

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A PRIVATELY OWNED TRUCKING
BUSINESS**

By

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DECLARATION

Ideclare that

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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ABSTRACT

In its broadest sense, conflict refers to circumstances in which the interests of different parties are not aligned. This can lead to open hostilities between the parties which have potential to negatively affect the organisational environment if let uncontrolled. However, if managed constructively, conflict can offer positive value in ensuring effective performance within the organisation. This study focussed on conflict related issues within a privately owned trucking business based in Durban. Senior management of this company has indicated the ever increasing prevalence and occurrence of conflict related issues within the company which is negatively affecting the business. Therefore, this study was deemed highly appropriate for this specific company. The objectives of the study were to identify the sources of conflict within the company, evaluate the frequency and extent of conflict within the company, and identify conflict inducing work related procedures as well as the contribution of internal communication processes towards conflict within the organisation. The quantitative method as well as qualitative research methodology was used for this study. The research instrument was distributed to all staff members within the company. Information was gathered from the sample (n=78) by means of a questionnaire comprising 3 demographic questions, 22 closed ended likert scale type questions and 2 open ended questions. The simple random sampling technique was employed in this study which was then statistically analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The findings outlined source problem areas of conflict within the company, frequency and extent of conflict within the company and certain pitfalls of existing work related practices and procedures that contribute to conflict within the company. The conclusions and recommendations of this study are bound to positively contribute and add value to the company. Though this study was too small to generalise to the entire trucking industry, pertinent recommendations made will certainly contribute to substantially reduce the occurrence of negative conflict within the organisation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Overview of Workplace Conflict

Conflict is an inevitable part of organisational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staff are often incompatible (Jones and George, 2000). According to Roloff (1987), organisational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other collectivities, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organisation. This definition of conflict can be broadened by conceptualising it as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities. Unresolved conflict in the workplace has been linked to breakdowns in communication, delays, increased tension amongst employees, reduced teamwork, and disruption to operational efficiency and reduced client satisfaction. Prolonged or volatile contention among workers within any organisation can result in serious consequences for the organisation as conflict impacts negatively on productivity, staff morale, communication, turnover and ultimately, profitability.

1.2 Overview of Labour Related Conflict in South Africa

According to Schoeman and Blaauw (2010), long periods of economic growth, accompanied by relatively low interest rates, low inflation and positive business sentiment has not been reflected in job creation in South Africa. Bhorat and Van der Westhuizen (2009) have stated that the South African economy has seen a significant increase in atypical employments since the mid- 1990's which include outsourcing, labour brokering and part- time contracts. The inherent skills shortage combined with the high costs of hiring can be viewed as major contributors to the unemployment rate in South Africa. The South African Labour Market has been subjected to the effects of structural shifts as well as technological change within the economy. South Africa's history with labour issues date back to the 1970's. This period marked the start of increasing levels of unemployment, which led to the current levels of unemployment in the country. The characteristics of labour relations in South Africa include historical racial conflict, low levels of trust and open conflict between labour and business. Labour market history in South Africa is overshadowed by racially dominated politics, institutionalised racial labour structures and open, racially based labour market conflict.

The 1980's were characterised by an increased demand for unskilled labour, primarily to resolve labour conflict issues through business by negotiating labour share in production. Hence the increased regulation of the labour market in South Africa gave labour a strong platform to negotiate not only for better wages, but also to see through and drive political goals.

South Africa has a powerful trade union movement which has aligned itself with the new government. In a relatively short period of time, the unions, led by the influential Congress of South African Trade Unions- COSATU- (which represents both industrial and general worker unions under one umbrella), developed into a formidable economic and political force. According to Kingdon and Knight (2001), the political dispensation change in 1994 in South Africa added momentum to labour in the form of government's alliance with labour, greater political intervention, the introduction of minimum wages, social charges on payrolls and job protection through legislation. However, the relatively quick radical changes in the labour environment, created a lot of uncertainty for business.

1.3 Motivation for the Study

This study was conducted within a privately owned trucking business which is situated within the greater Durban area. Based on the owner's statements and comments, the company has been experiencing increased levels of conflicts amongst staff members within various departments. The increased incidences of conflict within the company have negatively impacted on various departments within the company and more importantly, the business as a whole. Previous research e.g. McClellan (1993) and Tarcher (1992) has confirmed that unresolved conflict has been linked to miscommunication, missed deadlines or delays, increased stress amongst employees, reduced collaboration, disruption to work flow, reduced customer satisfaction and ultimately, reduced profitability. This study was therefore conducted within this company, in order to address the conflict related problems within the working environment with the aim of investigating and evaluating the core dimensions of the problem as well as providing suggestions and recommendations to finding practical and effective solutions to the problem. This small scale study based on 78 respondents; though sound and though conducted in an objective manner is such that caution should be exercised in respect of generalising the results and recommendations. The reason cited for this is that this was a small scale study and the privately owned company may differ substantially from other trucking companies. The recommendations

provided in chapter five of this study could only be extended to other organisations that are similar in terms of organisational structure, operating environments and organisational challenges.

1.4 Focus of the Study

The study investigated conflict management within a privately owned trucking business, situated in the greater Durban area. This business operates on a national basis with its head office based in Durban. The business is headed by a chief executive officer who is also the proprietor of the business. The staff compliment comprises directors, senior managers, supervisors, operational staff, administrative staff and support staff. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was administered to both staff and management of all occupational categories within the company. The survey examined participants' responses to various factors and work related issues concerning conflict within the company as well as their individual opinions regarding the problem in order that the main causes of conflict could be identified and recommendations made to address them.

1.5 Problem Statement

Based on the owner's comments, a privately owned trucking company based in Durban, has been experiencing increased levels of conflict in the past two years. Conflict with the target trucking company has increased and this has resulted in interdepartmental conflict and is affecting morale and productivity. It is suspected that this may be evident to clients and as such remedial steps need to be taken before the problem gets "out of hand." In a discussion with management it was revealed that increased occurrences of conflict within the organisation have had a detrimental effect on employee productivity, staff morale and overall organisational efficiency. In addition clients detect the conflict and that poses a risk of their business being moved to other trucking companies, with potentially disastrous consequences for this company. The problem is the increasing incidents of conflict within the company are having a negative impact amongst the employees which in turn impacts negatively on the overall efficient functioning of the business.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the frequency and extent of conflict within the company.
- To identify causes of conflict within the company.
- To identify the extent to which work related procedures address conflict related issues within the company.
- To identify the extent to which the failure or underperformance of communication processes within the company contribute to conflict.
- To determine which departments experience the most conflict.

1.7 Research Questions

- What is the impact, consequences and extent of conflict within the company?
- What factors or procedures are the major causes of conflict within the company?
- What procedures does the company have in place to effectively address and resolve conflict?
- How does communication processes within the company contribute to conflict?
- Which departments within the company experience the most conflict?

1.8 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that only one trucking company was selected for this study. This research is quantitative and thus indicates the extent of the problem but lacks the depth of responses of a qualitative study. A total of 78 employees responded to the questionnaires. Not all employees within the company participated in the survey even though they were all approached to do so. Reasons for lack of participation by certain employees are unknown, however, it is probable that certain individuals did not wish to risk reprisals and their jobs, even though they were assured that this privately conducted, academic work would strictly adhere to the issue of confidentiality. Only one trucking based company was selected for this study. This was entirely because of the personal and professional association of the researcher with the owners of the company.

1.9 Significance of this Study

This research is important because it provides management with strategic direction concerning the identification and resolving of conflict related issues within the company. This study has uncovered problem areas within the company whereby, if management take

appropriate action, a considerable amount of conflict within the organisation will be reduced, thus creating fertile grounds for better employees feedback, better staff morale and team spirit. The overall efficiency and effectiveness of the company will definitely improve if the nature of conflict within this company is better understood in order to equip management to make relevant changes.

1.10 Chapter Outline

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter outlines the research problem, its background and the context within which it was conducted. This chapter also provides insight into the objectives of the research, key research questions, significance of the study as well as limitations of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter will present literature on mainstream conflict theory and its influence within the work environment. The importance and significance of recognising conflict management as a core management function within the work environment will also be highlighted by the literature. Literature focusing on causal factors of conflict, its extent, impact and consequences within the working environment as well as theory relating to conflict resolution processes and procedures will also be reviewed in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research methodology used in this study. The research design, sampling, research instrument and data collection will be discussed. The statistical analysis of the data, reliability and validity of the research instrument will also be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will also outline the ethical considerations employed in this research as well as describe any fieldwork problems experienced.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Results

This chapter presents the results of the study in the form of graphs and tables. Brief discussions accompany the corresponding data representations.

Chapter Five: Interpretation of Results

This chapter is a more specific interpretation and discussion of the results of the study. The key findings will be discussed in relation to the key objectives and research questions of the study.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the research findings by evaluating them against the research objectives. It highlights what was researched, the outcomes of the research and the evaluation of the outcomes in relation to the key research questions. Based on the results and findings of the research, further recommendations and suggestions for further research within the field are provided.

1.11 Conclusion

Conflict, if left unresolved, is detrimental to any organisation. The increasing incidences of conflict within the working environment is negatively contributing to work related issues such as culture of the work environment, staff morale, productivity, interpersonal relationships and ultimately, the overall efficiency of the organisation. This study will seek to investigate the occurrence of conflict within a private business setting with the aim of outlining possible causes of conflict and recommending practical solutions to address the problem. This chapter introduced the subject of the study and provided a chapter by chapter breakdown as to what will be covered in the following chapters. The next chapter will provide a literature concerning the subject of investigation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Conflict is a reality of management and organisations, ever more so in today's extremely competitive and fast paced working environments. Traditionally, conflict has been seen as negative and counterproductive, but the role of conflict and that of conflict management, has evolved drastically. According to Mullins, (1999), conflict can be regarded as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of some other person's goals. It is based on the notion of incompatible goals and arises from opposing behaviours of individuals or groups. The management of conflict involves the diagnosis and intervention of conflicts, both at the individual and group level. The diagnosis should indicate the need and type of intervention needed. Extreme cases of conflict in organisations can have extremely upsetting or even tragic consequences for some people and ultimately adversely affect organisational performance. It is essential for today's leaders to manage conflict effectively and in order for them to effectively manage it, they must understand all aspects of it.

2.2 Workplace Conflict in the South African Context

According to the Mail and Guardian (24th February 2012), the South African workplace environment has been increasingly fraught with conflict related issues over the last five years. This is based on the increasing number of cases taken to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). Figures from the latest South African annual Dispute Resolution Digest (2012) report indicate that worker complaints to the commission increased by a staggering 30 000 – from 123 472 annually five years ago to more than 150 000 a year for the past two years. The report also indicates that the number of disputes referred to bargaining council tribunals in various sectors almost doubled from a little over 20 000 a year to almost 40 000. Viewed in the context of a shrinking pool of formally employed workers, it actually means the increases in disputes are even higher than the nominal values suggest. According to Tokiso Dispute Settlement, a private South African Company that compiles the analysis of the report, the Labour Relations Act had failed in one of its main intentions which are to create a working environment that facilitates co-operation.

2.3 South Africa's Work Disputes in Perspective

According to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), extracted from The Mail and Guardian (24th February 2012):

- Almost 200 000 disputes are lodged at labour tribunals every year out of a workforce of 7 million, compared with the United Kingdom, which has 240 000 cases out of a workforce of 28-million. Do these figures suggest South Africans are too sensitive about labour rights or are they simply diligent in making use of available alternatives?
- The retail sector is the biggest source of CCMA disputes at 15% of all cases, followed by 14% from professional services, 12% from the security industry, 9% from construction and 4% from mining. Does this suggest increased input and resources from relevant role-players towards the retail sector?
- Some 33% of CCMA findings are in favour of employees while 67% are in favour of employers, whether or not the parties were represented. If only the worker is represented, the ratio shifts to 36%-64%, but, when only the employer is represented, the odds turn to 79% in favour of the employer— generating a substantial amount of business for labour lawyers.
- Is the system hard on employers, or are they hard on the system? In the labour tribunals of developed countries employers won 80% of the disputes, said Tokiso Dispute Settlement chief executive Tanya Venter. In South Africa the figure is 50% if default awards—a full third of all cases—is included. Defaults occur when employers do not pitch for the hearing, indicating perhaps a crisis of legitimacy for the CCMA among employers, or a lack of consequences for noncompliance. But why do only two-thirds of employers who do participate win their cases, as opposed to Europe's 80%? Venter said they failed to learn from their mistakes.
- According to the report, 64% of dismissals declared unfair by the CCMA are both procedurally and substantively unfair. It means employers are not permitting employees a fair chance to state their cases and were simply firing workers, which is too harsh s punishment.

- In a country with 24% unemployment, getting fired usually precipitates a fight to the bitter end. 80% of all CCMA cases concern dismissals, dwarfing the number of disputes concerning constructive dismissal, retrenchment, renewal of contract and incapacity.
- According to the CCMA, accusations of dishonesty are behind most dismissal cases at the CCMA. Theft, fraud, dishonesty and unauthorised use of company property comprise more than one-third of all misconduct cases. Absenteeism is next at 14%, followed by negligence at 13% and insubordination at 11%. South Africa's purported propensity for violence seeps in, too as the report indicates that one in 20 misconduct dismissals relate to assault and violence within the working environment.
- Are managers cutting corners? In a notoriously under skilled workforce, only 6% of CCMA disputes are over poor work performance. Are our managers really so good at monitoring and giving feedback that most trainees accept it when they are fired for not being up to the job?

According to the general consensus of South African labour law experts, the figures possibly indicate that managers are avoiding rigorous monitoring, not participating in measurement and feedback and are failing to get rid of underperforming workers.

2.4 Perspectives on Conflict

The traditional views on conflict were encapsulated by Fox (1966) who described three major perspectives on organisations, each of which has a different underpinning based on the nature of conflict. Fox (1966), as cited by Martin and Fellenze (2010), described the following perspectives of conflict:-

2.4.1 Unitarist Perspective

Unitarism views the entire organisation as the natural unit of consideration and suggests that objectives are aligned within this unit. This view also reflects the classical management theory view of organisations as legitimate tools for achieving specified outcomes. According to this view, conflict is something that reflects a major breakdown in the normal state of affairs. Thus, this perspective suggests that conflict should be avoided if possible and eliminated if it arises. Conflict is seen as emanating from deviant members

who should be dealt with severely as they endanger the overall harmony of the group. Although engrained in some forms of managerial thinking, the unitarist perspective is relatively little used in contemporary management theory and research. This view fails to recognise the complex interactions among different stakeholders and their respective interests in today's increasingly dynamic and globalised organisations.

2.4.2 Pluralist Perspective

In contrast to unitarism, pluralism holds that an organisation comprises a collection of groups, each with their own objectives and aspirations. This perspective outlines groups within an organisation that form coalitions which arise because of differing individual interest as well as the level of uncertainty present in any organisation. Uncertainty within the organisation is directly related to the individual and group – level interpretations and evaluations of both problems and solutions within the organisation. Inevitably, the interests of different groups will diverge in some areas but converge in others. Employees are interested in maximising earnings while organisations seek the lowest labour costs. These different perspectives are irreconcilable and are therefore a basis for conflict between the groups involved. The pluralist view of conflict provides an indication of the issues on which there are fundamental differences between the different stakeholders. This perspective is reflected in many psychological, behavioural and human resource management oriented approaches to management and organisational behaviour.

2.4.3 Marxist and Radical Perspective

The Marxist or Radical perspective suggests that conflict is an inevitable function of capitalism. This view suggests that employees are fundamentally exploited by the controllers of the means of production (capitalists). One of the consequences of this is resistance to management in the form of conflict. According to this perspective, the conflict between capitalists and the working classes is an inevitable but ultimately temporary characteristic of capitalist systems. This view is at the heart of many sociological and critically oriented views of conflict. It is also central to the labour process debate that has been particularly influential the United Kingdom, South Africa and European considerations of industrial relations, organisations and conflict.

2.5 Labour Process Theory and Conflict

The concept of the labour process developed out of the Marxist tradition. Thompson (1989) defines the labour process as, “The means by which raw materials are transformed by human labour, acting on the objects with tools and machinery: first into products for use and, under capitalism, into commodities to be exchanged on the market.”

According to Thompson (1989) five core elements regarding the theory of labour process are particularly relevant for understanding organisational conflict. They are:-

Labour as a unique commodity – from the variety of resources necessary to create value and ultimately extract economic profits for the organisation, labour is the one that differs because of human free will and self determination. This self determination is used by capitalist organisations in the management ranks whilst among workers and front-line employees, such human traits have traditionally been ignored and even suppressed. The many forms of human labour is essential for creating value in organisations, but it brings with it qualities and obligations that can make it problematic and even undesirable from a capitalist perspective.

Labour as a special focus of attention – labour is employed by capitalist organisations as a means of value creation. However, means of production should contribute more value than the cost their use brings. When dealing with human labour, this surplus is contested between employers (capitalist organisations) and employees (labour). This is a contest that brings with it a predisposition for conflict.

Capitalism forces minimisation – labour process theory considers the role of labour and the labour process within the framework of the drive for surplus generation (profit) in volatile and uncertain capitalist markets. Competitive market forces cannot be controlled by individual organisations. Therefore these organisations typically pursue profit maximization through exercising intra-organisational control. Regarding labour, this is typically achieved through exploitative and exclusionary measures. In a capitalist organisation, labour is primarily seen as a means to an end (profit), where its costs are continuously queried and attempts are made to minimise labour and associated costs.

Control as an imperative – given the competitive context of capitalist markets and the different interests of the relevant stakeholders, profit maximisation is a contested activity. Therefore, the process of value, which is at the heart of profit generation, must be controlled. This is also applicable to the influence of other stakeholders that pursue their own interests within the organisation which also needs to be controlled. Control, for example through the acquisition and use of power, is a central issue in all interactions among the different stakeholders. Various types and levels of control and many different means of exercising it can be distinguished in organisations.

Institutionalised conflict – employees are paid less in wages than the true value of their labour – this is the basis of the wage – work bargain. Managers always attempt to seek better value from employees, and employees attempt to balance their contribution with the reward achieved. Thus, conflict between employees on one side and owners and managers on the other is inherent in the capitalist market system. Moreover, most managers are also employees and are often exposed to changes and pressures in their work similar to front – line workers. This also brings about immense potential for conflict.

According to Martin and Fellenze (2010), labour process theory provides a way of considering the nature of labour in capitalist organisations and perhaps placing conflict into a broader context. It is also an inescapable fact that all organisations are capitalist, even in a predominantly capitalist society. Examples include public service, charitable and voluntary organisations. Most of these institutions make use of modern management techniques and would be indistinguishable from capitalist organisations apart from the profit motive. Overall, perhaps the labour process approach is fundamentally limited in its ability to provide an all embracing perspective on every type of organisation. It does, however, provide a useful perspective on conflict and helps identify sources of intra - organisational conflict

2.6 The Nature of Conflict

According to Rahim (2002), conflict occurs when:

- An individual or party is required to participate in activities that are incongruent with his or her needs.
- The satisfaction of behavioural preferences is incompatible with other parties preferences.

- Mutually desirable resources, which are in short supply, are required by all parties
- The skills, attitudes, goals and values that are salient in directing that parties behaviour are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, goals, skills and values of the other party.
- Partially exclusive behavioural preferences are held by two parties.

According to Roloff (2009), conflict is generally associated with negative features and situations which give rise to inefficiency, ineffectiveness or dysfunctional consequences. Traditionally, conflict was viewed as being bad for organisations. Conflict can be seen as unnatural, disruptive and involves deviant behaviour which must be controlled. Extreme cases of conflict in organisations can result in extremely upsetting, or even tragic, consequences and can affect organisational performance adversely. Conflict situations within organisations can also lead to excessive emotional or physical stress. However, conflict does not necessarily involve negative consequences for the organisation. If managed properly, it can have potentially positive outcomes. Conflict can be seen as a constructive force, and sometimes even encouraged. It can be an agent for evolution for both internal and external change. Properly identified and handled, it can help to minimise the destructive influences of the win-lose situation. A more recent view of conflict is the *interactionist perspective*, which believes that conflict is a positive force and necessary for effective performance. According to Robbins (1998), this approach encourages a minimum level of conflict within a group in order to encourage self-criticism, change and innovation, and to help prevent apathy or too great a tolerance for harmony and the status quo.

Positive outcomes of conflict can include:

- Improved ideas produced within the work environment.
- Stimulation of interests and creativity.
- Outstanding problems brought to the surface and resolved.
- Clarification of different views.
- People forced to search for new approaches and solutions.

Negative outcomes include:

- A climate of mistrust and suspicion is created
- Resistance is developed rather than teamwork
- The distance between people increases.
- Some people feel defeated and demeaned
- Groups and individuals concentrate on their own narrow interests

2.7 Why Conflict Management Is Important

According to McDowell, Coleman, Raines, Seay and Sullivan (2007) the type of conflict and its management determines a positive or negative outcome. If not properly managed, conflict can be destructive and ruin employee relationships. Unmanaged conflict can create bad feelings in people who experience it as well as those who merely observe it.

Contrary to the common belief that conflict is limited to a disruptive effect, a number of researchers acknowledge substantial benefits. In fact, conflict can be a driving force of change. According to Bowditch and Buono (2007), when managed correctly, conflict produces the following results: new ideas for changing organizations, solving of continuous problems, a chance for workers to expand their capabilities, and the introduction of creativity into thoughts about organizational problems. Managers and supervisors must realise the importance of allowing constructive conflict. Management must react timeously to detrimental conflict within the organisation.

It is important to manage conflict, especially in the workplace. Doctor Tony Fiore, a certified anger management trainer and licensed psychologist, said, “The effects of conflict in the workplace are widespread and costly. Its prevalence, as indicated in three serious studies, shows that 24-60% of management time and energy is spent dealing with anger. This leads to decreased productivity, increased stress among employees, hampered performance, high turnover rate, absenteeism at its worst, violence, and death” (Fiore).

According to Brahm (2007) unmanaged and negative conflict has human costs, economic costs, and organisational costs. A doctor in the field of political science,

Brahm suggests that conflict costs organisations in many significant ways. “First, there are the direct costs, including such things as fees paid to lawyers and other professionals for their intervention. Second, conflict often has significant productivity costs in terms of the value of lost time to the organisation. It diverts worker attention from normal duties. Absenteeism often increases due to conflict and conflict often reduces motivation and increases turnover. Third, conflict can have continuity costs – namely, it can cause damage to ongoing relationships that wrecks the feeling of community in organisations. Fourth, conflict has emotional costs for those involved” (Brahm).

Clearly, it is imperative to manage negative conflict in the workplace constructively. According to Bowditch and Buono (2007) conflict that is poorly managed leads to deteriorated employee and team performance levels, reduced productivity, and negative employee relationships. Additional effects are higher levels of absenteeism and employee stress, increased turnover rates, and higher monetary losses associated with professional fees such as attorneys and court costs. Employees who are overstressed and have interpersonal problems at work are more likely to take those problems home. Conflict must be avoided at homes as it spoils the ambience and spreads negativity. Individuals tend to disrespect others as a result of conflicts. Conflict management prevents fall out between family members, friends, relatives and makes life peaceful and stress free.

According to Wahlstrom (2009), the causes of conflict can be addressed in a business organisation and thus negative conflicts can be managed, resolved, or even transformed into a positive force. Since people are often the main reason for interpersonal and organisational conflict, the way people interact and make decisions together must be addressed. Increased knowledge of differences between people in terms of cultural attitudes, conflict management styles, and psychological types is the first step. The second step is for people to learn skills and techniques to communicate more effectively and focus on issues rather than personalities. When these people skills and abilities are supported by matching organisational structure and culture, as well as effective leadership, increased productivity and profitability occurs. This is why conflict is such an important issue in business organisations of all kind, and should be managed, resolved, or transformed (Wahlstrom 2009).

2.8 Theories of Conflict

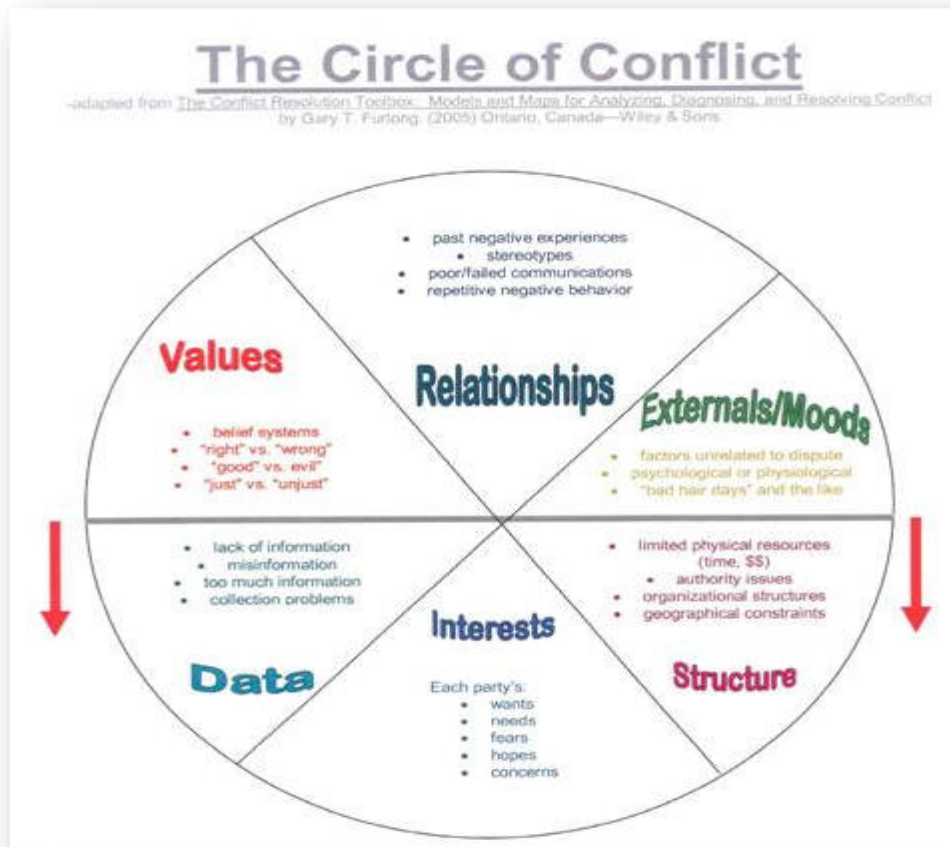


Figure 2.1 – The Circle of Conflict

Adapted from: The conflict resolution toolbox, by Furlong (2005)

As depicted above, the Circle of Conflict, by Furlong (2005), focuses on the various drivers of conflict which are:

2.8.1 The Circle of Conflict

Values and beliefs- the idea of right versus wrong. Most working environments comprise of employees who have diverse cultural backgrounds which result in different value systems as well as belief systems within the employees. This can be a potential source of conflict within the organisation as there can potentially be a clash of different belief and value systems amongst employees regarding the nature of work related procedures within

the work environment. This contributes to the objective and research question of this study which relates to the causes of conflict within the organisation.

Relationships- failed communications, stereotypes and negative behaviours

Working relationships and communication between employees are critical determinants of conflict between employees in an organisation. Effective communication between employees of various departments within the company generally facilitates good work flow procedures between employees and thus, improved relations. Conversely, ineffective communication systems and negative behaviours amongst employees tend to lead stereotypes within the organisation, which can be a potential source of conflict. This relates to the objectives that are concerned with the contribution and influence of communication processes within the organisation to conflict related issues within the organisation.

Psychological or physiological issues of parties of conflict

These are factors unrelated to disputes within the organisation itself but are associated instead with conflict situations stemming from psychological or physiological issues relating to staff and employees. Employees that bring home related problems to work, for example, will not be in the appropriate frame of mind or 'mood' to carry out their duties and interact with fellow employees in an effective manner. A multitude of factors can negatively influence the psychological makeup of employees which can in turn, negatively affect the organisation and can therefore also be related to a possible cause of conflict within the organisation.

Data - data collection problems, lack of information, misinformation or too much information

Effective data collection techniques and processes as well as appropriate information sharing within the organisation are essential for the efficient operation of the organisation. A lack of essential work related information regarding employees as well as poor data collection can also be a potential source of conflict within the organisation.

Interests- each parties needs, wants fears, desires or concerns.

Management must seriously take heed of interests of different parties of employees in an organisation. Appropriate consideration and appreciation of employees' different interests at work can possibly prevent potential conflict situations at work.

This can be related to the research question that relates to what procedures the company has in place to effectively address and resolve conflict.

Structure - limited resources like time, money, geographical constraints, organisational culture and authority issues

The structure of the organisation can contribute significantly to conflict related issues within the organisation. Physical resources, geographical constraints and authority issues need to be carefully and effectively managed in order to prevent potential conflict situations within the organisation. Structure can be associated with the research question and objective of this study which seeks to determine which departments experience the most conflict.

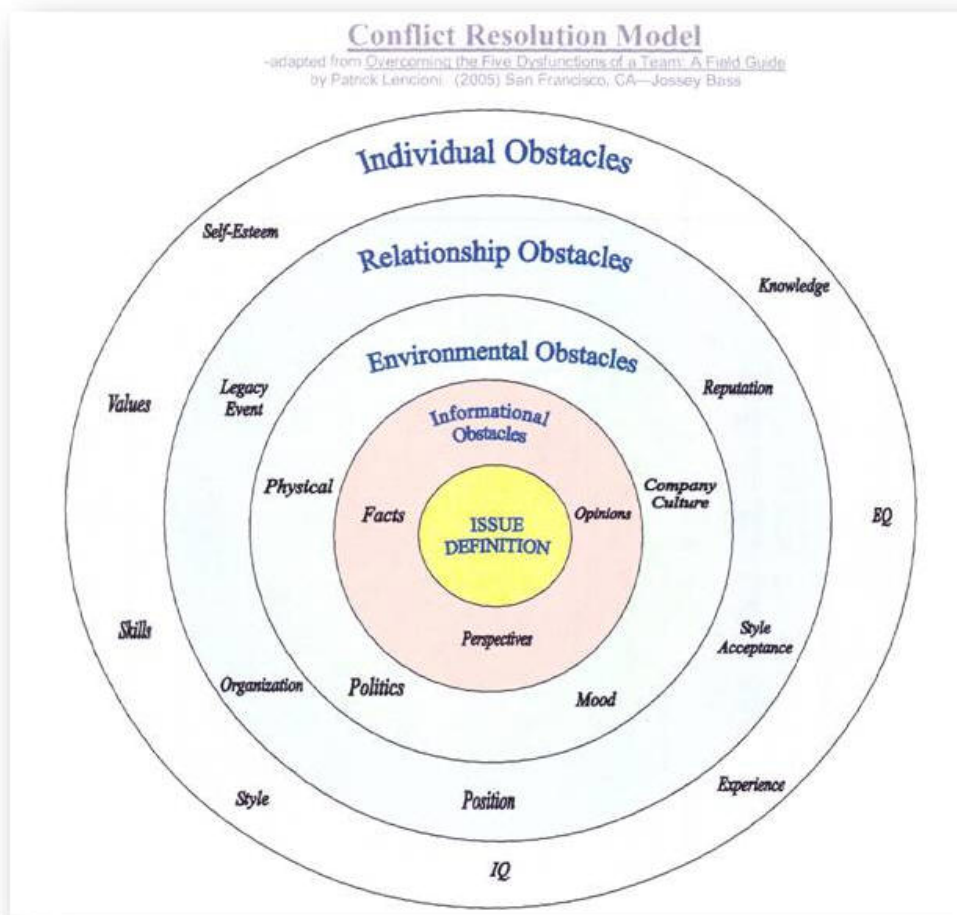


Figure 2.2 – Conflict Resolution Model

Adapted from: Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team, P. Lencioni (2005)

2.8.2 The Conflict Resolution Model

According to Lencioni (2005), the obstacles closest to the centre of the model, (the issue), are the easiest to overcome. The obstacles become increasingly more difficult to overcome as one moves outwards from the centre of the model. The barriers include:

- Obstacles relating to information. Conflicting parties need to exchange information, facts and opinions concerning the problem if they seek resolution. Communication processes within the environment play a crucial role in facilitating the exchanging of information between the parties.
- Obstacles relating to the environment i.e the physical environment in which the conflict occurs. Problems relating to personal physical space within the working environment could be difficult to overcome.
- Obstacles relating to relationships. This concerns issues between those people that are actually involved in the conflict e.g. interpersonal issues, work performance issues and reputation issues
- Obstacles concerning the individual. These are issues concerning conflict matters that are specific to the individuals concerned e.g. self-esteem issues, individual experiences within the work environment and other personal issues that that have an impact at work.

According to Lencioni (2005), the key to this model is to understand that these obstacles exist during discussions. This model should be used when a particular obstacle is encountered and whether its use would address the issue of contention or not. However, if parties choose not to address and resolve an issue at work, they should collectively agree not to let it affect their ability to resolve the larger conflict within the organisation. This is related to the research questions of this study that deal with the causes of conflict within the company as the relevant procedures the company has in place to effectively address and resolve conflict.

2.9 Sources of Conflict

Mullins (1999) summarised the potential sources of organisational conflict as follows:

Differences in Perception

All people see things differently. We all have our own 'world view.' Differences in perception mean different people attach different meanings to the same stimuli. As an individual's perception becomes a sense of reality, value judgements can be a potential major source of conflict.

The Nature of Work Activities - When one person's task in an organisation is dependent upon another's work, there is a significant potential for conflict. If the work of one department is dependent upon the output of another department, a similar situation can occur. If an organisation bases reward and punishment systems on performance levels, then the likelihood or potential for conflict within the organisation is even greater.

Limited Resources – limited resources within an organisation lead to individuals and groups fighting for the scarce resources. The more limited the resources, the greater the potential for conflict as the competition for these limited resources increase as well.

Departmentalisation and Specialisation - Most work environments are separated in many different specialised departments with specialised functions. Because of the familiarity of in the manner in which they undertake their activities, departments tend to concentrate only on the achievement of their specific goals. When the need for departments to co-operate with each other arises, the potential for conflict also arises. Differing goals and internal environments of departments are also a potential source of conflict.

Role Conflict - This is the expected behaviour patterns associated with members occupying a particular position within the organisation. The manner in which people actually behave may not be consistent with the expected behaviour. Inadequate or inappropriate role definition can lead to problems of role incompatibility. This can potentially be a significant source of conflict within the company.

Inequitable Treatment - An individual's perception of unfair or unjust treatment, such as in the operation of personnel policies and practices, or in rewards and punishment systems, can lead to tension and conflict within the organisation. The perception of inequity will motivate a person to take steps to restore equity, including changes to inputs or outputs or through acting on others.

Violation of Territory - Employees in an organisation tend to become attached to their own 'territory' - their own area of work. Jealousy may arise over other people's territory, e.g. size of office, company perks, and allocation of a secretary – through access of information or through membership of groups.

A stranger entering an office can immediately create a feeling of suspicion or even resentment because people usually do not like 'their' territory to be invaded.

Environmental Change - Changes in an organisations external environment such as new technology, government intervention, increased competition or changing social values, can cause major conflict.

Other potential sources of organisational Conflict:

- Individual – personality characteristics, attitudes or particular personal needs.
- Group- such as group skills, the informal organisation and group norms.
- Organisation –such as communications, authority structure, leadership style as well as managerial behaviour.

According to Bryans and Cronin (1984), the possible sources of conflict can be summarised as:

- Differences between corporate and individual goals.
- Conflicts between different groups or departments within the organisation.
- Conflict between the manager and the managed.
- Conflict between the individual and job.
- Conflict between individuals.
- Conflict between the formal and informal organisation.

Martin and Fellenze (2010) have identified the following six major areas within an organisation that can give rise to conflict:-

Intrapersonal – this refers to the conflict within an individual. Essentially, it stems from the various objectives and values that individuals hold, the choices that each individual must make in dealing with internal misalignments among them, and the challenges of resolving external demands with internal interests and preferences. Examples of internal conflict include relatively mundane issues such as decisions to go to work or stay home

when sick, more persistent problems such as role conflict between work and family roles, and profound issues such as ethical dilemmas.

Interpersonal - Whetten and Cameron (2007), as cited by Martin and Fellenze (2010), identify four sources of interpersonal conflict. They are:

- 1) **Personal difference.** No two people are exactly the same. It is simply not possible to like everyone with whom one works with and personalities frequently clash. However, agreeableness as a personality factor in individuals plays a large part in minimizing the risk of conflict.
- 2) **Role incompatibility.** The functional nature of work activity creates potential for interpersonal conflict. An example of role conflict could be that of two managers within different departments of the same organisation that have to meet separate deadlines or targets. There exists a high probability of conflict between the two managers in this type of situation.
- 3) **Information deficiency.** An individual with access to information is able to perform more effectively. Having more knowledge at hand allows them to exercise power over the situation and other people. Consequently, information can provoke conflictual relationships between individuals.
- 4) **Environmental stress.** Conflict is more likely to occur in times of intense competitive pressure. Over the past decade, most organisations have been going through significant periods of downsizing, re-engineering and change. Consequently, individuals find that their ability to retain a job and career is continually under threat. As a result of individuals constantly under threat in such organisations, the environmental conditions exist for fractious relationships and open conflict to emerge.

Intragroup – one particular context within which interpersonal conflict can be found is within a group. These conflicts are related to group development dynamics but can also reflect relationship difficulties among individual members. However, it must be noted that group activity inevitably brings the differing characteristics, attitudes and opinions of individual members into focus.

Intergroup – organisations consist of many different formal and informal groups and almost inevitably they experience differences and conflict at some point in time. Employees seek to earn as much money as possible, while employers want labour to be as cheap as possible. As an example, marketing departments may press hard for a diversified product range in order to compete in turbulent markets while production departments demand stability to be able to achieve economies of scale, thus creating a basis for conflict within the organisation.

Intra - organisational – individuals and groups inevitably account for much of the incidence of conflict within organisations. Formal organisational systems such as structure, hierarchy, career development, reward systems, communication systems, etc. compartmentalise and differentiate activity. This creates the need for co-operation, but resource limitations may also induce competition. If one party considers the competitive process to be unfair, or attempts to influence outcomes in its favour, then conflict can arise. The nature of organisational ownership and the relative exclusion of employees in decision making are seeds for potential conflict. The impact of technology on jobs related to the concepts of power, control and politics are other endemic features of organisational functioning that allow conflict to emerge. The intra- organisational perspective can certainly be used to assist in solving the problems identified in this study.

Inter - organisational – markets are responsible for creating a scenario in which organisations are inevitably in conflict with each other. All competitors in a particular industry seek to maximise profit and market share for themselves. World renowned companies are quite often continuously engaged in publicity and marketing campaigns in their quest to remain dominant players in the industry.

2.10 Conflict and Communication

Donna Bellafiore (2007) as cited by McDowell, Coleman, Raines, Seay and Sullivan (2007) stresses the importance of effective communication as she describes six critical steps for conflict resolution.

2.10.1 Identify the problem.

Bellafiore indicates that the resolution process begins with a discussion “to understand both sides of the problem.” In this stage, it is imperative that both sides clearly define

the outcomes they want. “Define the things that you both agree on, as well as the ideas that have caused the disagreement. It is important to listen actively to what the other is saying, use ‘I’ statements, and avoid blame” (Bellafiore, 2007).

2.10.2 Propose several possible solutions.

Bellafiore describes the second stage as “the brainstorming phase” during which “the points that everyone agrees on and the shared goals” are communicated. During brainstorming, parties record any potential approaches to the problem they can envision without considering the feasibility of the ideas. “Aim toward quantity of ideas rather than quality during this phase, and let creativity be your guide,” advises (Bellafiore, 2007).

2.10.3 Evaluate each alternative.

Bellafiore suggests then analyzing each approach to the problem one by one, “considering the pros and cons of the remaining solutions.” She recommends that parties repeat the process “until the list is narrowed down to one or two of the best ways of handling the problem.” Bellafiore stresses the importance of honesty at this phase and cautions that solutions will likely involve compromise.

2.10.4 Determine the best solution.

Bellafiore encourages parties to choose the most mutually acceptable solution, even if it is not perfect for either party. “As long as it seems fair and there is a mutual commitment to work with the decision, the conflict has a chance for resolution,” she writes.

2.10.5 Implement the alternative.

To implement the alternative, parties should first “agree on the details of what each party must do,” writes Bellafiore. In addition, they should determine “what to do in case the agreement starts to break down” (Bellafiore, 2007).

2.10.6 Continually evaluate the solution.

Bellafore suggests that managers should view conflict resolution as an ongoing process. “Make it a point to ask the other person from time to time how things are going. Something unexpected might have come up, or managers may have overlooked some aspect of the problem. Your decisions should be seen as open to revision, as long as the revisions are agreed upon mutually” (Bellafore, 2007).

2.11 Effects of Conflict in the Workplace

According to McDowell *et al* (2007), managers need to understand not only the causes of conflict, but also its effects. The effects of conflict in the workplace are often wide reaching and consuming. Further, they can be useful and beneficial or destructive and damaging. Effective leaders must differentiate between conflict that will boost productivity and build stronger teams and conflict that will decrease output and hinder teamwork. Clearly, managers must resolve conflict and channel it into positive competition and collaboration.

One of the most damaging effects of workplace conflict is the personal toll it takes on employees. Research clearly shows that employees routinely take their work home with them. According to Mullins (1999), a recent poll at Williams Energy asked 75 employees, “How often do you bring work home with you?” Interestingly, 58% responded that they bring work home with them weekly, 11% bring work home only monthly, and 10% bring work home daily. In addition, 21% respondents said that they never bring work home with them. When the poll asked the same 75 people how often conflict and stress at home causes them to lose sleep or feel anxiety, 91% responded, “Often, at least weekly.” The results of these two polls clearly show that employees take their work home with them a significant amount of time. According to research released by the human resources effectiveness group, The People Element (2012), South Africa has an estimated loss of 3 billion Rands a year due to workplace stress of which a significant portion is a result of workplace conflict. This is just one overwhelming consequence of workplace conflict in a South African context.

While taking work home has a damaging effect on employees, ineffectively managed conflict also affects employees personally through:

- Anxiety
- Loss of sleep
- Lowered morale
- Decreased job satisfaction

In addition to taking a personal toll on employees, conflict also has adverse effects on the workplace. Consider these benefits of managed conflict compared to the damage resulting from “out of control” conflict:

Table 2.1 – Manage Conflict Versus Out of Control Control

Managed Conflict	Out of Control Conflict
Strengthens relationships and builds teamwork	Damages relationships and discourages cooperation
Encourages open communication and cooperative problem-solving	Results in defensiveness and hidden agendas
Resolves disagreements quickly and increases productivity	Wastes time, money and human resources
Deals with real issues and concentrates on win-win resolution	Focuses on fault-finding and blaming
Makes allies and diffuses anger	Creates enemies and hard feelings
Airs all sides of an issue in a positive, supportive environment	Is frustrating, stress producing and energy draining
Calms and focuses toward results	Is often loud, hostile and chaotic

Contemporary management and organisational behaviour research on conflict in organisations generally applies a modified pluralist view that recognises conflict as inevitable yet often manageable. A premise of this approach is that a particular level of conflict contributes best to organisational performance. Too little conflict brings about

complacency while too much conflict can cause stress, burnout and negatively affect co-ordination and collaboration.

The essential meaning of this view is that conflict is being defined as a pressurising force. Using the analogy of a water pipe, too little pressure in the system and no water will come out of the tap. Too much pressure and the pipe is likely to burst. Just the right amount of pressure is required in order to render the system effective as intended. This model regards conflict as a force that can be harnessed to ensure that slackness is kept out of the organisation.

With no challenge, which is inherent in conflict, people and groups would simply go through the motions at work without thinking about them and take everything and everyone else within the organisation for granted. In this situation, such an organisation would become moribund and desensitised to the activities going on around it.

Equally, at the other extreme, excessive conflict, for example a labour stoppage, would bring the organisation to a standstill and thereby reduce performance to zero.

2.12 Strategies for Managing Conflict

Thomas (1976) proposed five well known generic conflict-handling styles based on combinations of two relevant dimensions: the degree to which a party tries to satisfy their own concerns (called self-assertion) and the degree to which they try to address the concerns of the other party (called co-operation). The five conflict handling styles as proposed by Thomas (1976) are:

- 1) **Accommodation.** This approach is based on a style that would allow the other party to achieve what they desire from the situation. It can be viewed as an attempt to maintain harmony through subjugating one's own wishes to those of the other party. This could be as a consequence of indifference towards any personal needs in the situation. However, it could also reflect a fear of the consequences of not allowing the other party to have their way.
- 2) **Avoidance.** This is a minimalist approach which involves the avoidance of any open confrontation or hostility in the situation. It may constitute a desire to ignore the problem, or simply a lack of willingness to engage with the issue and

the other party. Typical responses include ignoring the problem and evading attempts to deal with it.

- 3) **Integration.** This approach seeks to maximise the possibility of all parties working effectively together in the search for a viable outcome. It signifies a win- win approach to negotiation and problem solving. This style gives equal recognition to the need to resolve conflict through meeting the objectives of both parties if a lasting settlement is to be achieved.
- 4) **Competition.** This style reflects the win-at-all-costs approach to conflict resolution. It has little or no consideration of the other parties' interests in the situation and simply concentrates on the desires of the 'self' in the process. In negotiation terms, it represents the view that anything conceded is something lost.
- 5) **Compromise.** This represents the search for the acceptable. It is the satisfying approach to conflict resolution. It is the search for the acceptable middle ground between two points of view so that no one completely wins or loses.

According to Mullins (1999), there are a number of ways that management can attempt to avoid the harmful effects of conflict within their organisation:

- Clarification of goals and objectives this as well as role definitions and performance standards will help to avoid misunderstandings and conflict.
- Resource distribution- although not always possible, managers need to improvise and distribute resources as fairly.
- Organisational process- conflict may be reduced by attention to such features as: the authority structure, work organisation, patterns of communication and sharing of information, democratic functioning of the organisation.
- Personnel policies and procedures- careful attention to this aspect may help to reduce areas of conflict e.g. job descriptions, job evaluation, recruitment and selection as well as systems of rewards and punishment.
- Non-monetary rewards can be implemented when financial rewards are scarce e.g. these could include flexi time, increased delegation or more relaxed working conditions.

The abovementioned review of literature has highlighted important and pertinent aspects of conflict within the workplace. Conflict within the South African context was evaluated and it was found that the current conflict situation in South African workplaces is significantly related to the underlying theoretical foundations of organisational conflict. Thus, it is imperative that managers apply appropriate conflict resolution strategies to specific conflict related problems within their work environments. Effective conflict resolution, especially within specific work environments, will ultimately result in a more efficient and effective organisation. In terms of a private business, this can only result in a higher profitability ratio within the business.

The literature review has examined the nature, sources and importance of workplace conflict. Theories of conflict and strategies for managing conflict were also looked at. The abovementioned literature was therefore examined in relation to the major objectives of this study which included establishing the causes of conflict within the company, the frequency and extent of conflict as well as which departments and procedures within the company contributed to conflict.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed pertinent literature concerning the issue of conflict within the workplace. The nature of conflict was discussed as well as the different perspectives of conflict theory. Workplace conflict in a South African context was looked at as well as Labour Process Theory and Conflict. The need for conflict management, theories of conflict were looked at as well as the sources and effects of conflict within the working environment. Lastly, strategies for dealing with conflict within the workplace were also briefly stated. The next chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology that was followed for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According Webster (1985), to research is to search or investigate exhaustively. It is a careful or diligent search, studious inquiry or examination especially investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in light of new facts or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws, it can also be the collection of information about a particular subject.

The research methodology used in this study will be highlighted in this chapter. Issues such as the research approach, sampling techniques and data analysis, reliability and validity of research will also be looked at in detail. Ethical considerations concerning this research will be discussed as well as the design and construction of the research instrument. Details of the pilot study carried out by the researcher will be outlined as well in this chapter. The fieldwork involved in this study will also be explained in this chapter.

3.2 Type of Research

This study involved the use of mixed research methods. It involved the use of both the quantitative research methodology approach as well as the qualitative approach because it involved the analysis of statistical data from the research instrument as well as information from open- ended questions.

3.3 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is primarily characterised by the researcher formulating a well defined research problem or question and then objectively seeking answers or solutions to that problem through a logical, scientific and statistically relevant research process. This statement is further echoed by Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) as cited by Matveev (2002), who state that “Being deductive and particularistic, quantitative research is based upon formulating the research hypotheses and verifying them empirically on a specific set of data.” Quantitative research involves the use of numerical data that will be

subjected to statistical analysis. This study has utilized the questionnaire as its research instrument which is in keeping with one of the most commonly used methods of gathering data in quantitative research.

According to Matveev (2002), the strengths of the quantitative method include:-

- Stating the research problem in very specific and set terms (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992).
- Clearly and precisely specifying both the independent and the dependent variables under investigation.
- Following firmly the original set of research goals, arriving at more objective conclusions, testing hypothesis, determining the issues of causality.
- Achieving high levels of reliability of gathered data due to controlled observations, laboratory experiments, mass surveys, or other form of research manipulations (Balsley, 1970).
- Eliminating or minimising subjectivity of judgment (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996).
- Allowing for longitudinal measures of subsequent performance of research subjects.

3.4 Qualitative Research

In its most basic form, qualitative research involves the analysis of unstructured data which includes open ended survey responses such as the last two questions of the research instrument used in this study. Qualitative research investigates research variables in their natural settings, seeking to interpret or make sense of phenomena within their related environments. According to Shank (2002), qualitative research is a form of systematic empirical inquiry that is associated with meaning. The advantages of doing qualitative research is that it allows the researcher a degree of flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during the research process and thereby explore the processes effectively. This method is also sensitive to contextual factors within the work environment e.g., who is affected (by the issue) why, what factors are involved, how do individuals respond or react to each other- an important factor when trying to obtain information using open- ended questions. Qualitative methods are not limited to rigidly definable variables and they also allow for the examination of complex questions that cannot be analysed or interpreted by

quantitative methodologies. Qualitative research methods allow for much more detailed investigation of issues.

3.5 Sampling

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). By employing a particular sampling technique, the researcher can draw inferences about a population, provided the sample is representative of that population. Sampling can be divided into two major categories, i.e. probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

According to Landreneau (2006), the following can be stated concerning probability and non-probability sampling:-

Probability sampling

- Includes some form of random selection in choosing the elements.
- Greater confidence can be placed in the representativeness of probability samples.
- This type of sampling involves a selection process in which each element in the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected
- Four main methods include: 1) simple random, 2) stratified random, 3) cluster and 4) systematic.

Non-probability sampling

- The elements that make up the sample are selected by non random methods.
- This type of sampling is less likely than probability sampling to produce representative samples.
- The three main methods are: 1) convenience, 2) quota, and 3) purposive.

According to Walonik (1997), random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling where each member of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected.

This study used the simple random sampling method. The aim of this method is to reduce the potential for human bias when selecting the sample. This method was chosen because it ensured that every member of the company had an equal chance of being selected. This was important for the researcher who required important feedback from employees across various departments within the company in order to formulate conclusions from the sample that are truly applicable to the rest of the employees within the organisation. Another important benefit of this method is that it allowed the researcher to use a statistical tool to analyse the data in a relatively simple manner. The total number of employees within this organisation at the time of the study was 257. A total of 78 employees ($n=78$), completed and returned the questionnaire to the researcher i.e. the sample size was 78. There was some indication of certain resistance, especially of lower occupational category staff, to participate in the survey. Some respondents indicated that they simply did not trust the anonymity and confidentiality of their respective participation and were as a consequence thereof, not willing to participate in the study.

3.6 Analysis of Data

The data gathered in this study was statistically analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme. Popular among researchers within the social science discipline, the researcher found the SPSS software programme user friendly and effective. Data gathered from fieldwork was entered into the programme which statistically analysed the data and provided the results in a graphical format.

Correlation results of objective relevant variables were presented in the form of cross tabulation tables and were expressed in the form of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r), which measures the strength of the relationship between two relevant variables. The graphical representations of the research results as well as the correlation results are presented in the next chapter of this study.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

3.7.1 Reliability

Joppe (2000), as cited in Golafshani (2003), defines reliability as “...The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.”

The abovementioned citation refers to reliability in terms of replicability or repeatability of the research results. In simple terms, if the research was to be carried out on a larger scale, and the outcomes were similar to that of the same research carried out on a smaller scale, then the research study would be considered to be reliable.

According to Kirk and Miller (1986), as cited in Golafshani (2003), there are three types of reliability in quantitative research which are:-

- the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same.
- the stability of a measurement over time.
- the similarity of measurements within a given time period.

The reliability of the research conducted in this study was determined by using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient test. This will be outlined in detail in the next chapter.

3.7.2 Validity

Joppe (2000), as cited in Golafshani (2003), explains the concept of validity in quantitative research as:-

“Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions, and will often look for the answers in the research of others.”

The two major categories of validity are :-

- internal validity
- external validity

Internal validity has to do with the accuracy of the results. Results could be inaccurate if samples are not selected randomly. External validity has to do with the generalisability of the findings to the population.

External validity is the extent that results from a study generalise to other people, places, and situations--how well the findings stand outside the study and the extent to which they can be replicated. The internal validity is that extent to which the study's design enables it to measure and study what it intends to study.

Validity questions the accuracy of the means of measurement in research and whether what is measured was intended to be measured in the first place. The 'face validity' of the questionnaire used in this study was determined by the researcher i.e. the validity of the questions in the questionnaire was evaluated against the research objectives and key research questions. This was carried out by the researcher personally interacting with the participants during the pilot study phase of this research.

3.8 Research Ethics

An 'ethic' is a moral principle or a code of conduct which governs what people do. It is concerned with the way people act or behave. The term 'ethics' usually refers to the moral principles, guiding conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession (though there is no logical reason why individuals should not have their own ethical code)" (Wellington, 2000: 54).

Good research practice involves researchers taking the responsibility of securing the permission and trust of all those involved in a research study. Ethical research implies a moral responsibility of the researcher towards the participants in terms of protection of the rights of the participants, assurance of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy as well as tolerance and discretion towards issues of a sensitive nature.

According to the National Academy of Sciences, (2009):-

“The scientific research enterprise is built on a foundation of trust. Scientists trust that the results reported by others are valid. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists to describe the world accurately and without bias. But this trust will endure only if the scientific community devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical scientific conduct.”

The researcher has complied with the The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Research Ethics Policy, regarding this study. This process involved the application of an Ethical Clearance Certificate, which is compulsory for all staff and students as members of the university community, both graduate and undergraduate to obtain before any research is to be conducted. Therefore , as such, these members are required to sign an undertaking which binds them to the “University’s Code of Conduct for Research”

3.9 Questionnaire Design

Quantitative studies involve the use of formal standardised questionnaires. According to Marketing Research and Information Systems (1997), formal standardised questionnaires are characterised by:-

- Prescribed wording and order of questions, to ensure that each respondent receives the same stimuli.
- Prescribed definitions or explanations for each question, to ensure interviewers handle questions consistently and can answer respondents' requests for clarification if they occur.
- Prescribed response format, to enable rapid completion of the questionnaire during the interviewing process.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of questions that required biographical details of the participants, occupational information, questions relating to the central theme of the study as well as open ended questions that allowed the respondents the opportunity to express their individualised views and opinions of various issues relating to the issues being researched.

The questions from the questionnaire were linked to the research objectives as follows:-

- Questions **6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 26** were linked to objective **One:-**

To evaluate the frequency and extent of conflict within the company

- Questions **10, 11, 12, 26** were linked to objective **Two:-**

To identify causes of conflict within the company.

- Questions **13, 23, 24, 25** were linked to objective **Three:-**

To identify the extent to which work related procedures address conflict related issues within the company.

- Questions **19, 20, 21, 22** were linked to objective **Four:-**

To identify the extent to which the failure or underperformance of communication processes within the company contribute to conflict.

- Questions **14, 15, 16, 17, 18** were linked to objective **Five:-**

To determine which departments experience the most conflict.

3.10 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study of the research in order to assess the willingness and cooperative culture of the participants regarding the research. This also afforded the researcher the opportunity to engage with the participants on a one to one basis in order to explain any misconceptions or misunderstandings regarding the research. A few questionnaires were handed out to participants from different departments within the company. This process allowed the researcher to take note of useful suggestions and valuable input concerning sensitive issues within the particular working environment which ultimately resulted in the construction of a more reliable,

valid and practical questionnaire. Potential shortcomings and flaws regarding the administration of the questionnaire as well as the collection of completed questionnaires were also highlighted during this process.

3.11 Fieldwork

This entailed physically making the questionnaire available to employees across all departments of the company. All staff members had accessibility to the questionnaire. Some questionnaires were emailed to a few senior members of staff as per request. Although the purpose of the study was briefly explained to employees during a company staff meeting a few weeks before actual administration of the questionnaire, staff members questioned the purpose, reasons and significance of the research.

Although the participants were given a specific time frame within which to complete and hand over the questionnaire, the researcher was confronted by many employees who indicated that either they were unaware of the time frame for completion of the questionnaire or simply ‘did not get down’ to completing it. Some employees indicated that due to various work commitments, they simply did not have the time to complete the questionnaire.

3.12 Conclusion

The research methodology used in this study was explained and categorised in this chapter. The sampling procedure and type was also explained along with the statistical analysis of the data. The reliability and validity aspects of the research were also explained in this chapter. Research ethics was also discussed with reference to the ethical procedures followed by the researcher during this study. The construction of the research instrument in relation to the study objectives was also outlined. Details concerning the pilot study and fieldwork aspects of this study were explained in this chapter as well. The presentation of the research results will now be looked at in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This study was conducted within a privately owned trucking business within the greater Durban area. The occurrence of some form of conflict at one point in time or another is an inevitable reality in almost all organisations. The degree as well as the frequency of occurrence of conflict within organisations needs to be carefully monitored and assessed in order to establish if urgent intervention is needed within the organisation. Excessive occurrences and instances of conflict within the working environment impacts negatively on the entire organisation in terms of staff morale, interpersonal relationships, productivity and ultimately, the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the entire organisation. Within a privately owned business environment, conflict management needs to be highly effective as ineffective handling of conflict situations can indirectly impact negatively on the profitability of the business. Based on the management's recommendations as well as obvious recorded instances of conflict within the organisation, the researcher decided to investigate the problem further.

4.2 Data Collection

The questionnaires, which related to the core issues of the problem within this environment, were physically handed out to key departments within the company. They were then further distributed to the various employees within those departments. Some questionnaires were sent electronically to certain staff members upon request as they found this to be the most efficient method of participating. A total of 78 completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher. Thereafter the questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis in order to interpret the data.

Table 4.1

	N	%
Cases Valid	77	97.5
Excluded	1	2.5
Total	78	100.0

Case Processing Summary

- a. List wise deletion based on all variables
in the procedure

Table 4.2

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.761	20

The questionnaire used in this study was subjected to a reliability test in order to assess its reliability. This test is done because it is important for the researcher to have an indication as to what extent the questions in the questionnaire are actually related to the objectives of the study ie, how reliable the questions are in terms of addressing the main aims and objectives of the study. The reliability was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha value can range from 0 to 1, with the strength of the alpha value increasing as it progresses closer to 1. A value of .7 or higher is considered significantly reliable (Gliem and Gliem, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha calculated for this study was .761, (table 4.2), which indicates that the questionnaire has yielded reliable results.

Table 4.3: Age distribution of respondents

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 25	10	12.8	12.8	12.8
	26 to 35	27	34.6	34.6	47.4
	36 to 45	28	35.9	35.9	83.3
	46 to 55	12	15.4	15.4	98.7
	Over 55	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 35.9% of respondents were between 36-45 years of age, 34.6% were between 26-35 years of age, 15.4% were between 46-55, 12.8% were under 25 and 1.3% were over 55. This indicates that the majority of respondents (70.5%) were between the ages of 26 to 45.

Table 4.4 Gender analysis of respondents

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	60	76.9	80.0	80.0
	Female	15	19.2	20.0	100.0
	Total	75	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.8		
Total		78	100.0		

In total, 76.9% of respondents were male, 19.2% were female and 3.8% did not indicate gender.

Table 4.5: Occupational categories of respondents

Designation		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Management'	3	3.8	3.9	3.9
	Logistics	9	11.5	11.8	15.8
	Marketing	4	5.1	5.3	21.1
	Driver	23	29.5	30.3	51.3
	Administration	8	10.3	10.5	61.8
	Conductor	10	12.8	13.2	75.0
	Operations	9	11.5	11.8	86.8
	Maintenance	10	12.8	13.2	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

The majority of respondents were drivers (29.5%). 12.8% were maintenance staff, 12.8% were conductors, 11.5% were in operations, 11.5% were in logistics, 10.3% in administration, 5.1% in marketing and 3.8% in management. 2.6% did not indicate designation. A possible explanation for the high response rate of drivers could be attributed to the drivers within the company experiencing a significant amount of work related conflict issues which need to be addressed appropriately by management, as drivers are essential operational staff. Overleaf is the graphical representation of categories of respondents.

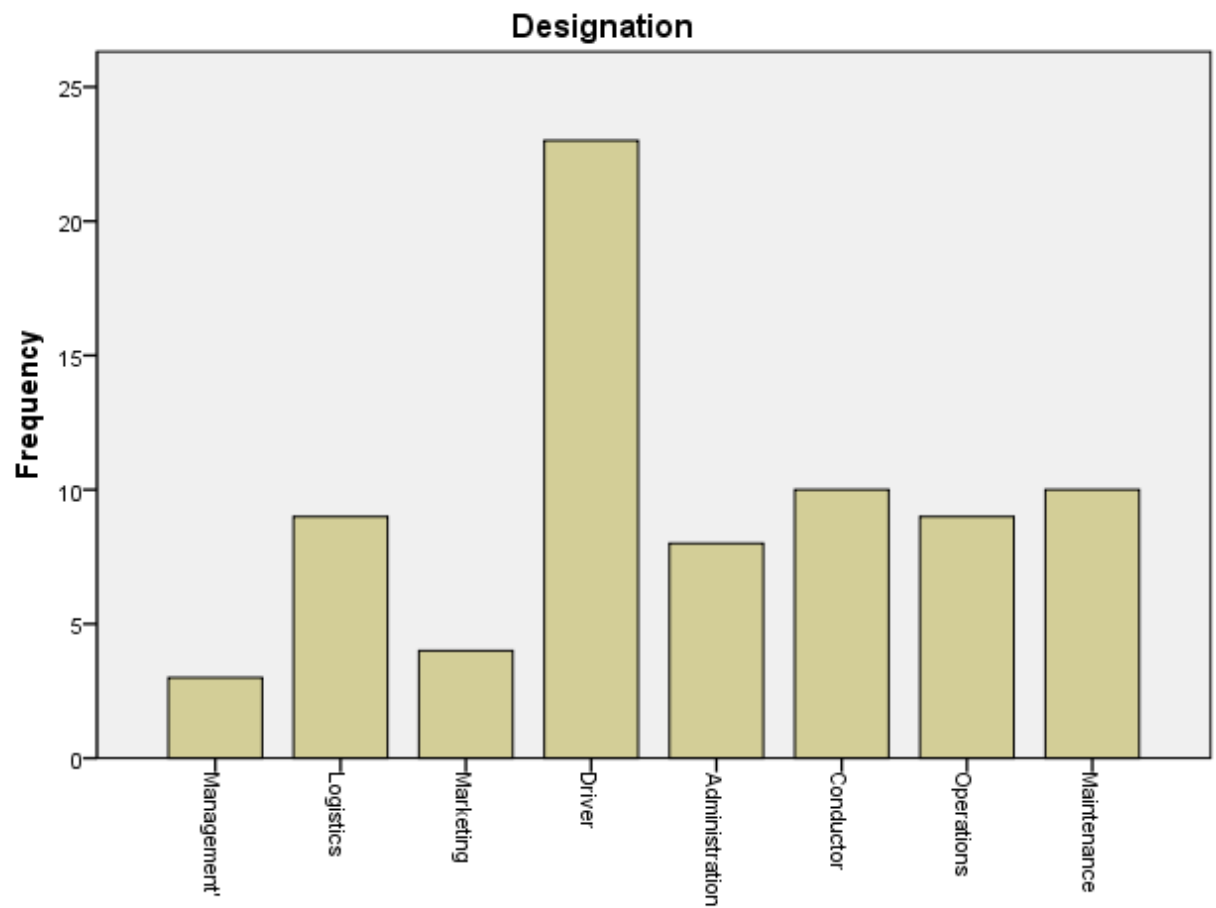


Figure 4.1: Graphical representation of occupational categories of respondents

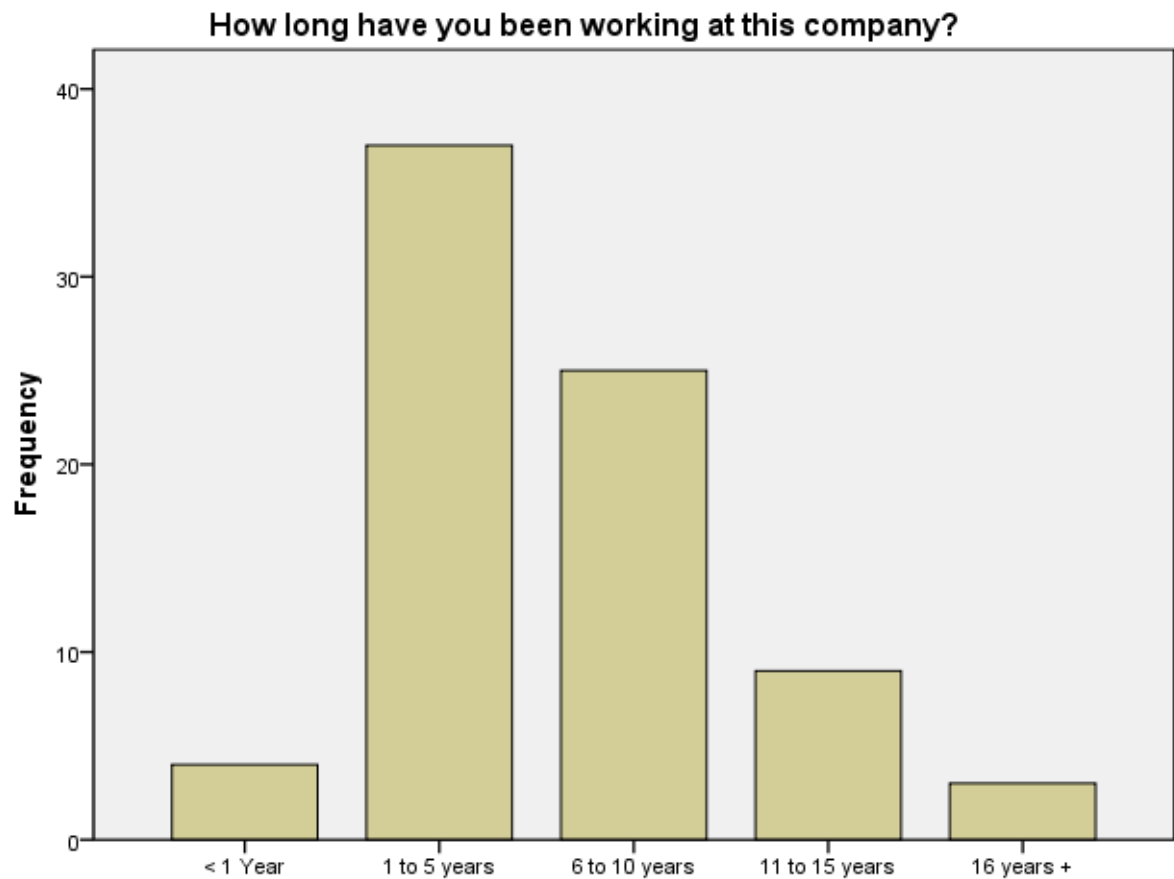


Figure 4.2: Responses to question 4

In total, 47.4% of respondents worked in the company for the period of 1-5 years, 32,1% between 6-10 years, 11.5% between 11-15 years, 5.1% less than 1 year and 3.8% for more than 16 years. This indicates that the majority of staff (79.5%) are employed in this company for a period of between 1 to 10 years.

Table 4.6 Responses to Question 6.

I have a good working relationship with my fellow employees.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Uncertain	9	11.5	11.5	14.1
	Agree	49	62.8	62.8	76.9
	Strongly Agree	18	23.1	23.1	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Of the respondents, 62.8% agree that they do have a good working relationship with their fellow workers, 23.1% strongly agree, 11.5% are uncertain and 2.6% disagree. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of respondents agree that they have a good working relationship with their colleagues. This seems to be in contrast to initial management reports of increased amounts of work related conflicts within this organisation.

Table 4.7 Responses to question 7

Conflict at work has a negative impact on work relationships.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Uncertain	7	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Agree	37	47.4	47.4	56.4
	Strongly Agree	34	43.6	43.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 47.4% of respondents agree that conflict at work has a negative impact on work relationships while 43.6% strongly agree and 9% are uncertain.

Table 4.8 Responses to question 8

I have been involved in some form of conflict (e.g.: arguments, disagreements etc) at work in recent months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Disagree	5	6.4	6.4	9.0
	Uncertain	5	6.4	6.4	15.4
	Agree	51	65.4	65.4	80.8
	Strongly Agree	15	19.2	19.2	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 65.4% of respondents agree that they have been involved in some form of conflict at work in recent months, 19.2% strongly agree, 6.4% are uncertain, 6.4% disagree and 2.6% strongly disagree. The majority of respondents to this question confirm that work related conflict has occurred within their work environment.

Table 4.9 Responses to question 9

According to my observations, conflict at work occurs quite regularly

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Uncertain	12	15.4	15.4	17.9
	Agree	42	53.8	53.8	71.8
	Strongly Agree	22	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A total of 53.8% of respondents agree that according to their observations, conflict at work occurs quite regularly. 28.2% strongly agree, 15.4% are uncertain and 2.6% disagree. It is once again clear that the majority of respondents agree that conflict occurs quite regularly at work.

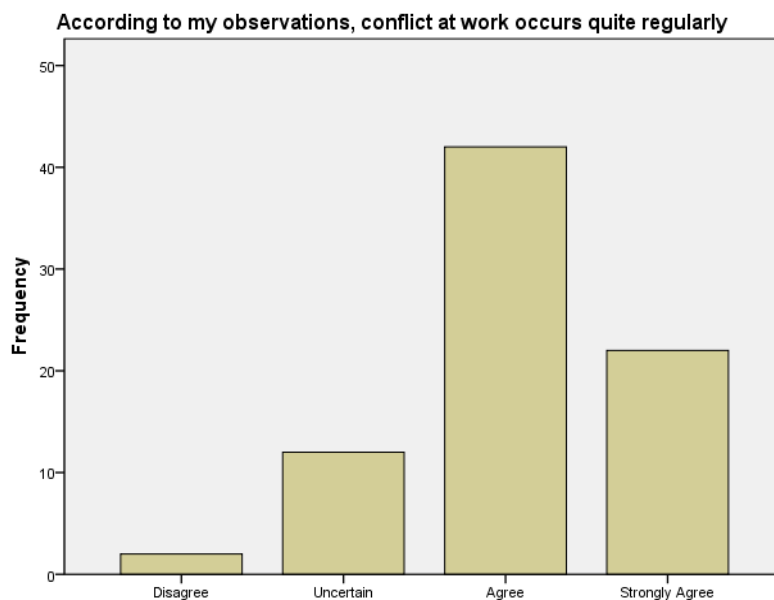


Figure 4.3 Graphical representations of responses to question 9.

Table 4.10: responses to question 10

Most conflict at work stems from a lack of effective communication between different departments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Uncertain	47	60.3	60.3	62.8
	Agree	17	21.8	21.8	84.6
	Strongly Agree	12	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Of the respondents, 60.3% are uncertain if conflict stems from a lack of effective communication between different departments, 21.8% agree, 15.4% strongly agree and 2.6% disagree. This could stem from possibly a general lack of awareness or knowledge of communication systems or processes within the organisation.

Table 4.11: Responses to question 11

Most conflict at work stems from unclear instructions from senior staff (managers) to operational staff (supervisors and drivers)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	2	2.6	2.6	3.8
	Uncertain	43	55.1	55.1	59.0
	Agree	23	29.5	29.5	88.5
	Strongly Agree	9	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

In total, 55.1% of respondents are uncertain if most conflict stems from unclear instructions from senior staff to operational staff, 29.5% agree, 11.5% strongly agree, 2.6% disagree and 1.3% strongly disagree. This indicates the uncertainty of the vast majority of respondents regarding the question relating to the source of most conflict relating to unclear instructions within the organisation.

Table 4.12: Responses to question 12

Most conflict at work is a result of complicated work procedures

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	12.8	12.8	12.8
	Disagree	19	24.4	24.4	37.2
	Uncertain	33	42.3	42.3	79.5
	Agree	15	19.2	19.2	98.7
	Strongly Agree	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A total of 42.3% of respondents are uncertain if most conflict is a result of complicated work procedures, 24.4% disagree, 19.2% agree, 12.8% strongly disagree and 1.3% strongly agree. There is uncertainty regarding the association of working procedures and conflict within this organisation.

Table 4.13: Responses to question 13

Based on my experience and observations, conflict situations at work are always resolved amicably

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Disagree	14	17.9	17.9	29.5
	Uncertain	39	50.0	50.0	79.5
	Agree	15	19.2	19.2	98.7
	Strongly Agree	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 50% of respondents are uncertain if conflict situations at work are always resolved amicably, 19.2% agree, 17.9% disagree, 11.5% strongly disagree and 1.3% strongly agrees.

Table 4.14: Responses to question 14

I experience most conflict with management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	14.1	14.1	14.1
	Disagree	33	42.3	42.3	56.4
	Uncertain	18	23.1	23.1	79.5
	Agree	11	14.1	14.1	93.6
	Strongly Agree	5	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Altogether 42.3% of respondents disagree that they experience most conflict with management, 23.1% are uncertain, 14.1% agree, 14.1% strongly disagree and 6.4% strongly agree. Majority of respondents are unsure if management is involved in most conflict situations at work.

Table 4.15: Responses to question 15**I experience most conflict with supervisors**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	6	7.7	7.7	7.7
Disagree	11	14.1	14.1	21.8
Uncertain	12	15.4	15.4	37.2
Agree	22	28.2	28.2	65.4
Strongly Agree	27	34.6	34.6	100.0
Total	78	100.0	100.0	

The majority of respondents, 34.6% strongly agree that they experience most conflict with supervisors, 28.2% agree, 15.4% are uncertain, 14.1% disagree and 7.7% strongly disagree. It is important to note that the vast majority of respondents (62.8%) collectively agree that they experience most conflict with supervisors within this organisation. This also needs to be seriously noted and investigated by management as a potential source of conflict within this organisation.

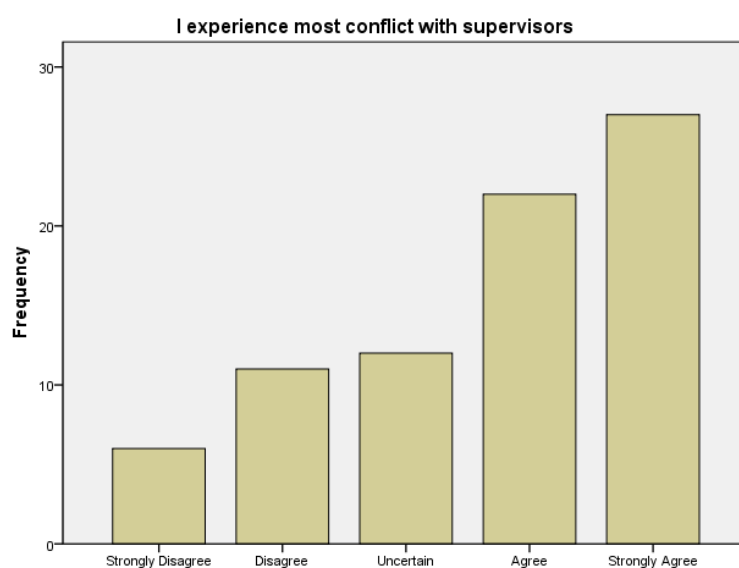
**Figure 4.4: Graphical representation of responses to question 15**

Table 4.16: Responses to question 16

I experience most conflict with operational staff, such as drivers, conductors, maintenance staff, etc

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	5.1	5.1	5.1
	Disagree	25	32.1	32.1	37.2
	Uncertain	11	14.1	14.1	51.3
	Agree	15	19.2	19.2	70.5
	Strongly Agree	23	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 32.1% of respondents disagree to the fact that they experience most conflict with operational staff while 29.5% strongly agree, 19.2% agree, 14.1% are uncertain and 5.1% strongly disagree. Collectively, 48.7% of respondents agree that they experience most conflict with operational staff. This is definitely an issue that management needs to take serious note of and therefore implement practical, effective solutions.

Table 4.17: Responses to question 17

I experience most conflict with administrative staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	20.5	20.5	20.5
	Disagree	31	39.7	39.7	60.3
	Uncertain	17	21.8	21.8	82.1
	Agree	12	15.4	15.4	97.4
	Strongly Agree	2	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A total of 39.7% respondents disagree that they experience most conflict with administrative staff, 20.5% strongly disagree, 21.8% are uncertain, 15.4% agree and 2.6% strongly agree. Collectively, 60.2% of respondents disagree that they experience most conflict with administrative staff.

Table 4.18: Responses to question 18

I experience most conflict with maintenance staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	10.3	10.3	10.3
	Disagree	35	44.9	44.9	55.1
	Uncertain	17	21.8	21.8	76.9
	Agree	11	14.1	14.1	91.0
	Strongly Agree	7	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 44.9% of respondents disagree with the statement that they experience most conflict with maintenance staff, 21.8% is uncertain, 14.1% agree, 10.3% strongly disagree whilst 9% strongly agree.

Table 4.19: Responses to question 19

I experience most conflict in terms of communications with management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	38	48.7	48.7	52.6
	Uncertain	17	21.8	21.8	74.4
	Agree	13	16.7	16.7	91.0
	Strongly Agree	7	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A large percentage of respondents (48.7%) disagree that they experience most conflict in terms of communication with management. 21.8% are uncertain, 16.7% agree, 9% strongly agree and 3.8% strongly disagree.

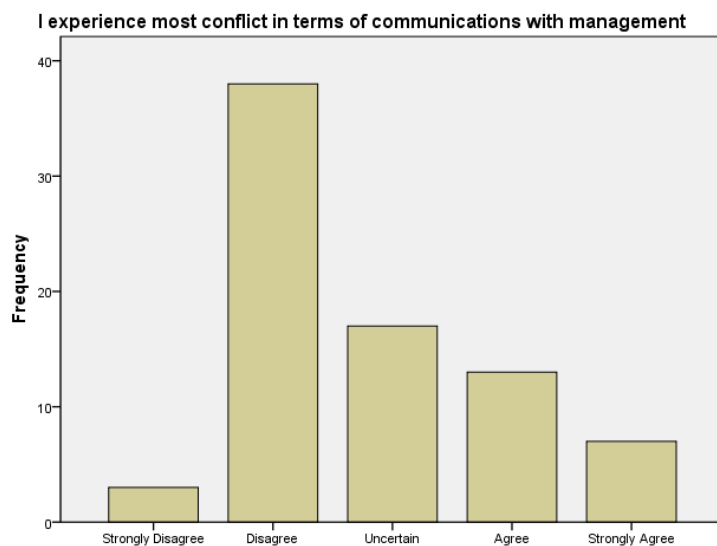


Figure 4.5: Responses to question 19

Table 4.20: Responses to question 20

I experience most conflict in terms of communications with supervisors

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	19	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Uncertain	9	11.5	11.5	35.9
	Agree	23	29.5	29.5	65.4
	Strongly Agree	27	34.6	34.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A total of 34.6% of respondents strongly agree that they experience most conflict in terms of communication with supervisors, 29.5% agree, 24.4% disagree and 11.5% are uncertain.

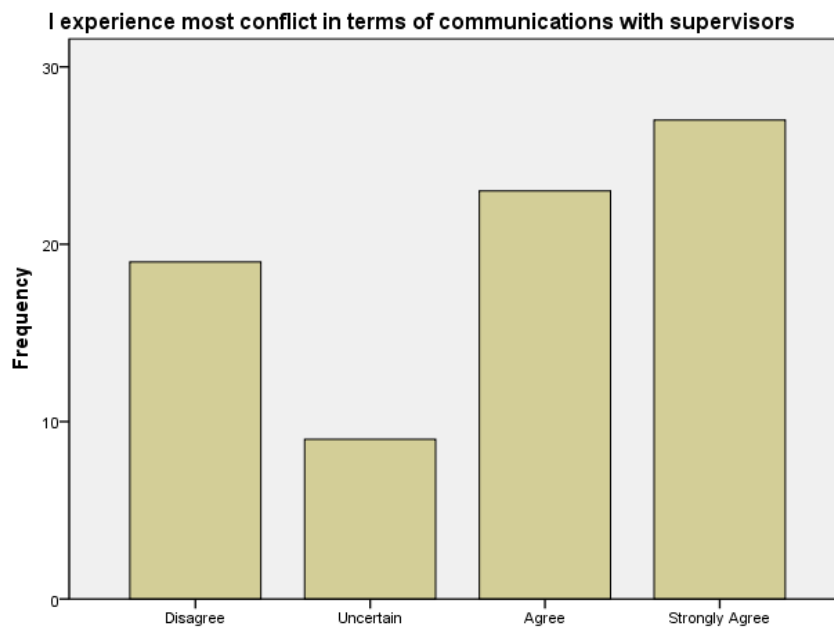


Figure 4.6: Responses to question 20

Table 4.21: Responses to question 21**I experience most conflict in terms of communications with operational staff**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
Disagree	21	26.9	26.9	28.2
Uncertain	22	28.2	28.2	56.4
Agree	17	21.8	21.8	78.2
Strongly Agree	17	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 28.2% of respondents are uncertain if they experience most conflict in terms of communication with operational staff, 26.9% disagree, 21.8% agree, 21.8% strongly agree and 1.3% strongly disagree. Operational staff do not seem to be implicated in conflict issues.

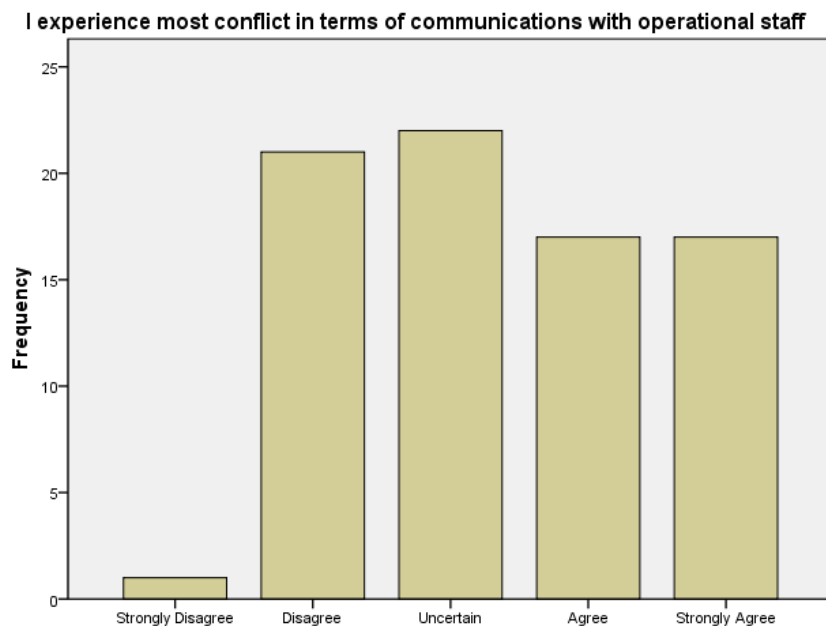
**Figure 4.7: Responses to question 21**

Table 4.22: Responses to question 22

I experience most conflict in terms of communications with administrative staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	14.1	14.1	14.1
	Disagree	40	51.3	51.3	65.4
	Uncertain	16	20.5	20.5	85.9
	Agree	8	10.3	10.3	96.2
	Strongly Agree	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A total of 51.3% of respondents disagree that they experience most conflict in terms of communications with administrative staff. 20.5% are uncertain, 14.1% strongly disagree, 10.3% agree and 3.8% strongly agree.

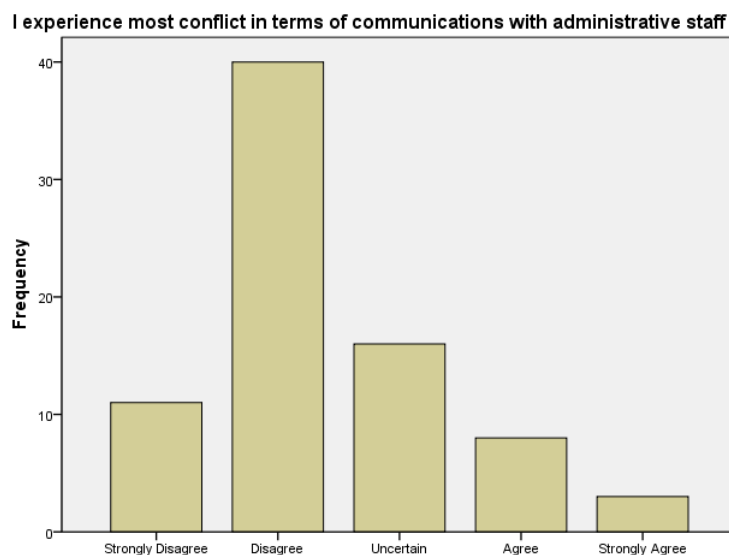


Figure 4.8: Responses to question 22

Table 4.23: Responses to question 23

The company has an effective conflict management system in place

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	10.3	10.3	10.3
	Disagree	16	20.5	20.5	30.8
	Uncertain	49	62.8	62.8	93.6
	Agree	5	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Majority of respondents (62.8%) are uncertain if the company has an effective conflict management system in place. 20.5% disagree, 10.3% strongly disagree and 6.4% agree. This should be an area of concern for management who need to perhaps engage their staff in appropriate training and awareness regarding conflict management.

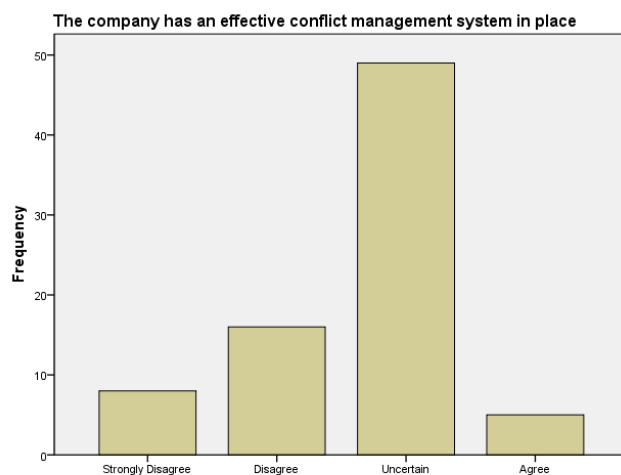


Figure 4.9: Responses to question 23

Table 4.24: Responses to question 24

Senior management is always available to address conflict issues at work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	14.1	14.1	14.1
	Disagree	24	30.8	30.8	44.9
	Uncertain	31	39.7	39.7	84.6
	Agree	9	11.5	11.5	96.2
	Strongly Agree	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Some 39.7% of respondents are uncertain if senior management is always available to address conflict issues at work. 30.8% disagree, 14.1%strongly disagree, 11.5% agree and 3.8% strongly agree. Senior management needs to urgently take not of these concerns.



Figure 4.10: Responses to question 24

Table 4.25: Response to question 25

Internal training programmes within the company effectively address conflict management within the company

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Disagree	25	32.1	32.1	39.7
	Uncertain	42	53.8	53.8	93.6
	Agree	5	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

A total of 53.8% of the respondents are uncertain if internal training programmes within the company effectively address conflict management within the company. 32.1% disagree, 7.7% strongly disagree and 6.4% agree. It is evident that internal training programmes regarding conflict be revisited by management urgently.



Figure 4.11: Response to question 25

The responses to the **open-ended questions** via: questions 26 and 27 were tabled and categorised as follows:

Responses to question 26 (open ended).

What procedures/practices within the company regularly result in some form of conflict between employees? Please elaborate.

Table 4.26

Issues leading to conflict	Number	Percentages
Frequency & Extent	6	7.69%%
Specific causes	19	24.36%
Work related problems	20	25.64%
Communication processes	17	21.79%
Inter Departmental Conflicts	10	12.82%
N/A	6	7.69%

Some 25.64% of respondents cite work related problems as factors contributing to conflict, 24.36% of respondents indicated that conflict at work stems from specific causes, while 21.79% attribute conflict to problems associated with communication processes within the organisation. 12.82% of respondents indicated that conflict situations within the organisation arise as a result of various problems between different departments of the organisation.

Responses to question 27 (open ended)

In your opinion, what can and must be specifically done in the company to reduce conflict situations between all parties concerned, thereby improving working relationships within the company as a whole. Please explain.

Table 4.27

Employee Recommendations	Number	Percentages
Improve Inter-Departmental Communications	31	39.74%
Clarified Work-Related HR Functions	26	33.33%
Further Training Interventions	6	7.69%
Increase Employee Morale	8	10.26%
N/A	7	8.97%

A total of 39.74% of respondents believe that improved inter-departmental communications would certainly improve working relationships within the organisation which will ultimately reduce or possibly eliminate conflict. 33.33% of respondents indicated that clearer job descriptions or work related functions would result in less conflict situations within the organisation. 10.26% of respondents have indicated that employee morale needs to be uplifted or improved.

CORRELATIONS

Pearsons correlation- indicates the strength and significance of the relationships. The Pearson's correlation is used to find a correlation between at least two continuous variables. The value for a Pearson's can fall between 0.00 (no correlation) and 1.00 (perfect correlation).

According to Pallant (2005):

Pearson can be -1 or 1.

A correlation of "0" = no relationship between the variables.

A correlation from .10 to .29 = a weak correlation between the variables.

A correlation from .30 to .49 = a medium correlation between the variables.

A correlation from .50 to 1 = a strong correlation between the variables.

The following correlations were done using the data from the questionnaires that best represented the study objectives:

Table: 4.28 – Correlation 1

		According to my observations, conflict at work occurs quite regularly
I have been involved in some form of conflict (e.g.: arguments, disagreements etc) at work in recent months	1 78	.296** .009 78

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between observing the frequency of conflict and being involved in some form of conflict is .296. This indicates a weak correlation between the variables.

Table: 4.29 – Correlation 2

		Conflict at work has a negative impact on work relationships.
I have a good working relationship with my fellow employees.	Pearson Correlation	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between having a good working relationship with fellow employees and the negative impact of conflict on work relationships is .461. This indicates a medium correlation between the variables.

		Internal training programmes within the company effectively address conflict management within the company
The company has an effective conflict management system in place	1	.614**
		.000
N	78	78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table: 4.30 – Correlation 3

The correlation between an effective conflict management system and the influence of internal training programmes on conflict management issues within the organisation is .614. This indicates a strong correlation between the variables.

Table: 4.31 – Correlation 4

		Senior management is always available to address conflict issues at work
The company has an effective conflict management system in place	1	.610**
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	78	78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between an effective conflict management system and the availability of senior management to address conflict issues is .610. This indicates a strong relationship between the variables.

		Most conflict at work stems from a lack of effective communication between different departments
I have a good working relationship with my fellow employees.	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.037
N	78	.748
		78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table: 4.32 – Correlation 5

The correlation between good working relationships with fellow employees and the lack of effective interdepartmental communication is -.037. This indicates a very weak relationship between the variables.

		According to my observations, conflict at work occurs quite regularly
Conflict at work has a Pearson negative impact on Correlation work relationships. Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.163
N	78	.153 78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table: 4.33 – Correlation 6

The correlation between the negative impact of conflict on work relationships and the frequency of conflict is .163. This indicates a weak relationship between the variables.

4.34 Conclusion

This chapter examined and presented the statistical data that was gathered during the fieldwork phase of this study. Data was presented in tabular as well as graphical formats. Correlations examining relationships between significant variables relating to key aspects of the study were also presented in a cross tabular format. The next chapter focuses on the interpretation and discussion of the results presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This study focused on the subject of workplace conflict. The specific setting for this study was a privately owned trucking business within the greater Durban area. Workplace conflict can be characterised by disputes between work colleagues, clashing of personalities, style differences, or general disagreements of goals, values and beliefs amongst individuals in an organisation. If left unresolved, conflict in the workplace can quickly escalate which can potentially lead to disastrous outcomes, both for the employees themselves, as well as the organisation as a whole. The results of this study now be looked at and evaluated in terms of the study objectives which were stated in the first chapter of this study as well as the percentages obtained from the previous chapter.

5.2 Research Objectives

Research objectives provide the researcher with clear guidelines regarding the methodology to be followed in order to ultimately realise the objectives. The entire scope of the research is determined by what is needed to be realised or achieved by the research. The research objectives for this study, as outlined in chapter one were:

- To evaluate the frequency and extent of conflict within the company.
- To identify causes of conflict within the company.
- To identify the extent to which work related procedures address conflict related issues within the company.
- To identify the extent to which the failure or underperformance of communication processes within the company contribute to conflict.
- To determine which departments experience the most conflict.

5.3 Research results in terms of objectives

5.3.1 Objective 1: To evaluate the frequency and extent of conflict within the company

Relevant Questions: 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 26

Some 62.8% of the respondents collectively agree that they have a good working relationship with their fellow employees. An overwhelming 91% of respondents collectively agree that conflict has a negative impact on work relationships. A total of 84.6% of respondents have been involved in some form of conflict at work in recent months. Some 82% of respondents observe conflict regularly at work. Some 50% of respondents are uncertain if conflict situations are always resolved amicably at work.

Findings being that conflict at work are most certainly an issue and employees of the firm recognise that conflict needs to be avoided and when it does flare up it needs to be addressed quickly and effectively. The high rate of conflict, at 82% at work illustrates a potentially serious situation which could lead to high staff turnover, intentional poor and slow work practices amongst other negative behaviour. This powder keg needs to be addressed by management and defused before it becomes extremely costly to the company.

Findings from the literature were that:

Organisations cannot afford to have excessive amounts of conflict. Out of control conflict or excessive conflict will ultimately be detrimental to the organisation. High incidences of conflict within an organisation will almost surely result in low production, decreased job satisfaction, low employee morale, increased incidences of disputes and ultimately, lower profits. However, it must also be noted that controlled conflict within a work environment can actually be beneficial to the organisation in many ways (Mullins 1999), e.g., management can be prompted to arrange for appropriate training and interventions based on their perception and observation of controlled incidences of conflict within the organisation.

5.3.2 Objective 2: To identify causes of conflict within the company.

Relevant Questions: 10, 11, 12, 26

Some 60.3% of respondents were uncertain if most conflict stems from a lack of effective communication between different departments. A total of 55.1% of respondents are uncertain if most conflict stems from unclear instructions from senior staff to operational staff. Altogether 42.3% of respondents are uncertain if most conflict is a result of complicated work procedures. Some 62.8% of respondents indicated that they experience most conflict with supervisors, while 48.7% of respondents experienced conflict with operational staff.

The above findings indicate that 40% of respondents consider there to be a problem at the firm with regard to communication levels being poor. In total 60% are unsure of the cause of the problem. In spite of the high percentages of uncertainty regarding this objective the high percentage of responses to the questions indicate that there is a communications problem in general. The other extremely concerning result from the survey was the unacceptably high levels of involvement of supervisors and operational staff in conflict related issues within the organisation. This is by no doubt a serious situation for management to take heed of and therefore offer viable solutions or interventions. If left unattended, this situation would definitely escalate to such an extent that the overall functioning of the business would be in serious jeopardy. Therefore, management needs to concentrate efforts and resources towards these areas of the business as a matter of urgency.

Findings from the literature were that:

Conflict can originate from various sources, both from within the work environment as well as from outside the work environment. Conflict related issues can emanate from the individual, the groups within the organisation or from environmental stress and pressures within the work environment. It is critical for managers to essentially be equipped to identify causes of conflict within the organisation. This would entail managers having the necessary skill and expertise to identify problem areas and provide practical, effective solutions. If the managers are lacking the skill to identify possible sources of conflict within the organisation, steps must then be taken to perhaps train and empower the managers to effectively deal with conflict issues e.g. conflict resolution courses, mediation

courses etc. Once equipped and after active participation and intervention with conflict resolution at work, managers must adopt a proactive stance regarding future conflict issues at work.

5.3.3 Objective 3: To identify the extent to which work related procedures address conflict related issues within the company.

Relevant Questions: 13, 23, 24, 25

A total of 50% of respondents are uncertain if conflict situations at work are always resolved amicably. A majority 62.8% of respondents are uncertain if the company has an effective conflict management system in place. Some 39.7% of respondents believe that senior management is always available to address conflict issues at work, while 30.8% also disagree that senior management is always available to address conflict issues at work. Some 53.8% of respondents are uncertain if internal training programmes within the company effectively address conflict.

It would appear that employees are unaware of work practices, channels of communication and whether or not conflict issues are resolved or whether they simmer. This is unhealthy and it is a situation that management needs to address in the interests of all stakeholders. Management needs to take urgent steps in creating awareness of role responsibilities, work related procedures and communication channels within the organisation. Perhaps holding group sessions or company workshops highlighting the role of work related procedures in conflict related issues would be beneficial to all concerned.

5.3.4 Objective 4: To identify the extent to which the failure or underperformance of communication processes within the company contribute to conflict.

Relevant Questions: 19, 20, 21 22

In total 52.5% of respondents collectively disagree that they experience most conflict in terms of communications with management. A majority 64.1% of respondents experience most conflict in terms of communication with supervisors. Altogether 28.2% of respondents are uncertain if they experience conflict in terms of communications with operational staff. Some 26.9% of respondents disagree that they experience conflict in terms of communications with operational staff. A total of 51.3% of respondents disagree they experience conflict in terms of communications with administrative staff.

These findings are consistent with the other results and there is no doubt that management needs to take the lead and drive a sound, proactive communications effort forward in the best interests of the company. Management must focus special attention towards conflict issues relating to the supervisors as it is clear that communication between supervisors and most of the respondents is certainly a problem area. Roles, responsibilities and duties regarding supervisors need to be clarified and if necessary, re-enforced frequently.

Findings from the literature were that:

Effective communication channels always facilitate good management practice which in turn results in efficiently run organisations. Worker relationships improve and roles and responsibilities are clear and well defined in an organisation that has good communication systems and practices. 'Getting the message across clearly' is absolutely essential for the efficient running of the business or organisation.

5.3.5 Objective 5: To determine which departments experience the most conflict.

Relevant Questions: 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

Some 42.3% of respondents disagree they experience most conflict with management while 23.1% are uncertain. A majority 62.8% of respondents collectively agree that they experience most conflict with supervisors. Some 48.7% of respondents collectively agree that they experience most conflict with operational staff. Some 60.2% of respondents collectively disagree they experience most conflict with administrative staff. A total of 55.2% of respondents collectively disagree they experience most conflict with maintenance staff.

Without doubt conflict stems largely from the areas of management, from supervisors and operational matters. This directs where most effort needs to be made to address the problem. Management also needs to self- evaluate in order to improve their role, especially with regards to work related conflict. Supervisors and operational staff must immediately be given priority in terms of comprehensively investigating their respective roles in conflict within this organisation. Applicable interventions need to be brought on board immediately in order to resolve the situation.

Open Ended Question Analysis

5.3.6 Question 26

Some 25.4% of respondent's related conflict in the workplace to actual work related problems, whilst 24.36% of respondents related conflict to specific causes in the workplace. A total of 21.79% linked conflict to communication processes in the workplace with 12.82% of respondents linked conflict to interdepartmental issues.

The responses to this question mirror responses to previous questions and thus confirm the necessity for the owners to improve the communications process as well as thoroughly investigate all worker related conflict issues and specific issues outlined by the respondents.

Findings from the literature were that:

Work related conflict issues must be investigated as soon as detected and handled appropriately. Specific causes of conflict need to be independently investigated and accordingly managed. Communications processes need to be clear, effective and well managed in order to facilitate a well run business.

5.3.7 Question 27

On the issue of employee recommendations, 39.74% suggested an improvement in inter-departmental communications will reduce the occurrence of conflict. A further 33.33% suggested a more clarified work related human resource function framework which precisely specifies job functions of employees, whilst 10.26% suggested increase employee morale and 7.69% suggested further training interventions.

Based on the responses to the open ended question it is certain that better communications, more frequent and more specific communications and instructions will reduce the level of conflict. That in turn will result in a happier work environment and with reduced friction; there will be less stress, better morale, especially if accompanied by team building. All this should result in lower staff turnover and a better working environment which in turn results in a more efficient business.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter explained and discussed the research results which are presented in chapter four in terms of the research objectives. The questions contained in the research instrument were grouped together in accordance with the applicable research objectives. The overall responses of each question was analysed and discussed in terms of the appropriate research objectives. The next chapter will provide conclusions recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable part of life, be it in a working environment or any other areas of life. If left unresolved, conflict within the work environment can have disastrous consequences. Managers today need to be ever so aware and more importantly, well equipped to identify and resolve conflict related issues in the work environment. The research undertaken by this study has investigated the problem of conflict within a privately owned trucking business in Durban. The main aim of this study was to identify the causal factors of conflict within the company, the frequency and extent of conflict, the relationship between work related procedures, communication processes and conflict as well identify the departments that experience the most conflict.

6.2 Main Findings of the Study

The main findings of the study will be discussed in terms of the research objectives.

6.2.1 Objective One

- To evaluate the frequency and extent of conflict within the company.

Discussion

Although most of the respondents employed in this company collectively state they have a good working relationship with their fellow employees, they also agree that conflict within this company will have a negative impact on their work relationship with each other. It is, however ironical that most of the respondents believe they have a good working relationship with their colleagues, a huge percentage of those respondents have actually been involved in some form of conflict within the company in recent months. It is also significant to note that a large percentage of employees actually observe conflict regularly at work. This leads one to believe that conflict does indeed occur regularly, as proved by the research results. However the interpretation and classification of what is really deemed to be conflict by the employees is questionable.

Recommendations:

Management should provide staff with training in the field of conflict management, in the form of workshops, teambuilding etc. Management must also take proactive steps in not only identifying and resolving conflict within the organisation, but also identify potential areas/departments/individuals within the organisation that are conflict prone. Management should meet more regularly with lower level staff to address conflict related issues more regularly, thus reducing the possibility of further conflict.

6.2.2: Objective two

- To identify causes of conflict within the company.

Discussion

The majority of respondents were uncertain or not if most conflict within the company occurred as a result of unclear communication processes. This seems to suggest that there is a high degree of doubt regarding the employees' perception of the role of the communication processes or systems within the company in terms of possible causes of conflict situations or actually being part and parcel of the conflict situation itself. A significant proportion of respondents are also uncertain of the extent to which complicated work procedures result in conflict situations within the work environment. This also suggests that there is a possibility that complicated work procedures can possibly instigate or be a result of conflict within the company. It must also be noted that a significant percentage of respondents also indicated relatively high levels of conflict relating to supervisory staff within the company.

Recommendations

Management must ensure that there is a clear understanding of relevant communication processes within the various departments of the company. This will not only ensure more effective inter-departmental communication, but will contribute positively the overall efficiency of the company as a whole. A further recommendation would be for senior staff to be subjected to relevant training regarding effective communication methods and practices which can be practically and successfully implemented within the company. In terms of complicated work procedures, management and supervisory staff should have a clear understanding of specific job descriptions and relevant tasks concerning the various

functions of staff within specific departments. Management staff should take it upon themselves to regularly educate and inform workers if necessary of their relevant specific tasks and obligations within the company. Perhaps management should intervene and closely investigate the involvement of supervisory staff in conflict related issues within the company.

6.2.3 Objective Three

- To identify the extent to which work related procedures address conflict related issues within the company.

Discussion

There seems to be a significant degree of uncertainty regarding the resolution of conflict situations within the company. There is a split opinion from the respondents as to conflict resolution within the company. The majority of respondents are also uncertain if the company has an effective and practical conflict resolution system in place. A fair percentage of respondents believe that senior management is not always available to address conflict related issues at work. The majority of respondents are also unclear or uncertain if the company has an effective conflict resolution policy in place.

Recommendations

Management and senior staff must take it upon themselves to create awareness of conflict resolution practices and procedures in place. First, however, management must establish if they indeed have an effective conflict resolution system in place. If not, urgent steps should be taken to ensure an effective and practically implementable conflict resolution procedure in place. Senior staff, including management must always avail themselves for conflict resolution processes involving company staff.

6.2.4 Objective Four

- To identify the extent to which the failure or underperformance of communication processes within the company contribute to conflict.

Discussion

In terms of communication, high percentage of respondents does not experience conflict with management. The majority of respondents clearly state that in terms of communication, they experience most conflict with the supervisory staff. There seems to be a general consensus to the fact that there is not a high degree of conflict with administrative staff and a relatively low degree of conflict in terms of communication with operational staff

Recommendations

Management must immediately intervene and investigate the involvement of supervisory staff in terms of conflict, especially regarding communication processes involving supervisors. If need be, urgent steps need to be taken to re-educate, provide further ongoing training and even initiate disciplinary steps towards supervisors who contravene company policy.

6.2.5 Objective Five

- To determine which departments experience the most conflict.

Discussion

A significant percentage of respondents do not experience most conflict with management. It must be noted that the majority of respondents experience most conflict with the supervisory staff of this company. This needs to be urgently looked at and evaluated by senior management. A significant percentage of respondents also indicated that they experience most conflict with operational staff as. This also needs to be investigated by management who need to implement urgent and effective solutions.

Recommendations

Management at all levels to urgently intervene and collaborate conflict resolution efforts, especially with regards to supervisors and operational staff. The specific causes of tensions within these two departments of the company must be thoroughly investigated and immediate remedial action must be taken in order to resolve this situation. If need be, external help must be brought in to further comprehensively assess the situation and provide implementable solutions.

6.3 Recommendations for further research

This study was conducted on a relatively small scale in order to provide insight into to occurrence of conflict within this privately trucking business. The occurrence of conflict in some form or the other, especially within the transport industry, is increasing ever more. Therefore, the researcher recommends further in depth research within this field, especially within the transport industry which is, without doubt, one of the most crucial components of our economy and society.

6.4 Conclusion

Conflict is an inevitable fact in of life in general and also an inevitable part of organisational life because the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and employees are more often than not, incompatible. Organisational conflict, if left unresolved can have potentially disastrous consequences, especially within a private business setting, where ultimately, profitability is negatively affected. The transport industry is considered as the 'hub' of our economy and as such, all efforts must be made in order to sustain high levels of efficiency and productivity within this industry. Effective conflict management within this extremely volatile environment is of the utmost importance as employees within this environment are the driving force behind this crucial industry. This study investigated specific variables of conflict within a privately owned transport business in order to bring to the fore the sources, extent and occurrences of conflict within this company. Based on the findings of the research results, recommendations were made to management regarding the possible alleviation of the occurrences of conflict within this company as well as specific guidelines in terms of possible action to be taken by management. If adhered to by management and all parties concerned, the incidence and occurrences of conflict within this company will certainly be reduced, thus contributing positively to the overall efficiency of the business.

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APPENDIX ONE - LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Mrs. A. Shamlall Tel: 0836330943

Supervisor: Mr. A. Bozas Tel: 0823344477

Research Office: Ms. P. Ximba Tel: 031 2603587

Conflict Management in a Privately Owned Trucking Business

The purpose of this survey is to solicit information from employees and staff of S.K.TRUCKING regarding work related conflict within the company. The information and ratings you provide us will go a long way in helping us identify the nature and root causes of conflict within the company. The questionnaire should only take 10-15 minutes to complete. In this questionnaire, you are asked to indicate what is true for you, so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to any question. Work as rapidly as you can. If you wish to make a comment please write it directly on the booklet itself. Make sure not to skip any questions. Thank you for participating.

APPENDIX TWO - COVER LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Graduate School of Business

Westville Campus

Dear Respondent,

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Mrs. A. Shamlall Tel: 0836330943

Supervisor: Mr. A. Bozas Tel: 0823344477

Research Office: Ms. P. Ximba Tel: 031 2603587

I, AVASHNEE SHAMLALL, an MBA student at the Graduate School Of Business, University of KwaZulu-Natal invite you to participate in a research project entitled Conflict Management In A Privately Owned Trucking Business. The aim of this study is to assess and evaluate the various factors and work processes within the company that contribute to conflict situations in the company. Your participation in this survey will enable me to identify various sources as well as the frequency and extent of conflict within this company.

Participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate from the project at any time with no negative consequences. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey group. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business, UKZN. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Yours Sincerely,

.....

Avashnee Shamlall

Researcher

.....

Date

This page is to be retained by participant

APPENDIX THREE - INFORMED CONSENT

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Mrs. A. Shamlall Tel: 0836330943

Supervisor: Mr. A. Bozas Tel: 0823344477

Research Office: Ms. P. Ximba Tel: 031 2603587

CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

APPENDIX FOUR - QUESTIONNAIRE

Conflict Management in a Privately Owned Trucking Business

1. Age

Under 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	Over 55
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2. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

3. Designation.....

4. How long have you been working at S K Trucking?

< 1 Year	1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years +
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5. Educational Qualifications.

Grade 11	Grade 12 certificate	Diploma	Degree	Other
----------	----------------------	---------	--------	-------

6. I have a good working relationship with my fellow employees.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
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7. Conflict at work has a negative impact on work relationships.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

8. I have been involved in some form of conflict (e.g. arguments, disagreements etc) at work in recent months.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

9. According to my observations, conflict at work occurs quite regularly.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

10. Most conflict at work stems from a lack of effective communication between different departments.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

11. Most conflict at work stems from unclear instructions from senior staff (e.g. managers) to operational staff (e.g. supervisors and drivers).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

12. Most conflict at work is a result of complicated work procedures.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

13. Based on my experience and observations, conflict situations at work are always resolved amicably.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

14. I experience most conflict with management.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

15. I experience most conflict with supervisors.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

16. I experience most conflict with operational staff, such as drivers, conductors, maintenance staff, etc.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

17. I experience most conflict with administrative staff (e.g. HR)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

Disagree				
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18. I experience most conflict with maintenance staff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

19. I experience most conflict in terms of communications with management.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

20. I experience most conflict in terms of communications with supervisors.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

21. I experience most conflict in terms of communications with operational staff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

22. I experience most conflict in terms of communications with administrative staff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

23. The company has an effective conflict management system in place.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
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24. Senior management is always available to address conflict issues at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
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25. Internal training programmes within the company effectively address conflict management within the company.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
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26. What procedures/practices within the company regularly result in some form of conflict between employees? Please elaborate.

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27. In your opinion, what can and must be specifically done in the company to reduce conflict situations between all parties concerned, thereby improving working relationships within the company as a whole. Please explain.

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THE END

Thank you for participating.

NB: The following information is for the benefit of the ETHICAL COMMITTEE and SUPERVISOR only.

The following table shows the relevancy of specific questions in the above questionnaire to the objectives mentioned in 2.3 of the ethical clearance application form.

OBJECTIVES	RELEVANT QUESTIONS IN QUESTIONNAIRE
1.	6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 26
2.	10, 11, 12, 26
3.	13, 23, 24, 25
4.	19, 20, 21, 22
5.	14, 15,16, 17, 18

APPENDIX FIVE



Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN, 4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 8350
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

18 October 2011

Mrs A Shamlall (9606591)
Graduate School of Business

Dear Mrs Shamlall

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0946/011MBA
PROJECT TITLE: An analysis of conflict at S.K. TRUCKING, Durban

In response to your application dated 22 September 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.






I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully





.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor – Mr A Bozas
cc. Mrs. C Haddon

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APPENDIX SIX



Proprietor: (SHAMTRANS CC)
(1994/013687/23)

291/295 Inanda Road Sea Cow Lake Durban	P.O. Box 3504 Durban 4000	Ph: 031 5771925 Fax: 086 514 6890 Email: info@sktrucking.co.za
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Mrs A. Shamlall
Graduate School of Business
UKZN

12 September 2011

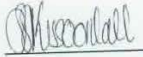
Dear Mrs Shamlall,

Re: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at SK Trucking toward your MBA qualification on the following research area: **An Analysis of Conflict within SK Trucking, Durban.**

I trust the data collected will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours Sincerely,


S. KISSOONLALL
CEO

~ 1 ~

MEMBER: S. KISSOONLALL

APPENDIX SEVEN

Turnitin Originality Report
as by Avashnee Shamlall
From Final Submission (Dissertation 2012)

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