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Military Communication and Leadership in Conflict Resolution

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Military Communication and Leadership in Conflict Resolution

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
<i>Abstract</i>	4
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Impact of Leadership Styles on Conflict Resolution	8
Leadership Styles and Emotional Intelligence.....	8
Conflict Management.....	8
Transactional Leadership.....	11
Transformational Leadership.....	11
Adaptive Leadership.....	11
Effective Communication Strategies in Military Conflict Resolution	12
Cultural Competence and Communication	14
Case Studies and Historical Analysis	17
Feedback Mechanisms and Conflict Resolution	20
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
Evaluation Criteria	27
Participants	28
Materials	29
Data Collection Procedure	29
Data Analysis Procedure	30
Ethical Considerations	31
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	32
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	34
Leadership Styles	34
Communication Strategies	34
Cultural Competence	34
References	38

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Abstract

This research investigates the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in military settings, examining the roles of leadership styles, communication techniques, and cultural competence. Using a qualitative approach, the research is examined through thematic analysis to identify common patterns, and evaluation which mostly focuses on transformational, transactional, and adaptive leadership styles, assessing their impact on conflict resolution outcomes. Additionally, the effectiveness of communication strategies, such as active listening and feedback mechanisms, are analyzed. Cultural competence is also explored, with attention to how personnel navigate conflicts in diverse, multicultural environments. Findings indicate that adaptable leadership, clear communication techniques, and higher levels of cultural competence are key factors in improving conflict resolution within the military. This research provides valuable insights for enhancing conflict management practices, particularly in diverse and hierarchical organizations like the military.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Effective conflict resolution within military settings is a vital aspect to daily operations that directly impacts the effectiveness, cohesion, and overall success of the military. The specific research problem addressed in this study is the thorough examination of how different leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competencies influence conflict resolution within hierarchical military structures. This topic is of importance as conflicts, if not managed effectively, can compromise mission success, deteriorate unit cohesion, and negatively affect the mental well-being of military personnel. The accumulation of conflicts within a military organization can cause much larger issues such as on a global scale.

The broader context of conflict resolution expresses the importance and need for military leaders to possess a widespread and blended capacity for emotional intelligence and adaptive communication skills to create a collaborative and resilient operational environment for today and years to come. Effective conflict resolution strategies are vital in high-stress environments like the military, where the stakes are incredibly high, and the cost of miscommunication or unresolved conflicts can be severe.

Relevant theories, such as Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework and Adler and Towne's communication techniques, provide foundational insights into how leaders can adapt their styles to manage conflicts constructively. These theories suggest that leadership styles ranging from transformational to adaptive are essential in creating an environment where conflicts are not only resolved but also viewed as opportunities for growth and innovation. Additionally, the importance of cultural competence, as highlighted by Dailey, focuses on the need for military personnel to effectively navigate and communicate within diverse and multicultural contexts.

The hypothesis of this study examines that various leadership styles characterized by high emotional intelligence, combined with clear and adaptive communication strategies and cultural competence, significantly improves conflict resolution outcomes in military settings. By exploring this hypothesis, the study aims to provide a framework for improving conflict resolution practices, ultimately finding to be more effective, resilient, and adaptive for military operations. The study focuses on qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods are more commonly used when studying interpersonal and organization dynamics (*Qualitative vs quantitative vs mixed methods research: How to Choose Research Methodology*, 2021). This research focuses on the vital role of leadership and communication in maintaining the operational integrity and success of military units.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict resolution in the military is an important aspect that impacts the effectiveness, cohesion, and overall success of military operations. In military settings there is an increase for strategies in managing and resolving conflicts efficiently. In order to excel in honing in on these strategies, foremost is effective communication and leadership. This research dives into various themes that address the role of communication and leadership in enhancing conflict resolution within the military.

By exploring the impact of different leadership styles, there is an understanding on how transformational, transactional, and servant leadership influence conflict outcomes. Effective communication strategies are essential for maintaining clarity and cohesion in both upward and downward communication channels within the hierarchical structure of the military.

Additionally, training and development programs created to improve conflict resolution skills among military personnel are essential for a responsive force. Cultural competence and the ability to address psychological factors play an often-forgotten role in managing conflicts, especially in diverse and stressful military environments (Smaliukienė & Survilas's, 2018). Ethical leadership and case studies provide insights into best practices and lessons learned from past experiences, paving way for a better future. Additional themes can include, feedback mechanisms, crisis management, and interdisciplinary approaches for understanding of conflict resolution. By examining these themes, this research aims to provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing conflict resolution in the military, ultimately contributing to more effective, resilient, and adaptive military operations. A multitude of resources filled with data addressing the role of communication and leadership in enhancing conflict resolution within the military can be divided into themes that have been synthesized below.

Impact of Leadership Styles on Conflict Resolution

Effective conflict resolution is essential for maintaining a productive and peaceful organizational environment. Various leadership styles significantly impact how conflicts are managed and resolved. Quigley & Lauck (2020), and Goleman (2000), as well as other relevant sources make use to explore how different leadership styles influence conflict resolution within organizations. Goleman (2000) explores the role of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness, particularly focused on its impact on conflict management. The article identifies various leadership styles and examines how each style can influence the resolution of conflicts within an organization. Key points from Goleman (2000) identify how information can be used to direct leadership styles for better success in organizational conflict resolution.

Leadership Styles and Emotional Intelligence

Goleman discusses six distinct leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching. Each style dives into different aspects of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2000).

Conflict Management

The article highlights that leaders with high emotional intelligence are more effective in conflict resolution. Leaders who can understand and manage their own emotions, as well as empathize with others, are better prepared to handle conflicts constructively. This provides better success in future conflict management.

Goleman (2000) identifies six distinct leadership styles—coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching—each leveraging different aspects of emotional intelligence:

- **Coercive Style:** Generally, less effective in conflict resolution as it creates a tense environment.
- **Authoritative Style:** Provides clear direction and reduces ambiguity, aiding in conflict resolution.
- **Affiliative Style:** Builds relationships and harmony, fostering a supportive atmosphere for conflict resolution.
- **Democratic Style:** Encourages participation and collaboration, leading to mutually agreeable solutions.
- **Pacesetting Style:** Can be less effective due to high pressure and competition.
- **Coaching Style:** Promotes personal development and understanding, supporting long-term conflict resolution.

Goleman highlights that leaders with high emotional intelligence are more effective in conflict resolution. They understand and manage their own emotions and empathize with others, leading to constructive handling of conflicts. This is important for resolving conflicts and preparing for future challenges.

Effective conflict resolution within organizations is deeply influenced by the leadership styles used by those in charge. Transformational leadership, characterized by its focus on inspiring and motivating teams, plays an important role in creating an environment of trust and open communication. This approach not only encourages collaborative conflict resolution but also leads to innovative and lasting solutions by valuing team members' input and working towards mutually beneficial outcomes (Quigley & Lauck, 2020). Additionally, it creates change in leaders for future generations.

Similarly, adaptive leadership, which is defined by flexibility and responsiveness to changing situations, promotes open communication and views conflicts as opportunities for growth and learning. Adaptive leaders create a supportive environment where team members feel comfortable expressing their concerns, leading to more effective conflict resolution strategies (Quigley & Lauck, 2020).

In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on clear structures, rewards, and punishments, emphasizes direct communication and adherence to established rules and procedures for addressing conflicts. This style is particularly prevalent in military settings, where clear hierarchies and strict adherence to rules are needed. While transactional leadership can lead to quick resolutions, it often addresses only surface-level issues, potentially resulting in short-term solutions and a negative work environment due to its nature (Quigley & Lauck, 2020). This style may be effective in situations requiring immediate action but struggles with complex or finding the root cause of conflicts.

In the military, where discipline and quick decision-making are critical, transactional leadership can be effective for maintaining order and responding rapidly to immediate threats or issues. However, for more complex and persistent conflicts, such as those involving interpersonal relationships or long-term strategic planning, transformational and adaptive leadership styles are more effective. These styles help in fostering a more cohesive and resilient unit by encouraging open communication, collaboration, and emotional intelligence (Dailey, 2018; Sackett, 2016).

Both transformational and adaptive leadership styles display the importance of emotional intelligence and flexibility in managing conflicts, ultimately creating a more together and productive organizational environment. In comparison, transactional leadership, while effective

in certain contexts, highlights the need for a better approach to conflict resolution that considers both immediate and long-term outcomes.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership focuses on clear structures, rewards, and punishments. Leaders using this style rely on direct communication and established procedures to address conflicts. While this approach can lead to quick resolutions, it often fails to address underlying issues, potentially resulting in short-term solutions and a negative work environment (Quigley & Lauck, 2020).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their teams, enabling an environment of trust and open communication. This leadership style encourages collaborative conflict resolution, leading to innovative and lasting solutions. Goleman (2000) supports this by emphasizing the role of emotional intelligence in transformational leadership, particularly in understanding and managing emotions to handle conflicts constructively.

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is characterized by flexibility and responsiveness to changing situations. Adaptive leaders encourage open communication and view conflicts as opportunities for growth and learning. They create a supportive environment where team members feel comfortable expressing their concerns, leading to more effective conflict resolution strategies (Quigley & Lauck, 2020).

These sources stress the critical role of leadership styles and emotional intelligence in conflict resolution. Transformational and adaptive leadership styles, supported by high emotional intelligence, are effective in enabling or creating collaborative and lasting solutions to conflicts.

Organizations aiming to improve their conflict management strategies should focus on teaching leaders who can adapt their style to the needs of the situation and the individuals involved.

Training leaders to develop and apply emotional intelligence can improve overall effectiveness in handling conflicts, leading to a more productive and successful work environment.

The critical role of leadership styles in conflict resolution lays a strong foundation for exploring how effective communication strategies further enhance this process, particularly within military contexts. Looking forward, leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and adaptive approaches, supported by emotional intelligence, play pivotal roles in managing conflicts constructively.

Effective Communication Strategies in Military Conflict Resolution

Effective conflict resolution within military organizations is influenced by clear communication and strategic conflict management. Adler and Towne (2014) emphasize the necessity of clear communication to ensure messages are correctly understood, particularly in high-stress military environments where miscommunications can lead to severe consequences. There is high focus on techniques such as active listening, repeating back information, and providing feedback to confirm understanding, which are vital for maintaining effective communication under pressure.

In parallel, Evans and Fisher (2013) offer an extensive plan for understanding and managing conflicts within organizations, with case studies and real-world examples. Their framework is adaptable to military contexts, addressing the complexities introduced by hierarchical structures and rigid protocols. They aim to create a system where the structured nature of the military can be flexible enough to allow for effective conflict resolution without damaging the organizational foundation or its members. By applying Evans and Fisher's

strategies, military leaders can better navigate interpersonal conflicts and maintain unit togetherness.

Further enhancing conflict resolution, Kilmann and Thomas (n.d.) developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), which identifies five conflict-handling styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Understanding these modes helps military personnel recognize their own and others' natural conflict styles, facilitating more effective conflict resolution. Incorporating the TKI into training and development programs can enhance an airman's ability to manage conflicts constructively, reducing the likelihood of escalation for the member and the organization. While the TKI is addressed within Professional Military Education (PME), its integration into the regular workforce could further improve conflict management outcomes.

Together, these approaches point out the importance of clear communication and adaptive strategies in resolving conflicts within military settings, ultimately creating a more unified and effective organizational environment. By combining the information of Adler and Towne, Evans and Fisher, and Kilmann and Thomas, military leaders can develop resilient systems for managing conflicts, ensuring both immediate and long-term organizational success.

The blending of clear communication techniques, a structured framework for conflict management in a structured workforce, and an understanding of conflict-handling styles creates an achievable approach to conflict resolution. Adler and Towne (2014) provide the foundational communication skills necessary for effective interaction, conflict or otherwise. Evans and Fisher (2013) offer a structured approach to managing conflicts, which is essential for guiding the dynamics of military hierarchies. Kilmann and Thomas (n.d.) add depth in a deep dive on the

importance of individual conflict-handling styles and providing tools for assessment and improvement.

In military environments, where the stakes of miscommunication and unresolved conflicts are high, integrating these strategies can significantly enhance conflict resolution. Clear communication ensures that orders and information are accurately conveyed, received, and understood. These methods do not stray from the typical procedures set forth in a military setting, making them easy to adapt to.

Progressing to the theme of cultural competence and communication, it becomes evident that effective communication is pertinent in military contexts, playing a vital role in mission success, creativity, and the seamless flow of information. Combining these works of literature, it becomes clear that cultural competence and effective communication strategies are interconnected and essential for sustaining a successful and innovative military environment.

Cultural Competence and Communication

Effective communication is foremost within military contexts, playing a vital role in mission success, creativity, and the seamless flow of information. Cross-cultural communication competence, highlighted by Dailey (2018), involves cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability, which are essential for building strong international partnerships and ensuring unit togetherness. At the same time, Smaliukienė and Survilas (2018) display that promoting open communication channels within hierarchical military structures can create a creative environment, driving innovation and adaptability. Addressing structural and cultural barriers to upward communication, as discussed by Sackett (2016), is also very important for allowing enlisted and commissioned personnel alike, to voice their concerns and suggestions effectively. By integrating cross-cultural competencies, fostering open communication, and overcoming

structural barriers, military organizations can create a more collaborative, innovative, and effective operational environment.

Dailey (2018) focuses on the role of cross-cultural communication competence within the U.S. military. The dissertation explores how the ability to effectively communicate across cultures enhances mission success, creates better relationships with international partners, and improves overall unit collaboration. Key parts of cross-cultural competence include cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability. Dailey highlights the need for ongoing training and development programs to enhance these skills among military personnel. This is met through professional military education.

Smaliukienė and Survilas (2018) investigate the relationship between organizational communication and creativity, specifically within rigid structures such as the military. The authors argue that effective communication can create a creative environment even in highly structured and hierarchical settings. By promoting open communication channels and encouraging feedback up and down the chain of command, organizations can lead to furthering innovation. This finding is relevant to the military, where structured environments can benefit from enhanced communication to drive creative problem-solving and adaptability.

Sackett (2016) addresses communication barriers within the Air Force, focusing on improving upward communication, where enlisted personnel can voice their concerns and suggestions to higher command. The study identifies structural and cultural barriers that prevent effective upward communication and suggests strategies to overcome these obstacles while preserving military tradition and policy.

Combining the insights from Dailey (2018), Smaliukienė and Survilas (2018) and Sackett (2016), it is apparent that cultural competence and effective communication are

connected in the ability to sustain a successful and innovative military environment. Dailey's focus on cross-cultural communication competence provides foundation on the importance of understanding and navigating cultural differences to build strong international relationships and unified teams. This competence directly impacts the effectiveness of communication within diverse teams such as those in the military. Smaliukienė and Survilas's (2018) findings complement this by showing how effective communication practices can enhance creativity within structured environments. In the military, where hierarchical and rigid structures are known, creating an environment that encourages open communication, and feedback can lead to innovative solutions and improved mission outcomes. As well as an unmatched comradery. Sackett's focus on communication barriers in the Air Force lays way for the importance of upward communication in ensuring that all voices are heard and valued, contributing to a more sound and responsive organizations. Together, these studies hone in on the importance cultural competence has not only on understanding other cultures but also about implementing communication strategies that use these differences to enhance creativity and effectiveness.

Incorporating cultural competence and effective communication strategies in military training programs is essential. By developing cross-cultural communication skills, military personnel can better navigate international collaborations and operate effectively in diverse environments. Additionally, promoting open communication and feedback within a military unit's chain of command upward and downward can ensure that insights from all levels of the organization can stimulate creative problem-solving, essential for adapting to complex, comradery and dynamic situations.

The synthesis of Dailey (2018), Smaliukienė and Survilas (2018), and Sackett (2016), demonstrates that cultural competence and effective communication are critical for enhancing

military effectiveness and creativity. By integrating these elements into military training and organizational practices, the military can improve its operational success and create a more innovative and adaptable force.

Understanding cultural competence and its role in communication within military settings lays the groundwork for examining how historical case studies and analyses provide practical insights into conflict resolution and leadership. The integration of cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability in communication strategies, as highlighted by Dailey (2018) and further emphasized by Smaliukienė and Survilas (2018), creates an environment encouraging to innovation and collaboration. Building on this foundation, the exploration of case studies and historical analyses allows for a deeper understanding of effective communication and leadership practices as a whole. This transition from cultural competence to practical case studies enhances the importance of adaptive strategies and informed decision-making in achieving successful conflict resolution and cohesive leadership.

Case Studies and Historical Analysis

Examining the themes of case studies and historical analysis provides valuable insights into conflict management and high-performance team dynamics within organizations. Evans and Fisher (2013) dive into conflict management through detailed case studies and real-world examples. Their work emphasizes understanding the root causes of conflicts and applying appropriate resolution strategies, demonstrating how various approaches can be effectively implemented in different organizational settings.

Similarly, Guttman (2004) focuses on the role of effective communication and collaborative leadership in building and managing high-performance teams. Through historical analysis and case studies, Guttman illustrates how leaders can create and maintain a culture of

open communication and collaboration to resolve conflicts and enhance team performance. The importance of aligning team goals with organizational objectives is highlighted as a critical factor in achieving high performance.

Building on these insights, Michaels (2020) explores principles for building high-performance teams and organizations, focusing on the impact of leadership and organizational culture. Using Guttman's methods, Michaels provides interviews and case studies from various industries, showcasing successful strategies and practices. These examples offer practical guidance for leaders looking to create environments that support high performance through effective communication, team collaboration, and conflict management.

Application of resources from Evans and Fisher (2013), Guttman (2004), and Michaels (2020) shows the significance of case studies and historical analysis in understanding and improving conflict management and team performance. Evans and Fisher's use of real-world examples highlights the practical application of conflict resolution strategies, providing teachable lessons for managing interpersonal conflicts. Guttman's focus on communication and collaborative leadership aligns with Michaels's focus on building a supportive organizational culture, both of which are critical for high-performance teams and the application of leadership methods. The case studies presented by these authors serve as valuable tools for analyzing past successes and failures, allowing organizations to learn from historical examples and apply these lessons to current practices. By examining the strategies and outcomes of various conflict management and leadership approaches, organizations can identify best practices and adapt them to their specific organizational needs.

Military organizations can benefit from incorporating the findings of these studies by adopting evidence-based conflict management practices and leadership strategies. Training

programs that emphasize communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution can enhance unit performance and operational effectiveness. Additionally, military leaders can use historical analysis to create their decision-making processes, ensuring that they build on past successes and avoid repeating mistakes.

Evans and Fisher (2013), Guttman (2004), and Michaels (2020) demonstrates the value of case studies and historical analysis in understanding and improving conflict management and team performance. By learning from real-world/past examples and applying these lessons or implementing proven strategies, to current practices, organizations such as the military can enhance their conflict resolution strategies, develop high-performance teams, and achieve greater overall success.

Building on the information gained from case studies and historical analysis, the examination of feedback mechanisms becomes crucial in understanding how effective communication and leadership drive towards conflict resolution. Case studies offer practical examples and lessons learned, demonstrating how past successes and failures can alter and improve current practices. To translate these lessons into strategies, feedback mechanisms play an essential role. They ensure that communication remains open and constructive, allowing leaders to address issues promptly and adapt their approaches based on real-time information. In transition from analyzing historical data to implementing feedback systems there is a focus on the importance of continuous improvement and responsive leadership in managing conflicts effectively. By integrating feedback mechanisms, leaders can create an environment where team members feel heard and valued, thereby enhancing overall organizational togetherness and conflict resolution outcomes.

Feedback Mechanisms and Conflict Resolution

For the theme of feedback mechanisms and how it relates to conflict resolution, the Harvard Law School and the program on negotiation provides valuable insight for organizational communication. The focus on effective communication is vital for successful leadership and conflict resolution. Leaders who can communicate clearly and empathetically are better equipped to manage conflicts within their teams. There is a major focus on the importance of providing timely and constructive feedback, which can prevent misunderstandings and resolve issues before they escalate. The Program on Negotiation's guide on handling difficult questions during negotiations and conflict management provides strategies for maintaining composure and responding effectively. The ability to navigate challenging questions is an essential component of conflict resolution, as it helps leaders address concerns and lessen tension. This resource shows the role of feedback mechanisms in making sure that all parties feel heard and respected during conflict resolution processes. In their 2024 publication, the Program on Negotiation explores strategies for leaders to create environments where conflict is seen as an opportunity for innovation and positive change. Collaborative leadership involves allowing open communication and encouraging team members to share their perspectives up and down the chain of command. This approach can transform conflicts into constructive discussions that lead to better outcomes and stronger team collaboration. Feedback mechanisms are important to this process, as they provide improvement and mutual understanding.

Utilizing these sources, it becomes evident that feedback mechanisms play an important role in conflict resolution and leadership effectiveness. The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School consistently emphasizes the importance of communication in managing conflicts and highlights how effective feedback can prevent and resolve disputes. Leaders who use

constructive feedback can transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and innovation. Effective feedback mechanisms make sure that communication remains open and transparent, allowing leaders to address issues promptly and maintain a positive team dynamic. Responding to tough questions with appropriate resolution strategies is a vital skill for leaders, as it helps manage conflicts and build trust within the team. Additionally, fostering a collaborative environment where conflict is viewed as constructive can enhance team performance and drive innovation.

In military settings, where effective communication and conflict resolution are critical, incorporating feedback mechanisms can increase operational effectiveness. Military leaders can benefit from training programs that emphasize the importance of constructive feedback and provide strategies for handling difficult conversations differently than they previously have. By maintaining a culture of open communication and collaboration, military organizations can transform conflicts into opportunities for innovation and improve overall mission success.

These resources from the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School demonstrates that feedback mechanisms are essential for effective conflict resolution and leadership. By adopting strategies that promote clear communication, constructive feedback, and collaborative conflict management, leaders can enhance their team's performance and create a positive, innovative organizational culture.

This literature review explores the critical role of effective communication and leadership in conflict resolution within the military. Key findings include:

- **Leadership Styles and Emotional Intelligence:** Goleman (2000) demonstrates that leaders with high emotional intelligence, who adapt their style to the situation, are more

effective in resolving conflicts. Different leadership styles (coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, coaching) influence conflict outcomes differently.

- **Communication Strategies:** Adler and Towne (2014) emphasize the importance of clear communication in high-stress military environments. Techniques such as active listening and feedback are crucial for ensuring messages are understood correctly, preventing misunderstandings.
- **Conflict Management Frameworks:** Evans and Fisher (2013) provide adaptable conflict management frameworks that, when applied to military contexts, help navigate and resolve conflicts within hierarchical structures.
- **Cultural Competence:** Dailey (2018) highlights the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in improving mission success and unit togetherness. Training in cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability is essential for military members.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School lays the foundation on the importance of timely and constructive feedback in preventing and resolving conflicts. Effective feedback mechanisms make sure that open communication and mutual understandings happen.

The findings provide information that backs integrating effective communication strategies and leadership styles tailored to the military context can significantly enhance conflict resolution. Emphasizing emotional intelligence in leadership, allowing clear communication, and developing cultural competence are vital for maintaining operational effectiveness and unit collaboration. Implementing structured conflict management frameworks and feedback mechanisms can transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and innovation.

Despite the extensive research, there are still gaps in the literature:

- **Implementation of Theories:** More studies are needed on the practical implementation of conflict resolution theories and frameworks within the military setting.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** There is a lack of the long-term effects of different leadership styles and communication strategies on conflict resolution in military settings.
- **Impact of Technology:** Limited research exists on the role of modern communication tools and technology in conflict resolution within the military.

Future research should focus on several key areas to improve conflict resolution and communication within military settings. Firstly, practical applications. Researchers should investigate how theoretical frameworks can be effectively applied in real-world military environments. This includes examining the integration of these frameworks into training programs and leadership development initiatives, particularly through Professional Military Education (PME) programs.

Secondly, understanding the long-term effects of various conflict resolution strategies on military effectiveness is vital. Studies should be conducted to assess the impact these strategies have on unit cohesion, mission success, and overall operational performance. By focusing on long-term outcomes, military leaders can better evaluate the sustainability and practicality of different approaches. As well as weed out the less effective ones.

Lastly, the role of technology and modern communication tools in facilitating conflict resolution and improving communication within military units should be explored. With advancements in technology, there are numerous opportunities to improve communication strategies, streamline conflict resolution processes, and create a better understanding among military personnel. Research in this area can provide innovative solutions and best practices for

the use of technology to support effective communication and conflict resolution in the military for the future.

By addressing these gaps and continuing to build on the existing body of research, future studies can contribute to more effective, resilient, and adaptive military operations. The ability to resolve conflicts effectively is integral to maintaining the cohesion and success of units. This review highlights the interaction between leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence in creating an effective conflict resolution framework within military settings.

The literature reveals that leadership styles heavily influence conflict outcomes. Goleman (2000) asserts that leaders with high emotional intelligence, those who can adapt their approach based on the situation, are more successful in resolving conflicts. This adaptability, seen in styles ranging from authoritative to democratic, ensures that conflicts are managed constructively, promoting long-term solutions over temporary fixes.

Effective communication has always been a key player within conflict resolution, especially in high-stress environments like the military. Adler and Towne (2014) emphasize the need for clear communication techniques, such as active listening and feedback chains, to prevent misunderstandings that could compromise operations. These strategies ensure that messages are accurately conveyed and understood, thereby reducing the potential for conflict or organizational downfall.

Additionally, Evans and Fisher (2013) provide adaptable conflict management frameworks that address the unique challenges of hierarchical military structures. Their approach, which includes practical case studies, lays a foundation on the importance of

understanding and addressing the root causes of conflicts to maintain unit togetherness and operational integrity.

Cultural competence is another critical factor in effective conflict resolution. Dailey (2018) highlights the importance of cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability in building strong international partnerships and fostering unit collaboration. Training programs that enhance these skills are essential for preparing military personnel to navigate diverse and multicultural environments effectively. Furthermore, the role of feedback mechanisms in conflict resolution cannot be overlooked. The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School illustrates how timely and constructive feedback can transform conflicts into opportunities for innovation and growth. By enabling an environment with open communication and mutual understanding, feedback mechanisms help prevent conflicts from escalating and ensure that all parties feel heard and respected.

While the current research provides a detailed understanding of conflict resolution in the military, there are still areas that require further exploration. Future studies should focus on the practical application of these frameworks in real-world military settings, the long-term effects of various conflict resolution strategies, and the role of modern communication tools in facilitating conflict resolution. Addressing these gaps will enhance the effectiveness, resilience, and adaptability of military operations, ultimately contributing to a more unified and successful military force and the world's greatest Air Force.

Transitioning to the methodology of this study, it is essential to establish a clear framework to investigate the practical applications, long-term effects, and technological integrations of conflict resolution strategies in military contexts. The following section outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques employed to achieve

these objectives. Through qualitative approaches, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into effective conflict resolution practices tailored to the unique challenges faced by military personnel.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the qualitative methods used in the research, including the evaluation criteria, data collection process, experimental design, participant identification, and procedures. The methodology is focused on a literature review approach, drawing on existing research to synthesize, analyze, and interpret data relevant to the research question. The use of qualitative methods allows for an in-depth understanding of the context, themes, and patterns that emerge from the analyzed literature.

This study investigates the effectiveness of various conflict resolution strategies within military settings, influenced by leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence, the dominating themes of the research. The research uses gathered evidence from multiple literature sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. A qualitative research method is more common in studies such as this one when exploring interpersonal and organizational dynamics (*Qualitative vs quantitative vs mixed methods research: How to Choose Research Methodology*, 2021). This design was selected because it allows for comprehensive exploration of existing research, facilitating the identification of gaps, trends, and patterns, which then allows for further research in the future.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria is designed to measure the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies based on three main components: leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence. When evaluating leadership styles, the research shows the impact of transformational, transactional, and adaptive leadership styles on conflict resolution outcomes (Goleman, 2000; Quigley & Lauck, 2020). When evaluating criteria for the study, four areas came into focus to ensure quality points within the study; Relevance: The studies selected must

be directly related to the research question. Credibility: Only peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, and official reports were included to maintain credibility. Recency: Priority was given to research published within the last 10 years, though working theories and frameworks from older sources were considered in order to meet the thematic approach throughout the study.

Methodological accuracy: Studies that utilized a qualitative research methods were preferred, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were based on reliable data and fit the needs of the research.

Effective leadership styles can be adapted to fit the needs of an organization.

Communication strategies are used to assess the clarity and effectiveness of communication techniques such as active listening, feedback mechanisms, and upward/downward communication channels (Adler & Towne, 2014; Evans & Fisher, 2013). Similar to leadership styles, communication techniques can be taught, learned, or adapted to fit the needs of the individual or conflict. Cultural competence is used to measure the ability of military personnel to navigate and manage conflicts in diverse and multicultural environments (Dailey, 2018; Smaliukienė & Survilas, 2018). The military is a diverse organization in nature, personnel with higher aptitudes for culture competence increase success in many areas (Dailey, 2018; Smaliukienė & Survilas, 2018).

The analytical techniques were seen through qualitative analysis for thematic analysis is used to identify common themes and patterns in the data.

Participants

Since this is a qualitative analysis approach, no direct participants were involved in the study. Instead, the "participants" in this context refer to the subjects of the studies included in the above chapter two literature review. The selected studies covered a range of topics related to the research question, with a variety of participant groups (i.e., professionals, specific populations,

organizations) depending on the focus of each individual study. Each study had a focus to address thematic areas of leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence.

The demographic, geographic, and thematic diversity in the literature ensures that multiple perspectives are considered.

Materials

The primary materials used in this research were the academic databases and journals accessed for utilization in the literature review. Databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PubMed were used to source relevant articles from the University of New Hampshire Library database. Other materials included books, governmental reports, and conference proceedings that showed support to the research or could be interpreted for use.

No physical apparatus was used in this research, as it focuses solely on qualitative data collection and analysis through secondary sources as this topic has not previously been a direct focus in prior research.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process involved several steps:

1. **Identification of Keywords and Search Terms:** Initial keywords were identified based on the research question, which guided the literature search and selection. Terms were refined as the study progressed to include more specific and relevant studies. Keywords allowed for further specification of literature.
2. **Literature Search:** Using online academic databases, literature was collected based on the established evaluation criteria. Titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess relevance before full-text articles were retrieved. Interpretation of text was often used to fit the identified themes and overall message of the research.

3. **Thematic Process:** After collecting relevant literature, thematic analysis was conducted to label and sort in recurring themes. The process involved identifying and labeling specific patterns or insights that were relevant to the research question. The main areas were more easily identified when sorted into various themes to support the research.
4. **Synthesis:** Once themes were identified, the findings from the literature were synthesized. This involved categorizing the themes into broader, overarching concepts and drawing connections between studies to address three main areas of leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence.

Data Analysis Procedure

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using the following steps:

1. **Familiarization with Data:** The first step involved thoroughly reading the collected literature to become familiar with the scope of the research and ensuring the continuity of information.
2. **Generation of Dominant Themes:** Key concepts and themes were identified and labeled during the familiarization process. This included looking for patterns (main point in identifying themes), contradictions, and gaps in the literature.
3. **Reviewing Themes:** Themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure that they adequately represented the data and supported the research. Irrelevant or overly similar themes were eliminated. The literature review supports a handful of broader themes that were narrowed to dominating and impactful themes.
4. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Once the final set of themes was determined, they were named and defined clearly to provide a narrative for the findings and allowed for further refining of dominant themes.

Ethical Considerations

Since no direct human subjects were involved in the research, ethical considerations primarily centered on ensuring the integrity of the literature review process. Proper citation of all sources was ensured to avoid plagiarism and maintain credit is given to sources as required. Additionally, any potential biases in the literature were acknowledged and discussed.

This methodology ensures extensive examination of conflict resolution strategies within military settings, providing valuable insights into the roles of leadership, communication, and cultural competence in managing conflicts effectively. The execution of a qualitative approaches offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving conflict resolution practices in the military. A utilization of a systematic approach to data collection, evaluation, and analysis ensured a comprehensive exploration of the research question. The next chapter presents the findings from the analyzed literature.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The following chapter presents the results gathered from a qualitative literature review, which explored conflict resolution strategies in military settings, the focus of the study. This research is based on the dominant themes of leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence. The results summarize the data derived from various studies that have addressed these themes as well as others and provides a narrative description of findings supported by qualitative insights. The findings are presented thematically and synthesized from existing research.

Leadership styles were seen as a significant factor influencing the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in military settings. Transformational leadership emerged as the most effective leadership style for fostering positive conflict resolution outcomes, with its focus on inspiration, collaboration, and adaptive problem-solving. On the other hand, transactional leadership was often seen as limiting in complex situations, as it typically focuses on short-term goals rather than long-term solutions. Adaptive leadership was also highlighted for its flexibility, allowing leaders to adjust strategies based on the nature of the conflict at hand. Additionally, it was particularly effective in rapidly changing environments, such as military operations. Overall, personnel typically looked at various leadership styles and dominant traits for pros and cons in correlation of leadership and conflict resolution.

Communication strategies played a vital role in managing conflicts, particularly the use of active listening and clear upward and downward communication channels (formal and informal). The remaining high focus on that feedback mechanisms were essential for resolving misunderstandings and ensuring that personnel at all ranks had a voice in the conflict management process. Communication channels at various levels contributed to positive conflict

resolution paths as well as overall positive association with the organization. Studies also pointed to the importance of adapting communication strategies to the specific conflict and the cultural context of those involved.

Cultural competence was another important factor, especially in the military's diverse, multicultural environment. Personnel with higher levels of cultural and self-awareness are seen as better equipped to lead, as well as function within diverse teams. The data focused the need for enhanced training in cultural competence to improve conflict resolution skills across all levels of military personnel. The ability to navigate and understand the cultural backgrounds of personnel was shown to enhance the resolution process by reducing misunderstandings and creating respect among team members from different cultural backgrounds.

The data supported the hypothesis that leadership styles, strong communication strategies, and cultural competence are the foundational basis for conflict resolution within the military and other hierarchy organizations. Leadership styles that encourage collaboration and flexibility, with clear communication and cultural sensitivity, improved conflict resolution outcomes. These findings suggest that honing these skills will enhance the military personnel's ability to manage conflict effectively and were the most successful in resolving conflicts within diverse military environments.

The results lay precedence in the need for continued research into these areas, particularly the role of cultural competence in conflict resolution. The following chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the research question and suggest implications for future military conflict resolution practices.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The research demonstrates that leadership styles, communication strategies, and cultural competence are interdependent factors that significantly affect the outcomes of conflict resolution in military environments. Leaders who adapt their style to the situation and emphasize clear communication and cultural awareness tend to foster better conflict resolution outcomes.

Leadership Styles

Transformational leadership is the most effective for positive conflict resolution, as it promotes collaboration, inspiration, and long-term problem-solving. Transactional leadership is less effective, especially in complex situations, as it focuses on short-term solutions and lacks adaptability. Adaptive leadership is beneficial due to its flexibility to specific conflicts, making it an essential component of conflict management, and important for professions such as the military.

Communication Strategies

The importance of active listening, tone, and feedback mechanisms in resolving misunderstandings and conflicts. Upward and downward communication channels (also formal and informal communication techniques) ensure that all ranks can contribute to conflict resolution, promoting a more inclusive and effective resolution process. It can also contribute to overall organization retention, etc. Clear communication is a foundation for positive organizational culture and conflict outcomes.

Cultural Competence

Personnel with high cultural competence and self-awareness perform better in conflict management within diverse teams (a necessary skill for military personnel). Highlights the need

for continuous training to enhance cultural and self-awareness, improving conflict resolution across all ranks. (maybe connect to training theme more).

Leadership styles that promote collaboration, flexibility, and clear communication yield better conflict outcomes. The results of the study are consistent with existing literature on organizational communication and leadership, demonstrating the need for tailored strategies in hierarchical and diverse environments like the military. While most literature focuses on broader organizational ranges and is not specific to the military, application is apparent.

Although the qualitative approach offered valuable insights, several limitations should be noted as shortcomings. First, this research relied mainly on secondary data from existing literature, which means the findings are the perspectives and methodologies of the studies reviewed and not direct data. Due to the lack of direct data being collected, it limits the generalizability of the results to specific military contexts or individual cases.

Additionally, while the research reviewed literature from diverse sources, there may be cultural or geographical limitations to the findings. The studies reviewed may not fully capture the nuances of conflict resolution in other cultural or organizational contexts and may not be able to be used for universal application.

Finally, the lack of quantitative analysis in this study limits its ability to provide statistical correlations or definitive relationships between the variables (leadership, communication, and cultural competence). Future studies could integrate quantitative methods to validate these qualitative insights, such as through interviewing, surveys, study groups etc.

In order to progress and look for future research, areas that may be good for exploration include; Specific leadership training programs and its' impact on conflict resolution outcomes in the military. The extent of cultural competence and leadership style trainings influence on long-

term conflict resolution success across different branches (or other hierarchy organizations). The variations in conflict resolution effectiveness based on rank or operational contexts (e.g., combat versus non-combat settings, career field differences, etc.).

This study contributes to the broader understanding of organizational dynamics and conflict resolution strategies within military settings. The findings highlight the importance of leadership styles, clear communication, and cultural competence in resolving conflicts efficiently and effectively. These conclusions are applicable not only to the military but also to other hierarchical and diverse organizations where leadership, communication, and cultural understanding are essential to conflict resolution.

In the military context, where high-stress environments and cultural diversity are typical, the ability to resolve conflicts efficiently is vital to operational success and team morale. The research shows the need for leadership development programs that emphasize these skills, ensuring that military personnel at all levels are equipped to handle conflicts in an ever-changing world.

The study's significance goes beyond the military, as the themes identified and explored are relevant to any organization facing internal conflicts. Leaders in various organizations can benefit from understanding how their leadership style, communication methods, and cultural competence can impact conflict resolution. Ultimately, improving these areas can lead to more effective organizations and improved interpersonal relationships within teams.

This study highlights the vital role of leadership, communication, and cultural competence in managing conflict within hierarchical, multicultural organizations. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on leadership development in the military and other large organizations. Enhanced training in transformational and adaptive leadership,

communication strategies, and cultural competence will improve conflict resolution outcomes and overall organizational effectiveness.

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