Conflict Behavior in the Workplace: A Study of Second Generation Arab Muslim Immigrants in the United States

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Abstract

Multiple studies have shown that culture, religiosity, and gender influence people's behavior in managing their conflict; however, there has been little investigation of the impact of the acculturation process on these variables utilized by second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. My study follows a sequential explanatory model with a mixed methods approach, and specifically explores the conflict management styles utilized by second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the U.S. and how their culture, gender, and religiosity contribute to these processes. Data was collected by conducting 112 online surveys and 12 face-to-face semi-structured interviews, with the sample population stemming from the Arab Muslim communities in Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis, Missouri. Binary logistic regression and Chi-square tests were used to analyze this quantitative data through SPSS while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The resulting analysis showed that second generation immigrants tended to be more individualistic, have a lower level of religiosity, and utilize and utilize dominating as a conflict management style to handle their interpersonal conflict. Level of religiosity had a significant relationship with the obliging, compromising, integrating, avoiding, and dominating conflict management styles. Gender had a significant association with the obliging, compromising, avoiding, and dominating conflict management styles. Finally, culture had a significant predictive relationship with obliging, integrating, compromising, and dominating conflict management styles.

Keywords: conflict management styles, Arab, immigrants, Muslim, culture, religiosity, gender, interpersonal conflict, Middle East

1. Introduction

1.1 Background Information

The immigrant population in the United States has grown considerably over the last 50 years, more than doubling since the 1960s. In 1990, the immigrant population was 19.8 million, which increased to 31.4 million in 2000, and reached a record of 40.4 million by 2011 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The Arab immigrant population in the United States has also increased, accounting for about 2.5 percent of the total immigrant population in 2009. According to the United States Census Bureau, the Arab immigrant population was slightly over one million, which more than tripled to 3.5 million in 2010, indicating a greater rate of increase than that of the overall immigrant population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Because Arab Muslim immigrants come to the U.S. with differing cultures, their norms differ from those of American culture. In the workplace, differences in expectations regarding workplace nature, norms, and interpersonal relations with co-workers create conflicts. Thus, they are more likely to utilize different conflict management styles. In some cases, acculturation can lead to some obstacles, especially in the work environment. Cultural differences between workers and the organizations they work for can lead to misunderstandings and ultimately conflicts in the workplace (Elsayed-Ekhouly, 1996). In fact, cultural differences can exist between workers from different cities within the same nation (Fitzsimmons, 2013).

The ultimate goal of any organization is to bring together individuals such that they unite to perform a designated mission in order to achieve specific goals (Bernard, Goldstein, & Hazy, 2006). As organizations aim to increase the diversity of their workers, conflict becomes inevitable, necessitating members within the organization to decide their approach to conflict based upon their culture (LeBaron & Zumeta, 2003). Conflict is,

therefore, a consequence of organizational (and workplace) communication within organizations (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the 5 main conflict management styles.
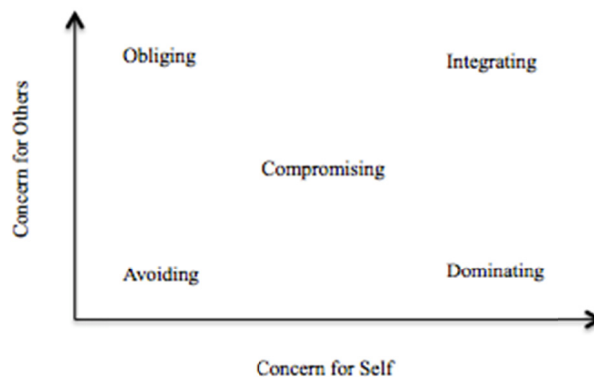

Figure 1. Conflict management styles

Multiple studies have shown that cultural differences have been identified as a source of project failure within organizations (Dinsmoer, 1984; Jaeger & Kanungo, 1990; Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). There is a clear gap in the literature, however, when it comes to examining workplace conflict for Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. More studies have suggested that cultures play a significant role in their conflict management style (Elsayed-Ekhouly & Buda, 1996). Hofstede specified that people from the Middle East differ from Americans in all four dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and collectivism, and masculinity and femininity (1984).

Pelled, Eisenhardt, and Xin (1999) conducted a study that determined that an individual's racial and cultural background contributes to an acceleration of emotional conflict within a workgroup. They noted that since race is an impermeable attribute, one that cannot be altered for any individual person, stereotypes were easily formed within the workgroup and this led to tense communications within workgroups, directly limiting organizational goals. Culture is an ever-evolving phenomenon and immigrants to the United States who are new to the United States environment will have different experiences within the workplace compared to their second-generation immigrant counterparts (Waldinger, 1996). This is due in part to the acculturation process through which immigrants engage with United States culture over time. Background differences influence people to choose one or more of five-conflict management styles o manage their interpersonal conflict.

Conceptualization of conflict management has evolved from Blake and Mouton's managerial grid (1964), which proposed typology of the five management styles to the schemes developed by Hall (1969), Thomas (1976) and Rahim (1983). The five main conflict management styles include the following: obliging, integrating, avoiding, compromising, and dominating (Rahim, 2001). When individuals utilize different conflict management styles to overcome obstacles, it can lead to greater conflict and misunderstanding.

The diversity of the American workforce makes conflict unavoidable. Multiple studies have shown that cultural differences have been identified as a source of project failure within organizations (Dinsmoer, 1984; Jaeger & Kanungo, 1990; Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). There is a clear gap in the literature however when it comes to examining workplace conflict for Arab-American Muslims.

The role of gender in determining an individual's choice of conflict management style has also been researched extensively in the literature (Heim & Murphy, 2001; Jordan, 2001; Nelson & Lubin, 1991; Rojahn & Willemsen, 1994; Rowley, 2010; Shockley-Zalabak, 1981). The literature on gender's role in conflict management has fluctuated and remains inconsistent. Some researchers argue that gender plays a significant role in conflict management styles (Nelson & Lubin, 1991) while other scholars argue that gender provides no significant role in choice of conflict management style (Kim et al., 2007).

The role of religion has also been investigated in the literature when it comes to determining conflict management styles. Alison (1975) and Geertz (1973) argue that religion, for most people, is the main cultural pillar through which they identify themselves. Randeree (2008) argued that the majority of Muslims utilize

Islamic values to resolve their conflicts. Interestingly, Abdalla (2001) expands on this concept by arguing that Muslims also sometimes manage interpersonal conflict via Western techniques so long as these techniques don't conflict with Islamic teachings.

1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study explores how culture, gender, and level of religiosity of second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States impact their choice of conflict management styles to resolve interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. Because Arab Muslim immigrants come to the United States with differing cultures, their norms differ from those of United States culture. In the workplace, differences in expectations regarding workplace nature, norms, and interpersonal relations with co-workers, gender roles, and religious values can create conflicts. Because Arab Muslim immigrants come from a different cultural background, they will likely utilize different conflict management styles. The question becomes can culture, gender, and level of religiosity predict conflict management styles utilized in the workplace by second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States? Below are the overall research questions, sub-questions, and appropriate hypotheses for this research study.

RQ1. What are the overall trends in conflict management style preferences in the workplace for the second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

- H1a: second generation Arab Muslim immigrants will have significantly higher scores on avoiding, obliging, compromising, and integrating in managing their interpersonal conflict.

RQ2. Is there a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using obliging to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

- Ho2: There will be no predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using obliging to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation of Arab Muslim immigrants.

- Ha2: There will be a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using obliging to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation of Arab Muslim immigrants.

RQ3. Is there a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using compromising to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

- Ho3: There will be no predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using compromising to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second generation of Arab Muslim immigrants.

- Ha3: There will be a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using compromising to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second generation of Arab Muslim immigrants.

RQ4. Is there a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using integrating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

- Ho4: There will be no predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using integrating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

- Ha4: There will be a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using integrating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

RQ5. Is there a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using avoiding to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

- Ho5: There will be no predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using avoiding to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

- Ha5: There will be a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using avoiding to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

RQ6. Is there a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using dominating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

- Ho6: There will be no predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using dominating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

- Ha6: There will be a predictive relationship between culture (Individualism vs. Collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using dominating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for second generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

2. Literature Review

Certainly, culture plays a major role in an individuals' perception of conflict (Hofstede, 1980) and their chosen conflict management style (Davidhizar, 2004; Tjosvold & Wong, 2004). In order to better understand how culture influences workplace conflict and the way that conflict is ultimately resolved, a full literature review of peer-reviewed literature is included

2.1 Organizational Conflict

Conflict is a widely defined topic within the literature. It occurs when an individual perceives differences with others about interests, beliefs, or values that are important (Starks, 2006) or perceives interference with the accomplishment of goals (Greenberg et al., 2003). Rahim (2002) expanded on this definition, specifying that conflict is "an interactive process manifested in an incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities" (p. 207).

Workplace conflict wastes the time of managers, impacting the bottom lines of organizations, and impacting the growth and development of the organizations (Alzawahreh & Khasawneh, 2011). One study showed that managers spent up to 20 percent of their valuable time dealing with organizational conflict and that conflict management is an issue of increasing importance within the organization (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976).

Given the diversity in the workplace, it is expected that conflict becomes a normal, natural result of interpersonal communication. This occurs with every relationship because it brings individuals from all cultures together, forcing them to acquire skills to manage conflict. The ways in which culture impacts the conflict management styles of individuals has a broad influence due to its impact on the economic and social levels of the organizations. Therefore, identifying potential differences in conflict management styles between Arab Muslim immigrants and their co-workers could potentially lead to earlier solutions to problems in the workplace, limiting the costs associated with prolonged conflict in the workplace.

Many studies have shown that cultures differ in their preferred forms of handling conflict (Chua & Gudykunst, 1987; Elsayed-Ekhouly & Buda, 1996; Leung, 1987; Morris et al., 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991; He, Zhu, & Peng, 2002). Elsayed-Ekhouly and Buda (1996) examined the impact of culture on styles of handling interpersonal conflicts and found that Arab executives use more of an integrating and avoiding style in handling interpersonal conflicts at work while their American counterparts use more of an obliging, dominating, and compromising style. Rahim (2001) suggested that people from individualistic cultures utilize a dominating or obliging style to resolve their conflicts. This is supported by a study conducted by Trubisky and Ting-Toomey (2000) found that Taiwanese students used obliging and avoiding styles more than United States students when faced with conflicts.

2.2 Individualism versus Collectivism

Hofstede (1980) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group or category from another" (p. 89). He also categorized cultural differences based on four dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede, 1993) In other words, societies with a high power distance score accept an unequal distribution of power and societies with a lower power distance score share power in a well-dispersed manner (Hofstede, 1980). The masculinity score refers to how much a society values and maintains traditional male and female roles, with societies having high masculinity scores expecting that men remain tough, be the provider, and be assertive (Hofstede, 1980). In addition, societies with high uncertainty/avoidance index indicate that individuals in this

society try to avoid ambiguous situations when possible, that these people seek "truth" rather than value differences. Finally, the individualism score refers to the strength of ties that people have to the community, with a high score indicating a loose connection and a low score indicating a more collectivistic society (Hofstede, 1980).

Hofstede (2010) expanded on these dimensions by adding "long-term versus short-term orientation," which was rooted in Michael Harries Bond's "Confucian work dynamism). Also, adding the sixth dimension, "indulgence versus restraint", was developed by Minkov, a Bulgarian scholar, who was invited by Hofstede and his son to co-author their third edition of the *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind.* The long-term component of this dimension represents cultures characterized as "perseverance, thrift, ordering relationships by status, and having a sense of shame" while the short-term component represents cultures with reciprocating social obligations, respect for tradition, protecting one's 'face', and personal steadiness and stability. Interestingly, both the United States as well as Islamic countries generally fall under the umbrella of short-term oriented countries. This sixth dimension of indulgence versus restraint focuses on "happiness research:" indulgence stands for a society that allows for gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms. While United States culture fits more into the indulgence category, Islamic countries generally occupy the restraint groups.

Studies have shown that one's cultural background, whether based on individualism or collectivism, has a significant impact on the individual's choice of conflict management styles (Rahim & Blum, 1994).

The division between individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures has been widely used in cross-cultural research (Hofstede, 1980; Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hofstede, 2001; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kozan, 1989). Those from individualistic cultures value their own personal goals over those of the group. Their counterparts from collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, value the groups' needs and values over those of the individual (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

While the individualist's focus on the goals and concerns of the self, the collectivist focus was on relationship (Triandis, 2006) and the concerns and goals of the group (Cai & Fink, 2002). Conflicts arise when individuals abide by individualistic norms in a collectivist society. Similarly, conflicts also arise when individuals adhere to collectivist norms in an individualistic society (Kozan, 2002). Furthermore, researchers have labeled societies such as African, Arab, Asian, Eastern European, and those with Latin roots as collectivist-oriented and those with American, Canadian, Australian, and Western European countries as individualistic (Cai & Fink, 2002; Chiu, Wong, & Kosinski, 1998; Hofstede, 2001).

Many scholars have examined the differences in individualistic and collectivistic cultural logics and scripts and how they result in differing notions of what constitutes proper treatment by others (Hofstede, 2012; Leung & Cohen, 2011; Ting-Toomey et al., 2001). In individualistic cultures, people are expected to look after themselves and their closest kin. On the other hand, individuals from collectivistic cultures are expected to show unconditional loyalty and support not only for their extended families, but also for members of particular in-groups (Hofstede, 2012).

There are many reasons for conflict among individuals with different cultural background in the workplace. Leung and Cohen (2011) suggested that cultural logics and behaviors lead to "a certain logical consistency and coherence for the people of a culture" (p. 508). These logics and scripts are often invisible to outsiders, which make them easily violated by those from a different culture. This in turn leads to conflict. Wagner (1995) suggested that when personal and group interests reach a conflict, individualists tend to give less of a concern to the group's interests. Collectivists give greater concern to the overall group's needs and interests. When those from individualistic and collectivistic cultures constitute the group, then it is easy to recognize how conflicts can arise. Given the differing cultural backgrounds of Arab Muslim immigrants compared to their American counterparts, it is also essential to investigate the differences in conflict management styles utilized by each group.

2.3 The Role of Gender

As previously discussed, multiple studies have investigated the role of gender in determining conflict management styles utilized by individuals. Mills and Chusmi (1988) investigated managers in the United States and found that males tended to use the forcing, competing, and problem solving conflict management styles compared with their female counterparts.

Other studies found similar results in their investigations of the role of gender in predicting conflict management

styles (Lindeman et al., 1997; Polkinghorn & Byme, 2001; French et al., 2005; Osisioma, 2009). It should be noted, however, that some investigations by scholars showed that gender does not seem to influence people's conflict management styles. Brewer, Mitchell, and Weber (2002) investigated how gender role impacted conflict management styles of workers in three similar organizations and found that both genders preferred accommodating, collaborating, and compromising approaches to conflict. Brewer et al. (2002) also found that males preferred using dominating styles while female participants tended to use avoiding in the bulk of their interpersonal conflicts. This inconsistency in the literature indicates the need for larger scale studies on the role of gender in predicting conflict management styles.

2.4 The Role of Religiosity

As discussed in the introduction, little literature has been written and investigated the role of religion as a predictor for the conflict management comcent styles utilized by individuals. Polkinghorn and Byrne (2001) found that participants from different religious backgrounds used different conflict management styles to address their conflicts. Croucher (2011) investigated how religion, specifically Islam and Christianity in Western Europe, influenced the way participants managed their interpersonal conflicts. Croucher found that religion did have a significant impact on participants' preference of conflict management styles. Specifically, Muslims preferred more compromising and obliging conflict management styles while Christians preferred the dominating styles overall. In addition to the multiple studies investigating the role of religion in predicting conflict management styles (Alison, 1975; Geertz, 1973; Randeree, 2008; Abdalla, 2001). Wilson and Power (2004) investigated the role of religiosity in impacting conflict management styles. This study was unique in that it assessed the extent to which individuals practiced their major religious requirements, and whether this predicted their choice of conflict management styles. The study found that Christians (practicing and non-practicing) and non-practicing Muslims tended to collaborate when dealing with conflicts, while practicing Muslims who correlated themselves with a higher level of religiosity preferred utilizing the compromising style for managing their conflicts (Wilson & Power, 2004). The authors hypothesized that "this difference in Australian practicing Muslims could be a reflection of their minority status in that less dominant groups have to 'fit in' more with the dominant culture and thus become practiced at compromising" (p. 80), an argument which goes back to the acculturation process of immigrants that will be addressed in my research study.

2.5 Conflict Management Styles

As highlighted in the introduction, different conflict management styles are defined based on general and consistent orientation toward the opposing/conflicting party and the conflict. They manifest in observable behaviors that form a pattern and share common characteristics over time (Ruble & Thomas, 1976; Thomas, 1976; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). While the goal of most conflicting parties is to handle the conflict, researchers have found that individuals vary in their ways of approaching their interpersonal conflict (Lulofs & Cahn, 2000).

Researchers have identified conflict management based on concern for self and for others, classifying the concerns based on high or low concern. This is attributed to the dual concern theory, which proposed five styles for handling conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976). The dual concern model is rooted in Blake and Mouton's (1964) theory that conflict is managed in different ways based on whether a manager has a high or low concern for production and high or low concern for people. These two dimensions led to the five ways of handling conflict.

The majority of scholars have agreed upon the five patterns of conflict management styles introduced by Black and Mouton in 1964 and expanded by Thomas and Killman (1975) as well as Rahim (1983). Rahim categorized the five patterns approach as follows: avoiding, obliging, dominating, integrating, and compromising. *Avoiding* is associated with intentionally withdrawing from the conflict situation, with a low concern for others as well as a low concern for self. The *obliging* style focuses on areas of agreement and sets aside differences. This style tends to reflect the individuals' concern with others' needs over personal needs and views. *Dominating* reflects low concern for others and a high concern for self and is described as forcing one's own views on others. *The integrating* style reflects high concern for others and high concern for self, an approach that strives to integrate the views of all those involved. The final conflict management style, of *compromising,* reflects moderate concern for all and is associated with finding a middle ground based on a common solution that addresses everyone's interest.

In a study investigating the conflict management styles of managers from collectivistic (Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, and the Middle East) and individualistic societies (the United States), the authors found that the managers from collectivistic societies were less confrontational, and more likely to use a group interaction to overcome conflict compared to their individualistic manager counterparts (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Rahim

(2001) found that individualists tend to use dominating or obliging approaches in solving their interpersonal conflicts, while their collectivist counterparts use integrative (such as collaborative or accommodation) approaches

Kozan (1989) conducted a study comparing Arab Muslim managers in Jordan and Turkey with American managers. He found that Jordanian and Turkish managers shared similar conflict management styles, clearly preferring the collaborative style in handling their conflicts. On the other hand, the American managers preferred force and accommodation. This is yet another example of how individuals from more collectivistic societies resolve conflict in a different manner compared to their peers from individualistic societies. Similar findings were found in other studies comparing individuals from collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Trubisky et al., 1991; Fletcher et al., 1998; Elsayed-Akhouly & Budy, 1996).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A two-phase methodology, sequential explanatory (Creswell, 2013) mixed-method study was used to explore whether gender, religiosity, and cultural variations impact conflict management styles utilized by second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the workplace. Phase one was a quantitative study that looked at the statistical relationships between gender, religiosity, and cultural variation and conflict management styles utilized by 112 participants. Following this macro analysis, phase two utilized a qualitative study approach in order to better understand the dynamics of certain conflict management styles by conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 12 participants.
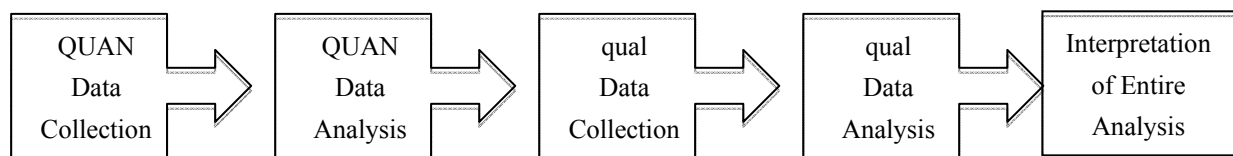

Figure 2. Sequential explanatory mixed method approach

In this study, phase one includes surveys, which were sent to three major Muslim communities in Missouri, specifically, in Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis. After data analysis was completed for the surveys, phase two followed with 12 semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

3.2 Operationalization

For the purposes of this study, a second-generation immigrant will be defined as an adult born in the U.S. or who had arrived to the U.S. at the age of five or older. The age of five is utilized because these individuals are expected to have similar experiences as those born in the United States due to their young age of immigration to the U.S (Britto & Amer, 2007). Please refer to Table 1 for definitions of each of the different conflict management styles, which make up the dependent variables for this study.

Table 1. Conflict management styles

Conflict management style	Definition
Dominating	Individuals seek to satisfy their own interests regardless of the impact on other parties in the conflict (Robbins et al., 2008).
Integrating	Win-win resolution where it is assumed that the solution to the conflict can leave both parties in a better condition (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).
Avoiding	Ignoring or suppressing a conflict in the hope that it will go away or won't become too destructive (Johns, 1996).
Obliging	When one party in the conflict is willing to place the opponent's interest above his or her own (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).
Compromising	No clear winner or loser; each party to the conflict is willing to give up something to come to a resolution (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

3.3 Validity

This research design triangulated between different sources and sampling methods. Investigating Arab Muslim American from three different communities also increased the validity of the results (Bailey, White, & Pain, 1999). Triangulation was employed through multiple sources: participants from three different Arab Muslim American communities, each community providing a different perspective on the behavior of handling their conflict (Konecki, 2008). I also triangulated by including a mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative) by using the interviews to investigate and help understand findings from the quantitative component, thus effectively increasing the study's internal validity. With a triangulation approach including surveys and face-to-face interviews, each method provides benefits that overlap with the weaknesses of other methods utilized in this study.

3.4 Sampling

For phase I of the study, a probability random sampling technique was utilized to select units from this study's population to participate in the survey.

A total of 225 surveys, 75 for each city, were sent out, however, only 112 surveys were completed and returned. The leaders of each of the three Muslim communities were contacted, and an invitation email to participate in the surveys was sent out to the first 75 emails from each of the three Muslim communities.

For phase II of the study, a snowball approach was utilized to select potential participants for interview. After identifying some individuals for preliminary interviews, I consulted with these participants for their recommendations for other individuals to interview. A total of 12 participants were interviewed, including two males and two females from each of the Muslim communities.

3.5 Phase I: Quantitative Study

3.5.1 Data Collection Method

An anonymous online surveys were used in phase one of the study. The survey process extended over the course of three months. Three different scales were used in this survey: religiosity scale, culture, individualism vs. collectivism scale, and conflict management style scale.

3.5.2 Instruments

3.5.2.1 Individualism–Collectivism Scale and Its Reliability (INDCOL)

This scale was derived from the original (INDCOL), which was designed by Hui and Triandas (1986). The original scale was a 66-item Likert scale, however, Cai and Fink (2002), adjusted this scale into one consisting of 11 items. This 11-item scale scored on reliability Cronbach's α = .69. Participants were asked to respond to the 11-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale.

3.5.2.2 Conflict Management Styles Scale and Its Reliability (ROCI-II)

The 28-item Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) was used to assess conflict management styles (Rahim, 2001). This scale measures the five conflict management styles: avoiding Cronbach's α = .87; compromising Cronbach's α = .69; dominating Cronbach's α = .73; integrating Cronbach's α = .76; and obliging Cronbach's α = .79.

3.5.2.3 The Centrality of Religiosity Scale Reliability (CRS)

This scale was used to investigate the religiosity of each of the study participants. This scale is designed to measure five sides of religiosity. These dimensions are: public practice, religious experience, ideology, private practice, and the intellectual practice (Huber, 2012). Reliabilities of the individual dimensions ranged from 0.80 to 0.93, and from 0.92 to 0.96 for the whole CRS-15.

3.5.3 Participants

All 145 subjects in this study participated on a voluntarily basis.). Among the second generation 46 were male respondents (41% of total respondents) and 66 were female (59% of total respondents). 107 were born in the U.S. while 5 participants were born overseas and came to the U.S. prior the age of 5. Jordan (n = 2), Palestine (n = 3).

3.6 Phase II: Qualitative Study

3.6.1 Data Collection Method

The quantitative study was followed by 12 face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which provided a more in-depth knowledge about why this generation used a certain conflict management style to handle their interpersonal conflict in the workplace. Specifically, what made some individuals choose one conflict

management style over the other?

4. Results

4.1 Phase I: Quantitative Data Analysis

The independent variables (IDVs) were operationalized as following: Gender was operationalized as a dichotomous variable (1 = Male; 2 = Female), Culture was operationalized as a dichotomous variable (1 = Collectivism; 2 = Individualism), and level of religiosity was operationalized as a dichotomous variable (1 = High religiosity; 2 = low religiosity). The dependent variable (DV) as a categorical variable takes five conflict management styles. Therefore, the five categories of conflict management styles include: Obliging (0 = no obliging; 1 = yes obliging), Compromising (0 = no compromising; 1 = yes compromising), Integrating (0 = no integrating; 1 = yes integrating), Avoiding (0 = no avoiding; 1 = yes avoiding), and Dominating (0 = no dominating; 1 = yes dominating).

Question 1. The first research question's results were analyzed using the chi-square test. The first research question in this study was, what is the overall trend in conflict management style preferences for the second generations in the workplace of Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States?

The first analysis explores whether there is a significant association between culture (individualistic or collectivistic) and second-generation immigrant. The cross tabulation statistics suggest that there was a significant association. Second generation immigrant tends to be more individualistic (89 percent). When assessing for a potential significant association between religiosity and being a second generation immigrant, the research showed that 69 percent of second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in this study identified themselves as having a lower level of religiosity.

A chi-square analysis was done to explore whether there was an association between being a second-generation Arab Muslim immigrant and each of obliging, compromising, integrating, avoiding, and dominating. Based on the results it appears that the second-generation immigrants were less likely to utilize obliging conflict management styles (30.0 percent of second-generation immigrants). The association between obliging as a conflict management style and the second- generation status of the participant was statistically insignificant with a p value of 0.065.

Table 2. Chi-Square analysis question 1

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Culture Pearson Chi-Square	156.372[a]	1	.000
Religion Pearson Chi-Square	123.176[b]	1	.000
Obliging Pearson Chi-Square	2.534[c]	1	.065
Compromising Pearson Chi-Square	3.193[d]	1	.012
Integrating Pearson Chi-Square	4.600[e]	1	.051
Avoiding Pearson Chi-Square	3.415[f]	1	.057
Dominating Pearson Chi-Square	23.937[g]	1	.010

a.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 35.22.
b.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 42.35.
c.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 54.01.
d.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 37.34.
e.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 40.74.
f.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 39.33.
g.   0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.67.

Second-generation immigrants were more likely to use compromising (65.0 percent). This result was also statistically significant, with a p value of 0.012. No significant relationship was found between second-generation immigrants status and utilizing the integrating and avoiding as a conflict management style

The dominating conflict management style was mainly utilized by second-generation immigrants. Participants tend to utilizing dominating conflict management styles up to 84 percent of the time. Based on the chi-square analysis, this association was also statistically significant with a p value of < 0.010.

Question 2. As was discussed in the introduction, question 2 investigates whether there is a predictive relationship between culture (individualism vs. collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using obliging

to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second-generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. Based on the results, gender (p = .000) religiosity (p = 0.000), and culture (p = 0.000) had a significant relationship with utilizing obliging to manage interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression for obliging conflict management style

Step 1a		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (1)		-.563	.199	.534	1	.000	4.53
Culture	(1)	-.546	.334	.356	1	.000	6.35
Religion	(1)	-.763	.403	.465	1	.000	7.34
Constant		6.175	.546	44.654	1	.000	45.653

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Culture, Religion.

Question 3. Question 3 investigates whether there is a predictive relationship between culture (individualism vs. collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using compromising to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. All three variables, level of religiosity (p = 0.007), Gender (p = 0.002), and culture (p = 0.000), had a significant predictive relationship with the compromising conflict management style.

Table 4. Binary logistic regression for compromising conflict management style

Step 1a	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (1)	-.342	.341	3.342	1	.002	.341
Culture (1) Religion	-.453	.435	4.276	1	.000	.220
(1) Constant	-.257	.298	2.381	1	.007	.439
	-4.634	.824	27.345	1	.000	42.234

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Culture, Religion.

Question 4. Question 4 investigates whether there is a predictive relationship between culture (individualism vs. collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using integrating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. We found that culture (p = 0.02) and level of religiosity (p = 0.001) had predictive relationships with utilizing integrating as a conflict management style to manage their interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. However, gender (p = 0.62) had no predictive relationship with integrating.

Table 5. Binary logistic regression for integrating conflict management style

Step 1a		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (1)		-.765	.276	4.243	1	.62	.653
Culture (1)		-.398	.345	6.764	1	.02	.354
Religion	(1)	-.489	.214	3.874	1	.001	.653
Constant		4.576	.908	32.434	1	.000	65.874

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Culture, Religion.

Question 5. Question 5 investigates whether there is a predictive relationship between culture (individualism vs. collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using avoiding to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. Utilizing binary logistic regression, gender (p = 0.000) and level of religiosity (p = 0.001) had significant predictive relationship with utilizing the avoiding conflict management style to manage their interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. Culture (p = 0.072), on the other hand, had no significant predictive relationship with utilizing the avoiding conflict management style.

Table 6. Binary logistic regression for avoiding conflict management style

Step 1a	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (1)	-.384	.201	6.387	1	.000	.345
Culture (1) Religion	-.490	.391	2.453	1	.072	1.948
(1) Constant	-.239	.217	3.354	1	.001	.395
	4.390	.890	22.398	1	.000	31.933

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Culture, Religion.

Question 6. Question 5 investigates whether there is a predictive relationship between culture (individualism vs. collectivism), gender, and level of religiosity and using dominating to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace for the second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. Gender (p = 0.02), culture (p = 0.001, and level of religiosity (p = 0.03) had a significant predictive relationship with utilizing the dominating conflict management style for managing their interpersonal conflict in the workplace.

Table 7. Binary logistic regression for dominating conflict management style

Step 1a	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (1) Culture	-.389	.209	.298	1	.02	2.453
(1)	-.465	.190	.399	1	.001	4.340
Religion (1)	-.509	.313	.234	1	.03	2.908
Constant	5.897	.957	28.387	1	.000	34.908

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Culture, Religion.

4.2 Phase II: Qualitative Data Analysis

The sequential explanatory model places greater weight on the quantitative component of the study. Based on the qualitative phase, the qualitative section was guided. This study focused on the results of research question 1 specifically to guide the qualitative component of the study. The first research question in this study was, what is the overall trend in conflict management style preferences among the second generations in the workplace of second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. Based on the quantitative results, the interview guide for the qualitative component of the study was modeled to explore why second generation immigrants were more likely to identify with a individualistic culture, have a lower level of religiosity, and more likely to utilize dominating conflict management style.

To organize each of the transcribed interviews, a simple coding system for each interview was utilized. Specifically, SGM refers to a second-generation male, and SGF refers to a second-generation female. In addition, a number following the code was utilized to identify the interview number.

4.2.1 Culture

In section I of the study, second-generation immigrants were more likely to identify with individualistic culture. Statistical results showed that culture had a significant relationship with: obliging (p = .000), compromising (p = .000), integrating (p = .02), and dominating (p = 001). When looking at the interviews, many interview participants showed some struggle in their workplace because of their hybrid culture. Interestingly, the reported feeling pulled between their parents' culture and the culture of their host community. One interview participant described how she feels when she is in the United States and when she visited Egypt, her parents' home country:

> *Sometimes I find it hard to call a particular place home. In the United States, I sometimes feel left out at work, I'm not that social and I am very shy and that can sometimes lead to problems because my co-workers don't see my points of view as much. I just try to avoid problems. The funny thing is when we visit Egypt, I don't necessarily feel at home either. I feel like when my family gathers everyone is so talkative and I am just shy. Sometimes my cousins comment on the ways I do things or think about things, they say I am so Americanized. – (SGF3, personal communication, September 9, 2014)*

In this participant's case, she more often utilized the avoiding conflict management approach. Interestingly, she was a second-generation immigrant and therefore her conflict management approach actually did not confirm the findings in the quantitative phase of the study. In phase I of the study it was found that the second-generation

immigrants were more likely to use the dominating conflict management style compared to their second-generation counterparts.

While almost all the interview participants relayed at least one difficult struggle when it came to their acculturation process to various differences they appreciated in American culture, the majority of the participants also relayed aspects of American culture that they enjoyed or were pleasantly surprised by. One interview participant (SGM1, personal communication, September 3, 2014) discussed how much he appreciated that Americans in public were so willing to just smile: "Back home in Jordan, most people they just don't smile in your face if they make eye contact, actually it is considered inappropriate sometimes. But one thing I really appreciated about most Americans was that a lot of times if someone makes eye contact with me in public, they would smile. It was nice, surprising and very nice."

4.2.2 Gender

As previously discussed, gender role and its influence in conflict management styles has been inconsistent. In the quantitative section of the study, gender had a statistically significant relationship with four of the conflict management styles: Obliging ($p = .000$), compromising ($p = .002$), avoiding ($p = .000$), dominating ($p = .02$). While gender had no significant relationship with integrating ($p = 62$) conflict management style.

Nonetheless, phase II did provide valuable anecdotal data on the potential impact of gender on the conflict management styles utilized in the workplace both for second-generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States.

> I am a female who sometimes sees and feels this gap between my family and me. I was born here in the United States and grew up here as well and have visited my parents' family several times in the Middle East. Gender roles are very different from there, but I don't mean bad things though. I believe since I work here in the United States. I handle my interpersonal conflict according to the culture I grew up in. I can't use techniques that are used in the Middle East to solve a conflict that I have with my American colleague. Women back home don't confront their problems the way they should. And again I don't mean all women or bad things. I believe confronting a problem better than leave it. – (SGF10, personal communication, October 2, 2014)

This second-generation female Arab-Muslim immigrant struggled with the expectations or norms that she was taught by her family, specifically, that back home (Palestine) women don't confront their problems directly. They are less likely to use the dominating conflict management style. On the other hand, she feels that sometimes she would like to attack a struggle in the workplace head on: "Sometimes I feel like I should just take charge at work and just make a decision in a conflict that would directly benefit my own needs." Of course disagreement between individuals and their parents occur in any culture. However, when looking at second-generation immigrants, perhaps more disagreement occurs due to the wider gaps in cultural understanding based on different upbringings or differences in the country and culture they grew up in. This is also the case for differences in social norms for gender, as was reflected in the interview with this participant. Similar stories were also discussed with other second-generation female participants who discussed differences in gender expectations and how it impacted them in the workplace, how it influenced their utilization of conflict management styles, and the differences they had with their families when they discussed their workplace decisions (SGF12, SGF16).

4.2.3 Level of Religiosity

Interestingly, level of religiosity had a predictive relationship with all the five conflict management styles: Obliging ($p = .000$), compromising ($p = .007$), integrating ($p = .001$), avoiding ($p = .001$), and dominating ($p = .03$). Phase II of the study provided in-depth data about these statistical results. Surprisingly, second generation Arab Muslim immigrants showed a lower level of religiosity in general. Other interview participants talk about the struggle to mix into American culture when it allows some lifestyle choices that go against their faith. One second-generation male stated:

> My parents always emphasized on me that I should stay away from alcohol since it is prohibited in my religion. A lot of the social gatherings from my work include alcohol, and while I like to socialize with my colleagues outside of work, the drinking makes me uncomfortable, so I don't end up going to a lot of these events. Sometimes this makes me seem a little bit weird at work, because always the next day after all the social gatherings, everyone is talking about it…I just feel more left out at work, and sometimes I don't fit in, but I manage I guess. – (SGM13, personal communication, October 7, 2014)

In his case, his level of religiosity raised his own expectations of himself, that he should avoid alcohol because it

is prohibited. This then led to the participant's perceived feeling of being left out at work and made him feel more uncomfortable. Certainly when someone doesn't fit in at work as much as the others it could lead more conflicts and dilemmas in the workplace.

Interestingly, one thing that should be noted was that the majority of second-generation Arab-Muslim immigrants identified their religiosity as being less than their parents (SGM2; SGF4; SGM5; SGM14; SGF16; SGM18). This same group of participants also felt that they utilized the dominating conflict management style the most when they were trying to solve conflicts in their workplace. One of the second-generation females (SGF16) stated that she didn't think that her religion and her work were related.

In addition, second generation immigrants more often discussed using the dominating conflict management style to solve the interpersonal conflicts at work:

> *I remember one day I had a dispute with one co-workers and I was in higher position than him. I used my position to influence his decision because I was sure his decision was not the best fit there. I know it may sounds bad to you, but no one can evaluate this situation other than me. Long story short, I went home and discussed this situation with my father, who works at the Islamic Center, and he completely looked at this situation differently. He said that, and I still remember it every time I get in a similar situation, "don't use your power to influence others especially people who work with you, be persuasive and protect the good relationship. You don't know what the future hiding for you." Don't forget how our religion requires us to be nice to others, help them and work as a team. – (*SGF22, personal communication, November 11, 2014)

In this interesting interview, the second generation female reported that she was using a more dominating conflict management style in the workplace, but that when she discussed the situation with her father, he recommended trying to be more open and flexible with her co-workers. This story is a fair reflection of the quantitative data in phase I where second-generation immigrants were found to have an association with utilizing the dominating conflict management style while the second -generation immigrant was more likely to use all the other conflict management styles. Overall the sequential explanatory model for this study allowed the qualitative results to enrich the findings in the initial phase in the study with specific intriguing experiences of second-generation Arab Muslim immigrants.

5. Discussion

The main goal of this study was to explore the extent to which the conflict management styles of second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States are influenced by their culture, gender, and level of religiosity. The results of this study have provided an intriguing contribution to the cross-cultural research of conflict management and organizational conflict, specifically with a focus on Arab Muslim immigrants and their acculturation process in the United States.

5.1 The Role of Culture

There are many ways to investigate culture, such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, etc., however, this study has investigated culture in terms of individualism vs. collectivism. This is by no means a proxy for culture generally, but it does provide a perspective on culture. Culture is by definition complex, and there are many different ways to characterize culture.

Phase I of the study found that second-generation immigrants tended to be far more individualistic (89 percent) in their culture. Phase II similarly suggested that second generation immigrants were more likely to identify with a collectivistic culture (SGM3, SGM1). Second generation was more likely to be assimilated to U.S. culture. However, the assimilation process for second-generation Arab-Muslim immigrants differs, since they are under the "direct socialization" influence of their parents as well as the "indirect socialization" influence of the United States society (Bisin & Verdier, 2000). Many communicated struggling between their parents' culture and United States culture they are surrounded by. These individuals arrived to the United States before the age of five years, or were born in the United States and therefore they grew up in United States culture and oftentimes United States culture became at least part of their own identity. While it is easier for this group of immigrants to adapt to United States culture, it is still difficult to fully assimilate because of their strong ties to their parents' native culture, and the clashes that arise within the family unit when it comes to expectations. Parents tend to design their home in a way that their native culture is preserved in their home interior design, and continue to use their Arabic language to preserve these components of their home cultures (Amor, 2006). This comports with the consensus, since the 1950s, in which scholars such as Herberg (1955), Glazier and Moynihan (1963), and Mayer (1979) have argued against the notion of complete assimilation and provided many examples contradicting this

notion.

I found that second-generation counterparts were more likely to utilize the dominating style. Culture also had a predictive relationship with second-generation Arab Muslim immigrants utilizing the obliging (p = 0.000), compromising (p = 0.000), integrating (p = 0.02), and dominating (p = 0.01) conflict management styles to help resolve their interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. These findings in part support and yet also contradict the current literature. Rahim (2001) and Triandis (2006) found in their studies that there was a significant predictive relationship between culture and conflict management styles utilized. Rahim and Bonoma (1999) also suggested that culture could be a factor that influenced individuals to choose more than one conflict management style when faced with an interpersonal conflict.

This study's findings partially contradict findings by Lulofs and Cahn (2000) that managers from collectivistic cultures in the Middle East tended to dominate more than managers from individualistic cultures in the United States. My results do, however, support Ting-Toomey and Oetzel's (2001) study which instead found that individuals from collectivistic culture tended to utilize obliging and compromising conflict management styles compared to those from individualistic cultures.

My study found Second generation Arab-Muslim immigrants were more likely to label their culture as individualistic and were more likely to utilize dominating conflict management styles. Interestingly, Rahim (2000) found that those from individualistic cultures were more likely to utilize dominating and obliging conflict management styles. Therefore, Rahim's findings partially support my findings, in that those from individualist cultures were more likely to utilize dominating conflict management styles. On the other hand, Rahim also found that those from individualistic cultures were more likely to utilize obliging conflict management styles, which actually contradicts my findings that obliging was less likely to be utilized by second generation Arab Muslim as they found to lean toward individualism.

Some plausible explanations for these findings could be based on the expectations of individualistic cultures. Second-generation Arab-Muslim immigrants have also been more influenced by the American style of individualistic culture. Phase II of the study provided intriguing results regarding the internal struggles faced by second-generation Arab-Muslim immigrants as they tried to reconcile their merging of components of their parents' culture and the American culture they are largely immersed in.

5.2 The Role of Gender

This study explores whether there is a predictive relationship between gender and the conflict management styles utilized by second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. While there is extensive literature that explores how gender plays a role in different conflict management styles utilized to solve interpersonal conflict, there is great inconsistency in the overall results. Therefore, my findings will coincide the findings in some studies and contradict those found in others. Interestingly, I found that gender did have a predictive association with utilization of obliging (p = .000), compromising (p = 0.02), avoiding (p = 0.000) and dominating (p = 0.02) conflict management styles.

Again, my findings reinforce some of the results in the literature and contradict others. Haare and Krahe (1999) conducted a study specifically on Indonesians and Germans and found that while culture did have a significant relationship with their choice of conflict management style, gender did not have a significant role in their study. On the other hand, my study did find a predictive relationship between gender and utilization of avoiding and dominating conflict management styles, however, it was in a different study population entirely. Brewer et al. (2002) found that males preferred using dominating styles while female participants tended to use avoidance in the majority of their interpersonal conflicts. While my study doesn't specifically investigate which gender prefers a particular conflict management style, Brewer's study does show that a predictive relationship exists. Although there is some literature that explored the role of gender holistically on a macro-level, outside the focus of immigration, there are still many gaps in the literature. My study expanded on the literature by incorporating gender as one of the independent variables on both a macro- and micro-level and assessed whether a relationship existed with the conflict management styles utilized by second generation Arab Muslim immigrant participants.

One of the possible explanations for my results is that perhaps participants in this study live in a liberal country that asserts the importance of gender equality, which plays a role in the comfort of individual males and females to use their personal choice in conflict management styles, compared to their counterparts in the Middle East, where gender roles are quite different. Another possible explanation is that males and females may be exposed to different types of conflicts, which may influence the choice of conflict management styles that they choose to utilize in those different situations (Portello & Long, 1994).

Phase II of the study provided some powerful anecdotal data on the role that gender played as participants chose specific conflict management styles in their workplace (SFG10, SGF12, SGF16, FGM11). Based on the qualitative data, it appears that it isn't specifically the gender that influenced the conflict management styles utilized but perhaps the cultural expectations of gender that played a larger role. Specifically, patriarchy is more central to Arab Muslim societal structure compared to United States societal structure where women have greater independence in society and perhaps have greater comfort competing with their counterparts in the workplace.

5.3 The Role of Religiosity

Although little research has been conducted to explore the relationship between religiosity and choice of conflict management styles, the studies available give a glimpse of the potential role that religiosity plays when determining conflict management styles utilized in interpersonal conflicts. My study found that religiosity had a significant predictive relationship when it came to choosing obliging ($p = 0.000$), compromising (p = 0.07), integrating ($p = 0.01$), avoiding ($p = .01$) and dominating ($p = .03$) conflict management styles. In addition, second generation immigrants (69%) demonstrated a lower level of religiosity. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of studies focusing on the role of religiosity in choosing specific conflict management styles. In fact, the only study I could find that investigated this specifically was by Wilson and Power (2004), which found that the level of religiosity does have a predictive relationship with the conflict management styles utilized by individuals. Therefore, since my study did find a predictive relationship with choosing obliging, compromising, integrating and dominating conflict management styles, it supports the study by Wilson and Power (2004).

Other studies investigate specific religions and their influence on conflict management styles. For example, Croucher (2011) found that there was a significant relationship between religion and conflict management styles utilized by (South Asian) Indians. Muslims in his study apparently preferred the integrating and compromising styles, while Hindus preferred the integrating and dominating styles.

It should be noted that phase II of this study did provide useful data in terms of the role of religiosity as a significant factor worthy of investigation. Interestingly, one thing that should be noted was that the majority of the second-generation Arab Muslim immigrants identified their religiosity as being less than their parents'. This same group of participants (SGM2, SGF4, SGM5, SGM14, SGF16, SGM18) also, felt that they utilized the dominating conflict management style the most when they were trying to solve conflicts in their workplace. Perhaps this goes back to the Islamic foundations that encourage prioritizing the groups' goals, therefore, individuals with a high level of religiosity tended to use a wider variety of conflict management styles,

6. Study Limitations

One of the main disadvantages of a mixed method approach is its time and labor-intensive nature. But it allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the research questions at hand. This is because it not only includes the more objective quantitative data, but it is also enriched by the qualitative data. Another limitation in this specific study is the risk of "backyard bias," which is well described by Creswell (2013). Backyard bias occurs when a researcher investigates a population that he or she is a part of. Because the researcher is also Arab and Muslim and an immigrant, his own personal opinion may impact his ability to obtain and report data objectively. Phase I of this study helps overcome such bias because it involves well-studied scales in the survey, allowing the researcher to get unbiased objective data. The second phase of the study was also based on the quantitative results, minimizing the researcher's bias as well. One of the main advantages of knowing the population that is studied is that the researcher knew the population's norms. Specifically, in Islam it is unacceptable for a strange man to be seated alone with a female, as would be the case in the individual face-to-face interviews. To overcome the discomfort that could have occurred with these interviews, the researcher informed potential female interviewees that a female colleague would also be present during the interviews. This made the interviews less tense and made the interviewees more comfortable and likely to be open to discuss the questions at hand.

7. Conclusion

Conflict within multinational and transnational corporations and organization has become inevitable due to their employees' heterogeneity in cultural background. Multiple studies have shown that culture, religion, and gender influence people's behavior in managing and handling their conflict, however they lacked focus on the acculturation process utilized by Arab Muslims immigrants in the U.S. As members of the United States workforce, Arab Muslim immigrants make important contributions in their fields.

This sequential explanatory mixed method study explores the conflict management styles utilized by second-generation Arab Muslims immigrants in the U.S. and how their hybrid culture, religiosity, and gender

influence this decision. Data was triangulated by conducting 112 surveys, which they were statistically analyzed and 12 face-to-face semi-structured-interviews with the sample population stemming from individuals in Columbia, St. Louis, and Kansas City, Missouri.

More weight was given to the quantitative phase compared to the qualitative phase. Nonetheless, both phase I and phase II of the study provided valuable and novel data on the ways in which culture, gender, and religiosity predict the conflict management styles utilized in the workplace by second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the United States. I found that second-generation immigrants tended to be more individualistic, have a lower level of religiosity, and more likely to utilize dominating conflict management style.

While this study establishes predictive relationships between gender, culture, and religiosity with at least utilization of some of the conflict management styles, further studies could be conducted to better understand these relationships. Specifically, studies could focus on how each of these factors contributes to conflict management choices of second generation Arab Muslim immigrants in greater detail. Furthermore, studies could investigate how other factors could influence conflict management styles of this population group. Ultimately, additional research is needed on this subject and there is great potential for finding substantive data on the subject.

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