

Assessing conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in higher education in South Africa

W.M. van Niekerk
22180656

Mini-dissertation submitted in *partial* fulfillment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Commercii* in *Industrial Psychology* at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Dr. M. de Klerk
Co-supervisor: Mrs. J.K. Pires-Putter

May 2016



COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The editorial style as well as the references referred to in this mini-dissertation follow the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (6th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) to use the APA style in all of its scientific documents from January 1999 onwards.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used for the article whereas the APA guidelines are followed in constructing the tables.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful for being given this opportunity to complete my mini-dissertation this year. This would not have been possible without the following support:

- The Lord, for providing me with the knowledge, courage, perseverance, resilience and strength to successfully complete my goal.
- My supervisor and mentor, Marissa de Klerk, who always supported me with all my challenges, answering so many questions and always offering a word of encouragement. Thank you for your knowledge, teaching and inspiration. My gratitude for always having patience, empowering me and lifting me up even when it felt like I will not be able to complete my studies while working.
- My co-supervisor, Jeanine Pires-Putter, who provided the dataset and for all the guidance.
- My parents, Cobus and Isabel van Niekerk, for always providing me with support (emotionally and financially), a word of encouragement and love throughout my years in studying.
- My family for always showing interest in my studies.
- The human Resource department at the NWU who provided me with the opportunity, knowledge and understanding.
- My flatmate, Lorandi, who was always there to support me by lending opinions, ideas, coffee and reassurance.
- My close friends, who always showed curiosity and had faith in the completion and success of my study.
- Rev. Claude Vosloo, who was always friendly and willing to help and whose response was always quick and efficient. My appreciation for being a mentor in my language editing.
- NWU Pukke for providing me with my Masters bursary.

DECLARATION

I, Wilmé Mari van Niekerk, hereby declare that “Assessing conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in higher education in South Africa” is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this study are those of the author and taken from relevant literature references as shown in the references.

I further declare that the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wilmé van Niekerk", written over a horizontal line.

Wilmé van Niekerk

NOVEMBER 2015

17 La Rochelle Street
Berg-en-Dal
WELLINGTON 7655
07 November 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby confirm that the Master's dissertation by Ms Wilmé van Niekerk was edited and groomed to the best of my ability, including some recommendations to improve the language and logical structure, as well as to enhance the presentation.

Rev Claude Vosloo
Language and knowledge practitioner and consultant

Home of Creativity/Kreatiwiteitshuis
<http://homeofcreativity.co.za>

South African Translator's Institute reference no: 100 2432
Associate Member of PEG (Professional Editor's Group)

Home of Creativity ULTD 

Don't think outside the box, reinvent the box

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Summary	ix
Opsomming	xi

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Problem statement	2
1.1.1	Conflict	5
1.1.2	Conflict management styles	7
1.1.3	Conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing	9
1.2	Research questions	11
1.3	Research objectives	12
1.3.1	General objective	12
1.3.2	Specific objectives	12
1.4	Research hypotheses	13
1.5.	Research method	13
1.5.1	Research approach	13
1.5.2	Literature review	14
1.5.3	Research participants and procedure	14
1.5.4	Measuring instruments	15
1.5.5	Statistical analysis	17
1.5.6	Ethical considerations	20
1.6	Overview of Chapters	20
1.7	Chapter Summary	21
	References	22

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE	28
------------------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	81	
3.1	Conclusions	82
3.2	Limitations of the research	88
3.3	Recommendations	89
3.3.1	Recommendations for the organisations	89
3.3.2	Recommendations for future research	90
	References	92

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
Table 1	Final engagement communalities and factor loadings	53
Table 2	Final burnout communalities and factor loadings	54
Table 3	Final conflict management styles –communalities and factor loadings	56
Table 4	Descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients of constructs	58
Table 5	Correlation matrix between engagement, burnout and conflict management styles	59
Table 6	Multiple Regression Analysis with Engagement as dependent variable	60
Table 7	Multiple Regression Analysis with Exhaustion as dependent variable	60
Table 8	Multiple Regression Analysis with Disengagement as dependent variable	61
Table 9	MANOVA- differences in conflict management styles, burnout and engagement between support staff and academic personnel	62
Table 10	ANOVA- differences in support staff and academic personnel based on conflict management styles	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Description	Page
Figure 1	Two dimensional model of styles of handling interpersonal conflict	38
Figure 2	Scree plot for Utrecht Work Engagement Scale	52
Figure 3	Scree plot for the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory	54
Figure 4	Scree plot for the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II	56

SUMMARY

Title:

Assessing conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in higher education in South Africa

Keywords:

Conflict management styles, work-related wellbeing, burnout, engagement, academic personnel, support staff, higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions contribute to the economy of South Africa, by the maintenance of knowledge (Gibson *et al.*, 1994; Waghind, 2002). Both academic personnel and support staff play an important role in the economic development and future of South Africa (Ensor, 2004; Pitman, 2000). Due to certain perceptual barriers in the interpersonal relationship between the mentioned groups, conflict is experienced. It is, therefore, important to create an awareness of conflict management styles, in order to deal effectively with conflict in the Higher Education Institution. These conflicts impacting interpersonal relationships exert an influence on these groups' work-related wellbeing. It is imperative to assess these relationships as there is a lack of research on the impact of conflict management styles on the work-related wellbeing of academic personnel as well as support staff.

The general objective of the present study was to assess the relationship between the different conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees working in a higher education institution. A cross-sectional survey design was used for data- collection purposes. A combined quota and convenient non-probability sample of academic personnel ($n = 180$) and support staff ($n = 201$) was taken from a higher education institution in South Africa. Measuring instruments were used for biographical characteristics, conflict management styles (The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II), burnout (The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory) and engagement (The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to ensure validity of each instrument within the South African context. Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to determine the reliability of the findings. Descriptive statistics (e.g.

means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were employed to investigate the characteristics of the sample. Correlations were examined to identify significant relationships between constructs. Multiple-regression analysis was employed to investigate predictions between the dependent (Burnout and Engagement) and independent (conflict management styles) variables. MANOVAs and ANOVAs were used to establish differences between academic personnel and support staffs' styles to manage conflict and their work-related wellbeing.

The results indicated the existence of a relationship between conflict management styles (i.e. compromising, avoiding and dominating) and work-related wellbeing (Burnout and Engagement). The compromising conflict management style indicated a significant positive relationship with disengagement, and a significant negative relationship with engagement. The avoiding conflict management style was statistically and practically significantly related in a negative way to exhaustion, and positively related to disengagement. The compromising conflict management style was a predictor of engagement and disengagement. The avoiding conflict management style was a predictor of exhaustion. A significant difference was found between academic personnel and support staff regarding their styles to deal with conflict. It was found that support staff members use the dominating and compromising conflict management style to a greater extent than academic personnel. No differences were found regarding the experience of work-related wellbeing between the groups.

In light of the findings recommendations were made for higher education institutions to follow up on as well as for future research on the topic.

OPSOMMING

Titel:

Beoordeling van konflikthanteringstyle en werkverwante welstand van werknemers in die hoër onderwys in Suid-Afrika

Sleutelwoorde:

Konflikhanteringstyle, werk-verwante welstand, uitbranding, werksbegeestering, akademiese personeel, ondersteuningspersoneel, Hoër onderwysinstellings.

Hoëronderwysinstellings dra by tot die ekonomie van Suid-Afrika deur die instandhouding van kennis (Gibson *et al.*, 1994; Waghind, 2002). Akademiese personeel en ondersteuningspersoneel speel 'n belangrike rol in die ekonomiese ontwikkeling en toekoms van Suid-Afrika (Ensor, 2004; Pitman, 2000). Personeel ervaar konflik as gevolg van sekere perseptuele hindernisse wat die interpersoonlike verhouding tussen die twee groepe beïnvloed. Dit is belangrik om 'n bewustheid van konflikhanteringstyle te skep, om sodoende konflik binne die hoëronderwysinstelling doeltreffend te bestuur. Konflik binne tussenpersoonlike verhoudings het 'n invloed op die werk-verwante welstand van hierdie twee groepe. Dit is belangrik om hierdie verhoudings te evalueer, aangesien daar tans 'n gebrek aan navorsing is oor die impak wat style van konflikhantering uitoefen op akademiese personeel en ondersteuningspersoneel se werk-verwante welstand.

Die algemene doel van hierdie studie was om die verhouding tussen die verskillende konflikthanteringstyle en werk-verwante welstand te evalueer van werknemers wat by 'n hoër onderwysinstelling werk. Die ontwerp van 'n kruis-deursnee-opname is in die huidige studie gebruik om data in te samel. 'n Gekombineerde kwota en gerieflikheids- en nie-waarskynlikheidsteekproef van akademiese personeel ($n = 180$) en ondersteuningspersoneel ($n = 201$) is geneem by 'n hoër onderwysinstelling in Suid-Afrika. Meetinstrumente is gebruik om die volgende vas te stel: biografiese eienskappe, konflikthanteringstyle (Die Rahim Organisasoriese Konflikinstrument), uitbranding (Die Oldenburg Uitbranding-Instrument) en werksbegeestering (Die Utrecht Begeesteringskaal). Verkennende faktorontleding is gedoen om die geldigheid van elke instrument te verseker binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks. Cronbach se alfa-koëffisiënte is

toegepas om die betroubaarheid van die bevindings vas te stel. Beskrywende statistiek (bv. gemiddeldes, standaardafwykings, skuinsheid en kurtose) is gebruik om die kenmerke van die steekproef te verstaan. Korrelasies is ondersoek om betekenisvolle verhoudings tussen konstrakte te identifiseer. Meervoudige regressie-analise is gebruik om voorspellings tussen die afhanklike (Uitbranding en Werksbegeestering) en onafhanklike veranderlikes (konflikhanteringstyle) te ondersoek. MANOVA's en ANOVA's is gebruik om vas te stel of daar wel verskille is in konflikhanteringstyle en werk-verwante welstand tussen akademiese personeel en ondersteuningspersoneel bestaan.

Die resultate toon 'n verhouding tussen konflikhanteringstyle (d.i. oorheersing, vermyding en kompromie) en werk-verwante welstand (d.i. Uitbranding en Werksbegeestering). Die konflikhanteringstyl, kompromie, toon 'n beduidende positiewe verhouding met onbegeestering, en 'n beduidende negatiewe verhouding met begeestering. Vermyding as konflikhanteringstyl was statisties en prakties betekenisvol, negatief verwant aan uitputting, en positief verwant aan onbegeestering. Kompromie as konflikhanteringstyl was 'n voorspeller van begeestering en nie-begeestering. Vermyding as konflikhanteringstyl was 'n voorspeller van uitputting. 'n Beduidende verskil is gevind tussen die style wat akademiese personeel en ondersteuningspersoneel aanwend om konflik te hanteer. Daar is gevind dat ondersteuningspersoneel grotendeels die oorheersende-, en kompromie-konflikhanteringstyle gebruik, in teenstelling met akademiese personeel. Geen verskille is tussen die groepe gevind wat werk-verwante welstand betref nie.

In die lig van die bevindings is aanbevelings gemaak vir hoër onderwysinstellings om op te volg, sowel vir toekomstige navorsing oor die onderwerp.

CHAPTER 1

Assessing conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in higher education in South Africa

INTRODUCTION

The present study focuses firstly on examining the five different styles for conflict management (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising) and, secondly on assessing work-related wellbeing (burnout and engagement) of employees working in a higher education institution in South Africa. In this sense, the study aims to compare conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of academic personnel and support staff employed in a higher education institution. This chapter presents the present study's problem statement and research objectives, which include its general objective and specific objectives. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the research method and outlines the division of chapters.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in South Africa as it adds to the production of knowledge not only nationally, but also globally through intertextual exchange (Gibson *et al.*, 1994; Waghind, 2002). Higher education institutions have a global impact through providing international higher education institutions with knowledge and research from a South African perspective (Waghind, 2002). These institutions produce knowledge and research that business, teams, and individuals can use effectively to improve their strategising and develop new products and technologies that will give them a competitive edge (Bloedon & Stokes, 1994). In addition, the present research may provide a foundation for transferring academic research into tacit knowledge and provides avenues for innovation (Koskinen & Vanharatan, 2002). In return this can contribute to South Africa's economy (Gibson *et al.*, 1994). Higher education institutions have to uphold a socially desirable and knowledgeable image for the public in order to recruit more students who can gain knowledge and thus contribute to South Africa's workforce (Ivy, 2001). Higher education institutions in South Africa, therefore, play a vital role in the economic development of the country, but also have to undergo challenging changes and need to keep up with global and local trends in order to make a difference in the country (Ensor, 2004; Oplatka, 2009; Winter, 2009).

The efficacy with which higher education institutions in South Africa can deliver their part has come under major threat (Cross, Mungadi & Rouhani, 2002; Du Toit, 2000; Fourie, 1999; Gillespie Walsh, Winefield, Due & Stough, 2001). In the new dispensation, South African academic personnel faced major challenges (i.e. language transformation and adaption of governance systems) of adapting to the political transformations which took place in society at large (Corrall, 1995; Du Plessis, 2005; Fourie, 1999). This required a restructuring of the curricula, incorporating a variety of languages in education. It also entailed a new focus on the specific developmental needs of research within the community and on equalisation of the governance systems in the higher education institutions (Corrall, 1995; Du Plessis, 2005; Fourie, 1999). These challenges had an effect on higher education institutions' culture and evidently on the environment in which people have to work (Du Toit, 2000); it also impacted on the role players (e.g. academic personnel and support staff) involved in the academic process, particularly academic personnel. This led to the empowerment of academics and adoption of a self-determined attitude as well as a changing role in which they have to fulfil more strenuous demands to keep up with the changing laws in South Africa (Waghind, 2002).

It must be remembered that higher education institutions do not consist solely of academic personnel, but also have support staff (Pitman, 2000; Thomas, 2004). There is a constant interaction between academic personnel and the support staff, which impacts their relationship and may lead to interpersonal relationship conflict (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). These forms of interpersonal conflict can be managed by understanding the different styles that individuals adopt to manage conflict (Rahim, 2011). However, in a society that is undergoing a major political and cultural transition this may cause a challenge. Some styles of conflict management may lead to burnout and poor health and are related directly to an employee's work-related wellbeing (Wright, 2011). Therefore, the present study can make a contribution by investigating the impact of conflict management styles on both academic personnel and support staff.

According to the University of California (2014), academic personnel can be defined as individuals who are associated with a university and are mainly involved in teaching, research, and public service in terms of the research function. Academic personnel in South Africa play an important role in the social and economic development (i.e. restructuring curriculums,

knowledge production, development and acquisition of potential and skill for the future of South Africa) of the country (Ensor, 2004; Waghind, 2002). Although academics in higher education institutions have a critical role in the education and development of the future of South Africa, they are faced with increasing stress levels due to strenuous work demands (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Tytherleigh, Webba, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi & Boyd, 2003). Work demands of academic personnel entail the following: teaching the students, writing articles, submitting numerous articles that must be published in a year, supervision, work pressure, long working hours, strained working relationships, work-life imbalance, job insecurity, lack of resources and poor communication systems, and, on top of that, insufficient funding from the government (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Tytherleigh *et al.*, 2005; Winefield *et al.*, 2003). In spite of these overstretched work demands, it is evident that academics do have access to work resources that can help them cope with the demands (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). These resources include the following: procedural fairness and autonomy, organisational support, growth opportunities, advancement opportunities, social support, and flexitime for useful support (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Boyd *et al.*, 2011; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006).

Reliance on support staff is critical for academics to reach their goals (Pitman, 2000). Support staff consists of “clerical and secretarial” personnel (Thomas, 2004, p. 276). Pitman (2000) in his definition also includes general staff as well as administrative personnel. Academics in cooperation with support staff have a significant influence on the education of students in South Africa to secure potential opportunities for their future (Ensor, 2004; Pitman, 2000). Support staff operates in a similar type of environment as academic personnel (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). According to Gillespie *et al.* (2001) the environment, demands, and stressors of the support staff can be characterised as follows: highly stressful, lacking in resources (e.g. insufficient equipment and funding), increasing workloads, ineffective management, job insecurity, lack of promotion, scant rewards, and poor recognition. Furthermore, support staff’s highly stressful environment impacts their job performance, interpersonal relationships, and commitment negatively, which in turn leads to higher rates of absenteeism and to below-quality services (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, Gillespie *et al.* (2001) report that the stress that academic personnel and support staff experience, puts strain on their interpersonal relationships. It is thus clear that academic

personnel and support staff's job demands differ, but the stress that both groups experience is similar (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001).

As stated above academic personnel and support staff differ with regard to work demands (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). It was found that academic personnel experience exhaustion more frequently as compared to the support staff (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). On the opposite side of exhaustion, academic personnel in South Africa show high levels of work engagement (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). This indicates that, depending on the resources academic personnel receive and the demands they have to meet, they can experience high levels of either burnout, or engagement indifferently (Blinge, 2006). Therefore, due to the difference in exhaustion that are experienced by academic personnel and support staff (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001) their conflict management styles may also differ due to the different lack of resources and received (Blinge, 2006). As seen in the literature, academic personnels' levels of engagement has been thoroughly researched, but there is a distinct lack of research done on support staff's engagement levels (Jackson, Rothmann & van de Vijver, 2006; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002). Furthermore, according to the researchers knowledge little or no literature exists on the comparisons between academic personnel and support staff regarding conflict management styles, burnout and engagement levels. Therefore, it is necessary to draw comparisons between academic personnel and support staff regarding their styles of conflict management resulting in burnout or engagement – in light of the insufficient sources on this topic.

1.1.1 Conflict.

Academic personnel and support staff have different perceptions of each other as group, and these differences in perceptions may lead to conflict in interpersonal relationships (Pitman, 2000). Interpersonal relationships refer to a specific connection between people when relating to and dealing with one another (Ho, 1998). These forms of interaction consist of “reciprocity, face and dynamic interactions”, which serve as building blocks for a relationship (Ho, 1998, p. 3). Pitman (2000) explains in the study on perceptions of administrative staff on academic personnel and students, certain perceptual barriers exist among academics and support staff. These barriers

include: negative stereotyping, non-reciprocal relationship of respect, feeling of inferiority and weariness, frustration, no recognition for value, power relationships, cultural differences, and strenuous relationships. The impediments can be rectified by developing interpersonal relationships between academics and support staff (Pitman, 2000).

Conflict should be understood as universal, diverse, and prevalent in organisations and in people's everyday lives (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Vokic & Sontor, 2009). For this reason, conflict cannot be ignored as it is inevitable and exists when individuals interact with each other (Jehn, 1995; Rahim, 2011; Vokic & Sontor, 2009). Conflict can be explained as a discrepancy, dissimilarities or incompatibility within or between groups or individuals (Rahim, 2011). Thus conflict from interpersonal relationships can be defined as "significant influence on group processes and outcomes" and furthermore, as tensions between group members that may have negative reactions on the individuals' concerned (Jehn, 1995, p. 258). Furthermore, conflict has a twofold nature: functional or dysfunctional conflict, which may each have different organisational outcomes (Rahim, 2011). Functional conflict is seen as productive, whereas dysfunctional conflict can be considered disruptive (Rahim, 2011). Functional conflict has advantageous outcomes for the organisation in that it promotes creativity, change, an enhanced decision-making process, increased individual and group performance, and alternative problem-solving approaches (Rahim, 2011). Dysfunctional conflict holds the following negative consequences for an organisation: possible job stress, burnout, reduced communication and job performance (Rahim, 2011). It may also promote a climate of distrust, dissatisfaction, and lead to damaged relationships (Rahim, 2011). Whether functional or dysfunctional, the main issue is that conflict still needs to be managed effectively (Rahim, 2011).

Conflict regarding interpersonal relationships in the workplace can be managed by understanding the different styles of conflict management and by implementing interventions (Rahim, 2011). By implementing interventions to help manage a certain style of conflict, higher education institutions can effectively manage the interpersonal conflict between academic personnel and support staff. The styles of conflict management which individuals demonstrate must be identified as a prerequisite for dealing with conflict (Rahim, 2011). Individuals will use their

particular styles to manage conflict within an interpersonal relationship (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010). Furthermore, by investigating the different styles of conflict management, higher education institutions can become aware of the relevant interventions to apply in order to regulate conflict within relationships effectively between academic personnel and support staff (Rahim, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the different styles of conflict management that both the academic personnel and support staff display.

1.1.2 Conflict management styles.

Rahim (1983) developed the two-dimensional model of styles to deal with interpersonal conflict. The model distinguishes five conflict management styles on two scales, which measure the individual's endeavours to fulfil the concern for others (Rahim, 1983). These scales include specific degrees of a high or low concern for others, and a high or low degree of concern for the self (Rahim, 1983). The combination of the two scales unfolds in the five styles of conflict management, namely integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising (Rahim, 1983). Each style is defined and classified with its degrees of concern for others and for the self (Rahim, 1983).

Integrating: the individual has a high concern for self and for others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). It is viewed as being open to all solutions presented during the conflict. The individual will consider the possible alternatives, weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the situation and reach an effective solution. This style is related to problem solving and the diagnosis of interventions when all the information is exchanged (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Obliging: the individual has a low concern for the self and a high concern for others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style is accompanied by investigating the differences, focussing on the similarities in the situation and satisfying the other party's needs (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). According to this style the individual would rather put the other party's needs before his/her own.

Dominating: associated with forceful behaviour, pursuing the other party and coercing them to give in to one's own terms (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). This implies a win-lose approach and neglects the expectations of the other party (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). In this style, the individual has a high concern for the self and a low concern for others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Avoiding: the individual has a low concern for the self and for others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Using this style, the individual will try and avoid the situation by side-stepping it. The individual will attempt to withdraw completely without having to deal with issues from the situation (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Compromising: the individual has an intermediate concern for the self and for others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style implies that both parties give up something in order to win something. It is described as a win-lose approach to find a mutually recognised outcome to the situation (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

It is important to note that individuals may change their style for handling conflict over time to one that is more advantageous for them in certain situations (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu, Van Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2004). In addition, it is found that individuals have different styles of conflict management in certain situations and that each style may have different psychological outcomes such as confidence, sense of accomplishment, burnout, long-term health, and psychological strain (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu, Van Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2004). These outcomes in return can have negative consequences (e.g., burnout) and positive consequences (e.g., engagement) on the individual's work-related wellbeing (Beebe, 2007; Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; Wright, 2011).

Furthermore, it is important that the different styles of conflict management may not only have negative and positive consequences for the individual, but also have ambivalent outcomes for the

organisation, such as absenteeism and high turnover rates (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010). It is crucial for higher education institutions to look after, safeguard, and manage their personnel for the sake of their health, their performance, and with a view to the intellectual health of the nation (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008). Following on the argument above, it is also necessary to investigate how the difference in conflict management styles between the mentioned groups impacts their work-related wellbeing (e.g. burnout or engagement).

1.1.3 Conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing.

The style of conflict management is linked directly to an employee's work-related wellbeing and health (Wright, 2011). Some styles for dealing with conflict particularly lead to burnout and even poor health (Wright, 2011). Evidence indicates a significant relationship between styles of conflict management and negative outcomes within the organisation such as job stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. Wright (2011) as well as Friedman, Tidd, Currall and Tsai (2000), found that individuals with an integrating conflict management style experience lower levels of stress and burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction. In contrast to the integrating style, the avoiding style leads to increased levels of stress and burnout (Friedman *et al.*, 2000; Wright, 2011). Lastly, research indicates that the compromising conflict management style is predictive of job satisfaction and decreased levels of burnout (Wright, 2011). The findings show that, within the South African context, the different styles of conflict management are used to the same extent, except for the integrating style (Linde, Alex, van Vrede, Havenga & Visagie, 2013). Females also demonstrate a more integrating and collaborative style than males (Linde *et al.*, 2013). Keeping the arguments above in mind, the study will move on to investigate levels of work-related wellbeing (e.g. burnout or engagement) for employees within higher education.

Burnout

Burnout refers to a state of "prolonged job stress when the individual's psychological resources are exhausted" (Mashlach & Schaufeli, 1993, p. 9). Burnout consists of two dimensions and can be defined as an individual who experiences exhaustion and disengagement from work (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). Disengagement is described as "distancing oneself from one's work and experiencing negative attitudes toward the work object, work content, or one's

work in general” (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2003, p. 14). Exhaustion is generic and refers to “general feelings of emptiness, overtaxing from work, a strong need for rest, and a state of physical exhaustion” (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003, p. 17).

Engagement

Engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Vigour is explained in terms of an individual demonstrating “high levels of energy and mental resilience” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Furthermore, this mind-set can be viewed as the enthusiasm willing to put extra effort into one’s work even during difficult times (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Dedication is described as “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspirations, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 259). Lastly, absorption can be described as being involved in one’s work to such an extent that one cannot detach oneself from the tasks. It also means enjoying one’s work and the time spent at work, which is perceived to pass quickly (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The literature reports a vast amount of research on the effects that certain styles of conflict management have on burnout, but limited research has been done on the effect certain styles have on engagement. Engagement is seen as the positive antipode of burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate this relationship. Prior research found that a compromising and integrating style of conflict management increases job satisfaction (Wright, 2011). Hence there may be a potential that these styles may also increase engagement among employees. It is also generally accepted that conflict can be both positive and negative (e.g., Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006). In light of this fact, the management and styles of conflict may also have both positive and negative effect on an employee’s work-related wellbeing.

To summarise, academic personnel and support staff have to work together and form relationships to create a healthy and supportive working environment. Unfortunately, mutually different perceptions of both academic personnel and support staff might lead to conflict within this interpersonal relationship (Pitman, 2000). This conflict has to be managed as it may impact

negatively on the employees' work-related wellbeing (Giebels & Janssen, 2005). This conflict may also hold negative consequences for the organisation, as indicated – high turnover rates and absenteeism (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005). The way in which this conflict can be managed is by investigating the styles of conflict management which the employees demonstrate within that particular institution of higher education. Each conflict management style may have a different effect on an employee's work-related wellbeing as prior research did prove (Wright, 2011). It is important to understand that some styles, such as integrating and compromising, may lead to burnout (Wright, 2011).

Individuals favour different styles to manage conflict, but they can change the particular style to fit the context (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu *et al.*, 2004). It is, therefore, of the utmost importance for the individual and the organisation to be aware of the different styles by which employees deal with conflict and the effect it may have on individual employee's work-related wellbeing. This knowledge will help to design and develop appropriate and effective interventions. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to assess the difference between the particular mentioned styles and its effect on the work-related wellbeing of both academic personnel and support staff of a South African higher education institution.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions helped to guide the present study.

- How is the relationship between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement conceptualised according to the literature?
- Is there a relationship between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement among employees working within a higher education institution?
- Will conflict management styles predict the work-related wellbeing of employees working within a higher education institution?
- How do conflict management styles differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution?
- How do burnout and engagement differ between the academic personnel and support staff

within a higher education institution?

- What recommendations can be made for future research and practice?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are divided into a general objective and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this research was to assess the relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in a higher education institution in South Africa.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

This general objective of this research fans out into specific objectives:

- To determine how the relationship between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement are conceptualised according to the literature.
- To determine the relationship between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement among employees working within a higher education institution.
- To determine whether conflict management styles predict the work-related wellbeing of employees working within a higher education institution.
- To determine how conflict management styles differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution.
- To determine how burnout and engagement differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution.
- To provide recommendations for future research and practice.

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses as stated below were put forward for the present research as they relate to the research questions.

H1: There is a positive relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing among employees working within a higher education institution.

H2: Conflict management styles predict work-related wellbeing among employees working within a higher education institution.

H3: There is a significant difference in terms of conflict management styles between academic personnel and support staff working within a higher education institution.

H4: There is a significant difference in terms of work-related wellbeing between academic personnel and support staff working in a higher education institution.

1.5 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The results obtained from the research are presented in the form of a research article.

1.5.1 Research approach

A quantitative research approach has been employed for the present study. Struwig and Stead (2001) explains quantitative research as a method of conclusive research in which certain hypotheses are tested regarding the causality of relationships in large representative samples. Furthermore, quantitative research is the best approach for the study as it uses structured methods of data collection, and also aims to generalise the results obtained from the study for all higher education institutions in South Africa (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Additionally, a cross-sectional research design is used to collect data from the sample and to achieve the research goals. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2011) describe a cross-sectional research design as

one in which multiple groups are studied simultaneously. This research design is used when the researcher seeks knowledge about whether a certain problem exists within a community and to what extent this problem may influence the community (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, the cross-sectional research design has the advantage that it is convenient and less costly and, therefore, is the most applicable one for the present study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

1.5.2 Literature review

A complete and scientific literature review was carried out by extensively researching the constructs of the study. The construct entails the following aspects: conflict management styles, (including: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising) and work-related wellbeing, consisting of both burnout and engagement. Other key words (e.g. academics, academia, academic personnel, support staff, administrative staff, general staff, university, work-related wellbeing and higher education institutions) are also used to research the setting and context in which the study took place (e.g. universities, higher education, academics, and support staff). The resources used to conduct the extensive literature review comprise the internet, specifically databases such as EBSCO host, GoogleScholar, JSTOR, Juta, SAePublications, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Sabinet References. Relevant additional, text books as well as scientific and accredited articles were also used.

1.5.3 Research participants and procedure

A total of 381 employees were targeted who work within a higher education institution. The participants to the study can be specified as 180 academic personnel members and 201 support staff who are employed within a higher education institution. For the purpose of the research design a combination of purposive and convenient non-probability sampling was used. The reason for this research design was that the research targeted those employees who were conveniently available, particularly the academic personnel and support staff (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, the researcher chose the sample according to specific attributes displayed through own judgement (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Regarding the procedure of the study, permission

was first obtained from the research ethics committee of the higher education institution. Booklets consisting of the relevant information for the study were compiled in a professional manner. The information included in the booklet focused on the purpose of the study, an informed consent letter, the aim of the measuring instruments, the measuring instruments as well as the time available to complete the booklet. A cover letter was written in which the aim of the study was explained and the instructions provided, accompanied by a note of appreciation.

Fieldworkers have approached the academic personnel and support staff and explained the aim of the research project, the possible advantages for each participant, as well as the length of the booklet. After the participants agreed to partake in the study, the fieldworkers requested each participant to sign an informed consent form and the booklets were handed out to them. All participants were informed of the timeframe to complete the booklet. After the researcher collected the booklets the data was uploaded onto the system and thereafter the statistical data analysis was initiated.

1.5.4 Measuring instruments

For the purpose of the present study, various measuring instruments were employed, as explicated below.

Biographic characteristics

For the research a biographic questionnaire was provided to obtain specific information about the participant's characteristics. The questionnaire included specific questions about the participants' gender, race and position.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II)

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) was used to measure styles of conflict management which the various employees favoured (Rahim, 1983). The ROCI-II was developed especially to measure the amount of interpersonal conflict on three different levels (i.e., superiors, subordinates, and peers), as well as the five conflict management styles, namely: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). The

ROCI-II consists of 28 items, which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*) (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Examples of each style is provided: Avoiding (6 items): “*I attempt to avoid being put on the spot*” and “*try to keep my conflict with my peers to myself*”; Dominating (5 items): “*I use my influence to get my ideas accepted*”; Obliging (6 items): “*I generally try to satisfy the needs of peers*”; Compromising (4 items): “*I win some and I lose some*”; and Integrating (7 items): “*I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way*”.

The ROCII-II was proven to be both reliable and valid. Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from 0.72 to 0.77. As can be seen this measurement compares favourably with other existing instruments and is within the acceptable range (Rahim, 1983). Rahim and Psenicka (2002), in comparing different countries including South Africa, found that the instrument also tested reliable with Cronbach alpha coefficients for South Africa, ranging from 0.79 to 0.87. In addition, Havenga (2008) found reliable Cronbach alphas for the ROCI-II in South Africa, which ranged from 0.65 to 0.83.

Burnout

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003) is applied to determine the participant’s burnout level. According to the OLBI, burnout is measured in terms of two scales, namely exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). Exhaustion refers to the “general feeling of emptiness, overtaxing from work, a strong need for rest, and state of physical exhaustion” and consists of six items (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). An example of an exhaustion item in the OLBI include: “*After my work, I regularly feel worn out and weary*” (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). Disengagement refers to “distancing oneself from the object and the content of one’s work and to negative, cynical attitudes and behaviours towards one’s work in general” and consists of seven items (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). An example of a disengagement item is: “*I frequently talk about my work in a negative way*” (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). The OLBI consists of 16 items that are measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). The OLBI was shown to be valid and reliable with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.83 (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003).

Engagement

For the measurement of engagement, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is used (Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002). This measurement consists of 17 items including three subscales, namely: vigour (6 items), dedication (5 items), and absorption (6 items) (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). Vigour refers to “high levels of energy and mental resilience” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). An example of a vigour item in the UWES is: “*At my work, I feel bursting with energy*” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). Dedication is described as “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspirations, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 259). An example of a dedication item is: “*I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose*” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). The third subscale, absorption, refers to being involved in one’s work to such an extent that one cannot detach oneself from the task at hand (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). An example of an absorption item is: “*Time flies when I am working*” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). The UWES is scored on a seven-point frequency scale, varying from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*) (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). Schaufeli *et al.* (2006) reports Cronbach alphas for the UWES, ranging from between 0.85 and 0.92. In addition, Mostert (2002) found reliable Cronbach alpha coefficients in South Africa ranging between 0.78 and 0.89. Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) also found reliable Cronbach alpha coefficients in a South African context ranging between 0.67 and 0.85.

1.5.5 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis is carried out with the SPSS program version 20 (SPSS Inc., 2014). Firstly, a preliminary analysis is done on the data by applying exploratory factor analysis and frequency analysis. Exploratory factor analysis is employed to assess the validity of the instruments. This form of analysis implies a technique in which the original variables are considered to be indicators of latent dimensions (Blungh, 2008). Exploratory factor analysis entails analysing principle components and is less complicated to use. Principle-component analysis explores the number of constructs that are extracted in a decreasing order of the variance (Blungh, 2008). The maximum likelihood extraction method is used to extract the constructs that has the largest probability of constructing the covariance matrix (Blungh, 2008). Direct oblimin

rotation is used to evaluate the correlation between items and loadings of items.

After the analysis of construct validity, the characteristics of participants are assessed by a frequency analysis of the biographical information. This analysis is followed by employing descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) and inferential statistics (correlations, multiple regression analysis, MANOVA) to assess the data further. The descriptive statistics focuses on the distribution of the sample through numerical data in order to interpret the results systematically (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The purpose of the descriptive statistics is to provide totality of the information regarding the distributions' specific features of the data (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The reliability of the constructs is determined by Cronbach alpha coefficients, which range between 0 and 1. The Cronbach alpha coefficients with the minimum value of 0.70 are regarded as reliable values, and any value higher is regarded as highly reliable, therefore, a cut-off point of 0.70 is used (Pallant, 2010; Pevalin & Robson, 2009).

Product-moment correlations are used to investigate and determine the relationship between the different styles of conflict management, as well as the burnout and engagement levels of both academics and support staff. The product moment correlations indicate how strongly the constructs relate and the direction of the relationships. The research explored the statistical and practical significance of the correlations. The statistical significance is investigated in terms of a 95% confidence scale indicating values above 0.05. The practical significance is investigated in terms of a medium effect (ranging between 0.30 and 0.49), or a large effect (ranging between 0.50 and above). Pallant (2010) explained that positive and negative relationships may exist in correlations, which indicate the direction of the relationships between constructs. A negative correlation between constructs indicates that, as the one variable increases, a definite decrease can be identified in the other variable (Pallant, 2010). If a positive relationship exists between two variables this implies: an increase in the one variable would lead to an increase in the other variable as well (Pallant, 2010). For the purpose of the present study, particular attention was given to the direction and strength of the correlation to investigate whether there are a small ($R=0.10$ to 0.29), medium ($R=0.30$ to 0.49) or large ($R=0.50$ to 1.00) effect that could be pointed out (Pallant, 2010). In addition, correlations can range between -1.00 to 1.00 (Pallant, 2010). A correlation with the value of 0 indicates that no relationship exists between the variable, whereas

a value of 1 indicates that these variables have a perfect relationship (Pallant, 2010). Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficients are used if the data are distributed normally, however if that is not the case, the Spearman's rho is used to assess the relationships.

Multiple regression analysis is used to investigate the predictions and effects of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2013). Multiple regressions are used to evaluate each independent variable's predictive power. The independent variable include the different styles of conflict management (i.e., integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising), and the dependent variables include burnout (i.e., exhaustion and disengagement) and engagement (i.e., vigour, dedication and absorption). Thus, the analysis assesses the total variance that is explained by the independent variable with regard to the dependent variable. Multiple regression as a system of data analysis can be used in a variety ways, for instance to make predictions and determine the main effects (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). This is a technique favoured in many behavioural sciences to test hypotheses (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to explain the amount of variance accounted for in the relationships between the different constructs (Salkind, 2010). The multiple correlation value (R) is used to identify the association between the dependent variable and the independent variable (Cohen *et al.*, 2013).

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAS) is conducted during the statistical analysis to determine whether there are discernible differences in the conflict management styles and levels of work-related wellbeing between support staff and academic personnel . This analysis technique is effective as the researcher can establish whether there are significant differences between groups (e.g. academic personnel and support staff), and furthermore, it provides the researcher with univariate results for each of the dependent variables (Pallant, 2010). MANOVAS, also compares groups and "tells the researcher whether the mean differences between the groups on the combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance" (Pallant, 2010, p. 283).

In addition, Wilks' Lambda is used when investigating the level of significance (Pallant, 2010). If the level is shown to be 0.05 and less then it is clear that differences do exist between the

groups (Pallant, 2010). Regarding the MANOVAS report on the overall differences between the academic personnel and the support staff, when an effect is significant in MANOVAS, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to discover which dependent variables have been affected. Multiple ANOVAs are used and, therefore, a Bonferroni- type adjustment is made for an inflated type 1 error. The Games-Howell procedure is used to determine whether there are statistical differences between the groups (Pallant, 2010).

1.5.6 Ethical considerations

For the purpose of the current study, the researcher adhered to certain ethical aspects to ensure that fair research principles were followed. These aspects include the following: avoiding harm, voluntary participation, informed consent and autonomy (Salkind, 2010); also no violation of privacy, and confidentiality (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, according to Struwig and Stead (2001), ethics requires of researchers to be competent, show integrity and accept responsibility for their actions. Therefore, in the present study the researcher adhered to the following guidelines:

- Ensured that the participants were not harmed in any way.
- Made sure that all the participants understood that participating in the study is voluntary.
- Obtained informed consent from the participants concerned before collecting the data. This action is extremely important, seeing that it is considered part of on-going communication between the participants and the researcher (Salkind, 2010).
- Took care that the data gathered stay anonymous and that no participant's name was mentioned anywhere in the research. The result obtained from the present study was kept confidential and locked away securely.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This mini-dissertation is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the problem statement is posited and the research design set out. The second chapter is presented in the form of a research article containing the findings of the research objectives. Lastly, the third chapter draws

conclusions from the findings, states the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for further studies and the practical applications for organisations.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the problem statement was discussed and the general objective and specific objectives were outlined. The research method, measuring instruments and statistical analyses were explained. An overview of the chapters to follow was provided as well as a summary of each individual chapter.

REFERENCES

- Barkhuizen, N., & Rothmann, S. (2006). Work engagement of academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *Management Dynamics: Journal of the Southern African Institute for Management Scientists*, 15(1), 38-46.
- Barkhuizen, N., & Rothmann, S. (2008). Occupational stress of academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 38(2), 321-336. doi:10.1177/008124630803800205
- Beebe, R. S. (2007). Predicting burnout, conflict management style, and turnover among clergy. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 15(2), 257-275. doi:10.1177/1069072706298157
- Bezuidenhout, A., & Cilliers, F. V. N. (2010). Burnout, work engagement and sense of coherence in female academics in higher-education institutions in South Africa. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1), 1-10. doi:10.4102/sajip.v36i1.872
- Bilge, F. (2006). Examining the burnout of academics in relation to job satisfaction and other factors. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 34(9), 1151-1160. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2006.34.9.1151>
- Bloedon, R. V., & Stokes, D. R. (1994). Making university/industry collaborative research succeed. *Research Technology Management*, 37(2), 44.
- Blungh, N. J. (2008). *Introduction to Structural Equation modelling using SPSS and AMOS*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Boyd, C. M., Bakker, A. B., Pignata, S., Winefield, A. H., Gillepsie, N., & Stough, C. (2011). A longitudinal test of the job demand- resource model among Australian university academics. *Applied Psychology*, 60(1), 112-140. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2010.00429.x
- Chung-Yan, G. A., & Moeller, C. (2010). The psychosocial costs of conflict management styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 21(4), 382-399. doi:10.1108/10444061011079930
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2013). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis of the behavioural sciences* (3rd ed.). Hoboken: Taylor & Francis.
- Corral, S. (1995). Academic libraries in the information society. *New Library World*, 96(1120), 35-42. doi:10.1108/03074809510085316
- Cross, M., Mungadi, R., & Rouhani, S. (2002). From policy to practice: Curriculum reform in

- South African education. *Comparative Education*, 38(2), 171-187.
doi:10.1080/03050060220140566
- De Dreu, C. K. W., & Beersma, B. (2005). Conflict in organizations: Beyond effectiveness and performance. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 14(2), 105-117, doi:10.1080/13594320444000227
- De Dreu, C. K. W., Van Dierendonck, D., & Dijkstra, M. T. M. (2004). Conflict at work and individual well-being. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 15(1), 6-26. doi:10.1108/eb022905.
- De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (2011). *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.) Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Vardakou, L., & Kantas, A. (2003). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 19(1), 12-23. doi:10.1027//1015-5759.19.1.12
- Dixit, M., & Mallik, D. (2008). Assessing suitability of Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II in Indian family-owned-and-managed businesses. *International Journal of Business Insights and Transformation*, 2, 28-38. Retrieved from <http://www.ijbit.org>
- Du Plessis, T. (2005). From monolingual to bilingual higher education: The repositioning of historically Afrikaans medium universities in South Africa. *Language Policy*, 5, 87-113. doi:10.1007/s10993-005-5627-5
- Du Toit, A. (2000). Critic and citizen: The Intellectual, transformation and academic freedom. *Literary and Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 91-104. doi:10.1080/713692703
- Ensor, P. (2004). Contesting discourses in higher education curriculum restructuring in South Africa. *Higher education*, 48, 339-359. doi:10.1023/B:HIGH.0000035544.96309.f1
- Fourie, M. (1999). Institutional transformation at South African universities: Implications for academic staff. *Higher Education*, 38, 275-290. doi:10.1023/A:1003768229291
- Friedman, R. A., Tidd, S. T., Currall, S. C., & Tsai, J. C. (2000). What goes around comes around: The impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(1), 32-55.
- Gibson, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P., & Trow, M. (1994). *The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: SAGE.

- Giebels, E., & Janssen, O. (2005). Conflict stress and reduced well-being at work: The buffering effect of third-party help. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 14*(2), 137-155. doi:10.1080/13594320444000236
- Gillespie, N. A., Walsh, M., Winefield, A. H., Due, J., & Stough, C. (2001). Occupational stress in universities: Staff perceptions of the causes, consequences and moderators of stress, work & stress. *An International Journal of Work, Health and Organisations, 15*(1), 53-72. doi:10.1080/02678370110062449
- Halbesleben, J. R. B., & Demerouti, E. (2005). The construct validity of an alternative measure of burnout: Investigating the English translation of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. *An International Journal of Work, Health and Stress, 19*(3), 208-220. doi:10.1080/02678370500340728
- Havenga, W. (2008). Gender and age differences in conflict management within small businesses. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management, 6*(1), 22-28. Retrieved from <http://www.sajhrm.co.za>
- Ho, D. Y. F. (1998). Interpersonal relationships and relationship dominance: An analysis based on methodological relationalism. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 1*, 1-16. doi:10.1111/1467-839X.00002
- Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: A correspondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Educational Management, 15*(6), 276-282. doi:10.1108/09513540110401484
- Jackson, L. T. B., Rothmann, S., & Van de Vijver, F. J. R. (2006). A model of work-related well-being for educators in South Africa. *Stress and Health, 22*, 263-247. doi:10.1002/smi.1098
- Jehn, K. A. (1995). A multimethod examination of the benefits and determinants of intragroup conflict. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 40*(2), 256-282. doi:10.2307/2393638
- Jehn, K. A., Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (1999). Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict, and performance in workgroups. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*, 741-763. doi:10.2307/2667054
- Kaushal, R., & Kwantes, C. T. (2006). The role of culture and personality in choice of conflict management strategy. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30*, 579-603. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.01.001

- Koskinen, K. U., & Vanharanta, H. (2002). The role of tacit knowledge in innovation processes of small technology companies. *International Journal of Production Economics*, *80*(1), 57-64.
- Linde, H., Alex, R., van Vrede, F., Havenga, W., & Visagie, J. C. (2013). A theoretical and empirical analysis of gender within the African business environment. *Managing Global Transitions*, *11*(1), 41-60.
- Maslach, C., & Schaufeli, W. B. (1993) Historical and conceptual development of burnout. *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research*, 1-16.
- Mostert, K. (2002). *Burnout and engagement in the South African police service* (Unpublished Doctoral thesis). North West University, Potchefstroom.
- Optlatka, I. (2009). Marketing the university: The subjective perceptions of Israeli academics of their role in attracting new students to their institution. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *31*(3), 207-217. doi:10.1080/13600800902974286
- Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS* (4th ed.) Chicago, IL: Open University Press.
- Pevalin, D., & Robson, K. (2009). *The stata survival manual*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Pitman, T. (2000). Perceptions of academics and students as customers: A survey of administrative staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *22*(2), 165-175. doi:10.1080/713678138
- Rahim, M. A. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, *26*(2), 368-376. doi:10.2307/255985
- Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing conflict in organisations* (4th ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Rahim, M. A., & Magner, N. R. (1995). Confirmatory factor analysis of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: First order factor model and its invariances across groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *80*(1), 122-132. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.80.1.122
- Rahim, M. A., & Psenicka, C. (2002). A model of emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies: A study in seven countries. *The International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, *10*(4), 302-326. doi:10.1108/eb028955
- Rothmann, S., & Jordaan, G. M. E. (2006). Job demands, job resources and work engagement of

- academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 32(4), 87-96. Retrieved from http://reference.sabinet.co.za/nwulib.nwu.ac.za/sa_epublication_article/psyc_v32_n4_a12
- Rothmann, S., & Rothmann, S. (2010). Factors associated with employee engagement in South Africa. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(2), 1-12. doi:10.4102/sajip.v36i2.925
- Salkind, N. J. (2010). *Encyclopaedia of research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 25, 293-315. doi:10.1002/job.248.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701-716. doi:10.1177/0013164405282471
- Schaufeli, W. B., Martinez, I. M., Pinto, A. M., Salanova, M., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). Burnout and engagement in University students: A cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 33(5), 464-481. doi:10.1177/0022022102033005003
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness studies*, 3(1), 71-92. doi: 10.1023/A:1015630930326
- SPSS Inc. (2014). *IBM SPSS 20.0 for Windows*. Chicago, IL: SPSS.
- Struwig, F. W., & Stead, G. B. (2001). *Planning, designing and reporting research*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Thomas, M. (2004). Bullying among support staff in a higher education institution. *Health Education*, 105(4), 273-288. doi:10.1108/09654280510602499
- Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webba, C., Cooper, C. L., & Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK higher education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research & Development* 24(1), 41-61. doi:10.1080/0729436052000318569
- University of California. (2014). *General university policy regarding academic appointees: Academic personnel definitions*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programmes/files/apm/apm-110.pdf>
- Vokic, N. P., & Sontor, S. (2009). Conflict management styles in Croatian enterprises-the

- relationship between individual characteristics and conflict handling styles. *FEB Working Series (Paper No. 09-05), Faculty of Economics and Business-Zagreb.*
- Waghind, Y. (2002). Knowledge production and higher education transformation in South Africa: Towards reflexivity in university teaching, research and community service. *Higher Education* 43(4), 457-488. doi:10.1023/A:1015211718131
- Winefield, A. H., Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., Hapuarachchi, J., & Boyd, C. (2003). Occupational stress in Australian university staff: Results from a national survey. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10(1), 51-63. doi:10.1037/1072-5245.10.1.51
- Winter, R. (2009). Academic manager or managed academic? Academic identity schisms in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 31(2), 121-131. doi:10.1080/13600800902825835
- Wright, K. B. (2011). A communication competence approach to healthcare worker conflict, job stress, job burnout, and job satisfaction. *Journal for Healthcare Quality*, 33(2), 7-14. doi:10.1111/j.1945-1474.2010.00094.x

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AND WORK-RELATED WELLBEING OF EMPLOYEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Abstract

Orientation: Both academic personnel and support staff play a vital role in the development of South Africa. However, there exist certain barriers in the interpersonal relationship between the mentioned groups. Therefore, it is important to create an awareness of conflict management styles, in order to deal effectively with conflict. There is a lack of research on the impact that conflict management styles have on academic personnel and support staff's work-related wellbeing; hence it is important to assess these relationships.

Research purpose: The objective of the present study was to assess the relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in a higher education institution in South Africa, and to draw a comparison between academic personnel and support staff with regard to their conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing.

Motivation for the study: By the assessment and comparison stated above, the present study will add to current literature on the topic. It will also help higher education institutions develop effective interventions to improve the conflict management styles of their employees, which will ultimately have an effect on the latter's work-related wellbeing.

Research design, approach and method: A cross-sectional research design was used on a sample consisting of academic personnel ($N = 180$) and support staff ($N = 201$) in South Africa. The following methods were employed to analyse the data: exploratory factor analysis, descriptive statistics (i.e. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) and inferential statistics (i.e. correlations, multiple regression analysis, MANOVA). Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to determine the reliability of the study.

Main findings: A relationship was established between conflict management styles (dominating, avoiding and compromising) and work-related wellbeing. More specifically, the compromising styles indicated a significant positive relationship with disengagement, and a significant negative relationship with engagement. Moreover, the conflict management style of avoidance is statistically and practically significantly related in a negative way to exhaustion, and positively

related to disengagement. The conflict management style of compromise is predictive of both engagement and disengagement. The conflict management style of avoidance is predictive of exhaustion. A significant difference was pointed out regarding how academic personnel and support staff respectively use the applicable conflict management styles. It was found that support staff use the dominating and compromising conflict management style to a greater extent, as compared to academic personnel's use. The findings showed that no significant differences exist between academic personnel and support staff regarding their work-related wellbeing.

Practical/managerial Implications: The results provide more insight into the existing conflict management styles in a higher education institution and its impact on work-related wellbeing. Management of higher education institutions will be able to create effective interventions to manage conflict and its impact on academic personnel and support staff's work-related wellbeing.

Contribution: The study contributes to the literature on conflict and work-related wellbeing, seeing that this is the first study to date on the topic to assess the impact of different conflict management style on work-related wellbeing, with particular reference to academic personnel and support staff within a South African higher education institution. In addition, the current study contributes to literature by comparing academic personnel and support staff based on their conflict management styles and their work-related wellbeing.

Keywords: Conflict management styles, work-related wellbeing, burnout, engagement, academic personnel, support staff, higher education institutions.

Introduction

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in South Africa as it adds to the economic and social development by producing information and thereby transferring academic research into tacit knowledge (Ensor, 2004; Gibson *et al.*, 1994; Koskinen & Vanharatan, 2002; Oplatka, 2009; Pusser, Kempner, Marginson, & Ordorika, 2012; Waghind, 2002; Winter, 2009). Higher education institutions undergo numerous challenges and form an integral part of education within the South African context. These challenges include reduced subsidies, political transformation, restructuring of curriculums, incorporating different languages and shifting the research focus to specific developmental needs (Corrall, 1995; Du Plessis, 2005; Fourie, 1999; Zusman, 2005). Therefore, it is important that these institutions keep abreast with the contemporary developments in the economic and social environment, in order to be sustainable and remain competitive (Hay & Fourie, 2002; Muller-Camen & Salzgeber, 2005). Higher education personnel contribute to the sustainability of these institutions by the task and goals they have to accomplish in their ever-changing roles and their environment (Ensor, 2004; Waghind, 2002). This in turn can lead to the danger that support staff members only recognise the culture of the higher education institution after conflict has taken place (Tierney, 1988).

To achieve sustainability and reach the goals set, higher education institutions have both academic personnel and support staff appointed working together (Pitman, 2000). Academic personnel can be described as individuals who are involved in activities such as research, education and by providing the function of research as public service to the community (University of California, 2014). Support staff, on the other hand, is defined as “clerical, secretarial”, general staff and administrative personnel and furthermore as “non-academic staff employed within the higher education sector; including staff in academic support, administrative support, and technical areas” (Pitman, 2000; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007, p. 136; Thomas, 2004, p. 276).

Both academic personnel and support staff have a unique role in the economic and social development of South Africa, through education and development since 2004 (Ensor, 2004). It is essential that academic personnel and support staff create and maintain sound interpersonal

relationships in order to reach departmental goals collectively (Pitman, 2000). However, this might become a challenge as Maintaining a beneficial interpersonal relationship might be difficult for staff due to constantly changing roles, multiple contexts in which they work and the various challenges that the environment of higher education holds (McAlpine & Akerlind, 2010; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi & Boyd, 2003). The interpersonal relationships between academic personnel and support staff can at times be strenuous due to different perceptions and understanding of each other's work (Pitman, 2000).

Because of the mentioned difficulties, the interpersonal relationships may lead to conflict between individuals and groups and therefor the outcome might be the same for the academic personnel and the support staff (Rahim, 2011; Rahim, 2015). Conflict can be viewed as a social concept used worldwide to describe strains on a relationship between group members (Jehn, 1995; Rahim, 2015). Investigating conflict can be an extremely sensitive topic as it describes a state of a discrepancy, dissimilarities or incompatibility. Conflict can also be functional and dysfunctional since it is dynamic in nature (Nauta & Kluwer, 2004; Rahim, 2011). Although conflict is a sensitive topic it is of the utmost importance to study the phenomenon. This is because conflict is not only dysfunctional but can also be viewed as functional for both the individual and the organisation (Rahim, 2011).

Functional conflict has a positive effect by adding to the organisation's productivity, stimulates performance for individuals and groups, assists in solving problems and helps find alternative solutions (Rahim, 2011). The most profound research on conflict and conflict management styles are conducted by Rahim and Rahim in his series of articles on conflict. In this sense, functional conflict improves decision-making and inspires innovation and change in organisations (Rahim, 2002, Rahim, 2011, Rahim, 2015). Conflict can and must be managed by considering both its positive and negatives dimensions (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Due & Stough, 2001; Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Rahim, 2011). The most effective way to manage conflict is by investigating the styles that individuals employ to manage conflict themselves (Rahim, 2011). Conflict management styles refer to the way in which an individual handles and copes with conflict in a specific situation, and that style can be integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 2002; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Conflict management styles have been researched thoroughly over the years (e.g. Euwema, Van de Vliert & Bakker, 2003; Havenga, 2006; Havenga & Visagie, 2006; Meyer, 2004; Pines *et al.*, 2011; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). Conflict in its broader sense has been investigated in higher education institutions but no comparison has been made between the academic personnel and support staff in this regard (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Kerr, 1990). In addition, gaps in literature exists in higher education institutions with regard to the conflict experienced by academic personnel and support staff respectively as well as the comparison of the different conflict management styles between the groups.

Researchers found that it is imperative to investigate the styles used for conflict management (Nauta & Kluwer, 2004; Rahim, 2002). Investigating these styles and applying the appropriate ones in an organisation will help the organisation to operate more effectively (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). Not only will it benefit the organisation but the individual may also experience positive consequences (e.g. confidence and sense of accomplishment) associated with their work-related wellbeing (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010). If the conflict is not dealt with, then individuals may experience negative consequences (e.g. burnout and psychological strain/stress) associated with work-related wellbeing (Friedman, Tidd, Currall & Tsai, 2000; Nauta & Kluwer, 2004; Wright, 2011).

Work-related wellbeing is a concept that has been studied to a great extent over the years but have no clear definition (Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern & Seligman, 2011). Researchers, however, did find that work-related wellbeing as a concept can be characterised by particular variables such as job satisfaction, occupational stress, burnout and engagement (Rothmann, 2008). Several studies have been undertaken on higher education employees' experience of work-related wellbeing, particularly with the focus on burnout and engagement (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Blinge, 2006; Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008, Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Tytherleigh, Webba, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005; Winefield *et al.*, 2003). However, limited research was done to date on the comparison of work-related wellbeing (e.g. burnout and engagement) between academic personnel and support staff. Therefore, research based on this aspect is imperative, seeing that academic personnel and support staff have to work together to reach a faculty's goals (Ensor, 2004; Pitman, 2000).

Burnout consists of two dimensions (exhaustion and disengagement) and entails a negative psychological state in which individuals' psychological resources are drained, causing continuous stress (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005; Mashlach & Schaufeli, 1993; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Another study conducted by Dutch employees, found that burnout comprises of exhaustion and disengagement as constructs of burnout (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008). Similarly, a two-factor structure on burnout has also been found within the South African context where exhaustion and disengagement forms the constructs of burnout (Lekutle & Nel, 2014). *Exhaustion* is a broad term that refers to “general feelings of emptiness, overtaxing from work, a strong need for rest, and a state of physical exhaustion” (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2003, p. 17). *Disengagement* can be described as a condition in which individuals has a strong negative attitude towards their overall work and completely distance themselves from that work (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003).

Engagement manifests three distinct aspects – vigour, dedication, and absorption – and can be defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Vigour can be described as having “high levels of energy and mental resilience” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). In addition, vigour can also be described as having enthusiasm and working even harder when the work presents difficult situations (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Dedication can be defined as “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspirations, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 259). Absorption is defined as “being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work”(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 259). Literature reports on some studies undertaken on the effects that conflict management exerts on burnout, but there is a lack of research covering its effects on engagement (Wright, 2011; Friedman *et al.*, 2000).

Seeing that engagement is seen as the positive antipode of burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006), it seems necessary to investigate this relationship. Additionally, Demerouti, Mostert and Bakker (2010) examined whether engagement and burnout are in essence inverse of each other and found through a comprehensive study that there is no simple answer to see whether these wellbeing constructs are inverse. It was found in this study that disengagement and

dedication are in fact the counter constructs of each other however exhaustion and vigour are not necessarily opposite but rather two distinct domains yet decidedly related (Demerouti, Mostert & Bakker, 2010). Since previous research found that a compromising and integrating conflict management style increases job satisfaction (Wright, 2011), such styles may also have the potential to increase engagement among employees. In addition, conflict can be both positive and negative (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006), therefore, the management and styles of conflict may also have both positive and negative effects on employees' work-related wellbeing. This makes it necessary to investigate the effect that each conflict management style may exert on an individual's work-related wellbeing within the designated groups.

Research purpose and objectives

In light of the discussion above, the purpose of the current study was to 1) assess the relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in a higher education institution in South Africa; and 2) determine the differences in conflict management styles and experience of work-related wellbeing in particular between academic personnel and support staff working in such an institution.

Contribution to the field

The present study contributes to the limited research done on the difference in conflict management styles between academic personnel and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa. In addition, the study adds to the literature on work-related wellbeing by exploring the impact of conflict management styles on employees' burnout and engagement. Investigating the various relationships will enable higher education institutions to develop interventions as a means to deal with the impact of conflict management styles on the wellbeing of their employees as it relates to their working environment.

What will follow

Against the background mentioned above, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of employees in a specific higher education institution in South Africa. This is done by discussing the concepts of conflict and conflict management styles (i.e. Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising). This is followed by a review of relevant literature on the relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing. Furthermore, differences are pointed out between the styles that academic personnel and support staff use to manage conflict and create work-related wellbeing. In the process, hypotheses for the present study are provided.

Literature review

Conflict and conflict management styles

Conflict is inevitable as a universal theme prevalent both in organisations and in people's personal lives (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Vokic & Sontor, 2009). Conflict can be defined as “an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organisation, etc.)” (Rahim, 2002, p. 207).

Conflict occur when tensions surface in the relationship between different individuals; a condition that may evoke undesirable responses (Jehn, 1995; Rahim, 2015). Moreover, when conflict arises between two or more individuals in a relationship, this is known as interpersonal-relationship conflict (Ho, 1998). This type of conflict involves two or more employees from the same or different departments in a mutually negative interaction (Rahim, 2002; Rahim, 2015). Furthermore, conflict has a twofold nature: functional and dysfunctional (Rahim, 2011).

Functional conflict can be defined as being productive in nature, whereas dysfunctional conflict is counterproductive (Rahim, 2011; Rahim, 2015). Both the functional and dysfunctional forms of conflict hold certain consequences for both the organisation and the individual, and thus

influence the strategic decision-making process within an organisation (Amason, 1996; Rahim, 2011). Functional conflict is productive and leads to positive organisational outcomes (Rahim, 2011). These outcomes may include the following: advancing decision processes; proposing dynamic and alternative solutions; increasing overall performance; discovering new approaches; improving communication processes; and inspiring creativity and change (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Rahim, 2011; Rahim, 2015). On the other side of the scale, dysfunctional conflict has many negative outcomes (Rahim, 2011) and may be as follows: predictive of burnout, stress and job dissatisfaction; introduce certain barriers in communication channels; cause a climate of uncertainty and resistance to change; strain relationships; reduce job performance; and affect employees' commitment and loyalty toward the organisation (Rahim, 2015). Whether conflict is functional or dysfunctional, the main issue is still that it needs to be managed effectively (Rahim, 2011).

Conflict can be managed by diagnosis, intervention and by investigating the different styles an individual employs to deal with such mutually negative interaction (Rahim, 2002; Rahim, 2011; Rahim, 2015). Conflict management styles have been researched to a great extent over the years (Euwema *et al.*, 2003; Havenga, 2006; Havenga & Visagie, 2006; Meyer, 2004; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). It was found that the appropriate styles used in an organisation will help the organisation to operate effectively (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). These styles can be seen as the individual process and behaviour of handling tension in interpersonal relationships (Rahim, 2002).

Rahim (1983) developed the first two-dimensional model that depicts styles for the handling of interpersonal conflict. The model explains that an individual deals with conflict in terms of two dimensions, namely concern for others and concern for self (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Within these two dimensions an individual's concern for the self or for others, can be assessed by referring to high or low degrees (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). This framework provides five different styles to handle interpersonal conflict, as seen in Figure 1 below.

The first is the *integrating style* where the individual has a high degree of concern for the self and others (Rahim, 1983). Such a style may involve “openness, exchange of information, and

examination of differences to reach an effective solution” (Rahim & Magner, 1995, p. 123). This style, furthermore, relates to problem-solving that holds the best advantage for both parties. The second style is *obliging*, where the individual has a low concern for the self and a high concern for others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). When using this style, the individual will weigh up the differences, advantages, and commonalities, in order to grant the greater advantage to the other party involved in the conflict (Rahim & Magner, 1995). The third is called the *dominating style*, in which the individual has a high concern for the self and a low concern for others (Rahim, 1983). This style implies forcing behaviour aimed at winning the ‘contest’ and can be seen as a “win-lose orientation” (Rahim & Magner, 1995, p. 123). The fourth is the *avoiding style*, where the individual has a low concern for both the self and for others. This style is “associated with, withdrawing, buck-passing or side stepping situations” (Dixit & Mallik, 2008, p. 31). The fifth and final style is called the *compromising style*, where the individual has an “intermediate concern for both the self and others” (Dixit & Mallik, 2008, p. 31). This includes a “give-and-take” situation where both the parties cooperate, negotiate, and sacrifices something to make the best “mutually acceptable decision” (Rahim & Magner, 1995, p.123).

By understanding this two-dimensional model, as represented in Figure 1 below, it is also important to note that individuals may change their conflict-handling style over time to a style that suits them the most (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu, Van Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2004).

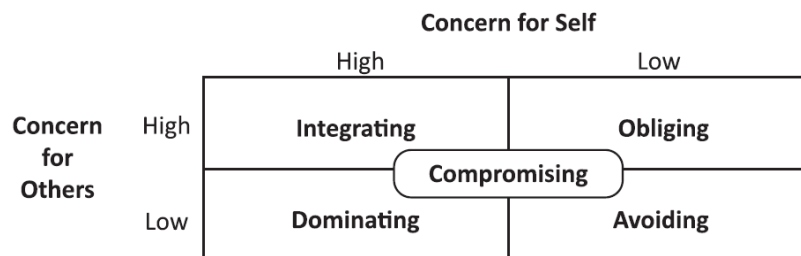


Figure 1: Two dimensional model of styles of handling interpersonal conflict

Source: (Rahim, 1983, p. 369)

For an effective measurement of Rahim’s five conflict management styles, Rahim’s organisational conflict inventory (ROCI-II) was developed in 1983 (Rahim, 1983). This

inventory is used to measure the five conflict management styles on three distinct levels: superiors, subordinates and peers; it also measures the amount of interpersonal-relationship conflict an individual experiences at work. In the present study the focus was only on peers since no literature could be found on the use of conflict management styles between academic personnel and support staff, particularly regarding peers.

Studies on conflict management styles among peers within the South African context in the public and private sector found that the obliging and dominating style was the most prominent in all the age groups (Havenga & Visagie, 2006). When conflict is experienced with peers, individuals mostly employ the integrating conflict management style (Havenga & Visagie, 2006). Furthermore, it was found that the more the integrating style is used, the less conflict the individual experiences (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). In addition, individuals who are younger are the less obliging. They are found to react towards conflict with peers and the older individuals and are more inclined to use the dominating style of conflict management with their peers (Havenga & Visagie, 2006). Moreover, research found that the more qualifications an individual has, the less the obliging style is used with peers. Nevertheless, individuals of advanced age and qualifications showed evidence of employing the obliging style (Havenga & Visagie, 2006).

After understanding the importance of managing conflict in an organisation by investigating conflict management styles, it is important to understand the impact of these styles on an organisation and an individual's work-related wellbeing (Friedman *et al.*, 2000; Wright, 2011). The reason is that these styles may lead to positive and negative outcomes for the organisation (e.g. burnout, engagement, job stress and increased absenteeism). It may also impact negatively on the individual's work-related wellbeing (e.g. engagement, burnout and psychological strain) (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010).

The relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing

Burnout is defined as a state of "prolonged job stress when the individual's psychological resources are exhausted" (Mashlach & Schaufeli, 1993, p. 9). According to the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), burnout consists of two dimensions, namely exhaustion and

disengagement (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008), and can be defined as an individual who experiences exhaustion and disengagement from work (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005).

Exhaustion is commonly referred to as “general feelings of emptiness, overtaxing from work, a strong need for rest, and a state of physical exhaustion” (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003, p. 17). Disengagement is defined as “distancing oneself from one’s work and experiencing negative attitudes toward the work object, work content, or one’s work in general” (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003, p. 14). Although limited literature exists on the effects of conflict management styles and the impact it has on burnout, it has been found that the integrating and compromising conflict management styles are predictive of lower levels of burnout and stress (Friedman *et al.*, 2000; Wright, 2011). In addition (as was pointed out previously), research found that the conflict management style of avoidance can cause increased levels of burnout (Friedman *et al.*, 2000; Wright, 2011).

Engagement is considered as the positive antipode or exact opposite of burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2001). Engagement has been formally defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Vigour, dedication and absorption are described as the three core dimensions of engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Vigour as the first dimension can be described in terms of an individual who experiences extreme energy levels and mental resilience at work (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The term denotes an individual’s extra efforts and inclination put into work even when encountering difficulties (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The second dimension, dedication, refers to “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspirations, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 259). The third dimension is absorption, which can be described as employees being involved in their work to such an extent that they are unable to detach them from these tasks and environment (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker,

2004). The term also implies employees enjoying their work and the time spent at work, which incidentally passes quickly for the individual (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

No research exists on the relationship between engagement and conflict management styles, although research shows that the integrating and compromising styles are predictive of increased job satisfaction. This indicates a positive side of conflict management styles' impact on work-related wellbeing (Friedman *et al.*, 2000; Wright, 2011). Therefore, it can be assumed that the mentioned styles may also impact on the dimension of engagement, seeing that it implies a positive state of work-related wellbeing.

Conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing: Differences among academic personnel and support staff

Higher education institutions contribute a total of 58% to the economy of South Africa (Pouris & Inglesi-Lotz, 2014). Therefore, the functioning of these institutions is of the utmost importance for the South African economy, seeing that it contributes to construction, expenditure and maintenance of knowledge (Pouris & Inglesi-Lotz, 2014). Higher education comprises both academic personnel and support staff who add to the social and economic development of South Africa as well (Ensor, 2004; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007). Academic personnel can be defined as staff allied with a higher education institution that mostly are involved in a collaboration of activities including; research, education, and public service with regards to the research function (University of California, 2014).

Academic personnel's environment can be characterised as highly stressful due to increased work demands over against insufficient resources to cope with these demands (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Tytherleigh *et al.*, 2005; Winefield *et al.*, 2003). Work demands particularly include the following activities: teaching the students, writing articles, dealing with the amount of articles that must be published annually, supervision, work pressure, extended working hours, strained working relationships, work-life imbalance, job insecurity, lack of resources and ineffective communication, as well as insufficient funding from government (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Tytherleigh *et al.*, 2005; Winefield *et al.*,

2003). Resources include the following: procedural fairness and autonomy, organisational support, opportunities for growth, advancement opportunities, social support, and flexitime for useful support (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Boyd *et al.*, 2011; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006).

Support staff, on the other hand, can be defined as “non-academic staff employed within the higher education sector; including staff in academic support, administrative support, and technical areas” (Rothmann & Essenko, 2007, p. 136). Support staff’s environment is similarly characterised as that of academic personnel, seeing that they too apply their skills in an exceedingly stressful environment. This is due to the multiple demands (e.g. lack of promotion, scant rewards and poor recognition) with which the support staff have to cope daily (Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Gillespie *et al.*, 2001).

As noted above, academic personnel and support staff’s work demands and work resources differ (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Pitman, 2000). Therefore, academic personnel and support staff might perceive each other and their job characteristics differently. Such perceptions may lead to tensions in their interpersonal relationships (Pitman, 2000). Evidence also shows that conflict with peers can be with work acquaintances (Laursen, 1993). Laursen (1993) examined the different conflict and conflict styles peers use in different peer relationships where the dominating styles was most use for the close peers. Research has established that, by utilising a specific and suitable conflict management style, interpersonal- relationship conflict can be resolved effectively (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu *et al.*, 2004; Rahim, 2011). There are no research to date on the comparison of academic personnel and support staff regarding their conflict management styles within the South African context. If conflict management styles are not investigated thoroughly and used optimally it may impact significantly on the work-related wellbeing of both academic personnel and support staff.

Studies conducted on higher education employees in South Africa with regard to their work-related wellbeing (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007) found that burnout levels of academic personnel differ according to their age (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008). Evidence shows that academic personnel and support staff experience high levels of exhaustion and burnout (Blingle, 2006; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Jackson, Rothmann & Van

de Vijver, 2006). In particular younger academic personnel experience much more exhaustion as compared to older personnel due to the involvement in teaching less rewarding classes for undergraduate students (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008). In addition, limited research conducted on support staff in South Africa has shown: the more they feel burned-out, the more prone they are to experience ill health (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). However, there still is a lack of research on the support staff regarding this matter, and particularly on their engagement levels (Pitman, 2000).

It is important to investigate both academic personnel and support staff in order to compare the two groups' conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing. The findings of such a comparative study will make the individual employees more aware of the styles they use to deal with conflict and work-related wellbeing. It also can be useful for higher education institutions and enable them to develop interventions to regulate and manage conflict productively, and thereby counter disruptive behaviour in the workplace (Rahim, 2011).

Proposed hypotheses

For the purpose of this study the following hypotheses were proposed and investigated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing among employees working within a higher education institution.

H2: Conflict management styles predict work-related wellbeing among employees working within a higher education institution.

H3: There is a significant difference in terms of conflict management styles between academic personnel and support staff working within a higher education institution.

H4: There is a significant difference in terms of work-related wellbeing between academic personnel and support staff working in a higher education institution.

Research design

The research approach and the research method that was employed are discussed below.

Research approach

The research approach employed in the present study is quantitative in nature, seeing that this is a form of conclusive research and aims to generalise results (Struwig & Stead, 2001). The quantitative research approach was chosen as the most applicable for the present research since this approach tests hypotheses and the causation of relationships in large representative samples (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Quantitative research also utilises structured data-collection methods, which makes it the ideal research approach (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Furthermore, a cross-sectional research design was used in the current study. This is a design in which several groups are studied at a single point in time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011). Through the design the researcher gains knowledge of a certain situation in the community and ascertains whether this is a problem. This provides the researcher insight into the extent of the problem and how it impacts the community (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Such a cross-sectional design also has the advantages that it is both convenient and less costly (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

Research method

Research participants

The participants to the present study's research comprised a total of 381 employees working in a higher education institution. More specifically, the research targeted a total of 180 academic personnel and 201 support staff in such an institution. A combined purposive and convenient non-probability sampling method was employed as the population sample greatly depended on the researcher's judgement of the specific characteristics of the sample (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Such a method was utilised since participants were easily accessible and the method has the advantage that the sample is very close to the real population (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Most of the participants were females (59.9%) and only 39.8% were males. The participants that were

included were White (57.3%), African (29.9%), Coloured (10.2%) and 2.1% were Indian. In total, 52.3% of the support staff participated in the study and 46.9% of the academic personnel at the institution.

Measuring instruments

The measuring instruments utilised in the empirical study are briefly expounded below.

Biographical characteristics

A biographical questionnaire was provided. The purpose was to gather detailed information on the participants' characteristics, which included their gender, race and position (as academic personnel or support staff) within the institution.

Engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was used to measure the employees' level of engagement (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). The UWES was shown to be reliable with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.85 and 0.92 (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). In addition, acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were also found in South African research on the topic ranging between 0.78 and 0.89 (Mostert, 2002). According to the UWES, engagement consists of three subscales (as was indicated previously), namely: vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006).

The three subscales comprised different items: vigour (6 items), dedication (5 items) and absorption (6 items). Exploratory factor analyses were conducted and it was found that the items only loaded on one factor, which was renamed as engagement only. The UWES consists of 17 items and are measured on a seven-point frequency scale, varying from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*) (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). Answering zero will be an indication that the participant never feels engaged where answering six, the participant will state that he/she experience engagement.

Burnout

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) was used to measure employees' burnout level (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). The OLBI was used, seeing that it showed acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients as per the guideline of coefficients being greater than 0.70, ranging from 0.73 to 0.83, which indicates that the instrument is reliable (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003; Pallant, 2010; Pevalin & Robson, 2009). In addition, the OLBI was also found reliable in the South African context with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.74 to 0.79 (Demerouti, Mostert & Bakker, 2010). The OLBI classifies burnout in terms of two dimensions: exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003).

The OLBI initially consisted of 16 items, however, after exploratory factor analysis was conducted, two items were extracted from the instrument as it loaded on both the dimensions. Only 14 items were used in the present study to conduct the statistical analysis. Examples of the items used for the two dimensions respectively include: Exhaustion (8 items) "Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well", Disengagement (6 items) "I find my work to be a positive challenge" (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). The OLBI measured the items on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*) (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). By answering five the participant would indicate that he/she experiencing less burnout and answering one would indicate that the participant strongly experience burnout.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II)

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) was developed to measure the amount of interpersonal-relationship conflict that employees experience, on three levels (e.g. superiors, subordinates, and peers) (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983). For the purpose of the present study, the focus was placed specifically on the peers. The need for such a focus is evident because of the limited research on conflict management styles with peers between academic personnel and support staff. The ROCI-II was found to be reliable with the Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.77 (Rahim, 1983). Furthermore, Rahim and Psenicka (2002) found reliable Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.79 to 0.87 in their study comparing

different countries, including South Africa. All these values fall within the suitable range and are higher than the cut-off point of 0.70, thus indicating that the items are reliable (Rahim, 1983).

Furthermore, the ROCI-II specifically measures the five conflict management styles namely: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). The ROCI-II originally consists of 28 items (Rahim & Magner, 1995) in total, but after exploratory factor analyses were conducted only 25 items were used. The exploratory factor analysis was also used to investigate the measurement on support staff and academic personnel and indicated that only three conflict management styles could be used since the items only loaded on three factors. These three styles were: compromising, avoiding and dominating. An example of each style reads: Compromising (12 items) “I use ‘give and take’ to reach a compromise”, Avoiding (9 items) “I try to avoid differences of opinion with my peers”, Dominating (4 items) “I use my authority to have a decision made in my favour”. The conflict management styles were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*) (Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Research procedure and ethical considerations

After permission was obtained from the research ethics committee of the higher education institution under investigation, booklets were compiled in a professional manner. These booklets contained the relevant information: the aim of the study, an informed consent letter, the measuring instruments its purposes as well as the time provided for each participant to complete the booklet. A note of appreciation and a cover letter was also distributed to explain the purpose of the study and instructions provided to complete the booklet.

When compiling the booklet and collecting the data, the researcher adhered to specific ethical principles to ensure that fair research practices took place. The researcher was honest, accurate, efficient and objective during the research and could be characterised as having integrity and accepting responsibility for all actions (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Salkind, 2010). Fieldworkers were used to distribute the booklets to the academic personnel and support staff. The fieldworkers convinced the participants to partake in the study by explaining the purpose and aim of the

research project, the possible benefits for each individual in the organisation and the length and time available to complete the booklet. The fieldworkers furthermore explained that the data would be handled in an anonymous and confidential manner. In the research process the fieldworkers did not cause any harm to the participants. After the participants agreed to partake in the study voluntarily, each participant was asked to sign an informed consent after which the booklets were handed out to the participants. Thereafter the fieldworkers informed the participants of the time-frame of three to four weeks to complete the booklet. After the allocated time the fieldworkers collected each booklet and the data was uploaded anonymously onto the SPSS system, after which the statistical analysis commenced.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS program, version 20 (SPSS Inc., 2014). Firstly, a preliminary analysis was done on the data by exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA was employed to assess the construct validity of the instruments. This technique is used where the original variables are considered to be indicators of latent dimensions and are less complex (Blungh, 2008). Loadings smaller than 0.30 and communalities smaller than 0.20, indicate that an item provides a poor measure of the factor under investigation (Child, 2006; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

The present study used the steps as described in Burns and Grove (2009). The steps entailed (1) the development of a correlation matrix; (2) analysis of the principal components, which provides the following: the eigen values, amount of variance in a decreasing order explained by each factor as well as the factor loadings and; (3) a factor rotation as either a varimax or oblique rotation. Direct oblimin rotation was used to evaluate the correlation between items and the items' loadings. The maximum-likelihood extraction method was used to extract the constructs with the largest probability of creating the covariance matrix (Blungh, 2008). It is suggested that the sample sizes for a factor analysis should be large, which implies between 10 and 20 observations per variable (Burns & Grove, 2009).

This analysis was followed by both *descriptive* statistics (focusing on means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) and *inferential* statistics (correlations, multiple regression analysis and multivariate analysis of variance or MANOVAs). Descriptive statistics presents the distribution of the sample in terms of numerical data – to interpret the results orderly (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The purpose of the descriptive statistics was to determine the totality of the information collected about the specific features of the distributions (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, the reliability of the constructs was established by calculating Cronbach alpha coefficients (De Vos *et al.*, 2011), which measures values between 0 and 1. The Cronbach alpha coefficients with the minimum value of 0.70 are regarded as reliable and any value higher regarded as highly reliable, therefore, the cut-off point was set at 0.70 (Pallant, 2010; Pevalin & Robson, 2009).

To address the second research question, product-moment correlations were used to investigate and determine the relationship between the different styles of conflict management as well as the employees' burnout and engagement levels. The product-moment correlations indicate how strongly the constructs relate and the direction of the relationships. The statistical and practical significance of the correlations was also explored. The statistical significance was investigated in terms of a 95% confidence scale. The practical significance was investigated in terms of a small effect (ranging between 0.10 and 0.29), medium effect (ranging between 0.30 and 0.49), and a large effect (ranging between 0.50 and above). According to Pallant (2010) correlations may comprise negative or positive relationships, which indicate the direction of the relationships between constructs. A negative correlation between constructs indicates that, as the one variable increases, there is a definite decrease in the other variable as well (Pallant, 2010). If a positive relationship is established between two variables this implies a mutual increase between the two variables (Pallant, 2010). In addition, a correlation can range between -1.00 and 1.00 (Pallant, 2010). A correlation with the value of 0 indicates that no relationship exists between the variables; and a correlation with a value of 1 indicates a perfect relationship (Pallant, 2010). In the present study only the Pearson correlation coefficients were used, seeing that the data was distributed normally.

To address the third research question multiple-regression analysis was used to investigate the predictions and effects of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2013). This form of regressions is used to evaluate each independent variable's predictive power. The independent variables comprise the different conflict management styles (e.g. compromising, avoiding and dominating) and the dependent variables point to the two conditions of burnout (i.e. exhaustion and disengagement) and engagement. Thus, the total variance was assessed as explained by the independent variable to the dependent variable. Multiple regression as a system of data analysis can be used in various instances such as predictions and main effects (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). This is a favourable technique that many behavioural sciences utilise to test hypotheses (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to explain the amount of variance accounted for in the relationships between the different constructs (Salkind, 2010). The multiple-correlation value (R) was used to identify the association between the dependent and the independent variable (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). To determine this association the statistical significance was used by setting the values on $p \leq 0.05$.

To address the fourth research question, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used during the statistical analysis to determine possible differences in the conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing between two groups (specifically support staff and academic personnel) (Pallant, 2010). This technique was effective since it informed the researcher of significant differences between the groups (e.g. academics and support staff) and furthermore provided the researcher with univariate results for each of the dependent variables (Pallant, 2010). The MANOVA, furthermore, compares groups and “tells the researcher whether the mean differences between the groups on the combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance” (Pallant, 2010, p. 283). In addition, Wilks' Lambda was used when the significance level was investigated (Pallant, 2010). If the level is less than 0.05, then it is evident that differences do exist between the groups (Pallant, 2010). The MANOVA report on the overall differences between the academic personnel and the support staff, when an effect is significant in MANOVA, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to discover which dependent variables had been affected. Multiple ANOVAs were used and therefore, a Bonferroni-type

adjustment was made for an inflated type 1 error. The Games-Howell procedure was used to determine possible statistically indicated differences between the groups (Pallant, 2010).

Results

The present research employed exploratory factor analysis, rather than confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), seeing that the literature is undecided on many aspects the research investigates. Such an aspect is the undecided factor model of the Utrecht Work Engagement scale (UWES) where Storm and Rothmann (2003) compared one- and three-factor models and Naude and Rothmann (2004) compared a one- and two-factor model for engagement. For all three models presented in these two articles different items needed to be omitted and different error-variances had to be included for a better fit (Naude & Rothmann, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003). Thus, in both articles the fit of the models are found to be poor, and there is no consistent pattern indicating which items do not belong with engagement. Thus the addition of error-variance, without sound and strong arguments, is suspect (Naude & Rothmann, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003). As a result, without a strong theoretical model, confirmation in CFA is questionable.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on all three scales to determine the amount of factor loadings and communalities on each scale. Loadings smaller than 0.30 and communalities smaller than 0.20, indicate that an item provides a poor measure of the factor under investigation (Child, 2006; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). As mentioned previously, EFA was used specifically since the literature is undecided on many aspects of the scales used in the present study. These include the structure and fit of the models (Naude & Rothmann, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003). First, principle-component analysis (PCA) was used on all instruments as an extraction method to determine the amount of the extracted constructs in terms of a decreasing order of the variance. After reviewing the scree plot (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), it was found that the UWES are measured by one factor; the OLBI by two factors; and the ROCII-II by three factors. Thereafter maximum likelihood (ML) was used as extraction method, followed by no rotation for UWES (since only a single factor was extracted), a oblimin rotation on the OLBI (as the two factors were found to be correlated) and a varimax rotation of the ROCII-II (as the three factors was found to be uncorrelated).

The UWES was analysed firstly, with a one-factor solution, which explained the 51.35 % variance by an eigen value of 1 and higher, and secondly, by a goodness-of-fit model with a chi-square value of 687.81. As depicted in Figure 2 below, it is evident that the scree plot curves at one factor, therefore, further investigation was necessary on the specific factor loadings and communalities. The further investigation of the final factor loadings and communalities on each item are expounded in Table 1 below, following Figure 2.

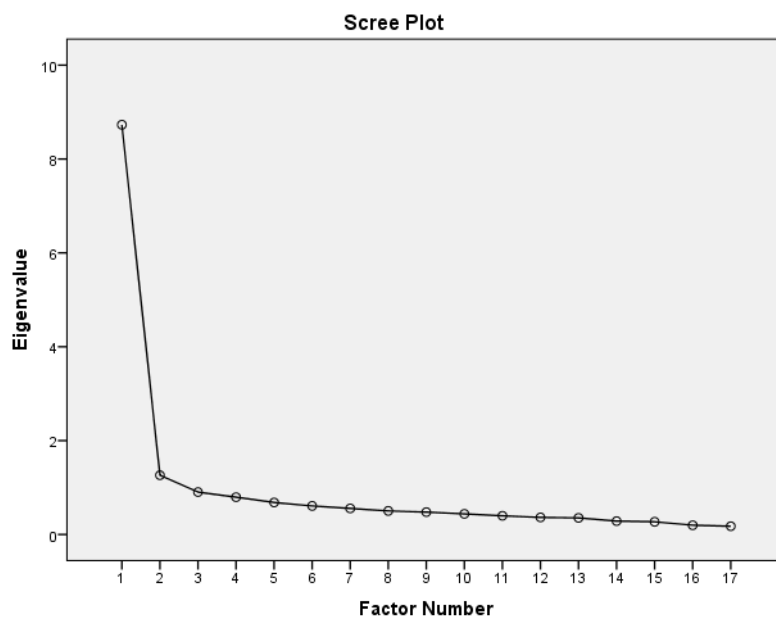


Figure 2: *Scree plot for Utrecht Work Engagement Scale*

TABLE 1: *Final engagement communalities and factor loadings (final EFA with a one-factor solution)*

Nr.	Items	Factor	h^2
UWES1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	0.54	0.29
UWES2	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	0.69	0.48
UWES3	Time flies when I'm working.	0.67	0.45
UWES4	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	0.73	0.53
UWES5	I am enthusiastic about my job.	0.78	0.61
UWES6	When I'm working, I forget everything else around me.	0.70	0.49
UWES7	My job inspires me.	0.83	0.68
UWES8	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	0.78	0.61
UWES9	I feel happy when I am working intensely.	0.74	0.54
UWES10	I am proud on the work that I do.	0.73	0.53
UWES11	I am immersed in my work.	0.73	0.53
UWES12	I can continue working for very long periods at a time.	0.72	0.52
UWES13	To me my job is challenging.	0.71	0.50
UWES14	I get carried away when I'm working.	0.65	0.44
UWES15	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.	0.67	0.44
UWES16	It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	0.46	0.21
UWES17	At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.	0.62	0.39

As can be viewed in Table 1 above, factor analysis was conducted on all the items of the UWES. Only one step was necessary in the factor analysis and no extractions were made. No double loadings on factors were evident. The factors did not load on any items that it was not supposed to; therefore, no items were omitted from the data.

Secondly, the OLBI was analysed with a two-factor solution in order to determine whether the items load onto Exhaustion and Disengagement as theoretical constructs. The two-factor solution

explained only 25.67% of variance by an eigen value of 1 and higher, and a goodness-of-fit model with a chi-square value of 128.59. As seen in Figure 3 below, it is clear that the scree plot curves at two factors, therefore, further investigation is necessary by examining the specific factor loadings and communalities. The final factor loadings and communalities on each item are expounded in Table 2 below, which follows Figure 3.

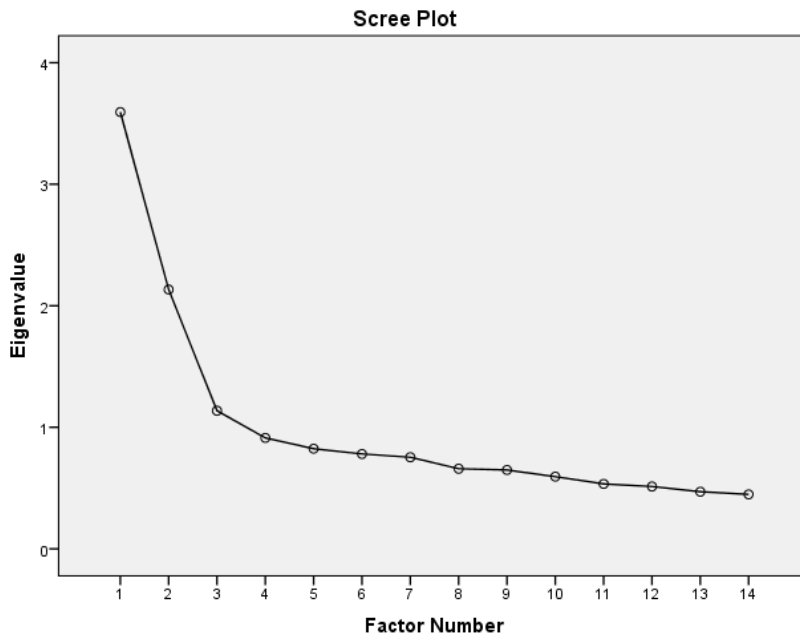


Figure 3: Scree plot for the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory

TABLE 2: Final burnout communalities and factor loadings (final EFA with a two-factor solution)

Nr	Items	Factor		h^2
		1	2	
OLD1	I always find new and interesting aspects in my work.		0.59	0.35
OLD2r	There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.	0.48		0.23
OLD3r	It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way.	0.59		0.39

Table 2 continues			
OLD4r	After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.	0.66	0.44
OLD5	I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well.	0.49	0.24
OLD6r	Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically.	0.33	0.12
OLD7	I find my work to be a positive challenge.	0.62	0.41
OLD8r	During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.	0.66	0.43
OLD10	After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.	0.43	0.24
OLD11r	Sometimes I feel sickened by my work tasks.	0.38	0.26
OLD12r	After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.	0.55	0.30
OLD14	Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well.	0.49	0.25
OLD15	I feel more and more engaged in my work.	0.60	0.37
OLD16	When I work, I usually feel energized.	0.65	0.45

Four exploratory factor analyses were conducted on all the items of the OLBI. Firstly, the item OLD 13 did not load on any factor and was omitted from the data. Secondly, the item OLD 9 loaded on both factors and was omitted from the data.

As can be viewed from Table 2 above, the final exploratory factor analysis indicated that the remaining items (14) of the OLBI showed acceptable values when viewing the communalities and factor loadings. These items were used for further descriptive and inferential evaluation.

Thirdly, the ROCI-II was analysed in terms of a three-factor solution. The three-factor solution explained only 26.69% of variance by an eigen value of 1 and higher, and a goodness-of-fit model with a chi-square value of 686.54. As seen in Figure 4 below, the scree plot curves at three factors, therefore further investigation is needed in examining the specific factor loadings and communalities. The final factor loadings and communalities on each item are expounded in Table 3 below, following Figure 4.

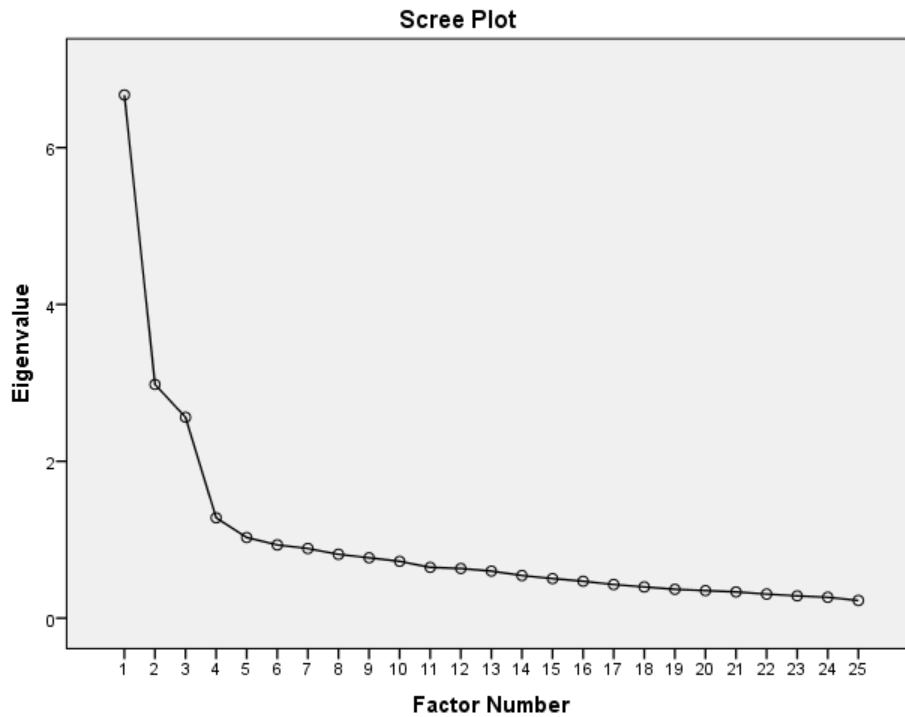


Figure 4: Scree plot for the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II

TABLE 3: Final conflict management styles – communalities and factor loadings (final EFA with a three-factor solution)

Nr	Items	Factor			h^2
		1	2	3	
COND1	I try to investigate an issue with my peers to find a solution acceptable to both of us.	0.73			0.53
COND3	I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and keep conflict with my peers to myself.		0.50		0.30
COND4	I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peers to come up with a joint decision.	0.74			0.57
COND5	I try to work with my peers to find solutions to a problem which satisfy both our expectations.	0.81			0.65
COND6	I usually avoid open discussions of my differences with my peers.		0.54		0.30

Table 3 continues			
COND7	I try to find the middle road in resolving a deadlock.	0.55	0.41
COND8	I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.	0.72	0.52
COND9	I use my authority to have a decision made in my favour.	0.83	0.69
COND11	I give in to the wishes of my peers.	0.43	0.19
COND12	I exchange accurate information with my peers to solve a problem together.	0.67	0.46
COND13	I usually concede to the wishes of my peers.	0.38	0.16
COND14	I usually propose the middle ground for breaking deadlocks.	0.63	0.43
COND15	I negotiate with my peers so that a compromise can be reached.	0.69	0.48
COND16	I try to avoid differences of opinion with my peers.	0.71	0.51
COND17	I avoid a disagreement with my peers.	0.75	0.57
COND18	I use my expertise to ensure a decision is made in my favour.	0.55	0.33
COND19	I often go along with the suggestions of my peers.	0.31	0.17
COND20	I use "give and take" to reach a compromise.	0.42	0.27
COND21	I am generally firm in pursuing my standpoint of the issue.	0.50	0.31
COND22	I try to bring all concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	0.72	0.53
COND23	I collaborate with my peers in coming up with decisions acceptable to both of us.	0.77	0.60
COND25	I sometimes use my power to win in a competitive situation.	0.63	0.40
COND26	I try to keep my disagreement with my peers to myself in order to avoid	0.57	0.34

	hard feelings.		
COND27	I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my peers.	0.60	0.41
COND28	I try to work with my peers towards proper understanding of a problem.	0.65	0.47

Four exploratory factor analyses were conducted on the ROCI-II. Firstly, the items COND 10 and COND 24 loaded on more than one factor and were thus omitted from the data. In the second step the item COND 2 loaded on both factors and was omitted from the data. As can be seen from Table 3 above, in the final step of the exploratory factor analysis the following 12 items loaded on factor 1 (labelled as *compromising*): COND 1, 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 28. The following 9 items loaded on factor 2 (labelled as *avoiding*): COND 3, 6, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 26 and 27. Lastly, 4 items loaded on factor 3 (labelled as *dominating*), which were COND 8, 9, 18 and 25. These items were used for further descriptive and inferential evaluation.

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach alphas

The descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients are displayed in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4: *Descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients of constructs*

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Engagement	4.18	1.12	-0.67	-0.05	0.94
Exhaustion	2.38	0.54	0.04	-0.20	0.74
Disengagement	2.21	0.60	0.33	0.28	0.75
Compromising	2.38	0.78	0.92	0.61	0.91
Avoiding	3.01	0.70	0.00	-0.02	0.80
Dominating	3.34	0.89	-0.26	-0.46	0.78

It is evident from Table 4 above that the majority of the variables were distributed normally. The measuring instruments also show acceptable levels of internal consistency. Table 4 also indicates that Cronbach alpha coefficients show acceptable levels of reliability. These coefficients range between 0.74 and 0.94. All the Cronbach alpha values are above the cut-off point of $\alpha > 0.70$ and, therefore, all the measuring instruments can be regarded as reliable (Pallant, 2010; Pevalin & Robson, 2009).

Correlations

The correlation coefficients between the constructs are displayed in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5: *Correlation matrix between engagement, burnout and conflict management styles*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Engagement					
2. Exhaustion	-				
	0.40 ^{*b}				
3. Disengagement	-	0.27 ^{*b}			
	0.47 ^{*b}				
4. Compromising	-	0.01	0.50 ^{*c}		
	0.32 ^{*b}				
5. Avoiding	-0.06	-	0.17 ^{*a}	0.29 ^{*b}	
		0.14 ^{*a}			
6. Dominating	0.03	-0.04	0.01	0.15 ^{*a}	0.10

^{*} $p < 0.01$ for all values; ^a Correlation ≥ 0.20 is practically significant (small effect); ^b Correlation ≥ 0.30 is practically significant (medium effect) ^c Correlation > 0.50 is practically significant (large effect)

From the results in Table 5 above, engagement indicates a negative statistically significant and practically significant (with a medium effect) relationship with exhaustion, disengagement and the compromising conflict management style. It is further evident from Table 5 that exhaustion has a negative statistically and practically (with a small effect) relationship with avoiding conflict management style. Furthermore, disengagement has a positive statistically and practically significant relationship with the compromising conflict management style (large effect) and avoiding conflict management style (small effect).

Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analyses were performed and the results are reported in Tables 6, 7 and 8 below. Each table presents a different dependent variable respectively, namely engagement, exhaustion and disengagement.

TABLE 6: Multiple Regression Analysis with Engagement as dependent variable

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	4.88	0.31		15.62	0.00	15.53	0.33	0.11	0.10
	Compromising	-0.49	0.07	-0.34	-6.68	0.00*				
	Avoiding	0.05	0.08	0.03	0.64	0.52				
	Dominating	0.10	0.06	0.08	1.57	0.12				

* $p \leq 0.05$ = statistically significant

Table 6 above summarises the regression analyses with conflict management styles (compromising, avoiding and dominating) as predictors of Engagement. Entry of the conflict management styles in the regression analysis produced a statistically significant model ($F_{(3,380)} = 15.53$; $p = 0.00$), accounting for approximately 11% of the variance. More specifically, it seems that lower levels of the compromising conflict management style ($\beta = -0.34$; $t = -6.68$; $p \leq 0.05$) is a significant predictor of Engagement.

TABLE 7: Multiple Regression Analysis with Exhaustion as dependent variable

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	2.70	0.16		17.16	0.00	2.98	0.15	0.02	0.54
	Compromising	0.04	0.04	0.06	1.12	0.27				
	Avoiding	-0.12	0.04	-0.15	-2.87	0.00*				
	Dominating	-0.02	0.03	-0.03	-0.63	0.53				

* $p \leq 0.05$ = statistically significant

Table 7 above summarises the regression analyses with conflict management styles (compromising, avoiding and dominating) as predictors of Exhaustion. Entry of the conflict management styles in the regression analysis produced a statistically significant model ($F_{(3,380)} = 2.98$; $p = 0.00$), accounting for approximately 2% of the variance. More specifically, it seems that lower levels of the avoiding conflict management style ($\beta = -0.15$; $t = -2.87$; $p \leq 0.05$) is a significant predictor of Exhaustion.

TABLE 8: Multiple Regression Analysis with Disengagement as dependent variable

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	1.35	0.15		8.86	0.00	43.44	0.51	0.26	0.25
	Compromising	0.39	0.04	0.50	10.73	0.00*				
	Avoiding	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.74	0.46				
	Dominating	-0.04	0.03	-0.07	-1.46	0.15				

* $p \leq 0.05$ = statistically significant

Table 8 above summarises the regression analyses with conflict management styles (compromising, avoiding and dominating) as predictors of Disengagement. Entry of the conflict management styles in the regression analysis produced a statistically significant model ($F_{(3,380)} = 43.44$; $p = 0.00$), accounting for approximately 26% of the variance. More specifically, this indicates that higher levels of the compromising conflict management style ($\beta = 0.50$; $t = 10.73$; $p \leq 0.05$) is a significant predictor of Disengagement.

Multivariate analysis of variance

Furthermore, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine differences between support staff and academic staff with regard to their conflict management styles, namely Engagement and Burnout. Results were first analysed for statistical significance by using Wilk's Lambda statistics. ANOVA was used to determine specific differences if a statistical difference was found. The results of the MANOVA analyses are provided in Table 9 below.

Differences between support staff and staff

TABLE 9: MANOVA -differences in conflict management styles, burnout and engagement between support staff and academic personnel

Variable	Value	F	df	p	Partial Eta Squared
Conflict management styles	0.97	4.15	3	0.01*	0.03
Engagement	0.98	2.28	3	0.08	0.02
Burnout	0.99	2.12	2	0.12	0.01

* $p \leq 0.05$ = statistically significant

During an analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, a statistically significant difference ($p \leq 0,05$) in levels of conflict management styles was found between the support staff and the academic personnel. This was analysed further by using ANOVA. The results of the ANOVA based on conflict management styles are presented in Table 10 below.

TABLE 10: ANOVA-differences in support staff and academic personnel based on conflict management styles

Item	Support staff	Academic personnel	p	Partial Eta Squared
Compromising	2.48	2.28	0.01*	0.02
Avoiding	2.98	3.04	0.40	0.00
Dominating	3.43	3.25	0.05*	0.01

* Statistically significant difference: $p \leq 0,05$

Table 10 above indicate statistically significant differences for the compromising conflict management style and dominating conflict management style. Support staff evidently experience higher levels of compromising and dominating, compared to academic personnel.

Discussion

Outline of the results

The objective of the current study was to assess the relationship between conflict management styles (i.e. integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising) and work-related wellbeing (i.e. burnout and engagement) of employees in higher education institutions in South Africa. The present study set out to compare the differences of conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing between academic personnel and support staff. Within the South African context, limited research undertaken on the effect of conflict management styles on work-related wellbeing, as well as on academic personnel and support staff (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Havenga & Visagie, 2006; Lekutle & Nel, 2014; Naude & Rothmann, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003; Wright, 2011). In addition, no comparisons have been drawn between the styles of academic personnel and support staff in dealing with conflict, and regarding the burnout and engagement levels within the South African context. Furthermore, limited research exists on the work-related wellbeing of support staff in the South African context. For the reasons mentioned above, the present study makes a clear contribution to the literature on industrial psychology (Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008; Rothmann & Essenco, 2007).

Before measuring the relationships between variables it is important to ensure that the measuring instruments are reliable and valid, this thus necessitates a thorough exploratory factor analysis. This type of analysis is a technique used to evaluate the validity of the instruments where original variables are considered to be indicators of latent dimensions (Blungh, 2008). An exploratory factor analysis was necessary because of the inconsistency found in literature on the different measuring instruments such as the undecided factor structure of the Utrecht Work Engagement scale (or UWES; Naude & Rothmann, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003).

In terms of the findings of the preliminary results the exploratory factor analysis was conducted to in particular investigate the different measurements, namely: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). The findings of the results on the UWES indicated that the scale has a

one-factor structure (labelled *engagement*), which explained 51.35% of the total variance. Storm and Rothmann (2003) was the first to evaluate the factor structure of engagement in the South African context on a sample of South African Police-service officers. It was found that engagement's one-factor structure model fits the data significantly better, compared to the three-factor structure found by other studies (i.e. Schaufeli *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, Naude and Rothmann (2004) found a two-factor structure model on a sample of medical technicians. Lekutle and Nel (2014) similarly found a two-factor structure for engagement in a South African study on employees at a cement factory. As is evident, different factor structures were found for engagement in South Africa on diverse samples (Naude & Rothmann, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003). Storm and Rothmann's (2003) one-factor structure model for engagement supports the finding of the present study.

The findings of the results for the OLBI scale revealed that the scale has a two-factor structure, namely *exhaustion* (labelled factor 1) and *disengagement* (labelled factor 2). These two identified factors explained 25.67% of the total variance. Demerouti and Bakker (2008) correspondingly found a two-factor structure for burnout in a sample of Dutch employees that supports the findings of the present study. Likewise, Lekutle and Nel (2014) recently identified that burnout has a two-factor structure in the South African context. Therefore the finding of the present study is supported.

The results revealed that the ROCI-II instrument for measuring conflict management styles, has a three-factor structure, namely *compromising* (labelled factor 1), *avoiding* (labelled factor 2) and *dominating* (labelled factor 3). The three factors identified in the present study explained 26.69% of the total variance. Limited research has been done on the assessment of the ROCI-II's factor structure within the South African context (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Studies on the factor-structure model are mostly international with different samples and reported on five-factor structures (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

In terms of the construct validity and internal consistency of the three scales mentioned above, it is evident from the results that these three scales had sufficient alpha coefficients. The one-factor solution identified for the UWES in the present study was *engagement* (items UWES 1, 2, 3, 4,

5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 $\alpha = 0.94$); the two-factor solution identified for the OLBI comprised *exhaustion* (items OLD 2r, 3r, 4r, 6r, 8r, 10, 11r, 12r $\alpha = 0.74$) and *disengagement* (items OLD 1, 5, 7, 14, 15, 16 $\alpha = 0.75$); and the three-factor structure identified for the ROCI-II measuring instrument comprised *compromising* (items COND 1, 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23 $\alpha = 0.91$), *avoiding* (items COND 3, 6, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 26, 27 $\alpha = 0.80$) and *dominating* (items COND 8, 9, 18, 25, $\alpha = 0.78$). All these alpha coefficients compared well with the guideline of Pallant (2010) as well as Pevalin and Robson, (2009), and therefore the measurements and scales are found to be confidently reliable.

First, to establish whether there were relationships between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement among employees working within a higher education institution. The results indicated statistically significant relationships between certain conflict management styles and some forms of work-related wellbeing. Therefore, the results partially confirmed hypothesis 1 (H1). More specifically, the results indicated that the conflict management style of compromise has a statistically and practically significant negative relationship (with a medium effect) with engagement, and a positive relationship (with a large effect) with disengagement. This indicates that, by using the compromising style, an individual will experience less engagement and more disengagement from work.

The finding also suggest that the academic personnel and support staff using the compromising style may be too concerned with finding an effective solution that will satisfy both their own needs and that of the other party. As a result, they may create distance between the work object, content and the conflict as such, which will lead to less engagement towards the work (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim & Magner, 1995). This may also indicate that the individual has to negotiate to such an extent that the positive attitude towards work in general disintegrate because he or she has to give up certain aspects to solve the conflict effectively, which leads to disengagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Wright (2011) found that individuals utilising the conflict management style of compromise are more satisfied in their work and show lower levels of burnout. In addition, since burnout is the negative antipode of engagement, it may be that the compromising styles then lead to engagement – which supports the findings of the present study.

The results also indicated that the conflict management style of avoidance is statistically and practically significantly related negatively to exhaustion (with a small effect) and positively related to disengagement (with a small effect). Even though the results revealed a relationship between the style of avoiding and burnout, the relationship was weak. The reason for this weakness may be that members of the academic personnel and support staff constantly avoid a conflict situation and psychologically attempts to withdraw from the conflict at times (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). Cetin and Hacifazlioglu (2004) investigated academic personnel and support staff's conflict management styles in relation to personalities. These scholars found that academic personnel would rather avoid conflict, in order to work on their academic tasks when employed in the long term – which corroborates the findings of the present study. Another reason might be that academic personnel and support staff may avoid a conflict situation due to their high workload, which they may find difficult to cope with (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). By avoiding the conflict, academic personnel may be able to complete their multiple tasks without possible burn-out as result of the stress they experience (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004). According to Friedman *et al.* (2000) and Wright (2011), it has been found that the conflict management style of avoidance holds negative consequences for an individual's health (e.g. burnout). Therefore, the fact that avoiding is positively related to disengagement is partially supported.

Second, to determine whether the conflict management styles predict the work-related wellbeing of academic personnel as well as the support staff, the results revealed that certain conflict management styles were predictors of specific forms of work-related well-being. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (H2) was only partially supported. More specifically, the results indicated that the conflict management style of compromising predicted lower levels of engagement and higher levels of disengagement. By applying the style of compromising for conflict management, an individual will adopt a win-lose approach to reach a solution that will mutually benefit both parties (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Academic personnel and support staff may also feel negatively inclined towards their work as they had to make a sacrifice in order to reach an effective solution (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995).When academic personnel members utilise the conflict management style of compromising, the following might be evident: when all parties have to

give up something in order to win (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976), they are less engaged in work and less enthusiastic about the situation because their needs are not completely met.

Furthermore, it was found that the conflict management style of avoidance predicted lower levels of exhaustion. Academic personnel and support staff may experience conflict because they have to work together to reach faculty goals (Pitman, 2000). They might perceive the conflict as another demand and rather avoid the conflict situation seeing that it would be less exhausting if they invest the minimum effort in the conflict situation (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). If members of academic personnel and support staff experience conflict as a demand and do not have the resources to cope with it, this may lead to burnout. Therefore they find it easier merely to avoid the conflict (Blinge, 2006). This finding is supported by Rothmann and Essenco (2007) who found that the conflict management style of avoidance is a predictor of exhaustion.

Thirdly, to determine whether and/or how conflict management styles differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution, the findings indicated significant differences between academic personnel and support staff where certain styles of conflict management are concerned. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (H3) was partially supported. More specifically, the results indicated that the support staff is more inclined to use the style of dominating and compromising, compared to academic personnel.

Support staff's stressful environment implies many demands but simultaneously a lack of resources (i.e. increasing workloads, ineffective management, job insecurity, lack of promotion, rewards, and recognition) (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). Hence there might be an imbalance and the staff members might struggle to cope with such an imbalance (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). Additionally, the conflict management style of dominating entails forcing and a win-lose approach (Rahim & Magner, 1995). The support staff's incapacity to cope with the numerous demands may be the reason why some adopt a forceful behaviour, in order to protect themselves from the plethora of demands (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). If these staff members can protect themselves from the multiple demands, they could work together with academic personnel to reach the general objective (Pitman, 2000). In this sense support staff may perceive their work as equally important as that of academic personnel, seeing that these two groups have to work

together to reach the faculty's goals (Pitman, 2000).

Support staff has to take on more roles and thus experience conflicting demands. This could be indicative of the dominating style they need to cope with the conflicting demands and pressures (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). This finding is also supported by Rothmann and Essenco (2007), who found that support staffs' multiple demands (i.e. conflicting demands and diversity of roles) lead to exhaustion. However, the dominating style is also characterised as the least effective style, seeing that it leads to future conflict and thus increases frustration (Meyer, 2004). In addition, for support staff to reach their goals it might be most effective to adopt a forceful behaviour, but might also hamper interpersonal relationships as the support staff members already perceive themselves as inferior to academic personnel (Pitman, 2000). Support staff would, therefore, want to win (dominate during a conflict situation) against academic personnel – to prove that their work as support staff is equally important (Pitman, 2000). Support staff might thus struggle to forge an effective relationship with academic personnel as the former group might experience this as a major challenge (Pitman, 2000). This in turn can lead to the danger that support staff members only recognise the culture of the higher education institution after conflict has taken place (Tierney, 1988).

The findings also revealed that support staff members use the conflict management style of compromising more frequently in comparison with academic personnel. Compromising, as conflict management style, means that individuals show an intermediate concern for the self and others where both parties may have to lose before winning (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Support staff may take into consideration the importance of interpersonal-relationship conflict and would wish to build effective working relationships with academic personnel to reach goals jointly within the working environment (Pitman, 2000). Therefore, support staff might also find it beneficial to use the conflict management style of compromising, and, as previously suggested, support-staff members should optimise their social support – or their relationships with colleagues (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007).

In addition, support staff members experience high stress and multiple demands and, therefore, might find it easier to compromise with academic personnel, in order to reach these demands

(Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). Support staff also clearly has a natural understanding of a higher education institution's culture. Therefore they might see the bigger picture easier and understand the importance to compromise and find a mutually agreed resolution for conflict (Tierney, 1988). This finding is also supported by Tierney (1988), who indicated that support staff that understand the culture of the higher education institution, is more likely to manage potential conflicts in the future better.

Fourth objective: To determine how burnout and engagement differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution. The results revealed no significant difference in work-related wellbeing (burnout and engagement) between the mentioned groups, therefore hypothesis 4 (H4) was rejected. Academic personnel and support staff are working in the same environment. This may be the reason that no significant difference was found in terms of the burnout and engagement they experienced (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). It has been found that both academic personnel and support-staff members experience a tremendous amount of stress (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Tytherleigh *et al.*, 2005; Winefield *et al.*, 2003). Both groups also have multiple work demands which differ but the amount of stress they experience is similar, therefore they might also experience burnout and engagement to the same extent (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). Job demands and job resources are found to be the preceding components of burnout or engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus the many demands with which academic personnel and support staff have to comply, is the reason for their experience of burnout, or of engagement (Jackson *et al.*, 2006).

There is currently no literature on the comparison between academic personnel and support staff, which makes it difficult to find support for the findings. However, it has been found that academic personnel experience high levels of stress, burnout and exhaustion due to work demands (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Blinge, 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2006). Correspondingly, support staff also experience high levels of exhaustion (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007).

Practical implications

The results of the current study provide insight into and understanding of certain conflict management styles' impact on work-related wellbeing for higher education employees. The results also assist both the individual and higher education institution in which these styles are most prevalent. The role-players are made aware of how each style impacts on the work-related wellbeing of academic personnel as well as support staff. Higher education institutions can clearly draw a comparison between the academic personnel and support staff and particularly between colleagues and peers regarding their styles of conflict management. Keeping these results in mind, higher education institutions can develop interventions for academic personnel and support staff while explaining the impact of certain conflict management styles on their work-related wellbeing. Furthermore, institutions can provide certain interventions (e.g. motivation through conflict workshops and awareness and education on the consequences of conflict management styles) in using and adopting different conflict management styles to help encourage more engagement and less burnout among their employees. By implementing such interventions academic personnel and support staff can understand and recognise the benefits that certain styles of conflict management hold for their work-related wellbeing.

Limitations and recommendations

The present study has certain limitations that should be noted. The first limitation is that a cross-sectional research design was used to conduct the study, indicating that the data was collected only once on several groups (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Menard, 2002). As a result, no causal relationships and effects could be distinguished and differentiated between the different variables of the study (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Mann, 2003). The second limitation is that only self-report surveys were used. Self-report questionnaires raise concerns about the biasness and validity of the data as well as whether the proposed fundamental interferences could be drawn from the data (Chan, 2009). The validity of self-report questionnaires is questioned since participants may have different interpretations and understandings of constructs, which may lead to the error of shared variance (Chan, 2009). The third limitation is that the conflict management styles were measured only on academic personnel and support staff's peers. This means that the full scope of conflict experienced and the styles utilised for the different groups (Subordinates and superiors) are not completely measured. The fourth limitation of the current study is that a lack of differences was

found between academic personnel and support staff's work-related wellbeing. A final limitation that needs to be mentioned concerns the sampling method that was employed. A combined quota and convenient sample was used. A concern of quota and convenient sampling is the possible bias and subjectivity of the researcher (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Future studies can investigate the use of different sampling methods to ensure the inclusion of all participants from various departments and sections within the higher education institution.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, there are also certain recommendations for future research and for management of higher education institutions to follow up. Firstly, it is important that management of such institutions realise the importance of conflict, what the most prevalent conflict management styles are, and the effect it may have on academic personnel and support staff's work-related wellbeing. A managerial solution is to manage conflict rather than attempting to terminate it (Rahim, 2002). Thus it will be beneficial for management to strategise "effective macro-level" interventions in order to minimise the dysfunctional effects conflict has on organisational outcomes (Rahim, 2002). If management can implement these interventions it will enhance the learning that takes place and optimise the effectiveness of such an institution's operation (Rahim, 2002).

Secondly, it is important that such institutions recognise the value of understanding the various conflict management styles and the impact it has on work-related wellbeing. According to Pitman (2000) academic personnel and support staff hold mutually negative perceptions, which can influence their relationship. Certain types of conflict also have adverse effects on individuals (Rahim, 2002). Therefore, it is important that both the academic personnel and support staff are made aware of the conflict management style they are more inclined to use with their peers. This could benefit their relationships since they would understand why their colleagues react in a certain way when encountering conflict. Therefore, it is important to note that individuals are able to change their style of conflict management over time, depending on the situation (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu *et al.*, 2004).

In order to add to literature on this topic certain recommendations can also be made. Firstly, longitudinal research designs can be used as these designs imply that the researcher can measure

the same constructs over an extended period of time and a longitudinal analysis can be drawn to create more effective interventions (De Vos *et al.*, 2011, Menard, 2002). In addition, longitudinal designs can also measure the change that individuals experience over a certain period (Avey, Luthans & Mhatre, 2008). Secondly, it is recommended that future studies focus on measuring the full context of conflict management styles by including superiors and subordinates. Thirdly, future research may find it beneficial to test more samples across South Africa, including those from other higher education institutions and from organisations in general. This may enable researchers to generalise the results for the South African context. Fourthly, the findings show no difference in work-related wellbeing between academic personnel and support staff from this particular institution. Therefore, it would be beneficial to continue studies on other higher education institutions to provide more generalised results.

Conclusions

The results indicated a definite relationship between conflict management styles (i.e. compromising, avoiding and dominating) and work-related wellbeing (i.e. engagement and burnout). The results, furthermore, confirmed that conflict management styles are predictors of work-related wellbeing. The results also revealed significant differences between academic personnel and support staff based on their conflict management styles. However, no differences were found between academic personnel and support staff based on their work-related wellbeing.

In light of these results, the present study does contribute to the literature by its assessment of the mentioned relationship between these two groups' conflict management styles and how it affects their work-related wellbeing in a higher education institution in South Africa, particularly by pointing out the difference in the styles to which these groups give preference respectively.

REFERENCES

- Amason, A. C. (1996). Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(1), 123-148. doi: 10.2307/256633
- Avey, J. B., Luthans, F., & Mhatre, K. H. (2008). A call for longitudinal research in positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(5), 705-711. doi: 10.1002/job.517
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2008). Towards a model of work engagement. *Career development international*, 13(3), 209-223.
- Barkhuizen, N., & Rothmann, S. (2008). Occupational stress of academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 38(2), 321-336. doi:10.1177/008124630803800205
- Bezuidenhout, A., & Cilliers, F. V. N. (2010). Burnout, work engagement and sense of coherence in female academics in higher-education institutions in South Africa. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1), 1-10. doi:10.4102/sajip.v36i1.872
- Bilge, F. (2006). Examining the burnout of academics in relation to job satisfaction and other factors. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 34(9), 1151-1160. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2006.34.9.1151>
- Blungh, N. J. (2008). *Introduction to structural equation modelling using SPSS and AMOS*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Boyd, C. M., Bakker, A. B., Pignata, S., Winefield, A. H., Gillepsie, N., & Stough, C. (2011). A longitudinal test of the job demand-resource model among Australian university academics. *Applied Psychology*, 60(1), 112-140. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2010.00429.x
- Burns, N. & Grove, S. K. (2009). *The practice of nursing research: Appraisal, synthesis, and generation of evidence* (6th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Saunders Elsevier.
- Cetin, M. O., & Hacifazlioglu, O. (2004). Academics' conflict management styles. *Dogus Üniversitesi Dergisi*, 5 (2),155-162
- Chan, D. (2009). So why ask me? Are self-report data really that bad? *Statistical and methodological myths and urban legends: Doctrine, verity and fable in the organizational and social sciences*, 309-336. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Child, D. (2006). *The essentials of factor analysis*. New York, NY:A&C Black.

- Chung-Yan, G. A., & Moeller, C. (2010). The psychosocial costs of conflict management styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 21(4), 382-399. doi:10.1108/10444061011079930
- Coetzee, S. E., & Rothmann, S. (2005). Occupational stress, organisational commitment and ill-health of employees at a higher education institution in South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 31 (1), 47-54
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2013). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis of the behavioural sciences* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Taylor & Francis.
- Corral, S. (1995). Academic libraries in the information society. *New Library World*, 96(1120), 35-42. doi:10.1108/03074809510085316
- De Dreu, C. K. W., Van Dierendonck, D., & Dijkstra, M. T. M. (2004). Conflict at work and individual well-being. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 15(1), 6-26. doi:10.1108/eb022905
- Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2008). The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory: A good alternative to measure burnout and engagement. *Handbook of stress and burnout in health care*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Vardakou, L., & Kantas, A. (2003). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 19(1), 12-23. doi:10.1027//1015-5759.19.1.12
- Demerouti, E., Mostert, K., & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Burnout and work engagement: a thorough investigation of the independency of both constructs. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 15(3), 209. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0019408>
- De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delpont, C. S. L. (2011). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.) Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Dixit, M., & Mallik, D. (2008). Assessing suitability of Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II in Indian family-owned-and-managed businesses. *International Journal of Business Insights and Transformation*, 2, 28-38. Retrieved from <http://www.ijbit.org>
- Du Plessis, T. (2005). From monolingual to bilingual higher education: The repositioning of historically Afrikaans-medium universities in South Africa. *Language Policy*, 5, 87-113. doi:10.1007/s10993-005-5627-5
- Ensor, P. (2004). Contesting discourses in higher education curriculum restructuring in South

- Africa. *Higher Education*, 48, 339-359. doi:10.1023/B:HIGH.0000035544.96309.f1
- Euwema, M. C., Van de Vliert, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2003). Substantive and relational effectiveness of organizational conflict behavior. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 14(2), 119-139. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/eb022894>
- Ferman, B., & Hill, T. L. (2004). The challenges of agenda conflict in higher-education-community research partnerships: Views from the community side. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 26(2), 241-257.
- Forgeard, M. J., Jayawickreme, E., Kern, M. L., & Seligman, M. E. (2011). Doing the right thing: Measuring wellbeing for public policy. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 1(1), 79-106.
- Fourie, M. (1999). Institutional transformation at South African universities: Implications for academic staff. *Higher Education*, 38, 275-290. doi:10.1023/A:1003768229291
- Friedman, R. A., Tidd, S. T., Currall, S. C., & Tsai, J. C. (2000). What goes around comes around: The impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(1), 32-55.
- Gibson, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P., & Trow, M. (1994). *The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: SAGE.
- Gillespie, N. A., Walsh, M., Winefield, A. H., Due, J., & Stough, C. (2001). Occupational stress in universities: Staff perceptions of the causes, consequences and moderators of stress, work & stress. *An International Journal of Work, Health and Organisations*, 15(1), 53-72. doi:10.1080/02678370110062449
- Halbesleben, J. R. B., & Demerouti, E. (2005). The construct validity of an alternative measure of burnout: Investigating the English translation of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. *An International Journal of Work, Health and Stress*, 19(3), 208-220. doi:10.1080/02678370500340728
- Havenga, W., & Visagie, J. (2006). Interpersonal conflict-handling styles used in public and private sector organizations: A comparative study. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 32(1), p-60.

- Havenga, W. (2006). Relationships between gender/age–status differences and conflict management styles in small business. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 6(1), 22-28.
- Hay, D., & Fourie, M. (2002). Preparing the way for mergers in South African higher and further education institutions: An investigation into staff perceptions. *Higher Education*, 44(1), 115-131.
- Ho, D. Y. F. (1998). Interpersonal relationships and relationship dominance: An analysis based on methodological relationalism. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 1, 1-16. doi:10.1111/1467-839X.00002
- Jackson, L. T., Rothmann, S., & Van de Vijver, F. J. (2006). A model of work-related well-being for educators in South Africa. *Stress and Health*, 22(4), 263-274. doi: 10.1002/smi.1098
- Jehn, K. A. (1995). A multimethod examination of the benefits and determinants of intragroup conflict. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(2), 256-282. doi:10.2307/2393638
- Jehn, K. A., & Mannix, E. A. (2001). The dynamic nature of conflict: A longitudinal study of intragroup conflict and group performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(2), 238-251.
- Jehn, K. A., Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (1999). Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict, and performance in workgroups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, 741-763. doi:10.2307/2667054
- Johnson, J. V., & Hall, E. M. (1988). Job strain, work place social support and cardiovascular disease: A cross sectional study of a random sample of the Swedish working population. *American Journal of Public Health* 78, 1336–1342.
- Kaushal, R., & Kwantes, C. T. (2006). The role of culture and personality in choice of conflict management strategy. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 579-603. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.01.001
- Kerlinger, F. N., & Lee, H. B. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research* (4th ed.). Holt, NY: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Kerr, C. (1990). The internationalisation of learning and the nationalisation of the purposes of higher education: Two ‘laws of motion’ in conflict? *European Journal of Education*, 5-22.
- Koskinen, K. U., & Vanharanta, H. (2002). The role of tacit knowledge in innovation processes of small technology companies. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 80(1), 57-

64.

- Laursen, B. (1993). Conflict management among close peers. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 1993(60), 39-54. doi: 10.1002/cd.23219936005
- Lekutle, M., & Nel, A. (2014). Psychometric evaluation of The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) within a cement factory. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 22(4), 641-647.
- Mann, C. J. (2003) Observational research methods. Research design II: Cohort, cross-sectional, and case-control studies. *Emergency Medicine Journal*, 20(1), 54–60.
- Maslach, C., & Schaufeli, W. B. (1993). Historical and conceptual development of burnout. *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research*, 1-16.
- McAlpine, L., & Akerlind, G. (2010). *Becoming an academic*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Menard, S. (2002). *Longitudinal research* (Vol. 76). London: SAGE.
- Meyer, S. (2004). Organizational response to conflict: Future conflict and work outcomes. *Social Work Research*, 28(3), 183-190. doi: 10.1093/swr/28.3.183
- Mostert, K. (2002). *Burnout and engagement in the South African Police Service* (Doctoral thesis). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10394/1569>
- Muller-Camen, M., & Salzgeber, S. (2005). Changes in academic work and the chair regime: The case of German business administration academics. *Organization Studies*, 26(2), 271-290.
- Naude, J. L., & Rothmann, S. (2004). The validation of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for emergency medical technicians in Gauteng. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences /Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe*, 7(3), p459-468.
- Nauta, A., & Kluwer, E. (2004). The use of questionnaires in conflict research. *International Negotiation*, 9(3), 457-470. doi: 10.1163/1571806053498760
- Optlatka, I. (2009). Marketing the university: The subjective perceptions of Israeli academics of their role in attracting new students to their institution. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 31(3), 207-217. doi:10.1080/13600800902974286
- Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS* (4th ed.) Chicago, IL: Open University Press.

- Pevalin, D., & Robson, K. (2009). *The stata survival manual*. Maidenhead. England: McGraw-Hill Education
- Pines, E., Rauschhuber, M., Norgan, G., Cook, J., Canchola, L., Richardson, C., & Jones, M. (2011). Stress resilience , psychological empowerment and conflict management styles among baccalaureate nursing students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68(7), doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2011.05875.x
- Pitman, T. (2000). Perceptions of academics and students as customers: A survey of administrative staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 22(2), 165-175. doi:10.1080/713678138
- Pouris, A., & Inglesi-Lotz, R. (2014). The contribution of higher education institutions to the South African economy. *South African Journal of Science*, 110(3-4), 01-07.
- Pusser, B., Kemprent, K., Marginson, S., & Ordorika, I. (2012). *Universities and the public spere: Knowledge creation and state building in the Era of globilization*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis
- Rahim, M. A. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(2), 368-376. doi:10.2307/255985
- Rahim, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(3), 206-235. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/eb022874
- Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing conflict in organisations* (4th ed.). Piscataway, NJ: Transaction.
- Rahim, M. A. (2015). *Managing conflict in organizations*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction.
- Rahim, M. A., & Magner, N. R. (1995). Confirmatory factor analysis of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: First-order factor model and its invariances across groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80(1), 122-132. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.80.1.122
- Rahim, M. A., & Psenicka, C. (2002). A model of emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies: A study in seven countries. *The International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 10(4), 302-326. doi:10.1108/eb028955
- Rothmann, S. (2008). Job satisfaction, occupational stress, burnout and work engagement as components of work-related wellbeing: Empirical research. *SA journal of industrial Psychology*, 34(3), 11-16.
- Rothmann, S., & Barkhuizen, N. (2008). Burnout of academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 22(2), 439-456.

- Rothmann, S., & Essenko, N. (2007). Job characteristics, optimism, burnout, and ill health of support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37(1), 135-152. doi: 10.1177/008124630703700110
- Rothmann, S., & Jordaan, G. M. E. (2006). Job demands, job resources and work engagement of academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 32(4), 87-96.
- Salkind, N. J. (2010). *Encyclopaedia of research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293-315. doi: 10.1002/job.248
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701-716. doi:10.1177/0013164405282471
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2001). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3, 71-92.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Martinez, I., Pinto, A., Salanova, M., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). Burnout and engagement in university students: A cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33, 464-481.
- SPSS Inc. (2014). *IBM SPSS 20.0 for Windows*. Chicago, IL: SPSS.
- Storm, K., & Rothmann, S. (2003). A psychometric analysis of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale in the South African Police Service. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), p-62.
- Struwig, F. W., & Stead, G. B. (2001). *Planning, designing and reporting research*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Thomas, K. W., & Schmidt, W. H. (1976). A survey of managerial interest with respect to conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 19(2), 315-318. doi:10.2307/255781
- Thomas, M. (2004). Bullying among support staff in a higher education institution. *Health Education*, 105(4), 273-288. doi:10.1108/09654280510602499
- Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), p.2-21
- Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webba, C., Cooper, C. L., & Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK

- higher education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research & Development* 24(1), 41-61. doi:10.1080/0729436052000318569
- University of California. (2014). *General university policy regarding academic appointees: Academic personnel definitions*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programmes/files/apm/apm-110.pdf>
- Vokic, N. P., & Sontor, S. (2009). Conflict management styles in Croatian enterprises – the relationship between individual characteristics and conflict handling styles. *FEB Working Series (Paper No. 09-05)*, Zagreb: Faculty of Economics and Business.
- Waghind, Y. (2002). Knowledge production and higher education transformation in South Africa: Towards reflexivity in university teaching, research and community service. *Higher Education* 43(4), 457-488. doi:10.1023/A:1015211718131
- Weider-Hatfield, D., & Hatfield, J. D., (1995). Relationships among conflict management styles, levels of conflict, and reactions to work. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 135(6), 687-698.
- Winefield, A. H., Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., Hapuarachchi, J., & Boyd, C. (2003). Occupational stress in Australian university staff: Results from a national survey. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10(1), 51-63. doi:10.1037/1072-5245.10.1.51
- Winter, R. (2009). Academic manager or managed academic?: Academic identity schisms in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 31(2), 121-131. doi:10.1080/13600800902825835
- Wright, K. B. (2011). A communication competence approach to healthcare worker conflict, job stress, job burnout, and job satisfaction. *Journal for Healthcare Quality*, 33(2), 7-14. doi:10.1111/j.1945-1474.2010.00094.x
- Zusman, A. (2005). Challenges facing higher education in the twenty-first century. *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges*, 2, 115-160.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current chapter draws conclusions and acknowledges limitations regarding the present study and proposes recommendations for organisations to follow up and for future research. The conclusions are drawn from the current study and flow from particularly the general and specific objectives. The limitations of the present study are argued, after which the recommendations are made.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The first objective was to determine how the relationship between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement is conceptualised, according to the literature.

An extensive literature study was conducted in response to the first objective. This study entailed in-depth research and understanding of the five different conflict management styles, burnout and its components as well as engagement. Conflict is described by Rahim (2002) as a disagreement between individuals. Rahim (2011, 2015) also believes that conflict can be both productive and disruptive. To ensure that conflict is functional, Rahim (2002, 2011, 2015) proposed methods of diagnosis, intervention and investigation of conflict management styles hence, the purpose of the current study was to start with the diagnosis of the process of conflict management styles. When appropriate conflict management styles are utilised it can improve the efficiency of an organisation (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). Conflict management styles are described as the way in which an individual deals with and effectively manages conflict (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 2002; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Furthermore, Rahim (1983) identifies the five basic styles, namely integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising.

These styles were defined independently by means of the “two-dimensional model of styles of handling interpersonal conflict” (Rahim, 1983, p. 369). The model consists of two dimensions, according to which the individual shows a concern for the self and for others (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Depending on the individual’s level of concern, the five conflict management

styles are defined. *Integrating* implies the individual has a high concern for self and for others (Rahim, 1983). By utilising this style an individual will show a direct and honest approach by which all the relevant information will be gathered from the conflict situation (Rahim & Magner, 1995). *Obliging* is described as an individual who has a high concern for others and a low concern for the self. This indicates that the advantage of the discussed outcomes of possible conflict will be given to the other party (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim & Magner, 1995). *Dominating* will be used when the individual has a high concern for the self and a low concern for others, representing forceful behaviour (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). *Avoiding* is termed as the individual having a low concern for the self and for others. This style indicates the tendency to evade the conflict situation as a whole (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). *Compromising* is demarcated as the individual having an intermediary concern for the self and others (Dixit & Mallik, 2008). This style suggests that both parties concerned will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the conflict and exchange reciprocally joined decisions (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). It was also found that the different conflict management styles have an impact on an individual's work-related wellbeing (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010).

Burnout forms an essential part of work-related wellbeing, which is defined in terms of two dimensions: exhaustion and disengagement (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). Exhaustion refers to being physically drained due to an overload of work demands (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003). Exhaustion can also be described as "general feeling of emptiness" (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003, p. 17). The second dimension, disengagement, is defined as "distancing oneself from one's work and experiencing negative attitudes toward the work object, work content, or one's work in general" (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003, p. 14).

The positive side of burnout is engagement, which also forms part of work-related wellbeing (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2001). Engagement refers to an optimistic, fulfilled and satisfied state that is defined by its three main dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). *Vigour* is described as an individual presenting vitality, high-corporate-citizen behaviour and mental resilience within the work context (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). *Dedication* is defined as "a

sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspirations, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 259). Lastly, *absorption* refers to employees enjoying their work to such an extent that they cannot detach themselves from it (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The second objective was to determine the relationship between conflict management styles, burnout and engagement among employees working within a higher education institution.

The study revealed statistically significant relationships between three conflict management styles (compromising, avoiding and dominating) and work-related wellbeing (burnout and engagement). More specifically, a statistically and practically negative relationship was found between the styles of compromising and engagement (with a medium effect). The compromising conflict management also showed a practically and statistically positive relationship with disengagement (with a large effect). These results indicate that, when the compromising conflict management style is used, the individual will be disengaged and negative whilst being less engaged and involved in their work.

These results indicate that academic personnel and support staff will be so involved in finding a mutual solution for the conflict that they become detached from their work (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Furthermore, due to giving up a part of personal gain academic personnel as well as support staff may experience negativity towards their work and be disengaged (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The compromising style for conflict management is predictive of job satisfaction and decreased burnout levels (Wright, 2011). Burnout is the antipole of engagement; it may be evident that the compromising style also leads to engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2001, 2002).

Furthermore, the relationships between the conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing were investigated. In this investigation, the conflict management style of avoidance showed a negative statistically and practically significant relationship with exhaustion (with a small effect). In addition, the avoiding conflict management style indicated a positive statistical and practical significant correlation with disengagement (with a small effect). The results indicate only a weak relationship between the conflict management style of avoidance and

burnout. Such a weak relationship can be ascribed to the understanding that academic personnel and support staff expressively try to extract themselves from the conflict situation and evade possible conflict (Demerouti *et al.*, 2003). It was found that academic personnel tend to avoid conflict when employed on a longer term, in order invest more time in academic tasks. This finding is supported by the study of Cetin and Hacifazlioglu (2004). In addition, academic personnel and support staff have to cope with an extremely high workload (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Due, & Stough, 2001), hence it might seem easier to avoid the conflict situation as a whole. In order to avoid the conflict situation academic personnel might find more time to complete tasks, which in turn will cut out the experience of burnout due to stress (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004). The conflict management style of avoidance holds certain detriments for an individual's health, one of which is burnout. This partially supports the findings of the present study that the style of avoiding is positively associated to disengagement (Friedman, Tidd, Currall, & Tsai, 2000; Wright, 2011).

The third objective was to determine whether conflict management styles predict the work-related wellbeing of employees working within a higher education institution.

The present study revealed specific predictions between conflict management styles and work-related wellbeing of academic personnel and support staff. The compromising and avoiding styles of conflict management showed to be predictors of work-related wellbeing. The conflict management style of compromising predicted decreased levels of engagement and, on the opposing side, increased levels of disengagement. Therefore the style of compromising is used particularly when a reciprocal beneficial approach is followed (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). In light of this fact, academic personnel and support staff may experience negativity because of making sacrifices for the conflict at hand, although they also gain from it (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Academic personnel's experience of conflict produces lower engagement levels. It is, therefore, evident that a less passionate attitude is projected because the individual's desires are not fully met.

The style for conflict management, namely avoiding, was shown to be predictive of decreased levels of exhaustion. Conflict may be experienced between academic personnel and support staff

because they work together to reach specific faculty goals (Pitman, 2000). This conflict are perceived as an additional work demand and they might find it easier to avoid the conflict situation, especially because individuals become less exhausted when all their efforts are not focused on the conflict (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). Seeing that conflict is experienced as another demand, and the lack of resources that exist to cope with demands, resulting in burnout academic personnel and support staff will find it simpler to avoid the conflict situation as a whole (Blinge, 2006).

The fourth objective was to determine how conflict management styles differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution.

The findings indicated significant differences between academic personnel and support staff's preferred use of conflict management styles. More explicitly, the results indicated that a preference in employing the dominating and compromising style is evident for the support staff when compared to academic personnel. The dominating style is characterised by a win-lose approach as well as forceful behaviour to win at all costs (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Support staff's working environment is characterised as highly stressful due to the multiple demands over against the lack of resources (i.e. increasing workloads, job insecurity, lack of promotion, rewards, and recognition) to cope with these demands (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). It is thus evident that there is an imbalance between job demands and job resources. This implies the challenge for support staff to cope with such a disproportion between demands and resources (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). It is evident that forceful behaviour may be adopted as a coping mechanism for support staff who struggle against the multitude of demands (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). In essence the ideal would be that support staff members learn to cope with the demands in order to work effectively together with academic personnel and thus help reach the overall objective of the organisation (Pitman, 2000).

Support staff may perceive their work as equally important to that of academic personnel, seeing that the one party cannot fully exist without the other to reach the general objectives of a faculty (Pitman, 2000). In addition, support staff members are obliged to take on supplementary roles and responsibilities. In these cases the use of the dominating conflict management styles will be

most successful to help them in dealing with demands of conflict. This finding from the present study is supported by a previous study by Rothmann and Essenco (2007). However, it has been found that the dominating style for conflict management is predictive of conflict and frustration and therefore the most ineffective style to use (Meyer, 2004). Since the support staff perceive themselves as inferior to academic personnel, it may seem effective to employ the dominating style, when collaborating on mutual goals within a faculty, even though interpersonal relationships may be compromised (Pitman, 2000). Therefore, support staff may have the need to impress on academic personnel the reciprocal importance of their work by adopting a more forceful approach to conflict during interaction (Pitman, 2000). However, support staff finds the building of effective interpersonal relationships with academic personnel as a challenge. This predicts the risk of determining the culture of higher education institutions only after conflict has occurred (Tierney, 1988).

Furthermore, the findings of the current study revealed that the compromising style for conflict management are used to a greater extent by support staff compared to academic personnel. The compromising style is considered to be used when both parties sacrifice something, therefore having to give up something before an effective solution can be reached (Dixit & Mallik, 2008; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Interpersonal relationships may take priority for support staff as the realisation of working together with academic personnel to reach mutual goals seems crucial (Pitman, 2000). Thus, the compromising style may take preference for support staff in conflict situations seeing that this may enhance the support staff's social support (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). In addition, the compromising style might be the more intelligent choice as support staff experience high levels of stress due to an overload in demands (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007). Moreover, support staff understands the culture of higher education institutions more clearly and habitually, with insight into the bigger picture. Therefore, support staff understands the benefits of adopting the compromising style to reach reciprocal solutions for the conflict situation (Tierney, 1988). Supporting the above-mentioned discussion, it was found that support staff comprehends the culture of the higher education institution and is therefore more inclined to succeed in curbing conflicts (Tierney, 1988).

The fifth objective was to determine how burnout and engagement differ between the academic personnel and support staff within a higher education institution.

The results revealed no significant differences between the work-related wellbeing of both academic personnel and support staff. This finding is evident due to a correspondingly environment of stress, high demands and a lack of resources (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001). Both academic personnel and support staff experience high levels of stress and overpowering demands. Even though the demands differ between the groups, the stress perceived by individuals from the perspective groups may be similar, which may indicate that both groups experience the same levels of burnout and engagement in the institution (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Tytherleigh, Webba, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi & Boyd, 2003). Foregoing factors of burnout and engagement are job demands and job resources, which reveal the reason for academic personnel's and support staff's burnout or engagement (Jackson, Rothmann & Van de Vijver, 2006). Previous studies lack a clear comparison between academic personnel and support staff regarding work-related wellbeing. Hence, it is challenging to provide corroborating findings. However, literature does indicate increased levels of stress, burnout and exhaustion for academic personnel due to increased demands (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Blinge, 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2006). Similarly, support staffs' levels of exhaustion are found to be extremely high (Rothmann & Essenco, 2007).

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The present study has definite limitations that are important to note. Firstly, the cross-sectional research design employed in the present study, only measures participants at one point in time. As a result, it was not possible to note underlying relationships (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011; Menard, 2002). Secondly, self-report questionnaires were used to gather information from participants. Self-report measures are known for bias, compromised validity and concerns whether essential interferences can be drawn from the data (Chan, 2009). The self-report questionnaires also raise apprehensions about shared variance due to the lack of understanding, or misunderstanding of constructs and words or phrases in the questionnaires (Chan, 2009). Thirdly, academic personnel' and support staff's styles for conflict management

was only measured among their peers and not compared with their superiors and subordinates. Fourthly, no differences were found between the work-related wellbeing of support staff and academic personnel. Lastly, a combination of a quota and convenient sampling method was used to conduct the current study. Both these sampling methods raise specific concerns for the researcher, one of which is bias and prejudice (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). This means participants may be chosen based on the researchers' convenience as well as their availability.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Notwithstanding the limitations as noted above, the current study also has important recommendations for higher education institutions and for future research as it related to the final objective of the study.

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisations

The following recommendations can be made for future research and higher education institutions in South Africa, forgoing from Rahim's proposition of diagnosis, investigation and intervention Rahim (2002, 2011, 2015). Firstly, it is important that management of such institutions realise the impact of conflict in terms of its functional and dysfunctional nature through diagnosis and investigation. An effective management resolution is to manage conflict rather than dismiss it, following an intervention as proposed by Rahim (Rahim, 2002). It is advantageous for managements of higher education institutions to implement "effective macro-level" interventions by which to reduce the dysfunctional effects of conflict on organisational outcomes (Rahim, 2002 p. 208). The efficiency of the institutions as well as learning can be optimised if management implements these specific interventions (Rahim, 2002).

Secondly, managements of higher education institutions are made aware of the most prevalent styles for conflict management in the organisation. It is recommended that management develop and implement certain interventions so that the conflict can be managed and not be negated (Rahim, 2002). Therefore, it is important to note that individuals can change their style of dealing with conflict over time, depending on the situation (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu, Van Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2004).

Thirdly, it is important for the higher education institution to understand the value of being aware of the different conflict management styles and its impact on academic personnel's and support staff's work-related wellbeing (i.e. burnout or engagement). Both the academic personnel and support staff can be sensitised to the specific preferred styles for conflict management to use with peers. Then they would be able to identify the most applicable conflict management style to use with peers, as well as understand why colleagues react in certain ways when conflict arises.

Fourthly, according to Pitman (2000), academic personnel and support staff has negative perceptions of one another that can influence their relationship. Certain types of conflict also have adverse effects on individuals (Rahim, 2002). Therefore, it is important that individuals are aware of the styles for conflict management that they use themselves. Furthermore, as academic personnel and support staff had interpersonal relationships where certain forms of conflict may arise, it is important for the individual to understand the preferred conflict management style that can be used to facilitate effective interpersonal relationships.

Fifthly, higher education institutions' management will also benefit from understanding how the different conflict management styles impacts on academic personnel and support staff's work-related wellbeing. Higher education institutions' setting is described as a highly stressful environment (Tytherleigh *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, it is important to understand why employees' different styles to manage conflict have an effect on their burnout and engagement. This understanding is especially important because it will enable higher education institutions to preserve the wellness of their employees, resulting in lower rates of staff turnover and absenteeism, and promote job performance (Rahim, 2011). If higher education institutions could ascertain the burnout and engagement levels of their employees, intervention programmes can be implemented to decrease levels of employees' burnout and increase their levels of engagement.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

Specific recommendation can be made for future research. Firstly, it is recommended that a longitudinal research design be used since it gives the researcher the capacity to measure participants over an elongated period so that more conclusions can be drawn (De Vos *et al.*,

2011, Menard, 2002). Secondly, future researchers will find it beneficial to include the styles for conflict management that individuals' use with both supervisors and subordinates. It may help the researcher to understand the depth of the results as well as provide a better representation of the outcomes. Thirdly, it is recommended that additional samples in similar higher education institutions and institutes be measured across South Africa by also adopting different sampling techniques (e.g. probability sampling). This will enable researchers to generalise the results of their study. Fourthly, the results indicate no difference between the work-related wellbeing states of academic personnel and support staff. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers conduct similar studies on samples in different higher education institutions with regard to their work-related wellbeing.

REFERENCES

- Barkhuizen, N., & Rothmann, S. (2008). Occupational stress of academic staff in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Psychology, 38*(2), 321-336. doi:10.1177/008124630803800205
- Bilge, F. (2006). Examining the burnout of academics in relation to job satisfaction and other factors. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 34*(9), 1151-1160. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2006.34.9.1151>
- Cetin, M. O., & Hacifazlioglu, O. (2004). Academics' conflict management styles. *Dogus Üniversitesi Dergisi, 5*(2), 155-162
- Chan, D. (2009). So why ask me? Are self-report data really that bad? *Statistical and methodological myths and urban legends: Doctrine, verity and fable in the organizational and social sciences*, 309-336. NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Chung-Yan, G. A., & Moeller, C. (2010). The psychosocial costs of conflict management styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 21*(4), 382-399. doi:10.1108/10444061011079930
- De Dreu, C. K. W., Van Dierendonck, D., & Dijkstra, M. T. M. (2004). Conflict at work and individual well-being. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 15*(1), 6-26. doi:10.1108/eb022905
- De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (2011). *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.) Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Vardakou, L., & Kantas, A. (2003). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 19*(1), 12-23. doi:10.1027//1015-5759.19.1.12
- Dixit, M., & Mallik, D. (2008). Assessing suitability of Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II in Indian family-owned-and-managed businesses. *International Journal of Business Insights and Transformation, 2*, 28-38. Retrieved from <http://www.ijbit.org>
- Friedman, R. A., Tidd, S. T., Currall, S. C., & Tsai, J. C. (2000). What goes around comes around: The impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 11*(1), 32-55.
- Gillespie, N. A., Walsh, M., Winefield, A. H., Due, J., & Stough, C. (2001). Occupational stress in universities: Staff perceptions of the causes, consequences and moderators of stress, work

- & stress. *An International Journal of Work, Health and Organisations*, 15(1), 53-72. doi:10.1080/02678370110062449
- Halbesleben, J. R. B., & Demerouti, E. (2005). The construct validity of an alternative measure of burnout: Investigating the English translation of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. *An International Journal of Work, Health and Stress*, 19(3), 208-220. doi:10.1080/02678370500340728
- Jackson, L. T., Rothmann, S., & Van de Vijver, F. J. (2006). A model of work-related well-being for educators in South Africa. *Stress and health*, 22(4), 263-274. doi: 10.1002/smi.1098
- Meyer, S. (2004). Organizational response to conflict: Future conflict and work outcomes. *Social Work Research*, 28(3), 183-190. doi: 10.1093/swr/28.3.183
- Menard, S. (2002). *Longitudinal research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Meyer, S. (2004). Organizational response to conflict: Future conflict and work outcomes. *Social Work Research*, 28(3), 183-190. doi: 10.1093/swr/28.3.183
- Pitman, T. (2000). Perceptions of academics and students as customers: A survey of administrative staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 22(2), 165-175. doi:10.1080/713678138
- Rahim, M. A. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(2), 368-376. doi:10.2307/255985
- Rahim, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(3), 206-235. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/eb022874>
- Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing conflict in organisations* (4th ed.). Piscataway, NJ: Transaction.
- Rahim, M. A. (2015). *Managing conflict in organizations*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publications.
- Rahim, M. A., & Magner, N. R. (1995). Confirmatory factor analysis of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: First-order factor model and its invariances across groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80(1), 122-132. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.80.1.122
- Rothmann, S., & Essenko, N. (2007). Job characteristics, optimism, burnout, and ill health of support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37(1), 135-152. doi: 10.1177/008124630703700110

- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293-315. doi: 10.1002/job.248
- Schaufeli, W. B., Martinez, I., Pinto, A., Salanova, M., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). Burnout and engagement in university students: A cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33, 464-481.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2001). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3, 71-92.
- Thomas, K. W., & Schmidt, W. H. (1976). A survey of managerial interest with respect to conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 19(2), 315-318. doi:10.2307/255781
- Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), p.2-21.
- Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webba, C., Cooper, C. L., & Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK higher education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research & Development* 24(1), 41-61. doi:10.1080/0729436052000318569
- Weider-Hatfield, D., & Hatfield, J. D., (1995). Relationships among conflict management styles, levels of conflict, and reactions to work. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 135(6), 687-698.
- Winefield, A. H., Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., Hapuarachchi, J., & Boyd, C. (2003). Occupational stress in Australian university staff: Results from a national survey. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10(1), 51-63. doi:10.1037/1072-5245.10.1.51
- Wright, K. B. (2011). A communication competence approach to healthcare worker conflict, job stress, job burnout, and job satisfaction. *Journal for Healthcare Quality*, 33(2), 7-14. doi:10.1111/j.1945-1474.2010.00094.x