

Conflict dynamics within the gender spectrum of a large South African sugar manufacturing company

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It all starts here TM

COMMENTS

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- The references and the editorial style as prescribed by the Publication Manual (6th edition) of the American Psychology Association (APA) were followed in this dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Labour Relations Management of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) that all scientific documents must use, as of January 1999.
- The dissertation is submitted in the form of a full-dissertation.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY OF RESEARCH

I, Alicia Beneke, hereby declare that "Conflict dynamics within the gender spectrum of a large South African sugar manufacturing company" is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this study are those of the author and the relevant literature references as shown in the reference list. I further declare that the content of this research will not be submitted for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

ALICIA BENEKE

NOVEMBER 2014

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“Conflict is the beginning of consciousness.”
M. Esther Harding

ABSTRACT

Title: Conflict dynamics within the gender spectrum of a large South African sugar manufacturing company.

Objective: The primary objective of this study was to investigate the perception and handling of interpersonal conflict within the gender spectrum compilation of biological sex and gender identity.

Methods: The research of this study was conducted by means of a theoretical study and a quantitative empirical analysis.

Literature analysis and scientific theories form the basis for the first three chapters of this study. These include the philosophies of Karl Marx and Max Weber, followed by a detailed discussion on the dynamics of conflict.

The empirical analysis utilized cross-sectional survey design, with a combined convenience quota sample of employees (n=133) within the company taken. This consisted of top management, middle management and lower management. The empirical study utilized the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and the Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) provided self-determining assessments of masculinity and femininity in terms of the respondent's self-reported control of socially desirable, stereotypically masculine and feminine personality characteristics. The Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) measured the present methods of conflict management specifically within an organizational environment.

Results: It was noted that there was no difference in how pure biological sex (males and females) perceived and handled conflict within the workplace; but there was a difference in how the different gender identity groups (masculine males vs. feminine males and feminine females vs. masculine females) perceived and handled conflict.

Conclusion: This study highlighted the conflict-dynamics within the gender-spectrum of a large South African sugar manufacturing company. Results of the study proved that the motivation towards this study was achieved in the sense that, although there were no differences in how different genders perceive and handle conflict, differences were found in the different gender identities within each of those genders.

It is recommended that further research include a comparative study between two or three manufacturing companies to see how different companies within the same industry deviate from or resemble the results of this study. Further research could also determine whether there are differences, by cross-checking all four *gender identity* groups (masculine males, feminine males, feminine females and masculine females) using the MANOVA statistical procedure.

Key terms: Conflict, Interpersonal conflict, Biological sex, Gender identity, Masculinity, Femininity, Perceptions, Causes, Consequences, Conflict-handling styles, Manufacturing.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Konflikdinamika binne die geslagspektrum van 'n groot Suid-Afrikaanse suikerproduksiemaatskappy.

Doel: Die primêre doel van hierdie studie was om die persepsie en hantering van interpersoonlike konflik binne die geslagspektrum-samestelling van biologiese geslag en geslagsidentiteit te ondersoek.

Metodes: Die navorsing van hierdie studie is uitgevoer deur middel van 'n teoretiese studie en 'n kwantitatiewe empiriese analise.

Literatuuranalise en wetenskaplike teorieë vorm die grondslag vir die eerste drie hoofstukke van hierdie studie. Dit sluit in die filosofie van Karl Marx en Max Weber, gevolg deur 'n volledige bespreking van die dinamika van konflik.

Die empiriese ontleding gebruik deursneeopnameontwerp, terwyl 'n gekombineerde geriefkwota-steekproeftrekking van werknemers ($n = 133$) binne die maatskappy uit die topbestuur, middelbestuur en laer bestuur geneem is. Die volgende skale is in die empiriese studie gebruik: die Bem Geslagsrolinventaris (BSRI) en Rahim se Organisasiekonflikinventaris (ROCI-II). Die Bem Geslagsrolinventaris bied self-bepalende aanslae van manlikheid en vroulikheid in terme van die respondent se self-gerapporteerde beheer van sosiaal-wenslike, stereotipies manlike en vroulike persoonlikheidseienskappe. Die Organisasiekonflikinventaris van Rahim (ROCI-II) meet die huidige metodes van konflikbestuur in 'n organisasie.

Resultate: Daar is opgemerk dat daar geen verskil is in hoe suiwer biologiese geslag (mans en vroue) konflik in die werkplek beskou en hanteer nie, maar daar was 'n verskil in hoe die verskillende geslagsidentiteitsgroepe (manlike mans teenoor vroulike mans en vroulike vroue teenoor manlike vroue) konflik beskou en hanteer.

Gevolgtrekking: Hierdie studie beklemtoon die konflik-dinamika binne die geslagspektrum van 'n groot Suid-Afrikaanse suikerproduksiemaatskappy. Resultate van die studie het bewys dat die motivering van hierdie studie bereik is in die sin dat, alhoewel daar geen verskille in biologiese geslag gevind is in die persepsie van konflik en die hantering-style daarvan nie, daar wel verskille gevind is binne die spektrum van geslagsidentiteit binne elk van die biologiese geslagte.

Daar word aanbeveel dat verdere navorsing 'n vergelykende studie tussen twee of drie vervaardigingsmaatskappye insluit om te sien hoe die verskillende maatskappye in dieselfde bedryf verskil of ooreenstem. Verdere navorsing kan ook deur kruiskontrolle met behulp van die MANOVA statistiese prosedure bepaal of daar verskille is tussen al vier geslagidentiteitsgroepe (manlike mans, vroulike mans, vroulike vroue en manlike vroue).

Sleuteltermes: Konflik, Interpersoonlike konflik, Biologiese geslag, Geslagsidentiteit, Manlikheid, Vroulikheid, Persepsies, Oorsake, Gevolge, Konflikhanteringstyle, Vervaardiging.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE, SCOPE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the experience and handling of interpersonal conflict, not merely between different genders, but within the gender spectrum compilation of biological sex and gender identities within a large South African Sugar Manufacturing company.

The Sugar industry was chosen as it is a global leading cost competitive producer and contributes significantly to employment, especially in rural areas, to maintain growth to the national economy. The industry manufactures approximately an average of 2.2 million tons of sugar per season. About 60% of this sugar is marketed in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). The remnants are exported to markets in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The purpose of this leading chapter is to identify the problem statement, stipulate the research questions and objectives which will guide towards examining the problem, and explore the research method and design which will assist in delivering the scientifically grounded empirical results in order to achieve to the main objective of the study.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Conflict is unavoidable in any type of organization (Ada, 2014). Interpersonal organizational conflict, whether it be destructive or constructive, needs to be managed by making the appropriate choices and anticipations by the leaders of those people contributing to the success (or demise) of that company (Havenga, Visagie, Linde, & Gobind, 2012). Considering the institutional change, affirmative action programmes, scarce resources, change management, and behavioural processes within organisations, it is believed that conflict situations may be increasing in these sectors of the South African economy (Havenga & Visagie, 2006). Conflict between personnel on both horizontal and vertical levels, either as individuals or groups, can no longer be overlooked or left untouched. It is essential that members of a group, and especially leaders, shall have sufficient knowledge regarding the nature of the impact of different ways of

handling conflict, the influence thereof on the individual behavioural processes, and effects that may lead to the prevalence of conflict (Havenga, 2004; Crawley, 1995).

Wilmot and Hocker (2011) define conflict *“as a felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness”* (p.11). Grey (2014) describes interpersonal conflict as an expressed struggle between interdependent parties who perceive incompatibilities, scarce resources, and interference from the opposing party.

For Kreitner and Kinicki, (2011), conflict is a process in which two or more parties attempt to frustrate each other's goal attainment. The factors underlying conflict are threefold: interdependence, differences in goals, and differences in perceptions.

In Chapter 2 the views of Karl Marx (1965) and Max Weber (1978) that power, poverty, unemployment, competition, social mobility and class awareness are all potential sources of conflict are discussed. For this reason, Marx and Weber's studies and their beliefs and predictions will be closely examined to underpin the theoretical groundwork of this research.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2011), Brown (2002) and Belak (2006) indicated that interpersonal conflict exists in most organisations. In a study done by Kruger, Smit, and Le Roux (2000) they reflected that interpersonal conflict may occur in an organisation because of task-interdependence, vague goals, threats, and group-identity or background. According to Rickrikki (2013), interpersonal conflict occurs because of opposing viewpoints and contradictory outcomes borne in mind. For Belak (2006), miscommunication can be the down-fall of any organisation and he states that communication is a crucial and significant factor between groups in reciprocal interdependence, but a deficiency of effective communication can have negative consequences such as interpersonal conflict.

Conflict can have positive as well as negative outcomes; depending on the nature and the intensity of the conflict (refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 3.4 where the intensity of conflict is discussed). Any type of company which have too little conflict may experience missed deadlines, indecision, lack of creativity, and apathy. Companies which have too much conflict, experience increased turnover, lack of teamwork, dissatisfaction, and lack of performance (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Positive conflict management strategies are therefore important to ensure that a

company will have positive outcomes. Considering what has been said above, one can come to the conclusion that many and different causes exist which can manifest in conflict. The type and form of conflict depends on the type and form of conflict situation, the time, and where it occurs. Keeping the argument stated in mind, a more in-depth discussion and motivation on the dynamics of functional vs. dysfunctional conflict are elaborated in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.3.

Organisational leadership plays an essential part in any organisation and effective leadership means effective management of conflict (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Johnson (2013) defines organisational leadership as the ability to change precedence in employees in order to generate followers through expressing the vision. Mayer and Louw (2012) define organisational leadership as the ability to establish a clear vision, to share that vision with others so that they will follow willingly, to provide the information, knowledge, and methods to realise that vision, and to coordinate and balance the conflicting interests of all members.

Takács (2002) states that it is very important that conflict at every level of the organisation be directed to make sure of the decline and well-organised management of dysfunctional conflict. If destructive conflict is not handled properly it can significantly affect employee morale, increase staff turnover, and may even result in legal disputes, ultimately affecting the overall well-being of the company (Iglesias & Vallejo, 2012). To make sure that dysfunctional conflict is reduced, it is important to deal with personality conflict, intragroup conflict, interpersonal conflict, and cross-cultural conflict through all management levels of the organisation (Belak, 2006).

Interpersonal conflict, specifically, plays a big role in South African organisations, particularly based on the bias of resources, power, race, gender, culture and religion (Schultz, Bagraim, Potgieter, Viedge, & Werner, 2007). People from similar backgrounds and races tend to form their own groups and may be in conflict with other groups depending on the backgrounds of the members of that group (Forsyth, 2005).

A main apprehension is that several people in management positions in certain organisations do not handle interpersonal conflict in the correct way, and also many times does not know how to deal with interpersonal conflict (Fisher, 2000). Posthuma (2012) also supports the importance of conflict management and through his research he states how important it is to understand where

the conflict comes from and what the emotions behind the conflict are in order to successfully solve the problem. Furthermore, Kreitner and Kinicki (2008) is of opinion that managers who understand the mechanics of interpersonal conflict are better equipped to face this sort of challenge; whereas Rahim (2002) suggests that conflict management strategies should involve recognition of the different types of conflict that may have a positive or negative impact on individual and group performance.

One can come to the conclusion that researchers share the common idea that conflict must be identified before the problem can be solved (De Jager, 2010). If management can identify the sources of conflict and understand the conflict, solutions and remedies for the problem can be found (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011).

Irrespective of the various destructive and constructive powers that conflict can have, and identifying the sources of conflict, cognisance is not always taken of the fact that employees are diverse and as such will perceive and handle conflict differently (refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 3.8). Previous research (Havenga, 2008) has focussed specifically on gender differences when it comes to the various handling styles of conflict within organizations. As can be seen from the discussion, however, consideration must be given to more than just simple gender differences, which is a deeper consideration for leadership to take into account. Abundant research has been done previously on gender differences (male and female) in the perceiving and preferred style of handling conflict in organizations, but very few have taken into consideration the person's *gender identity*. *Gender identity* means that gender is divided into two main groups, namely masculinity and femininity, and each group has its own actual *identity*. It is believed that if management has a better understanding about the prevalence of conflict, not only between different genders, but also within the whole gender-spectrum which includes the actual *gender identity*, it could cultivate an extension of leadership effectiveness.

1.1.1 Biological Sex and Gender Identity

Biological sex is our anatomy as male, female, or intersex (Ghosh, 2012). It includes our internal and external bodies – including our sexual and reproductive or generative anatomy, our genetic makeup, and our hormones. Ghosh (2012) defines *gender identity* as a personal idea of

oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither). *Gender identity* is self-identified, as an outcome of a mixture of natural and extrinsic aspects. Gainor (2000) describes *gender identity* as one's sense of oneself as male, female, or transgender. When one's *gender identity* and biological sex are not matching, the individual may be classified as transsexual or as another transgender group. Gainor (2000) further states that your *identity* as it is experienced with respect to your biological sex as male or female; consciousness generally initiate in infancy (childhood) and is reinforced throughout adolescence (teenage years). Ghosh (2012) further describes *gender identity* as the gender(s), or lack thereof, a person self-identifies. It is not inevitably based on biological truth, either genuine or perceived, nor is it always based on sexual orientation (McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, & Wright, 2012).

In Figure 1, a visual demonstration is given to explain the term *Gender Identity*.

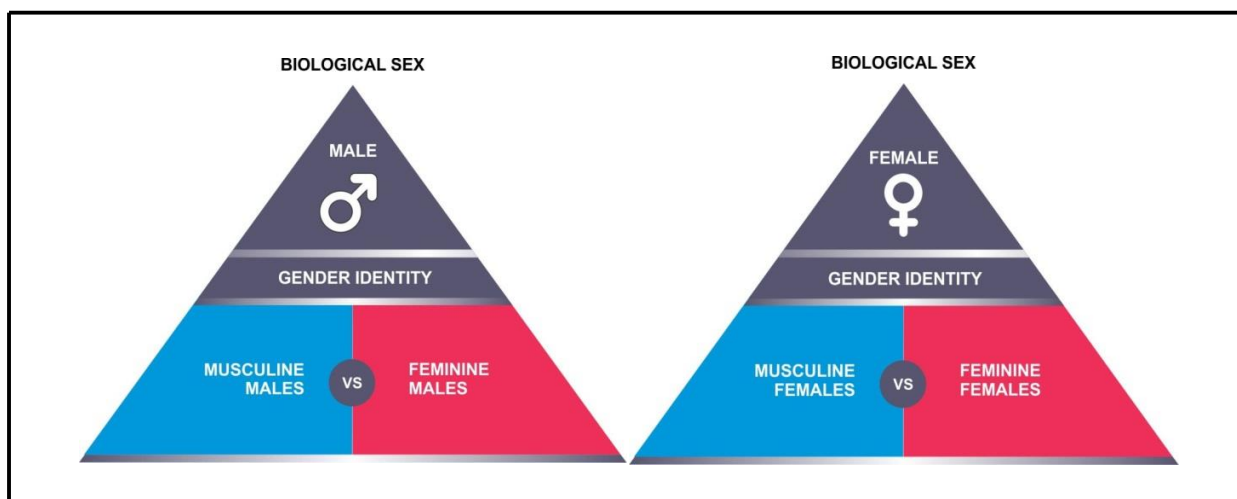


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the term *Gender Identity*.

Twenge (1997) describes that the masculine side deals with the strength and power of the self; which causes one to act either timidly or self-confidently. If you have a strong masculine side, you are in charge of your own life because you are internally controlled. Masculine qualities are behaviour that our culture habitually associates with being a boy or man. Words associated with masculinity include *independent, non-emotional, aggressive, competitive, tough-skinned* and *experienced* (Twenge, 1997). *Gender identities* for men typically consist of a strong individual, who brings home the money, is respectful of women, athletic, and who is independent and able

to take care of his own needs and also his family's. For men, the 'perfect man' is considered to be masculine, strong, a provider, in shape, strong and independent (Bornstein, quoted by Ryan & Hoxmeier, 2009).

The basis of the feminine side is also of value, just akin to the masculine, but instead of being a value you place on yourself, the feminine side is based on a value that you place on others (Twenge, 1997). If you have a strong feminine side and place high value on others, you are often giving and unselfish. Feminine qualities are behaviour that our culture usually associates with being a girl or woman. Words associated with femininity include *dependent, emotional, passive, sensitive, caring, quiet, graceful and innocent* (Twenge, 1997). The qualities for the 'perfect woman' include, feminine, beautiful, respectful, in shape, nurturing, motherly, housewife, dependent, caretaker, and loving (Bornstein, quoted by Ryan & Hoxmeier, 2009)

Studies such as those of Chusmir and Mills (1989), Hay, Nash, Caplan, Swartzentruber, Ishikawa, and Vespo (2011) and Miller (1991) have revealed that there is a gender difference in terms of conflict, and that men and women in fact do differ in their ways of perceiving and handling conflict. Chusmir and Mills (1989) stated that because men and women mostly, but not necessarily always, occupy diverse roles at work and at home, they would most possibly use different conflict handling behaviours as well. McElwain, Korabik, and Rosin (2005) found that there actually is a gender difference in the relationship between family demands and family interfering with work. They also found an asymmetry continues to exist between men and women in their work and family roles. Duxbury and Higgins (1991) tested whether there is a gender difference in terms of conflict and they found significant differences in 11 of 17 gender comparisons; they are mostly ascribed to social expectations and behavioural norms. Davis, Capobianco, and Kraus (2010) found that women are more likely to engage in constructive (positive) behaviour, whereas men are more likely to engage in destructive (negative) behaviours. They added that it is important to keep in mind that there is a gender difference in terms of personal life as well. They further added that men have been assumed or supposed to act in a more forceful, dominating manner during conflict, consistent with their gender stereotype of being confident and task-orientated, while women have been assumed or supposed to respond in more conciliatory ways, consistent in their gender stereotype of being communal and relationship-orientated.

In the late eighties researchers by the names of Pierce and Edwards did a study on children's writing of fantasy stories (Pierce & Edwards, 1988). They found substantial differences in conflict resolutions that these children created. They found that two types of conflict resolution were adopted, namely violent (the use of physical force) and non-violent (the use of reasoning, persuasion and compromising). Results showed that boys used more violent resolutions to solve problems, whereas girls used more analysis and reasoning. More girls than boys chose to avoid conflict, whereas boys tend to avoid nonviolent conflict resolution. They also found that more girls than boys tend to let conflict solve itself. An interesting finding in the study was the tendency for both boys and girls to omit or overlook conflict altogether, although this tendency was stronger amongst girls than boys. Lastly girls were more varied in resolution strategies than boys, which encompassed reasoning, analysis, trickery and avoidance.

Narayanan, Menon, and Spector (1999) also did a study where they compared different sexes and occupations in terms of conflict and they found noteworthy differences. According to Sutchek (2001, as cited by Havenga, 2008) males have a preference for the dominating conflict-handling style before utilising the avoiding strategy. Females, on the other hand, prefer the avoiding instead of the domination conflict-handling style. Miller (1991) found that during conflict, men focused more on the offended party's initiation of conflict, whereas women focused more on whether the offending party apologised. Hay et al., (2011) found that women are initially more prospective than men to use reactive aggression, but then desist, whereas men increase their use of force to defend their territory and possessions.

Studies such as McGeown et al., (2012), Echabe (2010) and Newman (2012) revealed that it is predictable or estimated of the masculine side to be stronger, more independent and more experienced than the feminine side. Echabe (2010) also claims that there's a difference between masculinity and femininity in terms of handling conflict. He describes masculine identities as equivalent to instrumental identities and feminine identities as the same as communal identities. Echabe (2010) found that women have more equal and liberal approach towards gender *identities* than their male counterparts – for instance, women have been gaining access to duties that up to now reserved for men, but men are not assuming roles traditionally reserved for women. McGeown et al., (2012) did a study on reading skill and reading motivation, investigating whether these differences could be better accounted for by sex, or by *gender identity*. However,

responses to intrinsic or natural motivation were better elucidated by *gender identity* than sex. Chusmir and Mills (1989) also stated that because femininity and masculinity regularly, but not always, occupy different roles at work and at home, there will be a difference in how they perceive and handle conflict. Another study done by Fang (2011) showed significant differences in job performance between different *gender identities* and found out that the level of masculinity is positively related to the job performance while the level of femininity is positively related to the contextual performance.

Having highlighted the various viewpoints on how males and females handle conflict one should come to the conclusion that the prominent conflict features for males are, *inter alia*, aggression, dominance, competition, analysis, forcefulness and self-sufficiency, and for women, passion, dependency, affection, sympathy, understanding, and gentleness.

According to Heppner and Heppner (2008) there's a huge lack of research on conflict experiences within the various *gender identities*. However, many studies have been done on *gender identities conflict* which can be defined as specific patterns of negative consequences that surface or begin for people during their experience with *gender identity* strain (O'Neill, 2008); for example, many men restrict their emotions. This may have positive consequences such as the ability to stay cool in a crises situation, but a disadvantage would be the inability to emotionally connect in a relationship. The man may experience some *gender identity* strain if he does express feelings in the relationship, and the loneliness and detachment that might follow upon this choice is the *gender identity* conflict (O'Neil, 2008). O'Neill (2008) breaks down *gender identity* conflict into different types that include *gender identity* conflict within oneself, *gender identity* conflict expressed or articulated towards others, *gender identity* conflict experienced from others, and *gender identity* conflict experienced from role transitions.

Overall, research has revealed that *gender identity* conflict is habitually associated to larger problems including depression, anxiety, relationship problems, low self-esteem, violence, and a variety of other undesirable things. It should therefore be noted that this study will fill the gap in research by looking at the *gender identity* differences and workplace conflict differences, as opposed to the well-researched field called *gender identity conflict*, thus supporting the motivation towards this study.

Apart from the above-mentioned, the main problem statement is that leadership might expect differences between gender when analysing conflict perceptions and handling styles, but might not consider that *gender identity* within those genders might play a role and influence the validity of the results in scientific research, in contrast to research in which only the main two constructs, namely male and female, are taken into account.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Having discussed, up to this point, the existence of conflict and its origin, types of conflict, and the new idea of taking biological sex and *gender identity* into consideration as well, the following research questions need to be answered:

- How are conflict, biological sex, and gender identity conceptualized in literature?
- What interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict theories derived through previous research has been explored?
- Are there significant differences between the biological sexes of male and female on the one hand, and between gender identity attributes of masculinity and femininity on the other hand, in their perception of conflict dynamics in the workplace?
- What differences exist in conflict-handling styles when measured between different genders, and the different gender identities within each of those genders?
- What recommendations can be made for future research and for practice?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to investigate the experience and handling of interpersonal conflict within the gender spectrum compilation of biological sex and *gender identity*. These objectives were achieved through an underpinning theoretical analysis followed by an empirical analysis.

The following sub-objectives were therefore pursued:

- To determine and compare, by means of a literature study, how the different facets of conflict, biological sex and gender identity are conceptualized in literature.
- To explore, through a theoretical study, the various interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict theories derived through previous research.
- To do a comparative analysis, by means of an empirical exploration, between biological sex, i.e. between male and female, and gender identity attributes, i.e. the masculine style and the feminine style, in their perceptions of conflict dynamics in the workplace.
- To determine, through statistical analysis, whether differences exist in conflict-handling styles when measured between different genders, and the different gender identities within each of those genders.
- Finally, to make recommendations for future research and practice.

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

1.4.1 A research of theory

Literature analysis and scientific theories will form the basis for the first three chapters of this study. The first part will involve the various theories on conflict, of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Their conflict theories will be discussed as it is still relevant to today's knowledge and research in the area of common stratification (Hoffman, 2006; Venter, 2006). Thereafter a detailed description and analysis of conflict in general will be discussed in Chapter 3, including the Conflict Process Model of Robbins, techniques to stimulate functional conflict, the intensity of conflict, different views of conflict, social power, antecedents of conflict, the different conflict-handling styles, interpersonal conflict and the interpersonal conflict model.

The following databases were used in the theoretical part of this study: Ferdinand Posthuma library, South African and International accredited journals, Textbooks, ProQuest, Lexis Nexus, Ebscohost, Google Scholar, Sabinet Online, SA e-Publications, Scopus as well as previous dissertations and thesis's relating to the similar subject content. The key journals that were referred to include the International Journal of Conflict Management, Sex Roles, International

and South African Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of Applied Psychology, South African Journal of Industrial Psychology and the Journal of Organisational Behaviour.

1.4.2 Empirical analysis

The empirical quantitative study was done through utilising existing standardised questionnaires. According to Struwig and Stead (2001, as cited by Botha, 2014), *research that is quantitative in nature is a form of conclusive research involving large representative samples and data collection procedures that are comparatively structured* (p. 11). To achieve the desired research objectives, a cross-sectional research design was used, which implies that several groups of participants took part in the survey simultaneously (Salkind, 2009). Cross-sectional research is a research method often used in developmental psychology, but also utilised in several other areas containing social science and education (Cherry, 2012). Cherry (2012) further states that a cross-sectional study makes use of various groups of people who do not fundamentally have the same interests, but share other characteristics such as socio-economic status and educational background. Cross-sectional studies are observational in character and are acknowledged as expressive or descriptive research which suits the requirements of achieving the objectives of this study.

1.4.3 The Measuring Instruments

The empirical study utilizes the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and the Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) provides self-determining assessments of masculinity and femininity in terms of the respondent's self-reported control of socially desirable, stereotypically masculine and feminine personality characteristics. The Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) measures the present methods of conflict management within an organisation. An elaborate discussion on these measuring instruments together with its validity and reliability are done in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.4.

1.4.4 Research population

This specific large manufacturing company has a total of 3770 personnel, of which 1800 are based at the headquarters where the study was done. A sample of 150 ($n=150$) personnel was drawn to participate in the questionnaire. The 150 respondents chosen consisted of employees and personnel of the company represented by top management, middle management and lower management. A total of 133 questionnaires were considered usable, reliable, and provided valid information for continuation of the study towards data-analysis.

1.4.5 Sampling method

A Combined Convenience Quota Sampling was used for this study. According to Baker, Brick, Bates, Battaglia, Couper, Dever, Gile, and Tourangeau (2013) convenience sampling (as opposed to the alternative stratified random sampling method) is one of the most cooperative and convenient sampling method as participants are chosen grounded on their convenience and availability. This method is also considered economical, stress-free and least time consuming (Baker et al., 2013). The convenience sampling method is combined with a quota sampling method, wherein an identical or equivalent representation of question depending on which attribute or feature is the base of the quota (therefore an equal representation of the amount of males and females in the study). According to Baker et al., (2013) the base of the quota are generally race, gender, age, religion etc. In this study the use of this sampling method provided a gender quota of usable data from 64 males (48.12%) and 69 females (51.88%).

1.4.6 Data analysis

All statistical calculations were done with the aid of various statistical techniques. The empirical study was analysed by the SPSS programme (IBM SPSS, 2012) to find true, accurate, reliable and valid research results. Various statistical methods were used appropriately to each section of the measuring instrument. Descriptive statistics, utilizing means, standard deviations and correlations to measure the causes of conflict, Inferential statistics utilizing phi-coefficient (measuring the consequences of conflict), and T-tests to interpret the preferred conflict-handling

style between two groups were performed in order to achieve the objectives pursued. Also the Cronbach Alpha was utilized to measure the reliability of each construct measured. This was performed through consultation with the North-West University's Statistical Consultation service, before and after the data had been collected, and further detailed description on how their methods were utilised has been done in the empirical analysis and results chapter (Chapter 4).

1.4.7 Research Procedure

A letter was sent to the HR-Director of the organisation explaining the nature of the study and what the objectives and aim of the study are. Permission was granted by all the general managers of the respective organisation, after which the questionnaires were administered electronically and completed by employees of this organization. All participants had the right to withdraw during any time of the process. After two weeks the questionnaires were collected, allowing respondents enough time to complete it. The data was analysed, interpreted, discussed and conclusions and recommendations were made. The data will be stored electronically for two years before it will be destroyed.

1.4.8 Ethical considerations

Informed consent was received from all participants prior to their completing the questionnaires and they were assured that the tests would be kept confidential before the tests were administered. To ensure that this project would be conducted in an ethical manner, ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and the possibility of deception were considered (Struwig & Stead, 2001). To ensure that participants would be familiar with what the questionnaires were about, and that biological sex and *gender identity* would be taken in account, the following ethical principles were used, namely honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, legality, and non-discrimination.

To maintain objectivity and to ensure that employees would be independent and objective in answering the questions and would not be harmed by their work environment, all information was kept confidential.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: The nature, scope and design of the study

This chapter gives a brief overview of the research and refers to the motives of this study. In this chapter the introduction, problem statement, method and purpose of the study, demarcation of the study, and relevant definitions of certain concepts are addressed.

Chapter 2: Sociological conflict theories

This chapter consists of various interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict theories derived through previous research, and includes the conflict theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber.

Chapter 3: The nature of conflict

This chapter consists out of a detailed discussion on the different dynamics of conflict and includes the Conflict Process Model of Robbins, techniques to stimulate functional conflict, the intensity of conflict, different views of conflict, social power, antecedents of conflict, the different conflict-handling styles, interpersonal conflict and the interpersonal conflict model.

Chapter 4: Empirical study and research results

This chapter consists of an empirical analysis between biological sex and gender identity attributes in their perception and handling of conflict dynamics in the workplace.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter, the main findings will be interpreted, and some recommendations regarding the manufacturing company will be made to increase the company's leadership effectiveness.

1.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 discusses the problem statement, literature review, research questions, research objectives and an overview of chapters. Furthermore the research method and design is explained for ease of the reader. In the following chapter the various interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict theories derived through previous research will be derived, followed by an empirical analysis between biological sex and gender identity attributes in their perception and handling of conflict dynamics in the workplace. Lastly a conclusion will be made, followed by recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

SOSIOLOGICAL CONFLICT THEORIES

In Chapter 1, the following were discussed: the problem statement, literature review, research questions, and research objectives. Furthermore, the research method and design were explained for ease of the reader, followed by an overview of what will follow in the study.

The main aim of this chapter is to explore which interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict theories have been derived through previous research, and how these agree and differ.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A theoretical research was undertaken to serve as a basis for the empirical study, and to support, and in certain cases contradict, the findings of the study. Various conflict theories, such as those of Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser and Émile Durkheim exist, but the theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber were selected, because according to Hoffman (2006), their theories remain the most relevant to today's knowledge and research in the area of social stratification and conflict dynamics. Looking at the background and antecedents of conflict, it will be seen that the origins of conflict are still similar to those of 100 years ago, even though these things happen in different situations or conditions and in a different time frame. As Posthuma (2012) stated (Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1), it is important to first identify conflict before the problem can be solved. The theoretical antecedents and prerequisites will be considered before looking at the empirical results of this study, as these will provide the reader with a better overall understanding.

Karl Marx was a conflict theorist, and was influenced by the philosophies of George Hegel; whereas Max Weber was influenced by the philosophies of Immanuel Kant (Venter, 2006). The different views of conflict according to these four individuals are discussed as follows, as cited by Venter (2006):

Georg Hegel (27 August 1770 – 14 November 1831): To begin with, Hegel argued that conflict occurs when individuals follow their personal interests. Contrasting interests lead to conflict, and through this conflict, people learn to find a middle way in order to live together and accomplish

their personal ends in such a manner that the community consents and the aims of other people are kept in mind (Kain, 1998).

Karl Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883): Karl Marx perceived society as a fight among different classes, and this might have produced conflict. Marx perceived that there were two classes, namely the bourgeoisie (owners) and the proletariat (employees), or, at least, that was the way he interpreted society. The two classes were in conflict with one another, because the employees were beleaguered and sought transformation, but the owners did not want to change things (Havenga, 2002, as quoted by Venter, 2006).

Immanuel Kant (22 April 1724 – 12 February 1804): According to Kant there were two forces that form history, namely the conflict of interests and the conflict of morality. The conflict of interests consist of the unsocial side (leads to conflict and war) and the social side (leads to caring and considering the importance of collaboration in order to work in harmony with others in order to accomplish one's needs and desires (Kain, 1998).

Max Weber (21 April 1864 – 14 June 1920): Weber perceived society as a fight for power, which could lead to conflict. Weber perceived the fight for power as follows: *“The class fights for economic power, the status group fights for prestige power, and the party fights for pure power”* (Cuff, Sharrock & Francis, 1998, as quoted by Venter, 2006, p.43).

Ralf Dahrendorf (1 May 1929 – 17 June 2009): Dahrendorf's key argument or disagreement was that neither Marxism nor structural functionalism on its own offers an adequate perspective on complex and advanced society. Therefore, Dahrendorf merged the basics from both these viewpoints to develop his own theory on class conflict within post capitalist society, as he thought the structural functionalists give too little consideration to the realities of social conflict, whereas Marx defined class too scarcely and in a tradition-specific milieu.

Subsequently, the prerequisites for conflict from both Marx and Weber will be discussed, followed by assumptions of conflict of the conflict paradigm and the pluralistic paradigm and ended off with a comparison between Karl Marx and Max Weber's views of conflict. The models and literature studies of the nature of conflict in an organization and ways to manage it will also be discussed.

2.2 BACKGROUND OF KARL MARX

Karl Marx was one of three daunting theorists who subjugated the knowledgeable and academic atmosphere during the 19th and 20th century (Havenga, 2008). ñ*Marx had a significant influence on the writings of early social psychologists with regard to conflict in other areas. On closer examination, it appears that his writings actually emphasize the more negative aspects of conflict, namely competition and destruction*ò (Havenga, 2008, p. 18i 19). Marx accentuates social struggle amongst classes; dividing social classes into two openly opposed groups, namely the bourgeoisie (those who own property) and proletariat (those who have to labour for wages).

Karl Heinrich Marx was born on May 5th, 1818 in Trier, Germany, and died on 14 March 1883. He was known as a philosopher, economist, and revolutionary, whose writings formed the basis of a body of ideas known as Marxism (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005). With his Jewish parents, he had already as a child experienced the consequences of his ancestry and the power of state authority in an excruciating manner.

Marx studied philosophy at the University of Berlin and did a doctoral thesis on Greek philosophy. He then decided to study journalism after the Ministry of Education banned him because of his fundamental beliefs. In 1842, Marx became editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, a democratic newspaper, where he progressively wrote fundamental reports about community and economic issues. In 1845 he met Friedrich Engels (Ashley & Orenstein, 1995).

Engels experienced the maltreatment and manipulation of the textile employees in the mills of his father, a wealthy German manufacturer. Engels became conscious of the importance of Marx's work, and for many years afterwards he funded Marx's work (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

In 1844, Marx participated in the founding of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, a Paris-based journal. Here, he became involved in writing the *Paris Manuscripts*. As a Prussian subject, he was then arrested for high treason against Prussia, and had to relocate with his wife Jenny, the daughter of Baron von Westphalen, and was cast out from society for three years (Wood, 2011).

In 1847 Marx and Engels attended the Communist League's Second Congress in London. They also participated in the German Revolution at Cologne in 1848. Marx and his family then

relocated permanently to London. In 1851 Marx landed a job as a correspondent journalist for the *New-York Daily Tribune*. He also collaborated with others in the and from 1864 to 1872 he was involved in the advancing of the International Working Men's Association. He died in 1883 (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

It is important to understand Marx's Conflict Theory because it had abundant influence on many countries of the world, especially where Communism/Socialism was or still is predominant.

For Karl Marx, conflict is a fight between different classes in a society. Marx described society as a capitalist society, consisting of two major classes, namely the *bourgeoisie* (those who own property), and the *proletariat* (those who have to labour for wages), (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

2.2.1 Marx's Theory of Conflict

Karl Marx's conflict theory is an essential part of this study, as most modern and pre-modern conflict theories at least recognize the influence of Marx and his ideas.

Marx visualised society as a constant conflict between social classes. His conclusions were based upon his observation of the industrialized remains of the feudal system in Europe and the British Isles but were universalized as if this system were applicable worldwide, which is not the case.

The terms *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat* come from the classic Roman system.

The Roman tax collectors used the term *classis*, for the tax groups to which they allocated the population in order to make their tasks easier. They called the two *classis* the *assidui*, (those that had assets) and the *proletarii* (those who had no assets other than their progeny). (Dahrendorf, 1959).

In an eighteenth century document, the term *class* was used by Ferguson and Miller as a collective term for the various social strata, divided by rank or wealth. Adam Smith (19th century) spoke about a *poor* or *labouring class*. Dahrendorf (1959) ascribes the use of the terms *class of capitalists* and *labouring class* to Ricardo and Ure. A *rich class* and a *poor class* were distinguished by Saint-Simon, whereas Engels and Marx called these classes the *bourgeoisie* and the *proletariat*.

Ashley and Orenstein (2005), as quoted by Venter (2006), report that, in Marx's view, society, with the exception of Asiatic societies, developed in the following stages:

- Pre-class systems: The earliest social systems consisted of tribes or clans, with communal ownership of land and very little difference in the types of labour performed. Labour and property existed to benefit the community as a whole (i.e. a type of 'ubuntu' system). Chaplin (2013) describes *ubuntu* as an African word for universal thought. Ubuntu means the possibility of being human (similar words include 'humanity', 'humanness' or even 'humaneness') and to signify the good of the society or community higher than self-interest (striving to help others, having integrity, being trustworthy, and illustrating respect for others)
- Asiatic societies: Economically self-sufficient societies with strong autocratic leadership.
- Ancient societies: These were societies established around large cities, where land was owned by private proprietors and where slaves were employed to make the owners rich.
- Feudal societies: Feudal societies developed only after the fall of the Roman Empire. In this system, serfs worked the land for the upper classes.
- Capitalist societies: These societies are marked by the presence of mainly two major classes, namely the *bourgeoisie* (property owners) and the *proletariat* (those who sell their labour in exchange for wages with which they can buy the goods needed for their existence) (McElwee, 2014; Brown-Ganues, 2012).

Laski, (1948), subscribed to the view that the history of all societies consists mainly of the conflict between the classes.

"The separate individuals form a class only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors" (Marx & Engels, 1930, p. 48-49). Therefore, a class is formed when the common interests of a group of individuals are in conflict with the interests of another group/class (intergroup conflict) (Venter, 2006).

Intragroup conflict is conflict between individuals of the same group that compete with one another (Venter, 2006).

A society's economic base consists of *forces of production (proletariat)* and *social relations of production (bourgeoisie)*. The *forces of production* may be subdivided into three divisions: Firstly, *labour power*, i.e. a human-being's competence to do valuable work. Secondly, *the means of production*. This includes resources such as machines, nuclear power, steam power, water power, etc. Thirdly, *the raw materials of production*, such as uranium, iron-ore and coal. (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005). The *production forces (proletariat)* are represented by the wealth potential of a society and *production relations (bourgeoisie)* are represented by those who control the wealth (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972). In the concept of *relations of production*, the controller of prosperity also owns the labour power of those that sell their labour to him. In the capitalist society, the labour power of the employee belongs to the employer during working hours. The employees are integrated into an economic production and consumption structure (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

Social conflict was described by Marx as a clash between classes. The *proletariat* may, for example, feel oppressed by the *bourgeoisie*, which will ferment into a feeling of conflict within oneself (intrapersonal conflict) which may possibly lead to visible or noticeable conflict (conflict that is acted out). Venter (2006), quotes Ashley and Orenstein (2005) who are of the opinion that intrapersonal conflict may develop into interpersonal conflict (conflict between the *bourgeoisie* and individuals of the *proletariat*), intergroup conflict (conflict between the two classes, namely the *proletariat* and the *bourgeoisie*), and intragroup conflict (conflict between individuals of the same class). Capitalist society also comprises other classes, namely the petite *bourgeoisie* (small business owners) and the lumpen *proletariat* (freelance employees and people who do not hold a regular job), inter alia. Ashley and Orenstein (2005) also note that, together with an increase in numbers of the *proletariat* and the *bourgeoisie*, there is more and more possibility for clashes between the classes; as the employer is driven by profits and would produce more and more goods while squeezing the employees' wages until they could no longer afford the products they created (McElwee, 2014).

Ashley and Orenstein (2005) note that Marx was of the opinion that the human mind can attain freedom by, inter alia, understanding itself, and admitting that it is dependent upon a non-obliging, ordinary objective and real universe. Marx was no idealist, as he did not agree with the view propagated by the idealism, namely that, if people believed that their consciousness was self-

determining, their understanding of themselves would inevitably be deceitful. (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

Marx's view of materialism, as interpreted by Ashley and Orenstein (2005), was that specific relations are unavoidably engaged in by men in the "social production of their being", and such relations *of production* are "autonomous of their character, namely, suitable to an agreed stage in the increase or progression of their substance *forces of production*." Ashley & Orenstein (2005), as supported by McElwee (2014), stated that these *production relations* are all part of the economic production of society. These form the authentic foundation upon which an official political superstructure is based, and which is similar to specific forms of social consciousness. The material life production mode is the means that condition the total social, intellectual and political life process. Man's consciousness or awareness does not define his subsistence, but his awareness or consciousness is actually determined by his social subsistence. Social improvement resulted from the development of *productive forces*. For this type of development employees would need to express themselves in new ways by understanding themselves differently (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

Competition for revenue can lead to creativity and originality in finding means to minimize production costs and introduce improved technology (and mechanize their workplace, McElwee, 2014) and better investment, bringing about more prosperity. As the capitalists become more prosperous, the owners of the means and the producers of the products become increasingly more and more polarized (McElwee, 2014). In one process (*proletarianization*), opposition to the extreme may lessen the wealth of the production media owners, leading to capitalists becoming poorer and weaker, concentrating the capital wealth in the pockets of only a small number of people. In another process (*pauperization*), production cost is reduced by keeping salaries and wages on the same level, or by retrieving costs of innovation and investment from money that should be paid to the employees instead of from profits (McElwee, 2014). This causes resentment and a feeling of not being appreciated, which leads to conflict between the classes (intergroup conflict), and probably to the fall of the *bourgeoisie*, according to Lopreato and Hazelrigg (1972).

It is obvious from the paragraph above that whether there is resistance from the reigning party or not, if the economic structure of a society changes, there will be subsequent social changes too, as confirmed by Lopreato and Hazelrigg (1972).

Intrapersonal conflict may result from the dehumanisation of society which may manifest into forms of conflict such as rebellion or revolution. Marx's view on this aspect was that the *principle of movement* is characteristic of man where mankind appeals to even more pronounced levels of creativity, self-fulfilment and self-awareness. Conflict that has positive benefits (functional conflict), is essential for changing the dehumanized and estranged situation of the employees (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972). Conflict may be functional (As discussed in Chapter 3 paragraph 3.3) and may even have a positive effect on workforce performance, because it can be exploited to obtain answers, encourage competition, and enhance individual productivity.

McElwee (2014) supported the opinion of Ashley and Orenstein (2005) that being regarded by owners of the forces of production as a working object only dehumanises employees, takes away their individuality, and estranges them from the people they work for. Marx further added that dehumanising will cause economic stagnation and estranged employees become dissatisfied and frustrated which could further increase the possibility for destructive interpersonal conflict (Kaletsky, 2014). The only way to overcome their frustrations is to take control of the existing social order. Bottomore and Rubel (1974) quote Marx's thoughts that the greater the output of the employee, the more he surrenders his life and himself to the employer, belonging less and less to himself and the more his innermost life and soul becomes impoverished, eventually resulting in estrangement.

Marx is also quoted by Bottomore and Rubel (1974) as holding that the estrangement of labour is brought about when the work is physically unpleasant, spiritually unfulfilling, and mentally numbing, which potentially may result in intrapersonal conflict (conflict inside oneself, because the individual is not happy with the present conditions).

Estrangement firstly means that the *bourgeoisie* in the capitalist society could be creative, stimulate their intellect, and let their imagination run freely, whereas the *proletariat* were robbed of these benefits and suffered under the worst possible conditions with little chance to get out of their despondency. Estrangement secondly caused people to underestimate the worth of their

own labour. They would also be unaware that their destiny could not be improved through other means, such as religion, etc. Furthermore employees are terrified of being unemployed or to leave their jobs, and therefore dearth bargaining power (McElwee, 2014). Estrangement thirdly is a cause for people not to try to escape their hideous situations, as the situations are ascribed to economic laws (Cuff et al., 1998). Unless employees become disenchanted with the bad conditions they live under, they will not become aware that they need to make changes in order to improve their own destiny. Such awareness has the impact upon employees that they refuse to live under such circumstances and to eventually engage in intergroup conflict.

In cases where employees are strongly dominated and power is forced upon them in a competitive work environment, dehumanising practices will often be rife or predominant, and employees are often exploited (McElwee, 2014). Under such circumstances, employees will become estranged, feel alone and isolated, experience animosity, and will see themselves as meaningless, deprived and powerless (Cockeram, 1995). Such employees need to break the power over them and overthrow the employers' power, which may lead to conflict or to a rebellion. Often the elite are not as conscious of the extent of their power over their employees as they are of the opposition of the employees to their power. They strive to haze the streak between the commonalities and themselves (in order to handle the conflict), but the people know that they have no power to escape the situation, and they regret the position they are in. Inter-party tensions cause social conflict. The side that stands to lose least will prefer the social order to remain as it is, but the side that has grievances will require the system to change, sometimes drastically at that, as stated by research done by Cronje (2002).

Due to the domination of a majority by a minority class being regarded as a natural phenomenon, the minority does not regard the capitalist control of production as having a historically limited mode of self-production (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).

Ashley and Orenstein (2005) describe Marx's opinion of the ability of the working class (*proletariat*), to progressively and gradually transform the capitalist society socially. Marx also reasoned that the main obstacle to progressive and liberal social change was the fact that the building of true *class consciousness* among the working class was prevented by the dominant classes.

Curra (1994) studied the conflict concept, as interpreted by Marx. Marx's opinion was that it established aid in understanding how social structures could be engineered in times of severe political and institutional differences of opinion. Marx freely and unrestrictedly spoke about 'class-war', 'rebellion', 'class-antagonism', 'civil war' and 'revolutions', without mentioning words such as 'conflict'. He saw conflict as either, covert or overt, latent or manifest. Manifest conflict is not violent per se, but does have a propensity towards violence (Jordaan, 1993).

Marx considered the history of societies as a constant clash between different classes. He therefore was inclined to view the world negatively, and desired to change circumstances. He noticed that the labouring class was oppressed, and wanted to bring about fairness and equality by destroying the class system in societies.

2.3 BACKGROUND OF MAX WEBER

Most sociology textbooks covering the philosophies of both Marx and Weber call Weber's work on social stratification a 'dialogue with the ghost of Marx' due to the fact that both touch upon similar study fields, although the conclusions reached by Weber are very different from those derived at by Marx (Livesey & Lawson, 2005). Zarka (2007) called Marx and Weber the 'fathers of Sociological Theories'. Whereas Marx's conflict theory is built around only two opposing groups (*bourgeoisie* and *proletariat*), Weber is of the opinion that a society consists of various 'status' groups in a society, each controlling a different level of social power (Zarka, 2007). Brown-Gaunes (2012) added that Marx only saw conflict between the working class (*proletariat*) and the capitalists (*bourgeoisie*), but didn't see what Weber saw that people have conflicts as individuals within a team (conflict within oneself is called intrapersonal conflict, Venter, 2006).

From Ritzer, (2003), it is learnt that Max Weber was born in 1864 in Erfurt, Germany, and died in 1920. His family consisted of a large number politicians, entrepreneurs and scholars. His father was addicted to work (Ritzer, 1992).

Weber attended school in Berlin, where he studied philosophy and literature as well as ancient and primitive history. Studies at various universities included philosophy, law, and economic

history. He was appointed lecturer at Humboldt University in 1893, and at Freiburg in 1894 (Ritzer, 2003), and in 1897 he married Marianne Schnitger.

Weber's father had abused and maltreated his mother and consequently Weber started managing their household affairs. When his father died, he preferred to associate with people who encompassed the then fashionable philosophies of secularism, urbanism and capitalism. In 1904, he travelled to the East, South, and Midwest of the USA. He was very impressed by the energy, self-reliance and cynicism of authority in the USA (Ritzer, 2003).

Weber's religious mother and aunt taught him to take an interest in the various church denominations (Ritzer, 2003). They taught him to foster moral values, dignity and meaning, to be guided by ethical standards, and that each person is worthy of respect as each person is unique. His wife afterwards reaffirmed these values (Ritzer, 2003).

His father, in contrast, had instructed him not to give in to *naïve idealism*, not to indulge in useless self-sacrifice, and to oppose the world even if it meant using unethical or immoral methods. His mother's teachings prevailed, however, and whatever his father had taught him, was suppressed. He sincerely and enthusiastically campaigned for ethics to be upheld and would openly take people on if they lacked a sense of justice and social responsibility (Ritzer, 2003).

Weber was a follower of Immanuel Kant, who stated that the existence of human beings occurred only partly in the naturally interconnected world. The other part was a state of freedom in which one is governed by moral rules rather than by causes. This would mean that human beings could not be entirely understood by natural science, and in order to study their moral and spiritual life, other resources would necessarily have to be utilised (Cuff et al., 1998).

Max Weber's Theory of Power is discussed below because Weber's assumptions about power and conflict were similar to some of Marx's, and, like Marx, Weber also was concerned with the nature of capitalism (Cuff et al., 1998). Weber's Theory of Power is important, because it can influence our understanding of how power might be the origin of conflict.

Weber saw society as a conflict-producing power struggle. Different types of power exist, namely economic power, prestige power and pure power. These can be classified into three

different groupings, namely classes, status groups, and parties (Cuff et al., 1998). Cuff et al., (1998) views were again supported by Adu-Febiri (2014).

2.3.1 Weber's Theory of Power

Max Weber's Theory of Power is significant and noteworthy to this study, as it provides a better understanding of what power is all about and of how it is conducive to conflict. Weber reasoned that a society is a group that is constantly struggling for power. Social life encompasses dissimilarity and variation in different forms (Cuff et al., 1998). Although dissimilarity / variation may not always be economic, it is essential economic dissimilarity / variation should exist, but this is just one form of dissimilarity / variation. From such dissimilarity and variation, the organization of people into groups, and dissimilarity and variation is what groups struggle over. In Weber's view of society according to Cuff et al., (1998), the intergroup conflict may be caused by the fight for power or the fight over dissimilarities and variations.

Weber saw stratification as dissimilarities or variations happening in three dimensions, or forms of power. These dimensions form a basis for different groups, namely classes, status groups, and parties. Adu-Febiri (2014) added that there are three key areas of life where people attain more or less assets or resources, and where they are more or less governing or subjected in conflicting courses of action. These include people's professions (where they are grouped in different classes), secondly the areas or communities where people reside (different status groups, including gender, ethnicity, age, etc.), and lastly their political rings (where different parties search for political power) (Adu-Febiri, 2014). The power struggle occurs among these three groups (Cuff et al., 1998; Adu-Febiri, 2014). The power conflict among members of the same group is called 'intragroup conflict'. Classes aim to obtain economic power, both among members of the same group and among members of the other groups. Status groups aspire for prestige power, both among members of the same group and among members of the other groups. Parties fight for pure power, both among members of the same group and among members of other groups (Cuff et al., 1998).

Weber perceives class as a point in the development of economic production and its association to a market. Adu-Febiri (2014) supported the opinions of Cuff et al., (1998), that a class consists

of an alliance of individuals having specific things in common, and may be recognized or branded by a shared communal or collective feature. The number of classes that can be discerned will depend on which set of standards are used (Cuff et al., 1998).

Cuff et al., (1998) explain that the number of classes can eventually be reduced to two, namely those selling their labour power and those buying it. The classes of labour power could also be more finely defined, for example as skilled or unskilled and manual or non-manual. By distinguishing an explicit kind of labour power, a large number of classes may be identified.

Members from a class frequently and habitually react similarly (Adu-Febiri, 2014), since they have comparable backgrounds, but they are not necessarily aware of one another's reaction. Classes also contain dissimilar groups and variations in concepts (Cuff et al., 1998).

Adu-Febiri (2014) stated that Cuff et al., (1998), was of opinion that a status group is an alliance of individuals who perceive one another as equals, but look down on other social groups. Status groups are distinguished by prestige, status, and snobbery, and exclude those who, in their own eyes, are not equal to them. *“A status group is defined in terms of consumption and not in terms of production”* (Cuff et al., 1998, p. 51).

The measure of whether a person is equal to others or not in the eyes of society, centres mainly upon lifestyle or economic circumstances (Adu-Febiri, 2014). The way in which an educated person lives, for example, is what is acknowledged by society and adds status. Adu-Febiri (2014) supported the opinions of Cuff et al., (1998) that a status group ultimately relies on economic dissimilarity or variations, and that the aim of their conflict is to finance their standard of living, luxurious and expensive as it may be. Status groups interfere in the market process in order to preserve their individuality, and create conflict in order to gain prestige power. In any specific caste or status group in India, certain jobs are accessible to member of such a caste only, and not open for just anyone. A status group is dependent upon long-term social stability or consistency, and in case of rapid social change, there is bigger emphasis on social class (Cuff et al., 1998).

“A party is a self-conscious organization that struggles for power (is in conflict over power), and wants to maximize it by working out its objectives” (Cuff et al., as cited by Venter, 2006, p. 31). According to Cuff et al., (1998) power is the core motive for the subsistence of a party; it consists of all associations related to it, for example spiritual organizations, leisure organizations

and political parties. According to Brown-Ganues (2012), Weber also believed that power was distributed among different roles in politics, ethnicity, religion and gender.

Power is characterized by accomplishing results, even when there is resistance or confrontation; although those who have the power experience little resistance. Power can lead to conflict, however, because other individuals may resist it or fight against it. Refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 3.6) where the seven bases of power are discussed:

- **Reward power** is used to get compliance from others by making promises and giving out rewards.
- **Coercive power** is used to get compliance from others by using threats.
- **Legitimate power** is used to get compliance from others through formal authority.
- **Expert power** is used to get compliance from others through knowledge.
- **Referent power** is used to get compliance from others by having a charismatic character.
- **Connection power** is when someone can associate with influential people and.
- **Information power** is when people wait for a leader to tell them what to do.

In the measuring instrument which results are delivered in Chapter 4, questions were asked about power as a cause of conflict. From the answers it is clear that amongst the feminine gender group, power is considered only the fifth biggest cause of conflict. The feminine male group considered the misuse of power as their fourth biggest cause of conflict. None of the other groups considered the misuse of power as one of their five biggest causes of conflict.

Charismatic leaders are appointed due to their personalities and characters, but their leadership capabilities will continuously be tested. Adu-Febiri (2014) added that if a charismatic leader is able to mobilize resentments of subordinates, conflict are more likely to occur between superordinates and subordinates. A leader should be able to make things happen, and will lose power and authority if he does not succeed, or when he battles to get things done. The death of a leader or failure to carry out his role may have fatal consequences for the group that depends on him/her. In such cases, the source of authority or power falls back upon either rational-legal power or traditional sources. According to Cuff et al., (1998), rational-legal power refers to a

position held by a designated person, whereas traditional authority refers to a position inherited by someone, for example a prince who becomes king. The most efficient and best-organised form of a bureaucracy or large-scale organisational structure is the rational-legal authority. *“A bureaucracy is a company structure characterized by regularized procedure, hierarchy, division of responsibility, and objective relationships”*, as stated by Cuff et al., (1998, p. 54-55).

To Weber, the market consisted of an exchange among buyer and seller, and of opposition / competition between sellers and between buyers, (conflict may be caused by competition for scarce resources). Adu-Febiri (2014) confirmed what Weber had said, namely that a lack of opportunities to gain access to power, wealth and prestige may lead to conflict. In the empirical side of this study (Referring to the results presented in chapter 4), however, none of the groups viewed scarce resources as one of their five biggest causes of conflict. Nonetheless, the lack of a scarce resource, namely effective personnel, was seen by both the male group and the masculine male group as their second biggest cause of conflict. The masculinity group, however, perceived the lack of effective personnel as their fourth biggest cause of conflict. Swedberg (1999) stressed the point that as market performers may, under certain conditions, open up the market, and correspondingly shut it down under other circumstances, its relationships can be either open or closed.

Economic life results from a *struggle or fight*. The market rate is the result of a struggle of *“interests”* (conflict between the two performers who end up doing the exchange, i.e. the buyer and the seller), and simultaneously constitutes a *“competitive struggle”* (conflict between the buyers who compete with one another to buy the best bargain as well as conflict between the sellers who compete to get the exclusive sale) (Swedberg, 1999). The dynamics of interpersonal conflict are elaborated on in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.9 where interpersonal conflict will be discussed in detail.

Max Weber preferred to divide capitalism into three main categories, namely rational capitalism, political capitalism, and traditional commercial capitalism.

- *Rational capitalism* is recognized by its systematic and organised essence plus the number of rational establishments, such as a calculable legal order, a projected political system, science, and accounting.

- *Political capitalism* consists of creating a financial income by exchanging items in the political arena, such as imperialism and colonialism, the weapons industries, subsidies to the agricultural sector, etc.
- *Traditional commercial capitalism* has existed for thousands of years and concerns mainly trivial businesses (Swedberg, 1999).

Swedberg (1999) relates that Weber would not use the term 'capitalism' but would rather speak of 'modes of capitalistic orientation of profit-making'. Weber also added an economic component to his study, in order to enable him to see how all three major authority types are financed and how these would affect the development probabilities for rational capitalism (Swedberg, 1999).

Swedberg (1999) advocates that bureaucracy, is financed through taxes, may work efficiently within a rational capitalist system. Charismatic authority, on the other hand, may be financed through donations or by valuables, especially valuables looted in war in plunder campaigns). Charismatic authority is a direct threat specifically to rational types of economic systems. Traditional authority, such as patrimonial authority, is normally financed by a sovereign himself. Traditional authority can exist side-by-side with traditional and political capitalism.

2.4 PREREQUISITES FOR CONFLICT

Hübscher (2001) defined a prerequisite as something that is required in advance; something that is required as a prior condition. Miscommunication (Belak, 2006) and difference in goals and perceptions (Kritner & Kinicki, 2011), for example may be regarded as prerequisites for conflict. Johnson (2013) added that poor communication, different personalities, different values, and competition can all serve as prerequisites for conflict. In Chapter 4 (paragraph 4.7.1), it will be seen that the biggest prerequisites of conflict in this study is ineffective communication, favouritism or jealousy, rumours or gossiping, a specific leadership style (for example micromanaging), cultural differences, the misuse of power, and the lack of effective personnel (that can be seen as a lack of resources).

The prerequisites or sources of conflict discussed below are assumptions compiled from the theories of Marx and Weber and the following literature sources were used: Jordaan (1993), Vorhies (1991), Yildirim (1979), De Kock (1984) and Cuff et al., (1998).

2.4.1 Marx's Prerequisites for Conflict

- Conflict itself: Jordaan (1993) postulates that most modern conflict theories, including those of Marx, hold that conflict generate bigger conflict. Any conflict is a source for more conflict.
- Class-consciousness: Because the *proletariat* wish to improve their own conditions, as opposed to the *bourgeoisie*, who want the status quo to remain as it is, there always will be antagonism and opposition between these classes (Vorhies, 1991). As soon as the *proletariat* (working class) realise how bad their circumstances are, this realisation becomes a source of conflict too, as the perceived wrong needs to be redressed.
- Lack of upward social mobility: People need to improve their circumstances and improve their life quality. The possibility of upward social mobility motivates people to take action to escape their bad circumstances. In the absence of possibilities for upward social mobility, people will turn to violence in order to force change upon society (Jordaan, 1993).
- Destitution: This is another source of conflict. Economic stagnation or degradation or economic disintegration of any group or social class compared to another group or social class lead to impoverishment and destitution (Yildirim, 1979). If this happens to the working class (*proletariat*) in any society, the normal conclusion they arrive at is that, the only means to progress forward will be conflict.
- Absence of security: Yildirim (1979) explains that, in a system where employees can be fired or replaced at any time, there is no job security and no-one is sure of how long they will have an income. People need to plan their lives, and to know what they can afford and what they cannot afford. For this reason, they will fight for job security.
- Unemployment: Productivity is improved through Mechanization, but this leads to downscaling of the number of employees, and where opportunities to find new work are

few and far between, mass unemployment is the consequences (Jordaan, 1993). This is a recipe for revolt.

- Competition: In the opinion of De Kock (1984), conflict and dissent may also result when employees need to compete for jobs. Conflict is also rife when people need to compete for jobs.
- Organization of political factions: Where there is individual conflict, the result may be retrenchment resulting in dissent, and the forming of Unions whose task would be to campaign for improved employment conditions, a better working environment, and better wages/salaries (Yildirim, 1979). Every time there is individual conflict, it will result in political faction forming into labour unions to improve the rights and privileges of the employees. This blows up the possibility of larger scale conflict.
- Incomplete democracy: Large scale conflict may easily result in societies that lack absolute democracy and consensus any government that uses absolute dictatorship or autocracy, may be able to temporarily suppress any signs of revolution or uprising. To the contrary, totally democratic governments normally generate no conflict. (Jordaan, 1993).
- National unity: Ethnic groups strive for gaining control over their own affairs, which often causes social conflict (Jordaan, 1993). An ethnic group's struggle for independence often leads to conflict within a nation. This can tear a nation apart, but can consolidate minority groups as their members have a mutual and common goal, namely explicitly to fight for freedom.
- Alienation: Alienation is the term used to describe the act of isolating an individual from his or her family, community, or other individuals, mainly as a consequence of his/her own actions. This is able to produce conflict (De Kock, 1984).
- Communication: Vorhies (1991) is of the opinion that employees will be enabled to communicate better and bring the *bourgeoisie* to a downfall through utilization of improved technology. He reasons that better communication can empower employees to antagonize and eventually topple the *bourgeoisie*.
- Scarce resources: Ongoing opposition and competition for scarce resources are natural occurrences between parties that more often than not will lead to conflict (Greyling, 2000).

- Technology: This may lead to the disintegration of work skills (Cockeram, 1995). The more work is mechanised; the more employees need scarcer skills. According to Marx, (quoted by Parsons et al., 1965), this has the consequence that Unions become accountable for the conflict between employees employers. Currently, employees in many industries are being laid off, as it pays employees better to replace them by machinery.

2.4.2 Weber's Prerequisites for Conflict

- Power: Power is the means to overcome all resistance in order to acquire what one desires. Any struggle for power has conflict as a consequence. Power can be classified in mainly three categories, namely economic power, prestige power and pure power. Economic power is strived for by social classes, prestige power is desired by status groups, and pure power is pursued by political parties. Specific social groups may contain predominant parties that may attempt to empower such a specific group. The goal of a socialist party might entail gaining power for the working class, according to Cuff et al., (1998).
- Role ambiguity: Cuff et al., (1998) state that, although it is customary for politicians to use methodical advisors, there is no clear role description, so it is not always clear who needs to do what. Advisors might, for example, interfere in the decisions the political leader needs to make, thus reducing it to a measly technical choice. Political matters of especially a scientific nature may be misinterpreted, and or misrepresented, according to Cuff et al., (1998). Role ambiguity results in a form of intrapersonal conflict, as a person is unsure of what exactly is required from him or her.
- Forcing: When someone wants to force his/her will onto another person, such domination is normally resisted, and may lead to conflict.
- Competition: Where people compete, opportunities are created for buyers to buy at the most favourable price, and for sellers to sell at the most favourable price, and thus a market is created, says Weber (1978). This may cause conflict among buyers, as they

compete for the most favourable deals, and the sellers may encounter animosity from others, as each tries to obtain the best price for his/her products.

- Politics: Cuff et al., (1998) are adamant that a clash of different standards and morals and causes that create conflict.
- Science: According to Cuff et al., (1998) people are responsible for choosing their own value systems, and should not depend on Science to make decisions about, for example the leaders to vote for, the cause to support, or the gods serve. Such choices may be conducive of conflict within and among individuals (Cuff et al., 1998).
- Society: Cuff et al., (1998) also state that, individual differences and inequalities cause groups that feel discriminated against to organize themselves into dissident organizations that may clash with other groups in their society.
- Economics: Economics depends on who the winner of a fight is. The market price of an article, for example, is the outcome of a dispute between two parties who eventually do the exchange, as well as of competition between potential buyers and sellers (Swedberg, 1990).

Table 1 contains a summary of the relevant prerequisites of Karl Marx and Max Weber that corresponded:

Table 1

Contrast and comparison of Marx and Weber's prerequisites for conflict

Prerequisite:	Karl Marx:	Max Weber:
Trade Union Involvement	Marx called it organization and political factions.	Weber called it politics.
Lack of physical resources (equipment, finances, effective personnel)	Marx called it scarce resources.	Weber called it economics (purely a lack of sufficient finances).
Misuse of power	Marx called it the lack of upward social mobility.	Weber called it power; with power one can acquire what one desires.
Professional competition	Marx said that competition for work amongst employees would lead to conflict	Weber called it competition; competition between the buyers, and competition between the sellers.
Specific leadership style	The bourgeoisie led the proletariat.	Weber called it forcing. Those with power force it onto those without power.
Ineffective communication	Marx called it communication.	Weber called it role ambiguity.
Cultural differences	Marx called it class-consciousness.	Weber called it society.

In Table 1 it is seen that Marx and Weber agreed in their perception of a number of prerequisites for conflict. The most important ones include, misuse of power, cultural differences, ineffective communication, specific leadership style and the misuse of power. In Chapter 5, Table 18 it will

be seen whether the respondents of this study have mutual acceptance for the philosophies of Marx and Weber.

2.5 ASSUMPTIONS OF CONFLICT PARADIGM

In the succeeding paragraphs a compilation of assumptions that narrate closest to the explanation of conflict will be examined. Karl Marx was a conflict theorist and Max Weber was a pluralist theorist (Venter, 2006). Because of that we will consider all the assumptions of the conflict paradigm, and the assumptions of the pluralist paradigm. In 1986 Perdue compiled various assumptions of what he called the conflict paradigm.

Human Nature

Marx perceived a human being as smart, sensitive and rational. If the social instructions of a community aren't appropriately designed, these characteristics can get slanted; which will result in people wanting to emphasise progressing their personal interests at the cost of others, and this may result in conflict over contrasting interests (Perdue, 1986).

The Nature of Society

Conflict theorists consider society as an organisational reality, and an institutional state that develops according to historic and ancient laws. From time to time the reality is correctly understood by individuals; and from time to time incorrectly understood. Social institutions are accountable for developing the attitudes, behaviour and performance of people in a society. Behaviour and attitudes may change and contrasting behaviour and attitudes may then be in conflict (Perdue, 1986).

According to conflict theorists every society is able to be considered human merely to the point that its institutions simplify co-operation, distribution, and the common interest; these institutions are vibrant and forceful rather than static or inactive. According to Venter (2006), *the basic world, as well as the social world, is characterized by change that is unstable (change that is unstable may produce conflict), rather than by change that is stable* (p. 38). Change in

the social world does not happen inadvertently, but occur in a decent mandate and happen consistently and regularly (Perdue, 1986).

Perdue (1986) also stated the social nature of human being is not predominant in a society where there are large dissimilarities in wealth, power, and status. Large dissimilarities in wealth, power and status could possibly lead to people having contrasting interests. The opposition might lead to intergroup conflict (two classes or groups in conflict).

Inherent or natural conflict between and amongst groups with contrasting interests could be seen in a society comprising of disparities and differences (Perdue, 1986).

The Nature of Science

As humans are objective and impartial beings who exist in an actual social world, the viewpoint of materialism is the foundation for human science. The pluralists have a view of numerous social realities, whereas the conflict theorists have a view of numerous *perceptions* of structural reality (Perdue, 1986). Further Perdue also states that *“human science subsists so that the interpersonal possessions of social command can be understood. Societies, such as institutions, companies, classes, etc. cannot be considered in isolation; societies must be studied holistically, because societies are aggregates that are interconnected”* (1986, p. 304-305).

Perdue (1986) lastly states that conflict theories are macro-sociological, and *“given the constancy of change, the reality of contradiction, and the fact that social phenomena are frequently the “cause and effect”, conflict theories will often reflect the use of dialectic logic”* (1986, p. 304-305).

2.5.1 Assumptions of the Pluralistic Paradigm

Human Nature

Rousseau (1962) was of opinion that freedom, independence and a social-political structure are essential in a pluralist theory, as pluralists perceive the freedom or independence personal rather than collective (Perdue, 1986).

The Nature of Society

Perdue (1986) theorized that society is a state of realisation built upon the collective views and opinions of its members.

Freund (1969) propagated the idea that a society originates from reciprocity and mutuality, and being aligned to others. If all group members behave according to what they think the others are doing, the relationship can be called reciprocal or mutual.

Give-and-take (shared) relationships, symbols, and perceptions of oneself should be understood as part of a larger picture, e.g. culture is not reconstructed from scratch every time human beings interact. Customs and philosophies contribute towards the conception of the larger picture. Perdue (1986) quotes Max Weber on Protestant thoughts being substantial in the understanding of motivation for entrepreneurial demeanour. Perdue (1986) added that *“the broader aspects of a society, for example the state, religion, education, the economy, and the family, are a company of roles that are interpreted and shaped by human action”* (p. 168-170).

The pluralist view is that while the behaviour, habits and life-style choice of members of most groups may differ, they share many of the major and noteworthy interests that make a society coherent (Perdue, 1986). Perdue furthermore explained that the pluralist also views society as interest groups that continuously oppose and contrast each other. The matter is further complicated by, the incompatibility of different cultures, with opposition, clashes, and incompatibility causing conflict (Perdue, 1986).

The Nature of Science

According to Perdue (1986) the pluralists assessed idealism as the base for human science; and relationships develop because:

- A person is capable to reason and contemplate,
- Able to create a world of philosophies and ideas, and
- Able to assign importance or sense to human behaviour

2.6 COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS

A comparison between Marx and Weber's views on some of the most important aspects of their conflict theories, namely power, social class, groups or classes, fundamental determinants and capitalism.

Table 2

A Comparison between Marx and Weber (Contrasts)

Factor:	Karl Marx:	Max Weber:
Power:	All forms of power have economic origins (Kirby, 1999).	Class and economic power is one example of power (Kirby, 1999).
Social class:	Social class is the major form of dissimilarity or difference (Kirby, 1999).	<i>“Social class is an example of unequal power relations in society”</i> (Kirby, 1999, p. 64).
Classes/Groups:	There are two predominant classes – those who labour for wages, namely the <i>proletariat</i> , and those who own property, namely the <i>bourgeoisie</i> . There are other classes also, namely the <i>petite bourgeoisie</i> (small business owners), and the <i>lumpen proletariat</i> (people who do not have a steady job) (Kirby, 1999).	Weber talks of a multitude of classes. Weber didn't perceive (economic) <i>“class”</i> and <i>“social class”</i> as having the same meaning; and interpreted it differently. Depending on the standards drawn, there can be as many or as few classes in a society as one likes (Kirby, 1999).

Fundamental Determinant:	The decisive factor of a class is those that own and those that do not own (Kirby, 1999).	Those that own property and those who own nothing is the decisive factors of a class, but there are different types of property owners (Kirby, 1999).
Capitalism:	He spoke about the Capitalist society of his time consisting of the <i>bourgeoisie</i> and the <i>proletariat</i> (Ashley & Orenstein, 2005).	Weber spoke of three kinds of capitalism, namely rational capitalism, political capitalism, and traditional commercial capitalism (Swedberg, 1999).

In the above table it can be seen that although Karl Marx and Max Weber's studies are both fundamental to this study, it also differs regarding power, social class, classes/groups, fundamental determinants and capitalism.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to explore which interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict theories have been derived through previous research, and how these agree and differ. Karl Marx and Max Weber's conflict theories were used because their theories are still relevant to today's knowledge and research in the area of social stratification (Hoffman, 2006). As seen in this chapter Marx and Weber's theories agree to some extent, and differ to another extent.

For Karl Marx conflict was the cause of a struggle or fight among contrasting classes, whereas Weber perceived conflict as a result of the fight for power. It was seen that Weber agreed with certain vital assumptions of Marx, but he disagreed with the methodology and view of history which Marx used.

Class, Class-antagonism, class-struggle, rebellions, war and civil-war are all factors which Marx perceived as the commencements of conflict. He viewed rebellions as the uppermost form of expression of the fight among classes. The property owners (*bourgeoisie*), who wanted to reserve the social order, burdened or overloaded the working class (*proletariat*) who desired to amend the social order.

Marx is seen as one of the utmost and greatest followers of conflict; and believed that conflict is leading or dominating all actions and dealings, and the oppressed class (*proletariat*) will in the end take over and rebel the oppressors (*bourgeoisie*).

Max Weber reasoned that a society is a group that is constantly struggling or fighting for power. Weber saw stratification as dissimilarities or variations happening in three dimensions, or forms of power. These dimensions form a basis for different groups, namely classes, status groups, and parties. Classes aim to obtain economic power, both among members of the same group and among members of the other groups. Status groups aspire for prestige power, both among members of the same group and among members of the other groups. Parties fight for pure power, both among members of the same group and among members of other groups.

A Class consists of an alliance of individuals having specific things in common, and may be recognized or branded by a shared communal or collective feature. Members of a class will characteristically react similarly since they have comparable background, but they are not necessarily aware of one another's reaction. A Status group is an alliance of individuals who perceive one another as equals, but look down on other social groups. Status groups are distinguished by prestige, status, and snobbery, and exclude those who, in their own eyes, are not equal to them. A party can be seen as a self-doubting group that fights for power (is in conflict over power), and wishes to take full advantage of it by working out its purposes. Power is the key purpose for the subsistence of a party.

In Chapter 3 a further literature study will be done to identify how different facets of conflict, biological sex and gender identity are conceptualized in literature. Firstly, the conflict process model of Robbins will be discussed to get an overview of the process of conflict, the types of conflict and ways to manage it. Subsequently, functional and dysfunctional conflict will be discussed, followed by ways to stimulate functional conflict. Thereafter the intensity of conflict,

which explains the strength or power of conflict, will be discussed followed by the different views of conflict over the past 80 years. Next social power, different levels of conflict within an organization, antecedents of conflict and conflict handling styles will be discussed. Lastly *interpersonal* conflict and the *interpersonal* conflict model of Hippocrates that was designed 400 years BC will be examined.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 focused on the problem statement, research question and objectives, as well as on the research method undertaken in this study. In Chapter 2, the study aimed at exploring the different theories of conflict derived through time by people such as Karl Marx and Max Weber in order to establish a basis from which the theoretical chapter on the nature of conflict was set, as well as to establish a comparison between their own findings and the correlation to those of this study's empirical findings.

The aim of this chapter is to identify how different facets of conflict are conceptualized in literature. Firstly, Robbins's conflict process model is discussed in order to obtain an overview of the process of conflict, the types of conflict, and ways to manage it. Subsequently, functional and dysfunctional conflict will be conversed, followed by ways to stimulate functional conflict. Thereafter the intensity of conflict, which explains the strength or power of conflict, will be discussed followed by the different views of conflict over the past 80 years. Subsequently, social power, different levels of conflict within an organization, antecedents of conflict, and conflict handling styles will be conferred. Finally, *interpersonal* conflict and the *interpersonal* conflict model of Hippocrates, designed 400 years BC, will be deliberated on.

3.2 THE CONFLICT PROCESS MODEL OF ROBBINS

Extensive research has been done on conflict and there are a number of conflict process models such as the Bloomfield-Leiss Dynamic Phase Model of Conflict, the Conflict Management Model, and the Strategic Communication Process Model for Crisis-Mode Public Relations Management, but Robbins's Conflict Process Model will be used for this study. In order to set the basis of this chapter which will allow the essence of conflict to be discussed in more detail, Robbins's Conflict Process Model provides a broad overview of the actual process, which comprises various steps or stages from the result to the outcome.

Through his work, Stephen Robbins studied the progression of conflict and divided it into five stages (Robbins, 2011). The aim was to point out the sources of conflict to a manager or supervisor. The sources of conflict in stage 1 may lead to serious conflict (stage 2). Individuals may have different objectives that may be explained by using the various approaches of conflict of the Thomas-Killman Model (stage 3) of conflicting behaviour, and ways to manage it (stage 4). The outcomes of the conflict process can be either functional or dysfunctional (stage 5).

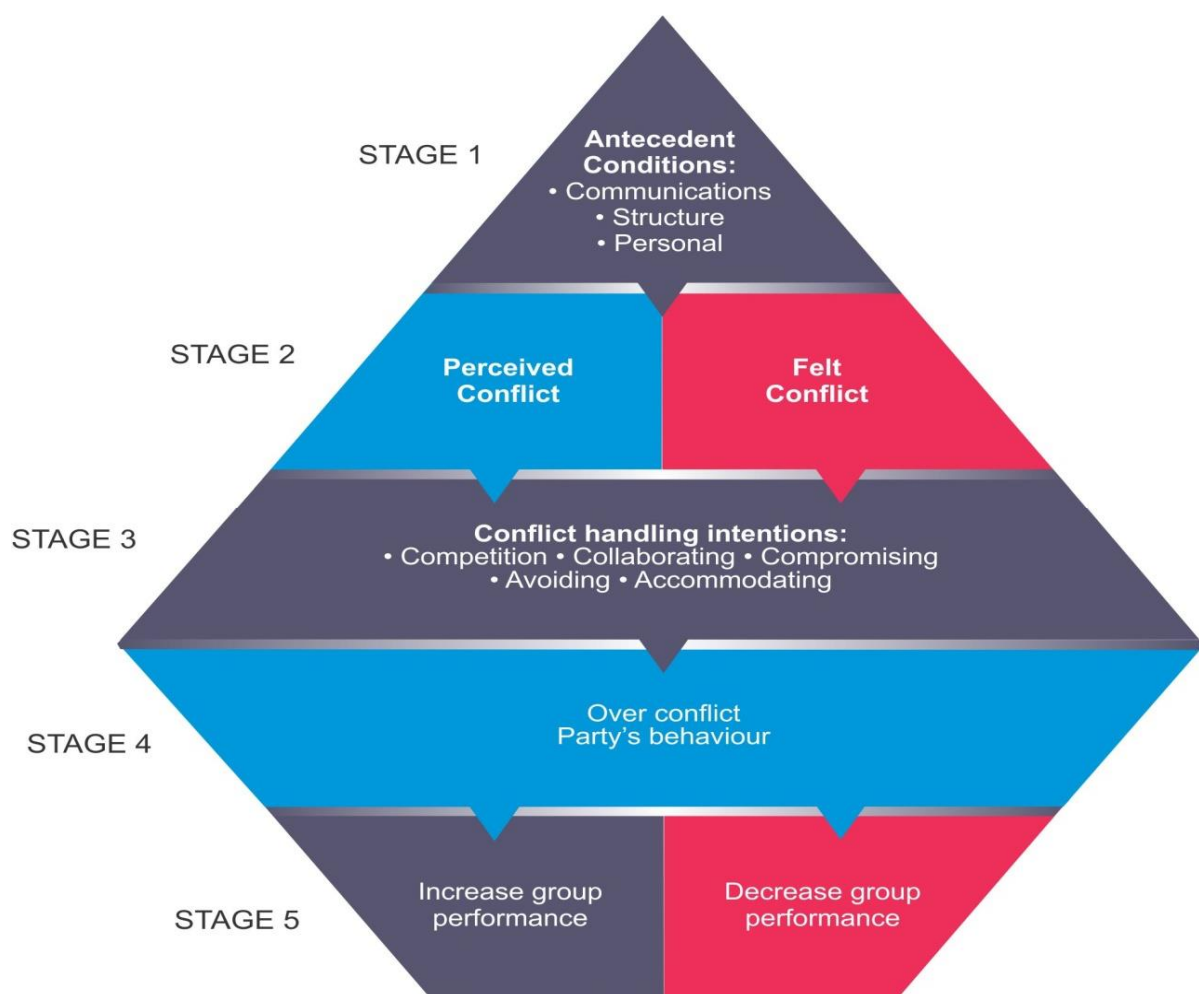


Figure 2. The Conflict Process Model of Robbins. Adapted from *Essentials of Organizational Behavior* (p. 424), by S. P. Robbins, 2005, San Diego: Prentice Hall.

First Stage: Potential Antagonism or Incompatibility

Communication: Poor communication cannot solely be blamed for conflict; semantic differences and misunderstandings or misconceptions may all lead to conflict. These are fostered by differences in training, discriminating perception, and inadequate or insufficient information about others (Robbins, 2011).

Structure: (Measure of interdependence between groups; reward system; leadership style; member-goal compatibility; the measures to which a group's members are specialized): The bigger a group, the more meticulous and specialized their activities are, the more it may lead to conflict. Group interdependence could also add to the possibility for conflict; and conflict is more likely to escalate when group members are young. Lack of clear definition, vagueness, and moving of goalposts result in uncertainty which increases the progression of conflict. Groups and individuals change their goals and objectives from time to time, and causes conflict. According to Robbins (2011), leadership styles such as very close or too participative leadership may increase the possibility for conflict, as is also evident from the empirical results of this study (Refer to Chapter 4, Table 8 and Table 12). These results have shown that a specific leadership style is the biggest cause of conflict for the female group and the masculine female group, and this corresponds with the work of Robbins.

Personal Variables: Individual value systems are dissimilar, and uniqueness of character may lead to conflict. Individuals with a demanding and difficult character or individuals with a low self-worth and low confidence may be considered trouble-makers (Robbins, 2011). In Chapter 4, Table 11, it is seen that the feminine female group perceived co-employees with an incompatible personality as the second biggest cause of conflict.

Second Stage: Cognition and Personalization

Conflict circumstances/sources/causes only lead to conflict if they affect a diverse group of parties and if these parties want to get involved in conflict. They will then define what the conflict will entail (Robbins, 2011).

Third Stage: Intentions

Interference among people's perceptions and feelings are shaped by their intentions and their unambiguous behaviour. Intentions are decisions to act in specific ways. This is an important stage, as one needs to presume another's intention or aim if one wants to react appropriately. Conflicts are frequently propagated because one group attributes the wrong intentions to the other (Thomas, 2002).

The Thomas-Kilmann conflict model is used for explaining the third stage intentions (Robbins, 2011). These styles are associated with the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II), which forms part of the standardized measuring instrument used in this study.

Competing is assertive, self-confident and uncooperative. Individuals pursue their own concerns at the cost of others (Milton, 2014). When competing, a person uses whatever power, influence or authority is available to him to maintain his position, for example his ability to argue, his status, or even economic sanctions (Robbins, 2011).

Accommodating is unassertive, obliging, and co-operative. An individual may put another's concerns above his own, by, for example, yielding to, or complying with, somebody else's point of view (Robbins, 2011), supported by Milton (2014).

Avoiding is unassertive, disobliging and uncooperative. An individual may not immediately pursue another's concerns or his own concerns (Milton, 2014); conflict is avoided diplomatically and discreetly (Robbins, 2011).

Collaborating is assertive, self-confident, and co-operative. Two or several individuals strive to collaborate in order to find a resolution together to satisfy their separate concerns (Milton, 2014).

Compromising is intermediate in both assertiveness and co-operation. Individuals search for win-win-solutions benefiting both parties (Milton, 2014). Compromising could mean searching out middle ground, exchanging ideas, and "splitting the differences" (Robbins, 2011).

Fourth Stage: Behaviour

This stage contains the reactions, proceedings, and announcements made by the parties in the conflict. These conflict behaviours normally consist of actions by each party attempting to

implement aim or intention. The original intentions often are not implemented due to unskilled performance and/or explicit behaviour (Robbins, 2011).

Robbins (2005) as supported by Venter (2006) lists the following techniques to manage conflict during the fourth stage:

- Firstly, meetings to resolve problems amongst conflicting parties, such as communication as mentioned by Marx (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1) as well as Weber (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2)
- Every person's collaboration and assistance is required to set goals. This can also lead to consolidation as mentioned by Marx (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1), as team members have mutual and common goals.
- Expanding the actual resources which produced the conflict in the first place.
- Avoiding or withdrawing the conflict, which is seen by Belak (2006) and Kreitner and Kinicki (2011) as a negative aspect to conflict or destructive conflict as it is a barrier to the performance of the team and further frustrates the objectives of the organization (Ergeneli, Gohar, & Temirbekova, 2007).
- Playing down differences whilst accentuating universal interest into achieving the common goal which is organizational success, despite individual interest
- Compromising, which for example, can mean that both parties agree to satisfy each other's concerns, partially by finding a middle-ground resolution (Thomas, Thomas, & Schaubhut, 2008)?
- Using official or prescribed authority to solve the conflict, such as organizational leaders who have the ability to establish a clear vision, share that vision with others so that they will follow willingly, provide the information, knowledge, and methods to realize that vision and coordinate and balance the conflicting interests of all members (Mayer & Louw, 2012).
- People should obtain training to adjust their approaches and behaviour, which can be in the form of an official Training and Development program or a type of external Leadership-Development course which assist in the process of dealing with conflict.
- Finally one can manage conflict by adjusting the actual structural variables inducing it

Fifth Stage: Outcomes

The result of conflict could be functional or dysfunctional. Functional conflict is beneficial to the company, because it may advance and progress performance, whereas dysfunctional conflict is disadvantageous and harmful for a company (Robbins, 2011).

Stage Five of Robbins's Conflict Process Model might result in either functional or dysfunctional consequences.

3.3 FUNCTIONAL AND DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICT

According to Ada (2014) one of the main characteristics of conflict is to know that conflict can be either functional (constructive) or dysfunctional (destructive). An important aspect to take into deliberation is that most people perceive conflict as a negative or undesirable characteristic that has to be avoided as far as possible because it exposes bad behaviour, anxiety and aggression (Hoffman, 2006). She further added that functional conflict is perceived as positive, because it progresses performance and distinguishes weaknesses. Functional conflict is in the interest of the organisation, and by increasing functional conflict the following can automatically increase: Organisational design characteristics, such as formalisation and validation; interdepartmental interconnectedness; low communication obstacles; and team spirit, can improve new product performance (Menon, Sundar, Bharadwaj, & Howell, 1998). Hoffman (2006) identifies several characteristics of functional conflict, including that it stimulates variation and creativity, lead to advanced employees' enthusiasm and eagerness, because employees get a chance to assess their capabilities. According to Hoffman (2006), functional conflict could also lead to improved efficiency, and could advance reliability, cooperation and motivation. Furthermore, in an organisation, functional conflict could have beneficial effects such as stronger connections amongst participants. Firstly it develops and strengthens collective norms and values; secondly, it contributes in minimizing stress and frustration and assists established objectives in stipulating when change is required in the organisation (Nel, Swanepoel, Kirsten, Erasmus, & Tsabadi, 2005).

Dysfunctional conflict might have a negative influence on the organisation, as it consists of disagreement or collaboration amongst groups that may damage and harm the organisation (Belak, 2006). Hoffman (2006) also identifies some characteristics of dysfunctional conflict, including: it decreases the self-confidence of the employees; it increases anxiety and nervousness that cause dissatisfaction; individuals simply focus on their own specific interests, and that inhibits teamwork; a feeling of cynicism or disbelief can be developed; absenteeism can escalate, and productivity may decrease; time and energy are consumed on conflict and solutions, and it disturbs communication and contributes to a negative influence on customer relationships. Kreitner and Kinicki (2011) are of the opinion that dysfunctional conflict in the organisation, whether between groups, teams, individuals, or departments, are a common and everyday threat to the organisation as well as to its competitiveness and effectiveness. According to Gottlieb (2003), dysfunctional interpersonal conflict might be extremely disruptive to any organisation, and if it is not handled properly and appropriately, it might have factual consequences for the organisation. Therefore it is very important to understand the difference amid functional and dysfunctional conflict to successfully manage and lead a company. De Dreu and Van de Vliet (1997) added that conflict management is a vastly and enormously important aspect that should be productive, cooperative, and supportive, and should take the form of problem-solving rather than competing or opposing. Once management knows what is expected of them in terms of how to handle conflict, and they are able to handle conflict constructively, then management can encourage functional conflict (Thomas, 2006).

Consequently, some techniques to stimulate functional conflict that assists the interest of the company will be discussed.

3.3.1 Techniques for Stimulating Functional Conflict

It is important to discuss techniques for motivating functional conflict, because knowledge of the kind of techniques and how to use them- is helpful to an organization if it can draw benefit from the conflict.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2011) see programmed conflict as various opinions encouraged without considering the protection of the managements.

Groups or committees may sometimes be so pre-occupied with procedures that no significant achievements can be detected. Careful managing can help functional conflict stimulate the participants. Programmed conflict can thus be useful to Managers. Two models of programmed conflict techniques, namely devil's advocacy and dialectic method, both help stimulate functional conflict (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

3.3.1.1 Devil's Advocacy, a Technique for stimulating Functional Conflict

Devil's Advocacy can be defined as *“a form of programmed conflict in which someone or some group is assigned the role of critic, whose job it is to uncover all possible problems with a particular proposal”* (Ivancevich, Kanopaske, & Matteson, 2005, p. 702).

This technique originated in the Roman Catholic Church where people's good records were required to be evaluated in order to determine whether the person was worthy to be blessed (Refer to Figure 3). In order to evaluate a person, someone had to play the role of critic (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

The interpretation of Figure 3, a devil's Advocate Programme, is as follows (Cosier & Schwenk, 1990), as quoted by Venter (2006):

First step: Create a planned course of action: If there is any conflict, let team members debate the situation, and create a planned course of action from the debate or argument.

Second step: Consign a devil's advocate to disapprove or criticize the suggestion: Let one or more team members comment on the planned course of action.

Third step: Present the appraisal to main decision-makers: Let someone take records about team members' thoughts and opinions, on the planned action, and hand it to the main decision-makers.

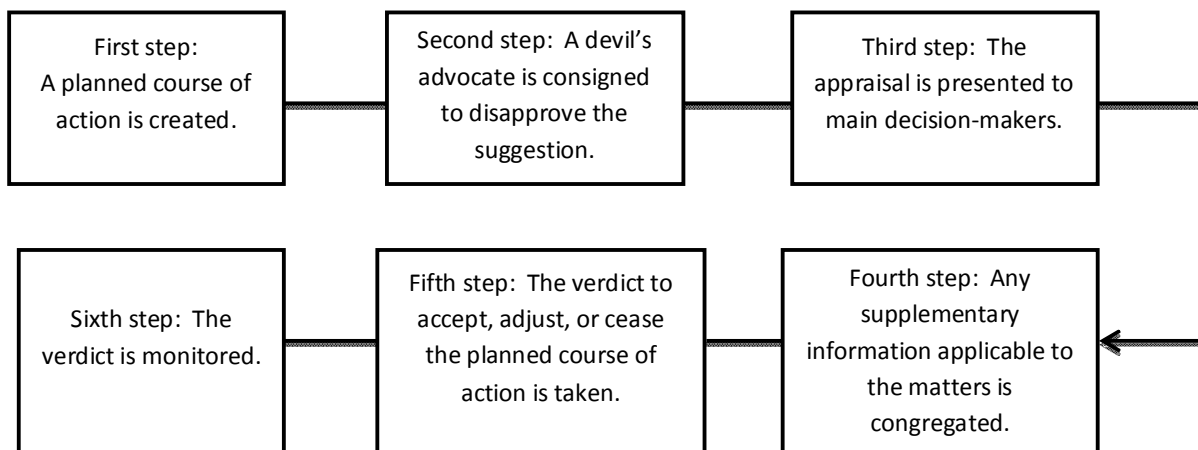


Figure 3. Technique one for stimulating Functional Conflict: The Devil's Advocate. Adapted from "Agreement and thinking alike: ingredient for poor decisions" by R. A. Cosier and C. Schwenk, 1990, *Academy of management executive*, 4(1), p. 69-74.

Fourth step: Gather supplementary information applicable to the matters: the main decision-makers will also search for supplementary information that will apply to the existing matters.

Fifth step: Take the decision to accept, adjust, or stop the planned course of action: the main decision-makers decide whether they are required to carry out the planned course of action, adapt the action, or take no action at all.

Sixth step: Monitor the verdict: When a decision is made, the decision will be monitored continuously in order to see how things are going.

3.3.1.2 Dialectic Method, a Technique for stimulating Functional Conflict

Kreitner and Kinicki (2011) had the notion that a dialectic method would constitute a debate of opposing viewpoints that need to be discussed and thrashed out in order to increase the understanding of an issue.

The "Dialectic Method" originated in the dialectic school of philosophy in ancient Greece. The use of the dialectic method involves much more training than using the devil's advocacy

technique, because the dialectic method may lose focus on the issue at hand, as it concentrates on winning the debate (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

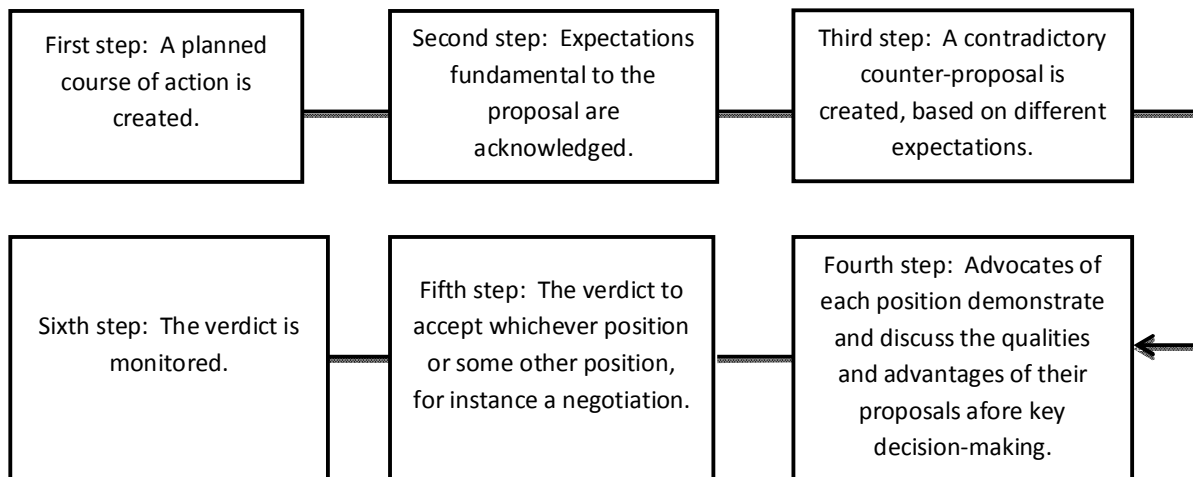


Figure 4. Technique two for stimulating Functional Conflict: The Dialectic Method. Adapted from "Agreement and thinking alike: ingredient for poor decisions" by R. A. Cosier and C. Schwenk, 1990, *Academy of management executive*, 4(1), p. 69-74.

Cosier and Schwenk (1990), as quoted by Venter (2006), interpreted Figure 3, the Dialectic Decision Method, as follows:

The first step is to create a planned course of action: Team members discuss any conflict that may be present, and create a planned course of action.

The second step is for team members acknowledge and identify expectations fundamental the proposal: For the sake of argument team members must assume the fundamental proposal as true.

In the third step, creating a contradictory counter-proposal is important. However, this must be based upon different expectations: A counter-proposed action course must be drawn up, based on a set of expectations, divergent from those of the first planned course of action.

In the **fourth step** Cosier and Schwenk (1990) mention that there should now be two teams, each demonstrating one of the courses of action generated as in the steps above. Each team presents its course of action to key decision-makers and debates its merits.

In **step five** the main decision-makers decide which positions to accept, or alternatively reach a compromise.

In the final step (**step six**) it is important to have the verdict monitored: Once a decision is made, it will need to be monitored and controlled continuously.

3.4 THE INTENSITY OF CONFLICT

Chetty (2012) sees conflict as a power that has to be managed instead of avoided; and adds that managers should not aim to avoid all organizational conflict, but rather to maintain the conflict at a functional and reasonable level which contributes changing efforts and leads to organizational profitability. Chetty (2012) confirmed Deutsch and Coleman (2000), that in order to manage conflict efficiently in an organization, management should formulate strategies according to the causes and types of conflict present within the organization. Since the performance of an organization is directly linked to the conflict taking place in an organization, it's compulsory for managers to create the skills that are vital to efficiently manage the conflicts arising within the organization (Chetty, 2012). In Figure 4 below the relationship between conflict and performance of an organization can be seen.

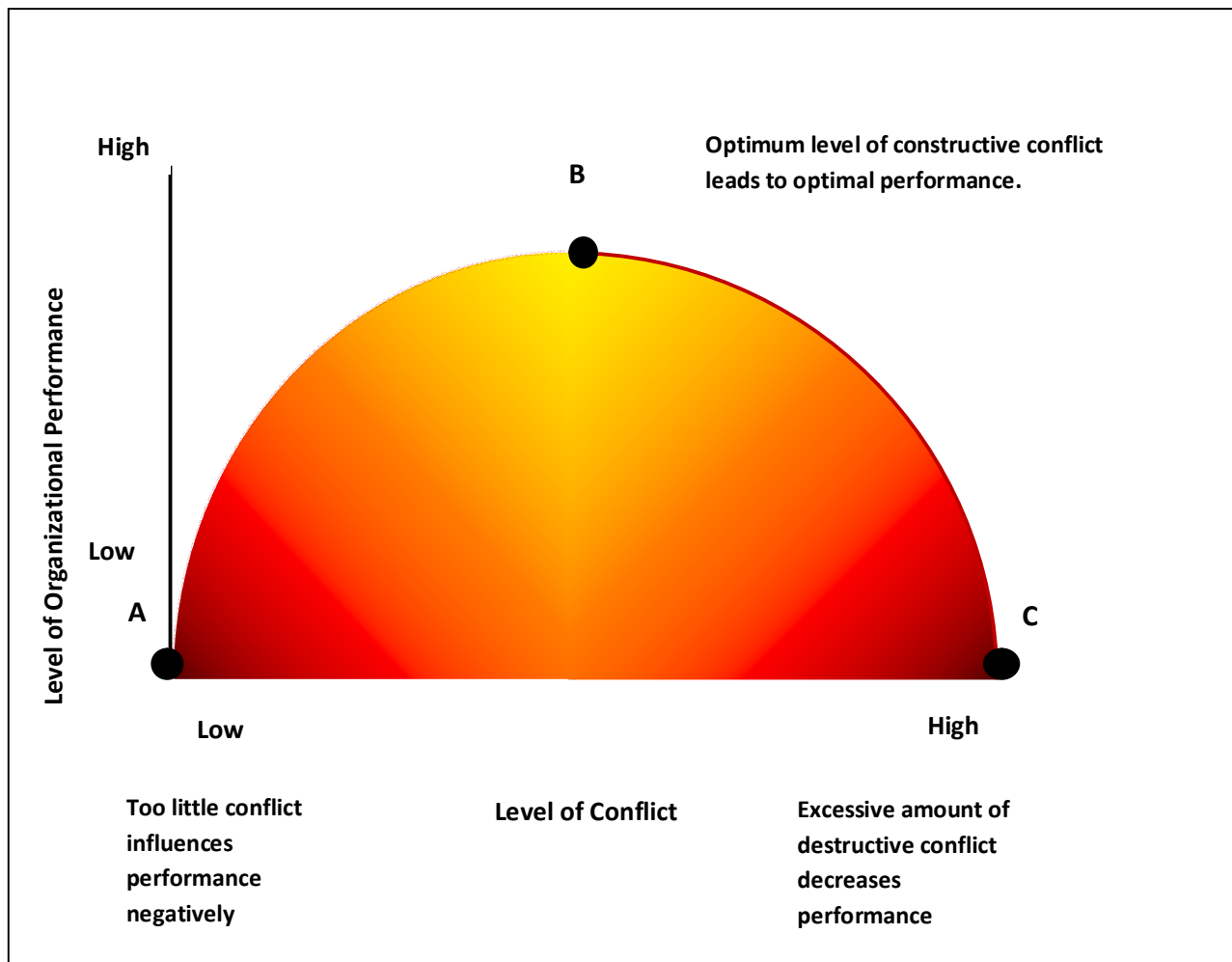


Figure 5. The Intensity of Conflict. Adapted from "Relationship between organizational conflict and performance of organization" By P. Chetty, 2012, Retrieved May 27, 2012, from <http://www.projectguru.in/publications/relationship-between-organizational-conflict-and-performance-of-organization/>

Figure 4 shows that conflict at a moderate intensity is necessary for a company to have a positive effect on its outcome. Figure 4 can be interpreted as follows:

When there is too little conflict in an organization (point A), the outcome may be neutral or negative/dysfunctional, because it will lead to apathy, lack of creativity, indecision and missed

deadlines. A lack in conflict within an organization regularly designate that managers place traditionalism at the new ideas's expenditure; this impermeable to strive and change for conformity (traditionalism) rather than making the decision process efficient (Chetty, 2012). She further added that as the conflict level increase from point A to point B, so will organizational efficiency. The following is possible to take place when an organization has a desirable and pleasing conflict level (point B):

- Diverse perspectives would be hearten and encouraged by managers who would also be more probable to be open.
- Ways will be sought to advance and progress the efficiency and performance of the organization. Management observes divergence and discussions as an imperative part for making effectual decisions (Constantine & Merchant, 1996, supported by Chetty (2012).

When the conflict level increases from point B to C, conflict rises to the point where the performance of the organization becomes negatively affected; the outcome will be negative/dysfunctional, because it will lead to political infighting, dissatisfaction, lack of teamwork, increased turnover, and managers who misuse resources of the organization for personal growth (Chetty, 2012; Osland, Kolb, & Rubin, 2001).

From Figure 4 it is apparent that an optimum level of conflict is needed and essential for all organizations to make efficient decisions and to display or reveal exceptional performance. Furthermore an organization with nil conflict fails to displays a good performance; consequently, conflict is imperative for an organization to conquer or to reach success (Chetty, 2012).

3.5 DIFFERENT VIEWS OF CONFLICT

These different views of conflict are important to the discussion, because it gives a detailed background on how conflict was managed, and how it may be managed in our present time.

Different views of conflict existed in the following years: The traditional view existed from 1930-1940, the behavioural view existed from 1949-1975, and the interactionist view originated in 1976, and still exists today (Robbins, 2011). The different beliefs about, and reactions to conflict, according to the different views, will now be discussed.

The Traditional View

In the traditional view, Managers were convinced that conflict was the last thing they needed, because according to this view, conflict could do much harm. Should conflict arise, it would be seen as personal failure, and consequently they feared conflict. Managers would try to stop conflict immediately by removing all indication of it, including the people who were responsible (Plunkett, Atner, & Allen, 2005).

The Behavioural View

Behaviouralist managers believed that conflict would exist on a regular basis and that conflict could be positive, but that it was more usual for conflict to be destructive. They also believed that conflict might have good or positive outcomes, but that it was more likely that conflict would have negative outcomes. The managers therefore tried to resolve or eliminate conflict immediately. They acted immediately and applied solutions that resolved the conflict (Plunkett et al., 2005).

The Interactionist View

Interactionist managers believe that conflict is unavoidable, but constructive conflict is essential for a company's health. Conflict is neither characteristically good nor bad. Dysfunctional conflict inhibits a company in achieving its objectives, but functional conflict is in the interest of the company, because it can support the objectives of a company. Managers will therefore try to manage conflict in such a way as to maximize the positive and minimize the negative (Plunkett et al., 2005).

3.6 SOCIAL POWER

Kreitner and Kinicki (2011) state that conflict may be the consequence of any struggle for power. They distinguish two types of power, i.e. socialized power and personalized power. Socialized power is strived at, so that people can help others, whereas personalized power is sought by people to help themselves (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Max Weber's theory shows some

resemblance to the above as he perceived conflict as a struggle for power (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.3.1, where Weber's conflict theory was discussed and the similarities are shown).

Venter (2006), as supported by Kreitner and Kinicki (2011), listed seven power bases, namely reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, referent power, connection power, and information power, which will be discussed below:

Reward power: Reward power is obtained by some managers and/or employees in a company by making promises and giving out rewards and thereby getting compliance from others (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). People like to be rewarded; therefore they will try to continuously improve their behavior when the manager wants them to improve their work, in order to get a reward. Improvement in employees' behaviour and productivity will surely reduce previous bad behaviour that usually would have led to conflict.

Coercive power: Some individuals may coerce and threaten others in order to get people to comply with their wishes (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Coercing (threatening punishment for 'bad' behaviour), does not ward off conflict for very long, but, creates an eventual backlash, whereas reward power is more effective. People resent punishment but respond positively to rewards.

Legitimate power: People may also use utilize legitimate power as a means of obtaining compliance through formal authority (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Legitimate power is essential to create structure in an organization. There is no order without structure order, and without order there will be conflict.

Expert power: Expert power is power obtained by managers or others by means of the application of their knowledge or information (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). A manager with expert knowledge on how to manage conflict can manage conflict well and usually have information (even if it is gossip and grapevine information) at his disposal.

Referent power: Smart individuals or individuals with a charismatic personality can attain compliance from others. People identify with role models, for example, and allow role models to exert this power over them (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Such power can lead to behaviour that

others will want to identify with, so the role model's participation in conflict or peaceful actions will influence followers of the role model to follow his lead.

Connection power: A manager also derives some kind of connection power from his association with influential people or organizations (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). This power is used to increase compliance as employees want to avoid punishment, or gain rewards from the powerful connection (Hersey et al., 2001). A manager who has connection power can manage conflict well, as the employees will try hard to obey him/her.

Information power: Employees need information from the manager in order to sustain or improve performance. This power can be used by managers to influence and excite employees (Hersey et al., 2001). Such managers can also keep order and control conflict.

It is clear that various forms of power can be applied to control conflict and attain compliance. It is essential, nevertheless, to identify the causes of conflict in order to assess correct methods for eliminating it, if necessary (if the conflict is destructive in nature).

It is necessary, therefore for this study's theoretical basis to devote attention to the different levels of conflict within an organization:

Organizational Conflict: This type of conflict usually is the consequence of a difference between the ways how the organizational culture expects employees to do things and how the organization's mission and value statements expect employees to do things. Weber considers role ambiguity as a prerequisite for conflict (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2).

Vertical Conflict: This occurs when people at different hierarchical levels such as supervisors and subordinates disagree over performance results, deadlines, goals, and resources (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2004). Refer also to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1, where a struggle over inadequate resources between two classes is one of Marx's prerequisites for conflict.

Horizontal Conflict: This occurs when people, persons or groups at the same hierarchical level have disagreements over inadequate resources, interpersonal factors, and goal incompatibilities (Schermerhorn et al., 2004). Marx's model considers a struggle over scarce or inadequate resources as a conflict prerequisite (as seen in Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1).

Line-staff Conflict: I.e. disagreement between authority and control over practices of personnel selection and termination. Line-staff conflict also is a type of horizontal conflict (Schermerhorn et al., 2004). Whereas Weber requires a struggle for power and authority for conflict (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2), Marx considers class-consciousness as one of the main prerequisites for conflict (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1).

Interest-Based Conflict: Schermerhorn et al., (2004) consider clashes between different functions, departments and units as conducive to conflict, as the different styles, priorities and needs of the various parties make them incompatible.

Informational Conflict: Inefficiently-designed communication channels lead to informational conflict. Employees may, for example, be uncertain how to implement new regulations, and nobody tells them. Managers or supervisors withhold information to maintain their power and influence over others (Schermerhorn et al., 2004). Max Weber ascribes informational conflict to the struggle for power (as seen in Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1) whereas both Marx (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1) and Weber (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2) talk about ineffective communication in this regard, and Weber sees it as role ambiguity (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2).

Cultural Conflict: Cultural conflict is the result of a difference in racial, ethnic, religion and gender perspectives or of racial, ethnic and gender-based styles of communication (Smuts, 2010). For Marx, inadequate communication was based on class-consciousness (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1) and was viewed as a prerequisite, whereas in Weber's view (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2) cultural differences within a society often trigger conflict.

Competition: Competition over scarce resources, such as materials, equipment, personnel, and money may ignite serious conflict (Plunkett et al., 2005). Marx and Weber viewed competition as a prerequisite for conflict (refer to Chapter 2, paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.4.2).

Communication: Communication breakdowns may result in misunderstanding. Receivers frequently do not listen very well and misunderstand the sender, consequently leading to arguments about goals, roles, or intentions (Plunkett et al., 2005). Karl Marx said better communication would assist the suppressed class in their quest for freedom (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1).

In order to be able to predict conflict, managers should know more about what precedes and follows it. For this reason, the following section will focus on the antecedents of conflict.

3.7 ANTECEDENTS OF CONFLICT

An Antecedent can be defined as something that needs to occur before something else can occur, for example a door has to be opened before one can enter into a building or a room. An antecedent to conflict could be inadequate communication. Inadequate communication within a team will lead to conflict within the team (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2012). In other words an antecedent can be described as something that's necessary before something else can happen, e.g. Peter and Susan have to get engaged before they can get married, or Susan arrived late for her meeting because she was stuck in traffic.

For cross-reference, refer to Chapter 2 (paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.4.2) where the prerequisites of Marx and Weber will be discussed and to Chapter 2 (Table 1 where a contrast between Marx and Weber's prerequisites for conflict are compared. Conflict Antecedents can produce either functional or dysfunctional conflict (Kreitner & Kinincki, 2011) and can help a manager anticipate conflict before a situation gets out of control (Fortado, 1992; Venter, 2006) and include:

- Suppressed or unresolved conflict.
- Unrealistic expectations of employees.
- Decisions made by consensus.
- Incompatible personalities or value systems
- Too many participants in the decision-making process.
- Unreasonable deadlines or pressing time limits.
- Unreasonable or vague rules, standards, and policies.
- Insufficient communication.
- Interdepartmental / Intergroup competition.
- Competition for limited resources.
- Unclear/overlapping job boundaries are unclear or overlap.

- Expectations that are not met (employees who have unrealistic expectations about salaries, promotions, and job assignments)

The question that remains is: if an antecedent/source of conflict is identified, how it can be resolved? What conflict handling styles should be applied? In the following section, the different handling styles will be examined for application to conflict situations.

3.8 CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES

Kulas (2010) stated that Thomas and Kilmann in 1977 were of the opinion that several different coping mechanisms were available to help one deal with conflict; and that every person has a favourite way of dealing with conflict and difficulty. Thomas and Kilmann (1977) identified five conflict handling styles – Avoiding, Obliging, Compromising, Dominating and Collaborative, and also developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (refer to Figure 5), which assesses a person's behaviour in conflict situations and describes it along two dimensions, namely assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas & Kilmann, 1977).

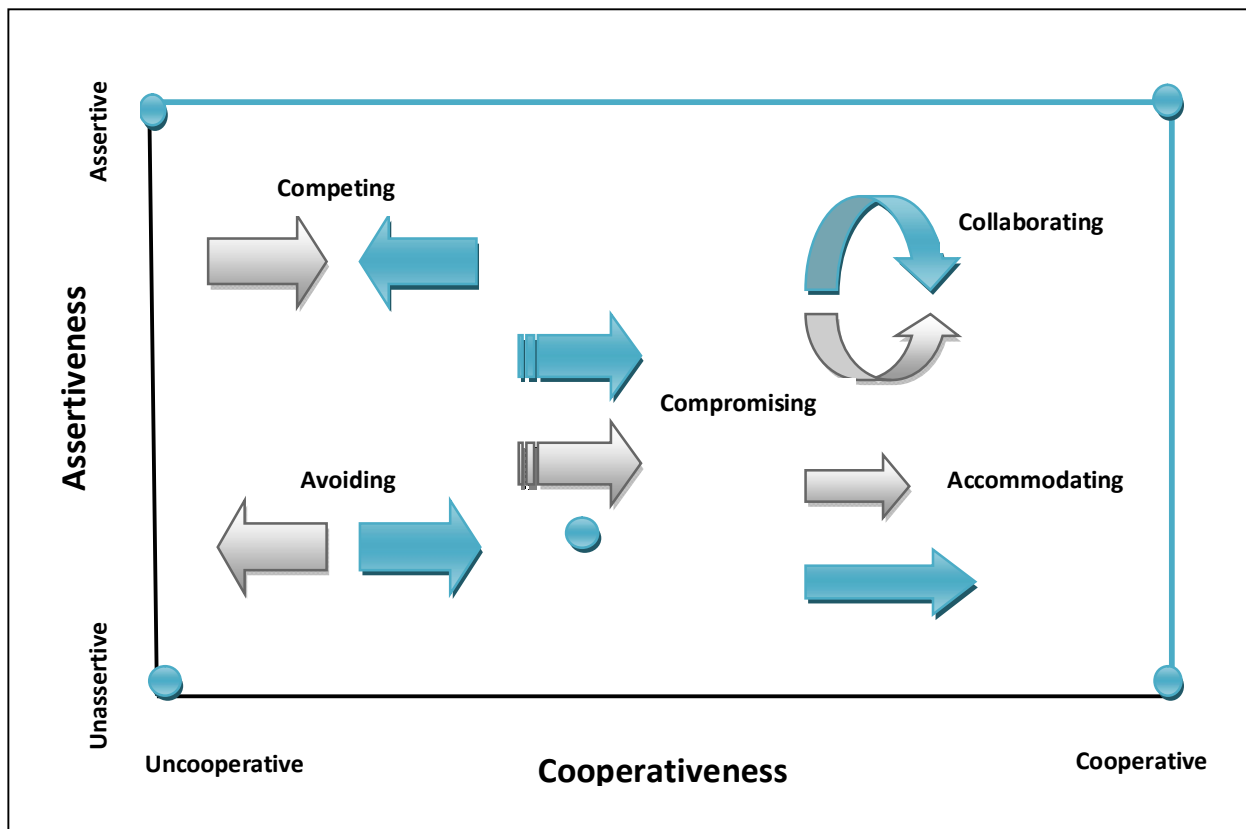


Figure 6. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model Instrument. "5 Stages of Conflict Process" by K. W. Thomas and H. R. Kilmann, as cited by Edu Articles, 2013, Retrieved from <http://edu-article.blogspot.com/2013/01/5-stages-of-conflict-process.html>

One of the most frequently used models is the conflict Model of Rahim (1983b), which is grounded on five styles, namely; (obliging, avoiding, dominating, integrating, and compromising), which happen along two extents, namely concern for others and concern for self (Milton, 2014). One of the main reasons why the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument was chosen for this study is because the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) measures the five conflict handling styles of this model.

3.8.1 The Five Conflict Handling Styles of Thomas and Kilmann:

- The **Avoiding approach** is characterized by individuals who have a low concern for self and others and a lack of concern about contentment. The use of this style is associated and connected with ignoring possible or actual controversial situations and avoiding, ignoring and postponing conflict situations. (Rahim, 2002, as cited by Milton, 2014).
- The **Obliging (accommodating) approach** is characterized by people who have low concern for self and high concern for others (Milton, 2014). This style endeavours to gratify the other's concerns at the expenditure of one's own concerns by finding a lose-win solution (Thomas et al., 2008). The use of this style is associated with accepting that an issue is much more important to the other party, attempting to preserve relationships, and giving in to another's views or demands (Rahim, 2002, as cited by Milton, 2014).
- The **Compromising approach** is connected with people who have a reasonable or fair concern for self and others (Milton, 2014). It is characterized by endeavouring to satisfy each party's concerns, partially by finding a middle-ground resolution (Thomas et al., 2008). The use of this style is associated with negotiation, concession, avoiding extended and lengthened conflict, and finding reciprocally satisfactory resolutions (Rahim, 2002, as cited by Milton, 2014).
- The **Dominating (competing) approach** is characterized by people who have a high concern for self and a low concern for others (Milton, 2014). This approach endeavours to satisfy one's own concerns at the expense of other parties concerned by finding a win-lose solution (Thomas et al., 2008). The use of this style is associated with disregarding the desires and needs of the other party, attempting to overpower the other and the use of assertive or belligerent strategies (Rahim, 2002, as cited by Milton, 2014).
- The **Collaborative (integrating) approach** is associated with people who have a high concern for self and others (Milton, 2014). It is characterized by endeavours to satisfy or gratify each party's concerns fully by finding a win-win solution (Thomas et al., 2008). The use of this style is associated with behaviours such as open information sharing, alternative seeking, and collaboration, to maximize each party's outcomes (Rahim, 2002, as cited by Milton, 2014).

3.8.2 Comparison of the Five Conflict Handling Styles of Thomas and Kilmann:

Thomas and Kilmann (1977) went further and identified the strengths and advantages (appropriate) and the weaknesses and disadvantages (inappropriate) of each of the five conflict handling styles:

Table 3

Comparison of the Five Conflict handling Styles of Thomas & Kilmann

Style:	Strengths & Advantages: Appropriate	Weaknesses and Disadvantages: Inappropriate
Accommodating:	• Able to build the relationship • When the problem is unimportant to you, but important to the other party • When the other party has more knowledge and expertise than you • When agreement and disturbance avoidance are important	• When your needs aren't met • You could feel misused and angry or offended
Avoiding:	• When the issue / relationship is unimportant • To avoid an immediate conflict • When a third party can solve the conflict more successfully • When you have slight probability of satisfying your concerns	• Conflict may aggravate or worsen until it escalates • Relationship remains shallow
Collaborating:	• When the problem is equally important to both parties • To combine perspectives from	• Might waste time and energy on unimportant problems • People might get aggravated

	diverse parties • promise, dedication and buy in is required to implement a resolution • When rigid feeling interfered with an interpersonal or operational relationship	or irritated as the process takes longer
Competing:	• Quick and important action is important • When your core standards need to be protected • When it's imperative for you to have it your own way	• You win, other person loses i may deteriorate relationships • Receive fewer contribution and thoughts from others • Others might want to sabotage the decision if they are not allowed to buy in
Compromising:	• Time is important i agreement needs to be reached • When collaboration is prevented by reciprocally limited goals • accomplish temporary resolution to compound problems • Use a backup method when competition and collaboration is unsuccessful and ineffective	• Both parties loose • Focus becomes on what you didn't deal with to get concerning needs. • Problems reoccur as they weren't completely investigated

Source: Thomas & Kilmann (1977)

3.9 INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

Up to here, conflict was discussed in general, but now theoretical research on *interpersonal conflict* (conflict between two or more people) will be focused on. In this context and to meet the objectives of this study, interpersonal conflict is the essence for further research in the empirical part.

Interpersonal conflict is one of the conflict types that occurs most in companies, due to normal and to-be-expected differences in viewpoints, personalities, values etc. (Kenny, 2012). There are various definitions of interpersonal conflict, of which three will be presented for discussion:

Interpersonal conflict: This is conflict that occurs between two or more people. It can arise from differences in perceptions, values, attitudes, and personalities (Nelson & Quick, 2005).

Wilmot and Hocker (2011, p.11) define interpersonal conflict as *“a felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness”*.

Personality conflict again occurs when someone disagrees with or personally dislikes another, resulting in interpersonal opposition (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

It may occur when one person does something insignificant and/or irrelevant over and over again that annoys another person, or as stated in a previous definition, when two persons disagree with each other (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

The following is an example: A worker at an organization interrupts a manager by tapping the manager on his back, because he disagrees with the manager. The manager gets annoyed by being tapped on the back and he is also annoyed because the worker disagrees with him. This situation and other situations alike may cause conflict (Venter, 2006).

In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1 it was said that interpersonal conflict is unavoidable and inevitable within an organisation; and therefore it is essential that members of a group, and especially leaders, shall have sufficient knowledge regarding the nature of interpersonal conflict. Therefore the Interpersonal Conflict Model and the different temperaments will be discussed to get a better understanding of how different temperaments would perceive and handle conflict differently.

3.9.1 Interpersonal Conflict Model

Approximately 400 Years BC, human behaviour patterns were studied by the Greek philosopher Hippocrates who determined that all people belong to one of four temperaments, namely Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholic and Phlegmatic, and built a model of interpersonal conflict. Beer (2009) also did a study on the four temperaments and refers to it as the different colours; namely, yellow (sanguine), red (choleric), blue (melancholic) and green (phlegmatic).

Temperament is mixed in individuals in varying degrees. For ease of discussion, twelve blends of the four basic temperaments are distinguished. A person may, for instance, be 60 percent choleric and 40 percent sanguine. In some cases, a person may have a combination of two to four of the basic temperaments, for example 15% choleric (red), 40% sanguine (yellow), 35% phlegmatic (green) and 10% melancholy (blue). Of course it is not possible to exactly determine ratios of a person's temperament, but a person's basic or predominant temperament can be determined. Figure 6 will focus on the four basic temperament types, and the twelve blends of the four basic temperaments will only be mentioned shortly.

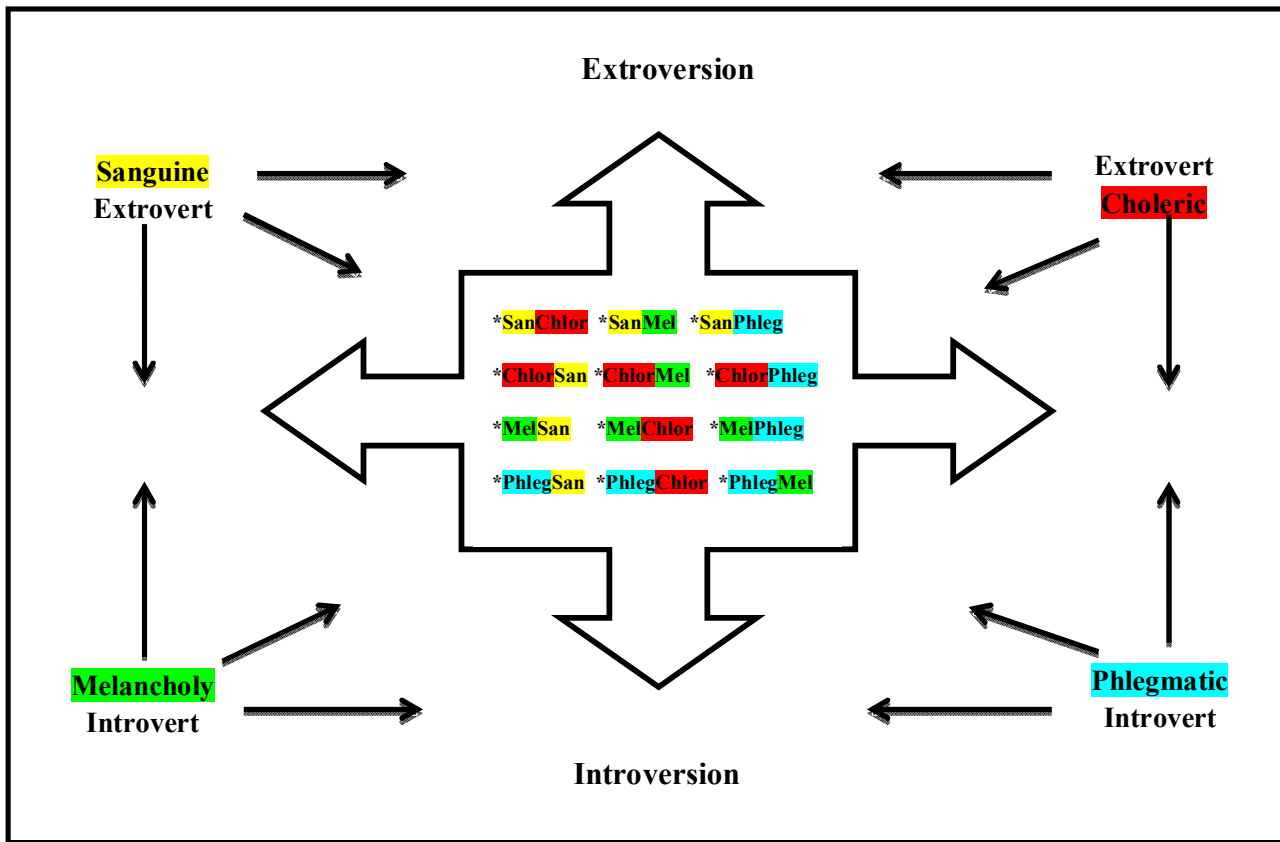


Figure 7. The Interpersonal Conflict Model. Adapted by ñThe Nature of conflict within an engineering company in the North West provinceò by J. Venter, 2006, Master's Dissertation, Potchefstroom: North-West University.

Venter (2006) stated that the works of LaHaye (1977) maintains that there are four basic temperament types, namely Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholy and Phlegmatic. Twelve blends of the four basic temperaments are discussed below.

- ♦ **SanChlor**: This indicates that the person's temperament consists of both the Sanguine (yellow) temperament and the Choleric (red) temperament. San is mentioned before Chlor, because the person has a bigger percentage of the Sanguine temperament than of the Choleric temperament.
- ♦ **SanMel**: This person has both Sanguine (yellow) and Melancholy (green) traits, but more Sanguine than Melancholy.
- ♦ **SanPhleg**: This extrovert Sanguine (yellow) also displays a number of Phlegmatic (blue) introvert traits, tends to be more extrovert than introvert.

- ♦ **ChlorSan**: More Choleric (red) than Sanguine (yellow).
- ♦ **ChlorMel**: This individual is more of a Choleric (red) extrovert than a Melancholy (green) introvert.
- ♦ **ChlorPhleg**: This person is more of an extrovert (Choleric) (red) than an introvert (Phlegmatic) (blue).
- ♦ **MelSan**: This indicates a Melancholy (green) introvert with Sanguine (yellow) traits.
- ♦ **MelChlor**: Melancholy (green) traits together with some Choleric (red) ones.
- ♦ **MelPhleg**: A blend of both introverts temperaments, i.e. Melancholy (green) and Phlegmatic (blue).
- ♦ **PhlegSan**: A Phlegmatic (blue) introvert with traits of extrovert Sanguine (yellow) personality.
- ♦ **PhlegChlor**: This individual is Phlegmatic (blue) with some Choleric (red) traits in his/her temperament.
- ♦ **PhlegMel**: A mixture of the two introvert temperaments, where the Phlegmatic (blue) traits are dominant over the Melancholy (green) traits. Gramatically

Traits of the Sanguine (yellow temperament according to Beer, 2009):

LaHaye (1977), as supported by Beer (2009) describes the Sanguine (yellow) personality as:

friendly; chatty; do not like to listen; is everyone's best friend; seeks to be the centre of attention; spontaneous; acts on instinct and thinks later; wants to satisfy others; enjoys life; lives in the existing and easily overlooks the former; people's person; a giver; flexible; docile; is unrealistic and disorganized; is disobedient (he jumps to something, but never finishes it); can dictate a conversation; easily feels sorry for himself; enthusiastically apologizes and says he is sorry; optimist; forms his judgments by predominant emotional state rather than by thoughtful feelings; fears of being unpopular or bored; seeks attention, love and acceptance.

Sanguine (yellow) traits that might cause *interpersonal* conflict

According to LaHaye (1977), as supported by Beer (2009), the Sanguine is:

The Sanguine might miss what someone else is saying, or he might not pay attention to a conversation but wants to take precedence of it. This might lead to frustration for another person and it could lead to irritation and character clashes. Unorganized and acts on instinct and thinks later: He might do something impulsive and not think about the problematical concerns that may negatively affect another person.

He furthermore is unrealistic and likes to exaggerate: It might annoy someone else and it might produce interpersonal conflict. He starts with something and never finishes it, hoping that others will do the work, which could lead to others finding it difficult to work with him.

Easily feels repentant for himself and turn dispirited or depressed; When there is abundant work pressure, another person might not react well to a Sanguine getting or depressed. This anger or bitterness might lead to conflict.

Traits of the Choleric (red temperament according to Beer, 2009):

LaHaye (1977), as supported by Beer (2009) describes the **choleric** (red) personality as having a

Wants to exert control; strong willpower for succeeding; can be bossy, insensitive and dominating (refer to paragraph 3.8.1 where dominating is one of the conflict-handling styles of this study); details bore him ĩ but can easily evaluate state of affairs and identify the most practical resolution; has a good judgement of others and is fast and courageous in difficulties; task-orientated; have a natural leadership ability; unemotional; easily becomes angry and holds grudges against those who have done him wrong; finds it difficult to apologize, and is stubborn; seeks subordination and obedience from others; fears lack of control (e.g. losing a job, not getting a promotion, serious illness); dislikes lazy people who are not

interested in their work and evade their duties; can run over other's feelings; he likes challenges and to be in control; he seeks subordination and obedience from others; has an unshakeable confidence in their own abilities to perform; individuality and self-assurance makes him autonomous; he can become proud and domineering and other people think they can never please him; he is not always concerned about pleasing people; he will say what he thinks; his speech is blunt and sarcastic, and he has a strong will; he is an opportunist; he may work towards an objective without seeing the possible difficulties in his way; extrovert, and does not empathize or express kind-heartedness naturally.

Choleric (red) traits that might cause *interpersonal conflict*

According to LaHaye (1977), as supported by Beer (2009):

Come what may, the Choleric seeks control and would use a person and run over his to be successful and accomplish his goals. He is domineering, bossy, insensitive and unwilling to delegate or give credit to others. Another person might not like the domination of a Choleric (refer to paragraph 3.8.1 where dominating is one of the conflict-handling styles of this study), because he might resent doing exactly what he is told. This resentment or anger might lead to aggression, anger and ultimately conflict.

The Choleric might clash with another person, however not necessarily deliberately, who has wronged him. Interpersonal conflict might be left unsolved, because of the Choleric's stubbornness and unwillingness to apologize.

The choleric can be sarcastic and does not empathize or sympathize with others. Others might perceive him as unemotional and hard-hearted, and this might lead to anger, resentment, and interpersonal opposition.

Traits of the Melancholy (blue temperament according to Beer, 2009):

LaHaye (1977), as supported by Beer (2009) describes the Melancholy (blue) person as having

a brilliant mind; philosopher and imaginative; wants to do things the right way; has the ability to organize and set long-term goals; he blames others for his mistakes; he is a perfectionist and cannot handle criticism; he has high values and ideas of adequacy and suitability and it is often more sophisticated than he or any other person can sustain; gets annoyed by superficial, unorganized and unpredictable people; he seeks respect, a sense of value, understanding and emotional support; he can examine a project in detail and highlight the possible problems; he is faithful and a dependable and loyal friend; self-sacrificing; likes intellectual people with whom he can have a meaningful conversation; he is reserved and a pessimist; he is unforgiving; avoids conflict (refer to paragraph 3.8.1 where dominating is one of the conflict-handling styles of this study); sometimes he feels depressed; is an introvert, but because of his mood swings can act as an extrovert at times.

Melancholy (blue) traits that might cause *interpersonal* conflict (LaHaye, 1977, as supported by Beer (2009):

Others might get annoyed or angry when he is blamed or kept responsible for mistakes he did not make, and it could lead to conflict with the Melancholy.

When the standards of adequacy or suitability are too high, it could lead to others feeling frustrated and intimidating.

Because the Melancholy is unforgiving, he might not, without difficulty, forgive others, which could lead to resentment and bitterness, and would eventually lead to conflict. Because the Melancholy is unable to make a decision, it could annoy and frustrate other people and cause interpersonal conflict.

Traits of the Phlegmatic (green temperament according to Beer, 2009):

LaHaye, (1977), as supported by Beer (2009) lists the traits of the phlegmatic (green) as follows:

He is discreet and peaceful; he is easy-going; balanced, pleasant to be around and has a dry sense of humour; slow and lazy; he may tease others; he avoids conflict and becomes depressed when there is too much conflict (refer to paragraph 3.8.1 where dominating is one of the conflict-handling styles of this study); he is not too communicative; an observer; could be stubborn and selfish; likes people who can make decisions on their behalf; do not like people who are pushy or too expressive; good listener; he is a faithful and dependable friend; he is logical and can find a practical or everyday way to achieve an objective with the least amount of effort; his best work is done under pressure; his work is neat and efficient; even though he is not a perfectionist he has a high standard of correctness and meticulousness; he is an introvert; he is obliging (refer to paragraph where dominating is one of the conflict-handling styles of this study).

Phlegmatic (green) traits that might cause *interpersonal* conflict (LaHaye, 1977), as supported by Beer (2009):

Other people may resent a phlegmatic person's selfishness. Resentment might flare up into interpersonal conflict.

The Phlegmatic, not being too communicative, might cause misunderstandings, which may lead to misconceptions and interpersonal conflict due to unclear communication.

A Phlegmatic person might be uncertain, slow, lazy, and stubborn, and this might unnerve an impatient or intolerant person; Interpersonal conflict might be unavoidable.

3.10 CONCLUSION

The main aim of this chapter was to identify how the different facets of conflict, biological sex and gender identity are conceptualized in literature. The following has been discussed:

- Firstly Robbins's Conflict Process Model was discussed, as it is an important aspect because it provides a broad overview of the actual processes that comprise various steps or stages from the origin to the outcome. Robbins studied the progression of conflict and divided it into five stages; the aim is to point out the causes of conflict to a manager or supervisor, in order for them to effectively manage the conflict.
- Thereafter, functional conflict (positive and in the interest of the organization) and dysfunctional conflict (negative, and might decrease productivity) were discussed, followed by techniques for stimulating functional conflict which include the devil's advocacy technique and the dialectic method.
- The intensity of conflict, which means the power of conflict, was then discussed, from which it was evident that conflict at a moderate intensity is necessary for a company to have a positive outcome. Chetty (2012) stated that if there's too little conflict in a company the result may be neutral or negative/dysfunctional, because it will lead to apathy, lack of creativity, indecision and missed deadlines. She further stated that if there's too much conflict in a company the result may also be neutral or negative/dysfunctional, because it will lead to political infighting, dissatisfaction, lack of teamwork, and managers who misuse company resources for personal growth.
- Subsequently, the different views of conflict were discussed, which included the traditional view (which existed from 1930-1940), the behavioural view (which existed from 1949-1975) and the interactionist view which originated in 1976 and still exists today. It's important to know the different views of conflict because it gives a detailed background on how conflict was managed, and how it may still be managed at the present time.
- Thereafter social power were discussed where Kreitner and Kinicki (2011) distinguished between two types of power, namely socialized power (striving to help others) and personalized power (striving to help oneself). They further identified seven power bases, namely reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, referent power,

connection power and lastly information power. Max Weber's theory shows some resemblance to the above as he perceived conflict as a struggle for power.

- It is clear that various forms of power can be applied to control conflict and attain compliance. It is essential, nevertheless, to identify the causes of conflict in order to assess correct methods for eliminating it, if necessary. It was necessary, therefore, for this study's theoretical basis to devote attention to the different levels of conflict within a company, which include: organizational conflict, horizontal conflict, vertical conflict, line-staff conflict, interest-based conflict, informational conflict, cultural conflict, competition, and communication.
- The antecedents of conflict were subsequently discussed, as an antecedent is something that happens before something else can occur. Unrealistic expectations of employees, incompatible personalities, unreasonable deadlines, unreasonable or vague rules, standards and policies, insufficient communication, and competition for limited resources can all be seen as antecedents of conflict. Because of these factors, conflict arises.
- Thereafter the five conflict-handling styles of Thomas and Kilmann, namely integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging and compromising, were discussed, as these are also the five conflict-handling styles used in ROCI-II, which will be seen in chapter 4.
- Lastly *interpersonal* conflict which is the essence for further research in the empirical part and the interpersonal conflict model had been discussed. *Interpersonal* conflict is one of the conflict types that occurs most in companies, due to normal and expected differences in viewpoints, personalities, values etc. (Kenny, 2012). Therefore it is imperative to know what interpersonal conflict is, what causes it, and how to manage it.
- The various positive and negative traits, of each of the four basic temperament types of Hippocrates, i.e. **Sanguine** (yellow), **Choleric** (red), **Melancholy** (blue) and **Phlegmatic** (green), were discussed. It is obvious that the various combinations of traits can either attract or repulse people with other combinations of traits, often causing *interpersonal* clashes and temporary or permanent conflict.

Chapter 4 will consist of the empirical research part of this study, including the reliability and validity of the results, biographic characteristics of respondents as well as the questionnaire. The

results of the descriptive statistics regarding causes and consequences as well as the descriptive statistics and effect sizes regarding the conflict-handling styles will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL STUDY AND RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 an overview and motives of the study had been discussed, followed by die problem statement, purpose of the study, demarcation of the study and relevant definitions of certain concepts. A detailed discussion on the research methodology and design was also conducted. This was followed by Chapter 2 where an exploration on the different theories of conflict had been discussed. The conflict theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber were individually looked at followed by a comparison of their studies. Chapter 3 followed with the nature of conflict, consisting of a detailed discussion on the different facets and dynamics of conflict.

The theoretical goal of the study as stated in Chapter 1 was also to determine how conflict dynamics is conceptualized through theory, industrial sociology, specific industrial sociological views and general management.

In support of the theoretical analysis an empirical analysis has been done in order to contribute to the achievement of the primary goal of this study. Results were evaluated and where possible clarified in terms of the given theoretical viewpoints obtained in the theoretical analysis.

In this chapter the composition of the measuring instrument will be explained as well as the results on the reliability and validity thereof. The results on the demographic characteristic of respondents are presented in table format followed by the presentation and interpretation of the statistical results, including the comparative results of causes of conflict between biological sex and gender-identity, and the consequences of conflict between those groups. Finally the comparison on whether differences exist in terms of their preferred conflict-handling style will be analysed and interpreted.

4.2 REVISITING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As mentioned in Chapter 1 the aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and handling of interpersonal conflict within the gender spectrum compilation of biological-sex and *gender identity*. These objectives were achieved through an underpinning theoretical study followed by an empirical analysis.

The following sub-objectives were therefore pursued:

- To determine and compare by means of a literature study how the different facets of conflict, biological sex and *gender identity* are conceptualized in literature
- To explore through a theoretical study the different interpersonal- and intrapersonal conflict theories that has been derived through previous research
- By means of an empirical exploration do a comparative analysis between biological sex that is between **male** and **female**, and *gender identity* attributes that is the **masculinity** style and **femininity** style, in their perceptions of conflict dynamics in the workplace.
- Through statistical analysis determine whether differences exist in conflict-handling styles when measured between different **genders** and the different *gender identities* within each of those genders.
- Finally, to make recommendations for future research and, practice.

4.3 SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE MEASURED CONSTRUCTS

Figure 8 gives a visual presentation of the different constructs that will be measured when aiming to achieve sub-objective 3 where biological-sex and *gender identity* differences with regards to employees' perceptions on interpersonal conflict are measured:

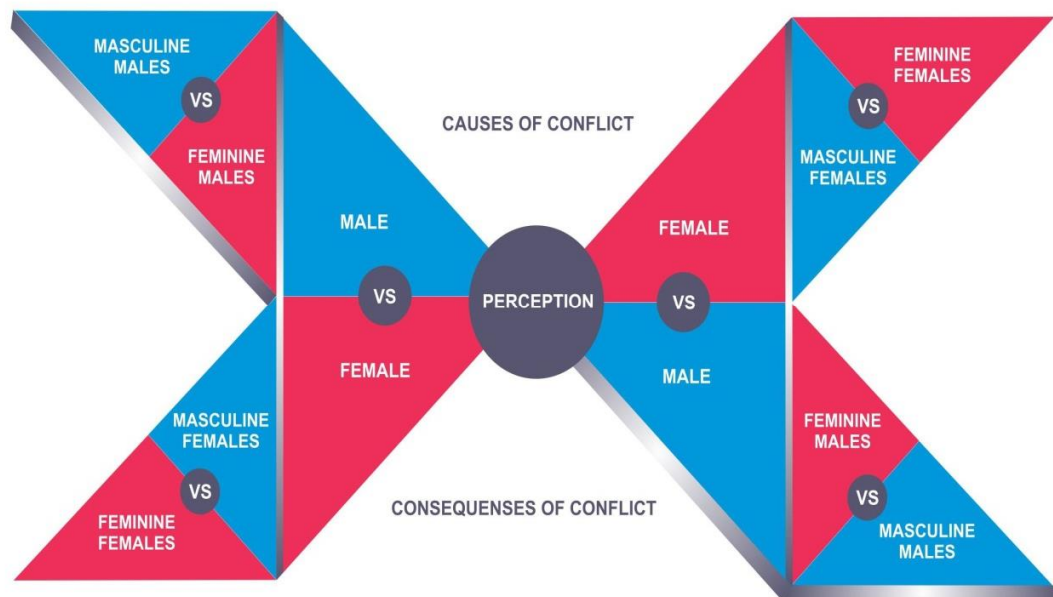


Figure 8. Schematic representation of how employees of different biological sex and *gender identity* perceive conflict.

Perception will be measured in terms of causes and consequences of conflict between biological sex (**male** vs. **female**) and the embedded *gender identity* (**masculine male** vs. **feminine male** and **feminine female** vs. **masculine female**) as indicated by the responses of the research group.

In other words the following will be measured against each other:

- **Male** vs. **Female**
- Then within the **Male** spectrum: **Masculine Male** vs. **Feminine Male**
- And finally within the **Female** spectrum: **Feminine Female** vs. **Masculine Female**

In Figure 9 a visual demonstration is given on what will be measured in order to achieve sub-objective 4 which are to explore if there are any significant differences in use of conflict-handling style between biological-sex and *gender identities*.

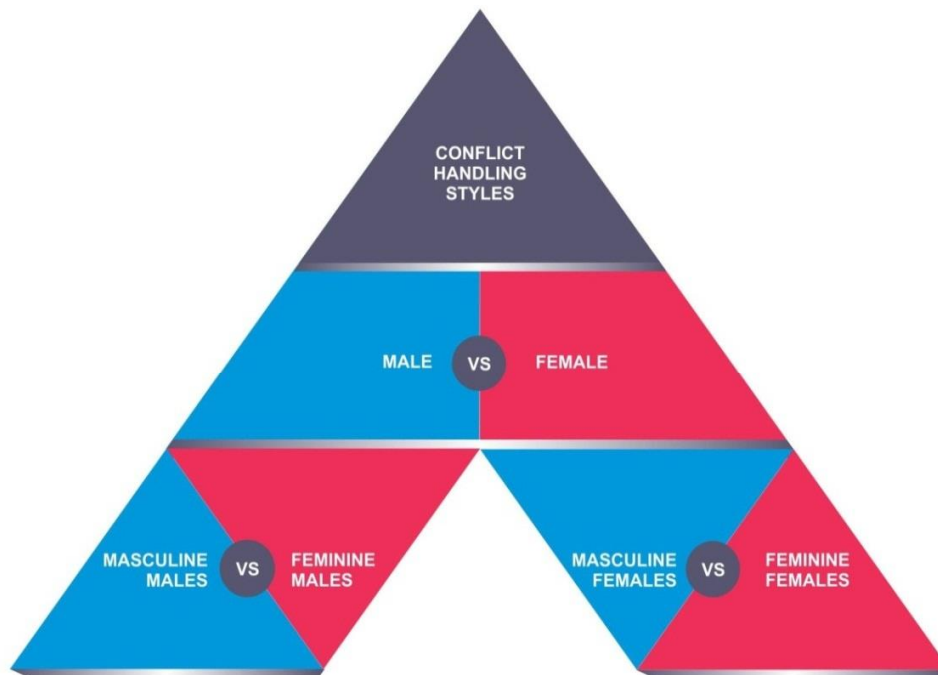


Figure 9. Schematic representation of how employees of different biological sex and *gender identity* handle conflict.

Conflict-handling styles will be measured by utilising the ROCI-II's indication of the five handling styles (as discussed in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.8) used by biological sex (**male** vs. **female**) and *gender identity* (**masculine male** vs. **feminine male** and **feminine female** vs. **masculine female**) respectively to the preference of one.

4.4 THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The measuring instrument is a combination of questionnaires comprising six sections. The first section (A) measures the respondent's biographical characteristics. Section B utilizes the standardised Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). This instrument provides independent

assessments of masculinity and femininity in terms of the respondent's self-reported ownership and control of socially required, stereotypically **masculine** and **feminine** personality characteristics. This can also be seen as a measurement of the range to which respondents spontaneously and naturally sort self-relevant information into separate **masculine** and **feminine** categories. The self-administering sixty-item questionnaire measures masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and undifferentiated, using the masculinity and femininity scales. The total is sixty questions – twenty regarding **masculine** characteristics, twenty regarding **feminine** characteristics, and twenty regarding **neutral** characteristics. Participants respond in terms of how well each attribute or trait describes themselves on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = never or almost never true to 7 = always or almost always true. Mean self-ratings on each scale were computed and calculated separately and consequently were composed as an index of androgyny, or as a characterisation of the person's gender role identification. This research questionnaire (BSRI) has previously been successfully used in other research studies such as Galyon and Wann (2012), Kelly and McGee (2012), Harmanci, Herguner, and Toy (2013), Huang, Zhu, Zheng, Zhang, and Shiomi (2012) and Campbell, Tross, Hu, Pavlicova, and Nunes (2012).

Section C of the questionnaire includes a standardised measuring instrument called the Situational Leadership Style Inventory. This was added as an additional section to obtain data for a future study, and the results thereof are therefore irrelevant towards the achievement of the primary goal of this specific study. An elaboration on the inclusion of this section is given under heading 'Recommendations for further research' (refer to Chapter 5, paragraph 5.7). Section D and E are self-developed through knowledge gained by the theoretical study and measure the preference of the respondent as to what he/she regards as the most prominent causes (D) and consequences (E) of conflict. This was done in order to measure how the study group to a certain extent perceives interpersonal conflict in their workplace.

Section F of the instrument comprises of the standardised Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). This section is a 28 item questionnaire that measures the present-day methods of conflict management in an organisation based on the five conflict management styles namely: *Avoidance*, *Accommodation*, *Compromise*, *Competition* and *Cooperation*. An organisational member responds to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. The lower the score

(mean) the greater use of a conflict style (1 = Strongly Agree ÷ 5 = Strongly Disagree). The ROCI-II is transitory which on its own can be administered in 10 minutes, yet the subscales have acceptable and satisfactory reliability and validity (Rahim & Magner, 1995). The ROCI-II has already successfully been used in other research studies such as Linde, Renjini, Van Vrede, Havenga, and Visagie (2013), Chen, Zhao, Liu, and Wu (2012), Cerni, Curtis, and Colmar (2012), and Manyak and Katono (2010).

4.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The reliability of a test refers to the consistency and steadiness of scores obtained by a similar person when examining with a similar test on different instances, or with different groups of equivalent items, or under other mutually exploratory conditions (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997, quoted by Field, 2005).

A correlation analysis was done to ensure relevancy of the questionnaire. Factor analysis was also conducted in order to explore the existence of the theoretical constructs. According to (Havenga, 2008) a desired reliability coefficient would usually fall in the range of 0.80 to 0.90. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) used 0.70 as a directive, whilst Bartholomew, Handerson, and Marcia (2000) argue that reliability between 0.80 and 0.60 is acceptable. Clark and Watson (1995) also came to the conclusion that if constructs are above 0.60 then the reliability of the measurement scale can be considered acceptable.

Ben-Yoav and Banai (1992) claimed that the Rahim instrument has a higher internal consistency coefficient than models such as the Thoman-Kilmann instrument (Havenga, 2008). The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by means of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of a measuring instrument is designed in order to indicate the consistency of the test items, and the extent to which they all measure the same attribute (Malan, 2001).

Table 4

Reliability of the Measuring Instrument

Construct:	N:	Cronbach Alpha:
Masculinity	118	0.81
Femininity	126	0.81
Integrating	126	0.90
Avoiding	127	0.86
Dominating	126	0.77
Obliging	124	0.74
Compromising	128	0.77

The overall average of the Cronbach Alpha is 0.81 which clearly falls within the range of directives as presented by Field (2005), Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) as well as Bartholomew et al., (2000). According to Field (2005) a construct must be ≥ 0.6 to be reliable. In this study the average of all constructs are 0.81 which make all constructs reliable.

4.5.1 Validity

The Validity of a test concerns what the test measures and how well it does so (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997, quoted by Field, 2005, p. 113). In other words it is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure (Field, 2005). Construct validity is the extent to which a test measures a theoretical concept of trait, such as a personality characteristic like intelligence. Construct validity can include measures of criterion-related validation, convergent validation, and content validation (Field, 2005).

Smit (1991) and Kruger (1999) consider that the validity of the content is based on the sameness or similarity of the test-items, and it is determined by the analysis of the internal symmetry and steadiness of the performance of the test-items. This validity is determined through the correlation amongst measuring the performance in a test, and an autonomous and objective criterion of the behaviour that must be measured. This is the validity coefficient of a test (Kruger, 1999).

The face validity is the magnitude or extent to which the test is appropriate for the objective for which the test is used, based on subjective evaluation (Kruger, 1999). Any technically trained individual can assess the test and control or regulate if the items in the test, and the content of the items are appropriate and fitting for the objective for which the test is used (Kruger, 1999).

The construct validity is the extent to which a test measures a theoretical concept or quality/characteristic, such as a personality characteristic like intellect. Construct validity can comprise measures of criterion-related validation, convergent validation, and content validation (Field, 2005).

From Table 5 it is clear that *Integrating*, *Avoiding* and *Compromising* only have 1 ideal factor, but Masculinity (6 factors), Femininity (5 factors), *Dominating* (2 factors) and *Obliging* (2 factors) all have more than 1 factor.

Table 5

Validity of the Measuring Instrument

Construct:	N:	Number of Factors:	MSA:	Percentage Variance Explained:
Masculinity	118	6	0.76	62.53%
Femininity	126	5	0.80	60.53%
Integrating	126	1	0.89	64.39%
Avoiding	127	1	0.80	59.72%
Dominating	126	2	0.70	78.32%
Obliging	124	2	0.72	63.23%
Compromising	128	1	0.69	46.43%

Although there is more than one factor under masculinity, femininity, dominating and obliging indicating that these factors could be split into more factors, the decision was made to work in this study according to the factors as defined in the original scoring instructions of the different standardised measuring instruments. Especially as a result of the fact that all these factors yielded high Cronbach alpha coefficients.

4.6 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The results will be discussed according to the sections as presented in the measuring instrument. In section A of the questionnaire, information on the biographical characteristics was obtained and the results are as follows:

Table 6

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Item	Category	N	%	Total N	Total %
Gender	Male	64	48.12	133	100
	Female	69	51.88		
Age	21-35 years	44	33.33	132	100
	36-45 years	37	28.03		
	46-60 years	47	35.61		
	60 + years	4	3.03		
Marital status	Single	27	20.45	132	100
	Married	93	70.45		
	Living together	4	3.03		
	Divorced	7	5.30		
	widowed	1	0.76		
Highest Qualification	Grade 10 or lower	2	1.52	132	100
	Grade 11	2	1.52		
	Grade 12	20	15.15		
	Diploma or Certificate	35	26.52		
	Undergraduate Degree	32	24.24		
	Post-Graduate Degree	41	31.06		
Home Language	English	14	10.77	130	100
	Afrikaans	94	72.31		
	Setswana	2	1.54		
	Sesotho	3	2.31		
	isiXhosa	1	0.77		
	isiZulu	9	6.92		
	isiNdebele	1	0.77		
	Siswati	4	3.08		
	Tshivenda	1	0.77		
	Xitsonga	1	0.77		
	Sepedi	0	0		

Years in Service	1-4 years	40	30.53	131	100
	5-10 years	32	24.43		
	11-15 years	18	13.74		
	16-20 years	12	9.16		
	21-25 years	16	12.21		
	26-30 years	8	6.11		
	30+ years	5	3.82		
Department in which employed	Education & Training	3	2.29	131	100
	Engineering	6	4.58		
	Finance	21	16.03		
	Human Resources	26	19.85		
	General Management	12	9.16		
	Marketing & Media	4	3.05		
	PR & Communications	4	3.05		
	Consulting	3	2.29		
	Research	7	5.34		
	Retail	1	0.76		
	Information Technology	13	9.92		
	Legal	3	2.29		
	Maintenance	4	3.05		
	Other	24	18.32		

Gender, Age, and Marital status

As can be seen in Figure 10 the proportion of **male** to **female** is compared within the company. As can be seen in Figure 10, 48.12% of the answered questionnaires were **male** compared to 51.88% **female**.

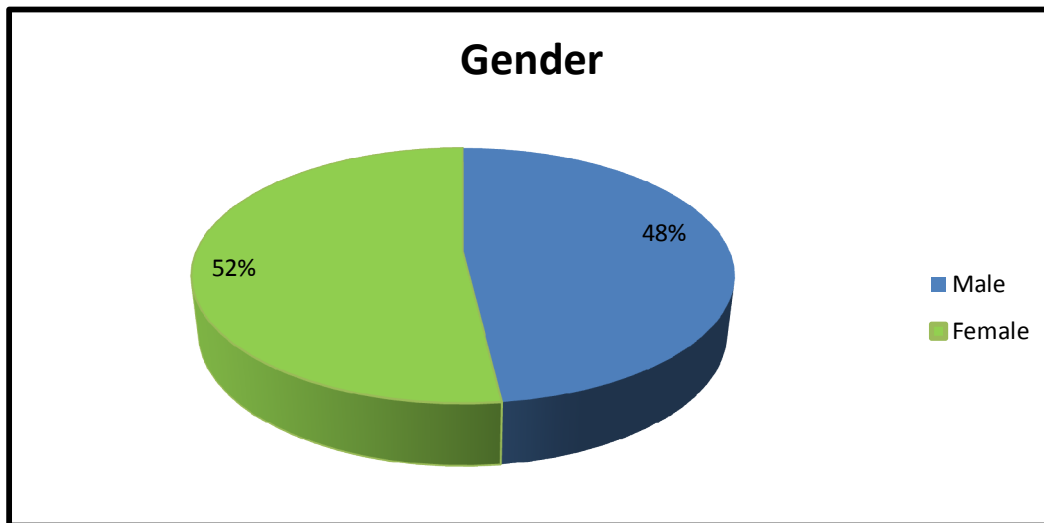


Figure 10. Gender of Respondents.

Figure 11 indicates the age distribution of respondents within the large manufacturing company. The majority age groups that responded in this study were between the ages of 46 and 60 (35.61%) and 21 and 35 (33.33%), with 28.03% of the respondents being between the ages of 36 and 45. Only 3.03% of the respondents were older than 60 years.

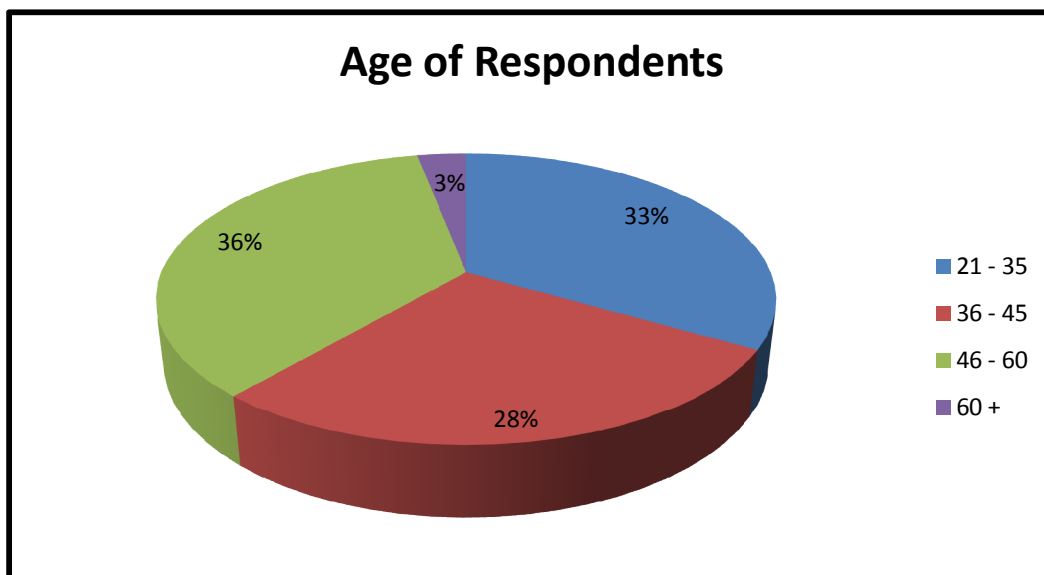


Figure 11. Age of Respondents.

In Table 6 (and Figure 12) it is seen that married respondents dominate with 70.45%, followed by single respondents who counts up to 20.45% of this study. Respondents whom are living

together but who are not married, together with divorced and widowed respondents respectively count up to 3.03%, 5.30% and 0.76%.

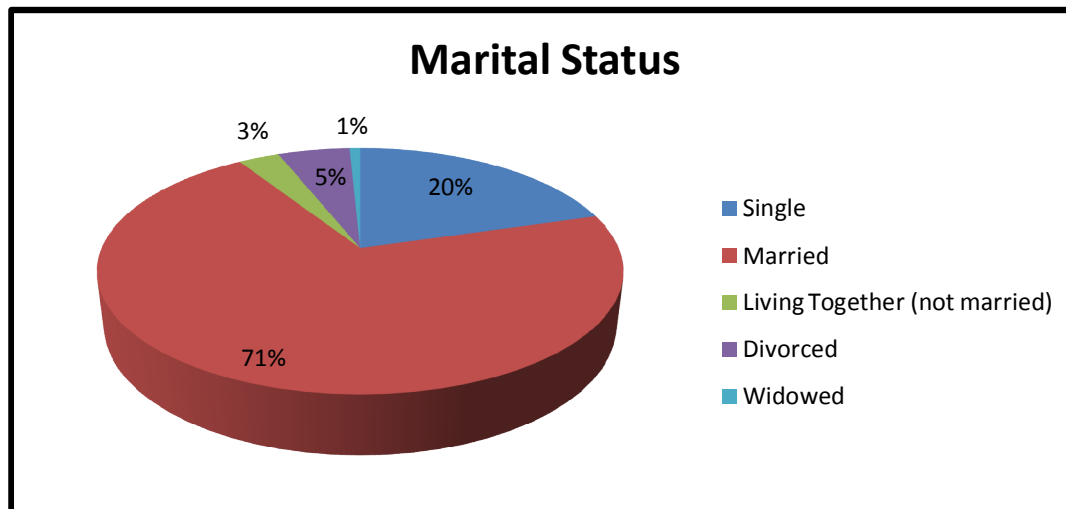


Figure 12. Marital status of respondents.

Educational qualifications and Years in service

Figure 13 shows that 81.82% of the respondents had post grade 12 qualifications; whereof 31.06% of the respondents had a Post-Graduate degree, 24.24% had an undergraduate degree and 26.52% had a diploma or certificate. 15.15% of the respondents' highest academic qualifications were grade 12, leaving respondents without a grade 12 or matric senior certificate with only 3.03%.

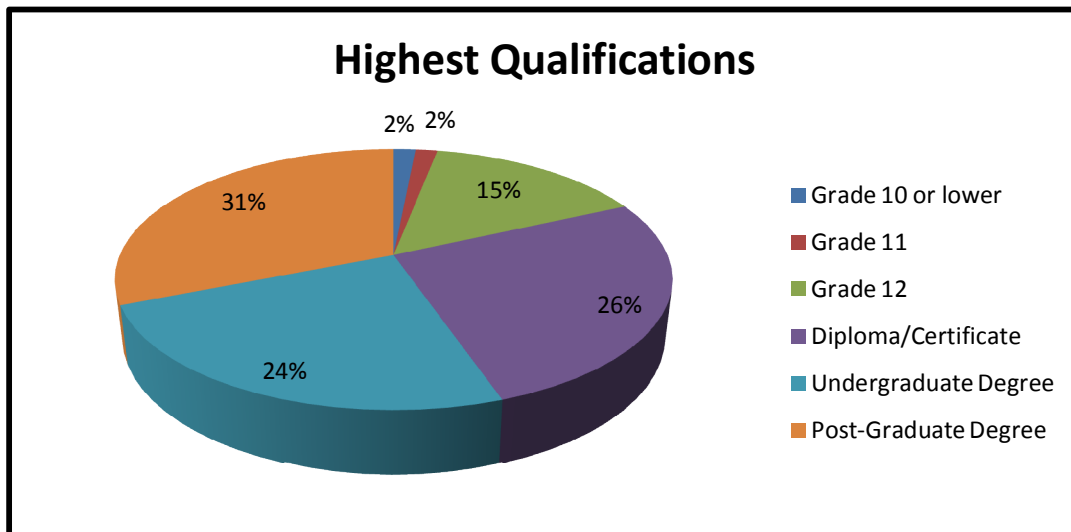


Figure 13. Highest Qualifications of Respondents.

An important aspect of any company is the occupation or profession of employees, in other words the number of years that employees have been working for the specific company. According to the results as indicated in Figure 14, the majority respondents have been working at this company for one to 10 years; in particular 30.53% for 1-4 years and 24.43% have been employed for 5-10 years. 45.04% of the respondents have been working at this company for 11 years or more, in particular 11-15 years (13.74%), 16-20 years (9.16%), 21-25 years (12.21%), 26-30 years (6.11%) and 30+ years (3.82%).

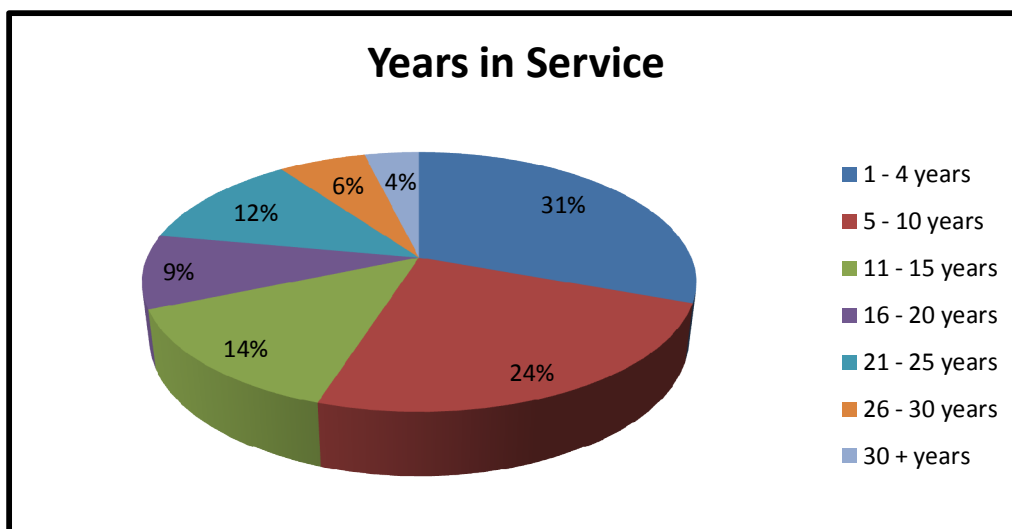


Figure 14. Years in Service.

4.7 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ON EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS, 2012) was used to carry out the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data received from the questionnaires. Results were described and compared, using means and standard deviations. The main measures of essential and central tendency used were the mean and median, which reveals what sets of measures are liked on average, but also compared to test relations.

The standard deviation approximate the average distance scored from the mean. The higher the standard deviation, the greater the distances on average from the mean become (Steyn, as quoted by Havenga, 2008).

4.7.1 Comparative analysis of Causes of Conflict (Section D of Measuring Instrument)

As mentioned earlier Section C's results (Leadership-style) are not used in this study, and Section B's (*Gender identity*) results are incorporated and reported on in the remainder of the chapter. Section D of the measuring instrument was designed to determine to what extent the certain given factors contribute to conflict within the large manufacturing company. These given factors presented in the section were decided upon after extensive literature research and is thought to present a reasonable core of the causes of conflict in the company. Referring back to Chapters 1, 2, and 3 literature studies revealed a vast number of causes, with structural, communication, values and emotional behaviour being key groupings of the causes of conflict.

Each factor (cause) given was presented on a Likert-scale (1-4) and could be applicable to the respondent's choice of cause from 'no extent (1)' to 'to a large extent (4)', thus meaning that when interpreting the results, the higher the mean, the higher the extent of the impact. The respondents had to point out to what extent they saw the factors as being a cause of conflict in their company.

Although there were many possibilities listed in the measuring instrument, only the top five causes of conflict of every group were reported on.

In Tables 7 to 12 the mean and median of what different groups of respondents viewed as the causes of conflict are presented. The different groups of respondents include gender (**male** and **female**), and the combinations of *gender identity*: **masculine male**, **feminine male**, **feminine female** and **masculine female**, as schematically explained in Figure 7 at the beginning of this chapter.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Causes: **Males**.*

Item / Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Favouritism / Jealousy	63	2.95	0.87
Lack of effective personnel	63	2.95	0.81
Specific leadership style	63	2.87	0.91
Rumours / Gossiping	3	2.81	0.88
Cultural difference	3	2.75	0.95

In Table 7 it is evident that the average **male** considers *favouritism/jealousy* as the main cause of conflict. Followed by *lack of effective personnel* (which has a smaller standard deviation than the first variable), *specific leadership style* used, then *rumours/gossiping* and lastly *cultural difference*.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Causes: Females.

Item / Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Specific leadership style	67	2.90	0.87
Rumours / Gossiping	67	2.88	0.99
Ineffective Communication	67	2.87	1.03
Favouritism / Jealousy	67	2.79	0.91
Cultural Difference	67	2.73	0.99

In Table 8 one can see that the **females** viewed *specific leadership style* as the biggest cause of conflict. Followed by *rumours/gossiping*, *ineffective communication*, *favouritism and jealousy* and lastly *cultural difference*.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Causes: Masculine Males.

Item / Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ineffective Communication	50	3.00	0.81
Lack of effective personnel	50	2.90	0.87
Favouritism / Jealousy	50	2.90	0.89
Specific leadership style	50	2.80	0.93
Rumours / Gossiping	50	2.72	0.88

According to Table 9 there were 50 male respondents that had a **masculine gender identity**. Male respondents with a **masculine** gender role viewed *ineffective communication* as the biggest cause of conflict. Followed by a *lack of effective personnel*, *favouritism/jealousy*, a *specific leadership style* and lastly *rumours or gossiping*.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Causes: **Feminine Males**.*

Item / Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ineffective communication	8	3.38	1.06
Favouritism / Jealousy	8	3.13	0.84
Rumours / Gossiping	8	3.13	1.13
Misuse of power	8	3.00	0.76
Specific leadership style	8	3.00	0.76

As seen in Table 10 only eight (8) **male** respondents had a **feminine gender identity**. These respondents viewed *ineffective communication* as the biggest cause of conflict. Followed by *favouritism/jealousy*, *rumours/gossiping*, *misuse of power* and viewed a *specific leadership style* as the fifth cause of conflict.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Causes: **Feminine Females**.*

Item / Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Rumours / Gossiping	30	3.13	0.97
Co-worker with an incompatible personality	30	2.93	0.94
Ineffective communication	30	2.87	1.11
Specific leadership style	30	2.83	0.87
Cultural differences	30	2.83	0.95

According to Table 11 there were 30 **female** respondents with a **feminine gender identity**. These females with a **feminine** gender role viewed *rumours and gossiping* as the biggest cause of conflict in the workplace. Followed by *co-employees with an incompatible personality*,

ineffective communication, and specific leadership style and in the fifth place *cultural differences*.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Causes: Masculine Females.

Item / Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Specific leadership style	30	2.93	0.94
Ineffective communication	30	2.87	1.17
Favouritism / Jealousy	30	2.80	0.93
Meeting production-targets / deadlines	30	2.67	0.99
Rumours / Gossiping	30	2.63	0.93

According to Table 12, 30 of the respondents were **females** with a **masculine gender identity**. This group of respondents viewed a *specific leadership style* as the biggest cause of conflict. Followed by *ineffective communication, favouritism, and jealousy*. *Meeting production-targets or deadlines* and *rumours and gossiping* as the fifth cause of conflict.

4.7.2 Comparative Analysis' of Consequences of Conflict (Section E of Measuring Instrument)

Section E of the measuring instrument was designed to determine what the participants perceived as the biggest consequences of conflict within their work environment. Eleven (11) factors (consequences) were given and each participant had to select all applicable options that he/she perceived as a consequence of conflict. These given factors presented in the section were decided upon through the aid of the theoretical study and are thought to present a reasonable core of the consequences of conflict in the company.

Cohen (1988) as supported by Cloete (2010) provided guidelines for interpreting the phi-coefficient which is as follows: $\bar{u} = |0.1|$ (small effect); $\bar{u} = |0.3|$ (medium effect, noticeable with

the naked eye) and $\bar{u} \geq 0.5$ (large effect or practically significant). Factors measuring 0.3 and higher (Phi-Coefficient > 0.3) is seen as an effect in practice, and thus reported on.

After the completion of the statistical analysis it was discovered that there were no differences in what **male** vs. **female** perceived as the biggest consequences of conflict. No one of the 11 factors had a phi-coefficient of 0.3 or higher which means that when comparing gender both groups have consensus on what they regard as the result that conflict has in their work environment.

Table 13

*Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Consequences: **Masculine Males** vs. **Feminine Males**.*

Factor	Gender Identity	N	% Yes	% No	P-Value	Phi-Coefficient ($\bar{u}$)
Decline Cooperation	Masculine Males	50	32	68	0.02	0.31
	Feminine Males	8	75	25		
Consider change of job	Masculine Males	50	28	72	0.01	0.34
	Feminine Males	8	75	25		

p-value yielded by Chi-square test

d-value = 0.5 $\bar{u}$ medium effect in practice ⁽⁴⁾

Results in Table 13 show that there were only on two factors differences in association between **masculine male** and **feminine male** with a medium practical effect namely *Decline cooperation* and *consider a change of jobs*. 32% of **masculine males** said that experiencing conflict in the workplace would influence them to *decline cooperation*, whereas 75% of **feminine males** felt the same, meaning that **feminine males** will easier *decline cooperation* than **masculine males**. 28% of **masculine males** said that conflict in the workplace would cause them to *consider a change of jobs*, whereas 75% of **feminine males** said that they would *consider to change of jobs* should they experience conflict in the workplace.

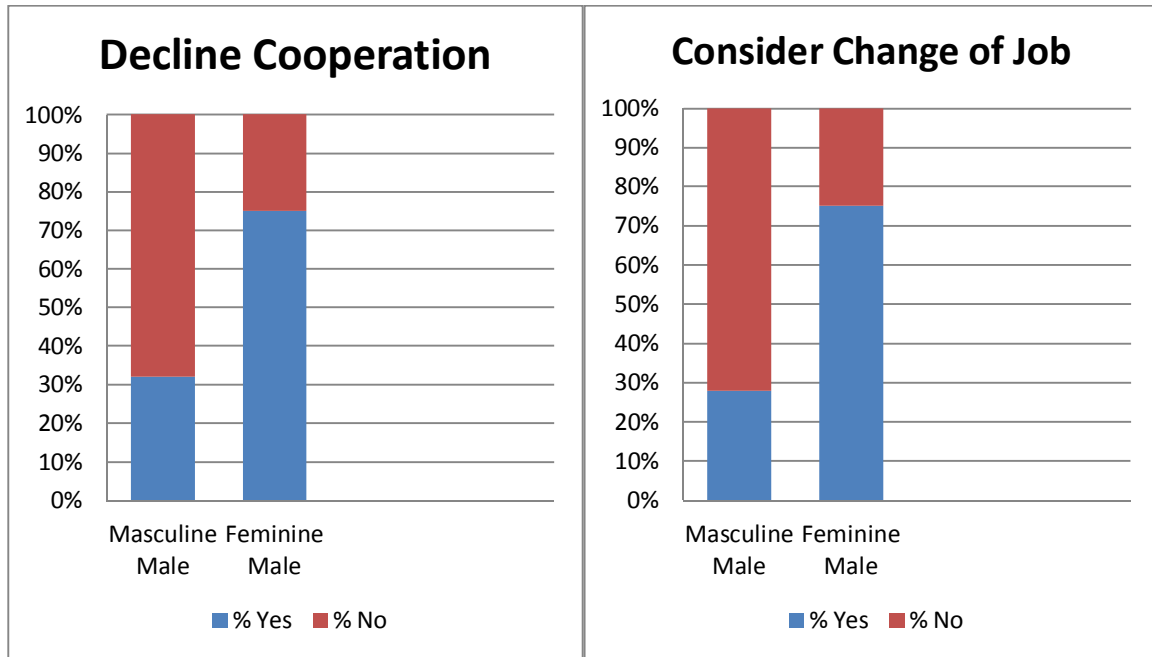


Figure 15. Perception of Conflict Consequences: **Masculine Males** versus **Feminine Males**.

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics regarding Perception of Conflict Consequences: **Feminine Females** vs. **Masculine Females**.*

Factor	Gender Identity	N	% Yes	% No	P-Value	Phi-Coefficient ($\bar{u}$)
Experience Depression	Feminine Females	31	48.39	51.61	0.00	0.37
	Masculine Females	29	13.79	86.21		
Consider change of job	Feminine Females	31	61.29	38.71	0.02	0.30
	Masculine Females	29	31.03	68.97		

p-value yielded by Chi-square test

d-value = 0.5 ĩ medium effect in practice ^(q)

In Table 14 it can be seen that 48.39% of **feminine females** *experience depression* as an influence of conflict in the workplace, where only 13.79% of **masculine females** *experience*

depression due to conflict in the workplace. 61.29% of **feminine females** indicated that they would consider a *change of jobs* if they experience conflict in the workplace, where only 31.03% of **masculine females** felt the same.

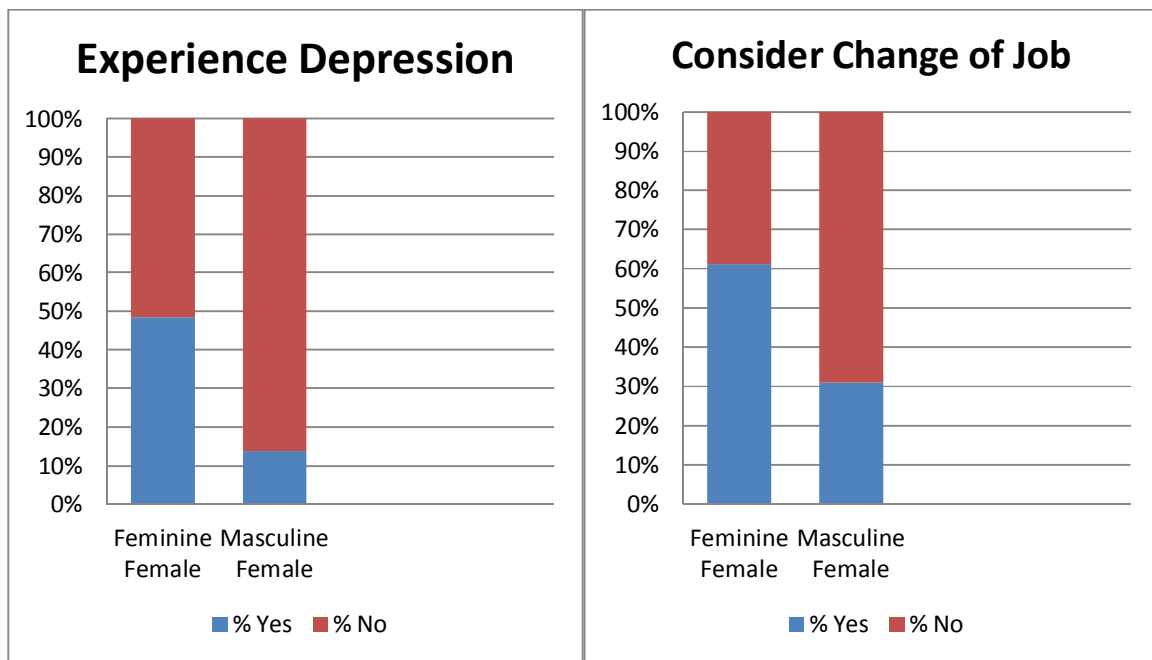


Figure 16. Perception of Conflict Consequences: **Feminine Female** versus **Masculine Female**.

4.8 STATISTICAL RESULTS OF EMPLOYEE’S CONFLICT-HANDLING STYLES

In this part of the study it was determined how different biological sex and *gender identity* handle conflict. In other words, which different conflict-handling styles were predominantly used between the respondent and the respondent’s colleagues (Section F), in relation to the background variables of the manufacturing company. Each construct (conflict-handling style) given was presented on a Likert-scale (1-5) and could be applicable to the respondent’s choice of conflict-handling style from “strongly agree (1)” to “strongly disagree (5)”.

A T-test measures two constructs against each other; and the three T-tests below were performed to test what conflict-handling style the following groups used (refer to the schematic explanation as presented in Figure 8).

- **Male versus Female**
- **Masculine Males versus Feminine Males**
- **Feminine Females versus Masculine Females**

By means of a T-test it could be determined whether a meaningful practical significant difference ($d = 0.8$) exists among the researched variables exists. Once a meaningful practical significant difference exists then it could be established which one of the five conflict-handling styles it was that resulted in the difference and thus facilitate interpretation of the way in which this handling style effects the particular variable.

The following guidelines were used for d-values regarding differences between means:

D-value = 0.2 ñ small effect in practice

D-value = 0.5 ñ medium effect in practice ⁽⁹⁾

D-value ≥ 0.8 ñ large effect in practice and practically significant ⁽⁹⁾

According to Ellis & Steyn, (2003) statistical significance tests have a tendency to produce small p-values (indicating significance) as the size of the data sets rises. The effect size is independent of sample size and is a measure of practical significance. It can be understood as a large enough effect to be important in practice and is described for differences in means, for the relationship in two-way frequency tables and also for multiple regression fit.

Table 15

*Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes regarding Conflict-Handling Styles (section F) towards Colleagues for **Males** (1) and **Females** (2).*

Construct	Gender	n	mean	std	p-value (in case of random sampling)	d-value
Integrating	1	62	2.02	0.66	0.94	0.01
	2	65	2.01	0.66		
Avoiding	1	62	3.14	0.89	0.38	0.15
	2	65	3.01	0.77		
Dominating	1	62	3.02	0.74	0.07	0.32
	2	65	3.26	0.77		
Obliging	1	62	2.90	0.56	0.85	0.03
	2	65	2.88	0.57		
Compromising	1	62	2.49	0.73	0.09	0.28
	2	65	2.29	0.58		

p-value yielded by t-test for independent group

Note- 1 = Male; 2 = Female; std = standard deviation

Note - Difference in total number of participants namely 127 (62 + 65) instead of 133 due to missing values.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles between the respondent and his colleague against the background variable: different **genders**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- No medium (0.5) or large effect (0.8) sizes were detected in any of the constructs meaning that there were no differences when measuring **gender**.
- Because there were no differences found regarding the handling-styles, it is not necessary to refer to the recorded group statistics for further analysis.

This means that when comparing the **male** and **female** employees of this specific company regarding the handling styles of conflict which they would predominantly use in a situation between them and their colleagues, all of the conflict-handling styles were used equally, and that no conflict-handling style was favoured amongst **males** or **females**.

Table 16

*Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes regarding Conflict-Handling Styles (section F) towards Colleagues for **Masculine Males** (1) and **Feminine Males** (2).*

Construct	Gender	n	mean	std	p-value (in case of random sampling)	d-value
Integrating	1	49	1.96	0.61	0.44	0.3
	2	8	2.16	0.64		
Avoiding	1	49	3.30	0.84	0.06	0.80 ^z
	2	8	2.52	0.97		
Dominating	1	49	2.93	0.71	0.25	0.5 [Ⓜ]
	2	8	3.33	0.85		
Obliging	1	49	3.01	0.52	0.04*	0.89 ^z
	2	8	2.44	0.64		
Compromising	1	49	2.52	0.73	0.18	0.5 [Ⓜ]
	2	8	2.16	0.64		

Note- 1 = **Masculine Male**; 2 = **Feminine Male**; std = standard deviation

* Statistically significant at 0.05 level according to t-test results for independent groups

d-value = 0.5 ï medium effect in practice ^(Ⓜ)

d-value ≥ 0.8 ï large effect in practice and practical significant ^(z)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles between the respondent and his colleague against the background variable: different *gender identity* ï **masculine male** (1) and **feminine male** (2), the following analysis of results can be made:

- Both *dominating* and *compromising* conflict handling styles have a medium effect (if d-value = 0.5 ï medium effect in practice). By referring to Table 16 it is evident that **masculine males** (mean = 2.93) are more likely to use the *dominating* conflict handling style than the **feminine males** (mean = 3.33). From Table 16 it can be seen that *compromising* has a medium effect and that **feminine males** (mean = 2.16) are more likely to *compromise* than **masculine males** (mean = 2.52)
- Both *avoiding* and *obliging* have a large effect and is practically significant (if d-value = ≥ 0.8 ï large effect in practice and practical significant). According to Table 16 one can

see that the **feminine male** group (mean = 2.52) is more likely to use the *avoiding* conflict-handling style, whereas the **masculine male** group (mean = 3.30) is not that likely to *avoid* conflict. By referring to Table 16 it is also evident that the **feminine male** group (mean = 2.44) is more likely than the **masculine male** group (mean = 3.01) to *oblige*.

Table 17

*Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes regarding Conflict-Handling Styles (section F) towards Colleagues for **Feminine Females** (3) and **Masculine Females** (4).*

Construct	Gender	n	mean	std	p-value (in case of random sampling)	d-value
Integrating	3	31	1.98	0.69	0.92	0.03
	4	29	2.00	0.69		
Avoiding	3	31	3.05	0.77	0.90	0.03
	4	29	3.02	0.80		
Dominating	3	31	3.49	0.58	0.02*	0.54 ^(p)
	4	29	3.01	0.88		
Obliging	3	31	2.90	0.65	0.88	0.04
	4	29	2.87	0.53		
Compromising	3	31	2.87	0.53	0.79	0.06
	4	29	2.29	0.69		

Note- 3 = **Feminine Females** ; 4 = **Masculine Female** ; std = standard deviation

* Statistically significant at 0.05 level according to t-test results for independent groups

d-value = 0.2 ï small effect in practice

d-value = 0.5 ï medium effect in practice ^(p)

- The results of Table 17 shows that there is a medium effect (if d-value = 0.5 ï medium effect in practice) difference in the *dominating* conflict-handling style between feminine females and masculine females. This means that with a **masculine** style (mean = 3.01)

tend to make use of the *dominating* style to a greater extent than those with **feminine** attributes (mean = 3.49).

- In Table 17, it can be seen that both **feminine females** (3) and **masculine females** (4) used the *integrating, avoiding, obliging* and *compromising* conflict handling styles very similarly and that there were no differences in practice.

4.9 CONCLUSION

The empirical data was evaluated and discussed in this chapter; the most significant findings are as follows:

- The 133 respondents consisted of 64 (48.12%) male employees and 69 (51.88%) female employees.
- Respondents with Afrikaans as home language are the highest percentage respondents with 72.31% of the total respondents. Respondents with English as home language are the second highest percentage respondents with 10.77%; whereas the remaining 16.02% are made up of the African language groups. This shows that the majority workforce is Afrikaans speaking; but that the company's workforce is culturally diverse.
- It is seen that 81.82% of respondents have tertiary qualifications (26.52% have a diploma or certificate, 24.24% have an undergraduate degree, and 31.06% have a post-graduate degree), whereas only 18.18% of respondents have grade 12 or lower (1.52% only have grade 10 or lower, 1.52% have grade 11, and 15.15 have grade 12).
- Both the **female** group (biological sex) and **masculine female** group (*gender identity*) perceive a *specific leadership style* as the biggest cause of conflict within the manufacturing company; whereas males perceive *favouritism / jealousy* and **feminine females** as *rumours / gossiping* as the biggest cause of conflict.
- An interesting fact is that both the **masculine male** group and the **feminine male** group perceive *ineffective communication* as the biggest cause of conflict.
- Both the **male** group and the **masculine male** group perceive the *lack of effective personnel* as the second biggest cause of conflict, from which it is evident that they seek a structured and productive environment.

- Both **masculine males** and **masculine females** perceive *favouritism / jealousy* as the third biggest cause of conflict; whereas both the **female** group and the **feminine female** group perceive *ineffective communication* as the third biggest cause of conflict.
- **Masculine males** and **feminine females** perceive a *specific leadership* style as the fourth biggest cause of conflict. None of the other groups perceive the same construct as the fourth biggest cause of conflict.
- The **male**, **female**, and **feminine female** groups perceive *cultural differences* as the fifth biggest cause of conflict; whereas both **masculine males** and **masculine females** perceive *rumours / gossiping* as the fifth biggest cause of conflict.
- It was seen that there is no difference in how gender (**male** vs. **female**) perceive the consequences of conflict. None of the 11 factors had a phi-coefficient of 0.3 or higher which means that when comparing gender both groups have consensus on what they regard as the result that conflict has in their work environment.
- **Masculine males** and **feminine males** differ in their perceptions of the following consequences of conflict: *Decline Cooperation* and *Consider change of job*. 75% of **feminine males** said that they would *decline* their *cooperation* if they experience conflict in the workplace; whereas only 32% of **masculine males** agreed. Furthermore 75% of **feminine males** agreed that they would *consider changing jobs* if they experience conflict in the workplace; whereas only 28% of **masculine males** felt the same.
- **Feminine females** and **masculine females** also differ in their perceptions of the following consequences of conflict, namely: *experience depression* and *consider change of jobs*. 48.39% of **feminine females** *experience depression* as an influence of conflict in the workplace, where only 13.79% of **masculine females** *experience depression* due to conflict in the workplace. Furthermore 61.29% of **feminine females** would *consider changing jobs* if they perceive conflict in the workplace; whereas only 31.03% of **masculine females** agreed
- When comparing gender (**male** vs. **female**) regarding their conflict-handling styles used, no medium (0.5) or large effect (0.8) sizes were detected in any of the constructs meaning that there were no differences between male and female. All of the conflict-handling styles were used equally, and no conflict-handling style was favoured amongst males or females.

- When comparing **masculine males** vs. **feminine males** the following is evident: both *dominating* and *compromising* conflict-handling styles have a medium effect (0.5). **Masculine males** (mean = 2.93) are more likely to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style than **feminine males** (mean = 3.33); whereas **feminine males** (mean = 2.16) are more likely to use the *compromising* conflict-handling style than **masculine males** (mean = 2.52).
- Furthermore, it was found that the *avoiding* and *obliging* conflict handling styles have a large effect (0.8) and is practically significant when comparing **masculine males** vs. **feminine males**. **Feminine males** (mean = 2.52) are more prospective to use the *avoiding* conflict-handling style than the **masculine males** (3.30). Lastly, the **feminine** attributes (mean = 2.44) tend to make use of the *obliging* conflict-handling style to a greater extent than those with **masculine** attributes (mean = 3.01).
- When comparing **feminine females** vs. **masculine females** the following is evident: the *dominating* conflict-handling style has a medium effect (0.5), meaning that the **masculine females** (mean = 3.01) tend to make use of the *dominating* style to a greater extent than the **feminine females** (mean = 3.49).
- When comparing **feminine females** and **masculine females** it is also seen that all the other conflict-handling styles (*integrating*, *avoiding*, *obliging* and *compromising*) were used very similarly and no one style was favoured.

In Chapter 5 an all-encompassing breakdown of the most important findings from the literature and empirical studies are done. Comparisons with literature and other studies will be made, which enables this study to meet its objectives, draw conclusions, highlight the limitations and make contributing recommendations for practise and future scientific research

CHAPTER 5

5.1 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss both the theoretical and empirical findings, come to scientifically valid conclusions, and make recommendations to practise in this field of science. Finally, the limitations of this study will be explored followed by appropriate recommendations for future research in this area.

5.1.1 Discussion

In Chapter 1, the discussion was made that considering factors such as institutional change, affirmative action programmes, scarce resources, change management and behavioural processes within organisations it is believed that conflict situations may be increasing in these sectors of the South African economy (Havenga & Visagie, 2006). Conflict is an inevitable part of any organisation and cannot be overlooked or untouched (Ada, 2014). It is essential that members of a group, especially leaders shall have sufficient knowledge regarding the nature of the impact of differences in handling conflict, the influence thereof on the individual behavioural processes and its effect which leads to the prevalence of conflict (Havenga, 2004; Crawley, 1995).

Since any type of conflict, whether it be constructive, or destructive, is unavoidable, and the understanding, handling and managing thereof plays an imperative part in the world of work (Ada, 2014). It was therefore the main objective of this study to investigate the perceptions and handling of interpersonal conflict within not just between different genders, but within the complete gender spectrum compilation of biological sex and *gender identity*. *Gender identity* means that gender is divided into two main groups, namely masculinity and femininity, and each group has its own actual identity. It is believed that if management (and the actual leaders within management) have a better understanding about the prevalence of conflict, not only between different genders, but also within the whole gender-spectrum, it could cultivate an extension of leadership effectiveness. These objectives were achieved through an underpinning theoretical analysis followed by the results of the study's empirical analysis.

In order to reach the overall objective of this study, a literature study and empirical analysis has been conducted, which included the following:

- Identifying key terms and explaining and deliberating on them.
- Karl Marx and Max Weber's philosophies were used as theoretical preliminaries and ground-work for this study.
- The nature of conflict within a manufacturing company, to determine how different facets of conflict, biological sex and *gender identity* are conceptualised in literature.
- Supporting and strengthening the literature study by means of an empirical study done through viable scientific analysis. The different perceptions (causes and consequences) of conflict, as well as the handling thereof within the gender spectrum compilation of biological-sex and *gender identity* (masculinity and femininity) within a sugar manufacturing company were inspected.
- Recommendations for practise and the field of organizational behavioural science.

5.2 FINDINGS ON SOCIOLOGICAL CONFLICT THEORIES

In Chapter 2, applicable theoretical aspects about conflict according to the literature were investigated. The objective was to explore, by means of a literature study the different interpersonal- and intrapersonal conflict theories that have been derived through previous research. Although a lot has already been written on these theories through the past two centuries it still remains an important underpinning for any study on conflict.

There are numerous theories of conflict, but for this study the emphasis was on the conflict theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Each of the theorists's conflict theories were discussed followed by the causes or prerequisites as viewed by these sociological philosophers.

Max Weber's theory of conflict was used in concurrence with Karl Marx's theory of conflict, as it is important to look at the diverse approaches and methodologies of conflict. Although there are many similarities in Marx and Weber's theories of conflict, there are also differences; Marx perceived conflict as a struggle between classes, whereas Weber perceived conflict as a struggle for power.

Marx's theory of conflict hoards a basis or foundation for a sociological theory of conflict, but doesn't contain an answer or resolution for conflict. Characteristics of conflict such as the struggle amongst those who want to sell and those who want to buy, the struggle between diverse values and the struggle over dissimilarities or power occurs in Weber's theory of conflict.

In Chapter 2, paragraph 2.1, it was stated that Marx followed the philosophies of George Hegel as the base of his theories, causing him to be a Hegelian; whereas Weber followed the philosophies of Immanuel Kant as base of his theories, causing him to be a neo-Kantian. Below it will be seen how the two philosophers (Hegel and Kant) and the two theorists (Marx and Weber) definition of conflict fluctuate.

According to George Hegel conflict occurs when people follow their personal welfare needs. Contrasting or distinct welfare needs lead to conflict, and in order to live in tranquillity people need to *compromise* and attain or accomplish their individual ends in such a manner that they pay the necessary joint or shared respect to others (Kain, 1998). This was confirmed in Chapter 4 (paragraph 4.8) where it was seen that *compromising* is one of the five conflict-handling styles measured in the empirical study.

Karl Marx perceived society as a struggle between mainly two different classes that might lead to conflict. The classes, namely the bourgeoisie (owners), and the proletariat (employees), are incongruent to one another because the proletariat (employees) were burdened and sought to change things, but the bourgeoisie (owners) did not want to change things (Havenga, 2008). This could also occur in a manufacturing company where the employees could strike, for the reason that their welfare needs are not met, whereas the welfare needs of their supervisors or managers are met.

According to Immanuel Kant there are two forces, namely the conflict of interests and the conflict of morality (Kain, 1998). *“The conflicts of interests are interplayed by a social side and an unsocial side of human nature”* (Kain, 1998, as cited by Venter, 2006, p. 138). Kant further added that the social side of human nature leads to a thought and consideration of how essential it is to *collaborate* with other individuals (as confirmed in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.8, where *collaboration* is one of the conflict-handling styles measured in the empirical section) in order to achieve their needs and necessities; whereas the *“unsocial side of human nature leads to conflict*

and fightingò (Kain, 1998, p. 385). Therefore conflict is almost unavoidable and predictable, as there will always be conflict in accordance with human nature.

Max Weber perceived society as a struggle or fight for power that could lead to conflict. Weber regarded the struggle for power as follows: ñ*The class struggles or fights for economic power, the status group struggles or fights for prestige power, and the party struggles or fights for pure power*ò (Cuff et al., 1998, as cited in Venter, 2006, p. 138). On the economic level of an organization, diverse classes of employees might struggle or fight for economic power both for themselves and the company (Venter, 2006). On the social level of an organization, employees might struggle or fight for prestige power; whereas on the political level, diverse parties might struggle or fight for pure power (Venter, 2006).

Next a comparison between what Karl Marx (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1) and Max Weber (refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.2) perceived as the prerequisites of conflict. Another column has been added revealing the results of this study to see whether the respondents have mutual acceptance for the philosophies of Marx and Weber.

Table 18

Contrast and comparison of Marx's and Weber's conflict prerequisites

Prerequisite:		Karl Marx:		Max Weber:		This Study:
Trade Union Involvement		Marx called it organization and political factions.		Weber called it politics.		Trade union involvement is seen as the 10 th biggest cause of conflict.
Lack of physical resources (equipment, finances, effective personnel)		Marx called it scarce resources.		Weber called it economics (a lack of sufficient finances).		Lack of physical resources is seen as the 14 th cause of conflict, but the lack of effective personnel is seen as the 5 th biggest cause of conflict.

Misuse of power	Marx called it the lack of upward social mobility.	Weber called it power; with power one can acquire what one desires.	The misuse of power is seen as the 7 th biggest cause of conflict.
Professional competition	Marx said that competition for work would lead to conflict amongst employees.	Weber called it competition; competition between the buyers, and competition between the sellers.	Professional competition is seen as the 13 th biggest cause of conflict.
Specific leadership style	The bourgeoisie led the proletariat.	Weber called it forcing. Those with power force it onto those without power.	Specific leadership style is seen as the 2 nd biggest cause of conflict in this large manufacturing company.
Ineffective communication	Marx called it communication.	Weber called it role ambiguity.	Ineffective communication is seen as the biggest cause of conflict within this large manufacturing company.
Cultural differences	Marx called it class-consciousness.	Weber called it society.	Cultural differences are perceived as the 6 th biggest cause of conflict.

From Table 18 it is evident that respondents of this study definitely agree with Marx and Weber on some of the prerequisites of conflict, especially on ineffective communication (biggest cause of conflict), specific leadership style (2nd biggest cause of conflict) and the lack of effective personnel (5th biggest cause of conflict). Prerequisites which the respondents of this study listed which are not part of Marx or Weber's prerequisites include: Favouritism / jealousy (3rd biggest cause of conflict), rumours/gossiping (4th biggest cause of conflict) and personal problems taken to work (15th biggest cause of conflict).

Some of the prerequisites of this study can also be associated with previous research on this topic; for example Hoffman (2006) also found that misuse of power, specific or new leadership

styles, cultural differences and the extent and content of the work are prerequisites of conflict; whereas Havenga (2004) found that the lack of physical resources, the extent and content of work and the application of new or specific leadership styles are the biggest causes of conflict.

5.3 THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

The main aim of Chapter 3 was to, determine and compare, by means of a literature study how the different facets of conflict are conceptualized in literature.

Firstly, the five steps of the conflict process model of Robbins have been discussed to get an overview of the process of conflict, the types of conflict, and ways to managed it.

The five stages of the Conflict Process Model of Robbins could be interpreted as follows:

Stage 1 ĩ The antecedent conditions of conflict

Stage 2 ĩ The seriousness of the conflict

Stage 3 ĩ The conflict-handling intentions

Stage 4 ĩ Ways to manage the conflict

Stage 5 ĩ The outcome of the conflict, either functional or dysfunctional

Subsequently, functional (in the interest of the company) and dysfunctional (negative for the functioning of a company) conflict were discussed (as seen in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.3). In sequence, ways to stimulate functional conflict were discussed as it is in the interest of the organisation because it progresses performance and distinguishes weaknesses (Hoffman, 2006). By increasing functional conflict, the following can automatically increase: organisational design characteristics such as formalisation and validation, interdepartmental interconnectedness, low communication obstacles and team spirit. These can improve new product performance (Menon et al., 1998). Nel et al., (2005) added that functional conflict minimizes stress and frustration and assists in establishing objectives in specifying when change is required in the organization. Refer to Chapter 3, paragraphs 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.2 where two ways of stimulating functional conflict, namely devil's advocacy and the dialectic method were discussed in detail.

For cross-reference, refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 3.4 where the intensity of conflict is discussed; which means the strength of power of conflict. Chetty (2012) mentioned that managers shouldn't aim to avoid all organizational conflict, but rather aim to maintain the conflict at a functional and reasonable level which contributes changing efforts and leads to organizational profitability. The problem statement in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1, mentioned how necessary it is for management to have sufficient knowledge about the nature of the impact of different ways of handling conflict, the influence thereof on the individual behavioural processes, and effects that may lead to the prevalence of conflict (Havenga, 2004; Crawley, 1995). In Chapter 3, Figure 4, it is seen that conflict at a moderate and stable intensity is necessary for a company to have a positive effect on its outcome, and that both no conflict and excessive conflict are negative for the organization.

The different views of conflict over the past 80 years were discussed, namely the traditional view, the behavioural view, and the interactionist view. The traditionalists' outlook is that conflict is negative, whereas the behaviouralists see conflict between negative and positive and the interactionists see conflict in a totally positive light. The assumption can be made that the traditionalists perceived all conflict as dysfunctional; perhaps they did not understand conflict and did not know how to handle it, whereas the assumption can be made that the interactionists perceive conflict as functional. In Chapter 3, paragraph 3.5, it is seen that interactionist managers believe that conflict is unavoidable, though essential for a company's health. These managers will attempt to manage conflict in such a way as to maximize the positive (functional) and minimize the negative (dysfunctional) (Plunkett et al, 2005).

Refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 3.6, where socialized power is described as a struggle for power to help others and personalized power is described as a struggle for power to help oneself (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Weber's struggle for power can be applied here as well as in the seven bases of power described below, as listed by Kreitner and Kinicki (2011), since Weber's theory provides an additional dimension or measurement of the concept of power.

Reward power is utilized by some managers and/or employees in a company by making promises and giving out rewards and thereby getting compliance from others (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

Coercive power ĩ Some individuals may coerce and threaten others in order to get people to comply with their wishes (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

Legitimate power ĩ People may also use utilize legitimate power as a way of obtaining compliance through formal authority (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

Expert power ĩ Power obtained by managers and/or employees by means of the application of their knowledge or information (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

Referent power ĩ Smart individuals or individuals with charismatic personalities within the company could achieve compliance from others (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011).

Connection power ĩ Where managers and/or employees in the company have connections with other people and use this power to gain compliance from others (Hersey et al., 2001).

Information power ĩ Employees need information from the manager in order to sustain or improve performance. This power can be used by managers to influence and enthusiasm employees (Hersey et al., 2001).

It is clear that various forms of power can be applied to control conflict and attain compliance. It is essential, nevertheless, to identify the causes of conflict in order to assess correct methods for eliminating it, if necessary (if the conflict is destructive in nature). It is therefore necessary for this study's theoretical basis to devote attention to the different levels of conflict within an organization. For cross-reference, refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 3.6, where the following levels of conflict were discussed in detail:

- Organizational Conflict
- Vertical Conflict
- Horizontal Conflict
- Line-Staff Conflict
- Interest-Based Conflict
- Informational Conflict
- Cultural Conflict
- Competition

- Communication

In order to be able to predict dysfunctional conflict, managers should know more about what precedes and follows it. Therefore it is important to know what the antecedents are in order to correctly manage conflict. Antecedents can be described as something that's necessary before something else can happen, e.g. Peter and Susan have to get engaged before they can get married, or Susan arrived late for her meeting because she was stuck in traffic. The five biggest antecedents of conflict of this study were:

1. Rumours / Gossiping
2. Specific leadership style
3. Favouritism / Jealousy
4. Ineffective communication
5. Cultural differences

A very important aspect of this study was subsequently discussed, namely the various conflict-handling styles of Thomas and Killman which were used in the well-acclaimed Rahim (ROCI-II) questionnaire (also used in this study). The five conflict-handling styles consist of the following: *Interpreting*, *Avoiding*, *Dominating*, *Obliging*, and *Compromising*. The *integrating* approach is associated with people who have a high concern for self and for others; whereas the *avoiding* approach is associated with people who have a low concern for self and for others - lack of concern about contentment. The *domination* handling style can be associated with people who have a high concern for self but a low concern for others; whereas the *obliging* conflict handling style can be associated with people who have a low concern for self but a high concern for others. Lastly the *compromising* conflict handling style can be associated with people who have a reasonable or fair concern for both self and others. For cross-reference, refer to Chapter 3, Table 3 where a comparison was drawn of the five conflict-handling styles.

Lastly interpersonal conflict, which forms the essence of the entire study, was discussed, as it is *“a felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness”* (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011, p. 11). Interpersonal conflict was defined, followed by

a discussion of the interpersonal conflict model of Hippocrates which consists of four basic temperaments namely the Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholy and Phlegmatic.

5.4 FINDINGS IN THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

As seen in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.3, the main aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and handling of interpersonal conflict within the gender spectrum compilation of biological-sex and gender-identity. The first two sub-objectives were achieved in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 by means of the theoretical study.

The third sub-objective, namely to by means of an empirical exploration do a comparative analysis between biological sex, of **male** and **female**, and *gender identity* attributes, of masculinity (**masculine males** and **masculine females**) and femininity (**feminine females** and **feminine males**), in their perceptions of conflict dynamics in the workplace, were answered in Chapter 4.

The fourth sub-objective, namely to determine by means of a statistical analysis, whether differences exist in conflict-handling styles when measured between different genders and the different *gender identities* within each gender were also answered in chapter 4.

The questionnaire consisted of six sections (sections A to F). Section A described the biographical data, whereas section B identified the *gender identity* of the biological sex identified in section A. Section C of the questionnaire included a standardised measuring instrument called the Situational Leadership Style Inventory. This was added as an additional section to obtain data for a future study. Section D determined what the respondents perceived as the causes of conflict, whereas section E determined what the respondents perceived as the consequences of conflict. Lastly, section F of the standardised Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) determined the conflict-handling styles which the respondents use to handle conflict with their work colleagues.

The question of reliability and validity of the questionnaire were determined, and according to Havenga (2008) a desire reliability coefficient would usually fall within the range of 0.80 to 0.90, whilst Bartholomew et al., argued that reliability between 0.60 and 0.80 is acceptable, this

is supported by Field (2005) who argued that a construct must be ≥ 0.6 to be reliable. According to the above all of the constructs were reliable as all had a Cronbach alpha of 0.70 and higher. *Obliging* had the lowest alpha value of 0.74, followed by *dominating* and *compromising* who both had an alpha value of 0.77. Masculinity and femininity both had an alpha value of 0.81, followed by *avoiding* that had an alpha value of 0.86 and *integrating*, which had the highest alpha value of 0.90. The average of all constructs was 0.81. This shows that all constructs are reliable in terms of consistency and steadiness of scores obtained by a similar person when re-examining with a similar test on different instances (Field, 2005).

~The Validity of a test concerns what the test measures and how well it does so~ (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997, quoted by Field, 2005, p. 323). Therefore it is valid if it measures that what it is supposed to measure (Field, 2005). From Chapter 4, Table 5 reports that there's more than one factor under masculinity, femininity, *dominating* and *obliging* indicating that these factors could be split into more factors. Nevertheless, the discussion was made to work in this study according to the factors defined in the original scoring instructions of the various standardised measuring instruments, especially as all these factors yielded high Cronbach alpha coefficients.

Section D of the questionnaire determined which constructs were the biggest causes of conflict. In Table 19 below, it can be seen what the respondents of this study, as divided into their different genders and sub-divided into their different gender-identities within each gender, perceived as the main causes of conflict.

In Table 19 the total perception of each group is seen of what they regarded the biggest causes of conflict. Note that due to the high number of possible causes listed in the questionnaire, only the top five causes were reported on:

1 = Biggest cause of conflict

5 = 5th Biggest cause of conflict

Table 19

Comparison of what the different genders and gender groups perceived as the biggest causes of conflict.

Gender / Gender Identity	Males	Females	Masculine Males	Feminine Males	Feminine Females	Masculine Females
Construct						
Specific Leadership Style	3	1	4	5	4	1
Co-Worker with an Incompatible Personality	-	-	-	-	2	-
Lack of Effective Personnel	2	-	2	-	-	-
Rumours / Gossiping	4	2	5	3	1	5
Misuse of Power	-	-		4	-	
Ineffective Communication	-	3	1	1	3	2
Favouritism / Jealousy	1	4	3	2	-	3
Cultural Differences	5	5	-	-	5	-
Meeting Production Targets / Deadlines	-	-	-	-	-	4

From above table it is apparent that **females** perceive a specific leadership style as the biggest cause of conflict, which could mean that most **female** respondents don't like to be managed in a specific way, for example micro managed. This is followed by rumours / gossiping and ineffective communication. For **males** favouritism / jealousy is the biggest cause of conflict; followed by the lack of ineffective personnel. By comparing **males** and **females**, it is evident that

males seek a more structured and productive environment, whereas **females** prefer an equal environment, with a consolidated leadership style and effective communication. As discussed in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1 the qualities of a 'perfect woman' include emotional, caring, nurturing and independent, whereas the qualities of a 'perfect man' include independent, strong, a provider and less emotional. Studies such as Chusmir and Mills (2008) and Hay et al., (2011) have shown that there's a gender difference in terms of conflict, and that men and women in fact do differ in their ways of experiencing conflict (refer to Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1).

Both **masculine males** and **feminine males** perceive ineffective communication as the biggest cause of conflict. **Masculine males** perceived the lack of ineffective personnel as the second biggest cause of conflict which relates to Fang's (2011) study that masculinity relates positively to job performance. Twenge (1997) stated that if you have a strong **masculine** side you are in charge of your own life because you are internally controlled; but in a workplace one works in teams and then the **masculine** side could consider ineffective personnel as a reason if job performance decreases. **Masculine males** perceived favouritism / jealousy as the third biggest cause of conflict within the company, and this could be because the **masculine** side are competitive, independent and experienced and dislikes inequity (Twenge, 1997). Looking at especially the first two factors that **masculine males** regard as causes of conflict, it is evident that masculinity relates positively to job performance (Fang, 2011). **Feminine males** also perceive ineffective communication as the biggest cause of conflict, followed by favouritism / jealousy and thereafter rumours and/or gossiping. According to Heartiste (2013) **feminine females** usually have the following personality traits: loving, sensitive to the needs of others, affectionate and emotional; and therefore it makes sense that they perceived rumours / gossiping as the biggest cause of conflict, followed by a co-worker with an incompatible personality and subsequently by ineffective communication. Here it is also evident that **feminine females** seek an equal environment, with a considerate leadership style and effective communication. For **masculine females** specific leadership style is the biggest cause of conflict, which could also mean that they do not like to be managed in a specific way, for example being micro managed. **Masculine females** perceive ineffective communication as the second and favouritism / jealousy as the third biggest cause of conflict within the manufacturing company. **Masculine females** perceive meeting production targets or deadlines as the fourth biggest cause of conflict; thus it

can be seen that they have the following personality traits: assertive, analytical, independent, aggressive, competitive, and dominant.

In order to determine the perceptions of conflict of the different genders and *gender identities*, it was also necessary to determine what these different groups perceived as the consequences of conflict. After the completion of the statistical analysis it was discovered that there were no differences in what **male** versus **female** perceived as the biggest consequences of conflict, meaning that no factor had a phi-coefficient ($\bar{u}$) of ≥ 0.3 .

However in Chapter 4, Table 13, it was seen that **masculine males** and **feminine males** contrasted in the following consequences which they perceived as the biggest consequences of conflict: Decline Cooperation (phi-coefficient ($\bar{u}$) = 0.31) and Consider change of job (phi-coefficient ($\bar{u}$) = 0.34). 75% of **feminine males** said that they would decline their cooperation if they experienced conflict in the workplace; whereas only 32% of **masculine males** agreed. This could mean that **feminine males** would prefer to work individually rather than in a team if they perceived conflict, whereas **masculine males** would prefer solidarity and teamwork even though they experienced conflict in the workplace. Twenge (1997) also stated that a feminine characteristic is to be sensitive; it could mean that the **feminine** side takes conflict in a sensitive way and feels offended and therefore declines their cooperation. Another consequence where **masculine males** and **feminine males** differ is in considering a change of job; 75% of **feminine males** agreed that they would consider changing jobs if they experienced conflict in the workplace; whereas only 28% of **masculine males** felt the same way. In a study done by Wang Fang in 2011, the results showed significant differences in job performance between different *gender identities*, and the study finds that the level of masculinity is positively related to job performance; this could mean that the **masculine** side would be more tough-skinned and competitive (Twenge, 1997), even though they experience conflict, whereas the **feminine** side would react more uncreatively and unwilling (Twenge, 1997) towards the conflict. Here it is also apparent that **masculine males** seek a more structured and productive environment (Fang, 2011); even though there's conflict, the team must remain structured and productive. Heartiste (2013) described **feminine males** as more emotional, understanding, loyal, sensitive, and sympathetic; therefore it is understandable why **feminine males** would decline their cooperation

and consider changing jobs if they experienced conflict to a greater extent than **masculine males**.

Results in Table 14 show that **feminine females** and **masculine females** also differ in their perceptiveness of two consequences, namely experience depression (phi-coefficient ($\bar{u}$) = 0.37) and consider change of jobs (phi-coefficient ($\bar{u}$) = 0.30). It is seen that 48.39% of **feminine females** experience depression as an influence of conflict in the workplace, where only 13.79% of **masculine females** experience depression due to conflict in the workplace. This can be ascribed to **feminine females** being loving, sensitive to the needs of others, affectionate and emotional (Heartiste, 2013); they seek an equal environment, with a considering leadership style and effective communication and could experience depression if this is not the case. **Masculine females** are more assertive, independent, aggressive, competitive, analytical, and dominant (Heartiste, 2013; Echabe, 2010); characteristics which are less associated with depression. In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, it is seen that research has shown that *gender identity* conflict is often related to larger problems including depression, anxiety, relationship problems, low self-esteem, and violence. Furthermore 61.29% of **feminine females** would consider changing jobs if they perceive conflict in the workplace; whereas only 31.03% of **masculine females** agreed. This could also be because of **feminine females'** characteristics of being loving, caring, sensitive to the needs of others, affectionate, and emotional, that they would rather consider a new job as a consequence of conflict as they do not like competition, assertiveness and dominance; whereas the **masculine female** is assertive, competitive, more independent (Heartiste, 2013; Echabe, 2010) and wouldn't let conflict cause her to change jobs that easily.

In order to achieve the final sub-objective and provide the final contribution towards achieving the overall mission of this study, the preference of conflict-handling styles between different genders and *gender identities* within those genders were measured. These results are presented in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.8. Each conflict-handling style, namely *Integrating*, *Avoiding*, *Dominating*, *Obliging*, and *Compromising* was presented on a five point Likert-scale and could be applicable to the respondent's choice of conflict-handling style from 'strongly agree (1)' to 'strongly disagree (5)'.

In Chapter 4, Table 15, it can be seen that no medium (0.5) or large effect (0.8) in terms of determining a practical significant difference were detected in any of the constructs, meaning

that there were no differences when measuring **males** versus **females**. The lower the mean, the more applicable the conflict handling style: **females** used the *Integrating, Avoiding, Obliging* and *Compromising* styles more with their colleagues than **males**; whereas males used the *dominating* style more with their colleagues than **females**. For cross-reference refer to Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, where Davis et al., (2010) found that **males** would react in a more forceful or *dominating* way during conflict, consistent with their gender stereotype of being confident and task-orientated; whereas **females** would react in a conciliatory or *obliging* way, which is consistent to their gender stereotype of being communal and relationship-orientated. Pierce and Edwards did a study on children's writing of fantasy stories in 1988, where they found that more girls chose to avoid conflict than boys and that boys used more violent resolutions to solve problems (refer to Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1). In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, it is seen that Sutchek (2001), as cited by Havenga, (2008) stated that **males** prefer to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style before utilising the *avoiding* strategy. These differences were too small, however, to be of practical significance ($d \geq 0.8$). This means that when comparing the **male** and **female** employees of this specific company regarding their handling styles of conflict which they would predominantly use in a situation between them and their colleagues, all of the conflict-handling styles were used to the same degree, and no one conflict-handling style was favoured amongst **males** and **females**. This means that there were no differences in how biological sex (**male** and **female**) handles conflict in the manufacturing company.

Results in Chapter 4, Table 16, where the conflict-handling styles between the respondent and his colleague of a different *gender identity*, **masculine males** and **feminine males**, were compared, shows the following: Both *dominating* and *compromising* conflict-handling styles have a medium effect (if $d\text{-value} = 0.5$). The lower the mean, the more applicable the conflict-handling style; meaning that from Table 16 it is noticeable that **masculine males** (mean = 2.93) are more likely to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style than **feminine males** (mean = 3.33). In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, it was seen that Twenge (1997) described the **masculine** side as dominating, tough-skinned, competitive and non-emotional; therefore it makes sense that the **masculine** attributes are more likely to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style than the **feminine** attributes. In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, it is also seen that studies such as McGeown et al., (2012), Echabe (2010) and Newman (2012) have shown that it is expected of the **masculine** side to be stronger, more independent and more experienced than the **feminine** side;

this could also be a reason why the **masculine** attributes are more likely to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style to show that they are in control. It can also be seen in Table 16 that *compromising* had a medium effect and that **feminine males** (mean = 2.16) tend to use the *compromise* handling style more often than the **masculine male** group (mean = 2.52). In chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, it was seen that Twenge (1997) described the **feminine** side as unselfish, graceful and often giving; therefore it is apparent that the **feminine** attributes would be more likely to use the *compromising* conflict-handling style than the **masculine** attributes. Both *avoiding* and *obliging* had a large effect and is practically significant (if d-value = ≥ 0.8). According to Table 16, **feminine males** (mean = 2.52) are more likely to use the *avoiding* conflict-handling style than **masculine males** (mean = 3.30). This is evident from Twenge's (1997) opinion that the **masculine** attribute is competitive, non-emotional, independent, and a provider; characteristics that doesn't align with the *avoiding* conflict-handling style. However, the **feminine** attribute is dependent, sensitive, respectful and nurturing; characteristics that could align with the *avoiding* conflict-handling style. It is also noticeable from Table 16 that **feminine males** (mean = 2.44) are more likely to *oblige* in a conflict situation than **masculine males** (mean = 3.01). This is also obvious as the **feminine** attribute can be associated with words such as caretaker, helpful and unselfish (Ryan & Hoxmeier, 2009). Results from Table 16 also show that both **masculine males** and **feminine males** used the *integrating* conflict-handling style, and that **masculine males** used it more than **feminine males**, but to a very small extent, which had no effect in practice.

Results in Chapter 4, Table 17, where the conflict-handling styles between the respondent and his colleague of the different *gender identity*, **feminine females** and **masculine females**, were compared, shows the following: The *domination* conflict-handling style had a medium effect (if d-value = 0.5). From Table 17 it can be seen that **masculine females** (mean = 3.01) tend to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style to a greater extent than the **feminine female** group (mean = 3.49). In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1, it was seen that Twenge (1997) described the masculine side as dominating, tough-skinned, competitive, and non-emotional, therefore it can be concluded that the masculine attributes are more likely to use the *dominating* conflict-handling style than the feminine attributes. **Masculine females** used the *Avoiding*, *Obliging* and *Compromising* styles more with their colleagues than **feminine females**; whereas **feminine**

females used the *Integrating* conflict-handling style to a greater extent with their colleagues than **masculine females** did.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the research findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- It is essential that members of a group, and especially leaders, be provided with sufficient knowledge of the fact that there are differences in how different genders handle conflict; and especially to be knowledgeable that within the different genders (masculinity and femininity) there are also differences in the handling of conflict. Provide the entire organisation with the necessary training to understand these concepts.
- That leadership is trained in nature and influence of different conflict-handling styles on organisational processes; and in how to manage it so that it doesn't progress into dysfunctional conflict.
- 72.31% of respondents answered that they would be interested in taking part in a Leadership Development Workshop in order to gain more knowledge on conflict and the handling and managing thereof (Section E, question 3 of the questionnaire).
- That conflict training and conflict handling workshops be presented in the manufacturing company. The employees and organisation could benefit if all employees are informed and educated on how to handle and manage conflict. This should occur through all job levels in the organisation.
- That employees be enabled to acquire the skill to identify the difference between functional (positive) and dysfunctional (negative) conflict. Both management and employees should learn to manage functional conflict in such a way that the manufacturing company will benefit and get value from it; otherwise it could turn into dysfunctional conflict.
- That employees be provided with stress management workshops before they even experience work-related stress. This could assist them in dealing and coping with work stress and burnout; it might also reduce depression among employees.
- That management organise communication skills workshops for employees to enable better communication. Clear communication is essential in any company. There must be open

communication channels, and it's substantial for management to produce better communication among staff and departments.

- That the roles of employees be clearly defined in order to circumvent role ambiguity which could lead to further conflict. Employees should know what is expected or anticipated from them.
- That management, in conjunction with the HR department, implement solutions where employees work more efficiently, as role overload could lead to depression, burnout and conflict.
- That Management create a diverse workforce and environment which is productive and in concord, where race and culture is not a problem.
- That power misuses by superiors are exterminated, as this causes enormous conflict between employees and superiors.
- That company guidelines and principles about the handling and management of conflict be formulated and carried out. Healthy management values and ethics are important in order to limit the existence of conflict.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There will always be limitations when testing conflict in an organisation. The most significant limitations in this study are as follows:

- The empirical research was done within one manufacturing company and the results cannot be generalized to other manufacturing companies.
- The researcher could not accommodate all of the factors that contribute to conflict or the consequences thereof in the literature and empirical study as it would have resulted in the study becoming too comprehensive.
- Not all departments within the company partook in this study which could possibly limit the scope of the research.
- Group responses were not measured in the study, but focus was put on the individual and his perceptions instead.

- Due to the complexity of the measuring-instrument, the questionnaire could not be administered at all job-levels of the company.

Despite of these limitations, the study still successfully achieved the objective it set out to do in chapter 1.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is always a need for further research and through this study it was found that further research could be done on the following aspects:

- Further research should include a comparative study between two or three manufacturing companies to see how different companies within the same industry deviate or resemble.
- Further research can be done to determine whether there's a difference in the perception and handling of conflict between the respondent and colleagues categorized according to different biographical backgrounds like job-position or years in service.
- Further research could determine whether there are differences, by cross-checking all four *gender identity* groups (masculine males, feminine males, feminine females and masculine females) using the MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) statistical procedure.
- The ROCI-II can measure conflict-handling styles amongst subordinate, colleague and superior; a future study could include the conflict-handling style among all three groups and not only between peers as used in this study.
- Perceptions on respondent's perception on "functional" conflict and "dysfunctional" conflict could also be measured in one of the sections of the questionnaire.
- Further research could include a qualitative study.
- Lastly, as mentioned in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.4, the measuring-instrument included a section which measured the respondent's leadership-style as well. This information was gathered to broaden the results of this study for further academic journal publications using the data obtained from the original source. The reasoning behind this inclusion is two-fold: Firstly, Gender differences *as well as gender identity* differences could (as have been proven

in this study with different conflict-handling styles) influence different leadership-styles. Secondly, a correlation may be drawn between a leadership-style and a specific conflict-handling style. In both cases of this future research alternative hypothesis could be formulated and could be proven or dis-proven.

5.8 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study, namely to investigate the experience and handling of interpersonal conflict within the gender spectrum compilation of biological-sex and *gender identity*, was successfully met. In Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.1 (last paragraph), it was said that there was a lack of research on conflict experiences within the various *gender identities* (Heppner & Heppner, 2008). Overall, research has shown that *gender identity* conflict is often related to larger problems including depression, anxiety, relationship problems, low self-esteem, violence, and a variety of other undesirable things. It should therefore be noted that this study will fill the gap in research by looking at the *gender identity differences* and workplace conflict differences, as opposed to the well-researched field called *gender identity conflict*, thus supporting the motivation towards this study.

The most significant contribution of this study was the conclusion that although there's no difference in how basic gender (male and female) perceive and handle conflict in the workplace where this study was conducted; there is a difference in how the different gender identity groups within each gender perceive and handle conflict in the workplace, and that future scientific research, and the leadership of any organization, regardless of what type of industry, should take cognisance of it.

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