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From the Editorial Board: The Expanded Reach of Mediation

Tony Belak

The International Center for Compassionate Organizations

Ari Cowan

The International Center for Compassionate Organizations

Introduction

Mediation has been around since the days of the Phoenicians, where it was a practice used to settle disputes in commerce. It was also a practice in Ancient Greece and, later, in the Roman Empire. In some cultures, the mediator was a chief or wise man and was sometimes viewed as sacred. This calm approach to dealing with conflict appeared in Buddhist cultures and was considered a thoughtful and civilized way of settling differences in Confucian society.

Mediation has been used in a range of settings, including commercial, workplace, family, legal, international, and workplace environments. In recent years, mediators have applied various styles and philosophies in an attempt to assist parties in conflict to manage their differences. The following is a brief summary of traditional mediation styles.

Evaluative Mediation

Evaluative mediators assist negotiations, usually, by focusing on the value of the case in light of litigation prospects. Legal merits take precedent over personal issues, and the neutral's opinion over-shadows the realistic assessment of the parties themselves. This approach often separates the parties early, with the neutral shuttling between the camps, bringing terms and options constructed in the private sessions. This messenger method orients the parties to the mediator, not each other, and misses opportunities for subtle and creative resolutions by focusing on narrow bands of legal issues rather than the full spectrum of needs and interests the parties may express with interactive communication.

Facilitative Mediation

On the other hand, facilitative mediators assist negotiations by inducing the parties to employ principled bargaining techniques to identify issues and interests. Separating wants from needs is vital to success but can be time consuming, since it requires trust building between the parties to be effective. These mediators encourage the parties to listen to understand rather than listen to respond, de-emphasize legal issues, and confine themselves to assisting the parties to assess the value of their case rather than offer their appraisal of the likely outcome in court. Facilitative mediators see their role as limited to helping parties analyze litigation options for themselves. This self-determination can be unsettling for some but up-lifting for others. If there is a personal advisor or attorney practicing a paternalistic approach to representation, facilitative mediation may not be as effective as a more directive style. A facilitated approach may not be able to meet

the parties' needs or expectations with substance, since these mediators attempt a process requiring willingness to explore interests and feelings.

Transformative Mediation

Transformative mediation emerged with Bush and Folger's 1994 breakthrough book, *The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict*. Their approach is focused on strengthening the parties' personal capacity for decision making and increasing their willingness and ability to appreciate perspectives different from their own. The mediator's role is to help the parties enhance the quality of their decision making and communication, subject only to their own choices and limits. With the mediator's focus on empowerment and recognition, the process can result in not only resolution of the parties' immediate problem but also can cause significant changes in their personal capacities for self-determination and responsiveness to others, both in the immediate matter and beyond. The mediator fosters empowerment by supporting each party's deliberation and decision-making at every possible opportunity and encourages voluntary efforts to reach new understanding of the other's perspective. Without discernable steps, the mediator follows the parties through the process looking for opportunities to intervene and rarely separates them.

Other ADR Processes

While there are other ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution, Appropriate Dispute Resolution, or — in Australia — External Dispute Resolution) processes such as neutral case evaluation, moderated settlement conferences, summary jury trials, and non-binding arbitration which provide predictions of what litigation will bring, some mediators select a particular style because it streamlines the sharing of essential information through the questioning by the neutral. These directive neutrals believe that the highest value to be attained through conflict intervention is mutual satisfaction of competing individual needs with reduction of suffering and dissatisfaction from unmet needs. They tend to believe that social institutions, such as courts, should referee adversarial competition between individuals and encourage conflict resolution for all on equal terms. This style views people primarily as separate and autonomous, without an inherent nexus to others, who pursue self-interest and have irrational fears and emotions. The mediator defines her/his role as persuasive, directive, or evaluative with the goal of generating interest-based bargaining and finding agreements that solve tangible issues in the parties' conflict.

The Challenge of Mediation

No matter how diligent to task or knowledge, indicators for satisfaction among parties to mediation may focus on different variables. The most frequently given party response for satisfaction with the mediation process depends upon how important the participants were made to feel during the mediation. Parties complimented mediation when allowed to present their views fully and when given a sense of being heard, while helping them to understand each other. Parties' favorable attitudes toward mediation came from their perception of how the process worked, with two features in particular being most responsible:

1. The greater degree of participation in decision-making that parties experience in mediation;
2. The fuller opportunity to express themselves and communicate their views, both with the mediator and each other in a respectful exchange.

Conversely, when mediators denied parties real process control, party satisfaction levels were lower, to the conclusion that despite what we might have thought, parties to mediation do not place the most value on a process that provides expediency, efficiency, or finality of resolution. Actually, the likelihood of a favorable substantive outcome is not most important to parties; rather, an equally or more highly valued feature of mediation is procedural justice or fairness, which in practice means the greatest possible opportunity for party participation in determining outcome, compared with the assurance of a favorable outcome, and for party self-expression and communication.

Some would encourage those in dispute to listen carefully in recognition of the individual and, perhaps, be transformed by the experience to establish a long-lasting and meaningful resolution. Sometimes, this style of mediation does not seek immediate resolution, as much as it hopes enlightenment will guide the parties, now empowered, to fruitful co-existence. Then again, the directive mediator will intervene to assist the parties in their dispute believing evaluation by the neutral should be the basis for rational people to resolve the matter with a focus on the agreement; without settlement, the mediation has no purpose. Between these approaches are other styles and schools of thought in the delivery of mediation services. Most mediators tend to utilize a hybrid or combination approach as required.

From this abundance of styles and practices, the initial selection of the appropriate mediator to the particular conflict and parties is critical. The ultimate result will follow the path of the mediation process and end where the parties determine, but the emotional component of resolution is at risk. The “feeling” aspect of settlement can be an important part of the entire experience, not to be over-shadowed by the relief of resolution as much as the way it was accomplished. The mediator should be alert and responsive to emotional needs of the parties, if indicated, but often masked by the presence of counsel or positional bargaining.

The mediator brings to the settlement table his/her own personality, life experiences, education, and training. If the mediator is to be a vital component to resolution, these factors must also be considered in the totality of the process. The mediator’s agenda and assertiveness may undermine the parties’ self-determination and the resilience of any agreement. The mediator’s lack of attention to communication dynamics or emotional factors may result in unfair outcomes detrimental to the less powerful party or leave unexplored potential for change, growth, or healing. Moreover, the mediator’s quest for open communication might permit one party to dominate or exploit another. Also, parties may not desire to explore development of needs and feelings, instead insisting on more substance over subliminal satisfaction.

The parties’ willingness to adopt the mediator’s suggestions about their negotiation behavior, situational characteristics, and information gathering and sharing can be significant to the outcome. Until the parties trust the mediator and have confidence in the mediator’s ability, knowledge, and style, the parties restrict opportunities for successful resolution. If the neutral is to affect resolution through the parties, then the mediator must influence the parties’ perceptions and attitudes toward themselves, each other, the negotiations, and mediation itself. Parties’ attitudes can be a critical determination of mediation success. During the course of the mediation

process the parties will engage in the same learning patterns concerning the neutral as that of their negotiations. The parties will attempt to obtain information concerning the characteristics of the mediator to determine whether the mediator is impartial, trustworthy, and capable of helping them in resolving their conflict. Trustworthiness and sincerity may be deduced from the mediator's personal individuality, but whether he/she is capable of assisting the parties to negotiate a settlement can be determined by the strategies and style the mediator employs. Style and interaction serves to provide evidence upon which to confirm or reject the initial perceptions the parties formulate concerning the mediator and the process. The mediator's style and strategy determine the parties' attitudes toward mediation, and the parties' attitudes shape the outcome.

While each style has advantages, for many mediators the evaluative approach seems comfortable, since it allows the neutral to direct the parties to an apparent resolution. However, early movement to this style deprives the parties of the opportunity to fashion their own lasting solution. Nevertheless, there are parties who seek the advice of an authority figure and encourage the mediator to assume that role and guide them. Some disputants may view themselves as a victim in need of a power figure to recognize their plight and vindicate the wrong perpetrated on them. While their legal claim may be viable, the martyr mentality-oriented individual can be unrealistic concerning settlement and demand more than the courts will allow. One result not available through the courts is an apology, which is also often not available through directive or evaluative mediation with the neutral acting more like an expert than a liaison. A strong and guided approach could assist in a reality-based resolution for some, but the evaluation should be measured against the full exploration of options, real or imaginary.

Enter Compassionate Mediation

An answer to the challenges of the role of emotions, sensitivity to fairness, and the connection between the mediator and the parties is the newly developed Compassionate Mediation (also referred to as "Whole Person Mediation") — an advance form of mediation. This approach to conflict resolution embodies core elements of evaluative, facilitative, and transformative mediation and adds elements that give the mediator greater insight into the dynamics of the interaction of the parties as well as new tools to increase the efficacy of their mediation sessions. For the parties, Compassionate Mediation creates a safer, more balanced experience that takes into account the suffering that is the result of the conflict itself and the fear of adverse outcomes resulting from mediation.

Developed at the International Center for Compassionate Organizations by Ari Cowan and Tony Belak, JD, this new approach incorporates Belak's substantial background and rich experience in mediation with Cowan's Integrative Conflict Management Model (ICM²) to deepen and increase the effectiveness of the mediation process.

Compassionate Mediation also incorporates lessons from the work of International Center Fellow Paul Gilbert, PhD (author of *The Compassionate Mind*) and the Compassionate Mind Foundation (United Kingdom) along with the International Center's Research Director Lidewij Niezink, PhD's work in the empathy field. Stephen Karpman, MD's (San Francisco) Drama Triangle is also an important concept in Compassionate Mediation.

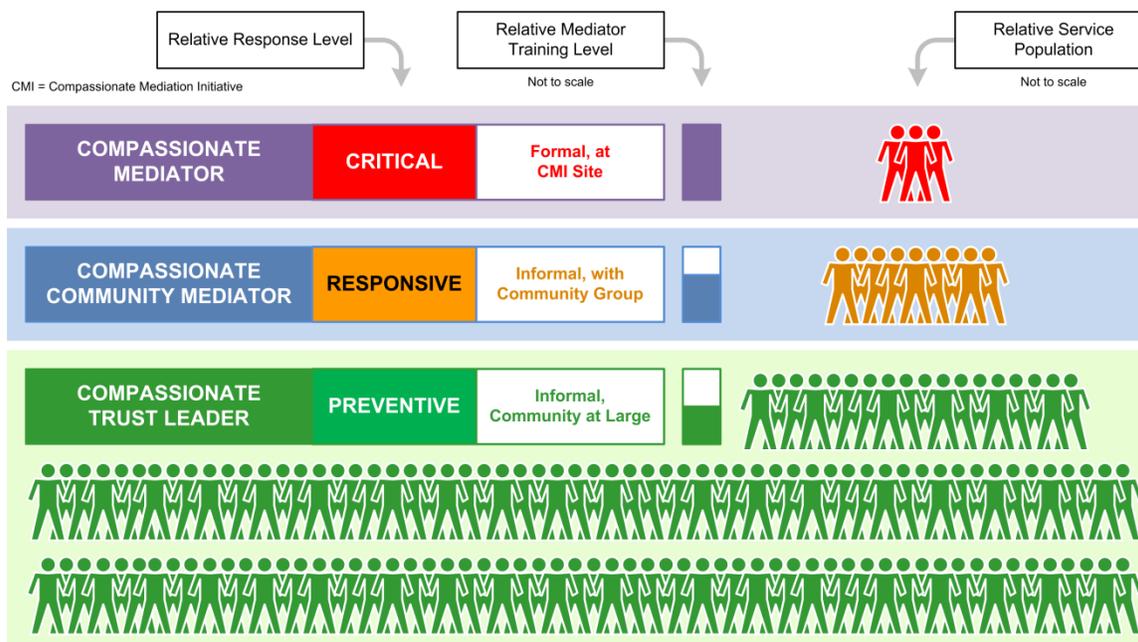
The work of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence provides a foundational component for Compassionate Mediation. The Emotional Intelligence impact on conflict issues such as bullying informs the development of Compassionate Mediation.

Expanding the Reach of Mediation

One of the unique things about Compassionate Mediation is that it expands the scope of services by developing three practitioner levels:

1. Compassionate Mediator — Professionals providing formal mediation services in situations in which legal issues (that may be legally binding or may result in legal action) are concerned.
2. Compassionate Community Mediator — Practitioners offering a semi-formal conflict management process to community members who are looking to work through their differences in a flexible, safe, and structured process.
3. Compassionate Community Trust Leader — Trained community members who provide information, education, and coaching about compassionate conflict management; are an active voice for compassion, understanding, and the working out of differences, and are a trusted members of community social, faith-based, political, or other groups.

Figure 1
Compassionate Mediation Application Levels



In addition to the fundamental elements of confidentiality, neutrality, listening skills, clarifying questions, open communication, suggestions (rather than ultimatums), and other essentials, Compassionate Mediation incorporates new concepts and research-based strategies — including those from neuroscience, psychology, emotional intelligence, and other recent findings in brain and social sciences — to assist the mediator and the parties to achieve positive results.

The implications for mediation are significant, expanding the body of understanding and skills as well as the application in daily living that provide basic skills to a broader audience that, in turn, can incorporate the concepts into families, workplaces, and communities. This approach may increase awareness of and engagement in more formal types of mediation.

Although new, Compassionate Mediation concepts have been applied at the University of Louisville through the Office of the Ombuds as well as course offerings at the university. The first cohort of Compassionate Trust Leaders graduated in August 2015 as part of the Challenged Communities Compassionate Mediation Initiative — a pilot program in Louisville, Kentucky. This program will be offered in the United States and internationally in 2016, expanding the reach of mediation worldwide.

The Advocacy and Corrective Strategies of the National Football League: Addressing Concussions and Player Safety

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Abstract

The issue of player safety in the National Football League (NFL) reached a heightened level of prominence when more than 4500 former players sued the league claiming that football was the cause of their long-term health conditions. Although a settlement was reached in 2013 for a reported \$765 million, the resolution of a legal case does not absolve an organization from public judgment or mean that policies do not need to be implemented to address the problem. A response is necessary because some responsibility for the problem is being attributed to the NFL. This article examines the advocacy role of the NFL in implementing corrective actions to address the problem. The NFL has implemented a comprehensive corrective action strategy in three areas: (1) making the current NFL game safer, (2) investing in research on concussion and brain injury science, and (3) developing and implementing youth football education and training programs.

Introduction

The issue of concussions, traumatic brain injury, and overall player safety in the National Football League (NFL) reached a heightened level of prominence in 2013 when the league settled a lawsuit involving more than 4500 former players for a reported \$765 million (Futterman & Clark, 2013). In the lawsuit the players claimed that football was the cause of their suffering from many long-term health conditions. Accusations toward the NFL included the league minimizing the impact of playing football on long-term health conditions, that the league had faulty policies in diagnosing and treating concussions, that the league produced misleading science to deliberately minimize the scope of the problem, and that the league marketed the game in way that highlighted its physical nature. These accusations along with profiles of former NFL players deteriorating cognitive functions were detailed in 2013 in a PBS' *Frontline* documentary based on reporting in the highly publicized book *League of Denial: The NFL, Concussions, and the Battle for Truth*. Other media outlets, such as HBO's *Real Sports*, ESPN's *Outside the Lines*, and *Sports Illustrated*, have also chronicled former players with failing health conditions.

The conflict has created public relations scrutiny and potential business concerns for the NFL. The resolution of a legal case does not absolve an organization from public judgment or mean that policies do not need to be implemented to address the problem. A response is necessary because some responsibility for the occurrence of the problem is being attributed to the organization (e.g., Benoit, 1995, 2000; Len-Rios & Benoit, 2004), in this instance the NFL. In that light, this article will examine the actions that the NFL is taking to address the issue of concussions and player safety.

The concept of advocacy is for the organization to be proactive in addressing a problem. One advocacy approach identified by several researchers is for an organization to take corrective action, implementing steps to address the problem (e.g., Benoit, 1995, Coombs, 1999, 2006; Dutta & Pullig, 2011). In its advocacy approach the NFL has implemented a comprehensive corrective action strategy in three areas: (1) making the current NFL game safer, including new sideline protocols for when a player has a concussion, (2) investing in research on concussion and brain injury science, and (3) developing and implementing youth football education and training programs designed to ensure kids learn to play football using the proper techniques for blocking and tackling that take the head out of the game.

The implementation of corrective action that addresses the problem allows the organization to communicate a positive message. The advocacy of corrective action emanates from a larger philosophy that the actions of the organization and the communication of these actions can persuade media coverage in the most positive light, which could ultimately positively influence public opinion (e.g., Benoit, 1995; McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 1997; Phau & Wan, 2006). From a communication standpoint the importance of advocacy in a conflict management situation is that an information vacuum presents itself, creating a need for the organization to provide its perspective. If the organization is not providing its perspective of the situation others could fill the vacuum with speculation, misinformation, or information that is detrimental to the organization (e.g., Coombs, 2006).

The importance of advocacy and corrective action on the part of the NFL is exacerbated in this specific conflict because the problem of player safety needing to be addressed is at the core of the brand's activities, the impact of the collisions that come from playing football. The problem of player safety is also perpetual and cannot ever be completely solved as football remains a physical, violent sport. The problem still must be managed with scrutiny toward the league that it has not properly addressed the issue and questions of how it will address the issue moving forward potentially creating business concerns. How the NFL addresses the specific risk that its game is contributing to long-term traumatic brain injury and player safety overall thus becomes an interesting area of inquiry. Roger Goodell, NFL Commissioner, stated, "as a league, we have an unwavering commitment to player health and making our game safer at all levels. This is, and will remain, our top priority" (NFL Press Release, October 4, 2013).

Literature Review

Several streams of research enlighten as to the necessity of a strategic approach for the NFL to address the problem of player safety. A response is necessary because some responsibility for the occurrence of the problem is being attributed to the organization (e.g., Benoit, 1995, 2000; Len-Rios & Benoit, 2004). In this case the NFL needs to address the long-term health of its former players that is the result of the impact of collisions that come from playing the game of football.

A response in this instance is heightened because the organization has to deal with a problem that is at the core of the brand's activities (e.g., Fortunato, 2011). Especially in these instances when the problem is at the core of the brand's activities the organization has to make critical strategic policy decisions and develop communication strategies for

addressing the problem. Strategies are necessary to explain not only what are the facts of the situation, but provide a feeling that steps are being taken to help ensure that similar situations will not happen again (e.g., Dutta & Pullig, 2011; Fortunato, 2008). The actions that the organization takes in dealing with the situation and how it communicatively responds during these times could drastically diminish the harm if managed properly or significantly increase the harm if mismanaged (e.g., Benson, 1988). Dutta and Pullig (2011) claim the response will help determine long-term consumer confidence toward the brand.

Response Strategies

Researchers have provided strategic response possibilities and have explained the importance of an organization implementing corrective action measures (e.g., Benoit, 1995; Coombs, 1999, 2006; Dutta & Pullig, 2011, Reid, 2013; Robitaille, 2011; Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2011). Robitaille (2011) explains that although corrective action involves a commitment of money, time, and effort, through thoughtful deliberation and responsible planning these investments can lead to positive market outcomes. Reid (2013) does acknowledge that a lack of resources could be problematic for the organization trying to overcome the situation. He states, “the right solution is usually determined by considering the cost and resources required, and the time available to find the best solution” (p. 46). Reid (2013) makes a critical distinction between containment, implementing temporary measures that curtail the situation but do not necessarily completely solve the problem, and corrective action, the purpose of which is to “prevent the recurrence of the problem” with actions “ranging from incremental changes to innovative solutions” (p. 46). He adds that it is imperative to verify the effectiveness of corrective actions implemented.

The theory of image restoration attributed to Benoit (1995) focuses on corrective action as one of the most beneficial strategic options to address a crisis. Benoit (1995) posits that communication is goal driven and designed to maintain a positive reputation and repair a tattered image. Through the theory of image restoration he identifies a series of general defense strategies that the organization can implement. An organization can engage in corrective action by implementing steps to solve the problem and prevent a repeat of the crisis (e.g., Benoit, 1995; Len-Rios & Benoit, 2004). An organization can also implement a mortification strategy, where the organization accepts responsibility for the act and apologizes (e.g., Benoit, 1995; Len-Rios & Benoit, 2004).

Other strategies identified by Benoit (1995) include a denial strategy that the crisis even occurred, an evasion of responsibility strategy, where the organization attempts to reduce responsibility for the crisis by claiming it did not have the ability to prevent the crisis, or an ingratiation strategy where the organization tries to reduce the offensiveness of the act by reinforcing its good traits. The ingratiation strategy tries to create a more complete context with which the organization should be evaluated. It is important to point out often not one singular strategy is implemented, but several response actions and communication initiatives occur simultaneously (e.g., Fortunato, 2008).

Coombs (1999, 2006) characterizes crisis response strategies by their level of acceptance by critical stakeholders. He identifies a full apology, where the organization takes responsibility for the crisis and requests forgiveness, as having very high

acceptance. According to Coombs (1999, 2006) there is high acceptance for corrective action, where the organization conveys a notion that actions are being taken to prevent a recurrence of the crisis. Coombs (2011) clearly emphasizes the need for corrective action as part of the overall response strategy, stating, “organizations have been considered negligent if they did not take reasonable action to reduce or eliminate known or reasonably foreseeable risks that could result in harm” (p. 16). Denial that the crisis even occurred or attacking the accuser, where the organization confronts the entity that is claiming there is a crisis, both have no acceptance. All other responses have mild acceptance according to Coombs (1999, 2006).

In stressing the need for corrective action Dutta and Pullig (2011) claim that organizational conflicts can be either performance-related, reducing the brand’s ability to deliver its functional benefits, or values-related, involving social or ethical issues confronting the organization rather than directly involving the product itself. They indicate that “functional benefits are more important to brand satisfaction than symbolic benefits” (p. 1282). Keller (2005) contends that functional benefits place the brand among the competition as it is difficult for a brand to overcome poor product performance. He does point out that values-related benefits can be helpful in brand positioning and differentiation. Dutta and Pullig (2011) are unequivocal that corrective action is the most effective response for performance-related issues. They explain that “in corrective action, a firm accepts responsibility and promises remedial and possibly preventive action” (p. 1282). They claim for a values-related issue there is benefit for both corrective action and reduction-of-offensiveness response strategies.

Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2011) stress that crisis situations present threats to an organization’s goals, while simultaneously offering the organization growth and learning opportunities. They argue that organizations must have a prospective versus retrospective vision, emphasizing that they “learn from their mistakes, infuse their communication with bold optimism, and stress rebuilding rather than issues of blame or fault” (p. 18). This learning ideally will help the organization “ensure that it will not experience a similar crisis in the future” (p. 18). Through corrective action some argue that a crisis presents an opportunity for the organization to emerge as a leader on the issue (e.g., Fortunato, 2008; Reid, 2013; Robitaille, 2011; Ulmer, et. al., 2011).

The implementation of corrective action allows for the organization to communicate a positive message (e.g., Fortunato, 2008; Reid, 2013). The advocacy of corrective action emanates from a larger philosophy that the actions of the organization and the communication of these actions can persuade media coverage in the most positive light, which could ultimately positively influence public opinion (e.g., Benoit, 1995; McCombs, et. al., 1997; Phau & Wan, 2006).

From a communication standpoint the importance of proactive advocacy in a conflict management situation is that an information vacuum presents itself. With this vacuum formed there is a need for the organization to provide a quick response to the situation and present its perspective (e.g., Coombs, 2006). If the organization is not providing its perspective of the situation others could fill the vacuum with speculation, misinformation, or information that is detrimental to the organization. Coombs (2006) explains, “a quick response is an active response because it tries to fill the vacuum with facts. A slow response allows others to fill the vacuum with speculation and/or

misinformation. Those others could be ill informed or could use the opportunity to attack the organization” (p. 172).

One of the mitigating factors in evaluating the public response to a conflict situation is the popularity of the brand and its products. Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, and Rao (2000) point out that consumer commitment to the brand is an important concept in evaluating the success of a crisis response. In this case the popularity of the NFL is certainly a factor in how people will respond to the league’s handling of the issue of player safety. Several researchers explain that experiencing sports has been shown to provide emotional satisfaction (e.g., Earnheart, Haridakis, & Hugenberg, 2012; Tutko, 1989; Wann, Royalty, & Roberts, 2000). Because experiencing sports can satisfy emotional needs, the sports audience has been described as very loyal which results in consistent and enduring behaviors, including attendance, watching games on television, and participation in other media forms (e.g., Funk & James, 2001; Wann, et. al., 2000). Because of their emotional satisfaction and loyalty fans tend to react differently to sports scandals (e.g., Fink, Parker, Brett, & Higgins, 2009; Lee, Bang, & Lee, 2013).

Method

To learn of the NFL’s perspective on how it is handling the issue of concussions, traumatic brain injury, and overall player safety the actions and communication emanating from the league are examined. Studying the actions and communication emanating from the organization to ascertain its perspective of an issue has been done in previous research (e.g., Basil & Erlandson, 2008; Cho & Benoit, 2005; Choi, 2012; Dawkins, 2004; Deri, 2006; Fortunato, 2008; Golob & Bartlett, 2007; Reber & Berger, 2005). Several of these researchers use a singular document put forth by an organization that explains how it is handling a certain issue as the primary focus of analysis. For example, researchers have used the corporate social responsibility report of a company as the focus of analysis (e.g., Basil & Erlandson, 2008; Dawkins, 2004; Deri, 2006; Golob & Bartlett, 2007). Deri (2006) highlights that the company reports respond to desires for greater transparency in the interest of gaining trust and reducing criticism about the company’s conduct.

The primary communication from the NFL detailing all that the league is doing regarding player safety is its annual Health and Safety Report. This report will be a focus of analysis for this article. Jeff Miller, NFL senior vice president of health and safety policy, explained the goal of the report is to “inform the public about the work that is being done at the league level and to make our game and sport safer” (NFL Press Release, September 25, 2013). The Health and Safety Report is available on the NFL’s web site dedicated to football safety, www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport/.

The rationale behind this research approach is that studying the actions and communication emanating from the NFL itself allows for best learning the league’s strategic perspective. If implementation and communication of corrective action measures are needed in addressing a conflict as argued by several researchers (e.g., Benoit, 1995; Coombs, 1999, 2006; Dutta & Pullig, 2011, Reid, 2013; Robitaille, 2011; Ulmer, et. al., 2011), there must be some description of the NFL’s strategy. These corrective action strategies of the NFL can then be analyzed in comparison to the best practices identified in the literature. In this study describing the actions and

communication of the NFL is important because it helps align theoretical claims with practical techniques and lends insight into several areas of study, such as advocacy strategies, corrective strategies, image repair strategies, conflict management, and brand management.

Findings

The Lawsuit

In 2012, more than 4500 former players initiated a lawsuit against the NFL claiming that football was the cause of their long-term health conditions. The long-form complaint filed in the Eastern District Court in Philadelphia on July 17, 2012, explained that the lawsuit “arises from the pathological and debilitating effects of mild traumatic brain injuries (MTBI) caused by the concussive and sub-concussive impacts that have affected former professional football players in the NFL” (Complaint, p. 1). The complaint accused the league of having a role in minimizing the impact of playing football on these health conditions. The complaint alleged “the NFL, as the organizer, marketer, and face of the most popular sport in the United States, in which MTBI is a regular occurrence and in which players are at risk for MTBI, was aware of the evidence and the risks associated with repetitive traumatic brain injuries virtually at the inception, but deliberately ignored and actively concealed the information” (Complaint, p. 1). The complaint noted that the NFL’s marketing highlighted “the ferocity and brutality of the sport” (Complaint, p. 5). Finally, the players alleged that the NFL’s research and the promotion of its findings was misleading, arguing, “the NFL made its biased and falsified position known by way of gratuitous press releases, publications in scientific literature, and other communications” (Complaint, p. 5).

The NFL attempted to get the case dismissed by arguing that issues of player safety were covered in the collective-bargaining agreement between the league and its players (Kaplan, 2012). United States District Court Judge Anita Brody, however, ordered mediation between the league and the players involved in the lawsuit. In ordering the mediation process, journalists Steve Fainaru and Mark Fainaru-Wada (2013) detailed how the judge pressured both sides to reach a settlement. They reported that Judge Brody pressured the players by indicating that the bulk of their case was in danger of being dismissed. She simultaneously pressured the NFL that continuing with the lawsuit could involve the league having to disclose information regarding what it knew about concussions and the continuing public relations damage that would occur throughout the duration of a trial. Fainaru and Fainaru-Wada (2013) claimed that the players initially requested a settlement of more than \$2 billion.

On August 29, 2013, the NFL and the players settled the lawsuit for a reported \$765 million. The settlement included \$75 million for baseline medical exams for former players and \$10 million for medical research (Futterman & Clark, 2013; NFL press release, August 30, 2013). The settlement made all former players, not only those who were part of the lawsuit, eligible for money. Payments would be capped at \$5 million for the players suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, \$4 million for those diagnosed after their death with a brain condition, and \$3 million for players suffering from dementia (NFL press release, August 30, 2013). The NFL did not have to admit any guilt in the settlement (Futterman & Clark, 2013).

Layn Phillips, former U.S. District Court judge who served as the mediator in the case, commented that the settlement provided “relief and support where it is needed at a time when it is most needed” (Futterman & Clark, 2013). Christopher Seeger, the players’ lead attorney, added the settlement provided “help quickly to the men who suffered neurological injuries. It will do so faster and at far less cost, both financially and emotionally, than could have ever been accomplished by continuing to litigate” (Futterman & Clark, 2013). Kevin Mawae, a 12-year veteran offensive lineman and former president of the NFL Players’ Association, however, argued that “basically for the cost of its least valuable team, the NFL was able to remove a huge monkey off its back. But even worse than the money, it’s that they don’t have to admit guilt and the players will never be able to know the information that the league knew about the issue” (Futterman & Clark, 2013). Roger Goodell, NFL Commissioner, commented on the settlement, stating, “we were able to find a common ground to be able to get the relief to the players and their families now rather than spending years litigating when those benefits wouldn’t go the players.” Goodell added, “this is a significant amount of money and the plaintiffs also believed it was an appropriate amount. The mediator felt it was an appropriate amount. It’s a tremendous amount of money that we think is going to go to the right purpose, which is helping players and their families” (Begley, 2013).

In the settlement the NFL will pay half the total amount within the first three years, but then has seventeen years to pay off the rest of the settlement. The total cost of the settlement amounts to approximately \$24 million for each franchise, or \$1.2 million per year. In comparison to the NFL’s revenues this monetary settlement amount is not significant. Some reports estimate that the NFL earned \$10 billion in 2013 (Futterman & Clark, 2013; Kaplan, 2013). To further illustrate the prosperous economic future for the NFL, in 2011 the league reached an extension of its broadcast contracts that will pay the league close to \$6 billion annually through 2022 (*Street & Smith’s Sports Business Journal*, 2012). The league has also been strategizing to have the teams, and not the league itself, make the settlement payments so that each team could account for the payment as a tax-deductible business expense (Kaplan, 2013). Finally, any players receiving payment as part of the NFL case settlement would give up their rights to sue the NCAA regarding culpability on issues of player safety (Kaplan, 2014).

Media Scrutiny

Hopwood (2007) states, “the attention of today’s media is always drawn towards anything controversial and negative” (p. 295). The lawsuit settlement did not end the issue for the NFL. The issue of player safety continued to receive intense media scrutiny. The NFL’s role in minimizing the impact of playing football on these health conditions was most notably highlighted in 2013 in a PBS’ *Frontline* documentary based on reporting in the highly publicized book *League of Denial: The NFL, Concussions, and the Battle for Truth* by authors Steve Fainaru and Mark Fainaru-Wada.

The *Frontline* documentary aired on October 8, 2013, but without the cooperation of the NFL or an appearance by Roger Goodell and other NFL executives. Doctors who had advised the league on the issue of concussions were allowed to decide for themselves if they wanted to participate in the documentary (Sandomir, 2013). Jeff Miller, NFL senior vice president of health and safety, commented in a statement in response to the media

scrutiny that the league is a “leader in addressing the issue of head injuries” and “by any standard the NFL has made a profound commitment to the health and safety of its players that can be seen in every aspect of the game, and the results have been both meaningful and measurable” (Mihoces, 2013b).

The *Frontline* investigation was originally through a partnership with ESPN. The NFL faced further scrutiny when ESPN pulled itself out of the production of the *Frontline* documentary (Miller & Belson, 2013; Sandomir, 2013). As a major broadcast rights holder for the NFL, paying the league an estimated \$1.9 billion per year (*Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal*, 2012), speculation was that the NFL pressured ESPN into opting out of the project. At the very least speculation was that ESPN chose to pull out as to not jeopardize a relationship with the most prominent sports league in America (Miller & Belson, 2013; Sandomir, 2013).

The decision by ESPN to remove its name, logo, and credit from the PBS documentary came after a lunch that included Roger Goodell, John Skipper, ESPN president, and John Wildhack, ESPN executive vice president for production (Miller & Belson, 2013). ESPN claimed its decision to remove itself from the *Frontline* program was due to a lack of editorial control. ESPN released a statement that explained “because ESPN is neither producing nor exercising editorial control over the *Frontline* documentaries, there will be no co-branding involving ESPN on the documentaries or their marketing materials. The use of ESPN’s marks could incorrectly imply that we have editorial control” (Sandomir, 2013). Raney Aronson-Rath, deputy executive producer of *Frontline*, claimed that ESPN was aware that *Frontline* would have editorial control over the content in the documentary and its web site, while ESPN would maintain control of the content put on its network and its web site (Sandomir, 2013).

ESPN did point out that its *Outside the Lines* program had featured the issue of concussions and player safety on nine occasions, including the August 18, 2013, program that strongly questioned the qualifications and the research of Dr. Elliot Pellman, former chairman of the NFL’s Traumatic Brain Injury Committee. ESPN also cited that Steve Fainaru and Mark Fainaru-Wada, the authors of the book in which the *Frontline* documentary was based, were both ESPN employees. The authors did state that they had never been asked to alter their reporting (Miller & Belson, 2013). They also appeared on several ESPN platforms to promote the book and the *Frontline* documentary in the week of its airing.

NFL Strategy: Corrective Action Policies and Initiatives

The resolution of a legal case does not absolve an organization from public judgment or mean that policies do not need to be implemented to address the problem. As several researchers indicate corrective action steps must be taken (e.g., Benoit, 1995; Coombs, 1999, 2006; Dutta & Pullig, 2011; Reid, 2013; Robitaille, 2011; Ulmer, et. al., 2011). The NFL has undertaken a comprehensive corrective action strategy that involves three areas: (1) making the current NFL game safer, (2) investing in research on concussion and brain injury science, and (3) developing and implementing youth football education and training programs.

NFL Game Safety

The NFL has changed several rules to enhance player safety as well as its sideline protocols for evaluating concussions. The kickoff was moved from the 30 yard line to the 35 yard line to increase touchbacks and decrease high speed collisions. In 2011, the first year that the kickoff was moved, kickoff returns fell by 32 percent. Rich McKay, president of the Atlanta Falcons and chairman of the NFL's competition committee, stated, "that rule change was 100 percent focused on safety" (Mihoces, 2012). Largely due to this one rule change in 2011, according to the NFL, total concussions in the game dropped 12.5 percent (Mihoces, 2012). Reid (2013) emphasizes the importance of verifying that corrective actions are proving to be effective.

The identification of a "defenseless player" has been expanded. Defenseless players included kickers, punters, and long-snappers. Under the expanded definition a wide receiver who has made a catch is considered a defenseless player until he has time to protect himself. Quarterbacks are protected against any hits to the head or neck area. Hits delivered to defenseless players or quarterbacks result in penalties and fines. These fines are more extensive for hits to the player's head and neck area. For the 2013 season it became a penalty for players, including running backs, to initiate contact with the crown of their helmet outside of the tackle box. In 2013, wearing protective thigh pads and knee equipment became mandatory (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, p. 42).

Although these rules were meant to protect players, several of them disapproved of the changes. Regarding moving the kickoff, New York Giants return specialist Jerrel Jernigan stated, "you can understand where they're coming from; they're trying to prevent injuries, but it's football. We need to move it back and bring the excitement back to the game" (Mihoces, 2012). Matt Forte, Chicago Bears running back, offered his opinion on not being able to use the crown of the helmet, commenting "it might be the most absurd suggestion for a rule change that I've ever heard" (Bell, 2013). Retired running back Jerome Bettis stated, "the problem is that you lower your head when you lower your shoulder. That's how you protect yourself. If you run exposed, you're going to get hurt." He added, "I applaud trying to make the game safer, but at some point, the game's got to be the game" (Bell, 2013).

Finally, through the Collective Bargaining Agreement changes were made regarding how concussions are diagnosed, treated, and how determinations are made as to when a player can return to the field. Players will have to pass a series of tests on the sideline during a game or during the week after leaving the game because of a concussion diagnosis before being cleared to play. Teams are required to use an electronic tablet with an application that has a step-by-step checklist of protocols and the injured player's baseline concussion tests. In 2013, each team would have its medical staff supported by an independent neuro-trauma consultant on the sideline. Additional trainers also now view the game from an in-stadium booth to try to detect player behavior which might signify he has concussion symptoms. Even NFL referees are encouraged to notice if a player needs to be medically evaluated (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, pp. 42-43).

Investments in Concussion and Brain Injury Science Research

The NFL has invested millions of dollars in research initiatives to study concussion and brain injury science. The NFL in partnership with General Electric, a leader in medical imaging, and Under Armour, an innovator of performance equipment, created the Head Health Initiative. The program has two components. The first is a four-year, \$40 million research grant to develop imaging technologies that will improve diagnosis, outcome prediction, and targeted therapy treatment for patients with traumatic brain injury. The research will be guided by an independent advisory board consisting of medical specialists from sports leagues, universities, and the military (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, p. 18).

The second component is the Head Health Challenge. This program is a two-year, \$20 million commitment. Two challenges were created in which proposals were submitted to win part of the total \$10 million annual award. The first challenge launched in March 2013 focused on methods of diagnosing traumatic brain injury. In January, 2014, sixteen organizations received a \$300,000 award out of more than 400 entries from 27 countries. The second challenge launched in September 2013 focused on innovative approaches for better protecting the brain from injury and tracking head impacts in real time (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, p. 18). NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell explained, "we are very pleased to have Under Armour join our work with GE to help accelerate progress and find better ways to protect the brain from injury. This is a perfect example of our shared commitment to making the culture of sports better and safer -- especially for young athletes" (NFL Press Release, September 6, 2013).

The NFL also gave the league's largest ever single donation through a five-year, \$30 million grant to the National Institutes of Health for independent research on concussion and brain injury science. The focus of this research is to develop a better understanding of chronic traumatic encephalopathy and traumatic brain injury through the development of enhanced neuro-imaging tools as well as comparing the effects of repetitive traumatic events and single events (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, p. 23).

Youth Football Education and Training Programs

The NFL is concerned that there has been a drop in youth football participation (D'Allesandro, 2013; Maese, 2012; Mihoces, 2013a). This is especially important in light of research indicating that playing the sport helps increase the interest in that sport (e.g., Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2006; Tutko, 1989). These youths are not only the NFL's future players, they are very much the NFL's future customers. Educational and training programs have been developed and implemented for youth football leagues designed to teach kids the proper techniques for blocking and tackling. Roger Goodell, NFL Commissioner, stated, "it's important to teach the right fundamentals at the earliest ages. That stays with them throughout their careers, whether it ends in the NFL or whether it ends in college or high school. It's important for what we do on the NFL level to do it right, to have the proper techniques" (Maese, 2012).

The largest educational and training initiative is in collaboration with USA Football, the official youth development partner of the NFL. The "Heads Up Football" initiative was launched in April 2013 with the main objective "to improve player safety at the

youth level by focusing on proper tackling technique and taking the head out of the game” (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, p. 34). The elements of the program are to teach players to keep their heads up and out of the line of contact, train coaches to properly teach the game’s fundamentals, train coaches on concussion-related protocols, train coaches about proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting, and teach coaches and players about proper hydration.

The program is explained on the web site, www.usafootball.com. At the web site youth leagues could sign up to participate. In its first year, the program had more than 2,800 youth leagues and 90,000 coaches participate. The Heads Up Football program has been endorsed by the Pop Warner organization, the country’s largest running youth football organization. All 1,300 Pop Warner leagues will participate in the Heads Up Football Program reaching almost 600,000 youth players.

Finally, the NFL supported legislation that has been adopted in 48 states that governs when kids can return to play after having a concussion. The movement has been led by the family of Zackery Lystedt, a youth player who suffered significant brain injury when returning to play in a middle-school football game after sustaining a concussion. The laws have three components that focus on a simple concept, “when in doubt, sit them out”: (1) athletes, parents, and coaches must be educated about the danger of concussions every year, (2) if a player is suspected of having a concussion, he or she must be removed from the game or practice, and (3) a licensed health care professional must clear the player to return (www.nflevolution.com/healthandsafetyreport, p. 32).

Discussion

The NFL remains incredibly popular and its annual revenue exceeds \$10 billion (Futterman & Clark, 2013). Still there are certainly potential business implications surrounding the issue of concussions and player safety. The NFL is concerned about the decline in youth football participation and the public relations scrutiny of several former players publicly disclosing some of the severe health problems they are confronting. Although the NFL reached a settlement with its former players for a reported \$765 million, the resolution of a legal case does not absolve an organization from public judgment or mean that policies do not need to be implemented to address the problem. New policies are especially important in this instance because the problem is at the core of the brand’s activities, the physical nature of playing football. A response is also necessary because some responsibility for the occurrence of the problem is being attributed to the organization (e.g., Benoit, 1995, 2000; Len-Rios & Benoit, 2004), in this instance the NFL.

Researchers are unequivocal that corrective action measures that address the problem need to be implemented and communicated (e.g., Benoit, 1995; Coombs, 1999, 2006; Dutta & Pullig, 2011, Reid, 2013; Robitaille, 2011; Ulmer, et. al., 2011). In that light, the NFL implemented a comprehensive corrective action strategy in three areas: (1) making the current NFL game safer, (2) investing in research on concussion and brain injury science, and (3) developing and implementing youth football educational and training programs. This advocacy approach of the NFL engaging and investing in corrective action does align with best practices as defined in the academic literature for an organization confronted with a conflict.

By implementing and investing in corrective action measures the NFL has a positive message to communicate. As the literature indicates, during a crisis an information vacuum forms (e.g., Coombs, 2006). By communicating about its new policies the NFL is able to fill that information vacuum and convey the notion that it understands the magnitude of the problem and that corrective actions are being taken to address the problem. To facilitate communication about its actions the NFL makes its annual Health and Safety Report available online. In communicating about its efforts the NFL creates a more complete context in which it should be evaluated in terms of the issue of concussions, traumatic brain injury, and overall player safety. The NFL is thus also implementing an ingratiation strategy as defined by Benoit. In fact, through the implementation of these initiatives the NFL is very much trying to emerge as a leader in addressing the problem. This strategy has been used by other organizations when responding to a conflict (e.g., Fortunato, 2008; Reid, 2013; Robitaille, 2011; Ulmer, et. al., 2011).

Studying the NFL's response to the issue of concussions and player safety provides an example of an organization executing theoretical concepts in a practical situation. While there might be some variation as to how to respond to a particular crisis, there is consensus about the importance of some response during these situations with an emphasis that the response includes corrective action measures. It must be noted that the corrective action measures of an organization are only one of the variables that determine consumer behavior. Ahluwalia et. al. (2000) point out that audience loyalty toward a brand remains a factor in determining consumer behavior. In this specific case many fans are still going to watch and attend NFL games regardless of the league's actions. However, an organization such as the NFL not contributing some of its resources to address the problem of player safety would certainly be reason for criticism.

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Influence of Personality and Family on College Students' Conflict Handling Styles

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of personality and family conflict resolution on conflict handling styles of college students. Personality was measured by Big Five Inventory (BFI), while family conflict was measured by Family Conflict Resolution scale (FCRS). Conflict handling styles were measured by the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument. The study participants were 359 volunteer college students. The results indicated there was significant influence of two BFI personalities (Extraversion and Agreeableness) on the conflict handling styles as measured by the MODE instrument. There was no impact of family conflict resolution on handling conflict. The study makes a valuable contribution in understanding how personality and family influences conflict resolution.

Introduction

There is a view that individuals tend to respond to conflicting situations based on their personality or other individual factors (Callanan, Benzing, & Perri, 2006). In this view, it is believed that individuals order their responses to conflict in a hierarchical manner such that their most dominant style is the approach they would likely use in reaction to a conflict. Renwick's research has indicated that basic psychological predisposition and differences in basic personality dimensions influence the manner in which individuals approach and manage conflicts (Moberg, 2001).

Studies have revealed that there is a negative effect on student learning when student and inter-parental conflict occurs (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, Papp, & Dukewich, 2002; El-Sheikh, 1997). Davies and Cummings (1994) argued that there is less likelihood of a negative effect on children and young adults if conflict resolution methods are well established in the family conflict resolution styles. Cummings, Ballard, El-Sheikh, and Lake (1991) indicated that children who are subjected to unresolved inter-parental conflict display angrier reactions than those

whose inter-parental conflict has been resolved. Poskos, Handal, and Ubinger (2010) recommend more research in this area to ascertain the effects of family conflict resolution as perceived by children, adolescent, or young adults. The current study intends to use the Big Five Inventory (BFI) instrument to examine whether a strong relationship exists between personality and conflict handling styles among undergraduate college students.

Conflict Handling Styles

Conflict handling refers to the resolution of the conflict. It involves the aspect of approach to conflict, behavior carried out to resolve the conflict, the propensity to handle conflict, and the relationship between individuals involved in the conflict (Janeja, 2011). Canary, Cupach and Messman (1995) noted many strategies, tactics, and styles in handling conflicts. Strategies are the approaches used to handle conflicts and can be integrative when parties work together, distributive when parties works against each other, and avoidant when a group works in opposition to another party. Conflict styles are, “individual tendencies to manage conflict episodes in a particular way” (Canary, Cupach and Messman, 1995). Curall, Friedman, Tidd, and Tsai (2000) noted that conflict styles tend to be predominant at a period of time and there are specific situations that requires certain styles

Conflict resolution practitioners must be prepared to deal with many problems and a diverse body of people in conflict resolution. Numerous studies have shown that Americans from diverse racial and ethnic groups experience conflict differently from each other and from members of outer groups (Bresnahan, Donohue, Shearman, & Guan, 2009). For example, African Americans show preference towards the highly expressive, affect-laden conflict style (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). Asian Americans prefer avoidance and a use of trusted go-betweens to seek conflict resolution (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Native Americans have been shown to prefer restraint and use of a third-party elder for conflict orientation (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

Noting these differences in conflict orientation on the basis of ethnicity, it is prudent to predict that there would also be a difference in attitudes toward conflict and a willingness to seek mediation, especially if mediators are from different groups compared to parties in the conflict (Bresnahan, Donohue, Shearman and Guan, 2009). It is recommended for mediators to formulate culturally sensitive intervention to mitigate feelings of distance from the mediators and the parties concerned in the conflict. The approaches individuals use to resolve interpersonal conflicts can be due to different factors such as personality traits; family origins, which would imply a social learning theory; and power inequalities (Bandura, 1986; Weitzman & Weitzman, 2006). However, studies have indicated that certain trait-like tendencies are more reliable in predicting how individuals will attempt to control a conflict, look for a solution, or avoid the conflict all together (Moberg, 2001; Noore, 2006). College-educated people in their 20s and 30s have reported feeling unskilled in dealing with interpersonal conflicts (Gardner & Lambert, 1992). Weitzman and Weitzman (2006) indicated effective conflict resolution by young people requires them to integrate their emotions, cognition, and personal skills. These findings are important for scholars, schools, and employers to recognize the social skills and try to connect them with the intellectual and relational growth of young people as they join the wide community in various capacities (Taylor, 2010).

Personality and Conflict Management Styles

Personality is a construct which describes the psychological type of an individual, and personality theory tries to explain how normal, healthy people differ from each other (Goel & Khan, 2012). Personality can directly be associated with quality of social interaction and relationships among people (Connolly, White, Stevens and Burstein, 1987). Personality factors are very significant in explaining how individuals deal with conflicts based on their interactions on a daily basis. Dealing with conflict positively leads to agreement and helps people to maintain relationships during the tense conflict phase (King, 1999). Herkenhoff (2004) argued that people who are intelligent emotionally make good friends, good partners, and better leaders. Different features of personality as described by various personality theories are found to affect conflict handling styles used by people in various social settings (Antonioni, 2007).

Antonioni (1998) concluded that personality does seem to play an important role in determining conflict behaviors. Barbuto, Phipps, and Xu (2009) indicated that there are some relationships that exist between conflict handling styles and the five dimensions of personality. Terhune (1970) revealed a strong relationship between conflict and personality traits exhibited by the parties who are in conflict. The study indicated that conflicts are more tense and tough when parties involved possess personality attributes like dominance, aggressiveness, and suspicion. However, conflicts are more manageable when concerned parties possess traits such as trust, sympathy, and open-mindedness (Goel & Khan, 2012). Terhune (1970) supported the view that some personal traits and personality attributes can predict how people will manage conflicts.

Park and Antonioni (2007) suggested that The Big Five personality factors are likely to predict how individuals can use specific conflict handling styles. Agreeableness is one of The Big Five personalities that are characterized by a strong motivation to maintain positive relationships with other people involved in a conflict, forgive others, and conform to demands involved in the resolution process (Kilpatrick & Johnson, 2001). Studies have shown that agreeable people experience more positive feelings when they get involved in cooperative behaviors rather than those that are competing. Agreeableness is a personality factor that is positively characterized by preferences for cooperation rather than competition (McCrae and Costa, 1997).

Extraverted individuals are characterized as sociable, assertive, and positive, and they are thought to be motivated by external rewards (Moberg, 2001). Gray (1981) noted the extraverted personality originates from sensitivity to reward signals, and thus they tend to use the competing style rather than accommodation or avoiding styles (Barrick, Stewart, & Piotrowski, 2002). Extroversion is a personality trait that is exhibited by individuals who are oriented toward working within groups, express assertiveness and dominance, and tend to be more forceful in communicating their opinions (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Neuroticism is a personality type characterized by being anxious, emotionally unstable, easily embarrassed, and depressed (Park & Antonioni, 2007). People who are high in neuroticism are less able to control their emotions in social interactions. It has been reported that neuroticism has a negative relationship with dominating and a positive relationship with avoiding conflict handling styles (Antonioni, 1998). McCrae and Costa (1997) argued that neurotic individuals are sensitive to punishment and negative events, and they are likely to react more negatively to interpersonal conflict. As neurotic persons experience conflicts, they are likely to apply competing or avoiding styles of conflict handling (Antonioni, 1998; Moberg, 2001).

A personality of openness is related to imagination, non-conformity, and autonomy. This may lead to a direct confrontational attitude while seeking conflict resolution (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Tjosvold, 1998). People who are high in openness are likely to value competitiveness and tend to use a direct approach when resolving conflicts (Barbuto, et al., 2009). Open individuals tend to have positive relationships with the dominating style and are usually associated with open-mindedness and reflectivity. They take other people into consideration and engage in greater divergent thinking to come up with creative solutions to the conflict (Judge, Heller and Mount, 2002). Antonioni (1998) reported a positive relationship between the trait of openness and integrating styles, but a negative relationship with avoiding styles.

Conscientiousness is another personality that is highly associated with industriousness, discipline, and responsibility (Barbuto et al., 2009). Individuals with this personality tend to use competing styles as they tend to be better prepared to outperform the other parties in conflict situations (Park & Antonioni, 2007). Moberg (2001) noted that conscientious persons also have high integrity and they may prefer collaborative styles, which would allow other parties to be satisfied with the agreed upon conflict resolution. Conscientiousness is highly related to the intellectual dimension of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Influence of Family Conflict Resolution to Young Adults

Intergenerational family conflict between parents and children is usually on the rise during early adolescence and declines by late adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett, 1999). This change is attributed to the way children establish their personal identities and social relationships as they grow up. The movement from home to college further loosens parental control, and this results in a decrease in overall family conflict (Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005).

Skinner, Edge, Altman, and Sherwood (2003) identified five strategies of coping with family conflict. These included problem solving, social support seeking, avoidance, distraction, and positive cognitive restructuring. One of the main negative effects of intergenerational family conflict is that individuals might not be using effective coping strategies to manage and resolve conflict; rather, they use those that have been established in their family history. Katz and Woodin (2002) noted that according to transitional theory, effectiveness of any coping strategy depends on many factors such as people involved, culture, and the situation.

One of the ingredients of a fruitful interpersonal relationship is the use of positive conflict handling styles such as problem solving, humor, compromise, and apology (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, Papp and Dukewich, 2002). Studies have shown that such behaviors can be transmitted across generations as children obtain them from their families of origin and these behaviors can be transmitted to later generations (Whitton, Waldinger, Schulz, Allen, Crowell and Hauser, 2008). Parental interpersonal conflicts act as a guide to how children will interpret the conflict within the family system (Harold, Shelton, Goeke-Morey, Cummings, 2004). Social learning theory supports the concept that behavior in the family can be modeled and carried by children through their adult relationships (Bandura, 1977). Harrington and Metzler (1997) suggested that dysfunctions in families of origin contribute to difficulties with problem solving, communication, and distress in adult intimate relationships.

Research has demonstrated that parental conflict resolution handling styles have a major influence on the way children approach conflict resolution on their own as they model and translate parental behavior outside the home (Dodds, Atkinson, Turner, Blums, & Lendich, 1999). When parents are able to resolve conflict well and appropriately, this is transmitted to the

children as effective models and skills for problem solving that can be used in those young people's future relationships with peers (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Studies have found that sibling relationships have given family members opportunities to develop conflict resolution skills since siblings are the first peer-like relationships most children experience (Reese-Weber, 2000). The family forms the context in which siblings interact to develop conflict resolution skills that children will later use in life. The cognitive skills development of the adolescents influences the effectiveness of conflict resolution skills with family members (Smetana, 1989). Social learning theory demonstrates that behavior modeled by others is easily displayed in relationships, and the behavior of higher-status individuals is replicated by individuals of lower status in the relationship (Bandura, 1989). In the family setting, parental conflicts would more likely influence sibling conflict (Reese-Weber, 2000).

Studies have shown that parent-child interactions have a great influence on later family relationships when it comes to closeness and control of conflicts (Dumlao & Botta, 2000).

Social learning theory predicts that behavior patterns learned in the family are practiced in young adulthood (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, & Hops, 2000). Coercion theory predicts that ineffective parental conflict management styles will produce coercive, unskilled responses to family, young adult, and peer relationships (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi and Hops, 2000). Reese-Weber and Bartle-Haring (1998) noted that father-adolescent conflict resolution styles were related to sibling conflict resolution styles. It is believed that adolescent conceptions of parental authority and parenting styles have a lot to do with intensity and frequency of adolescent-parent conflicts (Smetana, 1995). Dumlao (1997) noted the connection between family communication and several conflict handling styles while children were dealing with their fathers in situations involving conflict.

Method

This research was quantitative and utilized survey research method. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) and Family Conflict Resolution Scale (FCRS) instruments were used to collect data on participants' personality and family conflict resolution respectively. Participants of the study responded to two different surveys on personality and family conflict resolution levels. The data obtained was used to determine the influence they have on participants' choices of conflict handling styles using the Thomas –Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument.

Study Settings

Participants of the study are undergraduate students from different majors in a public state University in the USA, with an enrollment of approximately 13,303 undergraduates (2012-2013 academic year). Gender distribution of all undergraduate students is 47% male and 53% female. About 6.6% of the undergraduate students live in college housing and 93.4% of the students live off campus. Ethnicity by percentage showed that Asian/Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander were 1%, Black or African American—17%, Hispanic/ Latino—3%, White—72%, Two or More Races—1%, and Non-Resident Alien—1.0%. Attendance status of the students is 78% full-time and 22% part-time.

Participants Demographic Information

A total of 359 participants responded to the survey. The mean age of the participants was 20 years with the youngest being 17 and the oldest being 58 years. The majority of the participants were females contributing to 60% and males 40% of the sample.

Sophomores formed the majority of the participants at over 33%, followed by juniors with 24 % and seniors with 11%. Students who identified as Caucasian formed about 73% of the participants followed by students who identified as African American at 16%, and about 10% did not declare their ethnicity. 22% of the participants were from the Criminal Justice major followed by Nursing at 11%. About 20% of the participants did not declare their major of study.

Research Questions

RQ1. *Is there a statistically significant difference in how individual personality, as measured by BFI personality instrument, influences the conflict handling styles that students use as measured by Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument?*

RQ2. *Is there a statistically significant difference in how students' family conflict resolution styles, as measured by the Family Conflict Resolution Scale, influence conflict handling styles as measured by Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument?*

Instrumentation

1. *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*: The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument (TKI) measures conflict handling styles of individuals (an additional version provides a 360 conflict style assessment). The TKI categorizes the conflict styles of individuals along two dimensions – assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas, 1976). Assertiveness indicates the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy one's own concerns, while cooperativeness measures the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy the concerns of others. Five conflict modes are plotted based on the assertiveness vs. cooperativeness axes (Womack, 1988). These five modes of managing conflict include the following:

- i. Collaborating: Assertive and cooperative, people using this mode try mutual problem solving to satisfy both parties.
- ii. Compromising: Individual using this mode try to use both assertiveness and cooperation. They try to exchange concessions to resolve conflict.
- iii. Competing: Persons using this mode demonstrates conflict resolution styles that are more assertive and less cooperative.
- iv. Accommodating: Individuals who use this mode are unassertive and cooperative; they try to satisfy other people goals.
- v. Avoiding: People using this mode are unassertive and uncooperative. They usually postpone or avoid any unpleasant issues when dealing with others.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument consists of 30 paired items, which makes a total of 60 statements. Participants are asked to choose the response from each statement pair that best describes the way one usually behaves in conflict situations (Womack, 1988). It should be noted that there are no "good" or "bad" styles; rather, style efficacy is situational.

2. *Big Five Inventory Instrument*: The Big Five Instrument was developed by Lewis Goldberg. This 44-item inventory measures an individual on the Big Five Factors of personality (Goldberg, 1993). The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a self-report inventory designed to measure five personality dimensions and consists of short phrases with relatively accessible vocabulary. The personality dimensions measured includes:
 - i. Extraversion: encompasses traits such as talkativeness and assertiveness.
 - ii. Agreeableness: Has traits such as sympathetic, kindness and affectionate.
 - iii. Conscientiousness: With traits such as being organized, thorough and playful.
 - iv. Neuroticism: Traits such as being tense, moody and anxious.
 - v. Openness: Includes traits such as having interest, resourcefulness and insightfulness.

The five subscales in the instrument include Extraversion (8 items), Agreeableness (9 items), Conscientiousness (9 items), Neuroticism (8 items), and Openness (10 items).

3. *Family Conflict Resolution Scale (FCRS)*: The Family Conflict Resolution Scale (FCRS) was developed as a measure to assess conflict resolution within the family. A total of 17 of items were used to provide a total score for family conflict resolution. Fourteen (14) items were answered using a true/false response format.

Results

RQ1. Is there a statistically significant difference in how individual personality, as measured by BFI personality instrument, influences the conflict handling styles that students use as measured by Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument?

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE styles as the dependent variables (Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating) and each of the five personalities as measured by Big Five Personality Instrument (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness) as the factor or independent variable. A significant effect was found for Extraversion and Agreeableness. For Extraversion ($\Lambda(108, 1296) = .645, p = .006$). For Agreeableness ($\Lambda(112, 1293) = .632, p = .004$).

Therefore analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted as a follow-up procedure. However no significant effect was found for Conscientiousness ($\Lambda(104, 1295) = .711, p > .05$), Neuroticism ($\Lambda(116, 1290) = .687, p > .05$) and Openness ($\Lambda(108, 1298) = .690, p > .05$).

One Way ANOVA was conducted with the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument as the dependent variables (Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating) and the two Big Five Instrument personalities that showed significant effect in the MANOVA (Extraversion and Agreeableness) as the factor or independent variable.

For the Extraversion BFI subscale, one-way ANOVA yielded a significant difference for the competing subscale ($F(27, 330) = 2.02, p < .05$). For the Collaborating subscale ($F(27, 329) = 1.10, p > .05$). For the Compromising subscale ($F(27, 330) = 1.04, p > .05$). For the Avoiding subscale ($F(27, 329) = 2.17, p < .05$). For the Accommodating subscale ($F(27, 330) = 1.11, p > .05$).

For the Agreeableness BFI subscale, one-way ANOVA yielded a significant difference for the competing subscale ($F(28, 329) = 1.77, p < .05$). For the Collaborating subscale ($F(28, 328) = 1.31, p > .05$). For the Compromising subscale ($F(28, 329) = 1.48, p > .05$). For the Avoiding subscale ($F(28, 328) = 0.84, p > .05$). For the Accommodating subscale ($F(28, 329) = 1.67, p < .05$). The results indicated statistically significant difference in how some individual personality influences the conflict handling styles that participants used in conflict resolution.

RQ.2. Is there statistically significant difference in how students' family conflict resolution as measured by Family Conflict Resolution scale influence conflict handling styles as measured by Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument?

One Way ANOVA was conducted with Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Styles as the dependent variables (Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating) and the Family Conflict Resolution scale totals as the factor or the independent variable. The one-way ANOVA yielded the following results: For the competing ($F(31, 326) = 0.81, p > .05$), Collaborating ($F(31, 325) = 0.69, p > .05$), Compromising ($F(31, 326) = 1.05, p > .05$), Avoiding ($F(31, 325) = 0.99, p > .05$) and Accommodating ($F(31, 326) = 0.66, p > .05$). The results indicated there was no statistically significant difference in how students' family conflict resolution influenced conflict handling styles.

Discussion

This evidence supports research findings that indicate some personality traits tend to influence the choice of conflict handling styles. Extraverted individuals are characterized as sociable, assertive, and positive, and they are thought to be motivated both external and internal rewards (Moberg, 2001). It has been noted that the extraverted personality originates from sensitivity to reward signals, and thus they tend to use the competing style rather than accommodation or avoiding styles (Barrick, Stewart, & Piotrowski, 2002). Extraversion is a personality trait that is exhibited by individuals who are oriented toward working within groups, express assertiveness and dominance, and tend to be more forceful in communicating their opinions (McCrae & Costa, 1997). The current study did not agree with a study by Olekaln and Smith (1999) that argued that individuals with high extraversion tend to possess high pro-social orientation, which leads to high concern for others, and hence they are more inclined toward integrating and compromising styles while handling conflicts (Olekalns & Smith, 1999).

The current study indicates that agreeableness was statistically significant to competing and accommodating styles. This finding concurred with Kilpatrick and Johnson's, (2001) study that reasoned that agreeableness is characterized by a strong motivation to maintain positive relationships with other people involved in a conflict. Agreeable people experience more positive feelings when they get involved in cooperative behaviors rather than those people that are competing. Agreeableness personality is positively characterized by preferences for cooperation rather than competition (McCrae and Costa, 1997). Persons high in agreeableness tend to demonstrate sympathy and help other people. Antonioni (1998) indicated that agreeableness is positively related to integrating and avoiding, however negatively related to dominating. The result showed that Thomas-Kilmann Mode Conflict handling styles was not influenced by the Family Conflict resolution Scale (FCRS). The Conflict MODE handling styles instrument has five subscales (Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding and

Accommodating). The researcher expected participants with a high score on the family conflict resolution scale (FCRS) to score high on the conflict MODE handling styles in the areas of cooperativeness such as Compromising and Collaborating.

The results defy the Social Learning Theory and the Coercion Theory that each predicts an association between conflicts within the family and dysfunctional conflicts in young-adult relationships. Social Learning Theory predicts that behavior patterns learned in the family are practiced in young adulthood (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, & Hops, 2000). Coercion Theory predicts that infective parental conflict management styles will produce coercive, unskilled responses to family, young adult, and peer relationships (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, and Hops, 2000).

Arnett (1999) noted, intergenerational family conflict between parents and children is usually on the rise during early adolescence and declines by late adolescence and young adulthood. The sample of this study was mainly composed of young adults who might have changed their perceptions of family conflict that they had when they were adolescents. The mean age of the sample was 22.06 years with a mode of 20 and a range of 58.

The movement from home to college leads to further loosen parental control, and this may result in a decrease in overall family conflict (Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005). The movement from home to college may have contributed to the change in perspective of the family of origin conflict. College students may be dealing with other types of family conflict such as marriage conflict, cohabiting issues and conflict of starting families of their own. Such may make conflict of their family of origin of less significant at this stage of their life.

Conclusion

MANOVA indicated that there was significant influence of two BFI personalities (Extraversion and Agreeableness) on the conflict handling styles as measured by The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument (TKI). ANOVA indicated there was no impact of family conflict resolution on conflict handling styles.

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Incivility by Degree: The Influence of Educational Attainment on Workplace Civility

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Abstract

Research indicates that incivility, or subtle rude behavior, often stems from personal power inequities and flows downward, with those at the bottom of the hierarchy experiencing the greatest perception of incivility. This study used the Organizational Civility Scale (OCS) to survey residential property managers across the United States regarding perceptions of civility in their own organizations. The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of civility based on formal education level and the findings revealed statistically significant differences. Participants lowest on the formal education hierarchy reported a greater frequency of incivility, lower satisfaction with their workplace, and a lower perception of overall civility at work. The study provides additional insight into the relationship between power and incivility, which may add increased sensitivity of the issue and aid in the development of organizational incivility prevention programs. Suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Introduction

It is widely known that in many professions, a lack of formal education will limit job and advancement opportunities. But, is there another less recognized negative effect? The present article focuses on a comparison of the perceptions of organizational civility and workplace satisfaction in those with a college degree and those without.

An individual's formal education level can certainly influence their social status, but it may also sway attitudes and behaviors in interactions with others at different hierarchical status levels. Those at the top levels of the status hierarchy, with the greatest sense of personal power, may view and treat those at lower levels as status inferiors. As a result, certain negative behaviors may be perceived to be perfectly acceptable when they are directed at individuals at a lower status levels, but unacceptable when directed at those who occupy a higher status level. However, because overt mistreatment is socially, and often legally, unacceptable, individuals may turn to more ambiguous forms of mistreatment, such as incivility, in an attempt to maintain the existing power hierarchy.

Incivility is differentiated from other forms of mistreatment based on its subtlety, low intensity and the ability of its user to deny any malicious intent (Pearson, Andersson & Wegner, 2001). It can include general rudeness, the use of condescending remarks, belittling the efforts of others, taking credit for the work of others, withholding information, or disregarding the feelings and opinions of others (Pearson & Porath, 2009; Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Clark and Carnosso (2008) found that civility was generally found to be a positive attribute, while incivility

had negative connotations and was seen as a deliberate means to exclude certain groups of people, placing a burden on some societal groups.

Taken together, unacceptable behaviors and general incivility at work is perceived to be a major issue that is only getting worse. In a national poll, 75% respondents believe that incivility is getting worse (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). Pearson and Porath (2005) polled 800 U.S. employees, 10% of whom reported witnessing incivility at work on a daily basis. In a national survey conducted in 2001 by Public Agenda, New York, 79% of those responding indicated that a lack of respect and courtesy is a serious problem that needs attention. In additional studies across 9,000 employees, Pearson and Porath (2009) found that 95% of those responding indicated they had experienced incivility at work.

The following sections detail hypotheses that conceptualize the relationship between formal education level and perceptions of incivility at work. This research study does not attempt to provide a comprehensive measure of organizational incivility climate. Rather, it explores the possibility that the formal education level of an individual may be related to their perceptions of incivility within their organization. The comparison provides additional insight into the relationship between personal power status and workplace incivility.

The Power – Incivility Link

Massey (2007) observed a natural tendency for the classifying of individuals into categories, which may be based on race, ethnicity, social class, gender, education level, or other categories. These categorizations are not inherently problematic. However, the tendency to categorize individuals often results in classifying those groups of individuals on a hierarchy based on what society has deemed to be important. There is plenty of evidence that these hierarchy systems relate to power and impact both the attitudes and behaviors of individuals (Raven, 1992, 1993, 2008; Farkas et al., 2002; Nelson et. al, 2006; Michinov, 2005; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, 2012; Pratto & Stewart, 2011; Pratto et al., 1994; Pinker, 2002, Lareau & Conley, 2010). The real issue is that perceptions of power may contribute to an attitude of superiority by those who hold higher power, which can, in turn, serve to condone the unequal treatment or degradation of those in inferior status positions (Scott, 2007).

Several researchers suggest that individuals in higher power positions often believe that those in lower positions deserve not only their status, but also disparate treatment, as a means to “keep them in their place.” Porath, Overbeck, and Pearson (2008) suggested that uncivil behavior, in some cases, results from a competition for social status as group members struggle to maintain or defend an existing social status. The problem lies not simply with the idea that certain individuals are considered to be “inferior” by “superior” members of either an organizational or socially constructed hierarchy, but with those feelings of superiority and power comes the propensity for dispensing inequitable treatment in a top-down flow of incivility. Pearson et al. (2000) posited “Incivility is mistreatment that may lead to disconnection, breach of relationships, and erosion of empathy” (p. 125).

Blanchard (2015) indicates that there are at least five bases of power at play in work relationships. They include position power, task power, personal power, relationship power, and knowledge power. Knowledge power stems from a variety of skills and is typically evidenced by certifications or formal degrees. Consequently, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: As a group, individuals with a high school education level will report less satisfaction with their workplace environment than their college educated counterparts.

Porath et al. (2008) suggested that incivility represents not only a violation of the norms for civil behavior in the workplace, but also a challenge to an individual's status. They contended that targets' responses to status challenges would depend on the status of both the challenger and the target. Pearson and Porath (2009) also indicated that a larger range of behaviors are considered appropriate for status "superiors" even when the behaviors violate social norms. These studies examined power dynamics in workplace relationships and indicate that the use of power and authority to over-control and treat others oppressively is likely to be present in many workplace relationships. However, when social norms dictate a disdain for overt aggression and blatant mistreatment, an individual may turn to incivility as a more ambiguous and socially acceptable way to exert their power over others.

Several researchers have empirically tested the link between the influence of power in relationships and incivility. Pearson et al. (2000) provided a macro-level analysis of social interactions based on the conflict-theory perspective of the impacts of social and power inequities. For example, across a broad range of participants, these researchers found that incivility tends to come from the top and flow downward based on hierarchal, gender, and status differentials. In further support of the theory of top-down incivility flow, Caza and Cortina (2007) found that top-down incivility (i.e. incivility stemming from individuals at a higher level in the institutional hierarchy) was more strongly associated with perceptions of injustice than was peer-instigated incivility. Consequently, the following are hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: As a group, individuals with a high school education level will report greater perceptions of incivility from coworkers than their college educated counterparts.

Hypothesis 3: As a group, individuals with a high school education level will report greater perceptions of incivility from workplace supervisors than their college educated counterparts.

A hierarchy of status and power exists within and outside every organization. In a top-down flow, those individuals with the greatest power, either real or perceived, may also have a greater tendency to utilize and justify various forms of mistreatment against those with less power. In addition, incivility is possibly a more frequently used form of mistreatment because of its subtle and often undetectable intent. Consequently, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: As a group, individuals with a high school level education will report a greater frequency of incivility at work than their college educated counterparts.

The Significance of Incivility

Incivility is often viewed as being unworthy of serious attention. However, those seemingly insignificant subtle acts of incivility have many far-reaching implications. Research indicates negative implications at the societal, organizational, and individual levels.

In society, individuals are categorized based on any number of factors such as gender, social status, religious beliefs, race, etc. Groups that are lower on the hierarchy are valued less and considered socially unequal in terms of prestige and power. These categories exist on a hierarchy of social class, frequently determined by income level. Regardless of the term used, the "poor,"

“lower class,” “underprivileged,” “undervalued,” or “welfare dependent” occupy positions at the bottom of the ranking system that lumps together those individuals with little economic power, monetary wealth, few occupational opportunities, and little education.

Unfortunately, society places a greater importance on some groups than others (Kerbo, 2012). As a result, member of certain groups may develop an attitude of superiority that can influence their behavior in interactions with members of other groups. For example, incivility may be viewed as acceptable if directed toward members of those in lower social class group positions and is used as a means of preserving the existing social order (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, 2012; Pratto & Stewart, 2011; and Pratto et al. 2006). Kerbo (2012) added that the tendency to group and rank individuals is the basis for social inequality. However, because blatant discrimination against undervalued social classes is socially and frequently legally unacceptable, incivility, a more subtle and ambiguous forms of mistreatment, may be used in its place (Cortina, 2008).

At the organization level, incivility does not often get the same attention as violence and aggressive behavior; it is less transparent in intent, but much more prevalent (Pearson et al., 2000). Incivility can have a significant negative impact on the overall financial health of the organization. Employees confronting incivility at work may suffer increased stress, use more sick days or may even opt to leave the organization. Additionally, a climate of incivility can influence relationships with those outside the organization resulting in a loss of customers and damage to the organization’s reputation.

In addition to financial costs, incivility may, either intentionally or unintentionally, result in the discrimination of individuals in protected classes, putting organizations at a greater risk of illegal discrimination and resulting litigation. Cortina (2008) added that “Power also gives individuals at the top of the social structure the tools to translate their biases into discriminatory conduct” (p. 62). Research indicates that incivility is increasing. As a result, it is likely to have an even greater impact on individuals and organizations in the future.

While a great deal of incivility research has focused on organization-level implications, the underlying impact to organizations stems from the perceptions and resulting impact on the individuals who work there. Several researchers have found that incivility has a host of negative effects on the individuals who are targets. The literature revealed the following individual-level implications of organizational incivility: Employee stress and burnout (Pearson & Porath, 2009; Nydegger, 2001); Damaged social identity (Andersson & Pearson, 1999); anger (Andersson & Pearson, 1999); perceived injustice (Cortina, 2008); frustration (Cortina & Magley, 2009); low job satisfaction (Cortina & Magley, 2009; perception of social ostracism (Caza & Cortina, 2007); reduced helpfulness (Porath & Erez, 2007); and reduced creativity (Porath & Erez, 2009).

As Clark (2010) contended, all members of an organization, from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom, may be either an agent or a target of incivility, depending on with whom they are interacting. However, a top-down flow of incivility results in the unequal treatment of those at the bottom of the power hierarchy like those without a formal education. While overt aggression and violence tends to receive much more attention from management, lower-intensity deviant behaviors are actually more predominant, less visible, and can be just as harmful to individuals and the organizations for which they work (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Caza & Cortina, 2007; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Ottinot, 2010; Pearson et al., 2000; Penny & Spector, 2005; Porath & Erez, 2009, 2011; Reio & Ghosh, 2009; Trevino & Youngblood, 1990).

In order to help us to understand how individuals are affected by the power of others, this research uses Sidanius and Pratto’s (2001, 2012) social dominance orientation (SDO) theory as a

theoretical foundation. SDO Draws from Lewin's (1951) discussions of social power and power fields, which described how an individual may be simultaneously affected by the power of several individuals, Sidanius and Pratto (2001, 2012) theorized that there are group-based social hierarchies within the social system. They added that there are behavioral differences in people at different levels, which serve to reinforce the existing social system.

This research also draws on Cortina's (2008) theory of selective incivility, which provides a model of uncivil behavior some may use as a covert form of discrimination against members of undervalued social groups. The central argument in the theory is that incivility may represent manifestations of bias in the workplace. Cortina (2008) posited that discriminatory behavior at work is influenced by a combination of both personal bias and the organizational climate as it relates to biased behavior.

In sum, it is important to assess the influence of power on incivility climate. Consequently, this research seeks to investigate perceptions of organizational incivility, as measured by the Organizational Civility Scale, developed by Clark and Landrum (2012) and compare group differences based on formal education level. The study is intended to provide insight into the relationship between knowledge power and incivility.

Method

Procedure and Participants

This research study was comprised of a random sample of residential property managers across the United States drawn from members of the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) who met the following two qualifications: (1) they were categorized as a manager of public housing or private residential rental property and they (2) provided an e-mail address in their personal profile. While the contacted individuals do not represent all of the possible property managers in the United States, they serve as a general estimate to calculate property manager perceptions. The researcher asked qualified members to participate on a voluntary basis with no promise of compensation. Participants were offered a copy of the resulting study.

Demographic Statistics

Demographics of respondents are reported in Table 1 below. Respondents ($f = 178$) were fairly evenly represented with regard to gender with 57.4% or $f = 101$ identifying as male and 42.6% or $f = 75$ identifying as female. The majority of study respondents in this research study (78.7% or $f = 140$) indicated they were managers of private residential rental communities. The majority of them (82% or $f = 147$) have held their job for five or more years. The respondents in this study were concentrated in three age groups. Approximately 38% or $f = 67$ of the respondents indicated they were in the 57+ age group, 33.9% or $f = 60$ of them indicated that they were in the 48-57 age group, 18.6% or $f = 33$ of them in the 38-47 age group. With regard to education level, the majority of the respondents (77% or $f = 136$) indicated that they held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 1: Frequencies by Respondents' Tenure, Age Group, Gender, and Education level

		Frequency	Valid %
Tenure	less than 1	7	4.0
	1 – 2	9	5.0
	3 – 4	9	5.0
	More than 4 – less than 5	7	4.0
	5 or more	146	82.0
	N = 178	178	100.0
Age Group	18-27	2	1.1
	28-37	15	8.5
	38-47	33	18.6
	48-57	60	33.9
	57+	68	37.9
	N = 178	178	100.0
Gender	Female	76	42.7
	Male	102	57.3
	N = 178	178	100.0
Education Level	High School or GED	40	22.7
	Bachelor's Degree	104	59.2
	Master's Degree	30	17.0
	PhD	2	1.1
	N = 165	165	100.0

Survey Instrument

Perceptions of civility climate are measured using the Organizational Civility Scale (OCS) developed by Clark and Landrum (2012). The present author has purchased the right to use the OCS in this research (see Appendix C). The OCS (Clark & Landrum, 2012) is a comprehensive measure of organizational civility and has undergone extensive pilot testing. The instrument measures perceptions of organizational civility climate through the subscales listed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Organizational Civility Construct Measurement.

Construct Measurement	# of items	Response Scale	α
Perceptions of coworker relationships	9	5 point scale	.95
Perceptions of supervisor relationships	6	5 point scale	.89
Frequency of incivility	16	5 point scale	.96
Employee satisfaction	6	100 point scale	.88
Overall civility rating	4	100 point scale	.87

Because individuals are unlikely to volunteer information about their own uncivil behaviors or may even be unaware of them, the author set out to measure incivility from the viewpoint of the target. The attitudes and behaviors of management typically drive the climate within an organization, thus the researcher suspects that a measurement of the perceptions of organizational incivility climate will provide a good indication of the individual-level incivility behaviors within the organization. The researcher made no changes to the OCS instrument for this study. However, because the OCS was designed for use as a multi-faceted organizational civility climate assessment tool, not all sections of the OCS were relevant for use in this study.

Data Collection

The OCS surveys for this study were distributed exclusively via email. Participants were asked to complete and return the survey via an online survey tool (SurveyMonkey). The initial e-mail request with imbedded human subject safeguards including purpose and instructions, was sent to 1,639 potential participants and yielded 160 valid responses. The researcher sent a second request to non-respondents and subsequently received one additional valid response. A third and final request was delivered several months later to those who had not responded to the previous two requests. The final request yielded 17 more valid responses, for a total of 178 valid responses.

Results

The purpose of this research was to examine whether perceptions of organizational civility climate differed based on formal education level. The researcher used the Organizational Civility Scale (OCS), an instrument developed to measure perceptions of organizational civility climate by measuring perceptions of coworker relationships, perceptions of supervisor relationships, frequency of coworker incivility, employee satisfaction, and overall civility in the workplace.

This study sought to address four hypotheses related to the relationship between formal education level (college education vs. high school education) and the perceptions of organizational civility climate as measured by the self-reported OCS instrument. The contributions of this research will serve as a foundation for further study. Through this approach, management practitioners could be directed toward strategies and initiatives to reduce incivility in their organizations.

Data Reduction

The original OCS instrument includes nine sub-scales with 2-16 subset items, for 86 possible dependent variables (Clark & Landrum, 2012). Given the large number of items, which are highly correlated, the researcher used an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to reduce the data to a more manageable size. The goal was simply to take the large set of dependent variables and reduce them to a smaller, more manageable number while retaining as much of the original variance as possible. Factor analysis seeks to identify groups of items with correlations greater than zero (Walkey & Welch, 2010). The assumption is that certain underlying factors or influences are the cause of such correlations. A comparison to the outcome of Clark and Landrum's exploratory factor analysis (EFA) indicated very similar Cronbach's alpha (α) levels.

The researcher used an EFA to reduce each section of the OCS to latent variables. She did not use the sections of the OCS relating to stress and coping based on the lack of validity explained by Clark and Landrum (2012). Table 7 shows the results of the original authors. The researcher reduced the individual items in each section of the OCS by retaining the items loading with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. There were eight latent variables resulting from the EFA. The retained factors are considered representative of overall organizational civility climate. Table 3 shows the percentage of variance explained by the latent variable(s) for each section.

Table 3: Outcomes of Exploratory Factor Analysis for Dimension Reduction of the Organizational Civility Scale

Section Title	# Items/ #Resulting Latent Variables	% of Variance Explained by Latent Variable	Name of Factor, # of Factors Analyzed, Alpha Level
Perceptions of Organizational Climate	16/2	76.83%	Supervisory Relationship (9, $\alpha = .968$) Co-Worker Relationship (6, $\alpha = .910$)
Frequency of Incivility	16/1	68.07%	Frequency of acts of incivility (16, $\alpha = .968$)
Employee Satisfaction	6/1	77.16%	Feelings about employee satisfaction (6, $\alpha = .898$)
Overall Civility Rating	4/1	78.99%	Overall civility ratings (4, $\alpha = .87$)

Findings

This study addressed four specific hypotheses. The researcher used a combination of statistical tests to explore the relationships among the variables including the Pearson correlation (r), which measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Moore, McCabe, & Craig, 2009). Finally, the researcher used one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to explore whether any of the groups differed in their perception of organizational civility climate by examining the difference in group means.

Table 4 reports the correlations among education level and the five latent variables. There were several variables with statistically significant correlations. Education level showed a positive correlation with supervisor relationships ($r = .191$) and overall workplace civility ($r = .246$) indicating a positive correlation between those with a college level education and workplace civility and supervisor relationships in the workplace. Education level showed a significant negative correlation with the frequency of incivility ($r = -.170$) and employee satisfaction ($r = -.253$). Consequently, Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 are partially supported.

Table 4: Organizational Civility (OCS) and Educational Level Correlations

		Correlations				
		1	2	3	4	5
1. Education Level						
2. Supervisor Relationship		.191*				
3. Coworker Relationships		.024	.000			
4. Frequency of Incivility		-.170*	-.697**	.065		
5. Employee Satisfaction		-.253**	-.892**	.067	.752**	
6. Overall Work Civility		.246**	.941**	-.039	-.876**	-.948**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To address the hypotheses, the researcher used a one-way ANOVA to examine the variance of means across the five latent variables representing sections of the OCS by education level. The researcher recoded the independent variables such that high school education = 0 and college education = 1. The results, shown in Table 5, revealed a statistically significant group mean difference by education level on the perceptions of supervisor relationships $F(1,151) = 5.697, p = .018$, on the frequency of incivility $F(1,165) = 4.883, p = .028$, on employee satisfaction $F(1,164) = 11.11, p = .001$ and on overall civility $F(1,122) = 7.768, p = .006$.

Independent sample t tests indicated that respondents with a high school level education ($M = 78.57, SE = 1.56$) reported less civility from their coworkers than did those with a college education ($M = 85.22, SE = 3.308$). Those with a high school education ($M = 67.43, SE = 5.805$) reported significantly less civility from supervisors than did those with a college education ($M = 82.40, SE = 2.262$). Finally, respondents with a high school education ($M = 73.26, SE = 4.553$) reported less overall civility in general than did their college educated counterparts ($M = 83.46, SE = 1.792$). Consequently, hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 are supported. The analyses indicated that while not significant across all measures, there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of organizational civility climate based on education level. The evidence indicates that individuals without a formal education report poorer relationships with supervisors, a greater frequency of workplace incivility, and less satisfaction with their workplace.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance based on Formal Education Level Using Latent Variables.

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Supervisor Relationships	Between Groups	5.526	1	5.526	5.697	.018
	Within Groups	145.474	150	.970		
	Total	151.000	151			
Coworker Relationships	Between Groups	.089	1	.089	.088	.767
	Within Groups	150.911	150	1.006		
	Total	151.000	151			
Frequency of Incivility	Between Groups	4.757	1	4.757	4.883	.028
	Within Groups	159.738	164	.974		
	Total	164.495	165			
Employee Satisfaction	Between Groups	10.467	1	10.467	11.111	.001
	Within Groups	153.555	163	.942		
	Total	164.022	164			
Overall Civility	Between Groups	7.359	1	7.359	7.768	.006
	Within Groups	114.641	121	.947		
	Total	122.000	122			

Discussion

Theoretical evidence provides a good indication that incivility positively relates to the amount of social and personal power possessed by an individual (Callahan, 2011; Cortina, 2008; Keller, 1988). However, empirical evidence is scant. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between formal education level and perceptions of organizational civility climate. The researcher used the Organizational Civility Scale (OCS), an instrument designed to measure the extent to which incivility is perceived to be a problem in a variety of settings.

The finding that those without a formal higher education reported a greater frequency of incivility in the workplace supports Sidanius and Pratto's (2001) theory that there are group-based social hierarchies and behavioral differences in people at different levels, which serve to reinforce the existing social system. In addition, this research supports Cortina's (2008) theory of selective incivility. Although those without a formal education are not necessarily in a protected class, the findings indicate that uncivil behavior may also result in a disparate impact to undervalued social groups.

The analyses explored relationships among the variables and group differences in perceptions of organizational civility climate. Consequently, no causal statements can be made regarding the impact of certain demographic characteristics of power on overall organizational civility climate. Nevertheless, the researcher can discuss implications and recommendations for future research based on this study's results.

Self-reported responses to the OCS indicated statistically significant relationships between formal education level and organizational incivility. However, a close review of the data

revealed an unusual number of respondents, the majority of whom had a tenure of more than five years, who reported that they had never experienced incivility in their workplace.

An inspection of the correlations between formal education level and the latent variables representing perceptions of organizational civility climate also showed some support for hypotheses H1, H3 and H4, or that those with a high school level education would report lower workplace satisfaction, increased supervisor incivility, and increased overall organization incivility. The correlations table (Table 4) indicated significant positive correlations between education level and both supervisor relationships and organizational civility climate. There were also significant negative correlations between education level and both the frequency of incivility and employee satisfaction.

Respondents with a high school education reported less civility from coworkers, less civility from supervisors, and less overall civility than did their college-educated counterparts. This finding suggests that perhaps the power and social status that stems from educational attainment may give rise to increased incivility when interacting with those lower on the educational hierarchy. The finding supports Lim and Cortina's (2005) contention that incivility often occurs in relationships of unequal power.

The majority (59%) of the respondent indicated that they hold a bachelor's degree, 22% indicated completion of a high school level education, and 17% indicated that they hold a master's degree. Although, the respondents were not evenly distributed with regard to education level, the majority of the educational categories were well represented. Overall the findings support Sidanius and Pratto's (2001) contention that certain values and beliefs provide justification for practices that are intended to maintain, increase, or decrease the levels of social inequality between status groups. However, further research is needed as there are many other variables to consider. For example, Leiter (2013) suggested that identifiable differences were enough to create an in-group and out-group dynamic in the workplace and the definition of civil and uncivil behaviors may differ in across group and within group interactions.

Limitations

The quantitative research study is limited to managers of residential properties. The intention of the study is to explore the possible relationship between formal education level and organizational civility to determine whether statistically significant relationships and interactions exist. It does not intend to imply causation nor provide a comprehensive measurement of organizational incivility climate.

The Organizational Civility Scale is a self-reported survey based on the participants' perceptions of civility climate. The accuracy of these self-reported surveys may be compromised for several reasons. First, respondents may not remember instances of incivility, particularly if those instances are not recent. Also, certain behaviors may be over or under-reported based on what is perceived to be socially acceptable. Second, because the majority of the potential participants provided workplace e-mail addresses, there is a strong possibility that they were not completely forthcoming with information regarding negative behaviors in their workplace environment.

The idea that personal power can influence uncivil behavior is credible and aligns with other research findings (Andersson & Pearson, 1989; Cortina et al., 2002). However, an accurate measurement of organizational behavior is necessary. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone's (2002) research illustrates several factors influencing the validity of self-reported data. For example,

they find socially undesirable behaviors tend to be under-reported while socially acceptable behaviors are over-reported. In addition, they contend that an employee's fear of reprisal affects responses. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002) added that the problem of self-report bias is compounded when all the variables are measured using a single method of measurement. The contention is not that self-reported data is not useful in organizational behavior research, but that results of findings may be misleading and should be interpreted with caution. It is quite possible that specific variables measured by self-reported data from the OCS have been subject to self-report bias and influenced by fear of reprisal from employers.

Respondents' fear of retribution from their employer for sharing information may be the study's greatest limitation and may have influenced the results. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone's (2002) research indicates that if the behavior to be reported is undesirable, participants were likely to fear the repercussions of reporting it to researchers. Several invitees called and several e-mailed the researcher indicating that they were not comfortable sharing information about negative behaviors within their organization. Although anonymity was assured, it is the researcher's assumption that many of the respondents may have under-reported information regarding negative behaviors in their current workplace environment.

The idea that personal power can influence uncivil behavior is credible and aligns with other research findings (Andersson & Pearson, 1989; Cortina et al., 2002). However, an accurate measurement of organizational behavior is necessary. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone's (2002) research illustrates several factors influencing the validity of self-reported data. For example, they find socially undesirable behaviors tend to be under-reported while socially acceptable behaviors are over-reported. In addition, they contend that an employee's fear of reprisal affects responses. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002) added that the problem of self-report bias is compounded when all the variables are measured using a single method of measurement. The contention is not that self-reported data is not useful in organizational behavior research, but that results of findings may be misleading and should be interpreted with caution. It is quite possible that specific variables measured by self-reported data from the OCS have been subject to self-report bias and influenced by fear of reprisal from employers.

The researcher doubts that responses are completely candid for several reasons. Pearson and Porath's (2009) study across 9,000 employees indicated that 95% of the respondents indicated they had experienced incivility at work. In addition, 71% of the 1,180 employees surveyed in Cortina et al.'s (2001) study also reported experiencing incivility at work over a five-year period. However, many of the respondents in the present study, the vast majority of whom had tenure greater than five years, indicated that they had *never* experienced or even witnessed incivility from coworkers or supervisors in their organization. In reviewing the individual responses, 25.9% of the respondents indicated they had *never* experienced or witnessed rude remarks or put-downs toward themselves or others at work, 51% of the respondents indicated that they had *never* experienced or witnessed rude non-verbal gestures from coworkers or supervisors, 57% indicated that they had *never* experienced or witnessed name-calling by coworkers or supervisors, 40% indicated that they had *never* experienced or witnessed coworkers or supervisors using the silent treatment.

Lastly, research into workplace incivility is limited by a lack of civility measurement instruments available. The OCS survey instrument, while useful, utilized Likert-type scales and did not have any open-ended questions, which may have limited the ability of the instrument to measure all uncivil behaviors accurately.

Research Implications

In alignment with recent research on the relationship between power and incivility in the workplace (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001; Cortina & Magley, 2003; Caza & Cortina, 2007; Cortina, 2008; Cortina & Magley, 2009; and Porath et al., 2008), this research hints that power plays a role in shaping organizational civility climate. This study indicates that particular individual characteristics of power linked to educational attainment may influence incivility and perceptions of appropriate behavior. This study did provide evidence that knowledge power may influence perceptions of organizational civility climate. The findings should motivate future researchers to investigate further the relationship between incivility and other power characteristics such as race, age, gender, and job position. Although the findings were not all significant, further research should explore incivility within and across various status group. Given the complexity and importance of incivility, the researcher recommends ongoing studies on the influence of power on incivility using a variety of methods and populations.

The researcher contends there are a variety of characteristics provide a sense of personal power. An increased sense of personal power may foster uncivil behaviors and influence the perception of what behaviors are acceptable when directed at others. Findings confirm key assertions made by Raven and French (1992, 1993) that forms of legitimate power may influence behaviors. Further research should explore other forms of legitimate power and perceptions from the point of view of both target and agent.

Finally, use of the OCS in a property management organization will provide valuable data to the creators of the instrument and may enable them to continue to adapt the instrument for use across various industries.

Managerial Implications

The study also has managerial implications. Managers must understand that civil interactions with colleagues and customers is critical for the success of the entire organization. An organizational climate of incivility can result in employee stress (Pearson & Porath, 2009; Nydegger, 2001), low job satisfaction (Cortina & Magley, 2009), increased consumer anger, and negative inferences about the organization among the public (Porath, 2010). Consequently, incivility not only makes the employees unhappy, it also has a negative influence on customers, which can have a definite and direct impact on the organization's bottom line.

From a social perspective, incivility can demonstrate bias against undervalued social groups (Cortina, 2008). As a result, an organizational climate of incivility may put an organization at a greater risk of treating employees and customers unequally based on their social group identity status. Whether or not such disparate treatment is intentional does not negate the danger that it can place the organization at a greater risk of costly litigation and damage to the organization's reputation.

If incivility is accepted, endorsed, or sustained within an organization, the tendency is for employees to adopt uncivil behaviors. Incivility can grow unchecked, resulting in an overall uncivil organizational climate. Given the potential for negative financial and human resource consequences based on incivility, it seems critical to manage incivility effectively to keep customers and employees both satisfied and well respected, which would reduce the cost of hiring and training their replacements.

In addition to management training, every employee within the organization should understand the costs and benefits of organizational civility and undergo training designed to reduce or eliminate uncivil behaviors. Employees should have access to confidential support systems. Civility should also be considered when screening new employees. For example, a combination of interview questions designed to identify an applicant's demeanor and social skills along with phone calls to previous employers could help identify desired traits. Effectively managing the civility climate within the organization can improve the working environment for its employees and improve the quality of interactions with coworkers, supervisors, or those outside the organization.

Suggestions for Future Research

Certainly the relationship between power and incivility deserves further study. First, because self-reports of negative behaviors may not be entirely accurate due to fear of retribution or faulty perceptions, it is suggested that the relationship be explored using other samples and methods. For example, it would be interesting to examine organizational incivility based on the education level of employees in various industries. Another option would be to survey both management and non-management employees within a single organization. However, because it is unlikely that an adequate sample size could be obtained from a single organization, a qualitative study would be suggested.

To develop more effective assessment tools, it is important to understand what particular behaviors are considered to be uncivil by different populations. The perception of incivility may differ based on personal characteristics, geographic location, or industry. Future research should explore differences in perceptions of incivility based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, introversion/extroversion, emotional intelligence level, cognitive ability, self-confidence, and even appearance across various locations and industries. In addition, there may be differences based on the size and age of the organization. These differences may all serve to influence perceptions of incivility and hierarchical status of the organization's members.

Finally, the development of an organizational climate occurs over time. As new employees join the organization, their attitudes and perceptions are likely to adapt to those of other coworkers within the organization. A longitudinal study could explore the changes in perceptions of incivility at different points in time within an organization.

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