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Conflict Management in the Workplace: Case Study of Centro
Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC)

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Abstract

This research project explores the nature of conflict, the conflict process, conflict resolution skills and conflict management techniques in the case of workplace conflict in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo. Conflict is a normal and natural aspect of life. Conflict becomes a problem in organizations when excessive levels of destructive conflict occur. Problematic levels of workplace conflict occur in approximately 10% of organizations. Attempts to address problem levels of destructive conflict are proving ineffective. Even in the US, Portugal and other parts of the world, where there has been widespread implementation of ADR based workplace conflict management systems, levels of destructive workplace conflict are raising. As ADR includes all the options to solve conflicts, this is a troublesome trend.

A partial explanation for this is that there are many problematic areas in the theoretical framework on workplace conflict. For example, conflict theorists are focusing efforts on trying to consistently achieve win-win outcomes with conflicts that have become escalated and destructive, despite the evidence that once conflict has reached this point, win-win outcomes are unlikely to be achieved. The theoretical chapter gives an overview of sources and discusses types of conflict, conflict resolution skills and conflict management techniques.

A semi-structured interview was used to reach both target groups: people that live and come in contact with the Center for psycho-social help, as well as the staff who are working in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC). We used in-depth interviews to reach the staff while using focus group discussion (FGD) to target other people who live and go for psycho-social help in the centre. During the interview a total of 23 people were reached: five staff and eighteen persons who live and come in contact with the Center. The results were analyzed using a Colaizzi's process for phenomenological data analysis approach. Open coding identified significant inconsistency and themes between much of what the conflict literature claimed and what was actually being experienced by workers, managers and other conflict professionals. The theoretical framework

identifies the following as factors that contribute to destructive conflict in workplace: power, gender, culture and organizational culture.

The conclusions of this research are that managers at Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC) are quite familiar with the conflict resolution process and the majority of them apply conflict resolution techniques. It is easy to achieve a win-win outcome when it comes to a person who lives in the Center with negotiation mediation and reconciliation but among the employees it is always difficult to achieve that because of tension and friction associated with their workplace.

Finally, the research findings showed that the individuals holding the ultimate power in organizations, who are usually the CEOs/Directors, should be made personally responsible for the levels of conflict in their organizations. Potential implications of this research are that it has identified a theory that may help reduce problem levels of destructive workplace conflict both in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC) and in other countries experiencing the same workplace conflict dynamics.

Keywords: conflict management, conflict resolution skills, conflict resolution techniques, diversity and conflict.

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1. Introduction

In the present society, the conflict free organization has never existed and never will. In workplaces antagonisms, tensions, aggressions, stereotypes, negative attitudes, competition and frustration will always be an integral part of origin where men and women from a different culture, religion, status, lifestyle, and personality live and work together (Fleetwood & Karen, 1987). The existence of conflicts in a workplace is not necessarily bad because if it is properly managed, it can lead to organizational growth. However, approaching conflict as an opportunity to improve organizational policies and operations rather than a remedy to the eradicated or ignored people can result in increased productivity (Batool & Riaz, 2013).

I hope that this research study with relevant approaches that should be adopted to manage conflict in workplaces and also helps to identify the gaps in their organizational conflict resolution approach will help managers at Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC).

1.1. Background

According to Malcolm & Rennie (1998), whenever people meet to conduct business conflict are the norms, which exist in different forms: conflict of wills, personalities, ideas, plans, strategies and interests. The world of workplace is characterized by conflict which is analyzed as metatheoretical framework that identifies the constant and overarching challenges facing organizations (Jaffee, 2001).

There is a variety of views about conflict. Some people see the conflict as a negative situation that must be avoided at any cost, while others argue that the conflict is a phenomenon which necessitates management. From this point of view, a conflict is seen as an opportunity for personal growth and individuals try to use it to his or her best advantage. In the workplace potential conflict can be in practically every decision which the manager must take. Coping efficiently and effectively with potential conflicts is one of the most important aspects of the manager's positions. Since conflict is seemingly unavoidable, it is obviously necessary for managers to be able to recognize the source of conflict, to view its construction as well as destructive potential, to learn how to manage

conflict and to implement conflict resolution techniques in a practical way (Fleetwood, 1987)

Conflict in the workplace is a well known daily phenomenon and it is on an upward trend. Some experts believe that the unresolved conflict represents the largest reducible cost in many businesses, yet the financial and human cost of conflict in the workplace is not considered a variable worth measuring and pro-actively managed in most organizations. Every workplace is consisted of people and every individual is different from each other. When individuals are working together in a similar environment, there are chances of getting into conflict or disagreement on certain issues. The conflict in the workplace has an important consequence for health and well being (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). Conflict stresses people out, brings about a stress response such as elevated heart rate, increased respiration, and an increased alertness level.

In an organization with any kind of disagreement or conflict among individuals at work, it poses risk for the individuals, both the employer and the organization as it affects employees' productivity at work (Devine, 2008).

Finally, a conflict can be handled in either a constructive or destructive way. If a conflict is not properly managed and resolved by the manager, this can bring destructive results to the workplace and organization (Fisher, 2006); however, a better handling of the conflict can result in a better working condition and improve a productive and motivated workforce (Devine, 2008). Consequently the final function of a workplace conflict is that it helps to define boundaries and to clarify who, what and where you belong to (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). Conflict leads not only to redefine social identities but also to the disappearance of certain characteristic group, institution, language or specific subculture and its expressions.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research project is to study and analyze conflict management practices in a workplace and the case study of Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC). The research includes information about the possible sources of conflict and conflict resolution techniques applied. The focus of the research is the identification of conflict resolution, conflict management strategic pattern, alternative dispute resolution and other conflict skills that can be used by managers to resolve conflict in workplaces. The

research structure is based on using alternative dispute resolution and workplace conflict management approach to a conflict resolution model.

The conclusion of this research will provide the managers at Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC) a practical and useful recommendation to increase the performance level of their employees, of people who live in the centre, or of those who come to the centre for psycho-social assistance and other people that directly or indirectly come in contact with the Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC).

It is argued that workplace productivity depends on a number of other variables as well, but for the purpose of this research we are only based on two key variables: the impact of conflict inside the organization among the people that live and work in the institution and the employees; and how the research will help the management team of the Centre to really understand the conflict management strategies and techniques, their implementation in practice and a new insight on conflict resolution approach applied in the researched organization.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

The thesis study consists of nine chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction to the thesis, the background of the study, the purpose of the research and the structure of the thesis. The second chapter includes the literature review of the thesis topics. In the third chapter the history of workplace conflict is described. The fourth chapter covers the conflict strategies and patterns and sources of conflict in workplaces. The fifth chapter provides insight on diversity and conflict. The sixth chapter is about alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The seventh chapter describes the method and research techniques used in the investigation. The eighth chapter analyzes the results. The ninth chapter discusses recommendations and the final chapter says the final words.

1. Theoretical Framework on Conflict

1.1. Conflict Phenomenon and Concepts

According to some studies, conflict is a social phenomenon that occurs across species, time period and cultures. Conflict has been frequently studied among bees, ants, other insect communities, among crayfish and chimpanzees (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). The evidence of conflict among humans dates back to the appearance of humankind itself (Keeley, 1996). The first conflict ever recorded in human existence was in the Bible when Cain killed his brother Able in the book of Genesis (Gen 4 vs 8), and since then human existence has experienced different forms of conflict.

The conflict theory is very important for any manager. It is rooted primarily in the fields of business, sociology, and psychology, but not in communication or education. It is complicated to define conflict as it is difficult to come to an agreement concerning the definition of this term (Borisoff & Victor, 1998).

The easiest way to understand the term conflict is to divide theories of conflict in functional, situational, and interactive. The followers of functional approach think that a conflict serves a social function and those who view a conflict as situational, suggest conflict as an expression under certain situations. The third theory views conflict as interactive. Functionalists usually ask the question: why is there conflict? What purpose does it serve? While situationalists ask: when do we have conflict? Under what circumstances does it occur? Interactionists' questions are: how does conflict occur? What methods and mechanisms are used to express it?

One of the representatives of the functionalist school was Georg Simmel, the German sociologist. In 1955, he defined conflict as designed to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some kind of unity even if it will be through the annihilation of one of the conflict parties. According to Simmel, conflict served as a social purpose and reconciliation came even with the total destruction of one party. Conflict socializes members of a group and reduces the tension among group members. Furthermore, Simmel determines three possible ways to end a conflict. Firstly, the conflict may end with the victory of one party over another; secondly, the conflict can be resolved through compromise and thirdly, through conciliation. However, not all conflicts may

end as referred above. For instance, those conflicts that are characterized by a high level of emotions involved cannot be resolved by compromising. Simmel (1955) made a huge contribution in the study of conflict resolution as he clearly determined a positive social function for conflict.

In 1967, Lewis Coser, an American sociologist and author of the 'Functions of Social Conflict', gave the following definition to conflict: the clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be. According to Coser, conflict served the function of pushing society and was leading to new institutions, technology, economic systems. The most important contribution that Coser brought to the study of conflict resolution was the determination of the functional and dysfunctional roles of conflict.

In 1984, a representative of the situationalist school, Bercovitch, defined conflict as a situation which is generated by incompatible goals or values among different parties or group of people. However, Bercovitch's conflict depends on the situation. Conflict arises because of different conditions such as the influence of a person and other external factors.

Furthermore, for the interactive view Folger defined conflict as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals. This approach introduces two important concepts: interdependence and perception. Interdependence is connected to such situations where one party's future actions depend on another party's actions. Another concept was mentioned (Jehn, et al 2003): conflict does not only come about when values or needs are actually, objectively incompatible, or when conflict is manifested in action, but it also exists when one of the parties perceives it to exist.

Nevertheless, Cross (1979) defined conflict as differences between and among individuals. The differences are created by the conflict, for example, values, goals, motives, resources and ideas. In 1985, Hocker & Wilmont defined a conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce reward, and interference from the other party in achieving their goal (Borisoff & Victor, 1998).

In 2005, Thomas defines a conflict as a disagreement in opinions between people or groups, due to the difference in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. Especially in the business world, differences in such characteristics as work experience, personality, peer group, environment and situation, all lead to differences in personal attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. From the above definitions it is obvious that there is not just one practical definition of conflict. Each person has an individual way of thinking and behaves differently from others in similar situations.

As conflict exists in many forms authors shy away from providing an encompassing and comprehensive definition. According to De Dreu & Gelfand (2008), conflict is a process that begins when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between itself and an individual or group about interests and resources, beliefs, values or practices that matter to them. This shows that conflict, work and organizations are so strongly intertwined that people have to conclude that organizations without conflict do not exist and conflict cannot exist without people being interdependent for their task achievement.

According to Verma (1998), conflict is as inevitable in a workplace environment as a change seems to be. When managers and employees interact during the course of completing their tasks and responsibilities, there is always a potential for conflict. In fact, it is virtually impossible for people with diverse background skills and norms to work together, to make decisions, and to try to meet project goals and objectives without conflict. In the words of John Dewey, conflict is the gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory and it instigates invention. It shocks us out of sleeplike passivity and sets us at noting and contriving. Conflict is a “sine qua non” of reflection and ingenuity. Finally, Leung (2010) believed and concluded that conflict can affect everyone in a varying extent especially in workplace where people work together on a daily basis.

1.2. Conflict and Conflict Definition

It is argued that definitions of conflict vary so much because attitudes toward conflict vary widely as well. When Hocker and Wilmot (1985) conducted a survey in order to identify which associations people have with the word conflict the following responses

were given: destruction, anger, disagreement, hostility, war, anxiety, tension, alienation, violence, competition, threat, heartac

he, pain, and hopelessness. Obviously, people viewed conflict as a negative force.

Untthe early 1960s, even scientists portrayed conflict as an undesirable process that has to be avoided (Cunha, 2001). For instance, Hocker and Wilmot (1985) offered a list of negative assumptions about conflict:

- Harmony is normal and conflict is abnormal.
- Conflicts and disagreements are the same phenomena.
- Conflict is pathological.
- Conflict should be reduced or avoided, never escalated.
- Conflict can be the result of clashes of personality.
- Emotions are different from genuine conflict.

Furthermore, some researchers argue that conflict can be seen as positive. Ramsay (2001) introduced three assumptions that indicate that conflict can be positive to people especially in workplaces.

- Conflict is natural.
- Conflict is good and necessary.
- Most conflicts are based on real differences.

Conflict is viewed as natural due to life's uncertainty. Conflict is good and necessary because a conflict can stimulate innovative thinking when it is managed in the right way. Lacking conflict, thoughts and actions are performed because they are habitual. Conflict allows an examination of the necessity of these thoughts and actions. The third assumption points out that people find it easier to live with unresolved misunderstanding than facing the fact that fundamental differences do exist, they demand recognition and appropriate management (Ramsay, 2001). Conflict is an integral part of human life in all aspects. One can't avoid conflicts in families, at work, or even when watching the news on television.

1.3. The views on Conflict

However, over the years three distinct views about conflict have evolved in organizations and workplaces.

The traditional view (the late nineteenth century until the mid-1940s): This school sees conflict as bad, always as a negative impact, and lead to declines in performance as the level of conflict increases. In this view, conflict is closely associated with such terms as violence, destruction and irrationality (Verma, 1998). According to the traditional view, conflict should be reduced, suppressed or eliminated.

This traditional view of conflict is still widely held because industrial and business institutions that have a strong influence in our society concur with it. This negative view of conflict played a role in the development of labor unions. Violent or disruptive confrontations between workers and management led people to conclude that conflict was always harmful and should therefore be avoided (Verma, 1998).

The behavioral or contemporary view (late 1940s and held sway through the 1970s): This school argues that conflict is natural and inevitable in workplaces and that it may have either a positive or a negative effect depending on how the conflict is handled (Verma, 1998). However, performance may increase with conflict, but only up to a certain level and decline if the conflict is allowed to increase further or left unresolved. This approach advocates acceptance, because of potential benefit from the conflict manager's focus on managing it effectively rather than suppressing or eliminating it.

The newest perspective, the interactionist view assumes that conflict is necessary to increase performance. While the behavioral approach accepts conflict, the interactionist view encourages conflict based on the belief that a pleasant, peaceful, tranquil, too-cooperative project organization is likely to become static, apathetic, stagnant, and unable to respond to change and innovation. This approach encourages managers to maintain an appropriate level of conflict enough to keep workplace self-critical, viable, creative, and innovative.

However, using these three views of conflict, the managerial actions to be taken can be decided by comparing the actual level of conflict (a) and desired levels of conflict (d). According to the traditional view, the desired level of conflict is always zero. If $a = 0$ does nothing, and if actual conflict rises above zero, it should be resolved. But the behavioral and interactionist views differ only in terms of the desired level of conflict, which could be equal to or above zero in the contemporary view and is always above

zero in the interactionist view. If the desired level of conflict is above zero, then there are three possible outcomes depending on whether a is more than d or a is less than d .

Figure 1 - Comparison of conflict views (Verma, 1998)

	Traditional View	Contemporary View	Interactionist view
Main Points	Caused by troublemakers, bad, should be avoided, should be suppressed	Inevitable between humans, not always bad, natural result of change, can be managed	Result from commitment to goals, often beneficial, should be stimulated, should aim to foster creativity
Effect on performance	Performance declines as the level of conflict increases	Performance mainly depends on how effectively the conflict is handled. Generally performance increases to a certain level as conflict level increases, then declines if conflict is allowed to increase further or is left unresolved	Certain level of conflict is necessary to increase performance. Performance increases with conflict up to a certain level, then declines if conflict increases further or remains unresolved
Recommended Actions	Do thing if $a=d$, Resolves conflict if $a>d$, (where $d > 0$)	Do thing if $a=d$, Resolve if $a > d$ (where $d \sim 0$)	Do thing if $a=d$, Resolve if $a > d$, stimulate conflict if $a < d$, where ($d > 0$)

1.4. The Types of Conflicts

Working in an organization means to be involved in a conflict, as people working together have various personalities and different views on life. Consequently, they can't avoid conflicts in the workplace. According to Thomas (1999), the simplest way to reduce conflict is to eliminate relationship by leaving or refusing to interact with the other party. In many situations, however, this is not only impractical, but it may be

impossible. So, managers must learn how to address and manage conflict both in organizational and workplace levels.

The process of resolving conflict is influenced to a great degree by the situation in which the conflict occurs. For instance, during the past decades, organizations changed, so did their attitude to conflict management and now companies are trying to adopt a strategic approach to managing organizational conflicts (Aula & Siira, 2010). Generally, there are four types of organizational conflict, namely interpersonal conflict, intra-group conflict, intergroup conflict and inter-organizational conflict.

2.4.1. Interpersonal conflict

This is also known as dyadic conflict (Rahim, 2001). It refers to conflict between two or more organizational members of the same or different hierarchical levels or units. Conflict threatens self-esteem and impacts negatively upon all physiological systems in ways like accelerated heart beat and increased muscle tensions (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). However, interpersonal conflict with colleagues is significantly related to personal outcomes (self-esteem, general well-being, emotional exhaustion), while interpersonal conflicts with superiors is significantly related to organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions and real turnover (Riaz & Junaid, 2011).

De Deru & Gelfand, (2008), see workplace as an antecedent to interpersonal conflict, affecting well-being negatively and employees with low well-being which may trigger conflict with colleagues who are more prone to such conflict due to poor performance. Interpersonal conflicts arise from social identity issues like intolerance towards an out-group, feeling of superiority, and hidden inclination of serving in-group at the expense of out-groups (De Dreu and Gelfand, 2008).

2.4.2. Intra-group conflict

This is also known as intradepartmental conflict. It refers to conflict among members of a group or between two or more subgroups within a group in connection with its goals, tasks, procedures, behavior and attitude (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). Such a conflict may also

occur as a result of incompatibilities or disagreements between some or all the members of a group and its leaders.

Harmony with the departments of the company is essential. It helps to maintain productivity and workplace morale, among other things, such as good relationship and productivity. When two or more people do not get along together, that personal conflict can affect everyone around them. Intra-group conflict may be connected with ethnic, religious or gender prejudice, and also various personality differences. Depending on how strong the conflict is, a manager may need outside help to resolve the issues for effective running of the organization.

2.4.3. Intergroup conflict

This is also known as interdepartmental conflict. It refers to conflict between two or more units or groups within an organization. Conflicts between manager and staff, production and marketing, headquarters and field staff are examples of this type of conflict. One special type of intergroup conflict is between labor and management. For example, one group of employees can unite against another group. Such conflicts can arise from the differences in status and contradicting goals of the groups. Intergroup conflict usually leads to miscommunication or even to no communication, affecting an organization's ability to function.

The manager can try to resolve the problem through problem solving tactics or following an internal dispute resolution process. Sometimes a facilitator can be useful to help discuss issues of conflict and related concerns. Such types of conflicts should be solved quickly but if the problem continues it can destroy the organization (Bankovskaya, 2012). Conflict between different groups or teams can become a threat to organizational competitiveness (Bankovskaya, 2012). One of the main seeds of Intergroup Conflict can be cohesiveness, but a certain amount of it can make a smooth-running team, but too much of it can be harmful. The study of in-groups has revealed such changes connected with increased group cohesiveness:

- Members of in-groups view themselves as unique individuals but they stereotype members of other groups as all alike.

- In-group members see themselves positively as people with high moral standards, as opposite to viewing members of other groups negatively and as immoral people.
- Outsiders are viewed as a threat to the group.
- In-group members exaggerate differences between their group and other groups.

In-group thinking is an inseparable part of organizational life, which is why it guarantees a conflict. Managers cannot eliminate in-group thinking, but they shouldn't ignore it. (Bankovskaya, 2012).

2.3.4. Inter-organizational conflict

This is the conflict between different organizations (Jones & George, 2008). There are three types of inter-organizational conflict: substantive conflict, emotional conflict and cultural conflict.

- Substantive conflict appears when a basic disagreement arises between two organizations at a fundamental level. For instance, the conflict between organizations that carries out ethical treatment of animals and another one that conducts on laboratory animals.
- Emotional conflict takes place when people from different organizations react on an emotional level – out of fear, jealousy, envy or stubbornness.
- Cultural conflict is based on cultural needs and desires. These conflicts are often the result of misunderstanding and stereotyping.

However, inter-organizational conflict most often can be resolved through mediation and acknowledging cultural differences (Yi-Hui lee, 2009).

Several possible ways exist for resolving each type of conflict. A manager needs to identify the orientation of the conflict he/she is dealing with before coming up with a resolution strategy.

2.5. Orientation: Constructive or Destructive

In 1973, Deutsch created a view on conflict that remains a usable framework today. Deutsch claimed that the negative or positive nature of conflict is really determined by

people's behaviors; it is not an inherent quality of conflict itself. Some behaviors produce dysfunctional, destructive and unproductive responses; other behaviors produce functional, constructive and productive responses.

For many decades, managers had been taught to view conflict only as a negative force. Nowadays two different orientations to conflict have evolved: functional and dysfunctional.

The functional form of conflict, or constructive conflict, supports the goals of the organization and improves its performance. Functional conflict may actually encourage greater work effort and helps task performance one of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and to see the opportunities. Beside this, it can not only come up with new ideas but also improve learning and growth among individuals. When individuals engage in constructive conflict, they can learn more about themselves and others. In addition, it can help to improve relationships among members, because when two sides work on resolving a disagreement together, they feel that they have mutually accomplished something.

However, referring to dysfunctional conflict, it is believed to be destructive. Such a form of conflict usually hinders organizational performance and leads to decreased productivity. This conflict orientation is characterized by competing individual interests overriding the business overall interests. Managers withhold information from one another. Employees sabotage others' work, either intentionally or through subtle, conflict-motivated disinterest in teamwork (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2008).

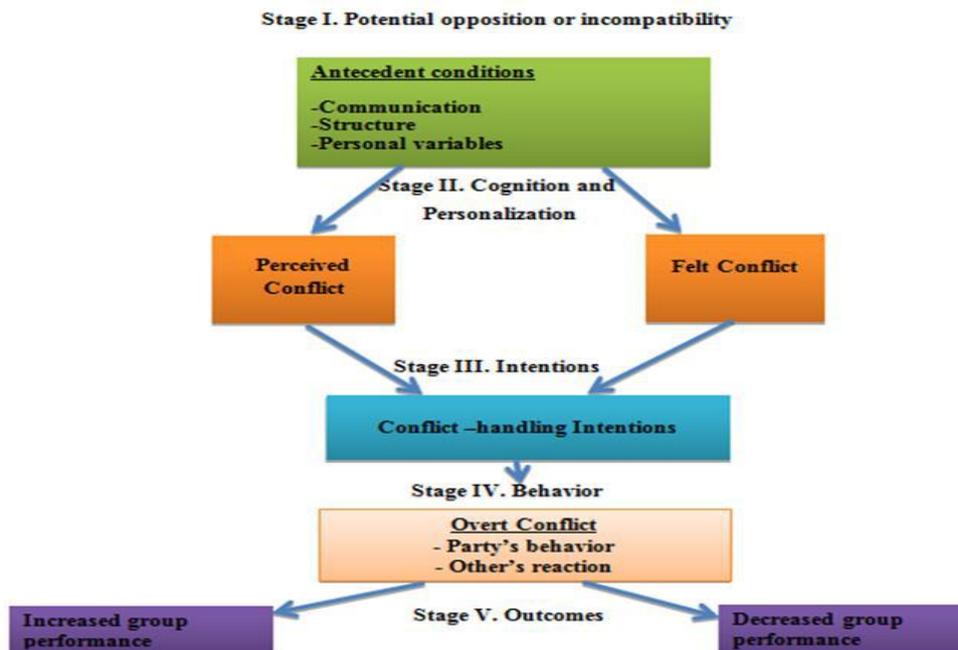
The differences between these two types of conflict are not in their sources but in the manner in which each of them is expressed. In constructive conflict, each party resists attacking the other. Instead, both sides take part in thoughtful discussion. They listen to each other's point of view, and try to find mutually beneficial solutions. By contrast, in dysfunctional conflict both parties are involved in confrontation which does not lead to any beneficial solution (Whetten & Cameron, 2012).

2.6. The conflict process

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable by one or more members of another group. As a rule people see only

the observable part of conflict angry words, actions of opposition. But this is only a small part of the conflict process (McShane & Glinow, 2008). The conflict process can be seen as comprising five stages and outcomes. The process is illustrated in the figure below potential opposition or incompatibility, cognition and personalization, intentions, behavior.

Figure 2 - The conflict process (Robbins, 2005)



Stage I: Potential opposition or incompatibility: This step in conflict process is the presence of a condition that creates opportunities for conflict to arise. They need not lead directly to conflict, but one of these conditions is necessary if conflict is to surface. The conditions are divided into three categories

- Communication
- Structure
- Personal variable

Communication: The term communication consists of different words, connotations and jargon. Insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel can be the reasons for conflict. Thus, either too much or too little communication can be the foundation of conflict.

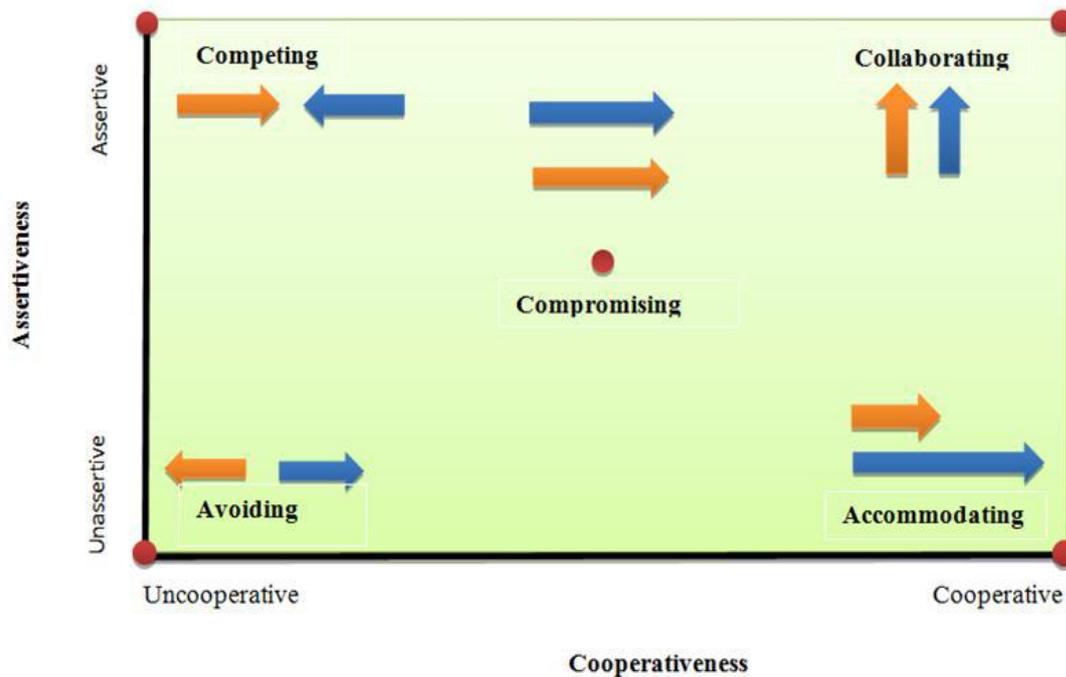
Structure: The term structure includes such variables as size, degree of specialization in the tasks assigned to group members, jurisdictional clarity, member goal compatibility, leadership styles, reward systems and the degree of dependence between groups. Most of all specialization and size stimulate conflict. If a group is large, there is greater possibility that activities will be more specialized, thus there are more chances that could lead to conflict. In addition, a high turnover and young members can formulate the basis for a new conflict.

Personal Variable: Personal variables include an individual value system that each person has. Certain personality types, such as authoritarian and dogmatic, can create a conflict. There is also another variable in the study of social conflict - difference in value systems. Value differences can explain diverse issues such as prejudice disagreements over one's contribution to the group and the reward one deserves.

Stage II: Cognition and personalization. In this step conflict issues should be defined. Parties decide what the conflict is about and emotions play a major role in creating perceptions.

Stage III: Intentions. Intentions mean decisions to act in a given way. Intentions can be described as intervening between people's perception and emotions and their overt behavior. A lot of conflicts are escalated merely by one party attributing the wrong intentions to the other party. In addition, there is typically a great deal of slippage between intentions and behavior, so behavior does not always accurately reflect a person's intentions. With the help of two dimensions - cooperativeness (the degree of willingness of one party to satisfy the other party's interests) and assertiveness (the degree to which one party wants to satisfy its own interests) five conflict handling intentions were identified. This principle is illustrated in the figure below

Figure 3 - The conflict handling intentions (Robbins, 2005)



- **Competing (assertive and uncooperative):** When one person wants to satisfy his or her own interests despite of the impact on the other parties involved in the conflict, this person is competing.

- **Collaborating (assertive and cooperative).** This is the situation in which the parties of the conflict desire to satisfy fully the concerns of all the parties. In collaborating, the parties try to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view. For instance, a win-win solution when both parties can reach their goals.

- **Avoiding (unassertive and uncooperative).** This occurs when the person learns about a conflict but decides to withdraw from the conflict process. An example can be ignoring a conflict and avoiding people with whom a person disagrees.

- **Accommodating (unassertive and cooperative).** In order to maintain relationship one party is ready to place another party's interests above its own interests.

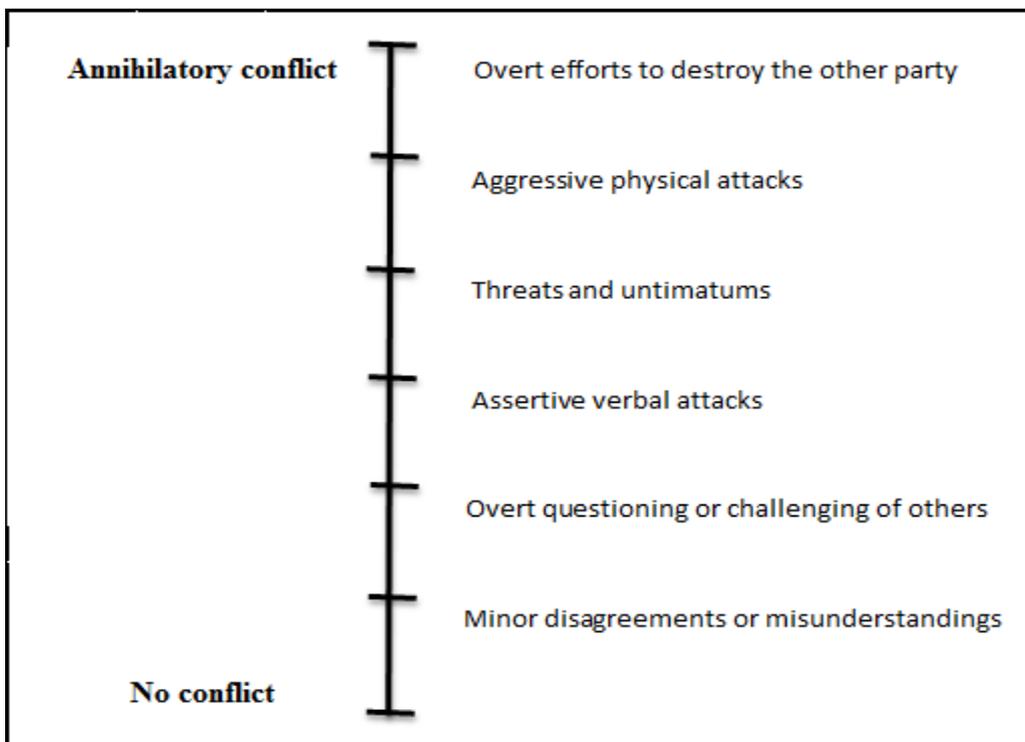
- **Compromising (midrange on both assertiveness and cooperativeness).** The situation when each party is willing to give up something. In this case there is no winner

or loser. Parties accept the solution where interests of both of them are satisfied. Intentions define each party's purpose. Some people want to win, some want to find a mutual beneficial solution while others choose intention according to their attitude to the situation.

Stage IV: Behavior

When most people think of conflict situations, they tend to focus on stage IV because this is where conflicts become visible. There may be some miscalculations or an unskilled enactment at this point, which is why overt behaviors may differ from original intentions. Stage IV is a dynamic process of interaction. Figure 4 illustrates a way of visualizing conflict behavior. All conflicts are found along this continuum. The lowest level of continuum represents conflicts with highly controlled forms of intention that have indirect character. Then conflict moves upward along the continuum until they become highly destructive. As a rule, functional conflicts can be identified on the lower range of the continuum.

Figure 4 - The Conflict intensity continuum (Robbins, 2005)



Stage V: Outcomes

Each conflict has its consequences. There are two kinds of outcomes: functional and dysfunctional. Functional outcomes result in an improvement in the group's

performance; dysfunctional outcomes usually hinder group performance. Conflict is constructive when its influence is positive. It improves and stimulates creativity, innovations, encourages interest and curiosity, thus it improves the quality of decisions and the effectiveness of a group. Functional conflict is very helpful for group thinking as it challenges the status quo and therefore can influence the creation of new ideas.

The Guinness Nigeria can be taken as an example of a company that suffered because of a lack of functional conflict. In 2001, the company became the most popular brand name in the Nigerian market. In 2002, the company's stock was down 92 percent from its peak. The problem was that the company could not change and adapt. Managers and staff felt comfortable and didn't want to challenge the *status quo*. The source of this problem was Henry Onyema, who was the company's CEO at that time. His policy was non-confrontation. In 2002, Onyema was replaced by a new CEO who appreciated the company's conflict-free time but felt it was a time to change strategy. Since then Guinness Nigeria gradually solved its problems.

Conflict is dysfunctional when uncontrolled opposition eventually leads to the destruction of the group. This type of conflict can reduce group effectiveness. Bad communication and lack of group cohesiveness are among the most undesirable consequences of dysfunctional conflict.

In Ireland the well known company Blooming Clothing was closed because its 150 employees couldn't get along with one another and this affected the company production and output. During the final meeting with the Company's board of directors, some of the members pointed that they did not have an economic problem, they had a personality problem, and they hated each other. This shows how dysfunctional conflict can destroy an organization.

Finally, it is imperative to identify the nature of the conflict as it will help in the resolution of the current conflict and can prevent the appearance of similar conflicts again.

3. Workplace conflict

3.1. History of conflict and workplace

According to Jaffee (2001), organizational conflict has its origins in the industrial revolution, where workers, concerned about their loss of freedom and autonomy, began to resist and rebel against capitalist employers. Conflict stemmed not just from the reorganization of work life but from the hierarchical management structure that most organizations adopted. This was based on command and control (Jaffee, 2001).

Edwards (1979) identified three main forms of control organizations use to ensure employees comply with guidelines. Firstly, there is the technical control, where technologies such as assembly lines regulate the pace of work. Secondly, direct control which involves bosses exercising control over subordinates. Finally, bureaucratic control regulates workers through the formal structures of the organization. Jaffee (2001) claims these efforts to closely control employees led to scientific management, an approach that reduces an employee to a unit of production and tends to eliminate the rights and welfare of employees. Employees rebelled against scientific management through resigning, collective resistance, sabotage and absenteeism (Jaffee, 2008).

However, Jaffee (2001) contends this was eventually attributed to team development and led to recognition that harmonious work environments were desirable. This ushered in the human relations era. Nevertheless, he claims that even the human relations era failed to address the underlying tensions involved in having a top-down bureaucratic structure and this has led to bureaucratic structures now being viewed as hostile to productive and efficient organizational process.

Furthermore, Bowles and Gintis (1990) describe the major problem of a bureaucratic structure as being that employees assume the mechanisms of control within it represent a major lack of trust by employers. This tends to create hostility and hatred towards management and to be bad for the workers morale. Bowles and Gintis (1990) add that when the costs of implementing a controlling bureaucratic structure are added to the costs of the low morale that results from it, the gains from enhanced detection of shirking may not offset the costs of regulation. This means both the operational and the financial logic behind bureaucratic structures are now being challenged.

3.2. The post bureaucratic paradigm

However, Jaffee (2001) claims that post-bureaucracy are now a clear trend both in actual organizations and in organizational study. While bureaucracy is based on formalization, rational legal authority and instrumentalism, post-bureaucracy is based on persuasion, dialogue and trust (Hecksher, 1994). Jaffee identifies actions guided by professional principles instead of by formal job definitions, information sharing and decision making driven by problems rather than top down orders as characteristics of the post-bureaucratic paradigm.

3.2. Sources of workplace conflict

There is a range of opinions from theorists about what the core sources of workplace conflict. Jaffee (2008) traces the sources of workplace conflict back to two areas. Firstly, he says it stems from individual tensions. These arise when unique individuals with different goals and objectives have to work in an organization with a single goal and objective. There is a natural tension in this relationship. A second source of conflict in organizations is the division of labor. This is because in almost all organizations workers are assigned specific jobs in specific departments and this approach tends to undermine unity and stimulate conflict. He adds that there are two clear divisions of labor in organizations, vertical and horizontal and that both of these can produce conflict.

De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) identify three broad sources of conflict between individuals in organizations. These are firstly, scarce resources and conflicts of interest which give rise to resource conflicts. Secondly, a search for maintaining and promoting a positive view of the self which gives rise to identity and value conflicts. Thirdly, a desire to hold consensually shared and socially validated opinions and beliefs which give rise to socio-cognitive conflicts of understanding.

3.4. Resources conflict

According to De Dreu and Gelfand (2008), since resources within organizations are limited, there is ongoing competition among employees in workplace. This results in

conflict at all three major levels in organizations: the individual level, group level and organizational level. They emphasize that understanding resource conflicts is useful to understand interdependence theory, a theory that assumes that participants within any social system depend on each other to attain positive outcomes and avoid negative outcomes.

This creates a continual conflict of interest situation as people continually struggle with deciding whether it is better to act selfishly for individual benefit or to cooperate and achieve a superior collective benefit. For example, in an organization a person who is individually rational will defect (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). This means they will show up late and work slowly, might steal and will not contribute. An individual who is collectively rational will work hard and help out. The risk with individual rationality is that if it becomes too widespread the company fails and then everyone in the organization is worse off. This means that a continual conflict of interest situation exists between collectively rational and individually rational employees (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008).

3.5. Identity conflicts

According to Sedikides and Strube (1997), the self is the entirety of distinct yet interrelated psychological phenomena that are associated with reflective consciousness. They claim people generally strive for a positive self view and try to convince both themselves and others that they are worthwhile individuals through self-enhancement strategies. The result of this approach is an inflated view of the self. Sedikides and Strube (1997) say the level of success people enjoy with their self-enhancement determines their level of self-esteem.

De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) assert that recent research has identified that the less stable the self view is with people, the less able they are to deal with criticism and negativity. They say this means people with an unstable self view are more likely to escalate conflict than those with a stable self-view. In addition to this, De Dreu and Gelfand explain efforts at maintaining a positive self-view inevitably create situations where people either intentionally or inadvertently hurt the self view of others. Furthermore, they contend that people take their inflated self-views into conflicts and this leads them to believe they are more cooperative than they really are and that their counter party is

more hostile. All these factors are sources of identity conflicts based on a threatened self (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008).

3.6. Socio-cognitive conflicts

According to De Dreu & Gelfand (2008), the socio-cognitive conflict theory has three basic assumptions. These are, firstly, people try to have accurate perceptions of them and secondly, they have limited ability to be rational as the amount of information available is restricted to them. This leads them to develop different understandings and beliefs about identical objects of perception. Finally, people seek social validation of their beliefs and this is a source of conflict if others do not share these beliefs (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). The socio-cognitive theory is not consistent with the research regarding identity conflicts described in the previous paragraph which contradicts the first of these assumptions.

Nevertheless, De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) stress that it would be a mistake to think that workplace conflict only has one of these three sources although mostly it has. They claim that it is not rare that workplace conflicts are about a mixture of opposing interests, clashing values and incompatible beliefs (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008)

3.7. Workers dignity

According to Jaffee (2001), the concept of dignity is the key entry point into workplace relations and organizational conflict. He argues that all humans have an inherent dignity that is developed through social action, as inalienable trait carried into the organization by the human factor of production. Presently, workers across the globe struggle to achieve dignity and to gain some measure of meaning and self-fulfillment at work (Jaffee, 2001)

Hodson (2001) approaches workplace conflict from a different perspective. He identifies dignity as a critical component of workplace conflict. He identifies four conditions in workplaces that can create conflict. Mismanagement refers to a state where irresponsible, incompetent and poorly trained managers create a disorganized work environment; abuse is defined by Hodson as the arbitrary, inconsistent and inappropriate use of power over employees. Overwork is a concept that Marx identified as a way in which workers are exploited. Challenges to autonomy refer to situations

where skilled workers have their decision making power taken from them. Hodson (2001) says efforts to recover this power are a common response.

The final condition he identifies is contradictions of employee involvement. This classically applies to situations where there are non-bureaucratic team based structures in operation. In such situations if there is an inconsistency between the true intentions of management and their rhetoric of worker participation, employees will tend to use strategies to bridge the gap.

Hodson (2001) also looked at how workers responded to factors that create conflict. He argues that the key motivator involved is a desire to maintain dignity. The main way workers respond to losing dignity is through resistance, a term Hodson (1995) says can include both passive and active forms. Examples of active resistance include sabotage, strikes, walkouts and confrontations (Hodson, 1995). Passive resistance measures include not cooperating and withholding effort and commitment.

4.1. Conflict strategies and patterns

One of the rare areas of broad consensus within conflict resolution studies is that there are five conflict strategies that can be used to manage conflict. It was Thomas and Kilman (1975) who developed a model that identified five common strategies or styles to deal with conflict. They emphasized that individuals tend to have a personal and habitual way of dealing with conflict which can take over when we are under pressure and sometimes it is the most productive style to solve the conflict, but very often it is not and simply worsens the situation (Pickard, 2012). A first step in dealing with conflict is to discover your preferred conflict styles and subsequently, learn how to manage a variety of situations using different approaches.

The table below (Cahn & Abigail, 2007) shows these strategies, what they mean, what their objective is and the behaviors they result in:

Figure 5 - The conflict strategies, objective, definition and objective (Cahn & Abigail, 2007)

Conflict strategy	Definition	Objective	Behaviour/Tactic
Avoidance	Withdrawal	Loss-Loss	Physical absent or silent
Accommodation	Acquiescence	Loss-win	Give in, don't make waves
Competition	Aggression	Win-Loss	Selfish, argumentative
Compromise	Trade-offs	Win and loss	Wheeler-dealer
Collaboration	Mutual satisfaction	Win-win	Supportive of self and others

Avoidance: Avoidance is a strategy usually adopted by people with a poor history of dealing with conflict (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). Wertheim (2002) says avoidance is a destructive conflict strategy and that using it means conflicts never get resolved. Furthermore, the other party often turns to fighting in order to get a response. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) say avoiders score low on both assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Accommodation: Accommodators are people who give in to maintain the illusion of harmony (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). Thomas and Kilmann (1974) say accommodation scores low on assertiveness and high on cooperativeness. Wertheim (2002) views accommodation as a destructive strategy because it often leads to a buildup of negative emotions. Resentment can develop for the accommodator and guilt or contempt for the victor.

Compromise: It involves bargaining and mutually giving up something to reach a settlement. It can be used to get a quick resolution and prevention of further escalation (Robin 2002). Compromise usually involves high to moderate emotional level, high to low skill level, moderate clarity of both goals, moderate status of the relationship, win-win attitude toward authority, moderate concern for traditions, and moderate fear of punishment.

Competition: Competitive individuals are high on assertiveness and low on cooperativeness (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Wertheim (2002) sees competition as a destructive conflict strategy. This is because it is a classic win-lose outcome that leaves the loser unhappy with the outcome and reinforces the competitive behavior of the winner. This is also the conflict strategy that most reflects dualistic thinking.

Collaboration: Collaboration is the best conflict strategy according to Robin (2002). This is because it delivers win-win outcomes. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) say collaborators are high in assertiveness and high in accommodation. Collaboration uses integrative behaviors and developing mutually satisfying agreements to solve the problem (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). They view integrative behaviors as being aspects of teamwork such as mutual assistance, cooperation and collective action. Collaboration is a non-dualistic behavior as it requires the parties to think of the best interests of both sides rather than just their own interests.

There is broad consensus amongst researchers and writers. They say that collaboration is the best conflict strategy as it offers an approach that can achieve the win-win outcomes required for conflict to be resolved (Wertheim 2002). However, there are a range of different names and approaches used by researchers to describe collaboration.

Nevertheless, Cahn and Abigail (2007) prefer not to describe a process, instead of focusing on the principles that the parties need to apply for a collaborative solution to

occur. They define these as separating people from the problem, focusing on interests, brainstorming options and finding objective criteria on which to base decisions (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). They posit that parties need to demonstrate collaborative behaviors to achieve win-win outcomes. These behaviors include looking for the areas they have in common, talking cooperatively and using the word we statements rather than I statements. Cahn and Abigail (2007) claim it is also important that the parties communicate frequently and consult each other often to check assumptions. Furthermore they point out the importance of parties staying positive, suggest parties have a prepared best alternative in case they do not get what they want and advocate that parties also engage in fractionation of the problem.

Having a third party to manage the conflict to achieve a collaborative outcome has a number of weaknesses. Firstly, it means that conflicts must have escalated to the point where a third party is identified as necessary before they begin to be dealt with. Using a third party also means the skills for resolving conflicts are not given to the staff, who are the people experiencing the conflicts. This means that to some extent this approach is a bandage that treats symptoms of workplace conflict rather than the causes. As destructive conflict is a massive problem for some organizations, the idea of addressing this problem in a way that addresses only its symptoms appears somewhat flawed. However, it is also clear from the discussion earlier in this thesis, that with some conflicts the parties need a third party to help and resolve them and so a dialectic process exists around this issue.

In contrast, Cahn and Abigail's (2007) approach assumes that staff within organizations actually develop the skills to resolve conflict collaboratively, meaning their approach addresses the problems of workplace conflict directly. This seems more likely to lead to success. This is because the tools for resolving conflicts are given to staff through this approach, meaning the solution is supplied to the source of the problem. Furthermore, this approach enables conflicts to be dealt with early in their life cycle, before they have escalated to the point where outsiders are called in to help. It seems reasonable to assume that once conflict has escalated and positions are entrenched it is more difficult to resolve conflicts collaboratively. Thus the earlier conflict can be addressed, the better. For these reasons Cahn and Abigail's commentary appears to be the most useful.

The problems with Cahn and Abigail's approach are that staff would obviously require significant training to be able to demonstrate the types of behaviors they refer to.

Secondly, as there are conflicts that the parties cannot resolve by themselves, defined by Cahn and Abigail themselves as disputes, their approach will only work in a limited number of situations.

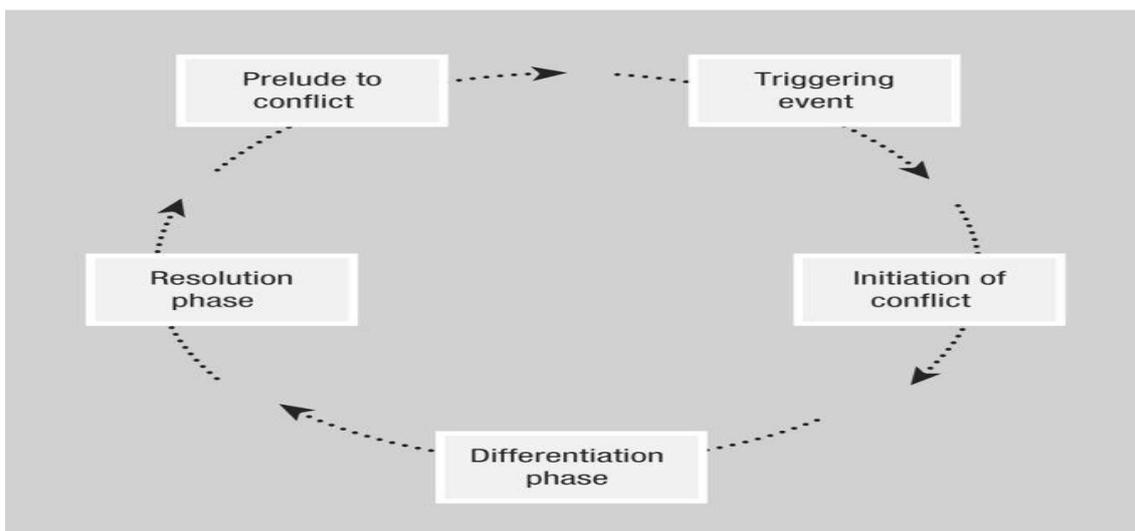
4.2. Patterns of Conflict

Robin (2000) argues that conflicts often follow a pattern in the way they progress and the phases of conflict are reasonably predictable. Furthermore, they claim that there are common processes that occur in most conflicts. Robin (2000) believes that it is as important to understand these phases and processes as it is to understand the various conflict strategies. Cahn and Abigail (2007) differentiate patterns of constructive conflict from patterns of destructive conflict.

4.3. Patterns of constructive conflict

According to Meehan (2012), constructive conflict operates under the belief that all parties can win and that the goals of both involved parties are flexible. However, when two opposing parties locate a common link between them, they may begin the process of reaching a shared decision. What is commonly constructive conflict occurs when the parties feel comfortable with the level of disagreement and acknowledge a need to compromise and rely on a steady flow of communication and a shared willingness to embrace change.

Figure 6 - The process view of conflict



The prelude to conflict refers to the four variables that combine to make it possible for conflict to occur. These are the participants, the relationship among them, other interested parties and the social and physical environment where the conflict occurs.

- The participants in the conflict situation (number, age, sex, etc.)
- The relationship between them (which may vary in closeness and distribution of power) and their conflict history
- Other interested parties to the conflict (including bystanders)
- The physical and social environment of the conflict situation.

In the prelude to conflict, the potential for manifest conflict exists because of the people involved and the other social and physical factors that define the situation.

The **triggering event** is a behavior that at least one person in the conflict points to as the beginning of the problem. An important point to understand about triggering events is that the parties involved do not always point to the same behavior as the trigger for the conflict. The events that trigger a conflict for two people may be removed in time.

The **initiation phase** occurs when the conflict becomes overt. This happens when at least one person makes known to the other that a conflict exists, such as, reacting to another's upsetting comment, pointing out the offensive nature of the other's behavior, calling attention to the breaking of a relationship rule, or reminding the other that (s)he is expected to do something the person is not doing.

The differentiation phase or ongoing interaction pattern occurs when the participants use constructive or destructive strategies and tactics, presenting both sides of the story, moving back and forth, either escalating or de-escalating. Lasting anywhere from a few minutes to days or even weeks, this is the stage where the conflict becomes quite obvious to everyone. Although parties may view the open disagreement as the conflict, from a communication point of view, the revelation of differences is the fourth stage in the interpersonal conflict process. (Meehan, 2012)

The **resolution phase** or outcome occurs when those involved agree to some outcome to the conflict. Thus, we argue that a successful conflict results in a win-win outcome, where the participants are unlikely to have to deal with the issue again. Resolution is a probable outcome when the agreement satisfies all concerned. If the conflict is resolved,

then a decision has been made by the parties to end the disagreement and they are both satisfied with the outcome.

4.4. Patterns of Destructive Conflict

According to Meehan (2012), destructive conflict promotes not only inequality and an imbalance of power but it also often damages relationships. In workplace employees who feel they are judged negatively lose focus, fail to complete tasks, suffer a decrease in productivity and lose self-confidence (Meehan, 2012). Without the respect of their co-workers, these employees experience frustration and resentment; they might spend more time trying to get frustrated even rather than dealing with the underlying issues. Avoiding conflict and closing the channels of communication increases the likelihood of additional destructive conflict.

Cahn and Abigail (2007) describe a number of conflict strategies that are destructive and cause conflict to escalate. Firstly, the conflict avoidance cycle is typical with people who try to avoid initiating conflict or try to withdraw when conflicts arises. This pattern is symptomatic of people who believe conflict is negative and abnormal. This pattern is associated with three misassumptions that they identify. These are that conflict is a symptom that the system is operating incorrectly, that conflicts and disagreements are the same and that initiating and escalating conflict is bad.

Cahn and Abigail (2007) describe the chilling effect which is a pattern where one person withholds grievances from another, usually due to fear of his/her reaction. This focuses on the negative aspects of the other and these become perceived areas of incompatibility and lead to ongoing conflicts. This approach generally leads to less communication in relationships and can lead to people cycling out of the relationship altogether.

Finally, there is the competitive conflict escalation cycle which Robin (2000) views as the most common of the three. The characteristics of this pattern are that people go over the same issues repeatedly, bring up past grievances and add them to present ones and do not tend to find workable solutions.

Wertheim (2002) explains that a key influence on whether a conflict is resolved or escalates is the mindset of the participants. A win-win mind-set generally leads to the conflict being resolved: however, a win-lose mind-set generally leads to the conflict escalating. The problem is that most people go into conflicts expecting a win-lose

outcome (Robin 2002). According to Wertheim (2002), this means the parties are likely to compete and look at each other as opponents and this means the parties are likely to take positions and defend them even in preference to an advocated solution.

They claim that in a win-lose situation most people adopt the aggressor defender model and assume that they are the defenders. However, what is really occurring is the defensive spiral. This is a type of matching where one side matches the others' actions. Thus if one side is competitive the other will be competitive as well and this can cause the conflict to escalate. Wertheim (2002) posits that when a conflict is won by win-lose strategies both sides have further reason to fight: the victors because their fighting has been shown to work and the losers due to resentment and this leads to escalation.

4.5. Conflict escalation

According to Pruitt & Rubin (1986), escalation is the increase in intensity of a conflict. However, the most destructive dynamic conflict, the cycle of provocation and counter-provocation, eventually results in the replacement of substantive debate with increasing hatred and sometimes violent confrontations directed more at hurting opponents than at advancing interests (Pruitt & Rubin 1986). Escalation alone is sufficiently powerful to transform what should be a tractable dispute into one that is virtually impossible to resolve what can lead people to take more extreme and unjustifiable positions.

According to two conflict theorists, Pruitt & Rubin (1986) listed five changes that occur as a conflict escalates.

- First, parties move from light tactics to heavy tactics. Light tactics include such things as persuasive arguments, promises, efforts to please the other side, while heavy tactics include threats, power plays, even violence.
- Second, the number of issues in contention grows as parties bring up more and more things that are making them annoyed or angry.
- Third, issues move from specific to general, and the relationship between the parties deteriorates Pruitt, Rubin & Kim (1994).
- Fourth, the number of parties grows from one to many, as more and more people and groups are drawn into the conflict.
- Fifth, the goal of the parties changes from doing well to winning, and finally, to hurting the other.

The result of escalation is that a conflict can grow out of control very quickly especially in workplace where people from different lifestyles live and work together. Escalated conflicts do not cease to be focused on the parties' original problems or goals, nor do they provide a way for those goals to be realized. Rather they provide only costs and continued conflict, with little benefit for anybody. At this stage of the conflict escalation becomes very hard to reverse (Rubin, et.al 1994).

Once relationships have been broken, once distrust, fear, and hatred grow, and especially, once violence has occurred, it is very difficult to back away from an escalated conflict and resolve it constructively. Rather people tend to continue the fight; if possible, even escalating it further, as this usually seems less risky than showing that you are weak by trying to initiate de-escalation (Rubin, et.al 1994).

According to Pruitt (2008), escalation can be either unilateral or bilateral. Bilateral sequences often develop into repeated cycles of retaliation and counter retaliation and this leads to the escalation becoming severe. However, Pruitt (2008) argued that retaliation can be motivated by either anger to deter an offender, to show an offender is not weak, to create justice or to prop up social norms. Pruitt (2008) adds that there is often an element of settling a score involved.

Retaliation is also more likely if the offender is perceived as having acted unfairly. Pruitt (2008) identifies three types of fairness norms that if violated can result in escalation. These are distributive justice, where one's outcomes depend on one's effort; procedural justice, where there is a consistent and rational decision making process and interactional justice, where one's views are sought, one's outcomes are clearly explained and one is treated with respect.

Figure 7 - The conflict escalation behaviors (Neuman & Baron, 1997).

Physical Active Escalation	Physical Passive direct Escalation	Physical action indirect escalation	Physical Passive indirect Escalation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Using violence against strikers ❖ Assault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Going on strike ❖ Chronic lateness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Theft ❖ Sabotage ❖ Hiding need resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Failing to protect other party's welfare ❖ Going slow so that target are missed
Verbal Active Direct Escalation	Verbal Passive direct Escalation	Verbal Passive Indirect Escalation	Verbal Passive Indirect Escalation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Yelling ❖ Threatening ❖ Using derogatory tone voice. ❖ Being insulting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Failing to return phone calls ❖ Refusing the other party's request ❖ Going the silent treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Feeling a grievance ❖ Whistle blowing ❖ Spreading rumors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Failing to send information ❖ Failing to warn of coming problem.

5. Diversity and conflict

5.1. Gender

Birkhoff (2013) emphasize that understanding the role of gender in conflict is best accomplished through an analysis of individual, interactional and societal levels. According to Birkhoff, research shows there are differences between the way men and women react towards conflict and others show there are none, but irrespective of which side of the debate one takes, men and women have different expectations of male and female roles and the way those roles should be enacted.

The essentialist paradigm assumes a separate female world, one in which women are by nature different from men (Birkhoff, 2013), in her view, women are by nature so completely different from men that we experience a different reality with women focusing, caring, cooperative, and peaceful attributes. Some of these studies focus on women's maternal abilities as shapers of our roles as caretakers and peacemakers (Birkhoff, 2013).

According to Robbins et al. (2008), claim that there are differences between men and women, when it comes to emotional reactions and the ability to read others. They say there are three possible explanations for this. These are that firstly, men and women tend to be socialized differently, with women being socialized to be more nurturing. Secondly, women may actually have more ability to read others and express their emotions and finally, women may feel a greater need for social approval and so develop their abilities to demonstrate positive emotions.

Mooney (2014) affirmed that conflict naturally arises when employees are discriminated against based on their gender. Workers can have problems relating to one another when there is unfair treatment by management to certain employees. Workers might argue instances of bias as they fight for equality in their place of employment. For example, if a male employee is junior to a female employee but is still promoted ahead of her, it will probably be difficult for the woman to accept this man as a supervisor, and she might argue with management regarding this decision.

While there is ongoing debate about whether men and women have biologically different brains there is no debate that women are disadvantaged in the workplace relative to men. Proof of this is that the OECD (2010) published a chart showing that

women in Portugal were only paid 90% of what men were paid for doing the same job in 2006. However, differences between men and women are relatively insignificant at worst, on the contrary the longer the debate as to whether there are biological differences between the brains of men and women continues, the longer society can put off addressing the inequalities that exist between men and women in the workplace.

Another interesting perspective comes from Thatcher (2008) who found that workplace subgroups formed along the lines of social categories such as gender and culture lead to stereotyping and prejudice and in this respect encourage conflict. As we can see, workplace subgroups formed on the basis of work experience and qualifications encouraged cooperative group behavior that allowed diverse perspectives to be integrated.

5.2 Culture and conflict resolution

According to LeBaron (2003), culture is an essential part of the conflict and its resolution. It is like an underground river that runs through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments, and ideas of ourselves and others (LeBaron, 2003). Moreover cultures are powerful, they are often unconscious, influencing conflict and attempts to resolve conflict in imperceptible ways.

Anthropologists have identified more than 150 definitions of culture, but according to Ford (2001), culture is defined as the shared set of values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, behaviors and social structures that define reality and guide everyday interactions.

In terms of culture and its relationship with conflict resolution Avruch (1998) makes two observations. The first is that conflict resolution at its core is about communication and communication involves recognizing the human element subjectivity, cognition and context culture (Avruch, 1998); the second is that the issue of culture is a real one that many of the abstract conflict theorists usually ignore. We might say that this comment is possibly in response to those social scientists that dismiss culture as peripheral to conflict resolution. Cultures are embedded in every conflict because conflicts arise in human relationships (LeBaron, 2003). Cultures affect the ways, the name, frame, blame and attempt to tame conflicts.

According to LeBaron (2003), culture is always a factor in conflict, whether it plays a central role or influences it subtly and gently. For any conflict that touches us where it matters, where we make meaning and hold our identities, there is always a cultural component. For example, the intractable conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir are not just about territorial, boundary, and sovereignty issues; they are also about acknowledgement, representation, and legitimization of different identities and ways of living, being, and making meaning.

LaBaron (2003) says that culture and conflict are inextricably linked. However, this does not mean that cultural differences inevitably produce conflict. When problems surface, between or within culture, it is often a response to difficulties in dealing with differences whether it pertain racial, religious, political, social, or economic matters difference is often a source of fear and misunderstanding.

Ford (2001) says that while it is important to appreciate cultural impacts on conflict resolution, there is a risk of confusing people through doing so. They do not take a firm position on this issue and acknowledge that there is a lack of consensus as to exactly how best to deal with culture in conflict in an increasingly multicultural world. Avruch (1998) goes further than Ford (2001). They point out that processes of social categorization and group differentiation tend to cause people to take their general stereotypical beliefs about other groups into conflict situations and this can cause longer and more intense conflicts. Thus differences in culture can heighten divisions between groups (Ford. 2001).

De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) identify one unusual aspect of culture as they contend it may suppress the positive effects of conflict in collectivist cultures. This is because there is a pressure to conform in collectivist cultures that does not exist in individualistic ones and this means that the open debate that can lead to positive outcomes in individualistic cultures tends not to be helpful in collectivist ones.

Differences between collectivist and individualistic cultures may offer the clearest evidence of how cultural differences impact on conflict behaviors. James and Gillibrand (2005) explain that in individualistic cultures positions on issues are usually transmitted clearly through language. However, in collectivist cultures positions on issues are either internalized or transmitted through the physical context of interaction. James and Gillibrand (2005) state that with collectivist cultures facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures are as important as the meaning of the actual words used. In such cultures

individuals will expect the other person to know what the problem is so they can avoid the embarrassment and loss of face that comes from talking directly about the issue.

5.3. Personality

According to CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008), 49% of 5000 participants spread across nine countries identified personality clashes and warring egos were the main cause of conflict in their workplaces. According to Wikipedia, conflict in the workplace can foster free and often passionate exchanges of ideas that lead to innovation, improve productivity and stronger teams when participants avoid personality focused comments. On the contrary, when workplace conflict becomes personality driven, it becomes destructive and it polarizes the workplace distracts from the work, wastes time and energy and forces talented employees to leave; on the other hand, ignoring a personality conflict will not make it go away.

The issue of personality conflict in the workplace is controversial. According to Turner & Weed (1983), the two types of workplace conflict are when people's ideas, decisions or actions relating directly to the job are in opposition, or when two people just do not get along. Turner & Weed (1983) argued that managers should avoid blaming interpersonal conflict on personality, such tactic is an excuse to avoid addressing the real cause of conflict, and the department performance will suffer as a result.

However, according to Jung (1934), personality is the supreme realization of the innate idiosyncrasy of a living being. It is an act of high courage flung in the face of life, the absolute affirmation of all that constitutes the individual, the most successful adaptation to the universal condition of existence coupled with the greatest possible freedom for self-determination.

The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (2001) describes two broad classes of definitions of personality. One of these looks at personality as being an entity with a causal role in behavior and the other looks at personality as a secondary factor that is implied on the basis of consistency of behavior. That dictionary warns that it is challenging defining personality as it is such a broad subject. However, one definition that encompasses both of the broad positions described in the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (2001) comes from Robbins (2008). Both define personality as the total sum of ways in which an individual reacts and interacts with others (Robbins. 2008). He claims that both

hereditary and environmental factors affect personality and some of the hereditary factors he describes include physical stature, gender, temperament, energy level and facial attractiveness.

According to Spector & Bruk-lee (2008), individual differences play an important role in the stress process whereby conflict affects the employee's health and well-being (Spector & Bruk-lee, 2008). Nevertheless, there is also a number of personality variables that are associated with conflict escalation: negative affectivity or trait anxiety, trait anger, type A and locus of control.

Negative affectivity or trait anxiety: It is a tendency, which is mostly limited to the psychosocial environment, to perceive situation as threatening (Spector & Bruk-lee, 2008).

Trait anger: Trait anger is defined as a tendency to perceive a variety of situations as provoking anger (Spector & Bruk-Lee, 2008). They contend that people high in trait anger are more prone to escalate conflict at work.

Type A: A person as having a sense of time urgency and as being competitive, hostile and impatient (Spector & Bruk-Lee, 2008). They are two dimensions of type A: personality impatience or irritability and achievement striving.

Locus of control: Spector & Bruk-lee (2008) defined it as a general belief that external forces or one's own actions control outcomes.

However, the following are factors that can influence human personality, mindset, group dynamics and organizational culture.

Mindsets

One interesting aspect affecting personality emerged from research on mindsets. According to McGuigan and Popp (2007), much of the research on conflict resolution is based on the assumption that people actually have the capacity to manage conflict constructively and they claim that this assumption is mistaken. They contend that it is not possible for conflict to be resolved if one of the parties is incapable of managing

conflict in a way that can deliver win-win outcomes. They rely on work from Kegan (1982) who has created a continuum of three mindsets.

They describe the first of these as instrumental. People with an instrumental mindset have a concrete orientation to the world, inability to think abstractly or see other points of view and a preoccupation with themselves. As instrumental people are unable to look at things from others' perspectives it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to act collaboratively in conflict situations. The second mindset is described as affiliative. People who have an affiliating mindset are concerned with how others view them, try not to offend others and can easily understand others' perspectives. The third mindset is the self-authoring. People who have a self-authoring mindset have both a minimal concern for others' views and the ability to see multiple other perspectives at the same time. McGuigan and Popp (2007) claim that much of the research on conflict resolution assumes that all the parties involved have a self authoring mindset and that this may be a mistake. Their findings suggest that compromise and collaboration may be strategies that are out of reach of some people and organizational culture.

Group dynamics

Pruitt (2008) claims that individual personality variables tend to have less relevance with respect to predicting conflict escalation when it comes to group environments. In these settings group behaviors are what matters. Pruitt points out that groups tend to escalate conflicts more than individuals do. Furthermore some groups are more likely to escalate conflicts than others. He identifies groups with a culture of honor, requiring retaliation in response to personal slights, as an example of a type of group that is more likely to escalate conflict.

As organizations are clearly group environments, Pruitt's research is especially relevant to a study of workplace conflict. From a group perspective he claims the level of retaliation is negatively correlated to the level of bonds that exist between groups. There is also a relationship between the structures of groups and the level of retaliation. Coleman (1957) found that escalation among groups was much less likely when there were crosscutting rather than overlapping structures in place. Crosscutting structures are those where there are strong bonds between important members of the various groups in a community. Overlapping structures are those where subgroup members are only

bonded to each other. Thus the more human the face of the other group is, the less intergroup escalation occurs.

Organizational culture

Organizational culture reflects societal culture for two reasons (Sinha, 2008): firstly, organizations are creations of society formed to meet the needs and objectives of societies; secondly, individuals in organizations acquire societal values and practices during their socialization that they bring into the organizations they join. However, Zaheer and Zaheer (1997) stress that organizational culture is not the same as societal culture. This is because if it were so then all organizations within a society would have the same culture. Sinha (2008) identifies a number of reasons why organizational culture differs from societal culture. Firstly, he points out that societal culture evolves over a much longer time period than organizational culture. Secondly, while societal culture evolves in an unplanned manner, organizational culture is carefully planned and implemented by management. Finally, Sinha (2008) claims organizations are more open to global influences than societies. He says the most important feature of organizational culture is that it is formed by the leader of an organization and his team of top managers. These points explain why organizational culture needs to be discussed separately from societal culture.

Organizational culture appears to be an often overlooked yet important aspect of workplace conflict. Not many researchers stress the importance of organizational culture. For example, Tillett and French (2006) discuss workplace conflict but do not mention organizational culture and Lulofs and Cahn (2005) do not view workplace conflict as a standalone category of conflict and so do not consider organizational culture. However, Morrill (1995) claims organizational culture is the major factor influencing how managers handle conflicts. Morrill (1995) believes that it is organizational structure that creates the culture, implying that cultures can be changed by restructuring. This seems an overly simplistic approach as it overlooks the impact of management on culture.

6. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

6.1. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Workplace

According to Scimecca (1993), the beginnings of the ADR movement date back to 1976 and the American Bar Association sponsored the National Conference on the Causes of Popular Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice. The conference concluded that the pressure on the congested legal system could be eased by utilizing alternative forms of dispute resolution. The acronym ADR became a key concept of conflict resolution following this conference and ADR rapidly evolved. The key part of this evolution was that what ADR represents has expanded to the point that it became apparent that the word alternative was no longer particularly appropriate (Scimecca, 1993).

According to the Wikipedia, ADR has gained widespread acceptance among both the general public and the legal profession in recent years. Presently some courts require some parties to resort to ADR of some type, usually mediation, before permitting the parties' cases to be tried (European mediation directive, 2008). The rising popularity of ADR can be explained by the increasing caseload of traditional courts, the perception that ADR imposes fewer costs than litigation, a preference for confidentiality and the desire of some parties to have greater control over the selection of the individual or individuals who will decide their dispute.

Peugh (1999) defines alternative dispute resolution (ADR) as processes and techniques that act as a means of disagreeing parties to come to an agreement short of litigation. It is a collective term for the ways that parties can settle disputes, with (or without) the help of a third party. The alternative dispute resolution (ADR) gives individuals a voluntary way to resolve concerns instead of using lengthy processes (Gramberg 2006). However, ADR fosters communication, creativity and cooperation, to resolve workplace conflict. The emphasis is on participants working together to obtain an agreeable resolution which shows that when participants agree to mediate early in the process, there is a greater opportunity for resolving the dispute. According to Gramberg (2006), alternative dispute resolution techniques are available at any stage of a dispute. Fiadjoe (2004) provides support for this position as he asserts that ADR is now offered by all

reputable law schools and lawyers who need greater skills in dispute resolution than they need in litigation. For these reasons the word *alternative* is clearly no longer appropriate in ADR. It is also clear that ADR covers all options to decide disputes.

The word *resolution* is also a subject of dispute. The differing views of what constituted resolution were discussed earlier in this literature review. A broad definition of resolution as meaning a win-win outcome where both sides were satisfied with the result was then identified as the most appropriate (Lulofs & Cahn 2000). However, all the definitions of ADR considered in this literature review include acceptance that ADR includes methods that give win-lose and lose-lose outcomes as well as win-win. Accordingly, the word resolution is not appropriate to describe what ADR has now become. It should be replaced by a word that covers win-win, win-lose and lose-lose outcomes.

There is also an issue with the word *dispute* which was defined earlier in this thesis as conflicts that have reached the point where the parties cannot resolve them by themselves. ADR techniques include processes such as holding difficult conversations (Brandon & Robertson, 2007) where the parties actually do try to resolve their differences by themselves. In this sense the word dispute may also not now be appropriate in describing what ADR has become.

Finally, Lipsky et al. (2003) affirmed that they regularly used the term “Conflict Management” to describe the processes that ADR now cover, although they do not propose that ADR be renamed Conflict Management. As there is confusion about what constitutes ADR and the acronym ADR clearly does not reflect what ADR has now become there is a strong argument for replacing ADR with a term that clearly defines what ADR now represents, such as Conflict Management.

6.2. ADR and workplace conflict management system

According to Bingham and Chachere (1999), ADR based on workplace conflict management systems have become so widely accepted that, in the US by 1999, about half of the major private employers in the US had ADR-based workplace conflict management systems. Stitt (1998) explains the logic behind the adoption of ADR systems by organizations in a way that is consistent with systems theory. He argues that all effective organizations have goals. As conflict exists in all areas of life and can be

dealt with constructively or destructively, all organizations presumably share a goal of wanting to deal with it constructively. He believes successful organizations manage conflict in a way that improves relationships and leaves everyone satisfied with the processes used to arrive at solutions to conflicts, even if they do not agree with the actual solutions.

Masters and Albright (2002) point that the main reason for the trend, in the US organizations to adopt ADR systems to deal with workplace conflict than any other country, is that a growing number of workplace conflicts are getting resolved in courts and other state controlled venues. When a conflict reaches this point the risks and costs to organizations rise and they lose control over managing the process and the outcome.

Lipsky et al. (2003) approach this issue slightly more carefully. They claim that there are four key trends that have led to the move towards ADR systems. The first of these is dissatisfaction with the legal system. They say courts and legal agencies are viewed with near hostility by almost everyone. This contradicts Masters and Albright (2002) who say ADR is being adopted by (powerful) organizations because the legal system is increasingly protecting the interests of powerless employees. Lipsky et al.'s position was not supported by evidence and seems hard to believe.

A second trend Lipsky et al identify is a long term decline in the labour movement. They claim that the demise of the union movement has left a void that human resources systems have unsuccessfully attempted to fill. What they fail to mention is that the demise of the union movement has resulted in powerless employees becoming more and more powerless. Thus this trend can also be identified as being that the powerful ones are actually increasing their control over the powerless ones.

A third trend they identify is a desire to reduce levels of destructive conflict as being a main reason for organizations wanting to introduce ADR based conflict management systems. This implies that organizations that have introduced ADR based systems did so believing they would help reduce levels of destructive workplace conflict.

The final trend that Lipsky et al identified is that deregulation and increased competition have forced organizations to look at their operational effectiveness. This has led to a realization that efficient workforces offer organizations a competitive advantage. According to them this desire for improved performance has resulted in organizations moving towards adopting ADR systems. This implies that a desire to reduce the cost of

destructive workplace conflict is a key reason for organizations to want to introduce ADR systems.

6.3. Deconstructing ADR

Lipsky et al. (2003) identify the main strengths of ADR as being the one that offers faster, cheaper and more efficient means of solving disputes than the legal system does. Furthermore, relative to litigation, many ADR processes are more confidential. ADR also enables disputes to be dealt with in a manner that is appropriate for the individuals involved and the issues in contention. This means to some extent that the ADR process can be customized to suit the situation, something that litigation does not allow.

However, these strengths are dependent on ADR being able to deliver justice in a fair and impartial manner and the critics of ADR claim that ADR does not do this. Lipsky et al. (2003) assert, for example, that in the US there is a trend by employers to force employees to waive their legal rights and accept arbitration. This shows how ADR processes which transfer dispute resolution from public forums to private ones can sideline employees' legal rights and are being used as a means by organizations to weaken and control their staff.

Lipsky et al. (2003) claim another way through which employees are disadvantaged by ADR and it has to do with representation. They say that in arbitration and mediation employees are not necessarily represented by advocates of their own choice whereas employers almost always are. Many employees cannot afford to hire high quality representatives and this puts them in a weak position. One aspect of this is known as the *repeat player effect* Bingham (1998) analyzed a large number of arbitration awards and found that employers who made repeated use of arbitration won the vast majority of their cases while employers who used arbitration just once lost the majority of their cases. She was able to conclude that employers who are repeat player at arbitration have advantages that one time players, who are usually employees, do not have. This situation shows ADR has drifted away from its original focus, which was helping those who did not have access to the law (Harrington & Merry, 1988).

Another weakness of ADR is that with it there is an assumption that third party neutrals can actually be neutral. This assumption should be challenged according to Lane (1982). This is because the values that lead to unequal power relationships tend to be inadvertently supported by third party neutrals (Lane, 1982).

Abel (1982) says that ADR has its roots in individualism and as such views the causes of conflict as being from individual responsibility rather than inequalities in society. This means from his perspective ADR denies that systemic factors might be causing conflict. Scimecca (1993) appears to agree with Abel as he claims ADR does not take unequal power distributions into account and tries to resolve conflicts assuming both parties have equal power. This will tend to see results coming out in favor of the most powerful.

The most serious criticism about ADR has to do with its failing to reduce levels of destructive workplace conflict. This shows that ADR is not actually delivering a reduction in levels of destructive workplace conflict. This is a concern as ADR has previously been defined as including all options for resolving disputes. However, if one assumes that it is possible to reduce levels of workplace conflicts this means that ADR options are not being applied properly. The failure of ADR is consistent with the thoughts of Burton (1990) who claims that the conflict resolution methods that now form ADR have been used throughout history and largely failed to reduce the number and intensity of conflicts. As they failed in the past Burton questioned why they should be maintained as they would likely continue to fail in the future.

On reflection, reducing numbers of destructive conflicts may be an unrealistic expectation of the conflict resolution methods that constitute ADR. While a few ADR approaches, such as holding difficult conversations and open door policies by management, can be used early in a conflict, these techniques are relatively peripheral. The major types of ADR are arbitration, adjudication, mediation and negotiation and these usually operate once conflict has become escalated and destructive. An analogy that explains this point is that of conflict occurring at the top of a cliff and destructive conflict resulting in the parties falling off the cliff. Most ADR techniques can be compared to a hospital treating injured people at the bottom of the cliff. Some patients get treated using negotiation, some with arbitration, some with mediation and some with adjudication.

The problem is that no matter how well the hospital at the bottom of the cliff operates it cannot reduce the numbers of people falling off the cliff and should not be held responsible for this. What is needed to reduce numbers falling off the cliff are preventive measures acting as a fence at the top of the cliff. This line of thought suggests that it is the timing of the ADR invention that may be the reason that ADR is failing to reduce levels of destructive conflicts in America and that ADR, if used before conflicts become destructive, may enjoy much greater effectiveness.

Furthermore ADR has been introduced to around half the private organizations in America and around the world as a means to deal with workplace conflict. However, ADR is not actually delivering a reduction in levels of destructive workplace conflict. While a range of reasons explain why ADR has become so popular with employers, there is evidence that some employers are introducing these systems to further powerless workers. That ADR is failing to stem the increase in levels of destructive conflict in the country where it has been most widely adopted indicates that there are serious flaws with ADR. One possible explanation for this failure is that ADR denies the role of systemic factors in workplace conflict (Able, 1982)

6.4. Alternative dispute resolution in Portugal

In Portugal the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) method of solving conflict is still at the embryonic stage, especially when compared with other European Countries and countries of the common law system (Almada 2001). According to Almada (2001), in the last decades there has been an exponential rise in the number of dispute in Portugal together with the problem associated with traditional judicial dispute resolution system which is based on its lack of timely response, due to frequent lengthy delays, consequent cost, unwanted publicity, and ill will. In contrary these delay has opened door for alternative disputes resolution method and is leading to a progressive use and development of these method he stressed.

On the hand, the recent approval of ADR as general resolution method by the government of Portugal has promoted the method in the country (Almada 2001). However, there is still a commonly held ignorance and suspicion towards ADR, which has obstructed the growth, progress and definite consolidation of this method in

Portugal (Almada 2001). Furthermore, lawyers and practitioners are still quite reluctant to advise their clients to use ADR method when trying to resolve conflict.

As Almada states, in Portugal ADR methods are classified under four techniques, namely: negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. There are other methods which are standing between some of these methods and state court justice, which are also original and significant mixed experienced called “Julgados de Paz” (peace court) (Almada 2001). Finally, there are other minor methods of ADR, which include med-arb and binding or arbitral expertise.

Thus mediation is the most popular ADR process and has statutory recognition in Portugal with respect to being used to resolve workplace conflicts (Hopt & Steffek, 2012). This shows how mediation is the ADR approach favored by legislation to deal with workplace conflict. When compared with arbitration it has another notable advantage. This is that mediation can be a collaborative process that delivers win-win outcomes whereas arbitration is a competitive process that generally delivers win-lose outcomes (Hopt & Steffek, 2012). This thesis will now briefly look at arbitration but then will focus on mediation as it is clearly the critical ADR for workplace conflict in Portugal.

7.0. Arbitration and Mediation

7.1. Arbitration

According to Cahn and Abigail (2007), arbitration is a process whereby a neutral third party listens to both sides of a dispute and makes a binding ruling. They add that there are usually no avenues of appeal following arbitration. In Portugal arbitration is the most entrenched, developed and highly rated ADR method (Almada 2001). It has proven its importance and efficiency especially in the commercial areas. In the light, arbitration procedures can be compulsory, if imposed by law or voluntary, if submitted by the parties in conflict by means of arbitration agreement the advantage of arbitration is that it can deliver quick decisions and those involved have some degree of control over the process (Pitchforth, 2007). This means they can have input into areas such as where and when the arbitration will take place and who the arbitrator is. Another advantage of arbitration is that it is usually relatively cheap and the awards it delivers are final, meaning dispute end with arbitration.

According to Pitchforth (2007), there are four disadvantages: the first, the law does not allow arbitrators to use some techniques that mediators are allowed to use; the second, in some cases one of the parties could be better served by the law rather than having an arbitrator giving a practical ruling; the third disadvantage with arbitration is that it utilizes an adversarial process that results in win-lose outcomes. This means arbitration delivers outcomes that Lulofs and Cahn (2000) would describe as conflict management rather than conflict resolution.

7.2. Mediation

Mediation is a non-adversarial method of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in which a neutral third party helps to resolve a dispute. The mediator does not have the power to render a decision on the matter or order an outcome. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the parties can pursue a lawsuit.

According to Kruk (2000), mediation is a collaborative conflict resolution process in which two or more parties in dispute are assisted in their negotiation by a neutral and impartial third party and empowered to voluntarily reach their own mutually acceptable

settlement of the issues in dispute. The mediator structures and facilitates the process by which the parties make their own decisions and determine the outcomes in a way that satisfies the interests of all the parties in the dispute (Kruk, 2000).

While mediation is required to be used by law in employment disputes, there is a number of reasons why organizations like to use it according to Goldman et al. (2008). Mediation is useful when there is a need for an ongoing relationship after the dispute, when there is a need for a speedy settlement, when keeping expenses under control is important and when there is a need for the dispute to be kept confidential. Goldman et al. (2008) say that historically organizations have been less willing to turn to mediation than their staff. They cite figures showing that employees want to mediate 87% of discrimination cases while employers only want to use mediation in 31% of the cases. Reasons employers are reluctant to use mediation include: cases which lack merit, where they may have to pay money, where the opposing party is seen as unlikely to compromise, where the honesty of witnesses is an issue and where the law offers clear protection to the employer.

7.3. Differentiating Mediation and other ADR processes

However, it is imperative to differentiate mediation from other ADR processes in order to have vivid understanding of the method. According to Kelly (1983), identifying features of mediation are firstly that mediation usually has a distinct goal that is usually limited to resolving the issues that are the subject of the mediation. Secondly, the mediation process is usually limited by time and is a task and goal focused process that involves psychological reflection and has a focus on the future. Thirdly, because mediation is future focused, assessment is limited. Finally, while the mediator is a neutral facilitator (s)he is an active and directive facilitator whose role extends to proposing options. While Kelly (1983) provides an interesting perspective that helps to understand mediation it is controversial whether the features of mediation he describes actually do distinguish mediation from other ADR processes.

7.4. Deconstructing mediation

According to Brandon & Robertson (2007), there are three basic stages in mediation process: pre-mediation, mediation session and ending phase.

Pre-mediation

The first phase occurs prior to mediation and sees an agreement between the parties to seek mediation and the appointment of a neutral unbiased mediator (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). The parties then meet separately with the mediator as this both establishes rapport and is consistent with a critical requisite of mediation.

The mediation session

Masters and Albright (2002) say the typical mediation session begins with an opening statement. This is made by the mediator and sets out the purpose of the mediation and the procedures that will be followed (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). They claim these include that mediation can be terminated at any stage as it is voluntary and that the objective of mediation is to arrive at a written mutual agreement that both sides are at least comfortable with.

Lulofs and Cahn (2000) argue that communication rules are also explained at this stage. These include that both parties respect time constraints, refrain from interrupting each other, take turns talking and look at each other rather than the mediator. Once the procedures have been explained the parties' statements are tabled and a timetable for the mediation is agreed on (Brandon & Robertson, 2007). The process usually begins with the complainant giving his statement (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). Following each statement the mediator gives a summary and identifies the issues that were raised and the position the party took on these issues. Brandon and Robertson (2007) say that at this stage the discussion is generally confused and wide ranging and the parties are usually behaving competitively.

Once the dispute has been described a process of negotiation occurs where the issues are discussed. This stage involves data gathering, exploring needs and interests and generating options for settlement (Kruk, 2000). There may be meetings involving the mediator and either one or both parties. If this phase is successful the discussion

becomes clear and an understanding of the issues is arrived at those results in specific statements being agreed.

The ending phase

The final phase is described by Kruk (2000) as the ending phase. This involves generating and evaluating options and then settlement of the dispute. This results in the production of a written list of steps that both sides have agreed to. As agreements are voluntary it is important that ongoing testing occurs following the agreement to ensure the steps agreed to actually deliver the outcomes that the parties desired.

7.5. Deconstructing mediation

According to Kruk, (2000) the major strength of mediation is that it is a collaborative process that only succeeds when there is a win-win outcome. A second strength is that the mediation process leads to increased perceptions of procedural justice (Ross & Conlon, 2000). Mediation is also popular in the workplace because it is effective. Masters and Albright (2000) claim figures on mediation in employment disputes in America show around 70% of disputes are settled. This is consistent with research from Goldman, Cropranzo, Stein and Benson (2008) showing settlement rates for mediation are usually between 60% and 78%. Furthermore, Brett, Barsness and Goldberg (1996) claim that satisfaction rates following workplace mediation are 75% or more. However, it should be stressed that these satisfaction rates are short term. Pruitt, Pierce, McGillicuddy, Welton and Castriano (1993) studied 73 mediations and interviewed the participants both immediately afterwards and then again four to eight months later. They concluded there is no relationship between short term satisfaction with the outcomes of mediation and long term satisfaction.

In an apparent effort to downplay the significance of their results, Pruitt et al. (1993) identified two possible explanations for these findings. Firstly, that agreements reached in a single mediation session are unlikely to deal with entrenched issues in a way that prevents them recurring. Secondly, Pruitt et al (1993) posit that agreements have little weight in distressed relationships. As entrenched issues and distressed relationships are features of all escalated conflicts, trying to justify results showing mediation does not

deliver long term satisfaction by pointing out that mediation may not work well dealing with escalated conflicts seems a rather weak effort to attribute their results to types of conflict rather than the process of mediation.

Pruitt et al. (1993) failed to identify the most likely explanation of why their research showed there was no correlation between short term levels of satisfaction with outcomes and long term levels. This is because of the negotiators' dilemma, which says win-win outcomes are unlikely to occur in collaborative conflict resolution processes as it is safe for the parties involved to behave competitively in collaborative negotiations and risky to behave collaboratively (Axelrod, 1984). This means that in theory participants to collaborative processes such as mediation can be expected to behave competitively. Thus it can also be expected that mediation will not deliver long term win-win outcomes and this is what Pruitt et al.'s research revealed (1993).

Their research is a single research project, which by itself is not enough to enable generalizations to be made. However, because of the theoretical support for their findings provided by the negotiators dilemma, it is likely that this research has accurately described one of the problematic aspects of mediation. The assumptions many people have about how mediation is a collaborative process that delivers win-win outcomes are seriously challenged both theoretically by the negotiators dilemma and in reality by Pruitt et al.'s research (1993).

7.6. Inequality in mediation

According to Wing (2009) there are three main reasons why inequality can occur during mediation. These are that if mediator neutrality is violated, if one party does not have the necessary power to negotiate the deal it wants and if one party fails to raise issues of concern and does not select an outcome of its choice. A fourth source of inequality appears to be where one party is less articulate than the other party and so is disadvantaged in that they have less negotiating ability. Wing (2009) attributes responsibility for inequality to the participants. She claims that it is the participants who are responsible for seeing that their interests are addressed rather than the mediator. Furthermore it is outside the responsibilities of the mediator to look at external power

dynamics and that as long as the mediator is neutral they do not need to worry about complaints of inequality (Wing, 2009).

This reasoning seems both harsh and unconvincing. If there is a power imbalance it seems unfair to hand responsibility to the powerless party for this situation and claim it is outside the area of concern of the mediator. It also seems that if one party is powerless in the sense that they are less articulated than the other party then the mediator may have a duty to try and establish an environment where the parties are on more level terms. In workplace mediations between a powerful employer and a relatively powerless employee it is hard to imagine justice being delivered by such an approach unless the mediator has very good interpersonal skills and an accurate perception of gender and power issues.

Another potential source of inequality in mediation is the repeated player effect which Bingham (1998) identified as occurring with arbitration. This means if employers make regular and repeated use of mediation it is likely that it will become more adept at handling it and win more cases against individual employees who are not regular users of mediation because of this experience. This is unproven but the logic behind it seems robust enough to suggest that it is probably true.

7.7. Neutrality

According to Wing (2009), mediation as a dispute process has the goal of producing a voluntary and consensual outcome through using a mediator. The core values of mediation are neutrality and self determination. Wing says that neutrality has two aspects, impartiality and equidistance. She defines impartiality as the condition where the mediator does not take sides and equidistance as the condition of being equally removed from each party. Equidistance demands that the mediator deals symmetrically with both parties. According to Grillo (2001), impartiality implies an observer with either no perspective or a completely neutral one.

However, even if mediators are trying to be impartial, their role always leads them to compare the party's arguments and make some sort of judgment about them, listening to the parties' statements implies a thought process that involves either a conscious or

subconscious evaluation of them (Gerami, 2009). This realization has led Wing (2009) to claim mediators influence the legitimacy of the party's perspectives through their interventions, reframing and setting the order of speaking. They claim because of this mediators influence not only the process of mediation but the outcomes as well. Another challenge to the neutrality of mediators is the argument that since mediation is a business, mediators have an interest in building a referral base and a reputation. This means self-interest influences mediators in their efforts to seek settlements as mediators have an interest in being viewed positively by clients who are likely to give them repeated business.

Furthermore, Wing (2009) argued that power imbalances are not the responsibility of the mediator and admits that heavy criticism of mediation comes from the fact that it does not recognize power imbalances. She says there is an assumption that both sides in a dispute have equal power to both articulate and act and this fails to take into account social inequalities. This means that mediators who remain impartial and equidistant when dealing with situations where there is a power imbalance are not seen as neutral by many in the marginalized groups. According to Wing, this has led many in the field to view neutrality as unrealistic and unachievable. Goldman (2008) perceives the inability to act neutrally as part of human nature. She points out that the recognition that human nature makes neutrality unachievable has led to a shared understanding that all we can do is strive for it. This is a compelling argument and it implies that identifying mediation as being dependent on mediator neutrality is setting it up to fail. Another issue affecting neutrality in mediation has to do with the dominant paradigm. Wing claims that narratives that fit with the dominant cultural stories in society have reinforcement behind them that makes them easily understandable to mediators. The power of these narratives is further strengthened if they reflect the life experiences of the mediator (Goldberg, 2009).

This also challenges the fairness of taking a symmetrical approach as one party's narrative, supported by both the dominant paradigm and the mediator's lived experience take less time for the mediator to understand and so should receive less time (Ross, 1995). Ross points out that the dominant paradigm is still present at the table even when it is not put into words. Gerami (2009) contends that it is questionable whether a mediator who is hired because of his knowledge and experience can be described as

neutral. Cobb and Rifkin (1991) also challenge whether neutrality is possible. They believe that the concept of neutrality is included in mediation discourse to obscure the workings of power in mediation (Cobb and Rifkin, 1991). Wherever mediation heads it is important that it is based on realistic principles. Thus the idea of mediation being based on real mediator neutrality needs to be reviewed and possibly replaced with something more realistic stressed (Cobb and Rifkin, 1991).

7.8. Critical theory and mediation

According to Bush and Folger (1994), the critical view of mediation has been artificially suppressed. Bush and Folger (1994) outline four mediation conceptions. The satisfaction story has the goal of satisfying the party's dispute by using problem solving. The transformation story attempts to promote empathy between the parties and empower them to make a decision. The social justice story views mediation as a tool for overcoming societal oppression and the oppression story sees mediation as being used to promote the interests of the powerful. While critical theory fits the social justice story, Bush and Folger (1994) contend that the satisfaction model has dominated mediation in such a way that it has stifled mediation development and debate to the detriment of the other stories. This has had the effect of artificially narrowing the field of mediation and suppressing debates that otherwise may have led to improvements. Bush and Folger (1994) tell the satisfaction story relies on the mediator taking a neutral stance. Taking this position without analyzing the power of the parties in conflict can hide the power imbalances that exist and actually undermine the efforts of the disempowered by supporting the ideology of the powerful (Eide, 1972). Critical theory therefore calls for conflict resolution practitioners to use the social justice story to view mediation. This means mediators should state power imbalances, take a partial position with the underdog and seek to go beyond settlement, helping parties change oppressive social relationships (Hansen, 2008).

Eide (1972) claims workplace conflict resolution using mediation is ideally suited to Bush and Folger's (1994) social justice story as it occurs between powerful employers and powerless employees. He points out that there is underlying inequality of power in disputes between the powerful and the powerless that is masked by using neutral conflict resolution processes. In this way neutral conflict resolution processes are used

as a tool to reinforce the *status quo* and protect the interests of the powerful. The response to this from a critical theorist perspective has been a call for conflict resolution in cases where there is a power imbalance to focus on protecting the interests of the less powerful party (Hansen, 2008).

One wonders why cruel employers would ever agree to mediation in dealing with an employment issue when the mediator is openly sympathetic to the employee's position. Reasons they may have for doing this are, firstly they may be aware of the injustice that exists and want to address it (Bush & Folger, 1994). Secondly, the oppressor may be compelled to come, either by higher authority or by the oppressed themselves due to their using shame or other direct action to force them to act (King, 1992). Finally, the outcomes from this type of mediation tend to be more durable and sustainable. This is because outcomes that give the oppressed more power, reduce social inequities and eliminate structural oppression are seen as just and thus are more respected (Galtung, 2000). Apart from being compelled to come to mediation it is still hard to imagine an employer willingly attending mediation where the mediator is openly sympathetic to the employee's position.

In conclusion, according to Lulofs and Cahn (2000) mediation is attractive because it can potentially deliver win-win outcomes and has a high success rate. However, both of these attributes are now facing serious challenges from research. It has been found by Pruitt et al. (1993) that mediation may not actually deliver true win-win outcomes, meaning that the true success rate of mediation may not be high. A compelling explanation for this is the negotiators dilemma, which explains how safer it is for parties in a collaborative negotiation to behave competitively than to behave collaboratively (Axelrod, 1984). Furthermore mediation has a number of problematic aspects. These are that mediator neutrality may be impossible to achieve, the powerless are disadvantaged by its approach to neutrality, there may be advantages for a participant in speaking first and it favors the more experienced and articulated. These factors mean that mediation tends to reinforce the dominant paradigm and in this respect it is a tool for the powerful to suppress the powerless.

It would be reasonable to dismiss mediation as a tool used by the powerful to disempower the powerless from the research outlined above. Nevertheless, Bush and

Folger (1994) contend is too early to label as just a tool of control. They point out that mediation is still evolving and covers many broad approaches. This means that potentially mediation can evolve into a form that does not have the weaknesses identified in the last paragraphs.

The negotiators dilemma means mediation is unlikely to consistently deliver true win-win outcomes. However, as the alternative is for conflict to continue to be dealt with, so win-lose outcomes are predominant and the reasons for continuing to look for a working system that delivers win-win outcomes are compelling.

For these reasons it is best that the conflict industry develop an increased awareness of the influence of power in mediation and look at mediation as a work in progress. As mediation is still developing it is best it be given a broad definition and then the various models be allowed to evolve. This process may reveal approaches that deal with many of the issues raised by the critics (Bush & Folger, 1994). Hopefully approaches that can minimize the negotiators dilemma emerge.

Having now deconstructed both ADR and mediation it is appropriate to look at an approach that potentially will reduce the volume of destructive workplace conflict. That approach is training; being trained and significant research supports it as an effective means of reducing levels of destructive conflict.

7.9. Training

According to the CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008), training is the biggest driver for high-quality outcomes from conflict (CPP Global Human Capital Report, 2008). Training is the single most important activity that organizations wanting to reduce levels of destructive workplace conflict can engage in, but unfortunately evidence from the CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) shows that most employees receive no training in conflict management and that is why conflict is high in workplaces.

According to De Witt (2001) workplace management training will help the staff to understand the causes of tension and conflict between people in your workplace/organization. Furthermore it will equip the managers with requisites and

practical skills to manage conflict effectively as and when it arise (De Witt 2001). Thus it is potentially superior to ADR based workplace conflict management systems focused on the causes and remedies of the conflict. This is because training can potentially reduce the numbers of conflicts being escalated to destructive pattern.

Avruch (2009) says training should be used when there is a general belief in the importance of having certain knowledge and it is important that this knowledge is passed on to a new group. This appears to accurately describe the situation where an organization has staff that has not received training in conflict resolution. (Harris & Crothers, 2010). They say training is also appropriate when a new approach to using knowledge and skills is required. This means even previously trained practitioners need to be retrained. Thus training in conflict resolution, which is experiencing a period of evolution and change, should be an ongoing process in organizations. Avruch (2009) says these two scenarios are related through the concept of confidence. With new training there needs to be confidence that the training will be effective and with retraining there needs to be confidence that the new approach is better than the one it is replacing.

Finally, training staff in conflict resolution is potentially superior to all forms of mediation, arbitration, adjudication and negotiation with respect to its ability to reduce levels of destructive workplace conflict. However, it is rarely used by organizations and perhaps this point highlights the depth of confusion that exists about how to deal with destructive workplace conflict.

8. Methodology

8.1. Research Justification

I developed a certain interest in the area of organization and workplace conflict when I worked as a program manager for a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) and subsequently my experience of living in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC) showed me that there was constant tension and conflict between staff and managers and among employees. It seemed to me that this was causing a lot of unhappiness, stress and expense and that it should have been possible to do something about this situation.

The collapse of the Non-governmental Organization (NGO) led me to conclude that the investment sector was changing fundamentally and the role I was specializing in for most of my career was likely to disappear. This meant that I needed to gain new skills in order to have a meaningful role in the future and this led me to explore studying conflict resolution as a manager.

I wanted to find out what caused destructive workplace conflict and what could be done to remedy the situation. My experience in the workplace and the feedback I had received from friends in other organizations led me to believe that workplace conflict was a widespread problem in CCSC as well as in other organizations. This meant that potentially there would be an interesting role for me in this area, if I developed the appropriate skills.

However, I chose Conflict Management in workplace for my Master Thesis in Business Science and it seemed to offer the answers I was looking for in conflict management skill in workplace. When I had to choose a topic for my thesis I knew I wanted to look at workplace conflict in order to satisfy my interest in this area. According to Masters and Albright (2002), despite all efforts to solve workplace conflicts they are increasing at international level even among professionals. This indicates there may be a problem with the theory of workplace conflict management skills.

8.2. Research Objective

The main purpose of this research project is to study and analyze conflict management practices in a workplace. The research includes information about the possible sources

of conflict and conflict resolution techniques applied. The focus of the research is identification of conflict resolution, conflict management strategic pattern, alternative dispute resolution and other conflict skills that can be used by managers to resolve conflict in workplaces. The research structure is based on using alternative dispute resolution and workplace conflict management approach to a conflict resolution model.

8.3. Research design and setting

According to Parahoo (2006), the design selected for research should be the one most suited so as to achieve an answer research question. For the purpose of the research question, the researcher chose to carry out a descriptive qualitative research design hoping to explore and analyze conflict management skill and patterns in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC). Qualitative research is a systematic, subjective approach to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Burns and Grove, 2009). Qualitative studies allow researchers to explore behaviors, perspectives, feelings, and experiences in depth, quality and complexity of a situation through a holistic framework (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002).

There are four common approaches within qualitative research - phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and historiography. As the researcher is a novice, none of the above approaches were deemed suitable for this study thus a simple phenomenology descriptive qualitative study was chosen. Descriptive phenomenology design aims to describe the essential findings in a rigorous way that is free from distortion and bias (Brabury-Jones et al. 2010). Descriptive studies help to discover a new meaning, describe what currently exists, verify the rate of which something occurs, and categorize the information. Thus the researcher chose this design for the study as it facilitates the precise actions the researcher aims to achieve such as identifying conflict resolution, conflict management strategic pattern, alternative dispute resolution and other conflict skills that can be used by managers to resolve conflict in workplaces.

A descriptive, qualitative approach method was used to enable the researchers to learn about the perspective of conflict management skill in workplace at Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC). According to Boswell and Cannon (2007), a qualitative method is suitable to uncovering the complex human issues and what lies behind them. The

method used is the analysis of the content of narrative data to identify prominent themes and patterns among the themes. It is a method that is useful to study phenomena about which little is known.

The research will be targeting all the persons that come in contact with the centre as well as the main staff that are working at CCSC. We will use in-depth interview to reach the staff while using focus group discussion to target other people who live or come for psycho-social help in the centre.

However, a set of two questionnaires will be developed by the researchers for comprehensive study of conflict management skill and patterns in CCSC. The first questionnaire will be targeting the people that live or come in contact with the Centre, while the other questionnaire will be targeting the staff that works in the centre. Certainly, there will be a slight difference between the questionnaires in order to differentiate them.

8.4. The Interviews

Semi-structured interviews took place in the month of February and March, 2014. As we previously said the research will be targeting all the people that come in contact with the centre as well as the main staff that are working in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC). We will use in-depth interviews to target the staff and focus group discussion (FGD) to reach people who live or come in contact with the Centre for psycho-social help. In the light of the above the interview was divided into two phases: firstly, for the people that live or come in contact with the centre which will take place between 19th and 21st February, 2014, which was targeted using focus group discussion - a group of 6 to 7 persons was interviewed using semi-structured format and opened-end question. Nevertheless from 24th to 3rd March, 2014, we conducted in-depth interviews which targeted the staff with different questionnaire. A total of 4 FGDs will be conducted during the research interview targeting both men and women. A total of five (5) staff members will be reached, while in total eighteen (18) persons who live and come in contact with the centre was targeted, in total twenty-three (23) persons was reached during the research work at Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC). The languages used during the interview was Portuguese and English which gives all the participants equal

opportunity to contribute during the interview, because most of the participants speak different languages as English and Portuguese are common to all the participants.

The interviews will be conducted in the workplace of Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC), as this will be convenient for participants and it is an environment in which they felt comfortable. During the interview the researcher used an interpreter because the Portuguese was not good enough to conduct the interview. The interviews generally lasted a little over 30 minutes for the FGDs per group while for in-depth interview lasted over 45 minutes per staff member.

These questions explored the participants' views on how to define conflict, win-win outcomes, conflict resolution processes, power, what factors affected levels of destructive conflict, harmonious workplaces, gender, culture and workplace conflict management systems. See the appendix for the interviewer's guide 12.1. & 12.2.

The interviews began with a question about how conflict should be defined. Checking the participants' understanding about what kind of conflict was created a context that helped me better understand subsequent comments they made about conflict and so it was a natural starting point. It is also a relatively neutral topic, unlikely to generate a great deal of passion and so it was a good starting point in this respect as well. As the questions moved into the participants' experiences of conflict the intensity of the interview rose and at this point my role became to maintain the flow through listening carefully and asking relevant additional questions when areas arose which I believed were worth exploring. All the interviews were recorded using a non-digital tape recorder.

8.5. Data Analysis

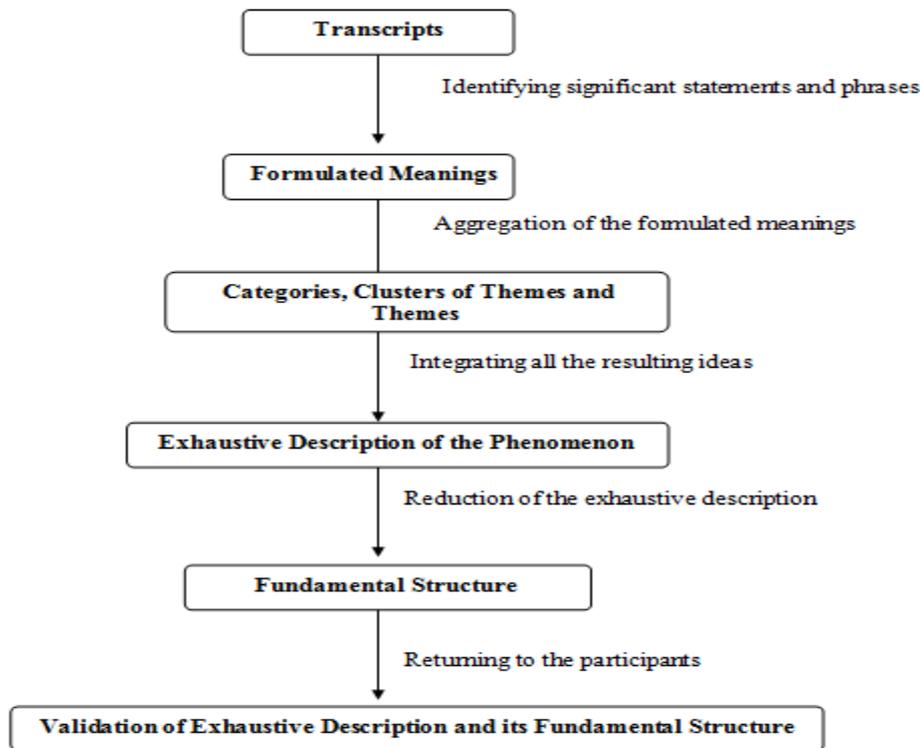
The purpose of data analysis is not only to organize, but also to provide structure and elicit meaning from research data (Polit and Beck, 2008). Data analysis will be ongoing in conjunction with data collection as Polit and Hunglar (1999) state, as interviews are conducted; gathered data are synthesized, interpreted and communicated to give meaning to them. According to Burns and Grove (1999), qualitative data analysis occurs in three phases: description, analysis and interpretation. The researcher will transcribe the interviews verbatim and analysis of the transcripts will be carried out by the

researcher while utilizing Phenomenological data analysis using Colaizzi's (1978) strategy.

The following seven steps represent Colaizzi's process for phenomenological data analysis (cited in Sanders, 2003; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007):

- Each transcript should be read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content.
- For each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study should be extracted. These statements must be recorded on a separate sheet noting their page and line numbers.
- Meanings should be formulated from these significant statements.
- The formulated meanings should be sorted into categories, clusters of themes, and themes.
- The findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study.
- The fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described.
- Finally, validation of the findings should be sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experience.

Figure 8 illustrates the process of descriptive phenomenological data analysis created by Colaizzi (1978)



8.6. Data reliability

The reliability and trustworthiness of data gathered during a research project is obviously of great importance. Robson (1993) cites Lincoln and Guba (1985) who proposed using credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as criteria to test the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Credibility is a measure of whether the research findings are a valid construction of reality (Robson, 1993). He says this is often a problem issue with qualitative research. Taylor and Bogden (1998) recommend using triangulation to check credibility. This means the researcher should compare multiple sources of data with the interviews. This is what occurred in this research project. As the participants came from a variety of backgrounds triangulation was possible in the interview process.

Transferability refers to the ability of the research to be replicated beyond the specific research context and it is often viewed as impossible with qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). As the participants in this project had, in some cases, relatively unique backgrounds, it is unlikely that the data that emerged from their interviews could be

exactly replicated. In this respect the criticism identified by Bryman and Bell (2007) can be leveled at this research.

Dependability deals with the participants' views on whether the data have been reliably interpreted (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that demonstrating credibility is sufficient to satisfy the issue of dependability. Dependability by itself is difficult to establish and so it is helpful to use credibility as a method to satisfy dependability.

Confirmability is defined by Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) as dealing with the danger that the analysis distorts the data and is made up by the researcher. The way that this issue was dealt with was through using a large number of direct quotes, thereby letting the words of the participants answer the challenge of confirmability.

8.7. Robustness

Rigor is associated with openness, scrupulous adherence to philosophical perspective, thoroughness in collecting data and consideration of all of the data (Burns and Grove 2009). Guba and Lincoln (1981), as stated by Morse et al. (2002), developed specific principles to examine trustworthiness and quality of research. These include credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, as cited by LoBiondo-wood and Haber (2002). Credibility evaluates quality and refers to truth in data (Polit and Beck, 2008). By carrying out a pilot study this increases credibility this is also done by clarifying any issues at the time of interviewing. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time (Polit and Beck 2008). Confirmability depends on others agreeing with the researcher's findings and interpretations (Parahoo, 2006) to communicate trustworthiness of data. Transferability refers to the extent to which finding can be transferred to other settings (Polit and Beck, 2008).

9. Analysis and discussion of results

The questionnaires for the semi-structured interviews were designed to explore the participants views on the broad areas and themes identified in the theoretical framework. Following transcription, a lengthy process of coding and reflection occurred. The process of open coding was used to identify the key themes that emerged from the interviews. The themes identified through using open coding are:

9.1. Theme 1: A lack of consensus and precise definition of conflict

The theoretical framework identified that there was a great deal of confusion among conflict theorists as to how conflict should be defined and this was reflected in the responses from the participants during the research. Many participants identified conflict as involving opposing views. Most other participants mentioned conflict as occurring when the parties see things differently and disagree. Only one of the participants identified conflict as existing when one of the parties felt uncomfortable, while another participant saw conflict as a situation, created by people and caused by different ideas and beliefs when solving a problem or a new situation that may arise during work.

However, seven of the participants identified conflict as a disagreement between two or more people. This was explained by three participants as involving negative emotions including fear, lack of emotional control, competitive behavior and feeling uncomfortable. This perspective implied that conflict was negative and a sign that things were somehow dysfunctional. Nevertheless, one of the volunteers at Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC) commented on how this perception was a mistaken one. She said that the word Conflict presumes negativity but we are beginning to see conflict as just a normal natural part of the way things are. Another participant living in the CCSC expanded this point: conflict is just normal and a daily interplay among human beings. Another group of five participants agreed with the view that conflict is normal.

One of the participants, a staff member, affirmed that it is all about how human beings get along with each other and the answer is we rub along. It is only through the conflict

of ideas that we get advancement and clarity of thought. Another participant concurred that in workplace, there is always way to conflict situations when employees do not have a specific job and they are resigned from one position to another even when they do not have more or less knowledge on that new position.

In the discussion, the clear majority of the participants supported the definition of conflict as existing when two parties disagree. This meant that a clear majority supported a position that enjoys support from much of the theoretical framework, which is in tandem with Lulofs & Cahn, 2000 and Cahn & Abigail, 2007.

That some of the participants viewed conflict as negative while others made the effort to explain that conflict was a normal and natural aspect of life was also significant. This is because the theoretical framework identified as there is a general misperception of conflict as being purely negative (Brandon & Robertson, 2007). However the responses also indicated that not only researchers but some conflict professionals and managers viewed conflict as a normal part of life. One of the participants said sometimes conflict is good when it is not destructive, was a clear sign that the idea that conflict is purely negative is being challenged both by research and by some managers and conflict professionals.

9.2. Theme 2: The need for respect in the workplace

All through the interview the most strongly supported theme that emerged from the participants was how critically important respect was in workplace/organization. The issue of respect was repeatedly raised by most participants throughout the interviews.

One of the participants, a staff member, responded by saying that the management should create ways of carrying all the staff along in making decision thus showing respect thereby, creating a good working environment in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC)

One of the participants believed that employees' opinions are not listened to and put into consideration; the manager/the management board makes decisions without consulting the staff. For example, presently people are working more and are drafted into a position which they have little knowledge about or little experience without informing them before making the decision. One of the respondents, a staff member, stressed that this

had caused different kinds of conflict among the staff ranging from interpersonal to intergroup.

Another participant believed it is also important that staff respects the CEOs/directors and said for this to happen it was crucial that the Directors spoke and acted consistently. Participants were asked in one question to describe the most harmonious workplace they had experienced. This left them with the opportunity to describe what factors they believed contributed to low levels of destructive conflict. There were only three participants that had experienced harmonious workplaces. Another participant described a harmonious workplace where the Director was a man who firmly believed you should do well and this gentleman walked the walk. The participant affirmed that during his stay at the workplace there was no conflict at all in the workplace.

Another participant, a staff member, mentioned the importance of respect flowing in all directions. The staff member describes a harmonious workplace she had worked in the past where the CEO was clearly respected and listened to the staff. The boss was quick to make decisions and they were fair. She did not particularly seem to have favorites and she gave people space to say what they needed to say in meetings and more important she carried every one alone during her work. According to one of the participants, harmony in the workplace drives harmonious sort of culture which is an underlying respect for everybody within the organization and a value sharing, which is really driven by communication. For example, participants (some living in the Center) identified disrespect as the main cause of systemic conflict, where people think they have a long relationship with some of the staff members and they can do anything and go free with it, without realizing the impact of their disrespectful attitude on other people. For the staff, systems that cause conflict according to a respondent are when decisions are made about people's jobs with no consultation. What could be more disrespectful to staff than this? However, according to one of the participants (staff), it is also believed disrespect was what caused systemic conflict especially from the management, staff are posted from one position to another with due consultation before the decision was taken. She described a situation where she was not treated with any respect in an organization she had worked for some years previously.

During the interview, a participant identified that respect was the key to create a harmonious workplace in CCSC; on the other hand, she stressed that the level of disrespect that exist between the employees is higher than it was before; this is due to friction created in making decisions for sustainability and other work related issues in the centre. Another participant (living in the Centre) affirmed the importance of respect for the well being of the people, but in the Centre it is difficult to achieve because of the differences in culture, lifestyle and religion, thus people find it challenging living in harmony with each other. A participant (staff) said that it is easy to control the people that live in the Centre because there are set rules to guide everybody's life in the Centre. However, the focuses concerning these responses partially validate the position of Hudson (2001), who argued the worker's dignity is the key to create harmonious workplaces. During the interview two of the participants in C.C.S.Cirilo mentioned dignity, self-esteem and self-respect as factors that promote a good and harmonious workplace environment. According to Hudson (2001), respect should be looked as an important factor in workplace conflict and this is particularly true as it is related to C.C.S.Cirilo and in any other workplace across the world. One of the participants (employee) explained that the Director is not walking his walk - this means that the staff is not carried along when making decisions that affect their work.

9.3. Theme 3: Power is a key aspect of workplace conflict

During the interview, most of the respondents identified power as a critical aspect of workplace conflict: one of the participants (during FGD interview) said that it's everything, it's absolutely everything. She narrated her experience in her former workplace where a CEO didn't like that her manager took turns with her to make cups of tea and used his power to stop this occurring to demonstrate how power is a critical aspect of conflict.

One of the respondents called power 'massive' and another participant, a volunteer, a female 55 years old said *"I think the issue of power affects every relationship in daily life. So, I think power is a huge issue not only in workplace"*. A participant took a slightly more differentiated position on the issue of power as she linked it to knowledge: a staff female 25 years old *"I think that information of power is a dangerous thing. I think that keeping half the organization in the dark means that you will not achieve*

anything. It gives people power over others. I think openness is really important as it diffuses the situation and takes that power away. I think it's driven by the behavior of the people at the top especially the CEOs and Directors".

A participant (staff) said that the issues with power lie on the hand of one person: the Director who determines how to use it. According to one of the respondents (staff), at CCSC their opinion is not respected because the whole power is vested on the Director. A staff female 50 years old ``we are redeployed from one position to another without being previously informed or tested to show if we have the capability to do the work. This causes interpersonal conflict and also affect people work output and relationship with others colleagues``

Furthermore, a participant (volunteer) argued that power is necessary and good in workplace, but must be used effectively and efficiently so that people will not be hurt, because when used wrongly it can lead to destructive conflict and affect the well being of the workers.

9.4. Theme 4: Gender and cultural differences cause conflict when accompanied by disrespect

In the theoretical framework these three aspects of diversity gender, culture and personality were dealt with separately as well in the interviews. The answers regarding gender and culture were so similar that it made sense to group them together and they are as follows.

Gender

During the interview there was a broad range of responses from the participants on the role of gender in workplace conflict. A number of the participants made the effort to dismiss the idea of gender stereotypes and in particular that women were typically more nurturing and looking for harmony in situations than men. According to one participant (volunteer), she said:” I have seen just as many men who are counselor managers as I have seen women who are competitive managers”. However, another participant staff female 27 years old concurred that, *for me gender doesn't play any role at all. It's the personality of the person, whether they are conducive to working with people.* Another

participant staff female 34 years old agreed that gender was not a major factor in workplace conflict, saying *I don't see much difference in the way that people respond to conflict based on gender*. In fact only one participant believed that men and women handle conflict differently. The rest said that there was no difference in how people of different genders respond to conflict. The common theme in answers to the question on gender was that respect was important and that, if there was a lack of respect based on gender then that situation would have impact on levels of conflict.

For example, a participant narrated a story where both issues of gender and culture created a potentially explosive situation. In this situation, an Indian woman had been promoted and then some Indian men were recruited below her: the Indian male workers began saying "we are not working under an Indian woman, we will work for a European woman but we will not work in a team with an Indian woman at the helm."

It was amazing; so, they changed the teams around. Even the woman in that position said I can't lead this team. I will lead it with any other nationalities. This narrative shows how Indian gender values created a problem situation in workplace. As it transpired management respected these values and so problem conflict was avoided. However, while most participants did not consider gender difference as a major source of destructive conflict in workplaces it was pointed out those women are still being disrespected as they are discriminated against purely on the basis of gender stressed by one of the participants, a female volunteer in the Centre.

Culture

The theoretical framework identified how different cultures dealt differently with conflict; an example by a participant used in the section on gender of Indian men refusing to work for an Indian woman manager. These examples show that there are differences between how people react to conflict based on culture.

According to one of the respondents, cultural differences do not need to be a source of conflict if there is respect and understanding of one another; he argued that in the dominant culture you have to be really careful, you don't plaster that all over other people. On the contrary, another participant believed that culture was a bigger conflict issue in a workplace, especially like CCSC, because of the people from different cultures living together. He further argued that the Portuguese culture has the tendency

to change your way of life and causes disrespectful acts to other culture. This will always cause friction and tension in workplace especially in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC).

This is according to literature, the answers to the question about gender showed that men and women respond to conflict in a similar way and in this respect gender by itself does not result in different levels of conflict (Birkhoff, 2013). Yet the participants pointed out that when gender and disrespect occurred together that could have impact on levels of conflict. According to the OECD (2010), women in Portugal are only paid 90% of what men are paid. This shows that while gender needs not to be a factor in workplace conflict, it is a factor because women are still disrespected. That the participants did not identify a higher level of destructive conflict due to gender is interesting because there is clearly ongoing disrespect. The example of the Indian woman was problematic for me. In respecting Indian patriarchal values and both sides' desires, management seemed to avoid dealing with an issue that should have been confronted. The problem was ignored rather than resolved. The responses on culture show how different cultures handle conflict differently. They also identified that with respect different cultures could work together. One respondent felt that unfortunately in Portugal there is a tendency for people not to respect other cultures because Portuguese culture influences everybody that come in contact with the people.

The views on how culture impacts on conflict in the theoretical framework were mixed. Lulofs and Cahn (2000) did not take a clear position. Folger et al. (2005) however, claim cultural differences can result in longer and more intense conflicts. This is because people stereotype others based on these differences. A further discussion explained the case comes from the theoretical framework where conflict was identified as normal (Lulofs & Cahn, 2000; Brandon & Robertson, 2007; Masters & Albright, 2002; Cahn & Abigail, 2007). Conflict was also identified as becoming a problem when an organization experiences excessive levels of escalated destructive conflict (Pruitt, 2008). This means identifying gender and cultural disrespect that occurs in workplaces does not necessarily mean that these will result in problem levels of workplace conflict. The responses to the questions on gender and culture indicate that based on the work experiences in Portugal of the participants in this study, gender and cultural differences are not major sources of destructive conflict.

9.5. Theme 5: Managers were critical of ADR and mediation

In the theoretical framework doubts were raised over the usefulness of ADR based conflict management systems. This was based on the evidence that in spite of ADR systems in many workplaces levels of destructive workplace conflict in the US and other parts of the world that are using ADR system in resolving workplace conflict are continuing to rise (Masters & Albright, 2002). One view that emerged, that was not presented in the theoretical framework, was that conflict management systems are an example of how organizations try to use process to deal with people, rather than management.

According to one of the respondent's mediation, it is an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. It is like having to walk through mud every day to get to work and apparently, once you arrive, you are not going to be muddy. I mean the fact is that the mud is still in the office. You come back to dysfunction and you are going to try to cope with that dysfunction. Not going to work. Why another participant affirmed that mediation will not work in this kind of setting (workplace) because of the kind of relationship that exists between the staff and people that both live and come in contact with the Center, this will always make the mediator to be bias in making a decision where Mr A is a friend of Mrs B. So, to achieve a good win-win outcome here is always difficult because people must get hurt.

In discussing the strength and weakness of using mediation in resolving conflict in workplace, one aspect of mediation that the conflict theorists did not identify is that there is often a window of time in which mediation can be effective. According to one of the participants (staff), the time a mediator is called in to mediate is very important; the problem had gone beyond resolution.

Another participant female 32 years old said that `` I have experienced conflict getting too bad before mediation so that nothing could resolve it really``. According to one of the respondents, this is an example in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC) where people refused to complain to the authority and continue to manage the situation, until it escalates beyond them because of the lack of interest from the staff get involved in or

the staff members are always busy and eventually when the staff start to mediate it is already late and it becomes difficult to achieve a win-win outcome. Somebody had to walk and so the mediation just made it all worse. The positions were entrenched there and people were jumping on each other's backs and goodwill and understanding had long gone; the respondent stressed.

Most of the participants (staff) don't know the meaning of acronym (ADR) and when explained more during interview, one of the participants staff, female 26years said ``we used this method in resolving conflict in CCSC but it is not known to me and my colleagues as alternative dispute resolution`` According to Almada (2001), ADR method in Portugal is still at the embryonic stage, especially when compared with other European Countries and countries of the common law system.

In Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC), resolving conflict between people living in the Center or people that come for psycho-social help is always easy to achieve a win- win outcome by the management and staff according to one of the participant but with the staff they have always conflict and disagreement to reach a settlement mostly on issue of work distribution and long term vision for the organization.

In resolving a conflict with the people living in the Center or people that come for psycho-social help we start with negotiation with the parties in conflict and three members of the staff are appointed to oversee such negotiation. At the end, if they cannot achieve a win-win outcome a mediator will be appointed to mediate and according to the staff this process has always produced a win-win and final reconciliation where it is allowed to work together in the Center. According to Almada (2001), in Portugal ADR methods are classified under four techniques, namely negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

9.6. Theme 6: Factors that cause systemic conflict and ways of achieving a win-win outcome

When the question on factor that cause systemic conflict in workplace was asked during the interviews to the employees, they unanimous mentioned the following: lack of information, skill deficit, ineffective organizational system, lack of respect for your

colleagues, lack of respect for the management team and lack of honesty among employees.

According to one of the respondents (staff), the lack of respect and tolerance to each other has been one of the biggest challenges we are facing in this institution, CCSC. Another respondent (staff) said that the Director's attitude towards the management of the organization and staff sometimes causes and creates conflict among the employees. A participant staff female 55 years old responded that: ``we don't have many problems with the people living in the Centre because there are rules and they know the consequences of going contrary to the rules``. She explained more when the interviewer probe further, by saying that when an individual goes against the rules (s)he is punished according to the law in the Centre; so in this light, individual tries as much as they can, to live together although conflict exist among them every day but not at a destructive level.

Achieving a win-win outcome is always difficult in the Center, according to one of the respondents because people always want to win especially with the people living in the Center. Another participant (staff) said that to achieve a win-win outcome among the employed people it should be truthful transparent and most important have the same workplace goal.

In the discussion, according to one of the respondents (staff), to resolve a conflict in order to achieve a win-win outcome, firstly, we should separate people from the problem and focus their minds on ways of resolving the conflict by counseling, mediation and negotiation with the individuals/parties in conflict in order to find objective criteria on which we can make decisions. According to Cahn & Abigal, 2002, Wertheim, 2002, Robin, 2002, in the theoretical framework they think collaboration is the best conflict strategy to achieve a win-win outcome which the employees used when resolving conflict.

9.7. Theme 7: The need for staff to be trained in conflict resolution

The CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) identified training staff in conflict resolution as the most effective action that organizations could take to reduce levels of

destructive conflict. Some of the participants (staff) said that they have never had a formal training on conflict resolution but every day they use their experience to resolve conflict related issues in the Center.

A participant (volunteer), said she was trained in conflict resolution and had a particular interest in this area. She explained why she thought it was so important to train in this area "I, have learnt one thing studying conflict resolution and that is conflict is all around us, internally, externally, everywhere in all sorts of different ways and it manifests in different ways. Get good at it. That's it. Just accept it and get good at solving it". She thinks training in conflict resolution is vital and veritable in managing workplace conflict.

Another participant (staff) described it as essential and important while another participant responded by describing training in conflict resolution as very important because it gives people the language and understanding that there are other ways different from what they have been using. She thinks that if you keep yourself updated with new research, new understandings of dangerous types of things like mobbing or the variations of how bullying happens, all of that can be very helpful.

A participant (staff) said in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC), they have not been trained both on conflict resolution and management skills but they manage conflict related issues every day and achieve a win-win outcome with the parties in conflict especially among the people living in the Center. Nevertheless, according to the CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) most staff receives no training in conflict resolution which was the case in the US, Portugal, New Zealand and other parts of the world. According to Harris & Crothers (2010),

It is hard to understand why organizations have not devoted more resources to train staff in conflict resolution as it appears that there is a broad consensus that it is highly effective, since organizations spend time and money in trying to resolve conflict in workplaces.

One of the respondents (staff) believe that training of staff will reduce conflict among the employees since some of them have known the patterns and also acquire skills on how to deal with conflict related issues. Another participant (staff) said that when

people (employees in workplace) are trained on conflict resolution it gives them experience to solve a conflict much earlier before it escalates and becomes destructive. During the discussion there was unanimous agreement of the participants as to the importance and value of training in conflict resolution. The CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) was also strongly supportive of the idea that staff should be trained in conflict resolution. However, based largely on the figures in the CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) it was shown in the theoretical framework that organizations in America that were in the bottom 10% in terms of the levels of conflict management.

10. Conclusions

Conflict cannot be ignored or concealed. It has to be faced. But if we remain trapped in conflict, we lose our perspective, our horizons shrink and reality itself begins to fall apart. In the midst of conflict, we lose our sense of the profound unity of reality. When conflict arises, some people simply look at it and go their way as if nothing happened; they wash their hands of it and get on with their lives. Others embrace it in such a way that they become its prisoners; they lose their bearings, project onto institutions their own confusion and dissatisfaction and thus make unity impossible.

In this way it becomes possible to build communion amid disagreement, but this can only be achieved by those great persons who are willing to go beyond the surface of the conflict and to see others in their deepest dignity. This requires acknowledging a principle indispensable to the building of friendship in society: namely, that unity is greater than conflict. Solidarity, in its deepest and most challenging sense, thus becomes a way of making history in a life setting where conflicts, tensions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity. This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution which takes place on a higher plane and preserves what is valid and useful on both side

However, people find it easier to live with unresolved misunderstanding than facing the fact that fundamental differences do existing recognition and appropriate management (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986). Concerning conflict in workplaces, the CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) provides a valuable perspective on workplace conflict to experience levels of conflict on average of three times higher than normal average. This indicates problem levels of conflict are a multiple at normal levels. In conflict strategies and patterns, it differentiated the issue by distinguishing between constructive and destructive conflict. Nevertheless the problems with workplace conflict have moved from it being a problem when excessive levels of conflict occur, to it being a problem when excessive levels of destructive conflict occur.

While this section explained the broad patterns that occur in both constructive and destructive conflicts, it has not addressed the issue of what happens with conflict when there are diverse parties involved. The next section considers this issue and looks at

gender, culture, organizational culture, personality and group dynamics to see what impact they have on levels of destructive conflict.

There are many variables that may affect the level of destructive conflict occurring within organization, such as gender, culture, personality, group dynamics and organizational culture. The conclusion taken from this literature review is that culture and gender differences do not provide an explanation as to why levels of destructive conflict vary. As the CPP Global Human Capital Report (2008) results showed levels of destructive conflict within organizations varied and the worst 10% of organizations had levels of destructive conflict three times higher than the remaining 90%. It seems that organizational culture is the critical variable element that affects the level of destructive conflict within organizations. It also appears that personality has a role to play.

In Portugal the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) method of solving conflict is still at the embryonic stage, especially when compared with other European Countries and countries of the common law system. However, ADR is not actually delivering a reduction in levels of destructive workplace conflict. While a range of reasons explain why ADR has become so popular with employers, there is evidence that some employers are introducing these systems to further powerless workers. That ADR is failing to stem the increase in levels of destructive conflict in the country where it has been most widely adopted indicates that there are serious flaws with ADR.

Arbitration and mediation are attractive because they can potentially deliver win-win outcomes and have a high success rate. Nevertheless, both attributes are now facing serious challenges from research. It has been found by Pruitt et al. (1993) that mediation may not actually deliver true win-win outcomes, meaning that the true success rate of mediation may not be high. A compelling explanation for this is the negotiators dilemma, what explains how it is safer for parties in a collaborative negotiation to behave competitively rather to behave collaboratively. However, as the alternative conflict is to continue to deal with win-loss outcomes are predominant reasons to go on looking for a working system that delivers win-win outcomes which are compelling? So, it is better that the conflict industry develops an increased awareness of the influence of power in mediation and look at mediation as a work in progress. As mediation is still developing it is better that it may be given a broad definition and then the various models can be allowed to evolve.

Training staff in conflict resolution is potentially superior to all forms of mediation, arbitration, adjudication and negotiation with respect to its ability to reduce levels of destructive workplace conflict. However, it is rarely used by organizations and perhaps this point highlights the depth of confusion that exists about how to deal with destructive workplace conflict.

The need for respect in the workplace is imperative for harmonious workplace. Staff feeling the need to be respected by management in order to have there less workplace conflict was the main need identified by the theme. This is a systemic need rather than an individualized one. It is related to the power figures in the organization respecting the less powerful.

Power was identified by the participants as a systemic issue. Every example of problem conflict situations involving power in the workplace that participants gave had a common feature. This was that in every case participants described the systemic use of power as being the problem.

The theme identified how the CEO was a key factor determining both high and low levels of conflict in organizations. The theme links the head of the organizational system to levels of conflict in the organization. According to this theme, levels of conflict in an organization are largely driven by systemic factors.

The participants' responses indicated that personality and behaviors of people in conflict change according to the personality and values of the power figure in an organization, who is normally the CEO. The literature reviewed on conflict contained no references to this dynamic and largely theoretical and seems to lack research backing.

Finally, given the number of themes that emerged from the interviews, that linked workplace conflict to systemic factors, is notable that much of the conflict resolution literature contained very little reference to systemic conflict. This is surprising particularly as Jaffee (2008) identifies that organizational conflict has its origins as systemic conflict in the industrial revolution, where workers, concerned about their loss

of freedom and autonomy, began to resist and rebel against capitalist employers and the way they used power.

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Appendix

The Interviewers guide for staff that works in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC).

The interview process will seek to identify narratives showing both how conflict in a workplace (CCSC) has been successfully and unsuccessfully managed. Questions are:

1. How would you define conflict?
2. Using an example, please describe the steps you go through when you are dealing with a (workplace) conflict.
3. How do you think the issue of power affects workplace conflict?
4. What factors do you think cause variations in the levels of conflict occurring within different organizations?
5. How would you describe the most harmonious workplace you have encountered and what elements do you believe were significant contributors to the organizational culture?
6. What do you think the factors are that lead to systemic conflict in organizations?
7. In your experience what factors need to be present for conflict to be resolved so there is a win-win outcome?
8. In your experience how often are win-win outcomes achieved.? Why do you think this is?
9. In your view what are the strengths and weaknesses of using mediation to deal with workplace conflict?
10. What sort of people do you think should be recruited in order to create a harmonious workplace?
11. What is Alternative dispute resolution and do you use it in your organization for conflict resolutions?
12. In your opinion, what role does gender play in conflict behavior and how does this impact on workplace conflict?
13. What effect do you think culture has on conflict behavior and how does this impact on workplace conflict?
14. What do you think of workplace conflict management systems?
15. How important do you think training (in conflict resolution) is and why?

The Interviewer guide for people that live or come in contact with the (Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC).) for psychosocial need

The interview process will seek to identify narratives showing how conflict in a workplace (CCSC) has been successfully managed. Questions are:

1. How would you define conflict?
2. What kind of conflict do you think exist in Centro Comunitário S. Cirilo (CCSC)
3. In your opinion what are the factor that causes conflict?
4. How do you cope with conflict in the workplace?
5. What do you think the factors are that lead to systemic conflict in organizations?
6. What sort of people do you think should be recruited in order to create a harmonious workplace?
7. What role does culture plays in conflict escalation ?
8. What are the conflict management styles you know ?
9. In your opinion what role does gender play in conflict behavior and how does this impact on workplace conflict?