The Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory: A conceptual framework and measure of intercultural conflict resolution approaches

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Abstract

Grounded in the pragmatics of human communication perspective, the current study examined how disagreements and emotion function across cultural context in resolving conflict. Specifically, the research effort developed the Intercultural Conflict Style (ICS) inventory, a 36-item measure of intercultural conflict resolution style based on two core dimensions: Direct vs. indirect approaches to dealing with disagreements and emotionally expressive vs. emotionally restrained patterns for dealing with the affective dimension of conflict interaction. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) found the proposed two-factor model was a good fit to the data. Analysis of the CFA findings identified a final set of 18 direct/indirect items and 18 emotional expressiveness/restraint items. The direct/indirect scale obtained a coefficient alpha of .73 and the emotional expressiveness/restraint scale achieved .85 reliability. Validity testing of the scales found no significant effects by gender, education or previous intercultural living experience. A theoretical framework for understanding differences in conflict resolution styles grounded in the development of this inventory, a practical, four-quadrant intercultural conflict resolution style model is proposed based on high/low levels of directness and high/low levels of emotional expressiveness: (1) discussion style (direct & emotionally restrained), (2) engagement style (direct & emotionally expressive), (3) accommodation style (indirect & emotionally restrained) and (4) dynamic style (indirect and emotionally expressive).
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1. Introduction

On April 4, 1961 Yuri Gagarin from the Soviet Union, completed the first human space flight. Since then, 422 individuals from 27 different countries have flown in space in either Russian or US sponsored missions, ushering in a new era of global cooperation. Today, The International Space Station, one of the largest cooperative scientific projects in history, involves the active efforts of 16 nations (McGeveran, 2002).

Yet evidence compiled since the earliest international space flight missions suggest that astronauts who live and work together for extended periods of time in what is known in space exploration parlance as "a confined space location in a hostile environment," experience disagreements and at times, hostility toward one another, based in part on their culturally different styles for resolving conflict (Bluth, 1984; Campbell, 1985; NASA Behavior and Performance Laboratory, 1989). Conflict is an essential feature of human interaction, whether it takes place on "planet earth" or in the space beyond. It is present in social situations that range from stranger-to-stranger interaction (e.g., road rage) to interpersonal relationships (e.g., marital disputes, disagreements between co-workers, hostage taking events) to intergroup settings (e.g., international disputes, terrorist incidents). How individuals respond to conflict dynamics within these varied arenas determines whether positive or negative outcomes occur.

1.1. The conflict dynamic

What is a conflict dynamic? While many definitions of conflict have been proposed (Holmes & Fletcher-Berglund, 1995), there is general consensus that one characteristic of conflict interaction is that perceived substantive *disagreements* exist among contending parties. Costantino and Merchant (1996) for instance, view conflict in terms of the "expression of dissatisfaction or disagreement with an interaction, process, product, or service" (p. 4), while Geist (1995) defines conflict in terms of "disagreements, differences of opinions, divergent interpretations, struggles for control, and multiple perspectives … (p. 46)." Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) suggest conflict "means divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously" (p. 5). Similarly, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) define conflict as "an intense disagreement process between a minimum of two interdependent parties when they perceive incompatible interests, viewpoints, processes, and/or goals in an interaction episode" (p. 48). One essential element, therefore, of a conflict process includes perceived substantive disagreements.

A second core feature of conflict interaction involves an affective or *emotional reaction*, typically in the form of antagonism based on perception of threat or interference by one or more parties to one another (Hammer, 2001). Fink (1968) for example, suggests conflict involves "any social situation or process in which two or more social entities are linked by at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation or at least one form of antagonistic interaction" (p. 456). Similarly, Fisher (1990) characterizes conflict as "a social situation involving perceived incompatibilities in goals or values between two or more parties, attempts by the parties to control each other, and antagonistic feelings by the parties toward each other" (p. 6). Overall, the elements of perceived disagreements coupled with a strong, negative emotional reaction characterize two fundamental characteristics of a conflict dynamic.

1.2. Interaction style and conflict style

At a general level, interaction style is concerned with patterns of behavior related to the way individuals communicate (Norton, 1983) or "the root sense of a way or mode of doing something" (Hymes, 1974, p. 434). Interaction style, according to Tannen (1988), is also fundamentally concerned with meaning while Norton (1983) adds that style includes consistently recurring patterns of behavior. When applied specifically to the area of conflict, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) defines conflict style as "patterned responses to conflict in a variety of situations" (p. 48). Conflict style is one of the central elements, therefore, that can escalate an intense conflict dynamic between contending parties (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

A number of taxonomies have been advanced to describe conflict style (see, for example, Van de Vliert, 1997 for a comprehensive review of various approaches). These have included such early efforts as flight–fight (Cannon, 1929), cooperation-competition (Deutsch, 1973), and moving away, moving toward and moving against framework (Horney, 1945). More recently, Rubin et al. (1994) view conflict styles in terms of withdrawing, yielding, problem solving or inaction.

Perhaps the most common typology used today, based on the work of Blake and Mouton (1964) views conflict style emerging from an individual's concern for self-interests vs. concern for the interests of the other. Rahim (1983) categorizes and measures, through the ROCI-II instrument, the following five conflict styles based on the individual's concern for self or other: dominating style (high self/low other concern), obliging style (low self/high other concern), avoiding style (low self/other concern), integrating style (high self/other concern) and compromising style (moderate self/other concern). Further, the (ROCI-II) measure of conflict style has been widely used in various research studies in both the domestic and intercultural context (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

Conflict style is also culturally contexted. That is, it is learned during an individual's primary socialization in a culture/ethnic group (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Members of cultural communities learn from one another the attitudes, knowledge structures, behaviors and strategies for defining and responding to conflict situations. Yet conceptualizations of conflict style previously discussed have been developed largely within western-based, individualistic cultural contexts (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Further, these taxonomies have not specifically been developed to assess or compare *Intercultural* Conflict Styles (ICSs), as the underlying conceptual frameworks are not grounded in culturally based patterns of differences. For example, the model and ROCI-II measure developed by Rahim (1983) of dominating, obliging, avoiding, integrating and compromising styles are suspect in their generalizability to more collectivist, Asian culture systems. Ting-Toomey (1994) posits that an avoiding strategy, viewed in western terms as a strategy that reflects low concern for self-interests and low concern for other interests, is employed in collectivist cultures to maintain relational harmony culturally reflects a *high* concern for self and other interests.

Unfortunately, there does not currently exist a conceptual framework and associated measure that attempts to understand and assess conflict style based on an explicit identification of viable "etic" (i.e., culturally generalizable) patterns of cultural difference from which intercultural conflict styles (ICSs) may be examined. Therefore, in this paper, I present (1) a preliminary conceptual framework for describing ICSs, and (2) a summary of the development of the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory (ICSI), a measure of ICSs.

2. A theoretical framework of Intercultural Conflict Style

An individual's ICS can be seen as grounded in a communication-based approach in which conflict style is understood in terms of the functional meaning of communicative behavior that is manifest during conflict interaction. Centrally rooted in the pragmatics of the human communication perspective, this interactional framework of communication suggests that communication "not only conveys information, but that at the same time imposes behavior" (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967, p. 51).

Based on the original work of Ruesch and Bateson (1951), these two elements of communication have been identified as the "report" and "command" functions of communicative interaction (Cissna & Sieburg, 1981; Watzlawick et al., 1967). The report function of communication is concerned with the information or content that is being discussed. As Watzlawick et al. (1967) suggest, the report aspects of communication "may be about anything that is communicable regardless of whether the particular information is true or false, valid, invalid, or undecidable" (pp. 51–52). In the context of conflict interaction, the report function may be usefully viewed in terms of the *substantive disagreements* (one characteristic of the conflict dynamic) that exist between the contending parties.

The second functional dimension of meaning, the "command" aspect, provides information about how the message "content" (i.e., disagreements) should be understood. The "command" dimension focuses on how the contending parties feel about not only the content or disagreements they have but also how they feel toward the other party and their relationship (Watzlawick et al., 1967). This second fundamental dimension of communicative meaning—the command function—is largely focused on the emotional response individuals have during a conflict interaction. Again, in the context of conflict interaction, the "command" function may be usefully viewed in terms of the affective or *emotional response* of the contending parties to one another (the second characteristic of the conflict dynamic).

The "report" and "command" functions of communication are the core parameters within which individuals "interpret" one another's motives, intentions and actions. In essence, these two dimensions of communicative meaning function as communicative frames for the conflicting parties (Johnson, 1997). Communicative framing, according to Putnam and Holmer (1992), occurs when individuals create verbal descriptions or representations of an issue or relationship. As Drake and Donohue (1996) state, "a frame is the particular quality assigned to an issue by the negotiator's linguistic choices" (p. 301).

Conflict style is therefore posited to comprise a set of behaviors contending parties exhibit that provide a coherent "interpretive frame" for understanding one another's intentions, motives and actions. These interpretive frames arise theoretically from the interplay of two fundamental dimensions of meaning: the "report" and "command" functions of communication. Further, it is proposed that within a conflict dynamic, the "report" function focuses on how contending parties deal with substantive disagreements while the "command" function focuses on how the parties deal with the affective or emotional dimension of communicative interaction. Conflict style then, is conceptualized as a stable "interpretive frame" that is generated from the manner in which contending parties communicate with one another around substantive disagreements and the manner in which they communicate how they feel toward one another (affective or emotional response).

By extension, ICS is conceptualized in terms of a culture group's preferred manner for dealing with disagreements and communicating emotion. That is, ICS is generated in terms of specific culture groups' preferred manner for communicating with the other party around substantive disagreements and feelings toward one another (affective or emotional response).

While ICS has been examined most extensively within the frameworks of individualism/collectivism (Miyahara, Kim, Shin, & Yoon, 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991) and high/low context (Augsburger, 1992; Cohen, 1997; Putnam, 1994; Ting-Toomey, 1985), it is argued that such constructs as individualism/collectivism are multidimensional "meta-concepts" or cultural syndromes (Triandis, 1994) and therefore not sufficiently specific for differentiating specific cultural style differences vis-à-vis disagreements and emotional expressiveness.

Yet there is also danger in attempting to analyze ICS using atheoretical typologies, which tend to simply provide a categorical "listing" of various intercultural dimensions. For example, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) identify a number of relationship dimensions (e.g., universalism/particularism, individualism/communitarianism, affective/emotionally neutral, specific/diffuse, achievement/ascription), attitudes toward time (e.g., past/future, sequential/synchronic activities), and relations with nature (e.g., controlling/adapting). However, how specific cultural dimensions are theoretically grounded is unclear. Similarly, Weaver (2000) provides a list of 62 different dimensions of cultural differences, divided into eight categories (characteristics of culture, social structure, philosophic outlook, psychological orientation, thought patterns, basic values, perception and interaction). While typologies such as these are useful in sensitizing individuals to various intercultural differences, for purposes of this research effort, these typologies are atheoretical and not focused specifically on ICS.

Therefore, a model of ICS is proposed that is: (1) *conceptualized* theoretically within the core "report" and "command" functions of communication meaning articulated within the pragmatics theory of human communication work, (2) *contexted* in terms of the two fundamental characteristics of a conflict dynamic (disagreement and emotional response) and (3) *interculturally grounded* in terms of how contending parties engage in more "Direct" vs. "Indirect" communication behavior around substantive disagreements and how "Emotionally Expressive vs. Emotionally Restrained" the parties are in communicating how they feel (emotion) toward one another. It is argued that the cultural dimensions of direct/indirect and emotionally expressive/restraint comprise two salient aspects of how meaning is generated and ICS generated.

To conclude, conflict style is conceptualized as the manner in which contending parties communicate with one another around substantive disagreements and their emotional or affective reaction to one another. Two core, culture-general dimensions of cultural differences provide a basis for identifying ICSs in terms of how parties deal with disagreements (the core "report" function of meaning) and emotion (the core "command" function of meaning). These *intercultural conflict dimensions* are: (1) Behaviors that reflect more direct vs. Indirect approaches for communicating about substantive disagreements, and (2) behaviors that reflect more emotionally expressive vs. emotionally restraint approaches for communicating how each party feels toward one another. I now turn to a review of selected studies that demonstrate the centrality of direct/indirect and emotionally expressive/restraint patterns in intercultural conflict and communication.

3. A model of Intercultural Conflict Style

Some people tend to express their disagreements to one another directly while others communicate more indirectly their thoughts; some individuals are more emotionally expressive and some more emotionally restrained in communicating how they feel toward one another around conflictual issues.[1]

Different linguistic strategies are employed by individuals who communicate in a more indirect manner. For example, more indirect strategies include greater reliance on ambiguity in language, use of analogies and metaphors, hinting or saying one thing to mean another, use of third party intermediaries, and relying on the receiver to clarify misunderstanding. Members of culture groups that prefer more direct strategies for dealing with disagreements place greater emphasis on using precise, explicit language, typically follow the maxim, ''say what you mean and mean what you say,'' look to the sender for clarifying misunderstanding, prefer more direct, face-to-face channels for discussing issues, and value verbal fluency as the main mechanism for resolving conflict.

Intercultural research conducted on direct and indirect communication strategies around conflict issues (disagreements) has been undertaken primarily through the ''etic'' (cultural general) lens of individualism/collectivism and high/low-context communication.

3.1. Individualism and collectivism

Individualism and collectivism, identified in both writings from Eastern and Western cultures, are posited to be central for distinguishing cultural values between a number of culture groups (Bond & Forgas, 1984; Hofstede, 1991; Hsu, 1981; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Ting-Toomey, 1988; Triandis, 1988; Yum, 1988) and are hypothesized to account for differences in intercultural communication and conflict styles (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986; Hofstede, 1991; Ting-Toomey, 1988). Hofstede (1991) defines individualism and collectivism as follows:

> *Individualism* pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. *Collectivism* as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioned loyalty. (p. 51)

Triandis (1988) views individualistic cultures as ''high in internal control, who emphasize private goals, who pay attention to what the person does rather than who the person is'' (p. 65) and collectivist cultures as a strong orientation toward maintaining the group as the ''best guarantee of individual freedom'' (p. 66). Overall, Individualism focuses on the

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[1]Both direct and indirect approaches and emotional expressiveness and emotional restraint dimensions comprise central patterns of cultural difference that have been examined under the more general cultural elements of individualism/collectivism and high/low-context communication patterns. In these studies, the interpretation of differences between members of specific culture groups is framed in terms of testing hypotheses related to differences between Individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures or between high vs. low-context cultural systems. Given that the purpose of this article is to provide a conceptual foundation for the generation of items for developing a measure of Intercultural Conflict Styles, literature is examined in terms of its findings vis-à-vis direct/indirect cultural patterns for dealing with disagreements and emotional expressiveness/restraint cultural patterns for communicating affect toward the other party within a conflict context.

individual's personal identity characteristics and his/her own needs and goals while collectivism emphasizes the group identity of the person with greater concern for the needs and goals of the group (Dsilva & Whyte, 1997; Guzley, Araki, & Chalmers, 1998; Trubisky et al., 1991).

Communicatively, individualistic cultures "tend to stress the value of straight talk and tend to verbalize overtly their individual wants and needs, while members of collectivist cultures tend to stress the value of contemplative talk and discretion in voicing one's opinions and feelings" (Trubisky et al., 1991, p. 68) perhaps in order to maintain ingroup harmony (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim, 1994).

Research that has examined cross-cultural differences in conflict style preferences has demonstrated that more direct patterns for dealing with disagreements are associated with more *dominating* conflict styles while more indirect patterns are related to *obliging/ accommodating* conflict styles (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Research is less clear concerning the relationship of *integrating/collaborating* conflict style and the *compromising* style, primarily because individualistic and collectivist cultures tend to attribute different meanings to the concepts of "integrating" and "compromising" (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

For example, Leung (1988) found that collectivist cultures prefer more conflict avoidance approaches and greater use of third party intermediaries while individualistic cultures emphasize more direct and solution communication styles. Other studies have found that collectivist cultures prefer more "other centered" negotiation strategies compared to individualistic cultures that emphasis one's own outcomes (Pearson & Stratton, 1998) and use more indirect and accommodating strategies compared to individualistic culture groups that employ more confrontational approaches for resolving conflict (Nomura & Barnlund, 1983; Wolfson & Norden, 1984).

Overall, research undertaken under the conceptual umbrella of individualism/ collectivism has identified the core cultural dimension of direct/indirect approaches as central for dealing with disagreements across cultures. As Trubisky et al. (1991) conclude:

> Overall, the evidence suggests that members of individualistic cultures tend to prefer direct conflict communication styles and solution-oriented styles. These two styles tend to emphasize the values of autonomy, competitiveness, and the need for control. Conversely, members of collectivist cultures tend to prefer obliging and conflict-avoidance styles. These two styles tend to emphasize the value for passive compliance and for maintaining relational harmony in conflict interactions. (p. 70)

3.2. High and low-context communication patterns

Differences in ICS have also been conceptualized using the distinction between high- and low-context communication systems (Augsburger, 1992; Cohen, 1997; Hall, 1976; Hammer, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 1985, 1988). According to Hall (1976) high-context communication occurs when most of the meaning of a message is either internalized by the individual or located in the social or physical context while low-context communication occurs when most of the information is found in the explicit, verbal code. Low-context negotiation style places greater emphasis in more explicit and precise use of language for conflict resolution compared to high-context negotiation style which emphasizes indirect speech, ambiguity of expression, and non-confrontational communication strategies (Hammer, 1997). As Ting-Toomey (1985) states: "in the High Context Culture (HCC)

system the predominant mode of conflict attitude can best be described as evasive and non-confrontational … A calculated degree of vagueness and circumlocution are typically employed when tensions and anxieties mount" (p. 80).

Under conflict conditions, low-context negotiators may likely rely more on direct verbal strategies while high-context negotiators may employ more indirect communication approaches, including greater reliance on third party intervention for tension reduction (Augsburger, 1992; Cohen, 1997; Hammer, 1997). Low-context conflict communication aims to clearly and unambiguously state the speaker's true intentions while high-context communication focuses on concealing the speaker's true intentions (Ting-Toomey, 1988d).

Overall, research conducted under the rubric of high/low-context also suggests that core cultural differences are found in terms of the degree to which individuals use direct and indirect approaches to resolve conflict across cultures.

3.3. Emotionally expressive and restraint conflict style

Emotions, according to Matsumoto (1996) "are in many respects the most revealing indicators of cultural similarities, and of cultural differences" (p. 2). While emotions are universal in their experience, they are culturally contexted in their expression. That is, emotions are related to specific verbal and non-verbal expressive behaviors and these behaviors are culturally learned and enacted in social interaction with others. Often termed "display rules" (Ekman & Friesen, 1969), emotional expression is based on the norms of specific cultural groups.

Based on extensive reviews of research focused on the relationship of culture and emotion, Mesquita and Frijida (1992) and Russell (1991) identify important differences in the way emotion is expressed across cultures. Cultures, then, differ in the degree to which emotional expressiveness and emotional restraint are valued and practiced in social interactions around conflict issues. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) report substantial cultural differences in emotional expressiveness/restraint in terms of the percentage of respondents from approximately 50 countries who would *not* show their emotions openly if they felt upset about something at work. According to their data, 75% of the respondents from Poland, Japan and Ethiopia indicated they would *not* display their emotions (i.e., emotional restraint orientation) while 75% of the respondents from Kuwait, Egypt, Oman, Spain, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and the Philippines indicated they *would* openly express their feelings of frustration (i.e., an emotionally expressive orientation).

Members of cultures that are emotionally expressive tend to more overtly and visibly demonstrate their feelings through laughing, gesturing, body posture and facial expressions. More emotionally expressive cultural systems tend to value affective engagement and involvement in communicating with others (Kochman, 1981) oftentimes using the whole body, more intense gestures, elevated volume and more vocalized communication patterns (Zandpour & Sadri, 1996).

In contrast, members of emotional restraint culture systems tend to contain, hide, mask or otherwise minimize more overt emotional expression. As Ting-Toomey (1999) suggests, "in many collectivist Asian cultures, maintaining restrained emotional composure is viewed as the self-disciplined, mature way to handle conflict" (p. 215). Other research suggests that control over negative emotions is central to facilitating conflict resolution among Latino (Alum & Manteiga, 1977; Triandis, Marin, Lisansky, & Betancourt, 1984)

and Southeast Asian (Dsilva & Whyte, 1997; Locke, 1992) cultures. In one recent study, Hammer and Rogan (2002) examined conflict resolution strategies employed by Indochinese and Central American refugees currently living in the United States. Their findings indicate the one of the central interpretive frames around conflict de-escalation for both groups was the control of negative emotional verbal and non-verbal expression.

A number of other studies support the importance of emotional expressiveness/restraint as a key dimension of cultural variability in conflict processes. In reviewing research within the collectivist/individualist conceptual framework, a number of writers suggest that individualistic cultures tend to encourage a more open and expressive display of emotion in order to "honestly" engage in conflict resolution while collectivist cultures tend to discourage expression of negative emotions as "the masking of 'negative' emotions is critical to maintaining a harmonious front during conflict" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 215). Other research suggests that more non-vocal reactions and verbal responses are displayed by people from individualistic cultures compared to collectivist cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Other authors posit different "etic" dimensions of culture as explanators of observed differences in emotional expressiveness. Hofstede (1991) and Ting-Toomey (1988) suggest that individuals in more masculine culture systems (i.e., cultures that emphasize achievement, competition) experience emotional distress more than people in feminine cultures (i.e., cultures that emphasize cooperation, nurturance). Gudykunst and Kim (1997) suggest that individuals from high uncertainty avoidance cultures (i.e., cultures in which strict rules guide behavior) "experience less joy from relationships than do people in low uncertainty avoidance cultures" (p. 229). Finally, research undertaken by Matsumoto (1989) conducted on emotional expression in fifteen cultures, found that individuals from both high power distance (i.e., social hierarchy defines relationships) and collectivist cultures engage in more emotional restraint in social interaction compared to individuals from low power distance and individualistic cultures who are more emotionally expressive.

It is clear that while emotional expressiveness has been identified as central to conflict style across cultures, there is little theoretical agreement among scholars concerning the more "etic" or culture general framework within which to "explain" observed differences in emotional expression between different culture groups. In part, this lack of conceptual clarity may reside in the desire among "culture general" theorists to "fit" research results on emotional expressiveness into pre-existing, "etic" categories of culture difference rather than to examine variability among culture groups specifically from the emotional expressiveness/restraint interpretive lens. Nevertheless, for purposes of this review, these studies identify both the centrality and variability of emotional expressiveness and emotional restraint as important dimensions of cultural differences in conflict style.

4. Method

Based on an extensive review of relevant literature, a total of 122 items were generated that reflect direct and indirect strategies and emotionally expressive and emotionally restrained approaches for resolving conflicts. A panel of 16 experts in conflict and intercultural communication was then sent these items to review and instructed to assess whether the items listed are sufficiently representative of the cultural dimension being examined (i.e., direct/indirect and emotionally expressive/restrained), whether the wording of the items are satisfactory or whether they should be changed to make the items clearer

and more applicable across culture groups, and whether other items should be added that are not listed.[2]

This protocol further aided in establishing the relevancy of the items to the constructs of direct/indirect and emotionally expressive/restrained and establishes initial content validity of the items (DeVellis, 1991). Changes proposed by the panel members were then incorporated which resulted in a set of 106 usable items (see Table 1 toward the end of article for a full listing of these items). Fifty-four items reflect the range from more verbally direct approaches (24 items) to more indirect approaches (30 items) to resolving conflict. Example items are: (1) Candidly express your disagreements to the other party, (2) verbally confront differences of opinion directly with the other party, (3) be comfortable with the other party fully expressing their convictions, (4) offer indirect suggestions rather than explicit recommendations, (5) express your complaints indirectly, and (6) accommodate and go along with the statements made by the other party even though you disagree.

A total of 52 items were generated that reflect the range from more emotionally expressive (25 items) to more emotionally restrained (27 items) approaches to resolving conflict. Example items are: (1) Allow your own emotions to come out when interacting with the other party, (2) passionately express your disagreement, (3) express your deeper emotions like fear and anger, (4) avoid expressing strong emotions, (5) keep strong emotions like fear and anger hidden from the other party, and (6) avoid imposing your feelings on the other party.

These items were then randomly ordered in a questionnaire. Response options for each of these items were: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree.

The following demographic information was also gathered in the questionnaire: (1) Gender (1 = male; 2 = female), (2) age (1 = 17 or under; 2 = 18–21; 3 = 22–30; 4 = 31–40; 5 = 41–50; 6 = 51–60; and 6 = over 60 years of age. (3) Amount of previous experience living in another culture (1 = never lived in another culture, 2 = less than 3 months, 3 = 3–6 months, 4 = 7–11 months, 5 = 1–2 years, 6 = 3–5 years, 7 = 6–10 years, 8 = over 10 years), (4) educational level (1 = did not complete high school, 2 = high school graduate, 3 = college graduate, 4 = M.A. degree or equivalent, 5 = Ph.D. degree or equivalent, 5 = other), (5) nationality and/or cultural/ethnic background, and (6) World region individual primarily lived during his/her formative years to age 18 (1 = North America, 2 = Central America, 3 = South America, 4 = Middle East, 5 = Africa, 6 = Australia, 7 = Asia Pacific, 8 = Western Europe, 9 = Eastern Europe, 10 = other).

The 106 items plus the demographic questions were administered to a sample of 510 culturally diverse respondents. This group of respondents was deliberately not drawn from a college student population. Rather, the sample was drawn largely, but not exclusively, from a large, metropolitan city located within the eastern part of the United States. The sample size exceeds the sample requirement of 300 respondents for scale development recommended by Nunnally (1978).

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[2]The panel members reflected a variety of cultural backgrounds, including African American, Asian American, European American, Hispanic American, Mexican, Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Arab Palestinian), African, (Kenya) and German cultures. Responses were received from approximately half of the panel members.

Table 1
Descriptive information: final 36-item intercultural conflict style inventory (est. $n = 415$)

Item description (abbreviated wording; not actual items)	Mean	Std. dev.
D: 1. Directly confront other party	4.25	1.47
D: 7. Verbally elaborate views	4.86	1.05
D: *13. Comfort in other party expressing convictions	4.70	1.0
D: 14. Be explicit as possible	4.78	1.07
D: *15. Directly express what you believe	4.88	.99
D: 23. Quickly come to the point	4.23	1.21
D: 27. Precise in words used	5.13	.82
D: 38. Frank in expressing opinions	5.89	.98
D: *39. Comfort in other party asserting ideas	4.81	.90
D: 40. Offer facts, objective evidence to persuade	4.68	1.13
D: 46. Assert ideas	4.74	.98
D: *47. Verbally defend views	4.78	1.04
D: 54. Argue when challenged	3.82	1.34
D: *57. Get straight to the point	4.65	.96
D: 62. Clearly state true intentions	4.77	.98
D: 66. Comfortable when other party directly confronts you	4.39	1.17
D: *68. Fully express convictions	4.66	.91
D: 70. Verbally challenge points	4.40	1.06
D: 73. Comfortable when other party verbally confronts differences in opinion	4.48	1.0
D: *74. Candidly express disagreements	4.47	.99
D: *77. Verbally confront opinion differences	4.31	1.04
D: *81. Clarity in communication with other party	4.91	.98
D: 87. Interrupt other party when misunderstanding arises	3.60	1.36
D: 101: Comfortable when other party is clear and unambiguous	4.58	1.12
I: 4. Sensitive to saving face of the other	2.77	1.22
I: *9. Offer indirect suggestions	3.56	1.35
I: 10. Use third parties to mediate conflict	2.89	1.29
I: 12. Be subtle in expressing disagreements	3.16	1.32
I: 17. Avoid imposing own views	3.28	1.48
I: 18. Drop the issue and act as if there is no conflict	4.60	1.41
I: 21. Comfortable if other party drops issue and acts as if there is no conflict	4.19	1.35
I: *24. Apologize for the conflict	4.16	1.33
I: 30. Be subtle in expressing nonverbally disagreement	3.18	1.29
I: 33. Qualify own views by saying maybe, perhaps	3.52	1.28
I: *36. Express complaints indirectly	3.81	1.41
I: 42. Avoid sharp & explicit analysis of conflicting views	3.48	1.30
I: 43. Avoid overt disagreement	3.57	1.36
I: 45. Comfortable when other party offers indirect suggestions	3.08	1.25
I: *48. Comfort when other party accommodates	3.19	1.28
I: 50. Rely more on nonverbal cues than verbal cues	3.98	1.21
I: 52. Sensitive to nonverbal behavior	2.72	1.12
I: *60. Talk around disagreements	3.61	1.44
I: 61. Use third party other person trusts	2.87	1.22
I: 67. Communicate that requires other to "read between the lines"	4.16	1.43
I: *71. Use intermediaries to settle disputes	2.91	1.19
I: 76. Avoid direct questioning	4.05	1.59
I: 82. Comfortable when other qualifies view by saying, maybe, perhaps	3.02	1.25
I: *83. Be cautious in sharing ideas	3.35	1.27
I: 88. Comfortable when other is cautious in sharing goals	2.75	1.09
I: *89. Avoid criticizing	3.02	1.25
I: *94. Go along with statements made by other party	4.03	1.28

Table 1 (*continued*)

Item description (abbreviated wording; not actual items)	Mean	Std. dev.
I: 102. Use apologies, proverbs to persuade	3.35	1.33
I: 103. Comfortable other party avoids explicit analysis of views	3.06	1.16
I: 105. Comfortable when other party relies more on nonverbal cues than verbal cues	3.30	1.21
EE: 2. Use forceful emotional approach to get point across	2.72	1.35
EE: 3. Express emotions when disagree	3.83	1.38
EE: 8. Comfortable when other restates their views forcefully	4.37	1.21
EE: *19. Allow your emotions to come out	3.32	1.31
EE: *20. Openly express anger	3.10	1.42
EE: 25. Reveal feelings even if upset	3.93	1.24
EE: *31. *Not* **try to control your emotions.**	2.36	1.23
EE: 34. Express yourself with passion	3.92	1.23
EE: 37. Let other know how you feel about the conflict	4.88	.91
EE: 41. Comfortable with forceful, emotional style from other	3.87	1.26
EE: *51. Express strong emotions.	3.22	1.36
EE: 53. Comfortable with emotional displays from other	3.64	1.31
EE: *58. Present ideas with fully emotion	3.08	1.32
EE: *59. Express feelings, even it means shouting	2.51	1.29
EE: 64. Comfortable with emotional intensity	4.33	1.11
EE: 69. Avoid controlling feelings	3.15	1.34
EE: *72. Interact with emotional intensity	3.11	1.24
EE: *75. Passionately express disagreements.	3.51	1.29
EE: 84. Fully reveal feelings to other	3.71	1.22
EE: 90. Comfortable with other openly expressing anger	4.27	1.15
EE: 92. Let other know how you feel about the conflict	4.65	1.04
EE: 93. Comfortable with other revealing feelings to you	4.42	1.12
EE: *95. Express deeper emotions like fear	3.10	1.37
EE: 96. Restate your views forcefully	3.84	2.26
ER: 5. Withhold negative feelings	3.17	1.29
ER: 6. Avoid impulsive emotional displays	2.23	1.16
ER: *11. Avoid expressing strong emotions	2.92	1.33
ER: 16. Be sensitive to not offending the other	2.28	1.11
ER: 22. Hide your own feelings	4.17	1.35
ER: 26. Avoid hurting the feelings of the other	2.63	1.23
ER: *28. Maintain emotional calm	2.07	.97
ER: 29. Comfortable when other does not express strong, negative feelings	2.44	1.05
ER: 32. Comfortable when other avoids revealing strong emotions	3.24	1.28
ER: 35. Avoid negative emotionally intense interaction with other	2.68	1.24
ER: *44. Contain emotions	3.03	1.32
ER: *49. Avoid imposing feelings	2.89	1.23
ER: 55. Maintain emotional restraint when disagreeing with other	2.60	1.15
ER: 56. Avoid revealing feelings of anger and fear	2.97	1.27
ER: 63. Maintain emotional control	2.22	1.02
ER: 65. Comfortable when other uses emotionally calm style	2.30	1.00
ER: *78. Keep strong emotions hidden	3.25	1.31
ER: 79. Prevent other from knowing how you feel	3.99	1.33
ER: *80. Insure own feelings do not interfere	2.83	1.23
ER: 85. Use self restraint and calm in conflict	2.35	1.13
ER: *86. Control strong emotions.	2.50	1.12
ER: *91. Use an emotionally calm style	2.27	1.09
ER: *98. Restrain negative emotions	3.10	1.27
ER: 99. Comfortable when other hides emotions	3.68	1.32
ER: 100. Present own ideas with emotional control	3.01	1.28

Table 1 (*continued*)

Item description (abbreviated wording; not actual items)	Mean	Std. dev.
ER: 104. Be sensitive to subtle emotional expression from other	2.50	1.01
ER: 106. Comfortable when other keeps strong emotions like fear and anger hidden from you	3.14	1.25

(1) Indirect items and emotional restraint items are reverse coded.
(2) *Bolded items comprise the final set of 36 items for the intercultural conflict style inventory.
(3) D = direct items, I = indirect items, EE = emotionally expressive items, ER = emotionally restrained items.
(4) Abbreviated wording of all items, see www.hammerconsulting.org for full inventory.

4.1. Sample

Of the 510 respondents, 42% were men ($n = 204$) and 58% were women ($n = 376$). Their ages ranged from the high teens to over 60 years of age. The respondents were distributed among the age categories, with the largest number of subjects between the ages of 22 and 30 (40%; $n = 198$). Two percent of the respondents ($n = 11$) were 17 years of age or under, 14% ($n = 68$) were 18–21 years of age, 16% were between 31 and 40 ($n = 81$), 16% were between 41 and 50 ($n = 80$), 9% were 51 and 60 years of age ($n = 42$), and 3% were over 60 years of age ($n = 13$).

In terms of education, 3% did not complete high school ($n = 13$), 21% graduated from high school ($n = 103$), 38% were college graduates ($n = 187$), 31% had MA or equivalent graduate degrees ($n = 153$), and 4% had Ph.D. or equivalent degrees ($n = 18$).

The respondents had varying degrees of experience living in another culture. Twenty-seven percent ($n = 135$) of the respondents never lived in another culture, 8% ($n = 41$) lived overseas less than 3 months, 10% ($n = 48$) lived in another culture 3–6 months, 6% ($n = 28$) lived 7–12 months, 11% ($n = 57$) lived 1–2 years, 11% ($n = 56$) lived 3–5 years, 11% ($n = 55$) lived 6–10 years and 15% ($n = 71$) lived over 10 years in another culture.

Fifty-six percent of the respondents ($n = 266$) indicated they primarily lived during their formative years to age 18 in North America (United States, Canada, Mexico), 1% ($n = 6$) in Central America, 6% ($n = 28$) in South America, 13% ($n = 62$) in the Middle East, 3% ($n = 13$) in Africa, .2% ($n = 1$) in Australia, 15% ($n = 69$) in Asia Pacific, and 5% ($n = 20$) in Eastern and Western Europe.

The cultural background of the respondents is quite varied with the majority being non-US White American (57%). Specifically, 43% ($n = 189$) indicated their cultural background as US White American, 2% ($n = 9$) as US Latin American, 5% ($n = 21$) as US African American, 2% ($n = 8$) as US Asian American, 8% ($n = 34$) as Latin American, 16% ($n = 71$) as Asian, 3% ($n = 14$) as Arab, 12% ($n = 55$) as Israeli, 2% ($n = 7$) as European, 2% ($n = 7$) as Eastern European, Russian, 1% ($n = 5$) as African, and 3% ($n = 12$) as other (unspecified).

4.2. Confirmatory factor analysis and scale reliability results

Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test whether the proposed two dimensional theoretical model (direct/indirect; emotional expressiveness/restraint) is

consistent, or fits the data.[3] A number of statistical procedures were employed to test the adequacy of the fit of the theoretical model to the data. First, the ratio of χ^2 to degrees of freedom (χ^2/df) was used to assess the discrepancy between the proposed model and the data. The χ^2 was 4003.9 and the degrees of freedom was 1695, resulting in a ratio of 2.36, which is relatively low and therefore reflects a reasonable fit of the model to the data.

Second, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) is a generalized estimation criterion, which ranges from zero (no fit) to one (perfect fit) (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984). The GFI was .75, suggesting the two-dimensional model is an overall good fit to the data.

Third, the root mean-square residual (RMR) is an estimate obtained by comparing the values of variances and covariances predicted by the model with the actual variances and covariances ascertained from the data. The larger the RMR, the greater the discrepancy between the model and the data, with zero representing a perfect fit. The RMR was .12, again indicating a reasonable fit to the data.

Finally, the RMSEA provides a fit of the data taking into consideration the complexity of the model. Browne and Cudeck (1993) recommend that a criterion of .08 or less for the RMSEA in terms of providing a good fit of the data. The RMSEA for the two-dimensional model is .05, indicating the model provides a good fit to the data.

Overall, the confirmatory factor analysis results indicate that the proposed two dimensional model, consisting of a direct/indirect dimension and an emotional expressiveness/restraint dimension, provides a good fit to the data. The confirmatory factor analysis narrowed the final set of items to 60, distributed across the two factors as follows: (1) 18 items reflecting more verbally direct approaches to conflict resolution and 12 items reflecting more indirect approaches to conflict resolution; and (2) 17 items reflecting more emotionally expressive approaches and 13 items reflecting more emotionally restrained approaches to conflict resolution.

A review was then undertaken of the 60 items identified in the confirmatory factor analysis in order to identify those items that conceptually and empirically provide both distinctiveness (i.e., no redundancy) in item content and overall scale reliability. Further, an effort was made to include items for the direct/indirect scale that reflected both the more verbally direct and indirect orientations. This same effort was also made to include items for the emotional expressive/restraint scale that reflected both emotionally expressive and emotionally restrained approaches. Finally, for individual diagnostic purposes, it was decided that scale reliability should be .70 (Nunnally, 1978) or higher (DeVellis, 1991).

The result is an 18 item direct/indirect scale (DI scale) that consists of 9 items worded in the verbally direct format and 9 items worded in a way that reflects a more indirect approach to resolving conflict. Reliability (coefficient α) for this scale was .71. A second, 18 item emotional expressiveness/restraint (ER scale) was also identified that consists of 9 items phrased in the emotionally expressive format and 9 items worded in way that reflects a more emotionally restrained approach to conflict resolution. Reliability for this ER scale was .86. The overall measure was termed, the ICSI. Table 1 presents a summary of the 36 items that comprise the measure of ICS identified in this study.

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[3]In the spirit that communication behaviors (including conflict communication behaviors) are interrelated, the two factors were allowed to correlate. However, even though a correlation was allowed, the resultant correlation was only −.007, indicating these factors were independent constructs. Also, the modification indices produced by the CFA analysis indicates that the items were not wrongly constrained to correlate only on one factor.

4.3. Validity testing of the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory

Additional analysis was completed examining the effects of gender, education and previous living experience in another culture. In examining the effects of gender, t-tests were run on the DI (direct/indirect) scale and on the ER (emotional expressiveness/restraint) scale. No significant differences were found on the DI scale ($t = .004$; df = 402; $p = ns$) or on the ER scale ($t = .507$; df = 405; $p = ns$), indicating there are no differences in the ICSs of men and women.

One-way ANOVAs were run to test for significant differences on the DI and ER scales by education. No significant differences by education (high school graduate or less, college graduate, M.A. degree and Ph.D. degree) were found on the DI scale ($F = 2.21$; df = 3.384; $p = ns$) or the ER scale ($F = 1.36$; df = 3.386; $p = ns$).

One-way ANOVAs were also run to test for significant differences on the DI and ER scales by previous living experience in another culture. A significant F-test was found on the DI scale ($F = 2.96$; df = 7,395; $p = .005$), however, subsequent post hoc analysis revealed no significant differences among any of the groups. Results indicated no significant differences on the ER scale ($F = .97$; df = 7,398; $p = ns$).

The overall findings support the proposed two dimensional model of ICS. The results from the confirmatory factor analysis suggest the two-dimensional model is a good fit to the data. The final 18 item DI (direct/indirect) scale and the final 18 item ER (emotional expressiveness/restraint) scale obtained adequate reliability (.71 and .86, respectively). Additional tests of these scales reveals there are no significant differences by gender, educational level or previous intercultural living experience. These findings support the generalizability of the ICSI.

5. Additional testing of the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory

In order to format the ICSI items identified in the research effort into a more "user-friendly" format, the final 36 items were arranged as follows. The 9 direct style items and the 9 indirect style items were "matched" with one another as two separate options (A & B), thus creating 9 question items. Similarly, the 9 emotionally expressive items and the 9 emotionally restraint items were also "matched" with one another as two separate options, thus creating an additional set of 9 question items. These 18 question items were then randomly arranged in the inventory. For each of these 18 questions (which each contained a response option of "A" or "B"), respondents were asked to respond to the statement, "in general, when resolving conflict with another party, my preferred approach is to:". Respondents were asked to distribute 5 points between either option "A" or option "B" as follows: 5-0; 4-1; 3-2; 2-3; 1-4; 0-5. In addition to these items, a set of six demographic items were included. These items focused on gender, age, previous experience living in another culture, educational level, country of citizenship and ethnic background of US citizen respondents.

The ICSI was then administered to a new sample of 487 respondents from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Of this sample, 64% ($n = 189$) were men and 36% (161) were women. 5% ($n = 20$) were 21 years of age or younger, 20% ($n = 92$) were 22–30, 28% ($n = 126$) were 31–40, 37% ($n = 164$) were 41–50 and 11% ($n = 47$) were 51 years of age or older. In terms of previous experience living in another culture, 41% ($n = 184$) never lived

in another culture, 17% ($n = 74$) lived less than one year in another culture, 9% ($n = 42$) lived 1–2 years in another culture, 9% ($n = 40$) lived 3–5 years in another culture, 6% ($n = 29$) lived 6–10 years in another culture and 17% ($n = 76$) lived over 10 years in another culture. In terms of education, 31% ($n = 133$) attended or completed high school, 52% ($n = 225$) completed college, and 17% ($n = 69$) completed post graduate education.

In terms of country of citizenship, 74% ($n = 335$) were United States citizens while 26% ($n = 116$) were citizens of other countries. Among those respondents who were US citizens, 32% did not indicate their ethnic background. Of those respondents who did indicate their ethnic identity, 41% ($n = 202$) were White American, 10% ($n = 48$) were African American, 11% ($n = 51$) were Hispanic/Latino/a American, .6% ($n = 3$) were Asian American, and .2% ($n = 1$) were American Indian. Among those respondents who were not US citizens and who indicated their country of citizenship, 2% $n = 10$) were from Bulgaria, 3% ($n = 14$) were from China, 2% ($n = 10$) were from Ethiopia, 3% ($n = 12$) were from Japan, 2% ($n = 10$) were from the Philippines, .8% ($n = 4$) were from Saudi Arabia, 2% ($n = 9$) were from Trinidad/Tobago, 7% ($n = 35$) were from Venezuela, and .2% ($n = 1$) each were from the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Mexico, Palestine, Peru, Sudan, and Thailand.

Because the direct and indirect items were options from which respondents distributed five points between them, the 9 direct item "options" comprised the direct/indirect scale. These nine items obtained coefficient alpha reliability of .73. Again, because the emotionally expressive and emotionally restraint items were options from which respondents distributed five points between them, the 9 emotionally expressive "option" items comprised the emotionally expressive/restraint scale. These nine items obtained .85 reliability.

The results from this additional sample analysis of the current format of the ICSI indicates the direct/indirect and the emotional expressive/restraint scales maintain consistent and satisfactory reliability.

5.1. A practical application: a model of intercultural conflict resolution style

Fig. 1 presents an elaboration and application of the basic theoretical dimensions of direct/indirect and emotional expressiveness/restraint developed in this study.

The ICS model presented in Fig. 1 identifies four basic, cross-cultural conflict resolution styles.[4] The first style, termed the *Discussion* style, describes an approach to conflict resolution that emphasizes a more verbally direct approach for dealing with areas of disagreement and a more emotionally restrained or controlled manner for dealing with each party's emotional response to a conflictual interaction. This style emphasizes precision in language use and generally follows the maxim, "say what you mean and mean what you say." Further, this style tends to view more intense expressions of emotion as potentially dangerous and generally inhibitory toward "effective" conflict resolution processes. Talking about the disagreement directly to one another is a comfortable approach for the *Discussion* style, yet this "discussion" should be based on objective facts if at all possible and the contending parties should be cautious in injecting their own personal feelings into the process.

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[4]The Intercultural Conflict Styles Inventory (ICSI) and the four quadrant model of Intercultural Conflict Styles presented in this paper are copyrighted and patent pending (2001) by Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D.

Direct

	Discussion Style	Engagement Style
	Accommodation Style	Dynamic Style

Indirect   Emotional   Emotional
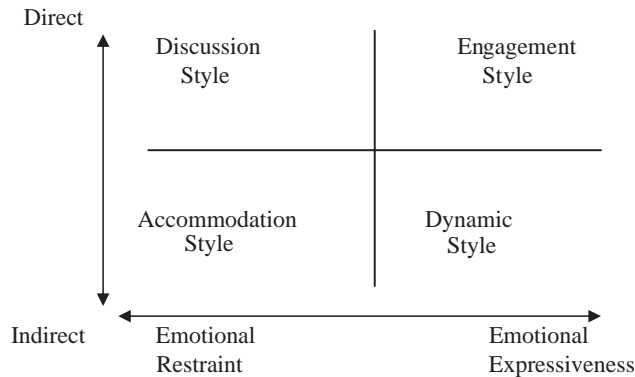   Restraint   Expressiveness

Fig. 1. A model of Intercultural Conflict Style.

The *Engagement* style emphasizes a more verbally direct and confrontational approach toward resolving conflict that is infused with an emotionally expressive demeanor. This style tends to view sincerity of each party toward a positive resolution of a conflictual dynamic as embedded in the degree of concern that is demonstrated through more intense, verbal and non-verbal expression of emotion. This style tends to be more comfortable than the *Discussion* style with personal engagement of the parties where disagreements are verbally confronted and emotion is "put on the table."

The third style, termed the *Accommodation* style, describes an approach to conflict resolution that emphasizes a more indirect approach for dealing with areas of disagreement and a more emotionally restrained or controlled manner for dealing with each party's emotional response to conflict. This style emphasizes ambiguity and circumlocution in language use in order to help ensure that a conflict does not "get out of control." Maintaining emotional calm and reserve is essential to this style for enabling interpersonal harmony to counter relationally damaging disagreements among the parties. This style, therefore, views more intense expressions of emotion as potentially dangerous and generally inhibitory toward "effective" conflict resolution processes. Indirect speech, use of intermediaries, and minimizing the level of conflict present among the parties are all specific strategies an *Accommodation* style may likely employ.

The *Dynamic* style involves the use of more indirect strategies for dealing with substantive disagreements coupled with more emotionally intense expression. This style may typically involve such linguistic devices as hyperbole, repetition of one's message, a more "associative" argument structure, ambiguity and use of third party intermediaries coupled with more emotionally confrontational discourse and expression. The credibility of each party is grounded, within this style, in the degree of emotional expressiveness one demonstrates toward the disagreement and toward the other party.

The ICSI and the four-quadrant model has been used in a variety of applied contexts. For example, mediators are currently using the ICSI when working on organizational, family and other dispute resolution efforts. In one mediation I conducted, both party's completed the ICSI prior to the initial mediation session. After reviewing the mediation process with the party's, I then reviewed with them their ICSs. One of the disputants' style was "engagement" while the other was "accommodation." A large part of the conflict between these individuals had involved misperceptions each held of one another, based on

differences in intercultural conflict resolution style. For example, the accommodation style individual felt the other party was "rude and aggressive" while the engagement individual characterized the accommodation style person as deceptive and lacking in commitment. After discussing these misperceptions in terms of differences in conflict resolution styles (rather than negative personal traits), the disputant's were better able to address their substantive disagreements.

In other situations, the ICSI is being used to improve organizations' capabilities in valuing diversity. For example, in various training programs I have conducted, participants in US organizations most often identify the discussion style as dominant. However, as individuals in the training programs identify their own intercultural conflict resolution approach by completing the ICSI, it becomes apparent that not all members of the organization equally use or value "discussion" strategies for resolving conflicts. For these individuals, their approach to conflict resolution is more engagement, accommodation or dynamic.

When conflict arises, these various "non-discussion" styles tend to be marginalized and the more direct and emotionally controlled processes for resolving conflict are asserted as proper and necessary for productively resolving disputes in the organization. Unfortunately, when discussion styles dominate and individuals have little awareness of the cultural grounding of this particular approach to resolving disagreements, engagement styles tend to be viewed as harsh and aggressive, accommodation styles as lacking conviction, and dynamic styles as volatile and disorganized. As a result, conflicts actually escalate even when a supposedly "effective" (discussion style model) is used to resolve disagreements! Recognizing these various styles and then developing more inclusive conflict resolution systems and approaches is facilitated through the use of the four quadrant ICS model presented in this article and the ICSI.

6. Conclusion

Understanding how individuals employ culturally learned strategies for dealing with disagreements and emotional response to conflictual interaction is critically important in this increasingly interdependent world. The theoretical model proposed in this study and the four derived ICSs (discussion, engagement, accommodation, dynamic) offers an important conceptualization of culturally based patterns of difference around conflict interaction. The development of the ICSI, composed of the twin scales that assess direct/indirect approaches and emotional expressive/restraint approaches to resolving conflict provides an empirical measure of ICS that can be used in future research studies.

Finally, the resulting format of the ICSI enables researchers and practitioners alike to examine these four ICSs. That is, the ICSI permits placement of respondent scores along the dimensions of direct/indirect and emotional expressiveness/restraint such that the overall ICS (discussion, engagement, accommodation, dynamic) can be determined at both the individual level (a person's own conflict style) and then compared to various culture group profiles (aggregate level conflict style).

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