

Comparative analysis of conflict dynamics within private and public sector organizations

Werner Havenga, (Honns. B.A., M.A.)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Philosophiae Doctor in the School of Human Resources Sciences
(Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences) at the
NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY, Potchefstroom Campus.

Promoter : Prof. J.C. Visagie

November 2004

Potchefstroom

***“Never in the field of
human conflict was so
much owed by so
many to so few.”***

**Sir Winston Churchill
18 June 1940**

Dedicated to Nadine, my true inspiration...

Acknowledgements

It is with gratitude to my Creator to Whom I owe all recognition and, Whom I sincerely believe, had already decided a long time ago that one day I may be allowed to complete this thesis.

I wish also to express special appreciation to the following persons who, during the course of this study, extended their assistance and support which enabled me to successfully complete my dissertation:

- Prof. Jan C. Visagie, my promoter, for his competent guidance, enthusiasm and motivation throughout the writing of this thesis.
- Prof. Kobus Slabbert and other members of the Department of Human Resources Management of the Rand Afrikaans University for their continuous support and interest.
- Mr. K. Phutiagae, Director of the Human Resources Management department of a local authority for his and his organization's participation in this research project.
- Mr. O. Fourie, Executive Director and Mr. L. du Plessis, Personnel Manager of the agricultural company for their participation in this research project.
- Dr. Coert Mommsen for his optimism, dedication, and psychological-technical editing of the thesis.
- Mr. Adam Martin of STATCON (RAU) for effectively conducting the statistical analyses.
- My parents, Klaas and Annette Havenga, and my sister Tanya, who through the years guided me to where I am today.
- My fiancé, Nadine Mommsen, for believing in me and providing the inspiration for my studies.

THE WRITER

NOVEMBER 2004

Table of contents

- Acknowledgements.....	I
- Table of contents.....	ii
- List of figures.....	xi
- List of graphs.....	xii
- List of tables.....	xiii
- Abstract.....	xvii
- Opsomming.....	xx
CHAPTER 1	
Introduction and problem statement.....	1
1.1 Introduction and motivation	1
1.2 Problem statement	4
1.3 Objectives of the study	7
1.4 Research methods to be used	7
1.4.1 Qualitative and quantitative research methods	8
1.4.2 Literature and source analysis	11
1.4.3 Empirical research	12
1.4.3.1 Survey design (cross-sectional)	12
1.4.3.2 Composition of the questionnaire	12
1.5 Disposition of the study	14
CHAPTER 2	
Social Psychological Theories on Conflict.....	17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Karl Marx's conflict theory	18
2.2.1 Basic assumptions of the conflict perspective	20
2.2.2 Causes or prerequisites for conflict	22

2.2.2.1	Poverty rights	22
2.2.2.2	Division of Labour	23
2.2.2.3	Poverty	23
2.2.2.4	Insufficient upward mobility	23
2.2.2.5	Competition	24
2.2.2.6	Unemployment	24
2.2.2.7	National unity	24
2.2.2.8	Political organization	25
2.2.2.9	Class consciousness	25
2.2.2.10	Alienation	25
2.3	Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory	26
2.3.1	Endogamic and exogamic conflict	29
2.3.2	Prerequisites for organizing conflict	30
2.3.2.1	Technical	30
2.3.2.2	Political	31
2.3.2.3	Social	31
2.3.3	Sources of conflict in organizations	33
2.3.4	A Comparison of Marx and Dahrendorf's theories	35
2.4	Views on organizational conflict	38
2.4.1	Classical view	38
2.4.2	Neoclassical view	40
2.4.2.1	Lewin's field theory	40
2.4.2.2	Deutsch: Theory of cooperation and competition	41
2.4.2.3	Von Neumann and Morgenstern's game theory	45
2.4.3	Modern view	47
2.5	Applicability of theories to the present study	49
2.6	Conclusion	52

CHAPTER 3

Elements of and approaches to conflict.....	55	
3.1	Introduction	55
3.2	The concept of conflict	56
3.3	Industrial relations and human resources perspectives on conflict	59
3.4	Types of conflict	61
3.4.1	Interpersonal conflict	61
3.4.2	Intrapersonal conflict	62
3.4.2.1	Approach – approach conflict	63
3.4.2.2	Approach – avoidance conflict	63
3.4.2.3	Avoidance -avoidance conflict	64
3.4.3	Intergroup conflict	64
3.4.4	Intragroup conflict	66
3.4.5	Intraorganizational conflict	68
3.4.5.1	Vertical conflict	68
3.4.5.2	Horizontal conflict	69
3.4.5.3	Line – staff conflict	69
3.4.5.4	Reasons for line and staff conflict	71
3.5	Intractable conflict	74
3.5.1	Characteristics of intractable conflict	74
3.5.2	Causes and consequences of intractable conflict	75
3.5.3	Intractable conflict interventions	77
3.6	Types of diversity and conflict	77
3.7	Functional and dysfunctional conflict and performance	79
3.8	Conclusion	83

CHAPTER 4

Evaluation of conflict sources and the conflict process.....	86	
4.1	Introduction	86
4.2	Sources of conflict	88
4.3	Mayer's "Wheel of Conflict"	90
4.4	Structural factors	91
4.5	Personal behaviour factors	95
4.6	Communication factors	98
4.7	Historical factors	99
4.8	Power factors	99
4.8.1	Structural and interpersonal sources of power	100
4.8.2	The implication of power regarding conflict	102
4.9	The conflict process	105
4.9.1	Pondy's organizational conflict model	106
4.9.1.1	Latent conflict	106
4.9.1.2	Perceived conflict	108
4.9.1.3	Felt conflict	108
4.9.1.4	Manifest conflict	108
4.9.1.5	Conflict aftermath	108
4.9.2	Robbins' conflict process model	109
4.9.2.1	Personal differences or incompatibility	109
4.9.2.2	Cognition and personalization	109
4.9.2.3	Intentions	110
4.9.2.4	Behaviour	110
4.9.2.5	Outcomes	111
4.10	Adapted conflict process model	112
4.11	Conclusion	114

CHAPTER 5

Conflict management style identification models.....	117	
5.1	Introduction	117
5.2	Thomas-Killman two-dimensional model (MODE)	119
5.3	Conflict management (CMS) model	122
5.3.1	Context or “relationship” as an area of relevance	122
5.3.2	Personal goals as an area of relevance	123
5.3.3	The two-dimensional approach	123
5.3.3.1	The 9/1 win-lose style	124
5.3.3.2	The 1/9 yield-lose style	125
5.3.3.3	The 9/9 synergistic style	125
5.3.3.4	The 1/1 lose-lose style	125
5.3.3.5	The 5/5 compromise style	125
5.3.4	Style response flexibility	126
5.4	Rahim’s two-dimensional model	127
5.4.1	Integrating style	128
5.4.2	Obliging style	129
5.4.3	Avoiding style	131
5.4.4	Dominating style	132
5.4.5	Compromising style	134
5.5	Conflict style and personality (Five-factor model)	139
5.5.1	Neuroticism	140
5.5.2	Extraversion	140
5.5.3	Agreeableness	141
5.5.4	Openness	141
5.5.5	Conscientiousness	142
5.5.6	Critique of the Five-factor model	143
5.6	Distributive and integrating dimensions	143
5.6.1	Problem-solving style	144
5.6.2	Bargaining style	144
5.7	Personality characteristics	145

5.8	Managing conflict – strategies and techniques	146
5.8.1	Strategies and techniques	147
5.8.1.1	Stimulation and management of functional conflicts	149
5.8.1.2	Destimulation and management of dysfunctional conflict	151
5.8.2	Methods of conflict in practice	155
5.8.3	The process of managing conflict	159
5.8.3.1	Diagnosis	159
5.8.3.2	Intervention	162
5.9	Conflict aftercare	162
5.10	Conclusion	164

CHAPTER 6

	Empirical research design and demographic data analysis.....	168
6.1	Introduction	168
6.2	The empirical research objectives	169
6.3	The hypotheses	170
6.3.1	General hypotheses	170
6.3.2	Statistical hypotheses	170
6.4	The scope of this research	170
6.5	The research environment	171
6.5.1	Local authority	171
6.5.2	Agricultural company	172
6.5.3	Demarcation of the environment	173
6.6	Research method	173
6.7	The measuring instruments	173
6.7.1	The questionnaire design	174
6.7.1.1	The ROC-II (Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II)	174
6.7.1.2	The designed questions (Sections)	176
6.7.1.3	Refinement or rephrasement of questions/statements	176
6.7.1.4	Questionnaire pre-testing	177
6.7.1.5	The Likert-scale	178

6.7.2	The sample	179
6.7.2.1	Local authority sample	179
6.7.2.2	Agricultural company sample	180
6.8	Method of data collection	181
6.9	Demographic characteristics of the respondents	182
6.9.1	Gender of respondents	182
6.9.2	Age distribution	182
6.9.3	Educational qualifications	183
6.9.4	Home language	184
6.9.5	Tenure	184
6.9.6	Respondents' departments of employment	185
6.9.7	Organization job-levels	186
6.10	Statistical analysis	186
6.10.1	Means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis	186
6.10.2	Validity and reliability of the measuring instrument	190
6.11	Conclusion	193

CHAPTER 7

Results of the study.....	184	
7.1	Introduction	184
7.2	Comparative results of causes of conflict (Section B)	185
7.3	Comparative results of conflict manifestation (Section C)	193
7.4	Statistical results on conflict-handling styles towards superiors (Section D)	198
7.4.1	Comparisons of gender as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)	198
7.4.2	Comparisons of age as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)	201
7.4.3	Comparisons of highest qualification achieved as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)	205

7.4.4	Comparisons of home language as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)	208
7.4.5	Comparisons of years in service as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)	210
7.5	Statistical results on conflict-handling styles towards peers (Section E)	213
7.5.1	Comparisons of gender as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peers)	215
7.5.2	Comparisons of age as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peers)	216
7.5.3	Comparisons of highest qualification achieved as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peers)	221
7.5.4	Comparisons of home language as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peer)	224
7.5.5	Comparison of years in service as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peers)	226
7.6	Comparative results on conflict-handling styles within and between the organizations	229
7.6.1	Comparative results of conflict-handling styles between groups in the local authority	229
7.6.2	Comparative results of conflict-handling styles between groups in the agricultural organization	231
7.6.3	Comparative results of conflict-handling styles of respondent and his superior between the two organizations	232
7.6.4	Comparative results of conflict-handling styles of respondent and his peer between the two organizations	233
7.7	Conclusion	235

CHAPTER 8		
Review, recommendations and conclusion.....	248	
8.1	Introduction	248
8.2	The literature study	248
8.2.1	Theoretical orientation	248
8.2.2	The elements and approaches to conflict	250
8.2.3	Conflict sources and processes	251
8.2.4	Managing and handling conflict	252
8.3	Findings from the literature study	253
8.4	Findings from the empirical study	255
8.5	Limitations of the study	262
8.6	Future research	263
8.7	Contribution of the study	265
8.7.1	Theoretical contribution	266
8.7.2	Practical contribution	267
8.7.3	Methodological value	267
8.8	Recommendations	268
8.9	Achievement of research objectives	271
8.10	Conclusion	272
List of references.....	274	
Annexure A.....	289	

List of figures

1.1	Alternatives of linking quantitative and qualitative data	10
1.2	Disposition of the study	15
3.1	Line and staff organization (1)	72
3.2	Line and staff organization (2)	72
3.3	Conflict and performance	82
4.1	The wheel of conflict	91
4.2	Levels of conflict	113
4.3	Conflict-process model	114
5.1	Two-dimensional conflict model	119
5.2	Model of conflict management styles	124
5.3	Rahims' two-dimensional model of styles of handling conflict	127
5.4	The process of managing organizational conflict	160

List of graphs

6.1	Skewness and kurtosis example : Question B_6	188
7.1	Comparative analysis of groups within the local authority	241
7.2	Comparative analysis of groups within the agricultural organization	242
7.3	Comparative analysis of conflict with superior (section D) in both organizations	244
7.4	Comparative analysis of conflict with peer (section E) in both organizations	245

List of tables

2.1	A typology of key elements of discussed conflict theories	51
3.1	Constructive approaches to addressing intractable conflict	77
4.1	Typology of power	101
4.2	Conflict intensity continuum	111
5.1	Classification of conflict-handling models	137
5.2	Uses of five styles of conflict handling	138
5.3	Styles for Handling Conflict	166
6.1	The layout of the questionnaire	175
6.2	Biographical data of the respondents	183
6.3	Local authority department in which employed	185
6.4	Agricultural organization department in which employed	185
6.5	Local authority and Agric organization job levels	186
6.6	Descriptive statistics regarding perception of conflict (Section B) for both organizations in total	189
6.7	Descriptive statistics regarding conflict-handling styles (Section D & E) for both organizations in total	189
6.8	Reliability and validity analysis of sections D and E	191
6.9	Factor-analysis and percentage variances for sections D and E	193
7.1	Results for determining the extent to which given factors contribute to conflict in the local authority (Section B)	197
7.2	Results for determining the extent to which given factors contribute to conflict in the Agricultural organization (Section B)	199
7.3	Analysis of combined results for the causes of conflict	201
7.4	Analysis of combined results for the causes of conflict (Recoded)	202
7.5	Results of analysis on what influence conflict has on the employees of the local authority	205
7.6	Results of analysis on what influence conflict has on the employees of the agricultural company	206
7.7	Comparison of effects of conflict on employees of the local authority and agric company.	207

7.8	Employee awareness of policy documents and willingness to participate in training program	208
7.9	Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and his superior (local authority)	210
7.10	Group statistics on the handling-styles of different genders between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	210
7.11	Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and the superior (agricultural company)	211
7.12	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age groups (local authority)	212
7.13	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	213
7.14	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age (agricultural organization)	214
7.15	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and the superior in the agricultural organization	215
7.16	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: highest qualification (local authority)	216
7.17	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the employer and the superior in the agricultural organization	217
7.18	Independent samples test against the background variable: highest qualification between respondent and his superior (agricultural organization)	218
7.19	Independent samples test against the background variable: home language between respondent and his superior (local authority)	220
7.20	Groups statistics on the handling-styles of different home-languages between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	220

7.33	Independent samples test against the background variable: highest qualification between respondent and his superior (agricultural organization)	234
7.34	Independent samples test against the background variable: home language between respondent and his peer (local authority)	235
7.35	Groups statistics on the handling-styles of different home- languages between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	236
7.36	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (local authority)	237
7.37	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different years of service between the respondent and his peer in the local authority	238
7.38	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (agricultural organization)	239
8.1	Postulates about conflict management	270

7.8	Employee awareness of policy documents and willingness to participate in training program	208
7.9	Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and his superior (local authority)	210
7.10	Group statistics on the handling-styles of different genders between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	210
7.11	Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and the superior (agricultural company)	211
7.12	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age groups (local authority)	212
7.13	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	213
7.14	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age (agricultural organization)	214
7.15	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and the superior in the agricultural organization	215
7.16	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: highest qualification (local authority)	216
7.17	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the employer and the superior in the agricultural organization	217
7.18	Independent samples test against the background variable: highest qualification between respondent and his superior (agricultural organization)	218
7.19	Independent samples test against the background variable: home language between respondent and his superior (local authority)	220
7.20	Groups statistics on the handling-styles of different home-languages between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	220

7.21	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (local authority)	222
7.22	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different years of service between the respondent and the superior in the local authority	223
7.23	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (agricultural organization)	224
7.24	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different years of service between the respondent and the superior in the agricultural organization	225
7.25	Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and the peer (local authority)	226
7.26	Independent samples test against the background variable: gender between respondent and the peer (agricultural organization)	228
7.27	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age (local authority)	228
7.28	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age- groups between the respondent and his peer in the local authority	229
7.29	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age (agricultural organization)	230
7.30	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age- groups between the respondent and his peer in the agricultural organization	231
7.31	Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable highest qualification (local authority)	232
7.32	Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age- groups between the respondent and his peer in the local authority	233

Abstract

Title: A comparative analysis of conflict dynamics in private and public sector organizations

Key words: Public sector organization, private sector organization, conflict handling/ management, conflict sources/ causes, conflict models, conflict strategy, conflict types, conflict styles, local authority, agricultural company.

In South Africa, private and public sector organizations have been experiencing conflict at an increasing rate during the past few decades and especially the last ten years. The prominence and high level with which conflict is regarded in this new democracy has made the study of this phenomenon more relevant. Especially within business organizations, between individuals, groups, and at management level, the influence of transformation and affirmative action has steadily affected interpersonal and intergroup relations. This situation makes it more difficult to handle or to manage. The lack of knowledge experienced in many business organizations causes mismanagement of conflict which eventually (directly or indirectly) affects the productivity of the employee corps and subsequently, the effectivity or profitability of the organization.

The objective of this study was to establish by means of a comparative theoretical and empirical analysis, the nature, causes and handling/ management styles of conflict within a public and a private sector organization. Being respectively non-profit and profit driven organizations and having introduced affirmative action and transformation at different degrees, it was possible to evaluate the effect with regard to conflict.

The research method followed in this study was both qualitative and quantitative. In the first five chapters a theoretical, qualitative approach was applied. Different theories of conflict, from the classical, neo-classical to modern systems, were analysed in order to establish sources of conflict. From this

discussion, an analysis of conflict which was viewed by the theories of both Karl Marx and Ralph Dahrendorf to be a social interactive process characterized by force, strife and animosity, was accepted to form the basis of the study regarding the sources of conflict.

Departing from this basis the various concepts of conflict as developed in the literature were studied in a comparative way. This was followed by a comparative analysis of conflict handling processes for which an adapted conflict process model was presented. The elements of this model form the core research of this study. Analysis of three key conflict handling style models (Thomas-Killman, ROC-II and CMS) were consequently compared to decide which one would be the most suitable for the empirical survey.

The second part of this study consisted of a quantitative comparison of causes, handling styles and manifestation of conflict on an interpersonal basis within a local authority and an agricultural company. This was done by means of questionnaires containing designed variables obtained from the qualitative section of the study and a standardized section borrowed from Rahim's ROC-II model questionnaire.

The descriptive statistical analysis was done with the SPSS-program in consultation with the STATCON Bureau of the Rand Afrikaans University. The empirical survey validated the viewpoints brought forward in the qualitative part of the study. By way of the results obtained from the analysis, the four hypotheses which were linked to the set objectives of the study were validated.

The four hypothesis are:

- A significant difference exists with regard to the causes of conflict between a local authority and agricultural organization.
- A significant difference exists between employees of the local authority and the agricultural organization's perception of what effect conflict has on them.

- A significant difference exists in the frequency with which different conflict-handling styles are used when compared to different background variables in both organizations.
- A significant difference exists in the frequency with which different conflict-handling styles are used amongst employees of the agricultural organization and local authority

Explicit findings with regard to the literature (qualitative) and empirical (quantitative) study were brought forward, and practical recommendations for management as well as recommendations for further research were made.

Opsomming

Titel: 'n Vergelykende analise van konfliktdinamika in publieke en privaatsektor organisasies.

Sleuteltermes: Publieke sektor organisasie, privaat sektor organisasie, konflikthantering/ bestuur, konflikbronne/ oorsake, konflikmodelle, konflikstrategieë, konfliktypes, konflikstyle, plaaslike owerheid, landboumaatskappy.

In Suid Afrika het private en publieke sektor organisasies konflik in 'n toenemende mate die afgelope aantal dekades en in besonder, die laaste tien jaar begin ervaar. Die prominensie en hoë frekwensie van konflik op beide mikro- en makrovlak binne 'n nuwe demokrasie, het die studie van hierdie verskynsel meer relevant gemaak. Veral binne besigheidsorganisasies, tussen individue, groepe en op bestuursvlak het die impak van transformasie en regstellende aksie gelydelik interpersoonlike en intergroep verhoudings begin beïnvloed. Hierdie toestand maak dit moeiliker om konflik te bestuur of te hanteer. Die gebrek aan kennis wat ervaar word in baie besighede het wanbestuur van konflik tot gevolg, wat uiteindelik direk of indirek die produktiwiteit van die werknemerkorps en die doeltreffendheid of winsgewendheid van die organisasies affekteer.

Die doelstellings van hierdie studie was om deur middel van 'n vergelykende teoretiese en empiriese analise, die aard, oorsake en hantering/ bestuurstyle van konflik binne 'n publieke en privaatsektor organisasie te bepaal. Omdat wins- en nie-winsgedrewe organisasies by die studie betrokke is en hulle regstellende aksie en transformasie teen verskillende tempos ingestel het, was dit moontlik om te die effek van konflik na te gaan.

Die navorsingsmetode wat in hierdie studie gevolg is, was beide kwalitatief en kwantitatief van aard. In die eerste vyf hoofstukke is 'n teoretiese, kwalitatiewe

benadering gevolg. Verskillende konflikteorië wat wissel van die klassieke, neo-klassieke tot die moderne denke, is ontleed om sodoende die bronne of oorsake van konflik te bepaal. Vanuit hierdie bespreking en ontleding van konflik as 'n sosiaal-interaksionele verskynsel wat gekenmerk word aan magstrewe, stryd en vyandigheid, vorm die teorie van Karl Marx en Ralph Dahredorf die basis van die studie met betrekking tot die oorsake van konflik.

Met hierdie basis as vertrekpunt is die verskillende konsepte van konflik, soos ontwikkel in die literatuur, op 'n vergelykende analise van konflikhanteringsprosesse benader waaruit 'n aangepaste konflikproses model ontwikkel is. Die elemente van hierdie model vorm die navorsingskern van die studie. Vervolgens is die konflikhanteringsstyl modelle van Thomas-Killman, Rahim se ROC-II en dié van die CMS vergelyk om te bepaal watter een die geskikste sou wees vir die empiriese gedeelte van die studie.

Die tweede gedeelte van die studie bestaan uit 'n kwantitatiewe vergelyking van oorsake, konflikhanteringsstyle en die manifestasie van konflik op interpersoonlike vlak binne 'n plaaslike owerheid en 'n landbou maatskappy. Dit is gedoen deur gebruik te maak van vraelyste wat selfontwikkelde vrae vanuit die teoretiese gedeelte bevat het, asook 'n gestandaardiseerde gedeelte van 'n vraelys wat ontleen is van Rahim se ROC-II model.

Die beskrywende statistiese analise is gedoen met behulp van die SPSS-program en in konsultasie met die STATCON buro van die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit. Die empiriese studie het die afleidings en resultate wat verkry is uit die kwalitatiewe gedeelte van die studie positief bevestig. Hierdeur is die vier hipoteses wat verbind is aan die gestelde doelstellings van die studie, ook as waar bewys. Die hipoteses is:

- 'n Noemenswaardige verskil bestaan in die waarneming van die oorsake van konflik tussen 'n plaaslike owerheid en 'n landbou organisasie.

- 'n Noemenswaardige verskil bestaan tussen werknemers van 'n plaaslike owerheid en dié van 'n landbou-organisasie se persepsie ten opsigte van die invloed wat konflik op hulle het.
- 'n Noemenswaardige verskil bestaan in die gebruiksfrekwensie van verskillende konflikhanteringstyle wanneer vergelyk word met verskillende agtergrond veranderlikes in beide organisasies.
- 'n Noemenswaardige verskil bestaan in die gebruiksfrekwensie van verskillende konflikhanteringstyle tussen werknemers van die plaaslike owerheid en dié van die landbou-organisasie.

Duidelike bevindings met betrekking tot die literatuur (kwalitatiewe) en die empiriese (kwantitatiewe) studie is gemaak en praktiese aanbevelings vir bestuur sowel as aanbevelings vir verdere navorsing is gemaak.

Chapter 1

Introduction and problem statement

1.1 Introduction and motivation

Today more than ever, businesses are placing stringent demands on their employee-, financial-, and capital resources, as well as regarding time management. In addition to these demands, the situation may be increasingly complicated by a combination of close working quarters, and people of different cultures, races, political affiliations and social classes working together. Factors such as these can create innumerable complicated situations within organizations which may eventually develop into some form of conflict. Conflicting values and points of view within groups is a common occurrence. According to McNamara (2003:25), conflict is, and can have a negative influence on an effective working environment. By implication this means that any type of organization (whether private sector businesses, tertiary or primary education institutions, government institutions, local authorities and others) can become the victim of conflict. Conflict is not a modern day phenomenon, but has been in existence since the creation of humankind. It has formed the foundation of the way in which human beings have changed and lived in this world (Van Veelen, 1995:31).

Because social structure is influenced by human interaction, the presence of conflict potential can be expected to manifest in the structures referred to, to a lesser or greater extent and may be either constructive or destructive. Conflict can be seen as being inherent to any organizational system where individuals are involved or when, as a result of group co-operation, interdependence between individuals exists. Organizational structures are in essence, networks of interdependent subunits which continuously struggle to improve their individual positions, while simultaneously being dependant each other. The

organizational network, according to Mastenbroek (1993:10), is composed of individual parties together with their individual mutual relations. Regarding individual parties, (subunits, individuals, groups) the interactional dynamics may manifest differently in different contexts, regarding for instance, the principle that outcomes of intentional acts are often unintentional and unforeseen. Furthermore, the task-oriented and socio-emotional relational aspects are combined with relational aspects involving power and the allocation of scarce resources (Mastenbroek, 1993:13).

Pfeffer and Veiga (1999) in Alper (2000:625) pay special attention to, and recognize the impact of the competitive marketplace. It is also stated that as groups confront many issues and discussions, they must be able to manage conflict adequately to be successful. Groups or individuals that are confident that they can deal with conflict are likely to work more productively, whilst those who doubt their conflict management abilities may become demoralized (Ilgen, 1999:129-139).

Although research regarding groups and conflict have proceeded somewhat independently, recent studies (Nemeth & Owens, 1996; Amason, 1996 and Jehn, 1997), according to Alper (2000:626), emphasize the critical role of conflict in groups. Groups must contend among other issues, with conflict regarding effective and fair distribution of work and rewards and the best ways to accomplish their goals (Wageman; 1995:147).

Available literature reveals a variety of interpretations of conflict. These were skilfully summarised by Pondy (1987:298) more than three decades ago. He observed that definitions differ regarding various aspects of conflict while simultaneously emphasizing for instance, antecedent conditions of conflicting behaviour; affective states of individuals (the perception or awareness of conflict situations); and the manifestation of conflict charged behaviour (passive resistance to overt aggression).

Van Uytrecht (1995:30) stressed that conflict is essentially pluralist in origin. However, conflict is also accepted as a feature of society by neo-Marxian industrial relation observers. Unitarists on the other hand, whilst accepting the reality of conflict, view it as pathological and indicative of a breakdown in management systems, or as the result of work of agent provocateurs (Van Aarde and Nieumeÿer in Slabbert: 1989:21-25). The management of organizational conflict requires the diagnosis of, and intervention with respect to, affective and substantive conflict at interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels and the styles (strategies) used to handle these conflicts (Rahim, 2002:206).

According to Bodtker & Jameson (2001:259) a growing body of research suggests that conflict can be beneficial to groups and organizations (e.g. De Drew & Van de Vliert: 1997). However, in order to manage conflict effectively, organizational members must take cognisance of recent literature and the role of elements such as communication, emotions, culture, and supremacy aspirations with regard to conflict and conflict management. It can be contended that in doing so, it may open opportunities for using generic conflict management strategies in the work environment.

In South Africa where transformation and affirmative action have been underway for the past ten years and where it is believed that race, culture and political affiliation play a predominant role (especially at national, provincial and local government levels), the need to establish the actual causes of conflict is important. Special attention needs to be paid to the role of human behavioural processes with regard to conflict. Legislation in South Africa makes it compulsory for private sector organizations to adhere to the guidelines of transformation and affirmative action.

Neill (2000:42) states that as a result of the new policy of affirmative action and management of local authorities, conflict takes place at an increasing rate in politics, culture, language and at different social levels. Affirmative action and

institutional change normally elicits opposition which results in emotional reaction and eventually, conflict (Nell, 2000:59).

1.2 Problem statement

Considering organizational changes, affirmative action programmes, scarce resources, management changes and behavioural processes within public and private sector organizations, it is believed that conflict potential may be increasing within these sectors of the South African economy: Conflict between personnel on both horizontal and vertical levels (either between individuals or groups) can no longer be ignored or left unattended. It is necessary that members of groups (and especially leaders) should have sufficient knowledge regarding the nature and impact of individual and group processes. They should understand the influence of these human behavioural processes on individuals and groups as well as the effects which lead to the development of conflict (Crawley, 1995:35).

In the South African context, limited empirical information is available concerning local authorities' and private sector businesses' understanding of conflict and its management. As far as labour disputes are concerned, well defined procedures are in place in terms of the prescribed rules of the labour law (Act 66 of 1995) regarding the management of conflict. These procedures however, do not provide solutions for the many different forms and types of conflict which may arise in any given organization at any given time. A study of the available literature, policies, research, and a personal examination of local authorities and private sector businesses, revealed that little is known about the way in which conflict influences the activities of these two sectors or the way in which it should be managed. This has indicated the need for scientific research regarding the nature, extent, control and management of conflict by local authorities as well as the private sector businesses. A comparative analysis of the way in which these types of organizations manage conflict could present data which may facilitate a better understanding of the problem and provide management options for some of the dilemmas encountered.

A study of secondary literature relating to the subject indicates that no comparative analysis of conflict has been undertaken thus far regarding different institutions sharing similar business, industrial, government or other group characteristics. Studies are mainly concerned with conflict at the interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels and the styles (strategies) used to manage conflict (e.g. See: De Church & Marks, 2001; Moberg, 2002; Gross & Guerrero, 2000; Tidd & Friedman, 2002; Alper, Tjosvold & Law, 2000; Bell & Ford, 1999; Imazi & Ohbuchi, 2002). In the "Handbook of conflict resolution" Deutsch & Coleman (2000) present the work of twenty one authors who contributed twenty six articles relating to interpersonal and intergroup processes; intrapsychic processes, personal differences; creativity and change; difficult conflicts; culture and conflict; and models of practice. In one way or the other these studies underscribed what has been said above. The results of these studies tend to confirm similar findings to a greater or lesser extent.

The question that can be presented is: Can the extent to which the influence of a new governmental system, the formation of social groups, the limited availability of resources, employee incompetence, management and other factors, contribute to the escalation of conflict between individuals and/or groups? The answer to this question lies in scientific investigation. Scientific investigations are an important method for providing new facts and solutions for problems regarding conflict.

From what has been said so far it can be assumed that conflict exists within local authorities and private sector businesses. Havenga (2002) has established that conflict exists within a local authority and that the personnel of the particular local authority which was studied, employed five conflict management styles as depicted in the Thomas-Killman (1976) model. These styles can be classified as cooperation, competition, compromise, avoidance and accommodation.

The aim of this study is to broaden the scope of the previous work of Havenga and to establish on an empirical basis, if these findings can be extrapolated and

applied to other local authorities and private sector businesses. A comparative study of these two types of organizations may be able to indicate if conflict manifests as an integral part of local authorities and private sector businesses in general. Furthermore, the supposition that very little or no knowledge exists with regard to causes, results or management styles of conflict is accepted. The theoretical models of Dahrendorf and Marx (refer chapter 2) will be used to establish and discuss causes of conflict. Rahim's two-dimensional model is to serve as the basis for determining conflict management styles (refer chapter 5).

The discussion so far has revealed that conflict is being studied extensively throughout the world from different perspectives. As far as can be determined, no direct comparative analysis has been done with respect to different types of institutions using Thomas-Killman's five factor model , Rahim's ROC-II model , or any other model.

Considering the above, the following research questions can be presented:

- a.) What are the main sources of conflict in public and private sector organizations?
- b.) How does conflict develop within public and private sector organizations?
- c.) Assuming that conflict does exist within these systems, is there a significant difference in the conflict management styles of public and private sector organization personnel on both vertical and horizontal levels?
- d.) Will a comparative analysis of conflict as experienced and managed by public and private sector organizations render significant additional knowledge that could contribute to the optimal management of conflict?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The primary aim of this study is to establish by means of a comparative theoretical and empirical analysis, the nature, causes and management styles of conflict in a private and a public sector organization.

In order to reach this goal, the following objectives will have to be attained:

- a.) To determine by way of a literature study, how specific conflict theories are conceptualised and applied in the study and clarification of conflict and to compare these theories;
- b.) To determine by way of a literature study, the various causes of conflict, conflict management styles and conflict process models and to compare these different sources, management styles and process models with each other.
- c.) To determine and compare by means of an empirical study based on objectives (a) and (b) namely:
 - What elements precipitate conflict within public and private sector businesses and the extent of their influence.
 - How Rahim's model elucidates conflict management styles.
 - Whether there is a significant difference in the handling or management of conflict within local authorities and private sector businesses.
 - The effect conflict has on the employees of these two types of organizations.

1.4 Research methods to be used.

The research study will be both qualitative and quantitative. The first few chapters will be exploratory and descriptive. Apart from answering the question "what" (exploratory research) the "how" and the "who" (descriptive research) will also be focussed on. The works of Emory & Cooper (1991), Babbie (1992) and

Neumann (2003) will serve as guidelines regarding the scientific research requirements of this study.

1.4.1 Qualitative and quantitative research methods

The research questions formulated in 1.2 above address a need to develop extended and additional knowledge about how public and private sector businesses perceive, experience and manage conflict as well as how the phenomenon of conflict relates to contextual factors. Gaining additional knowledge can be accomplished through qualitative and/or quantitative research.

When undertaking quantitative research, it is often found that quantitative researchers are more concerned about measurement issues than are qualitative researchers. Quantitative researchers treat measurement as a distinct step in the research process that occurs prior to data collection and special terminology and techniques are developed for this (Neuman, 2003:170). As part of the quantitative process, variables are converted into specific actions during the planning stage that occurs before and separate from gathering or analysing data. Well defined techniques are used to produce quantitative data. Thus, moving from abstract ideas or variables, to specific data collection techniques and eventually to precise numerical information produced by these techniques (Neuman, 2003:171).

Measurement on a qualitative basis is approached differently. Here ways are developed to capture and express variable and non-variable concepts, ranging from the use of different alternatives to numbers. An inductive approach is adopted, by way of which specific phenomena of social life are identified and described. Theories are developed for new concepts resulting from this process which allows for measurement and integration. Qualitative research however, does not convert all observation into a single, common medium such as numbers. Instead it may facilitate flexible, ongoing processes of measurement which can be applied to present data in various forms. Qualitative research

usually requires reflection regarding ideas before data collection, but many (if not most) of the concepts are developed during the actual collection of data. Data and concepts are re-examined and reflected on simultaneously and interactively (Neuman, 2004: 170-171).

An important aim of this study is to examine and address the different phenomena relating to conflict in organizations. This may indicate that qualitative methods should be considered which would include a review of relevant literature in an attempt to search for new facts. In addition, it is important that qualitative theories be verified by empirical evidence. This premise may indicate that quantitative methods should be applied, especially in order to facilitate the comparison of similarities and differences relating to the two types of organizations to be examined. It therefore seems apparent that the problem stated in 1.2 above, could be addressed more effectively by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The view that different methodological approaches not only address different phenomena but also may be in support of each other, seems to indicate that research should contribute to a better understanding of the problem and produce generalisable results: *"We typically need multiple methods or techniques which are imperfect in different ways. When multiple methods are applied, the imperfections in each method tend to cancel one another, and the resulting data are less ambiguous"* (Weick, 1979:21).

Miles & Huberman (1994:41) after developing data from previous research, summarise their reasons for combining qualitative and quantitative data as follows:

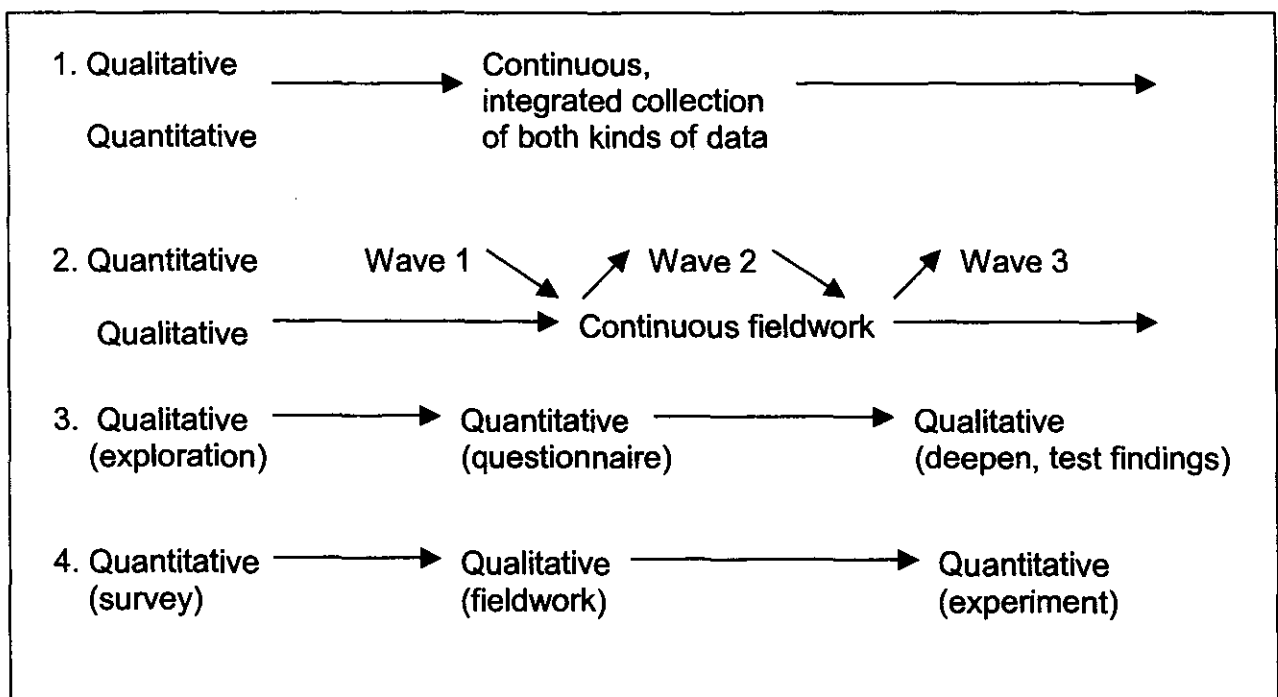
- It allows for confirmation of findings by way of triangulation;
- It furthers elaboration or analysis development, producing richer details;
- It initiates new lines of thinking by directing attention to the unexpected or to paradoxes;

- It facilitates sequential data collection by expanding the scope and breadth of the study.

Considering the research questions and the objectives of this study and taking into account what has been discussed above, firm justification can be found for utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods. In figure 1.1 Miles & Huberman (1994:41) illustrate four sequential alternatives of linking quantitative and qualitative data that point to several possible research designs.

The chosen design for this study can be said to belong to the third variant. In the initial chapters of this study, exploratory qualitative literature which facilitates the development of quantitative instrumentation (questionnaires), will be examined.

Figure 1.1 Alternatives of linking quantitative and qualitative data



Source: Miles & Huberman, 1994:41

The questionnaire findings will eventually be presented as qualitative material. This will be compared with the theoretical data and the final findings and results will be presented in the last chapter of the study.

1.4.2 Literature- and source analysis

The dichotomy between theory and research is an artificial one. The value of theory and the importance of conducting thorough research is essential. Researchers who proceed without theory rarely conduct top-quality research and frequently find themselves in quandary. Likewise, it should also be noted that theorists who proceed without linking theory to research or anchoring it to empirical reality are in jeopardy of incomprehensible speculation and conjecture Neumann (2003:66).

The objective of this study will be to initially identify a theoretical basis as vantage point for research purposes. Theories of conflict as proposed by Marx and Dahrendorf will be explained and compared in order to ascertain how 19th century and mid- 20th century theorists interpreted power, exploitation, struggle, inequality and alienation as part of groups that have opposing interests.

Furthermore, brief attention will be devoted to the more recent theories of Kurt Lewin (1935), Morton Deutsch (1949), Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944), and other behaviouralists, industrial sociologists and psychologists and management scientists such as Rahim (1974; 1986) and Robbins (1986; 2003).

Literature with regard to conflict dynamics is diverse in nature. Various books, journals and other literature will be studied in order to explain the nature, causes, reasons for conflict and different conflict management styles. This will be applied to local authorities and private sector businesses wherever possible, and then verified empirically. An initial electronic search will be done to determine if adequate literature exists regarding the latter as well as related subjects.

An Inmagic-search will be consulted following entry of the following principle keywords: **conflict; conflict management; conflict theories; conflict analysis; conflict resolution; conflict study; conflict styles; conflict systems; conflict strategies, dispute resolution and conflict models.**

The databases below have been consulted to determine the availability of literature sources:

- Catalogues of libraries of the Rand Afrikaans University, North-West University, Unisa and University of Pretoria.
- The Joint Catalogues for Dissertations.
- Nexus (HSRC).
- Ebscohost
- African Digital Library (ADL)
- Repertorium of South African Journals
- Apart from the above databases, contact was established with the following researchers abroad who will assist in the search for recent applicable literature in their respective countries:
 - = Prof. Hans Crÿns, Vlerick School of Management, Gent, Belgium.
 - = Dr. Enno Masurel, Free University of Amsterdam, Holland.
 - = Dr. Andre Nÿsen, EIM, Zoetermeer, Holland.
 - = Prof. Sandra King, University of San Diego, California, USA.

1.4.3 Empirical research

1.4.3.1 Survey design (cross-sectional)

Accepted scientific theories as well as the analysis of these theories will provide the basis for the study in the first three to five chapters. An empirical study will be conducted by means of a questionnaire which will focus on the causes, types and consequences of conflict as well as the implications of conflict with reference to public as well as private sector organizations.

1.4.3.2 Composition of the questionnaire

(a) Questionnaire and research participants

It is intended to use the sum total of all the workers from job-level 13 to 1 (Perommenes scale) in a B-group local authority and job-level 16 to 0 (FSA

scale) in a private sector company. These organizations will be comparable with regard to size in number of employees, budget and number of different departments. Because all the research findings will relate to the whole system, all units will be included as part of the target population. Due to the large number of employees, a scientific statistical sample will be drawn from the total population.

The questionnaire will be structured in such a way that it will include socio-demographic questions relevant to the study, a section making use of standardized 28-item Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROC-II) (Rahim: 1983-1992), and a structured section will be developed in order to address the set objectives. The ROC-II and the self-designed (structured questions) section will make use of the 5-point and 4-point Likert-scale respectively.

The socio-demographic section will include gender, age, qualifications, and other relevant information. The self-designed part of the questionnaire will be compiled from the literature study and will address such aspects as causes and outcomes of conflict, whilst the standardized ROC-II will measure the present conflict handling methods within the local authority and private sector company on the five-factor conflict style mode of Rahim. The questionnaire has been applied to local authority and private sector organizations. The human resources departments of the two organizations have assisted in this matter.

(b) Data analysis

All statistical analysis has been done by means of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Different and applicable statistical techniques such as the Cronbach-Alpha coefficient reliability test, Bartlett test for sphericity, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, Levene's test for equality of variances, t-test for equality of means, test for homogeneity of variances, as well as ANOVA, has been used.

The analysis has been done in consultation and cooperation with the STATCON Bureau of the Rand Afrikaans University. The scientific credibility of the results and interpretation thereof has been provided for in this way.

1.5 Disposition of the study

Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of the research and refers to the motives of the study. Core elements in this chapter are the problem statement including the research questions relevant to this study. The objectives of the study as well as the research methods to be used are formulated from the latter.

In chapter 2 a theoretical frame of reference is given, which will serve as a guide for the study's qualitative and quantitative analysis and empirical investigations. This theoretical frame of reference covers what is believed to be amongst the most prominent theorists on conflict namely, Karl Marx and Ralf Dahrendorf. A brief analysis is also done of a number of neo-classical and modern view theories which concentrate more on conflict at micro-level, namely, the business organization.

Chapter 3 devotes special attention to important elements of, and approaches to, conflict. Included are concepts of conflict, the different types of conflict and functional / dysfunctional conflict and performance.

Following from chapter 2, the sources of conflict is evaluated in chapter 4 with the emphasis on the modern day view of Mayer and his 'wheel of conflict'. Having established the sources of conflict, attention is paid to the conflict process, using the models of Pondy and Robbins. These models serve as the basis for an adopted conflict process model which covers five distinctive stages.

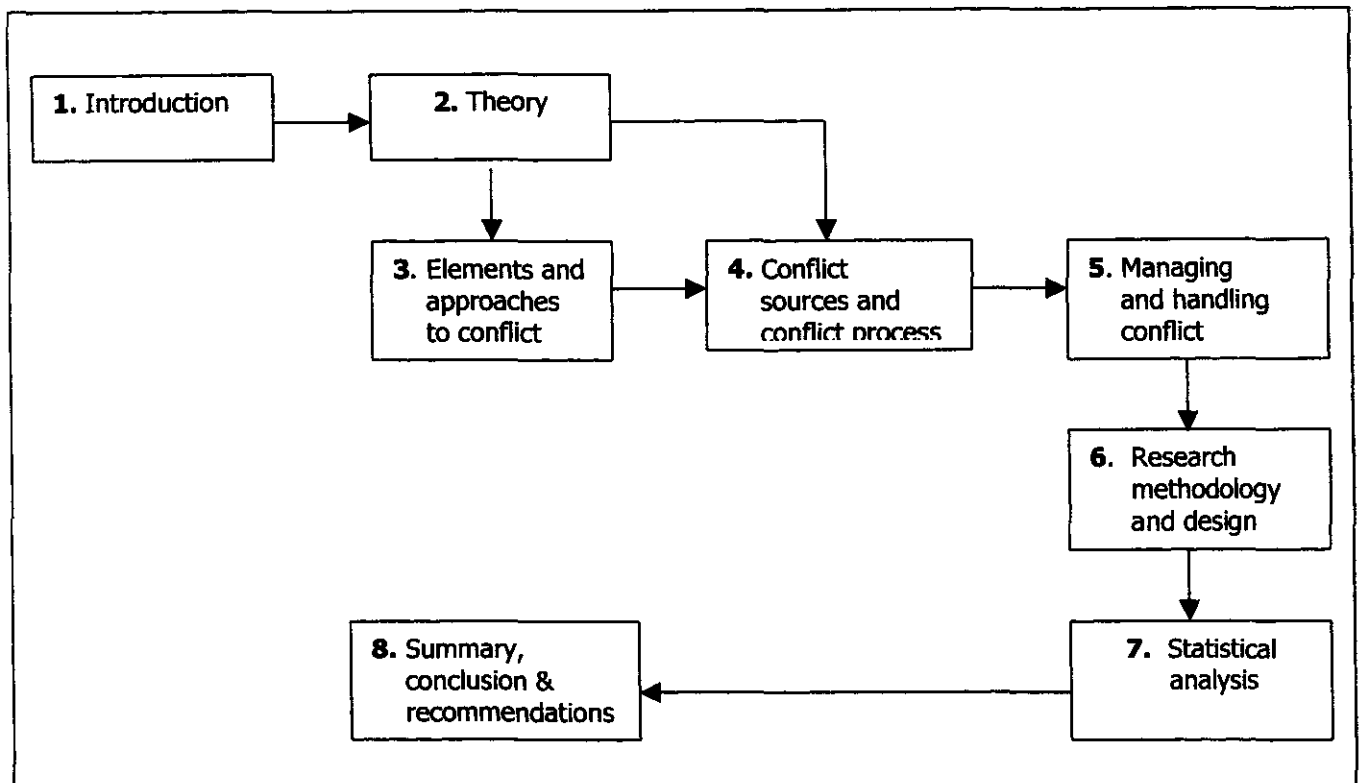
In chapter 5 the management of conflict is discussed and analyzed in detail. Three prominent models are evaluated and compared in order to find the model best suited for use in the empirical part of this study. While concentrating on

these models, the strategies and techniques necessary to manage conflict are discussed extensively.

Chapter 6 addresses the study's logical approach methods, its research design, different empirical statistical aspects and characteristics of the participating organizations. Special attention is also paid to the ROC-II model of Rahim which serves as the vehicle for the empirical analysis of the different conflict management styles. It should be noted that methodological issues are, however, also addressed to a limited extent in chapter 1.

In figure 1.2 a disposition of the study is given.

Figure 1.2 Disposition of the study



In chapters 7 a statistical presentation of the outcome of the survey is given. Apart from the individual analysis of the two participating organizations with regard to sources of conflict, the way in which conflict is experienced by

employees (conflict manifestation) is discussed. Attention is also given to the management styles of conflict between subordinates and their superiors, and between peers (equals). The different set hypotheses are validated statistically.

Referring to the study's research questions and objectives, chapter 8 serves to summarize and review the results of this study, and some theoretical and practical implications are discussed. This is followed by recommendations. Information regarding references, questionnaires and other information is presented in the appendices.

Chapter 2

Social Psychological Theories on Conflict

2.1 Introduction

Havenga (2002:14), quoting Linde (1997), states that no phenomenon can be studied without the application of a more or less clearly defined theoretical approach. The choice of a theoretical approach that would best explain a certain phenomenon is not always an easy one. However, the importance of utilizing a theoretical basis for the purpose of this study cannot be overestimated. Almost all theories that attempt to explain the sources (causes) of conflict and the way in which conflict is, or should be managed, are supported by, or adjusted to empirical studies. This has especially been so the past three to four decades as reflected by the research of scientists such as Blake & Mouton (1964,1978), Deutsch (1949; 1985; 1973; 2000), Rahim (1979; 1983; 1985; 1986; 2002), Thomas (1976; 1992), Thomas & Killman (1974, 1976), Tjosvold (1990; 1989), Volkema & Bergman (1989; 2001), Jehn (1992; 1994; 1997; 1999), Van de Vliert & Kabanoff (1990). Alper, Tjosvold & Low (1998), Amason (1996) and Pondy (1969).

If consideration is given to studies and literature on conflict in the late 19th and early 20th century, it is evident from the works of Lopreato & Hazelrigg (1972), Ashley & Orenstein (1985) and Stones (1998), that Marx, Pareto, Dahrendorf, Weber and Davis made the most exceptional contributions toward the theory of conflict. Sociologists such as Comte (Ashley & Orenstein, 1985:69-103), Durkheim (Ashley, 1985:187-207) have also contributed significantly, but not to the same extent as Marx and Dahrendorf.

The work of these theorists indicate that they concentrated on conflict mostly at the macro-social level. In other words, their thoughts and analyses were directed toward the functioning of communities and life in general, as for instance between

classes, groups or within the state. Knowledge of these theoretical principles is however necessary in order to understand conflict at a micro-social level and within that perspective. Studies done at the micro-level by Du Plessis (2000), Jordaan (1993) and Cockeram (1995) have already indicated the necessity and value of such an approach. Consideration given to the analysis of the different theories of conflict and conflict within organizations in these studies, is unfortunately relatively limited.

Because the occurrence of conflict within organizations is certainly a major phenomenon, it can be said that *“no current investigation of how organizations operate is complete without an understanding of the significance of conflict and the technique of its management”* (Robbins, 1974:xiii).

Pondy (1969:504) also stressed the importance of theories relating to conflict when he said that *“organization theories that do not admit conflict provide poor guidance in dealing with problems of organizational efficiency, stability, governance and change, for conflict within and between organizations is intimately related as either symptom, cause, or effect, to each of the problems”*.

In the next part of this chapter reference will be made to Robbins' (1986:4-9) discussion of the classical, neoclassical and modern view of organizational conflict. Following this, brief attention will be paid to Deutsch's Cooperation-Competition theory (1949), Lewin's (1935) field theory and Von Neumann & Morgenstern's (1944) "Game theory".

In the beginning of this chapter special attention will be paid to Havenga's (2002) analysis of Marx's and Dahrendorf's work on conflict.

2.2 Karl Marx's conflict theory

The writings of three formidable theorists who dominated the intellectual and academic atmosphere during the 19th and early 20th century were Darwin, Marx and Freud. They had a significant influence on the writings of early social

psychologists with regard to conflict in other areas. On closer examination, it appears that their writings actually emphasize the more negative aspects of conflict namely, competition and destruction. Darwin in turn, stressed the competitive struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest while Freud's view of psychosexual development emphasized the constant struggle between the biologically rooted infantile id and the socially determined internalized parental surrogate, the superego.

Marx again emphasized social struggle between classes. He divided social classes into two directly antagonistic groups: bourgeoisie and proletariat. Undoubtedly the contemporary relevance of Marx's theory is well known. In this respect Ashley & Orenstein (1995:249-250) state that: *"In the twentieth century countless revolutionaries, workers, and intellectuals have concurred with Jean-Paul Sartre's assessment that Marxism is the necessary philosophy of our time. Both as political philosophy, and as a theory of revolutionary change (conflict)...this theory sought to change the world"*.

Jordaan (1993:18) states that even though concepts such as class-antagonism, revolution, war, struggle and civil war were used freely by Marx, the conflict concept became an all-embracing idea which he used freely. The essential characteristic of his ideas on conflict is that conflict is the result of confrontational interest and antagonism between two parties. Although he used the concepts conflict, antagonism and struggle as synonyms, it does not imply that any one of them refers to "violence". Violence can be seen as being either latent or manifest within each of the different classes, that is, dormant or active.

Marx clearly concentrated on analysing phenomena relating to social conflict and the change, which resulted in the formation of a simple concept of class-structure. Subsequently, it was not possible for him to vary his conception of class regarding his perception of the complex social structure as a whole. An unrefined definition of Marx's view of class can, according to Lopreato & Hazelrigg (1972:19), be seen as *"A class is a group of people holding a common relationship to the means of reproduction, to the political-power structure, and to the ideas of the time, a*

relationship which necessarily brings it into conflict with some other group having divergent ideas and different interests with respect to economic and political structures”.

From the above it can be deduced that conflict develops within different classes as a result of the fact that individuals or groups differ from each other in one or more respect. Bukharin (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:19), who's intention it was to develop a clear definition of class, identified four different types of class namely: basic-class; intermediary class; transition-class; and mixed type class.

The core-class is generally accepted as consisting of the “bourgeoisie” and the “proletariat”. Marx also identifies an in between group referred to as the “petty-bourgeoisie” which consists of for instance, restaurant owners, retailers, shop-owners and other similar groups. According to Dahrendorf (1976:12) the bourgeoisie should be seen as those individuals who are privileged and have various resources at their disposal. The proletariat are those groups that have very little or nothing, are under-privileged, and only have their labour which they can exchange for material advantages and compensation. According to Marx, the most extreme form of conflict can manifest as violent revolutionary behaviour which would be the logical result of what he viewed as the materialistic concept.

From what has been said thus far regarding the concept of conflict, it can be concluded that Marx was one of the great protagonists of conflict and accepted conflict as one of the more dominant interactional processes of life. This approach to conflict has, according to Curra (1994:39) developed into an attempt to understand, in a time of great institutionalizing and political confusion, the mechanisms of control and development with regard to social change.

2.2.1 Basic assumptions of the conflict perspective

According to Greyling (2000:41), Marx's fundamental objective in his arguments concerning conflict is the quest to find clarifications for the mechanism of stability and change in society which could result in the over-throwing of the capitalist

system. In order to support these perspectives with regard to conflict, Marx had to make basic assumptions regarding man and the world. Cuff & Payne (1984:78) summarized Marx's size conflict assumptions as follows:

- The world, including the social world, is characterized by unstable change rather than stability.
- Change does not occur by chance in society or in the world, but originates in an orderly way in the sense that uniformity and regularity may be observed. Dahrendorf (1976:232-236) points out that the tempo of change varies directly in relation to the intensity of conflict.
- A key to the pattern of change is to be found within the economic order, in other words, the world of work. Every community has to make a living and the way in which they do this has a critical influence on the structure of the community as a whole.
- The community consists of different interdependent parts of which the economy is mainly responsible for the formation of the other parts.
- Again, social institutions are responsible for the formation of the individual's attitudes and behaviour within communities. For Marx the individual exists as an intelligent, sensitive and rational being. These characteristics can however, become distorted if the social rules of the community are not developed perfectly. The result is that man puts his own interest above that of others. This may result in conflict. In the sixth place, Marx sees the nature of mankind and his basic relationship with the world as historical materialism.

Apart from the assumptions that have been discussed above, it is necessary to refer to a few basic assumptions of the critical conflict-perspective that is also applicable to work, namely: dehumanizing and work-humanizing (Cockeram, 1995:118).

- The greater the class-awareness, as well as the exploitation and alienation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, the easier polarization is brought about.

This again, according to Turner (1991:118) causes more intense conflict as well as competition amongst individuals or groups for scarce resources.

- The more unequal the division of scarce resources between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, the greater the increase of conflict between classes.
- A large subordinate collective interest-consciousness will result in the questioning of the unequal distribution of scarce resources, which causes a greater possibility of conflict. The intensity of conflict determines the extent of the redistribution of scarce resources.
- Lastly it can be stated that conflict causes classes to become more homogeneous and when groups reach their utmost level of tolerance, the existing structure can change radically by means of revolutionary activities.

Thus, from Cuff & Payne (1984) and Cockeram's (1995) thoughts on Marx, it can be deduced that living together and working together is a dialectic- and revolution developing totality. This totality is characterized by change of which the origin is orderly and not merely the result of chance.

2.2.2 Causes or prerequisites for conflict

Marx implicitly referred to, and identified the prerequisites or causes of conflict in society. Because it is not the intention to discuss the prerequisites at this point, reference can be made to Havenga (2002:25-39), Ashley & Orenstein (1995:223-254), Lopreato & Hazelrigg (1972:11-42), and Bottmore & Forde (1956:127-254) as well as chapter 4 where a detailed analysis is done of the sources of conflict as identified by researchers throughout the past few decades.

2.2.2.1 Property rights

Property rights determine the classes within a community and the relationship between them. According to Marx, capitalization bases classes on the grounds of ownership with regard to land, capital and labour. The two identified classes, namely, owners and non-owners (bourgeoisie and proletariat) can experience latent conflict between them as the owners strive to retain ownership over their

belongings. Non-owners on the other hand, strive towards acquiring these belongings. The right of possession is thus the core aspect of conflict. The full deployment of class divisions however, takes place by way of a process of polarization which again is the result of the division of labour.

2.2.2.2 Division of labour

Over the past two centuries the development and change of production has brought about an extensive division of labour. Together with private ownership, as discussed above, this division forms the structural source of conflict which in turn generates further prerequisites or situations of conflict.

2.2.2.3 Poverty

The capitalistic society brings about economic, social, political and ideological polarization. A unique characteristic of the economic polarization is increasing poverty amongst the proletariat which creates situations of increasing antagonism. Poverty can presently be seen as being synonymous with relative deprivation, which originates from the weakening of a group's economic situation over a specific period of time as well as the weakening of a group's economic situation relative to that of other groups.

2.2.2.4 Insufficiency of upward mobility

Marx's position is that the capitalistic society not only creates a situation of absolute deprivation, suppression and perilous life circumstances for the proletariat, but is also responsible for the non-owner uncertainty as to subsistence in society. This position of the proletariat within the capitalistic society in fact, stresses relative deprivation as an important condition for conflict namely, the possibility of upward social mobility. In the absence of such mobility, conflict becomes the only route to ensure the possibility of improving living conditions Jordaan (1993:32).

2.2.2.5 Competition

Interpersonal competition is the result of unemployment and the lack of security. Insufficiency or absence of horizontal competition between equals, creates a situation for vertical conflict, that is, between unequals. Competition on a horizontal level on the other hand, forms a stumbling block for the solidarity of classes. Lack of such competition brings about vertical competition and consequently, revolution. Deutsch (2002) also analyses competition in relation to cooperation in his conflict theory (refer 2.4.2.2 below).

2.2.2.6 Unemployment

During the past century mechanization as feature of the capitalistic way of producing, has brought about greater unemployment. When productivity increased, workers became redundant and a decline in job-creating opportunities for the increasing proletariat was experienced. This gave rise to unemployment on a scale that created favourable circumstances in which conflict could thrive.

2.2.2.7 National unity

Only private ownership can influence the origin of conflict within a society. The nationalistic aspirations of groups within a society that strive toward control of their autonomy and own power, can become more dominant as their endeavour to attain material welfare increases.

The simple dichotomous division of society's infrastructure into proletariat and bourgeoisie leads to polarization on a political level. For Marx, the dominant conflict resulted from the collision of interests among the owners and non-owners. This can be seen as "*...a first national struggle*" (De Kock 1984:66).

2.2.2.8 Political organizations

For Marx competition amongst workers and between workers and capitalists stood in the way of revolution. Workers gradually began to realize that the struggle of the individual does not work, which consequently leads to re-grouping into trade-unions. Trade-unions can fight for better working conditions and higher wages, but are not able to destroy the capitalistic system. For this purpose it is necessary to develop political parties and leadership through organizing.

2.2.2.9 Class consciousness

Marx says that there are two organized groups that clash with each other. These two are the economic stakeholders who become aware of their situation and want to retain or change their position. This subjective process of becoming aware of things is important for the formation of conflict groups. Conflict group forming will however, not take place unless latent conflict occurs and this conflict is not unified amongst group members. Workers revolution will not take place unless a degree of class-consciousness is reached.

2.2.2.10 Alienation

Alienation is a situation of estrangement and loneliness that also creates a favourable condition for conflict. The essence of alienation lies in the control of the products of human labour. Products that are the result of the division of labour, include the following:

- Social organising of economic activities.
- Technology
- Social institutions
- The state

Alienation of the end-product of labour leads to the crystallising and externalization of the means of production which, as foreign elements, may dominate the workers. In other words, the worker does not see or experience the end product of his

labour. The alienation of labour in turn, leads to self-alienation which is the result of the relation between the personality structure of the individual and the socio-economic structure of the society. In such a situation work brings no satisfaction, but only serves as a source of physical exhaustion and psychological humiliation. Alienation is in essence, a loss of an individual's creative freedom. Man is controlled by his individual materialistic and spiritual products and needs.

Marx did not study the phenomenon of alienation in depth in order to determine if different degrees and forms thereof and/or the relationship with other variables which may cause specific behaviours in reaction. The fact however, remains that he identified alienation as a prerequisite for conflict (De Kock, 1984:82).

In conclusion, it appears from the discussion above that Marx viewed private ownership as being the origin of conflict. Private ownership essentially implies the existence of two parties who are in conflict with each other, namely, the bourgeoisie (the "haves") and the proletariat (the "have-nots"). He identifies ownership, class, labour, poverty, lack of security, unemployment, upward mobility, competition, political organising and alienation as a source (prerequisite) for conflict which may eventually culminate in violence and revolution.

It also appears that his ideas on conflict were mainly centred on the macro-world and not the micro-world of the organization as an entity. However, as will be revealed later on in this study, his thoughts on conflict are equally applicable to organizations and the individuals and groups who function within such entities.

2.3 Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory

The most systematic approach to conflict by a sociologist appears in a recent essay by Ralf Dahrendorf 'Element einer Theorie des sozialen Konflikte', in his 'Gesellschaft und Freiheit' (1962) (McNeil, 1965:91).

Dahrendorf in contrast to Marx, formulated and discussed his conflict theory in the 1950's in a much more systematic way ("Class and class conflict in industrial

society"). In his work Dahrendorf attacks the structure-functionalism by viewing the functionalistic approach of society as to utopian in nature. Shared values, social integration and equilibrium are however, overemphasized.

He had a definite conception of conflict and wrote that: *"Whoever hears the word conflict is lead to think of violence, bloodshed or at least threats and ultimatums, demonstrations and riots. Yet there is a reason why we are using the term in a wider sense. Negotiations, discussions, dispute, threats of violence, demonstration and armed clashes as well as many other phenomena of social discord may all fruitfully be understood as manifestations of the same social force we call conflict..."* (Jordaan, 1993:56-57).

Group conflict is defined as any antagonistic relationship between organized collectivist individuals that can be explained in terms of social structure patterns and class conflict: *"Any group conflict that arises from and is related to the authority structure of imperatively coordinated association"* (Dahrendorf, 1976:238).

The majority of conflict theorists including Dahrendorf, however, concentrated on the macro-social structure. In his conflict analysis he identifies different power roles in society but is very critical regarding the identification of conflict at the individual level. (Du Plessis, 2000:32). He also states that there are six basic requirements for a theory of social conflict. The first is to arrive at an applicable conception of the phenomenon and to distinguish between the most important different types (Du Plessis, 2000:32). His second basic requirement was to determine a conception of society that would be compatible to the study of conflict. According to McNeil (1965:92) Dahrendorf identified prerequisites for conflict by asking the following questions:

- What are the structural conditions that induce different forms of conflict?
- How does conflict develop from these different forms?

- What are the dimensions of each type of conflict and under what conditions does conflict vary within these dimensions?
- How can conflict be regulated?

Comparing these questions with the objectives of this study will reveal near consensus. It addresses the sources (causes) of different forms of conflict and how it is managed or approached.

In his theory on conflict Dahrendorf takes the focus away from the economic sphere of society to the social structure in general and then specifically to those social structures within which a certain degree of control exists. He is led through experiences and specifically those with regard to ownership and control (Dahrendorf, 1976:172). Power that is linked to the individual's position in life is the core element of Dahrendorf's analysis.

It is expected from people in positions of power to exercise authority over people under their control. These people dominate others as a consequence of the expectations of the people and not as a consequence of psychological characteristics (Jordaan, 1993:53). Power is thus not a constant factor and implies subordination and control. It can be traced back to the fact that power is vested in a position and not in a person. Power is a factual relationship whilst authority is a judicial relationship characterized by dominance and subordination. Authority can thus be seen as legal power.

Lopreato & Hazelrigg (1972:71) says that Dahrendorf considers power to be dichotomous or of dual nature. Power-management is any coordinated association that can be divided into two groups. He is not interested in whether or not some individuals have more power or less within a given situation. The main difference lies between:

- individuals who have a certain degree of power;
- individuals who have none.

From the above it is apparent that power can be seen as a lasting source of conflict. In chapter 4, paragraph 8 a more detailed discussion of power will follow.

This analysis of Dahrendorf can also be applied to private or public sector organizations, due to the stratification of roles present in these organizations which have the potential of generating conflict. The empirical part of this study aims to verify this premise in following chapters.

Dahrendorf (1968:140;173) further argues that society's norms are not determined by or arise from collective consensus. He is of the opinion that norms are maintained and determined by power structures and that the substance of norms can be described in terms of the interests of the powers that be.

Dahrendorf refers to two inequities that can be found in all well-known societies. The first is **productive inequity** which is the cause of social conflict and change. One of the consequences of this type of inequity is another subtype known as distribution inequity. **Power inequity** develops from productive inequity, which causes struggle between classes. Unequal distribution of social rewards such as income, prestige and power constitute the base of such distribution inequities. A clear distinction can thus be drawn between classes with power on the one hand and prestige and wealth on the other (with satisfaction as a prerequisite). Social stratification leads to the control of social behaviour through negative and positive sanctions and thereby facilitates the establishment of power (Dahrendorf, 1976:170-171).

2.3.1 Endogamic and exogamic conflict

According to Dahrendorf (1976:129-214) Different types of conflict exist that can induce structural changes within the society. Endogenous change is one type of such structural change with social conflict being one of the causes of endogenous change, whereas class conflict is another type of social conflict. A particular distinction that can be made between types of conflict is that of exogamic and endogamic conflict.

- The first-mentioned is introduced from outside a specific society and/or from any other association of society, whilst endogamic conflict develops within a specific society or association.
- Endogamic conflict in turn, can again be divided into two groups namely:
 - more specific endogamic conflict which originates from historical events
 - and secondly, general structural conflict which is inherent to all societies of all times or all societies in the same stage of development (Dahrendorf, 1976:129).

The analysis of both forms of endogamic conflict may allow for generalizations and thus for a general theory of endogamic conflict. Provision has to be made for different weights to be allocated in any such general theory.

2.3.2 Prerequisites for organizing conflict

Lopreato (1972:71) specifies three broad sets of structural prerequisites for the manifestation of latent conflict.

2.3.2.1 Technical

It can be stated that the minimum requirement for an organized interest group (which develops from a quasi-group) to be mobilized is that *"...they have to be certain persons who make this organization their business, who carry out practically and take the lead."* (Dahrendorf, 1976:185).

This argument is: *"...reminiscent of Marx's notion of the political cadre, the 'communists' as one of the conditions for the transformation of a 'Klasse an sich (Class-in-itself) into a 'Klasse für sich' (class-for-itself)"* (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:71).

The principle that the absence of quasi-groups and the technical prerequisites do not result in the formation of conflict groups, appears to be dependent on a second

category of prerequisites which must be fulfilled for the manifestation of conflict. These can be described as the political prerequisites for conflict.

2.3.2.2 Political

A political prerequisite for conflict is the second requirement that has to be fulfilled for interest-group formation. The formation of conflict groups is not possible if polarity between conflicting groups is not allowed. Here one can refer to a totalitarian state in which freedom for coalition or association is not allowed and such parties/ groups are suppressed by force (Jordaan, 1993:64). Dahrendorf implies that people can be submissive to an unlimited degree. Thus, as stated by Marx, class-consciousness and rebellion of the masses grow in relation to the oppression that they experience, the opposite is true for Dahrendorf. From his writings it also becomes clear that not even a dictator will succeed in suppressing conflict indefinitely.

2.3.2.3 Social

The last factor of class formation refers to the social prerequisites for conflict *"...which concerns the ease of communication in the society and topological and ecological dispersion of the members of quasi-groups."* (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:71)

The social conditions for organising conflict indicates amongst others, that communication should occur without difficulty in a society and facilitate the ecological distribution of members of quasi-groups. Thus the formation of conflict groups is poor where the distribution of members is large and communication difficult. The formation of conflict groups in organised interest-groups is only possible if the recruitment of members for conflict groups forms a structured pattern and is not left to chance.

At this point of the discussion one can make a few statements which will further clarify Dahrendorf's theory of conflict.

For Dahrendorf the value of social conflict is to be found in the fact that it brings about change. Furthermore it should be clear that because the influence of class can be latent as well as manifest, he accepts the concept of the quasi-group whose members have a common interest which does not materialize. Apart from this the conflict of interest-groups is affected by three prerequisites: the presence of sufficient communication; freedom of speech, and freedom of association. Class conflict is also never resolved, but rather regulated. This regulation is most effective when both parties recognize the reality of conflict. There is little else that can reveal the difference between internal and external conflict more clearly. Classes are interdependent parts of a larger totality and they can be influenced by the state in order to bring about conflict.

Lopreato's & Hazelrigg's (1972:73) brief exposition of Dahrendorf's implicit and explicit suppositions can be added to what has been said above.

- Conflict exists between classes and is regulated by the distribution of power within an organization.
- Attitudes toward a person in a position of power are dualistic because a person may or may not have power.
- The extent to which dualistic power and class structure take root in the population can result in a dualistic class perception within society.
- People without power are much less accepting of the control that others exercise.
- People with more upward mobility and who make use of the opportunities to use such mobility, have less chance to become involved in class-oriented action than those who see themselves as socially immobile or those who are less optimistic about their chances for social mobility.
- The probability that people who have experienced social mobility (especially upward mobility) resulting in a greater motivation to experience it again, decreases in terms of their involvement in class-orientated actions in contrast to those people that have never before experienced mobility of any nature.

2.3.3 Sources of conflict in organizations

Dahrendorf (1965:98-101) holds the view that conflict within an organization can come from a number of sources. According to Jordaan (1993:122-127) these sources can be classified into the following categories:

- **Group interests**
The views as well as the interests of employees differ from that of management. Employees want job security whereas management and stakeholders want profits. Group interest originating from class structures can be considered as an important source of conflict within groups.
- **Power sharing**
This is considered by Dahrendorf to be the most general source of conflict.
- **Training and development**
Lack of training and development within the work situation is also a source of conflict. In order to perform their jobs effectively and develop their careers, workers expect sufficient training from the organization's management.
- **Poor knowledge**
This can be linked to the above. Workers find it difficult to assimilate an ever increasing volume of information which makes it difficult for them to stay abreast of new developments in technology, which eventually causes conflict.
- **Working hours**
Present day organizations require continuous adjustments to working-hours. An increase in working-hours and the reduction of overtime work without taking employee needs into account, may also result in conflict.

- **Communication**
The absence or lack of communication can lead to misunderstandings which in turn, can lead to conflict.

- **Fear of the unknown and changing situations**
In order to survive, it is necessary for an organization to be dynamic. This implies change in the organization, which in turn implies that employees have to adapt. This causes uncertainty and resistance which can lead to conflict.

- **Work security**
Work security is a fundamental requirement for a satisfied workers corps. Insecurity within the work situation can give rise to unrest and conflict.

- **Prejudice**
Management or employee prejudice may result in a conflict situation.

- **Discrimination**
Due to the stratified nature of society, discrimination can be found on all levels. Discriminatory activities can give rise to conflict.

- **The abuse of power**
Especially in smaller sized organizations the misuse of power often becomes a reality and this is also considered to be the most common factor that leads to conflict between employer and employee. In 4.7 a detailed analysis is done of the function of power with regard to the origin conflict.

- **Agitation**
The political aspirations of trade unions lead to agitation and intimidation of those people who do not belong to trade unions. This may result in conflict.

- **Ethnicity and cultural differences**
The maintaining of one ethnic group at the cost of another group very often gives rise to radical conflict. This happens as a result of prejudice, racial pride, language and economic factors.
- **The ineffectiveness or absence of procedures**
The absence or ineffectiveness of disciplinary and grievance procedures can lead to conflict.
- **The political nature of trade unions**
As a result of societal pressure, trade union movements are part and parcel of politics.

2.3.4 A Comparison of Marx and Dahrendorf's theories

In the discussion regarding Marx and Dahrendorf's theories on conflict, little or no reference was made to any major differences or similarities.

A question that can be asked is whether Marx's theory has any value for social political and economic science? In the first instance it can be said that although his work is very comprehensive, Stones (1998:31) is of the opinion that his contribution must be viewed in patches and shreds from his numerous writings together with those of his lifetime collaborators. Like Friedrich Engels, Marx produces theories that explain institutionalised social inequality and related phenomena.

In the second place it can be said that his thoughts do not hide the simple characteristics of human conflict and social change that are inherent to the systems of inequalities (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:11).

Thirdly, it can also be stated that Marx had no sympathy for the too-often-revered value of keeping scientific work untouched by human passion. Being a scientist, philosopher, moralist, sociologist and humanist, it would have been almost

impossible for him to apply the abilities of only one of these identities at a time. This was not always so with theorists like Dahrendorf (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:12).

According to Angell (McNeil, 1965:93) the most influential theory of social conflict was that of Marx, although it was a hypothetical rather than a demonstrated theory. Even though his theory did not present solutions for conflict in its entirety, it still provides a sound and practical basis for a sociological conflict theory.

It should also be noted that Marx's conflict theory could be criticized as follows:

- He could not accurately forecast certain changes in the situations of working people within the capitalist system.
- He attempted to determine the causes for all social phenomena in the economic world.
- He did not accept the fact that human beings are by nature fallible and sinful.

It can thus be said that Marx did not give sufficient thought to the psychological dimensions of the human being. When one looks at direct differences and similarities between Marx's and Dahrendorf's theories then, according to Lopreato & Hazelrigg (1972:506), it appears that:

- Both Marx and Dahrendorf focused on the struggle between those people "who have" and those "who have not" as an important factor in the structural change of communities.
- In contrast to Marx, Dahrendorf sees the real difference between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as not being property ownership, but rather authority, which is a sub-type of political power.

Dahrendorf's theoretical model concentrates more on social phenomena. One such phenomenon is the "image" (perception) of a social structure that a

community may accept and which is considered to be a political association (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:510).

Furthermore, there is a deficiency in his explanation for the mobilization regarding potential conflict groups. A deficiency also exists with regard to guidelines as to when conflict groups will mobilize. It is also not possible to identify organizations in which conflict will occur (Du Plessis, 2000:33).

Based on the results of an empirical study conducted in Italy, it can be assumed that Dahrendorf's theory of social conflict rests on a firm footing (Lopreato, 1972:518). His theory can especially be used to explain conflict between individuals or groups that function within the proximity of persons in position of authority. Lopreato (1972:530) says that *"...whatever evidence exists to substantiate a theory of conflict based on a dichotomous class division, it is more favourable to Marx's theory of classes than Dahrendorf's."*

It can further be stated with regard to the logical structure of Dahrendorf's theory of class and class-conflict vis-à-vis that of Marx, that the basic difference between the two is to be found in the structural determinants of class. Dahrendorf says that Marx's criteria for effective private property ownership as the means of production is not applicable because it restricts the applicability of class-theory. Marx limited property "ownership" in his class-analysis (Lopreato & Hazelrigg, 1972:531).

Turner (1991:186) states that bourgeoisie and proletariat are not solely responsible for all apparent changes. Power and interests are also not the primary motivations for social behaviour. Furthermore, conflict does not always give rise to revolution, boycotts, uprisings and strikes. The power of pro-active collective bargaining is underestimated by both Marx and Dahrendorf as well as other conflict-theorists.

Ritzer (1992:258-259) also criticizes the fact that conflict-theorists do not pay enough attention to the element of change in their discussions.

Although not exhaustive, the few similarities and differences discussed above reveal that there are specific limitations regarding Dahrendorf and Marx's theories on conflict. Lopreato & Hazelrigg (1972:535) however, emphasizes the specific and valuable contribution of Dahrendorf. He said that in the midst of the current tendency regarding studies of social stratification, there is lack of explicit awareness concerning the continuing relevance of Marx's great synthesis, and Dahrendorf's work is a certainly a breath of fresh air. If Dahrendorf's theory does not add a new chapter to a Marx-inspired era, at least it provides the tools which add credibility to that legacy.

2.4 Views on organizational conflict

The decline in interest surrounding Marx, Freud, Durkheim, Darwin and other older sociologist and social psychologist's thoughts on conflict and the instinctivist doctrines were accelerated by the development and employment of empirical methods in social psychology. This early empirical orientation to social-psychology focused on the socialization of the individual, in part as a reaction to the instinctivist doctrine. It led to a great variety of studies, including some investigating aspects such as competition and cooperation in the conflict process. In the view of Deutsch & Coleman (2000:12), these later studies are the precursors to the empirical, social-psychological study of conflict.

In the following part of this chapter attention will be paid to the different views of organizational conflict as reflected by the works of Rahim (1986) and Deutsch & Coleman (2000).

2.4.1 Classical view

Classical organization theorists which include Taylor (1911), Weber (1947) and Fayol (1949) did not seem to appreciate the different types of impact that conflict had or can have on organizations (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). These theorists assumed in an implicit way that conflict was detrimental to organizational efficiency and therefore recommended and believed that it should be minimized.

Organizational structures such as rules, procedures, channels of command and hierarchy, were suggested or prescribed in order to prevent organization members from engaging in conflict. This approach to organization and management was based on the assumption that harmony, cooperation and the absence of conflict were appropriate for achieving organizational effectiveness.

The question of cooperation and competition as elements of conflict will be attended to in the discussion of Deutsch's theory later on in this chapter. Reference is suggested to Marx's views on competition in 2.2.25. above.

Taylor and his associates propagated the implementation of scientific management principles and foresaw that disputes between labour and management would disappear if these principles were applied. Opposition from organized labour resulted because it was believed that scientific management resulted in hastening workers (Rahim, 1986:4).

Fayol (1949) advocated that managerial functions such as planning, organization, command, coordination and control, are applicable to all sorts of human endeavour. Both Fayol and Taylor as well as other classicists implicitly assumed that conflict was dysfunctional to organizational effectiveness and consequently prescribed mechanistic organizational structures. These were characterized by clear lines of authority, hierarchical structures and the division of labour that would contribute to harmony and cooperation and would either suppress or eliminate conflict among workers.

Max Weber, a German sociologist considered his model of bureaucracy to defy all conflict. Although he was aware of some of the dysfunctional elements of bureaucracy, he maintained that bureaucratic structures were appropriate as these would increase organizational effectiveness and eliminate conflict. Mary Parker Follet (1940), with a strong behavioural orientation noted the value of constructive conflict in an organization and advocated the need for an integrative (problem solving) method to deal with conflict (Rahim, 1986:5).

2.4.2 Neoclassical view

Rahim (1986:6) states that studies done by Elton Mayo (1933) also emphasized the need to minimize or eliminate conflict in order to increase organizational effectiveness. According to Baritz (Rahim, 1986:6) *“Conflict to Mayo was neither inevitable nor economic. It was a result of maladjustment of a few men on the labour side of the picture. Even after Hawthorne forced Mayo to grow, he remained firm in his conviction that conflict was an evil, a symptom of the lack of social skills. Cooperation, for him, was symptomatic of health...”*.

Both Taylor and Mayo intended to reduce conflict by enhancing organizational efficiency, each by following a different route. Whilst Taylor attempted to reduce conflict by altering the technical system of the organization. Mayo tried to accomplish this by altering its social system. Theorists from the ‘neoclassical-view’ period saw conflict as undesirable and detrimental to organizations. Ideally, it should not exist but be eliminated (Litterer, 1966:178).

The classisists did not (however explicitly) state that conflict should be eliminated from organizations. They rather implicitly assumed that conflict was not desirable for an organization and should be minimized.

2.4.2.1 Lewin’s field theory

Between the 1920’s and 1940’s Kurt Lewin was theorizing and conducting research which profoundly affected later studies in many areas of social psychology. From his theorizing and research he formulated his “Field Theory” (Deutsch & Coleman, 2002:12).

This theory contains dynamic concepts of tension systems, driving and restraining forces, own- and induced forces, valences, level of aspiration, power fields, interdependence and overlapping situations which have an influence on thinking about conflict and cooperation-competition.

Employing his force fields, Lewin presents a penetrating theoretical discussion of three basic types of psychological conflict, namely: approach-approach, in which the individual stands between two positive valences of approximately equal strength; and approach-avoidance, meaning the individual is exposed to opposing forces deriving from positive and negative valences. Avoidance-avoidance, where the individual stands between two negative valences of approximately equal strength. According to Deutsch & Coleman (2002:12) numerous experimental studies supported Lewin's theoretical analysis, e.g. that of Hull (1938) who translated Lewin's analysis into the terminology of the goal gradient and Miller (1937, 1944) who researched and further elaborated the theory of Lewin. Numerous experimental studies supported the theoretical analysis. In chapter 3 (refer 3.4.2) more in depth attention is paid to the concepts of approach-approach, approach-avoidance and avoidance-avoidance mechanisms.

In the following paragraph the theory of cooperation-competition will be discussed. This theory developed by Deutsch was influenced to a large extent by Lewin's thoughts on tension systems. He employed the Lewinian dynamic emphasis on goals and how they are interrelated, which he drove as a key theoretical wedge into the phenomenon of conflict.

2.4.2.2 Deutsch: Theory of cooperation and competition

In the discussion so far, reference has been made to cooperation and competition as elements or sources of conflict. In the late 1940's Morton Deutsch developed a theory of cooperation and competition.

Deutsch's theory (2000:22) has two basic assumptions. One relates to the type of interdependence among goals of the people involved in a given situation, whilst the other pertains to the type of action taken by the people involved. He identifies two basic types of goal interdependence namely: positive (where the goals are linked in such a way that the amount or probability of a person's goal attainment is positively correlated to the degree or probability of another obtaining the person's goal) and negative (where the goals are linked in such a way that the degree or

probability of goal attainment is negatively correlated to the degree or probability of another's goal attainment).

The two basic types of action by an individual is also characterized by 'effective actions' which improve the person's chances of obtaining a goal, and 'clumsy actions' which worsen the person's chances of obtaining the goal. Individual's goals may be linked for various reasons. Positive interdependence can therefore result from people linking to one another, being rewarded in terms of their joint achievement, needing to share a resource or overcome an obstacle together or holding common membership or identification with a group whose fate is important to them. They would not be able to achieve their task goals unless they divide up work, being influenced by personality and cultural orientation and being bound together because they are treated in a specific manner by a common enemy or authority. Similarly, with regard to negative interdependence, this may be the result of people disliking one another; or from being rewarded in such a way that the more one is rewarded, the less the other is (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000:23).

It should be recognized that a lack of interdependence, or independence may exist to such an extent that the fate and activities of people involved does not affect them either directly or indirectly. If they are completely independent of one another, no conflict will arise. The existence of conflict implies some form of interdependence.

Deutsch & Coleman (2000:23) also postulates that three concepts namely, substitutability, attitudes and inducibility are vital to understand the social and psychological process involved in creating the most important effects of cooperation and competition. Substitutability is central to the functioning of all social institutions, to division of labour and to role specialization. Substitutability permits one to accept the activities of others in fulfilling one's needs. Negative substitutability involves active rejection and an effort to counteract the effects of another's activities.

Attitudes again refer to a predisposition to respond evaluatively, favourably or unfavourably to aspects of one's environment. By inducibility, reference is made to the readiness to accept another's influence in doing what one wants. Negative inducibility refers to the readiness to accept another's influence in doing what one wants. Negative inducibility refers to the readiness to reject or obstruct fulfilment of what the other wants. The complement of substitutability is inducibility. One is willing to help oneself, but not to help someone whose actions are harmful. In fact, one rejects any request for help from others who engage in conflict or harmful actions and, if possible, obstruct or interfere with these actions if they occur.

Thus the theory predicts that if a person is in a positively interdependent relationship with someone who bungles, his bungling is not a substitute for effecting the actions one intended, thus the bungling is viewed negatively. The theory of cooperation and competition goes on to make further predictions about different aspects of interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup processes (refer to chapter 3 for a discussion of these concepts) from inferences regarding substitutability, attitudes and inducibility. Thus, assuming that individual actions in a group are more frequently effective than bungling, some of the predictions that follow from theory are that cooperative relations (those in which the goals of the parties involved are predominantly positively interdependent), in comparison to competitive ones, show more of the following characteristics (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000:25):

- The presence of effective communication.
- Friendliness, helpfulness and less obstructiveness is exposed during discussion.
- Coordination of effort, division of labour, orientation to task achievement, orderliness in discussion and high productivity are manifested in cooperative groups.
- Feeling of agreement with the ideas of others and a sense of basic similarity regarding beliefs and values, as well as confidence in one's own ideas and the value that other members attach to those ideas, are attained by cooperative groups.

- Willingness to enhance the other's power to accomplish the other's goals increases.
- Defining conflict interests as a mutual problem to be solved by collaborative effort facilitates recognizing the legitimacy of each other's interests and the necessary search for a solution responsive to the needs of all. It tends to limit rather than expand the scope of conflicting interests.

A competitive process on the other hand has opposite effects:

- Communication is impaired as the conflicting parties seek to gain advantage by misleading the other groups through the use of ingratiation tactics and disinformation.
- Obstructiveness leads to mutual negative attitudes and suspicion of each other's intentions.
- The repeated experience of disagreement and critical rejection of ideas reduces confidence in oneself as well as the other.
- The conflicting parties seek to enhance their own power and to reduce the power of the other.
- The competitive process stimulates the view that the solution of conflict can only be imposed by one side on the other, which in turn leads to the use of psychological or coercive tactics, physical threats and violence.

As conflict escalates, it perpetuates itself by such process as autistic hostility (breaking off contact and communication with the other), self-fulfilling prophecies (wherein one engages in hostile behaviour toward another because of a false assumption of harm being done), and unwitting commitments (commit to negative attitudes and perceptions, beliefs and defenses against the other's expected attacks).

In conclusion it can be said that Deutsch's theory equates a constructive (functional) process of conflict resolution with an effective cooperative problem-solving process in which the conflict is the mutual problem to be resolved cooperatively. It also equates a destructive process of conflict resolution with a

competitive process in which the conflicting parties are involved in a competition or struggle to determine who wins or loses. The theory further indicates that a cooperative-constructive process of conflict resolution is fostered by the typical effects of cooperation. The cooperation-competition, although of central importance, is only one factor influencing the course of conflict. As will be seen later (refer chapter 4) numerous other sources exist that give rise to conflict and influence its course.

Tjosvold, Morishima and Belsheim (1999:45-69) examined the use of Deutsch's theory regarding cooperation and competition to specify the nature of the relationship and the strategies that facilitate mutually beneficial solutions to employee complaints. The theory of cooperative and competitive conflict was useful in specifying that cooperative goals characterize a facilitative relationship. Findings also identified that open minded interaction promotes integrative solutions.

2.4.2.3 Von Neuman and Morgenstern's Game Theory

The Game Theory has made major contributions to the work of social scientists who in mathematical terms, formulate the problem of conflict of interest. Although the mathematical and normative development of the Game Theory has been most successful in regarding pure competitive conflict (zero-sum games), Game theory also recognizes that cooperative as well as competitive interests may be intertwined in conflict (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000:14)

Recognition of the entwinement of cooperative and competitive interests in situations of conflict has had a productive impact on the social psychological study of conflict, theoretically as well as methodologically. The mathematical formulations of the Game Theory had an indirect but extremely valuable consequence of laying bare some fascinating paradoxical situations in such a way that it was highly suggestive of experimental work. Game matrices as an experimental device were popular because they facilitated precise definition of the reward structure encountered by subjects, and hence forward, the way in which

individuals are dependent on one another. Partly stimulated by and partly in reaction to research using game matrices, other research games were also developed. Most of this research however, according to Deutsch & Coleman (2000:14) was undertaken because of the availability of convenient experimental format. Some of the research has helped to develop systematic understanding of conflict processes and conflict resolution. Fortunately in recent years, experimental gaming has been supplemented by other experimental procedures in the field. This has overcome some of the inherent limitations of experimental gaming.

The work of Von Neuman and Morgenstern (1947) consists of ninety percent mathematical modules (\pm 637 pages) and does not directly refer to conflict theory as such. They pertinently address the problem of 'rational behaviour' and say that the individual who attempts to obtain maximal respect in social and economic terms is also said to act 'rationally'. But it may safely be stated that no satisfactory treatment of the question of rational behaviour is presented. Several ways in which an optimum level may be reached, have been presented (it can be assumed that this may also be applicable to conflict situations). This may depend upon the knowledge and understanding which the individual has and on the paths of action open to him. A study of the questions in qualitative terms will not exhaust these, because they refer to, as must be evident, qualitative relationships. It would therefore be necessary to formulate such relationships into qualitative terms so that all elements of the qualitative description are taken into consideration (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1947:9).

What Von Neumann & Morgenstern did, was to attempt to utilize certain commonplace experiences regarding human behaviour, implicitly include human behaviour in conflict situations, which then lends itself to mathematical treatment and which is of economic importance.

Aspects covered in mathematical terms in their study include amongst others (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1947:8-43):

- The problem of rational behaviour.
- The case of many participants: free competition.
- The concept of utility and marginal utility.
- Solutions and standards of behaviour.
- The intransitive notion of “superiority” and “domination”.

The question of ‘competition’ and cooperation has already been addressed by Deutsch (refer: 2.4.2.2), whilst ‘domination’ is classified in Rahim’s two-dimensional model as one of five conflict management styles (refer: 5.5.4).

2.4.3 Modern view

According to Rahim (1986:6) ‘healthy’ organizations seek to increase intra organizational conflict. This type of conflict does not necessarily signify any organizational weakness as implied by the classical organization theorists or human relations theories. The philosophy of conflict of the modern theorists was that of interaction, which differs significantly from the classical and neoclassical views. Robbins (1974:13-14) characterized this third philosophy of conflict as follows:

- Recognition of the absolute necessity of conflict.
- The explicit encouragement of opposition.
- Defining conflict management to include stimulation as well as resolution methods; and
- Considering the management of conflict as a major responsibility of all administrators.

Organizational conflict as it presently stands, is considered to be legitimate, inevitable, and even a positive indicator of effective organizational management. It is now recognized that conflict within certain limits is essential for productivity and creativity in organizations. Gruber (2000:345) says that: “...*students of conflict often view conflict as a necessary companion: (1) novelty engenders conflict and/or (2) creativity requires conflict.*”

Johnson, Johnson & Tjosvold (2000:73-74) says that constructive controversy (conflict) tends to promote creative insight by influencing individuals to view problems from new perspectives and reformulate problems in ways that allow new orientations to a solution to emerge. It promotes a significantly more accurate and complete understanding of opposing perspectives than does concurrence seeking, debate and individualistic learning. Constructive controversy increases the number of ideas, quality of ideas, creation of original ideas, and the use of more varied strategies.

Such conflict can be functional to the extent to which it results in the creative solution to problems or the effective attainment of a subsystem or organizational objectives which otherwise would not have been possible. Little or no conflict in organizations may lead to stagnation, poor decisions and ineffectiveness. On the other hand, organizational conflict left uncontrolled may have dysfunctional outcomes (refer 3.7).

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that too little or too much conflict are both dysfunctional for an organization's effectiveness. A moderate amount of conflict managed in a constructive manner, is essential for attaining and maintaining an optimal level of organizational effectiveness (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Some writers have overemphasized the dysfunctional aspects of conflict or failed to fully comprehend the functional aspects of conflict.

In conclusion, one can refer to Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt (2003:442-443) summary that research investigation in recent years have included theories of motivation, leadership, work design, and job satisfaction. Even though new theories were developed during the 1960's and 1970's, the emphasis since has been on refining existing theories, clarifying previous assumptions, and identifying relevant contingency variables. That is, researchers have been trying to identify the "what" variables and the ones relevant to understanding various behavioural phenomena. Motivation and leadership theories offered by David McClelland, Fred Fiedler, Fredrich Herzberg and others during the 1960's and 1970's provided

managers with still greater insights into worker's behaviour, either as individuals or in groups.

Although these behavioural scientists did not all address conflict explicitly, their theories and work has often served as points of departure in studies concerning various aspects of conflict. "Conflict-scientists" like Thomas, Schmidt, Deutsch, Coleman, Rahim, Tjosvold and others devoted more attention to empirically verifying and establishing new theories on conflict, it's sources and management. This has been continuing from the early 1970's up to the present.

2.5 Applicability of theories to the present study

Having discussed the different theories on conflict in a broad sense and realizing how essential it is to base any scientific study on a sound theoretical approach, it now becomes necessary to briefly discuss the points to be emphasized in the course of this study in order to meet the set aims and objectives.

- Firstly, most of the theories discussed refer to the causes (sources) of conflict or compile theories subsequent to the recognition or identification of it's causes. In this study (chapter 4) a thorough identification is done of the possible sources of conflict by means of analysing studies and published works.
- Some of the theories, especially the modern views, refer to the ways in which conflict may be managed. Taking cognisance of this, further investigations are considered necessary to obtain more knowledge about conflict and it's management. (Refer chapter 5).
- The theories discussed refer to conflict at both a macro- and micro-level. No consideration was given to specific types of organizations at the micro-level. This necessitates a better understanding of conflict as experienced and managed by both public and private organizations.
- From what has been said above, specific points which were emphasized in the different theories will form the core of the empirical section of this study. Aspects such as class, scarce resources, competition, politics, power, authority, alienation, technologies and others were covered in the different

theories needs verification in the empirical division of the study. None of the theories discussed considered race relations or affirmative action as sources of conflict. These elements may prove to be core aspects in developing theories on conflict.

In table 2.1 a typology is given of what is considered to be the key elements of conflict as perceived by conflict theorists. These elements are presented in a timeframe comprising the work of two of the greatest proponents of conflict theory (Marx and Dahrendorf) followed by classical, neoclassical and modern views on conflict. This typology is not exhaustive but it includes the ideas of what is believed to be the most prominent scholars of conflict. Their ideas are also considered to be appropriate in terms of the aims of this study.

A typology of key elements will serve as the basis from which (together with the more detailed discussion of sources of conflict in chapter 4) the questionnaires for the empirical study will be developed. As can be seen from the discussion above, the theories of Marx and Dahrendorf served as the points of departure for further development of theories on organizational conflict (classical, neoclassical and modern views). No specific theory served as a cornerstone for the study. It can however be stated that certain key elements which were deemed necessary to reach the primary goal and objectives of the study, were included.

2.6 Conclusion

The central theme of this chapter was to gain a better understanding of some of the most important theories on conflict, in order to identify a more sound basis from which to conduct a practical study with reference to the causes of conflict within a public and a private sector organization. Furthermore, the aim is to establish how conflict within organizations should be managed.

Table 2.1 A typology of key elements of discussed conflict theories

Marx	Dahrendorf	Views on organizational conflict		
		Classical views	Neoclassical views	Modern views
Class struggle Bourgeoisie Proletariat Property rights Division of labour Poverty Upward mobility Competition Unemployment National unity Political Class consciousness Alienation	Power. Productive inequity. Distribution inequity. Power inequity. Endogamic conflict. Exogamic conflict. Technical. Political. Social. Group interests. Power sharing. Training & development. Poor knowledge. Communication. Working hours. Fear. Work security. Prejudice. Discrimination. Power exploitation. Agitation. Ethnicity. Culture. Procedure absence.	Taylor (1911); Weber (1947); Fayol (1949)	Deutsch (1940); Elton Mayo (1933); Lewin (1920-1940); Von Neuman & Morgernstern (1944)	Rahim (1983); Robbins (1974); Pondy (1969); Killman & Thomas (1977)
		Organization structures - rules - procedures - command channels - hierarchy Harmony. Cooperation. Conflict absence. Scientific management principles. Managerial functions. Dysfunctionality. Constructive conflict. Integrative methods.	Organizational effectiveness. Maladjustment of labour. Lack of social skills. Cooperation. Altering social system. Needs. Tension systems. Driving and restraining forces. Own and induced forces. Valences. Levels of aspiration. Power fields. Interdependence. Overlapping situations. Psychological conflict. Cooperation. Competition. Types of action. Substitutability. Attitudes. Constructive resolution. Destructive resolution. Mathematical formulation.	Interaction. Necessity of conflict. Encouragement of opposition. Stimulation methods. Resolution methods. Management of conflict. Constructive controversy. Functional conflict. Dysfunctional conflict. Management styles.

Source: Own design

In this chapter the views of Marx and Dahrendorf on conflict were analysed by way of social interaction that is characterized by hostility, conflict opposing ideas and force. It is evident that conflict is an integral characteristic of social behaviour

which seems to play an important role as a causal phenomenon. Antagonism, revolution, class and class-struggle and even war can be included in the latter concept. According to Marx, revolution is the ultimate manifestation of the struggle between classes in society. Due to the man's struggle for survival he is forced to change his material environment by means of productive activities. Social rules and order are characteristic of the methods that groups use to dominate the masses.

Conflict is also a prerequisite for development. Creativity, innovation and development constitute part of the life of the individual, the group and the community and is brought about by the role of conflict between groups and individuals. Apart from the fact the Marx identifies property rights, class as well as the division of labour as possible structural-inherent situations or prerequisites for conflict, he also acknowledges other prerequisites such as unemployment, poverty, alienation and national unity.

Dahrendorf stresses the importance of power as well as the unavoidability of conflict. Like Marx, he also addresses the determinants of active conflict as well as the circumstances under which groups will organize and mobilize. The central theme of his theory is that different positions in society symbolize different degrees of power. This power is associated with the position rather than the person. Power always implies difference and control which can lead to the formation of classes and eventually conflict. Attention is also devoted to two quasi-groups that are characterized by dominant or subordinate positions of authority. These two quasi-groups have opposite latent interests and they are continuously in conflict with the aim of either changing or retaining the status quo position. Communication and absolute deprivation are also key elements in conflict. Explicit prerequisites for conflict considered by Dahrendorf are: technical, political and social situations.

Attention was also given to the views of classical organization theorists who implicitly assumed that conflict was detrimental to organizational efficiency and recommended that it should be minimized. This approach was based on the

assumption that harmony, cooperation and the absence of conflict were appropriate for achieving organizational effectiveness.

Considering the neo-classical view it became evident that the neo-classists intended to reduce conflict in order to enhance organizational efficiency by following different routes, such as altering the organization's technical or social systems.

More specific theories such as Lewin's Field Theory who's 'force fields' contain dynamic concepts of tension systems and Deutsch's theory of cooperation and competition were examined. Forming the integral part of this theory are two basic ideas which refer to an interdependence with regard to one individual's goals in a given situation in relation to that of another which is then applied to all types of action taken by those involved. Three concepts namely, substitutability, attitudes and inducibility are vital in the understanding of the major effects of cooperation and competition.

Attention was also briefly given to the mathematical formulations of the Game Theory in relation to the social-psychological study of conflict.

The modernistic approach of theorists during the latter part of the previous century is that of interaction, which differs significantly from that of the classical and neo-classical views. This third philosophy of conflict is characterized by absolute necessity of conflict; explicit encouragement of opposition; stimulation and resolution methods. Conflict management is seen as being a managerial responsibility.

The aim of this chapter was to pay attention to the theoretical basis of conflict. In the following chapter the elements of, and approaches to conflict will be analysed. Special attention will be given to the different types of conflict which have been dealt with in this chapter. The clarification of different types and diversity of conflict, functional and dysfunctional conflict as well as performance will be attended to in the next chapter. The aim in chapter 4 will be to clarify, understand and evaluate

the sources and processes of conflict. The management of conflict is to follow in chapter 5.

It can be concluded that theory cannot be considered as a magical instrument with which conflict is to be resolved. Theory however, serves as a general framework for understanding the fundamental dynamics of conflict and gives an indication of possible intervention strategies. Deutsch (2002:30) states that understanding and intervening in a given conflict situation requires specific knowledge about the conflicting parties, their social contexts, their aspirations, their conflict orientations, the social norms, and so on. The aim of the remainder of this study is to devote attention to the latter.

Chapter 3

Elements and approaches to conflict

3.1 Introduction

Already in 1970 Rhenman, Strömberg & Westerland (1970:8) realized that conflict is an integral part of business organizations when he said that “...*the conflict-free company can be regarded as an illusion and, furthermore, as a mistaken objective.*” He further argues that conflict surveys should be a prerequisite for planning company organization in relation to company goals as well as objectives. What he is in actual fact saying, is that conflict is an inherent part of business organizations and should be taken into consideration if the organization wants to function effectively.

The way in which conflict has been viewed over the years has changed (Veichio, 2000:234). The earlier views (refer: Marx 2.2 and Dahrendorf 2.3) considered conflict as harmful and unnecessary. The existence of conflict was regarded as a signal that something was wrong and required correction. According to this traditional view conflict served no useful purpose because it effected the organization negatively and was to be avoided. In addition, conflict was also seen as a result of poor or incompetent management (refer: Neoclassical and modern views 2.4.2 and 2.4.3). In order to avoid the negative effects of conflict, proper management techniques were to be applied.

In recent years, behavioural science and management scholars have changed their views on conflict and now see it as an inevitable occurrence in every organization that is oftentimes necessary to ensure high performance. According to this perspective, conflict may bring about a search for new tactics and strategies in order to overcome stagnation and complacency. The focus of this contemporary view is on the successful management of conflict rather than its

total elimination. Mayer (2000:3) also stresses the effective management of conflict and says that conflict is natural, inevitable, necessary and normal, and that the problem is not the existence of conflict but how it is managed.

It should also be noted that as far as organizations in the business world are concerned, management becomes more complex within micro-structures. This is the result of specialization, automation and high levels of mechanization. Together with these elements, high level technology not only contributes to conflict situations, but also dehumanizes the individual (Nelson & Quick, 2001:605). This may also be related to the process of alienation as perceived by Marx (refer 2.2.2.10).

Cockeram (1995:29) argues that the assumptions of the critical conflict perspective boils down to the fact that living and working together is a dialectic structure and that this revolutionary developmental process should be considered in its entirety. In it's entirety, it consists of stakeholders (employers and employees, groups and individuals) that compete for scarce resources, power, prestige, wealth, status and influence (refer 2.2.2).

Of course, conflict has many elements and can be viewed from different perspectives. Aspects such as approaches to conflict, functional and dysfunctional conflict, conflict types and styles, conditions and sources of conflict, line-and-staff conflict and others need to be addressed. This may serve as a basis for further argument regarding one of the key concepts of this study namely, sources of conflict and conflict management styles. Accordingly, this chapter will pay attention to those elements identified by various authors and scholars of conflict. Extensive use will be made of Havenga's (2002) study on conflict to explain and clarify the different aspects of conflict.

3.2 The concept of conflict

Very often researchers or scholars from different disciplines refrain from actually exploring the core elements or characteristics of concepts that form the basis of

their studies. Often limited attention is paid to core characteristics with only slight or brief referral to explanations or definitions. Because this study is concerned with the causes (sources) of conflict and the ways in which it is to be managed, it is necessary to define the concept and nature of conflict as clearly as possible.

Taking cognisance of various interpretations and definitions of conflict, Havenga (2002:7) states that there is no shortage of definitions of conflict. In essence, it refers to opposing needs that are active at the same time in the same situation. A situation occurs in which it is expected of an individual or group to act simultaneously in different and irreconcilable ways.

Schemerhorn (1999:339) says that conflict is the simultaneous presence of two irreconcilable goals or actions so that the presence of frustration or a threat of one sort or the other becomes unavoidable. Kreitner & Kinicki (2001:447) is more specific in his approach by clarifying conflict as the result of scarce resources or work activities that must be shared and the fact that the individuals or groups have different statuses, goals and values.

Wall & Callister (1995:517) on the other hand, have a more general approach when they state that conflict is a process in which one party (individual or group) perceives that it's interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another.

Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman (1983:459) sees the essence of conflict in terms of disagreement, contradiction, or incompatibility. Thus, conflict refers to any situation in which there are incompatible goals, cognitions or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or antagonistic interaction.

This definition of Hellriegel recognizes three basic types of conflict:

- Goal conflict is the situation in which desired end states or preferred outcomes appear to be incompatible.
- Cognitive conflict is a situation in which ideas or thoughts are inconsistent.
- Affective conflict is a situation in which feelings or emotions are incompatible.

Pondy, as quoted by Van Aarde (1991:47., See also Pondy; 1987:296) refers to the divergent nature of the term conflict and comes to the conclusion that:

- Antecedent conditions which lead to conflict are for instance: scarcity of resources, policy differences;
- Affective states; e.g. stress, tension, anxiety;
- Cognitive states of individuals; e.g., their perceptions of awareness of conflict laden situations, and;
- Behaviour ranging from passive resistance to overt aggression.

A comparison of the definitions of Hellriegel and Pondy reveal similarities with regard to cognitive and affective states. Kreitner also acknowledges the influence scarce resources as does Pondy. These elements were of course, already addressed by theorists in classical, neoclassical as well as modern views. Especially Dahrendorf paid attention to these (refer 2.3.3 and 2.4).

A definition of conflict which is more inclusive than others and implies that conflict can relate to incompatible preferences, goals, and not just activities, is that of Rahim (2002:206). He refers to Roloff (1987) who states that *“organizational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other collectivities, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services of products of the organization.”*

Rahim has broadened this definition by conceptualizing conflict as an interactive process which manifests as incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e. individual, group or organization). When conflict is referred to as an interactive process, it does not preclude the possibilities of intra-individual conflict, for it is known that a person can experience intrapersonal conflict.

According to Rahim (2002:207) conflict may occur when:

- A party (individual or group) is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests.

- A party has certain preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with that of another.
- A party wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, to such an extent that the needs of the parties concerned may not be satisfied as anticipated.
- A party possesses certain attitudes, values, skills and goals which are salient in directing its behaviour, and these are perceived to exclude the attitudes, values, skills and goals held by the other(s).
- Two parties have partially exclusive behavioural preferences regarding their joint actions.
- Two parties are interdependent in terms of their functions and activities.

What becomes clear from all these definitions and clarifications of the conflict concept is that incompatibility with regard to a number of aspects such as attitudes, values, emotions, resources, behaviour, opposing needs, goals and others are predominant. As will be seen in chapter four, numerous causes of conflict exist which form part and parcel of the conflict concept. These are not always addressed and may be difficult to define. For the purpose of this study it is believed that a certain degree of clarity has been attained regarding the concept of conflict. However, from what has been stated and discussed above, one can conclude that: **Conflict is a situation that develops when individuals or groups experience incompatibility when their physical, material or psychological interests are threatened, and the different forces resulting from this can be interpreted as irreconcilable.**

3.3 Industrial relations and human resources perspectives on conflict

Conflict is very often discussed within the broad general business environment and little attention is paid to the perspectives of specific disciplines such as industrial relations (IR) or human resources (HR). David Lewin (2001:453-485) highlights IR and HR perspectives on workplace conflict. Both perspectives recognize the existence of employment relationship conflict.

At its core, IR emphasizes the enduring nature of the employer – employee power imbalance and therefore conflict within the employment relationship, the need for institutional interventions by way of unionism and legislation to correct such power imbalance, and the positive consequences of openly surfacing and attempting to resolve conflict. This could be achieved through adversarial, non problem-solving approaches which could be constructive.

HR premises about employment relationship conflict, by contrast, are that this type of conflict stems from poor management, can be partially reduced by organizational and workplace interventions that build an employer – employee unity of interests which may be reduced even further by way of cooperative, mutual gains-oriented and problem-solving techniques. As a consequence of improved management, conflict would fade from the employment scene. In general, power in employment relationships is unbalanced, with the employer holding sway over the employee. This power imbalance is lessened considerably when an economy is at full momentum or wherever high-involvement work systems are practiced. It is accepted that conflict in employment relationships does not stem from poor management alone and that a unity of interests among employers and employees can be maintained for a certain period only and except in rare instances, cannot be counted on to prevail indefinitely. Furthermore it is accepted that there is a place for institutional mechanisms to deal with conflict in the employment relationship; that open surfacing of conflict can have certain positive consequences for individuals and organizations even when resolution is pursued through adversarial, non problem-solving approaches; and that conflict is an enduring feature of employment relationships whenever and wherever there are managers and those who are managed (Lewin, 2001:479).

From an IR perspective it is accepted that poor management is indeed one of the “drivers” of employment relationship conflict; that organizational and workplace innovations can improve employee attitudes and performance, enhance organizational performance and reduce employment relationship conflict; that a unity of interests among employers and employees can be formed

and can continue while in place, at least for a while; that institutional mechanisms such as unions and legislation for dealing with workplace conflict sometimes exacerbate existing conflict or result in the forming of conflict where little or none would have existed otherwise; and that it is possible to improve management and thereby contribute to the reduction of conflict in the employment relationship (Lewin, 2001:479).

3.4 Types of conflict

On examining the literature one comes to the conclusion that there are four main types of conflict namely: interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflict. Furthermore, three common types of intrapersonal goal conflicts have been identified, each representing different levels of acceptability among different options (Callahan & Fleenor 1991:289; Stroh, 2002:120-127; Bergh & Theron 2001:249-250).

3.4.1 Interpersonal conflict

This type of conflict refers to the existence of simultaneous, opposing and conflicting thoughts, feelings and activities. Negative feelings such as anger, a lack of trust and a fear of rejection may serve as causes for interpersonal conflict. It may also be viewed as a situation when an organizational member is required to perform certain tasks and roles, which do not match his or her expertise, interests, goals, and values. Examples of this type of conflict are the following (Walton, 1987:27):

- Two managers who work together refuse to accept each other's ideas and initiatives. The consequences of such a reaction is friction between the two individuals which can eventually develop in a full-fledged conflict situation.
- Members of divisional personnel who are caught up in unproductive (dysfunctional) conflict, is an example of undefined objectives and badly coordinated activities.

- Conflict occurs within a production team where no unanimity on procedures or ways of doing things exists. The result is that the ability to achieve objectives will be delayed.

In each of the above cases conflict can be observed within the team and as a result, this influences individual as well as group performance and activities.

Rahim (1986b:63) states that one would expect the outcomes of interpersonal conflict that fully satisfies the outcomes of both parties to be functional (constructive) for an organization. However, previous studies have generally indicated that problem-solving or an integrative style adopted by members of an organization leads to greater satisfaction with regard to organizational matters. There is no evidence to suggest that the greater the application of integrating style regarding the management of conflict may lead to greater organizational effectiveness. This style and others will be examined in detail in chapter five.

3.4.2 Intrapersonal conflict

Intrapersonal conflict exists within the individual. This concept refers to the existence of simultaneous, opposing and conflicting thoughts, feelings and activities. Characteristics of this type of conflict are uncertainty, hesitation, stress, anxiety and depression (Bergh, 2001:249). An individual may also develop intrapersonal conflict when experiencing difficulty in making a choice when compelled to choose between alternatives which may be equally attractive or unattractive.

According to Nelson & Quick (2001:431) it is important to take cognisance that interpersonal conflict manifests as different types. **Inter role conflict** for example, occurs when an individual experiences conflict between a number of roles in his life, for example: conflict which results from one's role as an employee at work versus one's role as husband or wife at home. Apart from this, the individual may also experience conflict in a single role. For example, when the person receives conflicting messages from others as to how a certain task

should be managed. This is known as the **intra role conflict**. The **person-role** conflict occurs when it is expected from an individual to act in certain ways which are incompatible with his or her values.

Lewin (See: Rahim, 1986:41, Rahim, 1992:7) conceptualized intrapersonal conflict as a situation where oppositely directed, simultaneous forces of about equal strength occur in a person. The three types of this conflict are: approach-approach conflict; approach-avoidance conflict and avoidance-avoidance conflict. In the discussion of Lewin's field of theory of conflict (refer 2.4.2.1) it was revealed that his theory contains dynamic concepts of tension systems, driving and restraining forces, own and induced forces, valences, level of aspiration, power fields, interdependence and overlapping situations which have an impact on concepts regarding conflict and cooperation-competition.

3.4.2.1 Approach-approach conflict

This type of conflict develops when a person has to choose between two alternatives both of which are attractive. Very often this conflict is resolved when attempts are made to first try and reach one goal and then the other. If this is not possible, the individual is forced to make a choice between the two goals. As soon as one is chosen, the other has to be renounced. This in itself, can result in intense conflict. The more equal the two goals are, the greater the possibility of conflict. A manager, for instance, is confronted with an approach-approach conflict if he has to recommend one of two subordinates for promotion who are equally competent for the position.

3.4.2.2 Approach-avoidance conflict

This is probably one of the most difficult conflict situations that an individual can be confronted with. It occurs when a person has to deal with a situation which possesses both positive as well as negative aspects, i.e., when a person feels similar degrees of attraction and repulsion toward a goal or competing goals.

Sometimes the person may first attempt to attain the positive goal in spite of the fact that he will eventually face the negative one.

3.4.2.3 Avoidance-avoidance conflict

Here the individual has to choose between two negative factors. This conflict occurs when each of the competing alternatives may have negative consequences, i.e., being equally repulsive. This situation can develop when a person is given the choice between accepting a lower salary or to resign his job. The strong feelings of fear, powerlessness and anger that accompany this type of conflict can cause the person to attempt to withdraw from the situation in the form of fantasy or regression. Very often the person is forced by another to exercise a choice.

3.4.3 Intergroup conflict

Nelson & Quick states (2001:431) that this form of conflict occurs within trade unions, between two departments or between an employer and the government. This situation occurs when opposing groups are formed within a work situation and are unable to come to an agreement.

Group conflict can occur within a group (intra-group) or between groups (intergroup). It is often difficult to separate the effects of each of these forms of conflict, since groups rarely exist in isolation. Intergroup conflict occurs primarily because groups exert considerable influence on individual members. This influence usually takes the form of shaping individuals' behaviour into a form that is acceptable to the group. Individual members may resist, resulting in conflicting goals, emotions, ideas and behaviours (Stroh, 2002:124). Walton (Callahan, 1991:228) says that the relationship between departments in a formal organization (and thus by implication also a public sector organization) can be recognized by the reaction of one department to the needs of the other, the validity of the information that is exchanged between the departments and the attitudes of the members of the different departments towards each other.

It can thus be deduced from what has been said above that indications of intergroup conflict should include occurrences such as the distortion or withholding of information, the overstating of needs in order to influence other departments, interference with the performance of other groups, as well as mutual distrust.

Rahim (1986:98) says that cognisance should be taken of the behavioural changes that occur between conflicting groups. In the first instance when intergroup conflict of a win-lose type occurs, competition between members within each group is reduced. Secondly, one of the possible consequences of win-lose intergroup conflict is that it creates significant distortions in the judgement and perceptual processes of the conflicting groups. Thirdly, this type of conflict may result in the emergence of autocratic leaders.

Muzafir (Stroh, 2002:124) recognized the following changes regarding behaviour within groups. He maintains that the following are predictable ways in which group members will react:

- Group cohesiveness increases
- Task orientation increases
- Loyalty to the group increases
- Acceptance of autocratic leadership increases
- Distorted perceptions and goals occur
- Negative stereotypes are generated about the other group
- Communication between the groups decreases

Following the ideas of Rahim (1986:99) it can be stated in conclusion that intergroup conflict may have some definite consequences such as: low trust, suspicion, hostility, competition, rigidity, formality with regard to decision procedures, appeals to superiors for decisions; decreased rate of inter-group interaction; concealment and distortion; and channelled intergroup contacts.

Intergroup conflict occurs frequently according to Fisher (2000:183) and is often handled poorly at all levels of society as well as between societies and it is

presumed, also between groups within organizations. It may originate from various sources (which will be discussed later) and involves a complex interplay of individual perception, attitudes and behaviour as well as group factors that have an inherent tendency toward escalation.

3.4.4 Intragroup conflict

According to Rahim (1986:82) intragroup conflict refers to the disagreement, differences, or incongruencies among the members of a group or its subgroups regarding the goals, functions or activities of a group. However, intergroup conflict involves more than the simple sum of intra- and interpersonal conflict.

There are various antecedent conditions or sources of intragroup conflict such as leadership style, task structure, group composition, cohesiveness and groupthink, as well as external threats. These sources could be altered to reduce or increase intragroup conflict.

The task structure as a source of intragroup conflict gives rise to classified task groups. Fiedler (1987) according to Rahim (1986:82) classified task groups into three types according to the nature of task interdependencies between group members in attaining their group objectives. The first one is the **integrating group**. This occurs for instance in a production team on the assembly line, where the output of one worker becomes the input of another worker. A **coaching group** is one in which the members perform their functions relatively independently of each other, for instance, faculty groups whose members perform their teaching and research functions relatively independent of each other. Thirdly a **counter-acting group** is composed of persons who work together for the purpose of negotiating and reconciling conflicting opinions and purposes. This type of group is exemplified by the labour-management team. Apart from these task-groups one should also refer to Deutsch's theory of cooperation and competition in which he identifies a positive and negative goal interdependence. He also acknowledges 'effective' and 'clumsy' actions (refer 2.4.2.2).

It is evident from the literature that conflict which occurs from task-related activities can be classified into two broad categories. De Church & Marks (2001:2) says that task-related conflicts occur when group members argue over alternatives related to the group's task, whereas relationship conflicts result from interpersonal clashes within the group that are not directly related to fulfilling the group's function (task). Studies in this regard are quoted by De Church are Amason (1996); Jehn (1990); Pinkley (1990) and Priem & Price (1991).

While researchers agree that the emergence of relationship conflict negatively influences team outcomes such as performance and satisfaction, the impact of task conflict is less clear. Task conflict has been shown to be beneficial in some circumstances, yet harmful in others.

Hellriegel (1983:468) referring to the effects of intragroup conflict on the group process, refers to the classical study of Deutsch who investigated the effects of cooperation and competition on group process and productivity (refer also 2.4.2.2). From the results of this study it was concluded that intragroup cooperation facilitates positive group processes like coordination and communication while also improving the quantity and quality of group output.

It should be evident from the discussion so far, that intragroup conflict can be very dominant in an organization. It can be assumed that groups experiencing this type of conflict may be able to resolve it by ending in consensus or may not resolve it resulting in disagreement amongst members.

Intragroup conflict also seems to fall into two distinct categories, namely, affective and substantive conflict. Affective conflict stems primarily from the group's interpersonal relations. It is associated with emotional responses aroused during interpersonal clashes. Substantive conflict on the other hand, refers to conflict based on the nature of a task. It is associated with intellectual disagreements among the group members.

3.4.5 Intraorganizational conflict

All the forms of conflict that have been discussed up to this point can occur within any organization. The need to determine the kind of conflict that is taking place as well as when it is taking place, is essential in order to decide what action should be taken to manage it. The conflict styles that can be used or are actually used by individuals or groups will be discussed later in the study.

It should be noted that the inter and intra personal and group conflicts can all be part of four types of intraorganizational conflict. Hellriegel (1983:471) identifies them as: **vertical conflict**; **horizontal conflict**; **line-staff conflict**; and **role conflict**. Although these types of conflict can overlap (especially with role conflict), each has its distinctive characteristics. Brief attention will be paid to the horizontal and vertical conflict before a more detailed analysis is applied to the line- and staff conflict that can occur in an organization. Discussion of these levels of conflict is necessary because it will also be addressed in the empirical study when Rahim's ROC-II model is applied to determine the conflict-handling styles with peers and superiors as well as the styles implemented between line and staff functions.

3.4.5.1 Vertical conflict

As should be clear from the title, this form of conflict refers to any conflict, whether inter-group or interpersonal which occurs at different levels in an organization. This type of conflict usually arises because superiors attempt to control subordinates with conflict in an attempt to resist escalation. Vertical conflict can also arise due to inadequate communication, goal conflict or cognitive conflict perception regarding information and values, as well as an unequal distribution of resources by superiors among subordinates.

3.4.5.2 Horizontal conflict

This type of conflict refers to conflict between employees or departments or between groups on the same hierarchical level in an organization. A fundamental cause of horizontal conflict according to Hellriegel (1983:472) is the pressure for suboptimization. This results from departments independently striving towards their individual goals. These goals may be incompatible between departments, causing goal conflict. The perceptions of employees within the different departments may also lead to conflict. An increase in the functional interdependence between departments, groups or individuals on a horizontal level as well as the greater the dependence on common resources, may lead to an improvement of opportunities resulting in conflict at this level.

3.4.5.3 Line-staff conflict

It is a generally known fact that applicable organizational structure strategies contribute to good performances in an organization. Clear and applicable authority lines coupled to departmentalization supply the basis for a functional organizational structure. In reality there are scores of different organizational structures. However, these are all variations of three basic types: the line organization; line- and staff organization; and the matrix organization (Williams, 2000:423-424., Hellriegel, 2001:218-219., Ivancevich, Donnelly & Gibson 1989:214-216).

Stoner & Wankel (1996:410) state that not all authors agree on the matter of line-and-staff authority distinctions. Line-and-staff authority often contain such penetrating and confusing elements in an organization that these need to be studied and well understood in order to get to grips with the ways in which conflict manifests here. Stoner & Wankel (1996:420-421) acknowledges the existence of conflict and see its development as a result of the shortcomings of this type of structure.

Line-and-staff members, like members of other differentiated units in an organization, have different time horizons, goals, interpersonal orientation and approaches to problems, and differences in formal structure.

Rhenman, Strömberg & Westerlund (1970:18) already noted more than three decades ago that line-staff literature contains many reminders that, given the above definition, the staff concept will embrace wide variations. In one organization practically everyone except those directly engaged in production and selling, and the hierarchy of their superiors, can with some justification be said to belong to various staff departments. Many suggestions have therefore been made for the further classification of staff according to type. For instance, staff may be classified as belonging to two different groups namely to a central auxiliary department and to a specialized department. The latter may be referred to as 'proper' staff when some specialized type of work is separated from the line departments and amalgamated in one particular department. These specialized types can be research, IT-division, human resources management, production development, transportation (logistics) and maintenance.

Jackson & Schuler (2000) discuss at length, the importance of the human resources department as a staff function. They stress the fact that the special expertise of HR professionals is used by, and in cooperation with, line managers, other administrative staff and all first-line employees in every department. In other words, in the best companies, managing human resources is done through partnership (Jackson & Schuler, 2000:22). These authors also highlight the important role of line-managers namely: compensation; creating internal alignment; ensuring fairness; environmental analysis; job and organizational analysis; managing human resources; performance appraisal and feedback; performance-based pay systems; planned organizational change; promotion and transfer; recruitment; safety and health; selection and placement; socializing, training and development; and unionization and collective bargaining (Jackson & Schuler, 2000:25-61).

It should be evident that to a large extent, many of these functions belong to the staff divisions and specifically the HR-department. Needless to say, the sharing of these activities (whether to a larger or lesser degree) can be sources of conflict. This can be due to the fact that staff-functionaries are by nature advisers to line-functionaries with whom the final decisions rest. It can also be stated according to Rhenman (1970:46) that line-functionaries' failure to utilize staff is thought to depend mainly on two things: line executives do not consider staff help to be valuable and secondly, they regard staff as a threat to their own position. In the third instance staff personnel complain rather generally about their inability, without top management intervention, to get their plans, ideas and improvements accepted by the organization.

It is possible that departments which can be classified as line or staff may differ from organization to organization (Hellriegel, 2001:218). In fig. 3.1 three line departments are to be found namely: production, marketing and finance. They are directly linked to the goals of the organization and receive their responsibilities from their superior's line of authority. The staff departments in this instance are the Human Resource and IT-systems departments. They are directly linked to the goals of the organization.

Figure 3.1 also shows how horizontal and vertical conflict occurs between individuals or groups (also referred to by some authors as parties or subunits).

Figure 3.2 is another presentation of the line-staff organization.

3.4.5.4 Reasons for line and staff conflict

Lawrence & Lorsch (1990:35) identified four differences in attitude and work-style that may occur between different individuals and groups within a local authority. These attitudes and styles may within the contexts of line and staff functions, contribute to conflict as a result of:

- Differences in orientation with regard to specific objectives.

Figure 3.1 Line and staff organization (1)

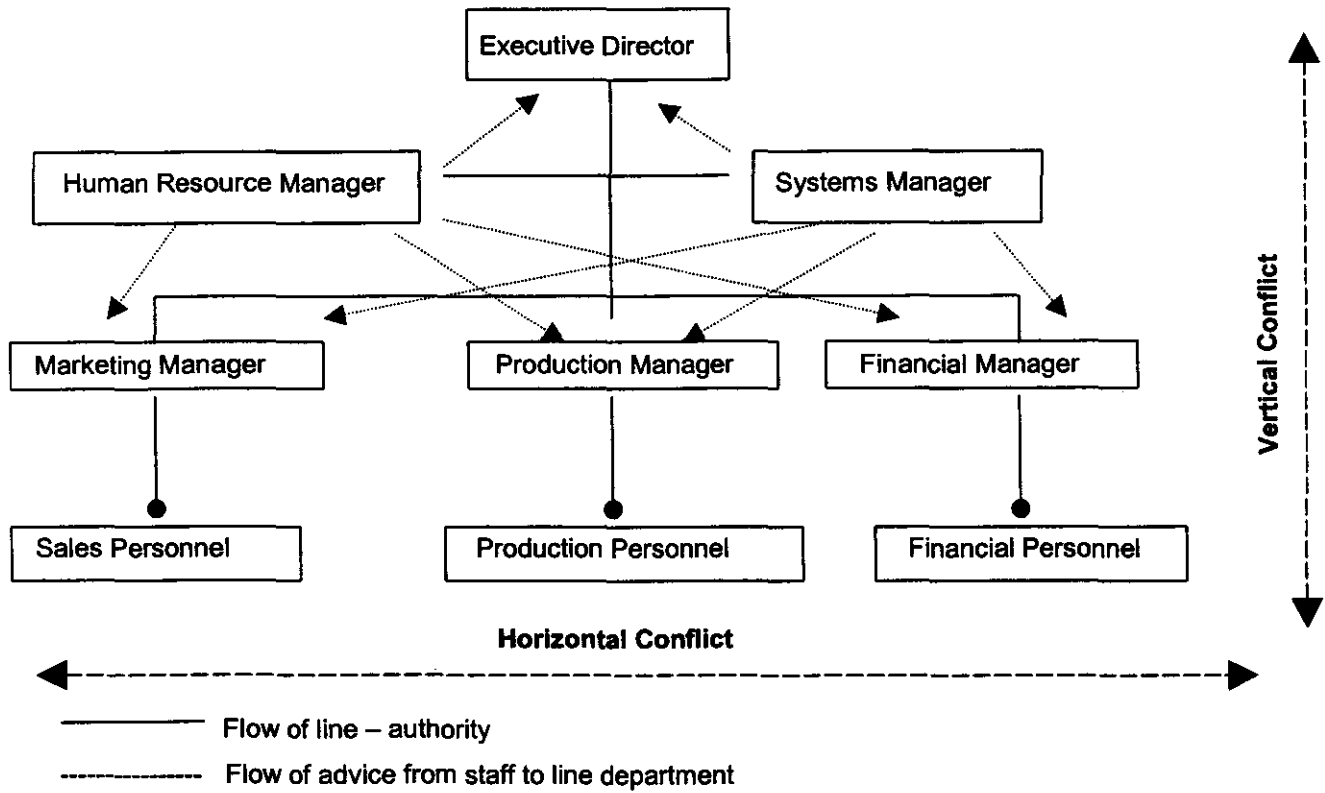
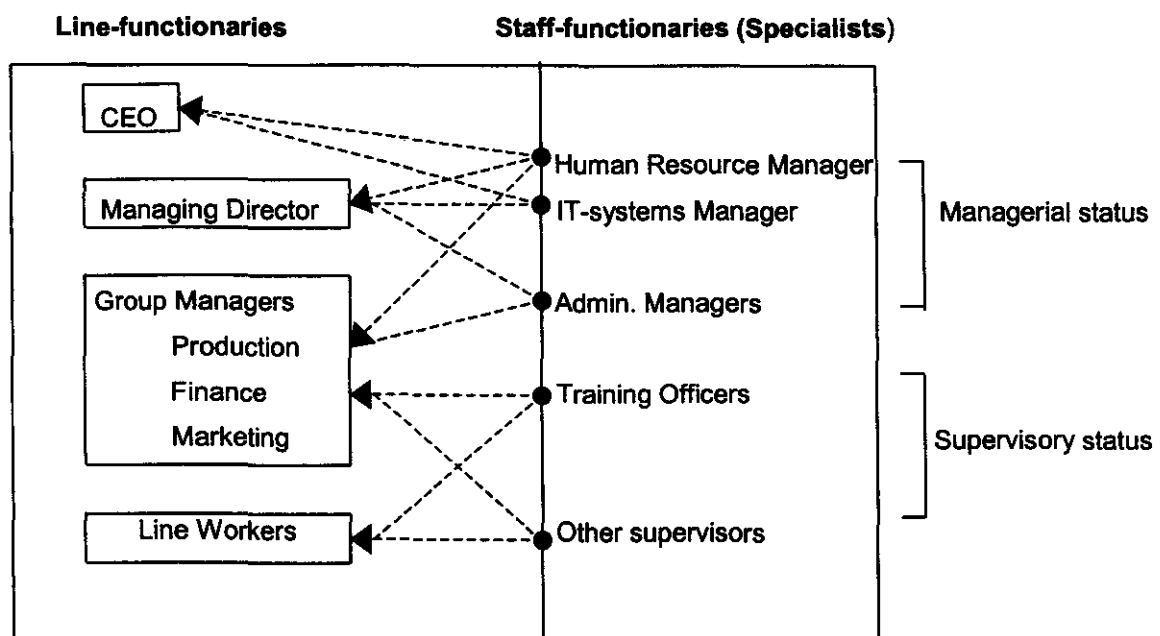


Figure 3.2 Line and staff organizations (2)



Source: Adapted from Rhenman (1970:41)

- Differences in time-orientation. Some line-functionaries may insist that problems be solved in one department at the same pace as the next.
- Differences in interpersonal orientation. Communication styles between the production and financial departments may differ.
- Differences in formal management. Each subunit type in an organization may for instance employ the evaluation of progress and the attainment of goals as well as remuneration of personnel.

The differences discussed above can contribute to the effective execution of tasks, but can also increase the potential of line-and-staff conflict. Venter (1988:33-34) found in his study that a dispute that develops more often may have bearing on those functional groups that are the most important in the organization.

According to Stoner (1989:403) line members frequently see staff members as having four major shortcomings, namely:

- Staff oversteps their authority;
- Staff does not always give sound advice;
- Staff steals credit from line;
- Staff has narrow perspectives.

On the other hand, staff members have analogous complaints about line members.

- Line-functionaries do not use staff properly;
- Line-functionaries resist new ideas;
- Line-functionaries give staff too little authority.

Differences in style and other characteristics often exacerbate conflicts between line and staff functionaries. According to Rue & Byars (1983:210) individual personalities, behaviour differences, characteristics and behaviour also contribute to conflict between line-and-staff groups or individuals.

3.5 Intractable conflict

This discussion on elements and approaches to conflict would not be complete without examining 'intractable conflict'. This type of conflict can have an impact on the results of the different types of conflict discussed so far.

Coleman (2000:428) says that when conflicts which are profoundly important to people remain unresolved for long periods of time, they tend to escalate, transform, and resurface repeatedly, eventually becoming stuck at a high level of intensity and destructiveness. These are intractable conflicts. An intractable conflict can be broadly characterized as one that is recalcitrant, intense, deadlocked, and extremely difficult to resolve. A more specific description or definition may be created to identify those characteristics that distinguish an intractable conflict from a manageable one.

3.5.1 Characteristics of intractable conflict

- **Time and intensity.** Intractable conflict tends to persist and cycle over time, with sporadic increases in intensity and occasional outbreaks of violence.
- **Issue centrality.** Intractable conflict tends to involve values that the disputants experience as critical to their own or their group's survival.
- **Conflict pervasiveness.** The experience of threat associated with such conflict is often so central and basic to human experience that the effects of the conflict spread and become pervasive, affecting most aspects of an individual's, group's or community's social and political life.
- **Hopelessness.** Typically, the disputants in an intractable conflict reach a point where they feel hopeless about the potential for constructive resolution.
- **Motivation to harm.** At this level of intensity, the motivations of the disputants are typically at a point where their primary objective is to harm one another.

- **Resistance to resolution.** Intractable conflicts are resistant to repeated and concerted attempts to resolve them.

3.5.2 Causes and consequences of intractable conflict

Although chapter 4 argues the sources (causes) of conflict at length it seems appropriate to reflect briefly on the causes of intractable conflict as noted by Coleman (2000:430-435):

In general, conflicts can involve a variety of interrelated issues such as resources, values, emotions, power needs, structural factors, history and others as discussed in chapter 4. Most conflicts involve more than one type of issue either directly or indirectly. A few important distinctions can however, be made when considering issues common to intractable conflict. Burgess and Burgess, in an article written in 1996 (Coleman, 2000:431) identified three types of issues that often lead to intractability, namely:

- Irreconcilable moral differences, which are conflicts over questions of moral, religious or personal values.
- High-stakes distributional conflicts which are conflicts over finite or scarce resources.
- Pecking-order conflicts, which are conflicts that emanate from struggles over relational power, ranking or political dominance among individuals or groups.

Other issues that need to be mentioned are those that primarily concern divisible resources such as time, money, land and others and those that concern the less tangible, basic issues of personal and group identity such as fair treatment, security and safety. Identity-based concerns are thought to be tied to the most fundamental human needs and therefore conflicts regarding these phenomena are often experienced by people as threatening their very existence.

Intractable conflicts particularly at intergroup level are typically rooted in ethnocentrism, racism or human rights abuses with regard to relations between disputants. It can be assumed that this may be the situation in South African organizations where the political history of the past is reflected in a new dispensation of democracy which has found its way through transformation and affirmative action into both public and private organizations. Where the power used to be seated in one group (whites) causing a severe imbalance of power on macro- and micro-level organizations, the power base through political force (in legislation) has changed, creating another imbalance. The result in both instances is that the those with more power exploit, control, or abuse the less powerful marginalized groups. According to Coleman (2000:433) the powerholders in these settings use the existence of salient intergroup distinctions (such as ethnicity) as a means of maintaining or strengthening their power base.

Fisher & Keashly (1991:234-236) conceptualized conflict as a mixture of objective and subjective elements that escalates and de-escalates over time. The subjective elements increase and take on greater importance as conflict escalates. Four stages of conflict escalation can be identified namely, communications, polarization, segregation and destruction. The destructive changes occur in several processes, including the disputants' communications, interactions, perceptions and relations with each other. A variety of social psychological processes that can fuel the intensity of conflict, include elements such as misperception, selective perception, self fulfilling prophecies, over commitment and entrapment (a special form of escalation where the parties expend more resources in the conflict that seems appropriate by external standards).

Other factors, according to Coleman (2000:434) include a win-lose or competitive orientation, the tendency toward cognitive rigidity in the parties involved in an escalated conflict, a gamesmanship orientation, miscommunication and autistic hostility.

3.5.3 Intractable conflict interventions

For intractable conflict to be resolved effectively, the intervention approach must be fashioned to be respectful. Interventions must be introduced in a manner inclusive and respectful of past and current approaches that have been employed successfully in addressing problems. In table 3.1 an outline is given of some of the past, present and possible future methods regarding conflict resolution. The primary objectives of these methods are to offer security to the disputants and their communities and to foster better relations among disputants.

Table 3.1 Constructive approaches to addressing intractable conflict

Past	Present	Future
Reflexivity. Dialogue. Forgiveness & Reconciliation. Traditional approaches.	Crisis management. Conflict systems analysis. Creating ripeness. Constructive confrontation. Problem-solving workshops.	Sustainable reconciliation. Focused social imaging.

Source: Coleman (2000:443)

3.6 **Types of diversity and conflict**

In recent years scholars of conflict started focusing on specific types of diversity and conflict. Jehn, Chadwick & Thatcher (1997:287-306) discuss three categories of diversity, namely, social category diversity, informational diversity and value diversity.

Social category diversity refers to the explication of the differences among group members who belong to a specific type of social category, the most salient of which are typically characteristics of race, gender and ethnicity. Although not

discussed very explicitly by Marx, his thoughts on the class-structure of proletariat and bourgeoisie implicitly included this type of diversity (refer 2.2).

Informational diversity on the other hand, refers to differences in terms of information and different perspectives that group members bring to the group.

The third form of diversity, **value diversity**, occurs when members of a workgroup differ in terms of their beliefs about the group's real task, goal, target or mission.

According to Mannix (2003:545) some recent research has just begun to link types of diversity to specific types of conflict. It was found that higher levels of informational diversity create more task conflict which can be beneficial, while higher levels of emotional conflict, tends to be more detrimental to performance. It has also been established that the greater the value diversity of the workgroup, the more both types of conflict occurs. Furthermore, functional diversity is linked to higher levels of task conflict in work teams, while race and tenure diversity lead to higher levels of emotional conflict. It should be noted that the link between social category differences such as race and ethnicity, and emotional conflict is especially critical to understand, particularly as it extends over the range of work, family and societal interaction.

In theories of diversity, conflict and conflict resolution, it may be especially important, according to Mannix (2003:545), to introduce variables that broaden one's perspective. Jehn and Mannix (2001) for instance, established that beneficial patterns of conflict were found in teams that began their interaction with similar work-related values which may be referred to as value homogeneity.

Careful scrutiny of these types of diversity will reveal that the different classifications can also be seen as sources or causes of conflict, and although neatly grouped and labelled as diversity, categories should not be set aside when trying to determine the reasons for conflict amongst individuals or groups.

3.7 Functional or dysfunctional conflict and performance

In the discussion of theories regarding conflict in chapter 2, Marx reiterated the fact that conflict can result into more intense conflict which can, even in micro-structures, be experienced as aggression between individuals or groups. The destructive nature thereof can be detrimental to the achievement of the goals of an organization. However, conflict should not necessarily be considered to be destructive (dysfunctional; negative; unproductive) at all times, but can also be constructive (functional; positive; productive) by nature.

From the discussions of Folger (1993:9) functional and dysfunctional conflict can be defined as the type of conflict where interaction is dependant on flexibility. Flexible interaction will also reveal to what extent prolonged efforts have been applied to bridge the irreconcilableness of positions. Dysfunctional conflict is that type of conflict where parties are less flexible because their goals have been defined more rigid and they compete with each other. Dysfunctional conflict interactions have long lasting avoidance characteristics.

Du Plessis (2000:83) also comes to the conclusion that conflict is an inherent part of every organization, because it is a social phenomenon that can be found at all levels of life. It does however, seem as if conflict is taken for granted and that most people view it only as negative, unproductive, dysfunctional or destructive. Conflict can also be functional, positive, productive or constructive and it should always be attempted to change dysfunctional conflict into functional conflict. Nelson (2001:423) is of the opinion that conflict can be harmful to any type of organization, but there are times when it is of utmost importance for expansion development and necessary for the adaptation and change of social systems. Both positive and negative results of conflict have to be taken into account when the constructive and destructive results of conflict are being evaluated. The outcome of functional and dysfunctional conflict can be noted as follows:

Positive (Functional) results of conflict:

- It gives Rise to new ideas;
- It stimulates creativity;
- It motivates change;
- It assists individuals and groups in developing their identity;
- It serves as a safety-valve for certain problems.

Negative (Dysfunctional) results of conflict:

- It leads energy away from the workplace;
- It has a negative influence on the psychological well being of the worker;
- It leads to under-utilization of resources;
- It creates a negative atmosphere;
- It breaks down group cohesion;
- It can result in aggression and hostility.

Rahim (1986) views the functional and dysfunctional outcomes of conflict in almost the same way as Nelson. According to him, **functional outcomes** include the following: better ideas are produced; people are forced to clarify their ideas; tension stimulates interest and creativity, and other people's capacities are tested.

On the other hand **dysfunctional outcomes** include: some people may feel defeated; distance between people can be increased; a climate of distrust and suspicion can develop where cooperation is needed; there may be an introspective withdrawal; resistance to teamwork can develop; and people may leave because of turmoil.

A very important consequence of dysfunctional conflict is aggression. From the studies of Opatow (2000:403-427) and Havenga (2002:62-65) the extent to which aggression is part of conflict becomes clear. According to Havenga (2002:64) conflict can either be constructive or destructive. If destructive, it may take one of two directions, that is, aggression or non-aggression. If the first route is followed,

aggression if not defused, may cause increased aggression. This aggression can take on many forms (Opatow, 2000:404):

- Physical, as in assault and sexual abuse, or symbolic, as in verbal, psychological, or emotional abuse.
- Vigorous attack, or passive withholding or diverting of needed resources.
- Instrumental, as a means of obtaining valued goods or goals, or emotional, as an end in itself in sadistic or dominating behaviour.
- Sanctioned or unsanctioned by those in power.
- With the intention to preserve the status quo, as by governmental militia, or with the intention to change the status quo, as by revolutionaries.
- By being prosocial or anti-social in its goals.

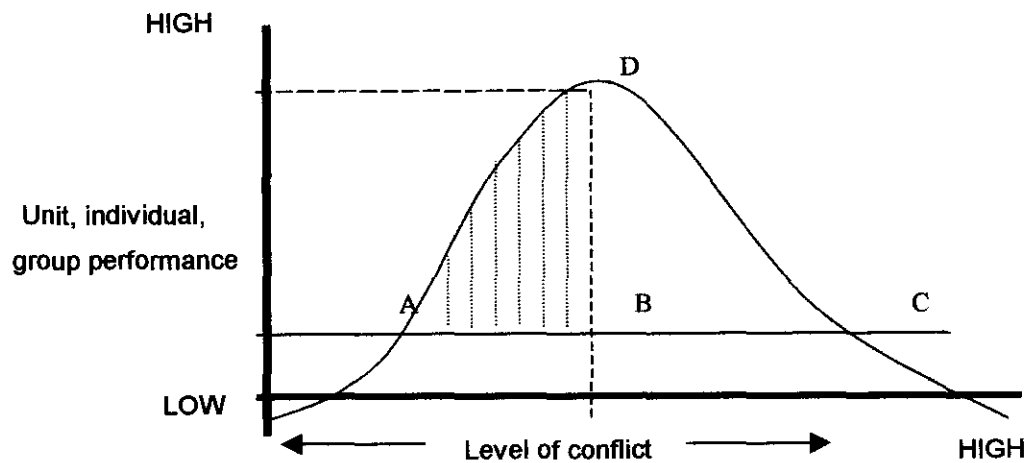
From what has been discussed so far one can come to the conclusion that it would be necessary to eliminate those resources that give rise to frustration and hostility between individuals and groups. McKendrick and Hoffman (1990:107) points to the fact that however much reformed the community may be, this in itself will not reduce the nature of conflict and aggression. It is necessary to acquire abilities by means of which conflict can be resolved and violence can be prevented.

In figure 3.3 an adapted presentation (Robbins, 2003:303) of conflict in unit (individual or group) performance is given. As shown in this figure conflict can be either too high or too low. Either extreme hinders performance of the individual or group. An optimal level is where there is enough conflict to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity, allow tensions to be released and initiate the potential for change, yet not so much as to be destructive or deter coordination of activities.

Inadequate or excessive levels of conflict could hinder the effectiveness of a group, individual or organization, resulting in group members being less stratified, in increased absence and turnover rates, and eventually in lower productivity. On the other hand, when conflict is at an optimal level, complacency and apathy should be minimised, motivation should be enhanced through the creation of a

challenging and questioning environment with a vitality that makes work interesting, and with the amount of staff turnover needed to rid the organization of misfits and poor performers (Robbins, 2003:303).

Figure 3.3 Conflict and performance



Situation.....	A	B-D	C
Level of conflict.....	Low or none	Optimal	High
Type of conflict.....	Dysfunctional / Destructive	Functional / Constructive	Dysfunctional / Destructive
Unit (Individual / Group) performance outcome.....	Low	High	Low
Unit (Individual / Group) internal characteristics.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apathetic - Stagnant - Non-responsive to change - Lack of new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viable - Self-critical - Innovative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disruptive - Chaotic - Fierce aggression - Uncooperative

Source: Adapted from Robbins (2003:303)

Concluding from the discussion above it can be said that conflict may be both constructive or destructive for an organization. It is constructive to the extent to which it results in better solutions of problems or effective attainment of individual, subsystem, group or organizational objectives or add to creativity which otherwise would not have been possible. In general either too little or too much conflict may be destructive for an individual, group or organization. The relationship between conflict and organizational effectiveness approximates an inverted U - function as presented in fig. 3.3. Whereas too little conflict may lead to confusion and organizational disintegration. A moderate amount of conflict, handled properly, is essential for attaining and maintaining an optimal level of individual, group and organizational effectiveness.

3.8 Conclusion

The business organization (whether private or public by nature) is most probably an area in which many different types of conflict is to be found. In order to manage conflict in these types of organizations effectively, such organizations need to identify the different types of conflict accurately. Only by doing so can the correct methods for the management of conflict be applied.

For the purpose of this study it is deemed of the utmost importance to evaluate the different elements of, and approaches to conflict. In other words, to clearly identify the different types of conflict. By identifying and evaluating all elements of conflict it will be possible to examine also more clearly, the sources that activate the different types of conflict in private and public sector organizations. With this in mind, attention was first devoted to the concept of conflict. After careful scrutiny of different viewpoints, and definitions regarding conflict, it was concluded that conflict should be seen as a situation that develops when individuals or groups experience incompatibility with regard to the endangering of their physical, material or psychological interests and when the different forces resulting from it are perceived to be irreconcilable.

Due to the fact that conflict resolution forms an integral part of industrial relations and human resources management, certain perspectives were removed from these two points of view. These perspectives recognize the existence of employment relationship conflict.

In this chapter a detailed analysis was done of the four main types of conflict namely, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup. In the case of interpersonal conflict the three sub-types of this conflict, that is, approach-approach; approach-avoidance; and avoidance-avoidance, as identified by Lewin in his field theory on conflict (refer 2.4.2.1 above) was discussed.

The different forms of conflict mentioned above can occur within any organization on either a vertical or horizontal level or as line-staff conflict and role conflict. Although these types of conflict can overlap, especially with role conflict, each has its distinctive characteristics. Because it is a generally known fact that applicable organizational structure strategies contribute to good performance in an organization, the line-and-staff authority was studied in detail in order to get to grips with the ways that conflict occurs in such systems. It was noted that line-and-staff members, like members of other differentiated units in the organization, have different time-horizons, goals, interpersonal orientation and approaches to problems, and differences in formality of structure.

Intractable conflict is very often neglected as a type of conflict in studies on conflict and was therefore also included in this chapter. This type of conflict has been characterized as one that is recalcitrant, intense, deadlocked, and extremely difficult to resolve. It remains unresolved for long periods of time, tends to escalate, transform and resurface repeatedly.

Because of the vary nature of all the different types of conflict it has become evident from the literature and results of previous research studies that conflict could be constructive or destructive. Consequently the last section of this chapter was devoted to an analysis of functional and dysfunctional elements of conflict and in the way in which it can be harnessed to the benefit of the organization. It

was concluded that conflict can be constructive to the extent in which it results in better solutions of problems or effective attainment of individual, subsystem, group or organizational objectives or add to creativity. In general, either too little or too much conflict may be destructive to an individual, group or organization.

Having identified the different types of conflict it now becomes necessary to establish what the causes (sources) of conflict are. The identification these is also one of the key elements of the empirical research of this study. Thus, in the following chapter an evaluation of the different sources of conflict will be undertaken. Although the causes were already discussed in chapter 2 where a review of the different theoretical approaches to conflict was undertaken, an evaluation of conflict sources, structural, communication, historical and power factors will be done in the next chapter. This will be followed by a discussion of the process of conflict and the conflict models of Robbins and Pondy.

Chapter 4

Evaluation of conflict sources and the conflict process

4.1 Introduction

The identification of the causes of conflict is one of the key elements in the empirical research part of this study. In the discussion of theories on conflict (refer chapter 2), it has already been illustrated that Marx and Dahrendorf devoted attention to the causes of conflict by keeping the macro-structural level in mind rather than the micro-level (organizations). Both these writers also interpreted the causes as being prerequisites for conflict.

In his study, Jordaan (1993:25-45) links the sources (causes) and 'conditions' as being prerequisites for conflict. Closer scrutiny with regard to terminology reveals that different authors (Marx, 1965.; Dahrendorf, 1976,1990.; Van Aarde, 1991.; Mayer, 2000.; Stroh, 2002.; Hellriegel et al, 1983.; Robbins, 2003) mostly consider sources as being prerequisites or causes of conflict.

Both Marx and Dahrendorf refer to the prerequisites of conflict. These are for instance poverty, the absence of security and other factors which are necessary for conflict to occur. Authors of the later generations however, prefer to use the terms sources or causes of conflict. Both terminologies actually describe the same phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, the terms sources or causes will be used interchangeably.

Because a relatively detailed analysis of the sources (prerequisites) of conflict (as seen by Marx and Dahrendorf), has already been addressed in chapter two, the following part of the study will only briefly refer to their ideas and whenever considered necessary. Both these authors specifically emphasized the following

as giving rise to conflict: **freehold (poverty rights); poverty; social mobility; absence of security; unemployment; competition and class-consciousness.** Some of these sources were implicitly identified by the authors as forming an integral part of the structure of society. On closer scrutiny of these sources it appears that in one way or another, the same causes for conflict may be found in the classifications of the younger generation of sociologists, organizational behaviourists and management scientists.

In the following discussion it is necessary to take note of the fact that the study will be done from a micro-structural perspective. This means that attention will be given to the causes of conflict as experienced and managed by businesses, for example by a local authority and a private sector company.

According to Holtzhausen (1994:19), organization-conflict can be resolved if the causes can be identified and solutions be found that please all the individuals or parties involved. Management of the origin (the causes) is the only effective way in which to ensure that conflict will not develop again. Nelson & Quick (2001:424) also makes this clear by stating the following: *“conflict is pervasive in an organization. To manage it effectively managers should understand the many sources of conflict”*.

In the problem statement of this study, the research question dealt with the key sources of conflict in the public and private sectors. The primary goal of this study is to answer this question. The means of achieving this goal will be by way of a literature study and the examination of theories regarding the main causes of conflict. Subsequently it will be attempted to empirically verify the principal causes of conflict in these two types of organizations. This is to be undertaken in chapter seven. The sub-objective of the study may be formulated as *“To determine and compare through a literature study, the various sources of conflict...”* (refer 1.3.b).

4.2 Sources of conflict

The identification of the sources of conflict is a key element in determining the strategies by which conflict should be resolved. Sources of conflict can also be associated with terminology that refers to 'causes', 'prerequisites' or 'conditions'.

Organization-conflict can be resolved if the causes of conflict within organizations can be clearly identified and solutions that suit all the parties involved, can be found. The management of the origin (causes) of conflict is the only effective way by which to ensure that conflict will not develop again or alternatively be channeled in a way that may be of benefit to both disputants and organization. Nelson & Quick (2001:424) clearly states that conflict is pervasive in an organization. To manage it effectively, managers should understand the many sources of conflict.

Havenga (2002:160) identified the following sources of conflict. These are listed in order of priority:

- Availability of resources
- Affirmative action programs
- Size and content of workload
- Application of new management techniques
- Cultural differences
- Racial differences

Although the above may have some degree of applicability, a more refined categorization is presented by Nelson & Quick (2001:424-428). According to him the causes of conflict can be divided into two categories, namely: structural factors (those that develop within the organization and the way in which the work is being organized); and secondly, personal factors (which develop as a result of differences between individuals).

Renwick (1975:444-456) identified the following sources of conflict: differences in knowledge, beliefs or basic values, competition for a position, for power or for recognition, a need to release tension, drive for autonomy, personal dislike, and differing perceptions or attitudes generated by the structure of the organization.

Rahim categorized six sources of organizational conflict (Rahim, 1986:79-86):

- effective, goal and substantive conflict;
- cognitive conflict and
- conflict of interest and values.

Kapp (Weider & Hatfield, 1995:687) saw the following as major causes of conflict:

- heterogeneity of the workforce;
- environmental changes;
- differences in goals;
- diverse economic interests;
- differential role structures;
- conflict group loyalties and;
- value discrepancies in organizations.

Some classifications however, overlook the very important category of communication. According to Robbins (1998) all the causes of conflict, or the necessary conditions for conflict to arise, can be divided into three general categories: **communication problems, structural variables** and **personal variables**. Van Aarde (1991:52-60) lists a number of sources of conflict as perceived by Bendix (1989), Korman (1971) and Ritzer (1972), but comes to the conclusion that after careful analysis, all the different sources can be classified into three components namely:

- Communication processes;
- Structure (as result of income distribution, size of organization and the mobility of workers);
- Personal or behavioural factors.

One can therefore come to the conclusion that a final classification can be narrowed down to the three categories formulated by Van Aarde (1991) and Robbins (1998) and acknowledged by various other authors.

4.3 Mayer's "Wheel of conflict"

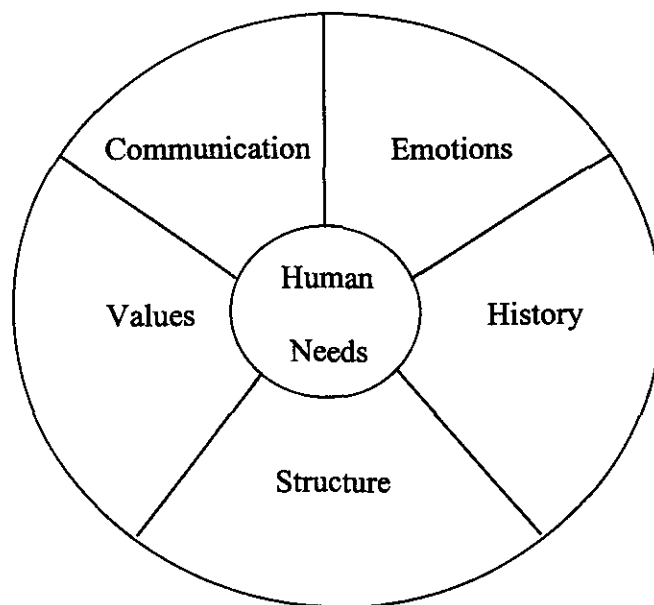
Mayer (2000:8-16) sees conflict as also having many origins and that there are many theories which try to explain these. Conflict however, is seen as arising from basic human instincts, from the competition for resources and power, from the structure of societies and institutions that people create, and from the inevitable struggle between classes.

It is felt by Mayer (2000:8), that if one can develop a useable framework for understanding the causes of conflict, a map of conflict can be created that can guide one through the conflict process. When one understands the different forces that motivate conflict behaviour, one is in a better position to create a more nuanced and selective approach to the management of conflict.

Generally the three basic forces or causes of conflict are communication factors, structural factors and personal behaviour factors. Moore (1996) according to Mayer (2000:9) developed what is called the circle of conflict. (fig. 4.1). This wheel of conflict has at its centre, the cause of all conflicts namely human needs. These needs, however, do not exist in a vacuum, but are embedded in a constellation of the forces that can generate and define conflict. The other forces or sources of conflict can be categorized into the following: the ways in which people communicate; emotions; values; the structures within which these interactions take place; and history. (See fig. 4.1).

At the centre of the wheel of conflict model are human needs that drive people's actions, including engagement in conflict. In the literature on conflict, a distinction is often made between interests and needs. Needs are more basic and enduring, whilst interests are viewed as superficial and transitory.

Figure 4.1 The wheel of conflict



Source: Mayer (2000:9)

The fact that one of the objectives of this study is to establish the sources that elicit conflict in local authorities and the private sector necessitates a more detailed discussion of the different sources.

If one refers to Marx's prerequisites for conflict (See chapter 2) and the application of the conflict theory in this study, it will be found that both the structural and personal (behavioural) factors can be linked to the theoretical discussion in chapter 2.

4.4 Structural factors

According to Havenga (2002:98) the causes of conflict which can be linked to an organization's structure includes the following: specialization, interdependency, communal sources, goal differences, jurisdiction vagueness, power relations and status inequalities.

- **Specialization:** Because people are not always aware of the tasks that others perform, some specialized tasks can result in conflict.
- **Size:** According to Vecchio (2000:236) there is fairly consistent evidence to suggest that conflict is greater in larger organizations. It is likely that an increase in size may be associated with less goal clarity, greater formality, increased specialization, more supervisory levels, and increased opportunities for information to become distorted as it passes through more levels.
- **Interdependency:** Work that is interdependent requires that individuals or groups have to work together and support each other to attain their goals. As long as this process works it may be fine, but if a problem appears it becomes easy to blame the other individual or group with the result that conflict escalates. Jones (2000:503) recognizes that as organizations differentiate, each subunit develops a desire for autonomy and begins to pursue goals and interests that it values above the goals of other subunits or of the organization as a whole. However, because the activities of different subunits are interdependent, the subunits' desire for autonomy leads to conflict between groups. Eventually, each subunit's desire for autonomy comes into conflict with the organization's desire for coordination. Furthermore, it should be noted that task interdependence between people or subunits or groups increases to the degree where the actions of one directly effects the actions of others. When task interdependence is high, conflict is likely to occur at the individual, functional, and divisional levels. If it were not for interdependence as a source, there would be no potential for conflict to occur among individual groups or subunits.
- **Goal differences:** When work-groups have different goals or objectives it may be that they are not concealable (Daft, 1997:609).
- **Jurisdiction vagueness:** Conflict can develop when job demarcation and borders as well as responsibilities are unclear.
- **Scarce resources:** When different parties have to share scarce resources potential conflict develops.

- **Authority relations:** The nature of the traditional employer-employee relationship brings to mind the development of a hierarchy where one person is superior to another. The bourgeoisie-proletariat (class-struggle) then emerges very strongly. Nelson & Quick (2001:425) points out that within some organizations, strong status differences exist between management and employees and such differences are characterized by benefits that management have and the others not. Vecchio (2000:236) also acknowledges the differences among staff members in terms of authority, longevity, and values as being sources of conflict.
- **Line-staff distinctions:** Conflict occurs between many line and staff divisions because of the functions they perform, their differing goals, and the values and backgrounds of their members. Line divisions are generally more operations oriented, while staff divisions are more removed from the central operating systems.
- **Power:** The distribution of power within an organization can also be a source of conflict, Coleman (In: Deutsch & Coleman; 2000:108) states that all conflicts have one basic element in common: power. Power to challenge, to resist and power through cooperation. Most conflicts directly or indirectly involve power, either as leverage for achieving a goal, as a means of seeking or maintaining the balance or imbalance of power in a relationship, or as a symbolic expression of one's identity. Power that is linked to position in life is, according to Dahrendorf, the core element (refer: 2.3) of conflict.

Other structural elements mentioned by Vecchio (2000:236-238) and Mayer (2000:12-13) which often affect conflict include: participation; reward systems; proximity of the disputants; access to information; legal parameters and organizational structure. It should be kept in mind that one of the major causes of conflict is to be found in organizational change. Change in the sense that new organizational structure is developed in order to facilitate new production or marketing methods or in certain cases to accommodate new political interventions such as affirmative action or transformation programs.

Change strategies developed to address the required changes must, according to Mastenbroek (1993:28) contain two elements, namely: it must give a general outline of the **goals of change** (ideas about the structure and culture to be achieved). The latter mainly involves the structuring and integration of concrete interventions, whilst the goals of change are related to the organization theory.

Change strategies that can assist in resolving or managing conflict can be grouped into four (Mastenbroek, 1993:28):

- Power/coercion strategy: In applying this strategy, a manager relies on the authority of his position to force his sub-ordinates to accept changes. This strategy takes advantage of the dependency of the sub-ordinates and the fact that a person who offers resistance severely restricts his right to self-determination or autonomy.
- Empirical/rational strategy: In this type of situation reasonable arguments are presented to convince individuals or groups of the usefulness and the appropriateness of the change. Here it is attempted to persuade those involved to adapt their opinions and views by taking a rational and logical approach to change and to propagate new insights and opinions which can accommodate the change.
- Negative/re-educative strategy: Here the strategy is directed at the norms and values of the employees. By 're-educating' them, attempts are made to change existing values, norms and behavioural patterns in such a way that new views and behavioural forms come about. The strategy also involves the individual's self-image and self-esteem.
- Facilitative strategy: This strategy creates considerations to bring about change by creating material and other facilities. 'Rewards' are promised if changes are accepted. This strategy appeals to the consideration given by individuals or groups to cost and benefits.

4.5 Personal behaviour factors

This category of potential sources of conflict is personal variables. Individual value systems and personality characteristics that account for idiosyncrasies and differences are included here.

According to Robbins (2003:439) evidence indicates that certain personality types lead to potential conflict (for example, individuals who are highly authoritarian and dogmatic, and who demonstrate low esteem). Most important (and probably the most overlooked) variable in studies of social conflict is that of differing value systems. Value differences are the best explanation of such diverse issues as prejudice and disagreements with regard to individual opinions.

Sources of conflict that develop as a result of individual differences and value systems include the following: personalities, perceptions, values, ethics, emotions, cultural differences, skills and communication restrictions (Havenga, 2002:100-101).

- Skills: Because the labour-force exists of individuals with a diversity of skills and abilities, it increases the probability of potential conflict. This is especially so when tasks are interdependent. It may for instance be experienced that competent workers find it difficult to work together with inexperienced workers.
- Personalities: Personality conflict is indisputably part of organizational functioning. This type of conflict is the result of basic differences with regard to personality, values and attitudes. Aside from personal behaviour factors, Vecchio (2000:239) adds the idea that some people's personal style is very conflict-prone, with life being a continuing series of escalating hostilities and battles. Studies show that conflict-prone individuals are likely to possess certain traits. Highly authoritarian individuals are prone to antagonize their co-workers by escalating otherwise trivial differences. Individuals with low self-esteem on the other hand, may more readily feel

threatened by others and overreact. In both cases conflict will be the end result.

- Perceptions: Differences in perceptions can also lead to conflict situations. One area in which perceptions can differ is the premise as to what motivates workers.
- Values and ethics: Mayer (2000:11) stresses this source of conflict when he says that when conflict is defined or experienced as being due to differences regarding values, it becomes more charged and intractable. Normally people define themselves only in part with regard to their core beliefs, and easily perceive these values to be questioned or under attack. It is also difficult to compromise when core beliefs are at risk as individuals may feel they are compromising themselves or their integrity. Although values and ethics are often a source of conflict and complicate its resolution, it can also be a source of commonality and restraint regarding the escalation of conflict. The recognition of values as an important potential source of conflict is critical in channelling the conflict into a constructive direction.
- Emotion: One of the predominant classifications in Mayer's (2000:9) wheel of conflict is 'emotions'. Emotions are generated both by particular interactions or circumstances and by previous experiences. In conflict it is often possible and necessary to work specifically on the emotional content of the disputant's experience. The importance of emotions is expressed by Bodtker & Jameson (2001:259) in their indication that emotion plays a predominant role in the workplace which goes beyond the concept of emotional labour.

A number of scholars (Putman & Mumby, 1993; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989) have called for greater attention to the role of emotional experience and expression in the workplace and its impact on organizational outcomes. Bodtker & Jameson (2001:260) also suggest that the biases against emotion (as a source) and conflict are the same. To be in conflict is to be emotionally charged, and part of the reason for conflict being uncomfortable, is due to its accompanying emotions. This may be

especially true in the workplace where organizational norms explicitly or implicitly prescribe what an individual is supposed to feel. One can therefore believe that in order to manage conflict more effectively, attention should be paid to the role of emotions in conflict and conflict management. It should be remembered that conflict is emotionally activated (Jones, 2000:503)

- Cultural differences: Whilst cultural differences can be an asset to an organization it can also be a source of conflict. Very often this type of conflict develops because one does not have enough knowledge of other cultures. In South Africa cultural differences are very often connected to racial differences. Kruger (1998:147) says that although cultural diversity can be functional when organizational change occurs in local authorities, it is the result of ethnocentrism and diverse occupational problems also hold the potential for conflict. It can be attributed to misunderstandings because of cultural differences and antagonism can also be the result of competition in order to get control of the socio-economic and socio-political structures. This implies that the class-differences to which Marx refers (refer chapter 2) are indeed meaningful. The core-classes identified by Marx are generally accepted to be the "bourgeoisie" and the "proletariat". An in-between group is the "petty-bourgeoisie" which consists of restaurateurs, retailers, shop-owners and other similar groups. The bourgeoisie is considered to be the privileged, whilst the proletariat can be seen as the under-privileged.

Kimmel (2000) discusses culture and conflict in depth with regard to aspects such as subjective culture, constructing reality, cultural identity, attribution and miscommunication, stereotypes and cultural awareness. What becomes evident from his discussion is that differences in perception, cognition, reasoning, and communication styles can lead to misperception and miscommunication that hamper resolution and create conflict. What one experiences in an intercultural conflict situation and what others intend one to experience are not always the same. Avoiding or ameliorating intercultural communication problems and the dysfunctional (destructive) conflicts that it creates or exacerbates requires

training in cultural awareness and intercultural communication which may promote intercultural exploration and learning how to learn. Intercultural exploration uses differences in a mindset to develop new options and approaches, and create unique solutions or ways of handling conflict (Kimmel; 2000:471).

4.6 Communication factors

According to Vecchio (2000:236) managers attribute a sizeable proportion of the conflict that arises in organizations to poor communication. This poor communication can only be ascribed to the fact that human beings are very inadequate communicators. Sometimes this imperfection generates conflict, whether or not there is a significant incompatibility of interests which makes conflict harder to handle, solve or manage (Mayer, 2000:9). To be sure, conflict stemming from unsuccessful communication as a source is not the same as conflict based on substantive differences, though this can still have powerful effects.

Robbins (2003:438) (in contrast to other authors) states that one of the myths that most of us harbour is that poor communication is the reason (source) for conflict. Such a conclusion does not seem far-fetched given the amount of time that is spent on communication. Although poor communication is not the source of all conflict, there is considerable evidence to suggest that problems in the communication process act to retard collaboration and stimulate misunderstanding. Semantic difficulties, insufficient exchange of information and 'noise' in the channel are all barriers to communication and potential antecedent conditions to conflict.

The potential for conflict increases when either too little or too much communication takes place. Apparently, an increase in communication is functional up to a point, after which it is possible to overcommunicate, resulting in an increase of conflict.

Communication, of course, should not always be viewed as a cause of conflict but also as a means to resolve conflict (if not the most important means). Krause & Marsella (2000:142) consider communication not to be a panacea, and in the absence of genuine desire to resolve conflict it is likely to intensify the parties' disagreement in moderating it. Although a point which may seem too obvious to warrant mentioning, conflicts often serve multiple functions and the parties may approach resolution with some ambivalence. They may find that the perceived benefits of continuing conflict outweigh its costs. In such cases, communication aimed at resolving conflict may be unavailing and conceivably make things worse.

4.7 Historical factors

Although these may seem to be difficult to accept as a source of conflict, Mayer (2000:13) makes some valid remarks as to why history can cause conflict. According to him, conflict can not be understood independently from its historical context. The history of people who are participants in a conflict, the systems in which the conflict occurs, and of the issues themselves have a powerful influence on the course of conflict. Such conflicts, however, cannot be solved without an understanding of the complicated systems of interaction that have developed over time and the degree to which the conflict itself has become part of the disputants' (individuals, groups, parties, subunits) identity.

It should be noted that all these different sources of conflict – communication, emotions, values, structure, interdependence, personal behaviour factors, and others – all interact with each other. This interaction however, is a function of people's history which affects their values, communication style, structure in which they operate and emotional reactions.

4.8 Power factors

So far it should have become clear that no indication has been given to the role that power plays in conflict in general, or whether it can be considered to be a

source of conflict at all. Careful scrutiny of the literature has not revealed the role of power explicitly as a source of conflict, but implicitly it has become evident that it does have the potential of acting as a catalyst or prerequisite in certain cases of conflict

Havenga (2002:35) referring to Dahrendorf (1976) says that power inequality which develops from productive inequality, gives rise to conflict among classes. Lopreato (1972:73) states that conflict is regulated through the distribution of power within an organization and persons that do not have power, act more negatively toward persons that exercise control over them.

The impact of power on conflict is such that it would not do justice to the objectives of this study if limited attention is devoted to the subject.

Very often the terms authority and power are used as having the same meaning. However, while closely related authority and power do not exactly mean the same. Authority is power legitimated through its acceptance by people as being right and proper (superior-subordinate relationship) (Hellriegel, 1983:430). It is closely related to leadership. Power, unlike authority, according to Badenhorst (Bergh & Theron, 2001:227) is not awarded to a manager, but can be seen as a reward from subordinates to the leader.

4.8.1 Structural and interpersonal sources of power

There are two general categories of power: structural and personal. Structural power is an integral part of a given situation, and refers to the objective resources people bring to a conflict, the legal and political realities within which the conflict occurs, the formal authority they have, and the real choices that exist. Personal power on the other hand, has to do with individual characteristics such as determination, knowledge, wits, courage, and communication skills (Mayer, 2000:54). Individuals or groups can be very creative in finding power to bring about conflict, and according to Mayer (2000:55) there are several key sources of power that disputants repeatedly mobilize in conflict.

From a literature survey it has become clear that there is some consensus as to the different types of power that exist. In table 4.1 a typology is given of that of five authors (Hellriegel, 1983:430-432; Stroh, 2002:196-198; Mayer, 2000:55-60; Robbins, 2003:397-400).

Table 4.1 Typology of power

<u>Robbins</u>	<u>Hellriegel</u>	<u>Stroh</u>	<u>Marx/ Dahrendorf</u>	<u>Mayer</u>
Reward Legitimate Coercive Expert Referent	Reward Legitimate Coercive Referent	Reward Legitimate Coercive Expert Task interdependence	Freehold (property rights) Poverty Social mobility Security absence Unemployment Competition Class-consciousness	Formal authority Legal prerogative Information Association Resources Rewards and sanctions Nuisance Procedural Habitual Moral Personal characteristics Perception Definitional

It is clear from this typology chart that most of the authors identify five or six types of power. As can be seen, Mayer identifies thirteen different types. His explanation of the different types not only reveals the different power conflict sources, but also brings to understanding the kinds and sources of power individuals or groups potentially have to bring about conflict.

Because Mayer offers a more clear and detailed picture of the types of power as sources of conflict, brief attention will be paid to each type. This does not mean that the classifications of the other authors are wrong. On the contrary, the five or six power source classifications include those detailed by Mayer (2000:55-80).

- **Formal authority:** Most people in leadership positions have some power based on formal authority and some based on personal influence. Formal authority is a form of structural power. The effectiveness with which it is used as a source of conflict is often related to personal power.
- **Legal prerogative:** This type of power is created by the rights and choices (as defined by law and policy), that a person is entitled to.
- **Information:** Data and knowledge are important sources of power. In many situations the actions individuals or groups take to share, discover, or conceal information are the key to how conflict originates or develops. This type of power is exactly the same as Robbins' expert power.
- **Associations:** This type of power stems from an individual's connection with other powerful people or organizations. In a certain sense this power can also be seen as borrowed or power implicitly or indirectly transferred by the owner to the associate.
- **Resources:** A major source of power is control over power in the form of access to resources such as money, time, labour material and intellectual resources. It may be either tangible or intangible.
- **Rewards and sanctions:** All power can to some extent, be defined in terms of the ability to reward or sanction. The ability to provide or withhold meaningful rewards and the ability to impose negative consequences on others or to prevent those consequences can be seen as twin sources of power.
- **Nuisance:** Related to sanctions as a source of power, this refers to the ability to irritate, bother, interfere or harass. This can very often be a major source of conflict – depending on the emotions of the person to whom this source of power is directed.
- **Procedural:** This power arises from the ability to control or influence a decision-making process. Although the power of a judge or a mediator may be procedural to a certain extent, it is certainly not insignificant.
- **Habitual:** Habitual power refers to being in a position of trying to prevent change as opposed to stimulating it. This power potentially explains why, for instance, community groups opposed to development have often been able to coerce large corporations with considerable resource and

- association power into submission. Earlier in the discussions change was highlighted as a source of conflict.
- Personal characteristics: Power derived from personal characteristics can be employed as a means of creating conflict. Intelligence, communication skills, concentration, perceptiveness, determination, empathy and courage are key factors in determining how well needs will be met in any conflict.
 - Perception of power: The beliefs people have about their own power and that of others, are often as important as the power itself. The ability individuals possess to modify the perception that others have about power, is in itself a source of power.
 - Definitional: This refers to the ability to define issues and potential outcomes of conflict and is a crucial source of power. Knowledge about the precise structure of a conflict situation is often the key to how it is to be resolved.

In comparing the different types of power above, one can assume that some of them are by nature more constructive than others and any of them can be used to escalate or deescalate conflict or to contribute to either constructive (positive) or destructive (negative) conflict. Some types of power are compatible with others and some are not. Conflict often develops when a person tries to use incompatible types of power. The supplementation of powers such as legal power and resources power can be very effective.

It should be noted that the sources of power are not the same as the uses of power. Mayer (2000:62) sees the use of power as a means to influence the behaviour of others. This can be achieved in three primary ways.

The first is the **normative approach** to the application of power. This is achieved by way of persuasive efforts regarding values and by making use of normative symbols. The objective is to activate others to comply with their wishes by convincing them that it is the right thing to do. The **utilitarian approach** is to appeal to people's self-interest or to indicate that they will obtain certain tangible benefits if they do what one wants. The third method, termed the **coercive**

approach is to try to force people to agree to, or comply with something by threatening significant sanctions or by manipulating the external environment by removing the freedom of choice.

4.8.2 The implication of power regarding conflict

It is also necessary to address the implication of power with regard to conflict. Coleman (2000:121-122) says that a competitive orientation to power currently dominates the approach to power by social scientists, as well as power holders.

From a practical perspective, a chronic competitive approach to power has harmful consequences. It has been pointed out (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000:28) that reliance on the influence of competitive and coercive strategies by power holders, produces alienation and resistance in those who are subjected to power. (Refer also to Marx's and Dahrendorf's 2.2 and 2.3). This in turn, limits the power holder's ability to use other types of power based on trust, such as normative, expert, referent, reward and others, and increases the demand for scrutiny and control of subordinates. If the goal of the power holder is to achieve commitment from subordinates, rather than short-term compliance, excessive reliance on power-over- strategy eventually proves to be very costly as well as ineffective. Furthermore it is evident that when power holders have a chronic competitive perspective with regard to power, it reduces their chances of viewing power sharing with members of low-power groups as an opportunity to enhance their own personal or environmental power.

Cooperative conflict in turn, leads to power (Coleman, 2000:123). When conflict occurs in situations where a communal task is shared, or reward or outcome interdependence structures exist, or a cooperative psychological orientation is shared by disputants, there is more cooperative power. In such situations conflict is probably portrayed as a mutual problem to be solved by both parties, which in turn leads to an increased tendency to minimize power differences between individuals or groups in conflict. This offers mutual enhancement of each other's power in order to work together effectively to achieve their shared goals.

It is also evident that the perception of power has implications for conflict. Often initial perception of another's power is great because it is based on aggregates of relative power and not on the other's actual power resources or efficacy in implementing the strategies relevant to the conflict at hand. This typically leads to a sense of overconfidence on the part of the power holders and to a sense of helplessness on the part of those who have little power.

It is also critical to bear in mind that power is typically context-dependant and that even the most powerful people are powerless under certain conditions. In these conditions it is the norms, roles, policies, structures, and cultures that are responsible for power differences and should also be targeted for change.

Fiske (1993) has demonstrated that powerful people tend to pay less attention to powerless people since they view them as not affecting their outcomes. Interacting with the powerless makes powerful people more vulnerable with regard to the use of stereotypes or implicit theories. Thus, in conflict situations, high power holders and members of high power groups often neglect to analyze, and may underestimate the ability of low power holders and members of low power groups. In addition, they usually attempt to dominate the relationship, use pressure tactics, offer few concessions, have high aspirations and use contentious tactics (Coleman, 2000:125).

4.9 The conflict process

In the previous paragraphs special attention was paid to the sources of conflict because it is believed that little hope exists as far as the resolution of conflict situations is concerned if organizations have no idea as to the causes of the conflict. Realizing the nature and extent of the conflict will facilitate the handling and managing procedures. For the purposes of this study it is necessary to establish the sources of conflict within local authority and private sector organizations. This is done through the empirical study. Section B of the questionnaire covers the identification of the sources (refer: Annexure A).

The sources of conflict is the point of departure regarding the conflict process which consists of five stages (Robbins; 2003:437) which starts off with potential opposition or incompatibility. Pondy's view of conflict as a process also consists of five sequential stages, starting of with latent conflict. The value of both these models lies in that it can be used to interpret and analyse a conflict situation and the action that should be taken to resolve it. The need to discuss these two models arises from the fact that after determining the causes of conflict, it should be established what styles disputants (individuals or groups/subunits) follow in conflict situations (avoiding, competing, compromise or others) and the way in which conflict should be handled or managed.

4.9.1 Pondy's organizational conflict model

4.9.1.1 Latent conflict

Jones (2000:503) states that in the first stage of Pondy's model no outright conflict exists, but because of the way organizations operate, the potential for conflict, though latent, is present. Lacey (2000:18) talks about such a first stage as a period of discomfort.

Pondy (1987), states that all organizational conflict arises because vertical and horizontal differentiation lead to the establishment of different organizational subunits with different goals and often different perceptions of how to best realize those goals. He also identifies five potential sources of conflict between subunits i.e: their interdependence, differing goals, bureaucratic factors, incompatible performance criteria, and competition for resources.

The **interdependence of subunits** refers to the activities of subunits which are interdependent and this enhances their desire for autonomy which consequently results in conflict between groups. Eventually, each subunits' desire for autonomy which consequently results in conflict between groups. Eventually, the different subunits' need for autonomy comes into conflict with the organization's need for coordination and cooperation. Looking specifically at task

interdependence and assuming this to be high, conflict is likely to occur at individual, functional and divisional levels.

Differences refers to subunit (group) orientation with regard to **goals and priorities**. This can affect the way each function or division views the world and cause subunits to pursue different goals which are often inconsistent or incompatible. The potential for conflict increases once goals or priorities become incompatible.

Bureaucratic factors undoubtedly play an important role in the generation of conflict. The way in which relationships develop in organizations can also be a potential source of conflict. Over time, conflict can occur because of status inconsistencies between different groups in the organization's bureaucracy. Line and staff functions' bureaucratic conflict is a typical example. Individuals in the line function come to view themselves as the critical organizational resource and people in staff functions as secondary players (Stoner, 1996:420).

Sometimes conflict arises between subunits not because their goals or priorities are incompatible, but because of the **incompatibility of performance criteria** (ways of monitoring, evaluating and rewarding groups).

Resources, whether scarce or not, have always been considered a dominant source of conflict. Resources may be plentiful but the unequal division thereof amongst individuals or groups may cause conflict. **Competition of scarce resources** occurs when choices about resource allocation have to be made, and groups or subunits have to compete for their share.

Considering these five factors of the Pondy model in relation to all the other sources mentioned and discussed in the first section of the chapter, a shortcoming in the first stage of this model is revealed. The typology of sources of conflict (Table 4.2) already shows that some very important aspects have not been taken into consideration.

4.9.1.2 Perceived conflict

In the second stage of Pondy's model, each group begins to define why conflict is emerging and to analyze the events that lead up to it. Each group searches for the origin of the conflict and constructs a scenario that accounts for the problems it is experiencing with other groups. Conflict escalates as different subunits start to quarrel over the cause of the problem.

4.9.1.3 Felt conflict

As pointed out earlier (Mayer, 2000:9; Bodtker & Jameson, 2001:259), emotion plays an important part as a starting mechanism in the conflict process. At the stage of felt conflict, groups quickly develop an emotional response toward each other. As conflict escalates, cooperation between the groups diminishes resulting in a decline in organizational effectiveness. This augmentation makes it difficult to manage the escalation of conflict.

4.9.1.4 Manifest conflict

Manifest conflict can take on many forms. Open aggression between people and groups is common. In general, once conflict erupts, organizational effectiveness suffers because coordination and integration between superiors and subordinates breaks down. Superiors need to prevent conflict from reaching the manifest stage for two reasons: because of the likelihood of a breakdown in communication and that of an aftermath.

4.9.1.5 Conflict aftermath

According to Jones (2000:509) every episode of conflict leaves a conflict aftermath which affects the way in which the parties concerned perceive conflict and react to future conflict episodes. If conflict is not resolved until late in the process, or not resolved at all, the aftermath will taint future relations and the

organizational culture will be negatively influenced with regard to future cooperative relationships.

4.9.2 Robbins' conflict process model

In his work on organizational behaviour, Robbins (2003:437-449) models a conflict process that has five stages. When comparing the two models it becomes evident that Robbins' model goes a little further in that he also addresses the conflict-handling intentions (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating) as well as behaviour and outcomes.

4.9.2.1 Potential opposition or incompatibility

The conditions or sources that create the opportunities for conflict serve as Robbins' point of departure for his model. These conditions need not lead to conflict directly, but one of them is necessary for conflict to develop. He subsequently reduced these conditions (sources or causes) into three general categories namely: communication, structure and variables. These sources have already been debated extensively in this chapter and will not be revisited at this point.

4.9.2.2 Cognition and personalization

If the conditions identified in the initial stage negatively affect one group, the potential of incompatibility becomes actualized in the second stage of the process. The antecedent conditions can only lead to conflict when one or more of the groups are affected by, and aware of the conflict. These are the **perceived** and **felt** levels which correspond with the Pondy model.

4.9.2.3 Intentions

Thomas (Robbins, 2003:441) says that intentions intervene between people's perceptions and emotions and their overt behaviour. These intentions are decisions to act in a given way. Conflict occurs and can be escalated due to one group wrongly interpreting the intentions of the other. In addition, there is a great deal of oversight between intentions and behaviour, as behaviour does not always accurately reflect a person's intentions.

Using two dimensions, namely, cooperativeness and assertiveness, five conflict-management intentions can be identified: competing (assertive and uncooperative), collaborating (assertive and cooperative), avoiding (unassertive and uncooperative) and compromising (midrange in both assertiveness and cooperativeness). Blake and Mouton (1964) first presented a conceptual scheme for classifying the styles of handling interpersonal conflicts. These are divided into five types namely: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising and problem solving. Because these conflict types (intentions) form a basic part of this study they will be considered together with Rahim's ROC-II model which is to be discussed in detail in chapter 5 of this study.

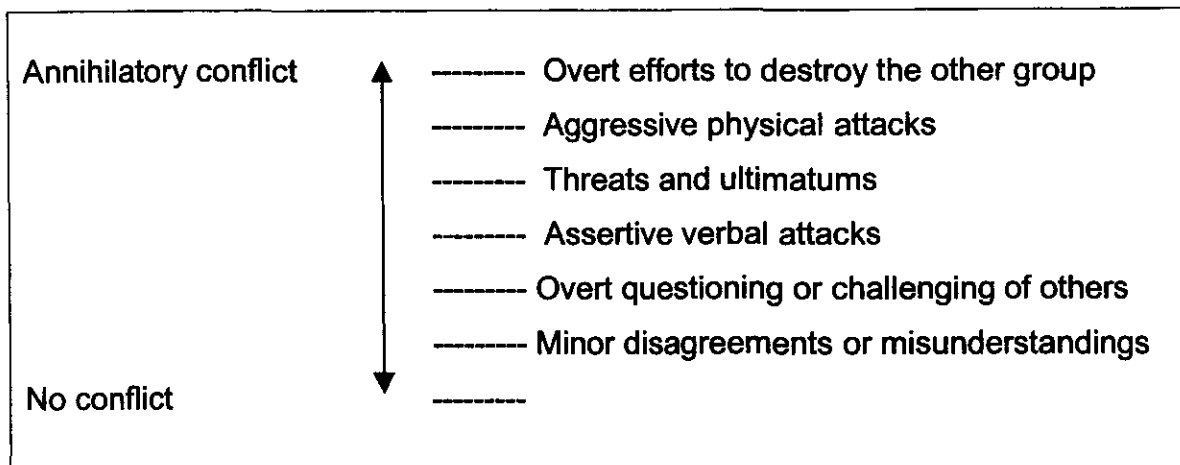
4.9.2.4 Behaviour

This stage includes the statements, actions and reactions made by the conflicting groups. These conflict behaviours are usually overt attempts to execute each group's intentions. It should be remembered that these behaviours have a stimulus quality that may be different from what was originally intended. Due to miscalculations or unskilled enactments, overt behaviours deviate from original intentions.

This stage can be considered as a dynamic process of interaction. Robbins (2003:443) provides a table (4.2) for visualizing conflict behaviour. At the lower part of the continuum conflict is characterized to be indirect and highly controlled forms of tension are to be found. Conflict intensity escalates as it moves upward

along the continuum until it becomes highly destructive (dysfunctional/negative). Functional (constructive/positive) conflicts are typically confined at the lower end of the continuum.

Table 4.2 Conflict intensity continuum



Source: Robbins et al. (2003:443)

4.8.2.5 Outcomes

The last stage of Robbins' model. The eventual outcomes, as demonstrated by the model, may be constructive (functional) in that the conflict results in an improvement in the group's performance or destructive (dysfunctional) in that it restrains group performance.

According to Havenga (2002:60) constructive and destructive conflict can be defined as a specific type of conflict characterized by interaction which is dependent on flexibility. Flexible interaction will also reflect to what extent sustained efforts have been applied in order to bridge the incompatibility between positions. Dysfunctional conflict is that kind of conflict where groups are less flexible because their goals have been defined more stringently and they compete with each other. This conflict interaction has long and protracted,

uncontrollable escalation-cycles or prolonged avoidance characteristics (refer: 3.7)

Du Plessis (2000:38) comes to the conclusion that in most instances, conflict is considered as self-evident and that people view conflict only as being dysfunctional, unproductive or negative. Havenga (2002:432) is also of the opinion that conflict can be damaging to any type of organization, but there are times when it is highly desirable for expansion and development, meaningful adjustments and changes to social systems. Both the positive and negative consequences of conflict should be taken into account when evaluating the functional and dysfunctional characteristics of conflict.

Lacey (2000:18) discusses the levels of conflict and categorizes it into five stages. The initial stage can be classified as the **discomfort stage**, which means that a feeling occurs that something is wrong. This may be the result of a small **incident**. As a result of this incident a **misunderstanding** occurs which is not clarified or brought out into the open. This eventually results in a **stage of tension** which inevitable may erupt into a **crisis** (See, fig. 4.2) which may be dysfunctional.

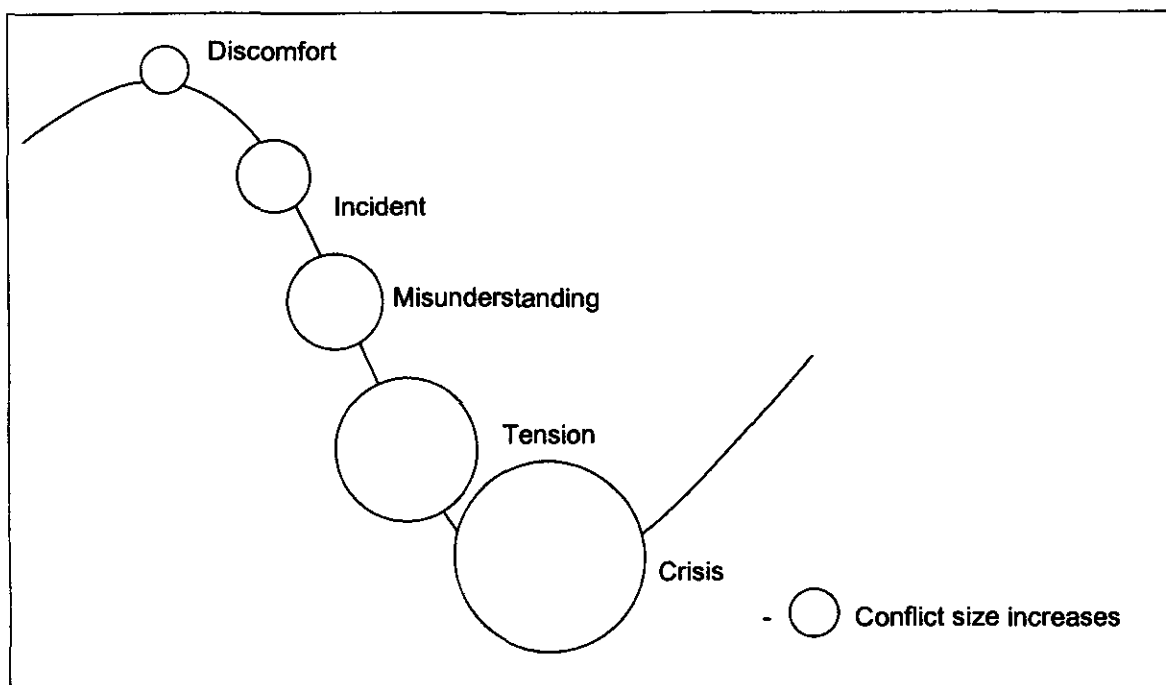
Although it is not discussed in any depth by Lacey, it should be noted that during each stage of development, emotions become stronger and intervention more difficult. The end result may be that conflict may spiral out of control. Each of these stages already necessitates a specific form of handling or management.

4.10 Adapted conflict process model

Having discussed Pondys' and Robbins' models of the conflict process and the stages of conflict as presented by Lacey, it is deemed necessary to present an adapted model of the conflict process. This model serves to clarify the process much better.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the development of the conflict process and joins and rearranges elements discussed so far in this chapter. The analysis done with regard to the sources and processes of conflict should make the model self-explanatory and no need for further elaboration of the flow-process is necessary.

Figure 4.2 Levels of Conflict

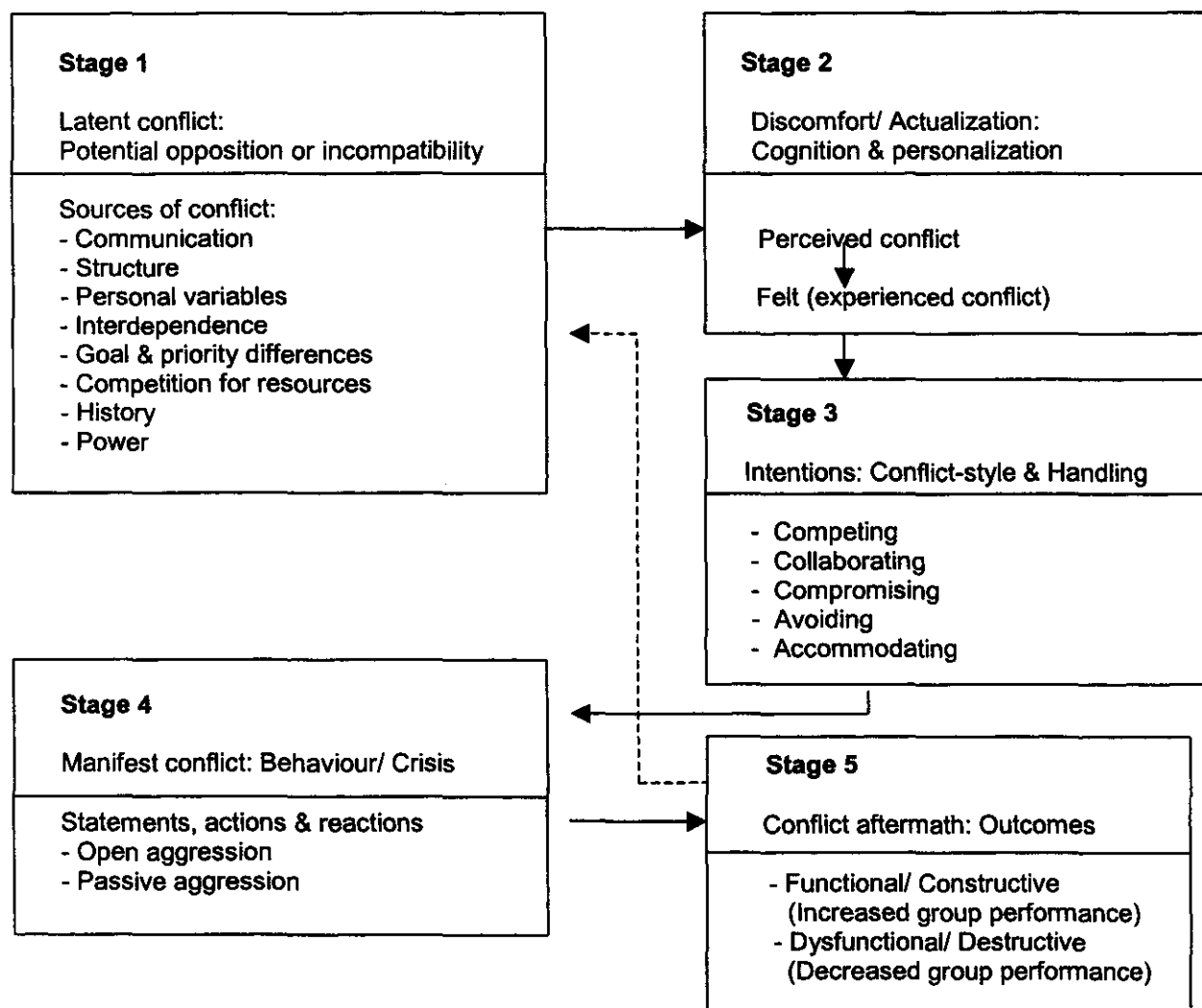


Adapted from: Lacey (2000:18-19)

Stages 1 and 3 form the core of this study and the empirical research part of it will tend to clarify the sources of conflict and the conflict-handling styles as perceived and used by subunits within private and public sector organizations. The objective as set out in chapter one (refer: 1.3) is to determine and compare by way of a literature study the various sources (causes) of conflict, conflict handling styles and conflict management processes. These are incorporated in this adapted conflict-process model. The causes of conflict as well as process models were analysed in this chapter and is referred to in stage 1 of the model. Thus the objective as set out has been reached met by way of the literature study. Stage 4 will be addressed in chapter 5. The standardized model of

Rahim's ROC-II will be applied to establish the group's or individual's acceptance of different conflict-handling styles in conflict situations.

Figure 4.3 Conflict-process model



Source: Adapted from Robbins et al. (2003:437) and Jones (2000:503)

4.11 Conclusion

Trying to resolve or manage conflict effectively in any organization is not an easy task. Few people try to establish the real source or origin of conflict and merely attend to the symptoms in order to rectify what they believe to have negative or

destructive effects on the organization's activities. Apart from this, little attention is paid to the actual process of managing conflict and the management styles employed by members of the organization to resolve the conflict.

In this chapter the problems stated above were addressed by identifying the sources of conflict and the process of managing conflict. Although some of the prerequisites of conflict were attended to in chapter 2, a more detailed discussion was done in this chapter. In the first instance attention was given to various authors' classifications of major causes of conflict. The three main categories identified are communication problems, structural variables and personal variables.

Following this classification a more detailed analysis was undertaken by using Mayer's (2000) exposition of Moore's (1996) circle of conflict ("Wheel of conflict"). Sources of conflict covered in this model included: structural factors; personal behaviour factors; communication factors; history factors; and power factors. A comparison of the work of a number of other scholars of conflict confirmed the conclusions drawn from the analysis. What has also become very clear is that sub-system causes exist that people are not always aware of when addressing conflict. For instance the 'power factor' and its classification into a number of sub-system factors such as: formal authority- ; resources-; procedural-; legal prerogative-; associations-; habitual-; and personal characteristics power.

After having determined the causes for conflict, a point of departure with regard to the conflict process, two models of the conflict process were analysed. The need to discuss the Pondy and Robbins models arise from the fact that after determining the causes of conflict, it should be established what styles disputants follow in conflict situations (avoiding, competing, collaboration, compromise, accommodating) and in what manner conflict should be handled or managed.

Following this analysis a new adapted conflict process model was presented of which stage one (sources of conflict) and stage three (conflict style and handling) will be the objectives of the empirical part of this study.

In the next chapter a critical review of the conflict management and handling styles will be done. Three models will be scrutinized namely, the well-known Thomas-Killman two-dimensional model (MODE), Rahim's two dimensional model, and the conflict style and personality (Five Factor Model). These models will serve as the background against which the conflict handling styles of employees of a public sector and a private sector organization will be determined.

Chapter 5

Conflict management–style identification models

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter attention was paid to the starting point of conflict, namely, the sources or causes of conflict. Having established that conflict can originate from a number of different causes, it was necessary to evaluate the conflict process. This was done by analyzing the models of Robbins and Pondy.

Referring back to the research question of this study it is now necessary to determine how conflict (whether functional or dysfunctional) can be managed or handled.

Estimates by Nelson & Quick (2001:422) show that approximately 21 percent of managers' time is spent on managing conflict. It is accepted that the process starts by identifying potential conflict, identifying the causes and eventually managing the actual conflict situation as well as the conflict aftercare.

According to Kreitner & Kinicki (2000:43) conflict management is a shared priority. The goal would be to manage without conflict, in other words, to be free of conflict. In practice this does not always seem possible, because the human being is a complex being that has to work with other equally complex beings. The main reason for the situation is the fact that they strive to attain a common goal as well as attaining diverse personal goals. When conflict arises, it has to be identified immediately and addressed accordingly in order to prevent it negatively influencing efficient and productive functioning within the organization. Conflict should be solved in such a way that all individuals or groups involved will be satisfied and the organization will not be affected negatively (Crawley, 1995:5).

It should be noted that a difference exists between concepts '*conflict handling*', '*conflict resolution*' and '*conflict management*'. Schermerhorn (1999:341) defines conflict resolution as "...*the removal of the substantial and/ or emotional reasons for conflict... True conflict resolution eliminates the underlying causes of conflict and reduces the potential for similar conflicts in the future*".

Rahim (1992:82) on the other hand, is very clear that conflict resolution implies reduction or elimination of conflict whereas the management of conflict does not necessarily imply reduction regarding the extent of conflict. For the purposes of this chapter, conflict management will be considered in terms of the initial awareness of the presence of conflict, diagnosing the nature and causes of conflict and the subsequent implementation of methods to defuse conflict.

In chapter 1 (refer 1.3) it was stated that the primary objective of this study is to establish by way of a comparative theoretical and empirical analysis, the nature, causes and handling styles of conflict. To reach this goal it is necessary to attain the sub-objective which is to determine and compare by means of a literature study, the styles of handling conflict as well as the process of managing it. This will be done in this chapter. An empirical examination of the handling styles utilized by the employees of a local authority and a private sector agricultural company will be done in chapter 7.

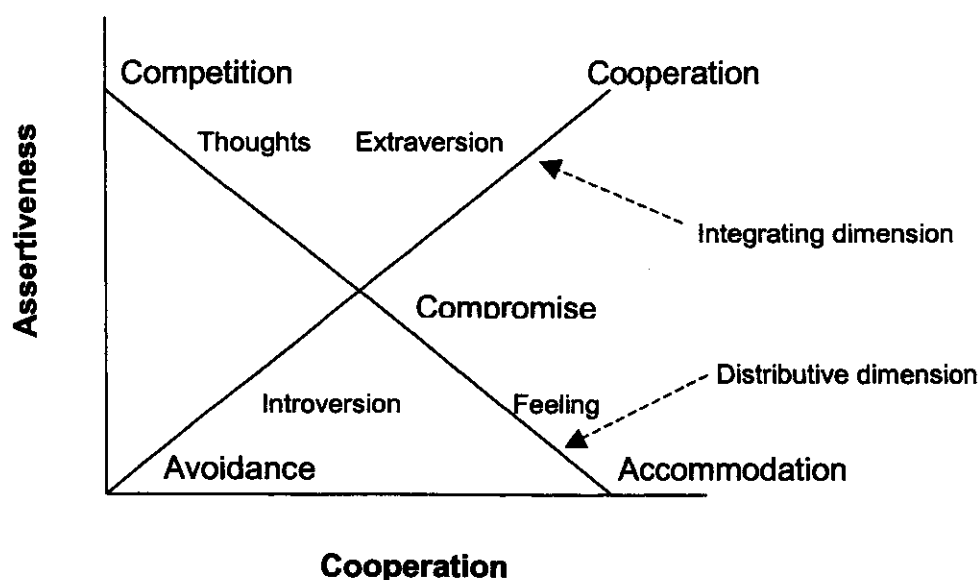
The method that will be followed in this chapter to establish the different styles of managing or handling conflict is by means of an investigation of the various points of view and ideas put forward by different scholars of conflict. The Thomas-Killman two dimensional model (MODE), the Rahim two-dimensional model and the conflict style and personality (Five Factor Model) model will serve as the basis for examinations in this chapter. Attention will also be devoted to the distributive and integrating style.

5.2 Thomas-Killman two-dimensional model (MODE)

Styles of managing interpersonal conflict have primarily been based on a two dimensional method (Thomas & Killman, 1974:937; Thomas,1976:889-945) namely, assertiveness and cooperation. Assertiveness is defined as a **concern for self** and cooperation as a **concern for others**. Individuals who demonstrate a high concern for self show a strong concern to fulfill their own needs, whereas individuals who show a high concern for others demonstrate a high level of interest in fulfilling the needs of the other party (Antonioni, 1998:338).

According to Thomas (1974:969) assertiveness and cooperation is the conceptual-dependant dimensions of interpersonal behaviour. Apart from this, the two dimensions are used to classify and describe conflict behaviour. The model depicted in fig. 5.1 also represents one of the ways in which conflict can be perceived by conflicting parties.

Figure 5.1 Two-dimensional conflict model



Source: Thomas & Killman, 1974:972

The five styles of conflict-handling (founded on the two-dimensional model of conflict) can also be organized in terms of a third (integrating) and fourth

(distributive) dimension. These dimensions are represented by weighting behaviour against the satisfaction of both parties in the conflict situation. The distributive dimension on the other hand, represents the extent of satisfaction of both parties in the conflict situation.

Individuals manifest a high concern for self directedness on achieving individual goals. This position includes prioritising the final outcome of a conflict episode in terms of profits or physical results (Blake & Mouton, 1978). Organizational leaders expect their employees to be productive. Content goals focused on the individual can be associated with a concern for production as these represent what should be done, what decisions should be made, where to go, how to allocate resources, and so forth. Thus, the production-based aspect of conflict appears to be focused on effectiveness rather than on appropriateness. In order to accomplish individual goals, one may find that a direct approach is usually more effective than an indirect approach. Therefore, strategies focussed on production are often assertive rather than passive.

In contrast, according to Gross & Guerrero (2000:200-227), those who manifest a high concern for others focus on how decisions affect the other person's goals. This concern for people involves privileging the rational needs that underlie the conflict, including issues of trust, understanding, and social support. Such a focus also involves maintaining a positive relationship that sets the stage for harmonious future interaction and for granting the partner some level of influence. This dimension seems to be more focussed on issues of appropriateness than effectiveness. It is important to engage in behaviour that is relationally and situationally appropriate in order to maintain positive relations with others. Thus individuals who are focused on other people tend to use constructive or cooperative conflict styles rather than more destructive, uncooperative styles.

The two dimensions of the Thomas-Killman model (assertiveness and cooperation) can be viewed to yield five independent styles:

- **Integrating:** high concern for both self and others.
- **Dominating:** high concern for self and low concern for others.
- **Obliging:** low concern for self and high concern for others.
- **Avoiding:** low concern for both self and for others
- **Compromising:** moderate levels of concern for both self and others.

Different assumptions can be made about the styles which people adopt to identify and manage conflict. Holtzhausen (1994:27-28) in his study, points out different authors' views and conflict handling styles. Amongst other things he concentrates on the personality characteristics that relates to conflict. He also says (1994:29) that it is a wrong assumption to believe that people have certain characteristic styles of handling conflict.

Scholars like Daft (1997:609) make the point that individuals develop specific styles with which they handle conflict and he thinks that it rests on "*...the desire to satisfy their own concern versus the other parties concern.*"

According to Slabbert (2002:266-267) a host of models / techniques exist which can be applied to human behaviour within an organizational context. Interesting viewpoints on the amalgamation of Thomas-Killman and the Four Factors Model of Jung. In essence Jung (Slabbert, 2002:267) postulates four different levels of perception or behaviour, namely **thinking, sensing, intuition and feeling**. These are respectively correlated with competing, compromising, avoiding, while accommodation (obliging) and collaboration (cooperation) both manifest on the feeling level. Within this framework, certain perspectives emerge: integrated human functioning is a result of an interplay between the four levels.

Rahim (2000:10) acknowledges the three main ways of dealing with conflict as proposed by Mary Follet in 1940, namely, domination, compromise and interpretation. Secondary ways of handling conflict in organizations (avoidance and suppression) were also identified by her. Blake and Mouton (1964) were, however, the first to present a conceptual scheme for classifying the models (styles) of handling interpersonal conflict into five types: **forcing, withdrawing,**

smoothing, compromising and problem solving. They differentiated the five modes of handling conflict on two dimensions which are related to certain attitudes of the manager, namely, concern for people and concern for production. Thomas (1976) reinterpreted their scheme by considering the intentions of a party in classifying the modes of handling conflict into five styles as mentioned earlier in this paragraph.

5.3 The conflict management (CMS) model

The CMS-model was designed by Teleometrics International to provide information about the various ways in which people react to try and manage the differences between themselves and others. This is based on a theory of conflict dynamics which allows one to identify styles of conflict management. That is, it identifies and explains, in terms of the model, one's preferred ways of behaving in conflict situations (Hall, 1986:14).

The model is based on the premise that conflict is neither good nor bad, nor right or wrong, nor does it necessarily have any meaning that people ordinarily attach to it. Rather, conflict dynamics are simply a natural part of human interaction whose "meanings" are imposed by the parties to the particular conflict.

The context within which the conflict occurs and the personal relevance of the issues involved in the conflict, are the two basic dimensions of the CMS-model. These two dimensions will be discussed briefly.

5.3.1 Context or "relationship" as an area of relevance

Hall (1986:15) says that the interpersonal context within which conflict occurs between parties represents a "relationship" in a general sense. Therefore a person's concern for the relationship must be accepted as one of the motivational factors operating to encourage the use of particular behaviours during conflict situations.

The importance of the relationship dimension and its relevance may be traced to the nature of conflict dynamics. It requires a state of interdependency if conflict is to occur at all and is also at the core of relationships and possible conflicts.

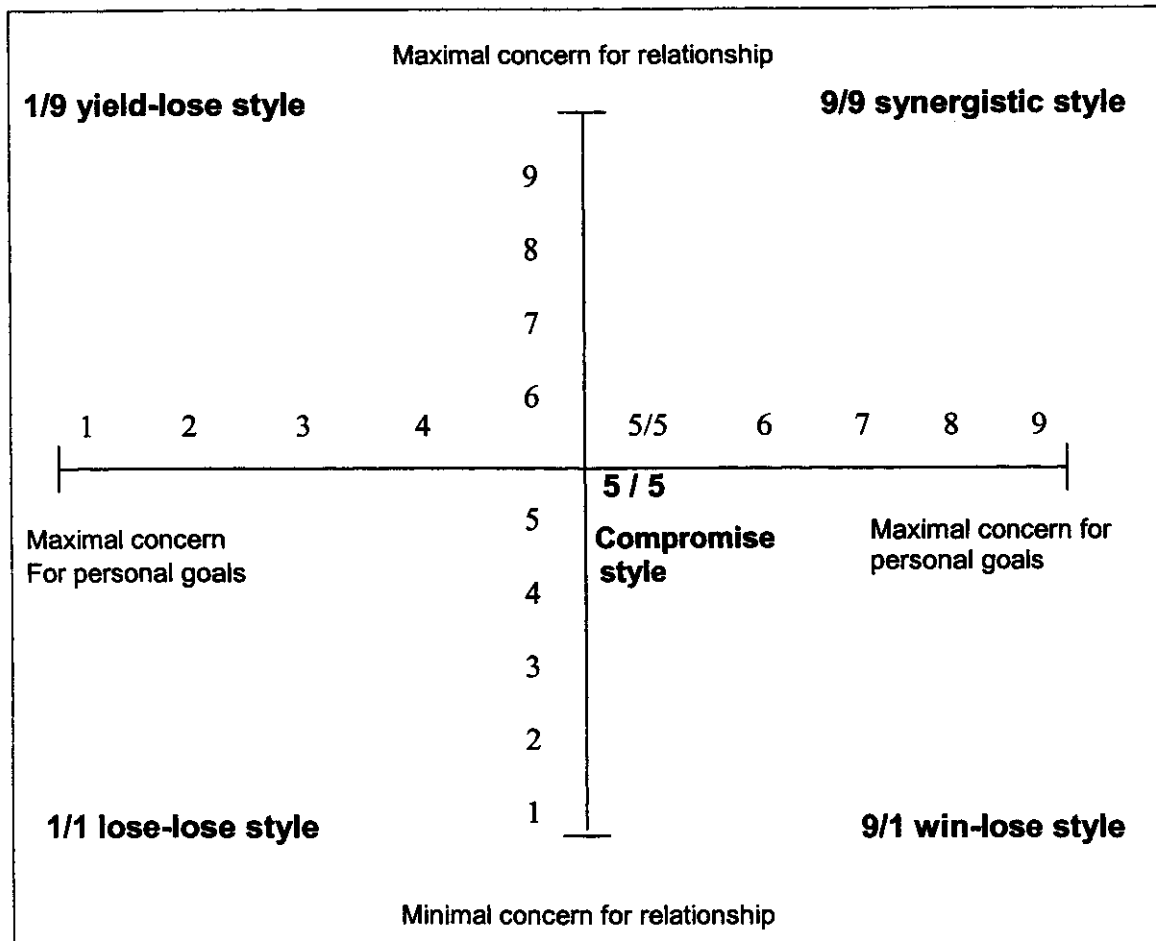
5.3.2 Personal goals as an area of relevance

The relevance of relationships, however, only pertains to a single dimension of conflict management. Conflict may also be interpreted as a collision of the personal goals of parties with regard to an interdependent relationship. Personal goals may collide in different ways and valued differently. The more common instances of conflict, according to Hall (1986:15) are:

- Mutually exclusive collisions where one goal is entertained or achieved at the expense of and to the exclusion of another.
- Distributive collisions where similar goals are desired that involve commodities which are in short supply and may not be available to all.
- Pathway collisions where the same end-objectives are desired, but the means for their attainment are perceived differently.
- Value collisions where subjective evaluations of right and wrong may have elements of other forms of inherent collision potential.

5.3.3 The two-dimensional approach

The CMS two-dimensional approach to conflict is portrayed in fig. 5.2. **Concern for relationships** is represented on the vertical axis, while **concern for personal goals** is shown on the horizontal axis. Each dimension has been converted to a nine-point scale in which the value "1" denotes a low concern and the value "9" indicates a high concern for either the relationship or personal goals. By pairing the two concerns in various combinations, five of the styles each reflects a different system of values that can be identified. More important, each results in different consequences in terms of conflict dynamics (Hall, 1986:16).

Fig. 5.2 Model of conflict management styles

Source: Hall (1986:16)

5.3.3.1 The 9/1 win-lose style

In the 9/1 style tends to illustrate only one of two possible outcomes to a conflict situation namely, winning and losing. Winning is associated with demonstrating or simply maintaining status and competence. Losing is seen as a gesture of loss of status, a display of incompetence and weakness. Prime importance is placed on personal goals to the virtual exclusion of any concern for the relationship. In this situation the result is an aggressive, inflexible and unreasonable approach to conflict management and suppression and coercion are the central mechanisms employed.

5.3.3.2 The 1/9 yield-lose style

This is a dominant conflict management style where maximum concern for relationship is exposed. The 1/9 style often reveals more about a person's need for affiliation and acceptance. It is a style which seeks to please other parties by ignoring, denying and avoiding conflict. This style is also characterized by a hesitant approach which is often revealed in false cooperativeness and agreement. Since personal objectives are set aside by the person using this style, the relationship lends itself to one-sided domination.

5.3.3.3 The 9/9 synergistic style

This style simultaneously attaches major importance to the goals of members of the relationship and to the well-being of the relationship itself. The style is based on an implicit faith in the process of conflict resolution and on the assumption that working through differences will lead to more creative solutions. The 9/9 style is based on the win-win notion that all parties profit from effective resolutions of conflict.

5.3.3.4 The 1/1 lose-lose style

This style is characterized by expectation. A person favouring this style leaves the conflict situation psychologically if not physically. The user becomes a withdrawn, detached observer and is typically willing to forego personal gain as well as positive contribution to the relationship in return for non-involvement. This style more often results in compliance without commitment and feelings of frustration and the hostility on the part of the party involved in the conflict.

5.3.3.5 The 5/5 compromise style

The earmark of the 5/5 style is that of "...*win a little, lose a little*" (Hall, 1986:17). It is a variation of the win-lose philosophy and attempts to soften the effects of losing by limiting the gains. It is a persuasive and manipulative style with both

ends being played against the middle in an attempt to serve the common good, while ensuring that the person is at least moderately successful in maintaining his/her position.

Hall (1986:17) believes that the 5/5 approach is opportunistic and is most often used by persons who believe that the ends justify the means. Half-hearted relationships and only limited attainment of goals are the usual results.

5.3.4 Style response flexibility

From the CMS-model it becomes clear that if a person prefers a given style of conflict management, it does not mean that the person will not use other styles. The model assumes that everyone uses each of the styles at one time or another. This implies that all five styles and their variations are equally available in response to conflict. People may choose and apply them depending on the individual's particular interpretations of conflict.

Apart from the dominant styles used, secondary choices constitute a backup system of conflict management techniques. The selection and use of these backup styles reveal the nature of one's shifting and adaptive reactions to changing conflict situations. If one has the ability to change one's style and one may want to adopt a more constructive approach to conflict management, it would then be possible to do so. However, changing styles demands an awareness of the available options and its potential consequences.

So far it has become clear that different dimensions form the basis of conflict. The Thomas-Killman model portrays **assertiveness** (concern for self) and **cooperation** (concern for others) as the conceptual-dependant dimensions to classify and describe conflict behaviour. The CMS-model on the other hand, considers **concern for the relationship** and **concern for personal goals** as the two basic dimensions. The main difference between the two seems to be in the concern for relationship and cooperation.

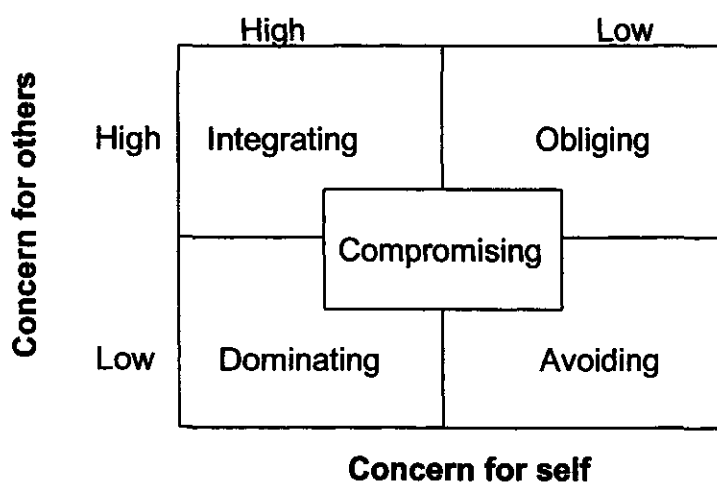
Rahim's two-dimensional model (which will be discussed in the next paragraph) also analysed conflict handling styles by means of the same two dimensions as Thomas-Killman. Further detail clarification will follow because Rahim's model will serve as the basis for the empirical study.

5.4 Rahim's two-dimensional model

Rahim (1983:369-376) and Rahim and Bonoma (1979:1323-1344) differentiated the styles of handling conflict by way of two dimensions namely, concern for self and concern for others. This correlates with the classification of Thomas and Killman (1974; 1976). The first dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns. The second dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which a person wants to satisfy the concerns of others. These dimensions portray the motivational orientations of a given individual during conflict. A combination of the two dimensions results in five specific styles of the handling of interpersonal conflict as shown in figure 5.3.

The nature of each of these five styles as differentiated by Rahim will be discussed below.

Figure 5.3 Rahim's two-dimensional model of styles of handling conflict



Source: Rahim & Bonoma (1979:1327); Rahim, Magner and Shapiro (2000:10).

5.4.1 Integrating style

This style focuses on problem-solving in a collaborative fashion. Individuals with this style face conflict directly and try to find new and creative solutions to problems by focussing on their own needs as well as the needs of the others. Integrating behaviours include analytic remarks that are descriptive, qualifying, disclosing, soliciting statements and conciliatory remarks such as supportive statements, concessions, and statements showing acceptance of responsibility. Communication focuses on reaching a successful resolution that keeps the relationship intact for future interaction. The integrating style is assumed to open lines of communication and increase information seeking and sharing.

According to Antonioni (1998:338) extraversion (refer to figure 5.1 above) may be one factor that predicts an integrating style because this style requires people to work together to mutually solve problems and find solutions that are satisfactory to both parties. Extraverts have the social skills and the desire to work with others which may be necessary to resolve conflict in this way. Extraversion is also an indication of one's assertiveness and confidence. Assertiveness is required in the integrative style because individuals need to stand up for their needs while at the same time respecting the needs of others.

In chapter 2, Deutsch's theory on competition and cooperation was discussed at length and two of the basic ideas were highlighted. One refers to the type of interdependence amongst goals of people involved in a given situation, whilst the other pertains to the type of action taken by people involved. According to Barrick, et al, (Antonioni, 1998:338), cooperation is required for the integrating style. Agreeableness is an intrinsically interpersonal characteristic, and it contains the element of cooperation. The possibility of correlation between conscientiousness and using an integrating conflict style according to Antonioni, (1998:339) has been supported by a study of Utley, Richardson & Pilkington in 1989, and Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield (1995:687-698), which found that a relationship between a need for achievement and an integrating style of interpersonal conflict resolution. Conflicts may be resolved more easily when

individuals possess personality characteristics such as trust and open-mindedness. Thus, openness may be a factor required for an integrating style. When using this style, parties engage in mutual problem solving and individuals therefore need to hear others' point of view and engage in divergent thinking to address the issues and interest of both parties. In the integrating style of handling interpersonal conflicts, individuals need to respond in a concerned, attentive, and expressive manner without getting tense or easily discouraged.

5.4.2 Obliging style

This style involves low concern for self and high concern for the other party – other people's needs are put before one's own interests (Schermerhorn, 1999:340). It is also referred to as accommodation, non-conformation, yielding or a lose-win style (Rahim; 2000:10). It can also be seen as denying or failing to express one's needs, and explicitly expressing harmony and cooperation in conflict. These types of conflict strategies are indirect and cooperative. Accommodating behaviours are sometimes seen as cooperative and appropriate particularly when a person feels strongly about an issue and the other person does not. Obliging may also be a particularly appropriate strategy when the conflict cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of two parties.

An individual who accommodates the other person's expectations without achieving his or her own goals, engages in a providing response to conflict. This type of response is adequate and comfortable, as it does not cause further disagreement or escalations of conflict. Because the accommodating style allows the other party to achieve his or her goals, it is thought to be rationally appropriate. However, this style is not very effective. Those who use the obliging response are unlikely to reach their personal goals. This can put strain on them over time. In addition, Gross and Guerrero (2000:208) say that obliging leads to a one-sided decision-making process that is less creative than collaboration or compromise.

There is an element of self-sacrifice in this style that may take the form of selfless generosity, clarity, or obedience to another person's orders (Rahim, 2000:10).

This style, according to Rahim (2002:217) is useful when a party is not familiar with the issues involved in a conflict situation or the other party is right and the issue is much more important to that party. This style may be used as a strategy when a party is willing to give up something with the hope of getting some benefit from the other party when needed. It may also be appropriate when a party is dealing from a position of weakness or believes that preserving the relationship is important. The style may also be considered inappropriate if the issue involved in a conflict situation is of less importance or the other party believes that it is right. It is also inappropriate when one party believes that the other party is wrong or behaving unethical.

Previous research, according to Antonioni (1998:344) found that a positive relationship exists between the need for affiliation and the tendency to use an obliging style in handling interpersonal conflict. While extraverts tend to be more social than introverts, a negative relationship exists between extraversion and the obliging style. Individuals who score high on agreeableness may prefer the obliging style. Highly agreeable individuals are generally trusting and accepting with regard to interaction with others and tend to be easily moved. These qualities seem to have a logical connection to the obliging style. Van der Vliet and Euwema (1994:674-687) determined by way of an empirical study that an overall positive correlation existed between agreeableness and obliging. They furthermore noted that agreeableness and activeness have been used to represent underlying dimensions of the behaviours individuals use in response to conflict (Van der Vliet & Euwema, 1994:676).

Individuals scoring low on emotional stability or high on neuroticism may prefer the accommodating (obliging) style. Individuals who have a tendency to feel anxious, worried and tense register low on emotional stability. These emotions can cause discomfort and may increase when dealing with interpersonal conflict.

5.4.3 Avoiding style

This style involves low concern for the self as well the other party and can also be seen as inaction, withdrawal or the ignoring style. Avoiding or withdrawing occurs when people physically or psychologically remove themselves from the scene of conflict. In such a situation, denying of the conflict, being indirect and evasive, changing and avoiding and irrelevant remarks occur.

The avoiding style is indirect and uncooperative. Frustration can occur during interaction with individuals who use the avoiding style. It may take the form of postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation. An avoiding person satisfies neither his or her own concerns nor the concerns of the opposing party. The style can be viewed as low in both effectiveness and appropriateness. According to Rahim (2002:318) this style may be used when the potential dysfunctional effect of confronting the other party outweighs the benefit of the resolution of conflict. This may be used to deal with some trivial or minor issues and a cooling off period is needed before a complex problem can be dealt with effectively.

This style should be considered to be inappropriate when the issues are important to a party. This style is also inappropriate when it is the responsibility of the party to make decisions, when the parties are unwilling to wait, or when prompt action is required.

According to Antonioni (1998:341) low extraversion, or high introversion, may be related to choosing an avoiding style. A significant negative correlation exists between extraversion and an avoiding style of handling conflict. Persons who score high on agreeableness tend to be tolerant, trusting, accepting and easily moved. These qualities make it difficult for them to stand up for their interests in conflict situations. It may be the differing component of agreeableness that contributes to using an avoiding rather than an integrating style.

Antonioni (1998:341) further says that low conscientiousness includes traits such as laziness and irresponsibility. Therefore individuals who score low on conscientiousness may delay when dealing with interpersonal conflicts or they may not take time to do the preparation necessary for problem-solving. Also, a low level of interest in a specific outcome may prevent individuals with a lack of discipline from using a style that demands preparation.

Low openness may be related to the avoiding style because of a correlation between avoidance and rigidity and a resistance to new ideas. It has also been indicated that individuals low in openness are unreflective and duals low in openness are unreflective and imperceptive, resulting in a non-agreement of these persons in the introspective analysis of self versus others which motivates people to engage in problem-solving conflicts. Discussing interpersonal conflicts with people is somewhat stressful for most people, therefore, low emotional stability may be related to an avoiding style.

Lussier (1997:465) says that it is good to use the conflict avoidance style when conflict is minimal; and the possible disadvantage in the matter is not big; confrontation can harm an important relationship; one does not have time to resolve the conflict; and emotions run high.

5.4.4 Dominating style

This style, which involves high concern for self and low concern for the opposing party is also called win-lose, control, competing or zero-sum style (Rahim, 2000:11). A dominating or competing person goes all out to reach (win) his or her objective and consequently ignores the needs and expectations of the other party.

The dominating style relies on the use of position, power, aggression, verbal dominance and perseverance. This style, according to Blake & Mouton (1964), is direct and uncooperative. Forcing and competing behaviours associated with a dominating style include such actions as remarks that are confrontational of

nature, personal negative criticism, aggressive questions and denial of responsibility at the expense of others. Within the interpersonal context the dominating (competing and distributive) style can also be associated with low levels of effectiveness and appropriateness. Quoting Papa and Canary (1995), and Spitzberg (1994), Gross and Guerrero (2000:207) suggest that the dominating style might be somewhat effective in organizational context when there are productive-related goals. In this case, an individual might use power strategies and aggression to effectively accomplish a goal, even though these strategies may be seen as inappropriate at a relational level. Papa and Canary (Gross & Guerrero, 2000:207) term the dominating style as the maximising response to conflict, because it maximizes the importance of one's needs at the expense (minimizing) of the other person's needs. Therefore, this style may be considered as effective but not appropriate.

The dominating style is appropriate when the issues involved in conflict are important to a party or an unfavourable decision by another party may be harmful to the previous. A superior may use this style if the issues involve routine matters or speedy decision is required. A superior may have to use it to deal with subordinates who are very assertive or do not have expertise to make technical decisions.

The dominating style is inappropriate, according to Rahim (2002:218), when the issues involved in conflict are complex and there is enough time to make a good decision. When both parties are equally powerful, using this style by one or both parties may lead to stalemate. This style is inappropriate when the issues are not important to the party. Subordinates who possess a high degree of competence, may not have affinity for a superior who uses this authoritarian style.

According to Antonioni (1998:442) a review of literature and relationship between conflict management styles and personality suggests that it is more difficult to resolve conflicts when one or more of the parties have personality characteristics such as aggressiveness, authoritarianism, need for dominance, or dogmatism.

Extraverts by their nature are assertive, however, they have the potential to be aggressive.

Low agreeableness may also be a factor that predicts a dominating style. Low agreeableness means being egocentric, persistent and aggressive. Van der Vliet and Euwema (1994:674-687) found a negative correlation between agreeableness and outcome fighting, which is similar to using a dominating style in that it means gaining ground and ultimately defeating the opponent.

Individuals using a dominating style may not be open to new experiences. In the integrating style, information about needs and interests are shared openly. In the case of the dominating style, information may be a source of power (refer 4.7, chapter 4 above for further clarification of power as a source of conflict). If the dominating party knows more about the other party's needs or interests, the other party is at a disadvantage. High levels of emotional stability may be required when using a dominating style because of the stress encountered when forcing negotiations in one's favour. Individuals need to be emotionally stable, remaining calm, rational, and guilt free during conflict resolution actions. However, to others this behaviour may appear uncaring and insensitive (Antonioni, 1998:443).

5.4.5 Compromising style

In Game Theory, this style is also called the mixed motive style (refer: 2.4.2.3 for Neumann and Morgenstern's "Game Theory"). It involves moderate concern for the self as well as for the other party. It involves give-and-take or sharing, whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. A compromising individual gives up more than a dominating person, but less than an obliging individual. Apart from establishing a mathematical connection with pure conflict (zero-sum games), the game theory also recognizes that cooperative as well as competitive interests may be intertwined in conflict (refer: 2.4.2.3). The compromising style is unique in that it represents the centre on the dimensions of production orientation versus people orientation. This style is also

seen by Blake & Mouton (1964) as moderately direct and cooperative. Compromising requires searching for an intermediate position through strategies such as splitting the difference, suggesting a trade-off, maximizing wins while minimizing losses, and offering quick, short-term resolution to the conflict at hand. As such, compromising typically contains some of each person's needs, but not all of them. When people have radically different goals and cannot collaborate to create a solution that will satisfy all of their needs, compromising is often seen as the best option.

Rahim (2002:219) says that this style may be used when the goals of the conflicting parties are mutually exclusive or when both parties are equally powerful and have reached a stalemate position in their negotiation process. This style seems most useful for avoiding protracted conflict. Compromising is inappropriate for dealing with complex problems needing a problem-solving approach. Unfortunately, very often people use this style to deal with complex problems and, as a result, fail to identify real problems and formulate effective solutions to these problems. This style may be inappropriate if one party is more powerful than another and believes that it is in a position to fight.

The compromising style consists of a blend between mutual problem-solving and yielding. In compromising, both parties give up something in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution. Rahim (Antonioni, 1998:324) indicates that individuals give up more than they would if they were obliging. Compromising also addresses issues at the heart of the conflict more than those who use avoidance, but they do not explore the issues in depth as they would when using an integrating approach.

In the compromising style, some extraversion is needed because the style requires being around others and being 'sociable'. Individuals may end up compromising when confronted with conflict because they lack the assertiveness associated with extraversion or because they choose not to be assertive for a given reason.

According to Rahim (Antonioni, 1998:325) high agreeableness may go hand in hand with a compromising style of handling conflict because agreeable persons tend to view themselves as group/team players. Furthermore, low conscientiousness may predict a compromising style because individuals with this personality characteristic may have a casual view of conflict situations. High-openness may also be related to a compromising style of conflict management. People with this characteristic are usually open to exploring ideas related to the conflict situation, and their creativity and willingness to change goals may be associated with the compromise style.

Antonioni (1998:443) also claims that low emotional stability may be related to a compromising style of conflict management. Individuals with this trait may work on problems until they reach a certain level of anxiety. Once this level becomes too high, they may yield and allow the other parties to have their needs met.

Having discussed the different styles of handling/managing conflict and having throughout the discussion referred to various authors and their ideas and the critique and validations of theories, one can come to the conclusion that despite their interpretational distinctions, each model contends that joint (low or high) standing on the dual dimensions and modes (styles) for approaching conflict can be created into specific blocks. These blocks can be viewed as:

- Minimizing differences through obliging. (accommodating, smoothing, yielding)
- Trying to maximize one's outcome at the expense of one's opposition through domination (competing, contending, forcing).
- Facing the conflict directly through integrating (collaborating, problem-solving).
- Eluding conflict altogether through avoidance (withdrawing, non-acting).
- Resolving the conflict through mutually acceptable decisions by way of compromising.

In table 5.1 a classification of the key conflict-handling models discussed in this chapter is presented.

The type of model as well as the different conflict-handling styles are summarized.

Table 5.1 Classification of conflict-handling models

Jung (1923)	Blake & Mouton (1964)	Thomas-Killman (1976)
<u>Four Factors Model</u> 4 Different levels of perception/behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thinking > competing - Sensing > compromising - Intuition > avoiding - Feeling > obliging > collaboration 	<u>Conceptual scheme</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern for people - Concern for self - Forcing - Withdrawing - Smoothing - Compromising - Problem solving 	<u>Two-dimensional model</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assertiveness - Cooperation <u>Five independent styles</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating - Dominating - Obliging - Avoiding - Compromising
Rahim (1983)	CMS – model (Hall, 1986)	
<u>Two-dimensional model</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern for self - Concern for others <u>Five specific styles</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating (collaboration) - Dominating (competing) - Obliging (accommodation) - Avoiding (withdrawing) - Compromising 	<u>Two-dimensional approach</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern for relationship - Concern for personal goals <u>Five independent styles</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9/1 win-lose style - 1/9 yield/lose style - 9/9 synergistic style - 1/1 lose-lose style - Compromising style 	

No particular style of conflict resolution discussed above is applicable to all situations. Thomas (McKenna, 2001:414-415) specifies the most appropriate situations in which to use the styles of conflict management. From table 5.2 and 5.3 (refer 5.10) it should be clear that individuals can adapt their conflict management behaviour to particular situations.

Table 5.2 Uses of five styles of conflict handling

Conflict Handling Styles	
1. Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When quick decisive action is vital • On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing • On issues vital to the organization's welfare and when you know you're right
2. Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against people who take advantage of non-competitive behaviour • To find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised • When your objective is to learn • To merge insights from people with different perspectives • To gain commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus
3. Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work through feelings that have interfered with a relationship • When an issue is trivial, or more important issues are pressing • When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns • When potential disruptions outweighs the benefits of resolution • To let people cool down and regain perspective • When gathering information supersedes immediate decision • When others can resolve the conflict more effectively
4. Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues • When you find you are wrong – to allow a better position to be heard, to learn, and to show your reasonableness • When issues are more important to others than to yourself – to satisfy others and to maintain cooperation • To build social credits for later issues • To minimise loss when you are outmatched and losing
5. Compromise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When harmony and stability are especially important • To allow subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes • When goals are important, but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes • When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals • To achieve temporary settlements to complex issues • To arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure • As a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful

Source: McKenna, 2001:415

However, this could be challenged, and one would argue that people are predisposed to deal with conflict situations in particular ways and in fact, rely on individual perceptions irrespective of the prevailing circumstances. If so, it may

be better to consider the five conflict handling styles from which people can select the most appropriate style for a given situation (McKenna, 2001:415).

5.5 Conflict style and personality (Five-factor model)

In the analysis of conflict styles above, frequent reference has been made to personality and its relation to conflict style. Mention was also made of personality factors such as extraversion, openness and others. In order to gain a better understanding of the utilization of the different conflict styles it would be necessary to pay attention to stable individual differences in personality and conflict style.

Moberg (2001:49), quotes a number of social scientists, psychologists and others who researched different personality traits, behaviour and conflict. Considerable effort has been invested in examining the extent to which personality relates to conflict style. For instance, personality and conflict styles in relation to Murray's (1938) motivational needs (need for achievement, power, affiliation). The relation of conflict style to Jung's (1923, 1971) psychological types (thinking vs. feeling) has also been investigated. Further attempts to predict conflict style with personality constructs have examined dogmatism, locus of control and type-A tendencies. Despite persistent efforts to understand the association between stable individual differences in personality and conflict style, the overwhelming majority of research has been conducted using extant views of personality that preceded the recent emergence of personality's Five Factor Model (FFM).

Robbins (2003:88) also acknowledges that the five-factor model of personality is supported by a strong research base. In recent years an impressive body of research supports the notion that five basic dimensions underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variations in human personality.

In an attempt to describe personality more completely than is afforded by traits. Costa and McCrae (1985) developed a five-factor model comprising five independent dimensions: **neuroticism, extraversion, openness,**

conscientiousness, and agreeableness. In the discussion that follows the main sources consulted are Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch (2000:289-315), Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2003:88-90), Moberg (2001:47-69) and Antonioni (1998:336-356).

5.5.1 Neuroticism

Moberg (2001:50) quoting Costa and McCrae describes 'neuroticism' as representing emotional instability and maladjustment characterized by negative emotions such as fear, anger, disgust, sadness, anxiety and guilt. It is also suggested that neuroticism functions as a warning system, activated by perceptions of environmental uncertainty that interfere with one's ability to adapt. Thus, individuals high in neuroticism are thought to be less able to both control their impulses and cope effectively with stress. In this way neuroticism may be logically related to conflict strategy preferences. Elevated levels of neuroticism would be expected to be associated with preferences of avoiding conflict.

5.5.2. Extraversion

Extraversion has steadily evolved from an early emphasis on unreliability, impulsivity, and social insensitivity to contemporary views which focus on social facility, ambition, energy, positive emotions, assertiveness and dominance. (Watson & Clark, 1997:767-794 and Sandy, Boardman & Deutsch, 2000:306-310). Extraversion is thought to tap individual predispositions to view one's actions as positive, emotionally satisfying, and effectual. Such predispositions will be expressed in settings where trait-based behaviours are valued and rewarded.

In terms of conflict styles, extraverted managers (supervisors) would be expected to prefer interpersonal strategies that allow for the expression of their predisposition toward interpersonal behaviour. Extraversion is thought to convey one's degree of comfort with social interaction, preference for social engagement, and positive affectivity. Thus one would rationally expect extraverted managers to relate more positively to conflict strategies that rely on

interpersonal efforts to reach solutions, such as in confronting a conflict directly or compromising to reach an agreement. Conversely, one would expect superiors to prefer strategies that minimize social interaction such as avoidance (Moberg, 2001:53-54).

5.5.3 Agreeableness

According to Antonioni (1998:339) agreeableness *"...concerns the degree to which individuals are cooperative, warm, understanding, and sympathetic versus antagonism, which is related to being rude, harsh and unsympathetic."*

Sandy (2000:307) says that agreeableness refers to persons who are trusting, generous, lenient and good natured. They have sympathy and concern for others but also may inhibit assertiveness or cause them to defer decisions. In a conflict situation this may result in decisions that fail to meet own best interests.

Moberg (2001:52) referring to Graziano (1996) characterized agreeableness as the personality dimension that is most concerned with interpersonal behaviour. Neither low nor high agreeableness is inherently better in all situations. Because it tends to be an interpersonal factor that is expressed when cooperation and consideration are important, its absence would be expected to adopt a conflict strategy in which one attempts to dominate, achieve one's own, or win at another's expense. High agreeableness on the other hand would be expressed through concern for another's outcomes and reflected in a preference for the compromise strategy.

5.5.4 Openness

This dimension, refers to individual differences throughout the breadth and depth of consciousness and is generally thought to involve intellectual activity, cultural sophistication, thoughtfulness, originality, and preference for cognitive complexity (Moberg, 2001:51). Individuals with openness may find conflict to be a concern preferring an adaptive, flexible approach to its resolution. In terms of conflict

strategy, one would reasonably expect open individuals to prefer strategies that express flexibility, adaptability, generation of new resolution alternatives, and consideration of the opponents view and characteristics that would be required in approaches involving compromise as well as addressing conflict directly.

Since feelings are very important to open individuals and they may get overwhelmed by their feelings during negotiation, conversely they might excel in perspective taking ability because of their sensitivity (Sandy, 2000:306).

5.5.5. Conscientiousness

This dimension of the five factor model measures the extent to which individuals are hardworking, organized, dependable, and firm (Antonioni, 1998:339). Although Hogan (Moberg, 2001:52) defined conscientiousness as social conformity and impulse control, conceptual interpretations vary in their emphases regarding the extent to which cautiousness, orderliness, persistence, dependability, responsibility, carefulness and preference for predictability characterize this factor.

Those who are high in this factor are thought to exhibit elevated levels of perseverance, low impulsiveness, a strong disposition toward achievement, and a responsible orientation toward work. High scorers on conscientiousness would be expected to prefer dealing with disputes directly by promptly addressing conflict situations, focusing on finding solutions, and resolving disputes in an efficient, thorough, organised manner to the benefit of the group. Thus, a superior (manager) high on this factor would reasonably be expected to prefer approaches to conflict that address disputes directly and pragmatically. The characteristics of individuals in this dimension can be useful in constructive negotiation, but extreme conscientiousness can lead to destructive preoccupation with perfection and detail.

5.5.6 Critique of the Five-Factor Model

Although the five-factor model has elicited criticism in the sense that is viewed as:

- not being a scientific description of personality;
- a factor-analysis approach to personality cannot verify its dynamic nature;
- the dimensions of this model are too broad to usefully predict behaviour.

Sandy (2000:307) opposes this criticism with some other factual information and studies.

The five-factor model offers information for conflict resolution because it is:

- More comprehensive than other trait models of personality in incorporating a wide range of human responses and behaviour.
- Inclusive of normal behaviours as well as the extremes to be found in personality disorders.
- Found in a variety of languages and cultures.
- A personality approach that is straight-forward and easy to understand.

5.6 **Distributive and integrative dimensions**

In figure 5.1 the Thomas and Killman two-dimensional conflict model depicting the five modes of conflict-handling was presented. In this model the integrating and distributive dimensions were also shown but not discussed. In order to fully understand its functioning, attention will now be paid to its place within the conflict-styles model.

It has been suggested by Thomas (1976:889-935) that a better understanding of the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict may be obtained by organizing them according to the integrative and distributive dimensions of labour-management bargaining. Rahim, (2002:206-236) demonstrates the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict and their reclassification into the integrative and distributive dimensions.

The integrative dimension (integrating minus avoiding style) represents a party's concern for self and others. The distributive dimension on the other hand (dominating minus obliging style), represents a party's concern for self and others. These two dimensions represent the problem-solving and bargaining styles for handling conflict respectively.

5.6.1 Problem-solving style

This represents a party's pursuit of own and others' concerns. A high-high use of the problem-solving style indicates attempts to increase the satisfaction of concern for both parties by finding unique solutions to the problems acceptable to them. A low-low use of this style indicates reduction of satisfaction of the concerns of both parties as a result of failure to confront and solve their problems. The problem-solving dimension is appropriate for managing strategic conflict enhancing double-loop organisational learning and effectiveness.

5.6.2 Bargaining style

The bargaining style represents a party's pursuit of self or other's concerns. A high-low use of the bargaining style indicates attempts to obtain high satisfaction of concerns for the self and providing low satisfaction of concerns for others. A low-high use of this style indicates attempts to obtain the opposite. The bargaining dimension is appropriate for managing tactical or routine day-to-day conflict. This approach to conflict management will maintain single loop learning.

Compromising, according to Rahim (2002:219), is the point of intersection of the two dimensions, that is, a middle position where a party has an intermediate level of concern for self and others.

The design for management discussed above suggests that effective management of conflict involves the following processes:

- Affective conflict should be minimized;

- A moderate degree of substantive conflict should be attained and maintained with respect to non-routine tasks;
- Organisational members should learn to select and use each of the five styles of handling conflict depending on the nature of the situations

5.7 Personality characteristics

No human being is perfect and therefore it cannot be expected that an individual will always have all the ideal personality traits. According to Alper (2001:265), it is of great importance for a person to have self-insight and to be able to do self-evaluation in order to develop positive characteristics to improve labour relations and manage conflict situations acceptably.

Anstey (1999:152) considers the following personality traits important:

- good communication;
- good insight and understanding;
- fairness (justice);
- reliability;
- acceptance;
- persuasion.

Anstey (1999:152) also indicates that if managements understand why individuals' behaviour gives rise to conflict, then:

- there should be an understanding of the emotions of subordinates (workers) and superiors (managers).
- there should be acknowledgement of the existence of role and emotions;
- management should not react to emotional eruptions and;
- Symbolic gestures should be utilized.

The elements that have been referred to above should be maintained during the conflict management process and these should be characterized by: transparency; predictability; honesty; integrity and confidentiality.

Unique personality traits as discussed by Alper (2001:23-29) and Anstey (1999) are mostly in accordance with those mentioned explicitly or implicitly in the preceding analysis done in this chapter. One can therefore conclude that characteristics which are necessary for effective conflict-handling, as well as for good human relations within an organization are: sensitivity; firmness; consistency; competence; reliability; analytical ability; leadership; independence; communication ability; objectivity; neutrality; and negotiating abilities.

5.8 Managing conflict – strategies and techniques

From the discussions of intra- and interpersonal as well as intra- and intergroup levels of conflict, it has become evident that the management of conflict does not necessarily imply the reduction of or elimination of conflict.

Rahim (2002:210 & 1992:82) states that a difference exists between management of conflict and conflict resolution (refer 5.1). Conflict resolution implies reduction, elimination and termination of conflict. According to him a large number of studies on negotiation, bargaining, mediation and arbitration fall into the conflict resolution category. What is needed for contemporary organisations is conflict management and not conflict resolution. Conflict management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction, or termination of conflict. It involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organisation.

Conflict management sometimes needs intervention to reduce conflict (if there is too much conflict) or intervention to promote conflict (if there is too little conflict). Organizations in which there is too little conflict or none at all, may become unproductive or even stagnate. On the other hand, if left uncontrolled, conflict may have a dysfunctional (destructive) effect. In chapter 3 extensive attention was paid to constructive (functional) and destructive (dysfunctional) conflict (refer 3.7).

Management scholars like Amason (1996:123-148) and Rahim (2001) have suggested that conflict management strategies involve the recognition of:

- Certain types of conflict, which may have negative effects on individual and group performance, that may have to be reduced.
- Other types of conflicts that may have positive effects on the performance of the individual and group.
- Organisational members while interacting with each other, will be required to deal with each other as well as their disagreements constructively.

In the first instance, these conflicts are normally caused by negative reactions of organisational members whilst, in the second instance, these conflicts relate to disagreements resulting from policies, tasks and other organisational issues. In the third instance, individuals or groups in conflict should learn how to use the different conflict-handling styles.

5.8.1 Strategies and techniques

According to Rahim (2002:211) an effective conflict management strategy should:

- Minimize affective conflicts at various levels. Affective conflict refers to inconsistency in interpersonal relationships, which occurs when organisational members become aware that their feelings and emotions regarding some of the issues are incompatible.
- Attain and maintain a moderate degree of substantive conflict. Substantive conflict occurs when two or more organisational members disagree on their task or content issues.
- Select and use appropriate conflict management strategies. As has been seen previously in this chapter, there are various styles of behaviour such as, obliging, dominating, integrating, avoiding and compromising.

Crawley (1995:10-26) and Hough (1997:170-171) refer to three methods according to which conflict can be managed. These are: stimulation of functional conflict where performance has been lacking due to the intensity of conflict being

too low; reduction or suppression of conflict when the intensity becomes too high; is dysfunctional (unproductive or destructive); and solving conflict when it appears. With the exception of the last method the others concur with the ideas of Kreitner & Kinicki (2001:449) and Daft (1997:612).

The all-embracing approach that must be followed in order to determine whether conflict will have a negative or positive result. During evaluation, it is important to determine whether the conflict will have a negative or positive effect or if the conflict will be dysfunctional or functional. According to Nelson (2001:440) this all-embracing approach consists of competitive and cooperative strategies. The competitive strategy is based on the assumptions of "win-lose" and consists of dishonest communication, mistrust and a rigid position or attitude that opposing parties adopt. On the other hand, the cooperative strategy is based on assumptions such as: the potential for "win-win" results, honest communication, trust, openness for the taking of risks, and the feeling for synergy.

Even in the event of intense conflict such as that which is due to scarce resources, the "win-win" strategy can lead to an overall win-situation for the organization. In reality conflict over scarce resources can be productive. To bring about this "win-win" situation, conflict should be handled with an open mind, both conflicting parties integrate their views and create new solutions that result in productivity and strengthen relations. In such a case, feelings of unity are developed (Nelson & Quick, 2001:440).

5.8.1.1 Stimulation and management of functional conflicts

Stimulation of functional (constructive) conflict can be brought about by identifying the problem, solving it and then stimulating creativity and renewal. If the latter has been achieved, group-coherence can be stimulated and a system of control and balance attained.

Williams (2000:184-185) proposes that conflict should be stimulated positively by means of three methods of which communication, organisation structure and personal behaviour factors are the core elements. Conflict can be stimulated:

- by bypassing communication channels;
- through the suppression or withholding of information;
- by bridging or avoiding questions or information of a threatening nature, or by ignoring or avoiding the release of too much information.

Change in the organisation-structure can stimulate conflict by creating uncertainty, the redistribution of power, changes in task-description and task-design, and change with regard to interdependencies.

Kreitner & Kinicki (2001:359) are in agreement when they address the stimulation of functional conflict. The techniques which they put forward are **“Devil’s advocacy”** and **“Dialectic inquiry”**

a.) **“Devil’s advocacy”**

According to this strategy, the five steps that should be followed to stimulate conflict are:

- To generate a potential solution.
- To appoint a person (devil’s advocate) to question and criticize the solution.
- To submit the criticism to decision-makers.
- To collect additional relevant information.
- To make a decision whether the original proposed solution should be used, changed or discarded.

b.) **“Dialectic inquiry”**

According to this technique, decision-makers are forced to propose assumptions with regard to a recommended solution and then to generate a solution that is the opposite to the one proposed. The five steps followed in this process are:

- To generate a potential solution.
- To identify the assumptions underlying the potential solution.

- To generate a conflicting counter-proposal that is based on opposite assumptions
- To let supporters of each premise present their arguments and become involved in a debate in the presence of the decision-makers.
- To make a decision whether the original proposed solutions should be used, changed or discarded.

Kreitner & Kinicki (2001:460) points out that the comparative effectiveness of these two approaches to stimulate functional conflict has not revealed any meaningful differences. It is, however, important to keep in mind that constructive conflict, when needed, should be stimulated actively especially when the risk of blind conformation or group cognition is high.

Stoner (1989:399) presents the following proposals for stimulating conflict when the attitudes of top managers are of critical importance in encouraging and controlling conflict. According to him, conflict stimulation methods include:

- That outsiders whose background, values and management styles differ considerably from the prevailing norms should be involved.
- That individuals or groups who normally supply information or communications must be taken out of the system. New individuals or groups should be added to the information network in order to accomplish the redistribution of power. This redistribution of power will stimulate conflict.
- Restructuring of the organization in order to add new members or responsibilities. This will create a period of uncertainty and adaptation. Conflict that develops during this period may stimulate new methods of performance.
- Encouraging competition. If conflict is maintained at a high level, it may lead to productive (constructive) conflict when one individual or group tries to perform better than the opposition.
- Selection of superiors (managers) that are suitable for certain groups can result in positive conflict being brought about.

Havenga (2002:117) feels that although the stimulation of functional conflict may have certain benefits, it should be done and managed in a very cautious manner. Recognized methods to handle and manage are indicated if conflict is to be used constructively within an organisation. It should also be noted that dysfunctional conflict requires much greater skill to manage than functional conflict.

5.8.1.2 Destimulation and management of dysfunctional conflict

In this chapter (refer: 5.2 & 5.4) special attention has been paid to the five conflict handling styles as formulated by Thomas-Killman and Rahim. As was also noted, these categories have two underlying dimensions namely, cooperation and assertiveness. The analysis of these dimensions contributed to the development of methods whereby functional and dysfunctional conflict can be managed.

Conflict develops easily but is difficult to solve. Therefore it is better to prevent it before it happens. However, in practice it is not so easy to achieve this. Destructive conflict brings about negative relationship processes that causes obstruction of the objectives of the organisation, should the needs of groups or individuals not be met. The best precautionary measure that management can apply is to ensure that the work environment is planned well and in such a way that employees are always aware of the objectives, responsibilities, decision-making processes, policy and work procedures (Havenga, 2002:118).

According to Stoner (1996:417) managers worry more about the reduction of conflict rather than stimulating it. A decrease in conflict leads to a decrease in antagonism and an increase in the escalation of conflict creates negative results in terms of reaching the objectives of the organization. It should however, be kept in mind that it is not possible to prevent all dysfunctional conflict. According to Anstey (1999:152), dysfunctional conflict can be the result of: weak communication, ineffective management, envy, personal clashes, deficiency in policy and unreliability.

(a) Domination or suppression

These methods normally have two characteristics in common, namely:

- The suppression of conflict rather than the settlement thereof.
- It creates a win-lose situation in which pressure is put on the loser by superiors resulting in hostility and disappointment.

Domination or suppression can occur in the following ways:

- Compulsion: Someone in a position of power compels the group or individual to act in a certain way.
- "Smoothing": In this case diplomacy is used to suppress conflict.
- Avoidance: Here an attempt is made to solve the problem by not addressing it or preventing the other parties from becoming involved.
- Majority vote: Group-conflict is solved by accepting the majority vote in order to determine who is right and who is wrong.

(b) Compromise

In this instance it is attempted to reach common ground between two or more positions. The true essence of this method is that all parties involved relinquish some of their set objectives and reach the remaining one's objectives. Decisions that are reached by means of compromising usually leave none of the conflicting groups or individuals frustrated or hostile. Forms that compromise may take are: arbitration; bribery; call on policy; and accidental agreements reached.

(c) Integrated problem solving

According to Rahim (2002:216), individual's defensive reasoning and organizational defensive routines inhibits members of an organization to effectively engage in problem-solving processes. Because existing management strategies have neglected to recognize and deal with the problems of defensive reactions of workers and defensive organizational routines, organizations do not have the culture that encourages members to engage real problem –solving

processes. The first phase of the process is to recognize the problem which includes problem sensing and problem formulation. After this is done, planning for change must follow. This consists of recommending solutions to problems and then preparing plans for intervention. Implementation is subsequently done by putting plans into action, reviewing the outcomes and taking corrective action.

Intergroup conflict is transformed by means of this method into a common problem-solving situation. This can be achieved through problem-solving techniques such as consensus, confrontation and the used of higher order objectives (superordinate objectives).

In the first phase, conflicting parties get together and reach agreements as to the solutions of their problems. In the second phase the opposing parties discuss their different views directly with each other. The reasons or causes of the conflict are analysed and methods to solve the problems are searched for. With able leadership and willingness to accept the stress from both sides, rational solutions can be attained. In the third instance it can also be stated that higher order objectives (superordinate objectives) can also be used for solving conflict. This happens when superordinate objectives incorporate the conflicting parties' minor objectives (Havenga, 2002:120).

Nelson & Quick (2001:422) also identifies a number of conflict management techniques which in some instances, concur with the views of Stoner (1992), Callahan (1986) and Kreitner & Kinicki (2001). A brief discussion of Nelson's views are done below.

- Superordinate goals

These are objectives which are more important to each of the conflicting parties than their own group objectives. Nelson & Quick (2001:422) says that one effective technique for resolving conflict is to appeal to a superordinate goal – in effect, to direct the parties to large issues on which they both agree.

- Expansion of resources

Another way of managing conflict is by adding additional resources to the scarce resources which may be the cause of the conflict. Although budgets may limit this, it may still be considered as a possible solution.

- Interchange of personnel

Sometimes conflict is lasting and of such a serious nature that no prospects exist regarding any possibility of solving the conflict. In such cases conflict can be resolved by means of interchanging personnel through dismissal or transferrals to other divisions.

- Change of organizational structure

Total or partial changing of organization structures may also be used as a method of resolving conflict. This, however, can be a very costly exercise for an organization. The use of cross-functional teams and integrators as facilitators plays an important role when this method is applied.

- Confrontation and negotiation

Both these strategies require the skills of a negotiator and careful planning before engaging in negotiation. Negotiation can, however, only be effective as a management strategy under the following conditions:

- When two or more parties are involved.
- When parties are willing to negotiate because they believe that they can use their influence to secure a better result.
- When parties choose to cooperate rather to give in, break down contact, refer disputes to superiors or to fall into a state of friction.

Kreitner & Kinicki (2001:463) say that in a perfect world, people will avoid conflict in a creative manner and manage true conflict in a direct and positive way. In the world of organization politics it may happen that a person may unwillingly or unprepared, be drawn as a third party into other parties' conflict. Thus, it is sometimes necessary to have a working knowledge of the conflict-triangle and

alternative dispute resolving techniques that are essential for effective management of conflict.

This third-party intervention can be viewed as a conflict triangle in which case the conflicting parties draw in a third party to assist them in finding a solution for their problem, instead of negotiating directly with each other. People that find themselves in conflict triangles have a relative wide range of possibilities at their disposal with which to manage conflict:

- “Detriangling” is one of the methods which is minimally influenced by organizational politics and present a low risk should dysfunctional conflict exist.
- “More triangling” occurs in situations where organization politics with a higher intensity of ethical implications exist and subsequently results in a high risk with regard to dysfunctional conflict.
- “Alternative dispute resolution” A more recent and constructive approach to the handling of conflict, is the application of the alternative dispute resolution. According to Kreitner & Kinicki (2001:464-465) the different methods that can be followed under this strategy are facilitating, conciliation, “peer review”, mediation, and arbitration.

At this point, having discussed the different methods that can be followed in order to manage or handle functional as well as dysfunctional conflict, it becomes clear that core-handling or management methods exist which can be used in the conflict process.

5.8.2 Methods of managing conflict in practice

In the previous section attention was paid to certain aspects of the management of functional and dysfunctional conflict as well as certain aspects regarding the handling of conflict. Extending these discussions at length would not be considered feasible regarding the objectives of this study. Consequently a brief exposition will be done with regard to the methods or procedures of conflict-

handling in practice as perceived by Alper, Tjosvold & Law (2001:633-637), Anstey (1999:51-52), Pons (2000:1-12), Nell (1998:158), Schermerhorn (1999:343-344) and Havenga (2002:122-125).

- Negotiation

Meaningful negotiation should at all times be possible for those groups or individuals involved. Management or superiors should also always be capable of satisfactory negotiation. This can only be reached by having the right attitude and by applying knowledge appropriately. Use can be made of distribution negotiations that focus on win-lose claims that are put forward by each of the parties. Integrating negotiations use a win-win orientation to serve solutions that are acceptable for both parties (Schermerhorn, 1999:343).

- Training

In some cases serious attention should be given to training. Conflict sometimes develops due to the incapability or ignorance of parties in understanding how the work should be done or the individual has been appointed in a job where it is not possible to realize his or her full potential.

- Standard procedures

Standard procedures with regard to line-superiors, problems and actions in case of grievances and bad work-performance should be made known to employees.

- Functional specialists

When one is confronted with a complex situation it is advisable that a specialist should handle it. The source of conflict can be identified more effectively by an outsider who has not been involved in the conflict.

- Conversation

Holding conversations during confrontations is of great importance and can be of exceptional value. The parties involved should be given the opportunity

to air their opinions. In this way frustrations can be put on the table for discussion, problems solved and greater cooperation achieved.

- Mediation

Mediation, whether by a third person or concrete means, can be considered as a method of solving conflict. Mediators are more objective and parties usually more inclined to put trust in them. Concrete means such as workplace environment, salaries and furniture or tools can also be considered. Kreitner (2001:424) says that the immediate objective should be to establish direct communication.

- Policy

Workers are entitled to know what their role is in the organisation. Workers must be informed about what should be done and what not. A signed task-specification and written policy together with other documentation such as procedures and work-manuals can assist in the eradication of misunderstandings.

- Arbitration

In some instances it may be necessary to make use of an arbitrator to solve the conflict situation. This method should be introduced very cautiously because feelings may get hurt in the process. The function of the arbitrator is to attend to both parties' views on the conflict and to make quite certain of the finer points of the dispute. He or she then makes a final decision which is binding for both parties (Pons, 2000:1-12).

- Reconciliation

When reconciliation is reached, both parties should be able to handle it in a responsible manner. Principles and policies of the organization must be maintained and parties should not be more frustrated after reconciliation than before. Reconciliation creates new friendships on both a vertical and horizontal level. This can also be achieved by means of a forum where parties

can discuss their disputes and find solutions for the conflict. This process may also be influenced by third parties.

Conflict, especially between superior and subordinate, may manifest as grievances. Most organizations have official grievance procedures with which workers can solve their problems (Nell, 1998:109). In work situations grievances normally following disciplinary actions, as well as uncertainty regarding the steps that have been taken which should be reconcilable with the worker's perception of what is fair and just.

One should take caution not to view official grievances as the only problems (conflict) which can be presented to management. Workers are very often hesitant to put their official grievances to management for fear of reprisal.

Almost all of the methods to resolve conflict which have been discussed above are subject to certain basic principles. Schermerhorn (1999:343) and Anstey (1999:151) identify four basic principles that management have to take into consideration when addressing conflict:

- Separate the individuals or groups that are involved in the conflict.
- Focus on the interests and not positions of the parties involved.
- Generate different alternatives before a decision is made with regards to what to do or not to do.
- Use the necessity of results based on objective standards.

From the discussion up to this point it should be evident that conflict management or handling is a rather complicated process that involves many possibilities, sources or causes, techniques and strategies, reactions of individuals or groups and different outcomes. Methods which can be applied to resolve conflict can vary from very simple ones to more complicated efforts where third parties get involved.

Resolving conflict through effective management, however, necessitates the utilization of a well-defined process. In the next section attention will be paid to the process of managing conflict as portrayed by Rahim (1986 and 2002).

5.8.3 Process of managing conflict

The management of organisational conflict involves the process of diagnosis and intervention in conflict. Intervention can only take place after a thorough diagnosis is done. In figure 5.4 the process of managing conflict is shown.

5.8.3.1 Diagnosis

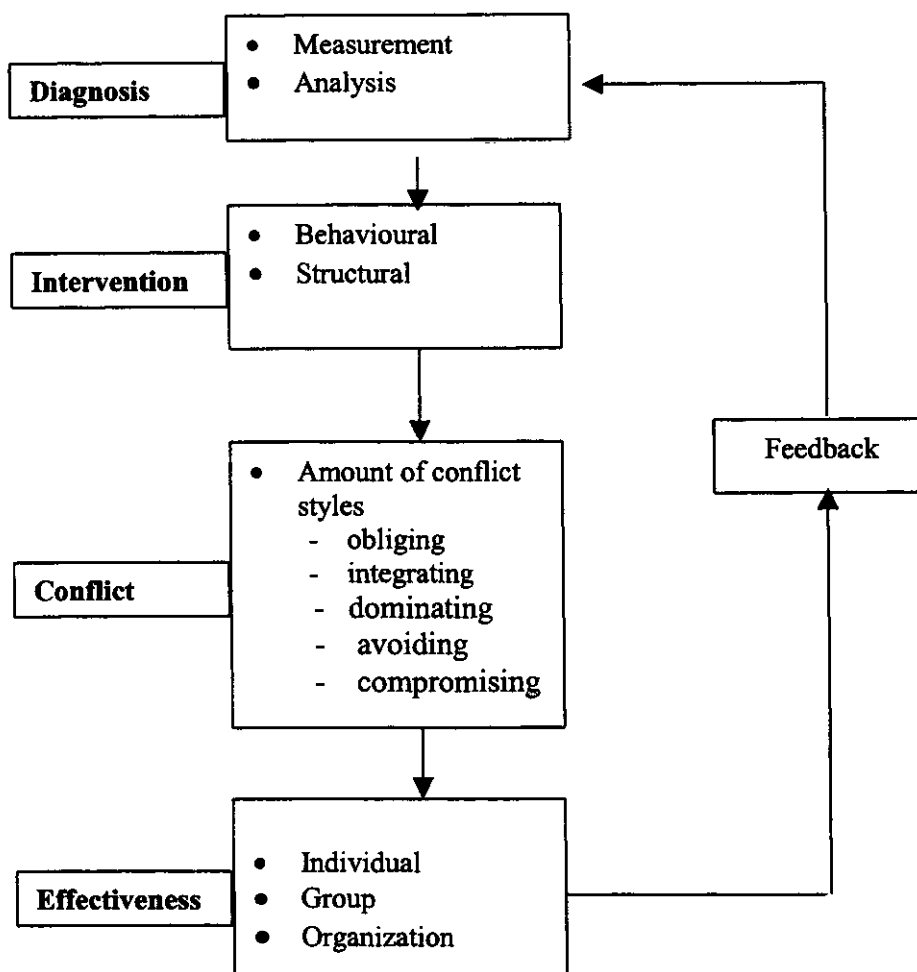
As discussed before, the first step in the conflict problem solving process is problem recognition, which involves problem sensing, and problem formulation. This requires an appropriate diagnosis of the problems if effective interventions are to be formulated. If an intervention is made without a proper diagnosis the probability exists that a change agent may try to solve a wrong problem. This will lead to what Mitroff and Featheringham (1974) call an error of the third kind. This error has been defined by them as the probability of having solved the wrong problem when one should have solved the right one (Rahim, 1986:33).

Several writers, according to Rahim (2002:221), specifically suggested the need for the diagnosis of conflict through some formal and informal approaches. Proper diagnosis of the causes and effects of different types of conflict in an organization is important because its underlying causes and effects may not be as they appear on the surface. The causes have been discussed and analysed at length in chapter 4 and it becomes evident that due to the multiplicity of sources (causes), proper diagnosis is undoubtedly a prerequisite for successful intervention.

Apart from diagnosing the causes and effects, one also needs to know whether the affective and substantive conflict experienced in an organisation is too much, too little or moderate. Knowledge regarding the appropriate application of the five

styles of handling conflict (by the employees of an organization), is also necessary.

Figure 5.4 The process of managing organisational conflict



Source: Adapted from Rahim (1986:33)

The question that can be asked is: in what format should a comprehensive diagnosis be made? It can be assumed that in most organizations little is done to diagnose the causes and effects of conflict, let alone the making of a comprehensive diagnosis. In a search done with respect to this aspect of conflict, no empirical study or other evidence could be found to verify this assumption. A study to determine organizations' attitude toward comprehensive diagnosis of

causes and effects could contribute to the ways and means of intervention and resolving conflict.

Rahim (1986:33; 2002:221) says that a comprehensive diagnosis involves the measurement of conflict, its sources, effectiveness, and an analysis of the relations among these.

- **Measurement**
 - The amount of affective and substantive conflict at the interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels.
 - The styles of handling interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup conflicts of the organizational members with superiors, subordinates and peers.
 - The sources of (1) and (2.)
 - Individual, group, and organizational learning and effectiveness.

- **Analysis**

The analysis of data and information gathered should include:

- The amount of substantive and effective conflict and the styles of handling conflict classified in terms of divisions, units and departments and whether they are different from their corresponding (national) norms.
- The relationship between the degree of conflict and conflict styles with regard to their sources.
- The relationship between different conflict styles, with regard to learning and effectiveness.

The result of diagnosis should indicate whether there is any need for, as well as the type of intervention which may be necessary for managing conflict. The results should be discussed with superiors (managers) in order to finally identify the conflict problems to be resolved.

5.8.3.2 Intervention

There are two basic approaches with regard to the intervention in conflict. These are the process and structural approaches. The 'process' intervention attempts to improve organizational effectiveness by changing the intensity of affective and substantive conflicts and members' styles of handling interpersonal conflict. The process approach is mainly designed to manage conflict by helping the organizational participants learn how to match the uses of the various styles of handling interpersonal conflict in different situations.

Changes in the levels of affective and substantive conflicts will require changes in organizational processes, such as culture and leadership. Changes in culture and leadership processes will also support the organisational members' newly acquired skills of conflict management (Rahim, 2000:24). These new skills with which to manage or handle conflict will be accomplished by way of learning and innovation in the organisation. As suggested by French and Bell (1999) learning new behaviour requires support from top management which probably requires transformational leadership and culture that can support effective conflict management.

'Structural' intervention attempts to improve the organizational effectiveness by changing the organization's structural design characteristics, which includes differentiation and integration mechanisms, hierarchy, procedures and reward systems. This approach mainly attempts to manage conflict at different levels by altering the organization members' perceptions of conflict intensity. Conflicts which result from the organization's structural design, can be managed effectively by appropriate change in design. According to Rahim (2002:24) the greater the congruence between the design and the environment, the more effective the management of conflict and the greater the organizational effectiveness.

From what has been discussed regarding the process of managing conflict, it should be noted that behavioural intervention is primarily designed to alter the

styles of handling conflict by changing the culture of group members. Such interventions may also affect the degree of conflict intensity. Structural intervention it is primarily designed to alter the degree of conflict by changing the structural sources of conflict. This type of intervention may of course, also affect the style of handling conflict.

What has become clear from the discussions is that organizational conflict (whether in the form of interpersonal, intergroup or intragroup conflict), should not necessarily be reduced, suppressed or eliminated, but rather managed in a way that enhances learning and effectiveness. In order to reduce affective conflict, the maintenance of a moderate amount of substantive conflict for non-routine tasks at different levels should be preserved. This could enable members of organizations to learn the various styles (obliging, integrating, dominating, avoiding and compromising) of handling interpersonal conflict situations effectively. The discussions that result from the process of managing conflict in any organization, should meet and address the needs and expectations of the concerned parties and stakeholders and should be ethically acceptable.

5.9 Conflict aftercare

Conflict aftercare is the final phase in the conflict management process. It is a preventative measure in itself. It gives management the opportunity to evaluate the conflict management process and if necessary, take corrective actions where indicated. Any occurrence of conflict needs to be followed up in order to establish whether it has been satisfactorily resolved and if something could be learned from the experience. This can be done by way of the following methods (Alper, 2001:652):

- **Reflection and evaluation.** A specific session or time should be devoted for a conflict-audit in order to investigate incidents and analyse and evaluate these. It can take the form of a reflective exercise. Important facts concerning the organization can emerge from such activity, and a recurrence of similar conflict incidents can be avoided in the future.

- Quantifying conflict. Conflict should be quantified in monetary terms as far as possible. This should be done considering production, marketing, capital investment and man-hour costs. Such strategies could assist in determining the consequences of conflict.
- Rehabilitation. Concrete problem areas should be rectified. Deliberation and consultation (where psychological damage was caused) should be used as a means to repair any damage. This should also be applied with regard to material losses incurred.
- Restructuring. Very often consideration has to be given to the interpretation and restructuring of policies, and/or organizational changes which could include the possible reallocation of posts or retrenchment of personnel.
- Anticipation. One should consider or reflect on the possibility of a recurrence of the conflict and how to go about preventing such a repetition.
- Training and development. Training, retraining and development are an integral part of the whole process of conflict after-care. Re-examination of existing training programmes and the introduction of preventative programmes are essential to ensure labour peace and conflict resolution.

5.10 Conclusion

It is very often assumed that conflict is an unnatural and unacceptable situation that has to be avoided at all costs. Management however, has to realize that conflict can be part of organizations but does not have to be negative or destructive. Management has to develop an understanding of conflict and its management. In this way maximum advantages can be accomplished for the benefit of the organization.

Views with regard to conflict have changed during the last five to six decades. Traditionally, all conflict was considered to be harmful. These views were the result of management principles not being implemented successfully. The

present or modern approach accepts that conflict is not only unavoidable, but sometimes necessary for organizations to survive.

From the discussions in this chapter it has become evident that there are three factors that determine how organization conflict should be managed. In the first instance it is obvious that the different types of conflict are unavoidable due to the fact that they can be set off by a number of different causes (sources). Secondly it has become clear that too little conflict can be just as counter-productive as too much. Functional and dysfunctional conflict requires a specific management approach that should be managed with different strategies, techniques and methods. Furthermore it has also become evident that there is no single way in which conflict can be resolved and managed. Different types of conflict, in different situations and environments, and with different intensities requires different approaches as far as resolution is concerned. Particular personality characteristics are also required for successful implementation of the different conflict management strategies.

It can also be stated that the causes of conflict in its different phases (from latent to manifest conflict) should be monitored constantly and handled in a positive manner. The basic points of departure for the management of conflict are the five styles of conflict handling (collaboration; competition; avoidance; accommodating; and compromise). If the intensity of conflict is too low, functional (constructive) conflict should be stimulated. This can be done by a number of techniques. However, should conflict be dysfunctional (destructive) the applicable conflict handling styles and techniques should be applied.

In table 5.3 a summary is given of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict and the situations in which these are considered to be appropriate or inappropriate. The use of the five styles method of conflict-handling developed by McKenna (2001:415), were presented in table 5.1 (refer 5.4.5). The exposition done by Rahim (1983:22) however, seems more inclusive because it also applies to situations where it is inappropriate to use specific styles.

Table 5.3 Styles for handling conflict

Conflict Style	Situations Where Appropriate	Situations Where Inappropriate
Integrating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issues are complex 2. Synthesis of ideas is needed to come up with better solutions 3. Commitment is needed from other parties for successful implementation 4. Time is available for problem solving 5. One party alone cannot solve one problem 6. Resources possessed by different parties are needed to solve their common problems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Task or problem is simple 2. Immediate decision is required 3. Other parties are unconcerned about outcome
Obliging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You believe that you may be wrong 2. Issue is more important to the other party 3. You are willing to give up something in exchange for something from the other party 4. you are dealing from a position of weakness 5. Preserving relationship is important 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is important to you 2. You believe that you are right 3. Temporary resolution may provide more time to reach an agreement in the near future
Dominating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is trivial 2. Speedy decision is needed 3. Unpopular course of action is implemented 4. Necessary to overcome assertive subordinates 5. Unfavourable decision by the other party may be costly to you 6. Subordinates lack expertise to make technical decisions 7. Issue is important to you 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is complex 2. Issue is not important to you 3. Both parties are equally important 4. Decision does not have to be made quickly 5. Subordinates possess high degree of competency
Avoiding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is trivial 2. Potential dysfunctional effect of confronting the other party outweighs benefits of resolution 3. Cooling off period is needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is important to you 2. It is your responsibility to make decision 3. Parties are unwilling to defer, issue must be resolved 4. prompt attention is needed
Compromising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goals of parties are mutually exclusive 2. Parties are equally powerful 3. Consensus cannot be reached 4. Integrating or dominating style is not successful 5. Temporary solution to a problem is needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One party is more powerful 2. problem is complex enough needing problem-solving approach

Source : Rahim (1983 :22)

Dealing effectively with conflict requires mature traits such as (Van Aarde & Nieumeÿer (1996 :41)

- Intellectual understanding.
- Honest self examination.
- Reaching out to others.
- Mature management of feelings.

In conclusion it can be said that social conflict is a phenomenon so omnipresent in organizational life that one can easily take it for granted. Members of an organization react by choosing the well-trodden path: they avoid a reproach, they accommodate a poor plan, they negotiate on price or solve a problem, and sometimes they fight an opponent on principle. (Van de Vliert, et al. in De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997 :38).

By and large, the past four chapters dealt with a literature study incorporating the different theories of conflict ; the evaluation of conflict sources and the conflict process, and the different viewpoints on managing and handling conflict.

Following this theoretical approach the next three chapters will link theory to an empirical study in order to determine how different sources of conflict surface in a local authority and a private sector company, and the conflict handling styles that are used by the employees of these organizations. Comparing the results of the two organizations will reveal if the different environments in which they function, influence the causes and handling-styles.

In the following chapter the two organizations involved in the empirical study as well as the ROC-II model of Rahim and the methods applied to analyse the data will be discussed. The data which was collected by means of a questionnaire presented for completion to a stratified sample, will also be discussed.

Chapter 6

Empirical research design and demographic data analysis

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 of this study devoted attention to the problem statement, objectives of the study and methodology. In chapter 2 the theoretical principles underlying the subject of the research project were discussed. Analysis of the different concepts of conflict, sources of conflict, the conflict process as well as the different models of conflict handling and management were done in chapters 3-5 which verified the goal and main objective of the study.

In order to make this study meaningful and to reach the said objectives and verify certain hypotheses, an empirical study is also necessary. The empirical research is done as a result of the perceptions of conflict held within both a private and public sector organization, to evaluate relevant findings and to clarify these findings in terms of specific theoretical perspectives. The research hypotheses will be presented in this chapter and the objectives set out in chapter one will be addressed. Although the research methodology has been discussed in chapter one, it was approached from a wide perspective in order to serve as an introduction to this study. In this chapter, aspects regarding the empirical research design will be discussed in detail.

The following aspects will be addressed in this chapter:

- The research objectives
- The scope of this research
- The research environment. A brief background of the private sector company and the public sector organization to be used in this research project, will be presented.
- The research method to be used.

- The measuring instrument:
 - = the questionnaire design;
 - = the sample and
 - = pre-testing.
- Methods of data collection.
- Statistical methods used for analysis.

6.2 The empirical research objectives

It is accepted that the identification of the causes of conflict as well as the styles of handling conflict by the two organizations in question, could be instrumental in improving the management or handling of conflict and the establishing of effective practices in this regard. Apart from identifying these critical elements of conflict, this investigation should present information that could be used in similar research studies.

a.) The primary goal

The primary goal of this study is to establish by way of a comparative theoretical and empirical analysis, the nature, causes and handling styles of conflict within a private and public sector organization.

b.) Objectives

In order to justify and establish acceptance of the project, the following objectives will have to be attained by means of an empirical study.

- To determine and compare the following by means of an empirical study based on a questionnaire survey:
 - What causes conflict to occur within a public and a private sector business and to what degree.
 - The extent to which the application of the Rahim ROC-II (Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II) model elucidates conflict handling styles.

- Whether there is a significant difference in the frequency of conflict-handling styles in a local authority and a private sector business.
- How conflict manifests itself within a local authority and a private sector business.

6.3 Hypotheses

6.3.1 General hypotheses

A significant difference exists in the experiencing, perception and handling of conflict in a public and private sector organization.

6.3.2 Statistical hypotheses

Hp_1: A significant difference exists in the causes of conflict between the local authority and agricultural organization.

Hp_2: A significant difference exists between employees of the local authority and agricultural organization's perception as to how conflict influences them.

Hp_3: A significant difference exists in the usage frequency of conflict-handling styles when compared to different background variables in both organizations

Hp_4: A significant difference exists in the frequency with which each conflict-handling style is used between employees of the local authority and employees of the agricultural organization.

6.4 The scope of this research

The scope of this study along with the research objectives is to establish a framework within which the theoretical and empirical research is to be conducted. It is within this framework, which is detailed below, that the research questionnaires are designed and the research is carried out.

- Evaluating conflict theories developed during the past century.
- Establishing the sources (causes) of conflict as reported in the literature.
- Analysing the processes and styles of handling conflict.
- Using a private and public sector organization as profit and non-profit institutions as the research environment.
- Using management and non-management personnel as elements of the research environment.

While the research outlines the broad issues relevant to this study, the research section analyses two types of environments which are specific to the actual research intended. Two entirely different industries, that is, a service industry – a local authority (non-profit) and an agricultural industry – an agricultural company (profit) will be examined. In comparing these, the study may present information to other industries which could possibly apply the results to their organizations.

6.5 The research environment

The research environment within which this research takes place, is a non-profit orientated local authority and a profit-orientated agricultural company. These two organizations will be discussed briefly.

6.5.1 Local authority

This municipality is classified as a B-category local authority with a municipal demarcation board code NW 203. The following statistics are relevant: Population 335237, Households 77835, Municipal budget 2002/03 – Operating: R393 523 680, Capital: R 33 813 028.

This local authority has an economy that produces roughly R8 billion worth of goods and services each year. In 1990 about 21,1% of the labour force was unemployed. It rose to 37,4 % in 1999 and is estimated to be more than 40% at present.

The municipality has eleven directorates, namely: Housing services; Community services; Corporate communications; Financial services; Civil engineering; Electrical engineering; Health services; Corporate services; Public safety; Market; and Economic affairs. The municipality has an executive mayor, mayoral committee and a municipal manager who are managing the activities of this local authority. The total workforce is in the order of 850 and is spread out over four different, former-independent towns. (Gaffneys, 2003). For the purposes of this study, the largest of the four towns (which is also the centre of all administrative activities) is used in the empirical survey.

6.5.2 Agricultural company

The agricultural company used in this empirical survey can equally be classified as a B-type organization if compared to the other companies in this private sector industry. Measures used to do this classification are based on annual turnover and budget as well as number of employees and different departments (directorates).

This private sector organization is situated in a rural area with an employee total of 815 spread out over the largest part of the province, in business branches, depots and factories. The core of the employees, who are stationed in the head office where all the administrative activities are performed, totals 103. A few retail branches are included in the study in order to reach a number of different activities also performed in this organization.

The 2002/03 budget for this agricultural company was ±R720 million. It has the following principal departments: Products; Industries; Trade and Mechanization; Finance: Corporate functions. Sub-divisions cover Marketing; Engineering Services; and Human Resources.

6.5.3 Demarcation of the environment

The demarcation of the research environment was restricted to one public and one private sector organization. The two organizations were chosen for the study due to the fact that local authority has already progressed considerably with regard to affirmative action and transformation (more than 45% of the employees are non-white), and whilst in the case of an almost private sector organization (such as an agricultural company), more than 90 % of the employees in job-levels 5 – 16 are still white. It is believed that the difference in ethnicity and cultural factors as well as the tempo with which affirmative action and transformation have taken place in these two entirely different organizations may also (besides other factors) reveal clear differences in conflict handling styles and the causes and manifestation of conflict.

6.6 Research method

This research study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, and the first few chapters were exploratory and descriptive. This served as the theoretical basis for the empirical (quantitative) part of the study. In chapter one (refer: 1.4.1) a more detailed discussion was done to motivate the qualitative as well as quantitative approach to this study. The descriptive part of the research presented a picture of specific details of situations, social settings and relationships. Apart from answering the “what” question (exploratory research) consideration was also given to the “why” question (explanatory research). The latter builds on the previous two and will proceed to identify reasons and causes as to why conflict occurs in public and private sector organizations and the styles which are used by individuals to handle or manage it. This will be done by means of an empirical survey and analysis.

6.7 The measuring instruments

The measuring instruments used in the empirical part of this study are conflict-evaluating questionnaires (Add: A and B). These questionnaires consist of a

standardized questionnaire (in part) and of a section designed to measure and test elements not included in the standardized sections of the questionnaires. The designed sections were developed from information gathered from the theoretical and descriptive part of the study.

6.7.1 The questionnaire design

6.7.1.1 The ROC-II (Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II)

Sections D and E being standardized questions were based on the ROC-II model. This ROC-II was designed on the basis of repeated feedback from respondents, and an iterative process of six successive exploratory factor analysis of data from various sets of items. Rahim & Magner (1995:122-132) performed confirmatory factor analysis with five different samples that provided support for the convergent and discriminate validities of the ROC-II and the invariance of the five-factor model across referent roles, that is supervisors (superiors), subordinates and peers, organizational levels, that is, top, middle, lower and non-management (Rahim, Magner & Shapiro: 2000:18).

The 28 items (questions) for the final instrument were selected from the final factor analysis of ratings of 35 items from a national sample of 1219 managers (Rahim, 1983). In this analysis the initial factors were derived through principal factoring with iteration and the terminal solution was reached through varimax rotation. The analysis extracted eight factors. The selection of an item was based on factor loading $\geq 0,40$ and Eigenvalue $\geq 1,00$. Based on these criteria, the five factors with 28 items were selected. The five factors explains more tha 89 % of the total variance in the data. The factor loadings of $\geq 0,40$ were underlined to indicate the items selected to construct the five scales.

The selected factors supports the five independent dimensions of conflict styles. Factors I through V are indicated as **"Integrating, Avoiding, Dominating, Obliging, and Compromising"**. The indices of the five styles are constructed by

adding the subjects' responses to the selected items in a factor and dividing the total number of items. This results in the creation of five continuous scales.

Constructs of five styles of handling interpersonal conflict and corresponding factors were discussed in depth in chapter 5 of this study. Consequently no further analysis of the handling styles will be done. It should also be noted that the criterion validity of the ROC-II instrument was confirmed in studies of Lee (1990:327-340) and Ting-Toomey et al. (1991:275-296).

The five conflict handling styles are incorporated in sections as set out in table 6.1

Table 6.1 The layout of the questionnaire

Questionnaire-subject	Items in questionnaire
Section A Biographical information	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8
Section B Factors contributing to conflict	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10
Section C Manifestation (effect) conflict -orientated questions	C1, C2, C3
Section D (Standardized) Conflict with Superior Sub_1D Integrating Sub_2D Avoiding Sub_3D Dominating Sub_4D Obliging Sub_5D Dompromising	D1, D4, D6, D15, D28, D29, D35, D7, D22, D23, D32, D33 D10, D11, D24, D27, D31 D2, D12, D13, D16, D17, D25, D30 D9, D20, D21, D26
Section E (Standardized) Conflict with Peers Sub_1E Integrating Sub_2E Avoiding Sub_3E Dominating Sub_4E Obliging Sub_5E Compromising	E1, E4, E6, E15, E28, E29, E35, E7, E22, E23, E32, E33 E10, E11, E24, E27, E31 E2, E12, E13, E16, E17, E25, E30 E9, E20, E21, E26

The 28 items were applied to both the questionnaires of the local authority and the agricultural company. The ROC-II (sub_D and sub_E) determines the way in which and individual of an organization handles conflict with his or her superior (supervisor) and peer (equal).

6.7.1.2 The designed questions (sections)

Apart from measuring the different conflict handling styles it is also an objective of this study to determine the respondent's, perceptions of how and why conflict occurs in their respective organizations. Using the findings of the theoretical part of this study as basis, sections A, B and C were designed (refer Add. A and B).

Section A covers the biographical section of the questionnaire and are, except for question 6 and 7 similar for both organizations. Question 6 relates to the different departments in which the respondents are working and question 7 the job-level that they occupy. In the first instance the departments of the two organizations are not totally compatible and in the case of the job-levels differences also occur. The public authority makes use of the Perommenes scaling of job-levels, whilst in the case of the agricultural company the FSA scale is used.

Section B's questions (statements) were designed to indicate on a Likert-scale, of 1 to 4 the causes or reasons that contribute to conflict in organizations. In order to determine the results of conflict experienced in these organizations, a section C was developed with eight statements. By way of these statements it was possible to ascertain how conflict in the work situation manifests itself and influences the individuals.

6.7.1.3 Refinement or rephrasement of questions / statements

The refinement of questions requires an analysis of how such questions were phrased (in a negative or positive way) and the meaning and possible interpretation of certain statements or words. The words of the questions were phrased in such a way as to enable respondents to answer the questions without

any doubt regarding the meaning or interpretation of such words. This also applied to the statements or total questions.

Sections D and E which were taken from Rahim's ROC-II, contain standardized items and having been used successfully in a previous study in South Africa (Havenga, 2002), were not refined or rephrased. Previous pre-testing of these sections revealed no problems in understanding the questions posed. No need was found to insert any open-ended questions.

6.7.1.4 Questionnaire pre-testing

The pre-testing of the two questionnaires was conducted to determine the respondents' understanding of the research questions and also to determine the time it would take to complete the questionnaire (self completion process).

Pre-tests were conducted amongst colleagues, the managers of the human resources departments of both organizations and also staff members of the Statistics Support Services divisions of two universities. The findings of these tests were noted and the necessary adjustments done. Amendments concerning both questionnaires were made and were then tested again with the two managers of the human resources departments, two professors, and two lower-level employees of the organizations.

Every effort was made to ensure unambiguous questionnaires and the two human resources managers were briefed, who in turn, briefed the heads of the different departments/ directorates of the organizations who participated in the project. These heads briefed the respondents, gave them the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in a set period and then collected the completed questionnaires. The time it takes to complete the questionnaire was on average ten minutes.

6.7.1.5 The Likert-scale

The questionnaires used in the survey cover five sections. These sections are:

- A – Biographical information which serves a basis for comparing and analysing the causes of conflict and handling styles.
- B – Indicates on a 4-point scale, the extent to which different (sources) elements contribute to conflict.
- C - Statements in this section of the questionnaire attempts to establish the effect / impact that conflict has on employees.
- D – This section determines by means of statements on a 5-point Likert scale The conflict handling styles that are used when incompatibilities, disagreements or differences occur between peers and superiors.
- E – This section determines (similar to D) the conflict handling styles between employees on a horizontal level (conflict with peers).

The Likert scale used in this research questionnaire is an ordinal type of rating scale which makes it relatively easy to complete. It is less time consuming and can be used with a large number of variables (Emory & Cooper, 1991:212).

The advantages of using the Likert-scale should bring about adequate results that will comply with the tests for reliability, validity and practical requirements of the two research questionnaires used. Emory & Cooper (1991:221) also state that from a design point of view, the Likert scale is also quick and easy to construct, where each item of the questionnaire should meet an empirical test for discriminating ability.

In 6.6.1 it has already been explained that sections D and E, each comprising 28 questions, are standardized parts of the ROC-II questionnaire. The five-point Likert scale is standard to these sections. The order of the five-point Likert scale runs from strongly agree (1), agree (2), undecided (3), disagree (4), to strongly disagree (5). The questions of this research meets the requirements of: each statement is relevant to the attitude being considered; and the statements reflect

a favourable or unfavourable position of that attitude (Emory & Cooper, 1991:220).

6.7.2 The sample

Data to test the hypotheses in this study were collected using survey methodology. Samples were drawn for both organizations from top-management, middle-management, and operational levels.

6.7.2.1 Local authority sample

The research group in this case consists of a stratified random sample of employees from the operational level (job-level 13) up to the top-level management (job-level 1). This local authority organizational structure includes the following directorates (departments): Housing; Community services; Corporate communications; Financial services; Public safety; market; and Economic Affairs. The total number of employees differ from directorate to directorate and it depends on the nature and function of the specific directorate.

The stratified random sample represents the total population of the directorates, and includes persons from both genders and different races. Of the total population of 386 employees, from job levels 1 through 13, 193 employees were selected randomly. This number represents 50 % of the total population determined by means of a stratified random sample. It was done in this manner in order to get a random sample out of all the different job-levels with a percentage-fault of less than 5%.

It was decided not to include the remaining job-levels 14 to 18 in the study. The reason for this decision being the extent of the questionnaire as well as the knowledge-orientation the questionnaire requires. It was determined that employees on job-level 14 and higher were to a large extent unable to interpret and answer the questions.

Of the 193 questionnaires distributed amongst the random sample employees 143 were sent back. A total of 139 usable questionnaires were returned. This represents a 72 % of the sample which is a more than adequate sample size for the use of multivariate statistical techniques such as multiple regression analysis to analyse data. (Hair, et al. 1995:103-105). It should be noted that very often the samples size seems to be a controversial issue when it comes to the proportional relationship it bears in terms of the population it is selected from. The design of the questionnaire and its differing statistical and economical efficiencies have an effect on the size of the sample and since a sample can never reflect its population for certain, the researchers must determine how much precision they need (Emory & Cooper; 1991:249).

The response can, however, in this case of the local authority, be deemed more than scientifically representative of the population in order to make meaningful deductions

6.7.2.2 Agricultural company sample

The research group accepted from this organization consists of all the personnel from job-level 5 to 16 at head office plus the same job-levels at three trade branches. Included also are the executive management above level 16. This organization's structure includes the following divisions: Products; Mechanization; Trade (Marketing); Finance; Manufacturing; Corporate Support. The total number of employees differ from department to department.

The statistical random sample represents the total population of the departments and includes persons from both genders and different races. From the total population of 101 on job-level 5 and higher a random sample of 101 was used. This number represents 100 % of the total population. It was done in this manner because the 101 could be handled with ease and in order to get a random sample out of all the different job-levels (5-16) with a percentage fault of less than 5%.

It was decided (similar to the case of the local authorities) not to include the remaining job-levels 1 to 4 in the study. The reason for this decision being the extent of the questionnaire as well as the knowledge-orientation it requires. It was determined that employees on job-levels 4 and lower were to a large extent unable to interpret and answer the questions.

Of the 101 questionnaires distributed, 65 were sent back. A total of 64 were usable. This represents a 63,4% of the sample which is more than adequate sample size for the use of multivariate statistical techniques such as multiple regression analysis of data (Hair, et al. 1991:103-105). The response-rate, taken into consideration Emory & Cooper's (refer 6.6.2.1 above) views on statistical samples, be considered to be more than scientifically representative of the population to make meaningful deductions.

6.8 Method of data collection

The following steps were taken to assure that the fieldwork involved was objective and effective in completion of the questionnaires by the sample.

- The research groups were composed by means of a scientific stratified random sample (refer 6.6.2).
- The questionnaires were pre-tested (refer 6.6.1.4).
- The directorates of the Human Resources of the two departments of the two organizations were briefed on the completion of the questionnaires. They in turn selected a person responsible for each department and briefed them. These persons distributed and briefed the respondents.
- The completed questionnaires were recovered within two weeks after it was distributed.
- The completed questionnaires were edited by the researcher, and the data statistically processed, analysed and interpreted.

6.9 Demographic characteristics of respondents

In both the questionnaires, questions ascertaining the particular demographic characteristics of respondents were posed. The main reason for doing this was to correlate certain findings with specific demographic characteristics of respondents in the two organizations. It was stated at the outset of this study that the two organizations, one being public and the other private, differ in many ways, and consequently comparing the biographical information could support the validity of the objectives of such a comparative study.

6.9.1 Gender of respondents

In table 6.2 the proportion of male to females is compared between the two organizations. In the local authority the males dominate with 74.6%, whilst in the case of the agricultural company the opposite situation is experienced, with 62.5% of the respondents being females. Male domination in terms of numbers and vice versa may reveal different conflict-handling styles being used.

6.9.2 Age distribution

The age distribution of the respondents is also indicated in table 6.3. An interesting observation that can be made is that in the case of the local authority there was no definite majority in the three (recoded) categories. The range stretched between 32.4% and 34.5% with the latter percentage representing the age group under 35 years. Here the agricultural company accounted for only 28.6%, with the majority (38,0%) in the 36 to 45 years age bracket. In the age group above 46 both organizations accounted for 33%.

Table 6.2 Biographical data of the respondents

NUMBER						
	Local Authority		Agricultural Organization		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
	139	64.5	64	35.5	203	100
GENDER						
Male	103	74.6	24	37.5	127	62.6
Female	35	25.4	40	62.5	75	37.4
Total	139	100	64	100	203	100
AGE (RECODED)						
- 35	48	34.5	18	28.6	66	32.7
36 – 45	45	33.4	24	38.0	69	34.2
46 +	46	33.1	21	33.3	67	33.1
Total	139	100	63	100	202	100
HIGHEST QUALIFICATION (RECODED)						
Grade 12 or lower	78	56.1	50	78.1	128	63.1
Diploma or certificate	39	28.1	5	7.8	44	21.6
Undergraduate or higher degree	22	15.8	9	14.1	31	15.3
Total	139	100	64	100	203	100
HOME LANGUAGE (RECODED)						
Afrikaans	78	56.1	58	90.6	136	67.0
English	34	24.5	4	6.2	38	18.7
Other	27	19.4	2	3.2	29	14.3
Total	139	100	64	100	203	100
TENURE (RECODED)						
1- 4 years	21	15.2	18	28.1	39	19.3
5 – 10 years	48	34.8	17	26.6	65	32.2
11 + years	69	50.0	29	45.3	98	48.5
Total	138	100	64	100	202	100

6.9.3 Educational qualifications

It is revealed in table 6.3 that in both organizations the highest qualification registered almost the same for the two organizations with the local authority

slightly ahead with 15.8% as against the agricultural company's 14.1%. The fact that almost 50% of the respondents in the local authority had higher qualifications after grade 12 than is the case with the agricultural company, may reveal differences in conflict-handling styles, observed causes of conflict and effects of conflict experienced. This assumption is made on the belief that the higher people are educated the more they should be in the mental and psychological position to handle conflict effectively.

6.9.4 Home language

Another way in which it was possible to establish if there was any real difference between the two organizations was to determine the home language of the respondents. Typical of the agricultural company is its large component of Afrikaans speaking employees. Almost 91% indicated that their home language is Afrikaans, whilst in the case of the local authority it was only 56.1%. English which is also increasingly spoken by Coloured and Indian people, together with indigenous languages such as Tswana and Sotho in the region where the local authority is situated, made up almost 44% of the non-Afrikaans languages. This should also indicate the difference that exists between the two organizations and the bearing that it may have on the outcome of causes, effects (manifestations) and handling styles of conflict.

6.9.5 Tenure

An interesting revelation of table 6.3 concerns the number of years that employees have been working for the respective organizations. In the case of the local authority 50% of the employees had a tenure of 11 years and more. The percentage recorded by the agricultural organizations was 45,3% less than 4 years employment. Reasons for this may lie in job satisfaction, good benefits, low levels of conflict and other negative factors.

6.9.6 Respondents' departments of employment

In table 6.3 and 6.4 a breakdown is given of the departments in which the respondents are working. Being a service-rendering organization it is no surprise that the Public Safety, and Civil and Electrical Engineering departments provide 63% of the employees of the local authority. More than a third, i.e. 34.4% of the respondents of the agricultural company are to be found in the Finance department, followed by Supporting Functions' 23.4%.

Table 6.3 Local authority department in which employed

DEPARTMENT	NUMBER	%
Municipal manager	2	1.4
Public safety	30	21.7
Health services	5	3.6
Community services	14	10.1
Housing	3	2.1
Civil engineering	37	26.8
Electrical engineering	20	14.5
Corporate services	2	1.4
Finance	15	10.9
Economic & Corporate	4	2.9
Communication	7	5.1
Total	139	100

Table 6.4 Agricultural organization department in which employed

DEPARTMENT	NUMBER	%
Executive management	1	1.6
Finance	22	34.4
Supporting functions	15	23.4
Industries	4	6.3
Trade & Mechanisation	10	15.6
Products	4	6.3
Business risk / Engineering / marketing	3	4.7
Other departments	5	7.8
Total	64	100

6.9.7 Organization job-levels

Table 6.5 reveals the number of respondents in each job-level for the two organizations. The Perommenes-scale is used by the local authority and the FSA-scale by the agricultural organization. The table has been drawn up in such a way that the job-levels could be compared. Levels 1 and 2 (local authority) and 16 and 15 (agricultural organization) depicts the top management. Job levels 8-13 and 9-5 again embraces the lower operational levels.

Table 6.5 Local authority and agricultural organization job levels

LOCAL AUTHORITY (Perommenes-scale)			AGRIC ORGANIZATION (FSA-scale)		
LEVEL	NUMBER	%	LEVEL	NUMBER	%
1	2	1.4	16	1	1.5
2	3	2.2	15	2	3.1
3	7	5.1	14	-	0
4	3	2.2	13	-	0
5	8	5.8	12	14	21.8
6	9	6.5	11	7	10.9
7	18	13.0	10	7	10.9
8	16	11.6	9	5	7.8
9	21	15.2	8	2	3.1
10	20	14.5	7	7	10.9
11	18	13.0	6	4	6.2
12	11	8.0	5	12	18.8
13	3	2.2		-	
TOTAL	139	100	TOTAL	61	100

6.10 Statistical analysis

6.10.1 Means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis

The SPSS-programme (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to carry out the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data of the two participating organizations. Results were described and compared, using means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. The main

measures of central tendency used were the mean and median. They reveal what sets of measures “are like” on average, but also compared to test relations.

The standard deviation approximates the average distance that is scored from the mean. The higher the standard deviation, the greater the distances on average from the mean become (Steyn, et al. 1995).

Skewness and kurtosis are the two components of normality. Skewness is a measure of the asymmetry of a distribution. The normal distribution is symmetric, and has a skewness value of zero (0). A distribution with a significant positive skewness has a long right tail. In the case of a negative skewness a long left tail occurs. When a variable is skewed it is a variable whose mean is not in the centre of the distribution.

On the other hand, kurtosis is a measure of the extent to which observations cluster around a central point. For a normal distribution, the value of the kurtosis statistic is 0. Positive kurtosis indicates that the observations cluster more and have longer tails than those in the normal distribution and negative kurtosis indicates the observations cluster less and have shorter tails. Thus the kurtosis explains the peakedness of a distribution.

In table 6.7 the mean, median, skewness and kurtosis of section B for both organizations as a total is presented. Table 6.8 again covers section D and E for both organizations as a total. Because section C only covers “yes” and “no” answers the skewness and kurtosis are not relevant as it was analysed by means of a t-test.

Considering table 6.6 and 6.7 it can be stated that there is nothing wrong with the skewness or kurtosis values shown being positive or negative. The values are all very acceptable (problem arises when skewness is equal to or beyond 3 or -3 and when kurtosis is equal to 7 or -7 , or beyond).

Without discussing all 28 variables it can for instance be observed that B-6 and Q-25 with skewness of -0.743 and -0.715 , respondents favoured answering higher values more, since the values indicate negative tails. The kurtosis of B-6, -0.766 and Q-25 with -0.392 and -0.233 being negative also indicate that there is a generalised favouring of higher values, since the negative values indicate a more flat curve. Graph 6.1 serves as an example of skewness and kurtosis referring to B-6.

Graph 6.1 Skewness and kurtosis example: Question B-6

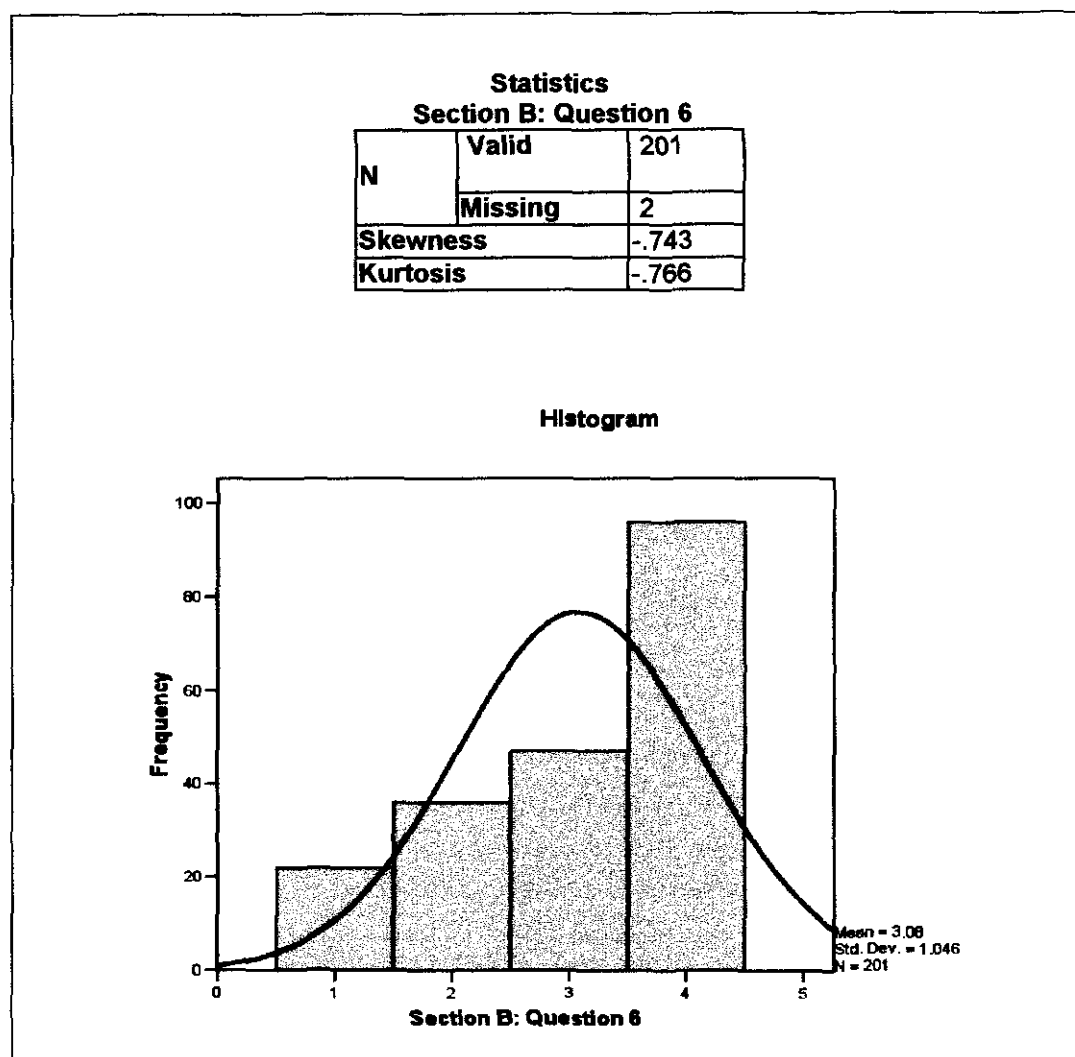


Table 6.6 Descriptive statistics regarding perception of conflict causes
(Section B) for both organizations in total

VARIABLE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SKEWNESS	KURTOSIS
B-1	2.75	3.00	-0.267	-1.242
B-2	2.49	2.00	0.064	-1.260
B-3	2.47	2.00	0.130	-1.168
B-4	2.55	3.00	-0.119	-1.023
B-5	3.00	3.00	-0.685	-0.828
B-6	3.08	3.00	-0.743	-0.766
B-7	2.19	2.00	0.408	-1.378
B-8	2.27	2.00	0.356	-1.048
B-9	2.37	2.00	0.095	-1.212
B-10	2.50	2.00	0.012	-1.500

Table 6.7 Descriptive statistics regarding conflict-handling styles
(Section D & E) for both organizations in total

VARIABLE	SECTION D				SECTION E			
	Mean	Median	Skew.	Kurt.	Mean	Median	Skew.	Kurt.
Q-1	1.92	2.00	1.552	2.171	1.74	2.00	1.595	3.782
Q-2	2.07	2.00	1.139	0.578	2.25	2.00	0.935	0.331
Q-3	2.74	2.00	0.434	-1.166	2.87	2.50	0.100	-1.309
Q-4	1.84	2.00	1.383	1.935	1.87	2.00	1.608	3.791
Q-5	1.73	1.00	1.777	3.214	1.76	2.00	1.074	2.080
Q-6	2.82	2.00	0.201	-1.349	2.87	2.00	0.180	-1.273
Q-7	2.07	2.00	1.196	1.193	2.14	2.00	1.247	1.406
Q-8	3.37	4.00	-0.457	-1.004	3.54	4.00	-0.546	-0.877
Q-9	4.04	4.00	-1.095	0.464	3.75	4.00	-0.961	0.151
Q-10	2.13	2.00	1.074	0.769	2.45	2.00	0.856	0.171
Q-11	2.57	2.00	0.604	-0.719	3.05	3.00	0.018	-0.956
Q-12	1.79	2.00	1.658	2.445	1.83	2.00	1.541	3.340
Q-13	2.49	2.00	0.683	-0.491	2.70	2.00	0.445	-0.696
Q-14	2.27	2.00	1.011	0.700	2.21	2.00	1.182	1.296
Q-15	2.09	2.00	1.222	1.075	1.93	2.00	1.345	3.084
Q-16	2.65	2.00	0.329	-1.176	2.80	2.00	0.299	-1.148
Q-17	2.59	2.00	0.339	-1.228	2.79	2.00	0.195	-1.180
Q-18	2.96	3.00	0.108	-1.301	3.06	3.00	0.087	-1.353
Q-19	2.42	2.00	0.828	-0.023	2.74	2.00	0.331	-0.962
Q-20	2.56	2.00	0.598	-0.723	2.48	2.00	0.740	-0.479
Q-21	2.48	2.00	0.576	-0.706	2.40	2.00	0.777	-0.335
Q-22	1.90	2.00	1.419	2.234	1.92	2.00	1.072	1.121
Q-23	1.92	2.00	1.438	2.288	1.91	2.00	1.518	3.828
Q-24	2.02	2.00	1.293	1.457	2.48	2.00	0.748	-0.203
Q-25	3.68	4.00	-0.820	-0.233	3.61	4.00	-0.715	-0.392
Q-26	2.96	3.00	0.100	-1.300	2.87	2.00	0.247	-1.163
Q-27	2.68	2.00	0.423	-1.049	2.69	2.00	0.435	-0.963
Q-28	1.78	2.00	1.654	3.387	1.76	2.00	1.654	4.345

6.10.2 Validity and reliability of the measuring instrument

The empirical research aims at testing the hypotheses formulated in 6.3 in order to reach the overall goal and objectives of the study set out in 1.3 and 6.2. However, before attempting to analyse the empirical results attention will first have to be focused on the statistical analysis of the questionnaires' validity and reliability. Both questionnaires for the local authority as well as agricultural organization were exactly the same except for questions 6 and 7 in section A which differed (refer Annexure A and 6.7.1.2).

To ensure the highest possible measure of content validity, the questionnaires were referred to experts, peers and sub-ordinates for content validation (refer 6.7.1.4). Different experts were asked to express their opinion regarding questions measuring what they were intended to measure. The correlation between the B and C sections and the literature to ensure relevancy of the questionnaires was also done. Factor-analysis was also conducted in order to explore the existence of the theoretical constructs. Reliability and item analysis is used to construct reliable measurement scales, to improve existing scales, and to evaluate the reliability of scales already in use.

The reliability of sections D and E of the questionnaires was determined by means of the Cronbach-Alpha coefficient which compares the internal consistency in the questionnaire and the degree to which the different items within the test measures equally (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of error variance contained in. Clark & Watson (1995:309-319) further states that the average inter item correlation coefficient can be considered to be a useful index to supplement information supplied by alpha-coefficient. The average inter-item correlation coefficient is a straightforward measure of internal consistency.

According to Anastasi (1976) a desirable reliability coefficient would usually fall in the range of 0.80 to 0.90. Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) use 0.70 as a derective , whilst Bartholomew, Handerson and Marcia (2000:298) argue that reliability

between 0.80 and 0.60 is acceptable. Clark & Watson (1995:315) also come to the conclusion that if constructs are above 0.60 then the reliability of the measurement scale can be considered "good or adequate".

The sections D and E of the questionnaire were divided into ten constructs on which the reliability of these items was analysed. The intercorrelations were further confirmed by means of the Bartlett test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. The main construct's (variables) alpha coefficients, Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) and the Bartlett significance test is depicted in table 6.8

Table 6.8 Reliability and validity analysis of sections D and E

	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Bartlett's Significance
S U P E R I O R S	Sub_1D Integrating	0.84	0.85	< .001
	Sub_2D Avoiding	0.81	0.80	< .001
	Sub_3D Dominating	0.66	0.72	< .001
	Sub_4D Obliging	0.82	0.84	< .001
	Sub_5D Compromising	0.58	0.62	< .001
P E E R S	Sub_1E Integrating	0.90	0.82	< .001
	Sub_2E Avoiding	0.82	0.79	< .001
	Sub_3E Dominating	0.71	0.74	< .001
	Sub_4E Obliging	0.80	0.81	< .001
	Sub_5E Compromising	0.66	0.70	< .001

The overall average of the Cronbach-alpha is 0.76 which clearly falls within the range of directives as presented by Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) as well as Bartholomew et al (2000). The compromising variable in both the case of superior and peer has a relative low alpha-coefficient (0,58 and 0.66) and KMO (0,62 and 0.70). this can, however still be considered as an on the edge acceptable level of reliability. Further analysis revealed that if questions 20 and 21 were deleted from section D and E of the questionnaire respectively the construct's alpha-coefficient would rise to 0.61 (section D) and 0.74 (section E).

Although still at the lower levels it is acceptable. These coefficients points out to a possible discrepancy in these two questions of the ROC-II.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for adequacy measured 0.77 indicating that the sample was appropriate. The Bartlett test of sphericity yielded a statistically approximate chi-square ($p < .0001$), which also indicated the probability that the correlation matrix had significant correlation amongst some of the variables. In both cases the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy reflects and supports the Cronbach-alpha coefficient results.

In the evaluation of conflict it is difficult to find a criterion that can be used as an independent, objective measure. Construct validity is therefore an alternative method that can be used in order to get to know more about the inherent characteristics which the variance of statements explain with regard to the constructs of the questionnaire. Factor-analysis is used for determining the construct validity. It is a statistical procedure for the identification of psychological characteristics and is focused on the analysis of interrelationships of data and the study of the internal consistency of the test (Smit, 1991:75). This statistical technique is used to determine the minimum number of constructs (factors) which explain the inter-correlations between variables. It supplies the number of factors which elucidate the correlations between tests, the factor-loadings and the communalities (total proportion of the variance in the test scores) which are declared by the factors (Smit, 1991:75).

From table 6.9 it is clear that the variables or main constructs only has 1 ideal factor, except for Sub_3E (Dominating) which has two factors. The minimum number of constructs or factors which explains the inter-correlations between the variables, has been established.

Table 6.9 Factor-analysis and percentage variances for sections D and E

	Variable	Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
S U P E R I O R S	Sub_1D Integrating	1	3.58	51.16	51.15
	Sub_2D Avoiding	1	3.17	52.95	52.95
	Sub_3D Dominating	1	2.20	44.05	44.05
	Sub_4D Obliging	1	3.16	52.63	52.63
	Sub_5D Compromising	1	1.84	45.90	45.90
P E E R S	Sub_1E Integrating	1	3.77	53.82	53.82
	Sub_2E Avoiding	1	3.20	53.16	53.16
	Sub_3E Dominating	1	2.50	49.59	49.59
	Sub_4E Obliging	2	1.00	20.15	69.74
	Sub_5E Compromising	1	3.04	50.80	50.80
		1	2.10	52.80	52.50

In chapter 7 where the comparison of the two organizations is done on a breakdown of certain elements in the questionnaires, such as sex, age, qualification and so forth the conflict-handling styles (integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, compromising) are evaluated by means of Levene's test for equality of variances, t-test for equality of means, test for homogeneity of variances, as well as ANOVA. It will be discussed at each applicable section where deemed necessary in chapter 7.

6.10 Conclusion

In this chapter the methodology of the empirical research phase to be followed, was analysed and discussed. It detailed how the research was conducted and paid special attention to the research environment, research method, measuring instrument, and method of data collection.

Attention was given to the questionnaire design. This was necessary because it included sections that were taken from a standardized ROC-II questionnaire, as well as newly designed sections based on the theoretical and qualitative section of the study. The hypotheses were also stated. In the latter sections of this

chapter, the demographic profiles of the respondents were analysed. This was followed by a discussion of the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument.

In chapter 7 an analysis of the empirical data and testing of the hypotheses will be done.

Chapter 7

Results of the study

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the basis of the empirical research design was discussed by firstly revisiting the study's research objectives, and then discussing the environment where the study was executed. After that the measuring instrument was discussed and the sample taken from both the local authority and the agricultural company was analysed. Finally the statistical analysis of the biographic-section (section A) of the measuring instrument was done and the questionnaires' reliability and validity were proven.

To achieve the set objectives of this study an empirical study regarding conflict had to be done in order to prove whether the stated hypotheses are true or false, and to meet the set objectives and goals of the study, as were formulated in chapter 1 and again in chapter 6. In this chapter attention will be given to the results of the empirical study done at the public and private sector organizations.

As will be seen in the analysis of results of section D and E the descriptive statistics were reported by means of the following:

- F statistics;
- P (sig.) 2 – tailed;
- t – statistic;
- df (degrees of freedom);
- Mean difference;
- Skewness and kurtosis;
- Std. Error difference;
- 95% Confidence interval of the difference;
- Standard deviation;
- Standard error mean;
- Mean.

Inferential statistics (multivariate) were also used in the analysis, namely:

- Factor analysis;
- Anova.

7.2 Comparative results of causes of conflict (section B)

Section B of the measuring instrument was designed to determine to what extent the certain given factors contribute to conflict within the organization. These given factors that were presented in the section was decided upon after extensive literature research and is thought to present a reasonable core of causes (sources) of conflict in an organization. Referring back to chapters 2 and 4 literature studies revealed a vast number of causes, with structural, communication, values and emotional behaviour being key groupings of the sources of conflict. Breakdown of the structural factors (refer: Mayer's viewpoint 4.4 above) for instance, include elements such as communal sources, status inequalities, interdependency, goal differences and power relations. In 4.6 above Vecchio's (2000) ideas on poor communications as a source was also amplified. Paragraph 4.8 again scrutinized the various thoughts on power, bringing the ideas of Marx, Dahrendorf, Mayer, Stroh and others under the magnifying glass.

Taking into account what could be gathered from theory and literature, ten key causes were identified from the empirical survey. It was believed that these ten when measured in the two organizations would prove whether the ideas brought forward by different scholars, as regard the sources of conflict, were justified or not. One cause that is new to this study is "affirmative action". As far as could be established it has never been addressed before in a study on conflict. The ten sources of conflict evaluated empirically were: affirmative action, cultural differences, racial differences, new management techniques, scarce resources, effective personnel, rationalization, new technology and power.

Each factor (source) given was presented on a Likert-scale (1-4) and could be applicable to the respondent's choice of cause from "no extent" – "to a large extent". The respondents had to point out to what extent they saw the following factors as being a source of conflict in the local authority:

- B_1:** Affirmative action
B_2: Cultural differences
B_3: Racial differences
B_4: Implementation of new management techniques
B_5: Lack of physical resources
B_6: Lack of effective personnel
B_7: Rationalisation / Dismissal of workers
B_8: Implementation of new technology
B_9: Extent and content of work
B_10: Misuse of power

Table 7.1 Results for determining the extent to which given factors contribute to conflict in the local authority (Section B).

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	No extent (%)	Small extent (%)	Moderate extent (%)	Large extent (%)
B_1	132	2.98	2.98	-.642	-.857	12.9	17.4	28.0	41.7
B_2	133	2.68	2.68	-.179	-1.168	15.8	27.8	28.6	27.8
B_3	132	2.64	2.64	-.001	-1.232	14.4	35.6	22.0	28.0
B_4	131	2.72	2.72	-.304	-.304	13.7	24.4	38.2	23.7
B_5	134	3.28	3.28	-1.186	-1.186	9.0	9.7	26.1	55.2
B_6	137	3.36	3.36	-1.333	-1.333	6.6	9.5	24.8	59.1
B_7	133	2.26	2.26	.324	.324	39.1	20.3	15.8	24.8
B_8	135	2.37	2.37	.223	.233	25.5	33.3	20.7	20.7
B_9	135	2.56	2.56	-.130	-.130	20.7	24.4	32.6	22.2
B_10	136	2.72	2.72	-.301	-.301	21.3	19.1	25.7	33.8

Table 7.1 reveals that skewness and kurtosis are within the +3.0 to -3.0 and +7.0 to -7.0 range respectively for each variable B_1 to B_10. Thus normality exists. The following findings can therefore also be considered reliable and acceptable:

- *Affirmative action (B_1)*, had its highest recording (n=55, 41.7%) in the *large extent* category, thus demonstrating that this factor was seen by the

respondents as being responsible for contributing to a large degree, to conflict in their workplace. Its smallest recording was n=17, 12.9% (*no extent*) which indicated that the smallest number of respondents saw this factor as a cause of conflict.

- The second factor, *cultural differences* (**B_2**), recorded its highest score in the *moderate extent* category (n=8, 28.6%) and its lowest (n=21, 15.8%) in the *to no extent* category.
- The third factor, *racial differences* (**B_3**), had its highest recording as being responsible for conflict only to a small extent (n=47, 35.6%). N=19 (14.4%) stated that this factor was to no extent a cause of conflict.
- *The implementation of new management techniques* (**B_4**), had its highest recording (n=50, 38.2%) in the *moderate extent* category, and its lowest (n=18, 13.7%) in the *to no extent* category.
- *The lack of physical resources* or **B_5**, was seen by the respondents as a strong factor in contributing to conflict (n= 74, 55.2%). Its lowest recording was 12 (9.0%) which shows that the least number of respondents recorded this factor as not being a source of conflict.
- Factor 6 (**B_6**) which states that a *lack of effective personnel* could be seen as a source of conflict received its highest recording (n=81, 59.1%) in the *large extent* category and its lowest (n=9, 6.6%) in the *no extent* category.
- *Rationalisation / Dismissal of workers* (**B_7**) was seen by the majority of respondents (n=52, 39.1%) as being responsible for conflict to *no extent*, and the minority of respondents (n=21, 15.8%) held this factor responsible to a *moderate extent*.
- *The implementation of new technology* (**B_8**) had its largest number of recordings in the *to a small extent* category (n=45, 33.3%) and its smallest number of recordings (n=28, 20.7%) were divided between a *moderate-* and a *large extent*, both receiving 28 recordings.
- Factor **B_9** which states that the *extent and content of an employee's work* as the resulting factor of conflict, had the highest number of recordings in the *moderate extent* category (n=44, 32.6%) and its lowest recording (n=28, 20.7%) in the *to no extent* category.
- Finally, factor **B_10** which states that the *misuse of power* can be seen as a cause of conflict recorded its highest score (n=44, 32.6%) in the *moderate*

extent category, and opposed to this, the lowest recording was in the *to no extent* category (n=28, 20.7%).

As could be seen from the analysis of the local authority's points of view with regard to the sources of conflict, clear differences exist with regard to the different causes. From the discussion that will be done on the agricultural company's perception of the causes of conflict, it will be seen that a definite difference exists with regard to that of the local authority.

Table 7.2 Results for determining the extent to which given factors contribute to conflict in the agricultural organization (Section B).

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	No extent (%)	Small extent (%)	Moderate extent (%)	Large extent (%)
B_1	63	2.25	2.00	.408	-.777	23.8	41.3	20.6	14.3
B_2	61	2.08	2.00	.665	-.672	34.	37.7	13.1	14.8
B_3	63	2.13	2.00	.348	-.885	31.7	33.3	25.4	9.5
B_4	64	2.22	2.00	.228	-.903	26.6	34.4	29.7	9.4
B_5	64	2.42	2.00	.039	-1.142	23.4	28.1	31.3	17.2
B_6	64	2.47	2.00	.164	-1.205	20.3	35.9	20.3	23.4
B_7	64	2.03	2.00	.580	-1.101	45.3	20.3	20.3	14.1
B_8	64	2.05	2.00	.592	-.524	32.8	39.1	18.8	9.4
B_9	64	1.97	2.00	.534	-.777	39.1	31.3	23.4	6.3
B_10	64	2.02	2.00	.739	-.850	43.8	28.1	10.9	17.2

An analysis of data in table 7.2 brought about the following findings:

- *Affirmative action (B_1)*, had the highest recording (n=26, 41.3%) in the *small extent* category, thus verifying that this factor was seen by the respondents as being responsible only to a *small extent* for contributing to conflict in their workplace. Its smallest recording was n=9 ,14.3% (*large extent*) which indicated that the smallest number of respondents saw this factor as a cause of conflict.

- The second factor, *cultural differences* (B_2), recorded its highest score in the *no extent* category (n=21, 37.7%) and its lowest (n=8, 13.1%) in the *to a moderate extent* category.
- The third factor, namely *racial differences* (B_3), had its highest recording as only being responsible for conflict to a *small extent* (n=21, 33.3%). In comparison with its lowest recordings (n=6, 9.5%) attributing this factor as being the cause of conflict to a *large extent*.
- *The implementation of new management techniques* (B_4), had its highest recording (n=22, 34.4%) in the *small extent* category, and its lowest (n=6, 9.4%) in the *to a large extent* category.
- *The lack of physical resources* B_5, was seen by the respondents as being responsible for causing conflict to a *moderate extent* (n= 20, 31.3%). Its lowest recordings were 11 (17.2%) that illustrates that the least number of respondents recorded this factor as being a source of conflict to a *large extent*.
- Factor B_6 which states that *a lack of effective personnel* could be seen as a source of conflict received its highest recording (n=23, 35.9%) in the *small extent* category and its lowest (n=13, 20.3%) recording was shared in the *no-* and *moderate extent* categories.
- *Rationalisation / Dismissal of workers* (B_7) was seen by the majority of respondents (n=29, 45.3%) as being a cause of conflict to *no extent* , and the minority of respondents (n=9, 14.1%) held this factor responsible to a *large extent*.
- *The implementation of new technology* (B_8) had its largest number of recordings in the *to a little extent* category (n=25, 39.1%) and its smallest number of recordings (n=6, 9.4%) was endorsed in the *to a large extent* category.
- Factor B_9 which states that the *extent and content of an employee's work* is the resulting factor of conflict, received the highest number of recordings in the *no extent* category (n=25, 39.1%) and its lowest recording (n=4, 6.3%) in the *to a large extent* category.
- Finally, factor 10 (B_10) which states that the *misuse of power* can be seen as a cause of conflict, received the highest score (n=28, 43.8%) in the *to no*

extent category. In contrast to this, the lowest recording was in the *to a moderate extent* category (n=7, 10.9%).

What should be evident from the analysis of the statistics of the agricultural company at first glance, is the fact that one recording was done that indicated only one of the factors as being the source of conflict in a moderate to large extent. In table 7.3 a re-grouping has been done so that each factor's highest score, according to the different organizations, can be seen.

Table 7.3 Analysis of combined results for the causes of conflict

Variable	Target group	To no extent (%)	To a small extent (%)	To a moderate extent (%)	To a large extent (%)
B_1	Loc. Auth.	12.9	17.4	28.0	41.7
	Agric co.	23.8	41.3	20.6	14.3
B_2	Loc. Auth.	15.8	27.8	28.8	27.8
	Agric co.	34.4	37.7	13.1	14.8
B_3	Loc. Auth.	14.4	35.6	22.0	28.0
	Agric co.	31.7	33.3	25.4	9.5
B_4	Loc. Auth.	13.7	24.4	38.2	23.7
	Agric co.	34.4	26.6	29.7	9.4
B_5	Loc. Auth.	9.0	9.7	26.1	55.2
	Agric co.	23.4	28.1	31.3	17.2
B_6	Loc. Auth.	6.6	9.5	24.8	59.1
	Agric co.	20.3	35.9	20.3	23.4
B_7	Loc. Auth.	39.1	20.3	15.8	24.8
	Agric co.	45.3	20.3	20.3	14.1
B_8	Loc. Auth.	25.5	33.3	20.7	20.7
	Agric co.	32.8	39.1	18.8	9.4
B_9	Loc. Auth.	20.7	24.4	32.6	22.2
	Agric co.	39.1	31.3	23.4	6.3
B_10	Loc. Auth.	21.3	19.1	25.7	33.8
	Agric co.	43.8	28.1	10.9	17.2

In order to make an analysis of the factor which could be regarded as being the most responsible source/cause of conflict according to the respondents, the four scales are combined into two categories, namely: *no- to small extent* and a *moderate- to large extent*.

Table 7.4 Analysis of combined results for the causes of conflict (Recoded)

Variable	Target group	No to small extent (%)	R	Moderate to large extent (%)	R
B_1	Loc. Auth.	30.3	8	69.7	3
	Agric co.	65.1	7	34.9	4
B_2	Loc. Auth.	43.6	5	56.6	6
	Agric co.	72.1	1	27.9	10
B_3	Loc. Auth.	50.0	3	50.0	8
	Agric co.	56.1	6	34.9	4
B_4	Loc. Auth.	38.1	7	61.9	4
	Agric co.	61.6	8	39.1	3
B_5	Loc. Auth.	18.7	9	81.3	2
	Agric co.	51.5	10	48.5	1
B_6	Loc. Auth.	16.1	10	83.9	1
	Agric co.	56.2	9	43.7	2
B_7	Loc. Auth.	59.4	1	40.6	10
	Agric co.	65.6	5	34.4	6
B_8	Loc. Auth.	58.8	2	41.4	9
	Agric co.	71.9	2	28.1	8
B_9	Loc. Auth.	45.1	4	54.8	7
	Agric co.	70.4	4	29.7	7
B_10	Loc. Auth.	40.4	6	59.5	5
	Agric co.	71.9	2	28.1%	8

* R = Ranking

As can be seen from table 7.4, a big difference exists regarding the two organizations' points of view with regard to the causes (sources) of conflict. In order to explain these differences, it is necessary to consider the statement in chapter 6 (paragraph 6.5.3) regarding the differences between the two organizations. The one has predominantly white employees and the other (the local authority) has a large proportion of non-white employees. In the latter organization, the principles of affirmative action have already been implemented to a considerable extent. The agricultural organization has very few blacks in the job-levels studied, are also more Afrikaans language-orientated and in the broader sense, conservative by nature and culture.

It can be gathered from table 7.4 that in eight cases, (with the exclusion of rationalisation of workers and new technology) the local authority's respondents

considered other variables as influencing the generation of conflict from a moderate to large degree. Affirmative action, lack of physical resources and effective (qualified) personnel were the main sources of conflict. On the other hand, the agricultural organization's respondents did not consider one of the variables as a major cause of conflict in their interpersonal conflict situations. It can be assumed that due to the predominantly white employee corps and a well managed organization (regarding conflict or possible conflict situations), no critical sources of conflict exist. Almost half (48.5%) of the respondents believe that a lack of resources, and 43.7% a lack of effective personnel as being responsible for interpersonal conflict to a large extent.

It should be evident that the hypothesis Hp_1 as formulated on page 3 (6.3) i.e. **A significant difference exists in the causes of conflict between the local authority and agricultural organization** has been validated. All the facts presented above have proved that a difference exists between the two organizations with regard to their perceptions of the causes of conflict. In 8 out of the 10 variables put forward, significant differences were tabled.

7.3 Comparative results of conflict manifestation (Section C)

The first question of section C of the measuring instrument examined the different ways in which conflict can affect an individual. This section of the questionnaire was designed to examine the points of view with respect to the dysfunctionality of conflict and performance. In 3.7 above, both the productive and unproductive characteristics of conflict were discussed and although the ideas of Marx, Folger, Nelson, Opatow and others were very convincing, the necessity to measure some of the perceived negative outcomes of interpersonal conflict could not be ignored. Therefore, taking their ideas into consideration, eight forms in which conflict may occur within the individual were considered and included in the questionnaire.

The primary question of section C stated that if the respondent experienced conflict in their work, what they would expect the result of that conflict to be. The

respondents were able to choose as many of the consequences as they thought applicable.

The consequences that they could choose from were:

- C_1a:** Lack of performance
- C_1b:** Become hostile toward colleagues
- C_1c:** Decline cooperation
- C_1d:** Experience depression
- C_1e:** Consider change of job
- C_1f:** Alienate yourself from other staff members
- C_1g:** Develop health problems

Findings from the questionnaire (refer: table 7.5) revealed that within the local authority, the predominant effect that conflict had on the respondents within the workplace was a *lack of performance*. Of a total of 139 respondents, 67 (49.3%) recorded this effect as having the largest influence on them, thus stating that destructive conflict (negative or unproductive) hampers their ability to perform in the workplace and therefore results in a lack of performance. In 3.7 above, six negative results of conflict were identified which apply to the eight variables of section C.

The second highest ranked effect of destructive conflict within the local authority resulted in the respondents experiencing some form of depression (n = 65, 47.8%). This negative influence on the psychological situation of the worker, manifesting in the form of depression (or even health problems in general), in turn, result in a "lack of performance" that was discussed above.

Because of discord in their working-environment (n=43, 31.6%), the third highest recorded response regarding the influence of work-related conflict on the respondents, was that they *would consider a change of job*. Again, a pattern emerges as it was recorded that employees of the local authority responded to conflict with "a lack of performance" in their work, then developing "depression or stress" and finally consider a "change of job or career". It can be assumed that

these factors tend to influence one another and could eventually escalate into an irreversible situation for both employee and the organization.

Table 7.5 Results of analysis on what influence conflict has on the employees of the local authority

Variable		Do Not Experience	R	Experience	R
C_1a	Count	69	6	67	1
	%	50.7		49.3	
C_2a	Count	99	2	37	6
	%	72.8		27.2	
C_3a	Count	107	1	29	7
	%	78.7		21.3	
C_4a	Count	71	5	65	2
	%	52.2		47.8	
C_5a	Count	93	4	43	3
	%	68.4		31.6	
C_6a	Count	95	3	41	4
	%	69.9		30.1	
C_7a	Count	95	3	41	4
	%	69.9		30.1	

* R = Ranking

The factor recorded as being the least direct result of conflict was *the declining of co-operation* between the employees. Only n=29 (21.3%) recordings were made with regard to this factor, and therefore obtained 57% less recordings than the highest factor. Alienation is also an effect of concern, taking into account 30.1% of the respondents that endorsed this experience.

In the agricultural organization, the factor that emerged to be the highest recorded result of workplace-conflict, was a *lack of performance* (n=31, 49.2%). Interpersonal conflict in the workplace also resulted in the staff *alienating themselves from their colleagues*, as can be seen in table 7.6, which received the second highest recording of 26 (41.3%). It can be assumed that alienation from peers and superiors in conflict-situations can be seen as an avoiding-style of conflict handling, and this could also have a direct influence on the employee's performance, resulting in a *lack of performance*.

The third-highest recorded effect of conflict within the agricultural company was that employees started *experiencing depression* (n=24, 38.1%). A factor that can also lead to an avoiding-style of conflict handling and a lack of performance in the workplace.

Table 7.6 Results of analysis on what influence conflict has on the employees of the agricultural company

Variable		Do Not Experience	R	Experience	R
C_1a	Count	32	7	31	1
	%	50.8		49.2	
C_2a	Count	45	3	18	5
	%	71.4		28.6	
C_3a	Count	56	1	7	7
	%	88.9		11.1	
C_4a	Count	39	5	24	3
	%	61.9		38.1	
C_5a	Count	42	4	21	4
	%	66.7		33.3	
C_6a	Count	37	6	26	2
	%	58.7		41.3	
C_7a	Count	49	2	14	6
	%	77.8		22.2	

• R = Ranking

Within the agricultural company the factor that was recorded the least number of times as being a result of conflict was that of *declining in cooperation* among the employees (n=7, 11.1%). It had 77% less recordings than the highest factor.

In table 7.7 a comparison of the effects of conflict on the employees of the two organizations was made. From these rankings it is evident that in only two cases, i.e., C_1a and C_1c, the rankings of negative effects were exactly the same. *Lack of performance* as an "experienced negative effect" was ranked the highest and *decline in cooperation* the lowest. Although C_1d was also ranked high (3 and 4) as having experienced negative effects, C_1f (alienation) was higher than C_1d for the agricultural company.

Table 7.7 Comparison of effects of conflict on employees of the local authority and agricultural company.

Variable	Item	Do not experience				Experience			
		Local authority (%)	R	Agric company (%)	R	Local Authority (%)	R	Agric company (%)	R
C_1a	Lack of performance	50.7	1	50.8	1	49.3	1	49.2	1
C_1b	Become hostile	72.8	2	71.4	3	27.2	6	28.6	5
C_1c	Decline cooperation	78.7	1	88.9	1	21.3	1	11.1	1
C_1d	Experience depression	52.2	6	61.9	5	47.8	2	38.1	3
C_1e	Consider job change	68.4	5	66.7	4	31.6	3	33.3	4
C_1f	Alienate yourself from staff	69.9	3	58.7	6	30.1	4	41.3	2
C_1g	Develop health problems	69.9	3	77.8	2	30.1	4	22.2	6

* R = Ranking

From the findings of information presented in tables 7.5 to 7.7 it is clear that in the majority of cases, differences exist with regard to the employees' experience with regard to the influence that conflict has on them. Because of the differences in 5 of the 7 variables, it can be stated that **Hp_2, i.e. A significant difference exists between the employees of the agricultural organization and the local authority's perception of what effect conflict has on them, is true.**

In section C, questions 2 and 3 were also included in order to establish whether the respondents were aware of any policy document or standard procedures that address conflict handling/ management and solution in their organization, and if they would be interested in taking part in a training program in order to gain more knowledge about conflict and the handling/ management thereof. The results are given in table 7.8

It can be assumed that after the respondents considered and answered the questions in section B and C_1, they became more aware of conflict in their interpersonal relations. Consequently, the questions C_2 and C_3 triggered their awareness and need for more information about conflict.

Table 7.8 Employee awareness of policy documents and willingness to participate in training program

Variable	Organization	N	Yes (%)	No (%)
C_2	Local authority	138	44.2	55.8
	Agric company	64	28.1	71.9
C_3	Local authority	137	78.1	21.9
	Agric company	64	73.0	27.0

As far as the awareness of policy documents and/or standard procedures is concerned, 44.2% of the employees of the local authority reacted positively, whilst in the agricultural company only 28.1% responded in the same manner. In both organizations the need to be formally trained with regard to conflict handling was expressed by 78.1% and 73.0% respectively. If one brings the findings of section B and C into consideration, the needs of the employees of both organizations speaks for itself.

7.4 Statistical results on conflict-handling styles towards superiors (Section D)

In this part of the study it was determined which different conflict-handling styles were predominantly used between the respondent and the respondent's superior (section D), in relation to the background variables of each organization.

In order to achieve this objective it had to be determined whether a significant statistical difference was present regarding each variable by means of independent sample tests and ANOVA (variance analysis), i.e. whether P (sig.) ≤ 0.05 which would confirm the presence of a significant statistical difference. (Howell, 1995:123). According to Salkind (2000:223) ANOVA is the analysis of variance which was applied because of the variance due to differences in performance, is separated into variance due to differences between individuals in groups and variance due to differences between groups.

By means of these tests it could be determined that if a meaningful statistical difference regarding the researched variables exists, it could be established which one of the five conflict-handling styles it was that resulted in the difference and thus facilitate interpretation of the way in which this handling style effects the particular variable.

7.4.1 Comparisons of gender as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **different genders / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- There was a statistical meaningful difference ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) between the different handling styles of conflict with regard to the different genders in the organization. Because there are only two variables (male and female), the test was performed by means of an independent sample test (refer table 7.9).
- A statistical difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.005] within the variable **Sub_2D : Avoiding**, thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree to which this style is used, can be found.
- By looking at the group statistics (table 7.10), of the recordings with regard to the different variables, it shows that after the avoiding-style was indicated as the only conflict-handling style where a difference was found, it can now be stated that as far as this handling-style is concerned, the female-employees (mean=2.3578) tended to apply it more when in conflict with their superiors, as opposed to the male-employees (mean=2.8883). Keeping in mind that 1 has the highest meaning and 5 the lowest (refer questionnaire in appendix A). The Std. Deviation was 0.96750 and 0.83498.

Table 7.9 Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and his superior (local authority)

Conflict-handling style (Variable)	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1D: Integrating	.650	.422	-.276	130	.783	-.03839	.13924	-.31386	.23708
Sub_2D: Avoiding	1.427	.234	2.854	132	.003	.53049	.18584	.16287	.89811
Sub_3D: Dominating	1.389	.241	.279	129	.780	.04439	.15890	-.27000	.35877
Sub_4D: Obliging	.112	.739	.573	132	.567	.09863	.17204	-.24168	.43893
Sub_5D: Compromising	.032	.859	-.245	131	.806	-.03530	.14380	-.31978	.24918

- Thus, in a conflict situation between the employee and his/her superior in the local authority, all conflict-handling styles would be used by both genders equally - except the avoiding style, which would be used on a more frequent basis by female-employees.

Table 7.10 Group statistics on the handling-styles of different genders between the respondent and the superior in the local authority

Conflict-handling style	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Section D: Integrating	Male	100	1.8857	.73154	.07315
	Female	32	1.9241	.51185	.09048
Section D: Avoiding	Male	100	2.3571	.96750	.09675
	Female	34	2.3571	.83498	.14320
Section D: Dominating	Male	100	3.2960	.80276	.08028
	Female	31	3.2516	.66527	.11949
Section D: Obliging	Male	100	2.4467	.84150	.08415
	Female	34	2.3480	.93777	.16083
Section D: Compromising	Male	100	2.2450	.72647	.07265
	Female	33	2.2803	.68396	.11906

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles between employee and superior against the background variable: **different genders / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables, as can be seen in table 7.11. No P-value [p (sig.)] was smaller than or equal to 0.05
- Thus all conflict-handling styles are used on an equal basis by male and female employees of the agricultural company, when in conflict with their superiors.
- Because there were no meaningful statistical differences found regarding the handling-styles, it is not necessary to refer to the recorded group statistics for further analysis.

Table 7.11 Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and the superior (agricultural company)

Conflict-handling style	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1D: Integrating	2.582	.113	-1.393	60	.169	-.25407	.18237	-.61887	.11072
Sub_2D: Avoiding	2.192	.144	-.488	59	.627	-.12237	.25051	-.62365	.37890
Sub_3D: Dominating	2.969	.090	-.682	61	.498	-.14359	.21063	-.56478	.27760
Sub_4D: Obliging	.201	.656	1.025	61	.309	.14637	.14282	-.13922	.43196
Sub_5D: Compromising	.063	.803	-.299	60	.766	-.05702	.19058	-.43824	.32421

7.4.2 Comparisons of age as a background variable in both organizations
(Section D: Superior)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **different age groups / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- By means of the ANOVA a meaningful significant statistical difference was found ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) after comparing different age groups with regard to conflict-handling styles in a conflict situation between the respondent and his superior.
- The statistical difference [P (Sig.) = 0.049] was found within the variable **Sub_5D : Compromising** (refer table 7.12), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the frequency with which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.12 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age groups (local authority)

Conflict-handling style	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1D: Integrating	1.207	2	.603	1.299	.276
Sub_2D: Avoiding	.031	2	.015	.016	.984
Sub_3D: Dominating	1.715	2	.857	1.444	.240
Sub_4D: Obliging	2.637	2	1.318	1.767	.175
Sub_5D: Compromising	3.051	2	1.525	3.081	.049

- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.13, it can be seen that this handling-style may be viewed as the only variable where a significant difference was found. It illustrates that the older the respondents of the local authority are, the more positive they are with regard to the use of compromising as a conflict-handling style in comparison with the other four handling-styles.

- Respondents younger than 35 had an average mean of 2.4402 in comparison with respondents who recorded their ages between 36 and 45 and had a mean of 2.2557, and finally the respondents who were older than 45 that had a mean of 2.0698.

Table 7.13 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and the superior in the local authority

Conflict-handling style	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1D: Integrating	- 35	46	2.0217	.79338	.11698	1.7861	2.2573	1.00	4.29
	36 - 45	43	1.8439	.60434	.09216	1.6579	2.0298	1.00	4.00
	45 +	43	1.8040	.62272	.09496	1.6123	1.9956	1.00	4.57
	Total	132	1.8929	.68327	.05947	1.7752	2.0105	1.00	4.57
Sub_2D: Avoiding	- 35	48	2.7431	.97241	.14035	2.4607	3.0254	1.00	5.00
	36 - 45	44	2.7765	.94346	.14223	2.4897	3.0634	1.17	4.50
	45 +	42	2.7460	.98789	.15244	2.4382	3.0539	1.17	5.00
	Total	134	2.7550	.96074	.08299	2.5908	2.9191	1.00	5.00
Sub_3D: Dominating	- 35	47	3.4085	.73064	.10658	3.1940	3.6230	2.00	5.00
	36 - 45	43	3.1349	.76684	.11694	2.8989	3.3709	1.20	4.40
	45 +	41	3.3122	.81737	.12765	3.0542	3.5702	1.40	5.00
	Total	131	3.2885	.77307	.06754	3.1549	3.4222	1.20	5.00
Sub_4D: Obliging	- 35	47	2.4326	.91529	.13351	2.1639	2.7014	1.00	4.67
	36 - 45	44	2.5795	.87934	.13257	2.3122	2.8469	1.17	4.83
	45 +	43	2.2326	.78607	.11987	1.9906	2.4745	1.17	4.33
	Total	134	2.4167	.86873	.07505	2.2682	2.5651	1.00	4.83
Sub_5D: Compromising	- 35	46	2.2557	.80309	.11841	2.2017	2.6787	1.00	4.50
	36 - 45	44	2.2557	.72234	.10890	2.0361	2.4753	1.00	4.00
	45 +	43	2.0698	.55454	.08457	1.8991	2.2404	1.00	4.00
	Total	133	2.2594	.71470	.06197	2.1368	2.3820	1.00	4.50

- It should be noted that the lower the mean, the more acceptable the respondents were to the handling-style. Thus the respondents between 35

and 45 tended to be more compromising than those younger than 35, and those older than 45 tended to be more compromising than both groups of respondents between 36 and 45 and those younger than 35.

It can thus be concluded that the older, more mature employees of the local authority who had been in some sort of conflict-situation with their superiors, tended to make use of compromising as a tool for managing conflict to a much greater extent than those of a younger age.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the mentioned background variable: **different age groups / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- A statistical significant difference was found with regard to the different handling styles between people in different age groups when in conflict with their superiors.
- The statistical difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.024] regarding the variable

Sub_4D : Obliging (refer table 7.14), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree to which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.14 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age (agricultural organization)

Conflict-handling style	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1D: Integrating	1.917	2	.958	1.958	.150
Sub_2D: Avoiding	.790	2	.395	.428	.654
Sub_3D: Dominating	.771	2	.386	.573	.567
Sub_4D: Obliging	2.224	2	1.112	3.962	.024
Sub_5D: Compromising	2.540	2	1.270	2.499	.091

- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.15 it can be seen that this handling-style (which has been indicated as the only variable where a significant difference was found), shows that the younger respondents (- 35) of the agricultural company tended to be more obliging than those

who's ages ranged between 36 and 45 (mean = 1.6852 and 2.0952 respectively). The respondents who were 45 years or older used this conflict-handling style the least number of times of all the other age groups (mean, 2.1087).

- It can thus be concluded that the younger the respondents are, the more obliging they would be in a conflict-situation with their superior in contrast to older respondents.

Table 7.15 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and the superior in the agricultural organization

Conflict-handling style	Age groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1D: Integrating	- 5	17	1.4454	.48677	.11806	1.1951	1.6957	1.00	2.29
	36 - 45	24	1.7798	.78017	.15925	1.4503	2.1092	1.00	4.57
	45 +	20	1.8857	.74678	.16699	1.5362	2.2352	1.00	4.29
	Total	61	1.7213	.71067	.09099	1.5393	1.9033	1.00	4.57
Sub_2D: Avoiding	- 5	18	2.5556	.85940	.20256	2.1282	2.9829	1.17	4.00
	36 - 45	22	2.8258	.91211	.19446	2.4213	3.2302	1.67	4.67
	45 +	20	2.7750	1.08858	.24341	2.2655	3.2845	1.00	4.50
	Total	60	2.7278	.95075	.12274	2.4822	2.9734	1.00	4.67
Sub_3D: Dominating	- 5	18	3.2444	.75632	.17827	2.8683	3.6206	2.40	4.80
	36 - 45	23	3.2957	.77194	.16096	2.9618	3.6295	2.20	4.80
	45 +	21	3.5048	.91787	.20029	3.0870	3.9226	1.60	5.00
	Total	62	3.3516	.81437	.10342	3.1448	3.5584	1.60	5.00
Sub_4D: Obliging	- 5	18	1.9812	.39145	.09227	1.4905	1.8798	1.17	2.50
	36 - 45	23	2.2751	.62079	.12944	1.8402	2.3771	1.33	3.33
	45 +	21	2.1087	.52327	.11419	1.8570	2.3334	1.33	3.33
	Total	62	1.9812	.55491	.07047	1.8403	2.1221	1.17	3.33
Sub_5D: Compromising	- 5	18	2.0278	.69074	.16281	1.6843	2.3713	1.00	3.75
	36 - 45	23	2.0761	.79213	.16517	1.7335	2.4186	1.00	3.50
	45 +	20	2.4875	.63076	.14104	2.1923	2.7827	1.50	3.75
	Total	61	2.1967	.73046	.09353	2.0096	2.3838	1.00	3.75

7.4.3 Comparisons of highest qualification achieved as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **highest qualification achieved / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- By means of the ANOVA a meaningful significant statistical difference was found ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) on comparing respondents with different qualifications with regard to their conflict-handling styles, when in a conflict situation between them and their superior.
- The statistical difference [p (sig.) = 0.004] was found regarding the variable **Sub_4D : Obliging** (refer table 7.18), thus verifying that this is the only handling style in which, when compared to the background variable, highest qualification, where a difference in the frequency with which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.16 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: highest qualification (local authority)

Conflict-handling styles	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1D: Integrating	.229	2	.115	.245	.783
Sub_2D: Avoiding	3.877	2	1.939	2.151	.120
Sub_3D: Dominating	1.678	2	.839	1.419	.246
Sub_4D: Obliging	8.178	2	4.089	5.843	.004
Sub_5D: Compromising	.528	2	.264	.516	.598

- After confirming the obliging-style as being the only style where a statistical difference was found, it can be accepted (according to the descriptive statistics in table 7.17) that the lesser qualified you are, the more obliging you will be towards your superior.
- Thus respondents who indicated that they were in possession of a Grade 12 qualification or lower (mean=2.2018), tended to be more obliging than those who indicated that they were in possession of a diploma or

certificate (mean=2.6272). Both of the abovementioned groups also had a higher mean than the respondents who indicated that they were in possession of a degree or higher qualification (mean=2.7937). Thus it can be assumed that this group of employees is the least obliging towards their superiors than the rest of the respondents.

Table 7.17 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the employer and the superior in the agricultural organization

Conflict-handling style	Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1D: Integrating	- Grade 12	75	1.8571	.66552	.07685	1.7040	2.0103	1.00	4.29
	Diploma +	38	1.9398	.71361	.11576	1.7053	2.1744	1.14	4.57
	Degree +	20	1.9429	.70047	.15663	1.6150	2.2707	1.00	3.86
	Total	133	1.8937	.68074	.05903	1.7769	2.0104	1.00	4.57
Sub_2D: Avoiding	- Grade 12	75	2.6600	.92368	.10666	2.4475	2.8725	1.17	5.00
	Diploma +	39	2.7222	.90752	.14532	2.4280	3.0164	1.00	4.67
	Degree +	21	3.1429	1.10716	.24160	2.6389	3.6468	1.33	5.00
	Total	135	2.7531	.95740	.08240	2.5901	2.9161	1.00	5.00
Sub_3D: Dominating	- Grade 12	72	3.2972	.80000	.09428	3.1092	3.4852	1.20	5.00
	Diploma +	39	3.1641	.75236	.12047	2.9202	3.4080	1.40	5.00
	Degree +	21	3.5143	.68285	.14901	3.2035	3.8251	2.20	4.60
	Total	132	3.2924	.77140	.06714	3.1596	3.4252	1.20	5.00
Sub_4D: Obliging	- Grade 12	76	2.4136	.72639	.08332	2.0358	2.3677	1.00	4.83
	Diploma +	38	2.4136	.93596	.15183	2.3195	2.9348	1.00	4.50
	Degree +	21	2.4136	1.00954	.22030	2.3341	3.2532	1.33	4.50
	Total	135	2.4136	.86623	.07455	2.2661	2.5610	1.00	4.83
Sub_5D: Comprom.	- Grade 12	75	2.2233	.69454	.08020	2.0635	2.3831	1.00	4.50
	Diploma +	37	2.2432	.76031	.12499	1.9897	2.4967	1.25	4.50
	Degree +	22	2.3977	.70567	.15045	2.0849	2.7106	1.00	4.00
	Total	134	2.2575	.71236	.06154	2.1357	2.3792	1.00	4.50

- It can thus be concluded that respondents who are higher qualified and intellectually more advanced will be less obliging in a conflict situation with their superiors, than those respondents with a lower qualification. The

self-esteem factor which may be due to a higher qualification as well as a higher job-level, can also play a crucial part in the frequency with which this handling style is used.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **highest qualification achieved / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables, as can be seen in table 7.18. Thus, no P-value [p (sig.)] was smaller or equal to 0.05.

Table 7.18 Independent samples test against the background variable: highest qualification between respondent and his superior (agricultural organization)

Conflict-handling styles	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1D: Integrating	.287	.594	.347	60	.730	.07483	.21565	-.35653	.50619
Sub_2D: Avoiding	.015	.904	-1.130	59	.263	-.32599	.28850	-.90328	.25130
Sub_3D: Dominating	.009	.925	1.195	61	.237	.29184	.24413	-.19634	.78001
Sub_4D: Obliging	.007	.936	-.710	61	.480	-.11905	.16757	-.45412	.21603
Sub_5D: Comprom.	.031	.860	1.079	60	.285	.23735	.22007	-.20284	.67755

- Thus, when in conflict with their superiors, all conflict-handling styles are used on an equal basis by employees of the agricultural company who are in possession of different qualifications.
- Because there were no meaningful statistical differences found regarding these handling-styles, it is not necessary to refer to the recorded group statistics for further analysis.

7.4.4 Comparisons of home language as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **home language / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- Two statistical significant differences were found with regard to the different handling styles between people with different home languages when in conflict with their superiors.
- The first statistical significant difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.005] within the variable **Sub_3D : Dominating** (refer table 7.19), Thus verifying that this is one of two conflict handling-styles in which, when compared to the background variable, a significant difference in the degree to which this style is used, can be found.
- The second statistical significant difference was found with regard to people with different home languages when in conflict with their superiors.
- This statistical significant difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.000] within the variable **Sub_4D : Obliging** as can be seen in table 7.19, thus verifying that this is the second handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a significant difference in the degree to which this style is used, can be found.
- By means of the descriptive statistics as set out in table 7.20 it can be stated that respondents who recorded Afrikaans as their home language, resulted in being less dominant (Sub_3D: Dominating) in conflict situations with their superiors, than those who recorded another language (English, African-language) as their home language (means = 3.4560; 3.0772 respectively).

Table 7.19 Independent samples test against the background variable:
home language between respondent and his superior
(local authority)

Conflict-handling styles	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1D: Integrating	.695	.406	.472	131	.638	.05621	.11916	-.17952	.29195
Sub_2D: Avoiding	4.188	.043	.810	133	.420	.13444	.16604	-.19397	.46286
Sub_3D: Dominating	.884	.349	-2.871	130	.005	-.37881	.13195	-.63986	-.11776
Sub_4D: Obliging	13.905	.000	4.278	133	.000	.60511	.14145	.32533	.88489
Sub_5D: Comprom.	.257	.613	.569	132	.570	.07097	.12479	-.17587	.31782

- The results also revealed that Afrikaans-speaking respondents resulted in being more obliging (mean=2.1491) in a conflict-situation than the respondents of the other language groups (mean=2.7524).

Table 7.20 Groups statistics on the handling-styles of different home-
languages between the respondent and the superior in the local
authority

Conflict-handling styles	Your home language (Recoded)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Section D: Integrating	Other	59	1.9249	.69347	.09028
	Afrikaans	74	1.8687	.67412	.07836
Section D: Avoiding	Other	60	2.8278	.86192	.11127
	Afrikaans	75	2.6933	1.02924	.11885
Section D: Dominating	Other	57	3.0772	.80689	.10688
	Afrikaans	75	3.4560	.70562	.08148
Section D: Obliging	Other	59	2.7524	.96657	.12584
	Afrikaans	76	2.1491	.67527	.07746
Section D: Compromising	Other	57	2.7524	.72340	.09582
	Afrikaans	77	2.7524	.70732	.08061

- The conclusion can thus be made that Afrikaans-speaking respondents tended to be less dominating when attempting to resolve a conflict-situation with their superiors, and also more obliging than the non-Afrikaans speaking respondents.

Unfortunately, due to the low number of respondents from the agricultural organization, the analysis for: **home language / agricultural organization**, could not be performed according to correct statistical guidelines, and was therefore not analysed.

7.4.5 Comparisons of years in service as a background variable in both organizations (Section D: Superior)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **years in service / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- By means of the ANOVA a meaningful significant statistical difference was found ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) after comparing different years of service with regard to conflict-handling styles, within a conflict situation.
- The statistical difference [$p(\text{sig.}) = 0.048$] was found within the variable **Sub_5D : Compromising** (refer table 7.21), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the frequency with which this style is used, can be found.
- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.22 of the handling-style that was singled out as the only variable where a significant difference was found, it shows that the longer the respondent has worked for the local authority, the more compromising he is in a conflict situation with his superior. This result can be confirmed by the analysis done in table 7.17 regarding different age groups.

Table 7.21 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (local authority)

Conflict-handling styles	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1D: Integrating	.435	2	.217	.463	.631
Sub_2D: Avoiding	2.125	2	1.063	1.204	.303
Sub_3D: Dominating	.103	2	.051	.085	.918
Sub_4D: Obliging	1.340	2	.670	.903	.408
Sub_5D: Compromising	3.410	2	.705	3.421	.048

- Respondents that only worked for the local authority for 1 to 4 years, resulted in being less compromising in a conflict situation than those who worked for the organization 5 to 10 years (mean=2.4737; 2.3085 respectively). Both of these groups of respondents also resulted in being less compromising than those who have given the company more than 10 years of service (mean=2.1791).
- It can thus be concluded that along with age and years of service the respondent develops an ability to be the person who backs down and makes a compromise when in conflict with his/her superior.
- The respondents thus endeavour to find a middle-ground in a conflict situation between themselves and their superiors rather than to have total control or totally back down.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **years in service / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- By means of the ANOVA a meaningful significant statistical difference was found ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) after comparing respondents with different qualifications with regard to their conflict-handling styles, while in a conflict situation between them and their superior.

Table 7.22 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different years of service between the respondent and the superior in the local authority

Conflict-handling styles	Period	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1D: Integrating	1 - 4	20	1.9857	.73416	.16416	1.6421	2.3293	1.00	4.29
	5 - 10	44	1.9383	.69331	.10452	1.7275	2.1491	1.00	4.00
	10 +	68	1.8424	.66602	.08077	1.6812	2.0036	1.00	4.57
	Total	132	1.8961	.68275	.05943	1.7785	2.0137	1.00	4.57
Sub_2D: Avoiding	1 - 4	21	2.4444	.84382	.18414	2.0603	2.8285	1.00	4.50
	5 - 10	47	2.7837	.90618	.13218	2.5176	3.0498	1.17	5.00
	10 +	66	2.7955	.98917	.12176	2.5523	3.0386	1.17	5.00
	Total	134	2.7363	.94088	.08128	2.5756	2.8971	1.00	5.00
Sub_3D: Dominating	1 - 4	21	3.3143	.70305	.15342	2.9943	3.6343	2.20	4.40
	5 - 10	46	3.2478	.80353	.11847	3.0092	3.4864	1.20	5.00
	10 +	64	3.3031	.77745	.09718	3.1089	3.4973	1.40	4.80
	Total	131	3.2855	.77023	.06730	3.1524	3.4186	1.20	5.00
Sub_4D: Obliging	1 - 4	20	2.6417	1.05724	.23641	2.1469	3.1365	1.17	4.67
	5 - 10	47	2.3582	.84626	.12344	2.1097	2.6066	1.00	4.83
	10 +	67	2.3632	.80713	.09861	2.1663	2.5601	1.17	4.50
	Total	134	2.4030	.86065	.07435	2.2559	2.5500	1.00	4.83
Sub_5D: Comprom	1 - 4	19	2.2737	.67646	.15519	2.1476	2.7997	1.50	4.50
	5 - 10	47	2.2737	.74311	.10839	2.0903	2.5267	1.00	4.50
	10 +	67	2.2737	.68369	.08353	2.0123	2.3459	1.00	4.00
	Total	133	2.2669	.70657	.06127	2.1457	2.3881	1.00	4.50

- The statistical difference [p (sig.) = 0.019] was found within the variable **Sub_4D : Obliging** (refer table 7.23), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable: highest qualification, a difference with regard to the frequency with which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.23 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (agricultural organization)

Conflict-handling style	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1D: Integrating	1.556	2	.778	1.597	.211
Sub_2D: Avoiding	1.036	2	.518	.566	.571
Sub_3D: Dominating	2.217	2	1.108	1.736	.185
Sub_4D: Obliging	2.317	2	1.159	4.216	.019
Sub_5D: Compromising	2.632	2	1.316	2.634	.080

- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.24 of the handling-style that was indicated as the only variable where a significant difference was found, it shows that the shorter period of time employees have been employed by the agricultural company, the more obliging they are towards their superiors.
- Respondents that only worked for the agricultural organization for 1 to 4 years, resulted in being more obliging in a conflict situation than those who worked for the organization 5 to 10 years (means=1.7604; 1.8426 respectively, keeping in mind that the lower the score, the more obliging you are). Employees who had worked for the agricultural company for more than 10 years tended to be the least obliging towards their superiors (mean=2.1839).
- The more years of service a respondent has given to the company, the less obliging that employee will be when in a conflict-situation with his superior.

7.5 Statistical results on conflict-handling styles towards peers (Section E)

After determining which conflict-handling style was used to a greater extent than the others in a conflict-situation between the respondent and his superior (refer 7.4 and section D of questionnaire), it can now be determined which style was more prominent when conflict was managed between the respondent and his peer (section E). Again as in paragraph 7.4 the handling-

styles are compared between the different background variables of each organization.

Table 7.24 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different years of service between the respondent and the superior in the agricultural organization

Conflict-handling styles	Period	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Section D: Integrating	1 - 4	17	1.4790	.46550	.11290	1.2397	1.7183	1.00	2.14
	5 - 10	17	1.7311	.65442	.15872	1.3946	2.0676	1.00	3.29
	10 +	28	1.8622	.82614	.15613	1.5419	2.1826	1.00	4.57
	Total	62	1.7212	.70482	.08951	1.5422	1.9002	1.00	4.57
Section D: Avoiding	1 - 4	18	2.7315	.98541	.23226	2.2414	3.2215	1.00	4.67
	5 - 10	16	2.9063	.79108	.19777	2.4847	3.3278	1.67	4.33
	10 +	27	2.5864	1.02258	.19679	2.1819	2.9909	1.17	4.50
	Total	61	2.7131	.94972	.12160	2.4699	2.9564	1.00	4.67
Section D: Dominating	1 - 4	18	3.1778	.72886	.17179	2.8153	3.5402	2.40	4.80
	5 - 10	16	3.1875	.79152	.19788	2.7657	3.6093	1.80	4.40
	10 +	29	3.5586	.84241	.15643	3.2382	3.8791	1.60	5.00
	Total	63	3.3556	.80838	.10185	3.1520	3.5591	1.60	5.00
Section D: Obliging	1 - 4	18	1.9788	.45184	.10650	1.6179	2.0673	1.17	3.00
	5 - 10	16	2.2031	.33867	.08467	1.5800	1.9409	1.17	2.33
	10 +	29	2.3929	.63519	.11795	1.9423	2.4255	1.33	3.33
	Total	63	1.9788	.55073	.06939	1.8401	2.1175	1.17	3.33
Section D: Comprom.	1 - 4	18	1.9028	.72324	.17047	1.5431	2.2624	1.00	3.50
	5 - 10	16	2.2031	.78112	.19528	1.7869	2.6194	1.00	3.75
	10 +	28	2.3929	.65060	.12295	2.1406	2.6451	1.25	3.75
	Total	62	2.2016	.72547	.09213	2.0174	2.3858	1.00	3.75

7.5.1 Comparisons of gender as a background variable in both organizations
 (Section E: Peers)

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

- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables, as can be seen in table 7.25. Thus no P-value was smaller or equal to 0.05 [p (sig. \leq 0.05)]

Table 7.25 Independent samples test against the background variable: gender, between respondent and the peer (local authority)

Conflict-handling styles	Levene's Test for Equal. of Var		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1E: Integrating	.457	.500	.213	130	.832	.02482	.11660	-.20585	.25549
Sub_2E: Avoiding	.236	.628	1.838	127	.068	.33807	.18390	-.02583	.70196
Sub_3E: Dominating	3.307	.071	.471	132	.638	.07711	.16370	-.24670	.40092
Sub_4E: Obliging	.279	.598	.808	129	.420	.13086	.16186	-.18938	.45110
Sub_5E: Comprom.	4.194	.043	.144	129	.886	.02162	.14992	-.27500	.31824

- This means that when comparing the male and female employees of the local authority regarding the handling-styles of conflict which they would predominantly use in a situation between them and their peers, all of the conflict-handling styles were used on an equal basis. Thus there was no handling-style that was favoured when comparing the male and female employees, and it could be stated that both male and female respondents used all of the handling-styles on an equal basis.
- It can however be reported that **Sub_2E: Avoiding**, although not being statistically correct for representing a meaningful difference, it can be seen from table 7.7 that this variable had a p-value of 0.068 ($p > 0.05$) which is

significantly lower in comparison with the other p-values. This mirrors the same effect as can be seen from the independent samples test conducted in the local authority between the employer and the superior, in which a statistical difference was found with regard to the avoiding-handling style.

- Because no statistical meaningful difference was found it is not necessary to report on the group statistics as analysed.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles between employer and peer against the background variable: **different genders / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables, as can be seen in table 7.26. Thus no P-value was smaller or equal to 0.05 [$p \text{ (sig.)} \leq 0.05$].
- The implication of this is the following: when comparing the male and female employees of the agricultural organization regarding the handling-styles of conflict which they would predominantly use in a situation between them and their peers, all of the conflict-handling styles were used on an equal basis. It can thus be stated that both male and female employees used the five conflict-handling styles to the same degree.
- Because there were no meaningful statistical differences found regarding the handling-styles, it is not necessary to refer to the recorded group statistics for further analysis.

7.5.2 Comparisons of age as a background variable in both organizations

(Section E: Peers)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles between the respondent and his peers against the background variable: **different age groups / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

A statistical significant difference was found with regard to the different handling styles between people in different age groups when in conflict with their superiors.

Table 7.26 Independent samples test against the background variable:
gender between respondent and the peer (agricultural
organization)

Conflict-handling styles	Levene's Test for Equal. of Var.		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1E: Integrating	.018	.893	-.110	61	.913	-.01739	.15769	-.33271	.29792
Sub_2E: Avoiding	.848	.361	1.580	60	.119	.35656	.22563	-.09477	.80789
Sub_3E: Dominating	1.272	.264	-.393	60	.696	-.08317	.21150	-.50622	.33989
Sub_4E: Obliging	.357	.552	1.063	61	.292	.20344	.19140	-.17929	.58618
Sub_5E: Comprom.	.000	.985	-.959	59	.341	-.16463	.17159	-.50798	.17873

- The statistical difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.046] within the variable **Sub_4E : Obliging** (refer table 7.27), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree to which this style is used, can be found.
- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.28 of the handling-style that was singled out as the only variable where a significant difference were found, it shows that the older the respondents of the local authority are, the more positive they are with regard to the use of obliging as a conflict-handling style in comparison with the other four handling-styles.

Table 7.27 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable:
age (local authority)

Conflict-handling style	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1E: Integrating	.372	2	.186	.564	.570
Sub_2E: Avoiding	.007	2	.003	.004	.996
Sub_3E: Dominating	1.166	2	.583	.863	.424
Sub_4E: Obliging	3.810	2	.905	1.471	.046
Sub_5E: Compromising	.329	2	.165	.302	.740

- Respondents that were younger than 35 had an average mean of 2.8007 in comparison with respondents who recorded their ages between 36 and 45 and had a mean of 2.5706 and finally the respondents who were older than 45 that had a mean of 2.5155. Keeping in mind again that the lower the mean, the more acceptable the respondents were to the handling-style. Thus, the respondents between 35 and 45 tended to be more obliging than those younger than 35, but also those older than 45 tended to be more obliging than both the respondents between 36 and 45 and those younger than 35.

Table 7.28 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and his peer in the local authority

Conflict-handling styles	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1E: Integrating	- 35	46	1.8851	.66436	.09795	1.6878	2.0824	1.00	3.71
	36 - 45	44	1.8279	.57439	.08659	1.6533	2.0026	1.00	3.71
	45 +	42	1.7551	.45317	.06993	1.6139	1.8963	1.00	3.00
	Total	132	1.8247	.57186	.04977	1.7262	1.9231	1.00	3.71
Sub_2E: Avoiding	- 35	45	2.8407	.93741	.13974	2.5591	3.1224	1.17	5.00
	36 - 45	44	2.8485	.86998	.13115	2.5840	3.1130	1.00	4.83
	45 +	40	2.8583	.97296	.15384	2.5472	3.1695	1.00	5.00
	Total	129	2.8488	.91914	.08093	2.6887	3.0090	1.00	5.00
Sub_3E: Dominating	- 35	48	3.3458	.77596	.11200	3.1205	3.5711	1.00	4.80
	36 - 45	43	3.1209	.73048	.11140	2.8961	3.3457	1.00	4.20
	45 +	43	3.2651	.94891	.14471	2.9731	3.5571	1.00	5.00
	Total	134	3.2478	.82121	.07094	3.1074	3.3881	1.00	5.00
Sub_4E: Obliging	- 35	46	2.5155	.75000	.11058	2.5780	3.0234	1.17	4.50
	36 - 45	42	2.5706	.85261	.13156	2.4049	2.9363	1.00	4.83
	45 +	43	2.5155	.74962	.11432	2.2848	2.7462	1.00	4.17
	Total	131	2.6654	.78705	.06876	2.5294	2.8014	1.00	4.83
Sub_5E: Comprom.	- 35	48	2.2760	.78760	.11368	2.0473	2.5047	1.00	4.75
	36 - 45	42	2.1548	.74480	.11493	1.9227	2.3869	1.00	4.00
	45 +	41	2.2195	.66894	.10447	2.0084	2.4307	1.00	4.00
	Total	131	2.2195	.73447	.06417	2.0925	2.3464	1.00	4.75

- It can thus be concluded that the older, more mature employers of the local authority who were in some sort of conflict-situation with their superiors, tended to be more obliging in a conflict-situation with their peers than those of a younger age.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the mentioned background variable: **different age groups / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- A statistical significant difference was found with regard to the different handling styles between people in different age groups when in conflict with their superiors.
- The statistical difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.050] within the variable **Sub_4E : Dominating** (refer table 7.30), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree with which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.29 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: age (agricultural organization)

Conflict-handling style	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1E: Integrating	.827	2	.414	1.178	.315
Sub_2E: Avoiding	1.079	2	.540	.702	.500
Sub_3E: Dominating	3.441	2	1.720	2.876	.050
Sub_4E: Obliging	1.068	2	.534	.980	.381
Sub_5E: Compromising	.384	2	.192	.448	.641

- After consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.30 of the handling-style that was singled out as the only variable where a significant difference was found, it shows that the older the respondents of the local authority are, the more dominating they are in a conflict-situation with their peers.
- Respondents younger than 35 had an average mean of 3.5800 in comparison with respondents who recorded their ages between 36 and 45 and had a mean of 3.3130. Finally the respondents who was older than 45 that had a mean of 2.9778. Keeping in mind again that the lower the

mean, the more acceptable the respondents were to the handling-style. Thus the respondents between 35 and 45 tended to be more dominating than those younger than 35, but also those older than 45 were the most dominating in a conflict-situation with their peers, than any of the other age-groups.

- It can thus be concluded that older the employee is, the more dominating he is towards his peer in a conflict situation.

Table 7.30 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and his peer in the agricultural organization

Conflict-handling styles	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1E: Integrating	- 35	18	1.6111	.50402	.11880	1.3605	1.8618	1.00	2.57
	36 - 45	24	1.8929	.77362	.15792	1.5662	2.2195	1.00	4.29
	45 +	20	1.8000	.37195	.08317	1.6259	1.9741	1.00	2.57
	Total	62	1.7811	.59423	.07547	1.6302	1.9320	1.00	4.29
Sub_2E: Avoiding	- 35	18	2.6667	.86130	.20301	2.2384	3.0950	1.00	4.00
	36 - 45	23	2.8696	.79130	.16500	2.5274	3.2117	1.50	4.83
	45 +	20	2.5583	.97824	.21874	2.1005	3.0162	1.00	4.50
	Total	61	2.7077	.87223	.11168	2.4843	2.9310	1.00	4.83
Sub_3E: Dominating	- 35	18	3.5333	.78482	.18498	2.5875	3.3681	1.60	4.80
	36 - 45	23	3.5217	.79733	.16625	2.9683	3.6578	2.00	4.80
	45 +	20	3.5000	.73384	.16409	3.2366	3.9234	1.80	5.00
	Total	61	3.3016	.79718	.10207	3.0975	3.5058	1.60	5.00
Sub_4E: Obliging	- 35	18	2.3611	.76962	.18140	1.9784	2.7438	1.00	3.83
	36 - 45	24	2.6528	.81637	.16664	2.3081	2.9975	1.17	4.33
	45 +	20	2.4083	.59598	.13326	2.1294	2.6873	1.50	3.67
	Total	62	2.4892	.73791	.09371	2.3019	2.6766	1.00	4.33
Sub_5E: Comprom.	- 35	18	2.0694	.72662	.17127	1.7081	2.4308	1.00	4.00
	36 - 45	22	2.0909	.67500	.14391	1.7916	2.3902	1.00	3.50
	45 +	20	2.2500	.55607	.12434	1.9898	2.5102	1.50	3.50
	Total	60	2.1375	.64838	.08371	1.9700	2.3050	1.00	4.00

7.5.3 Comparisons of highest qualification achieved as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peers)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **highest qualification achieved / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- Two statistical significant differences were found with regard to the different handling styles between people with different qualifications when in conflict with their peers.
- The first statistical significant difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.046] within the variable **Sub_2E : Avoiding** (refer table 7.31), thus verifying that this is one of two conflict handling-styles in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree with which this style is used, can be found.
- The second statistical significant difference was found with regard to people with different qualifications when in conflict with their peers.
- This statistical significant difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.040] within the variable **Sub_4E : Obliging** as can be seen in table 7.31, thus verifying that this is the second handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree with which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.31 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: highest qualification (local authority)

Conflict-handling styles	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1E: Integrating	.602	2	.301	.926	.399
Sub_2E: Avoiding	5.145	2	2.573	3.164	.046
Sub_3E: Dominating	1.604	2	.802	1.194	.306
Sub_4E: Obliging	3.917	2	1.959	3.293	.040
Sub_5E: Compromising	.235	2	.117	.217	.806

- By means of the descriptive statistics as set out in table 7.32 it can be stated that respondents who were not highly qualified tended to be more avoiding in a conflict-situation with their peer. The more qualified the

respondent was, the least number of times would he resolve to a avoidance-style for managing conflict. (means = 2.7230 for Grade 12 or lower; 2.8289 for a diploma or higher and 3.2857 for a degree or higher).

Table 7.32 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different age-groups between the respondent and his peer in the local authority

Conflict-handling styles	Age-groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1E: Integrating	- Grade 12	73	1.7847	.57099	.06683	1.6515	1.9180	1.00	3.71
	Diploma +	38	1.9323	.63519	.10304	1.7236	2.1411	1.00	3.71
	Degree +	22	1.7792	.42909	.09148	1.5890	1.9695	1.00	2.43
	Total	133	1.8260	.56989	.04942	1.7282	1.9237	1.00	3.71
Sub_2E: Avoiding	- Grade 12	71	2.5586	.94699	.11239	2.4989	2.9472	1.00	5.00
	Diploma +	38	2.8289	.80863	.13118	2.5632	3.0947	1.50	4.50
	Degree +	21	3.2857	.90238	.19691	2.8750	3.6965	1.83	4.83
	Total	130	2.8449	.91668	.08040	2.6858	3.0039	1.00	5.00
Sub_3E: Dominating	- Grade 12	75	3.1760	.88529	.10222	2.9723	3.3797	1.00	5.00
	Diploma +	39	3.2769	.81126	.12991	3.0139	3.5399	1.40	5.00
	Degree +	21	3.4857	.53131	.11594	3.2439	3.7276	2.60	4.40
	Total	135	3.2533	.82070	.07063	3.1136	3.3930	1.00	5.00
Sub_4E: Obliging	- Grade 12	74	2.5586	.82872	.09634	2.3666	2.7506	1.00	4.83
	Diploma +	37	2.8289	.70970	.11667	2.4165	2.8898	1.17	4.00
	Degree +	21	3.2857	.65009	.14186	2.7517	3.3435	2.00	4.33
	Total	132	2.6629	.78457	.06829	2.5278	2.7980	1.00	4.83
Sub_5E: Comprom.	- Grade 12	73	2.1815	.71475	.08366	2.0147	2.3483	1.00	4.75
	Diploma +	38	2.2763	.77719	.12608	2.0209	2.5318	1.00	4.00
	Degree +	21	2.2381	.73517	.16043	1.9034	2.5727	1.00	4.25
	Total	132	2.2178	.73191	.06370	2.0918	2.3438	1.00	4.75

- The second statistical difference revealed that respondents with higher qualifications also became less obliging in conflict situations. Respondents who recorded as having grade 12 or lower tended to be the most obliging (mean = 2.5586), and those who had a diploma or higher qualification (mean = 2.8289) resulted in being less obliging than the respondents with

only grade 12 but more obliging than respondents with a degree or higher (mean = 3.0476).

- Thus it can be assumed that a respondent with higher qualifications tended to be more aggressive and self-confident in a conflict-situation with their peers, than those who had a lower qualification.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **highest qualification achieved / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables, as can be seen in table 7.33. Thus no P-value [p (sig.)] was smaller or equal to 0.05

Table 7.33 Independent samples test against the background variable: highest qualification between respondent and his superior (agricultural organization)

Conflict-handling styles	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differen	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1E: Integrating	.021	.885	1.146	61	.256	.20700	.18070	-.15433	.56832
Sub_2E: Avoiding	.076	.783	-1.212	60	.230	-.31845	.26286	-.84425	.20734
Sub_3E: Dominating	.785	.379	1.546	60	.127	.37083	.23994	-.10911	.85078
Sub_4E: Obliging	2.104	.152	.818	61	.417	.18197	.22248	-.26291	.62686
Sub_5E: Compromising	.648	.424	1.043	59	.301	.20403	.19567	-.18751	.59556

- Thus, all conflict-handling styles are used on an equal basis between employees that are in possession of different qualifications of the agricultural company, when in conflict with their superiors.

- Because there were no meaningful statistical differences found regarding the handling-styles, it is not necessary to refer to the recorded group statistics for further analysis.

7.5.4 Comparisons of home language as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peer)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **home language / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- One statistical significant difference was found with regard to the different handling styles between people with different home languages when in conflict with their peers.
- The statistical significant difference was found [p (sig.) = 0.003] within the variable **Sub_4E : Obliging** (refer table 7.34), thus verifying that when compared to the background variable, a difference in the degree to which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.34 Independent samples test against the background variable: home language between respondent and his peer (local authority)

Conflict-handling styles	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sub_1E: Integrating	3.077	.082	.684	131	.495	.06834	.09985	-.12919	.26587
Sub_2E: Avoiding	.017	.898	-.028	128	.978	-.00458	.16299	-.32709	.31792
Sub_3E: Dominating	6.541	.012	-1.004	133	.317	-.14291	.14240	-.42457	.13875
Sub_4E: Obliging	.517	.474	3.006	130	.003	.40144	.13356	.13722	.66567
Sub_5E: Comprom.	.195	.660	1.595	130	.113	.20352	.12761	-.04893	.45597

- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.35 of the handling-style that was singled out as the only variable where a significant difference was found, it shows that Afrikaans speaking respondents tended to be more obliging in a conflict situation than non-Afrikaans speaking respondents (means=2.8879 and 2.4865 respectively).

Table 7.35 Groups statistics on the handling-styles of different home-languages between the respondent and the superior in the local authority

Conflict-handling styles	Your home language (Recoded)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sub_1E: Integrating	Other	58	1.8645	.65406	.08588
	Afrikaans	75	1.7962	.49775	.05747
Sub_2E: Avoiding	Other	56	2.8423	.92081	.12305
	Afrikaans	74	2.8468	.91983	.10693
Sub_3E: Dominating	Other	59	3.1729	.95589	.12445
	Afrikaans	76	3.3158	.69839	.08011
Sub_4E: Obliging	Other	58	2.4865	.80228	.10534
	Afrikaans	74	2.8879	.72819	.08465
Sub_5E: Compromising	Other	58	2.3319	.74396	.09769
	Afrikaans	74	2.1284	.71463	.08307

- A conclusion can thus be made that Afrikaans-speaking respondents tended to be more obliging when trying to resolve a conflict-situation with their peers, than what was illustrated by the results regarding conflict handling with their superiors (refer table 7.20).

Unfortunately, due to the low number of respondents from the Agricultural organization, the analysis for: **home language / agricultural organization**, could not be performed according to correct statistical guidelines, and was therefore not analysed.

7.5.5 Comparison of years in service as a background variable in both organizations (Section E: Peers)

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **years in service / local authority**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- By means of the ANOVA a meaningful significant statistical difference was found ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) after comparing different years of service with regard to conflict-handling styles, within a conflict situation.
- The statistical difference [p (sig.) = 0.028] was found within the variable **Sub_1E : Integrating** (refer table 7.36), thus verifying that this is the only handling-style in which, when compared to the background variable, a difference in the frequency with which this style is used, can be found.

Table 7.36 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (local authority)

Conflict-handling style	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1E: Integrating	2.279	2	1.139	3.684	.028
Sub_2E: Avoiding	2.338	2	1.169	1.400	.250
Sub_3E: Dominating	.073	2	.037	.054	.948
Sub_4E: Obliging	3.241	2	1.621	2.716	.070
Sub_5E: Compromising	2.812	2	1.406	2.732	.069

- By consulting the descriptive statistics in table 7.37 of the handling-style that was singled out as the only variable where a significant difference was found, it shows that respondents who worked for the company for 5 – 10 years were more integrating in conflict-situations than those who gave 1 – 4 years of service or more than 10 years.
- Respondents who only worked for the local authority for 1 to 4 years, resulted in being less integrating in a conflict situation than those who worked for the organization 5 to 10 years (mean=2.1429; 1.7690 respectively). Respondents who worked for the company for more than 10 years tended to be more integrating than respondents of 1 – 4 years of

service, but less integrating than those who worked for 5 – 10 years (mean=1.7824).

- It can thus not be concluded that through age and years of service the respondent develops an ability to use integrating conflict-styles to a greater extent and the frequency with which the style is used, may change during the years of service and no clear pattern could be established

Table 7.37 Descriptive statistics on the handling-styles of different years of service between the respondent and his peer in the local authority

Conflict-handling styles	Years	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Sub_1E: Integrating	1 - 4	20	1.7824	.68903	.15407	1.8204	2.4653	1.29	3.57
	5 - 10	47	1.7824	.56247	.08204	1.6038	1.9341	1.00	3.71
	10 +	65	1.7824	.50514	.06266	1.6572	1.9076	1.00	3.71
	Total	132	1.8323	.56746	.04939	1.7345	1.9300	1.00	3.71
Sub_2E: Avoiding	1 - 4	21	2.5714	.68834	.15021	2.2581	2.8848	1.17	4.17
	5 - 10	44	2.8182	1.08895	.16417	2.4871	3.1493	1.00	5.00
	10 +	65	2.9513	.84406	.10469	2.7421	3.1604	1.33	5.00
	Total	130	2.8449	.91668	.08040	2.6858	3.0039	1.00	5.00
Sub_3E: Dominating	1 - 4	21	3.2095	.67372	.14702	2.9028	3.5162	1.80	4.60
	5 - 10	46	3.2304	.92469	.13634	2.9558	3.5050	1.00	4.80
	10 +	67	3.2687	.79510	.09714	3.0747	3.4626	1.40	5.00
	Total	134	3.2463	.81965	.07081	3.1062	3.3863	1.00	5.00
Sub_4E: Obliging	1 - 4	20	3.0167	.60190	.13459	2.7350	3.2984	2.00	4.33
	5 - 10	45	2.5444	.86486	.12893	2.2846	2.8043	1.00	4.83
	10 +	66	2.6212	.75024	.09235	2.4368	2.8056	1.00	4.17
	Total	131	2.6552	.78261	.06838	2.5199	2.7905	1.00	4.83
Sub_5E: Comprom.	1 - 4	21	2.5595	.75376	.16448	2.2164	2.9026	1.50	4.75
	5 - 10	45	2.1889	.75029	.11185	1.9635	2.4143	1.00	4.25
	10 +	65	2.1462	.68164	.08455	1.9773	2.3151	1.00	4.00
	Total	131	2.2271	.72685	.06351	2.1015	2.3527	1.00	4.75

- It can however, be concluded that respondents who used the integrating-style the most were employed between 5 – 10 years, and those who used it the least was employed for 1 – 4 years.

By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable: **years in service / agricultural organization**, the following analysis of results can be made:

- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables, as can be seen in table 7.38. Thus no P-value [p (sig.)] was smaller or equal to 0.05.

Table 7.38 Analysis of variances (ANOVA) regarding background variable: years of service (agricultural organization)

Conflict-handling styles	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sub_1E: Integrating	.624	2	.312	.869	.424
Sub_2E: Avoiding	2.152	2	1.076	1.447	.244
Sub_3E: Dominating	1.735	2	.868	1.376	.260
Sub_4E: Compromising	1.603	2	.801	2.002	.144

- Thus, all conflict-handling styles are used on an equal basis between employees that have different years of service of the agricultural company, when in conflict with their peers.
- Because there were no meaningful statistical differences found regarding the handling-styles, it is not necessary to refer to the recorded group statistics for further analysis.

After interpreting the results from the above statistics regarding the comparison of the different background variables with regard to the conflict-handling styles it can now be stated that hypothesis Hp_3 that states: **A statistical significant difference exists in the usage frequency of conflict-handling styles when compared to different background variables in both organizations, is**

validated. Analysis of the above statistics has proven that in most cases a statistical difference exists regarding the degree or frequency with which conflict-handling styles are used, after comparing these to different background variables in both organizations.

7.6 Comparative results on conflict-handling styles within and between the organizations

After the analysis of the different conflict-handling styles that were predominantly used between the respondent and his superior (section D) and the respondent and his peer (section E) in both organizations, a comparative analysis will now be done of the different categories and different organizations. By reporting on these, a clear overall analysis can be made in order to determine if any differences exist in any of the recordings with regard to conflict-handling styles between the superiors and peers in the local authority and agricultural organization. By way of descriptive statistics, it can also be reported which conflict-handling style had the highest number of recordings, and which are most prominent in each section, and within each organization.

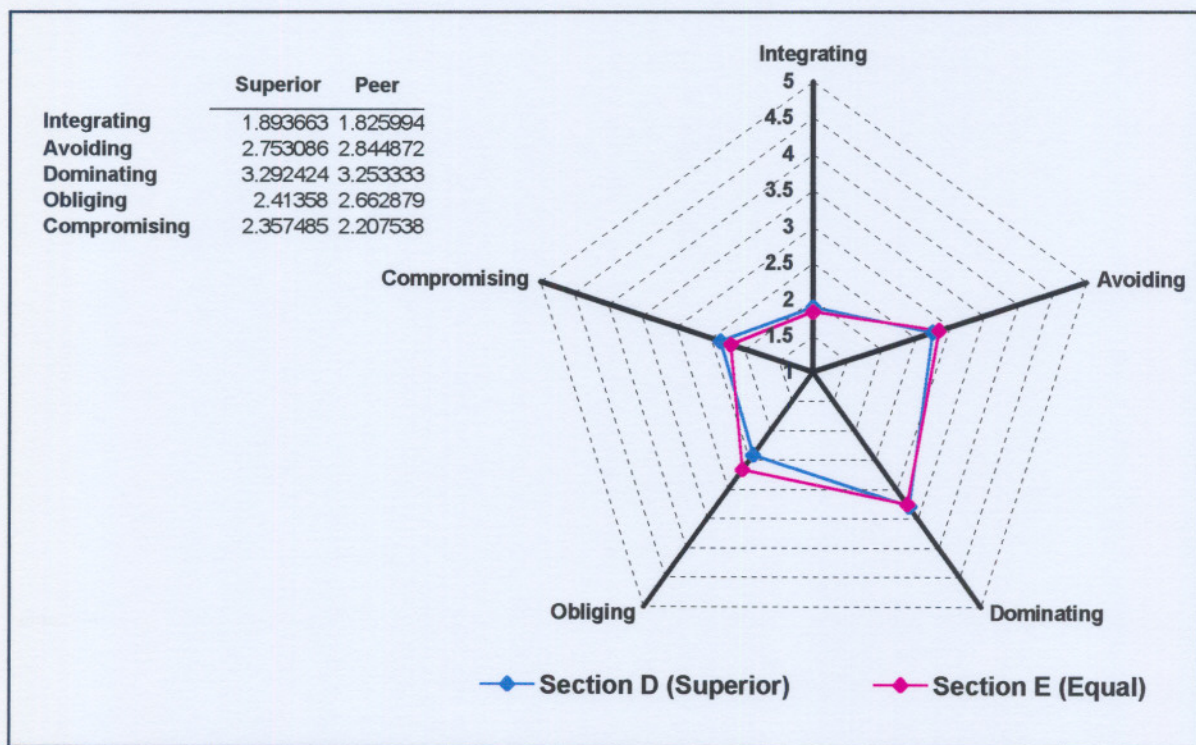
In order to achieve this, a report on the descriptive statistics was done with regard to the frequency the respondents recorded each conflict-handling style in the questionnaire within the two different groups and two different organizations. The word "groups" will be used throughout the rest of this chapter in order to indicate the subordinate – superior and secondly the respondent (subordinate or superior) – peer.

7.6.1 Comparative results of conflict-handling styles between groups in the local authority

When comparing the difference in the conflict-handling styles as analysed between respondents and superior (section D) and respondent and peer (section E) within the local authority, the following conclusions can be made:

- As can be seen from graph 7.1 all styles had a variation in the frequency each one is used when compared to the different sections.
- The style that differed the most after comparing the different sections within the local authority, was the obliging-handling style.
- By consulting the descriptive statistics as recorded by the respondents it can be reported that the obliging handling style was used to a significantly greater extent in a conflict situation between the respondent and his superior (mean=2.41358), than was the situation with regard to managing conflict between the respondent and his peer (mean=2.6628).
- The style that was recorded as being used to the greatest extent within the local authority in both groups, was the integrating style which had a mean of 1.8936 in section D (superior) and 1.82599 in section E (peer). Keeping in mind that the lower the score, the higher the frequency for the style.

Graph 7.1 Comparative analysis of groups within the local authority



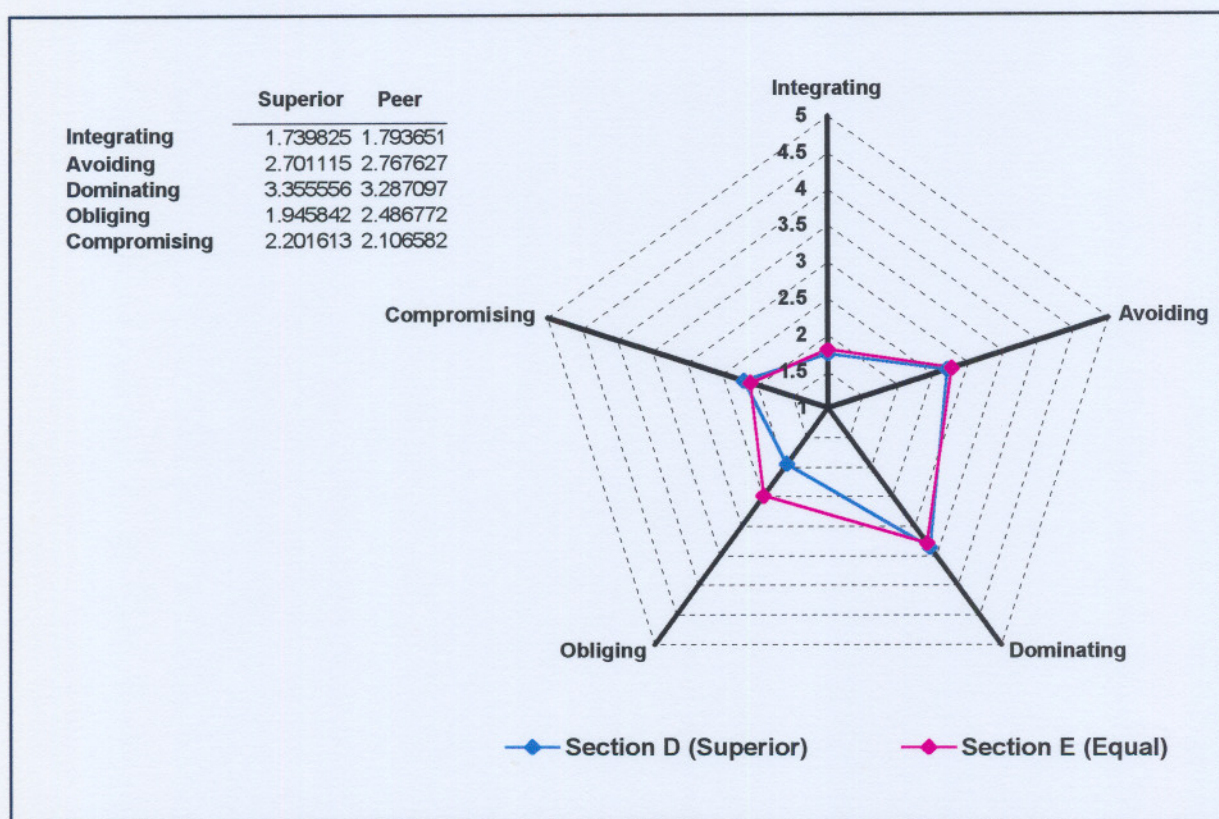
- The style that was recorded as being used least within the local authority with regard to conflict with either a superior or a peer, was the dominating style (mean=2.2934; 3.2533 respectively).

7.6.2 Comparative results of conflict-handling styles between groups in the agricultural organization

When comparing the difference in the conflict-handling styles as analysed between respondents and superior (section D) and respondent and peer (section E) within the agricultural organization the following conclusions can be made:

- As can be seen from graph 7.2 all styles had a variation in the frequency with which each is used when compared to the different sections.

Graph 7.2 Comparative analysis of groups within the agricultural organization



- The style that differed the most after comparing the different sections within the agricultural company was again the obliging-handling style.
- By consulting the descriptive statistics as recorded by the respondents, it can be reported that the obliging handling style was used to an even more significant extent between the respondent and his superior (mean=1.9458)

than it was used for managing conflict between the respondent and his peer (mean=2.48677), in comparison with the local authority.

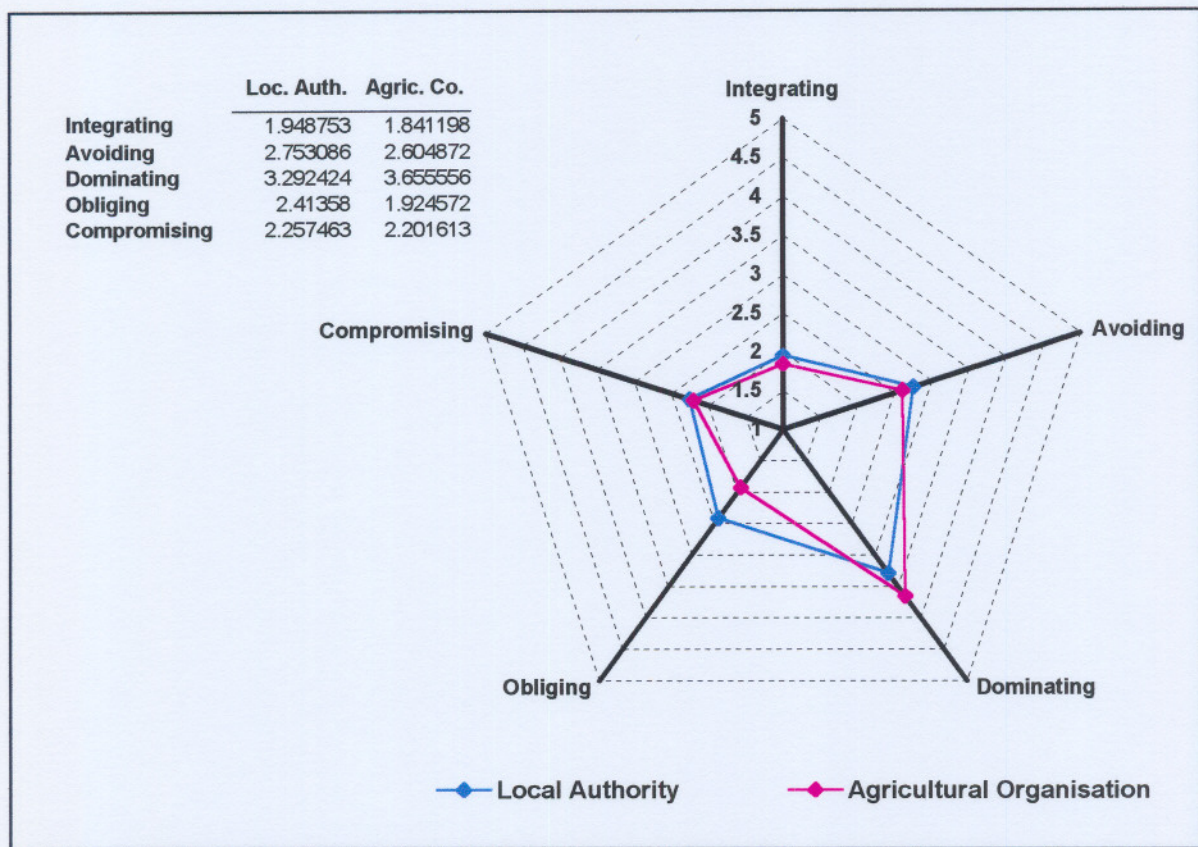
- The style that was recorded as being used to the greatest extent within the agricultural organization in both sections, was the integrating style which had a mean of 1.7398 in section D (superior) and 1.79365 in section E (peer). Keeping in mind that the lower the score, the higher the frequency for the style.
- The dominating style recorded overall the least number of applications with a mean of 3.3555 in conflict with superior and 3.28709 with a peer.

7.6.3 Comparative results of conflict-handling styles of respondent and his superior between the two organizations

When comparing the difference in the conflict-handling styles as analysed between respondents and superior (section D) from both organizations, the following analysis can be reported:

- As can be seen from Graph 7.3 all styles had a variation in frequency and each one is used when compared to the different sections.
- The style that differed the most after comparing the different sections within the local authority, was the obliging-handling style again.
- By consulting the descriptive statistics as recorded by the respondents, it can be reported that the obliging handling style was used to a significantly lesser extent in a conflict situation between a respondent and his superior in the agricultural organization (mean=2.41358), than it was used between the same people within the local authority (mean=1.92457).
- The style that was recorded as being used to the greatest extent within section D (superior) in both organizations, was the integrating style which had a mean of 1.8411 in the agricultural company and 1.9487 in the local authority. Keeping in mind that the lower the score, the higher the frequency for the style.

Graph 7.3 Comparative analysis of conflict with superior (section D) in both organizations



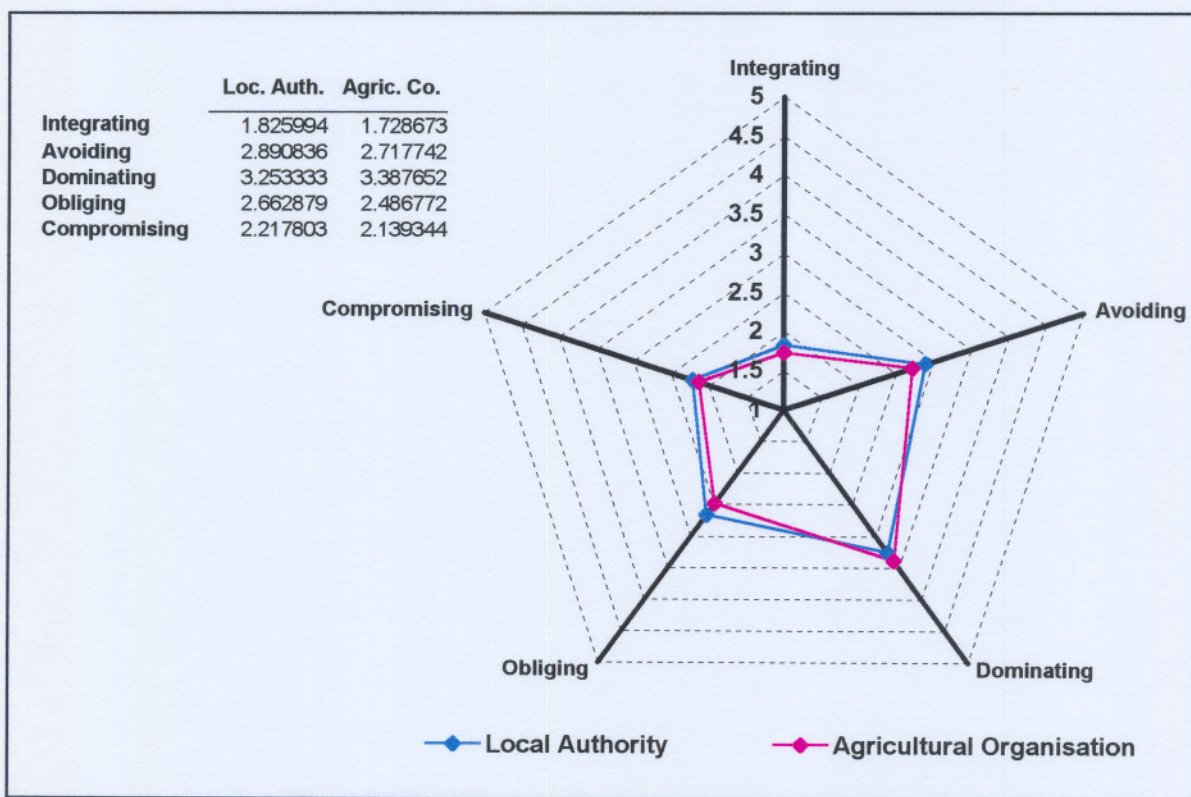
- The dominating style was used the least in a conflict-situation between respondent and superior in both of the organizations (means=3.2924 and 3.3555 respectively).

7.6.4 Comparative results of conflict-handling styles of respondent and his peer between the two organizations

When comparing the difference in the conflict-handling styles as analysed between respondents and peer (section E) from both organizations, the following analysis can be reported:

- As can be seen from graph 7.4, all styles had a variation in terms of the frequency with which each one is used when comparing the different categories.

Graph 7.4 Comparative analysis of conflict with peer (section E) in both organizations



- The style that was recorded as being used to the greatest extent within section E (peer) in both organizations, was the integrating style which had a mean of 1.8259 in the agricultural company and 1.72867 in the local authority. Keeping in mind that the lower the score, the higher the frequency for the style.
- The dominating style was used least in a conflict-situation between respondent and superior in both of the organizations (means=3.2533 and 3.2870 respectively).

After a report was done on the descriptive statistics regarding frequency of usage of the different conflict-handling styles, it should now be evident that the

hypothesis **Hp_4** : **A significant difference exists in the usage frequency of conflict-handling styles between the local authority and agricultural organization**, has been validated. All the facts presented above have again proved that a difference exists between the two organizations with regard to the degree or frequency with which each organization uses the different conflict-handling styles.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter formed the core of the quantitative part of this study. Whereas chapters 2 to 5 addressed different theoretical aspects of conflict with the central focus on the causes of handling-styles of conflict, it was attempted in chapter 7 to validate the viewpoints brought forward in the qualitative section by means of an empirical survey. The measuring instrument that was used, was a combination of Rahim's (1983) ROC-II standardized questionnaire combined with self-designed sections to address the demography of sample, causes of and manifestation of conflict.

The first part of this chapter presented an analysis of the comparative results of the causes of conflict (section B of the measuring instrument). Through the results achieved with the analysis it became evident that the hypothesis **HP_1** i.e. **A significant difference exists in the causes of conflict between a local authority and agricultural organization**, is true.

Comparative results of conflict manifestation as set out in 7.3 (section C of measuring instrument) validated hypothesis **HP_2**, namely, a significant difference exists between employees of the agricultural organization and the local authority's perception of what effect conflict has on them. It also became evident that both organizations' employees were in need of training or some form of information with regard to conflict and the handling thereof.

The analysis of the statistical results regarding the comparisons made between the different background variables in both organizations validated hypothesis **Hp_3** which states that a statistical significant difference exists in the usage

frequency of conflict-handling styles when compared to different background variables in both organizations.

The descriptive statistics on conflict-handling styles sub-ordinates used with regard to superiors and respondents towards their peers (section D and E), also validated the hypothesis Hp_4, i.e. A significant difference exists in the frequency usage of conflict handling styles between employees of the local authority and employees of the agricultural organization.

Cross- association between the empirical study and the qualitative investigation exists in the sense that the measuring instruments' section B (paragraph 7.2) links up with chapter 2 and 4. Chapter 5 again, forms the theoretical basis of section C, D and E which addressed the different conflict-handling styles. Chapter 3 illustrated, through the literature study, various important concepts of conflict which eventually found their way into the empirical study in various ways.

In chapter 8 (which is the last chapter of the study) attention will be paid to a review of the study, bringing forward the findings with regard to the literature (qualitative) and empirical (quantitative) study, and making some practical recommendations for management as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter 8

Review, recommendations and conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters the empirical research results were analyzed and discussed. Apart from the summary of findings already completed in these chapters, further attention will be paid to the findings in 8.4.

This study attempted to comprehensively analyze the sources, effects and styles of handling (management) of conflict on an interpersonal basis in a public and private sector organization. Because of the differences in the structure, vision and strategies of these organizations, the study was done on a comparative level. The objectives set were achieved by way of a literature study and empirical research carried out by following a qualitative and quantitative methodological approach.

This final chapter encapsulates the salient aspects embodied in the preceding chapters. It provides a summary of the theoretical orientation as well as the empirical survey. The most significant findings of both the literature and empirical study are presented, and recommendations made. Attention is also paid to the limitations experienced and suggestions are presented for possible future research on the subject.

8.2 The literature study

8.2.1 Theoretical orientation

In the book *"The uses of classical sociological theory"* Lewis Coser (Neuman, 2003:41) says that one of the major functions of theory is to classify experiences

with the help of concepts. It also identifies relevant aspects and data from an enormous multitude of 'facts' which the investigator of social phenomena has to manage.

In chapter 2 of this study it was attempted to present in broad outlines, the experience of a number of scholars with regard to the concept of conflict and to select relevant aspects concerning sources of conflict and how these are interpreted. Classical social theorists like Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Dahrendorf played an important role in generating innovative ideas with regard to conflict. They (especially Marx and Dahrendorf) developed original ideas on conflict that laid the theoretical foundation for subsequent generations of scholars of behaviour, psychology, sociology, management and organizations. New ideas on organizational conflict (at a micro level) developed rapidly from the 1940's incorporating the views of neoclassicists with the like of Lewin (Field Theory of conflict) and Deutsch (Theory of Cooperation and Competition). The past four centuries witnessed the modern views of Blake and Mouton, Robbins, Rahim, Coleman and others.

Having discussed the different theories on conflict in a broad sense, the chapter concentrated on the views of Marx and Dahrendorf. Their ideas were analysed in terms of social interaction phenomena which are characterized by hostility, conflict of opposing ideas and force. It became evident that conflict is an integral characteristic of social behaviour which seems to play an important role as causal factor with regard to phenomena such as antagonism, revolution, class and class struggle. The determinants of conflict as perceived by both Dahrendorf and Marx were addressed. Special attention was given to the sources (causes) of conflict such as power, mobility, scarce resources, competition, alienation and authority. The constructive (positive) and destructive (negative) elements of conflict were also highlighted as these would eventually play an important part in the empirical section of the study.

From the more modern views that were briefly discussed in chapter 2 it appeared clearly that the emphasis shifted away from greater (macro) environments to

smaller (micro) environments with respect to these organizations' interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup, and intragroup conflict. Considering the neoclassical views it has become evident that in order to reduce conflict and enhance organizational efficiency, different routes are followed. These are for instance, the altering of an organization's technical or social systems. More specific theories such as those of Lewin (especially the application of his force fields which contains dynamic concepts of tension systems), and Deutsch (his theory of cooperation and competition), were examined (refer 2.4.2). From this chapter it was possible to determine certain major sources of conflict. These were utilized in structuring the empirical part of the study and the design of the questionnaire. Not all of the causes identified in this chapter were used in the questionnaire.

8.2.2 The elements and approaches to conflict

Having devoted attention to a theoretical orientation in chapter 2 which served as the basis for determining key elements of conflict, it was deemed necessary to analyse and evaluate the different elements which characterize conflict. The analysis was performed with the intention of examining conflict at an organizational level.

In chapter 3, the aim was to identify and evaluate the different types of conflict. This process of identification and evaluation of the possible elements of conflict facilitated a more thorough examination of the sources (causes) which may activate the various types of conflict in private and public sector organizations. An extensive study of the different theoretical points of view and definitions contributed to a much clearer understanding of the subject and a concept of conflict could be formulated (refer 3.8). This formed the core of the study.

The key types of conflict discussed were interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflict. With regard to interpersonal conflict (which was also the focus of this comparative study) the sub-types (approach-approach; approach-avoidance; avoidance-avoidance) as identified by Lewin in his field theory (refer 2.4.2.1) were also discussed due to the fact that application of the correct

organizational strategies contribute to good performance in an organization. The types of conflict as mentioned above, were also analysed in terms of the line- and staff authority. This was necessary in order to perform the empirical study with regard to conflict-handling styles on a vertical (subordinate / superior) and horizontal ('peer', equal/ equal) level.

Intractable conflict which is very often neglected as a type of conflict also received attention. This type of conflict has been identified as being recalcitrant, intense, dead-locked, and extremely difficult to resolve. It tends to escalate, transform and resurface repeatedly. Because of the different character of the various types of conflict as it appears from the literature study and the results of previous research it has been established that conflict can either be constructive or destructive. Consequently, the last part of this chapter was devoted to an analysis of the positive and negative elements of conflict.

8.2.3 Conflict sources and processes

The identification of the sources of conflict was one of the key elements of this study. In chapter 3 it was necessary, after having identified the different types of conflict, to establish what the actual sources or origins of conflict are. It often happens in organizations that individuals try to work only on the symptoms of conflict in order to rectify what they believe to have dysfunctional effects on organizational activities and by so doing, fail to establish the real cause of conflict.

In chapter 2 attention was devoted to the theoretical approach with regard to the clarification of conflict. Marx and Dahrendorf's theories on conflict, especially with regard to the main causes or prerequisites, served as the basic reference structure. In this chapter it was attempted to confirm as well as extend their theories with regard to the sources of conflict. Various author's classifications were identified and grouped into three main categories i.e.: communication problems, structural variables and personal variables.

Using Mayer's (2000) exposition of Moore's (1996) Wheel of Conflict a more detailed classification was done. What became clear is that when people address conflict, they are not always aware of existing sub-systems. Cross-validation of the work of a number of theorists confirmed the conclusions which were drawn from the analysis. After having determined and analysed the causes, the function of the conflict process models were addressed. This resulted in the implementation of a newly recognized Conflict Process Model (refer 4.10).

8.2.4 Conflict management-style identification models

Having established the origin of conflict in the previous chapter, the next step was to determine the strategy styles used to manage/ handle conflict, whether the conflict was constructive (functional) or destructive (dysfunctional).

Three factors concerning the management or handling of organizational conflict were identified. In the first instance it was established that different types of conflict are unavoidable due to a number of initiating causes. Secondly it was established that the degree of discord is related to the counter productivity produced by conflict. Different strategies, techniques and methods are to be used in different situations with regard to positive or negative conflict. Particular personal characteristics are also vital with regard to the successful implementation of different conflict management strategies.

In chapter 5 the use of a five styles (competition, collaboration, avoidance, accommodation and compromise) approach with regard to the management of conflict was discussed. The models of Thomas-Killman (1974), CMS-modell of Hall (1986) and Rahim's two-dimensional model (1983) served as the bases for analysis and discussion. Elements such as neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness were analysed in relation to the other models.

In this chapter it has become clear that there are numerous practical strategies and techniques which may be used in the management of conflict. Careful

consideration and evaluation of the conflict situation itself is of the utmost importance in the choice and application of the correct conflict management methods. This of course, requires that the process be followed as indicated. The process to be followed is that of Rahim (1986) suggested in chapter 5 (refer 5.8.3). The specific steps discussed refer to the diagnosis, behavioural and structural intervention, conflict-handling styles and the effectiveness (individual, group, organization).

8.3 Findings from the literature study

In order to determine how conflict was conceptualized, it was necessary to approach the subject from different scientific points of view. This was done by studying the ideas and theories of scholars of social psychology; industrial sociology; organizational behaviour; management (strategic and general); and sociology. Chapters 2 through 5 included aspects and elements which were considered relevant with regard to the objectives of the study.

- In chapter 2 it was established that theories on conflict may be divided into classical, neoclassical and modern views.
- The two most prominent scholars of conflict are Karl Marx and Ralf Dahrendorf who's theories reflect certain similarities as well as differences (refer 2.4). Their theories were considered to be the most suitable for the purposes of this study, especially with regard to the analysis of the sources or prerequisites for conflict.
- Theorists from the neoclassical view saw conflict as undesirable and detrimental to organizations. It was also established that the basic types of psychological conflict included amongst others, an approach-approach type. Furthermore, constructive and destructive processes of conflict resolution were compared to cooperative and competitive problem-solving processes, respectively.
- It was also determined that the philosophy of conflict of the modern theorists was especially characterized by interaction, which differs significantly from the classical and neoclassical views. The key characteristics of this approach are: absolute necessity of conflict;

encouragement of opposition; stimulation as well as resolution methods; and management as a major responsibility of all administrators.

- After careful analysis of various scholars' definitions with regard to the concept of conflict, it was concluded that conflict could be described as follows: a situation which develops when individuals or groups experience incompatibility when their physical, material or psychological interests are threatened, and the different forces resulting from this process can be interpreted as irreconcilable.
- The presence of four different types of conflict was established following a literature study, namely: interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup. Interpersonal conflict was identified as being essential for the purposes of this study. This type of conflict refers to the existence of simultaneous, opposing and conflicting thoughts, feelings and activities. Negative feelings such as anger, a lack of trust and fear of rejection may be accepted as causes for interpersonal conflict.
- All four forms of conflict can occur within any organization and can all be part of the four types of intraorganizational conflict. The four forms that constitute intraorganizational conflict are vertical conflict, horizontal conflict, line-staff conflict, and role conflict. Although these types of conflict can overlap, especially with regard to role conflict, with each having its own distinctive characteristics.
- It was determined that intractable conflict occurs when conflicts that are deeply important to people remain unresolved for long periods of time. These tend to escalate, transform and resurface repeatedly. It eventually remains wedged resulting in a high level of intensity and destructiveness.
- Analysis of various scholars' views led to the finding that conflict may be both constructive and destructive for an organization. It was established that conflict can be constructive when it results in better solutions of problems or the effective attainment of objectives or when it adds to creativity which otherwise would not have been possible. In general, too little or too much conflict may be destructive for an individual, group or organization.

- The three main categories of causes of conflict that were identified are communication problems, structural and personal variables. Subsystem sources may exist which people are not always aware of when addressing conflict. One of these may for instance be the 'power factor' which can be divided into sub-elements such as resources, a legal factor, authority, procedural and other forms of power.
- The sources of conflict can be viewed as being crucial to the conflict process. The process follows five clearly identified stages which ends in conflict aftermath (outcomes). The five stages of the conflict process model distinguishes itself by the fact that it can be used to interpret and analyze a conflict situation and present alternatives with regard to resolutions.
- It was determined that the different types of conflict may be unavoidable due to the fact that they can be activated by a number of causes. It has also become clear that too little conflict can be just as counter-productive as too much. Furthermore, it has become evident that there is not only one way in which conflict can be resolved and managed. Different types of conflict in different situations and environments necessitates different approaches with regard to their resolution.
- Having analyzed and discussed three prominent scholars' models and conflict-handling styles, Rahim's ROC-II model (1983) was found to be best suited for the purpose of this study. Elements of a standardized questionnaire could successfully be applied to determine the conflict-handling styles used in the two organizations which form part of the study.

8.4 Findings from the empirical study

Whereas the first section of this study (chapters 2 – 5) concentrated on qualitative research to prove the objectives as set out in chapter 1 (refer 1.3), chapters 6 and 7 included the quantitative research aspects of the study. The empirical study was conducted by means of the application of structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistical techniques and inferential (multivariate)

statistics were used to prove the hypotheses based on the objectives set out in chapter 1.

The first objective of the quantitative part of this study was to prove the construct reliability and validity of the measuring instrument applied. The measuring instrument consists of five sections of which the D and E parts were standardized. These were adopted from a questionnaire developed by Rahim (1983). A, B and C were designed in order to establish part of the set objectives.

Apart from establishing the face value and content validity of the instrument (which was done by experts and peers), the reliability was researched by means of the Cronbach-Alpha coefficient. The overall Cronbach-Alpha average of the ten constructs which could be considered, was 0.76.

- The interaction was further confirmed by way of the Bartlett test of significance of sphericity. This was < 0.001 . The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) established a low of 0.62 and a high of 0.85 with regard to individual constructs.
- The skewness and kurtosis of sections B and C proved to be within the range of +3 to -3 and +7 to -7 respectively, which proved that normality existed.
- Important findings from analysis of the demographic data revealed that:
 - 76.6% of the respondents in the local authority were males, whilst in the agricultural company the figure was only 37.5%.
 - the age spread grouped in three between - 35 and 46 years + were almost equal for both participating organizations.
 - Respondents in the local authority with qualifications higher than grade 12 were 43.9% whilst in the case of the agricultural organization the figure was 21.9%.
 - 90.6% of the agricultural company respondents' home language was Afrikaans, whilst in the local authority only 56.1% spoke this language.

- A tenure of 5 years and longer was almost 85% as compared to the 72% of the agricultural organization.

The clear demographic differences that exist between the two participating organizations were ideal for the purposes of this study, and supported the decision to involve a public and private sector organization in the study.

Sector B of the measuring instrument attempted to establish the causes (sources) of interpersonal conflict in two different organizations by way of a comparative analysis of data using descriptive statistics, such as the mean, standard deviation, t-test, and others prove the hypotheses Hp_1. It was revealed that as far as the local authority is concerned, a lack of effective personnel (59.1%) was considered to be the biggest cause of conflict in the organization, followed by a lack of physical resources (55.2%) and affirmative action. If the counts on "moderate" and "large" extent are added, the respective results of 81.3% and 69.7% stresses the large majority claim for B_6, B_5 and B_1 as being the strongest generators of conflict.

In the agricultural company a more tranquil scene seems to prevail with the highest percentage of the combined responses "moderate" and "large" being 48.5% for B_5 and 43.7% for B_6. In not a single variable were feelings expressed above the 50% value.

Comparing the viewpoints of the two organizations confirmed the hypotheses Hp_1, i.e., that a significant difference in the causes of conflict between a local authority and an agricultural company, does exist. Only in two instances, that of dismissal of workers (B_7) and implementation of new technology (B_8) were there a reasonable concurrence regarding these two sources of conflict.

The comparative results, of the effect (manifestation) that conflict has on the personnel of the two organizations, were addressed in section C of the measuring instrument. The major findings of this analysis were that:

- Lack of performance could be considered to be the most noted result of interpersonal conflict. It ranked number 1 in both organizations with percentages of 49.3 and 49.2.
- Second in line was alienation of personnel from each other. Although not as high, 30.1% (local authority) and 41.3% (agricultural organization) with regard to the lack of performance, the cumulative effect of all seven manifestations should not be underestimated within the organizations.
- Although respondents experienced the effect of conflict to a reasonable extent in the same order, the biggest difference was recorded in C_1f (alienation) where the rankings was 3 and 6 (do not experience, and 4 and 2 (experience) for the local authority and agricultural organization respectively.
- In 5 out of the 7 variables differences were established which renders the hypotheses Hp_2, i.e., a significant difference exists between the employees of the agricultural organization and the local authority's perception of the effect that conflict has on them, as true.
- It was also established that in both organizations the majority of respondents (78.1% local authority and 73.0% agric. organization) expressed the need for a training program to increase their knowledge on conflict and conflict handling.

The empirical study also focussed to a large extent on the conflict-handling styles of the respondents in situations where interpersonal conflict occurred. The predominance and usage frequency of the styles was determined when compared between the different background variables of each participating organization. This was done for respondent's reaction to his superiors, and respondent's reaction to his peers. Establishing the presence of a significant statistical difference regarding each variable by means of independent sample tests and ANOVA (variance analysis) could render the set hypotheses Hp_3 true or false. The most important findings of this section of the study revealed that in the case of respondent – superior:

- There was a statistical meaningful difference ($p = 0.05$) within the variable “avoiding” with regard to the genders in the local authority.
- No meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables with regard to genders in the agricultural organization.
- A statistical significant difference ($p = 0.049$) was found within the variable “compromising” comparing different age groups in the local authority.
- A statistical significant difference ($p = 0.024$) was found with regard to the variable “obliging” in the agricultural organization’s age groups.
- A statistical significant difference ($p = 0.004$) was found with regard to the variable “obliging” comparing qualifications achieved in the case of the local authority.
- In the agricultural organization no meaningful statistical difference with regard to highest qualification could be found in any variable.
- Two statistical significant differences with regard to different handling styles between respondents with different home languages in local authority. The first difference was $p = 0.005$ within the variable “dominating” and the second was $p = 0.000$ within the variable “obliging”.
- In the case of the agricultural organization the number of respondents was low which prevented the analysis being done correctly according to sound statistical guidelines.
- A significant statistical difference ($p = 0.048$) was recorded after comparing different years of service at the local authority. The difference was found within the variable “compromising”.
- A significant statistical difference ($p = 0.019$) was also found within the variable “obliging” in the agricultural organization.

The most important findings with regard to conflict-handling styles between respondents and their peers were the following:

- With regard to the background variable, different genders no meaningful statistical difference could be found within the local authority.
- The same result was recorded for the agricultural organization.

- A statistical significant difference was found within the variable “obliging” ($p = 0.046$) as concerns age as a background variable in the local authority.
- Different age groups in the agricultural organization revealed a statistical significant difference of $p = 0.050$ with regard to the variable “dominating”.
- Two statistical significant differences were found with regard to the different conflict-handling styles between respondents in a local authority with different qualifications when in conflict with their peers. The first one was within the variable “avoiding” ($p = 0.048$) and the second “obliging” ($p = 0.040$).
- In the case of the agricultural organization no meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables with regard to qualifications achieved.
- By comparing the different conflict-handling styles against the background variable, home language one statistical significant difference ($p = 0.003$) was found in the local authority within the variable “obliging”.
- No recording could be done, due to the low number of respondents, in the agricultural organization.
- In the case of the agricultural organization no meaningful statistical differences could be found in any of the variables with regard to years of service.
- Comparison of years of service as a background variable in both organizations revealed a significant statistical difference ($p = 0.028$) within the variable “integrating” in the case of the local authority.

The hypotheses Hp_3 that states: A statistical significant difference exists in the usage frequency of conflict-handling styles when compared to different background variables in both organizations, has thus been validated. In more than 60% of the cases, differences were established

The comparative results on conflict-handling styles between sub-ordinates and superiors and respondents (subordinates and superiors) and peers within an organization and between organizations highlighted the following (refer: 7.6):

- Comparing the difference in styles between groups in the local authority (respondents and peer, and subordinate and superior) revealed “obliging” as prominent ($M = 2.4135$ and $M = 2.6628$). “Integrating” style was used the most.
- Comparing the difference styles between the groups within the agricultural company also revealed that the “obliging” style differ extensively ($M = 1.9458$ and $M = 2.4867$). The “integrating” style was used to the greatest extent by both groups ($M = 1.72119$ and $M = 1.79365$).
- Comparison of the styles being used by the group, subordinate and his superior, showed the greatest difference in the obliging-handling style between the two organizations ($M = 2.41358$ against $M = 1.9245$). the style used to the greatest extent between the group in both organizations is the integrating style ($M = 1.94875$ against $M = 1.84119$).
- Comparison of the styles used by the group (respondent and his peers) in both organizations revealed that conflict-handling styles only differed to a relatively small extent. The style used to the greatest extent was the integrating style with $M = 1.8259$ in the agricultural organization and $M = 1.7286$ in the local authority.
- Above results confirmed the hypotheses Hp₄, which states that a statistical difference exists in the usage frequency of conflict-handling styles between the local authority and agricultural organization.

The empirical findings of the study can be elaborated further on however, it is believed that sufficient statistical findings have been given in order to validate the hypotheses and also to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the study. Attention will now be devoted to the limitations of the study.

8.5 Limitations of the study

As an initial exploration in the field of comparison of conflict-handling styles and conflict dynamics between a private and public sector organization, the study carries certain limitations. The most important being the following.

- In the first instance, the two organizations differ in the sense that the public organization has already complied to a large extent to an external environmental influence. This external element is legislation acquiring all institutions in the country to transform the racial employment component, within a certain period of time, to match the ratio of racial groups in the country. The private sector company on the other hand, has not yet given full attention to the affirmative action program, which consequently makes the employee component considerably more homogeneous in the sense that almost 90 percent are Caucasian. With regard to the public sector organization, the percentage of African, Coloured and Indian constitutes more or less 45% percent of the labour component. This difference may have some influence on the evaluation of conflict.

However, due to this imbalance of the racial employee component, it is also believed that the findings would reveal very important information. Such information would highlight perceptions of conflict and conflict-handling styles that could differ considerably in a closed racial, more conservative and mostly single language group as compared to a multi-racial and multi-language group.

- Another limitation of the study was that the researcher could not attend to all the factors that lead to conflict including all the elements of the conflict management process in depth. Including every existing element in a qualitative and quantitative study such as this would prove to be too comprehensive.
 - **The fact that the comparative study was only limited to two organizations means that the findings of the study cannot be generalized with regard to all types of public and private sector**
-

- Qualitative studies that discuss the five conflict-handling styles have been discussed in this study and applied to two different organizations. It is believed that more research should be done to assess the effectiveness of each style to deal with different situations.
- Research is also needed to investigate why specific personality factors and behaviour tend to predispose individuals to interpersonal conflict and to specific styles of conflict-handling.
- Studies using or identifying participants with tendencies towards competitive (dominating) and avoiding personality styles could assist in establishing the type of training or coaching that is needed to help them accept and engage in behaviours required for collaboration.
- In this study there has been rather limited attention paid to the effect of conflict on the individual. Interesting results have however, been obtained so far. The importance of the physical as well as the psychological impact of conflict on the human being should not be underestimated. The ways in which conflict manifests itself in a physical as well as psychological way in terms of interpersonal conflict, and the influence of this in terms of the positive (constructive) or negative (destructive) effects on organizations should be researched in future.
- This comparative study concentrated on large organizations. Future research on conflict handling/ management within small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) is needed.
- In the scenario of a developing country such as South Africa the institution of a democracy has brought cultural and racial groups closer to each other in the workplace. Misunderstandings resulting from this newly formed diverse workforce, work demands with fewer employees causing greater unemployment, communication problems arising from language and cultural barriers, has indicated that this is becoming an important practical as well as theoretical matter and research should concentrate on the way in which subordinates, peers and superiors in business organizations handle conflict with each other.

- In the second chapter of this study it has been stated that one of the sources of conflict is conflict. Thus, conflict-handling styles influence future conflict and future conflict again influence future conflict, and future conflict again influences conflict handling. Studying the sequence of events would contribute to new knowledge regarding types of conflict, management thereof, and in the way in which way influence is exerted between the types and management of conflict.
- Cross-cultural and cross-racial studies, the styles of handling conflict in an environment where forced separation of cultures and races have occurred over time, could reveal important knowledge that can form the basis for the development of successful training programmes for handling/management of conflict.
- The study of conflict has generally been directed to lower, middle and upper – management, as was the case in this research project. Future research as to the conflict-handling styles of lesser educated and non-trained operational personnel in organizations may well contribute very to important information to existing knowledge on conflict.

The directions for future research given above should not be considered as complete. These are merely a few guidelines given to stimulate other researchers interested in the management of conflict. Through this study it has become evident that scholars of conflict, whether from a behavioural, psychological or sociological perspective, have only scratched the surface of this very important subject. Ongoing research in an age of continuous and rapid change in the world is a necessity.

8.7 Contribution of the study

This study has made a theoretical, practical and to a limited extent, a methodological contribution. It may contribute to a better understanding of conflict in the micro-economic field, i.e. the business organization. Insight that was brought about with regard to conflict in non-profit public sector organization (a local authority) and a profit-seeking organization (an agricultural company)

may be able to contribute to the effective management of conflict. Increased and greater in-depth knowledge of various aspects of conflict, as was indicated in this study, will assist in the development of theory and methods of assessing conflict within business organizations and consequently, improvement of conflict-handling/ management techniques.

8.7.1 Theoretical contribution

- This study sheds light on different aspects of conflict within an organization as well as between organizations.
- The study contributes to a better understanding of the sources (causes) of conflict by researching the theoretical approaches to conflict-theory from classical to modern views.
- The study enables an organization or individual to better understand the process of conflict and different strategies and techniques of managing it.
- The study's theoretical qualitative approach in the first part of the research provides a basis from which quantitative empirical research can be conducted.
- The study contributes to theory and academic knowledge in the sense of its contribution in terms of empirical evidence which it has provided with regard to the handling-styles of interpersonal conflict between superiors and subordinates (vertical level) as well as amongst peers (equals) on a horizontal level in business organizations.
- The study also makes a contribution in that the comparison between two totally different organizations (public and private sectors) which function strongly under the influence of political, economic and social constraints and has hopefully also presented new knowledge regarding the handling and management of conflict.

8.7.2 Practical contribution

- The study's major contributions are the framework and criteria it provides to managements for assessing different forms of conflict within a business organization.
- The study also lends support to the constructive (functional) role that conflict can play in an business organization.
- The study may enable business organizations to better understand and manage conflict.
- The study hopefully sheds new light, through the quantitative empirical survey, on important issues such as causes, effects and handling-styles of conflict which management can use in strategic as well as training programmes.
- The study shows that significant differences can exist between business-organizations with regard to perceived sources and effects of conflict as well as the handling-styles applied by individuals. Thus, management has to take cognisance of this fact before deciding what training programmes to use.

8.7.3 Methodological value

- The study supports the contribution of using both qualitative and quantitative methods in assessing conflict in business-organizations.
- The study supports the principles of multi-method and linking research.

Finally it can be said that developing effective ways of managing conflict and in particular cooperative approaches, could be useful for helping individuals and groups feel they can deal with conflict. In this way these parties will be able to take advantage of their autonomy and opportunities to contribute positive and constructively to the organization. Managers and human resource departments currently send individuals to courses where training with regard to conflict management is rarely addressed. Coaching or training individuals to understand

why and how their own personality may be associated or likened to the preference for a particular conflict-handling style could help individuals increase their self-acceptance and make it possible for them to learn behaviours contributing to collaboration and cooperation.

8.8 Recommendations

It should be noted that the survival power of organizations depends on the ability of their employees to deal with the ever expanding and denser networks of internal and external interdependencies. At an operational level it demands greater skills in dealing with many sorts of interdependencies, including the tensions and frictions (conflict) inherent to them (Mastenbroek, 1993:154).

Both organizations analysed in this study are growing and increasing in terms of complexity which may corrode their vitality - especially in the event of increased conflict. Relations between organizational units (individuals) are characterized by impulses not only with regard to mutual dependency and autonomy, but also with regard to conflict situations. Having investigated the causes, effects and handling of conflict in this study, a few recommendations are proposed.

- No matter what type of relation one is talking about, problems in organizations are viewed as manifestations of tensions or conflict between individuals (or groups) on an interpersonal basis. This includes instrumental and socio-emotional relations. It is therefore recommended that emphasis should be placed on positive relations between employees within the organizations. A relational perspective should give adequate attention to interpersonal processes, how these relations work, what sort of behaviour employees exhibit, what problems may occur in their mutual relations, and the styles of conflict-handling they exhibit.
- An archive of intervention methods with regard to conflict cases should be established with the main emphasis on managing dependency relations and negotiating relations. Assistance should be presented by Human Resource Departments with regard to the development of recognized

values such as continuing personal growth, job-enrichment, harmonious co-operation, openness (transparency) trust, and healthy competition. A careful balance between both rivalry and co-operation within organizations maintains healthy competitiveness.

- People always believe that they can handle or resolve conflict, but this is not true. Managing or handling conflict requires not only certain skills but also a good knowledge of the different forms, processes and qualities of conflict. Taking the findings of this study into account, it is suggested that organizations consider the following:
 - embark on an information/ training program for all employees in order to make them conscious and sensitive as far as conflict is concerned and to increase their knowledge on conflict matters and its impact on the organization. Aspects that can be addressed are: the nature and extent of constructive and destructive conflict, influence of stereotypes, racism, ethnocentrism, culture, limitations of resources, status, authority and conflict-handling styles and strategies.
 - Develop a well-balanced organization policy regarding the handling, managing or resolving of conflict.
 - Install a conflict induction training program for all new employees. Such a program should be part of the normal induction program in order to ensure successful integration into the organization.
 - Provide on an ongoing basis, attention to the sources (causes) of conflict and the way in which it can be eliminated or resolved. This process should be initiated by the Human Resource Department and thoroughly supported by the executive management as well as lower order employees.
 - Pay special attention to role and function clarification (job description) of employees as well as line- and staff functions. This very often results in conflict situations.

Taking the above-mentioned recommendations into account, it is further recommended that consideration should be given to the conflict management

strategies of Kottler as presented in table 5.3, as well as the uses of five conflict-handling styles of McKenna in table 5.2 and Rahim in table 5.4. Table 8.1 presents a summary of Mastenbroek's (1993:132) postulates about conflict management that should be included in any training program.

Table 8.1 Postulates about conflict management

Statements	Activities
Developing acceptance.	- Showing independence, creating clarity.
Structuring the network.	- Clarifying internal structure, structuring relationship between central authority and parties.
Promoting equilibrium and symmetry.	- Dividing attention equally, balancing the parties' influence on the process.
Developing optimal intensity.	- Introducing a cooling-off period, pointing out consequences, investigating willingness to change.
Distinguishing:	- Choosing interventions appropriate to this distinction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instrumental issues • socio-emotional tensions • questions of allocation • questions of power 	
Specification, confrontation, synthesis.	- Indicating procedure for specification, confrontation, utilizing impasses for further specification
Being forceful and flexible.	- Providing clear procedures, putting a stop to circular discussions

Source: Mastenbroek (1993:132)

8.9 Achievement of research objectives

In chapter 1, paragraphs 1.3, the objectives for this study were identified. This was again spelled out in chapter 6. The literature study conducted in chapters 2-5 was done to analyse relevant information to achieve some of the objectives. In chapters 6-7 the approach to and findings of the empirical study were reported.

The first objective was to determine how certain conflict theories are conceptualised and used in the clarification of conflict. This objective was achieved through an extensive literature study covering what can be considered the most important classical theories namely those of Marx and Dahrendorf. The neoclassical theories and modern views contributed to the clarification of conflict.

The second objective was to determine and compare the various sources (causes) of conflict, conflict-handling styles as well as the conflict management process. This objective was reached by way of a literature study which coupled the theories in chapter 2 with those in chapter 4. In this way it was successfully established what the sources of conflict are. The comprehensive approach to all the possible points of view can leave little doubt that most viewpoints of possible sources were identified. After having analysed the existing conflict process models, special attention was also paid to the models of Pondy and Robbins and an adapted model was presented.

The third section of this objective namely, to determine what the different conflict-handling styles are and how they can be used, was reached by analysing the most prominent conflict-handling styles identification models. The Thomas-Killman MODE, Rahims ROC-II, and Conflict Management Survey model of Hall formed the core in the investigation. Analysing these models together with strategies and techniques used or prescribed in practice, assisted in reaching the set objective.

The third objective that centred around the empirical survey was developed to prove by way of comparison, the causes of conflict in a public and a private

sector organization; the effect that conflict has on employees of these two organizations; and the conflict-handling styles which are used by employees. In this way the literature study could also be verified to a certain extent. This objective was reached through the findings adequately reflected in chapters 6 and 7.

A summary of the literature and empirical sections of this study and findings have been presented in accordance with the main questions of the study in sections 8.2 and 8.3. Suggestions are also presented with regard to the findings of the study and limitations that influenced the study were pointed out. What has been stated above in this section points to the conclusion that the objectives of the study as noted in chapter 1 and reconfirmed in chapter 6 have been achieved.

8.10 Conclusion

The results of the study will hopefully contribute to the existing body of knowledge that could assist organizations in their efforts to resolve, handle or manage conflict in such a way that it will contribute to constructive growth and development. Within a country like South Africa where the new age of democracy is only a decade old, the environment in which organizations function need a constant flow of knowledge on conflict. Not only is it needed to assist in resolving problems on a macro-level between groups such as unions and employees, but also on a micro-level, that is between individuals in the workplace. It is trusted that this study has provided some new knowledge that can be used.

“Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?” he asked.

“Begin at the beginning” the King said, gravely

“and go on till you come to the end :

Then stop.”

'Alice in Wonderland'

Lewis Carol

1832 – 1898.

---oo00oo---

List of references

Alper, S., Tjosvold, D. & Law, K.S. (2001) "Conflict management, efficacy performance in organisational terms" *Personnel Psychology*. Vol 53 (3):23-29.

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: 123-148.

Anastasi, A. (1976). *Psychological testing*. New York. MacMillan.

Antonioni, D (1998) "Relationship between the big five personality factors and conflict management styles." *International Journal of Conflict Management* 9 (4): 336-356.

Anstey, M (1999) *Managing change: Negotiating conflict*. Cape Town: Juta.

Ashley, D & Orenstein, D M (1985) *Sociological theory: Classical statements*. Boston: Allen and Bacon.

Babbie, E. (1992) *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Badenhorst, F (2001) *Leadership*. In Bergh, Z. C. and Theron, A. L. *Psychology in the work context*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bartolomew, K., Antonia, J.Z. & Marcia, J.E. (2000). Coded semi-structured interviews in psychological research. In H.T. Resi & C.M. Judd. *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 286-312.

Bell, M. & Forde, D.R. (1999) A factorial survey of interpersonal conflict resolution. *The Journal of Social Psychology*. (3): 139

Bergh, Z. C. & Theron, A. L (2001) *Psychology in the work context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blake, R. R. & Mouton, J. S. (1964) *Managerial grid*. Houston, Texas: Gulf

Blake, R. R. & Mouton, J. S. (1978) *The new managerial grid*. Houston: Gulf.

Bodtker, A. M. & Jameson, J.K. (2001) "Emotions in conflict formation and its transformation: Application to organisational conflict management." *International Journal of Conflict Management* 12 (3): 223-226

Bottomore, T.B. & Rubel, M. (1956) *Karl Marx : Selected writings in sociology*. London: Watts.

Callahan, S. & Fleenor, P. (1991) *Understanding organisational behaviour*. Columbus: Charles Merrill.

Clark, L.A & Watson, D. (1995) Construct validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7 : 309-319

Cockeram, G.C. (1995) *Die realisering van werkhumanisering in die plaaslike owerheid*. Potchefstroom. PU vir CHO. (Ph.D. – Dissertation).

Coleman P T (2000) "Power of conflict" in Deutsch M and Coleman P T ed. *Handbook of conflict resolution*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Costa, P.T. Jr., & McCrea, R.R. (1985) *The NEO personality inventory*. Odessa, Florida: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Crawley, J. (1995) *Constructive conflict management*. London: Brealy.

Cuff, E. C. & Payne, G. C. F. (1984) *Perspectives in sociology*. London: Allen.

Curra, F. (1994) *Understanding the social deviance: To the near side of the outer limits*. New York. Harper Collins.

Daft, R. (1997) *Management*. Orlando: Dryden.

Dahrendorf, R. (1976) *Class and class conflict in industrial society*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Dahrendorf, R. (1990) *Class and class conflict in industrial society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Dahrendorf R (1990) *The modern social conflict. An essay on the politics of liberty*. Berkley: University of California Press.

De Dreu, C. K. W. & Van de Vliert, E. (1997) *Using conflict in organisations* London: Sage.

De Church, L.A. & Marks, M.A. (2001) Maximizing the benefits of task conflict: The role of conflict management. *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 12 (1).

De Kock, C. P. (1984) *Die sosiologiese begrip konflik*. Unisa. Pretoria (Ph.D. – Dissertation)

Deutsch, M. & Coleman, P.T. (2000) *The handbook of conflict resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Du Plessis, A.G. (2000) *Geskilbeslegting in arbeidswetgewing in die landbou*. Potchefstroom. PU vir CHO (Ph.D. – Dissertation).

- Emory, C.W. & Cooper, D.R. (1991) *Business research methods*. New York: Richard D. Irwin.
- Fayol, H. (1949) *General and industrial management*. London: Pitman.
- Fisher, R. J. & Keashly, L. (1991) "A contingency approach to third party intervention" (In: Fisher, R. J. ed. *The social psychology of intergroup and international conflict resolution*). New York: Springer.
- Fisher, R. J. (2000) 'Intergroup conflict' (In Deutsch, M. and Coleman, P. T.) *The handbook of conflict resolution*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Folger, J. P. (1993) *Working through conflict*. New York: Harper.
- French, W. L. & Bell, C. H. (1999) *Organizational development*. Englewood Cliffs : Prentice Hall.
- Gaffney, P. (2003) *Local government in SA 2002-2004: Official yearbook*. The Gaffey Group. Sandton. South Africa.
- Greyling, P. J. (2000) Die noodsaaklikheid van 'n regstellende aksieprogram vir die primêre en sekondêre onderwys in die vaaldriehoek. PU vir CHO. Potchefstroom. (M.A. – Dissertation).
- Gross, M. A. & Guerrero, L. K. (2000) "Managing conflict appropriately and effectively: An application of the competence model to Rahim's organizational conflict styles". *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 11(3): 200-227.
- Gruber, H. E. (2000) "Creativity and conflict resolution" (In Deutsch, M. and Coleman, P. T. 2000. *The handbook of conflict resolution: (Theory and practice)*. New York: Jossey-Bass.

Hair, G.F., Anderson, R.E. et. al. (1995) *Multivariate Data Analysis: With readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Hall, J. (1986) "Conflict management survey" Houston, Texas: Teleometrics International.

Havenga, W. (2002) *Konflikdinamika binne 'n plaaslike bestuursomgewing*. PU vir CHO. Potchefstroom. (M.A. – Dissertation).

Hellriegel, D. (2001) *Management: South African Edition*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Hellriegel, D, Slocum, J. W. and Woodman, R. W. (1983) *Organizational behaviour*. New York: West Publishing Co.

Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. Sage Publications : London.

Holtzhausen, U. M. (1994) *Interpersoonlike konflikhanteringsmetodes van stedelinge binne die werksituasie*. PU vir CHO. Potchefstroom. (Ph.D. – Thesis).

Hough, M. & Minaar, A. (1997) *Conflict, violence and conflict resolution*. Pretoria: HSRC.

Howell, D.C. (1995). *Fundamental statistics for behavioural sciences*. Wadsworth Publishing Company: Belmont, California.

Ilgen, D.R. (1999) "Teams embedded in organizations". *American Psychologist*. 54.

Imazi, K-I & Ohbuchi, K-I. (2002) *Conflict resolution and procedural fairness in Japanese work organizations*. *Japanese Psychological Research* 44 (2).

Ivancevich, J. M., Donnelly, J. H. & Gibson, J. L. (1989) *Management: Principles and functions*. Boston: Irwin.

Jackson, S. E. & Schuler, R. S. (2000) *Managing human resources: A partnership perspective*. Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing.

Jehn, K., Chadwick, C. & Thatcher, S. (1997) "To agree or not to agree: Diversity, conflict and group outcomes" *International Journal of Conflict Management* 8: 287-306.

Jones, G. (2000) *Organisational theory*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, T. & Tjosvold, D. (2000) "Constructive controversy: The value of intellectual opposition" (In Deutsch, M. and Coleman, P. T. 2000. *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*) New York: Jossey-Bass.

Jordaan, D. (1993) *Konflik en geweld as determinante van arbeidsonrus by 'n voedselvervaardigings onderneming..* PU vir CHO. Potchefstroom. (Ph.D. – Thesis).

Jung, C.G. (1971) *Psychological types*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Krause, R. M. & Morsella, E. (2000) "Communication and conflict" (In Deutsch, M. and Coleman, P. T. ed. *Handbook of conflict resolution*). New York: Jossey-Bass.

Kreitner, R. & Kinicki, A. (2001) *Organisational behaviour*. New York : McGraw-Hill.

Kruger, D.J.F. (1998) Regstellende aksie: Die uitdagings vir plaaslike owerheidsopleiding in die Vrystaat. Potchefstroom. PU vir CHO. (Ph.D. – Dissertation).

Lacey, H. (2000) How to resolve conflict in the workplace, Vermont USA: Gower.

Lawrence, P. R. and Lorsch, J. W. (1990) Organization and environment: Managing differences and integration. Homewood: Richard Irwin.

Lee, C. (1990) "Relative status of employees and styles of handling interpersonal conflict: An experimental study with Korean managers." *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 1: 327-340.

Lewin, D. (2001) "IR and HR perspectives on workplace conflict. What can each learn from the other?" *Human Resource Management Review* 11 (2001): 453-485.

Litterer, J. A. (1966) "Conflict in organization: A re-examination" *Theory and research*. Edina, USA: Interaction.

Lopreato, J. & Hazelrigg, L. E. (1972) Class, conflict and mobility: Theories and studies of class structure. San Fransisco: Chandler Publishing.

Lussier, R. (1997) Management: Concepts, applications and skill development. Cincinnati: South Western College Publishing.

Mannix, E. (2003) "Conflict and conflict resolutions. A return to theorizing" *Academy of Management Review* 28(4): 543-546.

Marx, K. (1965) The class struggle (In Parsons, T., Shills, E., Naegele, K. D. and Pits, J. R. eds.) *Theories of society: Foundations of modern sociological theory*. New York: Free Press p.529-535.

Mastenbroek, W.E.G. (1993) Conflict management and organizational development. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Mayer, B. (2000) The dynamics of conflict resolution, San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

McKendrick, B. and Hoffman, W. (1990) People and violence in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

McKenna, E. (2001) Business psychology and organisational behaviour. East Sussex BN: Psychology Press.

McNamara, P.L. (2003) Conflict resolution strategies. Office PRO. Aug/Sept.

McNeil, E. B. (1965) The nature of human conflict. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994) Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source-book. Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage Publications.

Moberg, P. J. (2001) "Linking conflict strategy to five-factor model: Theoretical and empirical foundations". *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 12(1): 47-69

Moore, C. W. (1996) The mediation process: Practical strategies for resolving conflict. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Nell P H S (2000) Regstellende aksie in die plaaslike oorgangsraad van Britz: 'n Empiriese ondersoek. Potchefstroom. PU vir CHO. (M.A. – Dissertation).

Nelson D & Quick J (2001) *Organizational behaviour. Foundations, Realities and challenges.* Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing.

Neuman, W.L. (2003) *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* New York: Pearson Education Inc.

Nunnally, J.C. & Bernstein, I.H. (1994), *Psychometric theory.* New York. McGraw-Hill.

Nutting, J., Cielens, M. and Strachan, J. (1996) *The business of communicating.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Opatow, S. (2000) *Aggression and violence.* (In: Deutsch, M. and Coleman, P. T.) *The handbook of conflict resolution.* San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Pondy, L. R. (1969) Reflections on organizational conflict: Concepts and models. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour.* 13 (3): 125-261.

Pondy, L. (1987) Organizational conflict: Concepts and models. *Administrative Science Quaterly.* 12 (2): 296 – 320.

Pons, A. & Patrick, D. (2000) *Labour Relations handbook.* Cape Town: Juta.

Rahim, M. A. (1983) "A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict" *Academy of Management Journal.* 26: 368-376.

Rahim, M.A. (1986a) "Referent role and styles of handling interpersonal conflict." *The Journal of Social Psychology.* 7 (2): 144-153.

Rahim, M A (1986b) *Managing conflict in organisations.* New York: Praeger.

- Rahim, M. A. (1992) *Managing conflict in organizations*. New York: Praeger.
- Rahim, M. A. (2001) *Managing conflict in organizations*. Westport, C T: Quorum Books.
- Rahim, M. A. (2002) "Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict." *International Journal of conflict Management*. 13(3): 206-236.
- Rahim, M.A. & Bonoma, T.V. (1979) *Managing organizational conflict: A model for diagnosis and intervention*. *Psychological Reports*. 44
- Rahim, M.A. & Magner, N.R. (1995) "Confirmatory factor analysis of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: First-order factor model and its intervariance across groups." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 80: 122-132.
- Rahim, M. A., Magner, N. R. & Shapiro, D. L. (2000) 'Do justice perceptions influence styles of handling conflict with supervisors?: What justice perceptions, precisely?' *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 11(1): 9-31.
- Renwick, P.A. (1975). "Perception and management of supervisor-subordinate conflict." *Organisational Behaviour and Human Performance*. 13: 16-22.
- Rhenman, E., Strömberg, L. and Westerbund, G. (1970) *Conflict and cooperation in business organisations*. London: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Ritzer, G. (1992) *Sociological theory. Its development and major paradigms*. New York. McGraw-Hill.
- Robbins, S. P. (1974) *Managing organisational conflict: A non-traditional approach*. Englewood Cliffs New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Robbins, S. P. (1998) *Organisational behaviour*. New Jersey: Simon and Schuster.

Robbins, S. P., Odendaal, A. and Roodt, G. (2003) *Organisational behaviour: Global and South African Perspectives*. Cape Town: Pearson Education Inc.

Rue, L. W. & Byars, L. L. (1983) *Management: theory and application*. Homewood: Richard Irwin.

Salkind, N.J. (2000). *Statistics for people who think they hate statistics*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Sandy, S. V., Boardman, S. K. & Deutsch, M. (2000) "Personality and conflict (In Deutsch, M. and Coleman, P. T. ed. *The Handbook of Conflict Management*). San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schermerhorn, R. (1999) *Management*. New York: John Wiley.

Schloh, E, C, (1986) "Using central staff to boost line initiative". *Management Review*. 65 (5): 17-33.

Slabbert, J.A. et al. (1989) *Managing industrial relations in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Sigma Press.

Slabbert, A. D. (2002) "Managerial modes of conflict resolution in the banking industry." *South African Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*. 5(1): 258-270.

Smit, G.J. (1991) *Psigometrika: Aspekte van toets-gebruik*. Bloemfontein: HAUM.

Steyn, A.G.W., Smit, C.F., Du Toit, S.H.C & Strasheim, C. (1995). *Moderne statistiek vir die praktyk*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Stoner, J. A. F. (1989) *Management*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Stoner, J. A. F. & Wankel, C. (1996) *Management*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Stones, R. (1998) *Key sociological thinkers*. New York: University Press.

Stroh, L.K. (2002) *Organizational behaviour : A management challenge*. Fort Worth : Dryden Press.

Tidd, S.T. & Friedman, R.A. (2002) Conflict style and coping with role conflict: A extension of the uncertainty model of work stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 13 (3).

Ting-Toomey S, et al. (1991) 'Culture, face maintainence, and styles of handling interpersonal conflict : A study in five cultures' *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 2: 275-296.

Tjosvold, D., Morishima, M. & Belsheim, J.A. (1999) Complaint handling on the shop floor: Cooperative relationships and open-minded strategies." *International Journal of Conflict Management*. 10(1): 45-69.

Thomas, K. W. (1976) "Conflict and conflict management." (In Dunette, M. D. ed. *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*.) Chicago: Rand McNally.

Thomas, K.W. & Killman, H.R. (1974) *Thomas-Killman conflict MODE instrument*. New York: Xicom.

Thomas, K.W. & Killman H.R. (1976) "Conflict and conflict management." (In Dunette, M.D. (ed.) *Handbook of Industrial Organizational Psychology*). Chicago: Rand McNally.

Turner, J.H. (1991) *The structure of sociological theory*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Van Aarde, M.C. (1991) *Konflikbestuur: Die verband tussen deelnemende ingrepe, konflikpotensiaal en konflikmanifestasie*. RAU. Johannesburg. (M.A. – Dissertation).

Van Aarde M C and Nieuweyer L J (2003) Conflict management (in Slabbert. J. A., Prinsloo, J. J., Swanepoel, B. J. and Backer, W.) *Managing employment relations in South Africa*. Durban : Butterworths.

Van de Vliert, E. (1997) *Complex interpersonal conflict behaviour: Theoretical frontiers*. Hove, East Sussex, UK: Psychological Press.

Van de Vliert, E. & Euwema, M. C. (1994) "Agreeableness and activeness as components of conflict behaviours" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 66: 674-687.

Van Uytrecht, P. (1995) "Conflict power labour relations and labour law." *Industrial Law Journal*. 16 (1).

Van Veelen, M. (1995) "Conflicten in de Bijbel" (In Borgdorff-Hendriks, J.C.P. et al. *Conflicthantering*). Uitgewerij De Vuurbraak, Nederland, 31-50.

Vecchio, R. P. (2000) *Organisational behaviour*. New York: Dryden Press.

Venter, T.S. (1988). 'n Veranderende verhoudingsstelsel op mikro- en makrovlak in 'n landboukoöperasie. Potchefstroom. PU vir CHO. (Ph.D – Dissertation).

Visagie, J. C. (1992) Konfliktbestuur in 'n arbeidsverhoudinge sisteem. *Entrepreneur* 11(7): 12-13.

Volkema, R. J. & Bergman, T. J. (1989) "Interpersonal conflict at work. An analysis of behavioural responses" *Human Relations* 42 (9): 757-770.

Volkema, R. J. & Bergman, T. J. (2001) Conflict styles as indicators of behavioural patterns in interpersonal conflict *The Journal of Social Psychology* 135 (1): 5-15.

Von Neuman, J. & Morgenstern, K. (1947) Theory of games and economic behaviour. Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press.

Wageman, R. (1995) "Interdependence and group effectiveness." *Administrative Science Quaterly*. 40 (3).

Wall. J.A. & Callister, R.R. (1995) Conflict and its management. *Journal of Management*. 21: 515-558.

Walton, E. R. (1987) *Managing conflict: Interpersonal dialogue and third-party roles*. London: Addison-Wesley.

Watson, D. & Clark, L.A. (1997) Extraversion and its positive emotional core. (In R.Hogan, J. Johnson, S.Briggs, Handbook of personality psychology). San Diego: Academic Press.

Weick, K.E. (1979) The social psychology of organizing. Reading, Mass. Usa: Addison-Wesley.

Weider-Hatfield, D. and Hatfield, J. D. (1995) "Relationships among conflict management styles, levels of conflict, and reactions to work." *Journal of Social Psychology*. 135(6): 687-698.

Williams, C. (2000) *Management Cincinnati*: South-Western College Publishing.

Annexure A

Konflik-vraelys / Conflict Questionnaire

VERTROULIK

Vraelys voltooi te word deur werknemers van die munisipaliteit

DOEL

Om data te verkry oor konflik, omvang en aard daarvan binne die munisipaliteit, dit te verwerk en dan met aanbevelings te kom oor hoe dit, indien nodig, bestuur kan word.

BEANTWOORDING VAN VRAE

Die vraeboek kan in u eie tyd ingevul word en behoort nie langer as 10 minute te neem om te voltooi nie. U moet die vrae sonder die hulp van ander persone en objektief en eerlik beantwoord.

VERTROULIKHEID

Alle inligting wat verstrek word is vertroulik en konfidensieel en sal **onder geen omstandighede** u werk en posisie in gedrang bring nie. Die inligting is alleen ter insae van die navorsers.

DATUM EN PLEK VAN INHANDIGING VAN VOLTOOIDE VRAEBOEK

Die voltooide vraelys moet asseblief **binne 48 uur na ontvangs** in die bussie wat beskikbaar gestel sal word deur die Menslike Hulpbron Departement van die onderneming, geplaas word.

U samewerking sal waardeer word.

W. Havenga, Navorsers. Tel: 083-324 4769
E-pos: wh@rau.ac.za

CONFIDENTIAL

Questionnaire to be completed by employees of the municipality

OBJECTIVE

To gather data on conflict, its nature and extent thereof within the municipality, process it and then to make recommendations if deemed necessary on how it should be managed.

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

The questionnaire can be completed in your own time and should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete. Answer the questions objectively and honestly without the assistance of anyone else.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information supplied will be treated as private and confidential and will **under no circumstances** place your work or position in danger. The information is only for perusal of the researcher.

DATE AND PLACE FOR HANDING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The completed questionnaire must be placed in the appropriate box that will be supplied by the Human Resource Department of the company, within **48 hours after you have received it**.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

W. Havenga, Researcher. Tel: 083-324 4769
E-mail: wh@rau.ac.za

AFDELING A: BIOGRAFIESE BESONDERHEDE (Merk met 'n X)**SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (Mark with an X)**

Antwoord asb. alle vrae / Please answer all questions

1. Geslag / Sex

1	Manlik/Male	
2	Vroulik/Female	

2. Ouderdom / Age

1	Jonger as/Younger than 20	
2	21-35	
3	36-45	
4	46-60	
5	Ouer as/ Older than 60	

3. Hoogste kwalifikasie behaal / Highest qualification achieved.

1	St 8 (Graad 10) of laer/ St 8 (Grade 10) or lower	
2	St. 9 (Grade 11)	
3	St. 10 (Grade 12)	
4	Diploma of Sertifikaat / Diploma or Certificate	
5	Voorgraadse Graad/ Undergraduate Degree(s)	
6	Nagraadse graad(e)/Post-Graduate degree(s)	

4. Wat is u huistaal ? / Your home language ?

1	Engels/ English	
2	Afrikaans	
3	Tswana	
4	Sotho	
5	Xhosa	
6	Zulu	
7	Ander/ Other	

5. Hoeveel jaar werk u al by hierdie munisipaliteit ? /

How many years have you been working for this municipality ?

1	1-4 jaar / years	
2	5-10 jaar / years	
3	11-15 jaar / years	
4	16-20 jaar / years	
5	21-25 jaar / years	
6	26-30 jaar / years	
7	Meer as 30 jaar / More than 30 years	

AFDELING C/ SECTION C: (Antwoord asb alle vrae / Please answer all questions)

1. Indien u konflik in u werk ervaar - watter invloed het dit op u? Merk alle toepaslike opsies... / *If you experience conflict in your work - what influence does it have on you? Mark all applicable options...*

- a.) Gebrek aan prestasie / *Lack of performance*
- b.) Raak vyandig teenoor kollegas / *Become hostile toward colleagues*
- c.) Weier samewerking / *Decline cooperation*
- d.) Ervaar depressie / *Experience depression*
- e.) Oorweeg verandering van werk / *Consider change of job*
- f.) Vervreem uself van ander personeel / *Alienate yourself from other staff members*
- g.) Ontwikkel gesondheidsprobleme / *Develop health problems*

JA/YES NEE/NO

2. Is u bewus van enige beleidsdokument of standaard prosedures in u organisasie wat konflikhantering en – oplossing aanspreek?! / *Are you aware of any policy document or standard procedures in your organization that addresses conflict handling and - solution?*
3. Sou u belangstel om 'n opleidingsprogram te ondergaan om meer te wete te kom oor konflik en die hantering en bestuur daarvan? / *Would you be interested in taking part in a training program in order to gain more knowledge on conflict and the handling/managing thereof?*

1.	2.
1.	2.

Vervolg / *Continue*

AFDELING D/ SECTION D: (Beantwoord asb. alle vrae / Please answer all questions)

U mag onverenigbaarhede, misverstande of verskille d.i. (konflik) met 'n persoon op 'n hoër vlak as u hê. Plaas elkeen van die volgende stellings, om aan te dui **hoe u konflik met u HOOF hanteer**, in rangorde. Merk u reaksie in die toepaslike vakkies op u antwoord bladsy met 'n (X). Daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoord nie. Die reaksie wat mees kenmerkend van u gedrag is wanneer u in 'n situasie van konflik met u hoof verkeer, is die beste antwoord.

*You may have incompatibilities, disagreements, or differences (i.e., conflict) with persons on a higher level as you. Rank each of the following statements to indicate **how you handle conflict with your BOSS (Superior)**. Mark your responses in the appropriate boxes on your answer sheet with an (X). There is no right or wrong answers. The response which is most characteristic of your behaviour, in a situation of conflict with your boss, is the best answer.*

5. Stem glad nie saam / *Strongly disagree*
 4. Stem nie saam / *Disagree*
 3. Besluitloos / *Undecided*
 2. Stem saam / *Agree*
 1. Stem tenvolte saam / *Strongly agree*

STELLINGS / STATEMENTS

1. Ek probeer om 'n saak saam met my hoof te ondersoek en 'n oplossing aanvaarbaar vir ons albei te vind / *I try to investigate an issue with my boss to find a solution acceptable to both of us.*
2. Oor die algemeen probeer ek om aan die behoeftes van my hoof te voldoen. / *I generally try to satisfy the needs of my boss.*
3. Ek probeer keer dat ek in die kollig geplaas word (put on the spot) en probeer om konflik met my hoof vir myself te hou. / *I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and keep conflict with my boss to myself*
4. Ek probeer om my idees met dié van my hoof sinvol te integreer om gesamentlik tot 'n besluit te kom / *I try to integrate my ideas with those of my boss to come up with a joint decision.*
5. Ek werk saam met my hoof om 'n oplossing te vind wat beide ons verwagtinge bevredig / *I try to work with my boss to find solutions to a problem which satisfy both our expectations.*

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Vervolg / Continue

5. Stem glad nie saam / Strongly disagree
 4. Stem nie saam / Disagree
 3. Besluitloos / Undecided
 2. Stem saam / Agree
 1. Stem tenvolle saam / Strongly agree

20. Ek gebruik "gee-en-neem" sodat 'n kompromie bereik kan word.
I use "give-and-take" to reach a compromise.
21. Ek staan normaalweg vas in die navolging van my kant van die saak.
I am generally firm in pursuing my standpoint of the issue.
22. Ek probeer om al die bekommernisse na vore te bring sodat
 problemsake op die beste manier opgelos kan word.
*I try to bring all concerns out in the open so that the issues can be
 resolved in the best possible way.*
23. Ek werk saam met my hoof om vir ons oplossings te vind wat vir
 ons albei aanvaarbaar is. / *I collaborate with my boss in coming
 up with decisions acceptable to both of us.*
24. Ek probeer om aan die verwagtinge van my hoof te voldoen.
I try to satisfy the expectations of my boss.
25. Somtyds gebruik ek my mag om 'n mededingende situasie te wen.
I sometimes use my power to win in a competitive situation.
26. Ek probeer om my verskille met my hoof vir myself te hou om
 sodoende kwade gevoelens te vermy. / *I try to keep my disagreement
 with my boss to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.*
27. Ek probeer om ongemaklike diskussies met my hoof te vermy.
I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my boss.
28. Ek probeer om saam met my hoof te werk aan 'n behoorlike begrip
 van 'n probleem. / *I try to work with my boss towards proper
 understanding of a problem*

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Vervolg / Continue

AFDELING E/ SECTION E: (Antwoord asb. alle vrae / Please answer all questions)

U mag onverenigbaarhede, misverstande of verskille (konflik) met persone op die selfde vlak as u hê. Plaas elkeen van die volgende stellings, **om aan te dui hoe u konflik met u GELYKE hanteer**, in rangorde. Merk u reaksie in die toepaslike vakkies op u antwoord bladsy met 'n (X). Daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoord nie. Die reaksie wat mees kenmerkend van u gedrag wanneer u in 'n situasie van konflik met u hoof verkeer, is die beste antwoord.

*You may have incompatibilities, disagreements, or differences (i.e., conflict) with persons who are on equal level as you. Rank each of the following statements to indicate **how you handle conflict with your EQUAL**. Mark your responses in the appropriate boxes on your answer sheet with an (X). There is no right or wrong answers. The response which is most characteristic of your behaviour, in a situation of conflict with your boss, is the best answer.*

5. Stem glad nie saam / *Strongly disagree*
 4. Stem nie saam / *Disagree*
 3. Besluitloos / *Undecided*
 2. Stem saam / *Agree*
 1. Stem tenvolte saam / *Strongly agree*

STELLINGS / STATEMENTS

1. Ek probeer om 'n saak saam met my gelyke te ondersoek en 'n oplossing aanvaarbaar vir ons albei te vind / *I try to investigate an issue with my equal to find a solution acceptable to both of us.*
2. Oor die algemeen probeer ek om aan die behoeftes van my gelyke te voldoen. / *I generally try to satisfy the needs of my equal.*
3. Ek probeer keer dat ek in die kollig geplaas word (put on the spot) en probeer om konflik met my gelyke vir myself te hou. / *I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and keep conflict with my equal to myself*
4. Ek probeer om my idees met dié van my gelyke sinvol te integreer om gesamentlik tot 'n besluit te kom / *I try to integrate my ideas with those of my equal to come up with a joint decision.*
5. Ek werk saam met my gelyke om 'n oplossing te vind wat beide ons verwagtinge bevredig / *I try to work with my equal to find solutions to a problem which satisfy both our expectations.*

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Vervolg / Continue

5. Stem glad nie saam / Strongly disagree
 4. Stem nie saam / Disagree
 3. Besluitloos / Undecided
 2. Stem saam / Agree
 1. Stem tenvolle saam / Strongly agree

20. Ek gebruik "gee-en-neem" sodat 'n kompromie bereik kan word.
I use "give-and-take" to reach a compromise.
21. Ek staan normaalweg vas in die navolging van my kant van die saak.
I am generally firm in pursuing my standpoint of the issue.
22. Ek probeer om al die bekommernisse na vore te bring sodat
 problemsake op die beste manier opgelos kan word.
*I try to bring all concerns out in the open so that the issues can be
 resolved in the best possible way.*
23. Ek werk saam met my gelyke om vir ons oplossings te vind wat vir
 ons albei aanvaarbaar is. / *I collaborate with my equal in coming
 up with decisions acceptable to both of us.*
24. Ek probeer om aan die verwagtinge van my gelyke te voldoen.
I try to satisfy the expectations of my equal.
25. Somtyds gebruik ek my mag om 'n mededingende situasie te wen.
I sometimes use my power to win in a competitive situation.
26. Ek probeer om my verskille met my gelyke vir myself te hou om
 sodoende kwade gevoelens te vermy. / *I try to keep my disagreement
 with my equal to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.*
27. Ek probeer om ongemaklike diskussies met my gelyke te vermy.
I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my equal.
28. Ek probeer om saam met my gelyke te werk aan 'n behoorlike begrip
 van 'n probleem. / *I try to work with my equal towards proper
 understanding of a problem*

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Dankie vir u samewerking. / Thank you for your cooperation

Konflik-vraelys / Conflict Questionnaire

VERTROULIK

Vraelys voltooi te word deur werknemers van die maatskappy

DOEL

Om data te verkry oor konflik, omvang en aard daarvan binne die onderneming, dit te verwerk en dan met aanbevelings te kom oor hoe dit, indien nodig, bestuur kan word.

BEANTWOORDING VAN VRAE

Die vraeboek kan in u eie tyd ingevul word en behoort nie langer as 10 minute te neem om te voltooi nie. U moet die vrae sonder die hulp van ander persone objektief en eerlik beantwoord.

VERTROULIKHEID

Alle inligting wat verstrekkend word is vertroulik en konfidensieel en sal **onder geen omstandighede** u werk en posisie in gedrang bring nie. Die inligting is alleen ter insae van die navorser.

DATUM EN PLEK VAN INHANDIGING VAN VOLTOOIDE VRAEBOË

Die voltooide vraelys moet asseblief **binne 48 uur na ontvangs** in die bussie wat beskikbaar gestel sal word deur die Menslike Hulpbron Departement van die onderneming, geplaas word.

U samewerking sal waardeer word.

W. Havenga, Navorser. Tel: 083-324 4769
E-pos: wh@rau.ac.za

CONFIDENTIAL

Questionnaire to be completed by employees of the company

OBJECTIVE

To gather data on conflict, its nature and extent thereof within the company's, process it and then to make recommendations if deemed necessary on how it should be managed.

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

The questionnaire can be completed in your own time and should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Answer the questions objectively and honestly without the assistance of anyone else.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information supplied will be treated as private and confidential and will **under no circumstances** place your work or position in danger. The information is only for perusal of the researcher.

DATE AND PLACE FOR HANDING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The completed questionnaire must be placed in the appropriate box that will be supplied by the Human Resource Department of the company, within **48 hours after you have received it**.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

W. Havenga, Researcher. Tel: 083-324 4769
E-mail: wh@rau.ac.za

AFDELING A: BIOGRAFIESE BESONDERHEDE (Merk met 'n X)**SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (Mark with an X)**

Antwoord asb. alle vrae... / Please answer all questions...

1. Geslag / Sex

1	Manlik/Male	
2	Vroulik/Female	

2. Ouderdom / Age

1	Jonger as/Younger than 20	
2	21-35	
3	36-45	
4	46-60	
5	Ouer as/ Older than 60	

3. Hoogste kwalifikasie behaal / Highest qualification achieved.

1	St 8 (Graad 10) of laer/ St 8 (Grade 10) or lower	
2	St. 9 (Grade 11)	
3	St. 10 (Grade 12)	
4	Diploma of Sertifikaat / Diploma or Certificate	
5	Voorgaadse Graad/ Undergraduate Degree(s)	
6	Nagraadse graad(e)/Post-Graduate degree(s)	

4. Wat is u huistaal ? / Your home language ?

1	Engels/ English	
2	Afrikaans	
3	Tswana	
4	Sotho	
5	Xhosa	
6	Zulu	
7	Other	

5. Hoeveel jaar werk u al by hierdie maatskappy ? / How many years have you been working for this company ?

1	1-4 jaar / years	
2	5-10 jaar / years	
3	11-15 jaar / years	
4	16-20 jaar / years	
5	21-25 jaar / years	
6	26-30 jaar / years	
7	Meer as 30 jaar / More than 30 years	

**Afdelings B tot E is presies dieselfde as die van die vraelys vir die munisipaliteite
/ Sections B to E are exactly the same as the questionnaire for municipalities**