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Natasha L. Davis, Student

Dr. Wayne Lewis, Major Professor

Dr. Justin Bathon, Director of Graduate Studies

A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING FACULTY CONFLICT:  
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the College of Education at the University Kentucky

By

Natasha L. Davis

Morehead, KY

Co-Directors: Dr. Wayne Lewis, President, Houghton College  
and: Dr. Beth Rous, Professor of Educational Leadership Studies

Lexington, KY

2021

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING FACULTY CONFLICT: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Research indicates colleges and universities are faced with an excess of challenges and issues, and one of these issues is dealing with conflict. The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to implement a conflict management strategies workshop on the campus of Morehead State University as an intervention to address the problem of conflict between faculty and administrators. Data collected and analyzed from an exploratory pilot study included interviews of current faculty and administrators regarding situations of conflict. As a result, the following information was discovered: conflict does exist on the campus of Morehead State University between faculty and administrators; the handling of situations of conflict are at the discretion of faculty and/or administrators involved in the conflict; and university personnel and operational policies and faculty handbook, are absent of information necessary to assist in managing conflict. This information gathered led to the development of the intervention, a conflict management strategies workshop. Data collected and analyzed from the implementation of the conflict management strategies workshop included pre- and post- workshop assessments, group discussions, individual interviews, and the researcher's journal. This constructive approach to managing conflict was implemented through a step-by-step series of interactive activities focused on applying conflict management strategies to equip faculty and administrators with tools to manage conflict. In this paper, planning and implementation is described, answers to the research questions which led the study are provided and implication of the findings are discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** Conflict, Conflict management, Higher Education, Faculty Conflict, Faculty-Administrator Conflict

Natasha L. Davis

May 11, 2021

A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING FACULTY CONFLICT: AN  
ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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Director of Graduate Studies

May 11, 2021

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Date

## DEDICATION

*This is dedicated to the young high school version of myself with the world ahead of me, who was told I would never amount to anything, let me clear my throat once again "Look...At... Me... Now" (clap, clap, clap, clap)! And I will keep defying the odds!*

*This is dedicated to my mother (Juanita Davis) who said I can be anything in this world. She said, "Don't you dare let anyone define your future for you before you've had the chance to define it for yourself. Anyone who tells you otherwise, they are not God! You have to ask God who you are supposed to be in this life, for only HE can direct your path!", I asked God and HE has directed my path ever since.*

*To my two kitty babies, Belle and Bailey, while your note-taken and shorthand still needs work mommy appreciated you both providing comfort on days when I needed it most.*

*Last this is dedicated to my Great-Aunt Mrs. Effie M. Murray Washington (1901-1999) who we called momEffie and who I miss every day. She had to help raise twelve brothers and sisters and never received a formal education. She could not read or write, yet she was the smartest and most educated woman I ever knew. She was the matriarch who held our family together, the rock that kept us strong, and a dedicated God-fearing woman. I am who I am because of her faith, love and keeping me lifted in prayer. Even from heaven your presence is always felt and I can only hope I am making you proud.*

*Look MomEffie, "WE" did it!*

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First and foremost, I need to acknowledge that without God, the head of my life and the solid rock of my foundation, none of this would be possible. I never knew a little's girls dream could reach this far when I used to stare at a poster in my room that now hangs in my work office with the motto, "If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream, it you can become it". Even now, I still look at that poster and wonder what I can dream of to become knowing God has and will bless me beyond measure. This doctoral journey has been full of challenges from the moment I was accepted into the program. Continuing to work full-time and pursuing a full-time degree is no joke. Yet through all the tears and frustrations, anxiety attacks and sometimes mental breakdowns, I never gave up because God never let me give up. He placed "angels" in my life to keep pushing and motivating me to make sure this path HE set me on; I would succeed to fulfill his ultimate purpose. He strengthened me at every corner, and because of HIM and his angels, I am now a better leader, educator and person for what I have learned during this chapter of my life.

To Dr. Eric Brown (angel #1), my colleague and my friend, I want to thank you for the early morning, mid-day and late-night phone calls daily to check in on me and for being a sounding board to work out my frustrations through this process. For providing sound advice while not letting my current process "trigger" your own past doctoral process enough to talk me through all I needed to know to in order to meet every deadline and requirement. You made sure I kept my eyes on the prize, therefore I am sincerely



grateful for your encouragement and always making me laugh when I needed it most. Finally, thank you for keeping me sane through this until I crossed the finish line.

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To my tribe of family and friends who also provided support whether it was a text to ask how the writing was going, or a phone call telling me to “hang in there” or “you got this”, doing little “check-ins” from time to time, I want to thank all of you for keeping me in your thoughts and prayers through this journey. In our ever so colloquial language of the African-American vernacular, “iz you done yet? I’z done now”.

This dissertation journey was not completed alone and I would be remiss if I did not thank those individuals who I admire and made significant contributions to my growth in becoming a better version of myself as a leader and educator. First, Dr. Daryl Privott (angel #4), thank you for the continuous support and collaboration on this research project your insight was truly invaluable and as you say LMKWYK. Second, to Dr. Beth Rous (angel #5) I thank you so much for agreeing to step in as my dissertation Co-Chair and for always providing such instrumental feedback and words of

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People never tell you how the doctoral journey can affect you mentally, emotionally, physically, and sometimes spiritually, BUT it was all worth it in the end. That’s what growth is and does for God never promised things would be easy, but HE did promise we would never be alone. And by the grace of God and through his mercy, even with career changes and moves to new places, you continued to lead me through this, so “WE” did this too! I look forward to learning more from you, my friend. You truly are good people Dr. Lewis!

Now to end this acknowledgement, there are words to a Broadway song that I think is so fitting that sums up this entire crazy journey that is now coming to a bittersweet end and it says, “Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better, but because I knew you (all of you), I have been changed for the good”. May God bless you all!

*“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”*

*Psalm 91:11*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The often-used metaphor of higher education as an ivory tower suggests that it is a tranquil place, far removed from the struggles of daily life and free of stress and conflict. But colleges and universities are made up of individuals who have been trained to be critical of others and of themselves and socialized to probe arguments through analysis and to find flaws in the logic of others' thinking (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

While higher education has its share of conflict, from time to time, disputes arise which, unless contained, can bring the whole institution to a halt (West, 2006). However, the presence of conflict is not itself a problem, the problem in many relationships is that two people involved handle the conflict poorly, often behaving mindlessly, without thinking about their choices (Canary & Lackey, 2013). As the university community experiences countless conflict situations, without alternative methods to handle conflict, the conflict situations can contribute to a highly adversarial environment (Volpe & Chandler, 2001).

Therefore, when dealing with conflict in institutions of higher education, there are two issues of importance: (1) that faculty groups recognize the impact conflict can play in their department and (2) that chairpersons and deans comprehend their role in establishing the workplace environment regarding conflict (Berryman-Fink, 1998). Supervisors, administrators, and leaders should be committed to addressing departmental conflicts. There are various ways to cope with, manage, or resolve social conflict, using conflict intervention as part of conflict resolution (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

Unfortunately, few people have been trained in how to resolve the many conflicts that come our way. Few schools teach it, and few corporations, non-profits, or government agencies offer conflict prevention programs. These organizations rarely train managers and supervisors in dispute resolution or orient employees to conflict resolution methodologies (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2000).

There are a number of commonly used intervention strategies for addressing serious conflicts in the academy, such as traditional models of facilitation, negotiation, mediation and arbitration (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004). Facilitation is conducted by a third party as a way to create the conditions to enhance discussions and address immediate concerns, hopes and long-term goals. Negotiation involves a discussion between two parties to settle their dispute. Mediation is an extension of the negotiation process, which involves a formal third party with limited to no authority in making decisions and who is neutral to the outcome of the conflict. Arbitration is the settlement of a dispute by a person who is selected to hear evidence and testimony from both sides, then makes a binding or nonbinding decision or ruling depending on the condition of the arbitration (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

Alternatives to traditional intervention strategies can be used by administrators who need to develop special sensitivity to both the nuances and the obvious cultural differences of those we serve (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004). Conflict management workshops can serve as an alternative providing a non-traditional method to conflict intervention, through which participants can gain skills, knowledge and confidence to effectively manage conflict.

The concern of the workshop technique is not the elimination of conflict, but rather the management of conflict. A conflict management workshop is a problem-solving workshop designed to achieve two purposes; (1) to provide the researchers with an opportunity to observe the dynamics of real conflict behavior and (2) provide a learning opportunity for those involved in conflict (Hill, 1982).

Conflict management workshops for faculty, can provide a framework for dealing with conflict and is a part of the administrators' role to provide these tools (Berryman-Fink, 1998). As an assertive leader, administrators can teach co-workers the skills needed to effectively manage conflict enhancing productivity (McCune & Butt, 2001). Conflict management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction, or termination of conflict. It involves designing effective strategies to minimize conflict dysfunctions to improve the learning and effectiveness in an organization (Rahim, 2011).

The application of a mixed-methods action research (MMAR) design in this study, was used to address conflict between faculty and administrators by implementing a conflict management strategies workshop. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the context of the study, introduce the problem of practice, and supply insight regarding the identification of the problem and how the problem was addressed. In addition, a description of the researcher as an organizational leader, the study site, and supporting literature will be provided.

### **Context of the Study**

This study was conducted in the researcher's work setting, on the campus of Morehead State University (MSU) in Morehead, Kentucky. Morehead State University is a comprehensive, four-year public university that began as a coeducational institution that

opened its doors in 1887. As a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredited institution, MSU serves over 10,000 students from 108 of 120 Kentucky counties, 44 states, and 29 nations. The average class size is 18, with a student-faculty ratio of 17-1. Morehead State University offers 144 undergraduate degree programs including associate and baccalaureate degrees and 78 graduate degree programs. The university is one of five schools in the United States that offers a baccalaureate degree in space science and the Earth and Space Science program works directly with NASA. Its main campus employs 225 faculty, including instructors, and 42 adjuncts on its teaching staff. Besides the main campus located in Morehead, Kentucky, MSU offers distance learning with regional campus centers located in Ashland, Mount Sterling, Prestonsburg and West Liberty, along with several other locations in Eastern Kentucky as well as online courses. The university currently employs a total of 359 full-time faculty members who are non-tenured, on the tenure-track, or tenured (Morehead State University website, 2014).

### **Researcher Role in the Organization**

The researcher is the Assistant Dean of Caudill College Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Responsibilities in this position include representing the Dean on behalf of the college; participation in all recruiting events; serving as a liaison for the college with Alumni Relations to promote donor relations, with the Office of Research and Sponsored programs to identify appropriate funding opportunities for grants, and with the Office of Marketing and Communications to oversee the college's social media presence. In collaboration with the Dean, the researcher helps coordinate the Bachelor of University Studies degree, and serves in leadership roles on steering committees. In

addition to the administrative role, the researcher is also a tenured associate professor, director of an academic minor program, and serves as a campus leader and mentor to both faculty and students. As an insider to the context studied, being involved in situations of conflict as a faculty member and administrator provided the researcher with an opportunity to increase her knowledge of conflict management strategies for managing conflict.

### **Problem of Practice**

Conflict is present on every college and university campus in America, whether between or among students, faculty, administrators, board of trustees, or state and federal agencies; conflicts are an inevitable fact of academic life (McCarthy, 1980). An organization can experience too much or too little conflict; therefore, intervention may be needed to tamp down or stoke up the intensity, depending on the situation. Even more important than the amount of conflict is how it is managed. The job of a leader is to manage conflict as productively as possible (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). When leaders act as conflict coaches, they observe the organization through the lens of conflict resolution, and become better at identifying conflicts, responding quickly to emerging disputes and supporting others in acting strategically in their conflicts and promoting learning and collaboration (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011).

### **Background of Conflict**

The researcher has personal experience with conflict at MSU, which is important context for this study. She was at one time involved in a chronic situation of conflict and attempted to manage the issue through a series of steps. The first step involved the researcher independently engaging in several discussions with the other person, a fellow

faculty member, in which the situation of conflict had arisen. The researcher used an ‘empathetic listening’ approach to understand why the conflict(s) occurred. Empathetic and responsive listening automatically arises when we genuinely care about what our opponent is trying to tell us, and actively reach out with questions, tone of voice and body language. As listening deepens improved skills are developed in problem solving, resolution, and transformation (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011).

The next steps in the researcher's process to manage the situation of conflict involved asking mentors and peers how they handle conflict to gauge if the same methods could be applied in the conflict experienced by the researcher. Some suggested methods by mentors and peers were applied, while the researcher continued to engage in ongoing discussions with the other person in the conflict to find a resolution. Unfortunately, the proposed methods did not work.

After a significant amount of time with no resolution and tactics by the researcher exhausted, the researcher's next option led to the traditional route for personnel in institutions of higher education when situations of conflict occur, reporting the issue to the immediate supervisors. The researcher's immediate supervisors were the former Associate Dean of the department and the college's former Dean; both have since stepped down from these positions. With the assistance of the supervisors, the situation of conflict worsened; therefore, their knowledge and assistance with conflict resolution did not provide the results sought out by the researcher.

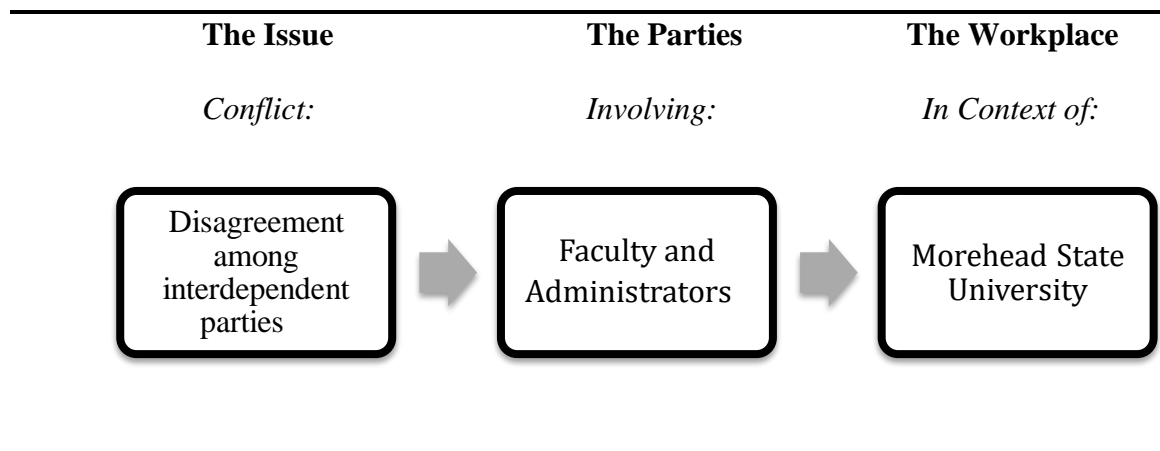
The researcher's last step involved contacting the Office of Human Resources to report the conflict and seek their assistance with conflict resolution. The Human Resources department acts as a mediator between employees and managers, quickly

responding to conflict and following conflict resolution procedures (Scott, 2021). The former director of the Office of Human Resources, who has retired since this study was implemented, could only offer mediation as a resolution to the conflict. They were the only person in the Office of Human Resources certified to mediate conflict at that time. According to the former Office of Human Resources Director, the Office of Human Resources on Morehead State University's campus managed conflict by either documenting these incidents as informal, thus enacting a mediation process with the parties involved or as formal grievances against the person(s) involved in the conflict. The researcher proceeded with mediation as suggested by the former Office of Human Resources Director in order to document and manage the conflict via a professional mediator; however, the situation still did not improve. Therefore, a formal complaint was filed by the researcher against the person in which the conflict resided and a former supervisor who the researcher believed contributed to the conflict instead of helping to resolve the conflict.

The researcher's personal involvement in a situation of conflict and the attempted methods to manage and resolve the conflict, helped to inform her understanding of the problem and the design, development, and implantation of this study. Additionally, the implemented study placed the researcher in a unique position as participant, observer, and leader.



**Figure 1.1** *Workplace Conflict*



The researcher selected this particular problem to address not only due her experience with a chronic situation of conflict, but also due to the lack of leadership practice to address the issue of conflict within the organization. The effects of conflict can impact those within the organization both personally and professionally as well as have an organizational impact.

In the “Complete Guide to Conflict Resolution in the Workplace” Masters and Albright (2002) state the following:

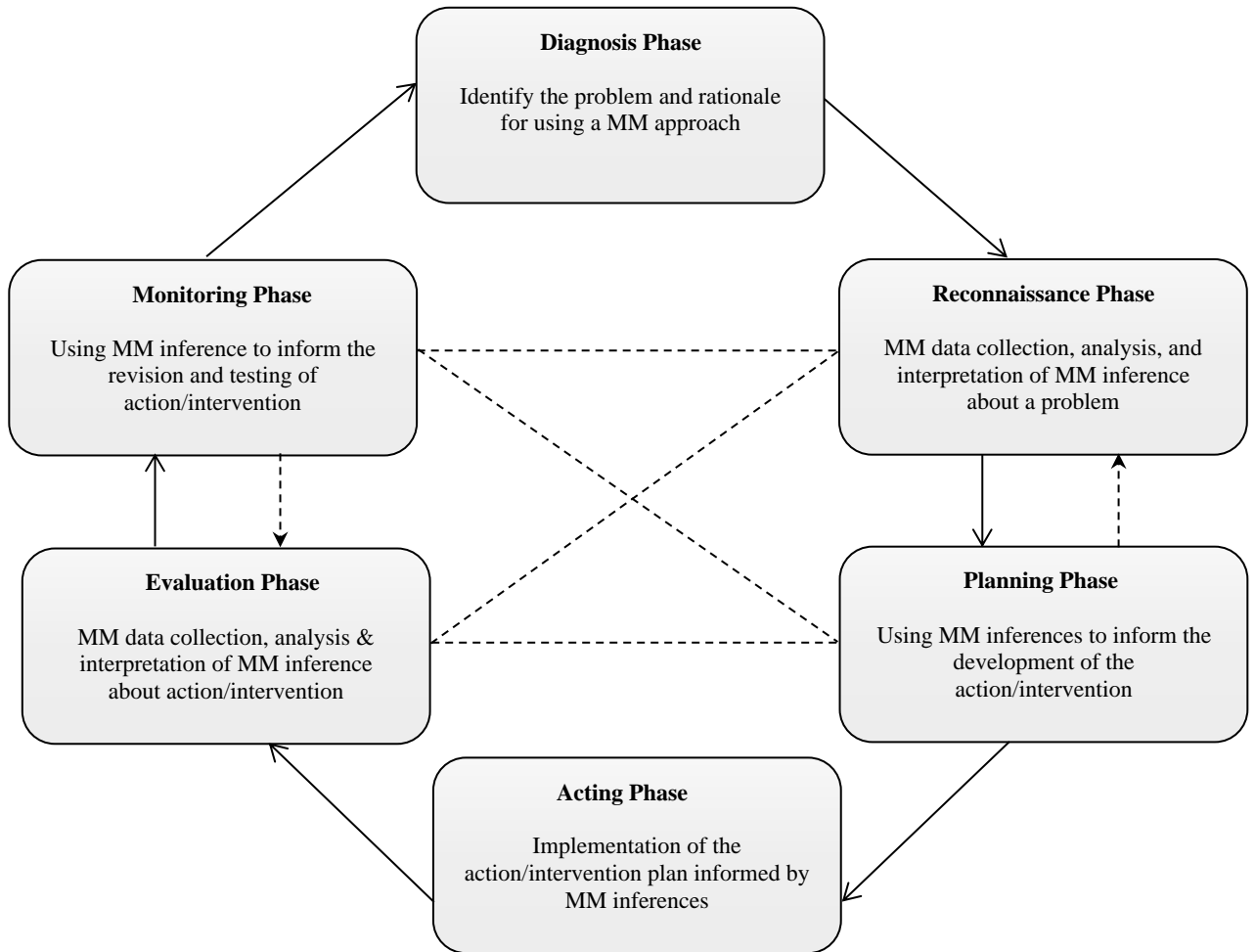
First, conflict can affect the parties involved psychologically, emotionally and can be physiological debilitating. Second, conflict can impact those involved professionally in the areas of advancement, opportunity, networking, or leadership potential. And third, conflict has an organizational impact by affecting organizational performance (delays, litigations, waste and re-works), affecting productivity (avoidance, procrastination, or hesitation) and exposing organizations to the risks of litigations or exposing the organization to looking for replacements if the employee(s) who are in conflict leave the organization (p. 23-24).

This study has the potential to improve the organization in their methods of addressing conflict and those who represent the institution; faculty and administrators.

**Overall MMAR Design**

This study is an action research study; a cyclical process which focuses on data gathering and preliminary diagnosis prior to action planning and implementation followed by a careful evaluation of the results (Huse, 1980). The researcher applied Ivankova’s mixed methods action research (MMAR) framework to help conceptualize, design and conduct a mixed methods action research study (Ivankova, 2015, p. 89). A general mixed methods action research study design is demonstrated in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2** *General Mixed Methods Action Research (MMAR) Study Design*



## **Diagnosis Phase**

The methodological framework for a mixed methods action research study (MMAR) involves procedural and conceptual aspects that can be applied at each phase within an action research cycle. The framework includes six phases: (1) diagnosing phase, identification of the problem (2) reconnaissance phase, a preliminary assessment of the identified problem is conducted in order to develop a plan of action/intervention, (3) planning phase, an intervention is planned and developed, (4) acting phase, the intervention is implemented, (5) evaluation phase, qualitative and quantitative data is collected and analyzed to provide results from the intervention, (6) monitoring phase, informs any revisions or further testing that might be needed of the intervention (Ivankova, 2015).

During the diagnosis phase, when practitioner-researchers identify the problem or issue in the workplace that requires a solution, mixed methods can help conceptualize the problem and identify the rationale for investigating by using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Ivankova, 2015). Identification or diagnosis of the problems of conflict in an organization must precede any intervention designed to manage the conflict. The results of a diagnosis should indicate whether there is a need for intervention and the type of intervention necessary to managing conflict (Rahim, 2011).

Due to her own experience of being involved in a situation of conflict, in the diagnosis phase, the researcher identified conflict as an issue between faculty and administrators. However, the researcher needed to validate her theory that conflict existed on campus between faculty and administrators and confirm it was an issue which needed to be addressed by the institution. Therefore, additional information needed to be

gathered. The researcher conducted an exploratory pilot study, as a preliminary assessment, to investigate the researcher's hypothesis. The exploratory pilot study was conducted in the reconnaissance phase of the study and an MMAR framework and a concurrent Quan + Qual design was applied to collect, analyze and interpret the problem of conflict between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University.

### **Reconnaissance Phase**

*Exploratory Pilot Study.* An exploratory design is conducted about a research problem when few or no earlier studies refer to or can be relied upon to predict the outcome. The focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation when research problems are in a preliminary stage of investigation (USCLibraries, 2021).

The researcher submitted a proposal to conduct an exploratory pilot study to the University of Kentucky's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is a committee that "applies research ethics by reviewing the methods proposed for research to ensure that they are ethical" (University of Kentucky, 2021). The exploratory pilot study received IRB approval (see Appendix P) and was conducted during the summer months of June, July and August 2019.

The researcher undertook two methods of data collection to provide information in regards to conflict between faculty and administrators for the exploratory pilot study: (1) the researcher reviewed Morehead State University's institutional policies and procedures on conflict and conflict management and (2) the researcher selected individuals to participate in an open-ended survey interview session. Both steps

provided the researcher with quantitative and qualitative data to formulate the research questions needed to guide the intervention.

***Human Resources.*** The Office of Human Resources serves as an entity that handles conflict on campus both formally and informally. The researcher collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from the Office of Human Resources to find evidence of any conflict management policies or procedures to assist faculty and administrators in managing conflict. The researcher thoroughly reviewed MSU's faculty handbook, operational and personnel policies, collected and reviewed documentation of past conflict management workshops for administrators only, and discussed the matter with a Human Resources officer.

***Faculty and Administrator Interviews.*** After the researcher collected information from the Office of Human Resources, the next step involved selecting faculty and administrators for an individual interview to collect qualitative data. In order to select participants for the exploratory pilot study, the researcher used purposeful sampling as an instrument to, "intentionally select a small number of "information rich" participants who have knowledge or experience with the studied phenomenon; the focus is on generating in-depth information and understanding of individual experiences (Creswell, 2012; Davies, 2010; Patton, 2002; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; as cited by Ivankova, 2015).

Based on the context of the identified problem and the criteria of purposeful sampling, five individuals were selected as "information rich" key informants with prior knowledge of conflict between faculty and administrators. These individuals additionally had experience dealing with situations of conflict as either participants or

observers. The potential participants selected consisted of full-time assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, and administrators who collectively have worked at Morehead State University between five to twenty plus years and have served at the institution in various leadership roles. The potential participants represented both males and females of either Caucasian or African-American descent and represented those who are currently moving through the tenure-track process or are established tenured professors.

Upon selecting the potential participants of faculty and administrators, the researcher sent an email invitation (see Appendix S) seeking their voluntary participation in the exploratory pilot study. The researcher received interest from all five selected individuals. Before the researcher could officially engage them in the pilot study as participants, an informed consent form was sent to them for review (see Appendix Q). The individuals had to sign the consent form that stated they agreed to participate in the pilot study voluntarily and were willing to be interviewed. The informed consent form provided information regarding their rights as participants and the purpose of their role in participating in the pilot study; which was to supply the researcher with relevant information regarding conflict between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University. Once the forms were reviewed and consent to participate provided, the researcher scheduled individual interviews with the five pilot study participants which were held in the privacy of the researcher's office or another privately secured location on campus where confidentiality and security of the information obtained could be upheld.

## **Instruments**

In the exploratory pilot study, the researcher created an instrument (see Appendix R), a questionnaire to guide the exploratory pilot study interviews, with the primary objective focused on validating the existence of conflict between faculty and administrators and whether or not it was an issue that needed to be addressed. The researcher relied on the following questions to develop the questionnaire; *does conflict exist between faculty members and administrators on MSU's campus and if so, how do faculty and administrators manage conflict?* The face-to-face interviews, at that time, were manually transcribed to ensure validity of the data and emersion of the researcher in the data at all times. To further the strength and support of the research a document review was conducted of institutional records regarding conflict management.

## **Reconnaissance Phase Quantitative Findings**

***Institutional Data.*** The results of the exploratory pilot study based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed from the Office of Human Resources provided the following results: (1) if issues of conflict are not resolved by the parties involved, be it between two faculty members, one faculty member and one administrator, between administrators or even an employee and a supervisor; an official report at the Office of Human Resources can be filed and a grievance process started, (2) if faculty or administrators do not want to file an official documented grievance report, Human Resources offers mediation as an intervention where those qualified from Human Resources can serve as a third party to assist in resolving the conflict, and (3) Human Resources offers workshops for administrators, but not faculty, on how to manage conflict. However, these conflict management workshops for administrators

have not been offered since 2012. The data collected and analyzed from the Office of Human Resources did not demonstrate other alternatives for managing conflict outside of a mediation process and institutional policies and procedures to address conflict before reporting a formal grievance were not reflected.

### **Reconnaissance Phase Qualitative Findings**

*Faculty and Administrator Interviews.* The researcher manually transcribed the interviews of the five participants in the exploratory pilot study. The qualitative data collected and analyzed provided the following results: (1) existence of conflict between faculty and administrators across academic units, (2) causes for the situations of conflict were varied, (3) conflict is handled differently by each faculty member and administrator where instincts or tools observed by others (supervisors, mentors, etc.) to address conflict were used, (4) most participants were not fully aware of any conflict management strategies for application beyond mediation and grievance processes.

Responses from the interviews provided a wealth of in-depth information regarding situations of conflict and conflict management. One faculty member of five years stated,

Yes, conflict between faculty and between faculty and administrators does exist in our department and on our campus which makes work very frustrating. I have dealt with conflict myself where I had a disagreement with a former Associate Dean. We were able to some-what resolve the conflict amicably but unfortunately experiencing that situation of conflict, has since caused more between us with no resolve.



Another interviewee stated,

As an administrator I have witnessed conflict between two faculty members that I had to try and resolve and I was in the midst of a situation of conflict myself with a faculty member. In my experience I have learned to let some things go, while trying to figure out how to address the other situations of conflict. But unfortunately, I have found when asking my immediate supervisor on how to handle conflict, there is not a training process that teaches us (administrators or faculty) how to address these issues when they arise. Oftentimes we are left to our own devices to figure it out the best way we know how. Do I get it right when addressing it? Sometimes. Other times, not so much.

When the issue of procedures and policies for reporting conflict to the Office of Human Resources was addressed, another participant stated,

Yes, we have rules and procedures for reporting grievances, but what if the conflict is so minor, we are not willing to report it? What access to conflict management tools does the university offer to address situations of conflict that may begin as a minor incident within the department that we can easily resolve ourselves? If it is a small conflict, I don't want to report it. But if someone who is not equipped with how to properly deal with conflict, it can make the situation worse and then who do I turn to assist me with managing said conflict? Supervisor? HR? This is where some type of training or knowledge of how to deal with conflict could come in handy.

Upon conclusion of the interviews, the researcher asked their thoughts regarding a conflict management strategies workshop as a means to address the issue of conflict between faculty and administrators.

One of the participants stated,

I don't think that we should be trained on how to handle other people if that is what the workshop would be about. Now if there is going to be a workshop on openness, and understanding viewpoints, that's different. But I think that a workshop specifically on how to handle people is not appropriate or helpful.

When the researcher clarified the intent of the conflict management strategies workshop was to equip faculty and administrators with practical tools to manage conflict, the same participant stated,

Then yes, I'd be interested in that because I have no method for handling or managing conflict. I believe there is always going to be conflict, yet I understand the value in learning specific tools to manage conflict and I'm open to that. I believe everyone on this campus would be open to something like that.

Another pilot study participant added,

I think a conflict management strategies workshop would be helpful, especially because at the moment I am currently handling a situation of conflict poorly. I would like to know what I can do differently, what strategies are out there, because just relying on my instincts is not getting me and the person, I'm in conflict with anywhere. It's frustrating and I have come to a point I no longer know what to do, but I do know I have to manage this the best I can because if not, it will never go away. I am getting to the point I'm ready to report it to HR

and my immediate supervisors are aware of the conflict between myself and the other person, but I think of myself as a problem-solver so I am not quite ready to go that route yet.

A fifth participant, who has served at the university for 24+ years responded with,

The university needs something. I have seen conflict over the years, some mild and some situations come to the point of violence almost occurring between faculty members. We are adults who have no clue how to handle conflict professionally in a professional setting. If a conflict management strategies workshop is the way to manage the conflict, or at least show us how to manage it professionally then I am all for it, but something has to be done. I am no longer involved in the department the way I used to be when I first arrived at the university because conflict has caused so much strife and contention that now I just come to work, do my job, and leave.

The additional qualitative findings from the conclusion of the interviews resulted in all five participants collectively agreeing a conflict management strategies workshop, could prove to be of significance for the institution to assist in managing conflict between faculty and administrators. Three out of the five participants from the exploratory pilot study additionally participated in the conflict management strategies workshop conducted by the researcher.

The qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed identified conflict between faculty and administrators as an issue and validated it was a problem of practice that needed to be addressed by the institution. The findings of the exploratory pilot study supported the researcher's theory there was a need for organizational

improvement in managing conflict between faculty and administrators. The information gathered from the exploratory pilot study informed the development of the intervention and generated the research questions to guide this mixed methods action research study.

### **Supporting Literature**

American higher education is special in its structure, mission, and governance. When the first higher education institutions began, faculty and administrators were often the same individuals with the same set of goals and perspectives. As institutions became more complex and grew larger, there came a need for separate groups of people to lead the schools and teach the students. This laid the groundwork for different perspectives and points of view, which causes conflict in organizations, so it is unsurprising that colleges and universities exude a large amount of conflict between their faculty members and administrators (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004; Del Favero, 2004; Gross & Grambsch, 1968; Richman & Farmer, 1974; Holton, 1998; Higgerson, 1998; Hancks, 2013).

It is known workplaces and organizations are profoundly shaped by conflicts between workers and supervisors, competing departments, and stressed co-workers. Our first response to conflict is to avoid or suppress conflict. However, we cheat our organizations out of learning, making it impossible to correct what led to the problem in the first place (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2012).

Conflicts in higher education are ongoing. They can be psychologically draining, raise anxiety, lower morale, cause disengagement from others and cause dissatisfaction with work and the college (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

Therefore, failure to acknowledge the existence of conflict and the related hope that time or events will resolve dispute situations often exacerbates hostility and leads to

destructive confrontation that could be avoided if the conflict were recognized, the issues examined, and the differences, managed in a way that encourages cooperative problem-solving (McCarthy, 1980).

Within higher education we need a culture that supports and acknowledges a systemic view of conflict, a view that acknowledges conflict within one part of the academy has an effect on all other parts. And so, dealing with the conflict will require engagement of all elements of the system and a cultural shift for most institutions of higher education (Holton, 1995).

With conflict in higher education intensifying, there is a need for people who know how to manage conflict. Therefore, it is vital to learn ways to deal with the conflicts. Higher education must develop leaders within all sectors of the academy who can deal with conflict. Leaders-current and potential-must be trained to deal with the realities of conflict. Perhaps no skill is more critical. The cry for leadership in higher education must be heard, and those leaders must be trained in conflict management (Holton, 1995).

The university has been an important setting for the development of conflict resolution systems for several decades. As academic communities have always been considered havens for all types of discourse and ideologies, it is natural that as centers of societal conflict they have been ideal settings for the establishment of these systems (Leal, 1995).

Though colleges and universities are not immune to conflict, conflict intervention is part of conflict resolution that involves various ways to try and cope with, manage, or resolve conflicts (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004). Therefore, the institutionalization of better

mechanisms of the management of conflicts and the need to provide for conflict resolution processes to be undertaken in a social setting of leadership integrity and moral responsibility when and where conflicts arise is imperative (Aseka, 2001).

If not managed properly, conflict can also increase faculty antagonism, lead to interdepartmental tension, disrupt normal channels of communication, and divert faculty's attention from a department's goals and mission" (Gmelch, 1995, p. 35).

The way administrators as interveners of conflict, handle conflict has a pronounced influence on how the institution is viewed, both within the college and in the larger community. If administrators believe that conflict is an unwarranted intrusion into the smooth running of the institution, they become annoyed and impatient with demands and tend to procrastinate in responding to grieving faculty. This apparent insensitivity fosters an impression of institutional intransigence. If, however, administrators see conflict as a natural and even healthy aspect of their relationship with faculty, they will be responsible to faculty concerns and demonstrate the institutions commitment to thoughtful and thorough consideration of issues within a rational problem-solving framework (McCarthy, 1980).

Through a proper diagnosis of conflict, it should indicate there is a need for intervention and the type of intervention required. An intervention attempts to improve organizational effectiveness by helping organizational participants to manage conflict (Rahim, 2011).

Researchers investigating conflict resolution processes have developed various problem-solving workshops. These workshops serve two functions: research of participant variety, allowing researchers to observe real-world conflict behavior; and

service, providing insight and training to the conflict participants regarding resolution of their conflict (Hill, 1982).

Whenever multiple parties are involved in a conflict, these parties should be involved in the conflict management process as this will lead to collective learning and to an increase in organizational performance and effectiveness (Fahed-Sreih, 2018).

Nothing is more important for American higher education than the emergence of academic leaders equipped to handle conflicts (Gmelch & Carrol, 1991). Clark Kerr president of the University of California from 1957 to 1967 and who is considered to be one of the great leaders of American higher education in the twentieth century stated,

I see contradictions and conflicts tormenting higher education, as they have so often in the past. I sustain an interest in their effective resolution within the context of this period of history; realizing, in full, that new contradictions and conflicts will arise in the more distant future that we cannot yet even visualize. There are no permanent solutions. How the current contradictions and conflicts work themselves out, and how higher education engages in their resolution, will heavily determine how the future for higher education evolves (Kerr, 1963, p.xv).

### **Summary**

This mixed methods action research study implemented a conflict management strategies workshop as an intervention to address the problem of conflict at Morehead State University. The MMAR research design and the implemented intervention is discussed in Chapter 2.

Warters (1995) expresses:

There has been considerable growth and development in the area of campus conflict resolution. We need, as well, a comparable increase in the research on and the documentation of campus dispute resolution efforts, and a refinement and integration of campus dispute resolution systems. While the ivory tower will never be free of conflict, it certainly has the potential to become one of the most well managed areas of conflict activity, where in the true value of conflict can be discovered, and the painful costs of conflict poorly handled can be minimized (p. 77).

## **Chapter Two**

### **Research Design**

#### **Introduction**

In many organizations, executives, managers, employees have learned to sweep conflicts under the rug in hopes that they will go away. As a result, the organizations have developed cultures that encourage people to avoid discussing difficult issues and settle for partial solutions or no solutions at all (Clove & Goldsmith, 2011).

By ignoring conflict, it tends to have the opposite of its intended effect; therefore, universities and colleges are utilizing conflict management systems as a method to respond to workplace conflict. Teaching people how to manage conflict constructively can lead to better working conditions, more understanding, and a better environment for students, faculty and administrators alike (Hancks, 2013).



The researcher identified conflict as an issue between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University. In the reconnaissance phase of this study, an exploratory pilot study was conducted, a thorough review of the research literature on conflict and conflict management was examined, quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed, and the researcher's professional experience and knowledge of the context studied led to the development of this action research study as an appropriate way to address the identified problem of conflict between faculty and administrators. The quantitative data collected and analyzed from the exploratory pilot study demonstrated an absence of resources in operational and personnel policies. Procedural policies regarding conflict management only provided a formal reporting to the Office of Human Resources. The qualitative data collected and analyzed from the exploratory pilot study demonstrated conflict existed between faculty and administrators, faculty and administrators were left to their own devices to manage conflict and a conflict management strategies workshop could be of use to the university to assist in managing conflict in the organization.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the implemented action/intervention, research design and methodology, research setting, the participants in the intervention, and the instruments and strategies used for data collection and analysis. In addition, quality assurance, ethical considerations and the researcher's role as participant-leader and participant-researcher is examined.

### **Research Setting**

Located in the rural setting of Morehead, Kentucky, this mixed methods action research study was conducted on the campus of Morehead State University. According

to U.S. World News and Record (2021) the university is recognized as one of the best public regional universities in the south ranking at number forty. The university has additionally received national recognition for several of its academic programs. Intelligent.com (2021), a resource for online degree rankings and higher education planning, ranked eight of MSU's academic programs in its multiple national top degree programs lists. Five of those programs earned top five honors and two ranked at No. 1 overall in their respective lists.

### **Study Collaborators in Research Setting**

*Role of the Researcher.* Due to the researcher's role as a faculty member and administrator where the study took place, the researcher had the opportunity to participate as both leader and researcher, collaborated with a co-facilitator, and investigated the issue of conflict as an insider to the context studied. To be credible and accurate, the investigation needs to be conducted by a professional who understands the analysis of communication and general processes of consultation (Downs & Adrian, 2004).

*Co-facilitator.* A fellow colleague and faculty member at Morehead State University served as a co-facilitator in this study. The co-facilitator assisted the researcher with participant selection for the implemented study, conducted one of the break-out group activities, moderated the discussion in the small and large group sessions, and monitored and observed one of the large group activities in the second workshop. Collaboration with a co-facilitator proved beneficial in administering the workshops, which allowed the researcher to take on the observer role to, "look and listen in a systematic and meaningful way" (McKechnie, 2008). This type of participant

observation allowed the researcher to overtly become a part of the context being observed. Additionally, the co-facilitator acted as a secondary data collector for the conflict management workshops who maintained and provided the researcher with their observational notes from the group activities and workshop overall. The co-facilitator and researcher engaged in preparation sessions before each workshop and debriefings after each workshop.

### **Research Design**

The purpose of this mixed methods action research (MMAR) study was to implement a conflict management strategies workshop in order to support the use of conflict management strategies to reduce the level of conflict between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University. The goal of the reconnaissance phase was to identify conflict management strategies by using a concurrent mixed methods design to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data. The goal of the evaluation phase was to determine the effectiveness of the conflict management strategies workshops by using a concurrent mixed methods design to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data from pre-post questionnaires/assessments, group discussions, and individual interviews based on workshop participation.

The rationale for applying mixed methods in this study was to seek ways to effectively address the issue of conflict by concurrently collecting qualitative and quantitative data which provided insight into the perceptions of the participants on workshop effectiveness as they completed each stage of the intervention. This study combined the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research linking concepts and

views and comparing findings with data from different situations and times. During a single phase of the research study both qualitative and quantitative strands of data are implemented, collected and analyzed separately, and integrated concurrently to address the research question (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The research design provided the researcher with the opportunity to design study objectives, research questions and outline expected outcomes of the implemented study. The objective of the action research study was to engage faculty and administrators in a conflict management strategies workshop with the purpose of learning strategies to help manage conflict within their department or the institution at large. The intent of the practical tools provided in the workshops were designed to increase faculty and administrator's knowledge and awareness of alternative approaches to managing conflict, learn from peers as an aspect of shared experiences, and learn from the researcher strategies she found useful from the research literature regarding how to manage conflict in the workplace.

The researcher expected the outcomes of the study would yield the following; (1) increased knowledge for managing conflict, (2) continued use of conflict management strategies learned in the workshops after completion of the implemented study, and (3) positive results of workshop participation to demonstrate its effectiveness.

The research questions formulated in the reconnaissance phase were intended “to assess the problem or situation, identify the areas for improvement, and inform the development of the action/intervention plan” (Ivankova, 2015). The following research questions guided the action research study in the acting and evaluation phases:

***Research Question 1:*** How do faculty and administrators currently handle conflict? (qualitative)

***Research Question 2:*** How will faculty and administrator participation in a conflict management strategies workshop affect their approach to handling conflict? (qualitative and quantitative)

***Research Question 3:*** What are the faculty and administrator perceptions of participating in a conflict management strategies workshop? (qualitative and quantitative)

While the study purpose renders the intent and an overall direction of the study, the research questions help focus the study and determine the choice of the methodological procedures (Ivankova, 2015).

### **MMAR Framework**

Within the mixed methods approach, the structure of an MMAR framework was used to, “provide more comprehensive answers to study research questions through the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods with the purpose of examining an issue from different aspects (Ivankova, 2015). The six phases or “steps” of the MMAR framework and action research cycle, “increases the researcher’s knowledge of the original question, puzzle or problem” (Herr & Anderson, 2005 as cited by Ivankova, 2015).

Each step is treated as an individual phase in the research process because it has clearly defined boundaries with the starting and ending points and inform and enhance each phase in the cycle of the action research process (Ivankova, 2015). The phases of

the MMAR framework provided the researcher with the parameters needed to put this study into action.

The first phase of the action research study, the diagnosis phase, conflict was revealed as a problem between faculty and administrators. The diagnosis phase required the researcher to identify the problem and identify a rationale for investigating that problem by using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Ivankova, 2015, p. 61).

The second phase of the MMAR framework, reconnaissance or fact-finding phase, involved conducting an exploratory pilot study. The goal of the reconnaissance phase was to (1) gather additional information to support the researcher's claim of conflict existing between faculty and administrators, (2) examine current information in regards to how conflict is managed on campus, (3) design the study applying a concurrent Qual + Quan method for collecting and analyzing data, and (4) develop the conflict management strategies workshop as an intervention. The data collected in the reconnaissance phase, helped the researcher to generate more thorough interpretations of the assessment results and create meta-inferences that informed the development of the action/intervention (Ivankova, 2015).

The third phase, planning phase, the researcher developed all the components of the conflict management strategies workshop and prepared the action research study for implementation. The researcher created a plan of action which included descriptive details of the workshops, what would take place at each stage of the intervention, a timeline for implementation, and a data collection and analysis plan. In this phase, the researcher reflected upon the meta-inferences or overall conclusion of the information

gathered from the quantitative and qualitative strands collected in the reconnaissance phase, to generate the objectives and expected outcomes of the study and design the action/intervention (Ivankova, 2015).

The acting phase put the intervention informed by the reconnaissance phase and developed in the planning phase into action. This fourth step in the action research cycle is to “act” (Ivankova, 2015, p. 62). The researcher enacted the entire study in order of the timeline the researcher created to ensure each phase of the study was conducted according to plan.

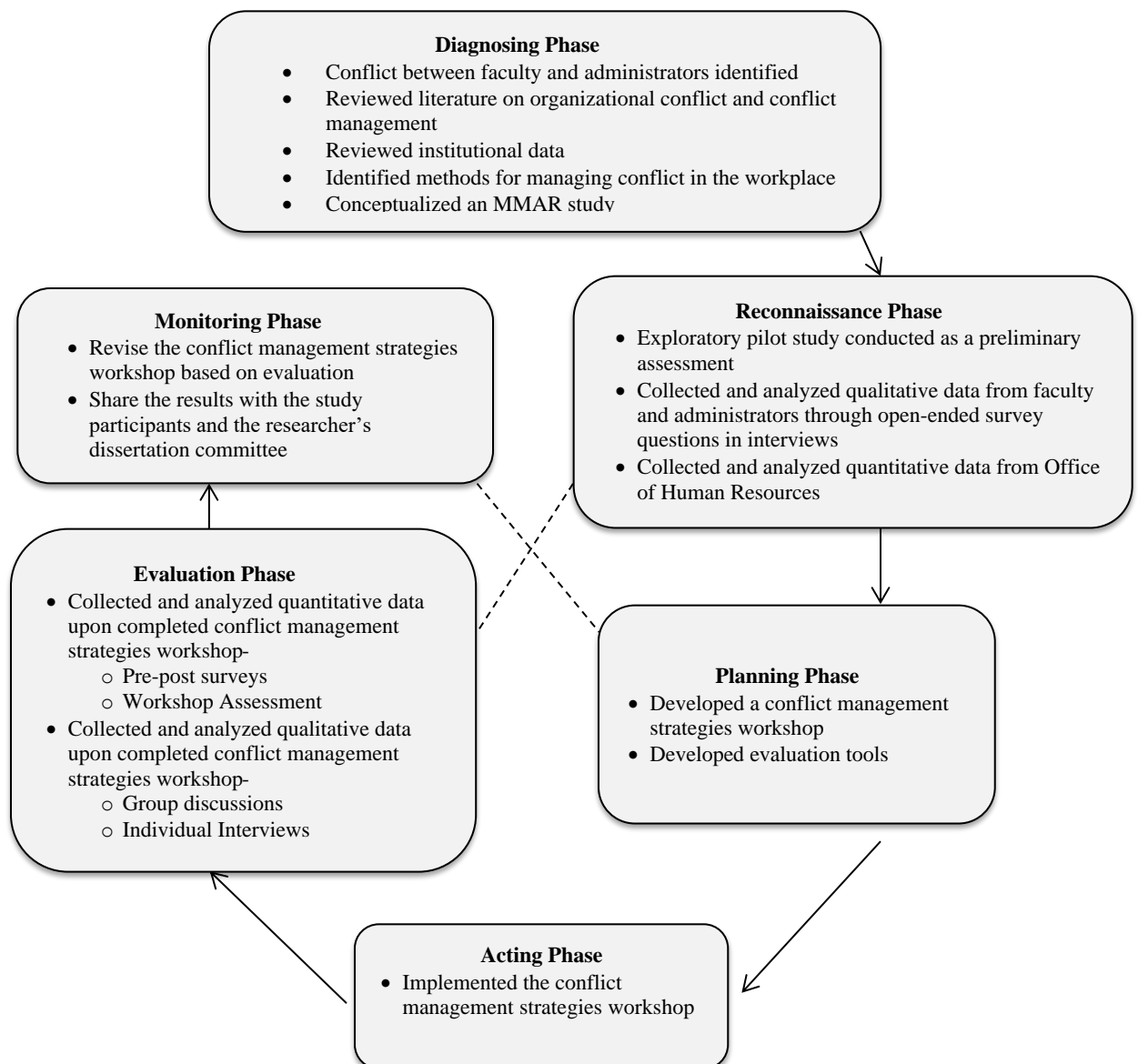
In the fifth phase of the action research study, the evaluation phase, the researcher collected and analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data. The use of mixed methods during the evaluation phase involves the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and interpretation of the integrated quantitative and qualitative results (Ivankova, 2015, p. 62). Based on the data collected and analyzed in the evaluation phase, results from the implemented action research study answered the posited research questions.

The sixth and final phase of the MMAR framework is the monitoring phase. Typically, the monitoring phase is based on the new set of mixed methods inferences that were generated during the action/intervention evaluation, the practitioner-researchers make decisions about whether the revisions or further testing of the action/intervention plan is needed (Ivankova, 2015, p.62).

Several decisions can be made regarding the outcome of the intervention. The researcher-practitioner can develop a revised plan of action or if the action/intervention is successful, continuous mixed methods evaluation of its progress can help promote

sustainability of the action/intervention and enable transferability of the action research study results to other contexts and community settings (Ivankova, 2015). With all the data collected and analyzed from the evaluation phase, the researcher will not conduct further testing nor revise the implemented study. Each step of the MMAR framework applied in this study is outlined according to the general mixed methods framework provided in figure 1.3.

**Figure 1.3** *Mixed Methods Methodological Framework.*





## **Methods and Procedures**

### **MMAR Approach**

The definition of mixed methods research included six “core characteristics” that combines methods, a philosophy and a research design orientation. Each of these characteristics is essential for designing and conducting a mixed methods study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011 as cited by Ivankova, 2015).

The six major characteristics of an MMAR approach include: (1) the researcher collects and analyzes data persuasively and rigorously both quantitative and qualitative based on the research questions, (2) the researcher mixes or integrates the two forms of data concurrently or combining/merging them sequentially by having one build on the other or embedding one within the other, (3) the researcher gives priority to one or both forms of data, (4) the researcher uses procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study, (5) the researcher frames these procedures within philosophical worldviews and theoretical lenses, and (6) the researcher combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study (Ivankova, 2015).

In the implemented study, the researcher collected and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data based on the research questions and integrated the results of quantitative and qualitative data concurrently while interpreting the study’s outcomes. In this study, the researcher gave priority to the qualitative data due to the in-depth explanations they provided. The researcher used mixed methods procedures in a single study and framed those procedures within the philosophical worldview of an advocacy/participatory worldview and the theoretical lens of conflict resolution.

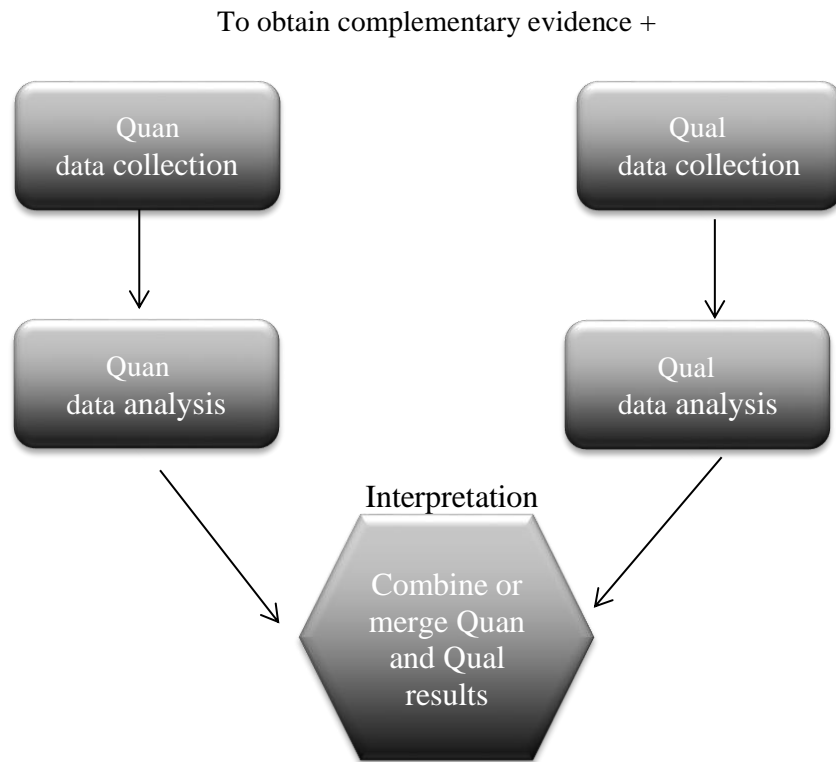
In an advocacy and participatory worldview, the research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which the individuals work or live, and the researcher's life. Specific issues need to be addressed and the researcher begins with one of these issues as a focal point of the study. The advocacy research provides a voice for the participants, raising consciousness or advancing an agenda for change to improve lives (Creswell, 2008).

The theoretical foundation of this implemented study was conflict resolution which refers to the facilitated analysis of the underlying sources of conflict situations by the parties in the conflict. The term conflict resolution also encompasses the process whereby institutional and policy options are discovered that meet the needs of the parties, thus establishing the basis for a resolution of the conflict (Burton, 1986).

### **Study Design**

There are four typical typologies of an MMAR study design. Of those four, the researcher selected a concurrent Quan + Qual MMAR design, which is commonly used in action research. The study design guides other methodological procedures to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014, as cited by Ivankova, 2015). Therefore, selecting an appropriate study design does not only help researchers choose appropriate methods, but also helps “set the logic by which the researchers make interpretations at the end of their studies” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, as cited by Ivankova, 2015). A concurrent Quan + Qual design can be applied in both reconnaissance and evaluation phases, but is more frequently used to evaluate the effects of the action/intervention than the needs assessment (Ivankova, 2015). The conceptual model of a concurrent Quan + Qual MMAR study is presented in figure 1.4 (Ivankova, 2015).

**Figure 1.4** *Conceptual Model of a Concurrent Quan + Qual MMAR Study*

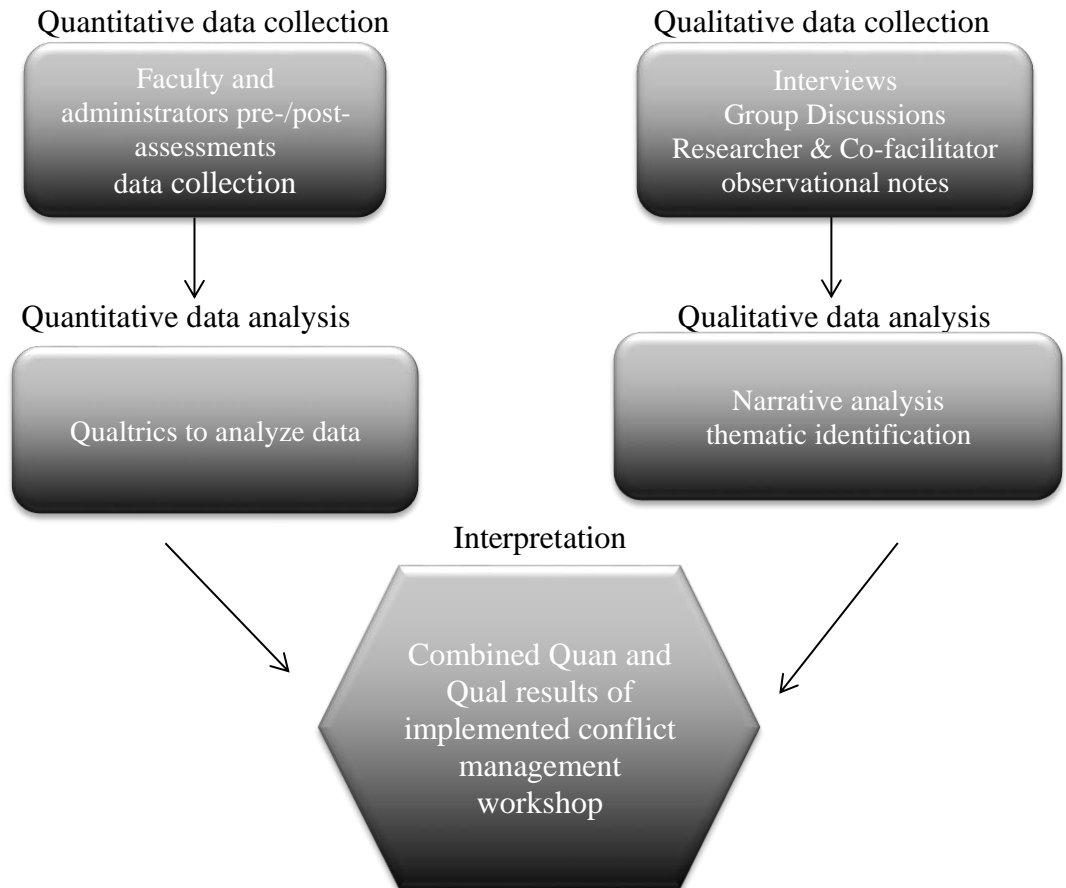


In both the reconnaissance phase and evaluation phase, a concurrent Quan + Qual design was applied. The characteristics of a concurrent Quan + Qual MMAR design typically include two strands, during which the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed separately or independently of each other. The primary purpose of this design is to compare quantitative and qualitative results to obtain complementary evidence in different types of data and produce well-validated conclusions (Ivankova, 2015).

This design suited the purposes of this mixed methods action research because it allowed the researcher to collect and analyze data for the intervention in a short amount of time, which enabled the study to be both time and cost efficient. The design also

allowed the researcher to obtain different yet contemporary data on the same topic, which enhanced the quality of data collected for analysis, thereby obtaining optimum results. The applied concurrent Quan + Qual MMAR design to the reconnaissance phase explored situations of conflict between faculty and administrators and provided the information necessary to conduct a literary review of the problem that needed to be addressed to find a solution for an intervention. In contrast, in the evaluation phase, the effectiveness of the implemented conflict management strategies workshop was assessed. In figure 1.5, the researcher has outlined the strands of data collected and analyzed from MMAR study design used in this implemented study according to the conceptual framework demonstrated in figure 1.4.

**Figure 1.5** *Visual Diagram of the Concurrent Quan + Qual MMAR Study Design*



***Population/Sample.*** The criteria for selection of the participants for the conflict management strategies workshop, involved the same instrument used in the reconnaissance phase of the study, purposeful sampling to “select information rich” participants who have knowledge of or experience with the studied phenomenon (Ivankova, 2015). The purpose of sampling is to ensure that the selected people and informational sources adequately reflect the characteristics of the population for whom the study results are intended (Ivankova, 2015; Mertens, 2005).

Based on the criteria of the purposeful sampling, the researcher selected forty faculty and administrators to receive an email invitation to participate in this mixed methods action research study (see Appendix A). Close to half (n=X) expressed interest and four participants requested more information concerning the study. The researcher spoke with these individuals by phone, ensuring confidentiality to answer questions that allowed them to make a well-informed decision regarding study participation. As a result, ten out of the forty invited, agreed to participate in the study.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The quantitative and qualitative data collected in the implemented study included a pre-questionnaire prior to workshop participation, two post-questionnaires at the completion of both implemented workshops, an overall workshop assessment, the co-facilitators observational notes, and the researcher’s journal. In Table 1, the researcher has provided how the data was collected in response to the posited research questions.

**Table 1-Combined Mixed Method-Data Sources**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data Source One</b>	<b>Date Source Two</b>	<b>Data Source Three</b>
<i>RQ1: How do faculty and administrators currently handle conflict?</i>	Pre-questionnaire prior to workshop one	Group Discussion workshop one	Researcher’s journal and co-facilitators observational notes
<i>RQ2: How will faculty and administrator participation in a conflict management strategies workshop affect their approach to handling conflict?</i>	Post-questionnaire both workshops  Overall workshop assessment  Individual interviews	Group discussion workshop two	Researcher’s journal and co-facilitators observational notes
<i>RQ3: What are the faculty and administrator perceptions of participating in a conflict management strategies workshop?</i>	Conflict management overall workshop assessment	Individual interviews of selected participants from the workshops	Transcribed videos and researcher’s journal

**Instruments**

*Pre-Questionnaire.* Prior to the workshops, a pre-questionnaire was used as an instrument to assess participants knowledge of conflict between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University. The primary focus of the pre-questionnaire was to: (1) evaluate the participants level of knowledge regarding conflict between faculty and administrators, (2) their level of involvement with conflict, (3) indirect vs. direct, (4) who the conflict occurred with a fellow faculty member or an

administrator, (5) how they handled the conflict, and (6) whether or not they were aware of any conflict management strategies. The pre-questionnaire guided the questions asked in the post-workshop surveys to measure overall impact.

*Post Workshop Surveys.* The researcher created post-workshop surveys (see Appendices G & I) that were administered after both workshops to measure and evaluate workshop effectiveness.

*Workshop Assessment.* A workshop assessment was used to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of every aspect of the conflict management strategies workshop. This included the participants completion of the pre-questionnaire, involvement in the group discussions and interactive conflict resolution games in both workshops, and post-group discussions (see Appendix J).

*Interviews.* An interview protocol guide (see Appendix M) was used as an instrument of inquiry as well as an instrument for conversation regarding workshop participation. The individual interviews were the last component of the intervention.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis included gathering all the quantitative data from the conflict management strategies workshop and using Qualtrics software program to analyze the data. The analyzed data was then exported to an Excel spreadsheet for easier reading and organization of the data. The qualitative data collected was transcribed via Sonix, an automated online transcription service, in which the researcher uploaded audio files of the workshops and interviews to Sonix and the service provided text-based documentation. The researcher transferred the text-based qualitative data from Sonix into Dedoose, another online research tool that assists in analyzing qualitative and

mixed methods data. Dedoose provided coded data in order for the researcher to examine the emergent themes regarding the effectiveness of workshop participation.

Coding is a central strategy used in inductive qualitative data analysis that helps distill units of meaning and then combine them in a new way into groups, categories, thus recreating participants' common experience with the studied phenomenon. Coding is a part of the data-segmenting process aiming to reduce large amounts of text-data into a system of hierarchically organized categories and themes based on similar types of information for identifying and presenting the findings (Ivankova, 2015).

Additionally, the researcher maintained observational notes throughout the evaluation phase to document the data collection process after the completion of each workshop, documented what the data analysis revealed at each step of the implemented workshops, and the researcher's thoughts were noted to reflect upon and maintain familiarity with the inner workings of the implemented study.

### **Action/Intervention**

An action plan is defined as a "framework or blueprint that is implemented to improve practice, conditions, or the environment in general. The purpose of an action plan is to "target information gleaned from the action research study findings in order to set goals and establish a plan for meeting the goals" (Craig, 2009 as cited by Ivankova, 2015).

The intervention is carried out (the "action" in action research) during which time, pertinent observations are collected in various forms. The new interventional strategies are carried out, and this cyclic process repeats, continuing until a sufficient



understanding of the problem is achieved (USCLibraries, 2021). The following steps were conducted to implement the intervention.

*Step One.* The researcher created a plan for action which included a timeline in which the implemented study was conducted. The timeline included the submission of the IRB application for approval of the study, workshop curriculum development, research design, plan for data collection and analysis, what would occur at each stage of the implemented study, and a report of the findings from the intervention. The IRB approved the action research study, with a new mode of workshop delivery via the online platform Zoom. The transition from face-to-face delivery of the intervention to online delivery was to adhere to the health and safety guidelines implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Step Two.* The researcher created pre-and post-questionnaires and a workshop assessment based on the research literature regarding how to conduct various types of training workshops, the researcher's knowledge of creating and hosting academic workshops, and the researcher's experience with academic assessments. The questionnaires and assessments were designed to measure and evaluate the participants knowledge of conflict and of conflict management strategies and effectiveness of the workshops. Additionally, these data sources were used as evaluation tools to provide evidence of change and direction of change in the intervention while collecting quantitative data. These questionnaires and assessments were uploaded to Qualtrics and distributed through the Qualtrics site.

*Step Three.* In the design of the workshop curriculum, the researcher chose to include interactive games as a method to engage the participants in fun, yet direct

activities that would motivate them to openly discuss situations of conflict in a safe environment and equip them to think and react to conflict differently. While there are several books on conflict resolution games to use in the workplace, the researcher utilized the reference guide, “The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games: Quick Effective Activities to Improve Communication, Trust and Collaboration” written by author and corporate trainer, Mary Scannell (2010), to incorporate conflict resolution games in both workshops.

The book was instrumental to the conflict management strategies workshops due to the conflict resolution games being able to, “reveal real conflict-along with emotions, personalities misunderstandings, and reactions. Through games, the team experiences conflict in a safe environment” (Scannell, 2010). From the book, the researcher selected conflict resolution games for the workshops based on: (1) the objectives of the game that would provide the most context from activity engagement, (2) the amount of people needed for the activity to ensure the break-out sessions included an equal number of participants, and (3) the time required to complete the conflict resolution game and answer post-discussion questions from the book which accompanied the activities.

The researcher chose three conflict resolution activities from the reference guide she felt would be the most beneficial; two were selected for small group activity/discussion for the first workshop and one activity for the second workshop to engage all ten participants in large group activity/discussion. It is important to be reminded these activities were initially supposed to be conducted in-person, however, the shift to conducting them online still proved to be effective.

The first activity selected from *The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games* (Scannell, 2010) was titled, “Anything Goes” (see Appendix E). This activity involved engaging the participants in a mini-conflict in order to practice the skills of dialogue and build consensus in a non-threatening manner. The purpose of the activity was to provide the essential difference between debate and dialogue in order to work towards shared understanding and strength and value in each other’s positions.

The second activity (see Appendix E) selected was titled, “Positive Spin”. This activity involved the participants changing their perspective on conflict in the workplace by considering the positive aspects of conflict. The challenge was to define conflict without using negative terms (Scannell, 2010).

The third activity selected was titled, “Check It Out” (see Appendix H). This activity required the participants to develop a step-by step process to resolving conflicts by using a check-list building guide included with the activity. The objective of the activity involved the buying-in of conflict resolution techniques and to develop a standard process by which to resolve conflict (Scannell, 2010).

All three activities were able to transition from being conducted in-person to online with relative ease. However, due to being online and not in-person, the online platform did not provide the researcher as observer with the opportunity to record and observe non-verbal communication between the participants. The researcher as an expert in observing body language due to her professional background and training, understands the value and oftentimes importance of non-verbal communication.

Therefore, when people are together in one room in-person, the detection of body language can play a key role to the researcher-observer. Non-verbal

communication can provide the researcher with additional clues into the participant's reactions and feelings about a situation they are discussing or an activity in which they are engaged. While the researcher could view faces, facial expressions and listen to the tonality in a participants' voice, the researcher missed the value of observing the totality of non-verbal communication, a component that an online platform does not provide. In addition to the games, the researcher included group discussions to take place before and after the conflict resolution games in order to provide the participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences with conflict and for the researcher to collect narrative based qualitative data for the implemented study.

*Step Four.* The researcher developed an outline of the research procedure (appendix M) to organize the workflow of the implemented study. This included the stages of the workshops, interviews and data collection and analysis processes. The outline additionally included times that needed to be devoted to each section of the workshops, questionnaires and assessment, and interviews. An agenda and a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix E) for the workshops were created and a scripted interview protocol guideline (see Appendix M) was constructed.

*Step Five.* The researcher's collaboration with the co-facilitator was an instrumental step in the carrying out the implemented study. The researcher met with the co-facilitator on numerous occasions throughout the process to discuss the implemented study which included workshop objectives, dates and times of the implemented study, selected conflict resolution activities, workshop agendas, their role as a co-facilitator and data collector. The co-facilitator additionally assisted in the selection of the participant pool in which to invite potential participants to engage in the

implemented study. As previously discussed, the potential participant pool was selected via purposeful sampling where forty faculty and administrators were identified based on the purposeful sampling criteria and invited to participate in the implemented study; ten officially agreed to participate.

*Step Six.* The researcher created a Zoom account in which to hold the workshops and in order to familiarize herself with the inner workings of Zoom, she spent a significant amount of time learning to navigate the online platform. Meetings with the co-facilitator via Zoom assisted in increasing the researcher's knowledge and skill with the communications program. Additionally, the researcher familiarized herself with all software used in the implemented study; Qualtrics, DeDoose, and Sonix.

*Step Seven.* With all the factors in place, including IRB approval, the researcher proceeded to implement the study. With the ten voluntary participants, a Zoom invitation was sent out to the participants the weeks of the first and second scheduled workshops. Informed consent forms were attached to all the Qualtrics links for the pre-questionnaire/post-questionnaire, workshops, and workshop assessment. (see Appendices B, D, G, I & J).

### **Quality Assurance**

The process of data analysis goes hand in hand with the process of assessing the quality of interpretations and making accurate inferences from the data. This process is often referred to as validation and implies assessing the rigor of the methodological procedures used in the study. Validation is an important aspect of the research process because it makes the knowledge claims from the study more powerful and more

representative of the problem under investigation (Koshy et al., 2011 as cited by Ivankova, 2015).

To ensure the validity, quality and legitimacy of this study, the following quality assurance measures were conducted; a thorough examination of the activities associated with the conflict management strategies workshop by the researcher and co-facilitator, regular inspections and reviews of the study by dissertation committee co-chairs, and the researcher's journal provided additional assurances through detailed description of methods, procedures and processes throughout the study. All data sources were stored in the secured office of the researcher which maintained privacy and prevented exposure of any confidential data. Pseudonyms and numbers were used to further protect the identities of the study participants.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues are present in any kind of research. The research process creates tension between the aims of research generalizations for the good of others, and the rights of participants to maintain privacy. Ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm. Harm can be prevented or reduced through the application of appropriate ethical principles. Thus, the protection of human subjects or participants in any research is imperative (Ord, Eisenhaur, & Wynaden, 2000).

Ethical issues were addressed at each stage of the implemented study. To ensure and maintain confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and identity protection of all study participants, the researcher employed the following steps: (1) all email correspondences were blind copied, (2) informed consent forms were presented and reviewed before the participants completed the questionnaires, engaged in the workshops, completed the

post-questionnaires/assessment and participated in the interviews, (3) all participants were assigned numbers and pseudonyms to protect their identities in all audio and written documentation, and (4) all participants were acknowledged by their numbers only in any discussions had during the implemented study.

The informed consent forms further addressed the measures used by the researcher to ensure confidentiality in this study. The researcher kept names and other identifying information private and confidential, used pseudonyms, removed any identifying information from transcripts and coded all data collected. Anyone not associated with the study would not know who provided the information or what the information contained.

Furthermore, the researcher asked the study participants to assist in maintaining the confidentiality of the action research study by not discussing the study or who the study participants were with anyone not associated with the research study. The study did not provide incentives and if any one of the participants wished to withdraw from any stage of the study at any given time, they could have without consequence. This ensured participants understood the study was completely voluntary and reduced the possibility of a participant feeling obligated or pressured to participate in the implemented study due to the role the researcher serves on campus as a faculty member and administrator.

Data was stored on the researcher's personal external hard drive, personal computer which remained locked and password protected, and a filing box with key-only access by the researcher. For additional safety and security of all confidential information collected in this manner, these items were stored in a locked filing cabinet

in the work office of the researcher. The researcher is the only occupant in her work office with key access-only to both the office and locked cabinet, and her work office is locked at all times. All data collected, electronic and hardcopies, will continue to be securely stored during the required period of five years after publication and submission of the final report of the data collected, as stated by the IRB guidelines. Upon completion of those five years, all data will be destroyed.

### **IRB Application Process**

The research was approved by the University of Kentucky's institutional review board and the researcher received permission by Morehead State University's institutional review board to utilize the campus as the research study site.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Introduction**

Few organizations have designed adequate structures, systems, processes, or cultures to encourage prevention in resolving disputes. As a result, conflicts become chronic and return to generate new problems. What is needed instead are conflict resolution structures, systems, processes and cultures that are designed to prevent and resolve all disputes within the organization and offer a rich array of diverse alternatives that motivate prevention and resolve disputes, and to learn from them (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011).

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to examine the effectiveness of a conflict management strategies workshop implemented as an intervention to managing conflict between faculty and administrators. This chapter will



discuss the acting phase of the study providing details of the implemented study, results from the evaluation phase of the study, recommendations for informed action, and reflections by the researcher in regard to the implications of the study's findings for organizational leadership and educational policy. Results of the data collected and analyzed will report on the effectiveness of the implemented conflict management strategies workshop. Recommendations provided will inform any future action the university could take in regards to managing conflict. And in conclusion, the researcher will provide her reflection of lessons learned as an organizational leader, participant-leader and participant-researcher.

### **Acting Phase**

After the planning phase, the next step in action research cycle is the 'acting' phase (Ivankova, 2015). The acting phase of the study took place from January to February 2021, over the course of three weeks, to conduct both workshops and interviews with selected participants. The workshops and interviews occurred one week after completion of each other. During this phase, the conflict management strategies workshop designed in the reconnaissance phase and developed in the planning phase was implemented in the acting phase, and the results evaluated in the evaluation phase. The purpose of the conflict management strategies workshop was to support the use of conflict management strategies to reduce the level of conflict between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University. Table 2 outlines the agenda and timeline of the intervention.

**Table 2- Conflict Management Strategies Timeline**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>January</b>	<p><b>Recruitment Procedure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment email</li> <li>• Obtained consent of subjects willing to participate in the study</li> <li>• Informed Consent form for Pre-questionnaire</li> </ul> <p><b>Workshop One Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction/Informed Consent Form for Workshop One</li> <li>• Workshop Overview, objectives, goals &amp; outcomes</li> <li>• Open Discussion</li> <li>• Break-Out Session (two interactive activities introduced)</li> <li>• Closing</li> <li>• Informed Consent Form for Post-Survey</li> <li>• Post-Survey Workshop One</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<p><b>Workshop Two Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction/Informed Consent Form for Workshop Two</li> <li>• Discussion about application of conflict management strategies from workshop one</li> <li>• Large group activity</li> <li>• Debriefing</li> <li>• Closing</li> <li>• Informed Consent Form Post-Survey</li> <li>• Post-Survey Workshop Two</li> <li>• Overall Workshop Assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed Consent Form Interviews</li> <li>• Interview Protocol Guide</li> </ul>

*Sample.* A total of ten participants were involved in the intervention. These participants represented faculty members at the ranks of assistant, associate and full

professors, associate deans, deans and chairs of departments and colleges from across various academic disciplines. Purposeful sampling was used as an instrument to collect data from the targeted demographic in this action research study. Table 3 provides a demographic representation of those participants who participated in the conflict management workshops by gender, years of service to the institution, ethnicity and professional designations.

**Table 3-Characteristics of Study Participants**

Demographic Parameters	N (%)
Gender	5
Male	5
Female	10
Total, n (%)	
Years of Service at MSU	
1 to 5 years	1
5 to 10 years	1
10 + years	8
Race/Ethnicity	
Caucasian	6
African-American	3
Hispanic	0
Other	1
Professional Designations	
Assistant Professor	1
Associate Professor	1
Full Professor	5
Administrator and/or Full Professor	3

## Results

### Evaluation Phase

*First stage of the study.* The ten participants in the study were asked to complete a pre-questionnaire (see Appendix C) which was generated and delivered via Qualtrics, an online survey system. The survey used dichotomous questions of yes, no

and maybe for responses. These questions were derived from the first research question, *how do faculty and administrators currently handle conflict?* The researcher collected the responses from the pre-questionnaire which resulted in all ten participants completing the survey.

Responses from the pre-questionnaire were extracted and imported into an Excel spreadsheet for easier reading and organization. The researcher also utilized Qualtrics for analyzing the data which provided an overall report of the findings. The pre-questionnaire did not collect any identifying information and all responses were anonymous. Overall, the pre-questionnaire revealed: (1) participants were aware of conflict on campus, (2) they were involved in conflict as both participants and observers, (3) most were familiar with some type of conflict management strategy to manage conflict, (4) some reported the conflict to an immediate supervisor or Human Resources, (5) some tried to avoid the conflict hoping it would go away, while others (6) addressed the conflict head-on and (7) all reported they were responsible for managing conflict on their own. In Table 4, the three most prominent responses from the pre-questionnaire addressed the first research question and addressed participants' knowledge of conflict management strategies.

**Table 4-Pre-Questionnaire Results-Conflict**

Field	Answer	%	Count
Have you experienced conflict at MSU within your academic unit?	Yes	100.00%	10
	No	0.0%	0
	Total	100%	10
Were you able to resolve the conflict?	Yes	50.00%	5
	Maybe	10.00%	1
	No	40.00%	4
	Total	100.00%	10
Are you familiar with any conflict Management strategies?	Yes	60.00%	6
	No	40.00%	4
	Total	100.00%	10

Overall, the results of the pre-questionnaire established most participants had been involved in a situation of conflict and they were in direct conflict with another faculty member or an administrator. In these situations of conflict, four out of the ten participants felt they were equipped to handle the conflict and four out of ten stated they were not equipped to handle the conflict, with two participants undecided on whether or not they felt equipped to handle conflict even as it arises.

While the above table 4 demonstrates participants prior knowledge of conflict management strategies, the pre-questionnaire revealed seven out of ten participants were not aware of the institution offering any conflict management strategies to assist in managing conflict while three were aware the institution offered strategies to manage conflict. In conclusion, the pre-questionnaire results showed all ten participants collectively expressed interest in participating in the conflict management strategies workshop conducted by the researcher.

**Second stage of the study.** The first workshop was conducted at the end of January 2021. The participants were sent a Zoom link invitation by the researcher. Once

all participants logged into the Zoom room, the workshop began with a brief welcome and introduction of the co-facilitator and myself. The PowerPoint created by the researcher to guide the workshop included a review of the informed consent form, brief background of the implemented study, agenda of the workshop, research overview/data, workshop objectives/learning goals, introduction of the conflict resolution games, and questions to guide an open discussion on conflict between faculty and administrators. To ensure the confidentiality and identity protection of all the participants in this study, in the first workshop before discussions began, the researcher assigned each participant with a number. Each participant changed their Zoom screen names to their numbers for easy recognition during discussions. Before speaking, each participant provided their number to further ensure anonymity in the discussions and in the convergence of the Zoom workshops from audio to transcripts only numbers would be in text.

Upon completion of the PowerPoint presentation reviewed, the researcher asked the co-facilitator to lead the group discussion regarding conflict in order for the researcher to move into the observational role and time-keeper for the 75-minute workshop. The group discussion lasted 25 minutes before the researcher broke the large group into two smaller groups for the breakout sessions. The researcher created two break-out rooms on Zoom and placed five participants in a group with the co-facilitator and five participants with the researcher. The time of each activity lasted 20 minutes and the researcher closely monitored the time to remain on schedule.

The first small group activity (appendix E) led by the co-facilitator titled, “Anything Goes”, engaged the participants in a mini-conflict in order to practice the skills of dialogue and build consensus in a non-threatening manner. The purpose of the

activity was to provide the essential difference between debate and dialogue in order to work towards shared understanding and strength and value in each other’s positions. The second activity (see Appendix E) led by the researcher titled, “Positive Spin” involved the participants changing their perspective on conflict in the workplace by considering the positive aspects of conflict. The challenge was to define conflict without using negative terms. (Scannell, 2010).

After completion of the first workshop, the researcher sent the participants a post-survey to complete. The post-survey (see Appendix F) provided the researcher with information regarding workshop participation. Table 5 presents the quantitative data collected and analyzed from participation in the first workshop.

**Table 5-Quantitative Data Analysis Results-Workshop One**

Field	Answer	%	Count
How beneficial do you think it is to have workshops like this offered to faculty and administrators?	Extremely Important	66.67%	6
	Very Important	22.22%	2
	Moderately Important	11.11%	1
	Slightly Important	0.00%	0
	Not at all important	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	9
How would you rate your experience in participating in the first conflict management workshop?	Poor	0.00%	0
	Fair	0.00%	0
	Good	55.56%	5
	Excellent	44.44	4
	Total	100.00%	9
Please rate the effectiveness of the interactive breakout sessions (5 being the highest)	5	55.56%	5
	4	44.44%	4
	3	0.00%	0
	2	0.00%	0
	1	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	9

*Qualitative data analysis workshop one.* The qualitative data collected and analyzed from the group discussions in the first workshop was additionally guided by the first research question; (1) *how do faculty and administrators currently handle conflict?* To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the researcher will use their assigned pseudonyms from this point forward. In an open discussion,

Rosalie (not real name) stated:

I look at the personality of the person, my history with the person, how I see that person and deal with conflict on other situations, maybe even conflict with me in the past. Then from there, I devise my strategy. I need to know the person in order to develop the tools or devise the tools in which I can deal with that problem.

Wanda (not real name) agreed with Rosalie and added:

I try to evaluate whether this is a personal conflict or a professional conflict first. If it's a conflict of personality or a professional conflict in judgement about what's going on in the workplace, I evaluate the two. I take time to assess other factors around the situation, get more information, if it's work-related gather policy or additional information from other people to make sure I have all the information I need to address whatever the conflict is.

King (not real name) provided:

In most cases, you have to really assess the level of conflict. Is it something that may take a minute or if it's something that was so egregious that I need to handle this right here, right now? So, for me it's a matter of being direct and in that moment, trying my best to listen and not necessarily express just



what's on my mind, but take into consideration the perspective of the other individual on the other side.

Olive (not real name) added to the discussion:

Some conflict is silent conflict and it's driven by one party not having all the information. Therefore, they don't have the tools to present a measured argument. So, if you don't have the tools and only one side of the conflict has the tools there's hardly any way for you to participate in the process of deflating that conflict.

Roger (not real name) concluded the discussion with, "I try to avoid conflict at all costs".

All ten participants agreed while everyone handles conflict differently, there were similarities in how they approached the conflict; either direct or indirect, evaluating personal versus professional, and time frame in which to process the situation of conflict in order to address it in the best way possible.

The qualitative data collected and analyzed from the post-questionnaire for workshop one resulted in the following: (1) when asked how they would describe their experience in the first conflict management strategies workshop eight out of the nine participants who took the survey found the workshop comfortable, positive, useful, well designed and described it as, "an enlightening experience", one participant rated their experience as "fair", while one participants response was not recorded; (2) when asked what they found most helpful in participating in the first workshop, nine out of the ten participants agreed discovery of ideas in how other people approach managing conflict allowed introspection and an appreciation of the open dialog and the leadership of the workshop was also mentioned as a helpful tool; and (3) when asked the most important

“take-away” they had from participating in the first workshop all nine participants stated the importance of viewing conflict in a positive light instead of always perceiving conflict as negative and one participant stated, “the ‘take away’ for me was that others have the same experience (regarding conflict) and would like to share and respond toward solutions”.

*Third stage of the study.* The second conflict management strategies workshop took place the following week after workshop one. In preparation for the second workshop, the researcher met with the co-facilitator a few days prior and discussed the agenda (see Appendix H). The researcher sent the participants the second Zoom invitation along with the group activity selected for the second workshop for advanced preparation. The allotted time frame for the second workshop was 45 minutes and included a brief welcome, reintroduction of the researcher and co-facilitator, a review of the informed consent form, a follow-up discussion regarding their participation in the first workshop and an introduction of the group activity. The researcher reminded the participants of their assigned numbers in place of names for confidentiality and anonymity in discussions and audio transcriptions converted to text-based documentation. In the large group discussion, the researcher pursued whether or not any changes occurred for the participants between the first and second workshop regarding conflict and conflict management.

Theo (not real name) opened the discussion with:

I had a couple of thoughts shortly after we met last time, I was thinking about it, actually a lot and I think a strategy that I need is to honestly, just get over myself. A lot of my problem comes from this sense of feeling like

there's been injustice, like someone's getting away with something, or how dare they? It's like you have to let that go and put the conflict in perspective. Ok, so someone was negative in a meeting, really? But in the moment of the negativity, it's tough to let things go. But then I watched my colleague in a meeting, turn a negative moment into a positive moment after a passive aggressive statement was made. And it was a great example for me to see how to handle myself in the future. So that's just one of the thoughts that I had since last time.

Dane (not real name) continued with the conversation to add:

I think one of the interesting things I was trying to address after we met last is that we came to agree there is a total lack of a universal standard or a strategy that could be applied to every type of complex situation of conflict. If we thought about using a compositional approach, now all of a sudden, I feel like I'm part of a universal system to managing conflict. I wondered if having activities like this could help us (faculty and administrators) develop a checklist to managing conflict. But at what level (faculty, administrative, institution) do we have to think about a comprehensive checklist to recognize conflict as big or small and how to manage it from there.

King (not real name) stated almost in unison with Dane:

Since our last workshop, I started thinking about conflict at the macro level, organizational level and the value that's put-on conflict management and resolution at the organizational level. And so, I thought about this

[research workshop] happening and kind of your concept of this happening. Organizationally from top down and providing this [workshop] as a professional development as a way to reduce conflict and to resolve conflict. I'm not sure where I landed in the thought, but it was the thought about the power that those at the top have in making the decision to offer this kind of institutional approach to conflict resolution and management. And if, in fact, that it is wanted. Because there is power in allowing that conflict to continue at lower levels, because as long as that is happening, there is less transparency and understanding. There is less ability for those at other levels to come together. So that's kind of where I landed, that kind of a more macro approach and a power decision.

The open group discussion took place for 10 minutes and was followed by the group activity titled, "Check It Out" (see Appendix H). The activity was pulled from the same reference guide, "The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games: Quick Effective Activities to Improve Communication, Trust and Collaboration" by Mary Scannell. The activity required the participants to develop a step-by step process to resolving conflicts by using a check-list building guide included with the activity. The objective of the activity was the buy-in of conflict resolution techniques and to develop a standard process by which to resolve conflict (Scannell, 2010). Each participant developed this checklist prior to the second workshop and shared their step-by-step process of resolving conflict.

King (not real name) stated:

The first thing that I had listed was 'pause'. Take a second to think and just pause. Take a deep breath in. Have that moment to just take a breath before beginning to process what steps to take next in resolving the conflict.

Identify what the actual issue is and then ask myself, do I care enough to address it? Is it worth it? That's a question that I have. That's how I go through it. Do I care? If so, attack it head on and address it and have a conversation to be able to hear both sides. The next one is to listen, because for me, listening is something that I don't do well a lot of times, but once I listen, I get it. Then my last one is to figure out a resolution moving forward.

Poppy (not real name) added:

For me, the steps I take is if it's not clear what the conflict is, I would try to narrow it down to maybe two or three key issues so that everyone is clear on what the conflict is. And then perhaps have each person take the other persons perspective to see what that other person might be thinking about that.

Theo (not real name) continued to add:

My first step is to pause, to take a breath, I have to tell myself to stay calm. Don't let your temper reaction deescalate it, which is part of listen and then state the opposite of what you need to address in a calm, respectful way, to be calmer and more respectful, more logical and reasonable you sound. It keeps it from escalating and it might be navigated. It might not, but you won't de-escalate it.

Wanda (not real name) replied with:

I would say to just attack the issue head on and decide when is and what is the best way to address this and plan to do that. I also ask myself what is the best setting to address this, it may not be in front of everyone at that at that time, it may be that I have to wait until the opportunity to take someone aside or wait till we're alone to have that conversation. Or if I know that we are going to be in another setting to say, hey, this happened can we talk about this and give them that opportunity. Because some people aren't willing to have that conversation, but it at least invites them to the conversation in a kind of way. So, I think you've got to establish pretty early on, like in a group setting, that you're there trying to seek a resolution of some kind. It may not be a one-time thing. It may be a several time type of thing. And the solution may not be what everyone wants, but it may be a solution.

Olive (not real name) stated:

I appreciate all of the information that the other participants shared because it helped me look at this more as how do you approach the problem rather than how do you solve the problem? One of the things that I think held me back in this activity is that I know that there are different styles and types of supervision. By that I mean, using different types and styles of supervision to manage conflict rather than looking at conflict management itself. So, there are things like directive styles of supervision where you just have to get this done and somebody needs to hear it and I'm going to direct

you to have to do that. There are collaborative ways to go about supervision. There are some that are non-directive. There are some that are consultative. So, I really had some difficult times with just looking at the process of conflict management itself.

Ramsey provided the following steps in their process which many participants seemed to relate:

First, I lower my voice in order to respond calmly. I recite their point of view back for clarity then end the conversation. I ask to set a time to continue the discussion (with moderator if necessary) then I do some research on the matter. I restart the conversation at a later date where both parties have had time to process and digest. In the resumed conversation, I clearly state both perspectives and compare with regard to policy, if applicable. I then conclude with thanking the person for being open to different perspectives and being open to my perspective.

Debriefing of the activity ended with final comments by the researcher and co-facilitator.

A post-questionnaire regarding participation in the second workshop and an overall workshop assessment, regarding participation in components of the research study which included the surveys and the workshops, were sent via Qualtrics. The co-facilitator and researcher debriefed after the second workshop. The co-facilitator shared their observational notes and assisted the researcher in selecting a few participants from the workshops in which to conduct individual interviews. The quantitative results of the

second post-questionnaire are provided in Table 6. Seven out of the ten participants responded.

**Table 6-** *Quantitative Data Analysis Results-Workshop Two*

Field	Answer	%	Count
How would you rate your experience in participating in the second conflict management workshop?	Poor	0.00%	0
	Fair	0.00%	0
	Good	28.57%	2
	Excellent	71.43%	5
	Total	100.00%	7
Please rate the effectiveness of the second conflict management workshop? (5 being the highest)	5	71.43%	5
	4	14.29%	1
	3	14.29%	1
	2	0.00%	0
	1	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	7

***Qualitative data analysis workshop two.*** The qualitative data collected and analyzed from the second workshop revealed the following: (1) participants in the second workshop found context of material, sharing with others in a safe environment, and relating to the experience of others to be most helpful, (2) the ‘take-away’ from the second workshop all participants stated the importance of pausing before responding and having a plan to approach the conflict and (3) the overall experience of participating in the second workshop was rated as good to excellent with ‘very helpful’ as an underlying theme.

***Fourth stage of the study.*** The overall workshop assessment collected and analyzed data in regards to the participants perceptions to participating in the implemented study. The assessment responded to research questions two and three: (2) *How will faculty and administrator participation in a conflict management strategies*



*workshop affect their approach to handling conflict? (3) What are the faculty and administrator perceptions of participating in a conflict management strategies workshop?* The assessment measured the attitudes of the faculty and administrators upon completion of the pre-questionnaire, workshop one and post-questionnaire for workshop one, and workshop two and post-questionnaire for workshop two.

***Quantitative data analysis workshop assessment.*** The quantitative findings from the overall workshop assessment in the evaluation phase, yielded the following results: (1) seven out of ten participants felt the content was important and valuable, (2) six out ten participants stated their expectation of receiving knowledge about managing situations of conflict were met while one participant remained neutral on this question, and (3) six participants stated their overall expectation for the workshop was fulfilled while one felt it did not. Three participants did not complete the overall workshop assessment.

***Qualitative data analysis workshop assessment.*** The qualitative data collected and analyzed from the workshop assessment involved the participants responding to the following questions at the end of the assessment: (1) *What did you like about the conflict management strategies workshop?* (2) *What did you dislike about the conflict management strategies workshop?* and (3) *Would you participate in another conflict management strategies workshop?* All of the participants stated they liked the workshops and would participate again if the opportunity arose.

***Participant Interviews.*** Additional qualitative data collected and analyzed in the evaluation phase involved interviews of four participants from the implemented study which provided additional information regarding workshop effectiveness.

*Fifth stage of the study.* After the first and second conflict management strategies workshops concluded, the researcher contacted four participants from the workshops to be interviewed as the final stage of the implemented study. The interview participants were selected based on the use of maximal variation sampling, “purposefully selecting individuals that differ on some demographic or other characteristic (e.g., age, gender, education, work experience, role in the community, etc.” (Ivankova, 2015). Once the participants selected agreed to the interview, the researcher scheduled Zoom meetings with each participant and an interview protocol guide (appendix L) was used to conduct each 30-minute interview. The qualitative data from the Zoom interviews were transcribed via Sonix, an online transcription service and collected and analyzed via Dedoose, an online software program used to analyze qualitative data.

In the interview with the four participants, the researcher asked five questions from the interview protocol guide which included the following:

1. Are you better prepared to manage conflict now after attending the workshop? Why or why not?
2. Was the workshop beneficial? If so, in what ways. If not, why not?
3. Do you intend to apply any of the conflict management strategies obtained from the workshop? If so, which one(s). If not, why not?
4. What, if any, changes would you make to the content or delivery of the workshop to make it more impactful for participants?
5. Do you think a conflict management strategies workshop is beneficial as a training tool for faculty on our campus?

To ensure the confidentiality of the participants in the interviews, the researcher will continue to use their assigned pseudonyms. When responding to the first question Roger (not real name) stated,

Having heard from others and working through the activities, I am not afraid of it [conflict] as I once was. I'm confident now that in the heat of the moment, I can handle conflict. While I do not deal with much conflict, I do feel I am better prepared if it were to ever come to the surface at some point in time.

while participant King (not real name) stated,

I've always had an approach, but not necessarily a detailed approach to conflict. It was more so in a general sense. But now I think about conflict management a little differently since I've had the workshop. Now, what that looks like, I don't know. It's more so that thought of being more direct about managing conflict. But I never thought about it or even considered what an approach may look like until participating in these workshops.

All four participants agreed the workshops were 'very' beneficial and intended to apply some of the conflict management strategies learned in the workshops.

Wanda (not real name) as an administrator in response to question number five, do you think a conflict management strategies workshop is a beneficial training tool for faculty on our campus, in which she responded,

I see a lot of value in this kind of work with us at the institution, because I think there's been a lot of conflict in the last several years. And that would help clear some of those channels.

Rosalie (not real name), a long-time faculty member of 20-plus years added to the same question,

I've had those situations of conflict and I've had them with colleagues. I've had them inside the college, outside the college with administrators in my college, with administrators at the university level. And I've had to go to H.R. The big conflict resolution at MSU...somebody leaves. The institution needs some type of conflict resolution whether it's a conflict management strategies workshop or even an Ombuds Office.

*Qualitative data analysis interviews.* The results of the qualitative analysis from the interviews revealed participants enjoyed the workshop and were better able to assess their own approaches to conflict after participating in the exercises and group discussions. The interviewees responded positively to the work done in the workshops while maintaining an understanding in order to manage conflict more has to be done on their part collectively with the support of the institution. All four faculty and administrators agreed they would like to see the university invest in more conflict management strategies beyond the offerings available from the Office of Human Resources. It was mentioned on several occasions the value and necessity of managing conflict, being able to participate in workshops to assist in conflict management, and the institution recognizing conflict is a real issue on campus that needs to be seriously addressed. Three out of the four interviewees were currently experiencing situations of conflict and stated while the workshops indeed helped to view conflict differently, they still wanted and needed more support from the university to deal with the conflict informally.

The majority of those interviewed expressed conflict management could be provided in other forms informally, but again all four interviewees stated with urgency there is a necessity on the campus of Morehead State University to address the conflict that exists at every level between faculty and administrators.

### **Summary of Results**

To summarize the results of the qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed, the implemented conflict management strategies workshop appeared to be an effective approach to managing conflict. The data analyzed indicated (1) conflict between faculty and administrators is a problem acknowledged and experienced by many participants, (2) the faculty and administrators who participated in the research study recognized and acknowledged the institution does not provide the necessary tools to manage conflict outside of formal reporting with the Office of Human Resources, (3) the participants expressed the desire for alternative methods for managing conflict suggesting a professional development similar to the implemented study as a possibility, and (4) the conflict management strategies workshop proved useful for a majority of the participants and substantiated the development and design of the implemented study.

Furthermore, it is important to note some repeated themes emerged from the analyzed data regarding the participants perceptions of the types of conflict they believe exists on Morehead State University's campus. These themes included: (1) Hierarchical conflict (feelings of superiority between classifications of tenured faculty and administrators such as assistant vs. associate professors, associate vs. full professors, Chairs vs. Associate Deans and Associate Deans vs. Deans, etc.), (2) Gender conflict (male vs. female), (3) Race/ethnicity conflict, (4) cultural conflict (where someone is

from such as differing areas of rural Kentucky vs. urban Kentucky, different countries US vs. outside of the US and even southern states vs. northern states) and (5) Lack of trust in the institution.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher will discuss her recommendations based on the results of the qualitative data collected and analyzed from the implemented study. Additionally, based on the results of the action research study, the researcher will provide implications and a discussion in regards to educational policy, organizational leadership, and future use of conflict management strategies to manage conflict between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University.

Conflicts are nearly always embedded: although the primary location may be at one level, issues at other levels will be reflected. Nevertheless, what strategies can we consider because the needs and issues are different and therefore, strategies will vary. It is important to recognize that there may be several intervention possibilities, so it is necessary to evaluate the pros and cons of each one to determine what is likely to be the most workable and durable intervention (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

The researcher chose a conflict management strategies workshop as the ‘workable and durable’ intervention in this case. Based on the results of the data collected and analyzed, the findings indicated a conflict management strategies workshop proved useful and helped participants to think about their approach to conflict differently. Based on the results of the study, there is value in the continuation of a conflict management strategies workshop to equip faculty and administrators with the tools necessary to manage conflict informally.

Therefore, it is recommended the institution consider offering a conflict management strategies workshop, as an approach to assisting faculty and administrators with methods to managing conflict. The format of a conflict management strategies workshop does not have to correspond to the researcher's approach however, it is implied one is needed.

Conflict managed effectively can result in a comprehensive solution to the difficulty, improve and strengthen relationship with colleagues, and contribute to the professional development of those who learn from the experience (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

The results of the action research study demonstrated the need for situations of conflict to be addressed by the institution with a universal approach to managing conflict by faculty and administrators and should be reflected in organizational leadership practices and educational policies.

For example, as possible conflict prevention, it generally helps for members of a department to make a list of anticipated conflicts and how they should be resolved. Such a statement can be included as a policy statement for the departmental handbook. Then when the particular problem surfaces, there is an objective documented that everyone has developed, and to which all have agreed, that can be used to solve the problem (Cheldelin & Lucas, 2004).

Therefore, it is recommended that the university address conflict and conflict management by providing clear policies and procedures to manage conflict informally in operational and personnel policies.

Based on the results of the action research study, evidence was clear in providing a consensus that some form of a conflict resolution at this institution is needed outside of the formal provisions offered by the Office of Human Resources. Therefore, it is recommended if a conflict management strategies workshop is not the approach utilized by the university, that some form of conflict management is put into place to address situations of conflict with informal approaches in conjunction with formal ones. Furthermore, it is recommended that the university invest in conflict management training or hire a conflict resolution company that can offer professional development seminars and training in conflict management, or invest in an internal or external Ombudsman to serve the university as a designated person to assist in the management and resolution of conflict between faculty and administrators.

### **Study Implications**

The implications of this action research study include what the researcher learned from the findings that directly affects Morehead State University which indicate the following: (1) conflict management alternatives are needed at the institution, (2) faculty and administrators need assistance, outside of their own devices, with managing conflict, (3) faculty and administrators are frustrated with managing conflict on their own which has led to a sense of loss of hope in dealing with conflict by themselves, (4) conflict by the institution goes unnoticed which has created pockets of animosity amongst faculty members and administrators, and (5) formal grievances and legal actions have been taken by faculty due to chronic situations of conflict poorly dealt with by the institution.

The study's implications further outline the conflict that exists between faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University is significantly affecting



their personal well-being and professional work ethic due to the levels of frustration expressed and experienced in dealing with ongoing conflict and the absence of organizational leadership and institutional support in managing conflict. According to the findings of the study, there is a need for a change in organizational leadership practices in regards to managing conflict between faculty and administrators. The implications of the findings demonstrate those in supervisory roles, i.e., chairs, associate deans, deans, cannot afford to ignore or avoid the conflict. Instead, individuals in these roles should be assisting their faculty in how to manage conflict and supporting them until a resolution has been commenced.

The implications of the study's findings additionally demonstrate conflict between faculty and administrators is costing the university. People have left the institution due to unresolved conflicts; people are no longer willing to serve in certain capacities within the university to avoid working with someone they are in conflict with; people are not confident in the institutions ability to resolve conflict; and people are unwilling to report conflict for fear of retaliation or job loss. Masters and Albright (2002) identify three types of cost organizations incur because of conflict: direct, indirect and opportunity costs. A chart of these organizational costs is demonstrated in Table 7.

**Table 7-Costs of Workplace Conflict (Masters & Albright, 2002)**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
<b>Direct Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labor-Time and Compensation</li><li>• Overhead</li><li>• Litigation Settlements</li><li>• Replacement</li><li>• Workers Compensation</li><li>• Health Care</li><li>• Security</li></ul>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality Defects</li><li>• Lost Productivity</li><li>• Lost Revenue</li><li>• Compensation Premium</li><li>• Excess Capacity</li></ul>
<b>Opportunity Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Missed Opportunities</li></ul>

Conflict between faculty and administrators, according to the findings of the study, is also affecting educational policy. The institution is responsible for setting the parameters to which it governs and how it operates. The absence of addressing how faculty and administrators should manage conflict, outside of formal reporting to the Office of Human Resources, effects the way in which faculty and administrators teach, lead and serve the university. Conflict between faculty and administrators, as key stakeholders in the institution, educationally can cause serious alterations in the growth and development of the institution.

### **Reflections**

*Participant-Leader/Participant-Researcher.* As an organizational leader who additionally assumed the role of participant-leader and participant-researcher, leading this mixed methods action research study provided context of the study from different

perspectives. As a participant leader, the researcher was able to empathize with those participants in the study due to her own experience with conflict and was overwhelmed by the similarities shared. It truly validated the reasons the researcher identified conflict as an issue and the interest in conducting this particular study. There was significant value in this study that allowed all involved to gain insight into our own approach to conflict. Working through the conflict management strategies workshops and sharing experiences demonstrated a need to discuss the issue of conflict by many. Discussing conflict in small pockets versus discussing conflict in a group with like-minded individuals from across campus, confirmed conflict on campus is not only a real issue but one that many are exhausted in dealing with.

The researcher learned, while various strategies of conflict resolution exist, this study proved useful as an effective approach to managing conflict between faculty and administrators and conflict management strategies workshops are widely used by professional conflict resolution companies. While not one factor can pinpoint the cause of conflict between faculty and administrators on Morehead State University's campus, this study demonstrated a need for conflict resolution sooner rather than later. The researcher recognizes as a participant-researcher the study may not have fully addressed every aspect of organizational conflict or other conflict management strategies offered in the literary research, but it did address the problem of practice examined through the guided research questions.

The researcher's observational notes indicated while the workshop seemed to be an effective method to provide conflict management strategies for faculty and administrators and it satisfied the objective of the action research study, even if not every

participant perceived the workshop to be of value. The researcher did state to the participants the conflict management strategies workshop was designed to be a moderated version for the purposes of a research study. Therefore, the researcher appreciated the value in receiving both positive and negative feedback to truly assess the workshops effectiveness. The research study addressed the issue of conflict between faculty and administrators, sought to provide an intervention, and reported on the results of the study. While the research study provided evidence that conflict exists on the campus of Morehead State University between faculty and administrators as an issue that needs to be addressed, the research study also emphasized the need for the institution to recognize conflict between faculty and administrators as an issue in order to provide methods to manage conflict.

***Leading Organizational Change/Leadership.*** This study could not have been effective without the support of the co-facilitator and the openness of the participants in discussing conflict and their experiences in dealing with conflict. The researcher recognizes for many, this may have been difficult to do, but they all did it with bravery. The participants recognize a change is needed in the institution regarding conflict and conflict management, therefore the researcher believes the participants were willing to have open and honest discussions about conflict in order to incite and express their vision for change. As a faculty member, I understand and as an administrator I am committed to being a voice for that change. These were the effects of the study, it allowed those of us who participated to be a change agent within the organization.

***Conducting Action Research.*** This action research study was enlightening on many levels for the researcher. It provided an opportunity to conduct the study from a

researcher's perspective and apply a mixed methods approach used by researchers in various fields. In this educational research, the use of a mixed methods approach allowed an expansion of knowledge and understanding the researcher may not have gained by solely using qualitative or quantitative research to conduct the study. This action research study, while challenging, provided an opportunity to learn new aspects of the context studied and a discovery of myself as a researcher. While this study has concluded by meeting the requirements of the researcher's dissertation, there is an opportunity for the researcher to continue her efforts in developing a conflict management strategies program to support other faculty and administrators in their efforts to find approaches to managing and resolving conflict.

***Conclusion.*** In conclusion, the researcher learned there are vast opportunities to assist faculty and administrators with managing and resolving conflict. The field of conflict management is ever evolving as institutions of higher education are acknowledging conflict as an issue and finding various ways to address the issue. The researcher's hope is that faculty and administrators in all higher educational institutions can become more confident and better equipped to manage conflict and that colleges and universities can become more efficient in managing conflict in order to avoid the costs conflict can cause an organization.

Conflict management should instill in all members of the academic community a greater sense of self-fulfillment and a stronger commitment to the college. Conflict which generates better approaches through study can produce a healthy organizational climate and a more effective teaching-learning environment (Feltner & Goodsell, 1972).

## APPENDIX A

### RECRUITMENT EMAIL-ACTION RESEARCH STUDY



The University of Kentucky

Dear Morehead State University Faculty Member,

Hello, I am Natasha Davis and I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Kentucky as well as Assistant Dean of Caudill College Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Associate Professor of Dance at Morehead State University. I am conducting an action research study regarding faculty conflict in institutions of higher education and how to equip faculty with conflict management strategies for managing conflict in the workplace. I am seeking to recruit faculty who may have experience in dealing with situations of conflict at Morehead State University. This email serves as a request for your participation in this research study that has been reviewed and approved by The University of Kentucky's Institutional Review Board.

Participation in this study would include participation in all of the following activities:

- Taking a pre-survey about your experience with situations of conflict (approximately 5 minutes)
- Engaging in two conflict management workshops where participants learn about and practice applying conflict management strategies (approximately 75 minutes for the first workshop and 45 minutes for the second)
- Completing two post-workshop surveys (approximately 5 minutes for each one)
- Completing an overall workshop assessment survey (approximately 5 minutes) and
- if selected, completing a 30-minute interview.

In total, participation in this study would take approximately 2.3 hours of your time if you are not selected for an interview and 2.8 hours if you are selected for an interview. The workshops and interview will be conducted online via Zoom and the surveys will be emailed to you via the online platform Qualtrics.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary for research purposes only. In order to obtain the maximum amount of data, it is necessary for full participation in every area of the study. However, please know there are no consequences for choosing not to participate at all or withdrawing from the study at any given time during the process. The study workshops will be conducted via Zoom which will be audio/video recorded.

To preserve confidentiality, please know the privacy of all participants will be maintained and data will be de-identified and aggregated before findings are shared. All data collected will be kept secure, confidential and password protected. The benefits of participation in this research study include; being part of a study that will help identify opportunities to enhance conflict management skills in the workplace. No compensation is being offered for participation in this study.

Any additional questions regarding this research study can be directed to me, Natasha Davis at 606-783-2167 or [nda228@g.uky.edu](mailto:nda228@g.uky.edu) and/or to my faculty advisor Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

Please respond to this email if you are interested in participating in this study. Once I have received your response that you are willing to participate, I will email the pre-survey to you for completion and ask for your best availability during the weeks of January 25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in which to schedule the workshops.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Natasha Davis  
Doctoral Candidate, University of Kentucky  
Assistant Dean, Caudill College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM-PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE



#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### KEY INFORMATION FOR **PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETION**

We are asking you to choose whether or not to complete a pre-questionnaire. We are asking you because you are a key informant who may hold a wealth of knowledge in regards to conflict within departments on the campus of Morehead State University. If you choose to participate, your participation will provide the information needed to assist the researcher in this study. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate in this section of the study. Detailed information is included after this page. Ask the researcher questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

#### **WHAT IS THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

A pre-questionnaire is about responding to questions to learn faculty's experience with situations of conflict on the campus of Morehead State University, how they manage conflict, and what, if any, conflict management strategies faculty use to address situations of conflict. The pre-questionnaire will be emailed to participants via a survey site. Time completion for the pre-questionnaire is approximately 5 minutes.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in pre-questionnaire completion is to provide the researcher with the necessary data for this research study. It will additionally provide you with an opportunity to address situations of conflict and valuable information regarding your own methods of conflict management strategies. This pre-questionnaire is a learning tool for both the researcher and participants.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE?**

You may not want to participate in this portion of the pre-questionnaire if you do not feel comfortable with being asked questions regarding the subject matter of conflict in the workplace.

#### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE?**

Yes. The pre-questionnaire is a valuable measuring tool to informing this study. If you decide to take part in completing the pre-questionnaire, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

Additionally, you are free to skip any question you do not want to answer.

### **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral candidate who is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this research study or you want to withdraw from the study please contact them at the following; Natasha Davis at 336-512-9227 or [nda228@g.uky.edu](mailto:nda228@g.uky.edu) and Dr. Beth Rous at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

## **DETAILED CONSENT:**

### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE?**

You would not qualify to participate in taking the pre-questionnaire if you are not currently a full-time faculty member serving at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor, an administrator (Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean) at Morehead State University, or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources at Morehead State University. Nor would you qualify if you are under the age of 18.

### **WHERE WILL THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

The pre-questionnaire will be administered online via a survey site and can be completed on any device with a web browser and internet access. The amount of time you will need to complete the pre-questionnaire is approximately 5 minutes.

### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

Participants will be asked to complete a pre-questionnaire form.



### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

This pre-questionnaire is considered low risk, however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in the pre-questionnaire.

### **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to complete the pre-questionnaire, there are no other choices except not to take part in the completion of the survey.

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the pre-questionnaire.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential. In order to maximize the protection of all participants identities while maintaining the value and integrity of the data in this study, as the researcher I will use pseudonyms, remove identifying information from transcripts and all data will be coded.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive locked in a safe and secure portable storage box to protect confidentiality of data, including computer records, audio/video recordings, researcher's journal, jump drives, and portable storage devices.

You should know that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people because this is my research project towards completion of my Doctorate in Educational Leadership. For example, the law may require us to share your information with:

- the University of Kentucky and my doctoral committee who may look at or copy pertinent portions of records that identify you.

***Online data-collection applies to this study:*** We will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

### **CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE EARLY?**

You can choose to leave any aspect of the study, including the pre-questionnaire, at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the pre-questionnaire.

If you choose to leave the study early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The investigator conducting the pre-questionnaire may need to remove you from the pre-questionnaire. This may occur for a number of reasons. You may be removed from the pre-questionnaire if:

- you are not able to follow the directions,
- if the researcher finds that your participation in the pre-questionnaire is more risk than benefit to you.

### **WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the pre-questionnaire.

### **WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership.

If you decide to participate and complete the pre-questionnaire, please know participants will not be identified by names in order to maximize confidentiality of research participation. I will be the only one with access to this data.

### **WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?**

All identifiable information (e.g., your name and email address) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal of all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

This consent includes the following:

- Key Information Page
- Detailed Consent
- All participants will receive a copy of this consent form.

**By clicking, 'I AGREE' below, you agree that you have read the information provided above and are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research study. If you do not agree, please close this web browser.**

- I AGREE**

## APPENDIX C

### PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

How long have you been employed at Morehead State University?

- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10+ years

Have you experienced conflict at MSU within your academic unit?

- Yes
- No

If yes to above question, please indicate if you had direct involvement with the conflict or if the conflict was observed in your presence, or you experienced both.

- Direct involvement
- Observed
- Both

If the conflict involved you, with whom were you in conflict with?

- another faculty member/colleague in your dept.
- another faculty member/colleague outside of your dept.
- an administrator (either in or outside your dept.)
- a staff member

Were you able to resolve the conflict?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Do you feel you are equipped to handle conflict as it arises?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Did you use any conflict management strategies to assist with resolving the conflict?

- Yes
- No

Was the conflict reported to your immediate supervisor or to Human Resources?

- Yes
- No

If yes to above question, to your knowledge or satisfaction, was the conflict resolved?

- Yes
- No

If the conflict was resolved, who resolved the conflict?

- Myself
- With the assistance of my immediate supervisor
- With the assistance of Human Resources

Do you feel faculty and administrators at MSU are able to manage situations of conflict?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Do you feel there is a need for conflict management training to assist faculty and administrators in successfully managing situations of conflict?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Are you familiar with any conflict management strategies?

- Yes
- No

Are you aware of any conflict management strategies to assist with managing situations of conflict within this organization?

- Yes
- No

Would you be interested in attending a workshop about conflict management strategies?

- Yes
- No

If yes to above question, a workshop is being offered by Natasha Davis as a part of a research study regarding situations of conflict within institutions of higher education. Participation is strictly voluntary, there are no incentives. Would you be willing to participate?

- Yes
- No

If no to above question, please provide feedback on why you would not want to participate in a conflict strategies management workshop.

## APPENDIX D

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM-CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WORKSHOP



#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### KEY INFORMATION FOR **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WORKSHOPS**

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer to participate in two conflict management strategies workshops. We are asking you because you are a key informant who may hold a wealth of knowledge in regards to conflict within academic departments on the campus of Morehead State University. If you choose to participate in these workshops, your participation will provide the information needed to test the effectiveness of an intervention to the problem which is conflict. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate. We have included detailed information after this page. Ask the researcher questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of this study is below.

#### **WHAT ARE THE WORKSHOPS ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

Through a series of group discussions and activities, the conflict management strategies workshops are about equipping faculty and administrators with the tools needed to manage situations of conflict in the workplace. Your participation in this portion of the research study will last 75 minutes for workshop one and 45 minutes for workshop two.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THESE WORKSHOPS?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in the workshops is to improve upon the way in which conflicts are handled within the departments between faculty to faculty and between faculty and administrators.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THESE WORKSHOPS?**

You may not want to participate in the workshops if you do not feel comfortable with discussing the subject matter of conflict in the workplace and/or you do not want to be audio/video recorded. All audio/video recordings will be deleted once they are no longer needed for the research study. Under Detailed Consent, further information regarding privacy protection and confidentiality in the study is outlined.

### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE WORKSHOPS?**

Yes. Taking part in the workshops is the foundation of the study and is essential for data collection. If you decide to take part in the workshops, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

All activities included in the workshops are completely voluntary. If there is any activity, discussion questions, or topics you wish to skip you may do so at any given time.

### **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral candidate who is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this research study or you want to withdraw from the study please contact them at the following; Natasha Davis at 336-512-9227 or [nda228@g.uky.edu](mailto:nda228@g.uky.edu) and Dr. Beth Rous at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

## **DETAILED CONSENT:**

### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THESE WORKSHOPS?**

You would not qualify to participate in the workshops if you are not currently a full-time faculty member serving at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor, an administrator (Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean) at Morehead State University, or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources at Morehead State University. Nor would you qualify if you are under the age of 18.

### **WHERE WILL THE WORKSHOPS TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

The workshops will be conducted via the online resource, Zoom. You will need to come two times during the study. The first workshop is 75 minutes, and the second workshop is 45 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this portion of the study is 120 minutes. These sessions will take place back-to-back within a week's time (ex. workshop one on a Monday and workshop two on a Tuesday or workshop one on a Wednesday and workshop two on a Thursday, etc. of the same week).

## **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

In the first workshop, participants will be asked to:

- Engage in discussions regarding your experiences with conflict in the workplace
- Participate in an interactive group activity applying conflict management strategies
- Discuss the interactive group activity at large
- Complete a post-workshop survey

In the second workshop, participants will be asked to:

- Engage in a discussion of the first workshop as a follow up session
- Participate in an interactive group activity
- Complete a post-workshop survey

In order to maximize the group activities, both workshops will include up to 10 other individuals as participants.

## **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

The workshops are considered low risk, however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

## **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOPS?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in the workshops.

## **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE WORKSHOPS ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to participate in the workshops, there are no other choices except not to take part in the workshops.

## **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the workshops.



## **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential. In order to maximize the protection of all participants identities while maintaining the value and integrity of the data in this study, as the researcher I will use pseudonyms, remove identifying information from transcripts and all data will be coded.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive locked in a safe and secure portable storage box to protect confidentiality of data, including computer records, audio/video recordings, researcher's journal, jump drives, and portable storage devices.

We will keep confidential all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court, or tell authorities if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Additionally, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

***Online data-collection applies to this study therefore***, we will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

Please note that the confidentiality of information disclosed to other subjects in group activities or discussions cannot be guaranteed.

## **CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WORKSHOPS EARLY?**

You can choose to leave the workshops at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

If you choose to leave the workshops early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The investigator conducting the workshops may need to remove you from the workshops. This may occur for a number of reasons. You may be removed from the workshops if:

- you are not able to follow the directions,
- if the researcher finds that your participation in the study is more risk than benefit to you

## **WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOPS?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the workshops.

## **WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership.

If you decide to participate in the workshops, please know participants will not be identified by names in order to maximize confidentiality of research participation. I will be the only one with access to this data.

### **WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?**

All identifiable information (e.g., your name and email address) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal of all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.


**This consent includes the following:**

- **Key Information Page**
- **Detailed Consent**
- **All participants will receive a copy of this consent form.**

## APPENDIX E

# WORKSHOP ONE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

## Informed Consent

 Consent to Participate in a Research Study

**KEY INFORMATION FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WORKSHOPS**

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer to participate in two conflict management strategies workshops. We are asking you because you are a key informant who may hold a wealth of knowledge in regards to conflict within academic departments on the campus of Morehead State University. If you choose to participate in these workshops, your participation will provide the information needed to test the effectiveness of an intervention to the problem which is conflict. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate. We have included detailed information after this page. Ask the researcher questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of this study is below.

**WHAT ARE THE WORKSHOPS ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

Through a series of group discussions and activities, the conflict management strategies workshops are about equipping faculty and administrators with the tools needed to manage situations of conflict in the workplace. Your participation in this portion of the research study will last 75 minutes for workshop one and 45 minutes for workshop two.

**WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THESE WORKSHOPS?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in the workshops is to improve upon the way in which conflicts are handled within the departments between faculty to faculty and between faculty and administrators.

**WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THESE WORKSHOPS?**

You may not want to participate in the workshops if you do not feel comfortable with discussing the subject matter of conflict in the workplace and/or you do not want to be audio/video recorded. All audio/video recordings will be deleted once they are no longer needed for the research study. Under Detailed Consent, further information regarding privacy protection and confidentiality in the study is outlined.

**DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE WORKSHOPS?**

Yes. Taking part in the workshops is the foundation of the study and is essential for data collection. If you decide to take part in the workshops, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

All activities included in the workshops are completely voluntary. If there is any activity, discussion questions, or topics you wish to skip you may do so at any given time.

**WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral candidate who is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this research study or you want to withdraw from the study please contact them at the following: Natasha Davis at 336-512-9227 or [nadavis@uky.edu](mailto:nadavis@uky.edu) and Dr. Beth Rous at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-899-400-9428.

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**DETAILED CONSENT:**

**ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THESE WORKSHOPS?**

You would not qualify to participate in the workshops if you are not currently a full-time faculty member serving at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor, an administrator (Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean) at Morehead State University, or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources at Morehead State University. Nor would you qualify if you are under the age of 18.

**WHERE WILL THE WORKSHOPS TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

The workshops will be conducted via the online resource, Zoom. You will need to come two times during the study. The first workshop is 75 minutes, and the second workshop is 45 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this portion of the study is 120 minutes. These sessions will take place back to back within a week's time (i.e., workshop one on a Monday and workshop two on a Tuesday or workshop one on a Wednesday and workshop two on a Thursday, etc. of the same week).

**WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

In the first workshop, participants will be asked to:

- Engage in discussions regarding your experiences with conflict in the workplace
- Participate in an interactive group activity applying conflict management strategies
- Discuss the interactive group activity at large
- Complete a post-workshop survey

In the second workshop, participants will be asked to:

- Engage in a discussion of the first workshop as a follow up session
- Participate in an interactive group activity
- Complete a post-workshop survey

In order to maximize the group activities, both workshops will include up to 10 other individuals as participants.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

The workshops are considered low risk, however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

**WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOPS?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in the workshops.

**IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE WORKSHOPS ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to participate in the workshops, there are no other choices except not to take part in the workshops.

**WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the workshops.

University of Kentucky  
Revised 12/18/19

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# Informed Consent Continued

## WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

When we write about or share the results from this study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential. In order to maintain the protection of all participants identities while maintaining the value and integrity of the data in this study, as the researcher I will use pseudonyms, remove identifying information from transcripts and all data will be coded.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive locked in a safe and secure portable storage box to protect confidentiality of data, including computer records, audio/video recordings, researcher's journal, jump drives, and portable storage device.

We will keep confidential all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court, or law authorities if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Additionally, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly, those would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

Online data-collection applies to this study therefore, we will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

Please note that the confidentiality of information disclosed to other subjects in group activities or discussions cannot be guaranteed.

## CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WORKSHOPS EARLY?

You can choose to leave the workshops at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

If you choose to leave the workshops early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The investigator conducting the workshops may need to remove you from the workshops. This may occur for a number of reasons. You may be removed from the workshops if:

- you are not able to follow the directions;
- if the researcher finds that your participation in the study is more risk than benefit to you.

## WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOPS?

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the workshops.

## WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty adviser, Dr. Beth Rowe of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership.

University of Kentucky  
Research 12/18/18

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If you decide to participate in the workshops, please know participants will not be identified by names in order to maximize confidentiality of research participation. I will be the only one with access to this data.

## WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?

All identifiable information (e.g., your name and email address) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal of all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

## This consent includes the following:

- Key Information Page
- Detailed Consent

All participants will receive a copy of this consent form.



# Conflict Management Workshop

Presented by Natasha Davis  
Research Investigator

## The Basics

Conflicts occur for a variety of reasons. Group members are bound to have different ideas concerning how to reach certain goals or work out issues. People handle conflict differently, usually based on what their culture or experiences have taught them. Some people are direct in being able to bring the problem to a group or an individual to discuss how to solve the issue whereas others may avoid conflict, complain to someone else, use the 'silent treatment', become abusive or make jokes. The purpose of this workshop is to recognize and handle conflict constructively in order to help people move to problem solving.

## Agenda for Workshop One

- ▶ Introduction/Welcome (5 min)
- ▶ Open group discussion about conflict in the workplace/current strategies for managing conflict (25 min)
- ▶ Conflict Resolution scenarios/group activities (20 min)
- ▶ Open group discussion of group activities, conflict management strategies learned, take-away from participating in the activities (20 min)
- ▶ Action planning and reflection for second workshop (3 min)
- ▶ Closing (2 min)

## Research Overview

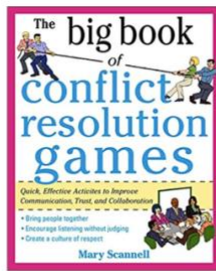
- ▶ Research indicates colleges and universities are faced with an excess of challenges and issues, and one of these issues is dealing with conflict. The aim of this study is to implement a conflict management workshop as an intervention to assist with the management of conflict between faculty to faculty and faculty and administrators on the campus of Morehead State University.
- ▶ This is an action research study, a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking action. In **schools**, **action research** refers to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical **research** methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses—whether organizational, academic, or instructional—and help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently.
- ▶ Action research, “is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted *by and for* those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor” in improving and/or refining his or her actions”. ([Sagor, 2011](#))

## Research Data

- ▶ The research questions for this study were formulated not only to guide the study but to provide a foundation for examining the issue at hand. This study is being guided by the following research questions:
  - ▶ How do faculty and administrators currently handle conflict?
  - ▶ How will faculty and administrator participation in a conflict management workshop affect their approach to handling conflict?
  - ▶ What are the faculty and administrator perceptions of participating in a conflict management workshop?

## Workshop Overview

- ▶ **Workshop Objectives:** The aim of this workshop is to introduce conflict management strategies to faculty and administrators in an effort to assist with the managing of situations of conflict. As leaders on the campus of Morehead State University, understanding and learning how to manage conflict is just one of the skills needed for maintaining productive and positive working relationships.
- ▶ **Learning Goals:** This course as a part of a research project will challenge/enable you to:
  - ▶ Recognize situations of conflict
  - ▶ Prepare you to constructively manage conflict
  - ▶ Understand sources and dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution
  - ▶ Apply conflict management strategies to situations of conflict
  - ▶ Analyze the effectiveness of various conflict resolution strategies



## Group Activities-Activity 1 Led by co-facilitator

**Anything Goes**

**OBJECTIVES**

- To engage in conflict
- To improve the skills of dialogue
- To build consensus

**Group Size**  
Any

**Materials**  
None

**Time**  
10 to 20 minutes

**Procedure**  
This game is a great way for participants to engage in a mini-conflict, with another team member in a non-threatening manner. Ask participants to find a partner. Have each pair stand face to face, right fist not touching the other's (thumbs and any fingers). "Nothing, something, anything!" One of the participants will, the two participants will and the name of any item they can think of (dog, coffee mug, shoe). After pulling out their items, team members must now debate one another as to why their item would "beat" the other person's item. Allow about two or three minutes of debate, then call a brief time-out to discuss the differences between debate and dialogue. After that, have the teams continue with their conversations, only now encourage team members to engage in dialogue—asking questions and listening to the answers—so come to an agreement between the two of them.

**Tip**  
The essential difference between debate and dialogue is that true dialogue is collaborative. Participants are working toward shared understanding and strength and value in each other's positions. A debate is a discussion with the goal of persuading or advocating for their own view, attempting to prove the other side wrong, and searching for flaws and weaknesses in the other's positions. In dialogue, the intention is to really listen to one another's perspective with a willingness to be influenced by what we hear. Dialogue allows people to develop understanding for one another's perspectives, thoughts, and feelings as well as to reevaluate their own position in light of the other's understanding. In dialogue, everyone has a chance to be heard, understood, and to learn from each other.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How did you react to your mini-conflict?
2. In this how you normally act in conflict situations? Why or why not?
3. How were you able to come to a consensus?
4. What happened when you switched from debate to dialogue?
5. When someone disagrees with you, do you always stop to ask questions?
6. Is it difficult to listen when someone disagrees with you? Why?
7. What made it easier in this activity?
8. In what ways could you use these skills the next time you're in conflict with another person?

## Group Activities-Activity 2 Led by Facilitator Natasha Davis

**Positive Spin**

**OBJECTIVES**

- To change our perspective on conflict in the workplace
- To consider the positive aspects of conflict

**Group Size**  
Any

**Materials**  
Flip-chart paper, markers, pens, one copy of the Mini-Chartering Discussion Card (see handout provided) for each team

**Time**  
20 to 40 minutes

**Procedure**  
Split large groups into smaller teams of four to seven (having at least three teams is desirable). Have each team select a member up to collect their supplies, which consist of about a flip-chart paper, some assorted markers, pens, and the handout. Tell the teams that they are to write their definition of conflict. Their challenge is to define conflict without using negative terms. Once team members agree on a definition, have them write it on their flip-chart paper along with an illustration. Before the group presentations and discussions, have each team answer the debriefing questions on the handout. After all teams are finished, have the teams present their ideas to the group. Hang up the flip-chart pages on the wall of the room for the duration of the training day.

**Tip**  
Whenever possible, refer to the team's definitions during the debriefing discussions.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does the definition of conflict affect the way we think about conflict?
2. What are some negative consequences of conflict?
3. What are some positive outcomes of conflict?
4. List four potential positive outcomes of conflict in an organization.



## Open Discussion-Conflict

Questions to guide discussion:

- ▶ Were their challenges or difficulties in the activities?
- ▶ What did you learn about yourself and others in regards to conflict?
- ▶ Can what you learned in the conflict management activities be used to manage conflict?
- ▶ Will you implement these strategies? Why or why not?

## Closing

- ▶ Thank you for your participation today. A post-survey of your participation in workshop one will be sent to you via the survey site Qualtrics.
- ▶ The next workshop will be on Thursday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10am. See you all then!



## APPENDIX F

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM-POST QUESTIONNAIRES



#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### KEY INFORMATION FOR **POST-QUESTIONNAIRES**

We are asking you to choose whether or not to complete two post-questionnaires. We are asking you because you are a key informant who chose to participate in the conflict management workshops. If you choose to participate, your participation will provide the information needed to measure effectiveness of workshop participation. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate in this section of the study. Detailed information is included after this page. Ask the researcher questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POST QUESTIONNAIRES ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

Two post-questionnaires are about responding to questions regarding the subjects' experience participating in the workshop activities and discussions. These post-questionnaires will be emailed via a survey site to participants after each workshop has ended. Time completion for each post-questionnaire is approximately 5 minutes.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE POST QUESTIONNAIRE?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in post-questionnaire completion, is to provide the researcher with the necessary data to inform workshop effectiveness. These post-questionnaires additionally will provide you the opportunity for the subjects' own self-reflection in regards to workshop effectiveness in managing conflict.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES?**

You may not want to participate in this portion of the study if you do not feel comfortable with being asked questions regarding workshop participation or the subject matter of conflict in the workplace.

#### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES?**

Additionally, you are free to skip any question you do not want to answer.

## **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral candidate who is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this research study or you want to withdraw from the study please contact them at the following; Natasha Davis at 336-512-9227 or [nda228@g.uky.edu](mailto:nda228@g.uky.edu) and Dr. Beth Rous at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

## **DETAILED CONSENT:**

### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES?**

You would not qualify to participate in taking the post-questionnaires if you are not currently a full-time faculty member serving at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor, an administrator (Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean) at Morehead State University, or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources at Morehead State University. Nor would you qualify if you are under the age of 18.

### **WHERE WILL THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

The post-questionnaires will be administered online via a survey site and can be completed on any device with a web browser and internet access. The amount of time you will need to complete the post-questionnaire is approximately 5 minutes.

### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

Participants will be asked to complete two post-questionnaires at the end of each completed workshop.

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

The post-questionnaires are considered low risk, however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in the post-questionnaires.

### **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to complete the post-questionnaire, there are no other choices except not to take part in the completion of the survey.

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the post-questionnaire.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential. In order to maximize the protection of all participants' identities while maintaining the value and integrity of the data in this study, as the researcher I will use pseudonyms, remove identifying information from transcripts and all data will be coded.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive locked in a safe and secure portable storage box to protect confidentiality of data, including computer records, audio/video recordings, researcher's journal, jump drives, and portable storage devices.

You should know that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people because this is my research project towards completion of my Doctorate in Educational Leadership. For example, the law may require us to share your information with:

- the University of Kentucky and my doctoral committee who may look at or copy pertinent portions of records that identify you.

***Online data-collection applies to this study:*** We will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

### **CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRE EARLY?**

You can choose to leave any aspect of the study, including the post-questionnaire, at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the post-questionnaire.

If you choose to leave the study early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The investigator conducting the post-questionnaire may need to remove you from the post-questionnaire. This may occur for a number of reasons. You may be removed from the post-questionnaire if:

- you are not able to follow the directions,

- if the researcher finds that your participation in the study is more risk than benefit to you

**WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE POST-QUESTIONNAIRES?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the post-questionnaires.

**WILL WE CONTACT YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE STUDIES?**

Not at this time unless the researcher has not received enough data for the research.

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you decide to participate and complete the post-questionnaire, please know participants will not be identified by names in order to maximize confidentiality of research participation. I will be the only one with access to this data.

**WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?**

All identifiable information (e.g., your name and email address) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal of all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

This consent includes the following:

- Key Information Page
- Detailed Consent
- All participants will receive a copy of this consent form.

**By clicking, 'I AGREE' below, you agree that you have read the information provided above and are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research study. If you do not agree, please close this web browser.**

- **I AGREE**

APPENDIX G

**POST-QUESTIONNAIRE**

**WORKSHOP ONE COMPLETION**

How would you rate your experience in participating in the first conflict management workshop?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

How would you describe your experience in the conflict workshop?

---

Please rate the effectiveness of the interactive breakout sessions (5 being the highest)

- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

What did you find most helpful in participating in the workshop?

---

What was the most important “take away” you had from the workshop?

---

How beneficial do you think it is to have workshops like this offered to faculty and administrators?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please provide further explanation to your reason for the answer to the above question

## APPENDIX H

### WORKSHOP TWO AGENDA

Beginning of workshop

- Introductions

Consent form review for workshop two/Q & A

Review of confidentiality procedures-

- respect the privacy of all participants
- do not repeat workshop discussions outside of the workshop
- do not share participant identities outside of the study
- keep all names, titles, and department information confidential during discussions about involvement in situations of conflict. Do not discuss outside of the workshop

Group interactive session-

- Researcher/Co-facilitator will lead group through an activity

Final Group discussion

End of Workshop-

- Post Questionnaire for Workshop Two



# Check It Out

## OBJECTIVES

- To get buy-in of conflict-resolution techniques
- To develop a standard process by which to resolve conflict

### Group Size

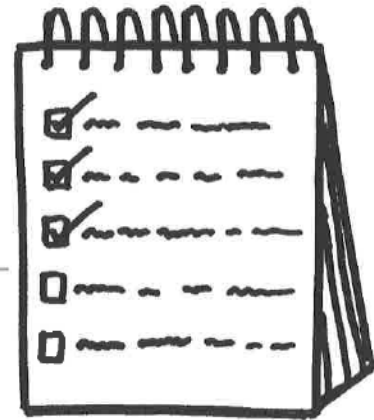
Any

### Materials

One copy of the Checklist Guidelines handout (provided) for each person, index cards, pens

### Time

30 to 40 minutes



### Procedure

A checklist can serve as a valuable tool for navigating through a conflict. However, to be effective, it needs to be carefully developed, validated, and applied. A checklist clarifies the process and helps team members recall skills as well as important steps. Using a checklist can also enhance objectivity, credibility, and consistency. A checklist provides rational guidelines for the team to follow when emotions may run high.

Have larger groups form into small discussion teams of five to eight participants to develop a step-by-step process to resolve conflict. Use the checklist-building guidelines provided in the handout to assist participants as they create their criteria. They can use the index cards to brainstorm ideas for their list.

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1.** What did you consider as you created your checklist?
- 2.** How did your team's perspective differ from the other teams' perspective?
- 3.** What were you able to learn from the other teams that you may not have considered?
- 4.** How can we use this checklist tool?
- 5.** What are some ways the checklist will improve the manner in which conflict is dealt with?
- 6.** How will we know if it works?

## **Checklist Guidelines**

**1.** Define the checklist.

- Define the checklist's intended uses.
- Reflect upon and draw from pertinent training and experience.
- Have conversations with other experts.

**2.** Generate a potential list of checkpoints.

- Briefly define each checkpoint.
- Add descriptions as needed.
- Provide rationale for checkpoints.
- Present any warnings for using the checklist.

**3.** Sort out the checkpoints.

- Write each checkpoint on a separate index card.
- Decide if any checkpoints can be categorized together or are subsets of another checkpoint.
- Review the checkpoints for content and clarity.
- Add, subtract, and rewrite checkpoints as needed.

## H A N D O U T

**4.** Determine the order of the checkpoints.

- Decide if an order is important for the intended users.
- Provide an ordering of the items on the checklist.

**5.** Get feedback from potential users.

- Ask potential users (other teams) to review and critique the checklist.
- Interview the users to get an understanding of their concerns and suggestions.
- Take note of any issues that need attention.

**6.** Revise and finalize the checklist.

- Based on the feedback, make any necessary revisions.
- Rewrite the items on the checklist.

**7.** Apply the checklist.

- Use the checklist.
- Assess its value.
- Get additional feedback.
- Use feedback to adjust the checklist as needed.

APPENDIX I

**POST-QUESTIONNAIRE WORKSHOP TWO**

How would you rate your experience in participating in the second conflict management workshop?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

Please rate the effectiveness of participating in the second conflict management strategies workshop (5 being the highest).

- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

What did you find most helpful from participating in the second workshop?

---

What was the most important 'take-away' you had from the second workshop?

---

Please describe your overall experience participating in the second workshop that may differ from the first workshop.

---

## APPENDIX J

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM-WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT



#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### KEY INFORMATION FOR **WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT**

We are asking you to choose whether or not to complete a workshop assessment. We are asking you because you are a key informant who has fully completed the conflict management strategies workshops. If you choose to participate, your participation will provide the information needed to measure effectiveness of the overall workshops. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate in this section of the study. Detailed information is included after this page. Ask the researcher questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

#### **WHAT IS THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

The workshop assessment is about responding to questions regarding subjects' overall workshop participation. The workshop assessment will be emailed via a survey site to participants after both workshops and post-questionnaires have been completed. Time completion for the workshop assessment is approximately 5 minutes.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in completing the workshop assessment is to provide relevant information regarding workshop participation.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT?**

You may not want to participate in this study if you do not feel comfortable with being asked questions regarding your participation in the workshop.

#### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT?**

Yes. The workshop assessment is a valuable measuring tool to informing this study. If you decide to take part in completing the workshop assessment, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

Additionally, you are free to skip any question you do not want to answer.

## **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral candidate who is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this research study or you want to withdraw from the study please contact them at the following; Natasha Davis at 336-512-9227 or [nda228@g.uky.edu](mailto:nda228@g.uky.edu) and Dr. Beth Rous at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

## **DETAILED CONSENT:**

### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT?**

You would not qualify to participate in taking the workshop assessment if you are not currently a full-time faculty member serving at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor, an administrator (Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean) at Morehead State University, or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources at Morehead State University. Nor would you qualify if you are under the age of 18.

### **WHERE WILL THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

The workshop assessment will be administered online via a survey site and can be completed on any device with a web browser and internet access. The amount of time you will need to complete the workshop assessment is approximately 5 minutes.

### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

Participants will be asked to complete a workshop assessment form.

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

The workshop assessment is considered low risk, however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in the workshop assessment.

### **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to complete the workshop assessment, there are no other choices except not to take part in completing the survey.

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the workshop assessment.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential. In order to maximize the protection of all participants identities while maintaining the value and integrity of the data in this study, as the researcher I will use pseudonyms, remove identifying information from transcripts and all data will be coded.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive locked in a safe and secure portable storage box to protect confidentiality of data, including computer records, audio/video recordings, researcher's journal, jump drives, and portable storage devices.

You should know that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people because this is my research project towards completion of my Doctorate in Educational Leadership. For example, the law may require us to share your information with:

- the University of Kentucky and my doctoral committee who may look at or copy pertinent portions of records that identify you.

***Online data-collection applies to this study:*** We will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

### **CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT EARLY?**

You can choose to leave any aspect of the study, including the workshop assessment, at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the workshop assessment.



If you choose to leave the workshop assessment early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The investigator conducting the workshop assessment may need to remove you from the workshop assessment. This may occur for a number of reasons. You may be removed from the workshop assessment if:

- you are not able to follow the directions,
- if the researcher finds that your participation in the workshop assessment is more risk than benefit to you

### **WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the workshop assessment.

### **WILL WE CONTACT YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE WORKSHOP ASSESSMENTS?**

Not at this time unless the researcher has not received enough data for the research.

### **WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership.

If you decide to participate and complete the workshop assessment, please know participants will not be identified by names in order to maximize confidentiality of research participation. I will be the only one with access to this data.

### **WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?**

All identifiable information (e.g., your name and email address) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal of all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

**This consent includes the following:**

- **Key Information Page**
- **Detailed Consent**
- **All participants will receive a copy of this consent form.**

**By clicking, 'I AGREE' below, you agree that you have read the information provided above and are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research study. If you do not agree, please close this web browser.**

- I AGREE**

## APPENDIX K

### OVERALL WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT

I feel that I will use what I learned from the conflict management workshops

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

I would recommend attendance in a conflict management workshop

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

The amount of material covered in the workshop was appropriate

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

The conflict management workshop was a productive use of my time

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

I found the content was important and valuable

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

In general, the conflict management workshops were interesting.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

My expectation for knowledge about managing situations of conflict was met

- very high
- high
- neutral
- a little
- none

My expectation for skill development when managing situations of conflict was met

- very high
- high
- neutral
- a little
- none

Overall, my expectation for this workshop were fulfilled.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

What did you like about the conflict management workshop?

---

What did you dislike about the conflict management workshop?

---

Would you participate in another conflict management workshop?

---

**Please answer the following short questions:**

What did you like about the conflict management workshop?

What did you dislike about the conflict management workshop?

Would you participate in another conflict management workshop?

## APPENDIX L

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM-INTERVIEWS



#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### KEY INFORMATION FOR INTERVIEWS

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer for an individual interview. We are asking you because you are a key informant who participated in the conflict management strategies workshops. If you choose to participate in the interview, you may provide the researcher with the opportunity to gain additional knowledge regarding your participation in the conflict management strategies workshops. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate. We have included detailed information after this page. Ask the research team questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

#### **WHAT IS THE INTERVIEW ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

The interview will be about your overall experience participating in the conflict management strategies workshops. Your participation in this portion of the research study will last 30 minutes by completing an individual interview with the researcher.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS INTERVIEW?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in the interview is to provide the opportunity for self-reflection and workshop analysis.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS INTERVIEW?**

You may not want to participate in the interview if you do not feel comfortable with discussing your experience in workshop participation and/or you do not want to be audio/video recorded. Under Detailed Consent, further information regarding privacy protection and confidentiality in the study is outlined.

#### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE INTERVIEW?**

If you decide to take part in the interview, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

Additionally, you are free to skip any question for discussion that you do not want to answer.

### **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral candidate who is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this research study or you want to withdraw from the study please contact them at the following; Natasha Davis at 336-512-9227 or [nda228@g.uky.edu](mailto:nda228@g.uky.edu) and Dr. Beth Rous at 859-257-6389 or [brous@uky.edu](mailto:brous@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

### **DETAILED CONSENT:**

#### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THIS INTERVIEW?**

You would not qualify to participate in the interview if you are not currently a full-time faculty member serving at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor, an administrator (Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean) at Morehead State University, or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources at Morehead State University. Nor would you qualify for this interview if you are under the age of 18.

#### **WHERE WILL THE INTERVIEWS TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

All interviews will take place online via Zoom totaling 30 minutes of involvement.

#### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

Participants will be asked to engage in a Q & A interview with the researcher.

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

This is considered low risk, however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS INTERVIEW?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in the interview.

### **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE INTERVIEW, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to take part in the interview, there are no other choices except not to take part in the interview.

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in the interview.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential. In order to maximize the protection of all participants identities while maintaining the value and integrity of the data in this study, as the researcher I will use pseudonyms, remove identifying information from transcripts and all data will be coded.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive locked in a safe and secure portable storage box to protect confidentiality of data, including computer records, audio/video recordings, researcher's journal, jump drives, and portable storage devices.

We will keep confidential all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court, or tell authorities if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Additionally, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

***Online data-collection applies to this study therefore***, we will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.



### **CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE INTERVIEW EARLY?**

You can choose to leave the interview at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the interview.

If you choose to leave the interview early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The investigator conducting the interview may need to remove you from the interview. This may occur for a number of reasons. You may be removed from the interview process if:

- you are not able to follow the directions,
- if the researcher finds that your participation in the interview is more risk than benefit to you

### **WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE INTERVIEW?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the interview.

### **WILL WE CONTACT YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE INTERVIEWS?**

Not at this time unless the researcher has not received enough data for the research.

### **WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Rous of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership.

If you decide to participate in the interview, please know participants will not be identified by names in order to maximize confidentiality of research participation. I will be the only one with access to this data.

### **WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?**

All identifiable information (e.g., your name and email address) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal of all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

**This consent includes the following:**

- **Key Information Page**
- **Detailed Consent**
- **All participants will receive a copy of this consent form.**

APPENDIX M

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Location of Interview: Zoom

Respondent ID No:

Researcher conducting interview:

*Script*

Good morning (afternoon),

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. As you know, I am Natasha Davis a doctoral candidate at the University of Kentucky and I am the primary researcher for this study. You have recently completed surveys and two days of online conflict management strategies workshops. This follow-up interview will take about 30 minutes and will include 8 questions regarding your experience in workshop participation and the information you received during the workshops. Please know there are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

Before we begin, I would like to review the consent form that was emailed to you prior to the interview. This is to ensure you are fully aware of the nature of your participation and to answer any questions you may have. After reviewing the form, I will need to obtain your verbal consent in order to conduct and record this interview before we proceed.

Since this is a virtual interview, it will be automatically recorded to accurately document the information you provide. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential. The transcript I will compile of this interview for data collection purposes only, will not contain any of your identifiable information.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without

consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Do you consent to beginning the interview and audio and video recording the interview?

1. Are you better prepared to manage conflict now after attending the workshop?  
Why or why not?
2. Was the workshop beneficial? If so, in what ways. If not, why not?
3. Do you intend to apply any of the conflict management strategies obtained from the workshop? If so, which one(s). If not, why not?
4. What, if any, changes would you make to the content or delivery of the workshop to make it more impactful for participants?
5. Do you think a conflict management strategies workshop is beneficial as a training tool for faculty on our campus?

This completes our time for the interview. Are there any additional comments or feedback you would like to add at this time? Your time and participation in this interview and the workshops/surveys has been greatly appreciated.

## APPENDIX N

### RESEARCH PROCEDURE OUTLINE

#### Recruitment Procedure

- Recruitment email
- Pre-Questionnaire (5 minutes)
- Consent form for Pre-questionnaire
- Obtain verbal consent of subject willing to participate in the study
- Researcher will document the verbal consent by noting date, time, and name with ID code
- Provide copies of the consent documents to the subjects

#### Workshop One Procedure (75 minutes)

##### Beginning of workshop-

- Verbal statement/acknowledgement of workshop recording
- Consent form review for workshop one/Q & A
- Review of confidentiality procedures for workshop-
  - respect the privacy of all participants
  - do not repeat workshop discussions outside of the workshop
  - do not share participant identities outside of the study
  - keep all names, titles, and department information confidential during discussions about involvement in situations of conflict. Do not discuss outside of the workshop
  - refrain from describing recent events, particularly if a participant in the workshop might be connected or have knowledge of the situation of conflict being discussed

##### Group discussion

##### Group interactive session-

- Two groups will be assigned to engage in two different activities.
- The researcher will assign a leader for each group to guide them through activity.
- The researcher will observe one group, the co-facilitator will observe the other group
- Allotted time for each activity to be completed is 20 minutes. One activity is slightly longer in time however, both can be completed in 20 minutes as stated on the activity.
- Final discussion

- End of Workshop-

Post Questionnaire for Workshop One (5 minutes)

### **Workshop Two Procedure** (45 minutes)

Beginning of workshop

- Verbal statement/acknowledgement of workshop recording
- Consent form review for workshop two/Q & A
- Review of confidentiality procedures-
  - respect the privacy of all participants
  - do not repeat workshop discussions outside of the workshop
  - do not share participant identities outside of the study
  - keep all names, titles, and department information confidential during discussions about involvement in situations of conflict. Do not discuss outside of the workshop
  - refrain from describing recent events, particularly if a participant in the workshop might be connected or have knowledge of the situation of conflict being discussed

Group interactive session-

- Researcher/Co-facilitator will lead group through an activity (20 minutes)  
Final Group discussion

End of Workshop-

Post Questionnaire for Workshop Two (5 minutes)

### **Final procedure**

Workshop Assessment-(5 minutes)

Individual Interviews-

- Selection of four subjects
- Obtain verbal consent
- Review consent form for interviews
- Conduct interviews-(30 minutes)

Collect, transcribe and organize data at each phase

## APPENDIX O

### IRB APPROVAL LETTER

#### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WORKSHOP



#### Modification Review

Approval Ends:  
7/5/2025

IRB Number:  
50339

TO: Natasha Davis  
Educational Leadership Studies  
PI phone #: 3365129227  
  
PI email: natasha.davis@uky.edu

FROM: Chairperson/Vice Chairperson  
Nonmedical Institutional Review Board (IRB)

SUBJECT: Approval of Modification Request

DATE: 10/26/2020

On 10/26/2020, the Nonmedical Institutional Review Board approved your request for modifications in your protocol entitled:

#### Faculty conflict resolution

In addition to IRB approval, you must also meet the requirements of the [VPR Resumption of Research Phased Plan](#) (i.e., waiver for Phase 1, training & individualized plan submission for Phases 2-4) before resuming/beginning your human subjects research. If your modification request necessitated a change in your approved informed consent/assent form(s), the new IRB approved consent/assent form(s) to be used when enrolling subjects can be found in the "All Attachments" menu item of your E-IRB application. [Note, subjects can only be enrolled using consent/assent forms which have a valid "IRB Approval" stamp unless special waiver has been obtained from the IRB.]

Note that at Continuation Review, you will be asked to submit a brief summary of any modifications approved by the IRB since initial review or the last continuation review, which may impact subject safety or welfare. Please take this approved modification into consideration when preparing your summary.

For information describing investigator responsibilities after obtaining IRB approval, download and read the document "[PI Guidance to Responsibilities, Qualifications, Records and Documentation of Human Subjects Research](#)" available in the online Office of Research Integrity's [IRB Survival Handbook](#). Additional information regarding IRB review, federal regulations, and institutional policies may be found through [ORI's web site](#). If you have questions, need additional information, or would like a paper copy of the above mentioned document, contact the Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428.

## APPENDIX P

### IRB APPROVAL LETTER-PILOT STUDY



#### EXEMPTION CERTIFICATION

IRB Number: 50339

TO: Natasha Davis, Ed.D  
Educational Leadership Studies  
PI phone #: 3365129227  
PI email: natasha.davis@uky.edu

FROM: Chairperson/Vice Chairperson  
Non Medical Institutional Review Board (IRB)

SUBJECT: Approval for Exemption Certification

DATE: 7/8/2019

On 7/6/2019, it was determined that your project entitled "*Faculty conflict resolution-A Pilot Study*" meets federal criteria to qualify as an exempt study.

Because the study has been certified as exempt, you will not be required to complete continuation or final review reports. However, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB prior to making any changes to the study. Please note that changes made to an exempt protocol may disqualify it from exempt status and may require an expedited or full review.

The Office of Research Integrity will hold your exemption application for six years. Before the end of the sixth year, you will be notified that your file will be closed and the application destroyed. If your project is still ongoing, you will need to contact the Office of Research Integrity upon receipt of that letter and follow the instructions for completing a new exemption application. It is, therefore, important that you keep your address current with the Office of Research Integrity.

For information describing investigator responsibilities after obtaining IRB approval, download and read the document "[PI Guidance to Responsibilities, Qualifications, Records and Documentation of Human Subjects Research](#)" available in the online Office of Research Integrity's [IRB Survival Handbook](#). Additional information regarding IRB review, federal regulations, and institutional policies may be found through [ORI's web site](#). If you have questions, need additional information, or would like a paper copy of the above mentioned document, contact the Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428.

## APPENDIX Q

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM-PILOT STUDY



#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### **KEY INFORMATION FOR Research on conflict and conflict management strategies in the workplace: a pilot study**

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer to take part in an in-person and/or over the phone interview that will be audio recorded for a research pilot study about conflict and conflict management strategies for faculty and administrators in higher education. This pilot study is a mini- version of a larger study for a larger population where an intervention will be developed. If you choose to participate, your interview will provide the information needed to design and develop an intervention for the larger study. We are asking you because you are a key informant in regards to conflict within departments on the campus of Morehead State University.

This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether or not to participate. Detailed information is located below. Ask the research team questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the pilot study is below.

#### **WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

By doing this pilot study, I hope to learn what conflict management strategies can equip faculty to handle conflict with their colleagues and administrators at the department level. Your participation in this research will last about 45 minutes to one hour over the course of the next month. One interview will be conducted either in person or over the phone.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?**

The most important reason you might want to participate in this pilot study is to improve upon the way in which conflicts are handled within the department between faculty to faculty and between faculty and administrators.

#### **WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?**

You may not want to participate in this pilot study if you do not feel comfortable with discussing the subject matter of conflict in the workplace.

#### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?**

If you do decide to take part in this pilot study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.



## **WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

Ms. Davis is a doctoral student who is being guided in this research by Dr. Wayne Lewis of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this pilot study or you want to withdraw from the pilot study her contact information is: Natasha Davis, 336-512-9227 or nda228@g.uky.edu.

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

## **DETAILED CONSENT:**

### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THIS STUDY?**

You would not qualify for this pilot study if you are not currently a full-time faculty member at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full professor within the School of Creative Arts, an administrator within the Caudill College of Arts and Humanities or an administrator within the Offices of Human Resources.

### **WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?**

The research procedures will be conducted at Morehead State University. You will need to come one time during the study. Each of those visits will take about 45 minutes to one hour. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is one hour within a day of our choosing over the next month.

### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

You will be asked to participate in a one on one interview, either in person or over the phone, and answer questions related to conflict in the workplace. All interviews will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcribing the interviews as collected data, to design and develop the intervention for a larger study.

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

This pilot study is considered low risk however, if a participant is in need of services, you are encouraged to contact counseling services at Allie Young located on the campus of Morehead State University.

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

### **IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?**

If you do not want to be in the pilot study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the pilot study.

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in this pilot study.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

When I write about or share the results from the pilot study, I will write about the combined information. I will keep your name and other identifying information private and confidential.

I will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team (Doctoral Committee) from knowing that you gave me information, or what that information is. All information will be securely stored on my personal computer and personal hard drive to be locked in a safe and secure portable storage box. This will include papers, audio recordings, researcher's journal, etc.

You should know that there are some circumstances in which I may have to show your information to other people because this is my research project towards completion of my Doctorate in Educational Leadership. For example, the law may require me to share your information with the University of Kentucky, and my doctoral committee who may look at or copy pertinent portions of records that identify you.

I will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

### **CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY EARLY?**

You can choose to leave the pilot study at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in this pilot study.

If you choose to leave the pilot study early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

### **WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the pilot study.

### **WILL YOU BE GIVEN INDIVIDUAL RESULTS FROM THE RESEARCH TESTS/SURVEYS?**

You may be given feedback about the results from your surveys done for purposes of this research.

### **WILL WE CONTACT YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE STUDIES?**

You will be asked in the future to be a part of the larger population for an intervention for the study.

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

Please know this research is being guided by my faculty advisor, Dr. Wayne Lewis of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership.  
If you decide to participate in this pilot study, all interviews will be audio recorded for the purposes of maintaining identifiable data. At the beginning of each interview, I will inform you that I am recording our interviews and ask for your knowledge of the recording with additional permission before we begin.

Please know, I will be the only one with access to this data.

**INFORMED CONSENT SIGNATURES**

**This consent includes the following:**

- **Key Information Page**
- **Detailed Consent**

**You are the subject or are authorized to act on behalf of the subject. You will receive a copy of this consent form after it has been signed.**

_____	_____
<b>Signature of research subject or, if applicable, *research subject's legal representative</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	
<b>Printed name of research subject</b>	
Printed name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent	Date
_____	_____

## APPENDIX R

### PILOT STUDY INSTRUMENT

1. What is your current job position?
  - a. Assistant professor
  - b. Associate professor
  - c. Full professor
  - d. Administrator
  
2. How do you deal with conflict?
  
3. Have you experienced conflict within the department?
  
4. If so, tell me about a time you had an issue with a colleague/administrator. Please do not include names.
  
5. What is/was the nature of the conflict?
  
6. Describe the conflict (s) you are experiencing.
  
7. Describe the interaction between you and the person with whom you have conflict?
  
8. Why do you think there is conflict?
  
9. How do you handle conflict when it arises, either in this situation or others?
  
10. Describe what it is like for you to experience conflict at work.
  
11. Did you report the conflict to your administrator? (Associate Dean or Dean)

12. If the conflict is with your administrator, did you report it to their immediate supervisor or HR?
13. How did the administrator or HR handle the conflict?
14. How has your Associate Dean handled conflict between faculty members in your department?
15. Are there any conflict management strategies you use to resolve your own conflict with others?
16. What methods would you recommend for improving conflict management skills within the department?

Additional questions for those in the pilot study

1. Do you feel the questions included will provide applicable information for the purpose of this study: to provide the opportunity for faculty and administrators to engage in a conflict management workshop in order to introduce and/or improve upon conflict management skills?
2. Do you feel any question should be deleted or added to achieve the purpose of this study? If so, please provide detailed commentary for the interviewer to adjust the interview document appropriate to the purposes of this study.
3. Do you feel the purpose of the study, as explained in question 1, is clear and understandable for the purpose the questions are trying to achieve?

## APPENDIX S

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN PILOT STUDY

#### Invitation to Participate in a Pilot Study

Dear MSU Faculty and Administrators,

I am Nataasha Davis an Associate Professor at Morehead State University as well as a doctoral candidate at The University of Kentucky working towards my Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Currently, I am working to complete my doctoral study focused on exploring opportunities for conflict management in higher education and I would like to request your participation in a pilot study. Participation in this pilot study will assist in my development of an intervention for conflict on a larger population at Morehead State University. This is a research request for your participation. This is not a work-related request, nor is it a request to complete as a part of your job responsibility. This is strictly for **research purposes only** on a volunteer basis.

As an employee of MSU who may have experience related to the purpose of this study, I would like to invite you to participate in this pilot study and affirm your consent to participate via the attached participant consent form. Participation in this pilot study will take 45 minutes to an hour answering questions one on one privately with me as the primary researcher. We can meet in person or over the phone. All interviews will be audio recorded for purposes of being transcribed for data collection to assist in the design and development of an intervention on a larger population.

Participation in this pilot study is completely confidential. No identifying information (name, department, position, etc.) will be collected. Your participation in this pilot study is voluntary. This means that if you decide to not participate your decision will be highly respected. You will not be treated differently if you decide not to be involved in this pilot study. If you decide to participate in the pilot study, you can change your mind at any time during the study. If you feel stressed during the pilot study, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions you feel are too personal. This pilot study is considered low risk, however if a participant is in need of outside services, you are encouraged to seek these services at Allie Young, located on the campus of Morehead State University.

The benefits include being part of a small scale pilot study that will help identify opportunities to enhance conflict management skills in the workplace. No compensation is being offered for participation in this pilot study.

As the person in charge of this pilot study, I am a doctoral student who is being guided in this research by Dr. Wayne Lewis of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this study or you want to withdraw from the study his/her contact information is: Nataasha Davis, 336-612-9227 or [nda223@uky.edu](mailto:nda223@uky.edu).

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

It is my hope that by collecting information about conflict in the workplace, opportunities to enhance conflict management skills will be identified. If you would like to participate, please review the consent form, sign and date, and return to me electronically. Once I have received your consent to participate, I will contact you with a daytime for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Nataasha Davis, MFA

Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership

The University of Kentucky

*"Success is liking yourself, liking what you do and liking how you do it"*

-Maya Angelou

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**VITAE**  
NATASHA DAVIS

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**Education**

- M.F.A.                      Shenandoah Conservatory of Shenandoah University  
Dance, *Magna cum Laude*
- NCDPI                      University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
Teacher's Certification-Lateral Entry Program, "A" Licensure  
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- B.A.                         University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Dance

**Professional Experience**

Assistant Dean  
Caudill College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
Morehead State University  
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Co-program Lead  
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Performing & Visual Arts Summer Dance Camps  
Winchester, VA

Tap Instructor  
The Hill School  
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Walter M. Williams High School,  
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