CONFLICT MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS DURING A SERVICE-ORIENTED TQM PROGRAM

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This paper develops an integrated set of propositions related to conflict management interventions during a service-oriented TQM program. The focus is on the activities and relationship in the superior-subordinate interaction. The developed model centers around interpersonal conflict resolution and effectual interventions intended to induce collaboration in the TQM environment and its antecedents and modalities.

INTRODUCTION

The services sector in the United States has emerged as the fastest growing industrial segment and as the largest source of employment (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993). The reason for this success may be service providers' speedy adaptability to changing environmental forces. A firm's changing environment is characterized as having generic uncertainty, evolving technology, changing consumer tastes, and floods of new technological interventions (Peters 1987). Influences like these, especially changing consumer expectations, have forced many service providers to scramble and adapt to market demands and increased competition in efforts to differentiate themselves as quality providers. The need to meet consumer demands is the reason many marketers of services are now a part of the American Quality Revolution.

Perhaps the impetus for marketers to embrace the quality movement has been spurred by the attractiveness and recognition of receiving quality awards such as the Malcolm Baldridge National Quality Award and the Deming Prize. Other pressures for promoting continuous quality improvement have been quality criteria within regulatory requirements. For example, the Joint Commission on Accreditation for Health Organizations is focusing on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) for health care facilities. The adoption of a Total Quality Management programs are now accepted as a popular organizational development intervention to better meet customer expectations, continuously improve processes, and reduce total costs of quality (Schein 1990). For example, Wal-Mart continues to expend resources for logistics and information technology to stock the shelves faster and more efficiently (Stalk, Evans, and Shulman 1992), and Dow Corning's continuous improvement programs assist in the decision to outsource functions like market research (Smith 1992). However, some companies like Toyota may not be seeing the same strategic advantages attained through their TQM efforts (Ingrassia and White 1994). Spending a firm's resources on TQM can fail in attaining a firm's strategic marketing objectives, especially when facing extreme global competition (Bhide 1986).

Why are companies failing at implementing their quality programs? Total Quality Management is a comprehensive intervention most often associated

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with institutional change that trickles down from top management. Unfortunately, many managers intend to offer TQM as a "fashion statement" without committing to the "nuts and bolts" of assembling an effective quality program (Niven 1993). Perhaps, some service providers are strongly committed to providing quality services, but fail in their service quality socialization processes with their front-line service employees. This may be especially true when a marketing department promotes a quality orientation to external customers, but overlooks the customer service representative (CSR) who is the deliverer of services. Other marketing managers may fail to measure and correct those interventions intended to create the proper work conditions (Hartline and Ferrell 1996; Robertson, Roberts, and Porras 1993).

Many marketing managers also fail to plan for interorganizational conflicts that erupt during drastic changes in a work setting. Implementing TQM involves unlearning and adopting new behaviors, despite the fact that people dislike change since "change of any kind is a struggle with fear, anger, and uncertainty, a war against old habits, hidebound thinking, and entrenched interest" (Frey p. 80, 1993). Intrinsic within any "unfreezing and moving" (Lewin 1951) of an organization's members, interpersonal conflict creates barriers to effective organizational changes. For example, health care marketers are recognizing the need for better conflict management skills. Sherer (1994, p. 52) quotes a hospital CEO as saying, "Successful CEOs and managers absolutely need strong conflict resolution and negotiation skills if they want to thrive in an environment that has become more difficult to work in." Also, Hudak et al. (1993) find that hospital administrators indicate that skills in conflict management, team-building, and motivational leadership rank highly as requirements for successful health care administrators in the future. Even if marketing organizations see the importance of managing intraorganizational conflict with work setting interventions, many fail to measure the efficacy of these efforts in creating more collaborative environments.

The objective of this paper is to develop an integrated set of propositions that focus on conflict management interventions for the marketing organization during a TQM program implementaton. In the process, we describe the importance of benchmarking and measuring organizational interventions intended to reduce conflict. First, we offer an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of interpersonal conflict as they relate to the superior-subordinate interactions especially between the marketing manager and the customer service representative (hereafter "CSR"). Next, the model is discussed as it pertains to the antecedents and modalities for interpersonal conflict resolution and effective interventions intended to induce collaboration during drastic organizational changes like a quality initiative. The paper concludes with implications of the developed conflict management intervention framework.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

The service encounter creates challenges for marketing managers in implementing a quality program in that service workers (e.g., CSRs) engage in activities characterized as intangible, co-productive, non-repetitive, and often autonomous (Tenner and DeToro 1992). While most services are arguably intangible (McDougall and Snetsinger 1990; Tenner and DeToro 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985), Lovelock (1983) proposes that services can be either tangible or intangible through the means of: (1) tangible actions to people's bodies, (2) tangible actions to goods and other physical possessions, (3) intangible actions directed at people's minds, and (4) intangible actions directed at people's intangible assets. The co-productive nature of the service encounter also requires the CSR to be highly dependent on the customer's input and participation. Thus, the customer is directly involved in the administration of the service as inseparable of production and consumption that provide opportunities for an on-going relationship (Beaven and Scotti 1990; Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993; Lovelock 1983; Tenner and

DeToro 1992). In this case of a cusotmer relations department, this mutual dependency forces CSRs to surrender some of their exercised control over the service process. Additionally, services are contingent to each situation in which they are rendered, and are subject to variability (Jackson and Cooper 1988). As such the CSR often fails to have the opportunity to measure service quality before the service comes in contact with the customer. Finally, many CSRs experience enormous autonomy (e.g., delivery of home health services) and exercise their personal control as they are free to make subjective decisions to guide the encounter. In many cases, management faces a CSR's independence and autonomy as barriers to implementing organizational changes. Thus, the potential for interpersonal conflict within the marketing manager/CSR dyad is raised as many of these interventions are implemented.

Conflict is "the process that begins when one party perceives that the other has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that he or she cares about" (Thomas 1992, p. 653). Likert and Likert (1976, p. 7) posit that "the success of a corporation or governmental agency is influenced greatly by its capacity to achieve cooperative coordination rather than hostile conflict among its functional departments and also to stimulate differences and then to capitalize on them by productive problem solving leading to creative and acceptable solutions." Intraorganizational conflict can offer both functional and dysfunctional repercussions contingent upon how the marketing manager assesses the causes and the degree of the conflict (Barclay 1991; Louis and Stern 1970; Pondy 1967). Rahim and Bonoma (1979) argue that organizations in which there is little or no conflict may stagnate. On the other hand, organizational conflict left uncontrolled may have dysfunctional effects. Conflict occurs because (1) an individual holds behavioral intentions and preferences that are incompatible with another's behavioral intentions or preferences, (2) several individuals desire a scarce resource or (3) an individual maintains values and beliefs that are incongruous of the values and beliefs of another individual (Rahim and Bonoma 1979). When conflict surpasses the optimal level the organization becomes dysfunctional, and the conflict affects organizational performance. Nelson (1989) describes five signals that indicate whether a firm is suffering from dysfunctional conflict. These are (1) high turnover rates, (2) apathy and fatalism among the workers, (3) inability to collaborate and reach a consensus on implementing operational changes, (4) requirement for external intervention rather than internal interventions for change implementations, and (5) the presence of identifiable factions among the workers. All these facets can hinder and even obstruct a planned total quality initiative's execution, and it is imperative that the marketing manager take necessary measures to thwart the level of conflict from reaching dysfunctional levels.

Several models in the literature have described the types of conflict that occur within organizations. For example, Rahim and Bonoma (1979) and Thomas (1992) characterize conflict as either intrapersonal (within the individual) or interpersonal (between two or more persons within the organizations). They further segregate interpersonal conflict as either intragroup (within a group), intergroup (between two or more groups within the organization), or as interorganizational (between two or more organizations). Moreover, Pondy (1967) provides three conceptual models of organizational conflict as the bargaining model, the bureaucratic model, and the systems model. The bargaining model corresponds to competitive or distributive interaction (Murray 1986; Pruitt 1981) where parties compete or bargain for scarce resources. Second, the bureaucratic model corresponds to conflicts that are apparent vertically within the superior - superordinate dyad. For example, these conflicts usually transpire as a result of the manager's attempt to control the CSR's activities in spite of the CSR's resistance. Finally, the systems model suggests that conflicts exist along the lateral lines within the organization primarily between two workers on the same level as common to interdepartmental conflict.

Pondy (1967) suggests that conflict is composed of antecedental conditions (e.g., unfavorable demands on an employee), affective states (e.g., feelings of the parties involved - stress, anger, etc.), cognitive states of individuals - being their perception or awareness of conflict, and conflicting behavior (reaction to the conflict like competitive or aggressive resistance). Conflict between individuals can be characterized as a "sequence of interlocking conflict episodes" responsible for forming the pattern of conflict that the parties involved reflect as the conflict's frame (Thomas 1992).

Pondy (1967) extends five cognominal stages of a conflict episode that he terms (1) latent conflict (conditions), (2) perceived conflict (cognition), (3) felt conflict (affect), (4) manifest conflict (behavior), and (5) conflict aftermath (conditions). Latent conflict is tied to service employees' competing for scarce resources (cf. Walton and Dutton 1969), striving for autonomy, dissenting from organizational goals, and role conflict. Pondy (1967) suggests that perceived conflict represents an individual's cognitive state or awareness of the conflict. It may result from a mere misunderstanding between two parties that can often be resolved through open communication of the conflicting issues. An individual has the capability to "block-out" conflicts that are only mildly important, but the level of conflict exacerbates when the conflict relates to conflicting values of the individual's personality. Felt conflict relates to the personalization of the conflict as an individual's anxieties surmount. These anxieties are internalized and personalized into bitter feelings displaced to the relationship with other service workers and with the customer. At this level, conflict becomes dysfunctional to the organization's effectiveness. Manifest conflict pertains to an individual's release of personalized feelings as outward expressions. Although open, physical aggression is prohibited both legally and normatively, other types of open expression are prominent which may be expressed as a worker's avoidance of working with another customer service representative or the withdrawal of needed support. For example, sales teams delivering industrial services are composed of the originator, technical support personnel, an account manager, and CSR who are required to meet regularly in servicing an account. As conflict rises within this team, a lack of support and coordination among the group links to a poor relationship with the customer. Pondy (1967) defines manifest conflict as behavior that, in the mind of the actor, frustrates the goals of at least some participants. Conflict aftermath refers to the results of the conflict episode. For instance, if the conflict is effectively resolved to the satisfaction of all participants and there is a foundation for which a cooperative relationship has been laid, the participants are said to concentrate on the latent conflicts that have not been previously discussed. On the other hand, if the participants are dissatisfied with the outcomes and a distributive atmosphere has resulted, they may be more prone to concentrate on the existing issues, and the conflict may exacerbate into a future confrontation.

Thomas (1992) provides a cyclical, episodal model for conflict consisting of awareness, thoughts and emotions, intentions, behavior, and outcomes. During the awareness phase, one party becomes aware that the other party is about to or has negatively affected something of importance of the first party. Thomas (1992) describes this stage as goal conflicts, judgement conflicts, or normative conflicts. Goal conflicts result from a party pursuing their own individual goals perceived as a threat to the goal attainment of the other party. Judgement conflicts result in differences over factual or empirical issues, and normative conflicts point to differences on how the parties ought to behave. Second, thoughts and emotions resort to a party's cognitions (thoughts) about how to deal with the conflict that interacts with the party's emotions or feelings about the same issues. These thoughts and emotions correspond to the propensities to act or behave in a certain way to resolve the conflict as analogous to Rubin and Brown's (1975) interpersonal motivational orientation. Next, the individual develops intentions that Thomas (1992, p. 657) defines as the "conation or decision to act in a given way, that intervenes between the party's thoughts and emotions and the party's overt behavior." Fourth, a party's behaviors are the overt acts intended to influence the intentions of the other party. Fifth, the interaction phase corresponds to the opposing party's reaction to the first party's behavior. Thomas (1992, p. 679) suggests that this phase acts "as a stimulus that provides additional input to the other's thoughts and feelings, leading to potential adjustments in tactical and/or strategic intentions that may change the course of the conflict episode." Finally, the outcome of the episode is when both parties cease interacting and have agreed to a solution as a result of their tactical interventions or broken-off the relationship and no solution has occurred.

A MODEL OF CONFLICT INTERVENTIONS DURING A TQM PROGRAM

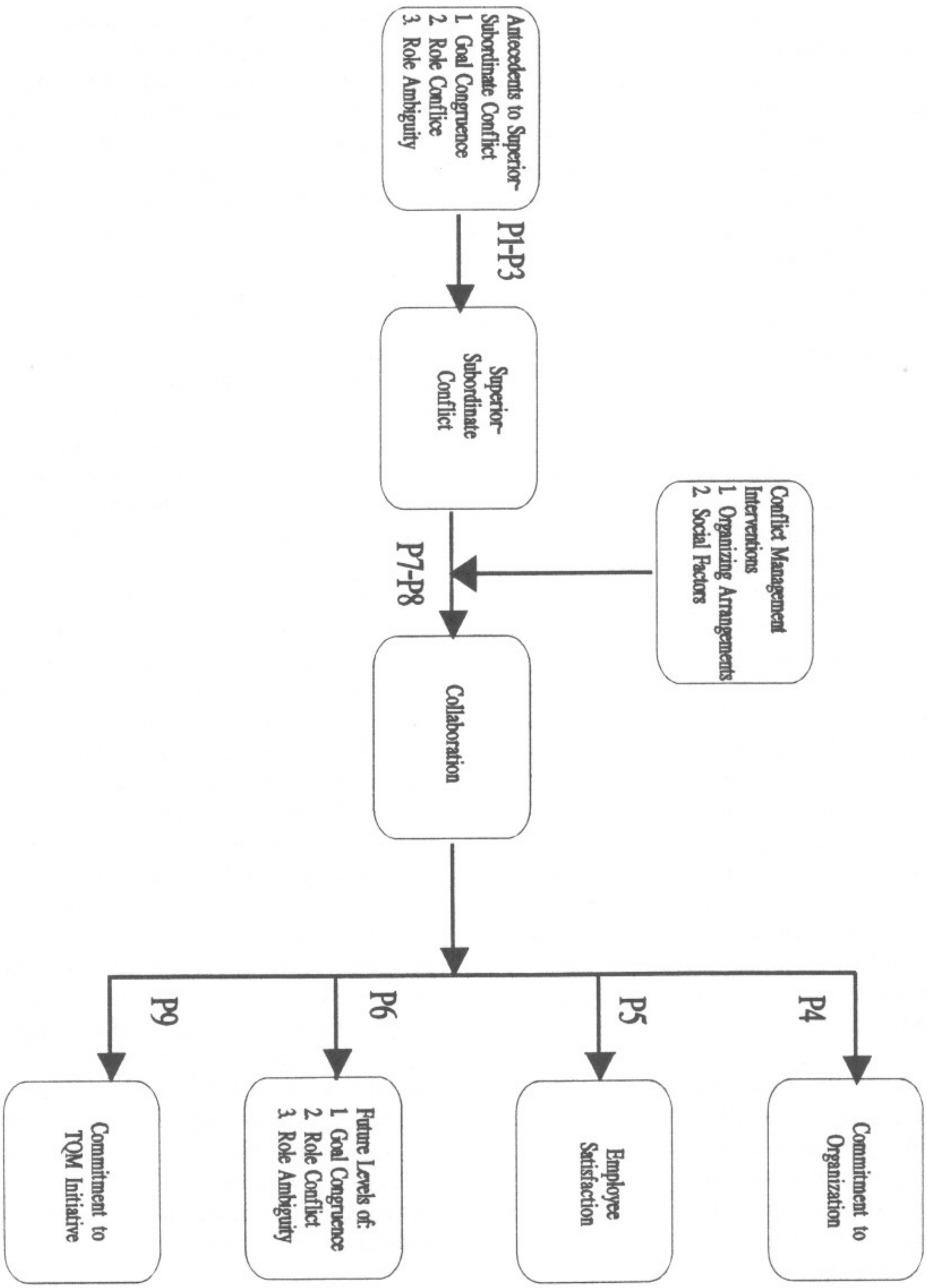
A contingency model of conflict management interventions during a TQM program is presented in Figure 1. As a marketing organization commits to a quality program, desired levels of commitment to the quality initiative and performance goals for its "colleagues" (employees) are set. These goals are set as a company's performance that will increase concurrently as the individual development and performance are positively affected (cf. Porras 1987; Robertson, Roberts, and Porras 1993; Silvers and Porras 1991) As the colleagues undergo the unfreezing and moving (Lewin 1951) due to quality interventions, they experience pressures for role and goal conformity that are commensurate with the company's quality goals. These pressures affect the individual's levels of goal incongruence, role conflict, and role ambiguity, leading to differing perceptions of reality that are, in turn, outwardly expressed as resulting conflicting encounters with other co-workers and the immediate supervisor. As the superior-subordinate conflict ensues, both parties establish intentions that drive the behaviors expressed as the modality chosen to resolve the conflict, including integrative problem solving, bargaining, avoiding, accommodating, or compromising. The organization employs moderating interventions to steer the modality of the conflict resolution process. The modality of conflict resolution functions as a mediator between the antecedents of conflict and the individual's commitment to the quality initiative that mediates the individual's performance. The effectiveness of the organizational interventions is based upon employee commitment and performance as measured at the onslaught of the quality initiative and after the application of the organizational interventions. An integrated set of propositions is developed in the following section to describe the relationships in the Figure 1.

Antecedents to Interpersonal Conflict

Conflict stems from goal incongruence, role incongruence and dysfunctional domain definitions, and differences in perceptions of reality used in joint decision making (Rosenberg and Stern 1970; Stern and Heskett 1967). In this regard, Stern and Heskett (1967) state that each party involved in the conflict maintains their own individual goals that often supersede the common goals of the organization. The organizational goals are those espoused by management, the leading figure that strongly influences the normative behavior within the firm, or a coalition of several prominent individuals within the organization. These common goals are normally transmuted within the daily decisions and operating policies and procedures that Rosenberg and Stern (1970) term the operative goals. As individuals strive to meet their goals in lieu of organizational goals, conflict is imminent. In addition, Stern and Haskett (1967) suggest that conflict may ensue simply because the parties involved perceive the situations existent within the organization differently in spite of goal and domain (role) congruency. In reference to the Rosenberg and Stern (1970) and Stern and Haskett (1967) models, role conflict and role ambiguity may pose the most accurate and thorough explanation for interpersonal conflict during a quality initiative.

In another model, Kahn et al. (1964) define the worker's role as the set of activities that are to be performed by an individual within the organization.

FIGURE 1
A Model of Conflict Management Interventions During a Service-Oriented TQM Program



For example, a CSR's role set is constituted by significant others within the work environment who influence their normal work activities. Role sets (stakeholders in the activities of the individual) are highly interdependent among CSRs, and they develop a set of role expectations or values, beliefs, and attitudes that relate to what the CSR should and should not do within the organization. A CSR's role set communicates or "sends" the role expectations to the CSR and then exerts role pressures to perform according to specific role expectations. The CSR then interprets these role expectations sent from the role set and translates them into the received role that amounts to a cognitive understanding of what is expected of the individual's performance.

As a result of the role set holding different values and beliefs individually, Kahn et al. (1964) propose that conflicting role expectations may be relayed to the CSR. If these role pressures exhibit a large degree of contrariety with expected behaviors, the CSR will experience the psychological disunity called role conflict. Role conflict can result from the violations of classical organizational theory that establishes the importance of the principle of the chain of command and the principle of unity of command (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970). The principle of the chain of command prescribes that organizations are formalized in a hierarchial fashion with a single and precise flow of authority from the top individual who is given the most control over the organization down to the lowest in the hierarchy. Furthermore, the principle of the unity of command corresponds to each worker's receiving directions from only one supervisor (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970). When these organizational norms are violated, role conflict commonly occurs.

Kahn et al. (1964) extend a typology for role conflict as: intra-sender conflict, inter-sender conflict, inter-role conflict, person-role conflict, and role overload. Intra-sender conflict results from a supervisor's requesting an employee to preform a task that she or he normally refuses to allow, and similarly, inter-sender conflict encircles conflicting role pressures from more than one role sender. In cases of inter-sender conflict, the employee will determine the relevance of each expectation and prioritize it according to personal values and those that they feel will be evaluated (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970). For example, a marketing manager initiates a quality program and through an intradepartmental steering committee sets quality outcome measures for resolving customer complaints. The CSR is being monitored on the thoroughness and completion of resolving each customer complaint. On the other hand, the marketing manager implements a productivity schedule requiring each CSR to rectify a given number of customer problems within a given day due to the present staffing shortage, however, the manager does not allow overtime if required. Each CSR complains that s/he cannot follow the proper protocols for handling customer complaints properly. In this case, the marketing manager is exerting conflicting pressures on the CSR resulting in inter-sender role conflict.

As another type of role conflict, inter-role conflict concerns role pressures associated with membership in one organization as being in conflict with pressures stemming from membership in another group. Person-role conflict occurs when role pressures conflict with individual values and beliefs typically present during decisions that are conflicting to an individual's ethical principles. Role overload occurs when role senders bombard the worker with numerous role expectations that seemingly cannot all be performed adequately. This phenomenon is quite prevalent within companies initiating a quality program where quality outcomes conflict with productivity standards set for the worker. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1988) posit that role conflict is related to the perceived conflict between expectations of customers and expectations of the organization, which is often manifested in the amount of paperwork needed to complete the service transactions, and number of internal contacts that the customer-contact people must make to complete the transaction. Additionally, management policies or a marketing manager's commands that conflict with specifications cause role conflict.

Kahn et al. (1964, p. 21) further describe role ambiguity as a "lack of agreement or coordination among role senders [which] produces a pattern of sent expectations that contain logical incompatibilities or which take inadequate account of the needs and abilities of the focal person." They tie role ambiguity closely with communication within the organization. Erroneous or inadequate information within the work environment creates difficulties for the CSR to adequately perform his/her work responsibilities. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1988) suggest that role ambiguity results from problems in the frequency and quality of downward communication, extent of constructive feedback, product knowledge, product-specific training, and training in communication skills.

Several other studies indicate that role conflict and role ambiguity have direct correlations to the level of worker satisfaction with their employer. For example, Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) established a measurement scale measuring role conflict and role ambiguity. Their study reveals strong correlations on role variables and direct supervisor-subordinate relations. In other words, role conflict and role ambiguity are lower under conditions in which supervisors emphasize production criteria under conditions of uncertainty, provide structure and standards, facilitate teamwork, and tolerate freedom. As support for this study, Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1976) find that salespersons who believe that their performance is being supervised experience higher job satisfaction. However, they find that salespersons who feel that they have to be highly innovative to meet the job requirements suffer from job dissatisfaction. These findings support the need for clear and concise direction pertaining to job requirements to eliminate role ambiguity. Also, Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) find that lower role conflict and ambiguity are correlated with more organizational emphasis on personal development, formalization, adequacy of communication, top management's receptiveness to ideas, coordination of work flow, adaptability to change, and adequacy of authority. Again Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1976) support Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) that salespersons who believe that they have input in determining the standards by which their performance is evaluated experience higher job satisfaction.

Furthermore, Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) find that role conflict and role ambiguity are higher under conditions of goal conflict and inconsistency, delays in decisions, distortions and suppressions of information, and violations of the chain of command. In a related study, King and King (1991) note from meta-analyses of two studies conducted by Fisher and Gitelson (1983) and Jackson and Schuler (1985) that role ambiguity and role conflict are correlated with an employee's propensity to leave (positively) (cf. Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977); organizational commitment (negatively); tension-anxiety (positively); overall job satisfaction (negatively); and satisfaction with co-workers, supervisor, and the work itself (negatively). Also Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) posit that role perceptions - role accuracy, role ambiguity, and role conflict - are direct antecedents to the level of a saleperson's performance. They espouse that greater role conflict and ambiguity lead to more mental anxiety and lower job satisfaction in a salesforce. Finally, role conflict and role ambiguity are tied to providing service quality. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuram (1988) find that higher levels of role conflict and ambiguity negatively impact an employee's service quality performance. Based on the above discussion, the following propositions are given:

P 1: Customer service representatives who experience greater goal incongruence during a TQM implementation experience higher levels of interpersonal conflict with their managers.

P 2: Customer service representatives who experience greater role conflict during a TQM implementation experience higher levels of interpersonal conflict with their managers.

P 3: Customer service representatives who experience greater role ambiguity during a TQM implementation experience higher levels of interpersonal conflict with their managers.

Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Strategies

The current organizational literature prescribes to five basic interpersonal conflict resolution strategies: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating (Rahim and Bonoma 1979; Ruble and Thomas 1976; Thomas 1992). Thomas (1992) posits that the competing intention entails an "attempt to prevail or win one's position - to satisfy one's own concerns at the other's expense" which is taken as an uncooperative and assertive tactic (Ruble and Thomas 1976; Thomas 1992). Others have termed this approach as a dominating style (Rahim and Bonoma 1979) or "tough battler" (Filley 1975) or a competitive bargaining style (Murray 1986; Pruitt 1981) where one party's attempts are winning without considering the expectations and needs of the other party. The individual who engages in competitive bargaining views succumbing to the needs and interests of the other party as reducing one's individual status, weakening one's position, or lowering one's self image (Filley 1975; Pruitt 1981). Second, parties who collaborate are concerned with the needs of both parties and are interested in formulating solutions that provide mutually beneficial outcomes as being highly cooperative and assertive (Ruble and Thomas 1976; Thomas 1992). This paradigm is centered on open communication, mutual alternative formulation, and commitment to mutually beneficial outcomes (cf. Clopton 1984; Filley 1975; Fisher and Ury 1991; Graham 1986; Gray 1989; Murray 1986; Pruitt 1981; Rahim and Bonoma 1979; Rubin and Brown 1975; Ruble and Thomas 1976; Thomas 1992; Walton and McKersie 1965). Third, compromising intentions are a combination of competing and collaboration as a moderating strategy between providing for the other party's needs and achieving individual needs satisfaction (Rahim and Bonoma 1979; Thomas 1992). This strategy corresponds to coordinative behavior centering on providing concessions in return for reciprocal concessions (Pruitt 1981) as both equally cooperative and assertive (Ruble and Thomas 1976; Thomas 1992). Next, the avoiding strategy is undertaken where one party desires to ignore the concerns of both parties as an attempt to completely avoid a conflict (Rahim and Bonoma 1979; Ruble and Thomas 1976; Savage and Blair 1989; Thomas 1992). Ruble and Thomas (1976) and Thomas (1992) describe this strategy as uncooperative and unassertive. Finally, accommodating is forfeiting one's own individual concerns and interests for the other party's (Ruble and Thomas 1976; Thomas 1992).

The negotiation literature overwhelmingly supports that collaborative negotiation yields the most favorable results (cf. Adler, Brahm, and Graham 1992; Adler and Graham 1989; Campbell et al. 1992). Collaboration fits Ertel's (1991) typology for an effective conflict management procedure that prescribes to clarifying interests, building a working relationship, generating options, perceiving as legitimate, cognizing of the parties' procedural alternatives, improving communication, and leading to wise commitments. For example, Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990) state that cooperative intentions on behalf of salespersons are an important dimension for promoting relationship quality. Additionally, Perdue, Day, and Michaels (1986) find that the collaborative style dominates among industrial buyers and sellers, and Graham (1986) finds that there are increased profits and satisfaction for industrial buyers and sellers when employing the problem-solving approach. Gray (1990) suggests that collaboration (1) improves the quality of solutions, (2) reopens deadlock, (3) assures all interests are considered, (4) parties retain ownership, (5) enhances novel and innovative solutions, (6) improves relationships, and (7) lowers the costs of other negotiation methods. As further support, Murray (1986) alludes that collaborative negotiation maximizes one's returns in the larger time and within the community context.

A marketing manager's collaborating with CSRs and TQM principles are highly congruous. Frey (1993) describes a company turnaround where he weathers organizational transformation through creating a collaborative environment with his employees. He describes developing a partnership with his employees of mutual problem-solving and promoting a high level of employee involvement in decision-making. Senge (1990) refers to this type of environment as members' deferring their assumptions and problem-solving together. What Total Quality Management calls for is a highly integrative environment of employee empowerment, team learning, and employee commitment, while increasing employee satisfaction (Filley 1975). These elements are apparent as parties collaborate by which they mutually identify interests and needs, mutually disclose, mutually problem-solve, mutually establish joint outcomes, and mutually commit to the derived solution (cf. Fisher and Ury 1992; Walton and McKersie 1965). Filley (1975) posits that problem-solving benefits all the parties, while anything less especially competition, creates more conflicts than it resolves conflict. Based upon the above discussion, the following propositions are offered:

P 4: Marketing managers who assume a collaborative conflict resolution style promote employee commitment to the organization.

P 5: Marketing managers who assume a collaborative conflict resolution style promote employee satisfaction within the organization.

P 6: Marketing managers who assume a collaborative conflict resolution style reduce the amount of role conflict, goal incongruence, role ambiguity, and incongruent perceptions of reality in future conflict episodes.

Quality Socialization Process Interventions

Quality companies "provide goods and services that completely satisfy both internal and external customers by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations" (Tenner and DeToro p. 31, 1992). To be a quality provider, service companies must intervene through organizational development (OD) interventions that promote innovation. Peters (1987) advances quality innovation as a firm's (1) obsession with quality as a guiding ideology (cf. Casalou 1991; Schein 1990), (2) measurement of quality (cf. Garvin 1983; Schein 1990), (3) rewards for quality (cf. Cole, Bacadayan, and White 1993), (4) training of quality principles (cf. Hartline and Ferrell 1996; Senge 1992; Schein 1990; Tenner and DeToro 1992), (5) team approach for quality (cf. Kaluzny 1989; Schein 1990), (6) focus on minute details, (7) development of a parallel organization, (8) total integration of all the parties in the system (cf. Tenner and DeToro 1992), (9) cost reduction, and (10) long-term commitment to the process (cf. Casalou 1991). In this light, Tenner and DeToro (1992) add energetic leadership, communications (cf. Schein 1990), and a supportive structure to employ effective continuous improvement in the firm. What is clear in the literature is that TQM is pertaining to an organization-wide strategy grounded in senior level management's commitment and adequate resource allocation and the inclusion of each CSR in the quality initiative. Such inclusion is more effective within a collaborative work environment. The best work environment is stimulatated through proper organizational intervention and socialization.

Hartline and Ferrell (1996) call for adopting an internal marketing philosophy as a driving force behind the quality socialization process. They suggest that these managerial interventions are tied to (1) recruitment, selection, and training of employees, (2) management's commitment to the organization's strategic direction and corporate values, (3) open, free-flowing communication with the employee, (4) alignment of corporate policies and strategy, and (5) effective use of marketing information systems. However, as a quality program is initiated within an especially dynamic and complex environment, service workers can have conflicting goals that stifle teamwork and communication that can immediately and drastically halt continuous improvement within the organization (Casalou 1991). Many companies implementing quality programs heavily concentrate on their internal marketing interventions, but fail to relate their efforts to relationships between individual workers and the on-going conflict resolution process involved in the service delivery (Savage and Blair 1989; Sherer 1994). It is only through effective interventions at the antecedental level and the modality of interpersonal conflict resolution can management truly avoid the negative influences that hinder quality efforts.

Organizational interventions must be targeted toward the organizational work setting. Porras (1987) (cf. Robertson, Roberts, and Porras 1987; Silvers and Porras 1991) suggests that the organizational work setting affects an employee's outcome expectations, efficacy expectations, and valence. Porras (1987, p. 50) alludes to organizational setting interventions because the "work setting is critical in the behavior change process because it sends organizational members the signals that affect their expectations (both efficacy and outcome) and the valences they attach to various personal outcomes". His organizational setting interventions are composed of the modification of organizing arrangements, social factors, technology, and physical settings. Organizing arrangements are considered the internal formalization such as the company's goals and strategies, formal structure, administrative policies and procedures, administrative systems, and the reward system. An organization's social factors are the culture (and subcultures), interaction processes, social patterns and networks, and individual attributes. A firm's technology encompasses: the tools, equipment, and machinery; job design; work flow design; technical expertise; technical procedures; and technical systems. For example, National Car Rentals Emerald Card program actually frees employees from dealing with routine customer processing allowing for more time to correct severe problems that need special attention (Wetherbe 1995). Finally, the physical setting contains the space configuration, physical ambiance, interior design, and architectural design. As related to Porras' (1987) typology of work setting interventions, companies implementing a TQM program undergo manipulation of these areas as a quality socialization process (Hartline and Ferrell 1996) to promote employees' interests and desires to provide quality services. The model presented in this paper posits that a collaborative environment within the organization can be established through the manipulation of work setting variables primarily Porras' (1991) organizing arrangements and the social factors. These work setting interventions can be geared toward lowering a CSR's goal incongruence, role conflict, role ambiguity, and differences in perception of reality.

Organizing Arrangements. Porras (1987, p. 51) indicates that organizing arrangements are intended to "coordinate formally both the behavior of people and the functioning of various parts of the organization". Therefore, organizations have direct control over the organizing arrangements and their effects on creating a collaborative environment. The organizational goals specify what the organization is attempting to achieve and guide individual decision-making behavior. Within a quality program, each colleague should receive an opportunity to participate in defining both individual and organizational goals. As previously noted, individual participation in defining role expectations reduce both role conflict and ambiguity (cf. Churchill, Walker, and Ford 1976), and stabilize the goals of both parties. One other effective method is to institute formalized policies and procedures that enhance the flow of communication within the organization. Companies have the opportunity to document an integrative problem-solving procedure to be followed in work groups. For example, marketing managers may insist on creating a formalized joint agenda (Filley 1975) and having the CSR commit to certain rules of engagement before discussing issues. As another example, companies who adopt written grievance policies provide a means for their employees to be heard up the chain of command, if necessary, which introduces mediation but reduces highly confrontational situations in the organization.

Additionally, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1988) suggest that formalized organizational training assists in reducing role ambiguity and directly affects the gap between the service delivery and the employee's translation of perceptions into service quality. A colleague's perceptions of quality are elucidated during effective training relating to conflict resolution skills with supervised simulations used to promote employee receptiveness and openness to the customer and other employees. Moreover, these sessions reduce hierarchial barriers between managers and employees. Some situations may warrant a restructuring of reporting relationships or the aligning of individuals with similar personalities and values. Finally, management's tying integrative problem-solving to the organization's reward system enhances collaboration. This intervention involves human resources to design job responsibilities reflecting a CSR's participation in collaborative work groups and requires each CSR to be apart of the team effort to solve problems. Moreover, the end-of-the-year job performance evaluations should reflect whether the CSR employs effective conflict resolution skills with other workers and their managers and whether the CSR respects others, respects authority, and is open to discussing innovative solutions to interpersonal problems.

Social Factor Interventions. Collaboration within the superior-subordinate dyad is rooted in creating a supportive culture and facilitating integrative interactive processes and promoting cooperative social patterns and networks (cf. Porras' Stream Analysis Model 1987). Schein (p. 12, 1992) defines an organization's culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learns as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that works well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems". It is not uncommon for an organization to have multiple cultures as "naive views" that may be related to industry and supply-chain cultures that traverse across the entire organization (Gregory 1983). Porras (1987) and Schein (1992) tie culture to the central values or espoused ideals translated through artifacts, stories, norms, and leadership styles within the organization. Much of the time, a company's values and norms rest upon its leadership and their behaviors as role models. Tenner and DeToro (1992) state that the leaders of the organization serve as resources, coaches, facilitators, and role models for the employees in the workforce. For example, Hartline and Ferrell (1996) find that higher levels of management commitment to quality instill employee organizational commitment. This type of relationship is expected to be carried to leaders who practice and encourage collaboration in their dealings with employees.

Additionally, much of the cultural socialization of employees stems from the training processes underway in the organization. For instance, Filley (1975) offers that training sessions could advance theory training or simulations involving win-lose and win-win behavior so that members can experience first-hand alternative methods for resolving conflict. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) find that service employees who are socialized collectively, formally, sequentially, and investively increase the extent of the shared goals and values within the organization. In other words, employees who are socialized in formal settings, who receive positive encouragement, and who are trained sequentially are more likely to conform to an organization's culture. Moreover, institutional socialization (through training) leads to reduced employee role conflict and role ambiguity, and it leads to higher levels of employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hartline and Ferrell 1996).

Interactive processes are demarcated as communication, conflict-resolution, problem-solving, and decision-making processes (Porras 1987). Social patterns and networks can exist as formal or informal modes of communication, problem-solving and decision-making. Filley (1975) calls for leveling conferences, pre-problem solving meetings, and sensitivity training. Leveling conferences are designed to discuss issues, feelings, and the history of the relationship. Pre-planning meetings are geared toward agreeing to an agenda and laying out the ground rules to be followed. Sensitivity training (T-groups) is described by Aronson (1976) who espouses their use as promoting interactive processes. He states that the goals of T-groups are (1) communication between parties, (2) personal examination of oneself, (3) awareness of others, (4) strengthened interpersonal relations, (5) ability to act collaboratively, and (6) ability to resolve conflicts. As other examples, Bechhard (1967) describes the use of confrontational meetings as having open communication, sharing ownership of problems, and collaborative goal setting and corrective actions. These meetings normally take place among managers, however, within a TQM program can take place within steering committees containing both superiors and subordinates. Additionally, collateral organizations assemble groups of individuals, including managers and their employees, to problem-solve regarding problems within the organization (Zand 1974). All of these types of strategies (e.g., training, employee participatory groups, etc.) serve as organizational interventions geared toward creating a collaborative social environment transmuting to all levels within the workplace.

P 7: A marketing firm's organizing arrangements intended to promote a collaborative work setting positively influence the use of collaboration within the marketing manager/CSR dyad.

P 8: A marketing firm's social factors intended to promote a collaborative work setting positively influence the use of collaboration within the marketing manager/CSR dyad.

Employee Commitment to the Quality Initiative

Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1988) suggest that employee involvement during a quality program is associated with commitment to the organization. One way to induce employee involvement is to allow colleagues to interact effectively with their managers and allow them to freely participate in organizational decision-making. However, as interpersonal conflicts erupt within the organization, integrative problem solving is hindered. As the organization establishes its parameters for organizational socialization, it often intercepts conflicting situations before they erupt into dysfunctional deterrents to a collaborative climate. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) find that organizational socialization is the strongest predictor of employee job satisfaction, commitment, and self-efficacy. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) link organizational quality to employee perceptions of organizational socialization, managerial commitment, shared goals and values, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, innovativeness, role conflict, role ambiguity, and perceived service quality. An employee's organizational commitment encompasses his or her effort, loyalty, similarity of values, motivation, and job satisfaction within the work climate. Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P 9: Marketing firms that provide a collaborative work setting promote increased employee commitment to the quality initiative.

CONCLUSIONS

The model presented herein is an attempt to better clarify the importance of promoting a collaborative environment in organizations implementing a quality initiative. The organizational literature has been specific regarding the implications of interpersonal conflict in organizations as having both functional and dysfunctional effects. First, some disagreement among workers promotes the sharing of feelings, values, and thoughts and enhances the creation of new ideas - a process imperative to a quality program. However, volatile conflict can offer disruptive consequences and stifle goal attainment. The model extended herein clearly depicts the monitoring of organizational interventions that are an effort to promote an optimal level of functional interpersonal conflict. The model provides a normative portrayal of the antecedents of conflict within the marketing manager/CSR dyad and the modalities used to resolve these interactions. The resulting collaborative climate mediates the employee's commitment to the organization's quality initiative while the entire process is moderated by organizational interventions.

The theme underlying the entire model is that organizations must acknowledge that conflict is imminent in the "unfreezing and moving" (Lewin 1951) during a quality implementation and that collaborative efforts can be measured. Most companies accept the responsibility for measuring the effectiveness of the quality effort as prescribed by the original forefathers of the quality movement - Deming, Juran, and Crosby. However, many link their measurements to performance measures of employee perceptions and satisfaction and the interaction in providing the service rather than the effectiveness that an organization's interventions have on interrelationships between workers. As an illustration, Hoffman and Ingram (1992) posit that job satisfaction is correlated with customer-oriented behaviors, but compensation is not for home care employees. Furthermore, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1988) posit a gap between service quality specifications and service delivery and propose that the widening of this gap may be related to employee-job fit, technology-job fit, supervisory control systems, role conflict, and role ambiguity. Also, Mangold and Babakus (1991) describe the gap between quality expectations of hospital employees and patients. Employee and administrator perceptions of the quality services provided were lower than patient perceptions representing potential underlying problems in the hospital or day-to-day job stresses. Mangold and Babakus call for educational programs, focus groups, employee morale promotions, cafeteria benefits, increased communication, and reward and motivation systems. Not inherently within these studies and in most of the literature (cf. Bowers, Martin, and Luker 1990; Headley and Choi 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985), service quality is measured as having a direct relationship with the customer and employee perceptions and behaviors. What this model offers is organization service quality as a function of marketing manager/CSR interaction and organizational interventions that promote collaboration as driving an employee's commitment to the quality initiative.

Second, this model outlines specific antecedents to interpersonal conflict within the superior-superordinate dyad. These antecedents are goal incongruence, role conflict, and role ambiguity. All three of these elements can occur independently or simultaneously as precursors to interpersonal conflict and force restrictive conformity in the workplace. For example, Jansen and Chandler (1994) posit that where role conflict is experienced, employees perceive that innovation is stifled and forces the employee into restrictive conformity. The levels for which they exist during a quality initiative and the thresholds leading to interpersonal conflict remain to be tested empirically. Also, are the antecedents additive? Or what effect do they have on the way conflict resolution is handled normatively? Prescriptively? A more thorough understanding of these facets and their distal effects on employee commitment will only be advanced through answering these types of questions.

Third and foremost is the issue of which organizational intervention is best to produce a collaborative climate? The model offers a few examples of organizing arrangements like grievances policies and procedures, formalized training protocols, and reward systems or social interventions similar to organizational cultural transformation or T-groups, etc. However, the question pertaining to which organizational intervention is most effectual is still unclear.

In summation, this model offers a normative depiction of superior-superordinate interaction that occurs during a quality initiative and promotes the importance of measuring the effectiveness of organizational interventions. A broadened perspective is presented on why some quality programs may never establish a foothold as an organizational implementation because of inherent conflict that results during the moving of an organization. These concepts are based on a survey of the social psychology, organizational development, and service quality literature. The model presented herein offers managerial implication by adding additional understanding into the theoretical underpinnings of managing conflict during a quality initiative implementation. The fundamental precept however, is the importance of creating a collaborative work environment during a quality program.

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