

**AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES USED BY AN ORGANISATION
TO
MANAGE CONFLICT**

**BY
ANN SHARON LOURENS**

Submitted to the Faculty of Management in accordance with the requirements of the
degree

**MAGISTER TECHNOLOGIAE (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)
at the Port Elizabeth Technikon**

PROMOTER: Mr D. M. Berry

DATE SUBMITTED: May 2000

PORT ELIZABETH

DECLARATION

I declare that:

THE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES USED BY AN ORGANISATION TO MANAGE CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY

is my own work and all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I have not previously submitted this thesis for a degree at another university or technikon.

A S Lourens

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful thanks are extended to all of those individuals who contributed to the successful completion of this study. In particular, the assistance of the following are acknowledged:

- Mr Dave Berry, my supervisor, for the professional and patient manner in which he guided me through this study and shared his knowledge.
- Mr J Bosman, Senior Lecturer: Mathematics and Statistics at the Port Elizabeth Technikon, for assistance with the analysis of my research data.
- Prof H Jeffery, Dean of the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Faculty, Port Elizabeth Technikon, for his support throughout the study.
- Prof Norman Kemp, Head of Department Management Faculty, for his advice and guidance.
- Mr Karl du Preez, Head of Department Applied Engineering Management for his continuous guidance, advice and encouragement throughout this study.
- My employer, the Port Elizabeth Technikon.
- The employees of the organisation who completed the questionnaire and Ms Catherina Lourens for distributing and collecting the questionnaires.
- My parents, Thelma and Leslie and brother Jaime Webber for their support and motivation.
- My husband Francois and son Damian, for their support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

This research study addresses the problem of determining the strategies that can be used to manage conflict effectively. To achieve this objective a comprehensive literature study was performed to determine the views on conflict and various models of conflict. The study also included the reasons for and sources of conflict and the effects of conflict on an organisation. The next step was to identify the conflict management strategies that were revealed by the literature study. The appropriate conflict handling styles, how to improve organisational practices and special rules and structures were discussed as well as various suggestions from different authors on how to resolve a conflict situation. Based on the information obtained from the literature study a model was developed to serve as a guide to organisations to manage conflict effectively.

Managers from a specific organisation were requested to complete questionnaires in order to determine the strategies used by their organisation to manage conflict. The questionnaire was developed in accordance with the findings from the research. The answers of the respondents were analysed and compared to the findings of the literature study.

The information obtained from the literature study and from the respondents resulted in various recommendations and conclusions. The previously mentioned model that was developed was applied to the organisation, specifically addressing the pertinent issues as indicated by the respondents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
CHAPTER 1	
PROBLEM DEFINITION AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	1
1.1 THE PROBLEM DEFINITION	1
1.2 DEMARKATION OF THE RESEARCH	2
1.2.1 Management level	2
1.2.2 Size of the organisation	3
1.2.3 Geographical demarcation	3
1.2.4 Type of organisation	3
1.3 DEFINITION OF SELECTED CONCEPTS	4
1.3.1 Strategies	4
1.3.2 Conflict	4
1.3.3 Managing conflict	6
1.4 KEY ASSUMPTIONS	7
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH	7
1.6 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	9
1.7 THE RESEARCH DESIGN	10
1.7.1 The research design	10
1.7.2 The literature survey	10
1.7.3 Empirical study	10
1.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS	11

CHAPTER 2	12
THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON ORGANISATIONS	
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 CHANGING VIEWS OF CONFLICT	12
2.2.1 The traditional view	12
2.2.2 The contemporary or interactionist view	13
2.3 FUNCTIONAL VERSUS DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICT	14
2.4 TYPES AND SOURCES OF CONFLICT	15
2.5 MODELS OF CONFLICT	17
2.5.1 Process conflict model	17
2.5.2 The structural conflict model	19
2.5.3 The organisational conflict model	20
2.6 THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT	27
2.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS	30
 CHAPTER 3	 32
THE IDENTIFICATION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	
THAT WILL ASSIST MANAGERS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE	
CONFLICT	
 3.1 INTRODUCTION	 32
3.2 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	32
3.3 THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	33
3.4 THE STYLE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	36
3.4.1 Forcing	37
3.4.2 Collaborating	38
3.4.3 Accommodating	38
3.4.4 Avoiding	38
3.4.5 Compromising	39

3.5 THE USE OF THE FIVE CONFLICT MODES	41
3.6 CONFRONTATIONAL TECHNIQUES	42
3.6.1 Negotiation and bargaining	42
3.6.2 Mediation	43
3.6.3 Arbitration	43
3.7 IMPROVED ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES	43
3.7.1 Superordinate goals	43
3.7.2 Reducing ambiguities and jurisdictional disputes	44
3.7.3 Improving policies, procedures and rules	44
3.7.4 Reallocation or addition of resources	45
3.7.5 Modifying communications	45
3.7.6 Rotation of personnel	45
3.7.7 Altering reward structure	46
3.7.8 Training	46
3.7.9 Inter-group interaction	46
3.7.10 Problem solving	47
3.8 SPECIAL RULES AND STRUCTURES	47
3.8.1 Liaison rules and interrogators	48
3.8.2 Relocation or recombining of units	48
3.8.3 Ombudsman	49
3.8.4 Organisational design	49
3.9 PROPOSED CONFLICT RESOLVING SYSTEMS	50
3.10 THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION	53
3.10.1 Dilemmas of corporate dispute resolution	53
3.10.2 The problem with the process and the people	54
3.11 RESPONDING TO PROBLEMS	56
3.12 STIMULATING CONFLICT	58
3.13 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	60
3.13.1 Bisno's conflict management flowchart	60
3.13.2 Suggested conflict management procedure	63
3.14 CONCLUDING REMARKS	69

CHAPTER 4	70
DESIGNING THE FIELD STUDY	
4.1 INTRODUCTION	70
4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	70
4.3 STATISTICS AS A TOOL OF RESEARCH	72
4.3.1 Primary functions of statistics	73
4.3.2 Classical measurement of research	74
4.3.3 Validity and reliability	75
4.4 THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD	77
4.5 THE EMPIRICAL STUDY	79
4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS	85
 CHAPTER 5	 86
INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY	
5.1 INTRODUCTION	86
5.2 RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE	87
5.2.1 Results from section A of the questionnaire	87
5.2.2 Summary of section A data	94
5.2.3 Quantitative analysis of the results of section B of the questionnaire	96
5.2.4 Summary of section B data	104
5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS	106
 CHAPTER 6	 107
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
6.1 INTRODUCTION	107
6.2 MAIN FINDINGS	107
6.2.1 A flowchart for managing conflict effectively	108

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	110
6.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	111
6.5 CONCLUSION	112
REFERENCES	114

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
FIGURE 2.1	CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT AND PERFORMANCE	14
FIGURE 2.2	PONDY'S CONFLICT MODEL	18
FIGURE 2.3	THE CONFLICT PROCESS	20
FIGURE 3.1	THE FIVE CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES	37
FIGURE 3.2	UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT OVERUSE AND UNDER USE	40
FIGURE 3.3	THE APPROPRIATE CONFLICT HANDLING STYLE	41
FIGURE 3.4	A FLOW DIAGRAM OF THE CONFLICT PROCESS	61
FIGURE 3.5	SUGGESTED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE	64
FIGURE 4.1	MEASUREMENT SCALES	74
FIGURE 5.1	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREA COVERED IN THE SURVEY	87
FIGURE 5.2	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF POSITIONS HELD BY RESPONDENTS	88
FIGURE 5.3	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS HELD BY RESPONDENTS	90
FIGURE 5.4	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF AGE OF RESPONDENTS	91
FIGURE 5.5	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE REASONS OF CONFLICT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION	92

FIGURE 5.6	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF CONFRONTATIONAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE ORGANISATION	97
FIGURE 5.7	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF IMPROVING ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE ORGANISATION	98
FIGURE 5.8	GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF SPECIAL RULES AND STRUCTURES APPLIED IN THE ORGANISATION	99
FIGURE 5.9	A SUMMARY OF THE STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT USED BY THE RESPONDENTS	103
FIGURE 6.1	MODEL OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	109

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
TABLE 5.1	GEOGRAPHICAL AREA COVERED IN THE SURVEY	87
TABLE 5.2	POSITIONS HELD BY RESPONDENTS	88
TABLE 5.3	NUMBER OF SUBORDINATES PER RESPONDENT	89
TABLE 5.4	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS	89
TABLE 5.5	AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS	90
TABLE 5.6	RESPONDENTS' EXPOSURE TO TRAINING	91
TABLE 5.7	THE REASONS FOR CONFLICT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION	92
TABLE 5.8	CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND THE ORGANISATION'S ROLE	93
TABLE 5.9	REASONS TO STIMULATE CONFLICT	94
TABLE 5.10	CONFRONTATIONAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE ORGANISATION (%)	96
TABLE 5.11	IMPROVING ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE ORGANISATION (%)	98
TABLE 5.12	SPECIAL RULES AND STRUCTURES APPLIED IN THE ORGANISATION (%)	99
TABLE 5.13	THE STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT USED IN THE ORGANISATION (%)	100

TABLE 5.14	A SUMMARY OF THE PERCENTAGE USE OF THE <i>COMPETING</i> STYLE	101
TABLE 5.15	A SUMMARY OF THE PERCENTAGE USE OF THE <i>COLLABORATING</i> STYLE	101
TABLE 5.16	A SUMMARY OF THE PERCENTAGE USE OF THE <i>COMPROMISING</i> STYLE	101
TABLE 5.17	A SUMMARY OF THE PERCENTAGE USE OF THE <i>AVOIDING</i> STYLE	102
TABLE 5.18	A SUMMARY OF THE PERCENTAGE USE OF THE <i>ACCOMMODATING</i> STYLE	102
TABLE 5.19	SUMMARY OF THE STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT USED BY THE RESPONDENTS	103

LIST OF APPENDICES

<u>APPENDIX</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
APPENDIX A	COVERING LETTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRE	119
APPENDIX B	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY	120

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM DEFINITION AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1. 1 THE PROBLEM DEFINITION

Mullins (1993:658) states that conflict can be regarded as a reality of management and organisational behaviour. Mullins (1993:660) argues that conflict is based on the incompatibility of goals and arises from opposing behaviours and can therefore be defined as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of some other party's goals.

Tosi, Rizzo and Carroll (1994:438) argue that there are different views of conflict. One view is that conflict is a preventable problem and that it can be avoided simply by getting employees to change their attitudes and behaviour so that co-operation can improve. It is also assumed that conflict is preventable if managers develop positive working relationships, design plans and implement policies and procedures that ensure mutual effort towards achieving common goals. A second view is that conflict is inevitable and that there is no way to eliminate it entirely.

The above discussion leads to the exploration of the main problem of this research paper:

What strategies should be used by organisations to **manage conflict** effectively?

In order to resolve the main problem, the following sub-problems have been identified:

SUB PROBLEM 1

What conflict management strategies does the literature reveal that will assist managers in effectively managing organisational conflict?

SUB PROBLEM 2

What conflict management strategies do managers utilise to assist them in managing conflict?

SUB PROBLEM 3

How can the results of sub problem one and two be integrated?

1.2 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH

The demarcation of the research serves the purpose of making the research topic manageable from a research point of view. The omission of certain topics does not imply that there is no need to research them.

1.2.1 Management level

The study was limited to middle and top management level employees, as this level manages conflict. The nature of the tasks and responsibilities of this level of management implies that they perform a co-ordinating role. Due to the centralised position of top and

middle level managers, they are the ones with the most frequent contact with the most employees, and thus the potential for conflict. This level was able to provide the most input into this research project.

1.2.2 Size of the organisation

Only one specific organisation was used for this study. This organisation employs 300 people. A larger organisation will have a more diverse work force and a more complex structure, which may be influenced by global forces. The managers in such an organisation will also have greater demands placed on them.

1.2.3 Geographical demarcation

The empirical component of this study was limited to an organisation within the Eastern Cape region. This region is defined as Statistical Region 47 and includes the industrial areas of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.

1.2.4 Type of organisation

This research was limited to a service organisation. The reason is that this specific organisation is undergoing significant change in its quest to become more competitive. The changes have given rise to conflict situations. Within the new structure, it is important for managers to gain benefit from potential conflict situations and to eliminate or manage harmful conflict.

1.3 DEFINITION OF SELECTED CONCEPTS

1.3.1 Strategies

Johnson and Scholes (1997:3) state that strategies are approaches used to meet needs and to develop the organisation in order to create consistency within the organisation. All organisations need to develop strategies to manage the structure and control within the organisation. Hellriegel and Slocum (1996:771) define a strategy as a major course of action that an organisation takes to achieve its goals.

1.3.2 Conflict

Vecchio (1995:468) defines conflict as the result of the process that occurs when one person or a group of people perceives that another person or group is frustrating or about to frustrate an important issue. Conflict is directed towards another party and involves incompatible differences between parties that result in interference or opposition. Callahan, Flednor and Knudson (1986:283) define conflict as all types of antagonistic interaction or all types of opposition. Siders (1999:33) defines conflict as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals.

Stuart, Klein and Ritti (1984:537) define conflict in behavioural terms and characterise conflict as attempts of one entity to interfere with the ongoing activities or goals of another entity, in the face of resistance from that entity. The context of conflict involves situations, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour, according to Stuart et al (1984:537). The

situational aspects of conflict involve differences in group goals and tasks, the allocation of scarce resources and the different group procedures in performing tasks. Spatial and geographical barriers can also be present. Attitudes and perceptions can be described as how various groups view each other. Fear, anxiety and hostility can be created in the context of conflict and as a consequence of those views. The behaviour is then conflict itself.

Robbins (1998:434) argues that the parties must perceive the conflict involved and that whether or not conflict exists, is a matter of perception. Conflict is defined as the process beginning with the perception by one party that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about. Robbins (1998:434) states that people experience a wide range of conflict in organisations, such as the incompatibility of goals, differences over interpretations of facts and disagreements based on behavioural expectations.

Tosi et al (1994:436) state that conflict can be a disagreement, the presence of tension or some type of difficulty between two or more parties. This can be created between individuals or between groups. Conflict is often related to an interference or opposition between the parties involved, which often see each other as frustrating, or about to frustrate, their needs or goals. Conflict can be public or private, formal or informal and can be approached rationally or irrationally.

Vecchio (1995:468) distinguishes between conflict and competition. Competition is seen as directed towards obtaining a certain goal without interference from another party. Intense competition can however, lead to conflict. Conflict can arise without competition and if two parties can gain from a competitive situation, then the situation is less likely to lead to conflict. In essence, the difference between conflict and competition lies in whether or not actions are taken which will interfere with another's goal attainment

Stuart et al (1984:540) state that conflict and competition are similar but not the same and that competition may contain the seeds of conflict. In organisations, the competition is often for scarce resources and when winning becomes the only important thing, the temptation to escalate competition into conflict is probable.

Conflict can thus be summarised as arising when one party interferes with the ongoing activities of another entity, or when a party is frustrating or about to frustrate another group. People experience a wide range of conflict in organisations, such as the incompatibility of goals, differences over facts and interpretation of data, by competing for limited resources and due to disagreements based on behavioural expectations.

1.3.3 Managing conflict

Hellriegel and Slocum (1996:760) state that conflict management interventions are designed to reduce excessive conflict, or to increase insufficient conflict. Constructive strategies must be developed to manage opposition arising from disagreement about

goals, thoughts and emotions within or among individuals, teams, departments or organisations.

1.4 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

A key assumption made is that most managers do not conform to the theoretical guidelines nor do they manage conflict effectively. It is assumed that there are some universally accepted approaches that are more effective in the managing of conflict. The literature study included authors that are mostly from countries other than South Africa. However, the assumption was made that the relevant information would be applicable to South African organisations.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research was aimed at emphasising the reasons why it is important for organisations to deal with, and to manage conflict effectively. It covers the potential causes of conflict and the positive and negative outcomes of conflict. The research investigated the benefits and disadvantages of conflict and how the management of conflict can improve an organisation's competitive position within the given industry.

Tosi et al (1994:464) argue that organisations involve so much interdependence between individuals and groups that conflict can easily arise and become a serious threat to organisational effectiveness. Tosi et al (1994:464) do not assert that all conflict is bad. If not at an excessive level, conflict can be useful or functional in an organisation. Conflict can be a sign of health, can add to creativity and bring different viewpoints to decision-makers.

Robbins (1998:437) states that it is mostly assumed that conflict is relative to lower groups and organisational performance. It is further stated that this is frequently incorrect, as conflict can either be constructive or destructive to the functioning of a group. The level of conflict can be too high or too low. Either extreme will hinder and affect performance. An optimal level is where there is enough conflict to stimulate creativity, prevent stagnation and allow tensions to be released. Inadequate or excessive levels of conflict can affect the effectiveness of the organisation or the group, which can result in reduced satisfaction of employees, increased absence and turnover rates and eventually lower productivity. When conflict is at an optimal level, complacency and apathy should be minimised and motivation should be enhanced through the creation of a challenging and questioning environment. This research will determine the level of conflict and where, within the organisational structure, conflict situations are most likely to arise.

Robbins (1998:445) argues that conflict can be constructive and lead to improvements in the quality of decisions, stimulation of creativity and innovation and it can encourage interest and curiosity. Constructive, or functional conflict can provide a medium through which problems can be aired and tension released, and it can provide for an environment of self-evaluation and change. Conflict is also an antidote for groupthink as it does not allow groups to passively accept decisions that can be based on inadequate information, weak assumptions or other debilities. Conflict challenges the status quo and therefore furthers the creation of new ideas, promotes reassessment of group goals and activities

and increases the probability that the group will respond to change. This research will determine benefits which can, and which has been gained from conflict situations, within the specific organisation being researched. Managers faced with excessive conflict within the organisation need advice and guidance on how to reduce the conflict that is present (Robbins 1998:465).

There is no one best way or strategy to manage conflict and managers should select the intervention appropriate for the situation. The major part of this research paper was devoted to determining the strategies that can be used for managing conflict. The strategies actually used within the chosen organisation were evaluated, and recommendations were made.

It is evident, from existing research results, that it is important to manage conflict effectively. If conflict is not managed effectively, it can pose as a threat to organisational effectiveness. Too little or too much conflict could hamper creativity and performance. This will lead to a negative atmosphere in the organisation and can influence the profitability and productivity. The situation within the specific organisation was analysed, through this research, in order for the organisation to identify and gain benefit from potentially harmful conflict situations. The results were utilised to formulate conclusions. Recommendations, which will aim to promote good relations in the organisation, were made.

1.6 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The overall purpose of the research is to identify and analyse the conflict management strategies used by a specific organisation. More specifically the objectives of this research are:

- The identification and definition of conflict management strategies and styles and the principles and guidelines fundamental to managing conflict situations.
- To advise the selected organisation on how to manage and reduce harmful conflict and implement the most appropriate strategy for managing conflict.
- The development of a model that will assist managers in managing conflict situations.

1.7 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

1.7.1 Research methodology

The following procedure was adopted to solve the main and sub-problems:

1.7.2 Literature survey

The strategies that are available for managing conflict and the effects that the conflict situation has on the organisation was identified from the literature.

1.7.3 Empirical study

The empirical study consists of the following:

- **Measuring instrument**

Data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire. The researcher developed a comprehensive questionnaire for this research project to determine the extent to which conflict management strategies within the selected organisation conformed to the theoretical guidelines. The questionnaires were presented to top and middle level management within the selected organisation.

- **Statistical analysis of data**

A statistical package was used for interpreting and analysing the relevant data. This procedure was determined in consultation with a statistician at the time the questionnaire was drawn up.

- **Sample**

The top and middle level management of a service organisation, employing approximately 300 people and which are located within the Eastern Cape region was used as a sample in completing the questionnaire.

1.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this chapter was to define the main problem to be addressed and to explain how the researcher aims to solve it. The following chapter will discuss the findings from the literature study.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON ORGANISATIONS

2. 1 INTRODUCTION

Kaye (1999) asserts that every business has its share of conflict among employees, between divisions, with customers, suppliers and governments. It is further stated that the more conflict is avoided in business relationships, the more destructive it becomes. In any organisation conflict that is well resolved is the lifeblood of growth and adaptation to change.

This chapter discusses the changing views of conflict and compares the traditional view of conflict with the contemporary view. The type of conflict that hinders performance is defined as dysfunctional conflict and is contrasted with functional conflict, which is the constructive form of conflict. Models of conflict, which define the underlying conditions, are discussed and the conflict models describe how those conditions shape events and influence conflict behaviour. Finally the effects of conflict, which can be positive or negative, are described.

2.2 CHANGING VIEWS OF CONFLICT

2.2.1 The traditional view

Vecchio (1995:434) postulates that until the mid-1940s it was popular to consider conflict as harmful and unnecessary. The existence of conflict was regarded as a sign that something was wrong and required correction. According to this traditional view conflict served no useful purpose and it only distracted managers' attention and sapped energy and resources. This viewpoint promotes the elimination of conflict through proper management techniques and the removal of troublemakers.

2.2.2 The contemporary or interactionist view

In recent years, the view on conflict has shifted. Conflict is now seen as inevitable and often necessary to ensure high performance. It is not denied, as argued by Vecchio (1995:469) that conflict can be harmful in certain instances. However, the emphasis is placed on recognising that conflict in certain forms can be useful for achieving goals. The focus of this contemporary view is on the successful management of conflict rather than its total elimination. Robbins (1998:435) states that conflict must be encouraged on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and cooperative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic and non-responsive to needs for change and innovation. According to Mullins (1999:818) the contemporary approach encourages the minimum level of conflict in order to encourage self-criticism, change and innovation, to prevent apathy and a too great tolerance for the status quo.

In itself, conflict is neither desirable nor undesirable (Vecchio, 1995:469). The value of conflict can only be judged on its effect on performance in the organisation. In Figure 2.1 (Vecchio, 1995:469) the notion is illustrated, which suggests that an optimal level of conflict exists for any given situation. If carried to the highest extreme, conflict can lead to disorder and chaos. An extremely low level of conflict will, in contrast, result in complacency and poor performance due to a lack of innovation.

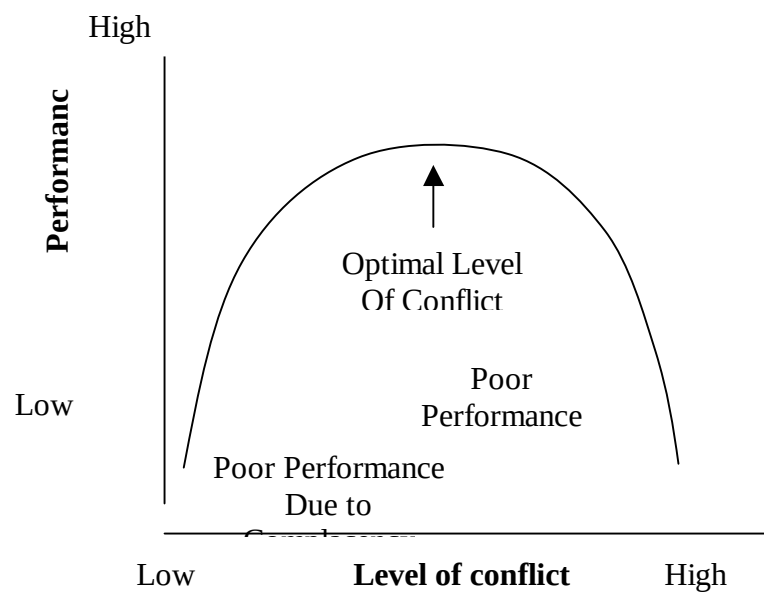


FIGURE 2.1 : CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT AND PERFORMANCE

SOURCE : VECCHIO (1995:469)

2.3 FUNCTIONAL VERSUS DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICT

According to Robbins (1998:436) the interactionist view does not propose that all conflicts are good. This view motivates that some conflict supports the goals of the group and improves its performance. These are the functional, constructive form of conflict. Some conflict hinders the performance of the group. These are the dysfunctional or destructive types of conflict. The demarcation between dysfunctional and functional is not clear and precise. The type and level of conflict that creates a healthy and positive environment for one group may in another group be regarded as dysfunctional. Thus, it can be stated that not one level of conflict can be adopted as acceptable or unacceptable under all conditions. Group performance is the criterion, which differentiates functional from dysfunctional conflict. The functionality of conflict is determined by the impact that the conflict has on the group, since a group exists to attain goals.

2.4 TYPES AND SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Szilagyi and Wallace (1987:297) proclaim that conflict can take a number of forms, but the following four forms are most prevalent:

- Goal conflict where one person or a group wants a different goal or outcome than others
- Cognitive conflicts where one person or a group holds ideas that are incompatible with those of others
- Affective conflicts where one person or a group holds feelings or attitudes that are incompatible with those of others

- Behavioural conflict where one person or a group does something that is unacceptable to others

Woodrow (1999) states that many enterprises experience a range of types of conflict, such as those occurring between:

- Organisational units
- Headquarters and field units
- The company and its customers, vendors or contractors
- The company and its partners in joint ventures or investment initiatives
- The company and the surrounding community
- The company and government regulatory/enforcement agencies

Mullins (1999:818) lists potential sources of organisational conflict as:

- Differences in perception
- Limited resources
- Departmentalisation
- The nature of work activities
- Role conflict
- Inequitable treatment
- Violation of territory
- Environmental change

- Individual - attitudes, personality, characteristics
- Group - skills, group norms, the informal organisation
- Organisational - communications, authority structure, leadership style, managerial behaviour

Henderson (1994:197) mentions the following causes of cross-cultural conflict:

- Language differences
- Differences in emotional and articulate forms of non-verbal communication
- Cultural stereo types that distort meaning
- Evaluating the content of speech as either good or bad
- High levels of anxiety that distort meaning

2.5 MODELS OF CONFLICT

Models define underlying conditions and describe how those conditions shape events and influence conflict behaviour (Callahan et al, 1986:283). Three models of conflict are identified; the process model, the structural conflict model and the organisational conflict model. The models identify and explain stages in conflict situations and the sources of conflict and focus on conflict situations within organisations.

2.5.1 The process conflict model

Callahan et al (1986:283) states that process models identify events within a conflict episode and trace the relationship of each event to a succeeding event. Pondy (Callahan

et al, 1986:283) proposed the process conflict model as illustrated in Figure 2.2. The aftermath of preceding conflict episodes sets the stage for those that follows. A previous experience with an antagonistic party sets expectations and to a certain extent determines the response to a new episode.

Latent conflict refers to the underlying conditions for conflict. Scarcity of resources, the drive for autonomy and the divergence of personal or unit goals are examples of such underlying conditions. Environmental conditions can also affect or influence latent conflict.

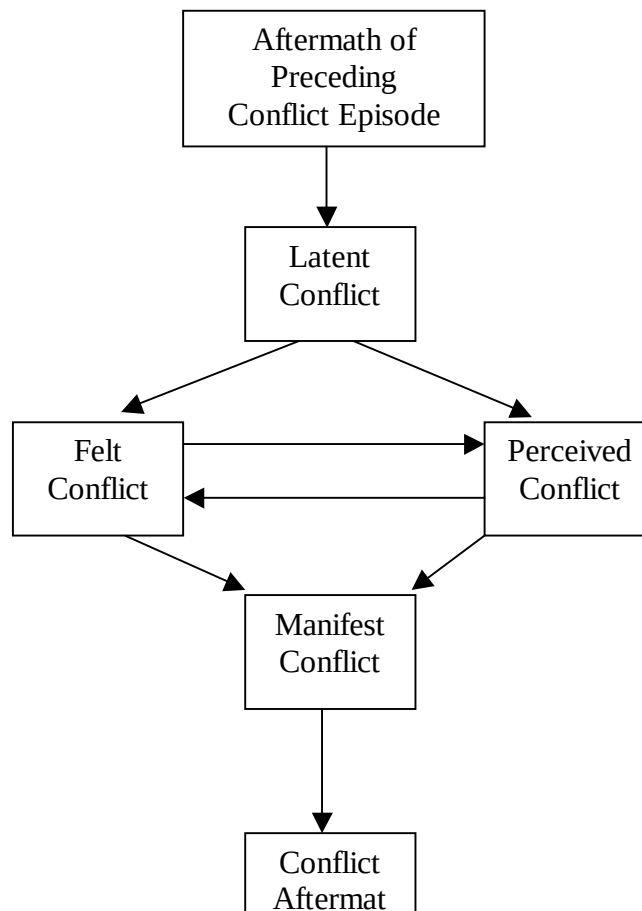


FIGURE 2.2: PONDY'S CONFLICT MODEL
SOURCE : CALLAHAN ET AL (1986:283)

Perceived conflict occurs with awareness of the existence of the latent conditions. Divergent goals will not cause conflict, unless an individual or group notices that they are divergent. Perceived conflict is still incipient and thus the parties have not responded effectively. The two mechanisms that prevent conflict from being perceived is when suppression occurs. This will happen when conflict is only mildly threatening and perceived as not worth dealing with. The attention-focus mechanism represents organisational and individual priorities. There could be a lot more conflict that can be dealt with easily, so the attention will be focused on only a few. Perceived conflict does not always become felt conflict as people may disagree on an issue but do not feel anxiety or animosity.

Manifest conflict is expressed through behaviour and it can be low key, in the form of apathy or dramatic, as in hostility or aggression. The availability of resolution mechanisms will determine whether perceived conflict and felt conflict become manifest conflict. The conflict aftermath can then become an environmental factor for the next conflict episode. If the conflict can be resolved, the parties can move to a more co-operative relationship, if not, conflict may expand to previously uninvolved parties or issues.

Pondy suggests (Callahan et al, 1986:285) that the origins of conflict can be informal, political, functional and social. Conflict can occur in any of the subsets while affecting and being affected by any of the conflict in the other subsets.

2.5.2 The structural conflict model

Callahan et al (1986:285) explain that structural models define underlying conditions and describe how those conditions shape events and influence conflict behaviour. Thomas in Mondy, Sharplin and Premeaux (1989: 536) describes the conflict model as each conflict episode moving through four stages. Thomas argues in Callahan et al (1986:285) that each party acts within certain pressures and constraints, which will shape the conflict episode. Each party will bring certain behavioural predispositions such as interaction, uncooperativeness, social pressure and cultural norms into an episode. The four stages of the structural conflict model, as identified by Thomas (Mondy et al, 1989:536) are:

- Frustration - a group cannot complete a task or reach a goal
- Conceptualisation - a perception that conflict exists is present and individuals involved formulate ideas about the conflict
- Behaviour - those individuals or groups affected respond to the conflict
 - Outcome - the conflict episode is resolved, or frustration continues and leads to another conflict episode

2.5.3 The organisational conflict model

The conflict process, as described in figure 2.3 (Robbins, 1998:437), comprises of five stages: potential opposition or incompatibility, cognition and personalisation, intentions, behaviour and outcomes.

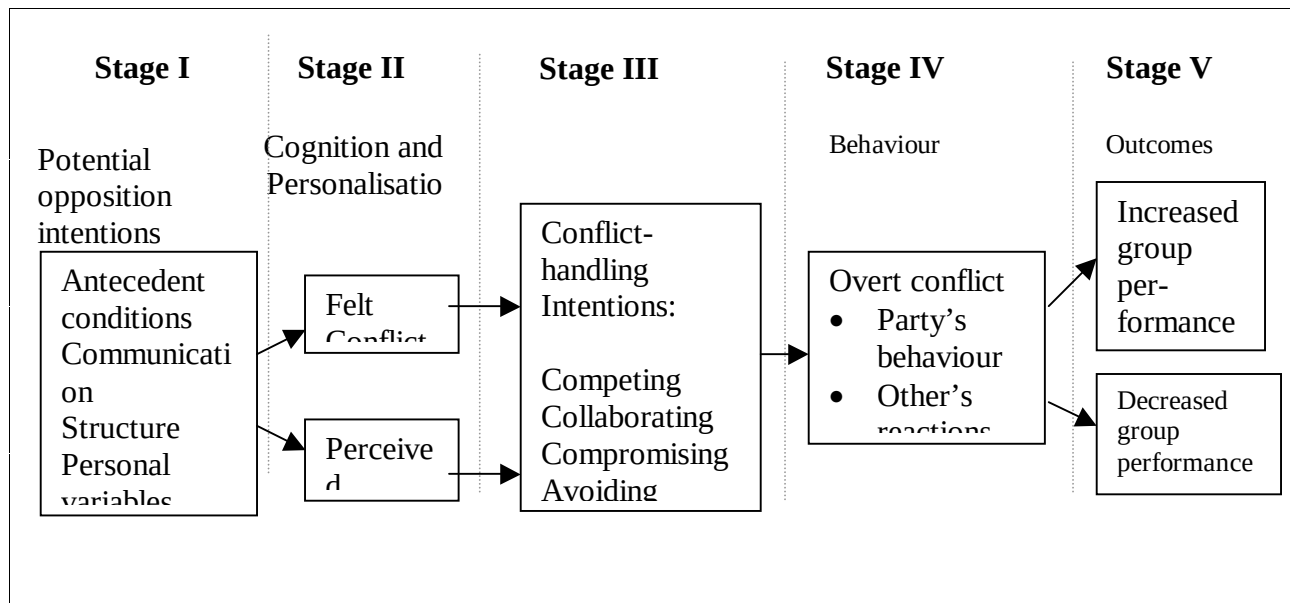


FIGURE 2.3: THE CONFLICT PROCESS

SOURCE : ROBBINS (1998:437)

The presence of conditions that create conflict opportunities is the first step in the conflict process. These conditions may not directly lead to conflict, but are necessary if conflict is to arise. The sources of conflict have been condensed into three categories: communication, structure and personal variables. Tosi et al (1994: 440) define the sources of conflict as individual characteristics, situational forces and organisational structures. Robbins (1998:438) describes the following antecedent conditions to the conflict situation:

- **Communication**

Robbins (1998: 438) argues that one of the major myths is that poor communication is the reason for conflict. He states that communication is not the source of all conflict. However there is considerable evidence to suggest that problems within the

communication process act to retard collaboration and stimulate misunderstanding. Barriers to communication are semantic difficulties, insufficient exchange of information and the noise level in the communication channel. Robbins (1998:438) states that research has proven that the potential for conflict arises when either too little or too much communication takes place. An increase in communication is only functional up to a point, whereupon it is possible to over communicate. Vecchio (1995:470) argues that managers typically attribute a sizeable proportion of conflict arising in an organisation to poor communication. Given the inherent imperfection of communication, that the receiver does not always receive the message exactly as intended by the sender, many opportunities exist for misunderstandings that give rise to conflict. Incorrect, distorted, or ambiguous information can create hostility.

- **Structure**

The term structure includes variables such as size, degree of specialisation in the tasks assigned to group members, jurisdictional clarity, member goal compatibility, leadership styles, reward systems, and the degree of dependence between groups. Robbins (1998:439) mentions that researchers have indicated that size and specialisation act as forces to stimulate conflict. The likelihood of conflict increases as the group size and specialisation of activity increases. Vecchio (1995:470) categorises the structural factors into seven individual sources:

- **Size**

It is suggested that conflict is more prevalent in larger organisations than smaller ones. The increase in size is associated with less goal clarity, greater

formality, increased specialisation, more supervisory levels and more opportunities for information to become distorted as it passes through more levels.

- ***Staff heterogeneity***

The differences among staff members in terms of authority, longevity and values can contribute to conflict situations. However, differences in staff members can also hold benefits for the organisation. Problem solving groups, which comprise relatively diverse individuals, have an advantage over homogeneously composed groups. The diversity can create new ideas and create challenges among members that can foster superior achievement.

- ***Participation***

Vecchio (1995:471) states that research has proven that the higher the subordinate participation, the higher the level of conflict. An increase in participation can lead to greater awareness of individual differences. The increased conflict is not necessarily undesirable, as it can enhance the overall performance of the work unit, and thus the existence of conflict can be productive.

- ***Line-staff distinctions***

A frequently mentioned source of conflict, according to Vecchio (1995:471) is the distinction between line and staff units within the organisation. Line units

perform jobs that are directly related to core activities of the organisation. Staff units perform jobs that support the line function. Conflict can occur between line and staff divisions because of the functions they perform, the differing goals, and the values and backgrounds of the members. Staff divisions are usually removed from the central operating activities, while line functions are generally more operations oriented. Line personnel are usually more loyal to the company while staff personnel tend to be critical of company practices. The two groups frequently have different time horizons, staff people typically think in terms of long-range issues, while line people are more involved with short term or day to day concerns.

- ***Reward system***

Vecchio (1995:472) maintains that conflict is easily generated when one party obtains rewards at the expense of another part. This form of conflict can arise among individuals, groups and among the entire organisation. Staff people are generally rewarded for being innovative and for identifying the need for change. Line people, on the other hand strongly prefer to avoid change, as it is disruptive and inconvenient. Line people are generally rewarded for productivity that results from interrupted activity.

- ***Resource interdependence***

Usually, groups must compete for the resources of the organisation. Should there be a growing supply of money and other resources within the organisation, then it is possible that conflict would not arise. However, this is

not the norm for organisations. As a result, conflict and the resulting lack of coordination and cooperation between individuals and divisions exist.

- **Power**

Vecchio (1995:472) states that the distribution of power within an organisation can be a source of conflict. A group that feels that they have less power than it should is likely to challenge the existing order. Often staff people must continually justify their reason to exist.

- **Personal variables**

This category includes the individual value system that each person has and the personal characteristics that account for individual idiosyncrasies and differences. Individuals who are highly authoritarian and dogmatic, while demonstrating low self-esteem usually create potential conflict. The differing value systems, such as diverse issues such as prejudice, disagreements over one's contribution to the group and the rewards one deserves, are important factors in creating conflict (Robbins 1998:441).

Vecchio (1995:472) maintains that one of the sources of conflict lies within the differences among individuals. Differing values and perceptions are likely to generate conflict with others. Some individuals enjoy being argumentative and combative, while individuals with low self esteem may more readily feel threatened by others and therefore over react. Authoritarianism and low self-esteem can predispose people to feel the need to 'defend their turf ' against trivial threats.

- **STAGE II: Cognition and personalisation**

Robbins (1998:440) argues that if the conditions listed in stage one (communication, structure and personal variables) negatively affect something that a party cares about, the potential for opposition become actualised in the second stage. This is then cognition leading to personalisation of conflict. The preceding conditions can only lead to conflict when one or more of the parties involved are affected by, and are aware of, the conflict. Conflict may not be personalised if it is perceived. When conflict is at the felt level, then parties experience anxiety, tension, frustration or hostility. In stage two, conflict issues tend to be defined. Stage two is where parties decide what the conflict is about.

- **STAGE III: Intentions**

Intention or a purpose, according to Robbins (1998:441) intervenes between people's understanding, their emotions and their open behaviour. These intentions are certain decisions to act in a given manner. An individual must reach a conclusion about the other party's intent or purpose in order to know how to respond to the other's behaviour. Robbins (1998:441) defines two measurements to identify the main conflict handling intentions.

- Cooperativeness is the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns.
- Assertiveness is the degree to which one party strives to satisfy their own concerns.

Five conflict-handling intentions can be identified as:

- Competing, which includes assertive and uncooperative dimensions
- Collaboration, which includes assertive and co-operative dimensions
- Accommodating, which includes unassertive and co-operative dimensions
- Compromising, which includes a midrange of assertiveness and cooperativeness
 - Avoiding, which includes assertiveness

- **STAGE IV: Behaviour**

In this stage conflict becomes visible, according to Robbins (1998:443). This stage includes the statements made and the action and reactions of the conflicting parties. Open conflict covers a full range of behaviours from subtle, indirect and highly controlled forms of interference, to direct, aggressive, violent and uncontrolled struggles. Stage four can be seen as a dynamic process of interaction.

- **STAGE V: Outcomes**

Robbins (1998:445) postulates that the action-reaction interplay between the conflicting parties results in consequences. The outcomes may be functional which improves the group's performance, or it may be dysfunctional. Dysfunctional or destructive outcomes will hinder group performance.

2.6 THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

Robbins (1998:437) states that it is mostly assumed that conflict is relative to lower groups and organisational performance. It is further stated that this is frequently incorrect, as conflict can either be constructive or destructive to the functioning of a group. The level of conflict can be too high or too low. Either extreme will hinder and affect performance.

Conflict can have positive or negative outcomes, according to Mondy et al (1989:536). Situations can arise where conflict can lead to greater creativity, more enthusiasm and better decisions. People can develop by learning that perceptions or information were incorrect. Positive outcomes can take the form of improved ideas, searching for new options and increased interest and creativity. Robbins (1998:445) argues that conflict can be constructive and lead to improvements in the quality of decisions, stimulation of creativity and innovation and it can encourage interest and curiosity. Constructive, or functional conflict can provide a medium through which problems can be aired and tension released, and it can provide for an environment of self-evaluation and change. Conflict is also an antidote for groupthink, as it does not allow groups to passively accept decisions that can be based on inadequate information, weak assumptions or other debilities. Conflict challenges the status quo and therefore furthers the creation of new ideas, promotes reassessment of group goals and activities and increases the probability that the group will respond to change.

An optimal level is where there is enough conflict to stimulate creativity, prevent stagnation and allow tensions to be released. When conflict is at an optimal level, complacency and apathy should be minimised and motivation should be enhanced through the creation of a challenging and questioning environment. A vitality, which makes work interesting, should be present and the amount of staff turnover needed to rid the organisation of misfits and poor performers (Robbins, 1998: 445).

Mondy et al (1989:537) argues that dysfunctional conflict can arouse anxiety in individuals, increase tension in the organisation system, lower satisfaction and decrease productivity. Other negative outcomes can include people feeling defeated and demeaned and the distance between individuals can increase. A climate of mistrust and suspicion can arise and resistance rather than teamwork can develop. It can also lead to an increase in turnover. Robbins (1998: 445) states that inadequate or excessive levels of conflict can affect the effectiveness of the organisation or the group, which can result in reduced satisfaction of employees, increased absence and turnover rates and eventually lower productivity.

Ivancevich and Matteson (1999:342) describe the consequences of conflict and argue that changes can occur within groups and between groups as a result of dysfunctional conflict. Changes within groups include increased group cohesiveness and an emphasis on loyalty. Usually an increase in autocratic leadership can be observed in extreme conflict situations where threats are perceived. When a group is in a conflict situation, its members usually emphasise doing what the group does and doing it very well and the group thus becomes

more task-oriented. Changes between groups usually results in distorted perception as group members develop stronger opinions of the importance of their units. Negative stereotyping that may have existed is reinforced. When negative stereotyping exists the members of each group see less differences within their unit and a greater difference between the groups than actually exists.

Woodrow (1999) argues that poorly handled conflict can generate significant costs in a corporate setting. This occurs in terms of frustration, disappointment, and poor performance, lost hours of management and employee time, hampering of creativity and productivity, souring of relationships and high employee turnover. Costs, due to legal suits can also be incurred.

Siders (1999:32) states that depending on how conflict is managed, the experience can be growth enhancing for the individuals involved, or it can be destructive to relationships and self esteem. Conflict, which is well managed, can tap the creativity and problem solving skills of workers, taking advantage of different gender, cultural and role perspectives and create mutually beneficial solutions. Conflict badly managed or consistently avoided reduces productivity, undermines trust and may spawn additional conflict.

2.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the overall purpose of this study is to determine the various procedures and strategies employed by an organisation to manage conflict, it was necessary to research a number of conflict models in order to establish the underlying conditions of conflict situations in the organisation. The underlying conditions and the effects of conflict have to be identified to determine the impact it has had and potentially will have on the organisation. Once the effects have been determined, together with the causes of conflict in the organisation, the different approaches to managing conflict will become more meaningful. The approaches to managing conflict include the styles that managers adopt to handle specific situations, the confrontation techniques used, and the practice of improving organisational routine and the special roles and structures that can be implemented.

It can thus be concluded that the managers should strive to reap the benefits associated with functional conflict situations and to eliminate the potential for a dysfunctional situation. In order to gain the benefits, the manager must understand the models of conflict, which will indicate the causes, the behaviour of the participants and the outcomes, which can be a functional or dysfunctional situation. Once the models have been examined, the next step would be to develop measures to manage the conflict situation.

In the following chapter the strategies for managing conflict and the different approaches, which have been identified by various authors, will be discussed. A model for managing

conflict, which is based on the information provided in the previous chapters, will be suggested.

CHAPTER 3

THE IDENTIFICATION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES THAT WILL ASSIST MANAGERS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE CONFLICT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters conflict was described as disagreements and arguments over choices and preferences. Burton and Dukes (1990:17) state that conflict is the result from interactions between parties who have common interests and goals but who differ on the means of achieving them.

This chapter identifies the different options available to managers and the organisation to manage conflict. The basic principles are discussed and four approaches to managing conflict, namely the styles (avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising and collaborating); confrontation techniques; improving organisation practices and special roles and structures. The common dilemmas with traditional management intervention strategies are analysed and the methods of stimulating conflict are described. To conclude, a flow diagram to assist the organisation in managing conflict is suggested.

3.2 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Tosi et al (1994:451) define conflict management as a manager taking an active role in addressing the conflict situation, and intervening when necessary. Tillet (1991:9) states that one of the keys to conflict resolution is innovative thinking. This implies breaking out of habits assuming that things must be done in set ways or that there are only limited options available in any situation. In considering possibilities for resolution it is necessary to be open to change, to be creative and imaginative in problem solving.

3.3 THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Tillet (1991:162) identifies a number of basic principles which are applicable in all conflicts and which promote effective conflict resolution. The overriding principle is that conflict resolution depends on adaptability, flexibility, creativity, motivation, innovation, willingness to experiment, critical and imaginative thinking and effective communication. A checklist, developed by Tillet (1991:162), identifies principles that can be used as considerations and not as the formula for resolution. The principles are:

- **Analysis**

This is a critical thinking skill. It includes identifying, mapping and recognising multiple factors and dimensions.

- **Preparation**

This includes planning for the resolution process.

- **Effective communication**

This includes taking account of perceptions, feelings, needs and developing assertiveness and self-esteem. The effective use of language (verbal and non-verbal) and active listening is also included.

- **Collaboration**

The participants must be involved fully and actively in the whole process of resolution. This involves issues of motivation, projection, perception and pressure.

- **Process**

The process refers to the importance of perceiving and applying conflict resolution as a process, rather than something that just happens. A conflict situation never moves from conflict to resolution instantaneously, there is usually a process through which the participants and the conflict move.

- **Problem solving**

This principle relates to the real problem, rather than the resolution of a symptom of an underlying cause. The emphasis is on the identification and resolution of the real problem through the process in which the relationship between the participants changes. The problem can be solved because the relationship changed and the focus is on the problem, not the people or positions which may be taken. Collaborative solutions are encouraged through techniques such as brain storming. Conflict resolution is a process of resolving problems in the context of changing relationships.

- **Negotiation**

Negotiation is not always a part of, nor in itself, conflict resolution. Generally, participants in a conflict resolution process are involved in some type of negotiation, the need to listen, and to give and receive. It is however, possible to negotiate a settlement to a dispute without resolving an underlying conflict. Effective negotiation is based on a positive, honest, relationship building style.

- **Mediation**

In some cases a third neutral party may be needed to facilitate or expedite the conflict resolution process. The first option should however always be direct collaboration between the parties.

- **Flexibility**

The participants must be prepared to be flexible and open to change during the process and regarding the outcome. Rigid positions, which do not allow for changes are effectively refusals to attempt resolution.

- **Resolution**

There must be a point at which the parties involved agree that it has been resolved. It is never effective to allow resolution to appear to be achieved without any explicit recognition. The participants must both cognitively and emotionally recognise resolution if it is to have been accomplished.

- **Training**

The final principle is the need for training or empowering. Participants and practitioners in conflict resolution and management require training in a range of skills. The training should include experiential and collaborative learning and the development of interpersonal skills.

Isaacs (1999:52) argues that the immediate results of enhanced conflict resolution skills are fewer adversarial conflicts, an improved emotional climate and less supervision of subordinates. The results can also include more autonomy granted to peers and subordinates, measurable improvement in work results, less absenteeism, fewer medical and stress-related claims and less propensity for physical violence. Isaacs (1999:52) lists teachable and transferable tools, which are required to manage and resolve conflict successfully. The tools are:

- Listen to feedback
- Refraining and clarifying
- Empathy and openness
- Coachability
- Responsiveness and responsibility
- Constructive engagement and relationship building
- Inventing without deciding
- Emphasis on humanity and forgiveness
- Reduction in blaming and sabotaging behaviours

3.4 STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Vecchio (1995:480) theorises that managers differ in their ways of dealing with conflict. Five major styles of conflict management that a manager can adopt are suggested in figure 3.1. The styles include forcing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. Thomas (Vecchio, 1995:480) suggests a two dimensional framework, as illustrated in figure 3.1, for comparing the five basic styles of conflict management.

Conflict-handling style	Related term	Proverb
Forcing	Competing Conflictful Moving against the other	Put your foot down where you mean to stand
Collaborating	Problem solving Integrating Confronting	Come let us reason together
Compromising	Splitting the difference Sharing Horse-trading	You have to give some to get some
Avoiding	Moving away from the other Withdrawing Losing-leaving	Let sleeping dogs lie
Accommodating	Yielding-losing Friendly-helping Moving toward the other	It is better to give than to receive

FIGURE 3.1: THE FIVE CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES

SOURCE : VECCHIO (1995:481)

3.4.1 Forcing

According to the framework in figure 3.1 (Vecchio, 1995:481) the forcing style attempts to overwhelm an opponent with formal authority, threats, or the use of power. The underlying features of this style are assertiveness and uncooperativeness. This dominating approach to conflict resolution represents a maximum focus on meeting private concerns and minimal focus on meeting the concerns of the other group.

3.4.2 Collaborating

The collaborating style is a combination of assertiveness and cooperativeness. Vecchio (1995: 481) states that collaborating involves an attempt to satisfy the concerns of both parties through honest discussion. In order for this style to be successful, trust and openness are required of all participants. A major obstacle to overcome, according to Ivancevich and Matteson (1999:346) when using this style is the win-lose mentality that often characterises conflicting groups. The parties involved must strive to rise above that kind of thinking or else problem solving will not be effective.

3.4.3 Accommodating

According to Vecchio (1995:481) this style combines unassertiveness and cooperativeness. This style, in its simplest form, may involve giving in to the other party's wishes. Accommodating behaviour may be motivated by the desire to be charitable or pro-social and it could be the best approach for a party in a truly weak position. The situation may also arise when preserving the peace and avoiding

disharmony are more important than reaching a solution that maximises a particular group's concerns (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1999:345).

3.4.4 Avoiding

The combination of unassertiveness and uncooperativeness leads to an avoiding style, according to Vecchio (1995:481). By using this style, a person implies that they will either improve a difficult situation or attempt to appear neutral. It may not always be possible to adopt a truly neutral position, but a manager may prefer to avoid a conflict situation. This strategy may thus be desirable in certain cases to ensure a short-term benefit or temporary solution to the organisation.

3.4.5 Compromising

This style, as argued by Vecchio (1995:482) involves intermediate amounts of assertiveness and cooperativeness. This style also strives for partial satisfaction of a party's' desires by seeking a middle ground. For compromising to be successful, both parties must be willing to make sacrifices. Tosi et al (1995:452) postulate that managers should be flexible enough to use a particular style when it best suits the situation. This flexibility would require a diagnosis of the conflict situation, the selection of an appropriate style, and the ability and willingness to use different styles. Managers must be trained to diagnose and practice each style. It is suggested that style flexibility would help to prevent the undesirable consequences of overuse and under use, as described in figure 3.2 (Tosi et al, 1995:452).

STYLE	OVERUSE: USING THE STYLE TOO MUCH	UNDERUSE: USING THE STYLE TOO LITTLE
Avoiding	Subordinated deprived of help Disagreements persist Coordination suffers Issues are not raised	Stirs unnecessary hostility Subordinates lose independence Non-avoider is overburdened Failure to set priorities
Accommodating	Loss of self respect/recognition Deprive others of ideas Seen as indecisive, weak Burdens others excessively Others feel manipulated into reciprocating later	Seen as rigid, unreasonable Prevents goodwill Ignores exceptions to rule False sense of losing face when opposite may be true
Competing (forcing)	Others avoid competitor Makes others repeated losers Cuts off information from others Subordinates give in easily	Lose self-esteem Feel powerless, controlled by others Relinquish decision making Avoid/accommodate too much
Compromising	Others tire of deals Gamesmanship atmosphere Games becomes more important than the issues Merits of issues can be lost	Seen as rigid, unreasonable Trapped into dealing and power struggles Lose opportunities to ease tensions
Collaborating	Some problems not worth it Unnecessary when stakes are low Can block accommodating Vulnerability to manipulation by others	Loose mutual-gain solutions Undue pessimistic Lose chances for creativity Lose subordinate commitment and team cohesiveness

FIGURE 3.2: UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT OVERUSE AND UNDERUSE

SOURCE : TOSI ET AL (1995:452)

3.5 THE USES OF THE FIVE CONFLICT MODES

Callahan et al (1986:295) quotes a survey of executives who produced guidelines for using the five conflict handling styles. Figure 3.3 lists the conflict handling styles as identified in figure 3.1 and the appropriate situation in which to use a specific style of handling conflict.

Conflict handling style	Appropriate situation
Competing	When quick decision action is vital On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing On issues vital to company welfare Against people taking advantage of non-competitive behaviour
Collaborating	For finding an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised When the objective is to learn To merge insights from people with different perspectives To gain commitment by incorporating concerns to consensus For working through feelings that have interfered with a relationship
Compromising	When goals are important, but not the effort or potential disruption When opposition with equal power is mutually committed For expedient settlement and solutions to complex issues As a back up when collaboration or forcing is unsuccessful
Avoiding	When the issue is trivial and to allow people to cool down If the potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution If gathering information supersedes immediate decisions When others can resolve the conflict When issues are symptomatic of other issues
Accommodating	To allow a better position to be heard and to show reason When issues are more important to others and to build credit To minimise loss when outmatched or losing When harmony is important and to allow subordinates to learn

FIGURE 3.3: THE APPROPRIATE CONFLICT HANDLING STYLE

SOURCE : CALLAHAN ET AL (1986:295)

3.6 CONFRONTATION TECHNIQUES

Tosi et al (1994:453) state that the confrontation technique requires parties to face each other in a constructive manner. The parties must be willing to work together to arrive at a consensus decision, which both parties can accept. The parties must not try to avoid the issues or give in. The parties may compete or compromise, but the major emphasis must be to find a mutually acceptable and longer lasting solution. An attempt must be made to use the collaborative style as much as possible with some use of compromise. The aim is for both parties to satisfy their needs and goals to the greatest extent possible. Effective confrontation techniques require skill and experience, a positive and constructive attitude and that both parties must be open to ideas and information.

Confrontation techniques frequently require a third party to be involved. The outside party can be a consultant or mediator, or from within the organisation. The third party must ensure that all the prescribed steps are followed, be a source of help and advice, ensure all opinions are heard and assist in processing decisions.

3.6.1 Negotiating and bargaining

Tosi et al (1994:453) maintain that bargaining is primarily a compromising style, but a variety of techniques can be used. Occasionally, force or threats can be used, or accommodation if the perception is that a concession will stimulate the other party to concede a point in return. It is also possible for two parties to collaborate on some issues, jointly searching for a solution that is useful to both parties.

3.6.2 Mediation

A common use of mediation is in labour-management negotiations (Tosi et al, 1994:453). The parties can use third party assistance to arrive at a solution. If the need arises and both parties agree, mediator services can be used. Mediators are not empowered to make decisions or impose a solution, but use various techniques to resolve differences.

3.6.3 Arbitration

Tosi et al (1994:454) claim that arbitration is another third-party approach to conflict resolution. Unlike mediators, arbitrators make decisions that are binding to both parties. Arbitrators are mostly used in labour-management situations.

3.7 IMPROVED ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES

Tosi et al (1994:460) state that there are a number of causes of conflict in the organisational setting. Cherrington (1994:430) argues that the most effective method of resolving conflict is some form of resolution strategy that identifies the source of conflict and resolves it. The manager who knows and understands the causes of conflict can take the following proactive steps to deal with conflict by changing the casual conditions.

3.7.1 Superordinate goals

Cherrington (1994:431) defines superordinate goals as a goal that is more important to both parties than the relatively minor issues causing the conflict. Managers must set superordinate goals that draw units into collaborative efforts. The benefits of a project can be integrated with the needs of each department within the organisation (Tosi et al,

1994:460). The organisation can, according to Vecchio (1995:451) assist antagonistic parties to reduce or avert the level of conflict by providing higher-level or superordinate goals. When people share a common superordinate goal, they are forced to cooperate to achieve a degree of success or to avoid a disaster.

3.7.2 Reducing ambiguities and jurisdictional disputes

Effective goal setting can reduce the ambiguities. Clear and non-conflicting goals clarify responsibilities. Goals can be devised in such a manner that each employee and unit does not interfere or compete with the work of others. Reporting relationships can be clarified by preparing organisational charts and by open discussion on the authority of individuals as stated by Tosi et al (1994:460). Worchel and Simpson (1993:129) argue that the misalignment of goals of the employee with the goals of the organisation can lead to major conflict. When alignment is a major focus of the organisation, it will reduce the chances for work slowdown, absenteeism, and the deliberate withholding of information, all of which can lead to a conflict situation. Examples of superordinate goals, according to Worchel and Simpson (1993:129) can be to minimise labour conflict, focus on customer relations, and ensure profits and to manage a debt-equity ratio.

3.7.3 Improving policies, procedures and rules

Organisations can establish policies, procedures and rules to minimise ambiguities and reduce conflict (Tosi et al, 1994:460).

3.7.4 Reallocation or addition of resources

Better schedules can improve the flow of work to minimise conflict situations. Organisations where employees are allocated authority and decision making status have fewer levels of conflict (Tosi et al, 1994:460).

3.7.5 Modifying communications

In some cases, as argued by Tosi et al (1994:461) it is best to eliminate the opportunity for communication to take place. Individuals resent being issued orders by subordinates or people whom they perceive as having a lower status than themselves. If this type of face to face interaction can be minimised then the potential for conflict will also be minimised.

3.7.6 Rotation of personnel

Tosi et al (1994:461) state that personnel should be rotated through different departments to develop an understanding of each unit's responsibilities and problems. The rationale is that when the employee returns to his or her original unit, a basis of cooperation will exist. This approach is particularly useful when an organisation is undergoing changes. New projects, products and other changes can generate a host of issues that causes conflict. Hampton, Summer and Webber (1982:645) assert that by rotating personnel narrow loyalties and misunderstandings due to perceptual distortions can be avoided. Even though exchanging personnel may not eliminate conflict, a favourable background for the future prevention of conflict may be created.

3.7.7 Altering reward structure

Tosi et al (1994:461) argue that the way in which rewards are administered may decrease the chances of conflict erupting. It is further argued that managers can be reinforced with positive feedback and good performance appraisals when they promote harmony. Even financial rewards such as bonuses can be consistent with conflict reduction.

3.7.8 Training

Tosi et al (1994:462) state that many organisations conduct training programmes in which employees learn to prevent, anticipate and cope with conflict. Employees are given the chance to practice conflict resolution techniques. They can assess their own conflict reaction style and learn how to use more than one style. In addition to the above, Cherrington (1994:430) is of the opinion that inter-group interaction and problem solving could be included as the most effective method of resolving conflict.

3.7.9 Inter group interaction

Cherrington (1994:430) argues that since one of the consequences of inter-group conflict is a reduction in communication and interaction between groups, it would seem that bringing groups together and increasing the contact between them would help to reduce conflict. However, when combating groups are brought together and the members of both groups are more likely to use the occasion to demonstrate their loyalty towards their

own group and their dislike for the other. Cherrington (1994:431) states that the most advisable option is to bring the leaders of both groups together to listen to the other group's position. This type of discussion usually allows a forum to express opinions freely and discussions are usually fruitful and represent the first step in resolving conflict.

Another strategy is to exchange members of the group for a period of time, or for members to share their feelings on paper with the other group. The groups can exchange the lists and respond to questions and comments. This process of sharing information could continue until the emotional feelings are sufficiently diffused to allow the groups to work together in face to face problem solving.

3.7.10 Problem solving

Cherrington (1994:431) suggests that a problem solving session is an effective resolution strategy if the two groups focus their attention on the problem rather than the argument over who is right and who is wrong. A session usually involves a face to face meeting of the conflicting groups to identify the source of the problem and to develop alternative solutions for solving it. This strategy would be the most effective when a thorough analysis of the problem can be made, when points of mutual interest are identified and when alternatives are suggested and explored. The disadvantage of this strategy is that it requires a great deal of time and commitment and if the people are emotionally involved, the tension may prevent them from progressing satisfactorily to an acceptable solution.

3.8 SPECIAL RULES AND STRUCTURES

Tosi et al (1994:462) suggest that additional steps must be taken in order to manage interdependencies and to resolve disputes when they appear. Special organisational roles and some structural changes may have to be introduced to manage conflict. It will include:

3.8.1 Liaison roles and integrators

Tosi et al (1994:462) declare that many companies have found that additional roles, called liaison or integrator roles are necessary to manage conflict. Often an individual can assume these roles or a committee can fill the function. People who fill these roles are expected to co-ordinate the groups and to reduce conflict. The responsibility will be theirs to conduct meetings, supply information and ensure that employees keep in touch with each other when necessary. In certain situations, liaisons and integrators have the authority to give orders or make decisions. In other instances, they can only assist and advise.

Employees in these roles must have respect and credibility to influence the units they are coordinating. They must be knowledgeable about the needs, culture and technology of the units involved. Liaisons should not be biased in any way and cannot favour one department at the cost of another.

3.8.2 Relocation or recombining of units

Relocation of certain units can eliminate cross pressures and assist in preventing conflict. The situation can arise where employees are subject to dual authority, when having to meet the needs of more than one superior (Tosi et al, 1994:463). Vecchio (1995:451) argues that transferring a conflict prone individual to another unit is a technique that can be used to reduce conflict.

3.8.3 Ombudsman

According to Tosi et al (1994:463) an ombudsman is a person assigned to hear complaints and mediate disputes between parties in the organisation. The ombudsman must be a respected person with problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Ombudsmen are being used increasingly in the business setting. Summer et al (1982:644) explain that an ombudsman is not a direct mechanism for conflict resolution as they stand outside the hierarchical structure. They do however facilitate communication and ensure that lower level employees can take their problems to higher levels. The ombudsman has no authority to make a decision and their greatest contribution is to assist people in obtaining information and to overcome misunderstandings.

3.8.4 Organisational design

The organisational design will affect the occurrence of conflict within the organisation. Conflict can also be managed through the effective design of the organisational structure. Tosi et al (1994:464) argue that the structure that is chosen solves some problems but creates others. Vecchio (1995:453) states that a number of options exist for managers who wish to reduce conflict via structural change. Cherrington (1994:432) states that

total organisational effectiveness must be emphasised, rather than group effectiveness and co-operation rather than competition. Groups should be recognised and rewarded for their contribution to the effectiveness of other groups, and charitable behaviour across group lines can be encouraged. Reorganising the departments and establishing clear, operational and feasible goals for the organisation can remove the source of conflict.

3.9 PROPOSED CONFLICT RESOLVING SYSTEMS

Kaye (1999) suggests the following system for resolving conflict:

- **Plan A**

The first aspect of this system is to bring together all the people involved in the conflict or those who might be involved in the solution. The involved parties must focus on their goals. If the crisis has amplified their differences, it will be beneficial to hear one another's articulated shared goals to remind them to look for win-win outcomes together.

- **Plan B**

When plan A is insufficient, the differences must be clarified and sorted into different categories. Some may be mere misunderstandings and active listening can clear that up. Some of the differences may be due to valuable differences of perspectives, which should be turned into an organisational strength rather than a communications obstacle. Some differences are irrelevant to the shared goals and simply need to be accepted, but a few will be truly fundamental conflicts that must not be ignored.

- **Plan C**

Plan C and D will require a third party's perspective and professional aid. Plan C requires members to make formal commitments to change behaviour or to take specific responsibilities.

- **Plan D**

In this step the chronic patterns of dysfunction must be analysed. It will require consultation if interpersonal problems keep reoccurring. But because not all conflict falls into that category, this five-step plan system begins with the least intrusive, briefest interventions and becomes more elaborate if and when necessary. Resolving chronic conflict within systems of people has nothing in common with settling disputes between unrelated parties. The goal of the latter is to end relationships whereas the goal within an organisation is to improve relationships.

- **Plan E**

This plan requires unilateral change on the part of individual members. Members can empower themselves to stop contributing to the problems, to take responsibility for their own actions and to improve communications even though barriers may exist.

Kaye (1999) states that at each step, before addressing the unresolved problems at a deeper level, the leaders have to gauge whether the relationship is worth the cost and trouble of saving it. Certain crucial ingredients such as respect, affection, economics and trust must be present.

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:464) describe three major approaches to conflict resolution:

- **Process consultation**

Porter et al (1975:465) advise that meaningful dialogue, on neutral grounds, should take place between the conflicting parties. Activities such as providing mild rewards for productive behaviour, helping parties diagnose the reason for the conflict and providing honest and constructive feedback about the reaction of the parties to each other will be necessary when attempting to deal with conflict.

- **Laboratory exercises**

Porter et al (1975:465) explains that this procedure can have the following results:

- It makes public the privately shared views held by the members of the groups.
- It provides a supportive neutral setting for discussing differences.
- It encourages the explicit action steps to do something concrete about the problem.
- It encourages the development of one or more super ordinate goals common to the group.

The last step is very important as literature suggests that having a shared goal is one of the most effective means of resolving conflict and moving from a competitive relationship to a collaborative one.

- **Structural change**

Porter et al (1975:467) suggests structural changes within the organisation when the possibilities of setting superordinate goals are slim. This measure will imply that the work structure or the reward structure could be changed so that the objective sources of conflict could be minimised or reduced.

3.10 THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION

3.10.1 Dilemmas of corporate dispute resolution

Woodrow (1999) states that problems with the traditional systems of conflict resolution systems include the following:

- Conflict resolution procedures take too much time.
- Even parties that win their disputes are often dissatisfied with the outcome.
- Many procedures do not provide any means for bringing the parties most concerned together to address the real issues.
- In some cases, the relationship between the parties is actually worsened through the dispute resolution process.
- There are no regular procedures for addressing certain kinds of conflict.
- People do not use existing processes, consider them unfair, cumbersome or likely to bring reprisals.
- At times, people tend to overuse processes, overloading the system with grievances and causing a backlog of unresolved cases.
- Companies lack ways to intervene timeously and informally to prevent problems from becoming serious.

- Too many disputes can escalate to expensive adjudicator processes, such as having to use arbitrators or law courts.

3.10.2 The problems with the process and the people

Tillet (1991:91) postulates that problems in conflict resolution usually fall into two categories, namely the problems associated with the process and with people. The problem of process arises when the process is defective or fails to meet the needs of the people involved. The participants could be dealing with what they understand the conflict to be but not with one mutually defined. The process may have failed to allow participants to express their feelings and this often results in frustration, anger or psychological withdrawal from the process. The problems relating to the participants in the conflict resolution process can result from the relationship between the participants. Blocks, defence mechanisms, games, resistance, personal attacks and fighting can affect participants. Below is a description of each of the potential problems.

- **Blocks**

Tillet (1991:91) states that it is common to come up against blocks when trying to work towards conflict resolution. The blocks may be deadlocks, states of exhaustion, or an inability to solve a minor problem despite endless discussions. According to Tillet (1991:91) an effective means to handle blocks is to put the blocked matter aside and to proceed with other issues, returning to it later. A block may indicate fixation, or be a deliberate game of power.

- **Defence mechanisms**

According to Tillet (1991:91) conflict and conflict resolution almost inevitably provoke defence mechanisms. This is a process that everyone uses to protect themselves from situations that are perceived to be unpleasant, uncomfortable or threatening. A defence mechanism may be adopted consciously and it is useful to be able to recognise them and to be able to draw the individual's attention to the fact that it is being used. Defence mechanisms used includes denial, repression, projection, diversion, displacement, rationalisation, intellectualisation, fixation, minimisation, hostility, conversion and fantasy, identification, regression, flight, resignation and apathy.

- **Games**

Defence mechanisms, (Tillet, 1991:96) are generally unconscious ways of dealing with unpleasant situations. There are however, conscious strategies for avoiding pain or for dominating others. This is commonly referred to as games or tactics and includes a number of techniques to coerce the other party into yielding. Tactics employed can include making threats and promises, withdrawals, delaying or doing nothing. Other games that can be played include blackmail, the good cop/bad cop routine, to change negotiators, interruptions, overwhelming the other party and to be obnoxious.

- **Resistance**

Tillet (1991:99) states that resistance is a term used in psychoanalysis in referring to the opposition's attempts to make unconscious processes conscious. Resistance is met in conflict resolution through defence mechanisms and also through less obvious and subtler

responses. It can be expressed through symptoms of anxiety, verbal withdrawal, late arrival, physical withdrawal, attempts to reopen closed issues and hostility aimed at the other participants. Resistance is usually the result of a perception that conflict resolution is opening up personally threatening issues. Resistance can be minimised by open discussion before the process begins and during the process by encouraging positive commitment.

- **Personal attack**

Personal attacks occur in conflict and conflict resolution. It can be a consequence of a defence mechanism or it can be a deliberate strategy to unnerve and upset. Usually, according to Tillett (1991:100), most people respond defensively to personal attacks and move into personal defence. This will shift the process away from the resolution of a particular conflict to a defence of the individual or a fight. Personal attacks can involve the questioning of competence, suggestions of immorality, comment about personal characteristics or a reference to the past.

- **Fighting**

Tillett (1991:100) argues that conflict resolution can easily degenerate into fighting, particularly where the issue is emotionally charged and participants feel that a desirable outcome is unlikely. Where fighting is involved, it should be identified and recognised and not be presented as conflict resolution. Fighting can precede resolution and punctuate the resolution process. If this happens, it is important that the fact is clearly defined, not in a judgmental way, but as a statement of fact. The parties may wish to fight for a while, and then return to resolution.

3.11 RESPONDING TO PROBLEMS

Tillet (1991:101) discusses a number of strategies and skills that can be adopted to respond to the problems created by blocks, defence mechanisms, games, resistance and personal attacks. The skills involve communication, assertion and firm persistence. Tillet (1991:101) states that it is necessary to have a clear sense of purpose of any discussion and to continually reiterate it. It should be done quietly and gently, but persistently. The 'broken record' technique can be used, that is, regardless of the attempts by the other party to change the subject or provoke defensiveness. The strategies that can be used are discussed below and it includes behaviour nomination, rules and procedures and control and self-control.

- **Behaviour nomination**

Tillet (1991:101) describes this strategy as explaining in a non-accusatory manner to the person what their behaviour appears to be and asking the person why they are engaging in it. Instructions that behaviour should change must not be given, instead the individual's attention must be drawn to the behaviour and if this is done repeatedly and firmly, it often leads to behaviour change. It is also useful to describe to the individual how the behaviour is preventing the process of conflict resolution.

- **Rules and procedures**

According to Tillet (1991:101) it is important in conflict resolution to establish clear, mutually agreed rules and procedures, ensuring that it takes account of some of the

defence mechanisms. It may be important to establish clearly that each party will have an opportunity, without interruption, to express viewpoints and to respond to the other. A clear agenda mutually agreed in advance also assists in minimising problems. If problems arise, the agenda can be referred to and issues that may divert from the purpose of the meeting can be added to the agenda. An open-ended meeting will encourage free-ranging and undirected discussion. This has some advantages but can lead to unproductive and diversionary conversations.

- **Control and self control**

Tillet (1991:102) maintains that one of the most effective ways of dealing with problems is for the mediator or the other party to demonstrate control and self-control. This will include verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The mediator's influence will increase if the perception is that the mediator is in control. Control must be established right from the very beginning of the meeting, as once the perception of the involved parties changes, the mediator will not be able to regain control. In this situation power games are likely to be used. It is however, important to encourage people to focus on the problem and not the personalities.

3.12 STIMULATING CONFLICT

Vecchio (1995:525) argues that managers may at times need to stimulate conflict. It is believed that some situations may benefit from the creation of conflict and that conflict encourages development and innovation. Cherrington (1994:432) mentions that as conflict increases, individuals will experience greater levels of stimulation and

motivation. An indication for the need to stimulate conflict can include an unusually low rate of employee turnover, a shortage of new ideas, strong resistance to change and the belief that being co-operative (the principle trait of a yes-man attitude) is more important than personal competence. Cherrington (1994:432) states that too little conflict will result in an organisation that is lethargic, where ideas have become stale and where behaviour has become routine. Among the specific techniques offered for inducing conflict are:

- **Appointing managers who are open to change**

A highly authoritarian manager will tend to suppress opposing viewpoints. The resulting lethargy can be overcome to some extent by the appropriate selection and placement of change-oriented managers (Vecchio, 1995:526).

- **Encouraging competition**

The use of individual and group incentives to performance, such as pay increases, bonuses and recognition, tend to enhance competition. Competition if managed properly can result in creative conflict (Vecchio, 1995:526). Cherrington (1994:433) reasons that offering rewards to the individual or group with the best performance can create competition. The rewards need to be sufficiently attractive and promote high performance, while those who lose should not feel that their defeat is a catastrophic loss.

- **Restructuring the work unit.**

Changing members of work teams, rotating personnel and altering lines of communication can contribute to bringing about the realisation of the need for change.

Restructuring can create new jobs to be filled by outsiders whose values and styles will contrast with the prevailing but lethargic set of norms (Vecchio, 1995:527). Cherrington (1994:433) states that as the general rule higher conflict levels occur when groups become smaller, for example such as specialised subgroups and this would create a situation more conducive to conflict, because each group will be competing for resources, materials and clients.

- **Altering the communication flow**

Cherrington (1994:432) states that information is a source of power in organisations and sharing or withholding information can create conflict. Showing groups how well they perform relative to other groups can create higher performance expectations. Some managers use the informal grapevine to create conflict by leaking confidential information and false rumours. This practice is not recommended due to the long-term consequence of destroying confidence.

- **Recruiting outside experts**

Cherrington (1994:433) criticises promotion-from-within policies as inbreeding since the "new" managers tend to follow old procedures that lead to stale thinking and a lack of creativity and imagination. To avoid these problems, organisations should recruit outside experts who will challenge established procedures and stimulate new thinking.

3.13 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

3.13.1 Bisno's Conflict Management flow chart

Bisno (1988:63) suggests in figure 3.4 a procedure that can be followed to manage conflict.

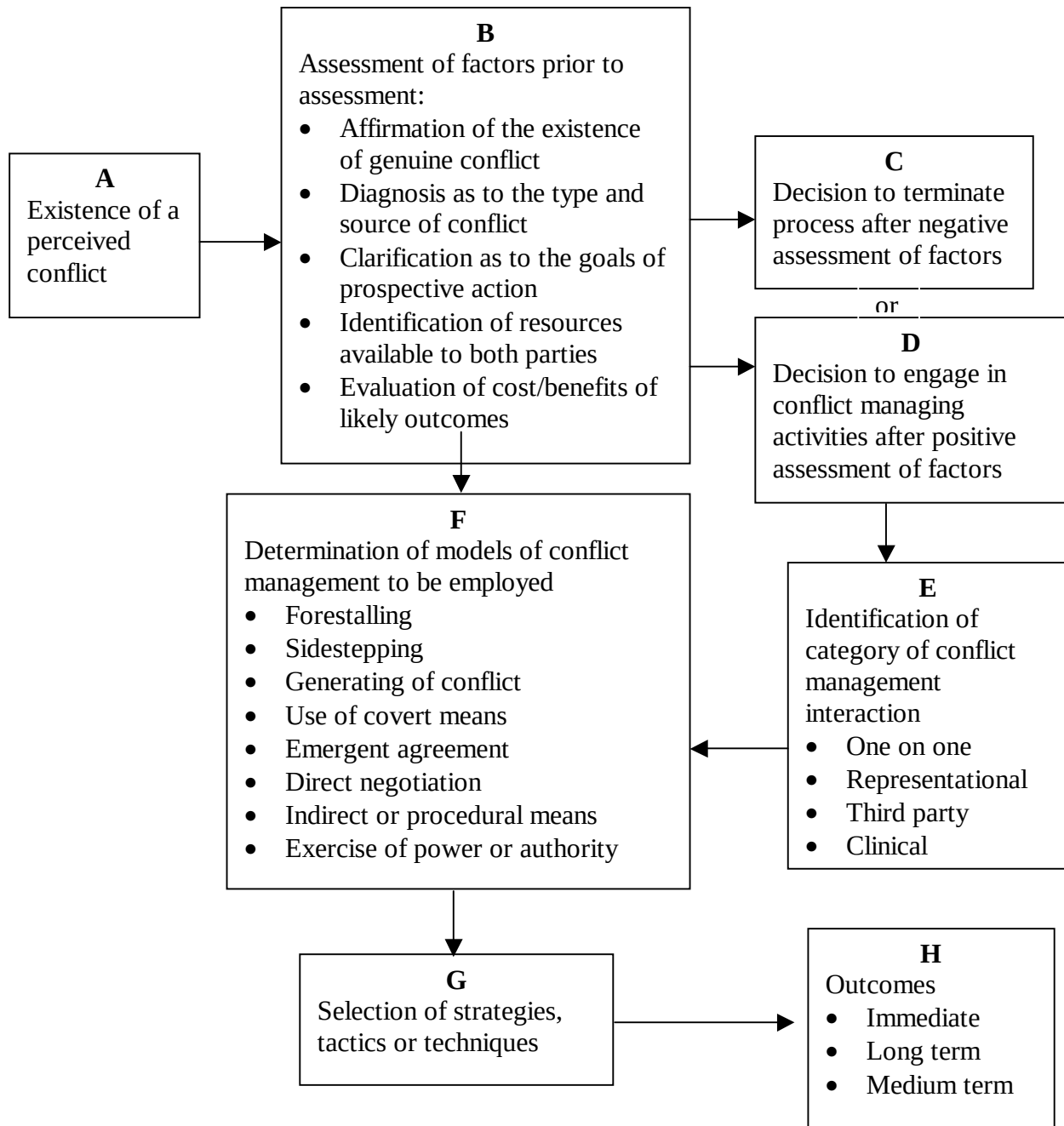


FIGURE 3.4: A FLOW DIAGRAM OF THE CONFLICT PROCESS

SOURCE : BISNO (1988:63)

The starting point in this process, according to Bisno (1988:61) is a perceived conflict, as depicted in box A. The perception in itself is however insufficient for making considered action decisions. Confirmation that a genuine conflict exists is needed and an understanding of the factors leading to and characterising the conflict (box B). Assessment may lead to a decision to act on the conflict or not to go further with the process (box C). If assessment results in the decision to go ahead with conflict managing activities the process continues (box D).

Bisno (1988:60) states that assessment is a complex activity. There should be clarity on all goals and the opposing party's objectives should be significantly opposite. Unnecessary conflict, due to misunderstandings, a lack of accurate information or bad timing can lead to disaster, and it should be avoided. It is crucial to make an accurate diagnosis of the type of conflict and there should be reasonable grounds for the judgement that the prospective conflict management activity will be an appropriate and effective way of achieving the desired objectives. This will involve a careful weighing of the broad range of likely benefits and costs in as complete a manner as is feasible. There also needs to be a comprehensive identification of the resources that would be available in the conflict situation and this process will require a realistic assessment of the resources available to the parties involved. The determination, will, expertise and rear guard supporters should also be cautiously appraised. Finally, according to Bisno

(1988:61) the selection of the appropriate strategies, tactics, and techniques should be carefully evaluated, bearing in mind that a balance between forward planning and flexibility is necessary.

Assuming that the decision to proceed with the conflict management has been made, then it is important to identify the type of interaction that will characterise the encounter, such as representational, third party or one on one (Box E). Once there is clarity on this matter, the appropriate mode or modes for managing the conflict situation must be selected. This will involve an ongoing choice, review and revision of strategies, tactics, and techniques (Box G). Finally, there are likely outcomes and there may be multiple results at different points in time (Box H).

Even though the process is depicted in figure 4.5 (Bisno, 1988:61) as a one-way flow of events, the process may not be quite as clean and uncluttered in actual practice. There may be a back-and-forth process among the stages as developments dictate reconsideration of prior operational decisions.

3.13.2 A suggested conflict management procedure

A suggested conflict management model was developed from the literature discussed in the previous chapters of this research paper. This generic model, as depicted in Figure 3.5, serves as a useful guide for managing conflict. In the final chapter of this research the model will be applied to the selected organisation according to the findings from the

questionnaire. The generic factors will be replaced with factors specifically relating to the selected organisation.

model commences with the acknowledgement of the potential for conflict situations to arise. The potential for conflict can exist for various reasons, which can include:

- Differing perceptions
- Role conflict
- Individual personalities and attitudes
- Limited resources
- Inequitable treatment
- Group norms and
- Communication, the authority structure and leadership style

When a conflict situation arises, the source must be identified to ensure the correct action plan for managing the situation to a win-win outcome. The following principles must be applied to every conflict management situation:

- Analysis
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Preparation
- Collaboration
- Negotiation

- Flexibility an
- Mediation

Even before conflict manifests, the organisation can take measures to improve organisational practices, if this would pertain to the source of conflict. Organisational practices can be improved by:

- Establishing superordinate goals
- Improving policies
- Reallocating resources
- Modifying communications
- Rotating personnel
- Altering the reward structure
- Inter-group interaction
- Reducing ambiguities
- Proper procedures
- Training and
- Problem solving sessions

These measures can be effectively utilised as a proactive measure to manage potential conflict before the conflict manifests.

If the preventative measures are not followed or are not applicable or useful in a particular situation, then conflict can manifest. The route to follow would be to apply the mentioned measures for improving organisational practices, it can thus be seen as a preventative and a reactive measure. Another alternative is to apply special rules and structures, which will include:

- The manager performing a liaison role
- Relocating units within the organisation
- The services of an ombudsman
- Improving or altering organisation design.

The skilled manager should be able to identify the appropriate style to match the conflict situation. The various alternatives include:

- Competing
- Compromising
- Collaboration
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

If a quick decision is required or if an unpopular action is necessary or if the issue is of a vital and urgent nature, then the competing style may be used. The compromising style will be appropriate when both parties have equal power, when a quick settlement is

necessary and when no disruption can be afforded. It can also be used as a back-up measure for the forcing or collaboration styles. The utilisation of competing and compromising styles will usually result in the need for effective confrontation techniques.

The usual confrontation techniques include:

- Negotiation
- Bargaining
- Mediation
- Arbitration

The collaboration style of managing conflict is best suited when an integrative solution is sought, when it would be beneficial to merge insights and when it is essential to gain commitment to a particular course of action. It is also used when there is a need to work through feelings and where learning is an objective. The style of avoiding conflict should be used when the matter is of a trivial nature, if unnecessary disruption will be caused or if others are competent in solving the issue. This style is also applicable when the conflict situation is a symptom of another issue.

The final conflict management option is the method of accommodating. This is appropriate when the manager needs to show reasonability and to build credit, also if the issue is not that important and to minimise potential losses and to maintain harmony within the organisation.

The success of managing the conflict situation will depend on applying the principles of:

- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Motivation
- Innovation
- Willingness to experiment
- Critical thinking
- Communication

The manager following the guidelines while applying the appropriate principles can be ensured of increased group performance.

3.14 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter the need for conflict management and the basic principles of managing conflict were defined. The different styles and strategies as described by various authors and the problems usually associated with conflict management were discussed. Means for responding to the problems were evaluated and the different ways in which conflict can be stimulated were also discussed. The need for stimulating conflict was discussed in the previous chapters. A model, aimed at assisting the manager to manage conflict, was developed. The model indicates a particular situation and a specific route to follow to resolve conflict situations.

In chapter 4 the research methodology used during the study will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGNING THE FIELD STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 the impact of conflict on the organisation was discussed in order to establish the need and importance of managing conflict to the benefit of the organisation. The information was based on the literature study. In Chapter 3 the various strategies for managing conflict were considered, the potential problems were discussed and a model was developed to assist in managing a conflict situation. The model was a conclusion from the information gained from the literature study. The literature study was used to establish an answer to the first sub problem: What conflict management strategies do the literature reveal that will assist the manager in effectively managing conflict

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology that was used during the study. This chapter describes the process of obtaining an answer to the second sub problem: What conflict management strategies do managers utilise to assist them in managing conflict? The technical aspects of this study are discussed in order to justify the quality of the procedures that were used.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Prior to describing the detail of the research methodology that was applied in this study, it is necessary to consider the following question:

- What is research methodology?

Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, as mentioned in Leedy (1997:4) defines research as: "Research. A studious inquiry or examination, especially a critical and exhaustive investigation or experimentation having its aim the *discovery* of new facts and their correct *interpretation*, the revision of accepted conclusions, theories, or laws in the light of newly *discovered* facts or the *practical* application of such conclusions, theories, or laws." Preece (1994:3) defines research, as quoted from a dictionary as "systematic investigation towards increasing the sum of human knowledge". Research and the investigation must be well organised and carried out in a system of ideas. Only a systematically trained mind is likely to be aware of the possible significance of any chance observation. From such observation the trained mind will develop intuitive ideas or a hunch. The inductively formed ideas must be tested systematically according to procedures.

Leedy (1997:3) defines research as "a systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon with which we are concerned or interested". Professional research, according to Allison, O'Sullivan, Owen, Rice, Rothwell and Saunders (1996: 4) is a particular form of inquiry, which has to be an inquiry into *something*. It is impossible to do research without having a problem that needs to be solved or a question that needs to be answered. Melville and Goddard (1996: xiv) describe research as the process of expanding the boundaries of ignorance and that the man who believes he knows everything is not only ignorant but also arrogant. Research is not just information gathering but it is about answering unanswered questions

whilst being a systematic quest for undiscovered knowledge. Good research is systematic when it is a planned, organised process with a specific goal. Leedy states (1997:12) that research is not a haphazard activity and that it has to follow a standard procedure in a logical sequence of steps.

Leedy (1997:9) states that the core concept, which underlies all research, is its methodology. An intimate knowledge and the understanding that research methodology directs the whole effort are necessary. In developing the research methodology critical decisions are made and the principles of organising, planning and directing are applied. The methodology will control the study, dictate the acquisition of data, arrange the data in logical relationships, set up a means of redefining the raw data and formulate an approach to manifest the underlying meaning. Finally, the methodology will lead to a conclusion or series of conclusions that will result in the expansion of knowledge.

Leedy (1997: 9) summarises that research has two primary functions:

- Research methodology can control and dictate the acquisition of data.
- Research methodology enables the grouping of data after the acquisition thereof and allows for meaningful extractions.

4.3 STATISTICS AS A TOOL OF RESEARCH

Leedy (1997:36) states that statistics is a tool of research and it provides a means by which researchers may more comprehensively view data; and viewing data properly is one major ingredient of successful research. Statistics is a most insightful tool and its

importance should not be undervalued. Statistical values are never the end of the research endeavour or the final answer to the research problem. Behind statistics lie the data to which the statistics refer. The final question in research is to determine what the data indicate. Statistics thus provide the researcher with information about that data.

4.3.1 Primary functions of statistics

According to Leedy (1997:37) statistics have two principal functions: descriptive and inferential. Statistics can aid the research process in two ways:

- **Descriptive statistics** describes the contour of data and, in the case of two or more groups of data their proximity or remoteness of relationship.
- **Inferential statistics** seek to fit data to the ideal form of a statistical model by suggesting certain inferences as to the nature of the data.

Statistics play an important role in manipulating data and in comprehending the entire research process. A major service and perhaps the primary one is that statistics assist the human mind in comprehending disparate data as an organised whole.

Statistics ties unconnected data together meaningfully. It provides a hypothetical platform from which data can be viewed. To acquire this view, each individual datum can be converted into a hypothetical whole from which, with the aid of statistical processing, the mind of the researcher can extract a substantial, though frequently entirely non-existent,

concept. Statistics may be defined as that numerical system that aims to make diverse and complex data unified and comprehensible to the human mind.

4.3.2 Classical measurements of research

A hierarchy of measurement levels was identified in 1946. This classification hierarchy has become a classic categorisation for statisticians and researchers. The four levels that were identified were nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio. The nature of the data will dictate the statistical procedures that can be used to process data and which will prescribe the appropriate type of measurement. Each level of measurement will be considered in table 4.1 (Leedy, 1997:3).

Measurement Scale		Characteristics of the scale	Statistical possibilities of the Scale
Non-interval	Nominal	Measures in terms of names or designations of discrete units or categories	To determine the mode, percentage values or chi-square
Non-interval	Ordinal	Measures in terms of values as more or less, larger or smaller, without specifying the size of the intervals	To determine the mode, percentage, chi-square, median, percentile rank or rank correlation
Interval	Interval	Measures in terms of equal intervals or degrees of difference but whose zero point, or point of beginning, are arbitrarily established	To determine the mode, the mean, standard deviation, the t test, the F test and product moment correlation

Interval	Ratio	Measures in terms of equal intervals and an absolute zero point of origin	To determine the geometric mean, the harmonic mean, the percentage variation, and all other statistical variations
----------	-------	---	--

FIGURE 4.1: MEASUREMENT SCALES

SOURCE : LEEDY (1997:33)

4.3.3 Validity and reliability

Researchers will constantly encounter the terms “validity and reliability”, according to Leedy (1997: 32). It is primarily used in connection with measurement instruments. The integrity of research will depend on the researcher’s understanding of the meaning of it. Validity and reliability govern the acquisition of data and skilfulness with which the research structure is designed as well as the creation of the instruments of measurement as an integral part of it. Validity is concerned with the soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument. A question such as what the test measures will be relevant to testing validity. Several types of validity have been identified, the six most common types are:

- **Face validity**

It relies on the subjective judgement of the researcher. Two questions are asked in accordance with the researcher’s best judgement, namely:

- Is the measuring instrument doing what it is supposed to do?
- Is the measured sample representative of the behaviour or trait being measured?

- **Criterion validity**

This is determined by relating performance on one measure to another measure, called a criterion. The data of the measuring instrument should correlate to equivalent data of the criterion.

- **Content validity**

This type can be equated with face validity but it is the accuracy with which an instrument measures the factors under study, that is, the content is being studied.

- **Construct validity**

It is any concept such as honesty, which cannot be directly observed or isolated.

- **Internal validity**

This is the freedom from bias in forming conclusions in the view of collected data.

- **External validity**

This is concerned with the generalisation of the conclusions researched through observation of a sample, or asking the question of which conclusions can be drawn from a sample.

Validity looks at the end result of measurements and the principal question that it asks is if the researcher is really measuring what was intended to be measured. Reliability is the consistency with which a measuring instrument performs (Leedy, 1997:35). In ensuring the integrity of any research, it must be considered mandatory to clearly state the specifications of the measuring instrument. A research study, which employs faulty measuring tools, will result in a defective research endeavour. In detecting whether the measure that the researcher has chosen is correct, a number of methods are available:

- The test-retest method will compare the results of two administrations of the measuring instrument separated by a time interval.
- Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a statistical procedure with relatively little error, will correlate every test item with each other. A score over .70 is acceptable, but the higher the score the better the evidence that items in the instrument are measuring the same trait.
- Establishing interrater reliability is when two or more observers in the same situation record the same behaviours. An agreement of eighty five percent is acceptable. Training is necessary to ensure consistency between observers.

4.4 THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

According to Neuman (1990: 316), the scientific method is not a single step, but refers to numerous ideas, different rules, techniques and approaches that are used in a variety of ways by the scientific community. Leedy (1997:94) views the scientific method as solving the problem by firstly identifying the core of the problem, secondly by gathering the necessary data to solve the problem, thirdly stating and using a hypothesis as a logical way of finding relevant data and as a means of resolving the problem. Lastly, challenging the hypothesis by utilising the accumulated preceded and interpreted data to determine whether it will solve the initial problem successfully. Leedy (1997:95) states that a researcher views the data only to come to a final conclusion. The reason for this being that the researcher can never be completely sure of what is indicated by the data. Leedy (1997: 95) states that the scientific method involves the induction of a hypothesis on an observation, the deduction of implications from the hypothesis, the testing of the implications, and the conformation or non-conformation of the hypothesis.

Considering the explanations of what research is, the research design of this study was categorised into the main problem and the two sub problems. The main problem is:

What strategies should be used by organisations to manage conflict effectively?

The two sub problems, developed to assist in solving the main problem are:

- What conflict management strategies do the literature reveal that will assist managers in effectively managing organisational conflict?

- What conflict management strategies do managers in a specific organisation utilise in assisting them in managing conflict?

By obtaining answers to sub problem one and two an attempt can be made to solve sub problem three, namely:

- How can the results of sub problem one and two be integrated?

The procedure that was applied to solve the main problem and sub problems were as follows:

- In chapter two a literature study was conducted on the views of conflict, the reasons for potential conflict and the different models of conflict that described the stages of a conflict episode.
- Chapter three discussed the basic principles of conflict management and the styles of conflict management, confrontation techniques, improving organisational practices and applying special rules and structures are also discussed. A proposed conflict resolving system is mentioned and the usual problems encountered with conflict resolution. Based on the information obtained from the study a model is drawn up as a conclusion that should assist the manager in solving conflict situations.
- In order to solve the second sub problem (what conflict management strategies do managers utilise to assist them in managing conflict) a questionnaire was developed

based on the information from chapter three. This study focuses on a particular service-orientated organisation and the questionnaire was issued to managers within the organisation. The method of administering the questionnaire is discussed in more detail in section 4.5.

- The results gained from the survey are analysed in the following chapters.

4.5 THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

Leedy (1997:191) states that, depending on the research objective, four principal research methodologies can be used. The methodologies include:

- The descriptive survey method or the normative survey method deals with a situation that demands the technique of observation as the principal method of collecting data (Leedy, 1997:191).
- The experimental method deals with the phenomenon of cause and effect and is performed within a system of controlled conditions. A closed system, using a structure of a control and experiment group is applied. (Leedy, 1997:230)
- Historical data, according to Leedy (1997:173) deals with the meaning of events and it looks intently at past and present events.

- The analytical survey method is appropriate for quantitative data and statistical assistance is needed to extract meaning from the data.

In this study the analytical survey method was applied. However, due to the small sample in this study it was not meaningful to perform a detailed statistical analysis. According to a statistician that were consulted the statistical tools that were used are applicable to the data collected.

Schnetler, Stoker, Dixon, Herbst and Geldenhuys (1989:14) distinguish between three methods of data collection, namely standardised, unstructured and structural data collection methods. Standardised and unstructured data collection methods are specialised techniques and require considerable experience to administer. Structured data can be used by most researchers and are not as specialised. Various structured data collection instruments are available to the researcher. Berry (1997:143) identified the following instruments as described by Schnetler et al (1989:16-37):

- Personal interviews. The advantage of this method is that it allows for effective co-operation from respondents and the disadvantage is that of high cost and time constraints.
- The telephonic interview. The advantage of this method is the quick response from respondents but it must be measured against the disadvantage of obtaining sufficient quality time from respondents.

- A form of the postal survey is the method that was applied in this study. The method requires the respondent to complete the questionnaire by him/herself. The questionnaire is the only method of correspondence between the researcher and the respondent.

- **Development of the Questionnaire**

The researcher should bear in mind that it is an imposition to ask the respondent to complete a questionnaire. Therefore the researcher must be certain that there is a need for a questionnaire. The researcher must also consider the question of reliability. The questions should be worded in such a manner that the respondent's state of mind will not affect the answer. The questions must also be worded to ensure valid interpretation by respondents; that is an interpretation which will match the researcher's. As far as possible, the same style of questions should be used throughout the questionnaire.

The questionnaire (appendix B) for this research was divided into two parts. Section A was compiled by requesting biographical data and by using close and open ended questions which related to the organisation and the individual perceptions and experiences of conflict situations.

Section B was compiled from closed questions that required the respondents to indicate the methods and techniques that they utilised to manage conflict. Four main categories of question with the following headings were compiled:

- Confrontation techniques
- Improving organisational practice
- Special rules and structures
- The styles used to manage conflict

Respondents were requested to indicate which method they used by choosing the appropriate answer. The options for an answer under the headings for confrontation techniques, improving organisational practices and special rules and structures (Section B, numbers 1,2,3) were:

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always
- Don't know

For the questions under the heading styles used to manage conflict (Section B, number 4) the respondents had to choose an appropriate reply from the following options:

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Likely
- Very likely

Lannon (1994:162) suggests the following to ensure a good response rate:

- Define the purpose of the questionnaire
- Define the sample group
- Define the methods used
- Decide on the type of questions
- Design an engaging introduction and opening questions
- Keep questions short
- Make each question unambiguous and unbiased
- Add personal touches to ensure reader response

- **The pilot study**

Prior to conducting the pilot study, the questionnaire was reviewed by a statistician and by two experienced researchers, both from the Port Elizabeth Technikon. The necessary adjustments were made and then presented to ten colleagues at the Port Elizabeth Technikon for the final review. The results of the pilot study were not included in the survey results.

- **Administration of the questionnaire**

An individual from the Human Resources Department within the organisation on which this study is based handled the distribution of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were handed out to managers and they were supplied with envelopes in which to return

the completed questionnaire. This measure was taken to ensure confidentiality, encourage openness and honesty and to ensure that the respondents remained anonymous.

A covering letter was attached to the questionnaire that explained the reason for the questionnaire and the purpose of the study. Respondents were ensured that the questionnaire would not take long to complete and that the information was viewed as confidential. It was also explained that the completed questionnaire should be returned to the contact person in the attached envelope.

The deadline for returning the questionnaire to the contact person was set for 29 September 1999. Thirty seven questionnaires were returned by the deadline date.

- **The response rate**

The questionnaires were handed to the contact person on the 6th September 1999 and a response rate of 74 percent was attained, which may be accepted as a good response.

Table 4.1: The response rate attained in the survey

DATE RECEIVED	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	<u>QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED</u>	<u>QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED</u>
		NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
29 September 1999	50	37	74

4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter attempted to provide an extensive analysis of the methodology of the research conducted. The different theoretical methodologies and the methodologies chosen to conduct this particular research were discussed.

The following chapter will consist of an analysis and interpretation of the response data obtained through the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The results from the empirical study described in the previous chapter will be presented in this chapter. The data will be interpreted in terms of the questionnaire, viz

- The biographical data
- The attitude to conflict management
- The methods to manage conflict, namely:
 - Confrontation techniques
 - Improving organisational practices
 - Special rules and structures
 - The styles used to manage conflict

This chapter will attempt to provide answers to the second sub problem: what conflict management strategies do managers utilise to assist them in managing conflict? The results are presented in the form of tables and graphs to provide a graphical illustration and to ensure a clear interpretation.

5.2 RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

5.2.1 The results from Section A of the questionnaire

Table 5.1 indicates that the majority of respondents were from the Port Elizabeth area.

Figure 5.1 is a graphic illustration of the data.

Table 5.1: Geographical area covered in the survey

Geographical area	Count	Percentage
Port Elizabeth	35	94.54
Uitenhage	1	2.70
Other	1	2.70
TOTAL	37	100

Figure 5.1: Graphic illustration of geographical area covered in the survey

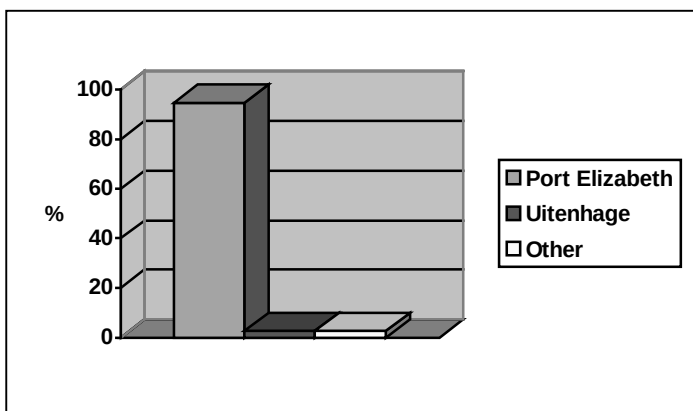


Table 5.2 and figure 5.2 indicate the distribution of the different positions in which the respondents are employed. The data reflects a fair representation of the company's staff complement. Ten different job positions were categorised and that indicates a good spread of exposure and differences that should make the study more relevant and applicable.

Table 5.2: Positions held by respondents

Nature of position of respondent	Count	Percentage
HR specialist	1	2.70
Legal advisor	1	2.70
Accounting	1	2.70
Client services	2	5.41
Legal department manager	2	5.41
Information technology	2	5.41
Head of Department	3	8.11
Marketing	5	13.51
OD consultant	6	16.22
Manager	14	37.84
Total	37	100

Figure 5.2: Graphic illustration of positions held by respondents

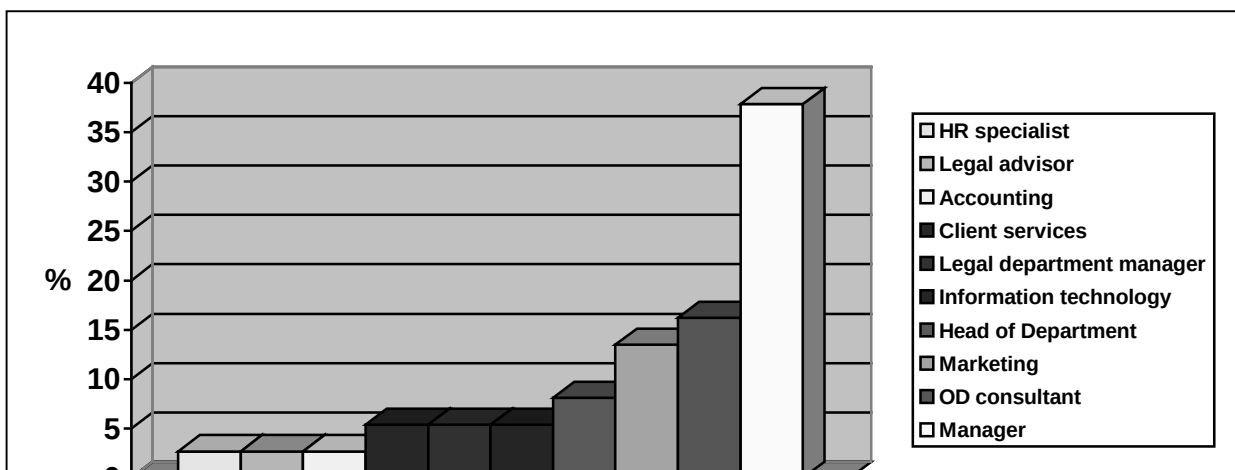


Table 5.3 indicates the average number of subordinates per respondent. This question was included to determine the respondent's exposure to potential conflict situations and their need for managing conflict. The response of 9.57 subordinates per respondent indicates a relatively high exposure to potential conflict situations.

Table 5.3: Number of subordinates per respondent

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SUBORDINATES TO EACH RESPONDENT	9.57
--	-------------

Table 5.4 and Figure 5.3 illustrate the qualification level of the respondents. The majority of the respondents (78.34 %) have a qualification higher than standard 10.

Table 5.4: Educational qualifications of respondents

Qualification of respondents	Count	Percentage
Std 8/equivalent	0	0
Std 9/equivalent	0	0
Std10/equivalent	8	21.62
B Degree/Diploma	13	35.14
Honours/higher diploma	9	24.32
Masters degree/ diploma	4	10.81
Doctorate/ DTech	2	5.41
Other	1	2.70
Total	37	100

Figure 5.3: Graphic illustration of qualifications held by respondents

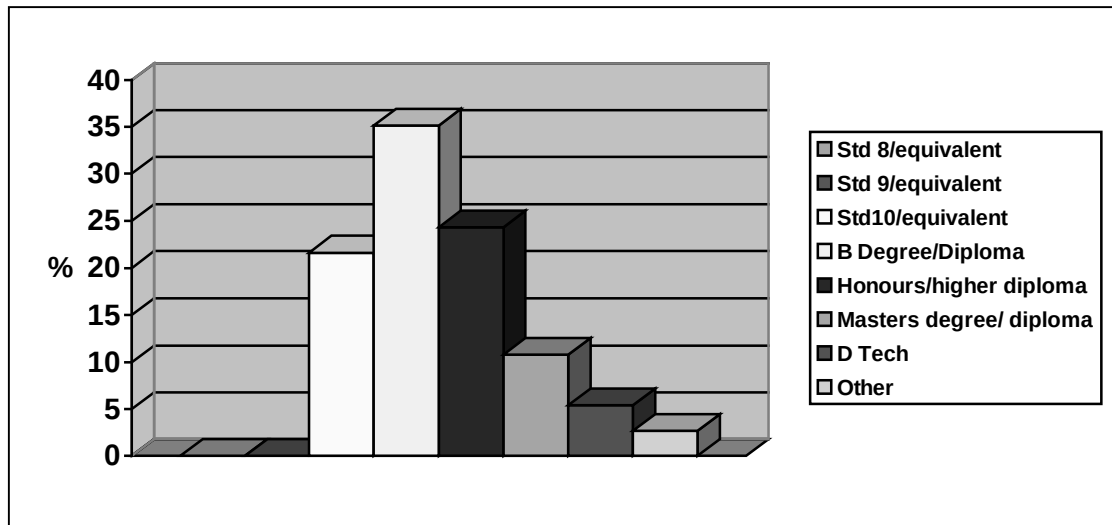
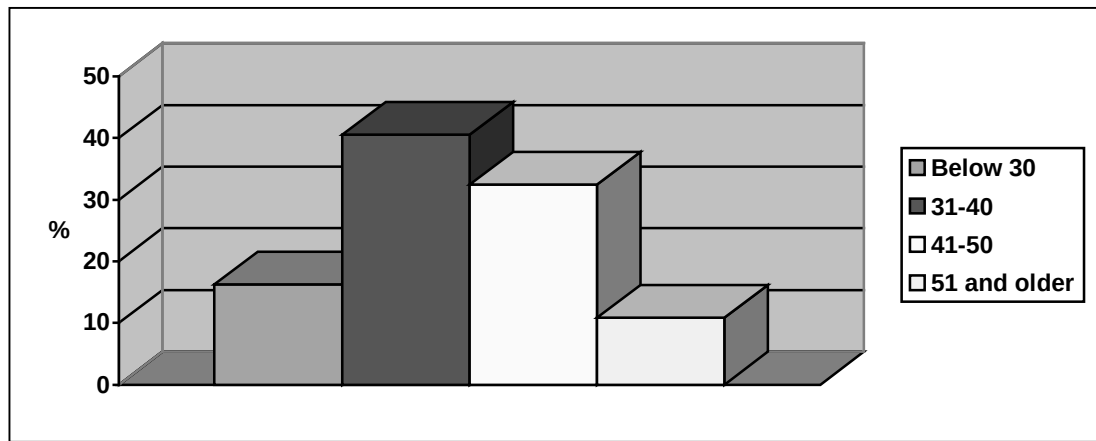


Table 5.5 and Figure 5.4 indicate the age of the respondents. The majority (40.54%) falls into the 31-40 years age bracket and 83.78 percent of the respondents are thirty years and older. This implies that the majority of respondents have had a number of years working experience and that they could provide valuable input for this study.

Table 5.5: Age of the respondents

Age of respondents	Count	Percentage
30 and younger	6	16.22
31-40	15	40.54
41-50	12	32.43
51 and older	4	10.81
Total	37	100

Figure 5.4: Graphic illustration of the age of the respondents



On the questions if the organisation has a training department and whether or not the respondents received training in the management of conflict the response was as shown in table 5.6. All the respondents indicated that the organisation has a training department but only 54 percent of the respondents had received training in the management of conflict.

Table 5.6: Respondents' exposure to training

	YES	NO
Does the organisation have a training department	37 (100%)	0 (0%)
Have you ever received training in the management of conflict	20 (54%)	17 (46%)

The respondents were asked to list the reasons for conflict within their organisation. The major reason listed was communication problems and then different perceptions, work

pressure and individual differences and different personalities. Table 5.7 and figure 5.5 illustrate the responses.

Table 5.7: Reasons for conflict within the organisation

REASON	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Changes in the work environment	1	1.5
Weak personalities	1	1.5
Individuals not taking ownership and responsibility	2	4
Red tape	2	4
Jealousy and competition	2	4
Affirmative action	2	4
Poor management and management styles	3	5
Personal prejudice	3	5
Individual differences and different perceptions	8	15
Work pressure (too many tasks, too little time)	8	15
Different perceptions	10	19
Communication problems	12	22
Total	54	100

Figure 5.5: Graphic illustration of reasons for conflict within the organisation

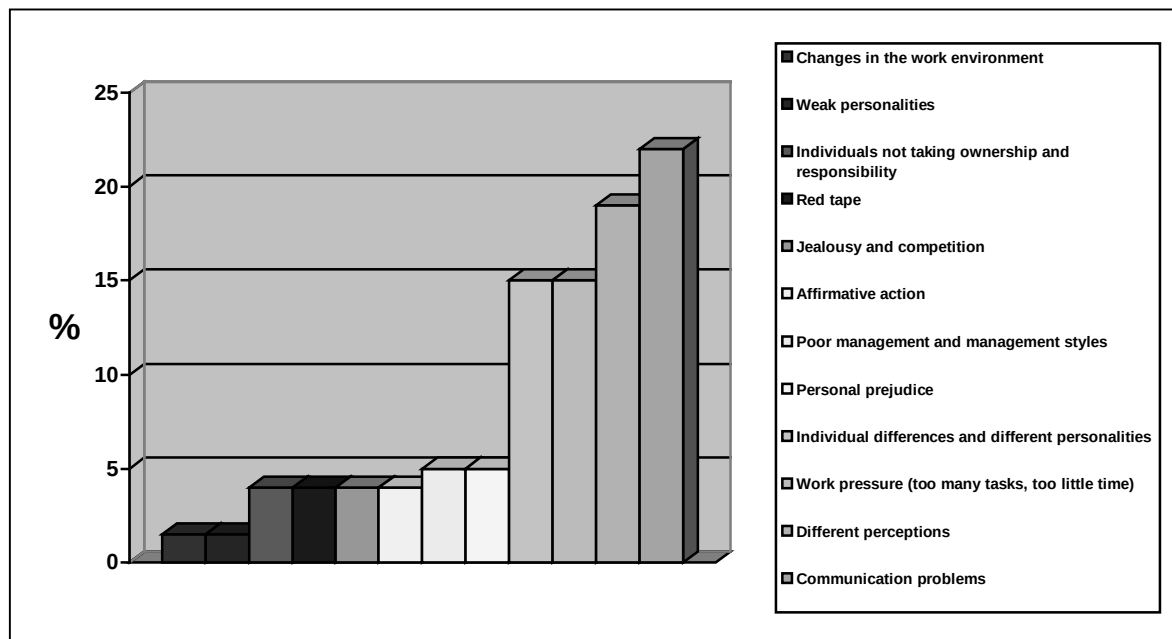


Table 5.8 represents the percentage of respondents who believed that conflict has only negative results and should be eliminated, the percentage that felt that their organisation tried to stimulate conflict and if they believed that there are benefits in stimulating conflict under certain circumstances. The majority of the respondents (75.68%) felt that conflict does not have only negative results and that it should not be eliminated. The majority (91.89%) believed that there are benefits in stimulating conflict and 64.86 percent thought that the organisation tried to stimulate conflict.

Table 5.8: Conflict situations and the organisation's role.

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you believe that conflict has only negative results and should be eliminated?	24.32	75.68
Does your organisation try to stimulate conflict?	64.86	35.14
Do you believe that there are benefits in stimulating conflict under certain circumstances?	91.89	8.11

The respondents were asked to provide a motivation if their answer was yes to the question of believing that there is benefits in stimulating conflict under certain circumstances. The respondents' answers are illustrated in table 5.9. The main reasons listed were to eliminate wrong perceptions and to understand behaviour for better teamwork and to create win-win situations. The majority of the respondents (27%) felt that conflict should be stimulated in order to eliminate wrong perceptions and to understand behaviour. Seventeen percent of respondents felt that better teamwork would be a result of stimulating conflict and 12 percent felt it would create win-win situations.

Table 5.9: Reasons to stimulate conflict

REPLY	COUNT	%
To ensure diversity in thinking and behaviour	1	2
To get to the bottom of the problem	1	2
Stronger focus on organisational goals	1	2
To ensure healthy work attitude and atmosphere	1	2
Create shared meaning	1	2
To learn from other people	1	2
To result in organisational effectiveness	1	2
To enhance teamwork and build a stronger culture in the organization	1	2
To stimulate or enhance the differences in perception	1	2
For a fair handling of situations	1	2
To get better results	1	2
Stimulation is healthy to change a rigid mindset	1	2
Conflict has positive results	2	5
To express feelings openly	2	5
For stronger focus on the organisation and organisational goal	2	5
It will result in a more healthy and competitive atmosphere	2	5
For win-win situations	5	12
Better teamwork	7	17
To eliminate wrong perceptions and to understand behaviour	12	27
Total	44	100

5.2.2 Summary of Section A data

- The data received from the questionnaire indicates a representative sample from the organisation, since a 74 percent response rate were achieved from respondents from

ten different positions within the organisation. The majority of respondents (78.34%) held a qualification higher than standard ten and the majority is within the 31-50 year age group. It can thus be deducted that the respondents are educated and have been exposed to business in general.

- Fifty four percent of the respondents have received training in the management of conflict and it can be seen as a low average. However, nearly 76 percent of the respondents indicated that conflict should not be eliminated even though only 35 percent felt that the organisation tried to stimulate conflict, which is a low average. Since nearly 92 percent of the respondents believed that there are benefits in stimulating conflict, it can be assumed that the organisation in general and specifically the respondents would be open to suggestions, training and change in managing conflict.
- Various reasons for conflict occurring within the organisation were listed with the four main reasons relating to communication problems, individual differences and personalities, different perceptions and work pressure. These are the areas to which management should be paying attention to avoid major problems and negative conflict situations occurring. Suggestions would include training in issues such as delegation, time management, effective communication and team building. The majority of respondents felt that conflict should be stimulated in order to eliminate wrong perceptions and to understand behaviour. The issue of different perceptions could lead to major problems within the organisation, since

this point was the main reason for conflict as well as the reason for stimulation of conflict.

- **5.2.3 Quantitative analysis of the results of Section B of the questionnaire**

The questions in section B were designed to measure the techniques that managers used to manage conflict situations. The questions were based on the information gained from the literature study that suggested various means of managing conflict.

- **Confrontation techniques**

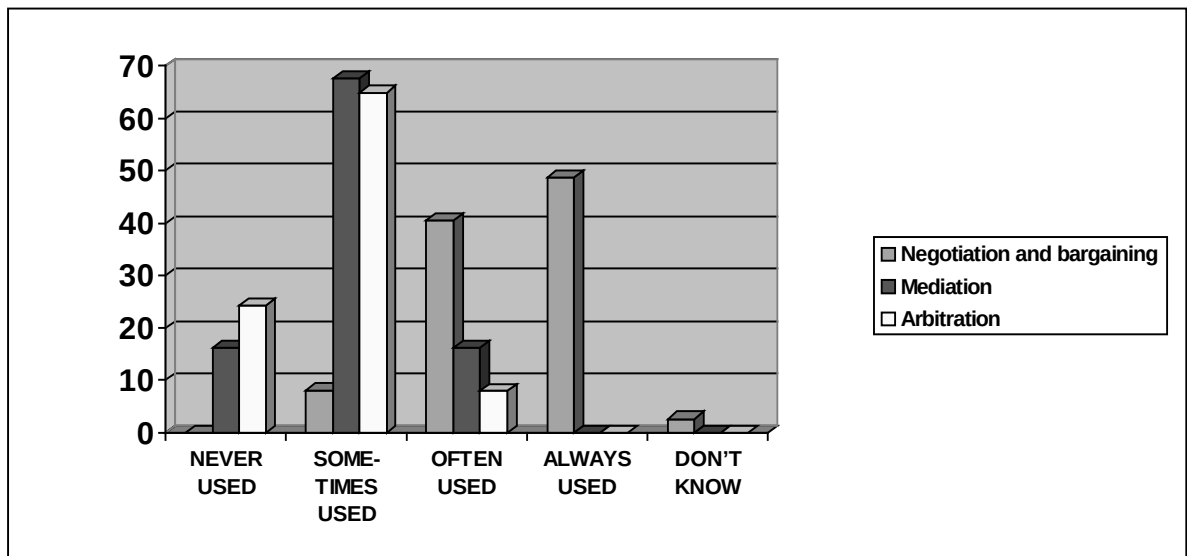
The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of the use of confrontation techniques.

The responses then indicate that negotiations and bargaining are most often used. This implies that when confrontation techniques are used it is done in a manner that promotes compromising and collaboration. Arbitration is used the least often which indicates that a third party is seldom used to assist in resolving conflict situations. It can thus be assumed that the organisation is mostly successful in resolving conflict situations within the structure of the organisation. Table 5.10 and figure 5.6 illustrate the use of confrontation techniques.

Table 5.10: Confrontation techniques used in the organisation (%)

TECHNIQUE USED	NEVER USED	SOME-TIMES USED	OFTEN USED	ALWAYS USED	DON'T KNOW
Negotiation and bargaining	0	8.11	40.54	48.65	2.70
Mediation	16.22	67.57	16.22	0	0
Arbitration	24.32	64.87	8.10	0	0

Figure 5.6: Graphic illustration of confrontation techniques used in the organisation



- **Improving organisational practices**

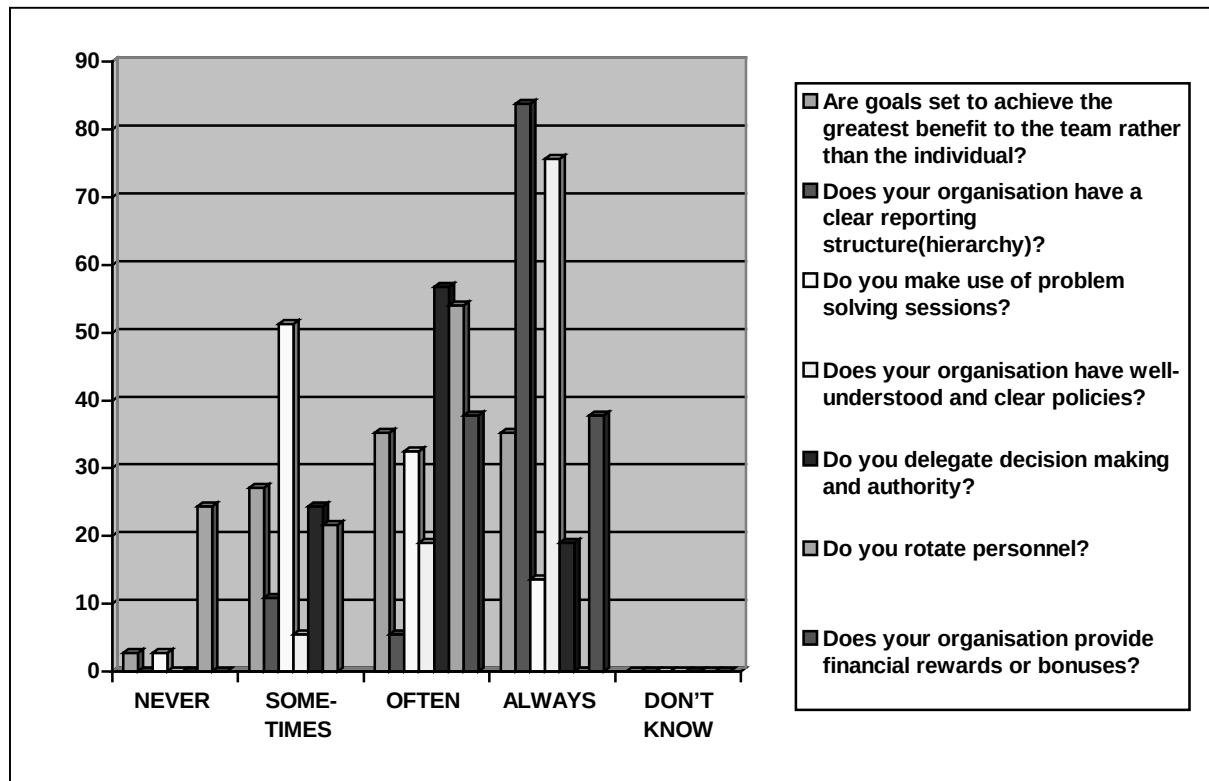
The respondents were asked to indicate the techniques that were applied to improve organisation practices. From table 5.11 and figure 5.7 it is evident that the respondents

feel that the organisation has a clear reporting structure and that policies are clear and well understood. However, problem solving sessions are seldom used and personnel are not rotated through the different departments.

Table 5.11: Improving organisational practices in the organisation (%)

TECHNIQUE USED	NEVER	SOME-TIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	DON'T KNOW
Are goals set to achieve the greatest benefit to the team rather than the individual?	2.70	27.03	35.14	35.14	0
Does your organisation have a clear reporting structure (hierarchy)?	0	10.81	5.41	83.78	0
Do you make use of problem solving sessions?	2.70	51.35	32.43	13.51	0
Does your organisation have well-understood and clear policies?	0	5.40	18.92	75.68	0
Do you delegate decision making and authority?	0	24.32	56.76	18.92	0
Do you rotate personnel?	24.32	21.62	54.10	0	0
Does your organisation provide financial rewards or bonuses?	0	24.32	37.84	37.84	0

Figure 5.7: Graphic illustration of improving organisational practices in the organisation



- **Special rules and structures**

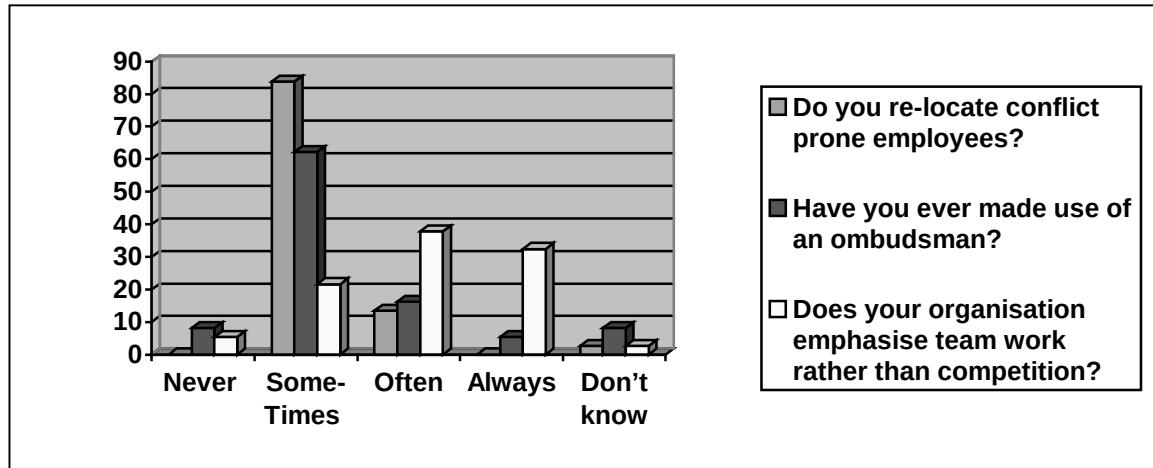
The respondents were asked to indicate which special rules and structures were applied within the organisation to assist in the management of conflict. Most pertinent from this data is the response that the organisation emphasises teamwork rather than competition.

Table 5.12 and figure 5.8 illustrate.

Table 5.12: Special rules and structures applied in the organisation (%)

Technique used	Never	Some-Times	Often	Always	Don't know
Do you relocate conflict prone employees?	0	83.78	13.51	0	2.70
Have you ever made use of an ombudsman?	8.11	62.16	16.22	5.40	8.11
Does your organisation emphasise team work rather than competition?	5.41	21.62	37.84	32.43	2.70

Figure 5.8: Graphic illustration of special rules and structures applied in the organisation



- **The styles used to manage conflict**

In order to determine the style of conflict management most often used the respondents were presented with a list of questions. The questions and responses are illustrated in table 5.13. Each question that was asked in table 5.13 represents a specific style of conflict management. The styles can be identified as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. Tables 5.14, 5.15, 5.16, 5.17 and 5.18 identify the specific question (as listed in table 5.13) relating to each individual style and allow for a conclusion to be drawn as to the style most often used.

Table 5.13: The styles of conflict management used in the organisation (%)

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Are you usually firm in pursuing your goal?	0	2.70	51.30	45.95
Do you try to win your position?	2.70	29.73	48.65	18.92
Do you give up points in exchange for others?	5.40	51.35	43.24	0
Do you feel that differences are not always worth worrying about?	13.51	56.76	29.73	0

Do you try to find a position that is intermediate between the other person and yourself?	0	24.32	64.86	10.81
In approaching negotiations, are you considerate of the other party's wishes?	0	29.73	64.87	5.41
Do you try to show the logic and benefits of your position?	0	21.62	64.87	13.51
Do you usually lean towards a direct discussion of the problem?	0	27.03	51.35	21.62
Do you try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for all the parties involved?	0	16.22	70.27	13.51
Do you attempt to work through differences immediately?	10.81	35.14	43.24	10.81
Do you try to avoid creating unpleasantness for yourself?	2.70	13.51	75.68	8.11
Do you try to soothe the other person's feelings and to preserve your relationship with that party?	0	16.22	75.68	8.11
Do you sometimes avoid taking a position that would create controversy?	0	37.84	56.76	5.41
Do you attempt to get all concerns and issues into the open immediately?	10.81	16.22	56.76	16.22
Do you try not to hurt other's feelings?	2.70	21.62	70.27	5.41

Table 5.14: A summary of the percentage use of the *competing* style

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Are you usually firm in pursuing your goals?	0	2.70	51.30	45.95
Do you try to win your position?	2.70	29.73	48.65	18.92
Do you try to show the logic and benefits of your position?	0	21.62	64.87	13.51

Table 5.15: A summary of the percentage use of the *collaborating* style

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Do you sometimes avoid taking a position that would create controversy?	0	37.84	56.76	5.41
Do you usually lean towards a direct discussion of the problem?	0	27.03	51.35	21.62
Do you attempt to work through differences immediately?	10.81	35.14	43.24	10.81

Table 5.16: A summary of the percentage use of the *compromising* style

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Do you give up points in exchange for others?	5.40	51.35	43.24	0
Do you try to find a position that is intermediate between the other person and yourself?	0	24.32	64.86	10.81
Do you try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for all the parties involved?	0	16.22	70.27	13.51

Table 5.17: A summary of the percentage use of the *avoiding* style

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Do you feel that differences are not always worth worrying about?	13.51	56.76	29.73	0
Do you try to avoid creating unpleasantness for yourself?	2.70	13.51	75.68	8.11
Do you attempt to get all concerns and issues into the open immediately?	10.81	16.22	56.76	16.22

Table 5.18: A summary of the percentage use of the *accommodating* style

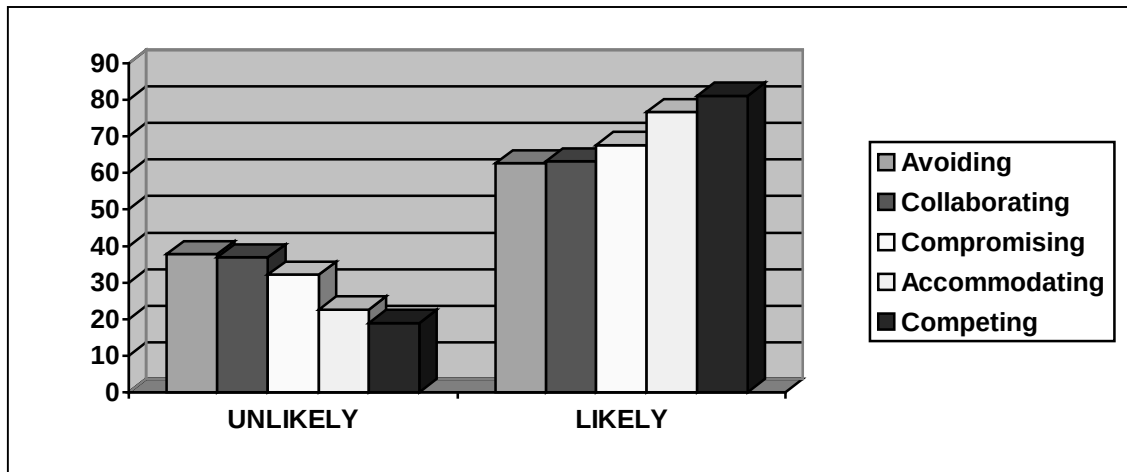
	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
In approaching negotiations, are you considerate of the other party's wishes?	0	29.73	64.87	5.41
Do you try to soothe the other person's feelings and to preserve your relationship with that party?	0	16.22	75.68	8.11
Do you try not to hurt other's feelings?	2.70	21.62	70.27	5.41

This research indicated in Chapter 3 (3.4-3.5) that each style has a role to play in conflict management. The best overall conflict management approach is the collaboration style, only that can lead to problem solving and true conflict resolution. Tables 5.14-5.18 identified the specific questions and responses that determine each specific conflict management style. Table 5.19 and figure 5.9 provide a summary of the percentage use of the different styles, as identified in tables 5.14-5.18. The percentage counts under the headings of very unlikely and unlikely have been combined and the percentages under the headings likely and very likely have been combined to ensure a clear interpretation.

Table 5.19: Summary of the styles of conflict management used by the respondents

	UNLIKELY (%)	LIKELY (%)
Avoiding	37.82	62.57
Collaborating	36.94	63.06
Compromising	32.16	67.55
Accommodating	22.61	76.58
Competing	18.91	81.06

Figure 5.9: Graphical illustration of a summary of the styles of conflict management used by the respondents



It is evident from the responses that the style that is most likely to be used in the selected organisation is the competing style. This style attempts to overwhelm an opponent with formal authority, threats and the use of power. The underlying features of this style, as determined in Chapter 3, are assertiveness and uncooperativeness. This is a dominating approach to conflict resolution and focuses on meeting private concerns with the minimum focus on meeting the concerns of the other group (refer figure 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3).

5.2.4 Summary of Section B data

- In interpreting the *confrontation techniques* used to manage conflict in the selected organisation, negotiation and bargaining were most often used as opposed to mediation and arbitration. From this it can be concluded that conflict situations were resolved before a third party had to be used.

- Through interpreting the *improvement of organisational practices* in the selected organisation, the main problems requiring attention is that the organisation does not make frequent use of problem solving sessions and they do not rotate personnel. This could be due to various reasons such as time and manpower constraints. However, the use of problem solving sessions and rotating personnel where appropriate could stimulate functional conflict and thus reduce the occurrence of dysfunctional conflict situations. If the organisational practices can be improved, it can lead to certain benefits as specified by the respondents. It includes eliminating wrong perceptions, improving teamwork and creating win win situations. Even though communication and work pressure were mentioned as the main reasons for conflict, the respondents indicated that the organisation is well organised, with a high percentage perceiving the organisational structure and policies to be clear and well understood and goal setting to be team orientated. Delegation is also applied and the organisation provides financial rewards or bonuses. It would thus seem to be appropriate to investigate the actual and underlying reasons for communication problems.
- In interpreting the *special rules and structures* applied in the selected organisation it is emphasised by the respondents that the organisation focuses on team work rather than competition and that conflict prone employees are seldom relocated and an ombudsman used only sometimes. Even though teamwork is emphasised it is evident from the responses that individual differences and differences in perception are causes of conflict. Team building exercises can be attempted to eliminate the differences but it is only a short-term solution and the organisation should ensure the

correct fit of the individual within the specific department within the organisation. It should however be borne in mind that these differences could lead to stimulation of functional conflict situations, which would be to the benefit of the organisation.

- The *styles* used to manage conflict in the selected organisation indicate that the most preferred style is the competing style, then accommodating, compromising, collaborating and avoiding. Characteristics of this style are being forceful and it is conflict orientated. The literature study revealed that the over use of this style could lead to information being cut off from others. The frequency of the use of this style could be the reason for the respondents feeling that communication and different perceptions are main causes for conflict. The organisation should strive to move to the style which was rated fourth by the respondents, namely the collaborating style. This is characterised by integration, problem solving sessions and confronting the conflict situation. This style is not frequently used and is proven in the response that the organisation does not make use of problem solving sessions.

It is important to consider that even though the literature study reveals that the 'best' approach is to use the collaborating style, there is an appropriate use for each style in specific situations (refer figure 3.3). The manager should be made aware of the uses and appropriateness of each style to ensure that the organisation benefits most from any conflict situation.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse and interpret the data obtained from the research questionnaire. The aim was to solve the second sub problem that seeks to determine which conflict management strategies are used by the managers of a specific organisation. The data provided information that indicated that the information obtained from the literature study could be applied and that the situation within the organisation has room for improvement. Chapter 6 will focus on various recommendations based on the previous findings of this study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter will focus on resolving the main problem through the recommendations that will be made. The main problem is to determine what strategies should be used by an organisation to manage conflict effectively. This would then also provide an answer to the integration of the findings of the literature study with the strategies used by the selected organisation.

Opportunities for further research and study will be discussed briefly and the application of the findings will be presented.

6.2 MAIN FINDINGS

The main problem posed in this research was:

What strategies should be used by an organisation to manage conflict effectively?

To determine the most effective strategies the following sub problems were identified:

- **What conflict management strategies does the literature reveal that will assist managers in effectively managing conflict?**
- **What conflict management strategies do managers utilise to assist them in managing conflict?**

The sub problems were addressed in the previous chapters. Although the organisation that took part in the study did in some aspects comply with the flow diagram developed in chapter 3 (figure 3.4), some recommendations (see 6.3) and comments can be made on the strategies employed by this organisation to manage conflict.

6.2.1 A flow chart for managing conflict effectively

The findings from the questionnaires were used to develop the revised flow diagram as illustrated in figure 6.1. Figure 6.1 represents a customised conflict management procedure that is based on the generic model as illustrated in figure 3.4 (page 61).

The information and the logic behind the flow diagram were discussed in detail in chapter 3. The original generic model (figure 3.4) was adjusted to specifically apply to the selected organisation. This flow diagram can serve as a guideline to the organisation as to the manifestation of a conflict situation, the practices recommended to ensure the successful management of the conflict situation and the appropriate style to management a conflict situation.

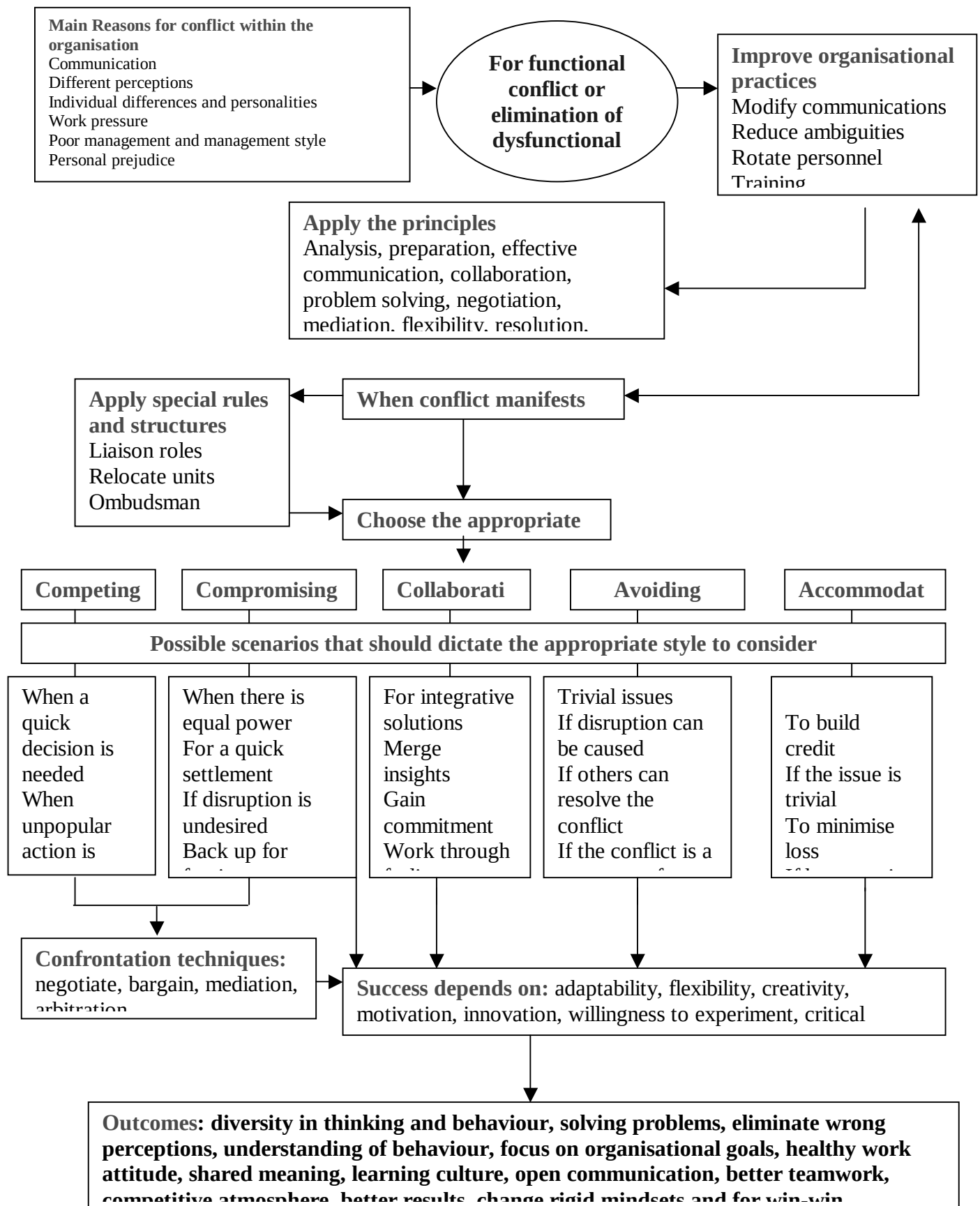


FIGURE 6.1 MODEL OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher believes that the following recommendations can be made to assist the organisation in managing conflict effectively:

- It is recommended that the organisation pays special attention to improving organisational practices by modifying communications, reducing ambiguities, rotating personnel, training and through group interaction. The aim would be to eliminate the reasons for dysfunctional conflict. The issues that need to be addressed are communication problems, determining a way to gain benefit from different perceptions and also to stimulate meaningful sharing of individual differences and different perceptions. Personal prejudice can be changed through proper information sessions and training. Solving communication problems may eliminate the perception of poor management. Work pressure can be lightened through effective delegation and time management. Many of the factors listed as reasons for conflict in the organisation can be symptoms of what can be classified as communication problems. It is therefore strongly recommended that the organisation investigate causes and symptoms of communication problems thoroughly.
- It is recommended that all personnel receive training in managing conflict situations in order to stimulate functional conflict and eliminate dysfunctional conflict.

- It is important for managers to familiarise themselves with the appropriate style of managing conflict, and to match that with the conflict situation. This will ensure a shift from mostly using the competing style of conflict management to a collaboration type style.
- It is recommended that the managers familiarise themselves with and further improve the information in figure 6.1 to suit their needs and the needs of the organisation.
- It does appear as if the majority of the respondents are open to change and innovation and this is evident in the positive response of the majority who believed that conflict should be stimulated and that it does not have only negative results.

6.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study can provide a basis for further research. The model for managing conflict that was developed in this study as well as the empirical component can make a contribution to further studies into problems and issues highlighted in this research.

The product of this research can be used for:

- All managers dealing with the human resource
- Other organisations seeking information on conflict management strategies
- Educational institutions that provide training in the field of Human Resources Management and specifically conflict management

6.5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine which strategies to use to manage conflict effectively. As organisations reshape to cope with new competitive conditions in the new millennium that will be characterised by leaner, fitter and flatter organisational structures, the need for managing conflict will be a crucial element in remaining and becoming more competitive in the national and global markets. Productivity and competitiveness can be greatly influenced by the mismanagement of conflict situations.

The flow chart that was developed may assist any organisation in developing strategies for managing conflict. It is seen as a crucial step for any individual involved in managing a conflict situation to determine the correct style to be used in order to match the situation if it is to be managed effectively. It is however clear from the research that the first step will be to determine the causes of conflict. Once the causes have been determined, the organisation must select the relevant organisational practice that needs to be improved or the special rules and structures that should be applied to ensure a functional conflict situation and a harmonious resolution.

It is in the interest of any organisation to support the management of conflict through creating an environment conducive to achieving positive and functional results from conflict situations. This will result in increased synergy, better results and achievement of goals in a harmonious manner.

REFERENCES

Allison, B., O'Sullivan, T., Owen, A., Rice, J., Rothwell, A. and Saunders, C. 1996.

Research Skills for students. London: Kogan Page.

Berry, D.M. 1997. **An assessment of procedures and techniques employed by manufacturing organisations in the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage region to evaluate the effectiveness of their supervisory training.** Unpublished masters dissertation. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.

Bisno, H. 1988. **Managing conflict.** Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Burton, J.W. and Dukes, F. 1990. **Conflict practices in management settlement and resolution.** London: Macmillan.

Callahan, R.E., Fleenor, C.P. and Knudson, H.R. 1986. **Understanding organizational behavior.** Columbus: Bell & Howell Company.

Cherrington, D.J. 1994. **Organizational behavior.** (2nd ed.). Needham Heights: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data.

Hampton, D.R., Summer, C.E., Webber, R.A. 1982. **Organizational behavior and the practice of management.** (4th ed.). Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Hellriegel, D and Slocum, J. W. 1996. **Management.** (7thed.). Cincinnati: SouthWestern College.

Henderson, G. 1994. **Cultural diversity in the workplace, issues and strategies.** West Port: Quorum Books.

Isaacs, H.M. 1999. The CPA negotiator: the next step. **CPA Journal.** Vol 69 (9), 52-53.

Ivancevich, J. M. and Matteson, M. T. 1999. **Organizational behavior and management.** (5th ed.). Boston: Erwin McGraw-hill.

Johnson, K. and Scholes, K. 1997. **Exploring corporate strategy.** (4th ed.). London: Prentice Hall.

Kaye, K. 1999. **Conflict as opportunity for change.** [On line] [Cited March 6, 1999]
Available from Internet URL <http://www.kaye.com/confoppt.html>.

Lannon, J.M. 1994. **Technical writing.** (6th ed.). New York: Harpers Collins College Publishers.

Leedy, P.D. 1997. **Practical research.** (6thed.). Englewood Cliffs: Macmillan Publishing.

Nueman, W. L. 1990. **Social research method.** (2nd ed.). Boston: Allan & Bacon.

Melville, S. and Goddard, W. 1996. **Research methodology.** (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Creda Press.

Mondy, R.W., Sharplin, A., Premeaux, S. R. 1989. **Management and organizational behavior.** New York: Prentice Hall.

Mullins, L.J. 1993. **Management and organizational behavior** (3rd ed.). Singapore: Pitman Publishing.

Porter, L.W., Lawler, E.E., Hackman, J.R. 1975. **Behavior in organizations.** New York: McGraw Hill.

Preece, R. 1994. **Starting Research: an introduction to academic research and dissertation writing.** London: Pinter.

Robbins, S. P., 1989. **Organizational behavior** (4th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Schnetler, J., Stoker, D.J., Dixon, B.J., Herbst, D. and Geldenhuys, E. 1989. **Survey methods and practice**. Revised Edition, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Siders, C.T. 1999. Conflict management checklist: a diagnostic tool for assessing conflict in organizations. **Physician Executive**. Vol 25 (4), 32-38.

Stuart, M., Klein, R. and Ritti, R.R. 1984. **Understanding organizational behavior**. (2nd ed.). California: Wadsworth, Inc.

Szilagyi, A.D. and Wallace, M.J. 1987. **Organizational behavior and performance** (4th ed.). Glenview: Scott Foresman and Company.

Tillett, G., 1991. **Resolving conflict: a practical approach**. Victoria: Sydney University Press.

Tosi, H.L., Rizzo, J.R., & Carol, S. J. 1994. **Managing organizational behavior** (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.

Vecchio, R. P. 1995. **Organizational behavior** (3rd ed.). Orlando: Harcourt Brace.

Woodrow, P. 1999 Volume 7 number2. Time Money and Morale- Reducing the costs through dispute resolution systems design. **Center of conflict resolution** [on line].

[Cited March 6, 1999] Available from Internet URL.

<http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/7.2/article03.html>.

Worchel, S., and Simpson, J.A. 1993. **Conflict between people and groups**. Chicago: Nelson Hall Publishers.

Dear Sir or Madam:

EVALUATION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

It would be greatly appreciated if members of your organisation who fall into the middle and top-level management structure can complete the attached questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire is to gather research data for a project titled: ***AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES USED BY AN ORGANISATION TO MANAGE CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY.***

The questionnaire has been prepared in such a way that it will require no more than 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire will be treated as strictly confidential and it would be impossible to identify the organisation taking part in this survey.

Kindly return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to the contact person, Ms Lulu Lourens before 29 September 1999.

Should you require any further information, please contact Ann Lourens at telephone 041-5043445 or 0832305460.

Thank you for your cooperation.

ANN LOURENS
(RESEARCHER)

(MR DAVID BERRY: SUPERVISOR)

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A - THE ORGANISATION

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate block, or by writing your answer in the space provided.

1.1 IN WHICH GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IS YOUR ORGANISATION LOCATED?

Port Elizabeth	
Uitenhage	
Other	

1.2 APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY MIDDLE MANAGERS ARE EMPLOYED IN YOUR ORGANISATION?

1.3 WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE POSITION THAT YOU HOLD?

1.4 HOW MANY PEOPLE REPORT TO YOU?

1.5 WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION?

Std 8/ equivalent		Honours / Higher diploma	
Std 9/ equivalent		Masters degree/ diploma	
Std 10/ equivalent		Doctorate/ D.Tech	
B Degree / Diploma		Other (please specify) -----	

1.6 WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

30 and younger	
31-40	
41-50	
51 and older	

1.7 DOES YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE A TRAINING DEPARTMENT?

Yes		No	
------------	--	-----------	--

1.8 HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED TRAINING IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
CONFLICT?

Yes		No	
------------	--	-----------	--

1.9 WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF CONFLICT WITHIN
YOUR ORGANISATION?

1.10 DO YOU BELIEVE THAT CONFLICT HAS ONLY NEGATIVE RESULTS
AND SHOULD BE ELIMINATED?

Yes		No	
------------	--	-----------	--

1.11 DOES YOUR ORGANISATION TRY TO STIMULATE CONFLICT?

Yes		No	
------------	--	-----------	--

1.12 DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE BENEFITS IN STIMULATING
CONFLICT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES?

Yes		No	
------------	--	-----------	--

1.13 IF YOUR ANSWER WAS YES IN QUESTION NUMBER 1.12, PLEASE
MOTIVATE WHY

SECTION B

THE METHODS USED TO MANAGE CONFLICT

PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU HAVE MADE USE OF THE FOLLOWING
METHODS/TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE CONFLICT

1. CONFRONTATION TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE USED	NEVER USED	SOME- TIMES USED	OFTEN USED	ALWAYS USED	DON'T KNOW
1.1 Negotiation and bargaining					
1.2 Mediation					
1.3 Arbitration					

***PLEASE INDICATE IN QUESTIONS 2,3, AND 4, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE
FOLLOWING METHODS/TECHNIQUES ARE USED BY MANAGERS IN YOUR
ORGANISATION TO MANAGE CONFLICT***

2. IMPROVING ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES

TECHNIQUE USED	NEVER	SOME-TIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	DON'T KNOW
2.1 The organisation sets goals to achieve the greatest benefit to the team rather than the individual					
2.2 The organisation has a clear reporting structure (hierarchy)					
2.3 The organisation makes use of problem solving sessions					
2.4 The organisation has well-understood and clear policies					
2.5 The organisation delegates authority and decision making					
2.6 The organisation rotates personnel					
2.7 The organisation provides financial rewards or bonuses					

3. SPECIAL RULES AND STRUCTURES

TECHNIQUE USED	NEVER	SOME-TIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	DON'T KNOW
3.1 The organisation relocates conflict prone employees					
3.2 The organisation uses an ombudsman					

3.3 The organisation emphasises team work rather than competition					
---	--	--	--	--	--

4. THE STYLES USED TO MANAGE CONFLICT

	VERY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
4.1 Managers in the organisation are usually firm in pursuing their goals				
4.2 Managers in the organisation generally try to win their own positions				
4.3 The managers within the organisation generally “give up points” in exchange for others				
4.4 The managers in the organisation generally feel that differences are not always worth worrying about				
4.5 The managers in the organisation generally try to find a position that is intermediate between the other person and themselves				
4.6 In approaching negotiations, the managers in the organisation are generally considerate of the other party’s wishes				
4.7 The managers in the organisation generally try to show the logic and benefits of their own position				
4.8 The managers in the organisation generally lean towards a direct discussion				

of the problem				
----------------	--	--	--	--

	VERY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
4.9 The managers in the organisation generally try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for all the parties involved				
4.10 The managers in the organisation generally attempt to work through differences immediately				
4.11 The managers in the organisation generally try to avoid creating unpleasantness for themselves				
4.12 The managers in the organisation generally try to soothe the other person's feelings and to preserve the relationship with that party				
4.13 The managers in the organisation avoid taking a position that can create controversy				
4.14 The managers in the organisation generally attempt to get all concerns and issues into the open immediately				
4.15 The managers in the organisation generally try not to hurt other party's feelings				

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION AND SUPPORT
PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE NOT LATER THAN
29 SEPTEMBER 1999.**