.

According to Hyle and Stall-Meadows (2013),

In 1970, Glass used a mining metaphor to describe the vast quantities of unrelated research. The mines of science have mountains of accumulated, unrefined ore. Many of the raw findings get buried under new accumulations, even though science would be better served if the findings were refined and hammered into usable metal. (p. 3)

With the vast information on the topics of learning organizations and conflict, previous research must be excavated and evaluated in an in-depth fashion. As accentuated by Hunter and Schmidt (2004), with this methodology, the “process of cleaning up and making sense of research literatures not only reveals the cumulative knowledge that is there, but also provides clearer directions about what the remaining research needs are” (p. 27).



## **Forms of Meta-Analysis**

Though meta-analysis is an emerging methodology, the varying levels in the purpose of the analysis can lead to a misunderstanding of the purpose of the methodology. Primary analysis refers to the examination of the original data from a study. Secondary analysis refers to information from reviewing the findings of the primary analysis in hopes of discovering new information or presenting a deeper insight to the topic. According to Glass (1976), “Meta-analysis refers to the analysis of analyses.

The statistical analysis of a large collection of analysis results from individual studies for the purpose of integrating the findings” (p. 3). Due to varying needs when utilizing meta-analysis, the researcher must identify the form appropriate for the research objective. In the arena of meta-analysis, five forms are academically recognized (Barroso & Sandelowski, 2007; Thorne, 2008): metasummaries, metasyntheses, metaethnography, metastudy, and metatheorizing. Though these forms are primarily accepted within the field of research, each method may have diverging foci within the approach. A prime example would be the description of metatheorizing presented by sociologist Ritzer (2010). Ritzer described the three basic types of metatheorizing, which have distinct purposes: (a) a means of attaining a deeper understanding of theory, (b) theory framework forming, and (c) a comprehensive evaluation and collection of sociological theory.

By synthesizing historical theories, varieties of current sociological advancements have been discovered. Ritzer (2010) acknowledged that the research methodology of metatheorizing is not a new form of research by stating, “Most important classical and

contemporary theorists developed their theories, at least in part, on the basis of a careful study of, and reaction to, the work of other theorists” (p. A-3). Established examples are Karl Marx’s theory of capitalism derived from his methodical examination of theories such as political economy, utopian socialism, and Hegelian philosophy. The same can be said of Parsons’s action theory, which was engineered out of the groundbreaking work of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Vilfredo Pareto, and George Marshall (Ritzer, 2010). Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons developed the theoretical framework that assisted Jeffrey Alexander’s engineered creation of nonfunctional theory (Ritzer, 2010). Even more recently, Jurgen Habermas created communication theory, inspired by the theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Margaret Mead, and Emile Durkheim (Ritzer, 2010). Though Ritzer’s focus was on theoretical review, the systematic analysis of existing theories contributed to the field of sociology. Due to its systematized approach, meta-analysis has been integrated into diverse disciplines and has bridged disciplines to create multidisciplinary analysis (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004; Hyle & Stall-Meadows, 2013; Walsh & Downe, 2005).

Multidisciplinary meta-analysis provides the researcher with the opportunity to investigate a phenomenon in a variety of settings or explain a phenomenon through the utilization of theories from a variety of disciplines. In the study entitled “A Multidisciplinary Meta-Analysis of Human Barriers to Technology Implementation,” Rizzuto and Reeves (2007) described “person-related problem sources, symptoms, and solutions associated within information technology (IT) implementation failure, and a meta-analysis is used to analyze scholarly literature from four academic disciplines

spanning two decades” (p. 226). The meta-analysis approach shifted in Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, and DuBois’s (2008) multidisciplinary meta-analysis on mentoring. The researchers strategically gathered information about mentoring programs from diverse disciplines and spanning three distinct generational populations: youth, academic, and workplace mentoring (Eby et al., 2008). A meta-analysis provides the researcher with the opportunity to review established data and newly released information from a variety of fields to produce new insights through analysis and cross-discipline and emerging theories.

### **Grounded Theory**

Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989) based their grounded meta-analysis model on the Glaser and Strauss (1967) classic grounded theory model but recommended the application of Corbin and Strauss’s (1990, 2015) data coding. Developed in 1967, grounded theory is an inductive analytic system that focuses on developing, as noted by Creswell (2007), “a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by views of a large numbers of participants” (p. 1813). Though Glaser and Strauss developed the methodology, a disagreement about procedures within the method led to the development of Straussian grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Evans, 2013). Evans (2013) explained that Corbin and Strauss’s grounded theory differs from the classic grounded theory by providing additional procedural steps to create more structure to the methodology but also limiting the flexibility and increase complexity and difficulty for researchers (Evans, 2013). The inclusion of the Corbin and Strauss (2015) additional phases of coding in the Hossler and Scalese-Love grounded meta-analysis does

not detract from Glaser and Strauss's original method but rather provided a clearer procedural elaboration of the coding process.

Though the classic grounded theory and the Straussian grounded theory are the most commonly recognized forms of the method, there are other emerging forms of grounded theories. Charmaz (2000) provided a constructive approach to grounded theory, Clarke's (2005) method drew from postmodern perspectives, and Wuest (1995) infused feminist theory into the methodology. The emerging forms of grounded theory are valid and provide a diverse lens for research. However, I selected the Glaser and Strauss grounded theory model as the appropriate methodology for this research. This process provides the researcher with solid guidelines, as explained by Evans (2013):

1. Fit determines whether the theory fits the substantive area in which it will be used.
2. Understandability refers to whether nonprofessionals concerned with the substantive area can understand the theory.
3. Generalizability determines whether the theory applies to a wide range of situations in the substantive area.
4. Control refers to whether the theory allows the user enough control in everyday situations, over time, to make the theory worth applying.

Grounded theory allows for the analysis and interpretation of data by examining data in the constant comparative method of open coding, causal conditions, strategies, intervening conditions, consequences, axial coding, selective coding, and propositions or

hypotheses (Creswell, 2007). The systematic approach provides the researcher the opportunity to fully examine data and produce credible, valid, and transferable findings.

### **Limitations of a Grounded Meta-Analysis**

As with any methodology, grounded meta-analysis has limitations. The commonly discussed area of concern within the study is the lack of a consensus on the actual procedure. Unlike other forms of research, grounded meta-analysis does not have a unified form of selecting articles (Abrami et al., 2008; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003; Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden, 1997; Walsh & Downe, 2005). Critics have argued that the methodology lacks scholarly solidarity in that “the major problem yet to be resolved is developing usable and communicable systematic approaches to conducting meta-synthesis projects that maintain the integrity of individual studies” (Sandelowski et al., 1997). The lack of a consistent approach from the selection of research to the process of subjective analysis (Abrami et al., 2008; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003; Sandelowski et al., 1997; Thorne, 2008) leads to questioning the reliability of the method. Advocates for the methodology have been cooperatively toiling to establish process and procedures for increasing the benefits of the methodology (Abrami et al., 2008; Sandelowski, 2004; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003; Sandelowski et al., 1997; Thorne, 2008; Walsh & Downe, 2005).

The purpose of employing a qualitative grounded theory meta-analysis is to gain a contextual narrative of a phenomenon that could lead to developed concept. Any concerns about the selected methodology were alleviated by following Hossler and Scalese-Love’s (1989) framework. Challenges exist in conducting a stand-alone

qualitative meta-analysis and seem to compound when adding the complexity of a grounded methodology. However, built-in research of the methodology design has provided a framework that allows researchers of varying levels to implement the methodology with fidelity and allows those examining that research a clear path to understand the process.

### **Justification for Utilizing Hossler and Scalese-Love's Grounded Meta-Analysis**

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this study was to identify the skills and strategies learned through conflict in organizational systems. Hossler and Scalese-Love's (1989) grounded meta-analysis approach was the appropriate methodology for the study because it provided the opportunity for research syntheses by gathering multivaried, multidisciplined, qualitative data from learning organizations. By analyzing qualitative data, I could examine the findings from a contextual perspective in which the organizations experienced and responded to conflict (Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989). Additionally, grounded meta-analysis provided the flexible opportunity for findings to emerge from the data without assumptions influenced by me, theoretical perspectives, and limiting rules (Evans, 2013; Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989). By utilizing the grounded meta-analysis, I was able to examine both the findings on organizational conflict in organizations and analyze the visible themes (Evans, 2013; Hyle & Stall-Meadows, 2013; Stall-Meadows & Hyle, 2010).

### **Data Collection**

As outlined by Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989), the initial process in developing a grounded meta-analysis is to establish a coding instrument. As a cyclical process,

grounded meta-analysis requires a coding instrument that is revisable as the synthesis of the study progresses (Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989). The system employed for the study was a developed keyword database and initial open-ended coding form. The variables of the study were established in the development of the keyword database to include conceptual definitions and synonyms.

This methodology required me to develop the focus of the study, select a guiding research question, search for candidate sources, retrieve, review, appraise, analyze, and present the results of the analytical process. From an initial sample of 33 reports, I reviewed 12 executive reports and publications relating to conflict in organizations (pre, post, or during), utilizing the framework established by Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989) to systematically select keywords and phrases in order to determine the trend within the qualitative data. I searched online databases and Internet searches with the key terms of *recommendations, executive summary, employee conflict, conflict executive summary, conflict management, conflict approaches, conflict strategies, conflict resolution, integrated conflict system, dispute resolution, challenges, and crisis.*

Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study (Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jillings, 2001) are as follows. Inclusion criteria were executive reports from 1990 to present that contained one or more key conflict and organization concepts of areas of study. Executive reports not referencing conflict and organization themes were not included. It was vital for the executive reports and publications to meet the established criteria, especially in the matter of providing recommendations. As the purpose of the study was to determine the skills and strategies organizations employ before, during, and after

conflict situations, the area of recommendations provided major curial data for the research. The 12 reports are marked in the reference list with an asterisk: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (2009); Aschkenase and Hedge (2010); Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011), CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare (2015); Dovetailing (2011); European Commission (2014); Flint Water Advisory Task Force (2016); MacDonald (2012); McAndrews (2010); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012); Sinar, Wellins, and Pacione (2010); and Strand, Dore, Slaughter, and McKnight (2005). The 12 reports are listed in Appendix A.

### **Inclusion Criteria for Sampling**

Thirty-three relevant executive reports were evaluated based on the redesigned coding form derived from Hossler and Scalese-Love's (1989) case study and research and development analysis coding sheet. The executive report coding form was restructured to operate as both precoding and case survey (Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989; Larsson, 1993; Stall-Meadows & Hyle, 2010; Yin & Heald, 1975). As a precoding process, executive reports were reviewed to ensure that they met the criteria for the study. The coding process required a fair, effective, and consistent rating process. So, in developing the measures for rating system, the case survey method was a prime process because it provided the opportunity to examine the criteria of weak to strong responses only. Yin and Heald (1975) proposed that each study be examined according to ratings of sure, not sure, and no information. Including Yin and Heald's rating system provided the opportunity to exclude executive reports that lacked substantial data and information, thereby increasing the quality of the study.



The initial executive report coding form was developed as a trial test. The form was comprised of objective categories and a subjective rating system. The objective sections focused on the following: research purpose, method, established conflict, overall quality, study design, factors, organizational effectiveness, sample size, methods and techniques, and recommendations (see Appendix B).

As noted by Burlingame (1994), “Qualitative researchers collect and analyze information at the same time. They do not collect information and then analyze; they collect and analyze at the same time” (p. 14). The active research and analysis process required open and constant revisions of criteria throughout the study (Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989). However, because the original form criteria presented by Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989) was designed for case studies, some of the components were irrelevant and incompatible for use with executive summaries. After completing the trial executive report coding form on three reports, areas for change were identified as the following: repetitive methods categories, irrelevant categories, and lack of validity-focused categories. Based on the areas of weakness, the executive report coding form was revised to include the following categories: overall quality, internal validity, external validity, stated purpose, methods and techniques, factors, sample size, and recommendations (see Appendix B). The updated form was utilized on the selected 33 executive summaries. Twenty-one of the executive summaries did not meet the criteria and were excluded. The precoding form provided a rigorous and standardized process for the executive reports.

## **Qualitative Analysis Software (QAS)**

Researchers often have turned to technology to assist, improve, and streamline their analyses. Traditionally, quantitative data have had more support in research-centered software. However, in recent years, a focus on QAS has emerged. This is not to say that QAS has not been well received, but it reflects more of a growing trend. Some of the concerns with employing software in the qualitative field lie with the researcher's expectations. QAS will not do the work of a researcher. Identifying themes, concepts, or connections is an intricate and strategic task. QAS programs assist in the organization of data and provide systematic platforms to examine data from generated perspectives. However, incorporating such tools can empower the researcher by providing a structural interface that creates a user-friendly data organization system, thus allowing the researcher to spend more time analyzing the data.

In selecting a QAS system, I took into account methodology, computer capability, features, and pricing. The two main systems under consideration were QDA Miner and MAXQDA (QDA refers to qualitative data analysis). QDA Miner (Provalis Research, 2017) was on the higher end of the price point, provided solid technical features, and automatically converted PDFs into workable documents for coding. However, it was not a native compatible program for my computer system. MAXQDA (2017) had strong technical features and support, was in a lower price bracket, had native formatting for both Windows and OSX, and had an engaging interface. The challenges with MAXQDA resided more in the infrastructure of the software. MAXQDA has so many features that it may be overwhelming and time consuming for a new user to learn and utilize.

Additionally, the software does not convert PDF files into workable files and requires the researcher to convert files prior to uploading into the system. After examining the two software choices, I selected QDA Miner because of its user-friendly capabilities, organization tools, and time-saving features.

### **Data Analysis**

Upon identifying qualifying articles, I proceeded with the data analysis phase of the process as outlined by Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989). The primary articles and publications were stored electronically on EndNote and a password-protected iCloud storage account. Electronic coding was utilized in the study; as I retrieved electronic reports and publications, I completed all manual coding and memo writing in the QDA Miner program. The collected data were assigned a randomized numerical identifier based on publication date.

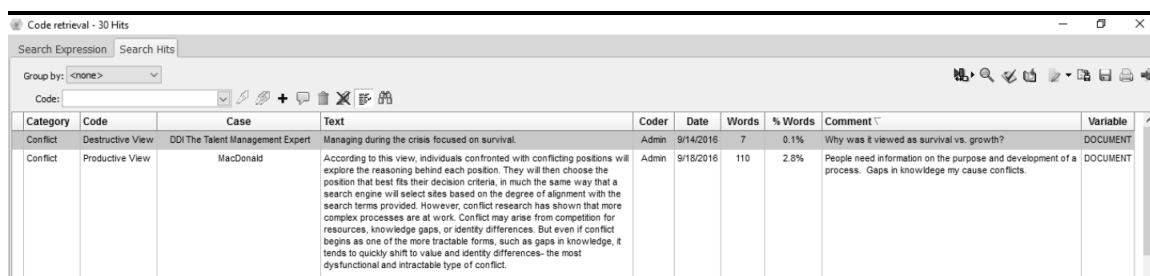
Once the data were electronically stored, I employed the qualitative coding software QDA Miner. QDA Miner provided programmable support to organize, categorize, and analyze data through the remaining stages of the grounded meta-analysis process of open coding, selective coding, theoretical coding, and theoretical integration (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989).

Throughout the open-coding procedure, I utilized a constant comparison approach and documented the process through electronic memos to dissect and examine incidences in data to develop main concerns and identify the core category. In the selective-coding process, coding was limited to the core category. This phase allowed me to examine the core category and establish its related concepts and variables. During theoretical coding,

I investigated and identified the correlation of the core categories, related concepts, and properties until the theory was established. Moving into theoretical integration, I examined existing literature related to core concepts and theory to reinforce the findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989).

### Open Coding

Before initiating the process of open coding, the executive reports were uploaded and converted into workable documents in QDA Miner. Each report was initially read and examined for applicable data by utilizing Strauss and Corbin's (1998) recommended method of "line-by-line analysis" (p. 119). The selected method provided opportunities for early identification of categories. As the phenomena emerged from the data, early pattern identification was evident. From the phenomena, concepts were developed. Recurring concepts were not duplicated but tracked for frequency. As the concepts emerged from the data, the conceptualizing process was initiated to ensure that similar concepts were grouped together and were classified into categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Examining both the positive and negative impacts of the phenomena on the conflict developed the categories. Based on the area of impact, the concept was assigned a category, as illustrated in Figure 2 and Table 1.



Category	Code	Case	Text	Coder	Date	Words	% Words	Comment	Variable
Conflict	Destructive View	DDI The Talent Management Expert	Managing during the crisis focused on survival.	Admin	9/14/2016	7	0.1%	Why was it viewed as survival vs. growth?	DOCUMENT
Conflict	Productive View	MacDonald	According to this view, individuals confronted with conflicting positions will explore the reasoning behind each position. They will then choose the position that best fits their decision criteria, in much the same way that a search engine will select sites based on the degree of alignment with the search terms provided. However, conflict research has shown that more complex processes are at work. Conflict may arise from competition for resources, knowledge gaps, or identity differences. But even if conflict begins as one of the more tractable forms, such as gaps in knowledge, it tends to quickly shift to value and identity differences- the most dysfunctional and intractable type of conflict.	Admin	9/18/2016	110	2.8%	People need information on the purpose and development of a process. Gaps in knowledge my cause conflicts.	DOCUMENT

Figure 2. Screenshot of use of the QDA Miner software to assign a category.

Table 1

*Example of Category Assignment Using the QDA Miner Software*

Category	Code	Case	Text	Words	Comment
Conflict	Destructive View	DDI	Managing during the crisis focused on survival.	7 (0.1%)	Why was it viewed as survival vs. growth?
Conflict	Productive View	MacDonald	According to this view, individuals confronted with conflicting positions will explore the reasoning behind each position. They will then choose the position that best fits their decision criteria, in much the same way that a search engine will select sites based on the degree of alignment with the search terms provided. However, conflict research has shown that more complex processes are at work. Conflict may arise from competition for resources, knowledge gaps, or identity differences. But even if conflict begins as one of the more tractable forms, such as gaps in knowledge, it tends to quickly shift to value and identity differences—the most dysfunctional and intractable type of conflict.	110 (2.8%)	People need information on the purpose and development of a process. Gaps in knowledge may cause conflicts.

Employing the approach of including both positive and negative impact of the concepts provided the opportunity to develop categories that represented a systems theory perspective of the executive reports' findings and recommendations (Pondy, 1966). Each of the categories was applied to all 12 executive reports (see Figure 3).

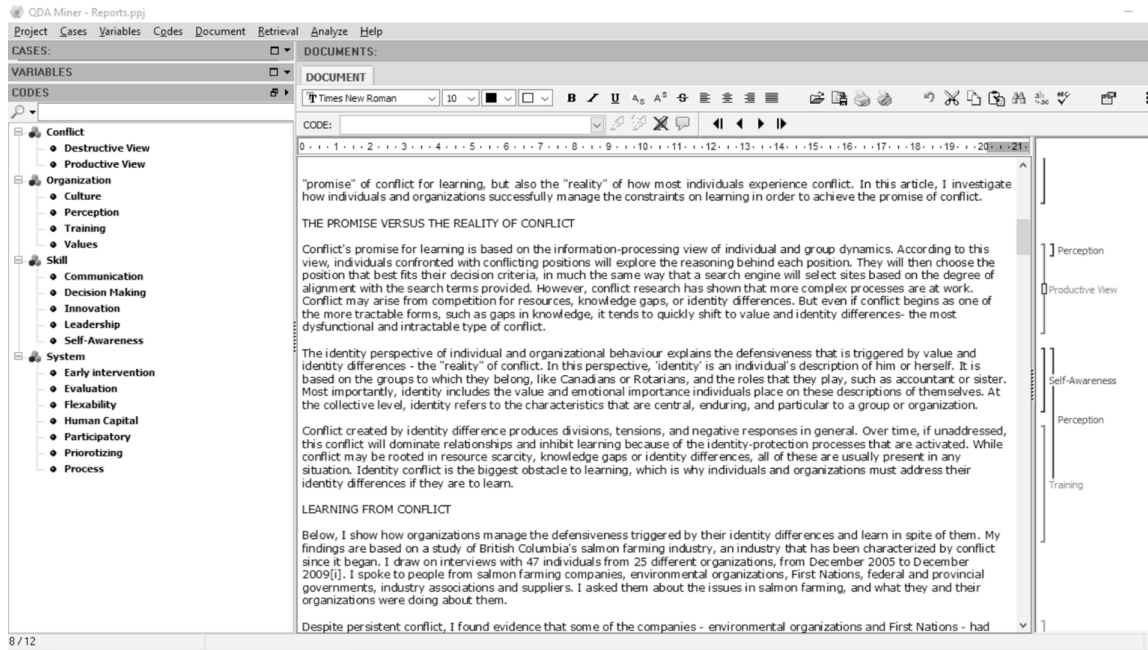
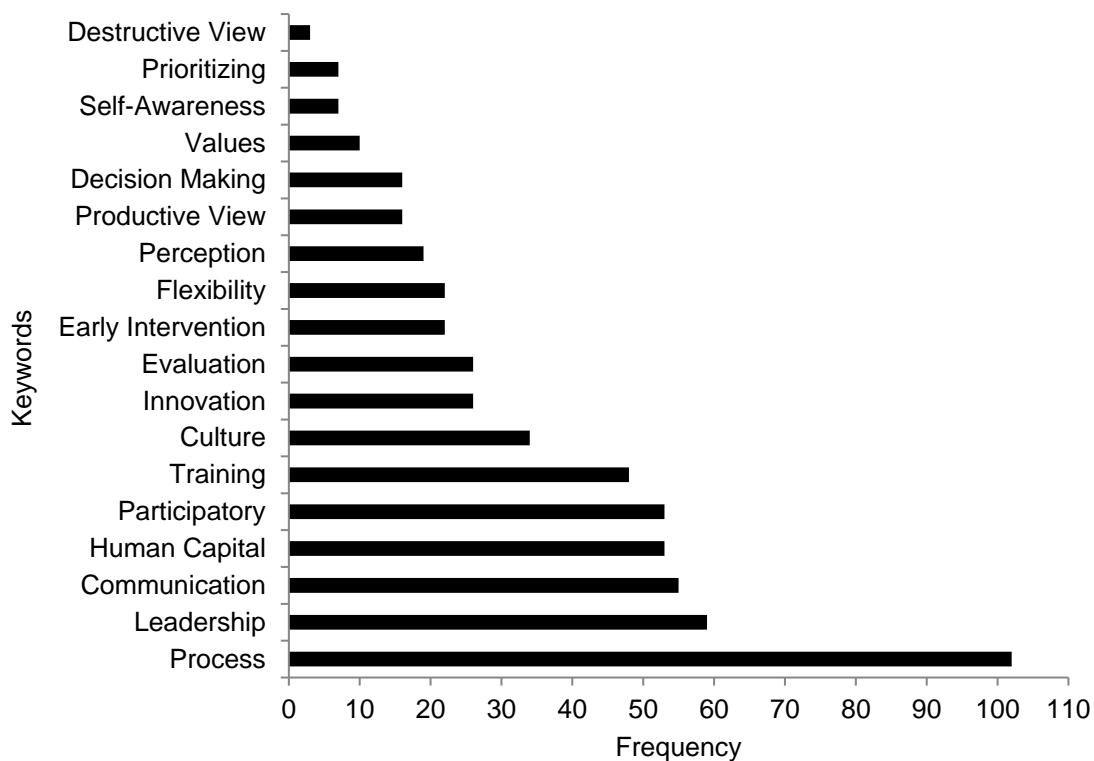


Figure 3. Screenshot of application of categories to the reports using QDA Miner.

With the defined categories in place, the open-coding process then moved to the final step of dimensionalizing each of the properties. Utilizing Strauss and Corbin's (1998) process of grounded theory, I identified and examined emerging categories for similar occurrences in the selected executive summaries. Measuring the frequency of strategies, skills, and concepts provided a starting point for category development as well as hypothesis development based on the repeated frequency of the selected categories (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Frequency of code distribution in the open-coding process.

Examining the of frequency of the occurrences of the categories provided a visual aid that assisted me in understanding the complexity of code development (Keller, 2017). I reviewed and rechecked to ensure no irregularity in the coding. The reviewing process provided insight to capture the phenomena, identify their dimensional properties, categorize data by concepts, and end the open-coding process.

### **Axial Coding**

After completing open coding, the next phase was selective coding. This process consists of linking and connecting categories and subcategories to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationships, properties, and dimensions of the phenomena. The

simplified concept of the process as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) is illustrated in Figure 5.



*Figure 5.* Selective coding process.

However, the nature of the study did not lend itself well to the prescribed process. By examining the purpose of axial coding, I employed Sarker, Lau, and Sahay's (2001) model of axial coding. Sarker et al. stated that the "paradigm model was too mechanistic and thus constraining. Not all sub-categories surrounding a category could be neatly categorized" (p. 45). They continued by affirming that "deterministic relationships between the casual conditions and phenomenon, and the phenomenon with consequences were not apparent from the data, and need to be forced" (Sarker et al., 2001, p. 45). In their study, the researchers implemented a two-part process. In the first part, major categories were linked to subcategories, and the researchers carried out a constant revision of open codes. In the second part, a memo was employed in each of the major categories to combine subcategories. It must be noted that the researchers utilized the NUD\*IST electronic system to assist in the categorization.

The process was later employed and fine-tuned by McFadzean, Ezingard and Birchall (2007), who were experiencing the same mechanical process and forced data issues. They employed Sarker et al.'s (2001) two-part model and stated, "We decided to use a coding paradigm that involved linking our categories with concepts, beliefs and behaviors of organizational stakeholders" (McFadzean et al., 2007, p. 631). The



researchers also incorporated integrated memo writing on each of their major categories and added process models to examine any potential gaps.

Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) paradigm design as a point of reference, I determined that the Sarker et al. (2001) two-part model would be the optimal system to code the data. In the first part, categories and subcategories were linked by concepts, behavior, and strategies. The result is shown in Figure 6.

After completing the first phase of the axial coding, the process transitioned into the integrated memo writing (Sarker et al., 2001). As Sarker et al. (2001) stated, integrated memos are "interpretive in nature, attempted to integrate as many sub-categories as possible within the memo on category" (p. 46). During the process of integrating memos, I noted themes in the 15 major categories.

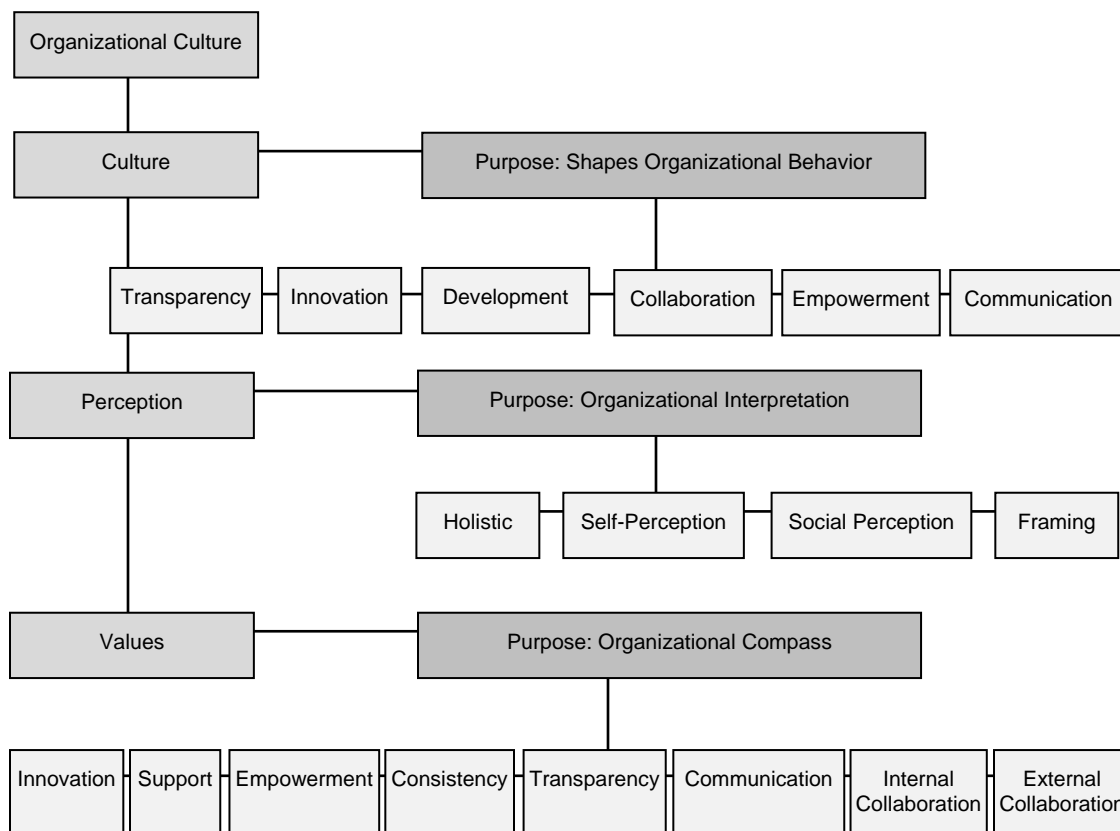
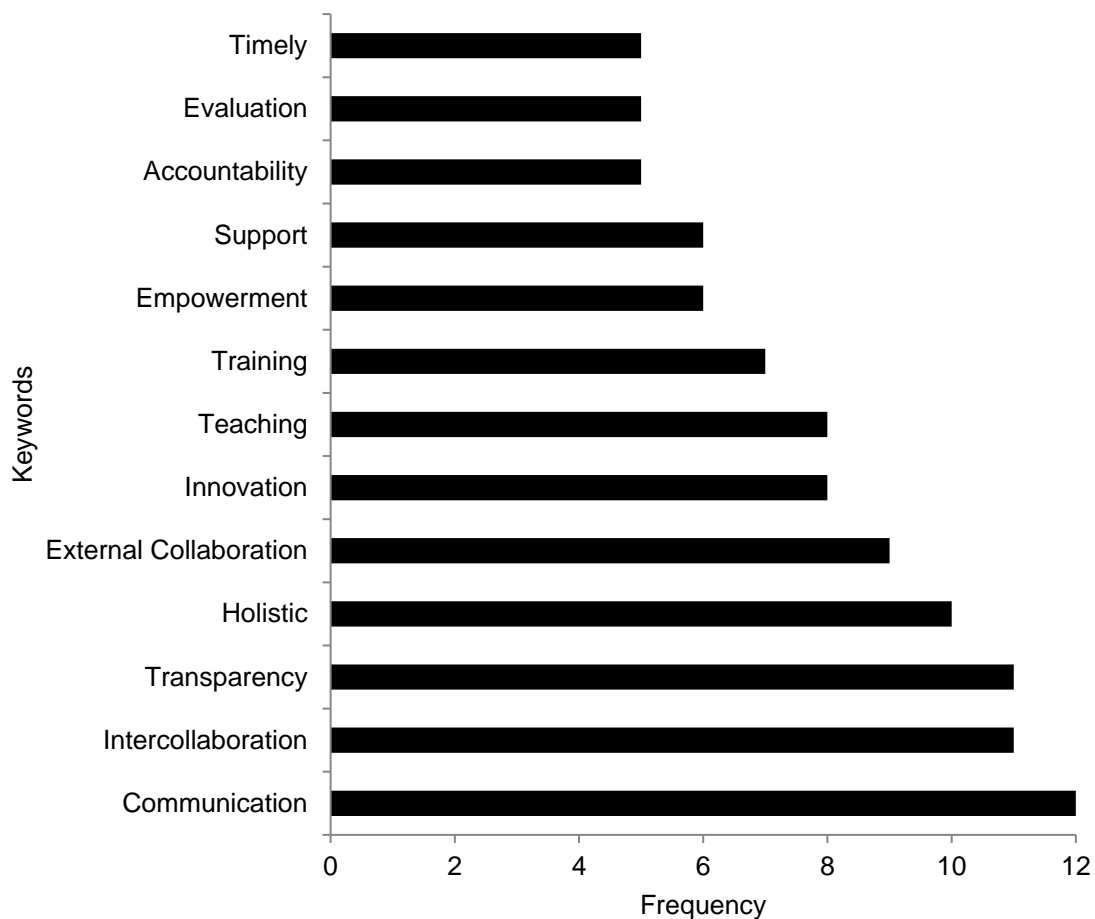


Figure 6. Results of the axial-coding process.

### Selective Coding

Moving into selective coding, the researcher's task is to assess the categories and subcategories established during axial coding and determine the central category along with the theory formation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As Strauss and Corbin (1998) outlined, the first task in selective coding is to identify the central category. I focused on the categories and subcategories to locate the recurring concepts. Utilizing the QDA Miner word statistics feature, the categories were first analyzed by frequencies and placed in a frequency word cloud to obtain an overall view of the categories' relationships to one another. Once all categories were accounted for and viewed for

interconnectedness, the focus shifted to the higher ranking categories and subcategories that had more than five occurrences in the axial coding process (see Figure 7).



*Figure 7.* Distribution of keywords in the selective-coding process.

The visualization of the occurrences of the concepts allowed me to observe that communication was the most dominant concept (Keller, 2017). I then moved to examine the memos of the categories and subcategories to analyze the relationships of the categories to one another. Throughout this process, Corbin and Strauss's (2015) guidelines to establish the center category were the key point of reference:

1. It must be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used as the overarching explanatory concept tying all the other categories together.
2. It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all, or almost all, cases there are indicators that point to that concept.
3. It must be logical and consistent with the data. There should be no forcing.
4. It should be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used to do further research leading to the development of general theory.
5. It should grow in depth and explanatory power as each of the other categories is related to it through statements of relationships. (pp. 4868-4869)

The guidelines assisted in ensuring that the core concept would emerge from the data but also would be abstract enough to absorb the categories and subcategories. In reviewing the memos, I decided a diagram approach to the process would allow a visual sorting process to understand the connection in the categories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), “Diagramming is helpful because it enables the analyst to gain distance from the data, forcing him or her to work with concepts rather than the details of the data” (p. 153). The diagrams were created in the QDA Miner software. The diagramming process and constant reviewing of the memos produced a core category with four major categories. Due to the nature of the study, I produced a chart that would demonstrate the relationship between the central concept and the major categories.

### **Quality and Verification of Data**

The data sources employed to select the 12 executive reports and studies were from online databases and Internet searches with the following key terms:

*recommendations, executive summary, employee conflict, conflict executive summary, conflict management, conflict approaches, conflict strategies, conflict resolution, integrated conflict system, dispute resolution, challenges, and crisis.* The criteria for inclusion were executive reports and studies from 1990 to present that contained one or more key conflict and organization concepts as areas of study.

Grounded meta-analysis presents the challenge of providing a clear confirmation of validation and reliability of both process and outcome. To ensure the quality of the study, I implemented Creswell's (2007) encapsulation of validity. Creswell explained "validation" in qualitative research to be an attempt to assess the 'accuracy' of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants" (p. 249). Creswell's summation provided the framework to verify continuously that the data extraction process was being completed with fidelity in order to ensure authenticity of the data. By employing QDA Miner software, I was able to establish, modify, and ensure multiple codes throughout the research process.

Though Whitemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) provided 29 forms of validation strategies, Creswell (2007) concentrated on eight techniques as follows:

- prolonged engagement and persistent observations in the field;
- triangulation;
- peer review or debriefing;
- negative case analysis;
- clarification of research bias;
- member checking;

- rich, thick description; and
- external audits.

For the purpose of the study, I selected clarification of research bias. I began working for organizations from the age of 17. I have worked for retail and sales companies, worked for not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, and provided training for governmental agencies. Throughout the process of my career, biases have been formed, represented and acknowledged in the following statements:

- Conflict is inevitable but repairable and a catalyst for change.
- Organizations often make decisions without weighing the cost to their employees.
- Discrimination and unequal treatment of minorities (by gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation) exist in organizations today.
- Behavioral awareness (individuals and organizations) can promote positive change.

I ensured that the acknowledged biases did not interfere with or misguide the research findings.

In addition to the measures discussed above, I employed Corbin and Strauss's (1990, 2008) recommended criteria for the continuous evaluation of the findings' quality and credibility. Specifically, Criteria 8–13 provided empirical grounding of the study by ensuring that I evaluated my sample selection process, examined the categories as they emerged, identified the major categories the key catalysts, observed the link between the data and the categories, monitored for discrepancies, reflected on the process of core category selection, explained the conditions and consequences, evaluated the significant

and extent of the findings, and identified opportunities for discussion in the relative fields (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In addition to the QDA Miner software and Corbin and Strauss's (2008) criteria, memos provided a tool to support the data analysis process. Through the process of producing detailed memos, I provided insight and understanding into the data and category development. The memos also provided a reflective understanding of the established links and relationships within the category leading to the formation of the model.

### **Ethics and Reflexivity**

Though the research did not involve any human interaction, the ethical responsibility still was to report both positive and negative findings, to ensure security of the data, and to provide transparency (Babbie, 2007). Defined as a research outside of the purview of the Institutional Review Board, this approved study still operated under the guiding principle that the findings would reveal the truth. With the guiding principal in mind, I diligently examined executive summaries, did not manipulate or remove from context the organization or members' experiences, and allowed key categories to emerge organically from the data.

As for reflexivity, I focused on continuous self-awareness and reflection through the process of reflective memos (Creswell, 2007; Ortlipp, 2008; Shenton, 2004). As an individual who is passionate about organizational conflict, I was in a consistent cycle of writing my thoughts and taking time to reflect on my thought process to ensure the study's findings were based on the data and not my personal experiences. Self-awareness

and reflection assisted in separating personal views that might impact the data and development of the research.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 focused on the process and procedures that were utilized in conducting the research. The concept of the study emerged after an extensive review of organizational executive reports and studies discussing conflicts and crises. The descriptive reporting provided valuable insights but lacked the extracted conflict techniques and the visible connection with multiple disciplines. A comprehensive and in-depth study was needed for the development of integrated conflict systems across organizations. Hossler and Scalese-Love's (1989) grounded meta-analysis was the selected methodology for this study because it would allow a systematic analysis of existing executive reports to produce concrete data to develop a practical conflict tool for organizations to utilize.

After the executive reports and studies were selected, the process of precoding began, resulting in the selected 12 executive reports. Once the precoding process was completed, the study moved to the three-stage analysis process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open-coding phase, each executive report was read for line-by-line analysis as procedurally recommended in the grounded meta-analysis methodology process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Hossler & Scalese-Love, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding provided the opportunity to systematically dismantle the data and begin to field the phenomena into developing categories. Within the axial-coding phase, the data were reconfigured to link categories with subcategories. Axial



coding involved a two-step process of (a) connecting categories and subcategories in peaking order and (b) creating integrative memos (Sarker et al., 2001). In the selective-coding process, graphs were utilized to identify the relationships within the categories. The analysis process provided the data necessary to complete the second goal of the study in the development of a conflict organizational tool that is explored in depth in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Grounded Meta-Analysis and Presentation of Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover the skills and strategies that organizations learn through the process of conflict. A further aim of the study was to develop a comprehensive development framework for integrated conflict systems. This chapter provides a contextual comprehension of the executive reports and an in-depth analysis of the findings.

### **Executive Reports Overview**

The 12 qualifying executive summaries utilized for the research represented diverse industries and locations. This diversification provided a refreshing examination of practices to manage and resolve organizational conflict. In order to fully explain insightful findings, I have provided a chart in Table 2 followed by a descriptive summary of each of the executive reports employed in the study (also see Appendix A).

Table 2

*Executive Report Chart*

Author	Sector	Industry
Domestic		
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics	Not for profit	Space and engineering
Aschkenase & Hedge	For profit	Consulting group
CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare	Not for profit	Health care services
Dovetailing	For profit	Consulting group
Flint Water Advisory Task Force	Nonprofit	Government agency
McAndrews	Nonprofit	Consulting group
Sinar, Wellins,& Pacione	For profit	Consulting group
Strand, Dore, Slaughter, & McKnight	Nonprofit	Government agency
International		
Buchanan-Smith & Scriven	Not for profit	Humanitarian training
European Commission	Nonprofit	Government agency
MacDonald	Nonprofit	Environmental training
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	Nonprofit	Government program

**Domestic Reports**

**American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (2009).** Founded in 1963, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics is an organization dedicated to the advancement of the aeronautics and astronautics industry. However, in 2008, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (2009) experienced an industry-specific internal conflict of ineffective capacity building, diversity, and retention. The industry's antiquated practices, such as revolving layoffs and stringent hiring requirements, had led to the field becoming less desirable and unable to attract, employ,

and retain qualifying engineers from diverse backgrounds (American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics, 2009). In 2008, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics designed and developed forums for the specific purpose of unpacking the industry challenges through dialogue with active members within the aeronautics and astronautics communities. Through the utilization of forums, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics was able to present findings that identified areas of deficiencies and to make key recommendations.

**Aschkenase and Hedge (2010).** As directors for AlixPartners Enterprise Improvement practices division, Aschkenase and Hedge (2010) have worked with a variety of distressed organizations. Since 1981, AlixPartners have aided organizations with corporate turnaround and restructuring. However, not until the recession of 2007 did the directors begin to evaluate their cases to identify and document the unsuccessful strategic trends that organizations would implement during times of economic conflict (Aschkenase & Hedge, 2010). Through this assessment, Aschkenase and Hedge were able to formulate recommendations that focused on managing organizational conflicts in the areas of objectives, processes, and communication. The findings would assist organizations in times of conflict and provide a best practice awareness for new and healthy organizations.

**CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare (2015).** With the signing of President Obama's 2014 Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs secured the services of the not-for-profit organization CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare (2015) to meet the independent developer and integration

assessments presented in the act. A highly qualified 16-member panel from the CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare interviewed employees, visited Veterans Affairs facilities, and conducted surveys. The panel identified organizational conflicts in the areas of workflow, resources, bureaucratic operations, integrated tools, and leadership. Based on the observed deficiencies, the CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare offered recommendations to aid in improving processes in Veterans Affairs medical facilities.

**Dovetailing (2011).** As an effort to determine the most effective way to support parenting education, the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative enlisted the assistance of Dovetailing (2011) consulting group. The Dovetailing consulting group focused on providing a strategic plan of action to remedy organizational conflicts, pinpointing leadership, values, diversity, process, and goals. Through the implementation of surveys, facilitated natural meetings, and interviews, the consulting group provided insight into systemic conflicts and made recommendations to improve the existing programs.

**Flint Water Advisory Task Force (2016).** After ending its 46-year contract with Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, the City of Flint, Michigan, commenced usage of its emergency water treatment plant as the city's primary source of water supply. However, through a series of identified organizational conflicts in the areas of communication, ethics, accountability, leadership, procedure, and training, the city's watering system failed to provide clean and safe water to the citizens of Flint (Flint Water Advisory Task Force, 2016). With the verification of water contamination, the city faced its largest crisis. In 2016, comprised of five public policy, health, environmental, and utilities experts, the Flint Water Advisory Task Force was initiated to examine the city's

actions and provide recommendations for the development of restorative systems and preventative processes.

**McAndrews (2010).** The Building Movement Project assists nonprofit organizations to strengthen their roles and social justice ethos for social change movements. McAndrews (2010), director of leadership and communication for the Building Movement Project, presented her findings and recommendations on multigenerational leadership in the nonprofit sector. The study used established indicators of job satisfaction and included the component of age. Utilizing interviews and surveys, McAndrews identified organizational conflicts in diversity, training, leadership, collaboration, and goals.

**Sinar, Wellins, and Pacione (2010).** Development Dimensions International is a consulting firm that focuses on leadership and innovation. After the 2007 economic recession, Development Dimensions International consultants Sinar et al. (2010) observed a decline in innovation within the organizations they assisted. In 2011, the team surveyed 1,027 leaders and employees to uncover the root cause of the decrease of innovation. Their survey identified conflicts in the areas of motivation, leadership, collaboration, process, and learning. The team developed recommendations for developing and implementing innovation.

**Strand, Dore, Slaughter, and McKnight (2005).** After experiencing high turnover, Children FIRST collaborated with the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service to improve recruitment and retention strategies. The research team, Strand et al. (2005), surveyed 960 employees. In addition, they conducted 21 focus groups with

employees from diverse backgrounds. Combining the findings from the survey and focus groups led to the uncovering of organizational conflicts in training, stability, priorities, communication, culture, safety, capacity building, and retention. The identified organizational conflicts provided the information necessary for the team to provide recommendations to improve the internal operations of Children FIRST.

### **International Reports**

**Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011).** The Active Learning Network for Accountability was created to provide support in developing a professional standard in the humanitarian industry (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011). Charged with the task after the evaluation of assistance provided in the 1994 Rwanda genocide, the Active Learning Network for Accountability's mission is to provide humanitarian groups with awareness and training in the development of effective response systems and accountability. In 2011, Buchanan-Smith and Scriven of the Active Learning Network for Accountability examined challenges that arose in operating humanitarian teams. Utilizing both interviews and case studies, the researchers identified challenges and provided recommendations to manage conflict in the areas of leadership, process, training, communication, and collaboration.

**The European Commission (2014).** Established in 1958 as the executive branch of the European Union, the European Commission is tasked with advocating, proposing, implementing, and enforcing legislation, policy, and budget. In 2009, after a series of concerns emerged from the health care profession and the community regarding patient safety, the European Commission (2014) initiated a working group to examine patient

safety reporting process and procedures in learning systems. The European Commission employed a three-stage process. In the initial phase, all 19 participating countries were required to update their reporting systems to ensure accurate information. In the second stage, the reporting systems were analyzed. In the final stage, the data were examined and the European Commission report was finalized, highlighting recommendations for internal conflicts in the areas of process, information sharing, and privacy and confidentiality.

**MacDonald (2012).** As an expert in the in the area of conflict and organizational strategies, MacDonald (2012) focused her attention on issues that emerged in the British Columbia salmon industry between wild salmon fisheries and salmon farms. The industry-specific conflict involved the dilemma of exploitation versus conservation and healthy versus unhealthy salmon fishing practices. In her 4-year study (2005–2009), MacDonald interviewed 47 individuals in the salmon farming industry. She identified conflicts in the areas of collaboration, training, process, culture, and values. However, she also discovered strategies that some industry leaders were striving to implement in order to manage the conflict.

**The OECD (2012).** Funded by the U.S. Marshall Plan, the OECD was established in 1948 to promote economic recovery and sgrowth for Europe after World War II. Due to its great success, the OECD (2012) has the active involvement of 35 countries and continues to aid countries recovering from war. The purpose of the OECD Principles for Enhancing Integrity in Public Procurement was to identify the deficiency in the procurement process, especially in countries with varying environmental concerns



and socioeconomic limitations. Utilizing an evidence-based approach to examining and reforming the procurement system, the OECD determined conflicts in the areas of ethics, values, process, and accountabilities. The findings provided the information necessary to craft short- and long-term organizational goals.

### Coding Data Analysis Findings

The method of open, axial, and selective coding generated the central category of an integrated conflict-management system that was intuitive and evolving with the immediate and long-term needs of the organization. Within the concept of an integrated system, the coding processes discerned four core components. The components developed from the data were the emerging strategies and procedures that organizations incorporated from their conflict experiences. For this reason, each component is to be viewed as a stand-alone concept as well as an element of a larger process, as shown in Figure 8. The categories and components are illustrated and discussed in further detail below, including excerpts from the executive reports.

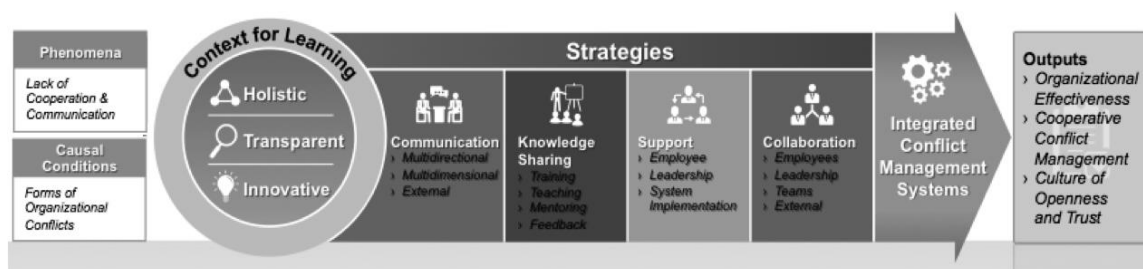


Figure 8. Chart of the relationship between the central concept and the major categories.

### Phenomena and Casual Conditions

The emerging phenomenology of the data was a lack of cooperation and communication. Every instance of building a strategic plan to manage or resolve a

conflict required action plans that were cooperative or communicative in nature. The causal conditions of the findings were organizational conflicts in a variety of forms such as employee versus employee, employee versus management, management versus leadership, organizational members versus process or procedures, and organization versus external factor or crisis.

### Context of Learning

I identified the context of learning as providing the elements beneficial for organizational learning: holistic, transparent, and innovative environments (see Figure 9). In the holistic component, organizations would describe issues of compartmentalized approaches to conflicts that had an impact throughout the organization.



Figure 9. Context within the process.

A prime example is from the CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare (2015) executive report that focused on the challenges in Veterans Affairs medical centers: “Data capture occurs at multiple levels and through multiple tools, generating multiple sources of truth about the status of the capital program” (p. 19). The division of information created lack of connectedness. The data suggested that organizations divided up into departments or levels would gather, analyze, and base decisions on the limited data the department had collected. The challenge that this process creates is a lack of

additional vital information and determination on action plans that may negatively impact other divisions of the organizations.

This lack of connected systems creates a challenge in organizational exchange of vital information, best practices, and shifts in desired outcomes. Such was the case in the European Commission's (2014) executive report on the issues within health care reporting and learning systems. A key finding was that "a consistent reporting formula should be defined" (European Commission, 2014, p. 6). The challenge the European Commission faced was that each country's reporting system operated independently and need not meet the required level of process and exchange to create a unified system for patient safety.

A common conflict that appeared throughout the data was trust in processes, employees, leaders, and communication. Either a negative experience or the lack of accessibility to information and resources generated this lack of trust. The correlation between trust and transparency was a strategy frequently presented in the reports. For example, the McAndrews (2010) executive report identified transparency as a vital component but not deemed effective in isolation:

Transparency in decision-making can be increased, but unless this is tied to an overall system of communicating what decisions have been made and how those decisions are made—including how individual employees can be a part of that process—increased transparency itself will not be as effective. (p. 13)

Researchers noted transparency was not limited to decision making and communication, but rather was across the organization, from leadership to strategic

initiatives. In creating a more transparent organization, employee involvement was a required component of the system's transitions. Transparency in organizations goes beyond the concept of process and communications. It involves an organization's ability to create and promote a culture of openness and impartiality. The OECD (2012) report stated, "The most prominent weakness identified by reviews is the lack of transparency in public procurement—in particular deficiencies in the legal framework to ensure that procurement is conducted in a fair and transparent manner" (p. 16).

In examining the findings, I realized that the role of organizational transparency requires organizational members to analyze, agree on, and commit to values and behaviors that would facilitate a transparent integrated conflict-management system. Transparent systems and processes provide employees with an organization of trust and growth. Based on the examples above, transparency is a cornerstone to the development and sustainability of the integrated system.

Throughout the study, organizational leaders expressed the realization that, in order to effectively maneuver through any form of conflict, they needed to be systemically innovative and create a culture of innovation for their employees. However, the challenge primarily seems to be that leaders do not know the components of an effective innovative system or strategies. The greatest threat to understanding and overcoming this challenge was the fear of failure. Organization leaders would express the aspiration for innovation but reject the trial and error that constitute the process. This was evident in Buchanan-Smith and Scriven's (2011) executive report on the humanitarian industry: "Organisations tend to be risk-averse and focused on sound

management and funding targets rather than leadership for bold and creative programming” (p. 43). The risk-aversion strategy not only limited the organization, but also carried a negative impact to employees. If employees have no systemic safety net, they will be reluctant to participate in innovate behavior for fear of negative consequences.

Innovation is vital, but the implementation can prove difficult, as Sinar et al. (2010) stated in their leadership and innovation executive summary: “Many organizations mistake creativity for innovation. No doubt, it is a very important ingredient in the dish, but not the only one” (p. 6). Innovation cannot successfully thrive in an organization without the supporting process and systems in place. In developing an integrated conflict system, the system must account for the failure required in innovation. In addition, organizational leaders should transition the process of innovation from a creative brainstorming session to an operational strategy within the system.

### **Strategies**

The research process produced four emerging core strategies of communication, knowledge sharing, support, and collaboration. These strategies are focused on the key arenas for the development of an integrated conflict system.

**Communication.** A dominant strategy in the data was communication (see Figure 10). However, communication was presented in three differing capacities: multidimensional, multidirectional, and external.



Figure 10. The strategy of communication in the process.

In the area of multidirectional communication, many organizations recognized that operating with a top-down form of communication was not the most effective during a time of conflict. However, when leaders did strive to implement a more open form of communication, they faced the issue of no established centralized point of communication. The Flint Water Advisory Task Force's (2016) executive report presented a prime example:

The Governor's office continued to rely on incorrect information provided by these departments despite mounting evidence from outside experts and months of citizens' complaints throughout the Flint water crisis, only changing course in early October 2015 when MDEQ [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality] and MDHHS [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services] finally acknowledged the extent of the problem of lead in the public water supply.

(p. 11)

The lack of established verified communication points allowed for incorrect information to circulate, thus escalating and prolonging the Flint water crisis. Data communication should be accessible to the entire organization and transmitted in multiple directions. The

findings demonstrated integrated conflict-management systems must incorporate a point of filtration to verify the quality of communication and to identify any potential issues.

Multidimensional communication took into account the added component of technology and a generational intermingling. Organizations have the common struggle of ensuring all aspects of the business are aligned. Technology has to relay the correct information to a group of individuals of varying technological savvy, which is no easy task. The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (2009) executive report addressed this challenge:

Employers should encourage young employees to communicate their views to their seniors (both coworkers and management) before decisions are made, and should recognize that young people often communicate in part via their favorite new media. Increased employee involvement has been demonstrated to increase productivity and employee satisfaction. (p. 7)

The data provided the key insight that the younger generation would prefer to share ideas and feedback through technology versus a roundtable meeting. This concept also works in reverse, as organizations struggle to transition the baby boomer generation into the rapidly evolving technology world. In addition to the concern about what medium of communication employees prefer are the quality, consistency, and timely delivery of the information. The data suggested that organizations realized that much of the information transmitted throughout the organization might be ineffective and misleading. The multidirectional communication insight supplied by the study demonstrated how multidirectional communication can be utilized in an integrated

conflict-management system. By including a multiplatform communication, an integrated conflict-management system can become more inclusive and native in process to the organizational members.

External communication is also a key component in managing or resolving conflict in organizations. External communication that is not crafted to effectively convey the organization's message may contribute to a conflict. The Flint Water Advisory Task Force (2016) report addressed this concern, stating, "Ensure that communications from all state agencies are respectful, even in the face of criticism, and sensitive to the concerns of diverse populations" (p. 38). In order to assist effectively in the conflict, external communication is needed to carry a level of respectfulness and consideration for the audience. The data indicated the function of external communication in an integrated conflict system. External communication is more than just a statement but rather a collective organizational voice used to facilitate the awareness, concerns, management, and resolutions of conflict.

**Knowledge sharing.** Knowledge sharing was an essential recurring concept throughout the data. However, the process of learning was varied and was formulated into four distinct categories of training, teaching, mentoring, and feedback (see Figure 11).



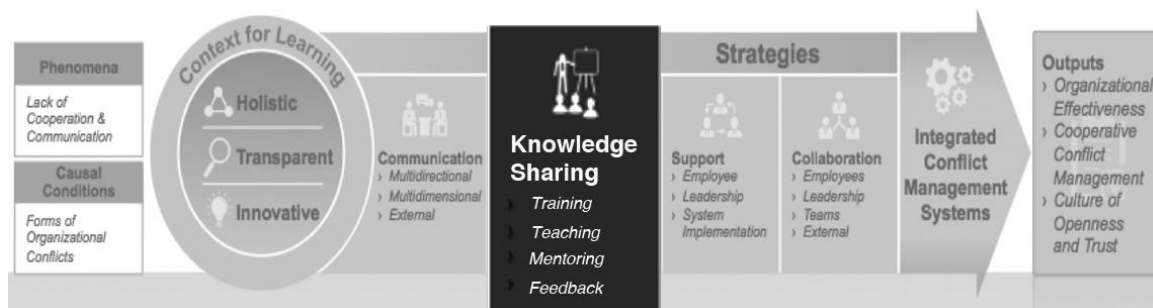


Figure 11. The strategy of knowledge sharing in the process.

Through the process of conflict, organization leaders struggled to understand conflict's role and impact on the organizations and varying levels, including within the organizational learning process. MacDonald (2012) stated, "Few organizations readily embrace the learning opportunities inherent in conflict. In fact, most managers are skeptical of a conflict's capacity to serve as a teachable moment" (p. 1). An organization's historical experience with conflict shapes the perspective and response to conflict. A negative experience may yield a limited understanding of the opportunity conflict may provide if navigated correctly. The common theme in the data was the use of learning to teach the needed workplace skills along with developing a transformative view of conflict.

Organizations provided a variety of trainings, both proactive and as a responsive tool. The data signaled that trainings were geared towards information and task efficiency. The common challenge was the limited amount of trainings, retraining, and the consistent surge of new industry techniques. The analysis produced an understanding of the value of training and the need to revise for effectiveness. This was clearly demonstrated by the Flint Water Advisory Task Force (2016) recommendation to

establish and fund a team of subject matter experts in water system operations (treatment and distribution system management) to support and train water system personnel, guide safe system operation under current conditions, and prepare for successful conversion to KWA [Karegnondi Water Authority]. (p. 49)

The key component presented was the utilization of external collaboration opportunities as well as the introduction of best practices. Through the process of conflict, organizational leaders and researchers realized that key experts and strategic awareness were components needed not only within the organizational structure, but also within the organizational trainings.

An additional concern was the lack of trainings as an individual grew within the organization. As employees moved to supervisory, management, or other forms of leadership, training became limited or nonexistent. Strand et al.'s (2005) executive report presented this concern:

There is no advance preparation or training for people who move up to become supervisors. An individual can be a caseworker one day and a supervisor the next, responsible for supervising former peers. This is a daunting transition for which most are ill prepared. (p. 8)

The lack of training for leaders causes the concern of creating a culture where leaders are incapable of guiding the employees and organization through times of conflict, crisis, and change. The inability to provide leaders with development opportunities limits their effectiveness. In terms of integrated conflict-management systems, training is a vital component; however, the training process and application must constantly be reevaluated,

refreshed, and revised to ensure that the system remains relevant as an organization, its members, and their internal and external conflicts evolve.

With the awareness of including best practices, organization leaders also discovered learning needed to go beyond information sharing and task efficiency to a level of cognitive understanding. The examined organizations lacked systems with teaching models that provided employees with a philosophical, cultural, and communicative understanding of tasks, process, and organizational concepts. The data suggested traditional classroom learning environments were ineffective. Strand et al.'s (2005) executive report illustrated this case:

There is too much emphasis on classroom training and not enough training in the field. More mentoring of new caseworkers by experienced workers was repeatedly suggested. Some supervisors felt that caseworkers did well in the classroom training but not as well with actual case assignments. This leads to confusion and frustration for new staff that come from the Academy feeling like they know what to do and are competent at it, only to receive poor responses in the field office to their work. (p. 12)

Supervisors described the traditional classroom setting as nonengaging, uneventful, and impractical. The common concern stemmed from the disconnect between theory and practice. In addition, classroom training did not provide the adequate skills and leadership contact needed to understand the process during challenging times. The finding demonstrated a disconnect between formalized instruction and application of skills. Designers of integrated conflict-management systems should include learning

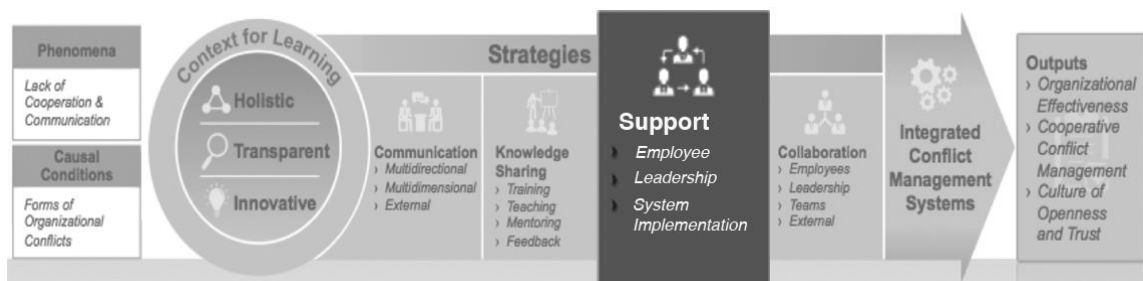
opportunities on the process being implemented along with the correlating skill sets required for effective implementation. This method would increase the organization's members' understanding of both theory and practice that over time would produce a more natural incorporation of the integrated conflict-management system.

The data suggested that the concept of best practices was a key model that many organization leaders believed was essential to succeed prior, during, and after a conflict. Organization leaders and researchers determined that internal and external feedback opportunities for best practice discussions would lead to effective motivation, product, and process. The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (2009) executive report stated, "Entry-level people seek approval, so they need communication and feedback; they should receive peer-nominated awards and thanks for work well done; they should be given responsible assignments" (p. 8). In examining the findings, I discovered that feedback provides an opportunity to replace undesirable behavior with a positive discussion on the productive behavior. Especially in the initial implementation of an integrated conflict system, building in the opportunity for the imperative discussion of strengths and areas for growth provides the organization's members with a clear understanding of their participation in the process and decreases the chance of feeling disoriented in the system.

Another evident finding was mentoring as a tool of learning. The concept was heavily connected to dialogue as a means of understanding the conflicts and process. Buchanan-Smith and Scriven's (2011) executive report stated, "Leadership development should be part of career development and start early rather than be a 'bolt-on' for more

senior staff. This means fostering and developing leadership qualities through training, mentoring, and coaching” (p. 62). In order for mentoring to be effective, participants cannot regard it as a simple task to be completed but rather an enrichment opportunity for development. As organizational conflict can be difficult to navigate and emotionally taxing on an organization’s members, an integrated conflict-management system must include mentoring opportunities to model and discuss positive responses, personal coping mechanisms, process awareness, and innovative strategies.

**Support.** As organization leaders and researchers evaluated their current conflicts to determine their course of action, they noted the need for support. The theme of support manifested in three subcategory forms: employees, leadership, and system implementation (see Figure 12).



*Figure 12.* The strategy of support in the process.

Throughout the study, the data revealed that employees in organizations before, during, and after conflict often felt unmotivated, underappreciated, overwhelmed, and at times helpless. The lack of support and direction led to the sense of aimless actions and unimportant contributions. This was evident in McAndrews’s (2010) executive report, which stated, “Time and again, we heard from survey respondents and focus group participants alike that feeling undervalued for their work and their contributions to

organizational success leads nonprofit employees to feel less motivated to perform to their top potential” (p. 13). McAndrews expounded on the negative impact of unmotivated employees:

At a time when the nation needs nonprofit services, solutions, and support the most, the rising numbers of disengaged employees is a big problem. Such workers put forward less effort, are less productive, and provide lower levels of customer service. (p. 4)

Organization leaders realized that in order to successfully navigate through conflict, they needed to support their employees. The analyzed reports recommended strategies that focused on increasing employee motivation through empowerment, participation in decision making, incentive systems that reflect organizational values, and support groups. This finding of support is a valuable insight in the development or enhancement of an integrated conflict system. As an individual moves through the process required by the integrated conflict system, leaders must provide encouragement and support to motivate the individual to continue in the process. In turn, the individual will be more likely to repeat the process and encourage others to do the same.

However, organization leaders understood that solid leadership had a direct impact on employee support. Thus, supporting leadership was a common concept within the data. For example, the CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare (2015) report recommended the organization “stabilize, grow, and empower leaders; galvanize them around clear priorities; and build a healthy culture of collaboration, ownership, and accountability” (p. 15). Support to leaders during the development, implementation, and

continual evaluation of an integrated conflict system provides them with an in-depth understanding of functionality and purpose, which empowers them to assist their teams. An empowered leader can assist in a cultural shift and create stronger buy-in and support for the integrated conflict-management system.

Organizations' system implementations are often challenged, dismantled, or proven ineffective through the process of conflict. The data reflected the need to develop simple, consistent, and flexible processes that must be continuously supported through the use of evaluation, shared accountability, and open dialogues. In addition, the process cannot be limited to responses to conflict but should include early-intervention components. The CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare (2015) executive report illustrated this concept: "Require a patient-centered demand model that forecasts resources needed by geographic location to improve access and to make informed resourcing decisions" (p. 23). The concept of forecasting to create a stronger proactive system was a common occurrence in the data. Organization leaders recognized that, throughout the process of conflict, rigid systems placed the organization at a disadvantage because they were not able to respond quickly and effectively to the issues. If an integrated conflict-management system lacks the implementation support to effectively meet the needs of the organization and respond to new challenges, the system can be dismantled quickly and become ineffective. Based on the findings, an integrated conflict-management system should be implemented with fidelity and fluidity to withstand the ever-changing organizational environment.

**Collaboration.** After experiencing organizational conflict and crisis, collaboration was a vital component that was either nonexistent or underdeveloped in organizations (see Figure 13). One interesting development within this category was the concept of leadership. In the early development of the data, leadership was a key area of interest. However, as the data evolved, I understood leadership as a mechanism to improve morale and promote collaboration. For this reason, I view leadership as a collaborative strategy. Collaboration emerged in two subcategories: internal and external collaboration.



*Figure 13.* The strategy of collaboration in the process.

Within the internal collaboration system, the data suggested a team-based approach is the most effective for creating vested interest in resolving issues. Individuals have the opportunity for open discussion and constructive feedback. McAndrews (2010) clearly explained the impact of this model: “Develop peer support groups and reflection spaces for employees to discuss their work, challenges, and learning. This includes supporting participation in outside peer networking and support groups as well” (p. 14). Providing internal collaboration opportunities offers organizations valuable insights, especially for the development of an integrated conflict-management system. By



incorporating internal collaborative opportunities, team members can evaluate conflict processes and systems and create an organizational culture of collaboration.

Promoting an external team-based approach, the data pointed to the need for organizations to adapt a best practice approach with other organizations and industries. MacDonald (2012) supported this concept, stating, “The organizations that learned from conflict went beyond ‘like minded’ organizations to collaborate with organizations in other sectors, often engaging with organizations with dramatically different or opposing perspectives” (p. 4). Opening the scope of collaboration to include outside parties enhances the knowledge base in the organization and provides an influx of innovation. In addition, external collaboration can strengthen the design of an organization’s integrated conflict system and expand its resources and impact by examining the current or developing system through the perspective of a neutral party.

### **Integrated Conflict-Management Outputs**

During a conflict or postconflict, organization members desired a stable culture and environment. The implementation of the strategies listed assisted the organizations in obtaining and maintaining positive outcomes such as organizational effectiveness, cooperative conflict management, and cultural openness and trust. Figure 14 presents this stage of the process.



Figure 14. The integrated conflict-management system outputs.

### Chapter Summary

The findings suggested that organizations operated as individual communities that employed strategies as specified responses to internal and external conflicts specific to their industry and goals. However, organizations employed these strategies, although diverse in design and implementation, to remedy common concerns in the areas of learning, support, communication, and collaboration. In addition, a commonality in the organizations' strategies was in the area of implementation. Organizations would address the areas of communication, knowledge sharing, support, and collaboration in isolation. This tactic would interfere with implementation of sound strategies, and organizations abandoned the initiatives prematurely.

## Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter focuses on providing a summary of the research and insights on the utilization of the developed model, the study's conclusions, and recommendations for further studies in the field of conflict analysis and resolution. Organization members need to understand integrated conflict-management systems for organizations to succeed before, during, and after conflict. The purpose of this study was (a) to discover what skills and strategies organizations learn through the process of conflict and (b) then to develop a comprehensive development framework for integrated conflict systems to aid organizations in the development of their systems.

I employed a grounded meta-analysis process as prescribed by Hossler and Scalese-Love (1989). I analyzed 12 executive reports to determine the strategies and skills that organizations acquire through the process of conflict. Upon completing the methodical analysis, the objective was to create a comprehensive framework for integrated conflict systems based on the categories and subcategories that emerged from the data.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to develop a practical and flexible framework that organizations could utilize for the development of integrated conflict-management systems. In order to accomplish the objective, the study undertook a two-stage process divided by two scaffolding objectives. The first was a driving question that focused on discovering the strategies that organizations created and implemented during and after a conflict situation. The second research objective was to develop a comprehensive

integrated conflict framework to aid organizations in the design of their integrated conflict-management systems. Utilizing the results derived from the first research question, I designed a framework to bring attention to the key areas in the development of integrated conflict systems, the roadmap for organizational conflict-management systems, or ROC framework (see Figure 15). I use the framework as a discussion guide for the findings of the study. In the ROC framework, every component is interconnected, and all aspects are designed to be implemented simultaneously with the organization's selected strategies. The operational capacity of the ROC framework is similar to the organizational use of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis (Koo, Chau, Koo, Liu, & Tsui, 2011). The SWOT analysis provides organizations with a guiding tool to assess their organization, department, process, program, and communication. However, instead of examining an organization's SWOT, the ROC framework enables a simultaneous development and assessment of organizational conflict-management strategies. However, it must be noted that in moving through the ROC framework it is necessary for organizations to incorporate the historical memories of the organizations systematic approaches along with creating a documentation system that will enable future organizational members to understand the reasoning behind decisions, processes, and systems (Mordhorst, Popp, Suddaby, & Wadhvani, 2015). Including this key factor will strengthen an integrated conflict management system by ensuring the newly developed initiatives do not dismantle crucial systems and organizations have a documentation system that enables the proper evaluation of antiquated procedures, effective systems, and strategies that can be reutilized.

# ROC Framework: Roadmap to Organizational Conflict Management Systems

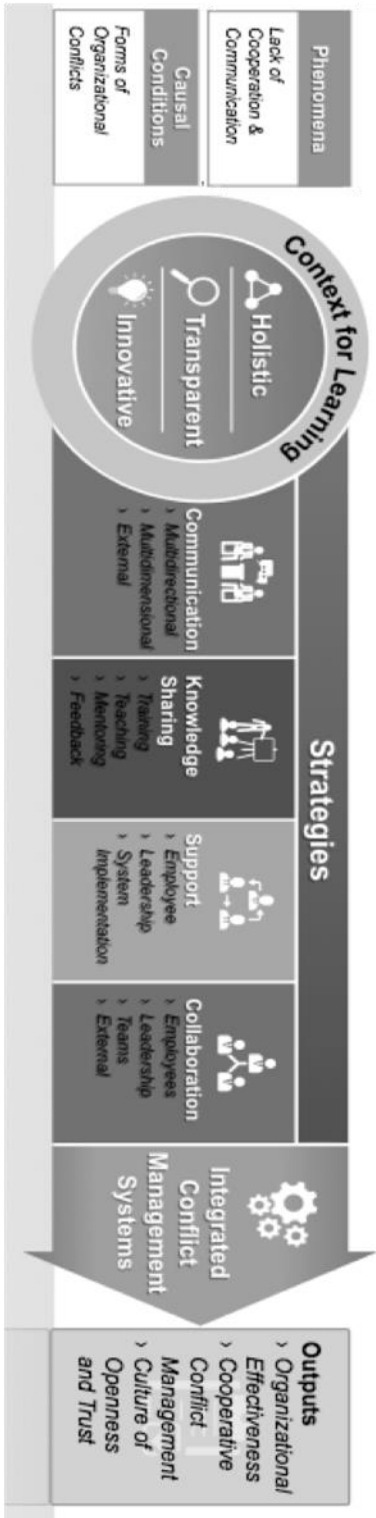


Figure 15. Roadmap to organizational conflict-management systems: ROC framework.

## **Context for Learning**

Organizational learning was evident in the examined reports and studies. However, when dealing with conflict, organizations opted for a more operationalized approach to dealing with micro to macro conflicts. The cornerstones of the framework are the components of holistic, transparent, and innovative. These three categories are key in both the development and continuous evaluation of integrated conflict-management systems

**Holistic.** Organizations identified disconnects in areas such as process, information, and leadership initiatives. A common organizational finding was the conversation of developing systems that would be consistently comprehensive and holistic by ensuring information is accessible, processes are fair, and trust and openness are promoted. Incorporating the previously mentioned systems theory, the framework required a holistic view of the organization. According to Ragsdell (2000), “An holistic view is captured as aspects of structure, process and climate are represented” (p. 108). In developing a framework for building an integrated conflict system, the systems theory approach allows the designers to decrease internal fractures, thus creating more of a solid fluid system (Ritzer, 2010). The holistic property requires the next category of transparency.

**Transparency.** Throughout the study, evidence indicated a lack of or mistrust in processes, communications, and desired outcomes put into action. Organizations acknowledged that the lack of transparency throughout the process of conflict created a deep level of mistrust from employees, consumers, or populations being served.

Transparency provides an opportunity for capacity building and organizational buy-in, both internally and externally (Auger, 2014; Thøger Christensen, 2002). In revamping the response to conflict situations, the data presented an essential focus on a higher level of organizational transparency. Building on the understanding of the impact of transparency will assist in the demystification of information, processes, expectations, and motivations (Klein, 2012). The data sufficiently support the necessity of transparency as a vital implementation focus for the development of an integrated conflict-management system. The utilization of holistic and transparent foundations is further made effective by the third tenet, innovation.

**Innovation.** A common occurrence in the findings was organizational fear of change and failure leading to process, creative, and interpersonal conflicts. The remedy was often the acknowledgement of the need for innovative solutions and strategies for complex conflicts, requiring organizations to create an innovative integrated conflict system that ensured the opportunity for failure and discovery for both systems and process (Chen, Zhao, Liu, & Wu, 2012). In this realm, organizations utilized the theoretical framework of framing. By reframing failure in process, projects, and ideas as an opportunity for growth and creativity, organizations can move into a more flexible design (Milway & Saxton, 2011; Rizzuto & Reeves, 2007; Sinar et al., 2010; Xie, Song, & Stringfellow, 1998). The findings suggest that by engaging a holistic perspective, transparency, and innovation at the core of development and learning of the integrated conflict-management system, communication, learning, support, and collaboration will emerge as instrumental organizational strategies within the system.

## **Strategies**

The next segment of the ROC framework model focuses on the data-supported strategies implemented during and after organizational conflicts. The analysis classified the strategies into the following categories: communication, knowledge sharing, support, and collaboration. These four categories demonstrate the collective organizational effort to manage and resolve organizational conflicts. The first category discussed is communication.

**Communication.** The strategies that comprise the communication category are multidirectional, multidimensional, and external. The research findings support that as organizations are in modes of conflict, leaders acknowledge the need for change and shift from the traditional communication form of a top-down model to a multidirectional system. The multidirectional communication plan provided organizational members opportunities to share, receive, and examine internal and external messages regardless of rank or role, creating a sense of openness within the organization (Shockley-Zalabak, 2011). Another observed benefit of employing the multidirectional approach was the opportunity for real-time analysis of information accuracy and quality (Popa, 2016). Organizations that provided a transparent multidirectional platform for dialogue of the organizational issues created increased vested interests by employees and an effective arena to solve conflicts.

In addition to the direction of communication, the results of the study provided insights to the challenges faced during and postconflict, as organizations grappled with the rapidly growing technological communications platforms and increasing technology



gaps. Organization leaders identified that they needed to create a conflict-management multiplatform strategy to ensure that members of the organizations received pertinent information. Incorporating social media, e-mail, and an announcement database to discuss the same information ensures that individuals can find their preferred mode of communication (Richmond et al., 2012). The data revealed that as organizations created industry-specific, multiplatform communication action steps, employees increased in understanding of expectations and connectedness to the organization (Kavada, 2012).

Both the multidirectional and multiplatform strategies impacted the conflict-management strategies for the last component of the category, external communication. Organization leaders understood that when dealing with conflict, they needed to ensure that members internally were clear on the concerns, action plan, and desired outcomes. This allowed organizations to create a solid and consistent message for the consumers or communities they serve (Richmond et al., 2012; Shockley-Zalabak, 2011). In addition, organizations managed how external information entered the organization to verify it was filtered to the newly created systems to avoid escalating or creating new conflicts. The results substantiate the need for designers of integrated conflict-management systems to provide the platform for organizations to shift from the traditional modes of sharing of information. This shift involves moving from a top-down system to embracing a multidirectional flow; an incorporated multiplatform system; and a designed procedure for the development, dispatch, and intake of external messages that will allow members of the organizations to have an vested voice in the understanding, management, and resolution of the conflicts.

**Knowledge sharing.** The strategies that comprise the category of knowledge development and sharing are training, teaching, mentoring, and feedback. In examining the data, I utilized social constructivism as a guide in evaluating and understanding knowledge development in building integrated conflict-management systems within the organization (Camargo-Borges & Rasera, 2013). Knowledge development is a unique process in the building of an integrated conflict-management system because it assists in the identification of valuable practices, skills, processes, and proper modes of delivery (Popsa & Nicula, 2014). The findings showed that most often organizations utilized trainings as their primary form of instruction. Traditionally, organizational trainings focused on learning skills and expectations (Pollice, 2003; University of California, Berkeley, 2015). Organizations often employed the training model when the conflict was time sensitive. This medium provided the organization with a quick and effective method to ensure that employees were effectively trained on policy and procedures. However, because of the designed purpose, trainings leave limited time for discussion and interactive learning.

Whereas training focuses on learning the application and utilization of skills or expectations, teaching focuses on understanding the philosophy and implications of the processes, procedures, or skills (Pollice, 2003; University of California, Berkeley, 2015). In organizations, members must have opportunities to gain in-depth understanding of the philosophy behind the new initiatives, especially in the development and implementation of integrated conflict systems. The research findings indicated organizational members who participated in teaching opportunities became more vested when they understood the

supporting philosophy for the design, development, and implementation of the new system. Organizations recognized the benefits of teaching opportunities as well as the challenges. Commonly discussed challenges were time constraints; instructor focus; and lack of interactive, real-time contributions.

In an effort to build on learning opportunities that would expand on trainings and teachings, organizations incorporated the identified third component of this category, mentoring. The data demonstrated that during and postconflict, organizations utilized mentoring to enrich learning, development, and collaborative efforts. The use of mentoring aided in the creation of sustainable positive dialogue toward the development of new conflict-management process and procedures (Eby et al., 2008). The utilization of training, teaching, and mentoring provides organizational members with the theoretical and practical understanding of the components of an integrated conflict-management system.

Feedback is the final concept in the category and the component that provides an integrated conflict-management system its growth potential. Organizations recognized the need for a form of evaluation that would provide opportunities for improvement and allow systems to be responsive as well as proactive. The data results indicated organization members had a negative response to the term *evaluation*. They viewed the process as designed for negative criticism and unproductive. However, members appreciated feedback from their peer and supervisors. As a result of the findings, I shifted the ROC framework from the rigid notion of evaluation to an adaptable concept of feedback that users can structure as formal or informal, verbal or written, and equally

distributed. In this design, feedback is a form of evaluation that provides for an open and continuous model of consistent evolution of an integrated conflict system and for the participating members (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). Yet, in order for feedback to operate in its positive functional purpose, organizational leaders must not contort it into a negative process. Feedback is not designed to be shaming, degrading, or a power tool used to negatively impact organizational members. Thus, it is recommended that organizations create a feedback check-and-balance system that will preserve the positivity and impact of the feedback process, securing the equitability of the process for all participants. Ensuring a holistic, transparent, and innovative process is in place for knowledge development and sharing will assist in the positive social conversations that are needed for employees to build a positive construct during new implementation of integrated conflict systems.

**Support.** The third category is support and contains the components of employee, leadership, and system implementation. Organizational support is a required element in the development and implementation of an integrated conflict-management system. For employees in an organization, organizational support provides the valued assistance and recognition and promotes vested interests (Dursun, 2015). Based on the studies' findings, employees who experienced organizational support also experienced a connection with their organizations during and postconflict. Organizational support was presented in a variety of modes, depending on the organization and industry. However, organizations presented the commonality of providing employees with a stream of

valuable information, opportunities to share concerns or thoughts, and assistance in the development or change process.

The data identified that support in the realm of leadership focused on trust and reinforcement. Leaders requested a productive level of autonomy in leading their teams and departments. Working with their teams and employees in close proximity provided opportunities for leaders to model the newly implemented strategies and to address immediate questions and concerns. For the development and implementation of an integrated conflict system, leaders require a level of trust and support to assist in the formation of vested interest of the group (Nyberg et al., 2009). Leaders provide the needed front-line application and understanding of the process, and in turn, leaders need the support of the organization as a whole.

Supporting the developed integrated conflict-management system is crucial for the process. The research findings demonstrated that as organizations developed and implemented new systems, the lack of support and consistency allowed organizational members to not adhere and adjust to personal needs or understanding, leading to frustration and abandonment in the initial process. The strategies providing strong support for an integrated conflict-management system were evaluative in nature and provided opportunity for growth. Designers of integrative conflict systems need to create an effective evaluation tool designed not for penalizing, but rather for correcting and evolving the process (Cummings & Huse, 1996; Ragsdell, 2000).

**Collaboration.** The last component of the ROC framework is collaboration, which is comprised of employee, leadership, team, and external collaboration.

Collaboration for integrated conflict-management systems will become an intricate part of the process because of the ability to collaborate internally and externally. At times, an organization may experience conflict that requires outside support. Ensuring that employees are secure in the transparent process will allow the collaboration to operate in a much more meaningful capacity (MacDonald, 2012). At the employee level, collaboration removes negative competition, providing employees with the opportunity to use their energy for participative efforts. The same can be said of collaboration at the leadership level, with the addition of interdepartmental opportunities of creating a pool or ideas and resources to assist in the development and implementation of conflict-management strategies.

However, in the sphere of organizational teams, collaborative efforts are truly showcased and appreciated. The data support that organizations that included diverse teams often provided innovative solutions to complex issues. In addition to the commonly established diversity groups of gender, race, ethnicity, and age, the study emphasized the effectiveness of incorporating diversity in skill sets, organizational roles and responsibilities, and length of time in the organization. Diversity in organizational roles and responsibilities provided team members a broader understanding of the impact of proposed solutions on varying departments and products. The length of time in an organization provided the insight in to the organizational culture and previously attempted resolutions, strategies, successes, and failures.

In the same method of strategic development for internal collaboration, the study revealed that organizations expanded on their knowledge and process of the conflicts by

including external collaboration. The primary forms of collaboration were open-forum discussions, panels, and working groups that dealt with similar conflicts or provided a relationship-building benefit. The internal and external collaboration component solidifies the relationship between organizational members as well as the development and implementation of the processes of the organization's integrated conflict-management systems.

### **Integrated Conflict-Management System Outputs**

The reference model of communication, knowledge sharing, support, and collaboration provided by the ROC framework serves as a interrelated process to assist organizations' integrated conflict-management systems to achieve positive outcomes such as organizational effectiveness, cooperative conflict management, and a culture of openness and trust. The data suggest that through the process during and after conflict, organization leaders desired to change the overall view, process, and conflict culture of the organizations in hopes of creating a conflict-productive environment. With the previously stated outcomes, organization members began to piece together and work on an approach in creating their own adaptation of an integrated conflict system.

### **Contributions of Study Findings**

The presented research provided analytical insight on what organizations learn during and after conflict. As stated in the literature review, integrated conflict-management systems are a rapidly evolving field, with industry leaders paving the way for solid development suggestions (Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Jaffee, 2008; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lynch, 2001; Ury et al., 1988). However, in dealing with a instantaneously

changing political and technological global economic market, organizations needed and thus began to create makeshift versions of integrated conflict management systems. This study focused on discovering what strategies organizations utilized to respond quickly and deal with conflict.

A contribution from this research study in the utilization of grounded theory is the development of the ROC framework (Figure 16). The framework provides a holistic model for organizations to use to create a continually evolving integrated conflict-management system that is rooted in the foundational realms of conflict management. The model supports conflict management and resolution from the micro to the macro level. In addition, the model provides organizations with the freedom and flexibility to shift strategies without dismantling their existing integrated conflict system model. With supporting data, the model and study present a novel understanding as to why organizations select certain strategies and implementation processes during and after conflict. This gained insight is valuable and serviceable to practitioners on the field of conflict analysis and resolution, as they are in the continual pursuit of designing systems to manage and resolve conflict in a productive mode.

The use of the grounded meta-analysis also added to field of conflict analysis and resolution. This methodology allowed me to examine current and ongoing organizational conflicts, strategies, and outcomes. This real-time meta-analysis approach provided the opportunity to analyze several different organizations in a variety of fields simultaneously, thus opening the lens for greater understanding and impact.



As interest and criticism continue to grow for integrated conflict-management systems, studies can contribute in both theory and practice. My ultimate desire for the current study was that it would add to the existing knowledge base in the field of conflict analysis and resolution and provide a simple and practical integrated conflict-management framework for organizations to implement.

### **Limitations of Study and Implications for Further Research**

In the design and execution of the study, I employed measures to reduce possible limitations. One measure was to utilize QDA Miner to assist with organization, effectively mapping comparisons in the data. In addition, QDA Miner provided the optimal venue to store memos and personal insights. The major limitation of the study was not being able to examine, capture, and categorize every skill employed in diverse organizations during and postconflict. For future research potential, a study could focus on defining the step-by-step skills and conflict strategies.

By studying the skills and strategies that organizations acquire through conflict in diverse industries, practitioners can begin to develop stronger and more effective integrated conflict systems. Through the de-mystification of the process of conflict, practitioners can develop an organizational environment that treats conflict as an opportunity for positive and productive change. The study provided the opportunity to identify trends in skill and strategy development through the process of conflict.

The challenge of the study was the varying strategies across all of the organizations. A worthwhile study could examine each of the strategies separately for implementation, modification, and effectiveness in integrated conflict systems. The

findings of the recommended study would assist and contribute to the development of curriculum trainings and programs with an emphasis on productive conflict in organizational settings.

### **Conclusion**

The study of organizational conflict is not a new and pioneering concept. Yet, how organizations acknowledge, manage, resolve, and respond to conflict is a rapidly growing and evolving field. With the natural changes that technology, generational gaps, workplace diversity, and shifts in the economy and politics bring, organization leaders are understanding the value of developing and incorporating integrated conflict-management systems. Organizations' executive reports manifest this desire to implement effective integrated conflict-management systems. These reports provide detailed information about systems, strategies, conflicts, goals, and outcomes specific to the organization and its industry.

The lack of interconnectedness and awareness of these strategies for integrated conflict systems became the catalyst for this grounded meta-analysis. This comprehensive grounded meta-analysis provided the opportunity to extract the organizations' methods and their implementation purpose to determine the link between strategies across industries. Though the strategies were diverse and industry specific, they were all developed to mitigate, dissolve, or transform organization conflict.

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## Appendix A: Analyzed Executive Reports

Executive report	Identified organizational conflicts
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. (2009). <i>Building and retaining the aerospace workforce: Report and recommendations</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://www.aiaa.org">https://www.aiaa.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Retention</li> </ul>
Aschkenase, S., & Hedge, P. (2010, March/April). What healthy companies can learn from distressed companies. <i>Ivey Business Journal</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://iveybusinessjournal.com">https://iveybusinessjournal.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>
Buchanan-Smith, M., & Scriven, K. (2011). <i>Leadership in action: Leading effectively in humanitarian operations</i> . Retrieved from <a href="http://www.alnap.org/resource/6118">http://www.alnap.org/resource/6118</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>
CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare. (2015). <i>Independent assessment of the health care delivery systems and management processes of the Department of Veterans Affairs</i> . Retrieved from <a href="http://www.va.gov/opa">http://www.va.gov/opa</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workflow</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Bureaucratic operations</li> <li>• Integrated tools</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul>
Dovetailing. (2011). <i>Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative Parenting Education Network Project: Parenting education provider and stakeholder survey summary</i> . Retrieved from <a href="http://www.oregoncf.org">http://www.oregoncf.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Goals</li> </ul>
European Commission. (2014). <i>Key findings and recommendations on reporting and learning systems for patient safety incidents across Europe</i> . Retrieved from <a href="http://ec.europa.eu">http://ec.europa.eu</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• Privacy and confidentiality</li> </ul>
Flint Water Advisory Task Force. (2016). <i>Flint Water Advisory Task Force final report</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://www.michigan.gov">https://www.michigan.gov</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Procedure</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>
MacDonald, P. (2012, January/February). Learning from conflict: Lessons from the salmon farming industry. <i>Ivey Business Journal</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://iveybusinessjournal.com">https://iveybusinessjournal.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Value</li> </ul>

Executive report	Identified organizational conflicts
McAndrews, C. (2010). <i>What works: Developing successful multigenerational leadership</i> . New York, NY: Building Movement Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Goals</li> </ul>
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012). <i>Progress made in implementing the OECD recommendation on enhancing integrity in public procurement</i> . Retrieved from <a href="http://www.oecd.org">http://www.oecd.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>
Sinar, E. F., Wellins, R. S., & Pacione, C. (2010). <i>Creating the conditions for sustainable innovation: The leadership imperative</i> . Pittsburgh, PA: Development Dimensions International.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Learning</li> </ul>
Strand, V., Dore, M., Slaughter, E., & McKnight, J. (2005). <i>Focus group findings on job satisfaction: Recommendations for recruitment and retention strategies</i> . New York, NY: Fordham University, Children and Families Institute for Research, Support and Training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Stability</li> <li>• Priorities</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• Retention</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Coding Forms

## Preliminary Case Study Coding Form for Assessing Study Quality

## Source Information:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Research Purpose
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Method
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Established Conflict
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Overall Quality
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Study Design
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Factors
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Distinction
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Intention
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Organizational Effectiveness
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Sample Size
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Methods/Techniques:
  - a. Interview
  - b. Observation
  - c. Experiment
  - d. Survey
  - e. Archival materials (memos, documents, self-studies, newspapers, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Recommendations:
  - a. Researchers:
  - b. Policy Makers:
  - c. Practitioners:
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Additional Comments:

## Final Draft for Document Coding Form for Assessing Executive Report Quality

Source Code \_\_\_\_\_

## Source Information:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Overall Quality
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Internal Validity
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. External Validity
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Stated Purpose
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Methods/Techniques:
  - a. Interview
  - b. Observation
  - c. Experiment
  - d. Survey
  - e. Archival materials (memos, documents, self-studies, newspapers, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Factors
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Distinction
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Intention
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Sample Size
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Recommendations:
  - a. Researchers:
  - b. Policy Makers:
  - c. Practitioners:
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Additional Comments:

## Curriculum Vitae

**RAQUEL E. PEREZ**

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**EDUCATION**

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**ABD, Conflict Analysis & Resolution**, (2010 – Present) – NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

**Postgraduate Study in Education** (2010) – FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

**MS, Conflict Analysis & Resolution** (2009) – NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

**BA, Organizational Leadership & Communication** (2006) – TRINITY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**FULL-TIME ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, **Visiting Instructor**, Communication Arts  
2014 – Present

Proficient in course development, enhancement, and implementation that fulfills both academic requirements and real-world application. Evaluating course materials and student progress to identify opportunities to infuse supplemental resources to ensure students' success. Providing students additional support by offering campus meetings, email communication, and Adobe Connect Live/Skype conferences.

**Undergraduate Courses Taught:**

- Organizational Communication
- Small Group Communication
- Communication for Effective Leadership
- Managerial Communication
- Advanced Public Speaking
- Organizational Conflict
- Conflict Management
- Advanced Business Communication

**Key Contributions:**

- Developed and delivered trainings designed to equip City of Miami police officers with communication and de-escalation strategies to improve community relations.  
<http://news.fiu.edu/2016/08/a-force-for-the-future-communication-professors-train-local-police-to-connect-with-citizens/101637>
- Initiated, designed, and developed a collaborative project with Miami-Dade Mental Health Jail Diversion Program that provided students with the opportunity to assist in evaluating and improving organizational communication between the program and the community vendors.  
<http://cartanews.fiu.edu/communication-arts-students-provide-support-for-the-miami-dade-jail-diversion-project/>
- Developed and implemented the ongoing Communication Arts Lecture Series *Communication Works*. The series provides students with the opportunity to interact

with community leaders and business owners on the impact of communication on the global market.

<http://cartanews.fiu.edu/lecture-series-features-top-communicators/>

### **PART- TIME ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, **Adjunct Instructor**, Communication Arts  
2014

Established a global academic environment to enhance learning through knowledge-based instruction, technology integration, and multiplatform assessments.

#### **Undergraduate Courses Taught:**

- Advanced Public Speaking
- Conflict Management

TRINITY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, **Adjunct Instructor**, Organizational Leadership  
2012–2014

Provided differentiated instruction that targeted multiple intelligences and culturally diverse populations; created interactive presentations to communicate subject matter and engaged audiences to achieve retention/understanding.

#### **Undergraduate Courses Taught:**

- Leading Teams
- Conflict Management
- Race and Ethnic Relations
- Intercultural Communication
- Research Design
- Adult Learning

### **NONACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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LEGACY WRITES, **Organizational Communication and Conflict Consultant**  
2007 – Present

Delivering professional development trainings focused on organizational communication, team building, and sustainability. De-escalating conflicts and redirecting individuals to comply with program's methodology. Facilitating employee training programs that focus on the organization's procedures and effective strategies. Evaluating and creating modifications of the program to address identified areas of conflict. Assessing the implementation of the program and recommending changes for dispute prevention.

2007-Present De-escalate conflicts and redirect individuals to comply with program's methodology. Deliver professional development trainings focused on team building and

#### **Proficient capabilities include:**

- Communication Planning
- Organizational Behavior
- Conflict Coaching



- Change Management
- Diversity Awareness
- Team Building
- Violence Prevention
- Strategic Planning
- Leadership Development
- Performance Management
- Procedure Evaluation
- Project Management
- Systems Design
- Training Development
- Dispute Resolution

**BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOLS, Leadership and Organizational Developer**  
2009–2012

Designed, effectuated, facilitated, and assessed leadership development trainings for staff. Mediated issues between management and employees to enhance the effectiveness of the organization. Strategically planned and facilitated the successful implementation of violence prevention programs. Served as a liaison between the community and institution to identify, address, and monitor areas of concern.

**Proficient capabilities include:**

- Curriculum Development
- Data Analysis
- Strategic Communication
- Community Relations
- Instructional Design
- Organizational Development

**GLOBAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Rabat, Morocco**

June 2012

Interfaced with peace-building programs, government, civil society, social change, peace education, and human rights organization as part of Nova Southeastern University's advanced practicum. Contributed to roundtable discussions with Amnesty International, Moroccan Association of Human Rights, National General Council of Human Rights, and the Moroccan Democratic Women Association.

**Istanbul, Turkey**

March 2012

Self-initiated study to examine conflicts rooted in communication, culture, religious history, economic disparity, and gender roles. Interviewed citizens, religious leaders, and nongovernmental leaders and discussed the development of violence prevention programs.

**Elias Piñas, Dominican Republic**

August 2010

Collaborated with Child Ambassadors to identify and assess sources of community conflict and social concern. Discussed with religious community leaders alternative programs and trainings to increase sustainability.

## **TRAINING SEMINARS**

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### **Engaging Leadership Lessons Workshops**

2007–2014

Introduced interactive strategies of engaging employees in the leadership process, ensuring individuals were up-to-date on leadership techniques and the use of strategies as a means to increase effectiveness.

### **Organizational Improvement Plan Training**

2009–2014

Provided employee training designed to communicate an overall understanding of the goals set by the management team. Courses also introduced organization-wide initiatives and result targets.

### **Team-Building Training**

2009–2014

Provided instruction emphasizing the importance of fostering strong relationships with team members; conveyed techniques to establish and maintain a positive rapport.

### **Procedures and Processes Training**

2009–2014

Provided training sessions that introduced staff to formal procedures and processes designed to assist in the creation of a safe and orderly work environment.

### **Violence-Prevention Training**

2009–2012

Presentation that focused on the organization-wide initiative to combat bullying and violence and ensure a safe and secure work environment.