THE NEED FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS (A HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY, PORT ELIZABETH)

R. Ajam

2016
The Need for Conflict Management in Organisations (A Health Insurance Company, Port Elizabeth)

By

Razaana Ajam

Student number: s209001416

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Conflict Management and Transformation at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

December 2015

Supervisor: Dr G. Bradshaw
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Sustainer of the Heavens and Earths, the Arranger of the affairs of all that is created, who sent the Messengers (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) to the Mukallafin (humans and jinn), for their guidance and to clarify to them the laws of religion with clear proofs and undeniable arguments.

I would like to acknowledge my parents for their continued support, unwavering trust and giving me the opportunity to gain knowledge, my brother, Nizaam for pushing me to further my education and encouraging me to pursue my ambitions. To my family and friends for their immense support and encouragement.

I also thank my Supervisor, Dr Gavin Bradshaw, for his mentorship, assistance and guidance throughout this study.

To the Health Insurance Company in, Nelson Mandela Bay, and all its members who responded. Thank you for participation and willingness to co-operate in making this study possible.
DECLARATION

I, Razaana Ajam, hereby declare that this treatise for Conflict Transformation and Management, be awarded as my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or another qualification.

Razaana Ajam

December 2015
ABSTRACT
Conflict is evident in many spheres of life, however this study concentrated more specifically on conflict relating to organisations. Organisational conflict is seen “as any social collectivity, organisations such as private sector companies, government departments, schools and universities, non-governmental organisations, and political parties all experience internal conflict in varying degrees” (Bradshaw, 2008: 22). Each individual coming into a workplace has created his or her own set of challenges especially in the brutal arena of business. Conflict has destructive and productive qualities that can diminish or elevate processes within an organization (Stone, 1999). If it is not harnessed properly or dealt with in the correct manner, it can damage the reputation of a business; resulting in its downfall and this in turn contaminates and affects peripheral businesses associated with the organisation downstream. This study explored the following key aspects:

- Background of organisational conflict and its management
- Background of the organisation
- Whether these two areas mentioned above can work together to create a cost effective and efficient outcome when dealing with conflict.

The research adopted a mixed method approach with predominant focus on qualitative research methodology. The main focus of this study was conflict management within organisations and to probe and determine whether companies see the need to employ the field of conflict management as a strategy in times of fluctuating dispositions.

It is evident that the organisation may not be fully aware or make use of alternative conflict resolution strategies and that the main causes of conflict can be eliminated such as poor communication, ill-defined job descriptions and objectives and differing of opinions. The need to employ alternative methods of conflict management may be emphasised by looking at the costs that conflict produces and the use of limited vital resources and the loss of human capital.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Annexures</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Study .............................................. 1
1.2 Aims of the Study ...................................................................................... 7
1.3 Theoretical Framework .............................................................................. 8
1.4 Research Questions .................................................................................. 9
  1.4.1 Main Research Question ...................................................................... 9
  1.4.2 Secondary questions ........................................................................ 9
1.5 Hypothesis ................................................................................................. 9
1.6 Limitations of the Study ......................................................................... 10
1.7 Definitions of Key Terms ......................................................................... 10
1.8 Preliminary Framework of the Research .................................................. 11
1.9 Ethics Statement ...................................................................................... 12

## CHAPTER 2: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction .............................................................................................. 13
2.2 Conflict Resolution Versus Conflict Transformation ............................... 14
2.3 Historical Context ................................................................................... 15
4.5.2 Interpersonal Conflict ................................................................. 39
4.5.3 Intra-group Conflict ................................................................. 39
4.5.4 Intergroup Conflict ................................................................. 40
4.5.5 Intra/Inter Organizational conflict .............................................. 40
4.6 SOURCES OF CONFLICT .................................................................. 40
4.6.1 Ill-defined Goals ............................................................................. 40
4.6.2 Role Conflicts ................................................................................ 41
4.6.3 Poor Communications ................................................................. 41
4.6.4 Personality Clashes ........................................................................ 42
4.6.5 Poor Management .......................................................................... 42
4.6.6 Organisational Change ................................................................. 42
4.7 CONSEQUENCES AND COSTS OF ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT ....... 42
4.7.1 The Link to Self-Esteem ............................................................... 43
4.7.2 The Link to Quality ....................................................................... 43
4.7.3 The Resource Link ......................................................................... 44
4.7.4 Public Perception ........................................................................... 44
4.7.5 Loss of Skilled Employees and Restructuring ................................. 45
4.7.6 Sabotage ....................................................................................... 45
4.7.7 Health Costs .................................................................................. 45
4.8 BARRIERS TO MANAGING CONFLICT ............................................. 46
4.8.1 Organisations represent the source of status and identity for individuals .... 46
4.8.2 People want to be seen as team players within their organisation ............ 46
4.8.3 Organisations are often hierarchically structured ............................. 47
4.8.4 Organisations are often extremely performance-oriented ..................... 47
4.9 SUMMARY ......................................................................................... 47
CHAPTER 5: CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

5.1 THE WHEEL OF CONFLICT ................................................................. 49
5.1.1 Emotions ......................................................................................... 49
5.1.2 History ............................................................................................ 50
5.1.3 Structure .......................................................................................... 51
5.1.4 Values .............................................................................................. 51
5.1.5 Communication ................................................................. 52
5.2 CONFLICT CUBE ............................................................................. 53
5.3 CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES ............................................. 54
5.3.1 Avoidance ....................................................................................... 55
5.3.2 Competition ..................................................................................... 55
5.3.3 Compromise .................................................................................... 56
5.3.4 Accommodation ............................................................................. 56
5.3.5 Collaboration .................................................................................. 56
5.4 NEGOTIATION ................................................................................. 57
5.5 MEDIATION ....................................................................................... 58

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................... 60
6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN ......................................................................... 61
6.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ..................................................... 61
6.3.1 Positivistic Methodology ............................................................... 61
6.3.2 Phenomenological Methodology .................................................. 62
6.3.3 Research Methodology adopted in this study ................................ 63
6.4 RESEARCH METHOD ...................................................................... 64
6.4.1 Research Methods Employed in a Positivistic Study ......................... 64
6.4.2 Research Methods Employed in a Phenomenological Study ............... 65
6.4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews ......................................................... 65
6.4.2.2 Structured Interviews and Questionnaire to Team Leaders ........................................ 65

6.5 DATA COLLECTION ............................................................................................................. 66
6.5.1 Secondary Sources ........................................................................................................ 66
6.5.2 Primary sources .............................................................................................................. 67
6.5.3 Data Collection Sampling Strategy .................................................................................. 67
6.5.3.1 Population and Sample ............................................................................................... 67
6.5.3.2 Sampling Techniques ................................................................................................. 67
6.5.3.3 Research Instrument .................................................................................................. 68

6.6 DATA ANALYSIS ................................................................................................................ 69
6.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with the Human Resource Manager ....................................... 70
6.6.2 Questionnaire to Team Leaders ..................................................................................... 70

6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ............................................................................................. 71

6.8 SUMMARY .......................................................................................................................... 71

CHAPTER 7: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 73
7.2 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION ........................................................................................................ 73
7.3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER ................................................................. 73
7.3.1 Conducting the interview .............................................................................................. 73
7.3.2 Reflections on Interviews and their link with literature ................................................... 74
7.3.3 General Comments on the Interview ............................................................................ 81
7.4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEAM LEADERS .......................... 81
7.4.1 General Comments on the Interview ............................................................................ 85
7.5 RESPONSES TO SURVEY (CLOSED-ENDED) QUESTIONS ........................................ 86
7.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .......................................................................................... 94
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>South African Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Maslow’s 5 points of the “Hierarchy of Needs”</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The Wheel of Conflict</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>The Conflict Cube</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Continuum of Human Needs 29
Table 4.1: Causes of conflict 42
Table 4.2: Positive and negative consequences of conflict 46
Table 7.1: Sample demographic 72
Table 7.2: Participant 1 response 86
Table 7.3: Participant 2 response 87
Table 7.4: Participant 3 response 88
Table 7.5: Participant 4 response 89
Table 7.6: Participant 5 response 90
Table 7.7: Participant 6 response 91
Table 7.8: Participant 7 response 92
# LIST OF ANNEXURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annexure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annexure 1</td>
<td>Ethics Approval</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexure 2</td>
<td>Letter of Permission</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexure 3</td>
<td>Letter to Participants</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexure 4</td>
<td>Information and Informed Consent Form</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Fundamental changes to the way individuals view conflict have shifted in the past few years and it may have transformed the nature and/or the occurrence of conflict. This does not mean that the causes of conflict are totally eliminated nor the degree of its power or the need to handle it effectively (Bercovitch, 1996). Organisations are more prone to conflict given the fact that the dynamics of the workplace are more diverse, and thinking that divergence will eventually be removed is flawed and fleeting.

Conflict can be defined as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatibility and the possibility of interference from others as a result of this incompatibility” as stated by Folger, Poole and Stutman (2009: 4). Zartman and Faure (2005: 4) also mention that “conflict occurs when parties who hold incompatible views seek to make their will prevail”. Anstey (2008: 5) describes conflict as a goal-directed behaviour involving “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals”. These descriptions and explanations may vary but a similar message is conveyed; conflict occurs when individuals pursue objectives that clash with one another. The analysis of conflict can be broken down into various sectors; sources of conflict, aggravators and moderators, conflict behaviour, dynamics, and tactics, more of which will be discussed in the study.

Social conflict is commonly divided into four categories (Bradshaw; 2008, Folger et al, 2009). These authors’ distinctions do differ to a certain extent concerning the explanations of each category. The categories are: Intrapersonal conflict, which is the disposition within oneself, interpersonal conflict is the divergence within the family and friends aspects, while intergroup conflict is conflict within any setting in which the individual is a part of a collection of people. Organisational conflict, one of the forms of intergroup conflict, will be discussed in detail below. Bradshaw (2008) has also included international conflict which deals with conflict among sovereign states.

Not every conflicting situation is the same; different sources of conflict, different parties involved and different outcomes can be produced but the process is similar; it might not be sequential and not every step is followed, the only constant is change. As mentioned by Zartman and Faure (2005: 4) “conflict actually begins when static incompatibility is turned
into dynamic incompatibility.” At first most conflicts start off with latent conflict, below the surface, before a certain event triggers the issue to escalate causing a manifested struggle.

A situation becomes a conflict when a person performs an action and there are reactions to that incident. “Reactions are based on learned values, biases, and life experiences. For this reason we say that conflict exists within people; not as an external reality.” (Kestner and Ray, 2002: 59). There are various models to explain the conflict process. In the model applied here, there are respectively five stages of conflict (Fisher, et al, 2000): the first stage is pre-conflict, where one party’s goals are incompatible with another party’s goals. The second stage is conformation, where all parties involved are aware of the conflict. The next stage is crisis, “this is the peak of the conflict, when tension and /or violence is most intense” (Fisher, Ludin, Williams, Abdi, Smith and Williams, 2000: 19). Most people would consider the outcome as the last stage, where the parties go into negotiation to reach a conclusion. However, here, the last stage is known as post-conflict, when relations become stable and the issue is resolved.

The common notion about conflict is that it is negative and destructive in nature in a world that is constantly striving for the utopian dream. “Conflict is natural. It stems from the fact that we each have our own interests (needs, concerns, goals, and priorities) and are concerned that others may prevent us from satisfying them” (Landau, Landau & Landau, 2001: 3). If conflict is as Landau et al, (2001) say, then it should have positive aspects to it as well. This is evident in the two theories of conflict; cooperative and competitive conflict theory. Cooperative conflict theory implies that managers and employees have a shared goal and interests; the only conflicting part is in what direction to go to achieve these objectives whereas competitive conflict theory suggests that there is a tension between employees and employers’ interests and goals (Knowles, 2012). Conflict is not the only aspect seen as natural. So is change. Change is also constituted as a perceived conflict (Kestner and Ray, 2002: 24) “viewing change as negative is a barrier to positive movement and adaption”.

Conflict can be functional as well as dysfunctional. Functionalist theorists who believe that conflict is negative, such as Talcott Parsons are criticised by scholars of conflict such as Coser who states that “Parsons was led to view conflict as having primarily disruptive, dissociating and destructive consequences” (Coser, 1956: 21 cited in Bradshaw, 2008: 52). However the majority of theorists are mainly supportive of the opposing view that conflict is functional, without denouncing the negatives of conflict. George Simmel sees the positive
outcomes that conflict can produce and goes on to say that “a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy is organically tied to up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together” (as mentioned in Schellenberg, 1996: 65, cited in Bradshaw, 2008: 53).

Conflict is pervasive in all spheres of life and comes in many forms and the business cycle is definitely not exempt from this disposition. Conflict is not limited to specific social situations; it carries over into all dimensions of human lives. It is not surprising then that conflict is prevalent in the workplace, even though organisations do not like to admit to the presence of conflict “organizations generally hate conflict. Until recently conflict was viewed as abnormal and treated as a shameful corporate secret” (Landau, et al, 2001: 5). Besides the negative premise organisations hold on conflict it is also costly, as Kriesberg, 1973: 163 exclaims:

...expending resources in pursuit of a goal becomes increasingly costly as it is maintained without gaining the end sought. The cost for each additional increment of coercive effort may increase at a higher and higher rate as alternative expenditures are forgone.

Just as in society as a whole, organisations also experience conflict, as there is a social structure within the business. So the organisation’s behaviour and actions will be that of human instinct and made by the people who run it. The socio-psychology approaches to conflict can play a vital role in understanding how the conflict will be acted out, “in adversarial relationships competitive orientations and group hostilities involving perceptions of threat intensifying a desire for control over resources or territorial claims (Cashman and Robinson, 2007, cited in Jeong, 2008: 65).

A world without organisations is unlikely and difficult to comprehend as there would be no schools to receive education, hospitals for medical assistance, social clubs and associations, no political parties and therefore no government. Individuals or even families would have to satisfy the numerous needs experienced, much as in “paleolithic times” (Khandwalla, 1977: 1).

There are two forms of sub-conflict types that fall under the umbrella of organisational conflict, intra-organisational and inter-organisational conflict respectively. Intra being within the organisation (strikes, go-slow) and conversely inter dealing with the external environment such as rival companies (Samsung vs Apple, Green Peace vs Global
Environmental Exploitation). Any form of conflict, depending on its temperament can be seen as either positive or negative, as mentioned by Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast (2003). These divergences that make themselves known in businesses stem from the same sources as any other conflict with minor differences or specifications. Diversity in organisations can produce individual differences, professional differences, unclear vision, conflicting responsibilities, unclear responsibilities and conflicting information. Considering organisational conflict, it can arise from scarce resources, power struggle and organisational structure and procedures (Landau, et al, 2001).

Conflict can produce positive outcomes which lead to innovation, change and creating an environment that keeps up with the times however, “unmanaged employee conflict is perhaps the largest reducible cost in organisations today and probably the least recognized” (Dana, 2014). Dana (2014) believes there are at least eight indirect factors contributing to the financial costs of conflict. Dana devised a financial worksheet which can determine the amount of costs that are incurred by the business as a result of conflict:

- wasted time
- reduced decision quality
- loss of skilled employees
- restructuring
- sabotage/theft/damage
- lowered job motivation
- lost work time and
- health costs

Lawler (2014) elaborates more on this explaining that employees avoid conflict by being ’sick’ or absent, workplace conflict leads to project failure and someone leaving the company, by either being fired or quitting. This all translates into real financial losses. Absenteeism results in other workers doing another employee’s work, paying for overtime and/or hiring temporary employees. Employee turnover is also a costly affair; filling vacant positions, recruitment, training, paying out severance cheques and lost investments made in previous employees.

In addition, the direct costs of conflict are generally observable, measurable and accrue over time. Take the following example of the cost of losing a single mid-level employee due to
conflict within a hypothetical organization, applying the Dana Cost Calculator from figures generated by HR Magazine in February 2003:

- Employee’s annual salary: $80,000;
- Multiply by 1.4 (140%) as the investment you have in the employee: $112,000;
- Multiply by 1.5 (150%) as the cost of replacing the employee: $168,000;
- Multiply by 0.6 (60%) average role of conflict in voluntary terminations: $100,800.
- Now, multiply times the number of voluntary terminations in your organization annually. Say you have a 10% turnover rate in a company of 100 employees that is 10 employees. 10 X $100,800 = $1,008,000. (McGuire, 2014).

All these struggles and issues affect the workforce. Depending on the size of the organisation the conflict can have different affects. In a big company the work can be isolated and contained to a workgroup but in a small business it is everyone’s problem (Lawler, 2014). The effects are seen in the decreases in productivity, the levels of quality of the product or effectiveness of services is lowered and increase in time wasted. In turn the effects lead to a decrease in profits and business operational targets.

Conflict management is a field dedicated to the exploration of conflict in all its dimensions and the levels at which it occurs. As mentioned by Kestner and Ray (2002: 24):

…professionals in conflict management can help people learn and grow from conflict situations. As we engage in conflict-resolution communication, negotiation, and mediation, we can help people to set aside the idea that sustaining one’s initial position and ’winning’ is the most important result of conflict.

Conflict transformation is a relatively new approach that seeks to find a deeper understanding of the problem and long term strategies for peace, as opposed to short term gains. This term tends to get confused with conflict resolution but they are two different approaches. The concept of transformation over conflict resolution “definition focuses on the “change[s] in the characteristics of a conflict” and on conflict transformation as a method of “inducing change in the parties’ relationship through improving mutual understanding” as stated by Yarn,1999: 121, cited in Botes, 2001).
Conflict is a global issue. Dana estimates that “65% of all employee performance problems are due to bad relationships, not bad employees” (McGuire, 2014). People are increasingly becoming concerned about how to manage conflict and how to use whatever conflict management strategies are available. Organisations need to understand conflict, but there seems to be a lack of research, knowledge and interest in this area. Being knowledgeable about this field may result in companies retaining employees, keeping the workforce happy and productive and saving resources and finances.

There are factors that can escalate or de-escalate a conflict such as social, cultural and, economic factors. It can be said that escalation occurs when people involved in a conflict believe that whether they are triumphant or defeated, the gains and losses of the conflict are “greater than the costs of raising the magnitude of their own conflict behaviour and absorbs the increased burdens which the other side places upon them” (Kriesberg, 1973: 154). Whereas in the de-escalation process, there is a consistency for more moderate action, this is likely to develop “after conflict behavior has been pursued at increasing costs without signs of successfully attaining the proclaimed goal” (Kriesberg, 1973: 164).

Different styles of interpersonal conflict management have also been developed, including avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration (Stone, 1999) as well as conflict tools such as mapping the conflict which is needed when investigating the conflict along with many other techniques.

There are numerous alternative interventions that can be used to reduce intergroup conflict as mentioned by French and Bell (1990) such as, creating a common enemy, increasing communication and interaction between groups which can lead to increased positive feelings, determining a ‘supra-ordinate’ goal where goals and objectives can only be achieved by working together, and rotating team members. These forms of facilitation in the reduction of conflict may not always be effective but may be worthwhile. It is imperative for organisations to understand what issues are best suited for which resolution strategy and the importance of these strategies, people’s preferences for one mode rather than another also are affected by the costs they have to bear to use one rather than another mode. As stated by Kriesberg (1973: 124) “every mode involves peculiar risks and expenditures”. “We have been working on the reasons to turn conflict into a contest to be won for a lot longer than we have been thinking about conflict as an opportunity to learn” (Withers and Lewis, 2003: 13).
1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

Conflict as well as the negotiation of conflict, and its management is a reality of life (Fisher and Ury, 1992) and can be viewed as complex, as they involve various dynamics, and are constantly changing and inevitable. Since conflict is so much a part of our lives, why aren’t individuals more comfortable with it? Because it hurts, “conflict happens when we want what is different from what we can have” (Withers and Lewis, 2003: 11).

Conflict resolution is costly for any organisation. That is why people so often just sweep the issues under the rug in the hope it will go away, “while it takes time to resolve disputes, it also takes time not to resolve them” (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000: 10). Because conflict is seen as unwanted or negative, especially in the business arena, people are more willing not to communicate what they want, or settle for inequitable solutions or no solution at all.

The researcher would like to change this perspective on the notion of conflict by studying it in an organisation and establishing whether businesses are equipped to deal with all that comes with disputes as well as whether conflict management is necessary in a workplace.

The focus of the study is a health insurance company which is a branch of its parent organisation. The organisation was established about twenty years ago when it started out as a small specialist health insurer. The core ideals of the organisation are to promote healthy living - “through continuous innovation, designed pioneering products and services that help our clients to improve their health and wellness, protect their financial future and enhance the quality of their lives” (taken from the company’s website, 2014).

This company has six million clients across four continents, South Africa (SA), United Kingdom (UK), China and United States of America (USA). It is a client-based organisation where health is a top priority. One of its core services is a call centre which has over 500 employees for clients who need assistance and for the sale of products to existing and potential clients.

It is intended that this study will achieve the following objectives:

- To gauge the level of understanding of organisational conflict in the company
- To gauge understanding of the necessity of implementing conflict management strategies
- To contribute to the study of conflict management within organisations
1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict theory forms the basis of this study. Conflict has brought about many theoretical assumptions relating to many activities of people’s daily lives. To understand conflict there has been various theories regarding the cause of conflict as elaborated by Fisher, et al (2000):

- Community relations theory - is based on the polarisation of groups which causes the aggression and distrust between the parties.
- Human needs theory - highlights deep-rooted issues caused by basic human needs not being met.
- Identity theory - focuses on conflict caused by individuals fearing a loss of one’s identity stemming from past unresolved divergence.
- Intercultural miscommunication theory - assumes that the cultural communication styles are incompatible and causing the dispute.
- Conflict transformation theory - “assumes that conflict is caused by real problems of inequality expressed by competing social, cultural and economic frameworks” (Fisher, et al, 2000: 8).

The researcher will go into more detail relating the necessary theory to the research.

This research is purposed to explore the nature of conflict in the workplace and the need for conflict management, and whether there is a possible link to Critical Theory. Critical theory “derives its basic insight from the idea that thought can transform itself through a process of self-reflection in history” (Rasmussen, 1996: 12). It evolved from ‘Western Marxism’, formulated in The Frankfurt School and is a branch of The Enlightenment philosophy (Bronner, 1994), an extension of which argues that humans are intellectual beings who can comprehend the universe and use it to sustain human needs while also trying to improve the human condition.

It is expected that the combination of these theories will produce a dynamic outcome which will be enlightening, detailed and create a different perspective to the subject at hand. Social theories mirror social reality, as social reality is not static and is constantly and continuously progressing. In turn, social theory will not be stagnant and does the same. Social theory attempts to align itself with the transformations in society. This becomes evident when looking at the numerous theories that exist today.
Social change is examined, analysed and evaluated, and is thus produced into social theory which can be described as theoretical descriptions of social reality. It is these theoretical descriptions which shed light on the processes within society, more specifically in this case, the business realm, and provide insight into its various dynamics and aspects. “The quest was to discover universal scientific laws that would explain connections, causes and developments” as stated by Hamilton and Thomson (2002: 268).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
This study intends to answer the following research questions.

1.4.1 Main Research Question
The main research question in this study is: To what extent does a particular organisation/kind of organisation consider that it needs conflict management assistance?

1.4.2 Secondary Questions
This study attempts to answer the following secondary research questions about the necessity of conflict management in organisations.

- How do organisations understand conflict?
- Should conflict management be implemented in organisations?
- What does conflict management have to offer?
- Are companies aware of this field?
- Are companies aware of the capabilities and the job description of conflict management?
- Is remedying conflict a priority?
- Is poorly managed conflict seen as a cost to the company?
- What are organisations’ strategies in this area of conflict and are they readily available?

1.5 HYPOTHESIS
In order to answer the research questions set out in section 4, the researcher has developed the following hypotheses:
• Organisations are not fully aware of the benefits of implementing conflict management or the cost occurring from conflicts not being resolved.
• Organisations lack the research needed to understand this field.
• Organisations remedying conflicting situations are short-term.
• Organisations are not aware that most diverging conditions are from previous unresolved deep-rooted issues within the company.
• Organisations view conflict as being mainly negative.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
It is acknowledged that there are various limitations to all studies. The restrictions predicted for this study will be listed as follows:

• The interviewee might be biased towards the company so as not to paint the organisation in a negative light and might withhold information concerning the specifics about the conflict within the business as it might be private and/or not willing to acknowledge the divergence.
• As the interviewee selection is reliant upon the snowballing effect there is no guarantee there will be a variety of answers as there is no definite sample size.
• It is a qualitative study therefore no statistical analysis can be drawn from it and comparative analysis will be difficult.
• There is limited, if any, data on the topic of conflict management requirements in the organisation.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS
The terms and concepts used in the study are listed and defined below.

Conflict theory
As conflict theory forms the basis of this study, a great amount of the literature will be dedicated to this theory. There are various theories which have contributed to this study.

Critical theory
Critical theorists believe that knowledge and reasoning is the way forward for a better living.

Sources of conflict
There are a number of origins of conflict such as; scarcity, identity, structural imbalance, differing goals, ambiguity, coordination and interpersonal.

**Conflict tools**

Conflict analysing tools are not sequential or specific to any conflicting situation but chosen by preference. It is used to assist in trying to neutralise the state of affairs.

**Conflict management styles**

Styles in which individuals tend to orientate themselves towards when dealing with conflict. These styles are known as; competing, problem-solving, avoiding, accommodating and compromising. These styles can be divided into two types, assertiveness and cooperativeness (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001).

**Stages of conflict**

The conflict process is made up of five different stages which happen in a sequence and may occur in a cycle. There is more than one model of the conflict process such as Rummel’s and Pondy’s models.

**Functional conflict**

It is conflict which is perceived as a positive force, natural and needed to spur on change.

**Dysfunctional conflict**

This view deems conflict as disruptive, negative and unwanted.

**Organisational conflict**

There are two types of organisational conflict, intra-organisational conflict and inter-organisational conflict. The former being the conflict within in a business and the latter is conflict between companies.

**1.8 PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH**

This research will be divided into eight chapters.

**Chapter 1**: General Introduction
Chapter 2: The South African Context

Chapter 3: Conflict Theory, Human Needs Theory and Critical Theory

Chapter 4: Organisational Conflict and Dynamics

Chapter 5: Conflict Resolution Techniques

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

Chapter 7: Empirical Findings

Chapter 8: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

1.9 ETHICS STATEMENT
The research will strictly adhere to the Code of Ethics relating to research at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and will present the treatise in an honest manner. All participants will be informed of the aims of the study and that they are free to withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality will be ensured as no names will be provided by the participants nor will any names or designations be mentioned in the treatise. All participants will be requested to sign an informed consent form prior to completing the questionnaire.
CHAPTER 2: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Firstly, a distinction needs to be made between disputes and conflict; the term disputes can be used for situations where issues can be negotiated and a compromise can be made and no institutions and structures are involved whereas conflict is “behaviour on the part of persons, groups or nations goes beyond the normal disagreements and confrontations that characterize much of the usual social, economic and competitive life of societies” (Burton, 1990: 2).

Historically, the evolution of all countries was normally violent and conflictual transitions by establishing societies of rational governance which emerged from chaotic existences of disorder and imposition. Differences, invasions, power-grabbing and colonialism were the order of the day which impacted and shaped countries into what they represent today.

South Africa is more famously known for the man who changed a nation, Nelson Mandela. Within the political arena, in a developing country, all has affected the nation for years to come. Acts and legislations are still being implemented to right the wrongs of the past. The political conflict in South Africa has lead this great man and many more to achieve equal rights in a country which was colonized by the British and Dutch colonists in the late 1800’s (Pampallis, 1991) and caused the polarization of the nation in a country filled with abundant natural resources, a multitude of ethnicities and great human conflict.

South Africa is credited for having one of the world’s best constitutions which was established after apartheid by the ruling party; the African National Congress (ANC). Unlike other countries that have experienced segregation such as the USA and Australia who “could afford to have one man, one vote because the whites did not have to relinquish power” (Johnson, 1994: 1), South Africa, whose white minority was in power during the apartheid era could not afford to allow people of colour, who were the majority, to have the vote.

Social conflict occurs as a result of various factors. Conflict in South Africa’s society also has these issues as a base, such as “value differences, clashes of interests, unfulfilled needs, misinformation, past relationships or structural situations, or any combinations of these” (Bradshaw, 2008: 18). These bases of conflict are evident in any society in the world but given the circumstances of the past in the South African regime, people can understand the
link between these causes and the conflict this country has experienced and is still being affected by in certain parts of the state.

Conflict in this case has shown how it can be functional and produce a positive outcome after years of fighting that has resulted in the people uniting against that which suppressed many and caused hereditary feelings of dominance (Johnson, 1994). The inconsistency in South Africa’s politics has caused much debate. As mentioned by Anstey (2008), violent conflict is prevalent and frequent in current and modernising social orders and this is revealed in the history of most countries.

2.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION VERSUS CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The term resolution is seen as a short term gain in a long term battle. Conflict transformation seeks to change the adversarial relationships and take advantage of the opportunities conflict has to offer. It is not enough to eliminate a current issue, but to ensure that the problem will not arise again.

These two terms are used interchangeably. But do not be mistaken; resolution is not seen as negative but it is just not as progressive as transformation can be. Conflict transformation focuses on changing attitudes developed over a certain period of time, whilst conflict resolution deals with immediate cause of the conflict. However some believe that when conflict is transformed it is more likely not to occur again than when it is resolved (Skinner, 2010).

What can guarantee that sovereign states, cultures, religious classes, races and even organisations will not experience the same form of conflict after it has been ‘resolved’? Conflict transformation does not look to eradicate the problem or eliminate the issue but to transform it as conflict is always changing. Fighting fire with fire as the conflict changes the process of de-escalating the divergence is not too far behind.

The use of the different terms does not mean that these forms of intervention oppose each other but rather offer alternative methods or options at eliminating conflict.

How individuals respond to conflict involve a moral choice. No man is an island. Every social and business interaction provides opportunity for interests to collide. Thus, every organization, groups or family experiences conflict. Conflict offers each of us an opportunity
to respond in ways that are negative, or in ways which are positive. For example as adapted by Skinner (2010):

- Do we respond by attacking each other personally or by tackling issues?
- Do we respond in ways that build organizational competence or which undermine it?
- Do we respond in ways that promote healing or in ways that deepen wounds?
- Do people engage in earnest dialogue to work through issues in ways that deepen understanding and relationships or rather do they pretend nothing is wrong, disengage, or (at the other end of the spectrum), engage in personal attacks, vendettas, or hostilities?

Are organisations using conflict resolution ‘ideology’ without looking for alternatives, or do the businesses not realise that there are other methods of achieving a mutually accepted agreement? Should not the process of resolving conflict be treated as a production element where engineers are called in to improve working conditions and productivity? Conflict managers can be seen as the engineers of conflict, trying to find ways of improving a situation, increasing chances of reaching a settlement and creating a more understanding environment.

2.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

To understand South Africa’s current situation politically and socially, a detailed explanation of past events will be provided in great depth.

2.3.1 The colonization

The British and Dutch were not the only ones who saw South Africa as a land of opportunities with scores of untouched natural resources. Many colonists settled on the rich land, “gold and silver were looked upon as something apart and distinct from other commodities, as the very incarnation of wealth” (Beer, 1908: 242). These so called settlers who came to this land and labelled it as the ‘dark continent’ as stated by Boaduo (2010), had come to bring about changes to the indigenous majority group of the country that was not seen as favourable by the natives. Colonization had begun in 1652; with it came slavery and forced labour. Today there are many South African descendants of the slaves brought to the Cape Colony; this lasted up until 1822 (South African history online, 2000).
2.3.2 The Anglo Boer War

The Anglo Boer South African war which is more commonly referred to as the Anglo Boer War, had taken place in 1899 – 1902 and was known as the ‘white man’s war’ (Ray, 2007). SAHO (2000) state that there were many reasons for the war, including political issues, and the growth of the British Empire which was competing on which areas to control. The Boers wanted to run Transvaal but the British government would not allow this even after several thousand people partitioned to make the Transvaal Boer territory (SAHO, 2000) The British wanted control over the colonies, African and Boer groups.

The war was between the British and the Boers but thousands of Africans were forced to fight the war along-side the British against the Boers. The British underestimated the Boers as an opposition as they were excellent hunters and knew the local terrain, whereas the British wore red uniforms which were easy to spot making them highly vulnerable targets (Ray, 2007).

“The Boers were not alone in being forced into concentration camps by the British. Some 100,000 Africans were imprisoned in the dozens of camps set up by the British” (Ray, 2007: 65) and weirdly enough the African men who were incarcerated in the camps, that were set up for the Boers initially, had higher death rates than any other peoples locked up and were used for cheap labour. At least twenty thousand of these African prisoners had died at those camps (Ray. 2007).

After re-evaluating the Anglo Boer War, the 1990’s scholars decided that the term “white man’s war” would not be used to describe this conflict. Many Africans were mistreated and had horrendous actions carried out against them. It was only fair that these African men get recognized for the sacrifices they made (Ray, 2007).

The British employed more Africans to complete mundane tasks and do jobs that were non-combat such as, “drivers, scouts, guards, cooks, and camp attendants” (Ray, 2007: 65).

2.3.3 Apartheid

The Apartheid which can be defined as an act of being discriminated against because of one’s race was institutionalised in 1948. The people of South Africa were differentiated according to their race (Jakoet, 2014). “White supremacist ideology drew upon both the scientific racism of Victorian Britain, brought to South Africa by settlers in the late nineteenth century,
and the frontier racism of the Boer settlers” (Butler, 2009: 35). The crucial part of apartheid was due to the fact that Africans were taken from homes and made to work with very little income or nothing at all. This movement “became integral to the operation and maintenance of apartheid” according to Ray (2007, 65).

The segregation started when the Afrikaners/Boers wanted to separate themselves from the English/British and it was a great victory when the National Party (NP) won the 1948 elections. The segregation then changed from segregation from the English to the non-white (Moller, Dickow and Harris, 1999).

SAHO (2000) indicates that South Africans were suppressed long before apartheid was made official, which was in 1948. “Apartheid helped to make partially fluid conceptions of difference concrete, by forcing those with the same racial and ethnic classification to live, learn, and work together” (Butler, 2009: 35).

Many know apartheid as the separation of race and ethnicity, where the whites were the only recognized citizens in this country and the blacks, coloureds and Asians were stripped of human rights (Butler, 2009). An example of this was the “pass law” which was implemented by issuing the Africans with documents which stated the individuals’ personal details (SAHO, 2000), like a passport that allows people to go in and out of areas locally.

Anti-apartheid political opposition, of which the ANC was the main black opposition, was banned in 1988 and people used funerals as a way of connecting and speaking to others as a form of a ‘rally’ (Moller, et al., 1999).

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was a group that broke away from the ANC party and decided to call on all PAC supporters and have an “anti-pass campaign”, where everyone met at police stations around the country without the pass according to SAHO (2000). The idea was that the police would not put all the protestors away in jail, as there would be no space and the products in stores would not sell for the duration of imprisonment as the majority of the consumers would be imprisoned. This is the period where the infamous Sharpeville massacre had occurred, many people joined the non-violent protest willingly but some individuals were forced or threatened to join. SAHO mentioned that there were three-hundred armed policemen to about five-thousand people who showed up at the Sharpeville police station. The incident escalated when a policeman was innocently knocked over, the people rushed forward to see what had happened and one of the policemen panicked and
opened fire onto the public, starting a firing frenzy for a duration of two minutes, killing sixty-nine individuals and wounding a hundred and eighty. This confrontation caused uproar among all that had heard of, it leading to more violent protests.

The church and the clergy did not agree with the exclusion of the peoples of colour from the norms of society, indicating that this was not the way of Christ (Moller et al, 1999). However, the Boer churches, including the Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerk, interpreted some of the scriptures of the bible as condoning the segregation of different peoples which gave strength to the argument of separation.

Economically, apartheid would not have been beneficial to the country as there were insufficient white people to employ into managerial or senior jobs and there were more people of colour in the country that were consumers than whites as mentioned by Johnson (1994). If consumer boycotts had to continue to happen as they did in cities such as Nelson Mandela Metropole, East London and Boksburg, businesses would have been forced out of the market (Johnson, 1994).

The apartheid era was a time when education was a privilege and not a right, when houses were taken away from the people of colour and, given to the white people and people of colour were forcibly removed without objection. Segregation of everything—education, settlement, resorts, and hotels, in busses and on streets was used during the apartheid era to degrade and dehumanize not only the black people but also the whites (Boaduo, 2010).

A brutal and bloody civil war was brewing. In 1976 the Soweto Uprising which was also known as June 16 was a series of rallies and protests led by high school students due to the inferior quality of education that was imposed on black students. English and Afrikaans were ordered as the language of education and instruction and this marginalised or totally excluded the indigenous black languages causing outrage in the country. This was a wake-up call for the apartheid regime to start serious negotiations to end apartheid, avoiding the possibility of the country being reduced to ruins and the eradication of whites.

### 2.3.4 Rainbow Nation

In 1990, after the African National Congress was no longer banned, Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years of prison, and exiled African National Congress members were granted indemnity. The White South African perpetrators and Black South African victims faced one another to negotiate an Interim Constitution and a common future for their country to transition from apartheid to democracy. Scared of
revenge, the White apartheid leaders made the first democratic elections only possible if amnesty was granted (Vora and Vora, 2004: 301).

Nelson Mandela, went from prisoner to first black president in South Africa (Crain 1995: 5). Crain who interviewed Peter Davis who did a documentary on Mandela’s life and career said that “I had long ago come to the conclusion that there could be no peaceful resolution to the problems of South Africa without Mandela”.

To achieve this idealistic view of equality it took a great amount of effort to firstly let the world know about the suffering, pay attention to the issue and receive help from international parties, “activists… paid for their resistance with their lives” (Moller, et al, 1999: 251). “Indeed we are clearly aware of how the liberation struggle started and intensified and forced the apartheid political leaders of the settlers to the negotiation table in the early 1990’s which finally climaxed on the 27th April 1994, leading to the birth of the new South Africa, dubbed by Archbishop Tutu as the rainbow nation” as mentioned by Boaduo (2010: 131).

Negotiations for a new non-discriminatory constitution for South Africa were conducted at a forum called Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). CODESA was a critical negotiating tool which created a road map for the country going forward whereby the ANC would take power after the period of white supremacist control.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was held and headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to encourage those who had perpetrated heinous crimes against humanity during the apartheid era to tell the truth in order to provide a path forward for reconciliation and transparency for the peoples of South Africa (Butler, 2009).

South Africa is widely known as the ‘rainbow nation’. This term had assisted in the transition period from an authoritarian government or dictatorship to a democratic government (Moller, et al, 1999; Vora and Vora, 2004). This political slogan or phrase is used to inspire the diverse people of the nation. The catchphrase came about when the Noble Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu used a rainbow as a symbol of “hope and reconciliation” for all South Africans (Moller, et al, 1999: 256).

1994 was not only the first free election but also a first for many. Years of oppression had left first time voters feeling victorious.

The official name of this country is now referred to as the Republic of South Africa, with eleven official languages, nine provinces and has its own currency the Rand and is led by the ruling party, the ANC (Butler, 2009).

“South Africa remains a long way from Archbishops Tutu’s vision of a rainbow nation comfortable with and strengthened by its own diversity” (Butler, 2009: 36). But it was the most significant event that had happened in the twentieth century from a divided nation to one who can walk into a building and sit in the same area as everyone else. South Africa is known as the Rainbow nation because of the country’s diverse cultures, religions, languages, races and backgrounds.

When discussions started as to what language should take precedence of the others, “the negotiators of South Africa’s new political order in the early 1990’s did not resolve language issues or debates over the status of ethnic groups with which languages are associated. Instead they designated 11 official languages: isiZulu, IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, XiTsonga, English and Afrikaans” (Butler, 2009: 37). Citizens should be able to choose which language to be taught in and have freedom to speak it.

Conflicts marginalize every sphere of society, nothing is spared, not even sport. South African national sports teams were no longer allowed to participate internationally because there were worldwide sanctions imposed on the apartheid regime. This period was a dark and dismal era in the lives of sportsmen of all colours in South Africa, as their talents could only be displayed internally and not globally. This severely impeded the individual’s earning power and reduced their exposure in the international arena.

The South African government, desperate to provide competition for the national teams and for the discouraged sports people, persuaded international unofficial teams to visit the country to provide competition for the national teams. The top players from other countries agreed to play in the country having been tempted with lucrative offers. The West Indies team who visited and played in South Africa was banned for life by the West Indies’ government for going against the wishes of the governing authority. Other countries’ international teams came away with a fine. The reason why the West Indies were banned for
life as opposed to having a fine was because the West Indies people were subjected to colonization, under white British rule (Bresnahan, 2013).

In 1995, sports teams were back on the sports fields to represent the country. Many achievements were made in the first year already. A memorable moment would be South Africa winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup, according to Moller et al (1999).

It is all well and good that the country had realized that apartheid would not work and be able to continue to exist in the twentieth century. Policies, programs and laws had to change and along with this so did the mind-set, perspectives, attitudes and personalities of the people. This is where the people who were in power conceded to the demands of the majority in order to avoid a bloodbath and the new government acknowledged the fact that education that was given should be on the same level irrespective of race and that it should be a human right for all.

1994 brought about a transformation and to complete this transition a new flag, new national anthem, and new nation was born (Moller, et al, 1999).

2.4 CURRENT STATUS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS

Recently, through the media, people have realized how corrupt the politicians and people in power in the country are. “Unfortunately, there were a greedy few South Africans who would always want to take everything and cling to them irrespective of the consequences” as mentioned by Boaduo (2010: 136); (Shapiro and Tebeau, 2011). Poverty and inequality which is a major concern is one of the highest in the world, South Africa’s economy might be the biggest on the African continent (Butler, 2009).

“Staggering unemployment has in turn fuelled ugly xenophobia, resulting in deadly eruptions against refugees and migrant workers from Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Rates of violent crimes, particularly murder and rape, remain gruesomely high” (Shapiro and Tebeau, 2011: 5). The HIV/AIDS pandemic created a serious problem economically and politically and these issues were not handled correctly (Butler, 2009; Shapiro and Tebeau, 2011). Service delivery and local infrastructure have not been up to the standard that the people of the country would like it to be.

South Africa is not all that bad, compared to the neighbouring countries that are going through civil wars, famine, drought and an economic downfall. South Africa won the vote to
host the 2010 World Cup and this has opened many doors for the economy, bringing in tourists and international stars to perform concerts as the stadiums that were erected are capable of holding the large numbers of people that the acts attract (Ndlovu, 2013: 3).

“Competitive relationships and a legacy of adversarialism have typified intergroup and interpersonal conflicts in South African organisations. The apartheid legacy left a divided and wounded society” (Rahim and Blum, 1994: 87). A new Act was brought in, the Black Economic Empowerment Act, “the South African business community is, by legislation, compelled to address inequality (among other ways through the Employment Equity Act) and ensure Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), (among others through the BEE Act) as stated by Shapiro and Tebeau (2011: 128). “Suddenly, post 1994, issues of gender equity, racial equality, the inclusion of the disabled, the aged, and those with an alternative sexual orientation, and so on had to be accommodated and addressed all at once” (Kotze, 2011: 19).

This act has been put in place to ensure “South Africa's commitment to readdressing injustices of the past. It creates a legal framework to promote economic participation and wealth redistribution to the majority of the population who were previously systematically disenfranchised and refused the right to participate in the economic wealth of South Africa” (Van Der Merwe and Meister, 2004).

This form of correction was expected to be put in place immediately. At first the only problem was that businesses were not equipped or ready for these changes, “companies are likely to face increasing expectations, pressures, and incentives for enhanced due diligence on human rights. “This is premised on international policy trends and South African political and legal developments” (Hamman and Schild, 2008: 1).

The past actions of apartheid affected its people by being excluded from all that was deemed as privilege, and certain racial groups were banned from access to political, civic and labour rights. At the time the population of South Africa was 35 million with some 28 million black people excluded from equal education and employment opportunities (Rahim and Blum, 1994), which was the root cause of all the serious problems of poverty and suffering. The apartheid era resulted in 60 per cent of the black population only having primary school education or none at all.
Slavery was an early form of social organisation, “the notion of authority is that some person is entitled to require the obedience of others regardless of whether those others are prepared to find the particular order or rule enjoined upon them as acceptable or desirable or not” (Burton, 1997: 85). Equalising opportunities and wealth distribution was the main priority, but in the short term the new constitution did not deliver tangible gains at organisational and individual levels or security, stability or protection of rights for the minority groups. Pressure was put on the organisations and under-skilled people were hired to reach the quota. This is an injustice to those hired, working in the organisation and business. This adjustment does require restructuring, concerning the near power balance between groups, referring to Hofstede’s cultural difference framework, this is referred to as ‘pragmatic flexibility’, “which can supersede rigid ideology commitment” (Rahim and Blum, 1994: 88).

In 2005, Herbst (2005: 97) had said that “the economy has grown by roughly 3% annually in the last ten years, a significant improvement over the record of apartheid” but to overcome poverty and increase the number of people employed, the economy should have expanded six per cent annually. Herbst (2005) believes the reason for the low numbers in unemployment and relatively high statistics in poverty is due to the fact that millions of South African citizens are not equipped for the working world, lack training and are illiterate. Herbst goes on to say that economically South Africa’s growth “has been ‘mediocre’ compared with that of other developing countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and South Korea – countries South Africa hopes to emulate” (2005: 97).

South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. There has been an increase in the unemployment rate in South Africa from the first quarter of 2014 being 25.20 per cent to the second quarter being 25.50 per cent. This is the highest level since 2008. From 2000-2014 the unemployment rate averaged at 25.27 per cent (Trading economics, 2014). Major job losses occurred in the manufacturing (93 000) and agriculture (73 000) sectors. However employment increased by 403 000 “due to increase in community and social services, trade and private households (265 000, 92 000 & 75 000) respectively” (Trading economics, 2014). These job losses resulted in 5.067 million people without work up; from 4.83 million in the preceding quarter (Trading economics, 2014). Figure 2.1 illustrates the South African unemployment rate between January 2012 and June 2014.
2.5 SUMMARY

Herbst (2005: 93) the author of the journal article “Mbeki’s South Africa” started with the title of “The tale of two countries”, explaining the first country as, “Abandoned white minority rule, a country once wrecked by violence and synonymous with human rights abuses; this South Africa now boasts a stable political system based on a liberal constitution defended by honest courts” and the second country as a nation that is run by only one party, the ANC, where opposition are looked at distrustfully and the economy did not make a major impact on the poverty line. Where only some people are benefiting and the others are fighting for survival. ‘The tale of two countries’ can be seen as a reflection of current day South Africa.

The word democracy is “derived from the classical Greek word demokratia, which means ‘people’ (demos) ‘ruling’ (kratos)” (Han and Dong, 2006: 1). It is believed by John Dunn that there are two types of democracy ‘real democracy’ and ‘ideal democracy’ (Han and Dong, 2006). According to Dunn (Han and Dong, 2006) what people expect democracy to be and what it really is cannot be “embodied simultaneously” in a political system, whereas Robert Dahl argues that democracy “means something different for people situated in different times and places” (Han and Dong, 2006: 2). Dunn thinks that people cannot fully enjoy what democracy has to offer or promises and believes the best kind of democracy is a “meaningless daydream”. Dahl disagrees and looks on the brighter side, saying that
“historically speaking democracy has been widening its fields” (Han and Dong, 2006: 2) minority groups have more rights now.

To a certain extent both Dunn and Dahl have some truth in their theories when considering South Africa. All citizens of this nation may not experience democracy at its best but the country is unrecognizable from nineteen years ago. As mentioned by Calland (2006: 277) “liberal democracy, with all its attendant civil and political rights and freedoms, is established”.

South Africa is still in its adolescent phase, learning new things, being stubborn and weeding out that which does not belong. The political conflict in this great country has been futile and destructive but not to the point of no return. As Winston Churchill once said “there is nothing wrong with change if it is in the right direction”.
CHAPTER 3: CONFLICT THEORY, HUMAN NEEDS THEORY AND CRITICAL THEORY

3.1 INTRODUCTION
Conflict Theory forms the basis of this study. Conflict has brought about many theoretical assumptions relating to many activities of people’s daily lives. To understand conflict there has been various theories regarding the causes of conflict;

- Community relations theory; is based on the polarisation of groups and distrust between the parties which causes the aggression.
- Human needs theory; focuses on deep rooted issues caused by needs not being met. Identity theory; is concerned with conflict caused by individuals fearing a loss of one’s identity stemming from past unresolved divergence.
- Intercultural miscommunication theory; assumes that the cultural communication styles are incompatible and causing the dispute.
- Conflict transformation theory; “assumes that conflict is caused by real problems of inequality expressed by competing social, cultural and economic frameworks” (Fisher et al, 2000: 8).

This research is purposed to explore the nature of conflict in the workplace and the need for conflict management, and whether there is a possible link to Critical Theory. Critical Theory as mentioned in Chapter 2 “derives its basic insight from the idea that thought can transform itself through a process of self-reflection in history” (Rasmussen, 1996: 12). It evolved from “Western Marxism”, formulated in The Frankfurt School and is a branch of The Enlightenment philosophy (Bronner, 1994), an extension of which argues that humans are intellectual beings who can comprehend the universe and use it to sustain human needs while also trying to improve the human condition.

It was expected that the combination of these theories will produce a dynamic outcome which will be enlightening, detailed and create a different perspective to the subject at hand. Social theories mirror social reality, as social reality is not static and is constantly and continuously progressing. In turn, social theory will not be stagnant and does the same. Social theory attempts to align itself with the transformations in society. This becomes evident when looking at the numerous theories that exist today.
Social change is examined, analysed and evaluated, and is thus produced into social theory which can be described as theoretical descriptions of social reality. It is these theoretical descriptions which shed light on the processes within society, more specifically in this case, the business realm and provide insight into its various dynamics and aspects. “The quest was to discover universal scientific laws that would explain connections, causes and developments” as stated by Hamilton and Thomson (2002: 268).

3.2 HUMAN NEEDS THEORY
Hinde (1987) states that humans will defend that which is considered to be the individual’s territory, possessions, family and especially livelihood. “Even when conscious decisions are involved, they are made under the pressure of stimuli and opportunities, and they tend to have unpredictable and unexpected implications” (Hinde, 1987: 65)

Dr Abraham Maslow has detected the most prominent human needs; each at a different level that humans may experience needs. Individuals move from the most basic needs to the needs that many may not reach. In order to attain the next level of needs the first one needs to be achieved and so on. Figure 3.1 shows the various levels of human needs and a basic explanation as to what each level is about.

![Hierarchy of Needs Diagram](Source: Anstey: 2008:133)
The needs connected to each level in the hierarchy in figure 3.1 can be explained as:

- 5. Self-actualisation- To have the autonomy to become what you want to be and do what pleases you. To find a position that is meaningful
- 4. Self-esteem- To be acknowledged, respected and recognised by others and to value oneself and have self-respect.
- 3. Love and belongingness- The need to fit in, be accepted or affiliated to a group; family, friends, work, sports, and social groups
- 2. Safety and security- A place to live that is safe and secure
- 1. Physiological needs- Food, water, shelter and sleep

Human needs tend to differ culturally, organically and in perspective but Burton (1990) believes that “conflict cannot be understood as biological, or psychological, or social, or legal, or economic: it can only be understood as human” (Tillett and French, 2006:298). Professor John Wear Burton is world renowned for his work in the conflict management field. Burton is one of a very few theorists who attempted to develope a unified theory to explain conflict and its resolution. This unified theory is called ‘Human Needs Theory’. Three categories appear to be the main ones that speak a common language for all humans; needs, values and interests. These terms are separate entities and should be treated as such, even though there is no precise or unanimous agreement on the meaning of the terms (Burton, 1990). However, Burton has been heavily criticised for the claim that these three categories are inherent human needs.

Mayer (2000) breaks it down further stating that in conflict a distinction is made between interests and needs. “Interests are viewed as more transitory and superficial, needs as more basic and enduring” (Mayer, 2000: 16). Burton and Dukes (1990) cited in Mayer (2000) argue that a settlement made that attends to the interests and not needs is less meaningful, and less likely to be effective. Table 3.1 illustrates the distinctions made between survival needs, interests and identity-based needs.

Mayer (2000) breaks it down further stating that in conflict a distinction is made between interests and needs. “Interests are viewed as more transitory and superficial, needs as more basic and enduring” (Mayer, 2000: 16). Burton and Dukes (1990) cited in Mayer (2000) argue that a settlement made that attends to the interests and not needs is less meaningful, and less likely to be effective. Table 3.1 illustrates the distinctions made between survival needs, interests and identity-based needs.
Table 3.1: Continuum of human needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survival Needs</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Identity-Based Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Substantive</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted by Mayer, 2000: 17)

3.2.1 Needs
Needs reflect universal motivation. It is not similar but related to Maslow and many other scholars’ theories on needs. In addition to the other basic human needs of shelter and food, “there are basic human needs that relate to growth and development” (Burton, 1990: 36). Each relationship is seen as a tool to meet certain needs if the tool is not producing the expected outcomes, needs will not be met, even the strongest relationships have limits (Dana, 1995).

3.2.2 Values
“Values are those ideas, habits, customs and beliefs that are a characteristic of particular social communities. They are the linguistic, religious, class, ethnic or other features that lead to separate cultures and identity groups” (Burton, 1990: 37).

Defensive and aggressive behaviours are the result of preserving values that the individual identifies with. There is however a sub-grouping of groups and there are different cultures, social identities and classes that are associated with the groups. Individuals have preferences and priorities concerning these aspects which involve their values.

3.2.3 Interests
“Interests refer to the occupational, social, political and economic aspirations of the individual, and of identity groups of individuals within a social system” (Burton, 1990: 38). Interests are normally common in groups but might differ in various departments. Interests are not intrinsically part of the individual such as needs or values. It is usually related to material possessions and roles or positions.

The trading of interests is possible if it is for social gains whereas needs cannot be suppressed or substituted.
The frustration aggression theory developed by Dollard and his colleagues at Yale University found that people tend to become aggressive when barriers are perceived to be raised to the individual’s desired behaviour (Bradshaw, 2008).

3.3 CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory “derives its basic insight from the idea that thought can transform itself through a process of self-reflection in history” (Rasmussen, 1996: 12). It evolved from ‘Western Marxism’, formulated in The Frankfurt School and is a branch of the enlightenment philosophy (Bronner, 1994), an extension of which argues that humans are intellectual beings who can comprehend the universe and use it to sustain human needs and also trying to improve human condition. The enlightenment period came about when “society began to escape from the dark ages of ignorance and superstition” (Romm and Sarakinsky, 1994: 4). It is seen as an extension as it is a natural progression for humans who have found logic and use reasoning, to want to have freedom of thought and expression; critical theory is an instrument of reason, which can ultimately change the world (Rasmussen, 1996). Kant cited in Romm and Sarakinsky (1994: 305) explains that “true freedom, can only be achieved if people learn to subject themselves to no authority other than that of reason”.

Habermas’ Critical Theory has roots in various theories, branching from enlightenment, moving away from the bases of “Historical materialism” and towards a “Theory of universal human” where interaction and communication were the main focus (Seidman and Alexander, 2008: 33). “This theory is used to discuss how a pluralistic society can develop ways of living together by coming to a mutual understanding of what is legitimate and illegitimate conduct” as stated by Seidman and Alexander (2008: 33).

The founder of Critical Social theory, Max Horkeimer, states that there are differences between Critical theory and Traditional theory. Critical theory is unlike any other theory as it does not only break down, explain and describe social processes but also “wants to present a vision of future, rational, emancipated society that can inspire and guide political agents to transform the status quo” according to Romm and Sarakinsky (1994: 306). Secondly it is self-reflective. Individuals are aware of the interaction being made and understand the meaning of the relations behind it. Critical theory claims that the fact that its origins are known creates an objective, neutral and value-free dynamic. Conversely Traditional theory is not, which in turn
constructs an environment that is unfounded and does not allow the same freedom as the Critical approach (Hoy and McCarthy, 1994).

Jurgen Habermas listed two important types of action, which are greatly differentiated. The concept of action is a link to Critical theory. These two actions are known as communicative action and strategic action respectively (Romm and Sarakinsky, 1994: 308). It is believed that many of the downfalls of modern culture were promoted by the latter. However according to Romm and Sarakinsky (1994) communicative action has brought about structures and processes that represent ‘reason’ and freedom to contemporary civilisation even though it is continuously threatened by the different innovative aspects modernity has brought into existence. These threats are derived from and motivated by power and money (the market and the state). This communicative action is how people can multiply and broaden the ‘lifeworld’.

3.4 SUMMARY

These theories explained above deals with almost every sphere in peoples’ day-to-day lives even though it is evident that theories may differ in a wide range of characteristics. It is a break-down of social structure and human processes. “While human beings are motivated by the norms, values, and belief systems that prevail in their society, structural change often throws these "vocabularies of motivation" into some confusion” (Mills, 1959: 162) cited in Elwell (2002) theories look to examine and explain human interaction and thought processes to simplify it.

From the researcher’s understanding the critical theory studies the various social dynamics which contribute to conflict whereas critical theorists believe that knowledge and reasoning is the way forward for a better living and from the human needs view, if one is looking from a broader perspective it is about satisfying one’s needs progressing from one level to the next. “Different theories provide different explanations, and the types of explanations tell us that the world works in different ways” (Nueman, 2011: 87).

According to Giddens and Turner (1987: 1) essentially social theory deals with “the status of social sciences, especially in relation to the logic of the natural sciences; the nature of laws or generalizations which can be established; the interpretation of human agency and its differentiation from objects and events in nature; and the character or form of social institutions”.

31
Social theory expands and facilitates one’s ability for continuous reflection, quest of sovereign research and capabilities to think critically and analytically about the probable and restrictions of the various sociological frameworks. Coherent knowledge and understanding of social theory should assist in improving one’s skills to communicate opinions and ideas effectively and to be cognisant of the different point of views and notions, an attention to the potential for inspired and innovative thinking and creative interpretation unique to the field.
CHAPTER 4: ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT AND DYNAMICS

4.1 ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT

Bradshaw (2008: 22) describes organisational conflict as “unspectacular, in that it is not usually associated with dramatic or violent behaviour, but does not mean that organisational conflict is not significant, or that it is not extremely damaging to the organisation concerned”. The industrial struggle has become far less between owners and others and more between managers and employees. As the populace increases and resources become scarcer and competition is on a high resulting from cheap labour, the organisational system will continue to influence political and social conditions (Burton, 1997). Conflict affects virtually all kinds of organisations- “businesses, government agencies, schools, hospitals, law firms, unions, armies, volunteer organisations” (Brown, 1983: 1) but conflict dynamics are more visible in some than in others.

There are no statistics found on conflict in the workplace in South Africa that is known of. But studies, done in the United States by CPP Global Human Capital Report in 2008 and Harvard Law School Special Report on Managing Conflict in 2009 reported that; 85% of employees experience conflict and spend 2.8 hours/week dealing with conflicting situations. Considerable amounts of organisational productivity and resources are lost, costing the businesses $359 billion in paid hours a year. 31 per cent of managers believed that the conflict was handled effectively, while 78% of employees oppose this notion. 25 per cent of employees avoid the conflict by being absent, however 75% of employees report positive outcomes from conflict that would not have been realised without the conflict (Arvis Institute, 2010).

Burton (1990) refers to the costs of treating the symptoms of social conflict as more than what societies can afford; in this case, organisations. The costs of dealing with conflicting situations and ending a contract with employees is costly; this hampers the economic state of the country in the end as these accusations and outcomes are put on the employees’ record and references which can make the employee undesirable to other organisations, creating another statistic in the unemployment rate.

More resources, technically and financially are spent on preventing theft, safety and policies and procedures of addressing deviant employees but not enough on why these behaviours are experienced in the workplace, why sabotage occurs or why violence happens.
“There is no organization except in the actual behaviour of real people at some moment in time; the organization is whatever they do and think and say” (Collins, 1975: 315). The ‘organisation’ is just a means of others achieving something by using others. This can be related to managers, leaders and owners of an organisation trying to get subordinates or employees to complete certain things. This can describe how an organisation is structured but not entirely because organisational structure refers to how people repetitively behave towards each other; it is however not certain how a large group of people will act/interact, “and any pattern is the result of bargaining among many parties” (Collins, 1975: 316). They may be very unequal in resources, fulfilling needs and power, as a result “a struggle over who will do what among people whose very inequality gives them different aims as to how they want the others to behave” (Collins, 1975: 316).

“As do most things in life, conflict offers a mixture of the good, the bad and the uncertain” (Folger, Poole and Stutman, 2001:1). Positive and negative aspects of conflict affects the workplace. Depending on how conflict is handled can have different residual effects. Identification of negative and positive conflicts needs to be made to ensure effective management. To conclude “there is now no option but to pay attention to the problems which give rise to conflict, even though this may require altered institutions and policies” (Burton, 1990: 17).

4.2 ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL
An organisation is a web of interpersonal influences, “and the most fundamental determinant of how men influence each other is the type of sanction they apply” (Collins, 1975: 298). The key types are coercive threats, material rewards, and loyalty to ideals.

4.2.1 Coercive Threats
Collins (1975) confirms that coercion leads to great efforts to evade coercion, the effort to counter-act the coercion applied depends on the resources available. If the resources are limited but there is a chance to flee, the member feeling coerced is likely to leave to escape the situation. If there are resources to fight back or not and an escape route or not the likelihood of the coerced leaving or staying is dependent on strong incentives (material rewards or power potential).
4.2.2 Material Rewards
“Control by material rewards leads to compliance to the extent that rewards are directly linked to the desired behaviour” (Collins, 1975: 299). The stronger the weight on material rewards, the greater the materialistic orientation on the part of the member being controlled and the greater effort will be applied to influence the situations in which performance is measured and rewarded to their own advantage.

4.2.3 Loyalty to Ideals
Individuals who give more orders in the organisation tend to identify more with the organisation. The same can be said when one is trying to prove one’s loyalty to others to obtain a position. Loyalty to the organisation can increase when recruits are already committed to each other (Collins, 1975). Loyalty is potentially greatly dependent on friendships made; having similar backgrounds, conducting informal gatherings on the job, the greater the chances of the organisational members are isolated from outsiders, the closer the relations and loyalty to the company will be (Collins 1975).

As mentioned by Collins (1975), perceived danger from another organisation enhances loyalty within the organisation, if there is not already hostility within the organisation among groups. If members are assured promotion especially when they know membership is temporary, loyalty towards the business increases. “It is apparent that any single form of control is rarely used alone.” (Collins, 1975: 307).

4.3 CONFLICT PROCESS
Rummel (1976) cited in (Folger, Poole and Stutman, 2001: 86) states that the conflict process goes through five stages. Early in the disagreement the conflict is seen as ‘latent’, until an incident occurs during the second stage, the ‘initiation phase’, triggering the one or other party to act or respond this is where the ‘interaction turns towards balancing power’, In the ‘balancing power phase’ the parties demonstrate tactics to come to an agreement or compromise, which leads to the next phase ‘balance of power’ where the groups involved, realize the penalty and come to terms with the outcome of the conflict. As time progresses and change is evident the ‘disruption phase’ occurs when the parties recognize potential conflict arising and the need to confront the opposition. “The model implies a continual cycle” until a solution is made (Folger, et al, 2001: 86).
Pondy (1976) cited in (Folger, et al, 2001: 107) developed a conflict model which is similar to that of Rummel’s phases of conflict but in the organizational context, which is relevant to this assignment. Conflict initially starts off as ‘latent’, when goals are incompatible but no action is taken. Pondy also points out that whether conflict is latent or not, it can still be perceived. In this phase, the latent issues are visible. This is when the conflict is ‘perceived’. Then the conflict is ‘felt’ when parties are affected by the conflict, and feelings are changed by another party and emotions get involved, acting negatively towards the opponent. The conflict transforms into ‘manifest’ conflict, “when parties act on the perceived and felt differences” (Folger, et al, 2001: 107). The final stage is known as ‘aftermath’ when parties develop new relationships and reach an outcome which is then assessed. The conflict dynamics can be affected by actors of the conflict and environmental factors within the organizations.

4.4 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF CONFLICT

Conflict is a motive force for history, an action geared toward building a consensus. Conflict is an inevitable, pervasive and inescapable phenomenon but many people tend to look at it as destructive, disruptive and reductionist from a negative perspective and it only involves the exchange of physical force or blows. It is an innate, inherent phenomenon in human beings; it could be at a level of an individual, national or international (Root, 2014).

Undoubtedly, conflict is usually viewed as uncomfortable or even agonizing. Yet it is also accurate that conflict often offers opportunity to develop new perspectives. “Conflict can be the force that helps us move beyond what ‘is’ and to move toward a more positive ‘what could be’” (Skinner, 2010). To an average man it is an option or opportunity for transformation, change and development.

Rahim (2011) views conflict as substantive and affective. Substantive conflict also known as cognitive or issue-orientated conflict “is essential for effective strategic choice” (2011: 46). It is suggested that this task conflict is beneficial as the disagreements have to do with tasks, policies and other business issues of which a moderate level is needed in the organisation as it has positive effects on employee and group performance. But there is a difference between low and high levels of conflict. Too little conflict can result in individuals and groups missing out on new opportunities or potential developments that can enhance performance whereas
too much can be a distraction to completing tasks at hand (Jehn, 1997: 532 cited in Rahim, 2011: 46), this conflict needs to moderated.

Studies have proven that groups and individuals with substantive conflict perform better and have improved with decision-making skills but it should be said that this is mainly related to employees who do non-routine tasks and not those who perform standardised tasks (Rahim, 2011). Although substantive conflict has an entourage of benefits, it still has a few kinks. It can reduce loyalty and commitment to the work group and organisation (Jehn, 1997; Jehn et al., 1997 stated in Rahim, 2011: 48).

Affective conflict is the divergence that needs to be reduced as it has potential to be destructive on individual and group performance. Issues pertaining to this conflict is negative reactions of organisational members, thus this conflict is also termed relationship conflict, and emotional conflict (Rahim, 2011). The negative results which are experienced in the high levels of substantive conflict are similar to that which affective conflict produces: they weaken workgroup and organisational loyalty and commitment, increase chances of employee turnover and diminish satisfaction. Stress and anxiety are the main causes of the negative results; these factors all contribute to impeding the progress of the group and individual as this type of conflict “interferes with task-related effort because members focus on reducing threats, increasing power, and attempting to build cohesion rather than working on tasks. The conflict causes members to be negative, irritable, suspicious, and resentful” (Jehn, 1997: 531 mentioned in Rahim, 2011: 48).

It is easier to spot the negatives in any situation but conflict should not be seen as black and white, good or bad or destructive or creative and avoided at all costs. It is crucial that individuals see the importance of dealing with the conflict instead of the traditional strategy of avoiding it (Wisinski, 1993).

Not all conflict can be resolved and it will not go away, but most conflicts that occur can be managed, conflicts can help build relationships and be a motivator for change. Generally so much can be learnt about oneself, realising the strengths within eventually progressing. “The desire or necessity to defend our own corner can develop within us talents which were previously hidden” (Whitfield, 1994: 5). Conflict can build team spirit and create a common purpose. Conversely from an individual’s perspective, if conflict is not controlled it can leave employees faced with symptoms of stress that have negative effects on the individual psychologically, mentally and physically; “high blood pressure, anxiety, sleeplessness,
inability to relax or settle, snappiness or bad temper, loss of interest in pleasurable activities and hobbies (including sex) and the development of nervous habits such as tics” (Whitfield, 1994: 13).

Conflict can destroy professional relationships, generate a ‘get-even’ attitude, conflict can mean confusion and ambiguity and added tension to an already stressful environment, not to mention the costs. Positive conflict can stimulate increased productivity and improved decision-making. It may also generate new ways of looking at situations and thus greater creativity (Stone, 1999). But ignored conflict creates “barriers to individual and organizational effectiveness, derailing teamwork and adding to the stress in the workplace” (Stone, 1999: 3). The concern for companies that are resolving conflict is that it is time-consuming, costing sometimes weeks, months and even years. Because of this, resolving the pending disagreement will be delayed until the current project is done or when the conflict has spiraled; this leads to disharmony, strained relationships, lack of commitment and poor performance. The hidden issues for an organisation are the possibilities of bad reputation, unhappy employees, decline in production and quality, and the business’s bottom line.

However the significant aspect that is not paid much attention to are the costs of resolving the conflict. Early detection and solution of the conflict is preferred to save all parties involved from legal costs. If an outsider is brought in to consult, costs will inevitable rise dramatically. Costs occurred in hiring a highly qualified expert are sometimes more than the company has budgeted for, and include travelling, accommodation, food and fees. If a dismissal is made this means a position is vacant. If hiring an employee internally is not possible, looking for a potential employee is costly. An agency might be needed and training and time for the employee to settle in needs to be taken into consideration.

There are two forms of conflict namely, functional and dysfunctional. Functional conflict is a term used to describe conflict that is positive and results in progress, achievement or in an outcome that was unexpectedly good. Dysfunctional conflict hinders progress, prevents achievements and delays success (Whitfield, 1994).

Even though functional conflict is good, leaving the conflict to run its natural course can result in it becoming dysfunctional. Being able to differentiate between functional and dysfunctional has proven to be sometimes difficult for some. Distinguishing between the two is more clearly seen retrospectively.
As mentioned by Whitfield (1994) there is no real choice but to manage every conflict, whether it is perceived to be functional or not because it is really never clear from the outset and not many can see the outcome of a conflict.

### 4.5 CONFLICT TYPES

Dealing with social conflict is complex, therefore, and has different levels at which it occurs. As mentioned by Jeong (2008: 16) “the complexity of conflict differs, depending on whether it focuses on interpersonal, inter-group, and international relations or global agendas”. There are four primary levels of conflict within an organization, namely:

#### 4.5.1 Intrapersonal Conflict

Intrapersonal conflict is experienced within oneself, (Bradshaw, 2008; Avruch, Black and Scimecca, 1991). Intrapersonal communication believes that, “the self is at the beginning and end of all communication” typically, communication begins and ends with oneself (Burton and Dimbleby, 1995: 1). These authors (1995: 2) define intrapersonal communication as “communication within the self, and of the self to the self”. This conflict is not usually evident to another person, it is not dependent upon a relationship but is generally the result of one (Tillett and French, 2006). As this happens within one’s self others are not aware of the internal battle which in turn affects the individual’s performance and relationships.

#### 4.5.2 Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflict (between individuals), occurs between friends, family members and, in a business context, colleagues, supervisors and employees, whereas larger disputes in bigger groups are termed intergroup conflict (Bradshaw, 2008).

#### 4.5.3 Intra-group Conflict

Intra-group conflict occurs within a group. If a member of the group is slacking, sponging or negatively affecting a team’s progress, the other group members can express unfavourable behaviours towards such said individual. A group in this instance is defined as “a number of individuals who want or are obligated to have an ongoing relationship with each other and are, of necessity, required to cooperate” (Tillett and French, 2006: 10).
4.5.4 Intergroup Conflict
Intergroup conflict refers to opposition, disagreements and disputes between groups as mentioned by Folger, Poole and Stutman (2009). This type of conflict may be very intense, drawn out and expensive to those involved. Under higher levels of competition and conflict, the parties develop attitudes towards each other that are characterized by distrust, rigid, a focus only on self-interest and failure to listen. This type of conflict should be handled through representatives of each party. It is difficult to differentiate between intra-group conflict and intergroup conflict as a larger group can separate into smaller groups creating a mentality that of being divided instead of being part of the larger group achieving the same goal (Tillett and French, 2006).

4.5.5 Intra/Inter Organizational conflict
There are two forms of sub-conflict types that fall under the umbrella of organisational conflict, intra organisational and inter organisational conflict respectively. Intra being within the organisation (strikes, go-slow) and conversely inter; this form of organisational conflict differs as it does not occur within the corporation but between organisations, dealing with the external environment such as rival companies (Samsung vs. Apple, Green Peace vs. Global Environmental Exploitation).

4.6 SOURCES OF CONFLICT
Sources of conflict are separate entities that do tend to overlap one another. Conflict does not just appear out of nowhere and disappear again. If the conflict is not resolved or at least acknowledged, the effects of the conflict can increase (Zetland, 2011). Sources or bases of conflict are seen as a prerequisite to conflict and are experienced in any form of distress; political, social and economic (Bradshaw, 2008). Mayer (2000: 3) states that “if we develop a usable framework for understanding the sources of conflict, we can create a map of conflict that can guide us through the conflict process”. Bradshaw (2008) outlines a number of conflict sources that are specific to organisational behaviour, which will be briefly summarised:

4.6.1 Ill-defined Goals
Individual’s means of achieving objectives differ, even if there is a common goal people might not see eye to eye on which option is best suited for the situation.
In order for an organisation to reach its vision and mission or achieve its goals, these aspects need to be communicated to the employees, as “mission and vision statements help to inform and direct both staff and customers” (Kotze, 2011:65). Shared ideals and aligned goals can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of acquiring the desired outcome.

4.6.2 Role Conflicts
“Uncertainty as to the boundaries of acceptable behaviour emerge, becoming not only the consequence but the cause of conflict” (Anstey, 2008: 25). As changes are brought about, it creates ambiguity and dissent.

When working with people it is crucial for job descriptions to be made and the determination of employee roles to be predetermined. Having basic knowledge of the position’s responsibilities and expectations are not enough as it can cause confusion and lead to employees feeling overwhelmed with responsibilities, or that their roles are being taken over.

4.6.3 Poor Communications
People are not mind readers and some individuals expect others to just know; not everything is a given. Mayer (2000: 119) sums up communication skills by stating that “the good news about this is that communication skills can be learned, applied, and enhanced. The bad news is that good communication is harder than most people realize”. Changed relationships are due to the consequences of technology which has changed the way individuals interact with each other in the workplace.

Communication is absolutely key in anything and everything associated with an organization however, as easily as it can resolve issues, it can start conflicts too. “At the heart of both conflict and resolution is communication” (Mayer, 2000: 119). Effective communication is crucial when assigning tasks, directions and when resolving issues in tense situations. In business there is no time out and the business cannot be paused to resolve issues. Sales are the lifeblood of a company and profit needs to be made and these are essential on-going functions that lubricate the business. The lack of information given and miscommunication affect the workforce, emotionally and physically.
4.6.4 Personality Clashes
Recently organisations have become diverse, with different religions, cultures, ethnicities, and personalities. Values and gender clashes are also expected to transpire.

4.6.5 Poor Management
Even though each group has its own tasks to be completed as mentioned by Burke (2008: 99) “work units or groups in organisations normally depend on one another” and yet still experience disagreements with each other due to the duplication or rearrangement of processes that are not clearly communicated initially or managed effectively. Disagreements or potential disputes should be dealt with immediately as to prevent conflict from happening, as unhappy employees lead to a decrease in production and performance that affects the bottom line and profits of the company.

4.6.6 Organisational Change
Mergers and take-overs can be considered as a transition. Change is “an ongoing interactive process” (French and Bell, 1990: 79) and a scary one at that, as humans are creatures of habit, in this situation the much needed development sparked conflicting incidents and it is evident that any one of these factors of change can create a climate of uncertainty and tension, resulting in disagreements. Table 4.1 below illustrates the various causes of conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality clashes/egos</th>
<th>Passive-aggressive behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive workloads</td>
<td>Resistance/fear of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective supervision and management</td>
<td>General tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in beliefs/values</td>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substandard performance</td>
<td>Professional disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition for resources</td>
<td>Inner conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-compliance with policies</td>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion/duplication with responsibility/authority</td>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantics (ambiguous words)</td>
<td>Negative attitudes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted by Arvis institute, 2010).

4.7 CONSEQUENCES AND COSTS OF ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT
It is evident that conflict has negative aspects and in any arena it costs money; especially in the organisation.
Conflict is objective and does not only affect small, starting-up businesses, it can affect the workforce and the standing of the company. Understanding the consequences of a conflict can help the organisation reach a quicker resolution and a more effective containment of the fallout that can ensue from drama at work (Ray, 2014). Bradshaw (2008) listed three general consequences to conflict in the workplace in addition to a few more consequences.

### 4.7.1 The Link to Self-Esteem

“Success and failure produces a number of effective outcomes, including moods highly associated with self-esteem for example, feelings of pride, confidence, shame, or stupidity)” as explained by Heatherton and Wyland (2001: 896)

Conflict is often related to self-esteem (Tillett and French, 2006). Self-esteem changes occurred in situations where the individual felt humiliated and the individual’s ego was threatened (Heatherton and Wyland, 2001).

However studies show that, “self-esteem levels should only have main and moderating effects on job performance when one’s self-esteem is not contingent upon workplace performance” (Ferris et al, 2010).

“Job performance has been shown to relate to organisation’s profits, effectiveness and survival” (Ferris, et al, 2010). Low self-esteem is linked to lowered job motivation. Enthusiasm and commitment are hard to maintain when individuals experience constant conflict with others at work.

### 4.7.2 The Link to Quality

Conflict creates mental and emotional fatigue even after the issue is resolved. Time is wasted on plotting, gossiping, being paranoid and brooding. This can eventually effect and rope in co-workers as they might feel the need to take sides and join in on the time wasting process to either protect themselves or those involved (Ray, 2014). These behaviours, actions and emotions have an impact on the quality of production produced and/or service delivered, which always will affect the profit margin of the company.

Dana (1995) goes on to say that there is also a decrease in decision quality. Decision-makers need information to provide a good decision. But if information is withheld or distorted this can have a negative impact on even the best decision-making procedure. “If the relationships
between the decision-maker and information sources (co-workers, superiors, subordinates, support staff) are strained, the information received will probably be poor” (Dana, 1995: 12). Information, opinions and thoughts given at meetings will be less based on what is good for the company and more on what is best for the self.

4.7.3 The Resource Link
When referring to resources, this term should not be taken to include only economic factors. Resources are that which are of interest to an actor (Wallensteen, 2004: 16, cited in Knowles, 2012: 35).

Conflict occurs when parties are in pursuit of incompatible objectives (Anstey, 2008), because of limited resources people often compete or try to eliminate the other party to achieve results. Closely linked to the latter is interpersonal conflict as individuals become frustrated when goals are perceived to be interfered with (Bradshaw, 2008).

In conflicting situations employees and managers have to attend conflict resolution meetings rather than spend time working on the projects assigned at the time. Less work will be done by participants as well as those who are not involved. These individuals then have to rush to complete tasks and catch up on work resulting in work not being up to standard. A management study determined that one third of manager’s time was spent handling conflict; that figure increases ten percent more for first line supervisors. As mentioned by Dana (1995: 11) “a fourth of the management salary budget represents no small investment in shielding productive work from the destructive effects of conflict”.

Money, effort and time is spent on resolving conflict, drawing up new policies and hiring new employees and in serious cases, law suits, adjusting schedules and prepping those who move departments (Ray, 2014).

4.7.4 Public Perception
Ray (2014) adds to the list by explaining that, conflict has a negative toll on the public image of a business, affecting the customers and the marketing of the company as it may be perceived as unappealing to potential customers, future or current employees and more specifically the business on the whole concerning new business with investors; especially if the conflict is made public as individuals might spread rumours about the company to outsiders and present a negative picture to the public.
4.7.5 Loss of Skilled Employees and Restructuring

Often conflict escalates and spirals to a point where dismissals, reassignment and resigning are seen as the only options. Whichever option is chosen, it results in the same outcome, a loss in investment, in skills and job competencies. This is not only a loss but also adds to the costs of the disruptions at work and hiring and training new employees.

If changing the position or role of an employee is possible this leads to “altering one’s job duties, changing the person to whom one reports, or changing the composition of work teams can reduce tensions between people” (Dana, 1995: 12) as appealing as that sounds such processes incurs costs.

4.7.6 Sabotage

This consequence of conflict is most likely the least easily recognisable cost of conflict “because most sabotage is hidden behind a cloak of ‘accidental’ mistakes, ‘forgetfulness’ or excuses of ‘being too busy’” (Dana, 1995: 13). When relations are strained it affects the production of the goods, employee disloyalty, and employee relations.

4.7.7 Health Costs

Not all absenteeism is caused by conflict but can be a side effect of the stress it causes, if an employee takes sick leave, medical aid is needed. “A company’s medical aid premium for employee health benefits is generally tied to the rate of claims. So the more health problems are caused by conflict, the greater the cost of medical aids” (Dana, 1995: 14).

Substance abuse and alcoholism can be appealing to those who are looking to escape the pressures and stress of work this is most likely the most radical health-related problem. Table 4.2 exemplifies the differences between the positive and negative effects of conflict.
Table 4.2: Positive and negative consequences of conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Consequences</th>
<th>Negative Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opens up discussions and encourages dialogue</td>
<td>Decreases productivity, majority of the workforce deals with it, some every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosters innovation, invites creativity, and results in positive change</td>
<td>Creates feelings of dissatisfaction, resentment, or anger and has resulted in personal attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved solutions to problems</td>
<td>Contributes to insecurity and uncooperativeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases individual involvement and interests and better understand one another</td>
<td>Sickness and absence from work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: adapted by Arvis institute, 2010).

4.8 BARRIERS TO MANAGING CONFLICT

Workplace culture or management quality needs to have a conflict prevention system in place. But there are issues concerning the implementation of conflict resolution practices or training. These barriers can be seen as the leading causes to companies losing out resources, decline in quality, unhappy employees and creating a negative perceived image of the brand.

Bradshaw (2008) mentions various factors that contribute to the difficulty in managing conflict within a workplace:

4.8.1 Organisations represent the source of status and identity for individuals

Individuals invest a lot of time and effort into their work. It eventually becomes part of their identity which is related to the status and position achieved in the work context. A distinction can be made between two levels of conflict, hot and cold conflict; hot simply describes highly emotional and personally-invested conflict whereas cold is when individuals have minimal personal investment and emotional involvement in the conflict (Tillett and French, 2006). If people perceive a threat to attainments made in the organisation, individuals will exhibit defensive tendencies resulting in a ‘hot’ conflict spiralling and causing a drawn out conflict.

4.8.2 People want to be seen as team players within their organisation

As organisations view conflict as negative and because it is frowned upon most people would avoid it and sometimes not being able to start conflict is the source of frustration. As the working world has become more group-orientated, the employees believe that they should be team players. Expressing conflicting emotions or words might deter from the norms and
culture of the organisation resulting in the individual feeling like an outcast or a pariah. Suppressed feelings eventually lead to an unhealthy work environment and conditions for the employee and the co-workers.

4.8.3 Organisations are often hierarchically structured
Most organisations are hierarchically structured and these structures are not questioned as it is always done like that and is expected to be accepted. But this structure can be a cause of conflict as not everyone handles the things in the same way. Even if one feels the need to express this concern, what process would be followed to achieve a solution? This is why this topic is generally not seen as a worry.

4.8.4 Organisations are often extremely performance-oriented
Some businesses do not see their employees as investments and rather as assets that can be obtained at any time. Because of this, employees become uninterested in the culture of the business which leads to the employee not being concerned with the goals with business and just concerned with the extrinsic reward at the end.

It is all about reaching the expected target at the end of the month, the workforce is pressured to produce results and are either rewarded or punished accordingly.

As the many organisations are performance-based, most conflict is not considered of great importance. Businesses believing that there are no resources in the budget to implement proper conflict management techniques and that staff are too busy on current projects (Rouble, 2013). With this mind-set there will never be enough time or money to assist in the prevention or solutions of conflicting situations.

4.9 SUMMARY
This chapter delved into the historical perspective of South Africa, explaining the reasoning and causes to the current state of the country, legally which ultimately affects organisations and their members. The differences between conflict resolution versus conflict transformation and the positive and negative effects of conflict was examined and explained. Further details were identified; types and sources of conflict, and the costs and consequences thereof.
“Conflict is seen as arising from basic human instincts, from the competition for resources and power, from the structure of the societies and institutions people create, from the inevitable struggle between classes” (Mayer, 2000: 8).

From birth, people are taught not to deviate from the norm according to societal demands but aggression is entrenched in the individuals’ DNA and this is experienced when this latent force is evoked. The circumstances in which the individual is brought up and the different aspects of cultural and peer or adult behaviour can play a leading role. But it must not be forgotten that aggression is a natural behaviour which almost all species experience, the only difference is the reason for the aggression, how it all develops in each and every human and how it is controlled or managed.

Conflict can be seen as a sign of failure for some “of personal, organizational, or societal malfunction” (Mayer, 2000: 27), but should not be avoided as more issues can and will arise from unresolved issues. It has been explained how conflict left to just dissolve can have a negative effect on the overall bottom line of the organisation.

Affecting costs are concerned with the resources and expenses used in resolving conflict and exhausted in handling unresolved conflicts. Conflict is a heavy emotional and paralysing price to be paid. Negative emotions and mentality affect individuals’ immune systems and block us from behaving and thinking in an intelligent and strategic manner or with genuine commitment (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000). There is far more to lose from unresolved, ignored and overlooked conflicts than what is projected.

The organisation’s ideals are that conflict should be absent; it is seen as a disease, plaguing relationships that everyone wants to avoid. Even though the popular belief of conflict being negative has shifted as people view it as a functional tool for organisations, it still falls short as it is more concerned with conflict resolution, reduction, or minimisation and not eliminating it (Rahim, 2011). He also goes on to mention that conflict management is different to conflict resolution as conflict resolution is related to reduction, elimination, or termination of conflict. However Rahim states that conflict management, not conflict resolution, is needed for contemporary organisations. Although conflicts cannot be totally eliminated, the impact can be reduced by company policies regarding how to resolve disputes.
CHAPTER 5: CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

5.1 THE WHEEL OF CONFLICT

Figure 5.1 The Wheel of Conflict represents the five different forces of conflict.

![Figure 5.1: The Wheel of Conflict](image)

Source: Adapted by B. Mayer (2000:9)

Peoples' relationships are usually established when individuals work, play, do business together and or even pray together. These relationships might not be seen as strong bonds but living in close proximity makes a ‘community-unit’ (Bell and Newby, 1974). There are five basic forces of conflict; emotions, history, structure, values, and communication. To understand human needs, it would be best to understand the aspects that affect and develop the needs that humans experience (Mayer, 2000).

5.1.1 Emotions

According to Mayer (2000: 10) “emotions are the energy that fuel conflict”. Some individuals are emotionally-driven and this tends to control behaviour. Not being able to understand one's emotions as well as others could lead to a major misunderstanding. Emotions unlike moods are not as temporary and need to be dealt with accordingly. As what may be
considered as a catastrophe to one may be a small issue to another. Conflicts that occur in important relationships are deeply emotional and not rational as Dana (1995) puts it.

With reference to emotional intelligence (EQ), it can be defined as “the ability to access and generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Modassir and Singh, 2008: 6). Therefore it can be noted that the concept of EQ is imperative in the context of conflict management because if individuals do not understand or counteract the mood of the counterpart, it can result in frustration leading to misunderstanding, misinterpretation and eventually divergence. As noted in Brewster et al. (2008), EQ is divided into two major components namely personal competence and social competence, comprising of self-management and self-awareness as well as social skills and social awareness respectively.

Modassir and Singh (2008) go on further to say that, EQ makes it easier to identify the individual’s own feelings and emotional position, make use of emotional knowledge in the need for problem solving as well as having a greater capability to handle positive and negative emotions within themselves more effectively than those who do not possess the intelligence.

5.1.2 History

No matter how much South Africa claims to be a ‘Rainbow Nation’, with its peoples currently enjoying the freedom as a democratic country post-apartheid, South Africans do not trust their own country. From a realistic view, for black people it is the memory of the country's sordid apartheid history and for white people it is the corruption of the ruling party, ANC and overall the state of the economy since its inception (Perry, 2013). The ANC’s greatest victory was uniting its peoples but the party’s downfall is the pervasiveness of the corruption in the country. Can distrust be the main cause of aggression in the country which prides itself over its diversity? As mentioned by Himes (1980) cited in Anstey (2008: 45) “violent conflict is widespread and common in modern and modernising societies and this is strongly reflected in the history of most nations”.

One of the world's most admired spiritual teachers, the fourteenth Dalai Lama (2002), who uses past experiences and insight said that humans are born with pure minds and spontaneous natures. What is meant by this is that the basic human mind is free from corruption, it is
desire, hatred and bewilderment that manifests and clouds the human mind. (Dalai Lama, 2002: 26) exclaims that “water may be extremely dirty, yet its nature remains clear”.

5.1.3 Structure
Authors such as Folger, Poole and Stutman (2001); Cheldelin, Drukman and Fast (2003) and Jeong (2008) seem to track on the same theory that if power is perceived as being asymmetric it could encourage disagreements, perpetuate future conflict and keep order in the hierarchical structure.

Change in structure can be seen as “an ongoing interactive process” (French and Bell, 1990: 79) and a scary one at that. As humans are creatures of habit, in this situation the much needed development sparked conflicting incidents and it is evident that any one of these factors of change can create a climate of uncertainty and tension resulting in disagreements.

5.1.4 Values
Bradshaw (2008) mentions origins of conflict are often found in the fact that different people hold different values. Values are not innate.

Values are “shared ideas about desirable goals” according to Hiltin and Piliavin (2004) cited in Brinkerhoff et al (2008: 39). Values are instilled in people generally to know what is good or bad - right or wrong. The rules or guidelines which a group shares are norms, it identifies what people should or should not do.

According to Steyn and Motshabi (1996: 14) “every person has a set of values to measure ideas, objects and people in his/ her social environment” whereas Hofstede (1984: 18) defines values as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others”. Values can be broken down into two distinct parts; cultural values and personal values, these values tend to overlap. Each culture has cultural values. These are guidelines regarding what is right and wrong; good and bad; permissible or not and these vary from culture to culture (Steyn and Motshabi, 1996).

“A belief is the acceptance or conviction that something, like an event or object, is probably true or that it exists” as mentioned by Steyn and Motshabi (1996: 16). Just as values and perceptions change from one person to another, so do beliefs. These aspects are learned and “not easily changed in communication with other people” (1996: 16).
5.1.5 Communication

Along with the values, history, structure and emotions, another source of conflict is communication, which could become strained between parties involved in conflict and is then only accomplished through aggrieved and violent exchanges. Deutsch (1973) cited in Anstey (2008: 37) states that “communication channels are either ignored or used to abuse the other party.” He also said that interactions between the parties become untrustworthy and indigent. As easy as it may seem, communication can be difficult when dealing with different dynamics. Communication can resolve conflict and also make it harder to solve.

Communication is highly influenced by cultures within societies. Cultures are complex as they are so intertwined with religion, race and other aspects that humans identify themselves by. According to Steyn and Motshabi (1996: 13) “if an individual is not sensitive and perceptive to the needs, motivations and intent of his/ her communication partner, the total communicator effort may be in vain”.

“Communication is a process of creating meaning” (Cleary et al, 2008: 2). It is a process that comes instinctively, almost naturally and is sometimes flawed, “all our acts of communication and our experiences have a bearing on one another” (Burton and Dimbleby, 1995: 1).

Being aware of communication barriers can enhance the chances of successful communication, turning the weaknesses into strengths can create this objective. Interaction between individuals occurs through verbal and non-verbal communication and these actions are normally performed together. As communicators people are consistently changing and developing. No one is the perfect communicator as it cannot be measured. Ideal communication can only be assured if both parties in the interchange feel that there was a connection made (Mayer, 2000).

The perception of others is believed not to be natural (Burton and Dimbleby, 1995). Burton and Dimbleby (1995: 46) state that “we perceive people as part of the communication process- a process within the process”. Perception as a skill has its positive and negative sides, human interaction tends to be complex resulting in people filtering information that is perceived to be of importance to the individual as people can only focus on certain stimuli at a time (Bradshaw, 2008; Ruscher, 2001) One shortcut to humans’ observation techniques is stereotyping, an outdated skill used to sum up people individuals come in contact with but because of globalization cultures have somewhat converged, rendering this process limited
and creating flaws in what could have saved primitive man from extinction. ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’ comes to mind. This process happens quickly unless an effort is made to control it (Burton and Dimbleby, 1995). Perceptual judgement can be used to determine the person’s next action or pick up on someone’s emotions and body language.

Mayer (2000: 119) sums up communication skills by stating that “the good news about this is that communication skills can be learned, applied, and enhanced. The bad news is that good communication is harder than most people realize”.

5.2 CONFLICT CUBE

The Conflict Cube depicted below exhibits the various sources of conflict. These various sources of conflict are identified as follows.

![Conflict Cube Diagram](image)

Figure 5.2: The Conflict Cube: Source: adapted by G. Bradshaw (2008: 20)

‘The Conflict Cube’ (Bradshaw, 2008) is similar to that of Mayer’s (2000) ‘Wheel of Conflict’ (presented above). Conflict in any sphere of life has many roots or sources of
conflict. These sources may be based on value divergence, conflict of interest, needs not being met, lack of or misunderstood information/communication, precedent relationships, or structural positioning (Bradshaw, 2008). The causes of conflict mentioned have been discussed previously. These sources may occur simultaneously, which makes handling the conflict that much more difficult. This Conflict Cube diagram depicts the complicated nature of conflict and can be used as a tool that rationally analyses the sources of conflict. When dealing with conflict, sources need to be identified and acknowledged as this increases the chances of resolving the conflict.

5.3 CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES
Conflict style is a person’s orientation towards conflict and can be described as “patterned responses, or clusters of behaviour, that people use in conflict” (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001: 130). People’s reactions to a conflict situation are normally not premeditated; it is mostly a subconscious action. The term used to explain these behaviours is ‘tactics’, which implies that a person has determined what styles would be used but it is quite another thing when having to deal with a reaction that styles and tactics provoke in others (Folger, et al., 2009). Eventually these behavioural tactics turn into a style. Styles and tactics are influenced by culture, gender and personality.

There are various ways to classify styles, typically four models;

- model of two styles- Deutsch (1949) cooperative – competitive model
- model of three styles- Putnam and Wilson (1982) non-confrontational (obliging), solution-orientation (integrating), and control (dominating)
- Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) forcing, smoothing and confrontation.
- The model of four styles- Pruitt (1983) yielding, problem solving, inaction and contending.
- But the most frequently used is the five-style approach, the Kilmann and Thomas matrix of personality types. These five styles are classified into groups; collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001).

This matrix can be used to explain aggressive behaviours (intended to satisfy one’s own concerns) or passive/cooperative behaviours, (intended to satisfy the other individual’s
concerns) when one is when dealing with conflict (Folger, et al, 2009; Wilmot and Hocker, 2001). This is useful to find out what conflict management style individuals apply in their own lives. An individual may not be aware of their behaviour at the time of an emotionally intense engagement. This behaviour can determine future relations. If this does occur, a destructive conflict may arise; “one needs to choose when to protect and disengage and when to engage and extend” (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001:135).

The five personality types are illustrated as follows:

### 5.3.1 Avoidance
This style is more of a passive tactic, and a denial of conflict. People who tend to steer clear of conflict and engaging with another are seen as avoiders (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001). Preferring to walk away, not to speak, joking, evasive remarks or changing the topic is typical of this style. This technique can cause the conflict to spiral, but that does not mean that it is not effective, it is a powerful tool. However in the long run it is useful as the complications ignored can arise again and set everything in motion again. These individuals give little significance to relationships and their concerns. The advantages of this style is that people can collect themselves and think about the issue, if the individual views the conflict as trivial and has no personal investment in it, it is best to avoid, it also prevents negative responses and influences. But avoidance has its pitfalls. The conflict can escalate to an unnecessary point that could otherwise be avoided, the avoider can also give the impression that they do not care and fear conflict that is not always negative, and it is difficult to resolve conflict with this type of person who refuses to engage.

### 5.3.2 Competition
Competitors tend to pursue their own needs even at the expense of a relationship, therefore having a high concern for goals and low concern for relationships. This is defiantly a win-lose situation, as positions are more of a concern than the issue. This hampers the negotiating taking place, a chapter in “Getting to Yes” written by Fisher and Ury (1999) was dedicated to the topic “separating the person from the problem”. This is done by focusing on the problem and not the individual we are in conflict with. This would be ideal to resolving an issue if humans functioned like robots as emotions and perceptions are deeply rooted in this subject. Humans are controlled by emotions; some more than others. Competitive engagement is counter-productive when others are being attacked, brought down, belittled and limiting the
opponent’s options, but can be productive when there is limited time and a decision needs to be made and when one wants to accomplish goals without trampling over another and destroying a relationship.

5.3.3 Compromise
Compromise is an intermediate style that seeks to find a middle ground and that is moderately concerned about goals and relationships. Compromise and collaboration can be difficult to differentiate between because they are so similar, but compromise differs in the fact that trade-offs and exchanges are required (Folger et al. 2009,) hence it elicits a bargaining style. Compromising offers a quick, short term solution, appeals to fairness, and maximises wins and minimises losses and is best used when there is an equal distribution of power (Willmot and Hocker, 2001).

5.3.4 Accommodation
Accommodators place higher importance on the other’s desires than their own. This way problems are sorted right away however because they are more concerned about others and their needs are not met, allowing for a potential conflict to come up again. By being an accommodator the individual feels as if they are doing good for the group by denying their needs, giving up or giving in, disengaging and appealing to others by expressing their desire for harmony (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001). Some people using this style do not even realise that this occurs and agreeing to everything becomes a pattern to the person and others who experience it.

5.3.5 Collaboration
Also known as mutual problem solving, this style shares the ‘active’ attribute. Collaborators have a high concern for their goals and others, the relationship and finding a solution. They are willing to put the energy and effort in to sort the problem out. Very effective forms to overcome divergences, relationships are almost always better after the problem is resolved as it is “focused on team effort, partnership, or shared personal goals” (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001; 161). If the issue is not of importance, it is not wise to use this technique as too much time and effort will be used. Communication skills are essential in this tactic, but if a person is not skilled verbally this will be a difficult task as the less skilled individual can be manipulated and influenced resulting in a, further power discrepancy between parties. This
technique can be flawed when dealing with an avoider. On the other hand collaborators find solutions that both parties are satisfied with especially concerning people in committed long term relationships. Ultimately collaboration offers the best result, as it is a win-win style.

5.4 NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is an essential life tool and innate in the human condition which is instinctively employed or meticulously designed to advance self or group interests or critically, to ward off perilous engagements to ensure survival.

Negotiation is a vast field and all aspects cannot be covered in this assignment hence the researcher is putting the spotlight on labour relations in which an attempt will be made to highlight this aspect of negotiation.

In South Africa, labour legislation is an extensive process considering that previously labour relations were reserved for only the ‘privileged’ due to South Africa’s apartheid race policies. Ideally conflict resolution related to labour relations is done through negotiations and not through violent actions.

Labour relations refer to the interaction and relationship within a workplace between employee and employer in which the government has authority over (Fox, 2006). The term individual bargaining is related to the employer and one employee whereas collective bargaining is a negotiation which deals with the representatives of the employer and union representatives of the employee. These two forms of bargaining process are different but go hand in hand with one another. In fact collective bargaining is synonymous with trade unions (Nel et al, 2012). Trade unions were developed alongside collective bargaining as a means of being the voice or mouthpiece of the labour force as people realised power is more attainable when in greater numbers.

Negotiation can be defined as a process “by which a joint decision is made by two or more parties. The parties first verbalize contradictory demands and then move toward agreement by a process of concession making or search for new alternatives.” As stated by Pruitt (1981: 1). Negotiation can be viewed as a form of conflict as it involves similar actions; “the defence of opposing positions” (Pruitt, 1981: 6) which is fitting, as it is only when you understand one’s enemy that one can eliminate the opposition.
The negotiating process is not limited to only trade unions, employees, employers or even organisations as it is present in every sphere of life and it also involves conflict as mentioned before. Conflict as well as negotiating is a reality of life (Fisher and Ury, 1992). “In diverse fields such as labour-management, international affairs, business and personal relationships— the significance of negotiations and the need to negotiate increase” (Nieuwmeijer, 1988: 2).

However it should be said that negotiation and bargaining are two separate entities “negotiation as the complete negotiating process (from when the parties decide to negotiate over a conflicting issue until the final decision is implemented or the negotiation is broken off, while bargaining is defined as the face-to-face communication process that takes place within the broader negotiation process” (Nieuwmeijer, 1988: 2). Simply put, negotiating seeks to find a mutual benefit for the parties - conversely, bargaining is done to reduce or improve with lesser benefits to one party.

“Conflict occurs when parties who hold incompatible views seek to make their will prevail” as stated by Zartman and Faure (2005: 4). It often occurs in union management relations. This type of conflict may be very intense, drawn out and expensive to those involved. Under higher levels of competition and conflict, the parties develop attitudes towards each other that are characterized by distrust, rigid, a focus only on self-interest and failure to listen. This type of conflict should be handled through representatives of each party.

5.5 MEDIATION

The term mediation comes from the Latin root “to halve” (Bercovitch et al, 2009: 341). Mediation can be used for diverse disputes and conflicts, it is a voluntary process “in which the services of an acceptable third party are used in a dispute as a means of helping the disputing parties to arrive at an agreed solution” (le Roux, Orleyn and Rycroft, 2005: 59). Similarly Brams and Taylor (1996: 243) state that mediation of a dispute involves “an outside party (mediator), who helps the disputants clarify etc. their objectives, better communicate with each other, find points of agreement, so as to facilitate settlement of the dispute”.

Mediation, like negotiation is a skill acquired through-out people’s lives as individuals practice it in everyday life, but without being aware of it (Fisher et al, 2000).

The difficulty and expenses incurred during the litigation of extreme cases has caused practical businesses to seek alternative remedies (Whittenbury, 2003). There are various ways
to solve conflict. It normally depends on the type of conflict that has taken place, whether it is conflict between employers and employees or a dispute between employers and unions. Some organisations might already have certain problem-solving procedures in place.

According to Burton and Dukes (1990) the communalities of conflict are; divide the conflict situations into parties and issues, there should also be a face-to-face interaction between the involved parties and there should be the involvement of a third party. By having a third party present, it means there would be someone with an unbiased mind-set, who would listen to both parties and then evaluate why the conflict existed, facilitate and suggest ideas on what steps can be taken to eliminate the divergence.

The main problem with conflict is that it is not approached in the right manner, some organisations do not know the correct procedures used to assist with workplace conflict, do not have the financial resources to tackle the issues and lack informed decisions as mangers and even employees are not aware of the policies and regulations that can be used.

Mediation is a third party process where an individual listens to both sides of the stories given by the parties and try to reach an agreement. Mediation involves the intervention of a third party who first investigates and defines the problem and then usually approaches both parties separately with recommendations designed to provide a mutually acceptable solution (Burton and Dukes, 1990). It is a process which is done face to face, where disputes are discussed.

This form of problem solving or conflict resolution is used when dealing with a number of intra-community problems, such as divorce, and child custody issues, consumer-merchant troubles, and landlord-tenant disputes. In the public sector, mediation is available in areas such as labour-management relations and city-county occupation disputes (Meintjes-Van der Walt et al, 2011).
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Babbie (2013) explains that there are three key purposes to social research; to explore, describe and explain. It is possible to have more than one purpose. He goes on to say that two major tasks in any research design is; “First, you must specify as clearly as possible what you want to find out. Second, you must determine the best way to do it” (Babbie, 2013: 89).

The purpose of this research is to explore the nature of conflict in the workplace and the need for conflict management, and whether there is a possible link between Conflict Theory, specifically the Human Needs approach, and Critical Theory.

The mixed method approach was used in the study, which included semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) with a Human Resource Manager and self-administered structured interviews with seven team leaders from different divisions within the call centre of the organisation (Appendix B).

“Research design addresses the planning of scientific enquiry - designing a strategy for finding something out” according to Babie and Mouton (2009: 72). The researcher also acquired information through analysis of secondary and primary sources including a literature review on conflict in both social and industrial context.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted in order to identify and determine the need for conflict management in the organisation. Useful information was obtained from a range of publications such as textbooks, journals and related studies on the subject as well as international and national data searches which were done. As far as can be ascertained, no similar research study has been conducted previously in South Africa. Information not obtained through the abovementioned sources, but relevant to the study was acquired through the use of questions directed to the participants.

The primary study of this investigation involved; research methodology and design, methods used to conduct the interview, the identification of the sample and the collection of the data as well as the analysis of the data collected.

The research design, as mentioned before, will be a mixed method, qualitative-dominant study in nature as the information gathered will not be expressed completely in numbers. The
qualitative paradigm is also known as the phenomenological paradigm which involves formulating hypotheses and developing theories.

The approach that was used for the research is typically a mixture of grounded theory, “proposing to establish theory that links participants’ perspectives to general social science theories” (Kotze, 2011: 99) - Conflict theory and Critical theory- for finding a solution to the possible problems.

6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN
The concept research design refers to the type of research that is being designed as well as the kind of results that are expected to be generated (Babbie and Mouton 2001). It should be pointed out that a study’s problem statement and research objectives should provide a base when considering a study’s research design (Viviers and Lillah, 2010). The research methodology chosen is dictated by the research design. Choosing the ‘right’ method to proceed is not always evident. Everything is dependent on what the researcher is trying to achieve (Silverman, 2011).

6.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
There are two main research approaches or paradigms that are respectively known as positivistic methodology and phenomenological methodology.

6.3.1 Positivistic Methodology
Auguste Comte was a French philosopher who came up with the word Sociology and also coined the term ‘Positive philosophy’ but this does not mean that positivism started with Comte nor that sociology did either (Giddens, 1974). Positivist theorists view themselves as scientific and seek to find both social science and natural sciences on the same bases (Johnson, Dandeker, and Ashworth, 1987). It views sociology as the ‘science of society’ (McNeil and Chapman, 2005).

It is a theory that “views man as a creature adapting to the conditions of heredity and environment, rather than as a creative being with the capacity of choice” (Johnson, et al, 1987: 48) which stems from the idea that this theory values society more than the individuals which create it. Positivists “tend to believe that the causes of human behaviour lie outside of the individual in the structural forces of society” (McNeil and Chapman, 2005: 18).
Marxism and functionalism are both positivistic theories as they perceive society in the same light. These two theories believe that human behaviour is the result of governed laws, social pressures and class systems, and see no significance in studying it; unlike society which does not die out and is beyond human influences (McNeil and Chapman, 2005).

This approach disputes the fact that it can generate scientific laws of human behaviour and that predictions can be made about the social world and if predictions can be made, this must mean that what society regards as undesirable aspects of human affairs can be reduced, and an improved society can be created (Giddens, 1974; McNeil and Chapman, 2005).

As mentioned by Silverman (2011: 169):

According to Positivism, interview data have the potential to give us access to ‘facts’ about the world; the primary issue is to generate data which are valid and reliable, independently of the research setting. The main ways to achieve this are the random selection of the interview sample and the administration of standardised, questions with multiple-choice answers which can be readily tabulated.

6.3.2 Phenomenological Methodology

Phenomenology “studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and violation to the bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity” Smith (2013: 1). It is the study of “phenomena” the way individuals see, experience and perceive objects and situations in the first-person point of view.

Phenomenology disputes the positivistic views on human behaviour and believes that “people are active, conscious beings, aware of what is going on in a social situation, and capable of making choices about how to act” (McNeil and Chapman (2005). For a social event to be considered social it is through the actors involved which give it meaning and focus on the essence of shared experience, and the explanations of what is felt and experienced need to be taken into account and humans in this case cannot be seen as less important or useless.

The majority of human knowledge is based on experience and they are greatly aware of their surroundings. So it is not sufficient to base a theory on just the structures of society as it is not only external influences that form research, but also internal factors. Phenomenology explains that the foundation of individuals’ understanding is based on the most direct evidence available (Luckmann, 1978).
With reference to phenomenology, “interviewees are always actively engaged in constructing meaning. Rather than treat this as standing in the way of accurate depictions of ‘facts’ or ‘experiences’, the researcher’s topic becomes how meaning is mutually constructed” (Silverman, 2011: 169).

Alfred Schutz cited in (Ritzer, 2008) focuses on the consciousness of social interaction. The cognisant-aspect is concerned about the awareness of other individuals during inter-communication as well as the interaction with oneself (intra-communication). Phenomenology is closely linked to ethnomethodology. The difference between these studies is that the former is more concerned with internal activities; the thought process, whereas the latter focuses on the actions of people in certain situations.

Phenomenological study as mentioned by Patton (1990: 71) can be defined as:

> …one that focused on description of what people experience and how they experience what they experience. One can employ a general phenomenological perspective to elucidate the importance of using methods that capture people’s experience of the world without conducting a phenomenological study that focuses on the essence of shared experience.

### 6.3.3 Research Methodology adopted in this study

The methodology adopted in this study was a mixed method with a phenomenology dominated study. Positivistic approaches are expressed in quantitative measures, the collection and analysis of quantitative data which uses observation techniques, semi-structured interviews and non-statistical methods of analysis and reporting, whereas the phenomenology paradigm consists of the collection and analysis of qualitative data which takes place in the field, in a natural setting with minimum disturbance (Pauw, 2012). Qualitative and quantitative research have their roots in the analytical distinctions discussed above.

Fundamentally, quantitative research entails the use of methodological procedures that signify the human experience in numerical groupings, which is sometimes referred to as statistics (Marvasti, 2004). The quantitative approach’s focal point is on relating a phenomenon across a large number of participants thereby providing the possibility of summarising and generalising characteristics across targeted groups or relationships. On the other hand, qualitative research offers comprehensive explanation and scrutiny of the value, or the essences, of the human experience (Marvasti, 2004). This approach to gathering
information focuses on describing an occurrence in a deep, inclusive manner. Even though these approaches have distinct differences they do overlap in practice. According to Marvasti (2004) these approaches’ research designs differ in the steps taken to complete the study.

This study was conducted at a branch of an organisation. The organisation is situated in Coega, Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, and has about 500 employees. Permission to perform the study was obtained from the appropriate authority. The interviewing process was voluntary and confidential and was explained verbally and in writing to the participants. Consent to tape record the interview was also obtained. The final report will be made available to the organisation.

The research methods used in this study were determined by the research methodology chosen. This will be discussed in the next section.

6.4 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method that will be the main focus of the study will be the phenomenology methodology.

6.4.1 Research Methods Employed in a Positivistic Study

The commonly known research methods used to collect quantitative data are surveys. This form of data collection can be done across group comparative, it allows people to be surveyed a number of times thereby permitting the end results that certain features manipulate specific outcomes. It is also used when the focal point is on topics that are structured and consistent questions, and when large samples and cost restrain are required (Adler and Clark, 2008). This type of research method is handy when a large sample is needed on many topics. It introduces anonymity and decreases the chances of interviewer bias.

However obtaining in-depth information can be limited due to the structure of the interviewing process, also it is assumed that all participants understand the questions in the same way. Another downfall to this technique is that it is controlled, hierarchical and asymmetric. Some have an even more extreme view saying that the approach “breaks the living connection with subjects so that it is forever engaged in the dissection of corpses” (Mies, 1991 cited in Adler & Clark, 2008: 270).
6.4.2 Research Methods Employed in a Phenomenological Study

The main research methods used to collect qualitative data are interviews; there are different types of interviews: personal versus telephonic; structured versus semi-structured versus unstructured and focus groups (Viviers and Lillah, 2010). Used for small samples, they range from highly structured to less structured, however findings cannot be generalised to a whole population.

Concerning semi-structured interviews, it is a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. Prearranged, fixed questions are posed to each participant in a methodical and constant manner but the participants are also given the opportunity to discuss issues beyond the questions’ confines as Adler and Clark (2008: 270) explains it gives “an insight into the meanings of their participants’ everyday lives by exploring with them their practices, roles, and attitudes”. This technique enables you to obtain multiple responses to set questions and allow for in-depth replies (Pauw, 2012).

With reference to structured interviews a set of formally structured questions that are based on theory, research, and/or the experience of the interviewer are posed. As it is formally structured the wording is not altered from one participant to the next. Neutrality of the interviewer is important; engaging in conversation with the participant on the topic could affect the responses given, causing it to be biased. This way comparison can be made between participants which is not easily obtainable with the other two interviewing methods (semi-structured and unstructured interviews). Reasonably large samples can be obtained if the questions are restricted. However this method does not allow the interviewer to probe for further data or allow the participant to provide information not covered in the interview (Struwig and Stead, 2010).

6.4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured, face-to-face interview was conducted with the Human Resource (HR) Manager, as it is more flexible, detailed and gave the researcher the opportunity to probe into issues beyond the questions asked. It also gave the researcher a feel for what the important issues are, and to determine whether the interviewee understands the questions and its significance.

6.4.2.2 Structured Interviews and Questionnaire to Team Leaders

The team leaders’ interviews were more closed-ended and self-administered, structured questionnaires. Structured interviews are a set of formally structured questions that are based
on theory, research, and/or the experience of the interviewer. It is formally structured and the wording is not altered from one participant to the next (Struwig and Stead, 2010). Seven team leaders participated. Questionnaires with two sections were sent out; section B being semi-structured and section C consisting of twenty-five questions based on conflicting handling styles drawn up by Wilmot and Hocker. The questions in section B are answered on a range from one to five: 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always. Pertaining to contexts where a conflict is experienced, disagreement, argument, or disappointment with someone (both a personal relationship and a less personal relationship). The questionnaire was uncomplicated and easy to understand.

The idea was to gain a fair representation of the staff component and an acceptable cross-section of the workforce. Team leaders are more likely to be dealing with inter or intra group conflict as they are involved within these workgroups and supervise the groups they each head.

The answers were used to draw up tables and graphs that would present the findings in a recognisable, meaningful and easily understandable manner.

6.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection extended over a period of a few months from January to February 2015.

6.5.1 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are data that has previously been collected by other researchers for a different study other than the one currently being done. Secondary sources can be defined as “in conducting research, information that has been gathered (and often interpreted) by other researchers and recorded in books, articles, and other publications” (Nordquist, 2014).

A comprehensive literature review will be conducted in order to identify and determine the need for conflict management in the organisation. Useful information will be obtained from a range of publications such as textbooks, journals and related studies on the subject as well as international and national data searches which will be done. As far as can be ascertained, no similar research study has been conducted previously in South Africa. Information not obtained through abovementioned sources but relevant to the study will be acquired through the use of questions directed at a target group of this study.
6.5.2 Primary sources

Primary data is personally collected by the researcher. “In conducting research, information collected first-hand from such sources as historical documents, literary texts, artistic works, experiments, surveys, and interviews” (Nordquist, 2014); this is known as a primary source.

The primary study of this investigation will involve; research methodology and design, methods used to conduct the interview, the identification of the sample and the collection of the data as well as the analysis of the data collected.

6.5.3 Data Collection Sampling Strategy

This section will explain the data collection strategy, the population and sample chosen, the sampling techniques and the research instruments used for the study.

6.5.3.1 Population and Sample

The definition of a population is “the group of elements from which a researcher samples and to which she or he might like to generalize” (Adler and Clark, 2008:101).

The term sample can be defined as “the process of drawing a number of individual cases from a larger population” (Adler and Clark, 2008: 98). For the purpose of this study the sample will include a HR Manager and seven team leaders. The interview was conducted with the HR Manager. A semi-structured face-to-face interview was the chosen method, as it is less rigid in structure, in-depth and gave the researcher the opportunity to query the answers given. It also gave the researcher a chance to observe the body language and tone of voice of the interviewer. This aided the interviewing process in determining whether the participant understood the questions and their importance. The interview carried out was audio-recorded by using a cellular phone recorder and transcribed as well as analysed. The seven team leaders were sent the questions via email so as not to distract the individuals from their tasks at hand. The researcher attempted to be neutral in her relationship with the participants.

6.5.3.2 Sampling Techniques

There are several alternative ways of sampling. These alternative ways can be grouped into non-probability and probability sampling techniques.

In probability sampling every aspect in the population has a known non-zero probability of inclusion (Neuman, 2011). This means that each aspect has a known probability of being
included in the sample (Struwig and Stead, 2010). The following are probability sampling techniques: simple random; systematic, stratified, cluster; and multi-stage.

The probability of any particular member of the population being chosen is not known. The selection of sampling units is random as researchers rely heavily on personal judgement (Neuman, 2011). Although it would be statistically improper to project the data beyond the sample, there are instances when this form of sampling will be best suited to the needs of the researcher (Struwig & Stead, 2010). The following are techniques used to conduct non-probability sampling: convenience; judgement; quota; and snowball.

An initial sample of one HR Manager of the organisation was used to obtain the relative information of what the major issues and concerns are regarding conflict. The snowball effect was then applied to acquire more respondents, for example: the seven team leaders who had participated in the study. Originally respondents were selected by probability samples and additional respondents were obtained by referral from initial respondents, it is used in special situations and has reasonably low costs, it is useful in locating members of rare populations (Struwig & Stead, 2010). Initially the researcher had obtained an interview with the HR Manager who had later referred the team leaders and arranged the means to connect with the participants.

6.5.3.3 Research Instrument

“The research methodology that you selected will have an influence on the type of research instrument that you will develop” (Viviers and Lillah, 2010: 12).

As mentioned by Silverman, 2011: 167):

Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals’ attitudes and values - things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees’ views, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions”.

When executed well this form of interviewing is able to attain a degree of depth and complexity that is not obtainable in other approaches; predominantly survey-based, approaches (Silverman, 2011).

In such interviews, in order to obtain ‘rich data’, the important factor is ‘active listening’ in which the interviewer allows the interviewee the freedom to talk and assign meanings while
keeping in mind the broader aims of the project (Silverman, 2011: 162). However, this method is subjective, time-consuming and less able to generalise to a population.

Open-ended questions were posed to the HR Manager as the interviewing process was a face-to-face approach. This allowed the interviewer to probe further than the questions’ constraints.

Similar questions were directed to the team leaders in section B whereas section C was excluded in the HR manager’s interview, but as a closed-ended, self-administered questionnaire so that the participants were able to answer the questions at their convenience and refer to other information if need be.

Refer to Appendix A and B as research instruments.

It is essential that the research instrument meets the criteria of reliability and validity. The term reliability refers to the indicator used. It should give the same results each time something is measured (Phelan and Wren, 2006). According to Struwig and Stead (2010: 130) “reliability is the extent to which test scores are accurate, consistent or stable”. It is synonymous with consistency and salient in social research as social theories are often vague and not directly observable. If reliability is not addressed then results in a study’s findings will be considered as worthless.

Validity can be considered as the truth of the findings (Neuman, 2011), it is the degree to which the theory, techniques and conclusions of a study can be relied on.

Addressing validity and reliability in qualitative research is difficult compared to quantitative research. Some find it unnecessary and query the usefulness of validation from a qualitative standpoint. But failure to do so may result in anecdotal information, affecting the credibility and plausibility of the research findings (Golafshani, 2003).

Absolute reliability and validity are practically impossible to achieve. Rather, they are standards researchers strive for.

6.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Once data is collected it will be analysed using the appropriate methods. Data collection for the phenomenological method was easier than transcribing it.
Interviews with the HR Manager and the seven team leaders were conducted to investigate the conflict experienced in organisations and to discover the effects and how it is dealt with by management and the organisation’s members.

Quantifying methods are used to express or indicate data in numbers whereas non-quantifying methods are not. Non-quantifying methods were used in the interview done with the HR Manager and a combination of the two methods, which was predominately qualitative-focused, were implemented in the questionnaire with the team leaders. Section B used non-quantifying methods. Section C was quantified and transformed into non-quantified data.

The interview with the HR Manager was recorded by a cellular phone and notes were taken during the process. Later the ethnographer transliterated the recording and combined it with the notes made. This combination helped achieve a more detailed report.

The self-administered interviews directed to the team leaders were emailed and so were the responses. This made the process easier to obtain information but harder to gain detailed information. Once the responses were received an analysis of the answers were made and the scores of section B were tallied and categorised within the guidelines of Wilmot and Hocker.

6.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with the Human Resource Manager
As organisations are more concerned with completing the tasks at hand, and more often than not individuals are out of the office, emails are not always responded to on time, and it is difficult to get an appointment without it being cancelled once or twice. The organisation was concerned about the interviewing process as it was not willing to have its name being made public in the research paper. One HR Manager was interviewed face-to-face with a tape recorder on hand with a few notes being taken. However the interviews for the seven team leaders were done via email as this process can be time-consuming and to limit distractions, emails seemed to be a more viable option.

6.6.2 Questionnaire to Team Leaders
The questionnaire that was sent out via email was designed to discover how their understanding of conflict in the workplace and their conflict handling styles as team leaders experience the conflict first hand. The sample was made up of five males and two females. The HR Manager interviewed briefed the team leaders on the research project. Consent forms
were signed and a letter of approval pertaining to the study was sent as well. It was stated in
the email that participation was voluntary, they were not obligated to partake in the study,
their identities would remain confidential, the process was anonymous and finally that
withdrawal was possible at any time.

The open-ended questions and questionnaire were manually completed and sent back via
e-mail. This meant that the researcher was not able to probe more into the answers given, it
was hoped that more detail would have been given but the information was sufficient.

6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
As stated by Schwarz (1991, cited in Struwig and Stead, 2010: 66) ethics is referred to as “a
system of morals, rules of behaviour”. It is a guideline used by researchers on how to conduct
research in an ethically acceptable manner. These guidelines are put in place to prevent
misconduct, such as; plagiarism, false data, unsuccessfully providing privacy and anonymity
of participants and forcing people to be part of the study:

- A proposal was submitted to NMMU delineating the reasons and purpose of this study.
  Permission and ethical clearance were approved by the relevant committee(s).
- A Letter of Permission to commence the research within the company was acquired, with
  the understanding that the questionnaire was to be anonymously completed and
  voluntarily and that participants could decline to participate in the study and were entitled
to do so, with no consequences to themselves.
- A prerequisite of the voluntary, informed consent of participants were required to conduct
  the research.
- Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to the participants.
- The participants were informed that they could withdraw should they so wish.

6.8 SUMMARY
In this chapter it was indicated that a mixed method with more focus on phenomenological
(qualitative) research methodology was adopted for this study. As such qualitative and
quantitative data was sourced by means of face-to-face interviews and self-administered
questionnaires.
An HR Manager as well as seven team leaders within the organisation were used in the study. The interviewing processes included open-ended questions whereas the questionnaire was made up of closed-ended questions. Primary data will be analysed by the researcher and transliterated.

In the following chapter the empirical research will be analysed and discussed, and comparisons of the responses and scores will be made.
CHAPTER 7: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, the empirical findings from the collection of primary data will be expressed. The research method used to collect the data, was a questionnaire. The questionnaire is contained in Appendix A and B and the cover letter in Annexure 2.

7.2 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION
A description of the sample listed below is divided into four categories, job title, gender, age and race.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Manager</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Sample description

The respondents were a mixture of females and males varying between the ages of twenty-five to thirty-four. The seven participants were team leaders with one HR Manager.

7.3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER
The empirical findings of the interview with HR Manager will be examined and discussed in this section.

7.3.1 Conducting the interview
The HR Manager was given the details about the research being undertaken, and was informed that the research had been approved by the NMMU Ethics Committee. The HR Manager was given a consent form and confirmed her participation through email. The HR Manager was notified that her participation was greatly appreciated and that confidentiality and anonymity would be in place.
7.3.2 Reflections on Interviews and their link with literature

Each question will be written down with the combined responses and these in turn, where possible, will be tied to the literature that has been discussed in earlier chapters.

a) Do you understand conflict?

The participant had responded “Yes, as a Human Resource Manager it is essential to understand the dynamics of conflict.”

As mentioned in Chapter 4 it is not conflict resolution that is needed as Rahim (2011) further enhances the statement but conflict management as conflict management aims are “designing effective strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to improve learning and effectiveness in an organization” (2011:46). Many believe that in conflict resolution, avoiding and reducing and terminating positive and negative conflict is the best approach. Conflict transformation is an element that falls under conflict management; it entails analysis of and intervention in conflict.

b) What is your basic understanding of it?

The interviewee elaborated more by saying that there will be conflict no matter where you go in terms of politics and people not respecting one another, the HR Manager also went on to mention that “there will always be that misunderstanding, between management and employees or employees and employees.”

Conflict has moved away from just inter-organisational conflict and towards intra-organisational conflict where disputes are experienced between management and employees as well as among co-workers.

c) What conflict do you experience in workplace?

The HR Manager advices that “it has a lot to do with change managers a lot of employees are not given a lot information concerning the change specifically to the organisation and they become unhappy with the changes that takes place and the workforce feel they are not communicated to in the correct manner so they do not understand the reasoning and there are things that indirectly affect the employees at the end of the day.” The HR Manager believes that this form of conflict is the most prominent and experienced more at the organisation.
Lack of communication and management not willing enough to communicate everything about the changes taking place are the main causes of conflict.

Poor communications and poor management can only lead to conflicting situations and unsatisfied employees. As easy as communication can assist in reaching a common consensus it can also cause divergence. This is made more possible when communication from management is not done effectively or not done at all.

However the HR Manager had mentioned that there was seldom any conflict in the organisation.

d) Is absenteeism high in the workplace?
The HR Manager had confirmed that absenteeism is relatively high at the organisation.

Should there be no assistance given during the time of the disputes the issue may escalate and fester resulting in the organisation suffering in decreased productivity and lower service levels due to stress, illness and absenteeism (Kotze, 2011).

This goes without saying, but absenteeism without valid reason can have disastrous effects on an organisation, it is a growing issue for many South African businesses due to the knock-off effect it creates for productivity, staff morale and a company’s bottom line. Besides the impact it has on productivity and service levels, co-workers have to pick up the slack of the absent workforce, employees are being paid for time not working and contractual duties are not being carried out.

It may not be a relatively major consequence to larger businesses but to a small to medium enterprises it can be, as most of these enterprises have a small workforce employing less than ten employees at best. Figures released by Statistics SA, shows that absenteeism is costing corporations more than twelve billion rand annually (Business partners 2013).

e) Do you think it is related to conflict?

Related to Question d, the respondent advised that the high number of absenteeism was not related to conflict but rather to other factors, stating that “there was a mixture of factors, not just one factor that is the cause of the high absenteeism.” The HR Manager had said that absenteeism was not a real issue until recently when the organisation had decided to expand “due to the organisation growing at a larger scale, more factors came into play.”
Absenteeism can be the result of conflict in two ways as mentioned by Dana (1995: 14).

- Lack of interest in work and a desire to avoid an unpleasant workplace, and
- Actual physical illness at least partially due to the emotional stress of chronic interpersonal conflict at work.

A survey carried out by CareerBuilder noted that employers reported an increase of absenteeism among employees around holidays and employees are more likely to stay out of work during the months of December, January and February (Business Partners, 2013).

f) **Does conflict get covered up instead of using grievance procedures?**

“The organisation uses grievance procedures should conflict arise.”

Unresolved conflict does not only affect the members of the organisation negatively but the organisation as well. All forms of organisations can benefit from embracing and learning from its conflicts (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000).

The grievance and disciplinary procedures put in place were all done internally. If the issue has escalated and an employee is not satisfied, the relevant procedures will be followed. Employees can submit complaints for issues which have not been resolved.

g) **Do you see conflict as positive or negative?**

Specifically to the organisation, the HR Managers view conflict as negative as “employees tend to remain in that space, they become despondent and negative and this tends to filter down into their work, their morale is affected negatively at the end of the day, reduced performance of the service team.”

Most organisations view conflict as negative and prefer to avoid it instead of acknowledge it. Neglecting disputes can cause more harm than trying to manage it. Many individuals who experience conflict view it as being negative, especially when concerning personal relationships, because of the uncomfortable feeling and sometimes negative outcomes it produces. However conflict is natural and it is all related to the fact that everyone has their own interests, needs and priorities. The main worry is being prevented from being able to meet any one of these aspects (Landau *et al*, 2001). The positive aspect that can be derived from this is learning about oneself and developing new perspectives in order to achieve
understanding and compromise. A certain amount of conflict is necessary to produce change, innovation and new ideas; conflict is “organically tied up with the very element that ultimately holds the group together” (Schellenberg, 1996 cited in Bradshaw, 2008: 53).

On the flip side of the coin, unmanaged conflict among the workforce is possibly the greatest expenditure and most likely the least acknowledged aspect in an organisation (Dana, 2014).

**h) What does conflict cost your company per annum?**

Because it is a call centre it has reached its six hundred mark in terms of staff complement, so there is a lot of movement, people who find negative energy start looking at other things such as options or job opportunities. There is a lot of Internal Relations (IR), IR is any issue relating to absenteeism, or anything serious that an employee has committed against the organisation’s policy. But the organisation tries to limit the use of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and try and resolve the issues in-house before it results into an extreme case. Referring disputes to the CCMA may be effective it is however time consuming and incurring costs.

The organisation is presently trying to expand the business, more hiring is currently being done. The respondent pointed out that it costs money to train people. There are few organisational members who leave after three months and they have to train others all over again.

However, the respondent said “I can’t really answer this as we can’t quantify this - we do not track the amount of hours and off the queue etc.” the HR Manager had said that “nobody can seem to give me precise information.”

With reference to section 1.1 Dana (2014) believes that there are eight factors which can assist in finding the amount incurred by the business as a result of conflict: 1) wasted time; 2) reduced decision quality; 3) loss of skilled employees; 4) restructuring; 5) sabotage/theft/damage; 6) lowered job motivation; 7) lost work time; and 8) health costs.

Time is money and as much time as it takes to handle a problem it also takes time not dealing with it. The time and money spent on unresolved disputes always tends to exceed the amount it would take to resolve the conflict (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000). If the total amount of time, energy, money and resources were exhausted on unsettled disputes, the amount would be staggering. “We have squandered our potential for growth and learning and missed
possibilities for improved relationships and personal transformations. These are the real reasons for conflict resolution” as stressed by Cloke and Goldsmith (2000:11).

**i) What conflict management strategies do you have in place?**

There are various ways to solve conflict. It normally depends on the type of conflict that is taking place, whether it is conflict between employers and employees or a dispute between employers and unions. Some organisations might already have certain problem solving procedures in place.

As mentioned before (Question h), a lot of the grievances experienced are dealt with internally (in-house). The HR manager or team leader tries and meet with the candidate to resolve the issues to determine the best possible solution and decision.

What was different in this organisation was that the business’ grievance procedures do use the ‘warning’ system where employees who have violated the organisation’s policy are given three warnings before getting dismissed, but with a different term, ‘coaching’ as ‘warning’ has a negative connotation attached to it. “Coaching is a formal and documented procedure”. The HR Manager sets up a meeting with the employee and discusses the issue at hand. A follow up of coaching is done with the employee involved.

Conflict is normal and necessary in any organisation. After all, people cannot be expected to agree on everything at all times but should strive to reach a common consensus, however conflict in any organisation could be detrimental especially if not dealt with correctly. There may not be a vast amount of ways to resolve conflict, but one of these ways is third party intervention such as mediation, arbitration and adjudication.

Negotiation and mediation is used if need be. The third party is contracted by the organisation. These labour consultants are flown in if necessary; it is rare that arbitration is needed.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, grievance and disciplinary procedures can be dealt with a little differently, especially in cases of sexual harassment or discrimination. In these cases third party intervention, and/or mediation, can be an alternative method to utilise. A safe environment is created where the victim does not have to sit in the same room as the perpetrator, can speak freely and this is all done unknowingly to the rest of the organisation.
It is also cost-effective, as litigation is not necessary unless either party feels wrongly accused or unsatisfied according to Brams and Taylor (1996).

Negotiation in cases of inter-personal conflict is useful as a neutral third party is present guiding the discussion and creating a climate of trust. This way, individuals can decide on what the outcomes should be and converse on the matter among one another with assistance of the third party (Niewmeijer, 1988).

Time and again, these accusations leave the employer in an unfavourable position having to determine the credibility of the parties who are of equal worth to the organisation, litigation procedures and court battles are time-consuming and expensive, with a win-lose outcome which is detrimental to the relationships of the parties (Whittenbury, 2003).

**j) What is the company’s employee turnover?**
The respondent had stated that there “is a 1.48% turnover per annum that is roughly 1% of 500 staff per year and eight staff on a monthly basis.” It may be concluded that the business is hiring eight new staff members each month and are paying exorbitant amounts to train these future employees. If the organisation does not keep filling these vacant positions this could lead to more pressure on the current workforce, increasing stress and creating an environment that is unhealthy and frustrating.

Basic human needs addressed earlier in this paper, illustrates how perceived threats to the satisfaction of meeting one’s needs, can affect behaviour and situation outcomes. Burton (1987) mentioned in Kotze (2011: 23) agrees that frustration occurs in diverse societies, families, social relationships and in the workplace.

The emotional and mental health of employees are important to owners and managers, as individuals’ mental frame of mind has a direct impact on their ability to perform as well as on the organisational productivity and profitability.

**k) Can you say that it is the result of poorly managed conflict?**
The participant advises that “to a degree yes, but you also get people with a different mentality. It is a young call centre; concerning maturity the average age of the workforce are in their early twenties, I would not say it is poorly managed conflict. It is the mentality of our guys not wanting not understand, people throwing their toys out their cots, only wanting to see it from their perspective and not management’s way which makes it difficult, more
difficult because of the generation today, who expects to be spoon-fed and getting their way; thinking the world owes them; especially coming out of a university with a B Com degree, then reality hits you in the face. Not everyone sees it like that but there are a select few.”

The researcher followed up by asking if people leave because they do not see growth within the company concerning promotions. She responded by saying there is definitely growth. They are aware and are informed of this. As she handles the recruitment processes she said that a lot of time is spent on sending messages for vacant positions and possibilities, “definitely growth opportunities just not when they expect it, as many feel that if it ‘does not happen today’ or ‘on my time’ they do not feel satisfied and plenty of explanations as to why it has not happened to them yet is needed.”

I) For conflict that has been resolved, does the process used seem to improve the relationship of those involved?

If there is more than one party involved, they will be called in individually, and spoken to, to try and see. The organisation is all about fairness and integrity, the best and the fairest approach will be used. How the parties mend their relationships, is sort of up to you.

The HR manager further added that the organisation will resolve the issue, but how you resolve the relationship is up to you. Explaining that due to the amount of people there tends to be a lot of ‘cat fights’. A lot of the times, it is up to the individual to resolve the relationship; we leave that part in their hands. McGuire (2014) provides quantifiable evidence that suggests that 65% of all employees who exhibit performance problems are related to bad relationships and not bad work ethic.

The organisation is team-orientated. Each division is supervised by a team leader. The respondent says that there are a lot of teams, these team leaders also seem to ease out the conflict in the team. They do a lot of team management exercises and workshops and team building. There is a lot of focus on the team and them getting along because it is important. It is important because the organisation is dealing with a large workforce. There are people who are bound to not understand one another, diversity issues. The teams will try and sort the issues out before it escalates but if it is not possible, it will go to management.

“Symptomatic of the lack of such a commitment is the assumption that a one-shot team-building exercise will suffice to cure organizational problems” noted by French and Bell (1990: 216). This effort should be maintained as it is an ongoing process this requires a lot of
resources. However the organisation has built a climate that encourages team ‘get-togethers’ and promotes social interaction between the groups and its members with the initiative of opening the bar to the employees after work on a Friday.

7.3.3 General Comments on the Interview
The questions were broad and general at times but this way the interviewing process being face-to-face made it easier to explain questions that needed more details and possible to probe into questions where answers were not satisfactory or more details could be given. Some of the questions asked could not be answered immediately as most aspects considered linked to conflict is not as evident as expected and are most likely not linking the effects or causes of conflict. The participant however agreed to provide more information if needed.

7.4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEAM LEADERS
This section provides a detailed account of the questions directed to the team leaders and answers received.

a) Do you understand conflict?
All of the respondents agreed to understanding conflict, it should be expected given the fact that every individual has experienced conflict one way or another in their lifetime. But it should also be said that there is a fine line between ‘knowing’ and ‘understanding’.

b) What is your basic understanding of it?
Many of the respondents had similar responses stating that “when two or more individuals of any demographic engage in verbal and or physical confrontation owing to an underlying cause”; “When people meet and have a heartened discussion about something or a physical discussion to resolve a query that has come up”. Two had similar responses stating that conflict is a difference of opinion and no mutual ground can be found. And finally “it starts with a disagreement then escalates into conflict”

Mayer (2000) states that once there is an understanding of the causes of conflict the conflict process can be mapped; in that way guiding individuals through the conflict process.
c) What conflict do you experience in workplace?
Each participant elaborated on their own personal experience of conflict. One interviewee explained that “there are three separate conflicts within my work space, one is between myself and a staff member when we disagree, second is between the staff member and the client (at times) and third is amongst the team itself.”

A respondent had said a verbal conflict with people not believing or not having the correct understanding of something. There are also individuals not agreeing on processes and on how things are done, approaches to staff and uncooperative staff.

It seems, from the team leaders’ perspectives, as the evidence shows, the main causes or roots of conflict in the workplace come down to poor communication, understanding one another and the processes that exist in the organisation. The workplace today, is more prone to inner divergence and controversy as the dynamics of the organisation and its members are more diverse. Diversity in the business, as mentioned in Chapter One, can produce individual and professional differences, unclear and conflicting responsibilities, and poor communication. One however, said that there was not much conflict at all, just the usual differing opinions.

Humans are habitual, any apparent change perceived to be a threat or a frustration can cause conflict, this is why management should utilise the downward communication strategy so employees are aware of what is happening and acknowledges the changes.

Conflict can sometimes be linked with aggression, however most of the work-related conflicts are tame, but do differ in opinions as Bradshaw (2008: 22) states, conflict is not a spectacular event “in that it is not usually associated with dramatic or violent behaviour, but that does not mean that organisational conflict is not significant, or that is it not extremely damaging to the organisation concerned”.

d) Does conflict get covered up instead of using grievance procedures?
One participant had said that “at times, for the most part it gets covered up as grievance procedures are not seen to be worth the effort it brings forth” and another explained that “our work environment is filled with conflict from various sources, but in cases where it does become serious, a lot of it gets overlooked as it’s a once off spur of the moment conflict generated by stress, however if this conflict then continues and overshadows the moment,
then grievance procedures need to be followed only as a last resort as a function of the Team Leader is to manage our staff and not dictate”.

However the other participant argues that conflict is not over looked and that “conflict is acknowledged and handled out in the open with correct procedures followed” as well as “yes because it is resolved before it goes further”. Two others had just responded yes and no.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, managing conflict effectively has become a nearly universal concern, with the ongoing search for better methods for reaching a solution or settlement in conflicts (Lipskey, Seeber and Fincher, 2003).

e) Do you see conflict as positive or negative?

“If channelled correctly by somebody who knows how to work with conflict it can be a positive” is what is believed by some of the respondents with others agreeing and however more participants believe it can be both, as it brings change. Conversely many agreed that it can be negative. Because of personal experience and perspectives everyone views conflict differently.

Rahim (2011) explains there are three types of conflict in organisations that produce positive and negative effects. Substantive conflict can have positive effects on groups and the individuals who make up the groups. These conflicts are based on tasks, policies and various business issues.

Affective conflict is the negative reactions produced by members of the business. This form of conflict needs to be reduced as it affects the individual and the group’s performance. Bullying, violations and sexual harassments are a few to mention.

Process conflict has a negative impact on groups and this too needs to be reduced. This deals with how tasks are to be performed, the duties each task entails and responsibilities.

f) What conflict management do you have in place?

Team leaders are put in place to assist in supervising a designated team.

Many of the team leaders were specific with their roles in resolving conflict, respondents had spoken from a team leader’s perspective stating that “set procedures, protocols, also as a leader you have to be able to deal with situations that are ever-changing” and another saying that “face- to- face coaching where I get to the root of the issue as the surface could be just
the outbreak but could be spurred on by a totally unrelated issue. An example would be an argument with a husband, Divorce etc.” and “I as a TL, will intervene when conflict is starting or has started.” As well as “exploratory discussion with each of the parties involved, thereafter an amiable one with both parties to remedy the situation.”

The one participant responded by mentioning that “we have an HR manager to go to, to set up a meeting and to put people into INCAP (incapacitation) to monitor their performance or behaviour”. INCAP would be considered as performance management, if an employee is not meeting the organisation’s requirements the individual then gets ‘Incapped’. It is an evaluation process where an employee has a few months to prove themselves.

Each situation calls for different techniques to achieve the best outcome.

g) Is absenteeism high in the workplace?

Three agreed “yes” while another said “no, not in his team”. One team leader had said that it depends, when there is a change in team leaders it spikes and another said in stressful environments “yes” if it is not managed correctly.

Stress and structural changes can produce internal conflict (Intra-personal conflict) which could further lead to conflict among the workforce (inter-personal conflict). However there was no direct link made by the respondents for the reasons for the high levels of absenteeism.

Lawler (2014) elaborates more on this explaining that employees avoid conflict by being “sick” or absent, workplace conflict leads to project failure and someone leaving the company, by either being fired or quitting. This all translates into real financial losses. Absenteeism results in other workers doing another employee’s work, paying for over time and/or hiring temporary employees. Employee turnover is also a costly affair, filling vacant positions; recruitment, training, paying out severance cheques and lost investments made in pervious employees.

A positive culture, personal engagement between managers and employees and involving staff in the performance of the business may help the employee understand the role they play in making the business successful, can limit absenteeism to a certain degree it may also result in the workforce feeling more valued and appreciated.
h) Can you say that it is the result of poorly managed conflict?

Out of all seven respondents only two had agreed that it is due to poorly managed conflict stating that it is 100% correct as all conflict can be managed. The remaining participants had said no, one adding that, in the call centre environment it would be due to other contributing factors.

It has been mentioned before in the previous chapters, specifically chapter 4, that these contributing factors are the cause of the absenteeism rate. It is more evident as there is an increase in the workforce, the members could be ill, taking a day off, taking care of sick family members or tending to a child or just being lazy.

i) For Conflict that has been resolved, does the process used seem to improve the relationship of those involved?

Majority of the respondents had said yes, “that it does build on the relationship”; another added that in most cases yes, “in a working environment individuals are functioning as professionals and tend to respond that way once conflict is resolved”. As well as there “seems to be an understanding between the two people once the conflict has been resolved”.

One participant had given another perspective by advising that it would depend on how it is resolved; if resolved just to keep the peace, then no; if resolved so that both parties are in the win section, then yes.

Many do not realise that calling others out on the individual’s faults can be constructive and beneficial to all. Just because members may be friends or get along it does not mean that these individuals understand what is trying to be said or how tasks are meant to be done. “People become involved in serious life, altering conflicts because they were unable to communicate what they really wanted or were afraid of the conflict that would result if they did” (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000: 11).

7.4.1 General Comments on the Interview

The researcher has sent out self-administered questionnaires to the team leaders who had participated in the study via email which was more convenient for the researcher and more importantly the participants but the responses took over a month to collect and some questionnaires gave only basic responses. It is understandable considering the manner the interviews were conducted in.
7.5 RESPONSES TO SURVEY (CLOSED-ENDED) QUESTIONS

The questions from section C, 1 to 25 will be calculated according to the responses with directions given by Wilmot and Hocker’s study. The 25 questions were divided into five categories of handling styles; collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise. Each question asked was ranked with a rating scale choice.

1= Never

2= Seldom

3= Sometimes

4= Often

5= Always

Each number placed in the column next to the question was tallied and each respondent’s conflict handling skilled was determined.

Tables will be used to reflect section C’s responses, with comments thereafter. This section does use quantifiable data to achieve results but the main focus will be on the individuals’ conflict handling style that are derived from the scores presented.
Table 7.2: Participant 1 responses

Participant 1’s responses to section C of the interview

|    | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2|3 | 2. | 2|3 | 3. | 4|3 | 4. | 4|4 |
| 6. | 3|4 | 7. | 1|1 | 8. | 4|1 | 9. | 3|4 |
| 11. | 3|4 | 12. | 2|2 | 13. | 5|2 | 14. | 3|2 |
| 16. | 4|4 | 17. | 3|4 | 18. | 5|4 | 19. | 4|4 |
| 21. | 4|4 | 22. | 2|2 | 23. | 4|2 | 24. | 2|4 |

|    | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 16|19 | 10|10 | 22|17 | 16|18 | 19|21 |

|    | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Avoidance | Competition | Compromise | Accommodation | Collaboration |
| Totals | Totals | Totals | Totals | Totals |

There are different scores when compared to the same handling style but with different relations (colleagues and personal relations). This individual scored higher in compromising handling style and less in the competition style however, equally competitive at home as well as at work. The major difference in the scores was in the compromise style where a higher total of 22 was scored in respect of a colleague and a score of 17 in respect of a relative that was closer in relation to the individual.
Table 7.3: Participant 2 responses

Participant 2’s responses to section C of the interview

| A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 1|1 | 2. 5|5 | 3. 2|2 | 4. 3|3 | 5. 5|5 |
| 6. 1|1 | 7. 1|1 | 8. 5|5 | 9. 2|2 | 10. 5|5 |
| 11. 1|1 | 12. 2|2 | 13. 3|3 | 14. 2|2 | 15. 5|5 |
| 16. 1|1 | 17. 4|4 | 18. 4|4 | 19. 2|2 | 20. 5|5 |
| 21. 1|1 | 22. 2|2 | 23. 3|3 | 24. 4|4 | 25. 5|5 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of all the respondents this participant’s score totalled equally to every conflict handling style. This means that the respondent is either answering the questions just to answer or the participant is exactly the same in all situations with different relations or interactions. These questions were not grouped according to each conflict handling style so to answer these questions so that the tallied scores will be the same is probable but not likely.
Table 7.4: Participant 3 responses

Participant 3’s responses to section C of the interview

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this participant the biggest differences are in the avoidance conflict handling style. For colleagues the score was 18 whereas for personal relations it was a 10. As well as in competition the work environment score was 6 marks less than that of a personal relationship. The highest score was in compromise and collaboration.
Table 7.5: Participant responses

Participant 4’s responses to section C of the interview

|       | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.    | 5|3 | 2. | 1|1 | 3. | 1|2 | 4. | 5|3 |
| 6.    | 5|3 | 7. | 1|1 | 8. | 2|4 | 9. | 4|4 |
| 11.   | 5|4 | 12. | 3|2 | 13. | 2|2 | 14. | 4|3 |
| 16.   | 4|4 | 17. | 3|2 | 18. | 2|3 | 19. | 5|3 |
| 21.   | 4|4 | 22. | 1|1 | 23. | 2|2 | 24. | 5|4 |

A|B       A|B       A|B       A|B       A|B
9|7       9|13      23|17      13|19

|       | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoidance | | | | | | | | |
| Competition | | | | | | | | |
| Compromise  | | | | | | | | |
| Accommodation | | | | | | | | |
| Collaboration | | | | | | | | |
| Totals      | | | | | | | | |
| Totals      | | | | | | | | |
| Totals      | | | | | | | | |
| Totals      | | | | | | | | |

The participant scored low in the competition handling style in both personal and less personal relationships. The participant scored high in avoidance and accommodation with equal amounts. Collaboration and accommodation however show that there were at least six units of difference between the reactions with the personal and less personal relationships.
Participant 5’s responses to section C of the interview

| A|B  | A|B  | A|B  | A|B  | A|B  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 3|3 | 2. 3|2 | 3. 4|3 | 4. 3|2 | 5. 4|4 |
| 6. 3|3 | 7. 2|2 | 8. 3|3 | 9. 3|3 | 10. 2|2 |
| 11. 2|3 | 12. 2|3 | 13. 3|2 | 14. 3|3 | 15. 3|4 |
| 16. 2|3 | 17. 2|3 | 18. 3|3 | 19. 3|3 | 20. 3|4 |
| 21. 3|2 | 22. 3|2 | 23. 4|2 | 24. 3|5 | 25. 3|4 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Competition</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant 5 seems to use all styles generally as neither one of the styles are scored more than 18 or less than 12. The respondent is more likely to compromise and least likely to be competitive. The major difference is in the compromising style, between the more personal relation and the less personal relation. As seen above avoidance is least used compared to collaborative styles. For participant 6, competition in personal and less personal relationships are equal.
Table 7.7: Participant 6 responses

Participant 6’s responses to section C of the interview

| A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 3|3 | 2. 4|2 | 3. 5|5 | 4. 5|3 | 5. 5|5 |
| 6. 3|1 | 7. 3|5 | 8. 3|4 | 9. 4|3 | 10. 5|2 |
| 11. 5|2 | 12. 3|3 | 13. 3|3 | 14. 3|2 | 15. 5|3 |
| 16. 1|1 | 17. 5|5 | 18. 5|3 | 19. 5|2 | 20. 3|3 |
| 21. 4|2 | 22. 5|5 | 23. 5|5 | 24. 5|5 | 25. 4|3 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For participant 6, avoidance was the lowest score and collaboration and accommodation was the highest scores. There were three areas that had highest differences between the scores for the personal and less personal relationships. Competition was equally weighted for both types of relationships.
Table 7.8: Participant 7 responses

Participant 7’s responses to section C of the interview

| A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 3|3 | 2. 3|4 | 3. 5|5 | 4. 4|3 | 5. 2|2 |
| 6. 4|4 | 7. 3|4 | 8. 5|5 | 9. 3|3 | 10. 2|3 |
| 11. 4|4 | 12. 3|3 | 13. 5|5 | 14. 4|4 | 15. 4|4 |
| 16. 1|1 | 17. 3|3 | 18. 4|5 | 19. 5|5 | 20. 4|4 |
| 21. 4|3 | 22. 3|4 | 23. 5|5 | 24. 4|3 | 25. 3|5 |

| 16 |15 | 15|18 | 24|25 | 20|18 | 15|18 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B | A|B |
| Avoidance | Competition | Compromise | Accommodation | Collaboration |
| Totals | Totals | Totals | Totals | Totals |

For this participant compromise and accommodation styles seem to take precedence. There were no major differences in scores between personal and less personal bonds. However, competition and collaboration seem to be higher in personal relations than those of less personal status.
7.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the empirical findings of the HR Manager and section A of the team leaders’ questionnaire revealed the following:

- A basic understanding of conflict is evident between respondents.
- Communication, operating processes and personal relations are the main sources of conflict.
- Employee turn-over cannot be certainly linked to mishandled conflicts or conflicts itself.
- There is no empirical evidence of the costs conflict has incurred the organisation.
- Neutral results on conflict were the reason for high absenteeism, or poorly handled conflict; conflict being positive; and conflict being covered up instead of using the proper grievance procedures.
- Most of the conflicts are resolved internally unless it has escalated to a point where this is not possible.
- Most participants believe that post-conflict resolution affects relationships in a positive way.

The overall analysis in Section C of the team leaders’ questionnaire finds that people are more willing to compromise, accommodate and collaborate in personal lives more than in public arenas. It could be the fact that personal areas are valued more than work relationships. People tend to differ in handling conflicts with individuals on different levels of intimacy.

As previously discussed on the issue related to conflict handling styles it can be difficult to reach a settlement between individuals utilising various styles, especially if the handling styles are on the opposite ends of the scale.

In the following chapter, the findings from the literature review and the empirical investigation will be discussed, as well as conclusions and recommendations developed from the findings.
CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, the research objectives and research methodology of the study will be recollected. The findings of both the empirical research and literature review will be presented. In addition the conclusions, recommendations and shortcomings of the study will be discussed.

8.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
Conflict resolution is costly for any organisation. That is why people so often just sweep the issues under the rug in the hope it will go away “while it takes time to resolve disputes, it also takes time not to resolve them” (Cloke and Glodsmith, 2000: 10). Because conflict is seen as unwanted or negative, especially in the business arena, people are more willing not to communicate what they want, or settle for inequitable solutions or no solution at all.

The researcher would like to change this perspective on the notion of conflict by studying it in an organisation and establishing whether businesses are equipped to deal with all that comes with disputes as well as whether conflict management is necessary in a workplace.

The focus of the study is a health insurance company, situated in the Eastern Cape region. This organisation is an internationally known conglomerate which was established about twenty years ago. The core ideals of the organisation are to promote healthy living- “through continuous innovation, designed pioneering products and services that help our clients to improve their health and wellness, protect their financial future and enhance the quality of their lives” (taken from the organisation’s website, 2014).

It is intended that this study will achieve the following objectives; to determine the level of understanding of organisational conflict in the company to establish an understanding of the necessity of implementing conflict management strategies and finally to contribute to the study of conflict management within organisations.

8.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
The research design will be qualitative in nature as the information gathered will not be entirely expressed in numbers, “social events are not static and therefore understanding change and process is imperative” (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 12). But it has essences of the
quantitative research making this study’s methodology mixed method. It will be more useful to understand why and how events occur as well as how often. The qualitative paradigm is also known as the phenomenological paradigm which involves formulating hypotheses and developing theories.

The study was conducted at a branch of the organisation. The organisation is situated in Coega, Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. Permission to perform the study was obtained from the appropriate authority. The interviewing process was up to ethical standards as the process was voluntary and confidential and explained verbally and in writing to the participants.

Initially the sample consisted of one Human Resource Manager of the organisation. The snowball effect was carried out to acquire more respondents, leading to the team leaders. The interviewees were seven team leaders and the Human Resource Manager. A semi-structured face-to-face interview was conducted in respect of the Human Resources Manager, and for the team leaders it was a two part, self-administered interview done via email.

The researcher also acquired information through analysis of secondary and primary sources including a literature review on conflict in both social and industrial contexts.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed, following the grounded theoretical approach, without the intention of building a new theory.

8.4 MAIN FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW
The main findings found in the literature review will be discussed in this section.

8.4.1 Costs and consequences of conflict
As mentioned in the literature review major costs are incurred by the company due to conflicting situations handled poorly. This is not only concerning monetary values but also employee investments, resources, time and effort lost in time of crises.

Conflict affects individuals’ self-esteem which in turn has an influence on job performance and ultimately leaves an impact on the profits of the organisation (Ferris et al, 2010). Just as this aspect has a domino effect on business operations and employee behaviour and performances so does the other aspects (Ferris et al, 2010; Bradshaw, 2008; Dana, 1995) such as the quality of products/services delivered and decisions made; resources, as limited as it is,
are exhausted on achieving incompatible goals; the image and brand of the organisation is
hampered by destructive, poorly handled conflicts; disparaging conflict could lead to
unnecessary employee turnovers whether it is by choice or not; disrupting conflict often
leaves people to assume that negative behaviour is the route to be taken to get attention or get
even, it sometimes leads to sabotage; and finally mishandled conflict has a toll on the parties
involved, physically, mentally and emotionally, resulting in absenteeism, sick days and
unproductive workforce.

Conflict is rarely ever isolated to one area or to only two parties. It would be illogical to
assume that a disruptive conflict can be confined to just the parties involved. This could be
regressive to the business and the relationships concerned.

8.4.2 Positive and negative effects of conflict
Conflict is an indelible indisposition and fortitude of human nature. Conflict can be seen as a
positive and a negative mechanism. Today’s work environment is conducive to conflict as the
workforce is expected to do more with less time and resources. This results in increased stress
and tension (Stone, 1999). How the conflict is handled determines the outcome.

Positive outcomes can be washed away by a great deal of negative conflict. Negative conflict
can produce obstacles to individual and organisational efficiency, disrupting teamwork and
adding to the pressure in the workplace. Conversely, positive conflict can inspire creativity,
develop better decisions, improve productivity and create new ways of looking at a situation
(Stone, 1999).

8.4.3 Importance of conflict management
It is important that conflict should be handled instead of avoided (Wisinski, 1993). Not every
conflict can be settled and it will not disappear, but fortunately most conflicts that are
experienced can be managed, conflicts can help build relationships and be a motivator for
change.

As mentioned previously in Chapter One, the concern for companies handling conflict is that
it is time-consuming; sometimes, weeks, months and even years. Because of this resolving
the pending disagreement will be delayed until the current project is done or when the
conflict has spiraled, this leads to disharmony, strained relationships, lack of commitment and
poor performance (Whitfield, 1994).
However the significant aspect that is not paid much attention to are the costs of resolving the conflict. Early detection and solution of the conflict is preferred to save all parties involved from legal costs. If an outsider is brought in to consult, costs will inevitably rise dramatically. Costs occurred in hiring a highly qualified expert is sometimes more than the company has budgeted for; travelling, accommodation, food and fees. If a dismissal is made this means a position is vacant. When hiring an employee internally is not possible, looking for a potential employee is costly; an agency might be needed and training and time for the employee to settle in needs to be taken into consideration (Whitfield, 1994).

Even though functional conflict is good, leaving the conflict to run its natural course can result in it becoming dysfunctional. Being able to differentiate between functional and dysfunctional has proven to be sometimes difficult for some. Distinguishing between the two is more clearly seen retrospectively. As mentioned by Whitfield (1994) there is no real choice but to manage every conflict, whether it is perceived to be functional or not because it is really never clear from the outset and not many can see the outcome of a conflict.

8.4.4 Conflict handling styles

Humans are instinctively similar, individuals have needs that should be met but how it is achieved is the difference, and managing these differences is important (Dana, 1995). As stated above conflict cannot always be resolved or avoided but it can be managed to some point. There are five ways of handling conflict. A conflict style is an approach people use to deal with conflict (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001). People’s reactions to a conflicting situation are normally subconscious. The term used to explain these behaviours are tactics which implies that a person has determined what styles would be used but it is quite another thing when having to deal with a reaction that styles and tactics provoke in others (Folger et al, 2009). Styles and tactics are influenced by culture, gender and personality.

These five styles are classified into groups; collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001).
8.5 MAIN FINDINGS FROM EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

The main findings of the empirical research will be elaborated on in this section.

8.5.1 Cost and consequences of conflict

Theoretically it is easy to see the devastating effects conflict has on the organisation but when one is immersed in the environment the analysis of the effects are not as evident. But when looking at the data, such as absenteeism and employee turnover a lot can be deduced from that.

The HR Manager had stipulated that at least eight employees leave the company every month. This adds to the costs, time and effort of recruiting potential employees and training the individuals. This could leave the other employees feeling stressed, affecting their health and performance. It could also limit or slow down the employees’ progression career-wise by leaving them in positions as there are no candidates to fill the position or conversely putting the employee in a position that they are not capable of handling just yet.

8.5.2 Positive and negative effects of conflict

There was no unanimous agreement on whether conflict is positive or negative.

But it is evident that conflict has an effect. The HR Manager had believed that it is negative as it affects the employees as the individuals experiencing conflict become despondent and negative resulting in lowered employee performance, reduced morale and commitment to the organisation, this is specifically from the organisation’s perspective.

Absenteeism is relatively high in the organisation but it is not directly linked to conflict but rather to contributing factors.

8.5.3 Importance of conflict management

The respondents had a basic understanding of what conflict is, but it is not clear if there is an understanding about the field itself.

The organisation is team-orientated and a large workforce is employed. It increases the likelihood that disputes and disagreements may occur; individuals may not understand one another; procedural misunderstanding; as well as diversity issues. Expanding the business is currently in the pipe lines; this will only increase the chances of facing conflict. As more
employees are recruited and hired, greater diversity and structural changes can be one of the leading forces of conflict.

Some participants believe that conflict gets covered up as it is not seen as worth the effort to resolve unless it seems to be more serious, then grievance procedures will be utilised. However the implementation of Team Leaders has proven to be useful as many seem to grasp the understanding of conflict which is half the way to resolving it. It seems as if these individuals are pivots to conflicting situations, stepping in when necessary and handling incidences if need be. This can assist the HR Manager in a major way, especially with the workforce expanding.

The main sources of conflict in the organisation are miscommunication, lack of information and ill-defined procedures. The HR Manager believes there is a link between poorly handled conflict and employee turnover, to a certain degree.

Rehabilitating employees relationships that were once involved in a dispute is as important as resolving the conflict. Holistically one cannot work without the other. The past emotions and behaviour may return if the conflict is not dealt with and relationship is not made a concern.

Concentrating on the root of the issue and the relationship of the parties concerned can reduce the chances of the conflict reappearing again or even eliminate the possibility of reoccurrence.

“More conflict management and training could be useful to assist employees to address conflict in a positive way, rather than ignoring or avoiding it with the hope that it will disappear and to prevent festering” (Kotze, 2011: 143).

8.5.4 Conflict handling styles
It is evident that personal conflict handling styles varies among the respondents. The degree to which the respondents used the style between personal and less personal relationships varied. Different situations brought out different handling tactics. However there was always a dominating style used or preferred by each individual or a general use of them all. It can be said that the conflict handling style chosen is dependent on the level of the relationship rather than the situation that occurred. It could be for two reasons; an individual could feel more comfortable in a relationship to be more extreme in handling a situation or it could be related to the intensity of the relationship.
Being aware of one’s-self and others’ conflict techniques could result in positive outcomes. It increases the chances of understanding one another. However if a person consistently uses the same techniques it could become a barrier to diffusing the problem. Not adjusting to different circumstances could leave one feeling frustrated or not producing results that were expected and leaving others to predict one’s actions or reactions.

8.6 CONCLUSIONS

This research intended to investigate the need for conflict management in the workplace and its possible connection to Conflict Theory- Basic Human Needs Theory and Critical Theory.

Individuals all have basic needs and to achieve these needs actions will be taken if one route taken is not effective an alternative method will be chosen. South Africa is still in the development phase from the deep rooted conflict experienced during Apartheid.

The research addressed some relevant topics namely: significant South African history; the dynamics of conflict; the effects conflict has on an organisation; how conflict can be resolved and the various conflict handling styles.

The following section provides conclusions to the research objectives that were proposed. The objectives of the study were as mentioned in section 8.2:

- To gauge the level of understanding of organisational conflict in the company.
- To gauge understanding of the necessity of implementing conflict management strategies.
- To contribute to the study of conflict management within organisations.

In order to achieve these objectives primary and secondary questions were posed.

The main research question in this study was: To what extent does a particular organisation/kind of organisation consider that it needs conflict management assistance?

This study attempted to answer the following secondary research questions about the necessity of conflict management in organisations.

- How do organisations understand conflict?
- Should conflict management be implemented in organisations?
- What does conflict management have to offer?
• Are companies aware of this field?
• Are companies aware of the capabilities and the job description of conflict management?
• Is remedying conflict a priority?
• Is poorly managed conflict seen as a cost to the company?
• What are organisations’ strategies in this area of conflict and is it readily available?

Based on empirical findings, the organisation and its members have a basic understanding of conflict, but not the field of conflict management. The business is aware of the usual conflict resolution methods implemented in organisations but with little knowledge of the alternatives. Remedying a conflict is seen as of importance when it reaches a certain level of escalation as there are so many employees it is difficult to resolve all conflicts that are brought up and concentrate on the persisting ones. It is mainly done for the benefit of the organisation and the bottom line than for the relationships affected by the divergence.

The organisation is aware that conflict costs the company when time is taken out to; resolve conflict, assess individual’s performance and behaviour and to train new employees for positions that are made vacant due to employee turnovers. However an actual numerical figure or statistics cannot be provided at this time. Almost every conflict experienced in the company is dealt with in-house strategies and resources unless the conflict has escalated beyond in-house capabilities.

It is evident that all effects of conflict are interlinked as one outcome can produce another or increase the degree to which it impacts the business and its members.

In the researcher’s opinion organisations will only pay more attention to this field when direct cost from conflict is evident without anecdotal reasons.

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS
As the company could not give exact amounts of the cost (financial resources and human capital) that conflict has on the business an exiting-interview could be conducted to gain more knowledge on the subject.

The organisation should do an extensive study on the costs occurred by conflict as it could lead to a better understanding of the organisation holistically.
More conflict management awareness, recognising alternative conflict resolution approaches and training could assist in resolving and understanding conflict in a more positive and functional way.

8.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This section will provide a list of shortcomings that were experienced during the research and construction process of the study.

- Waiting for the ethics committee to approve the proposal took more time than expected; this left the researcher with limited time and resources to do data collection and analysis.
- The HR Manager was not able to answer all questions directed at her at one time. This meant there was a lot of back and forth done to collect all the information that was needed.
- Limited information provided from the organisation concerning the costs of conflicts
- As conflict management is such a broad field, filtering the information was an immense task.
- Face-to-face interviews should have been the research instrument used throughout the study as it provided more in-depth data and faster responses.
- As the organisation employs a large workforce more insight would have been gained had more employees participated in the study.
- More than one organisation should be included in the study to gain a better understanding.
REFERENCE LIST


This interview will assist in exploring and understanding dynamics of conflict that become apparent in the workplace, the causes, the outcomes and methods used to resolve the conflict.

a) Do you understand conflict?
b) What is your basic understanding of it?
c) What conflict do you experience in workplace?
d) Is absenteeism high in the workplace?
e) Do you think it is related to conflict?
f) Does conflict get covered up instead of using grievance procedures?
g) Do you see conflict as positive or negative?
h) What does conflict cost your company per annum?
i) What conflict management do you have in place?
j) What is the company’s employee turnover?
k) Can you say that it is the result of poorly managed conflict?
l) For conflict that has been resolved, does it the process used seem to improve the relationship of those involved?
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE TEAM LEADERS

A. Your name is not necessary. However please fill in general details in the table below:

**Demographic questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position held</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Please answer all the questions below

a) Do you understand conflict?

b) What is your basic understanding of it?

c) What conflict do you experience in workplace?

d) Does conflict get covered up instead of using grievance procedures?

e) Do you see conflict as positive or negative?

f) What conflict management do you have in place?

g) Is absenteeism high in the workplace?

h) Can you say that it is the result of poorly managed conflict?

i) For conflict that has been resolved, does the process used seem to improve the relationship of those involved?

C. Think of two different contexts where you have a conflict, disagreement, argument, or disappointment with someone. An example might be a work associate and someone you live with (a personal relationship and a less personal relationship). Place scores next to the questions.

1= never       2= seldom       3= sometimes       4= often       5= always
Person | Person

A|B

1. ___ I avoid being “put on the spot”; I keep my conflicts to myself.
2. ___ I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
3. ___ I usually try to “split the difference” in order to resolve an issue.
4. ___ I generally try to satisfy the other’s needs.
5. ___ I try to investigate an issue to find a solution acceptable to us.
6. ___ I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with the other.
7. ___ I use my authority to make a decision in my favour.
8. ___ I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.
9. ___ I usually accommodate the other’s wishes.
10. ___ I try to integrate my ideas with the other’s to come up with a decision jointly.
11. ___ I try to stay away from disagreement with the other.
12. ___ I use my expertise to make a decision that favours me.
13. ___ I propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
14. ___ I give in to other’s wishes.
15. ___ I try to work with the other to find solutions that satisfy both our expectations.
16. ___ I try to keep my disagreement to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
17. ___ I generally pursue my side of an issue.
18. ___ I negotiate with the other to reach a compromise.
19. ___ I often go with the other’s suggestions.
20. ___ I exchange accurate information with the other so we can solve a problem together.
21. ___ I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with the other.
22. ___ I sometimes use my power to win.
23. ___ I use “give and take” so that a compromise can be made.
24. ___ I try to satisfy the other’s expectations.
25. ___ I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved.
ANNEXURE 1

ETHICS APPROVAL

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
for tomorrow

SOUTH CAMPUS
FACULTY OF ARTS
Tel: +27 (0)41 5042855 Fax: +27 (0)41 5041581
nmdalo.mnpornyama@nmu.ac.za

Ref: H/15/ART/PGS-004

14 May 2015

Ms R Ajam
36 Krest Crescent
Overbaakens
Port Elizabeth
6070

Dear Ms Ajam

THE NEED FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS (A HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY, IN PORT ELIZABETH)

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the FPGSC Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The Ethics clearance reference number is H/15/ART/PGS-004, and is valid for three years, from 07 MAY 2015 – 07 MAY 2018. Please inform the FPGSC, via your supervisor, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

Mrs N Mngonyama
FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

cc: Promoter/Supervisor
HoD
School Representative: Faculty FPGSC
LETTER OF PERMISSION

THIS IS A COPY OF THE EMAIL RECEIVED FROM

THE HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY

SIGNED BY THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER

15 July 2014

Dear Razaana

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

I hereby acknowledge discussions between us regarding your proposed academic research for your Masters in Conflict Transformation and Management with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth.

I confirm your research is entitled: “The need for conflict management in an organisation”.

The Human Resources, hereby give you permission to conduct your interview with members of staff. We confirm that the interview is confidential and voluntary and we proceed with the assumption that staff may refuse to participate and are entitled to do so, with no consequences to themselves.

It is agreed that, on completion of the outcome of your academic research, your results will be made available to myself on behalf of the company.

Yours sincerely

Human Resources
Reference: Dr G. Bradshaw- 041 504 2913

Contact person: Razaana Ajam- 072 877 1853

Dear Participant

You are being asked to participate in a research study entitled ‘The need for conflict management in an organisation’ which is in the form of a questionnaire which will be explained to you.

Any queries with regard to the questionnaire may be directed to the researcher at any time on 072 877 1853.

Furthermore, it is important that you are aware of the fact that the ethical integrity of this research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the university. The REC-H consists of a group of independent experts that has the responsibility to ensure that the rights and welfare of participants in research are protected and that studies are conducted in an ethical manner. Studies cannot be conducted without REC-H’s approval.

Participation in research is completely voluntary. Your identity will at all times remain confidential. You are not obligated to take part in any research. If you choose not to participate in the research, this is acceptable. If you do partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time.

The results of the overall research study may be presented in specialist publications. This informed consent statement has been prepared in compliance with current statutory guidelines.

Yours sincerely

Razaana Ajam
RESEARCHER
# NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

## INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCHER’S DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title of the research project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reference number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal investigator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postal Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact telephone number</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT

I, the participant and the undersigned (full names)

## A.1 HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by Razaana From Conflict Management and Transformation of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

## THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, THE PARTICIPANT:

### 2.1 Aim:

The researcher is studying the need for conflict management in an organisation- health insurance (call centre) in Port Elizabeth.

the information will be used to facilitate the research paper to obtain
the degree of masters conflict management and possible publications

| 2.2 Procedures: | I understand that participation will be in the form of being interviewed |
| 2.3 Risks: | n/a |
| 2.4 Possible benefits: | n/a |
| 2.5 Confidentiality: | My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators. |
| 2.6 Access to findings: | Any new information or benefit that develops during the course of the study will be shared as follows: |
| 2.6 Voluntary participation / refusal / discontinuation: | My participation is voluntary, and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation. |
| | My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care / employment / lifestyle |

| 3. THE INFORMATION ABOVE WAS EXPLAINED TO ME/THE PARTICIPANT BY: | Initial |
| Razaana | |
| in Afrikaans | English | x | Xhosa | Other |
| | and I am in command of this language, or it was satisfactorily translated to me by |
| n/a | I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily. |
| 4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation. |
5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.

A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th>Port Elizabeth</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature or right thumb print of participant</td>
<td>Signature of witness:</td>
<td>Full name of witness:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I, Razaana</th>
<th>declare that:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have explained the information given in this document to (name of patient/participant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This conversation was conducted in Afrikaans English X Xhosa Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have detached Section D and handed it to the participant YES NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of interviewer</td>
<td>Signature of witness:</td>
<td>Full name of witness:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PATIENT/REPRESENTATIVE OF PARTICIPANT
Dear participant/representative of the participant

Thank you for your/the participant's participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:

- an emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study, or
- the following occur

(indicate any circumstances which should be reported to the investigator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindly contact</th>
<th>Razaana Ajam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at telephone number</td>
<td>072 877 1853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>