# Omega Graduate School

# Dissertation Research Prospectus (Pre-Proposal)

**LaMonya E. Kirkland**

# Problem Statement

The problem is among employees within the school system because ultimately, a workplace was systemically infected with conflict resulting in a hostile work environment, poor performance, health problems, and a high employee turnover rate (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2020). Improved interpersonal communication skills resulted in fewer conflicts. (Horila, 2019; Kindler, 1994, 1996, 1998; Lewin, Gollan, et. al, 2016; McKibben, 2017)

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# Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore whether there were statistically significant differences in (a) overall surveyed viewpoint flexibility values and (b) overall surveyed interaction values among classified employees at the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System (CMS) in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**Background of the Problem**

In many organizations, the typical manager may spend 25% of his time dealing with conflicts (Bass & Bass, 2009). The costs of conflict included the apparent expenses of legal fees and settlements and costs of lost customers, employee turnover, and damage to the organization’s reputation and brand name (Raines, 2020). Individuals joined organizations for several reasons, from physical to protection, social, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). Whatever the individual did within the organization, the goal was to meet the various needs mentioned above. While conflict arose if an organization's climate changed or the goal was not accomplished (Dubi, Bawuro, & Tahir, 2015), an organization's leading cause of conflict was the lack of interpersonal communication skills ( Lasater & Stiles, 2019; Ringer, 2019; Salvation, 2019). Given a shared workplace and task, individuals worked together to accomplish given tasks. Communication was necessary for the completion of the task. As Lewin, Gollan, et. al (2016) noted, “Researchers have found that high-quality supervisor-employee relationships are characterized by mutual trust, respect, and open communication. Unfortunately, this type of relationship is often the exception and not the rule. Instead, ‘armed truce’ may be an accurate term for describing many of these relationships” (xi).

# Improved communication skills were critical in the reduction of workplace conflict. In

# addition, improving interpersonal communication promoted a less stressful environment

# enabling workers to maintain an increased focus on the tasks, improved perception of well-being, and an improved sense of career advancement. As Horila (2019) observed. “Competence in communication has been linked with numerous positive outcomes, such as individual career success, reduced levels of stress, and an increase in well-being, as well as satisfaction” (abstract).

# Since working with Charlotte Mecklenburg School System for nine years, conflict was

# observed and heard from employees, peers, managers, support staff, school staff, and school leaders. However, it was essential to note that conflict also affected various cultures, diverse races, and different religions within the workplace; therefore, conflict reduction required the participation of all employees.

# Conflicts at work were challenging. Some conflicts arose when employees argued with each other due to work absence or task performance. In cases where managers used leadership positions to intimidate employees, conflict arose. Conflict happened in the workplace, whether within the school system, on Wall Street, or as an entrepreneur. However, not all conflict was by nature, negative. McKibben (2017) suggested that positive conflict management helped resolve conflicts. When a conflict was resolved effectively and beneficially, it was considered positive. The use of positive conflict management was used to assist organizations in resolving workplace

# conflicts. Each side of a conflict understood that when there was a disagreement, there was a need to develop skills to locate a mutually beneficial solution. In addition, a positive conflict resolution held the potential to inspire employees to think differently about problems, ultimately improving workplace performance and results. This research aimed to provide a method of reducing conflict within the workplace so that employees were willing to communicate individual concerns without causing negative conflict.

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Describe the problem in the context of extant literature

# Significance

This study will contribute to the gap in research of conflict by identifying when conflict

develops negatively, communication can be used to shape and maintain employees’

perceptions, which will help guide conflict behaviors (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2016, p.

 24). Conflict is normal, healthy, and it highlights the importance of understanding and

managing conflict properly. (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2016, p.1).

The significance of this research will provide resources that will help to change and challenge the mindset of working adults involved in conflict. While the goal is to reduce conflict in the workplace, it is also vital for employees to feel safe in their work environment. With these goals in mind, employees want to know that they will be supported by the people who hired them to do a job. Employees should believe they can have a life full of joy, peace, and hope within the workplace. The significance of the research is to get participants who can relate to how conflict starts and ends within the workplace. It is also important to note that resolving conflict is a win-win for everyone. No matter how conflict starts it can always be resolved with effective communication to ensure that employees are on the same page.

# Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between conflict among the role of the communication culture within the workplace? (quantitative correlational)

RQ1: What differences exist between employees among their behaviors? (quantitative quasi-experimental)

# Research Methodology

This study will utilize a quantitative methodology because hypotheses derived from research questions will be tested using statistical analysis.

# Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study is framed by \_\_\_\_\_\_ theory because… (cite).

# Instrumentation

Validated survey instrument that measures attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, or behaviors… (quantitative)

This study will utilize the Management of Differences Inventory instrument, which measures interaction and viewpoint using \_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_(approaches) subscales (cite).

Researcher-developed and field-tested questionnaire, interview, or focus group (qualitative)...

This study will utilize a field-tested researcher-developed questionnaire validated by feedback from 5-7 subject matter experts…

# Research Design

Quasi-Experimental: compare differences in a continuous dependent variable between groups split on one or more independent variables from a validated instrument (quantitative, deductive)

This quantitative study will utilize a quasi-experimental design because it will examine \_\_\_\_\_ scores between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ for statistically significant differences among \_\_\_\_\_.

Correlational: examine the relationship between two continuous variables within the same group from a validated instrument (quantitative, deductive)

This quantitative study will utilize a correlational design because it will examine the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ among \_\_\_\_\_\_.

# Population and Sampling

The target population for this study will be in/at/from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_…

# Hypotheses (Quantitative Only)

Quasi-Experimental:

H0: No statistically significant difference exists in \_\_\_\_\_\_ between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ among…

Ha: A statistically significant difference exists in \_\_\_\_\_\_ between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ among…

Correlational:

H0: No statistically significant relationship exists between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ among…

Ha: A statistically significant relationship exists between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ among…

# Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative:

This study will test data for normality and relevant assumptions of appropriate statistical procedures. If data do not meet assumptions for parametric procedures (results apply to the population), nonparametric procedures (results apply only to the sample) will be utilized.

This study will utilize Pearson’s Product Moment of Correlation (parametric) or Spearman’s Rank Correlation (nonparametric) to test the hypotheses for statistically significant relationships.

This study will utilize a t-Test (parametric) or a Mann-Whitney U procedure (nonparametric) to test the hypotheses for statistically significant differences.