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Conflict, Knowledge, and Collective Bargaining in Public Education

Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker
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Walden University

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Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Conflict, Knowledge, and Collective Bargaining in Public Education

by

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MA, California State University Dominguez Hills, 2006

BA, California State University Dominguez Hills, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

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Abstract

Negative conflict in public school districts during collective bargaining impedes efforts towards creativity and student success. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of conflict for participants in collective bargaining in California public school districts. Complexity theory and social construction theory were used as the conceptual framework for the research, and ideas related to conflict, social interactions, knowledge management, and collective bargaining were examined to gain an understanding as they related to the central phenomenon. The specific research questions pondered in this study related to how conflict was experienced in California public schools during collective bargaining, what the perception of conflict was when knowledge management tools were used, and what some of the outcomes from conflict were when knowledge management tools were used. Data were collected from 25 participants who met the specified criteria of having experienced collective bargaining in a California public school setting, having experienced conflict during collective bargaining as a part of the negotiating teams, and must have experienced the use of knowledge management tools when in conflict during collective bargaining. Findings showed that knowledge management tools were a benefit to positive perceptions of conflict and positive conflict outcomes during collective bargaining in California public schools. The findings effectuate positive social change because when in conflict, knowledge is an intermediary that fills a void where there is a gap in understanding and a lack of viable solutions between the parties.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to God and to my immediate family, George, Trey, Nygel and Noah Baker, for all the sacrifices and encouragement you gave me to complete this journey. I know it was tough you all, but I pray in years to come that you understand how important this journey was for our family. This study is also dedicated to my parents, Debiase and Debra Hall, who built a spirit of determination and persistence into the fabric of who I am. Without them, there is no me. And to those closest to me (family and friends), thank you for continuing to invite me places even though I had to decline or was not always completely present. I love you all for understanding and being there for me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The focus of this study was conflict in collective bargaining environments. Specifically, I focused on gaining an in-depth understanding, using phenomenological methods, of how the participants of this study experienced conflict when knowledge management is used in California public school districts during collective bargaining. Public school environments contain diverse and dynamic stakeholders, and their success is critical to that of the students. For years, dating back to before President Ronald Reagan's administration, there have been inadequacies in public education from limited educational standards to underperforming staff and students (Montgomery, 2012). Negative conflict is a contributor to such underperformance and diminished organizational development as a whole (Iordanides & Mitsara, 2014).

There is a robust body of literature on conflict as a part of social and interpersonal relationships in organizations. Negative conflict, when unmanaged, hinders forward development because of the impacts it has on positive organizational processes (Chen, Zhang, & Vogel, 2011). In spite of the richness of documentation on the influences of conflict in organizations, there was still a gap in the research in the area of public education. In a review of the literature, I found multiple articles that addressed conflict in organizations and the effects of good and bad conflict on organizational sustainability and culture. Scholars have also specifically addressed the role conflict played in public organizations. Nita (2014), for instance, conducted quantitative research on pre-university educational systems. The researcher looked at conflict related to changes in the system by

documenting schools going from having autonomy to a centralized model. Nita examined how stakeholders' engagement in conflict played a part in and influenced the environment as a whole. In reviewing the findings of the study, I found that conflict was settled positively using mediation, which led to improved outcomes. The author, however, did not discuss the use of knowledge management processes. In another article, Beszter, Ackers, and Hislop (2015) provided a summary of their qualitative case study on why collective bargaining survived in the public sector despite a sharp decline in the private sector in the last decade. The authors found that the study participants saw maintaining the practice of collective bargaining and labor relations as important despite the diverse feelings about the relationships between the parties.

In this study, I took a different approach by researching how members of public educational environments with collective bargaining perceived their acuties of conflict and how conflict was experienced when knowledge management processes like sharing, creation, and identification were used as an intervention during adversity. I used phenomenological methods for data collection and analysis, and focused on exploring participant experiences to gain in-depth interpretations.

The continuing battle over power and resources between management and labor in the public sector provided further evidence of the need for this study. U.S. labor laws afford unions the right to represent and negotiate on behalf of some public employees over power and resources (Walker, 2014). The struggle between management and unions and contributing factors such as strife over wages and working conditions are paths to labor disputes. Teachers' unions in the public sector, with approximately 4.5 million

members, make up a significant part of union membership in America (this number does not include the non-teaching staff union membership numbers; Choi & Chung, 2016).

Public education is a highly unionized environment, and there are concerns about disputes that affect critical performance outcomes (Choi & Chung, 2016). Negative conflict, unmanaged, could ultimately disrupt student learning outcomes and the community.

With this phenomenological study, I sought to develop an understanding of the participants' experiences with conflict. The participants included labor union and organizational management leaders who have engaged in collective bargaining and used knowledge management processes as an intervention. The participants chosen for the study were a combination of union and management representatives who participated in collective bargaining in California public school districts.

Background of the Study

Conflict is inevitable in social relationships in growing and prosperous organizations, including those in public education. Conflict as a result of collective bargaining interactions between labor unions and management in business organizations has been a complex phenomenon historically (Post, 1990). Violino (2012), for instance, explained adversarial and contentious labor relations in a California public community college district, which the author described as contentious and as having a costly influence on the college environment and collegiality. Violino's article was critical to my thinking in this project because it addressed conflict in a public education setting with collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining in public education influences employment-related decision-making processes (Anzia and Moe, 2014). Researchers have described the interactions between labor and management as positional with little or no meaningful dialog over essential matters to establish an agreement. Antagonistic tones lead to contentious interactions. For this reason, understanding methods that stakeholders could use to manage conflict in school environments that have collective bargaining is imperative. Unmanaged or ignored conflict could be detrimental and costly to organizations as it encroaches on organizational resources, including the cohesion of the organizational culture (Sadri, 2012). Genç and Hamedoğlu (2012) described educational environments as areas where conflict is highly likely because of the intimate and concentrated interactions between the stakeholders. Conflict in schools happen for the same reasons it occurs in other organizations, including the reasons of competing interest and diverse perspectives (Gross, Hogler, & Henle, 2013).

Žikić, Marinović, and Trandafilović (2012) discussed how negative labor conflict could lead to unfavorable results that influence business outcomes including the goals and group relations of the organization. Public sector unions have significant impacts on decision-making by playing a substantial and compulsory role in the negotiations process. They have a high potential for power through the political process, which helps balance authority at the negotiations table with management (McGinnis & Schanzenbach, 2010).

The negative effects of conflict in the workplace also cause managers to take vital time away from productivity to deal with the impacts that could lead to physical, mental, financial, and political consequences to the parties involved (Ojo & Abolade, 2014).

Negative relational conflict also negatively impacts creativity and stifles the positive conflict that benefits group work and can result in enhanced creativity and task completion (Rispen, 2012). When conflict is not managed appropriately, it worsens; however, when conflict is skillful dealt with, it can be resolved inventively. Conflict from collective bargaining could be lasting and embedded in the labor-management relationship. Lehr, Akkerman, and Torenvlied (2014) explained that when stakeholders have experienced negative conflict in past collective bargaining negotiations, that conflict may be perpetual and could impact future events.

Templer (2012) explained that communication in collective bargaining environments is essential. When knowledge is actively hidden by the party in possession of it, it is seen by the potential recipient as a lack of communication and a contributor to conflict. Hiding knowledge is an action where one party intentionally withholds knowledge to deceive another party (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, and Trougakos, 2012). Foss, Husted, and Michailova (2010) explained that knowledge sharing is an important part of conflict management because it facilitates understanding. Knowledge management tools motivate employees and build proficiency and trust; it also improves group performance (McNeish and Mann, 2010).

Problem Statement

Negative conflict in public school districts during collective bargaining impedes collaboration and damages efforts towards creativity and student success (Sims, 2015). Conflict in collective bargaining environments could be costly to organizational interrelationships and finances. In 2003, a labor dispute between the union and

management during collective bargaining cost the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, a public agency, an astounding \$175 million dollars (Wheeler, Ghazzawi and Palladini, 2011).

In this study, the general problem was that conflict in public education, if not managed effectively, could be harmful to organizational success, performance, and growth. Conflict can have positive and negative outcomes, so there is a need to find different ways to manage all conflict efficiently by minimizing the negative impacts and increasing the positive (Ojo & Abolade, 2014). The specific problem was that the negative conflict between labor unions and management in public school districts is detrimental to student success (Gates & Vesneske, 2012). Disputes during labor-management exchanges in public school districts could directly damage employee-manager relations, work performance, and task completion (Yongyue, Hua, & Guanglin, 2016). The indirect adverse effects of conflict during labor-management interactions in schools include disruptions to vital learning exchanges that could lead to immeasurable, lasting damages (Iordanides & Mitsara, 2014).

The gap I identified in the research was that there was not a phenomenological study documenting the lived experiences of participants involved in conflict in California public school districts during collective bargaining and that provided an understanding of how parties of the conflict experienced conflict when knowledge management tools were used as part of an intervention. This study fills the gap in the research on conflict management, knowledge management, and collective bargaining offering a better understanding of conflict during collective bargaining in public school districts in

California. The findings are also vital to positive social change because those experiencing conflict may use them during labor-management relations in public educational environments to develop collaborative solutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore conflict for members of both management and unions at California public school districts with collective bargaining. Conflict, the central phenomenon, is generally defined as a misunderstanding, miscommunication, and difference of perception, interest, and practices between parties.

Research Questions

I developed the research questions to address the problem and purpose of the study, and to focus on the participants' perceptions of and experiences with the phenomenon. Patton (2002) explained that getting to the core of participant experiences with the phenomenon is essential to phenomenological inquiry. The following were the research questions for this study:

Primary Research Question: How is conflict experienced by labor and management participants in California public school districts during collective bargaining?

Sub-question 1: What was the perception of conflict during collective bargaining when knowledge management tools were used?

Sub-question 2: What were some of the outcomes resulting from conflict when knowledge management processes were used?

Qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving, and non-directional. Researchers pose them in various forms and they are intended to be broad enough to capture responses that support the purpose and problem of the study, yet specific enough to collect vital data. My approach to designing the phenomenological research questions for this study was to introduce a central question that was broad, with two additional sub-questions that were specific and direct.

Conceptual Framework

I developed a conceptual framework for this study composed of theories and ideas related to conflict, social interactions, knowledge management, and collective bargaining. Conflict can have positive or negative effects and has high complexity with multiple related, dissimilar, and sometimes concealed parts (Gallo, 2013). I examined conflict as an element of the labor-management relationship during collective bargaining in California public school districts. This environment enhances the complexity of conflict simply by the inherent nature of the association between the parties. The conflict between the parties is a disagreement of philosophies that has come to an impasse (Elbanna, Ali, & Dayan, 2011). It could also involve a persistent battle over power and position.

In this setting, I reviewed knowledge management processes to identify how they could contribute to the management of conflict through the development of informed, collaborative solutions in collective bargaining environments. Knowledge management is a concept that includes the sharing, identification, storage, and creation of information that translates to improving people-centered relationships and organizational success (Azarian, Yunus, & Dahlan, 2013). Researchers have discussed knowledge management

as an inter-organizational process that is beneficial to building competencies for the improvement of organizational competitive advantage. Knowledge management processes involve the various uses of information (Durst & Edvardsson, 2012). Knowledge management tools in conflict comprise processes like the creation, identification, utilization, and transfer of knowledge. For instance, knowledge exchange allows members of the organization to build on and reveal existing knowledge needed to solve problems and to explore options collectively (Kessler & Sitterle, 2012). McNeish and Mann (2010) explained that both knowledge sharing and trust are vital to inter-organizational relations. They are essential to managing interpersonal and intergroup interactions in the organization.

Collective bargaining in California public school districts is a mandated interpersonal association that involves both good and bad conflict, and that could be influenced by the various knowledge processes (Walker, 2014). Collective bargaining is a process where management and employee unions have an obligation to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment (Boniface & Rashmi, 2013). It is set up to provide an opportunity to engage in democratic decision-making between management and the union (Adams, 2011). Boniface and Rashmi (2013) explained that the collective bargaining process has several phases including what is termed distributive bargaining, which focuses on fixed resources that facilitate a win-lose outcome. In collective bargaining, there are alternative methods that could be practiced that involve shared and collaborative outcomes. Distributive bargaining is one that is typically contentious, with alternative dispute resolution methods being more congenial. Collective bargaining

processes that are adversarial and involve negative conflict in school districts lead to mistrust and an agitated environment. The parties involved are misinformed and lack vital knowledge for the decision-making process (Gates & Vesneske, 2012).

When there are methods in place to manage conflict, the outcome could go from a negative, contentious conflict to one that is cooperative. Opute (2014) explained that cooperative products of conflict lead to trust, positive relations, and reciprocal support. Knowledge management tools could be particularly useful for conflict management in educational environments. Knowledge has become one of the most valuable capitals in organizations. Managing it strategically throughout the system is essential to the organization's success (Van Reijssen, Helms, Batenburg, & Foorhuis, 2015).

Collective bargaining interactions require regular methods of knowledge transactions to resolve problems, especially when the parties are bound to negotiations processes. Tangaraja, Mohd Rasdi, Ismail, and Abu Samah (2015) explained the approaches used to process knowledge could improve the interactions between the knowledge requestor and provider, ultimately improving outcomes. Bao, Zhang, and Chen (2015) further found that knowledge sharing enhanced group environment exchanges while also improving the commitment to perform by individual group members.

Knowing these facts and being aware of the high level of conflict in collective bargaining environments make this study relevant to scholars studying conflict management, knowledge management, and collective bargaining, as well as to practitioners working in these fields. The results of this research could help members of

management and the employee groups gain a better understanding of conflict in and across organizational systems. The study could benefit not only employees and managers involved in the collective bargaining relationship, but also other stakeholders who are associated with the organization who are recipients of the interactions. Gaining an understanding of employee conflict experiences when knowledge management tools were used could open doors to additional methods for dealing with conflict.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative phenomenological strategy of inquiry for this study. The phenomenological method oriented me to gaining an objective understanding of the lived experiences of those who are knowledgeable of the phenomenon (see Moran, 1999). When reflecting on the problem and purpose, I determined that qualitative methodology was most appropriate for this research. The inherent nature of qualitative research allowed for a holistic look at human actions and experiences (see Schwandt, 2015).

The phenomenon I investigated was conflict. Other key concepts included knowledge management and collective bargaining. Conflict is a naturally occurring social interaction that involves differences in understanding, perceptions, and resources. Knowledge management is a key organizational asset that includes the creation, sharing, storing, and facilitation of information. Collective bargaining is the workplace relationship between employees and the employer that requires negotiations over employment-related subjects.

The phenomenological method of inquiry was most appropriate for studying participants' experiences with conflict in collective bargaining relationships while

focusing on how participants in that environment perceived it. The research characteristics of phenomenology allow a researcher to hear about the experiences, knowledge, and interactions of participants as perceived in their natural setting of one participant, to cross-analyze their responses with those of other participants, and to compare them to relevant literature and data (Miles, Huberman, & Sladana, 2014).

Duckham and Schreiber (2016) asserted that phenomenology allows the researcher to focus on a particular phenomenon by using the participant's familiarity with that phenomenon to chronicle the experience. The participants' views are unique to the individual and could mark distinct worldviews. In this type of study, those disparate experiences with the phenomenon lead, via data collection and analysis, to true and disinterested outcomes.

Phenomenology is a means to a holistic analysis using a systematic approach to individualizing participants' experiences and then bringing them together to identify the themes and patterns of the whole. This global approach acknowledges the individual and the whole, as they are interconnected (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). Given this interdependence, data in this study were not limited to fragments of experiences, but functioned as a collection of information. Data were collected from the participants' lived experiences as well as a review of a significant number of journals and publications. I scrutinized the data to confirm veracity and similarities across sources using methods of triangulation (Stake, 2010).

Definitions

I have included the following definitions to provide a general understanding of the vital concepts I used throughout this study:

Conflict: A social interaction in a complex and unique system that involves parties with needs, interests, values, and objectives that are distinct from one another (Gallo, 2012). The discrete worldviews intersect to create a struggle over resources necessary to fulfill the desire. Chen et al. (2011) explained that conflict is an important organizational phenomenon that could result in collaborative and creative outcomes.

Conflict management: A systematic process that involves the efficient administering of differences by recognizing the good and bad effects, as well as recognizing the tools and management styles that maximize the good effects while alleviating the bad (Coggburn, Battaglio, & Bradbury, 2014).

Collective bargaining: A process that mandates the engagement of organizational management and unions in exchanges and brokering related to the terms and conditions of employment (Boniface & Rashmi, 2013). It creates a perceived level playing field between the groups that allows the employees to have a collective voice when addressing employment concerns.

Explicit knowledge: Knowledge that is in a form that is tangible, and that can be easily and readily stored and retrieved (Virtanen, 2013). Explicit knowledge is knowledge found in computer databases, organizational policies, training materials, and so on.

Knowledge creation: The breeding of information based on individual and collective preexisting awareness and past experiences (Matysiewicz & Smyczek, 2013).

Knowledge identification: The discovery of existing knowledge in various forms (e.g., tacit, explicit, institutional, personal, industrial, historical, etc.) for use (Haider, 2014).

Knowledge management: A complex method that uses knowledge, in both tacit and explicit form, through processes such as knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge exchange, knowledge storage, and knowledge assimilation to improve organizational functionality and competitive advantage (Mciver, Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, & Ramachandran, 2013).

Knowledge management tools: For purposes of this study, these are the different uses of knowledge like sharing, creation, identification, storage, and so on.

Knowledge sharing: The allocation of information that is centered on organizational processes, procedures, and capabilities that are vital to achievement, succession planning, learning, and growth (Wang, Tseng, & Yen, 2014).

Lived experiences: A person's description of perceptions, reality, and existence with a phenomenon (Miles, Chapman, & Francis, 2015).

Phenomenology: A qualitative strategy of inquiry that focuses on gaining an understanding of lived experiences through reflection (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Tacit knowledge: Knowledge that is in a softer, respective form, which is not typically tangible and sometimes difficult to share (Whisnant & Khasawneh, 2014). It is

knowledge that is received through performing tasks and through the perceptions and experiences of the individuals possessing this knowledge (Mciver et al., 2013).

Assumptions

I made several vital assumptions for this study. One was that conflict is a natural occurrence in social organizations. I also assumed that difficulty with communication between management and the union, including a lack of communication and competing perceptions, are factors in the evolution of conflict. Another assumption was that knowledge is an organizational asset that is used for growth and sustainability. I expected that all of the participants in the study had either worked for a California public school district or for a union that represented California public school district employees. I assumed that the participants in the study had experienced conflict during collective bargaining. A final assumption was that the participants in the study representing both management and the union have used knowledge processes in multiple forms for other organizational functions to their benefit.

Scope and Delimitations

In this research, I focused on specific experiences of qualified participants who work or had worked with California school districts, and have participated in collective bargaining. I purposefully selected this group to gather the needed information based on the purpose of the study. All participants had perceptions and experiences of collective bargaining relationships from a union or a management perspective. No other social groups in conflict were included.

Limitations

This study was limited to data gathered from participants who were either school district employees or union leaders in the California public school system. Further, I chose participants that were engaged and immersed in the mechanics of collective bargaining environments. I focused on conflict that is a product of union-management relations only, and did not attempt to study overall organizational conflict. There was no pretest done to assess management and conflict resolution styles. I studied the participants in their natural environments to gain an understanding related to the research.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of the substantial impacts negative conflict could have on public education and the importance of managing conflict in public organizations. Conflict is inherent in social environments and is a complex system that is not always easily understood or resolved without knowing the components involved. Conflict is the result of differences that are both known and unknown to the parties, and that could evolve over time (Gallo, 2013). Li, Zhu, and Gerard (2012) explained, “Conflicts arise when concerned parties hold competing claims to scarce status, power and/or other resources or when parties have substantial or perceived divergence of beliefs, opinions or interest” (p. 210). Conflict is vital since it is not limited to negative outcomes, but could also produce positively inspired solutions. The negative outcomes of conflict could lead to dysfunctional, unproductive, and antagonistic outcomes, while the positive outcomes lead to collaborative decision-making, creativity, and team building (Iordanides & Mitsara, 2014).

Significance to Practice

Conflict management is critical in school environments to sustain good performance and ingenuity. A lack of conflict management is especially harmful in public school environments because it not only increases its adverse effects, but also suppressed the positive (Savary, Kleiman, Hassin, & Dhar, 2015). Žikić et al. (2012) explained that when conflict is managed appropriately and systematically using techniques that recognize its benefits and involve tools that could lead to constructive resolutions, outcomes are improved. Because conflict in collective bargaining environments is sometimes a result of differences in philosophies and comprehension between the management and the union, vital organizational functions such as change fail (Chen, Zhang, & Vogel, 2011). Finding successful methods of communicating information regarding essential organizational processes to manage the negative effects could help improve outcomes (McClellan, 2011).

Collective bargaining is a process where unions and management meet, negotiate, and confer mostly over terms and conditions of employment. Interests and positions are determined collectively on each side and presented as the concerns of the whole (McKersie & Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 2009; Badoi, 2014). Collective bargaining interactions that result in the negative effects of conflict could lead to damaged outcomes in the workplace, including performance issues, depleted morale, and lower productivity (Ojo & Abolade, 2014). Managing the conflict effectively by fostering a sense of fairness during the interactions could produce positive collective bargaining and organizational outcomes (Cloutier, Denis, & Bilodeau, 2012).

Significance to Theory

This study is significant to existing theory on conflict because it has the potential to expand how people view research related to conflict, conflict management, and social interactions. Opute (2014) described phenomenon conflict as interactional and one that arises from challenges to one party or another's perspectives and worldviews. Progressive methods to manage conflict were described through the use of interest-based, collaborative, and insight-based methods. In this study, I did not discount those methods, and I recognized the relevance of those approaches to conflict management.

I designed this study to assess the additional potential tactics, knowledge management, and tools associated with it such as knowledge sharing and knowledge creation. I reviewed related theories to determine how knowledge management tools contributed to the study of conflict, specifically in collective bargaining environments. Collective bargaining environments warrant mandated social interactions that could involve conflict in many business and management environments.

Significance to Social Change

The importance of this study, as it relates to social change, is associated with the social-interdependence of the collective bargaining relationship. How conflict is handled could determine the stability of the labor-management relationship in public school districts. Gaining an understanding of how conflict is perceived in interdependent relationships when knowledge management tools are used could provide practitioners and scholars better means for dealing with conflict in social relationships. In socially interdependent relationships, trust is vital, and the sharing of knowledge is one of several

knowledge management tools that could be helpful in building that trust across groups and individuals (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). This could mean improved relations, trust building, enhanced understanding, and tolerance between diverse groups, and greater attempts to resolve conflict collaboratively. The element of knowledge in conflict management could equate to the cooperation-competitive model, and produce a solution-oriented outcome ultimately supporting positive social relationships (Bélanger, Pierro, Barbieri, De Carlo, Falco, & Kruglanski, 2015).

Summary and Transition

Conflict was the central phenomenon I studied and is also an expected component of social relatedness. This study was characterized by an urgency to understand the dynamics of conflict and a tool used as a potential intermediary. My purpose in the literature review I present in the next section was to assess past research on conflict and to explore related concepts and theories. In Chapter 3, I describe the study's methodology, including but not limited to instruments used, the role of the researcher, the appropriateness of qualitative methods, and processes followed to assure confidentiality, anonymity, and the elimination of biases. Chapters 4 and 5 include detailed descriptions of the results and a commentary regarding future research on related subject matter, implications, and effects of the findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem I addressed, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was that conflict in public education, if not managed effectively, could be harmful to organizational success, performance, and growth. Negative conflict between labor unions and management in public school districts is detrimental and could directly damage employee-manager relations, work performance, and task completion. The outcomes of conflict could have a negative influence on the stakeholders of public education (i.e., students, parents, employees) by threatening organizational growth and sustainability. Sources of conflict in educational institutions include the division of limited resources and differences in individual worldviews. Conflicts happen when there are verbal and non-verbal interactions between social beings in organizations that could fetter growth and cause a sense of unjust and contentiousness between parties (Üstüner, & Kis, 2014). Conflict could also have positive outcomes for the parties involved. The positive outcomes could lead to expanded cognitive thinking that result in better reasoning and perspective taking that assist with understanding opposing viewpoints (Oore, Leiter, & LeBlanc, 2015), providing a mechanism of growth to organizations.

The purpose of this research was to conduct a phenomenological study to explore conflict for members of both management and unions at California public school districts with collective bargaining. I used phenomenological inquiry to explore the lived experiences of the participants. Conflict is a social phenomenon and will be principal in this literature review. The purpose and the problem I identified in Chapter 1 were my impetuses for this literature review.

The literature in this section covers conflict, how it could be good and bad for organizational competitive advantage and culture, how conflict interactions need to be managed, and how conflict—when it is not managed—increases its negative effects. The literature also explores the importance of knowledge and knowledge management in organizations, and how it is a major asset contributing to growth, development, and cross-functional team-building in the organization. I reviewed the literature to lay a foundation for understanding the central phenomenon, conflict, and to explore the importance of knowledge and the components of collective bargaining. In what follows, I also discuss social relationships and the role they play in conflict.

Literature Search Strategy

I used electronic search databases such as those available from the Walden University Library to find relevant resources. Searches were done using the keywords *conflict*, *social conflict*, *knowledge management*, *knowledge sharing*, *knowledge creation*, *unions*, *public education* and *collective bargaining*. I also paired the search keywords with additional secondary terms such as *conflict management*, *conflict resolution*, *conflict styles*, *systems thinking*, *social interactions* and *social change* to achieve the most in-depth results. I also reviewed publications used and suggested from courses I took at Walden University.

I reviewed more than 500 articles, books, and web-based resources related to the study topic. Of these, I used, directly or indirectly, more than 300 relevant articles, books, and dissertations. I searched the following databases: Business Source Complete,

ABI/INFORM Complete, PsycINFO, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Google Scholar, Thoreau, and ProQuest Central.

Literature Review Conceptual Framework

The central phenomenon for this study was conflict—specifically, conflict in social relationships. Conflict is the result of social interactions that involve competing interest and needs in a defined environment with limited resources and options (Ojo & Abolade, 2014). Conflict could also involve limited transparency between social parties, which leads to a lack of information and more intensified complexity (Laddha, Ayyub, & Gidwani, 2012). Social interactions involve necessary exchanges between humans that are prompted by and in response to components such as affiliations, self-preservation and self-efficacy, resources, improvements, and the gaining of information (Ateca-Amestoy, Aguilar, & Moro-Egido, 2014). Complexity theory explains the dissimilar perspectives individuals may have one to another in interconnected social systems and that, at times, sensitivities to unpredictable differences in holistic systems may cause disruptions and conflicts (Shakouri et al., 2014). Perceptions that are non-linear and volatile, or that cannot be understood, could be characterized as complex and lead to conflict in social environments.

In social environments, conflict is inherent and could happen with very little interaction or understanding of how individual decisions and interests affect the whole. There are also cases where parties base their adverse actions on existing and sometimes antiquated knowledge, interests, and worldviews. How parties interact socially is based on the amount and type of information the decision maker has when executing an act

(Gonzalez & Martin, 2011). These interactions with external effects are a part of a social construct. Social construction theory describes the exploration of one's perception of what they engage in socially and their interactions with people, places and things (Refai, Klapper & Thompson, 2015). I included social construction theory as a part of the theoretical structure of this study since it explains how the interactions between people could produce various perceptions based on an individual's life experiences.

Researchers have investigated conflict in social environments for decades. Karl Marx, an early philosopher of conflict, described it as a struggle over limited resources, with power being the most prevalent. Marx believed that the more resources subordinate groups are aware of and the more they identify their needs collectively, the more likely it is that there will be conflict with the power source (Turner, 1975). Social conflict has been explained as dissension between commitments, and that there are divided loyalties and competing obligations between home, work, school, and so on. Individuals mistake autonomy in their social environments as complete freedom. Although there is a freedom to structure a life in a manner that is desirable, the obligations that arise from the design could be in conflict. An example of the conflict is the need to work a job away from home in competition with the need to engage in social activities away from work (De Campo, 2013).

Since conflict is the inevitable in social environments, organizations have developed thought processes that make it more functional. Kolb and Putnam (1992) asserted that conflict had become a normal process to develop and refine strategy, and to adapt to change more readily through the completion of cross-functional tasks.

Organizations have further realized that there is creativity in differences and more dissimilar organizational workforces present conflicts that are not only based on differing ideas but also related to diverse genders, cultures, religions, races, and the like (Kolb & Putnam, 1992).

Coggburn et al. (2014) determined that conflict was a point of incompatibility in compulsory social relations. These relations are those that are interrelated and that need to operate in concert for the whole to function. In organizational structures, researchers have characterized this interconnectedness using the systems concept. A systems environment contains autonomous, interdependent parts that are strategically and intentionally constructed for the functionality of the organization. The structure's interconnected subsystems are distinct from each other and have independent sets of boundaries and responsibilities that make the system complex (Gallo, 2013). Systems thinking facilitates thinking beyond the individual unit and encourages cross-functional assessment and analysis to solve conflicts that impact the integrity of the whole. Systems thinking in conflict means that those involved from the various units must collectively look at past concepts to determine causes and remedies for the conflict (Shaked & Schechter, 2013).

Conflict has been widely identified as physical or to involve violence. Social conflict, specifically, presents a different view. Conflict in social environments is physical in a different way. Although it could involve violence, conflict could also be changes in postures and moods, and in methods of communication that in turn signify dissonance (Levine, 2007). Scholars have also given some attention to how things are

said in social conflicts. The words used (i.e., the use of certain verbs, adjectives, etc.) could signify the direction of the conflict. Specific words could lead to dissonance and threats on one hand, and collaboration and compromise on the other (Putnam, 2010).

Significant products of conflict are the positive outcomes. Conflict outcomes that are positive improve individual self-efficacy and task production. Conflict in work environments forces differences to be exposed, and in teamwork tasks it facilitates collaborative interactions (Posthuma, 2011). Conflict causes change to happen, and change is vital to a system's sustainability. Conflict has a causal effect, often resulting in change. The conflict operates as an allurements to change (Berstene, 2004), and could activate systematic decision making resulting from conflicting perspectives. Systematic decision-making is the result of allowing a mindset with better reasoning to lead to more creative choices and outcomes (Savary, et al., 2015).

Literature Review

Conflict

The central phenomenon, conflict, results from many things, but some relevant components are discrepancies of perceptions and power or styles between two or more parties in social constructs. They are diverse worldviews that need to be reconciled. Conflict is needed in social environments since it equalizes variances and enables development (Simon, 2016). Conflict is a tool for motivating employees, and this motivation results from conflict's ability to prompt creative competition (Mukhtar, 2013).

Conflict is relational and is an ongoing phenomenon in social environments. In organizations, conflict is an expected behavior among employees and is interwoven in

employee group work interactions. There are variations in how seminal scholars such as Follett and Lewin have defined conflict, but it is ultimately characterized by differences, oppositions, and perceived inequities between parties in a system (Hasani & Boroujerdi, 2013). Conflict, notably known for its negative effects, also has a significant influence on positive institutional outcomes. Bradley, Anderson, Baur, and Klotz (2015) discovered that when conflict exists and there are open and constructive discussions about perceptions, understandings, and ideas, production and performance in team and task work improves. Conflict expression is imperative in positive scenarios, and the leaders of the organization are imperative to its facilitation.

Salas, Shuffler, Thayer, Bedwell, and Lazzara (2015) explained that when engaging in constructive discussion during conflict, there must be a feeling of psychological safety. Psychological safety refers to parties of the conflict feeling comfortable participating in the discussions and having an altered mindset on how conflict is received. The opposing parties in the conflict must also be receptive to the vulnerability of the party communicating perceptions and other interpersonal expressions (Bradley, Klotz, Brown, & Postlethwaite, 2013).

Since researchers have proven that conflict is clearly related to job satisfaction, social relationships, turnover, and group work progress, positive outcomes of conflict are important (Avgar, Lee, & Chung, 2014). Conflict plays a multifaceted role in intergroup task encounters, including those experienced in cross-functional task engagement. Todorova, Bear, and Weingart (2014) explained that the positive, energizing effects of conflict are vital when the expression of differences in the group related to the task is

mild. The leaders managing conflict must facilitate the mild intensity expressions of emotions and perceptions to maximize the benefits of positive conflict outcomes.

Conflict is expected, so how it is managed in an organization is likely embedded in its system structure, which makes it a part of the organizational culture. There are individual conflict styles, but the organizational conflict culture determines the perspective and approach to conflict. The leaders of the system facilitate the conflict culture in the organization, and individual employees typically adapt to the culture despite their independent conflict styles.

Kaur (2014) assessed organizational citizenship behavior and interpersonal conflict to determine if the relationship between the two produced positive outcomes. Organizational citizenship behavior was described as how individuals performed in an organization collectively as a part of the exclusive organizational culture. Interpersonal conflict was described as those between persons in the organization that have obligatory interactions in the work environment. Kaur (2014) found when there is a cohesive and collaborative organizational citizenship behavior it has a significant impact on the lowering of interpersonal conflict. Further explanations suggest that a positive organizational culture of conflict enhances performance, organizational development, and civil interpersonal competitiveness.

Rispens and Demerouti (2016) explained that undesirable effects on the organization from conflict manifest when bad conflict takes an adverse toll on the emotions of the parties involved. Parties in conflict want to feel understood, and as if their positions and perceptions of the conflict are lucid. When conflict is perceived as

negative, it damages relations (Gordon & Chen, 2016). Cardador (2014) further confirmed that when employees dwell on the negative components of conflict, there are significant adverse impacts on overall job performance.

Conflict Styles

Conflict and how it is managed is a part of the conflict style and communication competency of the parties involved. How one communicates in human relationships during conflict determines the conflict management outcomes. Communication competency could be learned and must be improved as it assists in building a conflict style that fosters components such as collaboration, persuasion, leadership, and knowledge sharing. Since conflict could lead to development, having a flexible conflict style is suitable to a multifaceted, socially interactive environment (Besic, and Stanisavljevic, 2014).

The well-known conflict styles identified consistently across literature resources are accommodating, collaborating, avoiding, compromising, and competing. These styles are known by various names but ultimately translate into similar concepts (Gelfand, Leslie, Keller & de Dreu, 2012). The accommodating conflict style focuses on the needs of others in a submissive approach to resolving the conflict, instead of dealing with the conflict directly. The collaborating style is an integrated approach where the needs of all involved are a priority and is a style that may improve interpersonal relations. The avoiding style is one that does not address the conflict and could lead to more escalated episodes of conflict. The compromising style, which is effective at times, is a style where both parties are willing to give up something to get the conflict resolved. The competing

style is distributive, uncooperative, and could lead to hostile relations and protracted conflict (Saeed, Almas, Anis-ul-Haq, & Niazi, 2014).

Anjum, Karim, and Bibi (2014) identified and described the characteristics of conflict styles as shown in figure 1.



Figure 1. Description of conflict styles. Adapted from Anjum et al. (2014).

Montes, Rodríguez, and Serrano (2012) studied conflict styles as a method for rational decision-making, and in a quantitative study found that participants with self-described positive moods were more likely to have a collaborative conflict style. Cerni, Curtis, and Colmar (2012) studied different types of thinkers and the conflict styles they would identify with strongly. In the study, what was described as rational thinkers, experiential thinkers and constructive thinkers were examined. Rational thinkers were

described as critical yet judicious and were found to identify more with the integrating, compromising and dominating conflict styles. Experiential thinkers were described as practical, relational, considerate, and empathetic; this type of thinker was not strongly identified with any of the conflict styles. Constructive thinkers were described as strategic and self-aware, and were most associated with the integrating and compromising conflict styles (Cerni, et al., 2012).

Gbadamosi, Abbas, and Al-Mabrouk (2014) examined how gender, age, and nationality related to conflict styles, and in the study there were no major disparities between nationalities found. There were variances, however, in the differences of age (younger versus older) and gender (women versus men). Gbadamosi, et al. (2014) explained that men are known to be more forceful and dominant than women in general, while women were known to be more passive, dependent and complaisant. The Thomas-Killman conflict mode instrument was used to determine the conflict style based on gender and age. The Thomas-Killman conflict mode instrument is a test used to establish how people deal with conflict and the reasons why (Dibra, 2013).

The Gbadamosi, et al. (2014) study used the quantitative one-way ANOVA and t-test methods to study university students and found that men typically had the conflict style of avoiding, yet were more likely to use the compromising style than women. Women were likely to be more competitive. The differences found in the conflict styles of women and men were substantial. With age, younger students were more accommodating and compromising, while older students were associated with the avoiding style.

Conflict and Organizations

Berstene (2004) explained that conflict is sometimes viewed as a need to change or adjust. Employees, specifically those working in groups that are affected by conflict, could effectuate positive and creative outcomes as a result of the conflict when guided to do so. Managing conflict effectually could facilitate problem-solving. It is a construct that requires the managing of differing perspectives.

Avgar, et al. (2014) recognized that in organizations there was both task-oriented and relationship-oriented conflict. Task conflict is based on disparate ideas, work related techniques and processes, while relationship conflict is more related to the moods and characteristics of the people involved. How these two types of conflict are resolved could influence the sharing of institutional knowledge. Task conflict is more related to a task being completed while relationship conflict is interpersonal.

Relationship conflict is more damaging to knowledge sharing as it was also found to have some psychological effects on the individuals in the relationship. It causes personal effects such as fear, anger, and anxiety. Task-related conflict, specifically for new or non-routine tasks, is likely to influence knowledge in the workplace positively. Task conflict during disparate processes causes divergent thinking and the development of cross-function knowledge (Selmer, Jonasson, & Luring, 2013). There is an explicit expectation of conflict in groups, and because of this, precautions must be taken to capture cooperative decision-making and to minimize irrational and negative outcomes. Group conflict in an unmanaged state could cause hostility between members post-conflict that is protracted and detrimental to collaboration (Martínez-Tur, Penarroja,

Serrano, Hidalgo, Moliner, Salvador, Alacreu-Crespo, Garcia, & Molina, 2014). How the conflict unfolds dictates the cross-functional interactions and learning opportunities of the group (Loughry, & Amason, 2014).

Iordanides and Mitsara (2014) gave a slightly different approach to conflict by asserting that although conflict could produce positive outcomes, the negative could be damaging regardless of the outcome of the conflict. Iordanides and Mitsara (2014) found in a qualitative study that incidents of conflict could become more severe with each episode, and damage social interactions that are sometimes irreparable. Financial and emotional cost could be detrimental to the organization, including the development of a harmful reputation (Simpao, 2013). Another related consequence may be conflict being recognized as a negative in the organization.

Oore, Leiter, and LeBlanc (2015) identified the negative marks of conflict on other types of occupational hazards. Conflict could cause physical and mental ailments to those involved. There are also psychological and humanistic downsides that disrupt collaboration with others in the organization, and the individual's performance and job satisfaction. Oore, et al. (2015) asserted that the transformative theory of conflict explains how to alleviate the imposition of the negative effects of conflict. The transformative theory of conflict is the management of conflict to reverse the negative impacts of conflict that involves stress, anxiety, and dissidence to the positive effects that involve relationship building, creativity, and organizational growth. Cogburn, et al. (2014) discovered through a quantitative study that it is a standard that conflict is a part of most organizations, but it is how it is perceived that influences job performance and the

employees' perception of the work environment. When conflict was perceived as negative by managers, as opposed to an opportunity for growth and creativity, it diminished the job satisfaction of the subordinates.

Social Interaction in Group Work

In social interaction, there is a significant need for group leadership to be concerned about the needs and outcomes of the group collectively. The leadership management of the conflict helps with the interactions in the group between the members and how efficient and effective they are for the individual task. It also helps produce an awareness of the behaviors of the independent group members since there is a vested interest in others doing their part (Becker, 1974). Becker (1974) used the model of the family unit to describe social interaction since in many descriptions of families there is a leader to the family unit that emulates the need to provide examples and resources from the top down. The examples are in place to help the functionality of the family (or group) and could be passed down for posterity. Social interaction is obligatory and a significant hierarchal need.

Pfeiffer, Schilbach, Timmermans, Kuzmanovic, Georgescu, Bente, and Vogeley (2014) found that there are benefits to studying the human brain in the natural environment when engaged in social interactions rather than during times of social inactivity. Social interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, have been identified as a motivator to change behaviors. What is seen and heard in social interactions could enable different behaviors in individuals or groups (Ploderer, Reitberger, Oinas-kukkonen, & van Gemert-Pijnen, 2014).

Social interaction was described by Glew (2012) to have three features when manifested in work teams. Those features are collectivism, need for affiliation and sociability. Collectivism is an individual mindset that sees the needs of the group as more significant than personal needs. There is a desire for communal achievement of goals, and the need for affiliation is relationship based. Collectivism characteristics lead the individual desire to work with team members to build relations while working collaboratively on tasks. Sociability, similar to the individuals with the need for affiliation characteristics, seeks and prefers to work with others instead of working alone.

Having these social interaction characteristics in workgroup settings will produce the best individual-group fit outcomes (Glew, 2012). Individual-group fit is significant to the positive social interaction experience. A lack of positive social interaction leads to social anxiety as is, on the contrary, positive interactions support minimizes stress (Fiori, Windsor, Pearson, & Crisp, 2012). In social relationships where there is a heightened level of social-anxiety, there is a depletion of self-control and collaboration. Social anxiety as a result of a negative social interaction could also cause below standards performance of individual work tasks (Blackhart, Williamson, & Nelson, 2015).

Social Interaction and Knowledge

Another significant aspect of social interaction is learning to correctly interpret the behaviors of those with whom one is interacting. Babu and Panda (2012) described the theory of mind development as an obligatory process of comprehension through perspective taking and collaboration for better social understanding. Perspective taking and collaboration could improve positive social interaction in groups. In work groups,

these skills translate into greater single associations with others and individual contributions to the group (Rouzies & Colman, 2012).

Collective Bargaining

Conflict, social interaction, and collective bargaining are inherently related since collective bargaining is a social occurrence. In collective bargaining, opposing parties with differing objectives discuss items of interests, positions, and needs. Brown, Tang, and Hollman (2014) explained that conflict in public organizations with collective bargaining sometimes occurs when there is a strain on the management-employee relationship due to lack of empathy. It is perceived by unions that managers are not concerned with improving basic human needs such as quality of life. For example, management and unions have differing goals for monetary outcomes; management is looking to improve organizational financial stability while employee groups are seeking to gain security and higher wages. Maslow (2000) explained that a part of the employment relationship is a quality of life. Management's facilitation of employee self-actualization by satisfying vital needs develop overall satisfaction for the employee. The humanistic approach to managing employees projects perceptions such as the organization is caring, that the employer-employee relationship is secure, and that the organization is interested in the best for the employees inside and outside of the system, now and in the future.

Collective Bargaining and the Public Sector

Collective bargaining as a social activity in the public sector has a vast and tumultuous history. The establishment of rights for public sector employees involved the

intervention of the United States Legislature and Judicial System to resolve a protracted conflict. In 1937, given to public employees was the right to organize and engage in concerted activity with protections through the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). The NLRA created a perceived level playing field for employees bargaining over terms and conditions of employment, and was considered pro-employee. In 1947, the Labor Management Act was conceived and afforded employers rights to combat employee organized concerted activities and allowed the establishment of what is called right to work states. Right to work states are those states in America that do not require all employees to be in the union in organizations where unions exist. They are not required to join and pay dues or association fees. The Labor Management Act was considered pro-employer (Kang, 2012).

Collective Bargaining and Conflict

For many years after the conception of the NLRA and the Labor Management Act, unions and employers continued to dispute over management and employee rights. The heightened contentious relations would escalate on a major level, including all the way to the Office of the President of the United States during President the Reagan Administration. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan authorized the firing of over eleven-thousand air traffic controllers, which in turn obliterated the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), the union representing them. This type of challenge to labor unions in the United States was unheard of and facilitated the steady decline of unionism for years to come in the United States, including in the public sector (Gourse, 2012). Kang (2012) explained how the conflict was ongoing, including dramatic changes

and declines to public labor unionism displayed in 2011 in the States of Wisconsin and Ohio. Both Wisconsin and Ohio passed legislation that caused significant fractures in collective bargaining in the States' public entities.

Union membership in the United States has been on a steady decline for many years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2016 that in the year 2015 union membership was at 11.1 percent as oppose to 20.1% in the year 1983. This decline was despite the fact that union workers tend to earn more than non-union workers. Union workers reportedly earned a median salary that was 21% higher than non-union workers (United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). A contributor to the decline in unionisms in America is in part due to the disproportionate wages and benefits for public union employees versus that of public unions and the perception that public wages and fringe benefits have a nexus to budget deficits (Clark, 2012).

When there are adversarial relations in collective bargaining, it becomes a struggle for power over resources. Management wants to lower cost to achieve organizational success, while the union wants higher wages and enhanced employee centered benefits (Post, 1990). The disagreement is where the conflict begins, and when it is not resolved at the collective bargaining table, it manifests in other areas of the organization including productivity, workplace culture, and performance. Limiting collective bargaining to a win-win and situation of power and the gaining of resources limits its full scope of potential and heightens conflict (Ibietan, 2013).

Knowledge Processes

Knowledge processes include functions of knowledge such as sharing, transfer, storage, and creation. If and how knowledge is managed in the organization is vital to organization's competitiveness. Knowledge management should be an overt process in both its tacit and explicit forms. The management of knowledge is now a multi-billion dollar venture in American organizations. The management of information is imperative since knowledge is used strategically as a vital impetus to organizational success.

Knowledge is complex, therefore the process for which knowledge may be managed in organizations is not as informal and as instinctively as one may expect (Mills & Smith, 2011). Knowledge comes in both explicit and tacit forms, and both forms are necessary assets in organizations.

Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

The two forms of knowledge that are managed are tacit and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is deliberate and simpler to store and share (Allameh, Pool, Jaberi, & Soveini, 2014). Tacit knowledge is learned through one's actions, not a process typically in tangible form. Tacit knowledge is implicit and learned through doing and observation. It is not easily transferred, yet it is vital to the knowledge system because of how it is procreated and deeply embedded in the daily routines in the organizational structure (Kothari, Rudman, Dobbins, Rouse, Sibbald, & Edwards, 2012). In many cases, the management of knowledge is deliberate, and processes are strategically modeled to capture, store, transfer, and create knowledge (Turner, Zimmerman, & Allen, 2012).

Agarwal and Islam (2015) described the differences between tacit and explicit knowledge concisely as shown in Figure 2.

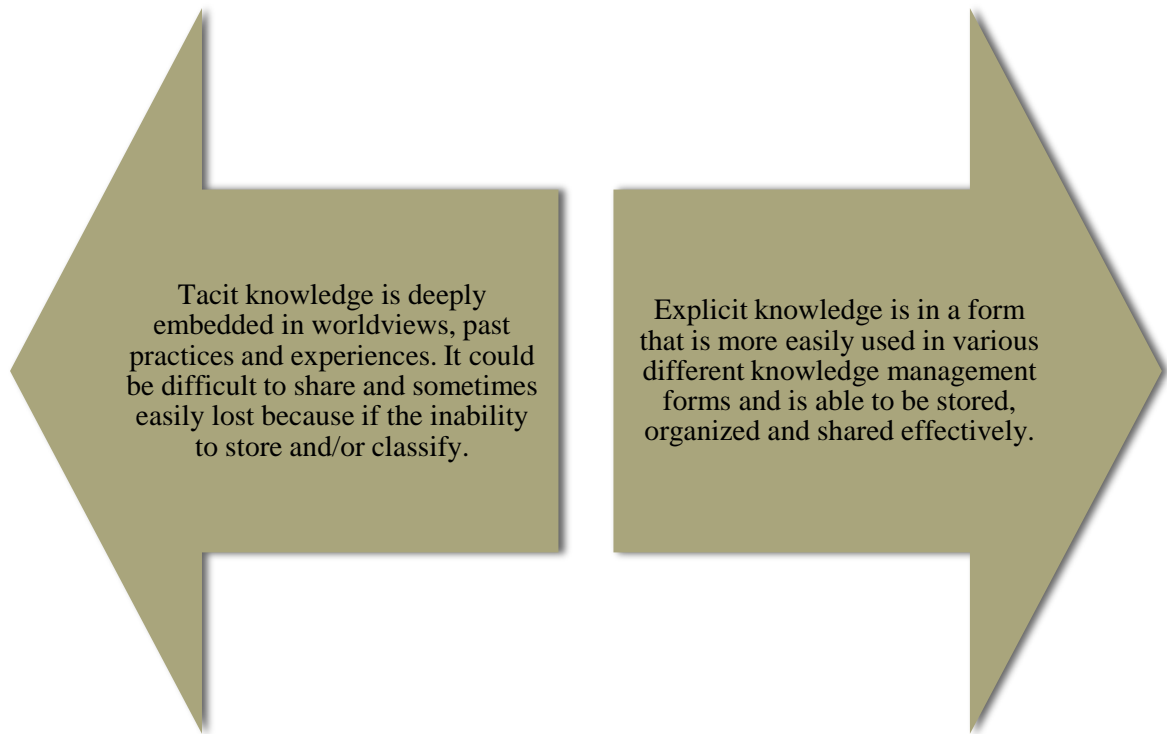


Figure 2. Description of differences between tacit and explicit knowledge. Adapted from Agarwal and Islam (2015).

Knowledge Management and Human Resources

Knowledge management is a process that is systematic, but that also requires willingness in the culture of the organization. It is imperative that teams in the organization be conduits of knowledge. This role is because of a team's ability to bring together different people at various knowledge levels to engage in creating and transferring knowledge with those in the group (Atapattu & Jayakody, 2014). Atapattu

and Jayakody (2014) explained that although teamwork leads to a greater probability of knowledge processing, there are still inconsistencies based on other factors such as gender and organizational cultures. Women are more likely to engage in knowledge processes during group work simply because of affiliation, while men's tendency to participate in knowledge processes in a group is more incentive-based. Knowledge management cannot happen without people. Verma and Verma, (2011) explained that the openness of human resources to facilitate the movement of tacit and explicit knowledge makes a difference in the success of the organization. The leaders of those human resources were particularly important to how knowledge is managed in the organization, and is vital since it is the driving force behind the strategic planning, development of systems, and the organizational commitment of knowledge management. Human resources, in the form of individuals and teams, depend on the strategic vision of leaders to guide them through knowledge management processes (Verma and Verma, 2011).

Leaders must be engaged in strategic planning related to knowledge management because of the positive correlation between knowledge management and competitive advantage. Knowledge management is a knowledge conduit to professional development, problem-solving, decision-making, and organizational success (Kaveh, Bamipour, Far, & Far, 2015). Multiple knowledge processes contribute to knowledge management, many of which have a positive influence on organizational performance. Ahmed, Fiaz, and Shoaib (2015) explained how knowledge processes such as knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, and knowledge protection all have positive effects on organizational performance and are vital to the sustainability of the organization. Managing knowledge

makes the implementation of routine tasks, providing services, decision-making and problem-solving more fundamental (Ahmed, et al., 2016).

The knowledge management processes that are discussed primarily in this study are knowledge sharing and knowledge creation; however, many knowledge processes are vital to organizational success. Knowledge sharing and creation are a focus because of the specific association it has to conflict and collective bargaining. Knowledge sharing is a way for the parties, both labor, and management, to reciprocate information. Knowledge creation is the method for both parties to identify new information from existing understanding collaboratively.

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is a significant part of knowledge management since it has a strong connection to the model of the learning and growing organization, and is imperative to subsistence (Tangaraja, Mohd Rasdi, Ismail, & Abu Samah, 2015). Traditionally, knowledge sharing was more known to be computer-based process contrary to the human based interaction it is known to be now. In more recent times, knowledge networks have developed that rely on social connections to validate the flow of information (Akhavan, & Hosseini, 2015).

Social capital theory was identified as a theory valid to knowledge sharing. Social capital theory describes a network of people working collectively and the knowledge and potential knowledge they share, transfer, and create to build communal competencies (Rostila, 2011). Social capital is central to knowledge sharing since it is the capital that is the product of effective work relationships within the organization. It is unique and more

complex than other capital such as financial capital in that it lacks the physicality of the others and it could manifest in implicit forms making it difficult to capture and retain (Cvetanovic, Despotovic, & Filipovic, 2015).

Knowledge sharing within organizations could be a learned behavior and is not always a natural part of organizational culture. Leaders in organizations must learn why some do and do not engage in sharing knowledge, and build a culture of learning and a desire for knowledge. It is the promotion of interdependent and sharing of experiences that stimulate more of a knowledge-sharing centered environment (Weinberg, 2015). A knowledge management atmosphere is vital to the sharing of tacit knowledge since the effect of sharing of tacit knowledge include the harvesting of experience over time and the internal comprehension of information from the organizational history. The organizational culture must be appropriate for knowledge sharing progressions (Stenius, Haukkala, Hankonen, & Ravaja, 2017).

Knowledge Creation

Chung and Yoon (2015) explained the concept of knowledge creation in the context of the organization as a firm. Knowledge asset development was viewed as a social activity with the capacity to learn as vital within the firm. Knowledge creation was described as the essential to long-term organizational viability. Seo, Lee, and Moon (2016) described knowledge creation as a means to innovation and needed for problem-solving and organizational learning. It is a knowledge process that could be done individually or in groups.

Nejatian, Nejati, Zarei, and Soltani (2013) found that knowledge creation happens undoubtedly when the culture is set-up for it before attempting to facilitate it. The culture must be there; however, there is little need for structure or formalization of knowledge creation processes. Important components such as trust and collaboration must be in the culture to enable knowledge creation as well as other knowledge processes. Jeng and Dunk (2013) confirmed that trust and association with others in the culture was a significant component of learning organizations and that in organizations where this exists there is the internal creation of knowledge.

Schiuma, Carlucci, and Lerro (2012) explained that knowledge creation is a knowledge process related to cause and effect progressions. Organizations learn by doing and understanding procedures better, which in turn lead to improvements and new processes in the system as a whole. The process is strategic and systematic, with an integrated approach that enhances effectiveness from the organizational level to the individual level, leading to holistic system improvements.

Complex Systems

Complex Systems for the purpose of this study are strategic setups with autonomous parts working together for the greater good. Systems are made up of units with individual goals, yet work collectively towards strategic changes for the organization (Ireland & Gorod, 2016). Saurin, Rooke, and Koskela (2013) explained that complex systems are organic and respond to internal and external stimuli. Complex systems are living, abstract organisms that are interconnected. The interconnectivity means that insignificant changes in part of the organization have the ability to affect

another part dramatically. An example related to this study is the collective bargaining relationship- management and unions have the potential to be autonomous in decision-making, but the interconnectivity that exists between the groups sometimes dictates that the effects of the decision-making be shared.

Chaos and Complexity

Chaos and complexity are often studied together. Shakouri, Teimourtash, and Teimourtash (2014) explained chaos as random and sometimes insignificant alterations in complex systems that could result in unexpected and dynamic yields. The diverse outcomes produced by chaos lead to new norms. Because chaos is unpredictable and random, predictions on outcomes from inputs are challenging (Fernandez-Solis, 2013). Chaos is what happens in social, living environments where conflicts exist, and change is constant. Feedback loops could help with the effects, facilitation, and adaption to change since it works to allow correction and adjustment to unintended outcomes through evaluation in chaos (Clancy, 2013).

Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking is also non-linear and continuous. It is complex since it requires collective thinking and decision-making within and beyond the present in a capricious yet dynamic manner. The thinking must change as the organisms change based on consistent feedback (Bratianu, 2015). On an individual level, developed is strategic thinking through tacit and explicit methods of learning. It comes through different variations of organizational and environmental experiences, responsibilities, learning opportunities, self-evaluations, and feedback that make up an individual's complete style.

Interactions in workgroups and learning the overall organizational culture also contribute to strategic thinking (Goldman, 2012). Goldman, Scott, and Follman (2015) asserted that leaders of organizational groups must be strategic thinkers themselves, be able to communicate the meaning of strategic thinking and make strategic thinking a part of decision-making.

Strategic thinking, systems, chaos, complexity, and leadership are vital to collective bargaining and knowledge management since the groups who have experienced collective bargaining participating in this study are responsible for collaborative strategic decision-making. Peterlin, Pearse, and Dimovski, (2015) explained that leaders must engage with the groups and stakeholders to assess interests and the needs of the whole and to promote strategic thinking and cooperation when making decisions.

Strategic Thinking during Conflict

Strategic thinking could cause a critical thought process when managing conflict. Mello and Delise (2015) discovered that in-group work where there are diverse opinions, the lack of conflict management, and critical thinking damages interconnectivity. Cognitive style plays a role in how individuals, through internal deliberation, think strategically, and come to decisions in group work. Cognitive styles determine how critically one thinks before coming to a decision, and the critical thinking process could be different from one individual in the group to the other. With the importance of strategic thinking and the multiple levels of diversity in the ideas and philosophies as well as in the cognitive styles, conflict management was critical (Mello & Delise, 2015).

Related to strategic thinking during conflict is the use of metaphors. The purpose of using metaphors in conflict through framing is to gain comprehension and to express interests and positions. The strategic approach is by presenting the metaphors in framing that is intentionally subjective without appearing to be deceptive. The framing is to communicate specific knowledge and to discourage alternative negative interpretations (Ritchie, & Cameron, 2014).

The change could also cause conflict since it intrinsically goes against the norm. Because of this, strategic thinking in conflict must also evolve. The strategic thought process in one set of circumstances that worked may yield a very different outcome in another. There must be an effort to have flexible thought processes to the varying conditions (Vasilescu, 2013). When circumstances where strategic thinking is the result of change uncertainties, anxieties are produced. The uncertainties in social environments appear to be detrimental to comfort and normality. In such instances, the manager of the conflict must guide the group to think all-inclusively and to achieve an understanding of the need for change (Pana, 2013).

National Public Education Model

The public education model is meant to be free and equitable, structured to provide an equal and sufficient educational opportunity to all (Edwards, 2017). Public education could include a vast range of diversity in the student population, including drastically varied socioeconomic and academic levels in the same classroom (Phillips, Yamashiro, Farrukh, Lim, Hayes, Wagner, White, & Chen, 2015). In the United States, in the 2013-2014 academic year (from July to June), there were approximately 50 million

students enrolled in the public school elementary through secondary system, with 3.1 million full-time equivalent teachers. Post-secondary two (2)-year public college educational institutions enrolled approximately seven (7) million students as of 2015. Both systems are diverse with the number of minorities enrolling in the systems rising consistently (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016).

In public employment such as in school districts, collective bargaining is a legal right. Collective bargaining could sometimes be a point of contention between those that support and oppose it. The contentiousness of collective bargaining was recently observed in both Ohio and Wisconsin. In both States, there have been multiple attempts to weaken the collective bargaining rights of public school employees (Ingle, Willis, & Fritz, 2015). Collective bargaining gives the employee and employer the right to assert their interests and positions related to the conditions of employment.

When those interests and positions do not connect, the conflict could result in deficiencies to the learning experience as seen in strike actions. Strikes are when employees withhold the services they perform for a particular employer while attempting to resolve a dispute (Deacon, 2014). Strikes and other labor-management disputes can be disruptive to the overall goal of public education.

California Public Education System

The California education system reflects the tenets of the US national system, including providing an opportunity to an exceptional education to all students (California Department of Education, n.d.). In the California public kindergarten to secondary public school system 2014-2015 academic year, there were 295,800 teachers. The per pupil ratio

was 21 students to every seven (7) full-time equivalent teachers. There were 105,927 full-time equivalent classified staff members (non-teaching support staff) (Ed Data Educational Data Partnership, 2016).

In the California community college system, there were 64,043.9 full-time equivalent instructional and classified employees employed in the fall semester for the year 2015 (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015). There were 1,562,625 students for the spring 2016 semester (California Community College Chancellor's Office, n.d.). With such a large employee population in California public school districts, union activity is inevitably prevalent.

Collective Bargaining in California Public Schools

The Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) of 1976 is the legislation enabling collective bargaining in public education in California (Public Employment Relations Board PERB, 2013). The Public Employment Relations Board is the governing body that administers the EERA. The EERA gives California public school district employees the right to engage in collective bargaining activities with an exclusive representative. This right means that an identified recognized independent body has the right to represent the employees of the public school district without reprisal. The public school district is also obligated to acknowledge and meet and confer in good faith with the recognized representative over all terms and conditions of employment. Failure to do so could result in an unfair labor charge, which violates national labor laws and could result in a substantial penalty. The recognized employee organization also has the right to represent the employee in employment matters (Public Employee Relations Board, 2015).

The individual public school district's management or their designee has an obligation to negotiate in good faith with the recognized exclusive representative. The employee groups have the right to choose, through a vote, the group that is to represent them collectively in negotiations with the school district management. The responsibility of an exclusive representative of the public school district to employee groups does not extend to employees who are designated as management and other specifically identified groups. The right to organize in public school districts includes most of the teaching and classified staff (Public Employee Relations Board, 2015).

Filling the Gap and Extending Current Knowledge

Conflict is complex and multi-dimensional. Because of the composite dynamics and social implications, there are several opportunities to extend the current body of knowledge. In the present body of literature and as mentioned above, conflict are contradictory points of views between social beings on various subjects such as needs, practices, and dispositions. The literature is consistent regarding the appearances of conflict being both negative and positive (Canaan Messarra, Karkoulian, & El-Kassar, 2016). Knowledge management, in general, is also dependably described in the literature as processes to manage and facilitate the use of information in organizations for competitive advantage and success. Knowledge is an asset valuable to organizations (Arsenijević, Trivan, Podbregar, & Šprajc, 2017). There are many peer-reviewed publications that cover both conflict and knowledge management from various research viewpoints. On the contrary, collective bargaining in public education is under-represented in current literature. Collective bargaining is obligatory by law in many cases

and is the duty to bargain over the terms and conditions of employment (Lovenheim & Willén, 2016). The explanations are reiterated to express that although there is a wealth of knowledge on conflict and knowledge management and knowledge management processes, studying the nexus between conflict, knowledge management and knowledge processes, and collective bargaining in public education presents a gap.

There are many areas related to conflict that provide insight to the many different expressions of conflict. Knowledge and knowledge management has become such an incredible quality in organizations (Tangaraja, et al., 2015) that there was and continues to be a need to study it exhaustively. Both conflict and knowledge are needed to sustain (Simon, 2016; Kaveh, et al., 2015). It is when the bad characteristics of conflict happen that it becomes harmful to the organization (Iordanides and Mitsara, 2014) and in the case of this study, a detriment to student success and posterity. Based on a review of the literature, the gap in the research and the opportunity to extend the knowledge continued to be the need for research related to understanding how conflict is experienced when knowledge management tools are used during collective bargaining in public education, specifically in California.

Scholars, practitioners, and leaders need to consider gaining an understanding of managing conflict in ways that is constructive to organizational success and creativity. This is certainly true in an environment such as public education where there is an obligation to engage in a social interaction process that inherently involves conflict and where the adverse effects of conflict could be damaging to the system indefinitely (Lovenheim & Willén, 2016). Through this study, I explored the perceptions of those

engaged in collective bargaining in public education that has experienced conflict and used knowledge management processes. The study provides some insight to the premise of the study and some the outcomes from the participant experiences.

Summary and Transition

The opening sections provided imperative data on the problem, purpose, and nature of the study. Conflict was introduced as the central phenomenon, and other significant concepts were knowledge management processes and collective bargaining. California public school districts were presented as the setting of the study. Research questions were designed to guide the study, and the significance of the study was communicated. The conceptual framework introduced was related to conflict, complexity theory and social construct theory. The assumptions, limitations and delimitations were explained, and a thorough review of the literature was provided. In the literature review, the subjects explored were conflict, social interactions, knowledge management, collective bargaining, and the California public school system.

The literature reviewed supports the problem and purpose of the study regarding conflict in social environments, specifically public schools, and the characteristics of knowledge management processes. The gap in the research was also validated. In the literature reviewed, a phenomenological study documenting the lived experiences of participants with conflict in California public school districts with collective bargaining when knowledge management tools were used, as an intervention was not identified.

In Chapter three, I again reviewed the research problem, purpose and questions. I also introduced and discussed the research design, role of the researcher, the methodology, and the ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore conflict for members of both management and unions at California public school districts with collective bargaining. The participants included those familiar with conflict dilemmas when knowledge management tools were used as an intervention. In this study, I defined conflict, the central phenomenon, as a misunderstanding, miscommunication, and difference of perception, interest, and practices between parties. This type of conflict is what could happen during collective bargaining between management and unions in public school districts in California. In Chapter 1, I identified the problem and purpose, presented the research background, and established researchable questions. The problem, as I mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, is that conflict in public education, if not managed effectively, could be harmful to organizational success, performance, and growth. Negative conflict between labor unions and management in public school districts is detrimental and could directly damage employee-manager relations, work performance, and task completion. In the problem section in Chapter 1, I noted that negative conflict in public schools and other public institutions is disruptive and costly. I also acknowledged that conflict is a natural phenomenon that exists in social relationships, including those in business environments. It is important to remember that conflict could be positive or negative.

In the review of literature, I identified a gap in the research and noted that it lacked information on the use of knowledge management processes as an intervention to conflict in public schools with collective bargaining. I selected a phenomenological

qualitative research method for this study because it allowed me to explore the lived experiences of members of management and unions in public school districts.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature that identified the characteristics of conflict management, explained knowledge management processes, and provided a history on collective bargaining in public agencies and public school districts. Other researchers discussed social environments, social interactions, systems thinking, and group work as they relate to conflict and knowledge in organizations.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design and rationale and my role as the researcher, and I provide an in-depth explanation of the methodology including why other methodologies were not considered or insufficient. In this chapter, I also discussed the instrument selection rationale, sampling process, and sample size. Further, I discussed issues of trustworthiness and ethics to identify the importance I gave to the ethical integrity of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Tradition, Design, and Rationale

I used a qualitative phenomenological research method used for this study. The phenomenological study was best since as the researcher, I could examine participants' experiences with conflict when knowledge management tools are used in collective bargaining relationships. The focus of the study was on employees of public education institutions from both management and unions who were involved in collective bargaining related interactions, and who had used knowledge management tools.

Qualitative research is a science based on human experiences and perceptions related to a

phenomenon (Stake, 2010). Qualitative research enables the researcher to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of those who are knowledgeable of the phenomenon or life event specific to a study's purpose and setting (Moran, 1999). Using a qualitative strategy of inquiry for this was appropriate because of the need for a holistic view of human actions and experiences to gain a greater understanding of the phenomena (see Schwandt, 2015).

A phenomenological process is a rounded approach that enables the researcher to gather data about the experiences, knowledge, and interactions of participants as they perceived them in the natural setting. The data I gathered related to how participants in that environment perceived the interactions. I interviewed the participants individually and cross-analyzed the data collectively with that of the other participants.

Phenomenological studies often generate themes pertinent to the literature and complex transcribed data (Miles, Huberman, & Sladana, 2014). I gathered the data on participants' lived experiences using open-ended questions and an interview protocol. The data was scrutinized and assessed to identify common themes. In data collection, I was able to focus on the phenomenon as it manifested or appeared to the human participant experiencing it (see Vagle, 2014).

A qualitative method was best suited for this study because it afforded me the ability to go beyond direct and statistical measurements. Quantitative research focuses on measurements and relationships between variables (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012). It is based on linear, sequential outcomes, as opposed to human perceptions of lived

experiences like those outcomes found in some qualitative research. For this reason, quantitative research methods were not appropriate for this study.

Other methods I considered but rejected were the case study and narrative approaches. I rejected the case study method because limiting the study to the identified bounded cases did not dictate exploration of a diverse population with multiple collective bargaining and knowledge management experiences. In a case study, a clearly identified unit of analysis is needed to establish a case to be studied (Merriam, 2014). I rejected the narrative approach because of the need to explore multiple experiences from the population identified. In narrative studies, individual stories of human events are expressed to gain knowledge of occurrences with a phenomenon (Shkedi, 2005).

Methodology

Phenomenological inquiry enables the researcher to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of participants. Ziakas and Boukas (2014) explained that phenomenology, used as a strategy of inquiry for research related to management, was away from its traditional use as a method for psychological related studies. However, the methodology was imperative for this study since it facilitates an exposure to in-depth, real-life familiarities with unvarying features true to the participants. My goal was to capture, understand, and evaluate accurate reflections of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon.

I strategically developed the research and interview questions to gather the information needed to answer the broader research question and to realize the research purpose. The questions were developed with the phenomenological research

methodology in mind, and I deliberately asked participants the interview questions in the same order. I only inserted comments into the questioning as needed to provide clarity to the questions posed. Throughout the process, I kept a journal to reflect on personal thoughts that may have influenced outcomes.

Central Phenomenon and Relevant Concepts

Conflict was the central phenomenon I investigated in this study. Conflict is probable and constant. There is no consistent way to define conflict because it is complex, but in social situations, it is typically associated with differences in perceptions, needs, resources, and compatibility. Researchers consider conflict both positive and negative since it sometimes facilitates change and critical thinking (Coggburn, Battaglio, & Bradbury, 2014). Other key concepts in this study included knowledge management and collective bargaining. Knowledge management is a vital contributor to organizational success. It involves the sharing, storing, transfer, and integration of existing knowledge and the creation and discovery of new knowledge. It is, foremost, a component of competitiveness in organizations (Manohar, Singh, & Gupta, 2014). Collective bargaining, specifically in public school systems, is the obligatory relationship between employees and management that involves negotiations over subjects related to the terms and conditions of employment (Lovenheim & Willén, 2016).

Research Questions

I specifically designed the research questions to align with the study's methodology and strategy of inquiry. While developing the questions, I drew on my

practical expertise related to the phenomenon and related areas being studied. The research question and sub-questions were:

Primary Research Question: How is conflict experienced by labor and management participants in California public school districts with collective bargaining?

Sub-question 1: What was the perception of conflict during collective bargaining when knowledge management tools were used?

Sub-question 2: What were some of the outcomes resulting from conflict when knowledge management processes were used?

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was that of an observer learner during the interview process. I sought to gather the experiences, thoughts, and perceptions of the participants through the observer-learner experience. This role was separate and apart from any other role in the research. I focused solely and directly on collecting the data from the participants in the interview process. I did not take on any other role during this process.

Researcher Biases

In this phenomenological study, I consciously identified and set aside assumptions and biases. While researchers cannot completely set aside biases and worldviews, I made a conscious effort to ensure that my background knowledge, perceptions, and experiences were of minimal influence on the interpretation of the collected data. This process is known as bracketing (Sorsa, Kiikkala, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2015).

I have extensive experience in the area that I researched. Because of this, before the data collection process, I extensively assessed of my worldviews, perceptions, and experience in the areas of conflict, knowledge management, collective bargaining, and

public school districts to collect data from interviews that was truly and precisely that of the experiences of the participants. The suppositions and perceptions I discovered were set aside.

The following is information from my background and experiences that I identified through the bracketing process as I prepared to engage in the data collection and analysis process:

- I have 19 years of experience working in the field related to the study environment and am familiar with the public school structures in California including both the kindergarten through 12 grade and community college systems.
- I have worked in public education and for a union representing employees working for public school districts, and have participated in collective bargaining as both a manager and union representative.
- I am familiar with the collective bargaining relationships between management and unions in public education, and with many of the statutes that govern the relationships.
- I currently work at a community college in California as director of human resources.

Peters and Halcomb (2014) explained that the researcher must explicitly acknowledge preconceptions and diminish the effects on all parts of the research throughout the process. I made efforts to minimize biases in the study by addressing

them, acknowledging them, and then setting them aside. I worked to recognize biases at all stages including planning, data collection, and data analysis.

To mitigate conflicts of interest and biases, no one reporting to me in a supervisory structure or with whom I currently have a collective bargaining relationship was a participant in the study. I documented all potential challenges and possible interferences resulting from biases at the data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages in a journal and resolved them immediately.

I focused on California school district collective bargaining relationships where I was disinterested in the outcome. I checked in with personal perceptions and worldviews related to the study continuously to ensure that they did not have a significant impact on how I gathered and examined the data. I conducted a second and third independent review of the data, excluding identifying information, to help secure accurate and pure themes and patterns.

Participant Selection

Participant Identification and Recruitment. Participants were chosen using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the intentional selection of participants that have a rich knowledge of the subject area and that could lead to deep inquiry-information reciprocation and a wealth of data specifically related to the study. Purposeful sampling is not meant to be exhaustive or generalized, but specific and willful for a conceptual understanding (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). A part of the criteria for participants was to have experience as a part of the leadership teams of management or the union for

collective bargaining in a California public school district. The participant criteria that needed to be met are the following:

- Participants must have experience with collective bargaining in a California public school setting;
- Participants must have experienced conflict during collective bargaining;
- Participants must have been a part of management or union collective bargaining team, and
- Participants must have experienced the use of knowledge management tools such as sharing, transfer, creation, and so on when in conflict during collective bargaining.

I solicited participants through social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook, and professional organizations such as human resources and faculty and classified employee union associations. Professional contacts that fit the criteria were also deliberately sought out and invited to join the study.

A letter to solicit potential participants was developed for social media platforms and professional groups to post and email to potential participants. The letter included an introduction to the study and my role, information about Walden University, the criteria for the participants, the purpose of the study and an invitation to contact me with questions, concerns, and to participate (Appendix A- Letter/invite to participate).

Once the sufficient number of participants responded, I communicated with the identified participants to schedule interviews. Once the maximum number of participants was reached for interviews, I notified and thanked all individuals who displayed a

willingness to participate but were not selected. The chosen participants' qualifications were reassessed through a brief preliminary online questionnaire (Appendix B-Participant qualifications questionnaire).

Sampling and Sample Size. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling with the criteria mentioned above as a guideline. Maxwell (2013) described purposeful sampling as a tool to intentionally decide upon the participants and the setting needed for the research purpose. The number of participants determined for the sample size was 25 (five more than suggested number in the Walden University qualitative dissertation template). Saturation, as described in more detail below, was also considered as the interviews were conducted. All 25 interviews were conducted. Sample sizes in qualitative studies should be based on quality responses, and not based on the generalization of the data (Creswell, 2013). The sample sizes could be smaller than those found in quantitative studies. For this study, a smaller sample size was sufficient to gather rich, in-depth data. Patton (2002) explained how quality time could be spent with smaller sample sizes to do data collection and analysis. Generalization was not a goal and was not attainable with this study.

As a part of the initial contact with the participants, I provided a written informed consent outlining confidentiality, participants' rights, volunteer nature of the study, and other vital ethical disclosures. The informed consent procedures were adhered to and signed by all participants before moving forward with the study. I provided full disclosure about the purpose of the study and methods of communicating objections,

questions, and concerns to the appropriate channel, such as the chairperson and Institutional Review Board committee.

The Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was completed prior to moving forward with data collection. When chosen for the study, participants were given the consent form with introductory information in writing informing them that the study is confidential and private and that all material with identifying information will be destroyed. I gave the participants the option to participate, the time frame for the interviews and the assurance that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The participants were notified that they may have a copy of the completed study upon request (Appendix C- Consent form). The chosen participants were contacted via email with the consent form and the interview protocol sheet that contained details of the study including the study's purpose. The emails also contained a letter with dates and times to sign-up and conduct the interviews.

Data Saturation. Data saturation is a tool used in sampling. Data saturation is a concept sometimes used in phenomenological studies. It is used in conjunction with sample size. If saturation was reached, I intended to reduce the number of interviews conducted for data collection. Saturation, in relation to sample size in qualitative studies is the point reached in the gathering of information from participants where no new information is received (Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). If and when saturation was reached in the study could not be predicted, so I anticipated, prepared, and ultimately conducted interviews for the maximum sample size of 25.

Research Instrument

Basis for Data Collection Instrument. The interviewing process was the method chosen for data collection. Interviewing was selected as the primary method since it allowed me to facilitate the processes of phenomenological research and that was to gather an understanding of the participants' lived experiences. Developed open-ended questions were the prompt for the participants to provide details of perceptions and understandings related to the research purpose. Creswell (2013) explained qualitative interviewing as systematic and specifically designed for purposes of capturing insights and familiarities.

Content Validity. Content validity was related to measures taken to ensure that the instruments used and the research approach was related and in depth enough to cover the subject matter of the study. A method for determining content validity is to gather an expert understanding of the phenomenon and related concepts (Carmines, & Zeller, 1979). To obtain content validity for this study, multiple scholarly articles were read to provide an informed understanding of conflict, knowledge management, and collective bargaining.

Sufficiency of Data Collection Instrument. The interview questions used in the telephone interviews were reviewed by professionals in the California public school system that has extensive experience in the field of study and who also meet the criteria of the study (Please note that this panel were not the same described above for the research questions). I identified an area expert panel and gave them a review and rating sheet for the study that included the purpose statement, research questions, definitions of

key terms, and a brief description of the strategy of inquiry and interview questions. The expert panel was asked to rate the interview questions to determine if they are sufficient for gathering the in-depth explanation based on the details of the study. The rating sheets allowed the panel to independently make suggestions, clarifications, and corrections as needed to provide sufficient research questions for the study's purpose. This model was adopted from a study conducted by Dr. Nicole Johnson (Simmons-Johnson, 2012).

Permission to use this model was requested and approved on March 14, 2017 (Appendix D- request and approval of use of expert review model).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection. The data was collected from each participant using the interview process. The interviews were conducted over the phone to allow the participants to remain in a comfortable space of their choice. Mealer and Jones (2014) found that conducting interviews over the phone is not the traditional approach to conducting qualitative interviews, but proved to be a viable method. Muntanyola Saura and Romero Balsas (2014) explained that using the phone as a method for data collection had its deficiencies such as lacking the face to face interaction, and the absence of physical cues, but explained that this caused increased attention to other senses and heightened listening. There was a need for closer attention to be given to hearing and managing the significance of silence and unintelligible expressions (i.e. humh, uh, ah, and so on.). Niero (2014) discussed characteristics of what was termed the invisible interviewer; it was clarified that the non-face to face interview might produce more contemplated and thorough responses needed for the research. The

research questions and the email protocol sheet were emailed to the participant in advance of the telephone interview.

An interview protocol sheet guided the interview process with information including an introduction, definitions, confidentiality statement, and open-ended questions (Appendix E- Interview Protocol). On the interview protocol sheet was a space for the use of pseudonyms to maintain participant privacy and confidentiality. For managers, the identification was “District” with number for all of the participants from the management participants (i.e., District 1, District 2, etc.). For the union participants, the identification was “Labor” followed by a number (i.e., Labor 1, Labor 2, etc.). The interview process was semi-structured to ask follow-up questions when elaboration or clarification was needed. When a supplementary question was asked, I documented the question, answer and reason for the follow-up question in the observation notes. During the interview, the participants were prompted by open-ended questions. Attached as Appendix F are the interview questions.

As the researcher, I was the sole collector of the data in the role of observer-learner and interviewer during the interviewing process. I attempted to schedule the interviews four a week until saturation or completion. The interviews were approximately 30 minutes each. The data was recorded on a digital recorder and in notes recorded as observation notes. The goal sample size for this study was 25 or until saturation. The sample size of 25 was reached in the initial round of recruitment and interviews as described above, additional recruitment efforts were not needed.

Once the interview was concluded, the participants were thanked and given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. There was a reminder given about confidentiality and privacy. I provided contact information again should the participant have questions and concerns about the process. I asked permission of the participants to contact them if there were additional questions or clarification needed regarding information given during the interviews. I sent the participants a transcript of their interview and encouraged correction and clarification for accuracy.

Data Analysis Plan

After the data was collected, the coding process began. I used qualitative data analysis software to facilitate the coding process. Rabinovich and Kacen (2013) described the coding process as a process for sorting through and examining the similarities and differences in the data collected. The purpose of the analysis and sorting was to attempt to identify key themes and patterns.

Coding was commenced by identifying the frequent themes and patterns in the data like recurring phrases and terms. After identifying key themes and patterns, there was further examination to determine the groupings of similar findings. The groupings were labeled and further analyzed to determine consistent information based on the data compiled. The coding process supported the inductive approach to examining raw research data. The raw data gathered were based on specific interview questions asked of each participant for consistency in data collection and solicitation of the needed information identified for the research purpose. The majority of the data analysis was done manually.

NVIVO was used as the qualitative data analysis software. NVIVO is well-known qualitative data analysis software. It is known for its tools for helping structure raw and complex data. This data could come from multiple style types. NVIVO affords the flexibility to import and export data, create nodes and codes, run queries, explore and analyze, and create visual aids (i.e., color coding, maps, charts, word trees and clouds, and so on) to communicate the findings developed from the organization and examination of the raw data (QSR International, n.d.).

The NVIVO was chosen to support my preference for the use of technology. I used NVIVO to input data from the various interviews for analysis and presentation of information. The interview questions were developed specifically for this study and in a manner that supports phenomenological research. After a good faith effort at gathering and analyzing the data is completed, I attempted to discover the reason for the irregularities based on discrepancies or inconsistencies in the data, and presented the information in the results section of the study. The NVivo analysis was used to support the manual analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is determined by credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (also known as reliability and validity). Using multiple approaches to determine reliability and validity is imperative, as it assists with achieving a higher level of veracity in the findings and conclusions (Amankwaa, 2016). I was diligent and methodical with the collecting, documenting, and the repetition

of processes to establish consistency throughout the data collection and analysis processes.

Credibility. For credibility (internal validity), I ensured that each participant met the participant research criteria mentioned above and that each was given an opportunity to explain how they have lived with the phenomenon being studied. There was prolonged attention given to the participant data collection process by allowing ample time for each research question to be answered thoroughly and an opportunity follow up. The interviews were scheduled with extra time to allow the participant to continue past the scheduled time if needed.

After the transcript of each interview was completed, I contacted the participants individually for debriefing and the member check purposes. Participants were given the transcript of their interview to determine that the information in the transcript was correct and interpreted in the manner that the participant intended. During the data analysis process, I engaged in research triangulation by comparing and contrasting the different participants' perceptions to one another and comparing those findings with existing studies on the phenomenon and other related topics. The purpose of triangulation was to use multiple methods of data collection and analysis to validate the research (Golafshani, 2003). I documented data collection and analysis efforts through audio recording, the use of interview protocol sheets and journaling.

Transferability. The achievement of transferability (external validity) was through a systematic description of every part of the research process. The description is robust and includes the complete research process from the selection of the participants,

their attitude and perceptions towards the research, the setting for data collection, the timing of each data collection event, the introductions and connections made between the participant and me, and a description of how every data collection event concluded. The data analysis description is also be thorough to include a depiction of how information was coded, grouped, how themes and patterns were determined, how visual aids were developed and how the findings were determined. The richness of information for transferability was intended to allow the audience to trust the authenticity and diligence put into achieving an accurate outcome.

Dependability. Dependability (qualitative reliability) was achieved as such to allow other researchers to replicate the research processes engaged in this study and get the same or similar findings. Reliability in qualitative studies may be difficult to achieve when the collection and analysis of the data are all the result of individual, lived experiences at a point in time (Dikko, 2016). To mitigate challenges with reliability, I was transparent and consistent by documenting each step through providing examples of the instruments used, questions asked, and the methods engaged in throughout this study. I acknowledge that different participant worldviews may bring about different outcomes.

Confirmability. English (2015) explained conformability (qualitative objectivity) as ensuring the data and analysis presented is truly that of the participants and that personal bias does not interfere with the findings. There was also a need for triangulation methods to assure that the analysis of the data is in line with analysis of other forms of data collected. To ensure conformability in this study, I started by suppressing biases through continuous bias acknowledgment and quelling, and journaling during entire

research collection and analysis processes, review of related data as compared to the data collected, and multiple reviews of the interview notes with the recordings of the participant interviews.

Ethical Procedures

While maintaining confidentiality and privacy, Aggarwal and Gurnani (2014) asserted that the Belmont Report was the mechanism that advised for the creation of the institutional review board (IRB). The primary purpose of the IRB is to maintain ethical standards in research and protect the entitlements and welfare of participants in the study. Research did not commence until after approval from Walden's IRB. The IRB application was completed, submitted and approved by the research committee for this study the proposal.

The application was transparent and gave a detailed account of the specifics of this study to assure that it was ethically sound. The IRB approval number is 05-01-17-0333031 and the IRB Approval Expiration Date is April 30, 2018. On June 22, 2012, I completed the National Institute of Health (NIH) certification training on "Protecting Human Research Participants". I was sure to adhere to the guidelines of this certification, which included transparency, honesty, consent, confidentiality, carefulness, and fair and equitable treatment of all participants. My approved NIH certification number is 938342 (Appendix G- NIH Certificate).

The storage of data collected from participants was put on a password-protected USB drive. The security of information included all written and recorded information that includes material specific and identifiable to the participants. The USB drive will be kept

for five (5)-years in a safe at an undisclosed location, only known by me. I will destroy the drive at the end of the five-year term.

Participants in the study were informed that participation was voluntary. All were required to sign consent forms. I informed all participants that they could rescind and withdraw their participation in the study at any time. Participation could have been ended with a verbal or written communication. All participants, withdrawals and continuing, were thanked for considering participation. There was no penalty for withdrawing from the study, and the participants shall remain whole.

Data collection and analysis was conducted according to the plan proposed above. I planned to immediately share any changes and challenges with the proposed data collection or analysis process with the research committee and the IRB before moving forward. The changes and challenges were also documented in Chapter 3 of this study. I fettered all potential conflicts of interests by avoiding all data collection and analysis that is in conflict with the role I play in the California public education system.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 3, the main characteristics of the study as described in Chapter 1 were re-iterated. There was an explanation of the research methodology, including the use of phenomenology strategy of inquiry, role of the researcher, participant recruitment, and sample size, data collection procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethics. The instrument of telephonic interviews was used to facilitate the phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis. I was in the role of an observer-learner and was able to gain an understanding of conflict in a collective bargaining environment where

knowledge was used as an intervention. Using the processes presented in the study, I was able to gather information from participants that had experienced this dynamic in the California public school system.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the results of the data collection and analysis events.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to conduct phenomenological research to explore conflict for members of both management and unions in California public school districts with collective bargaining. The participants had experienced conflict when knowledge management tools were used. Conflict was the central phenomenon and could have been a positive or negative experience. Chapter 1 included discussions of the problem, purpose, background, research questions, nature of study, significance, and other essential aspects of study. I introduced conflict as a usual occurrence in personal and professional social relationships.

The research questions I developed for this study were the following:

Primary Research Question: How is conflict experienced by labor and management participants in California public school districts during collective bargaining?

Sub-question 1: What was the perception of conflict during collective bargaining when knowledge management tools were used?

Sub-question 2: What were some of the outcomes resulting from conflict when knowledge management processes were used?

I developed the questions for the phenomenological strategy.

In Chapter 2, the literature review, I offered a thorough review of the literature that included a verification of the gap in the research. The primary areas reviewed were conflict, knowledge management, collective bargaining, and public education. I also discussed literature on social relationships and interactions, which is are important

elements associated with conflict. Chapter 2 culminated with a review of Chapter 1 and an introduction to Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, I documented all of the details leading up to data collection and analysis. The details in Chapter 3 included the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, sampling techniques, methodology rationale, processes to address ethical and concerns, and data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter 3 concluded with a review and introduction to Chapter 4.

In this chapter, I discussed data collection, analysis, and outcomes. The information presented includes material on the research setting, participant demographics, trustworthiness, and the results of the study. I report the results of the data collection and data analysis. In a portion of this chapter, I shared participants' responses to the interview questions I asked during the telephonic interviews.

Research Setting

I collected data using telephonic interviewing and a digital recorder. All participant interviews were done over the phone to a phone number of the participants' choice from my mobile device. I conducted all interviews in private and quiet settings to ensure privacy for the participant, and to increase the quality of recording for data collection. All participants were given consent forms and the interview protocol sheets in advance of the interview to ensure that they were well informed of the details of the research project. I also wanted to have their permission to conduct the interview and record the interview. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced the interview outcomes, quality, or analysis.

I worked to maximize participant comfort by allowing them to choose the time and date of the interviews, and by conducting the interviews over the phone. I did not pressure the participants to participate in the interviews. Each participant was reminded that the process was optional and that they could withdraw from participation at any point during the process up until final approval of the research project. All post-interview follow-up was done over email, including the review of the transcripts and check-in.

Demographics

As the researcher, I sought to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of participants who had experienced conflict during collective bargaining when using knowledge management tools. The participants had to have experienced the phenomenon as a part of collective bargaining in a California public school district. I used a qualification questionnaire to verify that all participants were eligible for the study before conducting the interviews. I also verified the qualifications orally with the participant before starting the telephonic interviews. The proposed sample size for this study was 25 participants, and I ultimately interviewed 25 participants.

There were 13 participants from labor unions and 12 representatives of management. The union participants included academic (teaching) and classified (non-teaching) employees, as well as union leaders who performed as the union's lead negotiators. The managers included those from all levels of management, including senior management. The participants were representative of California public education, from kindergarten through 12-grade schools (also known as K12) to community colleges. The participants were from both Northern and Southern California. The questions were

the same for all participants to give each participant and participant groups the opportunity to give fair and reliable responses to the interview questions.

Data Collection

I conducted the interviews using phenomenological practices. Phenomenological practices included open-ended questions to gather in-depth insights to the lived experience that the participants had with the phenomenon. I recruited the participants by posting a flyer on social media, in professional groups, and through email to those who may have qualified. I assured that recruitment and data collection did not start until after I gained Walden University IRB approval to do so.

I conducted 25 interviews, which were reflective of my proposed sample size. The interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the participants. I attempted to make myself as available as possible for scheduling. The interviews were scheduled throughout the day, at various times between 6:45 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. There were approximately five interviews a week, with four interviews being the most I conducted in one day. I conducted four interviews on either a Saturday or Sunday. All other interviews took place Monday through Friday. The interviews lasted 40 minutes or less.

Before conducting each interview, I identified a secured space to eliminate disruptions, and I tested the digital recorder and the battery life of the recorder. I also sent participants a reminder text or email 10 minutes before the call, reminding them of the call. Only one participant requested a slight change to the time of the interview. During the interviews, I used the interview protocol sheet to ask the questions, and referred back

to definitions presented on the protocol sheet as needed. The interview protocol sheet was also sent to the participants in advance of the interview to be reviewed and referenced during the interview. All participants shared their familiarities and appeared to be open and transparent when describing their experiences and perceptions.

At a later date, following the calls, I transcribed the interviews, and emailed a copy of the transcript to the participants. Only one participant suggested change to the transcript. All participants gave positive feedback regarding the interview process. There were no disruptions, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or misfortunes that occurred during data collection that would have affected the analysis or outcomes of the data. I separated the participants into labor or manager groups, which represented their participation role in collective bargaining when the phenomenon was experienced. Thirteen participants provided information from the labor perspective, and 12 provided the manager's perspective. I identify the union participants with the pseudonym "Labor," followed by the participant number (e.g., Labor 1). Managers were identified with the pseudonym "Manager," with a participant number (e.g., Manager 1). I did not ask for personal information such as gender identity, age, or salary when interacting with the participants. In Appendix H, I provide participant profile information.

I kept notes to document potential anomalies and for bracketing as needed. In assessing the data collection process, I determined it to be mostly successful. Some minor concerns during the process included a slow start to the data collection process, three cancellations, lack of responses to request for participants, and four potential participants who confirmed participation and subsequently did not schedule. The concerns were

minimal compared to the ultimate success of the overall process. Another minor setback was securing transcription that was timely and affordable. The process of transcription was much longer than I had anticipated; however, the cost was fair.

Data Analysis

I conducted data analysis subsequent to the data collection process. I decided to conduct multiple analysis processes to improve the veracity and trustworthiness of the research outcomes. The coding procedures required an in-depth and scrupulous process of identifying relevant details in the data, and likeness and variances between the data collected (Rabinovich & Kacen, 2013). I used a coding process to identify overarching themes and patterns. Data analysis started during data collection through my review of peer-reviewed articles and relevant terms. Open coding was done with each telephonic interview and transcript. During an additional perfunctory review of each transcript after all the interviews were completed, I identified preliminary information to lay a foundation for analysis and to lead me to the next steps. As a part of the early assessment of the data, I identified key words such as conflict, knowledge, relationships, and trust.

The next steps in data analysis were line-by-line reviews of each transcript. Vagle (2014) suggested that line-by-line examinations be conducted for purposes such as meticulous note taking, to determine if additional follow-up with the participants is needed, and to code, group, and organize data. In the first line-by-line review, I determined that no additional follow-up with the participants was needed, and I organized the data by color, grouping them based on related thoughts. In the second line-by-line review, I took notes directly from the information on each transcript. The notes helped

me form an understanding of the individual participants' experiences and compare them to the others in the group. There was a third line-by-line review that led to additional grouping, coding, and the gaining of an in-depth understanding of the data based on the experiences with the phenomenon, related interview question, and notes during the interview process, and the other line-by-line reviews. In these, I identified multiple words and phrases. With the words and phrases, I used a reduction and grouping process to find meaning and relations to the research purpose and questions. The reduction and grouping was done to exhaustion. The groupings were based on like words, units, and phrases. There was a lot of similarity between data collection episodes, which led to a significant amount of reduction. The next step was taking those groupings and engaging in the coding process.

As a part of the review, I began the holistic coding process. Miles et al. (2013) described holistic coding as a coding process meant to determine a global understanding of the text. It was done by developing the areas of most concentration of the participants into larger portions of data with meaning. I compared the larger portions of the text to the groupings, reconciled them, coded them, and assigned themes. Holistic coding was done for all 25 of the participant transcripts to review and group the data and notes. After the manual process of reviewing the transcripts individually and collectively, I listened to the audio recordings of each participant interview to recapture the intent and expressions of all statements, and to gain a more analytical interpretation of the data that could only be achieved through hearing the participant interview and listening closely to how the phrases and terms related to the potential themes. There was also further need to

reconcile data collection episodes to assure that similarities and differences were clearly noted. The process resulted in concise outcomes. Based on the research questions and the aforementioned analysis processes, the following themes emerged: knowledge management tools used during collective bargaining conflict, conflict (positive or negative) during collective bargaining, conflict outcomes, relationships, trust, and understanding. Some quotes of participant statements that led to the development of the themes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes and Participant Quotes

| Themes | Participant Quotes |
|---|--|
| <i>Knowledge management tools used during collective bargaining conflict</i> | <i>So, I believe, as far as knowledge transfer or knowledge management techniques, number one is transparency. I believe that falls under that category. I think that -- regardless of what else is happening or what has happened in the past, the more transparent both sides can be, the more open and honest. –Manager 1</i> |
| <i>Conflict (positive or negative) during collective bargaining</i> | <i>Well in negotiations there's always going to be disagreements. My experience has been that the more you are able to justify your position and how it's of benefit to both parties, the more successful you are. –Labor 4</i> |
| <i>Conflict outcomes</i> | <i>That's a good question. For the most part, generally, they are mostly positive. Simply because if you have problems, once you feel like you've been heard and you find some kind of resolution, then it does become a more positive experience. –Labor 10</i> |
| <i>Relationships</i> | <i>Well, in my experience, I see that at least in my experience, what I think I've seen is</i> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Trust</i> | <p><i>that relationships have actually improved through the effort and even into the conflict, and I think a lot of that has to do with because in order to successfully go through that, you really have to work diligently to get to look at a broader picture, and it often times goes beyond the specificity to a number of different issues that all kind of link together and I think what it does is through the process, it improves the process for future potential conflict resolution. –Manager 7</i></p> <p><i>Acknowledging, that we're engaged in the process of constantly building the relationship and it's going to be a relationship at some point as we continue to work built on trust, and some level of transparency. – Labor 3</i></p> |
| <i>Understanding</i> | <p><i>So yeah, diffusing their doubt about what the district was saying by providing factual data, information and allowing for discussions, allowing for clarification. And in the beginning, they may not have appeared to be very receptive but as we talked them through it, as they had time to go away and reveal it and come back as follow-up questions, ask for clarification and we provided that to them, I think it really reduced the level of conflict if I could say it that way. –Manager 11</i></p> |

Following the identification of themes and analysis conducted manually, the computerized data analysis software NVivo was used to support the findings. NVivo for Mac was used to facilitate and cross-reference the analysis steps previous conducted. The objective for using NVivo was achieved, but was restricted by the ability for NVivo for Mac. NVivo for Mac is more basic and limited when compared to the functionality of other versions designed for different types of computers. I started the NVivo process by

importing all of the clean participant transcripts into the software. I then put all like expressions and sections into what is termed nodes in NVivo. Nodes are files contained in the software that allow users to compile like information for comparison and analysis. With the nodes established, I ran queries to determine the most used words and phrases. Based on the queries and as expected, the top two mostly used words were conflict and knowledge (also known as information). This was identical to the information determined in the manual review. Related to knowledge, was sharing and identification, and related to conflict was positive and negative (also so known as good and bad). Other frequently used words were relationships, understanding, management, unions (also known as labor), trust, and district. The results from the analysis and queries in NVivo appeared to be the same or similar to the evidence identified in the manual analysis. The purpose of the NVivo assessment was to reevaluate the information found in the manual evaluation. NVivo was not as accommodating as originally expected; therefore the majority of the analysis was done through manual efforts.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The IRB process was thoroughly exhausted, and there was an approval prior to engaging in any data collection processes. I assured that all participants met the research criteria as required and described in Chapter 3. And the participants were also required to answer a qualifying questionnaire. All suggestions of the IRB were implemented to improve credibility, including making sure each participant knew that the process was voluntary and that there was no penalty for withdrawals. Each participant was given the

interview questions in advance and ample time to thoroughly answer the questions to improve response quality and research credibility. There was an open opportunity to the participants for feedback, and at the end of the data collection process, there was a participant transcript review for reflection, and a check in. Research triangulation was used to compare and contrast the individual responses with each other and with scholarly articles on related subjects.

Transferability

Transferability was achieved by documenting each part of the processes completely and consistently to documents research process from start to finish. Details of the processes were robustly documented in Chapters 3 and 4. The information documented includes descriptions of participant selection, sample size determination rationale, the role of the researcher, data collection instruments and setting, a depiction of how information was coded and grouped, how themes and patterns were determined, how visual aids were developed, and how the findings were determined. The intent of the documentation is to allow the audience to trust and appreciate the genuineness and meticulousness put into achieving an accurate outcome.

Dependability

Dependability (also known as qualitative reliability) was attempted as succinctly as possible through consistency with each data collection episode. The same questions were asked, and same data collection methods and instruments were used for each participant. The process was transparent and reliable, and I methodically following the process described in Chapter 3 as refined through the IRB process. There was a self-

acknowledged and accepted principle that different participant worldviews may bring about different outcomes going into each data collection episode.

Confirmability

I made a conscious and moral effort towards ensuring that the data collection and analysis was truly that of the lived experiences of the participants and that personal bias did not disrupt data collection analysis or reflect in the findings. Triangulation was used in reviewing the data to assist with analysis by cross-analyzing the transcripts and peer-reviewed articles. Prior to starting data collection and analysis and throughout the process, I acknowledge and suppressed potential biases through journaling and reflection. The efforts towards confirmability increased the objectivity and impartiality of the research findings.

Study Results

Discovering the study results was centered on the research questions, and then the identified themes. The interview questions used during the telephonic data collection were designed based on the research central and sub-questions. The themes identified during data analysis process were also based on responses to the research questions. A list of the telephonic interview questions are found in Appendix F. Below I paired the research questions with the corresponding number for the interview question:

Central question: How is conflict experienced by labor and management participants in California public school districts during collective bargaining (Interview questions one, two)?

Sub-question 1: What was the perception of conflict during collective bargaining when knowledge management tools were used (Interview questions three, four, and six)?

Sub-question 2: What were some of the outcomes resulting from conflict when knowledge management processes were used (Interview questions four and five)?

The themes identified during data collection are *knowledge management tools used during collective bargaining conflict, conflict (positive or negative) during collective bargaining, conflict outcomes, relationships, trust, and understanding*. The study results and how they addressed the research questions are organized below based on the identified themes.

Knowledge Management Tools used During Collective Bargaining Conflict

The information in the responses connected to knowledge management tools used during collective bargaining conflict were related to sub-question 1 and interview questions three, four, and six. The use of knowledge management tools during collective bargaining was standard across participants as it was a criterion for the study. There were various knowledge management tools used, but the top two used based on participant responses were Knowledge sharing (also described as storytelling) and knowledge identification (also described as surveying). From the instances of knowledge sharing and identification were the opportunity to create new knowledge through information exploration and collaboration.

Knowledge Sharing. Knowledge sharing was a popular tool used by the participants of this study, in several different ways and at times not realized by the participants until reviewing the definitions of this study. M1 found sharing as a method for providing information in advance of potential conflict as a tool to quell the negative effects and a tool to be used during conflict simply to provide information that could

help. M3 experienced sharing as a tool through storytelling. M3 explained it as an opportunity to build bridges from one perspective to another about the history of the organization. M4, like M1 thought it important to engage in knowledge sharing early as an intervention. M5 found sharing information as critical to transparency, since the information would be exposed eventually. M6 discussed the sharing of tangible information, such as documents to assist with the creation of new collective language and documents. M9 explained the knowledge sharing experience as:

I would say the process of sharing the knowledge and when I think knowledge sharing, I'm really talking about just making sure everyone understands their role, everyone also understands why there's a need to address compensation and the pros and cons of doing that. But also sharing best practices as it relates to what other organizations or colleges or employee groups have been doing specifically, faculty, when it comes to compensation in specific area. So I think being able to give those examples, so that everyone understands what is happening, not just locally, but state wide helps the process of sharing that knowledge and making sure that we do our best to avoid confrontation, as well as just folks at the table not being receptive.

M12 asserted that sharing was tool to be used in multiple ways when minimizing negative conflict. M12 gave an example of knowledge sharing used for inter-group conflict, to gain a collective organization in the group. There was another example used as a presentation to the union from management. M12 expressed how using knowledge sharing with the union heightened the probability of consensus. There were also

examples of the union and management receiving information from a subject matter expert at the same time to help build compromise and/or create new knowledge.

L4 used knowledge sharing through the sharing of “real-life” examples that could help explain why something is needed and how a particular resolution would work. L5 felt that the parties in collective bargaining were protective of the information being shared, but often shared it anyway. L6 found that knowledge sharing reciprocated open and honest communication that lead to agreement. L10 was concerned about the use of knowledge sharing as knowledge could be used negatively and positively, but ultimately saw it as an asset despite potential misuse. L10 stated, “Knowledge sharing is the most important. It’s being able to share that knowledge in a way that is constructive to the negotiation process.” L11 firmly explained the use of knowledge sharing as a method to turn away from conflict. L11 explained knowledge sharing as a method for perspective taking; when positions are taken decisively and are entrenched, sharing information gives another point of view to help with the disparate views and to bring the sides more towards the middle. L12 looked at the human element related to the sharing of knowledge by acknowledging that knowing more makes those involved more willing to concur.

Knowledge Identification. Knowledge identification was widely used by the participants. L1 used knowledge identification, specifically during the most contentious discussions over budgets and employee wages. L1 described knowledge identification as a means for dealing with “unique situations of school districts” since most funding comes from State or federal sources. By identifying funding information and/or methods from like situations in other California public school districts, it provided an advantage at the

table and a clearer understanding of the underlying meaning of budgetary restrictions. L2 shared similar views of knowledge identification in that this participant expressed that identifying information in various comparable districts “opened their eyes that they were a little bit under market in their wages which helped it.” Knowledge identification includes knowledge that could be stored as a tangible asset and that of experience from an individual or institution (Hassen, Turki, & Gargouri, 2016). L4 specifically referenced surveying as the method of knowledge identification. The use of surveying was used similarly to the examples above. L4 described it as the gathering of existing data that would provide real experiences of a particular change facilitated and that could also help resolve a conflict. The surveying, according to L4, also involved perspective taking by the parties identifying how a particular occurrence affected daily operations to give the opposing side an understanding. L11 viewed knowledge identification as a tool to bring forth existing information for problem solving.

M2 discussed the identification of “historical data” as knowledge identification and to assist with conflict. M3 also discussed the used of historical data at the table during conflict as imperative to the understanding. M3 explained, “So I think historical data helps a lot at the table at least for the bargaining side. It helps me get a feel for why there is a conflict and how it started it in the first place.” M10 determined that the use of “past practice” was a method of identification used in conflict. Past practice was explained by M10 as,

Going back to what has worked, what hasn't worked, and then along the way, if you need to make corrections, meeting with your negotiating team members, even

when it's not negotiating time to address a concern, because sometimes things get placed in the contracts that were not... maybe we've never experienced.

In the examples above the forms of knowledge identification were used through the gather of experiential and historical information. All the participants that used identification as a method viewed it as a vehicle for transparency and to build trust. Both the transparency and trust component were attributed mostly to the parties' willingness to bring in existing information to support interest and positions. M7 explained that based on personal experience, knowledge identification was probably the tool most used with knowledge sharing being second. On the contrary, M7 explained that when knowledge tools over all were not used or when knowledge was hidden it fractured trust and relationships.

Conflict (positive or negative) during Collective Bargaining

Conflict, positive and negative, was a part of all participants' experiences. Conflict during collective bargaining covered all of the research question and sub-questions, and was, for one participant or another, a part of the answers to most of the interview questions. All of the participants felt consistently that conflict was a normal manifestation consistently in collective bargaining. It was viewed as good and bad, but good most of the time. Conflict was seen as a needed and expected phenomenon. The participants' assessment and/or perception of conflict were not different from what was found in the literature as presented in Chapter 2. Labor 6 explained labor as:

Well, conflict is inevitable because you're going to have the sides start off with their position. However, it's something that can easily be overcome with open

communication and dialog, and allowing both sides to see that we're trying to reach the same goal, eventually.

M4 concurred with L6 and the other participants by asserting:

I think it is a healthy experience between both the union and the management to have a little bit of conflict because it helped us understand each and everybody's perspective where they are coming from, good context on the issues and then have a better resolution and understanding of how we can move forward to address those kinds of situations.

Literature on conflict supports the participants' assessment of how conflict is experienced. Jungst and Blumberg (2016) contended that conflict is not what it was perceived to be by early scholars. Conflict was perceived to be negative. That has since changed. Conflict, as described by Jungst and Blumberg (2016), could result in positive outcomes depending on the circumstances and is a normal manifestation. The participant responses and literature are correlated.

Conflict Outcomes

Conflict outcomes were in reference to those effects that resulted from conflict situations when knowledge management tools were used. The answers from the theme conflict outcomes were the result of research sub-question two, and in the responses of interview questions four and five. L1 was emphatic that conflict outcomes were positive when knowledge management tools were used since it did not allow the opposing side (the district) to be deceptive. L2 expressed that the majority of the time conflict improved, however there were many times where there seemed to be a lack of honesty

and straightforwardness. L3 felt that conflict outcomes were improved since the use of knowledge allowed the group to get “aha” moments throughout the knowledge management process. L4 thought that the outcomes were more empathetic and human since the opposing parties were able to see the people behind interests and positions. L5 experienced positive outcomes, but felt it important that parties know on the onset of conflict that when it’s over, everyone may not agree with each other but that having differences were a part of the process. L6 explained that just engaging in attempts to resolve conflict was a step forward. L6 asserted, “Anytime we're trying to have conflict resolution or knowledge sharing, I think it's a very positive endeavor to go through, so more power to you.” L7 thought there were positive outcomes, while L8 agrees but believed that the knowledge received and used was not always accurate. L9, contrary to the other participants from labor, did not feel positive about the outcomes, but felt that the process overall was unfair due to there being an uneven competency level at the table. L9 explained:

Well, like I said, I don't think it's a level playing field when you're going up against Master's degrees, seasoned negotiators, and seasoned attorneys and your people with knowledge and information are custodians, carpenters, and admins. We're just doing the best we can with whatever information and research they have, and when it was presented; the response from the district attorney, his tone, and demeanor, and body language, and the way he closed his laptop, to me, it wasn't much of a negotiation.

L10 declared that the conflict interactions and outcomes was something enjoyed since the group was working towards a collective resolution. Like L4, L11 believed that the use of knowledge management tools gave conflict outcomes a more human element. L12 saw the use of information as a benefit to conflict resolution and L12 explained that once the facts are brought in, the groups are closer to an agreement.

The management responses were, in general, similar to those of the labor participants. M1 experienced a neutral outcome and explained that it never gets worse, but at best remains neutral. M2 thought that the outcome depended on who the information was coming from and the perception the opposing group had of that person. M3 and M4 determined that outcomes improved and it was important to have the transparency. M5 expressed that for the most part the outcomes were good, but has also experienced times when there was misinformation disseminated and there was a bad outcome. M6 asserted that the information has to be interpreted correctly by both sides for there to be a good outcome. M6 also explained it is inherently better in conflict situations to know that you are not being kept in the dark. M7 felt that not sharing information made the conflict situation worse. M7 explained:

Well, I think that what happens is a conflict typically gets lessons or result in a more consistent fashion in my opinion. I think that what I have seen is without bringing these things into this type of discussion, things typically will get worse and worse and what we find, by being able to sit down and talk through conflict, is that actually patterns of conflict start to emerge. We see the difference, we see

the lack of difference between some of these things and we find easier steps to resolution by continuing these types of discussions.

M8, like M7, felt that situations improved when communication was open. M9 saw an increase of respect between parties when information was shared. M10 saw conflict situations improved and M11 as well. M11 explained, “So yeah, diffusing their doubt about what the district was saying by providing factual data, information and allowing for discussions, allowing for clarification.” M12 felt that at the very least, using knowledge management tools brought about an understanding, which was considered positive.

Relationships

Relationships in general were brought up throughout data collection as an important concept during conflict. There were several responses related to relationships, and were pretty consistent with saying if the relationship was good the conflict was resolved effectively; if the relationship was bad there were challenges with conflict resolution. The theme, relationships, was another theme that was covered by the research question, as well as all of the research sub-questions and all of the interview questions.

Jungst and Blumberg (2016) explained that there is task conflict and relationship conflict. Task and process conflict deals with a difference of opinion over tasks or ways of completing a task. Relationship conflict is interpersonal tension. There is a strong nexus between relationship conflict and task and process conflict. Relationship conflict could be injurious to conflict management attempts. Some relevant examples presented in data collection on relationships during conflict are the following:

- M1- And usually the times when it, and importantly, is because there, either was no relationship or there was mistrust from a past relationship, or something like that. So, in my opinion, describe the outcomes are mostly a component of the quality of the relationship, in a room.
- M3- You got to look at all these individual as people. And so it becomes kind of an elephant in the room of wanting to have a good relationship.
- M9- So my personal experience, even if the situations were tough like with that classified situation, in the end, I had a great working relationship with the union representatives, as well as the faculty in my most recent experience, where I've even received just a little thank you cards commending me on how I handled certain meetings, how I was open minded.
- L1- When you build relationships with the right people, and you have integrity and people know that you don't struggle with doing the right thing, even when conflict arises, they understand and they realize that you are fighting that fight because you feel in your heart of hearts that it is the best thing and the right thing to do for your constituents that you are supporting.
- L2- If someone in this personality conflict - not negotiation conflict - but personality conflict, it's hard to get that person's door that side to move at all which is impossible situation kind of thing quite often. I think it depends on who you are actually negotiating against.

- L8- First, I feel like the goal is go to the table and get the needs of each party met, but keep the relationship intact and I think with knowledge management tools that you can do that. You can agree to disagree and find that middle ground that everyone can live with.

Relationships, both good and bad, were co-existent with conflict. The resolution of the conflict is often contingent on how the relationship was perceived by the parties. It appeared from the data collection that it was also important to build relationships. The participant responses were similar to what was found in the literature.

Trust

Trust was another recurring theme throughout data collection. The trust was primarily connected to the knowledge being managed during conflict. Trust was also vital to the relationships of one to another during conflict as discussed above. Trust was a theme that was related to all the research and interview questions. The participant responses were centered on the importance of trust being present in conflict and knowledge processing, and its significance to building relationships. The majority of the trust responses were from the management (M) represented participants.

In data collection there were several mentions of trust, as well as underlying concerns related to trust. L1 explained that when an opposing party appears disconnected from the issues and concerns it could facilitate mistrust. M1 attributed mistrust to past relationships the parties in conflict had and how it could overwhelmingly influence current conflict situations. M3 asserted that knowing the principles of conflict does not matter if there is no trust and that trust is a factor that determined a positive or negative

conflict outcome. L13 found that lack of trust was also a result of the mismanagement of knowledge; when the incorrect information is disseminated, people tend to lose trust. M5 felt that having your honest intentions being present and clear during conflict could change low-trust, to improved trust. M6 thought that building trust throughout the collective bargaining relationship was vital. M6 asserted:

There are times later on where you may be dealing with another issue maybe let's say an employee discipline issue and because you have built trust in terms of how you have interacted with the collective bargaining team you go to them with that particular issue.

M11 also found that building trust continually helped conflict and that it should be done in "small increments," despite it being a time-consuming process. According to the literature, trust is a factor in conflict. Low-trust and high-trust in relationships has implications on conflict outcomes. When at least one party in the conflict has low-trust, it could negatively affect the conflict outcomes (Kim, Weisberg, Simpson, Oriña, Farrell, & Johnson, 2015).

Understanding

Understanding is a theme meant in the sense that the parties were able to use knowledge to gain an understanding of what the concerns were. This did not mean that there was a resolution, but simply an understanding of what was being felt, perceived, and/or presented. The theme understanding was a response mostly to research sub-questions one and two, and interview questions three, four, five and six. Windeler, Maruping, Robert, and Riemenschneider (2015) intently explained shared understanding

as advantageous to conflict because it causes parties to realize and respect differences, while working together to achieve a collaborative resolution. The shared understanding aids the alleviation of the negative consequences of conflict.

In general, the impact of understanding related to the central phenomenon, conflict was positive. The participants felt it imperative to making progress towards resolution. There were multiple examples of how Labor (L) experienced understanding when in conflict. L5 who declared that there does not have to be in agreement, but there must be some understanding of the diverse points of views. L8 explained the following, “I think that it’s important that each party goes to the table really seeking to understand each other’s position, what they can live with and what they can’t live with, understand perception and work toward a happy medium.” L12 found understanding to be something that could be transferred to those not at the negotiations table. L12 explained that when there is an agreement that everyone understands the premise for, it is good for the group to take the understanding and share it with their constituents.

Management shared similar sentiments of understanding while in conflict. M3 experienced how important it is to understanding another’s perspective during conflict. M4 also noted the importance of understanding perspectives and also having a mutual understanding over how to move forward amidst conflict. M5 explained that when there is no understanding of why certain things happen, it could be seen as malevolent and cause conflict. M8 explained their experience by stating,

I think conflict is good because then you get to understand people’s feelings and then hopefully you can come to a peaceful resolution based on the conflict that is

there because at the end of the day the purpose of collective bargaining is to come to an agreement.

M9 expressed that having an understanding propels the desire to get to the positive side of wanting to get to the constructive side of conflict. This is because there is an understanding of underlying concerns. M10 experienced the lack of understanding and that leading to undesired conflict. M11 explained how understanding is a method of education and how it could bring clarity to misinterpretation. M12 also experienced understanding in conflict and saw it as a method for looking deeper to attempt to gain an informed overview of feelings, perception and or people who are different in general.

Summary and Transition

Twenty-five participants, thirteen representing labor unions and twelve representing school district management, participated in the study. I conducted 25 telephonic interviews to capture the in-depth, lived experiences each participant had with the central phenomenon. The experiences captured were based on their perspectives of conflict during collective bargaining when knowledge management tools were used. All of the participants experienced conflict during collective bargaining and used knowledge management tools as this was a part of the criteria of the study. Conflict was perceived as both negative and positive phenomenon. The two most used knowledge management tools used during conflict were knowledge sharing and knowledge identification. The use of knowledge management tool influenced the conflict outcomes. Most of the conflict outcomes were positive, but there were minor deviants when the knowledge received was perceived to not be reliable. There was also significance given to relationships; how the

conflict outcomes and knowledge were received was based on prior and current relationships between the parties. Trust was important since resolving the conflict and accepting the information or knowledge received has related to if the parties trusted the people involved or the process to getting the information. It was also vital that the information involved was understood. When the parties had a good understanding of the information and its purpose, they were more likely to come to a resolution.

In Chapter 4, the research setting for data collection and the participants' demographics. I discussed the data collection process, which included the telephonic interviews and other correspondences with the participants. The challenges and accomplishments of data collection were discussed, including recruitment of participants, scheduling, transcription, and check-in. The next step was data analysis, which was harder than was expected. The processes conducted included multiple waves of open coding, line by line coding, and holistic coding. The different methods of coding were to get an in-depth understanding and recollection of each data collection event and to identify differences and similarities. I also took time to re-listen to each recording. I then used NVivo to re-analyze the data to support the manual findings. In Chapter 4, I also provided information on evidence of trustworthiness as it related to the data collection and analysis.

In Chapter 5, I discussed the interpretation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, limitations and a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this phenomenological study, I explored conflict for members of both management and unions in California public school districts with collective bargaining. In the study, I gained an understanding of the perceptions and experiences the participants had with conflict when knowledge management tools were used during collective bargaining. The participants met specified criteria and were from management and unions that had engaged in collective bargaining in a California public school district. I used the qualitative phenomenological strategy of inquiry to engage in the research process. I conducted 25 telephonic interviews to collect data. After I collected the data, I manually coded the interview transcripts and identified themes. I used NVivo qualitative data software to support the manual analysis process. In this chapter, I present the study results based on the themes identified in participants' responses to the questions. The themes were *knowledge management tools used during collective bargaining conflict, conflict (positive or negative) during collective bargaining, conflict outcomes, relationships, trust, and understanding.*

In this chapter, I review and interpret the findings reported in Chapter 4. I also acknowledge the study's limitations and provide recommendations for future research. I conclude the chapter with the implications for future research and positive social change, and with a conclusion that captures the spirit of the study.

Interpretation of Findings

To present my interpretations of findings, I described the themes identified in the research, including the experiences of the participants. The participants' experiences were assessed along with current peer-reviewed literature to identify parallels. I confirmed the finding while extending knowledge based on the purpose of this research and the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2.

Theme 1: Knowledge Management Tools Used During Collective Bargaining

Conflict

According to the participants of this study, the knowledge management tools used most often during collective bargaining were knowledge sharing and knowledge identification. Knowledge sharing included exchanging information in various forms to assist with advising, proficiencies, and understanding during conflict. Knowledge identification was the pinpointing of historical, existing, and new information to assist with conflict, enlightenment, and misinformation. According to the participants in the study, knowledge management tools were a needed part of the collective bargaining process when dealing with conflict.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how knowledge is received and manipulated in tacit and explicit forms (see Allameh, Pool, Jaber, & Soveini, 2014). There, I described knowledge as an asset to organizational growth and the development of human resources (see Atapattu & Jayakody, 2014). This is vital since developing both institutional and individual knowledge not only leads to change, but also leads to decision making, problem solving, and professional development (Kaveh et al., 2015). According to the

literature and the participants, processing knowledge through various methods could be beneficial to all parties involved in conflict. There were multiple methods of knowledge management described by the participants of the study, but knowledge sharing and identification were by far the most discussed.

The use of knowledge management tools during collective bargaining conflict was a criterion for participation in the study, so every participant described their perceptions of the experience. Each participant felt it to be an overall positive experience with a few concerned about the misuse of information. For instance, L10 spoke of knowledge being used in “unprofessional ways,” and noted that when sharing it one must consider the humanistic aspect of exchanging knowledge by making it a constructive part of resolving conflict. L6 was concerned with parties being open, honest, and transparent with the information they shared. Without trust and transparency, future opportunities to share information could be foreclosed. M12 explained that parties needed to know when it is time to seek subject matter experts that may be able to identify knowledge that may not be a part of the discussion of the parties in conflict. This could bring about timely understanding of concerns.

Again, participants’ overall perception of the use of knowledge management tools during conflict was affirmative. Knowledge process engagement was something that each participant looked forward to and felt was important. It was also interesting to find that many participants did not realize how often they used knowledge management tools until their participation in the study. Through reflection, many participants were surprised by how many times knowledge processes were helpful in conflict situations.

Theme 2: Conflict (Positive or Negative) During Collective Bargaining

The second theme was conflict (positive or negative) during collective bargaining. In the literature, researchers have described conflict as inherent in social relationships and manifested in both negative and positive forms (Bradley et al., 2015). Participants in the study did not deviate from this perspective on conflict. All of the participants consistently reported that conflict was unavoidable and inevitable. How actual conflict was experienced was mostly described in the answers following interview question 1. L5 explained, “My perception is it happens and there is nothing to be alarmed about.” The managers of the group had similar responses. M6 expressed, “I think when you are engaged in collective bargaining there’s definitely going to be conflict.” The responses on the expectation of conflict during collective bargaining, a social interaction, were consistent with the literature. There were no abnormalities in the responses from the participants.

Similar to the expressed expectation of conflict during collective bargaining was the constant perception of conflict by the participants as positive or negative. Current literature on conflict has shown how conflict has complex dynamics that could lead to creative exchanges in teams and could enhance organizational development (Avgar et al., 2014; Todorova et al., 2014). This could be the positive perception of conflict. On the contrary, negative conflict is disruptive to work productivity, relationships, and growth (Rispen & Demerouti, 2016; Gordon & Chen, 2016; Cardador, 2014). The participants experienced both the positive and negative undercurrents. L8 described conflict as “healthy” because it allowed perspective taking and dialog. L10, although recognizing

the positive aspects, acknowledged the negative effects and explained that “as long as everyone is professional and reasonable, conflict is a great thing during negotiations.”

Throughout the literature review and participant interviews, I found evidence of the constant presence of conflict during collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is, in part, a decision making process with divergent parties attempting to achieve the best outcomes for the constituents they represent. According to Brown et al. (2014), those differing objectives could cause conflict. M9 shared that “conflict during collective bargaining interaction is that it's inevitable. It will occur during negotiations no matter which group you're with.” M12 supported this assertion by stating, “Well, conflict has a tendency to show up at various times as you're negotiating. Whether it's just a short side letter or you're in successor bargaining, it has the tendency to show up in various forms.” Throughout the responses, conflict in collective bargaining was aligned with the limited literature that did address the combination in public institutions. Overall, although conflict was a regular part of collective bargaining, participants did not see it as adverse.

Theme 3: Conflict Outcomes

There were a few factors I found in the participants' perceptions of conflict outcomes that appeared to be under described in the literature. For instance, many of the outcomes described by the participants were directly related to factors such as the prevailing issue during negotiations, communications and transparency, and most of all the relationships of the parties involved. In the literature, it was difficult to find research on conflict outcomes and its correlation to the variables that effected the outcomes. There

is, however, literature related to how the handling of past conflict episodes could influence current conflict events (Canaan Messarra, Karkoulian, & El-Kassar, 2016).

The participants of the study attributed conflict outcomes to various factors. L11 felt that simply not having enough information could influence conflict outcomes. Providing clear information at the onset of discussions that may lead to conflict could change the overall experience. Changing the perception of a particular conflict episode will help, since according to L11 negative perceptions could disturb relationships. L13 confirmed the finding by describing how storytelling could change conflict outcomes. M4 attributed conflict outcomes to transparency by stating:

So as part of our interspace bargaining, we agree that we put all the cards on the table in terms of where we want to go and using the process of letting them know ahead this time what the intention is, is one of the I think the techniques that we did to make the better relationship between them and reduce conflicts.

I found that the subject of bargaining could also change the outcome. For instance, a few of the participants shared that bargaining over budgets and salaries are the most antagonistic. M11 explained is always a contentious subject of bargaining in negotiations. The explanations for the adversarial interactions and outcomes included not being well informed or just that it was a difficult subject of bargaining. There was also a position expressed related to knowledge being hidden. Knowing the different factors that cause negative conflict outcomes could be a part of the knowledge management process. According to M8 and other participants, taking the time to listen to concerns, perspective taking, and building and maintaining relationships could change outcomes.

Theme 4: Relationships

Relationships was a theme that emerged early and often throughout the data collection and analysis. It appeared to be a contributor to the positive perceptions of conflict and the ease of handling knowledge. M1 brought up the concept of relationships and conflict almost immediately explaining that conflicts usually arise when there is no relationship, and mistrust and emphasized the importance of quality relationships. L8 felt that coming to the collective bargaining table with an undamaged relationship not only mediated the conflict, but also facilitated effective knowledge management.

Researchers have likewise emphasized the importance of relationships when in conflict. Lemay and Dobush (2015) found that parties that are committed to social relationships are more likely to behave in situations of conflict. Others have found that dysfunctional relationships have a consequence on the tasks to be completed, effectively diminishing efficiency and creativity (Cuijpers, Uitdewilligen, & Guenter, 2016). M3 expressed that good relations were necessary to meaningful engagement. L2 also agreed that based on experience, bad relationships obstruct conflict resolution. The participant responses confirmed the existing literature on relationships as the theme related to conflict and conflict resolution.

Theme 5: Trust

Trust was a theme important to several experiences by the participants including the veracity of the information, relationships, conflict episodes, and conflict outcomes. The study found that knowledge management tools improved conflict and conflict outcomes based on participant responses, but without trust the participants reported

challenges. Trusting the information was a recurring concern with the participants, including those giving and receiving the information since misinformation or the hiding of information could severely compromise trust and relationships. There were also expressions from the participants to have trust in the process. Although the need for trust seemed obvious in social relations, the development of trust as a theme in this research study was surprising. The surprise came with the premise that the research was based on conflict and knowledge management. The identification of this theme affirmed that in this study that trust was an important companion to receiving, understanding, and accepting the authenticity of the knowledge involved. There also appeared to be a need to feel confident in believing that the reconciling of the conflict was worth the effort.

Existing literature described trust as a feeling of security when making one's self vulnerable (Söllner, Hoffmann, & Leimeister, 2016). In this study, susceptibility was in the context of engaging in conflict situations and the manipulation of information for decision making. As mentioned in Chapter 2, knowledge management processes require trust and when individuals trust, proficiencies are built, creativity is enriched and collaboration is more likely between the parties (Nejatian, et al., 2013). Most of the participants of the study seem to have the same viewpoint on trust. L3 asserted that relationships must be built on trust when in conflict. This is because it provides a foundation for the relationship when dissention happens. L13 shared a different experience related to the need for trust, but describing situations where imperative opportunities to resolve conflict were missed because there was no trust and what the information given was received cautiously. M6 felt that in conflict trust needs to be

present in conflict and a phenomenon that is continually constructed, since conflict situations are fluid and the dynamic could change throughout the process. M11 supported M6 in that there were multiple references to the need to build trust persistently during conflict.

A slight deviation from the perceptions of trust came from L9. L9 expressed a lack of trust due to what was perceived as an uneven balance of power between labor and management at the collective bargaining table. L9 felt that the education levels were vastly different and the information received from those highly educated at the table was not presented in a manner that would provide understanding and therefore could not be trusted information. L9 felt that trust was important, but did not feel it matter when there was an intentional disproportionate level of understanding during collective bargaining.

Theme 6: Understanding

Understanding the information received during conflict was another theme that was surprising. As mentioned above, knowledge processes alleviate negative perceptions of conflict and negative conflict outcomes. The concern that was raised by the participants for this theme was how the information received was understood.

Understanding as a theme was reflected in the perceptions of conflict when knowledge management were used, as well as noted in the literature. Based on the responses and the literature, understanding is needed to move forward with resolution. It is a part of knowing what the conflict is, what the history of the concern is and a part of perspective taking from one party in conflict to another. According to the participant responses, it is

easier to work towards a resolution when you understand why the opposing party is taking a specific position.

A lack of understanding could, fundamentally be a part of conflict. In Chapter two I discussed chaos and complexity theory, and how not engaging in systems thinking could cause disruptions in the organization. Systems thinking involves thinking beyond one's understanding to a level that causes cross-functional deliberation (Shaked & Schechter, 2013); a thinking that makes one understand another's multifaceted environment. The process of systems thinking naturally requires understanding. Bradley, et al. (2015) confirmed that understanding was one of the more central methods to conflict resolution. Babu and Panda (2012), as explained in Chapter 2, described expanding a knowledge base that included perspective taking built upon social interactions. Pana (2013) associated understanding to positive change, by explaining that when comprehension is present change could be facilitated.

The participants of the study presented understanding similarly to what was presented in the literature. M4 described understanding and resolution synonymously; for appropriate conflict resolution, there must be understanding. M11 experienced that when in conflict, to gain understanding that "diffused the doubt" helped with communication. L10 explained that sometimes all that is needed is an understanding, and that a simple misunderstanding caused conflict. L4 spoke about how mutual understanding by the parties in conflict was needed to change how conflict episodes and outcomes were perceived.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study did not change much from those mentioned in Chapter one. The limitations continue to be circumscribed to a narrow group of participants associated with California public school district employees and union leaders. The participants' experiences with the central phenomenon, conflict, were also restricted to those experiences during collective bargaining relationships. The participants were limited to the following criteria: A. Participants who have experience with collective bargaining in a California public school setting; B. Participants who have experienced conflict during collective bargaining; C. Participants who have been a part of management or union collective bargaining team, and D. Participants who have experienced the use of knowledge management tools such as sharing, transfer, creation, and so on, when in conflict during collective bargaining.

There was a deliberate and intentional attempt to avoid generalization and to focus on gathering in-depth perceptions and experiences from the identified group in the specified environment. Conflict, the use of knowledge management and collective bargaining exist in other environments outside of California public education, but those other environments were not assessed. I was aware of some of those areas but chose to focus exclusively on the area described in the purpose statement to guide the study. Even though there are research results that could be consistently and accurately valid across relationships that involve conflict, there was no attempt to do that valuation in this study.

Another limitation was the sample size. It was limited to 25 participants. Those participants were chosen based on the qualifications above. There was no consideration

given to other determining factors like gender, race, age or social-economic status. There was also no consideration given to conflict resolution styles or other worldviews associated with the participants' experiences with conflict other than the study's specified qualifications.

Recommendations

As I navigated through the research processes, a number of recommendations for future research were recognized. Traversing through the dissertation process identified areas where additional study may be opportunities for new knowledge. For instance, while developing the literature review, I realized how normalized conflict was in social relations. Because of the consistency of conflict in social environments, a generalized study may be advantageous. I also had time to reflect on the study through Chapter 4 and identified areas for future research. An example is a reflection on some of the information discovered in data collection and analysis. I realized there is a need to study, in part, personalities and relationships when conflict episodes happen. Below are some of the recommendations for future research that were of most interest to me.

Generalization

One of the recommendations identified was to widen the scope of the research to be more generalized in area and population by conducting quantitative study. This study could be implemented based on the same premise, but with a larger population and setting. A survey could be used based on the quantitative research questions and hypotheses with a purpose of soliciting a broader range of responses. The results could be calculated with measurable importance given to the information evaluated.

Case Study

On the contrary to the quantitative study recommendation, there is also an opportunity to do a more in-depth, intimate case study that follows the conflict when knowledge management tools were used in collective bargaining from the inception to the conclusion of a collective bargaining experience. This could provide more answers about the personalities at the table, the basis for conflict, how knowledge management processes were applied specifically, and the underpinning of the conflict outcomes. The case study could involve two disparate cases, with some observation as well as qualitative interviews with the cross-analysis between the cases.

Conflict and Personalities

Another recommendation for future research is a study on the conflict resolution styles and relationships of the parties at the collective bargaining table during conflict. I realized, as I engaged the study that preexisting relationships and the personalities of the people involved sometimes exacerbates conflict. The personality conflict sometimes leads to the lack of trust and transparency. Gulzar and Khalid (2016) explained that the personalities of those involved in conflict are essential to how the parties behave. Different personality types could result in contrary responses in conflict situations. During data collection, multiple participants attributed the conflict to the person as well as how the conflict was experienced; how they dealt with conflict also depended on the personalities at the table. The influence personalities had on conflict was a consistent factor, despite the participant's acknowledgment that conflict could be good and bad, and

that it was important to manage it effectively for organizational development (Godiwalla, 2016).

Focus Group

Lastly there is the potential need for a study that uses the focus group method to gain an understanding of the experiences with the benefit of cross-group discussion. Varga-Atkins and Mcisaac (2017) explained that the focus group as a small group reciprocal communication that has benefits such as cost effectiveness, in-depth group interaction and a high quantity of profound qualitative data. The focus group would benefit the purpose of this study since a group of managers and labor could have come together to give a cross-functional prospective with the advantage of perspective taking through hearing how the other side perceived the experience with the phenomenon. This experience is important since according to the research identified in the literature review, conflict could be a social phenomenon that may require some consensus and/or perspective taking to manage. Knowing another's experience through their story and through cognitive and visual cues allows for a better understanding of the interest and needs of others (Mori and Cigala, 2016). Having the group ponder their experience in this way could make the recollection of events with the phenomenon and their responses more realistic.

Implications

Determining successful methods for managing conflict, which also supports successful outcomes, may be important to the creative developments that happen due to diverse perspectives. Cooperation and collaboration in collective bargaining ultimately

facilitate resourceful change (Master, Albright, & Gibney Jr., 2015). On a systems level, the use of knowledge management tools like knowledge sharing, creation, and identification were found to be vital to conflict management and building relations. It was also discovered that building and maintaining sustainable relationships also play a part in the conflict outcomes and positive social change. The combination of healthy conflict episodes, the use of knowledge management processes, and building relations are imperative to successful labor relations in the California public school system. Successful labor relations are important since collective bargaining is mandated in many of the k12 and community college public educational institutions. This finding may also be significant to managers and labor leaders looking for new ways to improve adversarial relations and increase collaboration at the collective bargaining table.

From an individual perspective, trust is important to conflict outcomes and how knowledge used. Trust or distrust in collaborative relationships may lead to one not wanting to share knowledge or to one not believing the knowledge shared (Brown & Calnan, 2016). According to the research of this study, individual personalities at the table must have some features of a trusting and respectful relationship when going into conflict episodes. When the relationship exists between individuals, they may be more likely to share information and trust the information being received, as a result effecting positive social change. There is also perspective taking. When one has a relationship with the person they are interacting with, and they share their worldview (knowledge), there may be a conscious effort to gain an understanding and to see the underlying interest or need. Most of the participants in this study understood the purpose of conflict, the need

for the use of knowledge management tools and reverential relationships; some of which expressed how the interview questions caused them to think a little deeper about how they had dealt with conflict, knowledge, and relationships in the past and to think about ways to improve how it is viewed in the future.

All of the participants looked to see an improved process and seemed positive about being that change. There appeared to be an inherent desire to want to see most conflict differently and to use knowledge more often as tool. Surprisingly, knowledge identification, such as surveying stakeholders and researching topics of interest, was a widely used process. This and knowledge sharing seemed to be the two processes that facilitated relations and collaboration. For example, if there is salary data needed from another source, both union and management would determine what other sources would be identified as comparable to survey, and both groups would own the data results. There was no surprise that knowledge sharing, which is a significant knowledge tool, was the most used by participants in the study. What was most surprising was how many on the union side preferred using it. The most preferred way to use knowledge sharing from the union's perspective was through storytelling. This implication was central since a part of building relations is having someone engage in the process of perspective taking.

It appeared that all participants, from management and labor, wanted to minimize conflict. This common objective is not always realized amidst conflict. The study findings acknowledge the probability that people in conflict believe that knowledge management processes can fetter the negative effects. It is appropriate to suggest that knowledge management tools be used as a method to quell conflict and harvest the

positive outcomes from conflict episodes. Social change will also benefit from these assertions and affirmative findings.

Summary and Study Conclusion

Conflict is a phenomenon that is a part of social interaction and is a constant that cannot be eliminated even in educational environments (Olaiya, Benson, & Adeola, 2016). Since labor unions are obligatory and a big part of the governing and decision-making process in public education in California, the social interactions are incessant. The various knowledge management processes are tools that could contribute to business success, and that also could be positive attributes to positive conflict outcomes. The findings of the study showed that parties in conflict understand that it is a natural phenomenon. The parties also are eager to engage ways to diminish the negative properties of conflict. It was also found that relationships are important that involves trust and understanding. Knowledge management tools like knowledge sharing and knowledge identification were vital to conflict as it involved the sharing and identification of information that aided understanding and trusting relationships. The administration of necessary information and the fostering of relationships quelled the negative attributes of conflict most of the time.

The study revealed that -in what could arguably be one of the more contentious environments- that being informed and having access to implicit and explicit information, including historic information, was a means for efficacious resolution. The study also showed that the importance of relationships during conflict could influence how the conflict is resolved and that most of the parties in collective bargaining conflicts in public

education were interested in constructive results. As stated in the recommendations of this study, scholars and practitioners with interest in the research may benefit from a generalized finding and also one that focuses specifically on how the state of a social relationship may affect conflict outcomes. There is a need for more in-depth research on conflict in public education and the different variable that may play a part in the conflict outcomes.

Understanding more about conflict, conflict outcomes and contributors to the positive and negative attributed to conflict is central to positive social change. Conflict is a social phenomenon and confirming that processes like knowledge management could improve positive perceptions and outcomes plays a part in the creativity dynamic that could be a result of conflict episodes. Having methods to suppress conflict episodes in public education has the potential to allow for better opportunities for learning and student success.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

***VOLUNTEER RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH STUDY ON CONFLICT, KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT, AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING***

The study will use qualitative Research methods to gain the lived experiences of participants that meet the following criteria:

- a) Participants must have experience with collective bargaining in a California public school setting;
- b) Participants must have experienced conflict during collective bargaining;
- c) Participants must have been a part of management or union collective bargaining team, and
- d) Participants must have experienced the use of knowledge management tools such as sharing, transfer, creation, etc. during collective bargaining exchanges as an intervention during conflict.

The study will be conducted through a telephonic interview that will take approximately

30-45 minutes to complete. The Telephonic interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. There is also a need for a total of approximately 30-45 minutes to review and complete forms, questionnaires and the interview transcripts. **All data collected will be confidential and will be kept private.**

Your time is appreciated and will contribute a vast body of knowledge in the fields of conflict, knowledge management and collective bargaining.

If you are interested, please contact me at XXXX or at treshawn.hall@waldenu.edu.

Thank you!

***This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, Walden University (Approval #05-01-17-0333031)**

Appendix B: Participant Qualifications Questionnaire

April XX, 2017

Dear ((Insert Name)),

Thank you for your interest in participating in the qualitative research study, *Phenomenological Study: Conflict, Knowledge Management and Collective Bargaining in Public Education*. The purpose of the study is the following:

To explore conflict for members of both management and unions at California public school districts with collective bargaining, including community colleges. Conflict, the central phenomenon, will be generally defined as a misunderstanding, miscommunication, and difference of perception, interest, and practices between parties.

Prior to moving forward, I need to verify that you meet the criteria for this study. Please complete the attached questionnaire and return to me by email at [xxxx](#). Please type directly into the form, save it, and email the completed form to me.

Please note that you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty as your participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw from participation, your information will be destroyed up until it is submitted for final review.

If you have questions, please feel free to call or email me. Your expedient response is greatly appreciated.

Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker

Doctoral Student

XXX-XXXX

[xxxx](#)

Participant Qualifications Questionnaire

| (((INSERT NAME))) | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Research Criteria | I meet the criteria (X) | I do not meet the criteria (X) |
| I have experience with collective bargaining in a California public school setting. | | |
| I have experienced conflict during collective bargaining. | | |
| I have been a part of management or union collective bargaining team. | | |
| I have experienced the use of *knowledge management tools such as sharing, transfer, creation, etc. during collective bargaining exchanges as an intervention during conflict | | |

**Knowledge management tools* are uses of information to improve communication, and group or organizational functionality. Examples of tools are knowledge sharing (the sharing of information another may or may not know), knowledge creation (developing and discovering new information or ways of functioning), knowledge exchange (providing and receiving information), knowledge storage (Documenting information for future use), and knowledge assimilation (Combining information for the creation of new knowledge).

Appendix C: Consent Form

Date: XXXX

Participant:

Researcher: Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker

Institution: Walden University

Title: Conflict, Knowledge Management Tools in a Collective Bargaining Environment

Consent to Participate in Research and Confidentiality and Privacy Statement
Identification of Researcher & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by *Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker* from Walden University. The researcher may also be known by some in her role as Director of Human Resources at XXXX. My role as researcher in this process is completely separate and apart from my role as Director of Human Resources at XXXX or any other role. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore conflict for members of both management and unions at California public school districts with collective bargaining, including community colleges. Conflict, the central phenomenon, will be generally defined as a misunderstanding, miscommunication, and difference of perception, interest, and practices between parties. The participants' section for this study will allow for the collection of data and contribute to the researcher's completion of her dissertation requirement as a part of her PHD program.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study and you have read through this document, you will be asked to sign signifying your consent. This study consists of an *interview* that will be administered to individual participants via telephone. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to conflict, knowledge tools and collective bargaining. The interviews will be recorded to capture the most accurate data
Time needed

Participation in this study will need approximately 30-45 minutes of your time participation in a telephonic interview. There will also be a total of approximately 30-45 minutes to be given to the completion of this consent form, questionnaires, participant check-in, and review of telephonic interview transcripts.

Risks

The researcher-interviewer does not foresee more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study. Minimal risk is that associated with everyday life.

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include your contribution to knowledge and research on a subject that could facilitate positive social change and that could assist scholars and practitioners in the fields of conflict, knowledge management, and human resources.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

The study will use qualitative Research methods to gain the lived experiences of participants that meet the following criteria:

Participants must have experience with collective bargaining in a California public school setting;

Participants must have experienced conflict during collective bargaining;

Participants must have been a part of management or union collective bargaining team, and

Participants must have experienced the use of knowledge management tools such as sharing, transfer, creation, etc. during collective bargaining exchanges as an intervention during conflict.

Prior to moving forward with the research and data collection process, there will be a qualification questionnaire emailed for you to complete that will assist the researcher with determining if you meet the criteria for this study provided above.

Interview Protocol

An interview protocol sheet that will be used to guide the participant and researcher through the telephonic interview will be sent along with this form. Please review the interview protocol sheet, which contains the research purpose, key definitions and the interview questions. The research will be asking the questions on the interview protocol sheet during the telephonic interviews.

Transcript Verification

Shortly after the conclusion of the telephonic interviews, you will be sent a transcript of your individual interviews via emails. You will be asked to review the transcript and provide feedback on if there are any questions, concerns, clarifications, misstatements, misinterpretations or errors. Your comments and feedback is important to the integrity of the research.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Personal Acquaintances

Participation, declining to participate or withdrawal of participation from this study will have no influence and/or negative impact on current and future personal acquaintances.

Compensation

There will be no compensation provided for this study.

Confidentiality Statement

This study is private and confidential. The researcher will limit the collection and retention of information about your identity. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data, unless you choose to withdraw from the study.

Withdrawing from the study is your choice and means that all information collected related to your participation will be immediately destroyed up until it is submitted for final review. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing themes and/or patterns about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers (*including digital audio recordings*) will be destroyed.

Questions about the Study

The interviews of the participants will be conducted over the phone. The participants in this study will be provided a 1-2 page summary of the completed study, after the conclusion of the final research document. If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a full copy of the final study, please contact:

Tre' Shawn Hall-Baker
School of Management and Technology
Walden University
XXXX

Instructions for Returning the Consent Form

When the form is completely read and signed, please return a copy by scanning it, attaching it to an email, and sending it electronically by emailing it to the email above.

Participant Rights

For questions regarding participant rights, please contact the following:
Office of Research Ethics and Compliance (IRB): irb@mail.waldenu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The researcher provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

I give consent to be audio recorded during my telephonic interview.

Name of Participant (Printed)

Name of Participant (Signed)

Date

Name of Researcher (Signed)

Date

IRB Approval # is 05-01-17-0333031

IRB Approval Expiration Date: April 30, 2018

Appendix D: Request and Approval of use of Expert Review Model

March 14, 2017

Dear Dr. Johnson,

My name is Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker. I am a doctoral student at Walden University in the School of Management and Technology. I am currently in the dissertation writing phase of the program.

I am writing to request permission to copy, recreate, reproduce or use Appendix J- Validity Rating Questionnaire found on page 220 in the dissertation authored by you titled, The path to graduation: A model interactive web site design supporting doctoral students. The requested use of Appendix J is for educational purposes only. If permission is granted, I will be sure to cite and give credit to you as the original author.

Please feel free to respond to this email with your decision. I am grateful for your consideration.

Best,
Tre'Shawn Hall-Baker
Doctoral Student
Walden University- School of Management and Technology
XXXX
[XXXX](#)

Dr. Nicole Johnson, EDD



March 14, 2017

Tre' Shawn Baker Hall
Doctoral Student
Walden University

Dear Tre' Shawn,

Thank you for taking the time to read and examine my study THE PATH TO GRADUATION: DESIGNING A MODEL INTERACTIVE WEB SITE DEISGN SUPPORTING DOCTORAL STUDENTS.

Your request to copy, recreate, reproduce or use Appendix J- Validity Rating Questionnaire found on page 220 in the dissertation The path to graduation: A model interactive web site design supporting doctoral students is granted.

Please be sure to cite and give credit to me as the original author.

I wish you all the best as you continue along your doctoral journey. Stay the course and run your race.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Nicole Johnson, EDD

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

**WALDEN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Date:

Participant Interviewed: TBD

Participant Pseudonym: TBD

Interview Completed by: Tre' Shawn Hall-Baker

Time of Interview: TBD

Study Title: *Conflict, Knowledge Management and Collective Bargaining in Public Education*

Introduction

Walden University is an institution for higher education focused on improving social justice. As a doctoral student at Walden, I am conducting research as a part of a qualitative phenomenological study. The purpose of this interview is to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon conflict and the other related components of knowledge management (referred to as KM) and collective bargaining within California school districts.

This interview is confidential. Everything that you say will be kept private. If there is a direct quote or other references to your interview used, it will not be attributed to you publically. All records of the interviews will be destroyed five years after the conclusion of the study.

I have set aside forty-five minutes for this interview. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. Should you want to stop at any point during this interview, please let me know. I will be taking notes during the interview. I will also be using a digital voice recorder to record the interview. This will help me completely capture all of the components of the interview. Are you willing to participate in the interview and answer the interview questions?

Research Purpose and Interview Questions

The purpose of this interview with you today is to learn your thoughts, feelings, perceptions, understandings and experiences about the use of knowledge management as

a conflict management tool in a collective bargaining environment. Your insights will help me get a better understanding of conflict for members of both management and unions at California public school districts with collective bargaining, including community colleges. Conflict, the central phenomenon, will be generally defined as a misunderstanding, miscommunication, and difference of perception, interest, and practices between parties.

For purposes of this study the following definitions were developed:

Conflict was described by Gallo (2012) as a social interaction in a complex and unique system that involves parties with needs, interests, values, and objectives that are distinct to one another. The discrete worldviews intersect to create a struggle over resources necessary to fulfill the desire. Chen, et al. (2011) explained that conflict is an important organizational phenomenon that could result in collaborative and creative outcomes. *Conflict management* is a systematic process that involves the efficient administering of differences by recognizing the good and bad effects, as well as recognizing the tools and management styles that maximize the good effects while alleviating the bad (Coggburn, Battaglio & Bradbury, 2014).

Collective bargaining as defined by Boniface and Rashmi (2013) is a process that mandates the engagement of organizational management and unions in exchanges and brokering related to the terms and conditions of employment. It creates a perceived level playing field between the groups that allows the employees to have a collective voice when addressing employment concerns.

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that is in a form that is tangible, and that can be easily and readily stored and retrieved (Virtanen, 2013). Explicit knowledge is knowledge found in computer databases, organizational policies, training materials, etc.

Knowledge creation is the breeding of information based on individual and collective preexisting awareness and past experiences (Matysiewicz & Smyczek, 2013).

Knowledge identification is the discovery of existing knowledge in various forms (i.e., tacit, explicit, institutional, personal, industrial, historical, etc.) for use (Haider, 2014)

Knowledge management was explained by Mciver, Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, and Ramachandran (2013) as a complex method that uses knowledge, in both tacit and explicit form, through processes such as knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge exchange, knowledge storage and knowledge assimilation to improve organizational functionality and competitive advantage.

Knowledge management tools for purposes of this study are the different uses of knowledge like sharing, creation, identification, storage, etc.

Knowledge sharing is the allocation of information that is centered on organizational processes, procedures, and capabilities that are vital to achievement, succession planning, learning and growth (Wang, Tseng, & Yen, 2014).

Lived experiences are a person's description of perceptions, reality, and existence with a phenomenon (Miles, Chapman, & Francis, 2015).

Phenomenology is a qualitative strategy of inquiry that focuses on gaining an understanding of lived experiences through reflection (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is in a softer, respective form, which is not typically tangible and sometimes difficult to share (Whisnant & Khasawneh, 2014). It is knowledge that is received through performing tasks and through the perceptions and experiences of the individuals possessing this knowledge (Mciver et al., 2013).

Interview Questions

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please describe your perceptions, experiences and/or feelings about conflict during collective bargaining interactions.

Describe the outcomes from the conflict situations experienced between management and labor (i.e. positive, negative, neutral)?

KM tools include anything involving knowledge processing, such as knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge identification, etc. What are some of the KM techniques used during conflict situations in collective bargaining?

When knowledge management techniques were used, was the outcome of conflict situations negative or positive the majority of the time?

What are some of the KM techniques used the most to assist with on-going management-labor relations during conflict?

How did KM processes change relations during conflict between management and labor?

With the use of KM techniques during conflict, did labor-management relations improve or worsen?

If there was improvement, please give an example of how relations improved.

If relations worsened, please give an example of how.

If they stayed the same, why do you think there was no change?

When KM tools are utilized, how is conflict impacted?

What are your questions and/or comments about this project or the interview process?

Please note again that you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty as your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have questions or concerns after we depart from this interview, please email me at [XXXX](#). A copy of the transcript of this interview will be provided to you for review. Additionally, if I have follow-up questions later, may I contact you?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please describe your perceptions, experiences and/or feelings about conflict during collective bargaining interactions.

Describe the outcomes from the conflict situations experienced between management and labor (i.e. positive, negative, neutral)?

KM tools include anything involving knowledge processing, such as knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge identification, etc. What are some of the KM techniques used during conflict situations in collective bargaining?

When knowledge management techniques were used, was the outcome of conflict situations negative or positive the majority of the time?

What are some of the KM techniques used the most to assist with on-going management-labor relations during conflict?

How did KM processes change relations during conflict between management and labor?

With the use of KM techniques during conflict, did labor-management relations improve or worsen?

If there was improvement, please give an example of how relations improved.

If relations worsened, please give an example of how.

If they stayed the same, why do you think there was no change?

When KM tools are utilized, how is conflict impacted?

What are your questions and/or comments about this project or the interview process?

Appendix G: NHI Certificate



Appendix H: Participant Profile Information

A description of the participant data collection information

| Participant Pseudonym | Relations to California Public School Collective Bargaining | Duration of data collection (including email correspondences for recruitment, scheduling and check-in) | Additional Data Collection Reflection |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Labor 1 | K12 employee, union leader and collective bargaining participant | 60.15 minutes | Described the importance of bringing knowledge to the negotiating table, and being transparent and fair. |
| Labor 2 | Community college employee, union representative and chief negotiator | 60.19 minutes | Described the significance and need for conflict to achieve change and growth. |
| Labor 3 | Community college employee, union representative and chief negotiator | 60.22 minutes | Emphasized the need for established relationships when engaging in conflict situations, since this could play a part in if conflict is good or bad. |
| Labor 4 | Community college employee, union representative and chief negotiator | 54.14 minutes | Described the importance of the story telling of practical, real life examples to help as a knowledge tool in conflict situations. |
| Labor 5 | Community college employee and collective bargaining | 60.10 minutes | Expressed that conflict was a part of the negotiations process and that it |

| Participant Pseudonym | Relations to California Public School Collective Bargaining | Duration of data collection (including email correspondences for recruitment, scheduling and check-in) | Additional Data Collection Reflection |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | participant | | should not be received has a deterrent. |
| Labor 6 | Union representative and chief negotiator | 54.25 minutes | Explained that conflict and the use of knowledge tools was a way to achieve positive communications. |
| Labor 7 | Community college employee and collective bargaining participant | 61.17 minutes | Explained how knowledge identification is important to conflict since lack of sufficient knowledge could lead to unfavorable outcomes. |
| Labor 8 | Union representative and lead negotiator | 51.22 minutes | Described conflict as generally resulting in positive outcomes and the use of knowledge management tools as a process for seeking understanding. |
| Labor 9 | Community college employee and collective bargaining participant | 63.25 minutes | Described an uneven playing field in favor of management during collective bargaining, but felt that the use of tools |

| Participant Pseudonym | Relations to California Public School Collective Bargaining | Duration of data collection (including email correspondences for recruitment, scheduling and check-in) | Additional Data Collection Reflection |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | such knowledge identification was helpful to attempting to bring balance. |
| Labor 10 | K12 employee and union representative and collective bargaining participant | 54.33 minutes | Described conflict as a welcomed phenomenon that gets problems solved and that the tacit knowledge sharing was a resourceful part of managing conflict. |
| Labor 11 | Union representative and lead negotiator | 54.45 minutes | Explained experiencing both positive and negative conflict and that having someone to share tacit knowledge and experience on a particular subject was important. |
| Labor 12 | Community college employee and collective bargaining participant | 63.59 minutes | Described conflict as an opportunity to bring interest and positions forward from both sides, and that knowledge processes helps with solving problems. |
| Labor 13 | Community college employee, union | 64.38 minutes | Explained that story time was important |

| Participant Pseudonym | Relations to California Public School Collective Bargaining | Duration of data collection (including email correspondences for recruitment, scheduling and check-in) | Additional Data Collection Reflection |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | representative, and collective bargaining participant | | during conflict to share different perspectives. |
| Manager 1 | K12 manager and lead negotiator | 68.18 minutes | Explained that how conflict is perceived and how knowledge is shared is incumbent upon the people and personalities involved. |
| Manager 2 | Community college manager and collective bargaining participant | 61.46 minutes | Described the importance of the trustworthiness of the explicit knowledge shared and how it could influence the relationships. |
| Manager 3 | K12 manager and lead negotiator | 62.19 minutes | Explained that the more knowledge was shared the better understanding the parties gained during conflict. |
| Manager 4 | Community college manager and collective bargaining participant | 61.49 minutes | Emphasized being transparent and sharing information prior to meeting about a conflict situation is helpful when trying to discuss and resolve |

| Participant Pseudonym | Relations to California Public School Collective Bargaining | Duration of data collection (including email correspondences for recruitment, scheduling and check-in) | Additional Data Collection Reflection |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | |
| | | | it. |
| Manager 5 | K12 manager and collective bargaining participant | 74.46 minutes | Explained that during conflict sometimes doing comparisons to see how other like entities resolved concerns may be beneficial. |
| Manager 6 | K12 and community college manager, and collective bargaining participant | 63.13 minutes | Explained that building trust between the parties was important to conflicts that may arise. |
| Manager 7 | Community college manager and collective bargaining participant | 60.47 minutes | Explained that relationships have improved as a result of sharing information during conflict situations. |
| Manager 8 | Community college manager and collective bargaining participant | 52.14 minutes | Explained that when in conflict is it important to share information to determine common goals and objectives. |
| Manager 9 | Community college manager and collective bargaining participant | 66.43 minutes | Explained in public education that it was important to identify a common goal first, such as student |

| Participant Pseudonym | Relations to California Public School Collective Bargaining | Duration of data collection (including email correspondences for recruitment, scheduling and check-in) | Additional Data Collection Reflection |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | success, when working to resolve conflict. |
| Manager 10 | Community college manager | 53.14 minutes | Explained the importance of each party in a conflict conversing to share feelings, perspectives and objectives. |
| Manager 11 | Community college manager and lead negotiator | 64.16 minutes | Discussed the importance of improving relationships through the use of knowledge management tools. |
| Manager 12 | K12 manager and collective bargaining participant | 64.42 minutes | Explained that knowledge sharing was important to providing a foundation to build from during conflict. |