

MASTER'S THESIS

**Organizational Conflict in the Banking Sector in Cyprus: Sources,
Strategies and Prevention**

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NICOSIA, MAY, 2021

OPEN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η παρούσα μεταπτυχιακή διατριβή πραγματεύεται το θέμα των εργασιακών συγκρούσεων στον Κυπριακό Τραπεζικό τομέα. Σκοπός της προτεινόμενης εργασίας είναι να ανιχνευθούν τα θέματα εκείνα που συνδέονται με τη διαχείριση συγκρούσεων στα εργασιακά, δηλαδή με τις αιτίες που οδηγούν στην πρόκληση τους καθώς και τις συνέπειες τους. Επιπλέον εξετάζονται οι τρόποι με τους οποίους οι managers, στο παρόν στάδιο, διαχειρίζονται και αντιμετωπίζουν τέτοιες συγκρούσεις και πως η στάση και οι επικοινωνιακές τους δεξιότητες θα μπορούσαν να μειώσουν τις μη λειτουργικές συγκρούσεις.

Στο θεωρητικό μέρος της μεταπτυχιακής αυτής διατριβής γίνεται παρουσίαση των θεωριών όπως έχουν αναπτυχθεί διαχρονικά από διάφορους μελετητές του συγκεκριμένου θέματος, κατόπιν εκτενούς βιβλιογραφικής ανασκόπησης. Το συγκεκριμένο κεφάλαιο εστιάζει κυρίως στα ερευνητικά ερωτήματα, αν και αγγίζει κάποιες επιμέρους θεωρίες, επιχειρώντας τη διασύνδεση των προαναφερόμενων ερωτημάτων με τα αποτελέσματα της πρωτογενούς ποσοτικής και της ποιοτικής έρευνας, οι οποίες έχουν διεξαχθεί στα πλαίσια της διατριβής μέσω διανομής ερωτηματολογίων και πραγματοποίησης προσωπικών συνεντεύξεων σε εργαζομένους στον Κυπριακό Τραπεζικό τομέα.

Με τη βοήθεια πρωτογενούς έρευνας έχει γίνει προσπάθεια σύγκρισης υφιστάμενων και προτεινόμενων πρακτικών αντιμετώπισης του φαινομένου των συγκρούσεων από τους managers, με σκοπό τη βελτίωση των χειρισμών τους προς όφελος των εργασιακών σχέσεων. Αξιοσημείωτο είναι το γεγονός ότι η θεωρία της διαχείρισης των συγκρούσεων δεν στοχεύει στην εξαφάνιση του φαινομένου αλλά αφ'ενός στη μείωση των μη λειτουργικών συγκρούσεων και αφ'ετέρου στη διατήρηση των λειτουργικών συγκρούσεων, οι οποίες όπως έχει αποδειχτεί με βάση την παρούσα έρευνα, οφελούν ένα οργανισμό. Συνεπώς το συγκεκριμένο ερωτηματολόγιο έχει σχεδιαστεί με τέτοιο τρόπο ώστε να εξετάζει τις παρούσες και προτεινόμενες συμπεριφορές, πρακτικές και τεχνικές διαχείρισης συγκρούσεων από τους managers. Ένα τελευταίο αλλά εξίσου σημαντικό σημείο που έχει εξεταστεί είναι η απάντηση στο ερώτημα: “πότε είναι ο σωστός χρόνος να διαχειριστεί κάποιος ένα τέτοιο επεισόδιο”.

Για τη συλλογή των δεδομένων έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί η γνωστή μέθοδος της τριγωνοποίησης, όπου ο ερευνητής χρησιμοποιεί περισσότερες από μία ερευνητικές μεθόδους με σκοπό την επιβεβαίωση των αποτελεσμάτων. Συγκεκριμένα, έχουν συλλεχθεί ποσοτικά δεδομένα με την μέθοδο των “κλειστών ερωτήσεων” και ποιοτικά δεδομένα με την μέθοδο των προσωπικών συνεντεύξεων των managers. Τα τελικά συμπεράσματα προκύπτουν μετά από σύγκριση όλων των αποτελεσμάτων.

ABSTRACT

The current postgraduate thesis examines organizational conflict in the banking workplace in Cyprus. In essence it seeks to identify the major sources of conflict and the consequences of conflict within the Cyprus banking environment. It also examines how do managers within banking institutions behave, prevent or manage such conflicts and how their actions might eliminate or minimize “bad” or relationship conflicts.

The theoretical part of this study presents the theories that have been developed over time by various scholars, following an extensive bibliographic review. This division focuses mainly on the research questions, although it touches some supplementary conflict philosophies, and attempts to correlate the research questions with the results of the combined quantitative and qualitative research carried out via questionnaires and personal interviews.

An attempt was made using primary research to compare existing with recommended practices in order to highlight areas meant for improvement. Conflict management does not necessarily suggest elimination of conflict, but entails minimizing relationship conflict and maintaining “healthy” or constructive conflict which, as the present research has revealed, can be advantageous to an organization. Within the context mentioned above, the questionnaire was designed to investigate current and suggested managers’ conflict handling styles and negotiation techniques. In addition, the factor “time” has been examined. The findings revealed which is the appropriate time for a manager to handle a conflict situation.

It should be pointed out that data was collected using a compound methodological approach referred to as triangulation. Triangulation involves using more than two methods in order to verify results. Thus the investigator gathered both quantitative (by means of close-ended questions) and qualitative data (by means of face-to-face interviews), integrated the two, and then drew interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data.

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First and foremost, I have to thank my thesis advisor Dr Michalis Socratous. Without his assistance and dedicated involvement in every step throughout the process, this paper would have never been accomplished.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this study to my beloved father Michalakis who is not with us anymore, but I am sure he would be very proud of me that I have managed to accomplish this project.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

1.1. Introduction

It is a fact of life that people hold different points of view. They have unique value hierarchies, unique perceptions of reality and establish different norms about how to act in social environments. At the same time, organizations are living systems that demand dynamic, rather than static, interactions among employees (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010). Organizational culture plays a significant role in forming our ways of feeling, thinking and acting or even managing change in the workplace. Often employees need to agree on new work arrangements, revise the company's strategic direction and renegotiate existing procedures or scarce resources necessary to perform their tasks. Thus, conflict frequently arises in the workplace.

“Conflict is a battle or clash involving two people or more in opposition to each other. It is an interpersonal or an inter-unit event and involves a particular type of interaction” (Litterer, Conflict in Organization: A Re-Examination, 1996).

No organization can survive if the employees are constantly engaged in fights and conflicts. There are consequences of conflicts in the workplace and such will be described in detail in the following chapters.

Hence, conflicts should be avoided for a healthy and competitive environment. Employees must ensure that precautionary measures are taken in advance to prevent conflicts. People are the assets of any organization and they must feel motivated and joyous to perform well. Conflicts only lead to tensions and depressions. Besides, no individual can work alone; he has to depend on his fellow workers for the maximum output. Every individual has to work in a team and cannot afford to fight with his team members. So conflict-free relationships among employees allow them to give their hundred percent at workplaces to generate revenue and profits for the organization.

Although a conflict episode may lead to synergy and better decision-making and as Tjosvold (2008) correctly explained, Constructive or Substantive or Task Related or Cognitive Conflict is a very positive and healthy process and it is very rational for an organization to combine the energy, ideas and knowledge of diverse people, sometimes the problem might grow bigger, as people focus

on characteristics of other individuals, rather than on the issues and also refer to ‘personality clashes’ rather than legitimate differences of opinion (McShane and Von Glinow, 2010, p330) regarding tasks, or decisions. This leads to Relationship or Socio-Emotional or Affective Conflict. As per Doucet, Poitras, & Chenevert (2008), relationship conflict occurs when parties experience aggression and resentment toward one another and interactions become strained and hostile. Further, Cox (1998) aligns hostile behaviors with emotions to form a relational conflict scale (i.e. emotional and behavioral).

Another form of ‘unhealthy’ conflict is the process-oriented conflict, its content will be explained in detail in the main chapters of the current survey.

In light of the above, conflict resolution strategies ought to be implemented by any wise organization in order to minimize, or better terminate, relationship conflict episodes in the workplace. Conflict resolution means terminating conflict, by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem. ‘Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or "settlement", points to an outcome that, in the view of the parties involved, is a permanent solution to the problem’ (Burton, 1988, p2).

Organizational behavior experts have identified several conflict management styles (CMSs), namely, Yielding, Avoiding, Compromising, Problem Solving and Forcing which will be also evaluated extensively. However, the best style depends on the various characteristics of the situation. It is also argued that as conflicts are often highly emotional events, emotional intelligence plays an important role on individuals’ preferences for conflict handling styles (Gunkel, Schlaegel, & Taras, 2016).

There is no doubt though, that manager’s leadership style plays also an important role in conflicts situations. As Doucet, Poitras, & Chenevert (2008) specifically stated, transformational leadership can assist in diminishing conflict. Likewise, Bass & Riggio (2006) argue that by emphasizing the organization’s interests over the individual’s own interests, transformational leaders find ways to resolve conflict between subordinates.

Numerous scholars have dealt with various conflict management models some of them will be analysed in the succeeding chapters. An example is the theoretical model of ‘The relationship

between perceived apology, sincerity, forgiveness and willingness to cooperate', which was developed in Ayoko (2016).

As a final point, identifying sources of conflict helps to diagnose conflict episodes and resolve the conflict. The main sources of conflict which will be analysed extensively in this Master's Thesis are the following: Incompatible Goals and Activities, Differentiation, Task Interdependence, Power imbalance or rank, Scarce Resources, Ambiguous Rules, Communication Problems, Stress and Burnout Syndrome, Office Romance and Workplace Bulling.

Obviously, managing conflict is vital and academic research has shown that effective conflict management, contributes to increased labour productivity and performance, elimination in time delays and eventually minimization in operational costs.

1.2. Formulation / Definition of the Problem

Within the framework examined above, the problem that will be analysed, is focused on identifying sources of conflict within the Cypriot banking sector and the actual consequences of conflict.

The current study also examines how managers within the banking environment, prevent and manage such episodes.

A further aim of this study, is to measure to which extent employees find the current conflict management practices adequate, to identify the levels of trust and satisfaction and to determine any areas for improvement.

1.3. Research Objectives

The major research questions of the current Master's Thesis will be:

1. Which are the main sources of conflicts in the banking work environment?
2. In what ways do managers prevent or resolve interpersonal conflicts?
3. What approaches need to be implemented to improve conflict management and employee engagement?

1.4. Methodology

Relevant material will be collected from existing academic literature, books, articles, academic journals and the Internet. Primary research data collection (via questionnaires and personal interviews) will be conducted in a sample of 170-200 employees from the banking sector in Cyprus, with an estimated percentage of 60% of women and of 40% of men.

1.5. The Value of this Research

The current study contributes to the literature as it links conflict management research with banking organizational research in Cyprus. Findings will broaden the understanding of social conflicts in a narrower, more family-oriented organizational context and will highlight employee relations as an important factor which can safeguard employee's satisfaction and work engagement.

1.6. Structure of Study

The structure of this research is as follows: Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on workplace conflict. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, including the selection of our sample, our interview schedule and our method of data analysis. Chapter 4 presents and interprets the results that emerged from both questionnaires and interviews. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the implications of our findings in regard to our research questions and the practice of conflict management.

The next chapter presents the literature review of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

It is a common view that “Organizational life is replete with instances of pure disagreement” (Barki & Hartwick, 2004, p8). Possible examples of pure disagreement occur when there are opinion dissimilarities concerning objectives, tasks, or actions that are not very relevant or important to an individual, when these differences are easily resolvable, or when they hold the potential for win-win solutions. When such disagreements are not accompanied by negative emotions, they would not generally be seen or labeled as conflict. There is no doubt however that organizations are also “replete with instances of pure negative emotions” (Barki & Hartwick, 2004, p.8). Regularly, individuals dislike or detest others without necessarily disagreeing or interfering with them. Again, just because an employee dislikes another as a person, it doesn't mean that he or she would always be in conflict with that person, especially when their work-related views and opinions are pretty similar.

2.2. Defining Conflict

While no single definition of conflict exists, most definitions seem to involve the following factors: that there are at least two independent groups that they perceive some incompatibility between themselves, and the groups interact with each other in some way (Putnam and Poole, 1987). Two example definitions are, “process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party” (Wall & Callister, 1995, p.517), and “the interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities” (Rahim, 1992, p.16).

For instance a baby-boomer manager experiences conflict with Gen-X and Gen-Y employees who spend time text-messaging as the manager believes that this practice interferes with his goal reaching departmental goals on time. On the contrary the text-messaging employees also experience conflict with their supervisor because they view this form of communication as a

valuable tool to network, keep informed and achieve departmental objectives (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010). The above example reflects the fact that conflict is ultimately based on perceptions.

2.2.1. Separating Constructive Conflict from Relationship Conflict

The predominant pyramid of conflict starts with a distinction between constructive or substantive (also called performance, task, issue, or active) conflict and affective (also called relationship) conflict. If one could make a distinction between good and bad conflict, substantive would be good and affective conflict would be bad.

Examples of bad or affective conflicts, are conflicts about personal tastes, political preferences, values, behaviors and interpersonal style. Examples of good or constructive conflict are intense disagreements about the distribution of recourses, procedures and policies (process-oriented conflicts), and different judgments and interpretation of facts (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). It has also been discussed that task-related conflict occurs when two or more social entities disagree on the recognition and solution to a task problem, including differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions (Jehn K., 1995; Rahim, 2002).

To support the above view, during the last years there has been a growing tendency in the literature to assume that although relationship conflict hurts team effectiveness, task conflict, under certain circumstances, can be impressively valuable to team efficacy (Jehn K. , 1995).

Still, Robbins & Judge (2017) disputed on the view of process or task-oriented conflicts being constructive, that if too high may become highly personalized and quickly evolve into relationship conflicts.

2.2.2. Inter-organizational and Intra-organizational Conflict

Organizational conflict, whether substantive or affective, can be divided into intra-organizational and inter-organizational. Inter-organizational conflict occurs between two or more organizations (Rahim, 2002). Thus when different businesses are competing against one another, this is an example of inter-organizational conflict. Intra-organizational conflict, is conflict experienced within an organization and can be examined based upon level (e.g. department, work team, individual) and can be classified as interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup. Interpersonal conflict

whether it is substantive or affective, refers to conflict between two or more individuals (not representing the group they are a part of) of the same or different group, at the same or different level, within the organization. Interpersonal conflict can be divided into intragroup and intergroup conflict. While the former (intragroup) occurs between members of a group (or between subgroups within a group), the latter (intergroup) occurs between groups or units in an organization (Rahim, 2002).

The scope of this Master's Thesis is to examine intra-organizational conflicts, of all kinds.

2.3. Theorizing about Conflict

Conflict social theory has both modern and classical roots. In terms of its modern roots is defined as an outgrowth of structural functionalism, and in terms of its historical roots it rests largely upon the work of Karl Marx (1818-1883), a nineteenth century German philosopher, sociologist and revolutionary theorist. However, conflict theories, which emphasize class struggle and change, are often pitted against new consensus theories. Consensus theories such as *structural functionalism* focus on social stability and shared values and norms. Consensus theorists in fact, often view conflict as essentially bad; they highlight the continuity of social systems over time, instead of social change (EBSCO, 2014). Even if consensus and conflict theories are often presented as conflicting perceptions, many theorists believe they are complementary. Some even suggest they should be integrated into a single theory (Bailey, 1997).

Together with Marx, the writings of two more "intellectual giants Darwin and Freud dominated the intellectual atmosphere during social psychology's infancy" (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006, p31). All three theorists, appeared to emphasize the competitive, negative aspects of conflict. Darwin stressed "the competitive struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest" (Hyman, 1966, p29). Freud, however, saw "psychosexual development mostly as a constant struggle between the biologically rooted infantile id and the socially determined, internalized parental surrogate, the superego" (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006, p31).

At large, conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally compare historically dominant ideologies. It is therefore a macro-level analysis of society. (Wikipedia, 2020).

2.4. Process of Conflict

Having outlined some theories about conflict let us look at the model of the conflict process, shown in Figure 1.

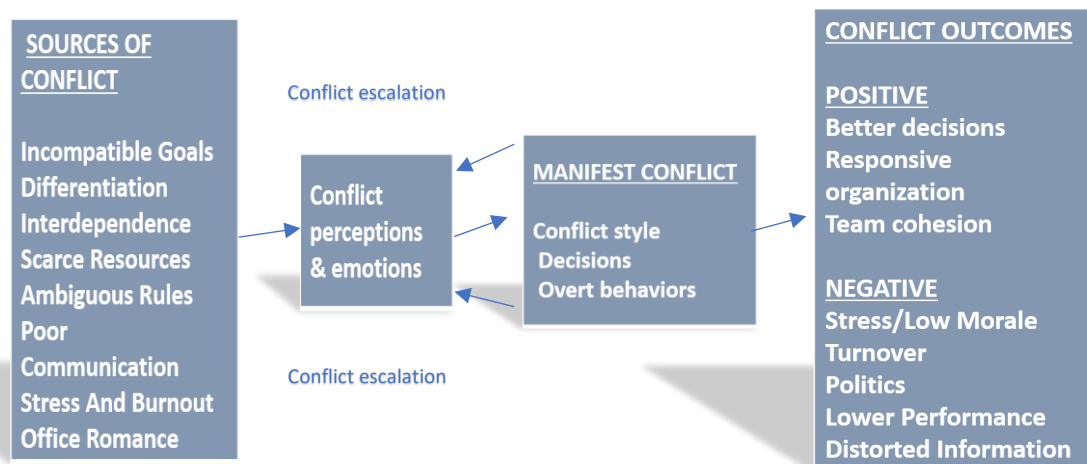


Figure 1: Model of the Conflict Process (McShane, 2010; Pondy, 1967)

This model begins with the sources of conflict, which will be described in more detail in the next section. “At some point, the sources of conflict lead one or both parties to perceive that conflict exists. One (or each) party becomes aware that the other party’s statements and actions are incompatible with his or her own goals” (McShane, 2010, p.330). Such perceptions usually interact with emotions experienced about the conflict (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Then conflict perceptions and emotions manifest themselves in the decisions and manners of one party toward the other. These conflict episodes may range from indirect nonverbal behaviors, to hostile aggression. Particularly, when people experience high levels of conflict emotions, they have difficulty in finding the words and expressions that communicate effectively without further irritating the relationship (Von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett, 2004). Conflict is also manifested by the style each side uses to resolve the conflict. Some people tend to avoid the conflict, while others try to defeat those with opposing views. The above diagram shows arrows looping back from manifest conflict to conflict perceptions and emotions. These arrows illustrate that the conflict process is really a series of episodes that potentially cycle into conflict escalation (Martin & Bergman, 1996). It

doesn't take much to start this conflict cycle just an incorrect comment, a misconception, or an action that lacks diplomacy. These behaviors cause the other party to perceive that conflict exists. Even if the first party did not mean to exhibit conflict, the other party's reaction may produce the perception that conflict exists (McShane, 2010).

2.5. Sources of Conflict

It is true that as “people bring to the job differing work habits, ethics and modes of expression, differences of opinion are bound to rise” (Kumar & Dr.Sundareshan, 2015, p70). The following section examines some of the roots of conflict.

2.5.1. Incompatible Goals and Activities

Conflict arises “when goal attainment by one person interferes with goal attainment by others, or when one person's actions harm, interfere, resist, oppose, or in some other way make another's action and positions less effective” (Barker, Tjosvold, & I. Andrews, 1988, p169). As per Litterer (1996), organizational conflict out of incompatible goals can occur in a win-lose situation. He explains that sometimes two units' goals cannot exist simultaneously.

2.5.2. Differentiation

Every individual is unique. Having that in mind it is expected that conflict between employees will sometimes appear. Wienclaw (2010) correctly observed that differentiation rises when individuals or groups of employees hold divergent beliefs and attitudes because of their different background, experience and training. Correlating the above view with the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values one could easily distinguish that people with different values assess things differently and similarly act differently. Therefore, although the nature and structure of values may be universal, individuals and groups have different value 'priorities' or hierarchies (Schwartz, 2012).

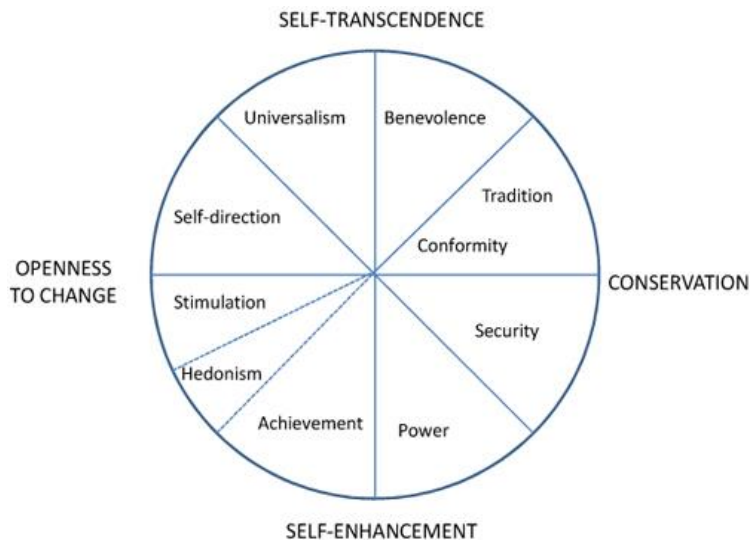


Figure 2. Schwartz’s Value Theory (Schwartz, 2012).

Similarly, employees’ personalities play a major role in workplace conflicts. Personality can be described as ‘the sum of ways an individual reacts to and interacts with others’ (Robbins & Judge, A.J., 2017, p175).

Among others the *Big Five Personality Model* is a model which identifies five basic dimensions in human personality: First, ‘*Conscientiousness*’ describes someone who is responsible and organized. Second, ‘*Emotional Stability*’ taps a person’s ability to face stress. High scorers are positive, calm, self confident and secure people. They are also adaptive to changes. Third, ‘*Extraversion*’ personality aspect describes someone who is gregarious, assertive and socially dominant. Forth point, is ‘*Openness to Experience*’, which characterizes creative people,with imagination, also adaptive to change. Finally, the fifth dimension is ‘*Agreableness*’ that describes people who are good-natured, cooperative and trusting.

2.5.3. Task Interdependence

Conflict increases with task interdependence. The performance of one person or group of people affects directly the goals of another individual either in the same team or another. Based on the Four-Drive Theory of Motivation (McClelland, 1987) the drive to defend becomes alert when the degree of one employee’s performance depends on the outcome of the performance of another co-

worker. If the two performance outcomes do not match according to each employee's expectations, conflict emerges.

2.5.4. Scarce Resources, Ambiguity, Communication

Scholars also recognise that lack of resources can generate conflict. Scarcity in financial and human resources and technical equipment or weak software systems and training gaps, comprise major roots of conflicts.

Similarly, ambiguity in written rules and procedures as well as aggressive communication techniques lead to numerous conflicts and eventually reduced productivity. Further, opposing forces that arise from semantic difficulties, misunderstandings, and 'noise' in the communication channel, along with jargon and inadequate information it can block the communication and cause conflict (Robbins & Judge, A.J., Organizational Behavior, 2017).

In fact low or high uncertainty avoidance plays an important role on how ambiguity and potential change are handled by employees. "Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other manifestations, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules". It is also a fact that "Extreme ambiguity creates intolerable anxiety" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p189). Of course, anxiety leads to conflict.

2.5.5. Stress and Burnout Syndrome

Dr Hans Selye, a Canadian endocrinologist, discovered and documented that stress differs from other physical responses in that stress is stressful whether one receives good or bad news, whether the impulse is positive or negative. He labelled unpleasant stress as "distress" and positive stress as "eustress" (Selye H. , 1936). Dr Selye, specifically described stress as "a non-specific response of the body to a demand for change" (Selye H.,1936, p32). He had also described stress in all his books as the "spice of life". Likewise, existing literature argued that when eustress or mild stress is experienced in the workplace "may get employees' "juices" flowing and lead to increased activity, change, and overall better performance" (Luthans, 2015, p.264).

It is true though, that distress may lead to burnout which indeed "constitutes a prominent occupational health problem plaguing organizations today" (Fernet, Gagne, & Austin, 2009,

p1163). According to a well-known definition “job burnout is a psychological syndrome described as a specific response to prolonged exposure to work-related stressors and has three components: exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced self-efficacy” (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p399). The aforesaid authors specifically explained that exhaustion indicates the mental state of being overextended and depleted of emotional and physical resources, whereas depersonalization or cynicism refers to indifference or distant attitudes towards the clients or the work in general. Finally, they supported that reduced self-efficacy or personal accomplishment refers to a feeling of incompetence or lack of achievement and efficiency at work.

It should be pointed out that recent studies have been devoted to the impact that distress has on physical health such as immune system problems, cardiovascular system problems, musculoskeletal system problems, and gastrointestinal system problems (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998).

Extant literature advised that “Imbalance between personal, social, physical, spiritual, and occupational domains of our lives is inevitable, but as social workers we can successfully address moment-to-moment adjustments approximating a wellness-focused balance” (Yager & Tovar-Blank, Z. G., 2007). But when that balance is not maintained then both psychological and physical outcomes of stress and burnout in the workplace will result to costly increases in turnover, absenteeism and reduced productivity for the individual and the organization, as well as negative effects on the customers. In the long run this will cause conflicts as well.

2.5.6. Power Imbalance and Workplace Bullying

The phenomenon and concept of bullying in the workplace is indeed as a psychological abuse. Such behaviors are antagonistic, offensive, malicious, insulting or intimidating (Einarsen et al. 1994). It can be direct e.g. verbal abuse or indirect e.g. withholding work-related information and is focused toward an individual (Bartlett and Bartlett, 2011). In order to be defined as bullying, the behavior must be recurring, repeated, and persistent across time (Lee & Brotheridge, 2006). An incident that occurs only once however, does not constitute bullying. Hence, workplace bullying is a series of negative behaviors inflicted over time that force targets into a position where they

feel unable to defend themselves, causing harm to the target. (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011).

A recent review study by Aquino & Thau (2009) uses the term "workplace victimization". According to the above authors, workplace victimization occurs when an employee's wellbeing is harmed by one or more members of the organization. Psychological or physiological needs are unmet or dissatisfied. Needs not fulfilled due to victimization may be e.g. sense of belonging, a feeling that one is a worthy individual, believing that one has the ability to predict and to cognitively control one's environment, and being able to thrust others. For someone who is imposed to bullying his belongingness and love needs as described in Maslow's Pyramid (Maslow, 1943), are actually threatened.

Research has shown that power imbalance plays an important role in the mediation of bullying cases. However power dynamics are often not straight forward. While formal hierarchies between the parties (in manager-subordinate relationships) is a cause of power imbalance it was discussed the possibility that the victim can often gain some power by claiming bullying (Lempp, Blackwood, & Gordon, 2020).

2.6. Consequences of Conflict

“Conflict within an organization can be an essential portion of cybernetic system. It often occurs at the point at which some other systems within the organization are functioning inadequately and therefore calls attention to these problem areas and generates a search for solutions or improvements” (Litterer, 1996, p.180). In this sense it leads to innovation and change.

However, affective conflict deals with interpersonal relationships or incompatibilities (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008). It is generated from emotions and frustration (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001) and has a detrimental impact on group or organizational outcomes (i.e. information processing ability, cognitive functioning of group members, attributions of group members' behavior, group loyalty, work group commitment, intent to stay in the present organization, and job satisfaction) (Amason, 1996).

Further research has revealed that "relationship conflict interferes with task-related effort because members focus on reducing threats, increasing power, and attempting to build cohesion rather than

working on tasks. The conflict causes members to be negative, irritable, suspicious, and resentful" (Rahim, 2002, p. 210). Besides, in De Dreu and Weingart's (2003) meta-analysis, both substantive and affective conflicts are negatively related to team performance. It was found that 20% (5 of 25) of the studies used, showed a positive correlation between substantive conflict and task performance. These relationships show the severe negative impact that conflict can have on groups, and illustrate the importance of conflict management.

In fact, unresolved conflict generates many serious consequences involving high financial and human costs. Conflict may lead to frustration, tension, low morale, missing meeting deadlines, lack of self-confidence, low trust level, communication problems, absenteeism, and legal proceedings (Buss, 2009). In the same way Dana (2001) identified eight hidden costs of conflict: wastage of time, bad quality of decisions made, loss of skilled employees, restructuring inefficiencies, lowered job motivation, disruption, absenteeism, and health costs.

It is obvious that conflict implies costs to all, employees, organization and customers (Buss, 2009). According to Levine (1998), cost of conflict comprises of: Direct cost (fees of lawyers and other professionals), productivity cost (value of lost time), continuity cost (loss of ongoing relationship) and emotional cost (the pain of being held by emotions).

2.7. Conflict Resolution Vs Conflict Management

Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus (2006, p50) pointed out that “the theory equates a constructive process of conflict resolution with an effective cooperative problem-solving process in which the conflict is the mutual problem to be resolved cooperatively. It also equates a destructive process of conflict resolution with a competitive process in which the conflicting parties are involved in a competition or struggle to determine who wins and who loses; often, the outcome of the struggle is a loss for both parties”. The theory further indicates that “a cooperative-constructive process of conflict resolution is fostered by the typical effects of cooperation” (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006, p50).

In line with the recommendations in the "how to" section, businesses can benefit from appropriate types and levels of conflict. That is the aim of conflict management, and not the aim of conflict resolution. Thus, conflict management does not necessarily imply conflict resolution. “Conflict management involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization” (Rahim, 2002, p. 208). The findings reveal that learning is essential for the longevity of any group. This is especially true for organizations; Organizational learning is essential for any company to remain in the market. Properly managed conflict, increases learning through increasing the degree to which groups ask questions and challenge the status quo (Luthans, Rubach, & Marsnik, 1995).

2.8. Models of Conflict Management

Popular dual-dimensional models of conflict management behaviors include intention to satisfy own needs and intention to satisfy other's needs (Blake & Mouton, 1964), concern for relationship and concern for personal goals (Hall, 1969) assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974), concern for self and concern for others (Rahim, 1983), and concern for own outcome and concern for other's outcome (Pruitt, 1983). Pruitt essentially suggested a model based on the concerns of the parties involved in the conflict. Pruitt called these styles yielding (low assertiveness/high cooperativeness), problem solving (high assertiveness/high cooperativeness), inaction (low assertiveness/low cooperativeness), and contending (high assertiveness/low

cooperativeness). Pruitt argued that problem-solving is the preferred method when seeking mutually beneficial options.

Needless to say that the above models constitute different labels with a very similar meaning. Generally speaking, one dimension is concern for self - leading to assertiveness - while the other is concern for others, resulting in cooperation and maintaining relationships. The common modes of conflict management behavior are *integrating*, *compromising*, *avoiding*, *obliging*, and *dominating* (Rahim, 1983).

From the process and content perspectives, Pondy (1967) proposed four elements: (a) antecedent conditions; (b) affective aspects; (c) cognitive aspect; and (d) behavior aspect; and five stages: (a) latent conflict; (b) perceived conflict; (c) felt conflict: conflict is personalized and negative emotions emerge; (d) manifest conflict; and (e) conflict aftermath. Next, Kilman and Thomas (1978) proposed five similar stages: (a) frustration; (b) conceptualization of the situation; (c) behavior; (d) interaction: positive dynamics like rational thinking, communication, warm attitude, and trust, or negative ones like biases, blocked communication, and distrust; and (e) outcomes. Then some years later Thomas (1992) modified the model into conflict awareness, thoughts and emotions, intentions, behavior and consequences, highlighting the interactive nature of emotions and cognition.

As against the above generic models, Kazan (1997) asserts that conflict management should be contextual and stresses the role of harmony - a cultural value - in conflict management.

In addition to the above models of conflict management conduct, Thomas & Kilman (1974) developed the *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)*, which evaluates individual's behavior in conflict situations. The model provides insight into an individual's typical response to conflict situations using one or more of five conflict-handling modes, or styles: *competing*, *accommodating*, *avoiding*, *collaborating*, and *compromising*. Such modes reveal levels of *assertiveness* - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and *cooperativeness* - the extent to which the individual cares for the interests of those across the table. By identifying alternative conflict resolution styles, how and when to use them most effectively, the TKI assessment helps individuals to reframe and soothe conflict, creating more productive outcomes (Figure 3).

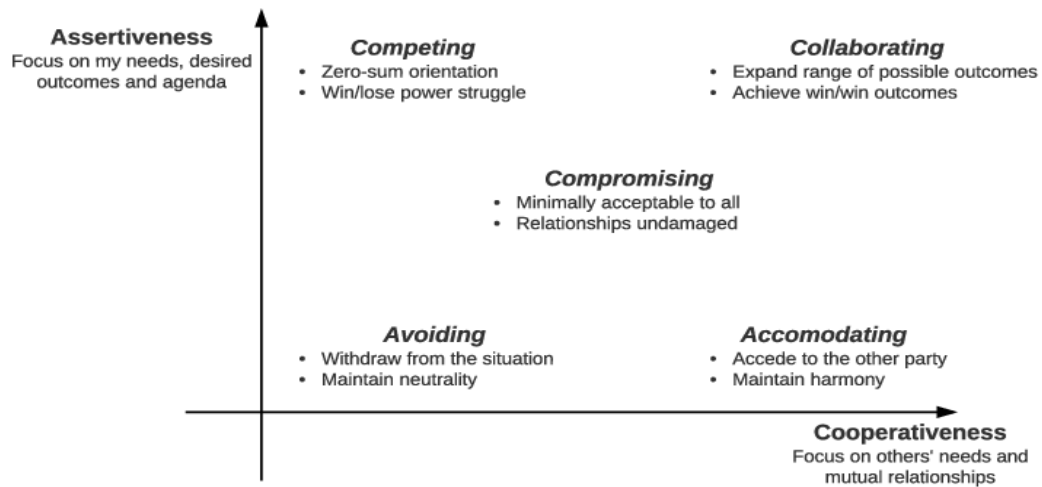


Figure 3. TKI Conflict Model (Gren, 2017)

Along with the previous models Khun & Poole (2000) established a similar system of group conflict management. In their system, they split Kozan's confrontational model (Kozan, 1997) into two sub models: distributive and integrative.

- *Distributive* - Here conflict is approached as a distribution of a fixed amount of positive outcomes or resources, where one side will end up winning and the other losing, even if they do win some concessions.
- *Integrative* - Groups utilizing the integrative model see conflict as a chance to integrate the needs and concerns of both groups and make the best outcome possible. This model has a heavier emphasis on compromise than the distributive model. Khun and Poole found that the integrative model resulted in consistently better task related outcomes than those using the distributive model.

Soon after DeChurch and Marks (2001) examined the literature available on conflict management and established what they claimed was a "meta-taxonomy" that incorporates all other models. They argued that all other styles have inherent in them the two dimensions - *activeness* (the extent to which conflict behaviors make a responsive and direct rather than inert and indirect impression) and *agreeableness* (the extent to which conflict behaviors make an enjoyable and relaxed rather than unpleasant and stressful impression).

One year later, Rahim (2002) noted that there is agreement among management scholars that there is no ideal method to make decisions, lead or manage conflict. In a similar vein, rather than creating a very specific model of conflict management, Rahim created a meta-model - equivalent to that created by DeChurch and Marks (2001) - for conflict styles based on two dimensions, *concern for self* and *concern for others*. Within this framework are five management approaches: *integrating*, *obliging*, *dominating*, *avoiding*, and *compromising* which will be analyzed extensively in the following section.

2.9. Selecting the Best Conflict Style and Negotiation Behavior

As described above, conflict management theory involves preventing the manifestation of conflict. Yet there are occasions where conflict is unavoidable and managers will have to face the challenge. According to both theory and practice there is no good or bad option and the choice depends on both circumstances and personality of managers. The preferred conflict handling style infers the manager's actual *intention* to act in a certain way (Robbins & Judge, A.J., Organizational Behavior, 2017).

Problem-Solving or Collaboration or Confrontation or Integrating Management Style. Integration involves openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and examining differences to solve the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties (Rahim, 2002). McShane and Von Glinow (2010) suggested that this option would constitute a good choice only under the following conditions: issues are complex, there is time to exchange information and it is certain that people share a mutual trust. This tactic is usually adopted when a person has a strong concern of both self and others (Yeung, 2014). This method creates a win-win situation for all the parties.

Although *Avoiding or Withdrawal* is not considered to be a functional long-term solution to conflict situations, "sometimes it is necessary to temporarily cool down heated disputes or for situations where the issue causing conflict is trivial" (Wienclaw, 2010, p4). In general "avoiding is demonstrated when the person has a weak concern about both self and other's outcomes, such as withdrawal or sidestepping situations" (Yeung, 2014, p2). In this style one party is indifferent to the feelings of the other party and keeps away from participating in conflict at all. It leaves the conflict unresolved and creates anger or frustration in the other party (Barki & Hartwick, 2001).

Avoidance style is prevalent in East Asian culture, Chinese cultures main concern in maintaining relationship. They usually use this style to maintain a harmony situation (Huang, 1999).

Both the above tactic and the forcing technique are generally not recommended as they increase frustration and anxiety. *Forcing* or *Dominating* is observed when a person attempts to satisfy his/her own concern (Yeung, 2014) and, as a result, regularly ignores the wants and expectations of the other party (Rahim, 2002). Of course, forcing might be an appropriate choice in situations where the manager is certain he/she is right, or there is a need for a quick decision. Domination and forcing create win-lose situation for the parties in conflict (Lam, Chin, & Pun, 2007).

Further, McShane and Von Glinow (2010) noted that *Yielding Style* would be suitable only when the other party has more power; basically in a win-lose situation. Yielding or Obliging is shown when a “person attempts to satisfy concerns of the other party, such as playing down the differences between parties, accommodating and yielding” (Yeung, 2014, p2).

Finally, *Compromising Style* might be a proper choice where there is shortage of time and both parties are willing to give something in return for something else. Compromising is demonstrated when the person has an intermediate level of concern for self and others to reach a commonly acceptable agreement (Rahim, 2011). This involves a give-and-take situation in which both parties will give up something after negotiation in order to reach an agreement (Yuan, 2010).

In relation to conflict handling styles, and as already noted in previous sections, Rahim (1983) differentiated styles based on two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her needs and the second dimension describes the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy the concern of others (Figure 4).

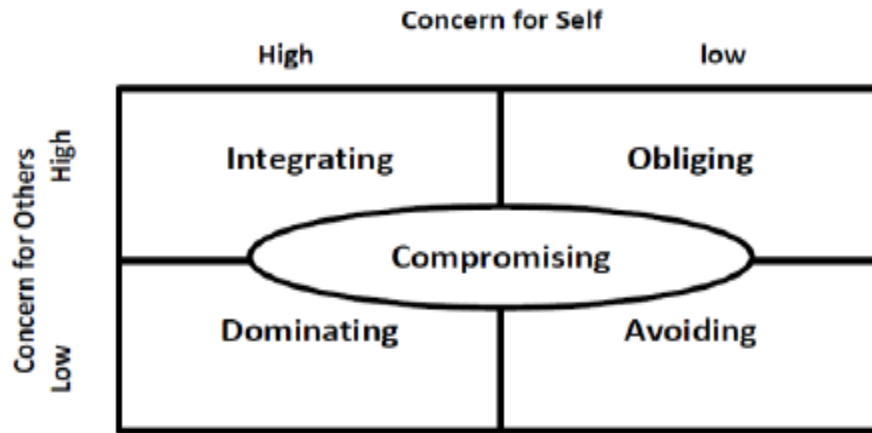


Figure 4. The Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict (Rahim, 1983)

Further research has shown that such behavioural differences in conflict handling could be due to cultural variations. For instance, Asians are more likely to use avoiding or compromising to manage conflict, whereas Americans prefer direct confrontation or dominating (Friedman, Chi, & Liu, 2006). Some other findings though have revealed that age differences may affect responses to interpersonal tensions (Yeung, 2014).

As correctly reported by Kumar and Sundareshan (2015), it is important to keep an eye on the dynamics of different departments and if some of them are in constant conflict it may be that department head may have a management style that invites conflict. Subsequently employees get anxious and team cohesiveness weakens. Besides, it is a fact that conflict management does not play to our strengths but reveals our weaknesses (Tjosvold, 2008).

2.10. Techniques for Resolving Conflict

Conflict resolution techniques may be applied at any of several pressure points. Their effectiveness and appropriateness depends on the nature of the conflict and on the administrator's philosophy of management. Although these may be perfectly appropriate for certain forms of imagined conflict, their application to real conflict may only intensify the conflict (Pondy, 1967).

2.10.1. Negotiation

Negotiation is a process of interaction between both the parties using different communication channels in resolving conflict in a mutually beneficial way. At the time of negotiation in the conflicting stage, the negotiation process has four steps such as establish the issues and set the agenda, opening moves, intensify the negotiation, and work out an agreement (Appelbaum, Abdallah, & Shapiro, 1999). One can reduce stress, increase productivity and resolve challenges with the help of effective dialogs (Billikopf, 2003). Emotions play critical role in conflicts. Conflicts stimulate emotions and emotions exist throughout the life cycle of conflict (Nair, 2008).

As noted earlier there are two general approaches to Negotiation: *Integrating Bargaining* that seeks one or more possible settlements that can create a win-win solution and *Distributive Bargaining* which seeks to divide a fixed sum of resources forming a win-lose situation (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

2.10.2. Third-Party Conflict Resolution

“Third-party conflict resolution is any attempt by a relatively neutral person to help conflicting parties resolve their differences” (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010, p346). There are generally three forms of third-party dispute resolution activities: mediation, arbitration and inquisition. These activities can be categorized by their levels of control over the process and control over the final decision.

Workplace Mediation has many benefits in terms of efficiency in that despite it rarely being used as such (Saundry et al., 2018), it does provide an opportunity for early intervention prior to escalation and can resolve disputes that may otherwise result in costly legal proceedings (Kasserman, 2016). Mediation is also advocated as a safe environment, which enables “voice” as disputing parties are encouraged to have their say in a facilitated environment where power imbalances are, ideally, managed and parties are encouraged to find a resolution themselves rather than having it imposed upon them (Saundry et al., 2018). However, it maybe that this procedure would not be appropriate in cases of workplace bullying. An analysis presented by Lemp, Bal and Gordon (2020) revealed four key features of bullying experiences that mediators believed influenced the effectiveness of the mediation process: emotional stability of the parties; power

imbalance between the parties; insight and differing interpretations; and the impact of organizational context.

Workplace Arbitrators have high control over the final decision but low control over the process. Executives engage in this approach by following previously agreed-on rules of due process, listening to arguments from the disputing employees, and making a binding decision. Arbitration is applied as the ultimate stage of complaints by unionized employees in many countries, but it is also becoming more common in nonunion conflicts (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010).

Workplace Inquisitors control all discussion about the conflict. Like arbitrators, they have high decision control since they choose the form of conflict resolution. However, they also have high process control because they choose which information to examine and how to examine it, and they generally decide how the conflict resolution process will be handled (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010).

2.10.3. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

ADR includes third-party dispute resolution in an arranged sequence. ADR typically begins with a meeting between the employee and employer to clarify and negotiate their differences. If this fails, a mediator is brought in to help the parties reach a mutually agreeable solution. If mediation fails, the parties submit their case to an arbitrator, whose decision may be either binding or voluntarily accepted by the employer (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010).

2.11. Emotional Intelligence, Leadership and Conflict Management

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been an emerging and popular topic among social and organizational psychologists in recent years (Schutte, et al., 2001). EI development, as outlined by Skiba (2020), contributes to the identification of an individual’s state and their potential responses to a given situation. Application of EI facilitates demonstration of a high level of empathy and contributes to reading other people’s emotions. This ability allows people to show concern for others and makes a positive contribution toward de-escalation. EI can significantly improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness.

According to Daniel Goleman’s theory on EI (Goleman, 1995), the four pillars of EI are *Self-Awareness* (our ability to understand what we feel), *Self-Management* (our ability to orient ourselves towards our goals, to recover from setbacks and manage stress), *Social Awareness* (empathy) and *Relationship Management* (our ability to relate, to communicate, to reach agreements, to connect positively and respectfully with others) (Figure 5).

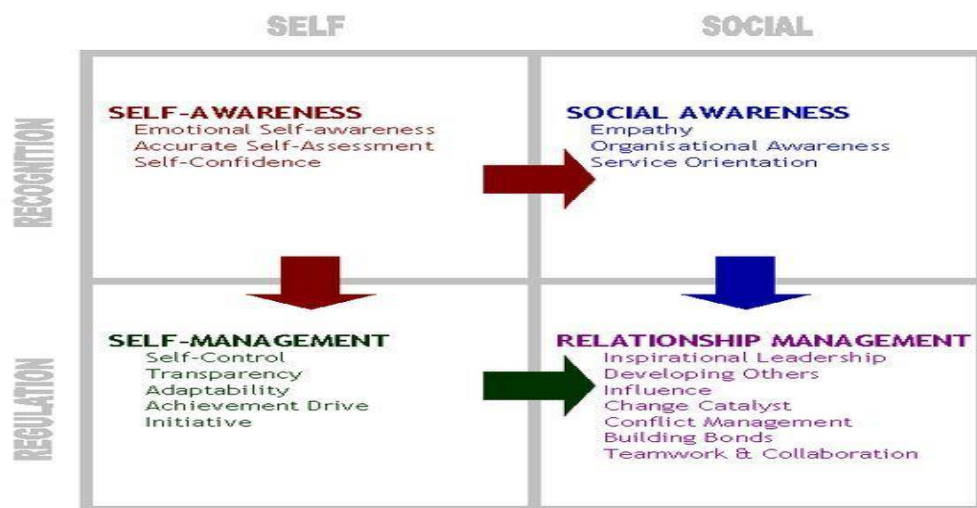


Figure 5. The four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

(<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/596093700650397068/>, accessed on 15/12/2020)

Leaders set the tone of their organization. If they lack EI, it could have more far-reaching consequences, resulting in lower employee engagement, higher turnover rate and ultimately more conflict episodes. Being able to relate behaviours and challenges of EI on workplace performance is an immense advantage in building an exceptional team. Shetach (2012) pointed out, that team

decisions, actions and outcomes, are a direct consequence of how well conflicts are handled throughout the overall team process. One of the most common factors that leads to retention issues is communication deficiencies that create disengagement and disbelief among employees. Good leaders must be self-aware and understand how their verbal and non-verbal communication can affect the team. Misunderstandings and lack of communication are usually the basis of problems between most people. Failing to communicate effectively in a workplace leads to frustration, bitterness, and confusion among employees. As correctly reported by Tjosvold (2008) leaders are oriented towards promoting open-minded discussions of opposing views among employees.

Some scholars suggest (Robbins & Judge, A.J., *Organizational Behavior*, 2017) that good leaders should adapt their conflict management behaviours to a given situation. *Authoritarian Management Style* would be a suitable choice in emergencies when unpopular actions need to be implemented, such as cost cutting, facing discipline issues and generally when the issue is critical for the organization's wellbeing. Next, seeking *Integrative* approaches would benefit when objective is to learn, merge insights from people with different perspectives, gain commitment of the team, or when someone's intention is to work with feelings that have traumatized a relationship. *Accommodating* others can build trust, invest on the future and build the rapport among the colleagues. This strategy would be applicable when issues are more important to others than to yourself. A manager could consider *Compromising* when goals are important but do not worth potential disruption and when opponents of equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals.

Of even greater significance are the results of a present survey (Saeed, Almas, & Anis-ul-Haq, 2014) which examined the relationship between leadership styles and conflict management styles among managers. The managers who perceived to exhibit more on *Transformational Leadership Style*, by inspiring followers to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the organization (Robbins & Judge, A.J., 2017), adopted integrating and obliging style of conflict management. Those who perceived to exhibit more on *Transactional Leadership Style* opted for compromising style of conflict management. These findings are consistent with the philosophy that transactional leadership is an exchange process based on the fulfillment of contractual commitments and transactional leaders offer rewards based on their behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Whereas, managers perceived to exhibit *Laissez-fair Leadership Style* adopted avoiding style to manage

conflicts with subordinates. These results are consistent with prior research (Rahim, 1992) that avoidance style may postpone an issue until a better time or result in withdrawing from a threatening situation.

To maximize effective decision making and efficient, conflict-free implementation of decisions Shetach (2012) proposed Adizes' "*CAPI*" model (Adizes, 2004) coupled with "*RDSM*" model (Shetach, 2009) to lead managers and teams through a comparatively safe route to successful project finalization and achievement. CAPI is a management tool that stands for *Coalesced Authority, Power, and Influence*, and intends to get the stakeholders' representatives to collaborate in managing a project from the beginning to the end. At the same time, *RDSM (Revised Decision-Square Model)* provides team managers with simple techniques to ensure efficient follow-up and control during decision-implementation processes throughout the project (Shetach, 2012).

2.12. Motivation Practices and Conflict Management

In a Bank Organization, as it applies to any industry, there is a clear need to enhance employee motivation and engagement. The word Motivation, originates from Latin word 'Movere' which means 'to move' or 'to stir' and it is divided into two categories:

Intrinsic (Internal) Motivation: Self desire to seek out new things and new challenges, to analyse one's capacity, to seek and to observe. (Wikipedia)

Extrinsic (External) Motivation: Involves engaging in a behaviour in order to gain external rewards or avoid punishment. Money, praise, grades and even competition consist external rewards. (Wikipedia)

Existing literature suggests that "employee delight has to be managed in more than one way. This helps in retaining and nurturing the true believers who can actually deliver value to the organization" (Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016, p.261). Indeed, managing employees' feelings, motives, senses and worries in a way that will eventually improve performance, sounds fascinating.

The conceptual approach to motivation is predominantly based on the idea that individual needs or expectations, result in the behaviour or action that drives a person to achieve desired goals which provide fulfilment in the individual (Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). This approach correlates to the *Expectancy Theory of Motivation* which links ‘motivation’ to ‘performance’ (Figure 5). The above theory states that “An individual tends to act in a certain way based on the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual” (Robbins & Coulter, 2012, p.442).

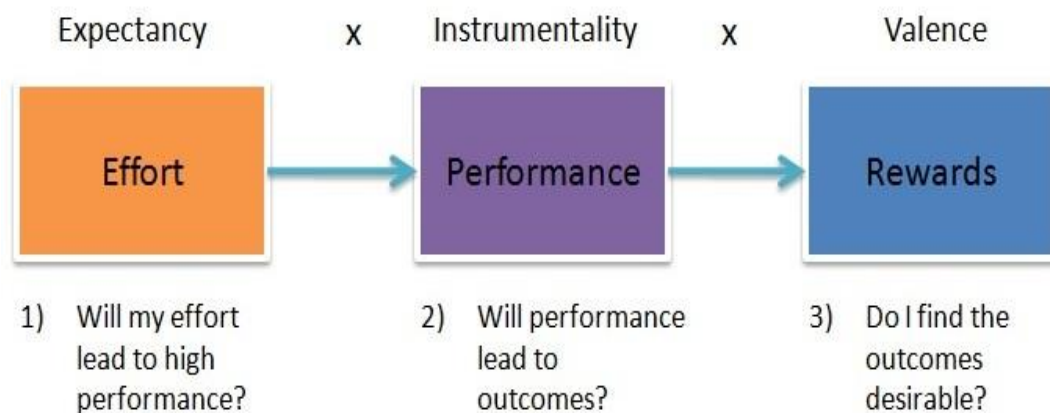


Figure 6. Expectancy Theory of Motivation (proposed by Victor Vroom)
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Vroom+Expectancy+Theory&form=IDINTS&first=1&tsc=ImageHoverTitle>, accessed on 22.01.2021)

Undeniably, most employees need motivation to feel good about their jobs and perform optimally. Some of them are money motivated while others find recognition and rewards personally motivating. Motivation levels within the workplace have a direct impact on employee productivity. Workers who are motivated and excited about their jobs carry out their responsibilities to the best of their ability and production numbers increase as a result. On that aspect, numerous research studies have examined the relationship between conflict and supervisor’s motivating behaviour. Xin and Pelled (2003) established a negative relationship between emotional conflict and supervisors’ emotional support and creativity encouragement, two leadership behaviours that are in turn similar to the inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation dimensions of transformational leadership. More specifically, they found that employees who experience relationship conflict perceive their leaders as expressing less confidence in achieving goals and encouraging their creativity to a lesser extent.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology for this study including the selection of participants, research design, and data analysis approach.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1. The Research Scope

Within the framework examined above, the problem that will be analysed is focused on identifying sources of conflict within the Cypriot banking sector and on examining how managers within the banking environment, manage and prevent such episodes. A further aim of this study is to measure to which extent employees find the current conflict management practices adequate, to identify the levels of trust and satisfaction and to determine any areas for improvement.

Having analysed the existing literature regarding conflict management the current section describes all details about the kind of research conducted, the research population in mind and the relative sample used. This section also refers to the statistical methodology used to process and analyse the data in order to reach some final conclusions.

“A research can be defined as a systematic way of finding out things with a clear purpose, where the data is collected and interpreted systematically, thus increasing knowledge. This process of collecting, interpreting and formulating the data needs a certain methodology. This is termed as research methodology” (Vishnumurthy, 2017, p.39).

The major research questions of the current Master’s Thesis are the following:

1. Which are the main sources of conflicts in the banking work environment?
2. In what ways do managers prevent or resolve interpersonal conflicts?
3. What approaches need to be implemented to improve conflict management and employee engagement?

In response to the research questions presented above, primary research has been conducted using the mixed method approach which will be examined in the succeeding paragraphs.

3.2. Data Collection Method

As already mentioned earlier the data collection method used in this survey which is a profiling and descriptive research (the intention is to generate a profile of the characteristics of the sample) (Rowely, 2014), is the mixed method approach (“MMA”). This is “an approach to research in the social, behavioural and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems. A core assumption of this approach is that when an investigator combines statistical trends (quantitative data) with stories and personal experiences (qualitative data), this collective strength provides a better understanding of the research problem than either form of data alone” (Cresswel, 2015, p2).

Using data from compound methodological approaches is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation involves using more than two methods in order to verify results; the idea is that if different research approaches produce roughly similar results, then the strength of the research is reinforced. If the outcomes from different research methods produce conflicting results, then the researcher has the opportunity to revise how the methods used may have impacted the results or decide whether or not the problem should be reframed (Harper, 2019).

Although MMA aims to compensate for the weaknesses of using a single method, the technique carries some challenges. It requires a great deal of expertise and effort to study the phenomenon under consideration using different methods and it may also be difficult to compare two types of data as well as resolve inconsistencies if they arise (Steven R. Terrell, 2012).

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires are frequently used in conducting quantitative research, where the researcher wants to profile the sample in terms of figures (e.g. the proportion of the sample in different age groups) or to be able to count the frequency of occurrence of opinions, attitudes, skills, processes, behaviors, or expectations (Rowley, 2014). Thus, it was decided to prepare the current survey using mostly this form of data collection.

Besides, “The big advantage of questionnaires is that it is easier to get responses from a large number of people, and the data gathered may therefore be seen to generate findings that are more generalizable”. (Rowley, 2014, p3)

On the other hand a major drawback of using questionnaires instead of personal interviews is that you will never be sure whether the respondents have understood your questions, or whether they have taken the time to provide accurate data. Also, you will inevitably have some unanswered questions on some questionnaires – these might arise from the respondent being bored, running out of time, not being willing to provide certain information, feeling that they do not know a fact or have an opinion, or not understanding the question (Rowley, 2014). A further limitation of using questionnaires in surveys was stated by Gray (2009, p339) who supported that “Questionnaires reflect the designer’s view of the world, no matter how objective a researcher tries to be”.

Nevertheless the above limitations have been confronted somehow with the use of a small number of personal interviews conducted in a very small segment of the population sample; the managers. Interviewing managers was indeed effective since researcher has succeeded in gaining a deeper understanding of conflict management behavior in the banking workplace. Managers were surprisingly honest, relaxed and talkative. Personal interviews along with a couple of open-ended questions have assisted the researcher to acquire a good indication of actual sources of conflict in their workplace, as well as how managers currently handle conflicts and which is their perspective about using better practices.

3.4. Research Population and Sample Selection

The present study, which has been conducted within the month of February 2021, addresses bank employees, and it is divided into two parts; the quantitative part which is addressed to all rank employees and the qualitative part which addresses managers.

In that matter, a convenient sample of employees from 8 banks in Cyprus was randomly selected to complete the questionnaire. So in the mid-February 188 questionnaires, written in both English and Greek language, were submitted electronically for completion. Eventually, in a two week period 199 completed questionnaires were returned; 170 Greek questionnaires and 29 English questionnaires.

It is worth mentioning that before distributing the questionnaires, some oral (telephone), informative, communication was conducted by the author. The intention was to inform respondents about the survey, acquire their email addresses or telephone numbers and invite them to forward the questionnaire to their colleagues. Needless to say that communication was also effected using the help of social media (Facebook and Messenger application), or Viber application.

Concurrently with the quantitative part, the qualitative part of the questionnaire has been applied to examine the views of 10 out of the 38 managers (19% of the sample), who have already answered the quantitative part of the questionnaire, using the Concurrent Triangular Strategy (Steven R. Terrell, 2012). It should also be pointed out that the researcher had initially communicated with the 10 respondents via telephone. Soon after their conversation, 5 meetings were scheduled via Zoom platform, which is an on-line audio and web conferencing platform (Wikipedia). It is worth noting that physical meetings were impossible to be organized due to Covid-19 restrictive measures. Ultimately, 5 qualitative questionnaires (in the form of interviews) were finalized.

3.5. Structure of Questionnaire

The quantitative part of questionnaire is composed of six sections. The first section, which consists of 14 statements, examines the sources of conflict in the banking workplace. The second part, which also consists of 14 statements, deals with conflict management practices. Next, the third section which comprises of 10 statements, studies manager's attitude towards conflict and their conflict handling style. The fourth part, containing 6 statements, explores some techniques to manage conflicts. For all sections B, C and D, respondents are invited to evaluate the current practices and simultaneously make suggestions for improvements. Then, the fifth section (7 statements) examines how employee engagement can minimize conflicts. Finally the sixth unit, Demographics, displays age, gender, education, marital status and employment relationship.

For the quantitative data collection, the author used the "Likert scale" question type. Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaires. It is the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research, such that the term is often used interchangeably with rating scale, although there are other types of rating scales. (Wikipedia).

Closed questions were used, having a choice of answers from 1 to 5, among which, 1. represents Strongly Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral opinion i.e. Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4. Agree and 5. Strongly Agree.

Dichotomous questions with two possible answers of the type of YES or NO have been avoided. However, multiple-choice type of questions with three or more possible answers were used in the sixth section (Demographics).

With respect to the qualitative part of questionnaire, the researcher has communicated to the respondents the three research questions of the current dissertation. In other words she asked the respondents three open-ended questions; the intention was to permit a range of responses, to extract true stories and experiences and draw conclusions on their personality, their leadership and conflict management styles and their negotiation behavior.

Existing literature suggests three forms of open-ended questions; completely unstructured, word association and sentence completion (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Actually the current research includes completely unstructured questions.

Soon after designing the questionnaire the researcher planned some pilot testing, with the help of five participants in order to evaluate validity, reliability and error testing. Testing a questionnaire for validity requires that we ask whether the questions posed, adequately address the objectives of the research. On the other hand, a questionnaire is considered reliable if respondents understand the questions and can answer them meaningfully. (Fivevidya, 2020).

Indeed, some questions were rewritten or rephrased and some of them were totally removed. In fact, Baker and Foy (2008) suggest that piloting tests both the questions (for variation, meaning, difficulty, and respondent interest and attention), and the questionnaire (for “flow”, question order, skip patterns, timing, respondent interest, and respondent well-being). A preliminary pilot, just to check that the questions make sense, can be conducted with friends and colleagues, but at least a few questionnaires should be completed by a member of the selected population that you are targeting.

In order to correlate the research questions of the current survey with the bibliography already examined in Chapter 2 and the actual questionnaires, please refer to Appendix A.

3.6. Data Analysis

Initially, pieces of data derived from the quantitative research (parts A, B, C, D, E and F) were transferred from Google Forms spreadsheet to a Microsoft Excel sheet. Google Forms is a survey administration software used to create forms for data collection purposes (Wikipedia). After that, data was transferred into the SPSS software system (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences) which is a statistical analysis tool. Then the quantitative results were extracted from SPSS, providing researcher with the mean and the standard deviation of each question as well as the percentage of each response. Eventually responses were analyzed using bar or column charts.

The final step of the analysis process involved the interpretation of the qualitative data, collected by means of personal interviews, and the comparison of the two pieces of information - qualitative and quantitative data - driving to the final conclusion of the research. All research findings will be presented in detail in the following chapter.

3.7. Limitations of the Current Research

This study contains a number of limitations. We must first point out that our sample is only a small segment of the banking population and it involves employees working in eight different bank organizations, of different size and culture. This unquestionably affects our ability to extrapolate accurate results. Future research could include a bigger sample to enhance generalizability. However, this limitation is mitigated since sample is homogeneous.

Further an alternative research could focus on examining the views of the total population of a single bank organization in Cyprus.

Furthermore, given that we relied our research on our personal relationships, research was conducted upon a non-probability random sample, non-representative of the population. Hence there is always a possibility our results to be misleading (Rowley, 2014).

Another limitation also described by Belwalkar & Vohra & Pandey (2018), is the use of questionnaire as the dominant instrument for data collection. However, to mitigate this limitation the researcher has gathered a small number of qualitative data using the tool of personal interviews (Mixed Method Approach).

Lastly, it is a common view “that all data collection, quantitative or qualitative, operates within a cultural context and is affected by the biases and beliefs of the data collectors” (Pole, 2007, p2). Even so, this limitation has somehow been confronted when during the pilot testing procedure third parties have injected new ideas and recommendations for improvement of the content of the final questionnaire.

The next chapter presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative research.

CHAPTER 4

The Results of the Survey

This chapter deals with the results of the survey with respect to the views of bank employees. The collection of quantitative data was performed using a questionnaire, which was given to a research sample of the banking population, within the time frames analyzed in the previous chapter.

As already discussed above qualitative data has been collected using personal interviews.

4.1. Part A: Sources of Conflict in the Banking Workplace

The first section of the questionnaire examines the sources of conflict within the banking environment, which is in fact the first research question of this study. In order to link more effectively theory with practice the current fourteen-query section has been divided into five subsections, thus placing questions into homogeneous groups.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Work Load and Stress

Too much <u>workload</u> leads to conflict episodes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	1	8	29	109	52	4.02	0.785
Percentage	0.5	4.0	14.6	54.8	26.1		
Bad stress (or '<u>distress</u>') leads to conflict	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	2	5	16	116	60	4.14	0.746
Percentage	1.0	2.5	8.0	58.3	30.2		

Table 4.1.1

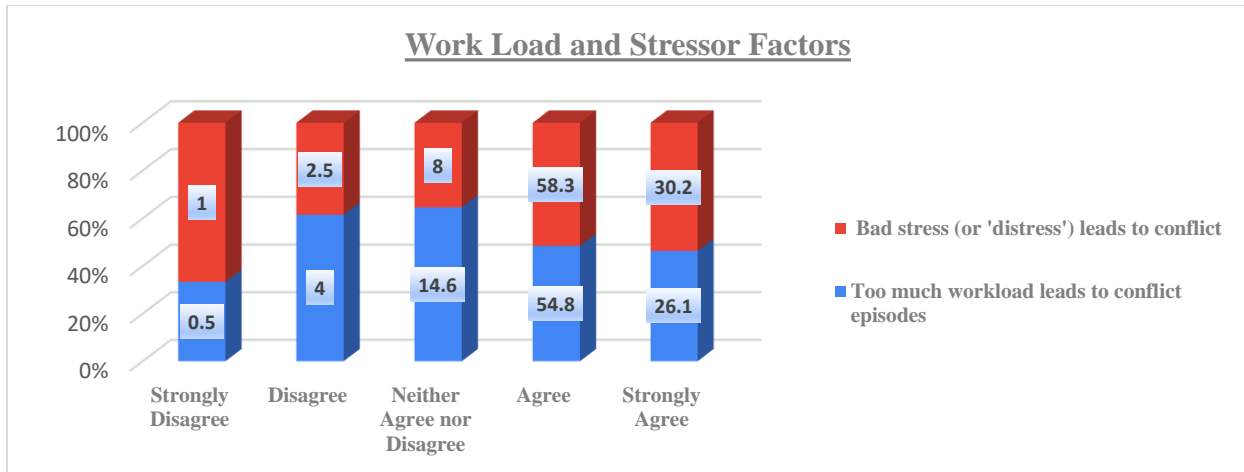


Diagram 4.1.1

Following the graph above, it is clear that the vast majority of the respondents agree (either Agree or Strongly Disagree) that too much Workload (Agree 80.9%, Mean 4.02, St. Dev. 0.79) and Distress (Agree 88.5%, Mean 4.14, St. Dev. 0.75) can become sources of conflict in the banking environment. The results comply with the existing literature that supports that psychological and physical outcomes of stress and burnout syndrome in the workplace may result to conflicts.

Personality and Differentiation

<u>Very ambitious employees cause conflicts</u>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	4	22	52	69	52	3.72	1.035
Percentage	2.0	11.1	26.1	34.7	26.1		
<u>Very impulsive employees cause conflicts</u>							
Frequency	2	20	50	91	36	3.70	0.915
Percentage	1.0	10.1	25.1	45.7	18.1		
<u>Very sociable employees cause conflicts</u>							
Frequency	40	79	56	18	6	2.35	0.998
Percentage	20.1	39.7	28.1	9.0	3.0		
<u>Cooperative employees do not cause conflicts</u>							
Frequency	2	25	37	68	67	3.87	1.051
Percentage	1.0	12.6	18.6	34.2	33.7		

Table 4.1.2

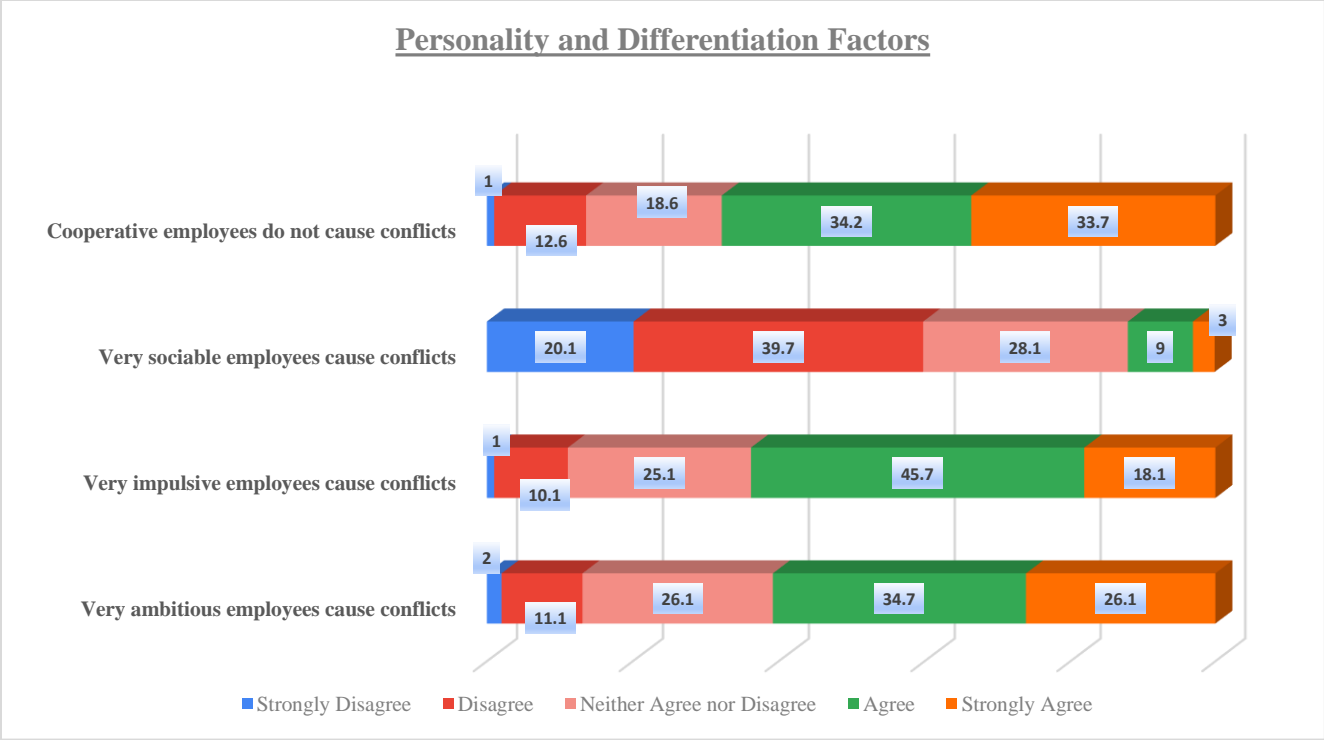


Diagram 4.1.2

The diagram above depicts the views of the sample with regards to how conflict may result from differentiation aspects among employees or personality clashes. The current sample tends to agree (either Agree or Strongly Disagree) that very impulsive (Agree 63.8%, Mean 3.70, St. Dev. 0.92) and ambitious employees (Agree 60.8%, Mean 3.72, St. Dev.1.035) may cause conflicts. However, a significant amount of respondents (1 out of 4), is unsure (25.1% and 26.1% respectively). Further, 67.9% of the respondents (Mean 3.87) agrees that cooperative employees do not cause conflicts although the standard deviation (St. Dev.1.051) indicates some spread. Being sociable on the other hand, is less likely to cause conflicts, as 59.8% of the sample Disagree or Strongly Disagree and 28.1% Neither Agree nor Disagree.

As mentioned earlier in chapter 4, every individual is unique. Therefore the results above support the said theory which indicates that different background, experience, training and personality of an individual may or may not cause conflicts. People with different values assess things differently and similarly act differently.

Communication Factors and Uncertainty Avoidance

Manager's consistency minimizes conflicts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	3	6	14	91	85	4.25	0.833
Percentage	1.5	3.0	7.0	45.7	42.7		
Ambiguity in written rules creates anxiety							
Frequency	1	8	30	78	82	4.17	0.863
Percentage	0.5	4.0	15.1	39.2	41.2		
Lack of communication creates conflicts							
Frequency	1	6	10	76	106	4.41	0.766
Percentage	0.5	3.0	5.0	38.2	53.3		
Regular meetings prevent conflicts							
Frequency	6	23	78	72	20	3.39	0.924
Percentage	3.0	11.6	39.2	36.2	10.1		

Table 4.1.3

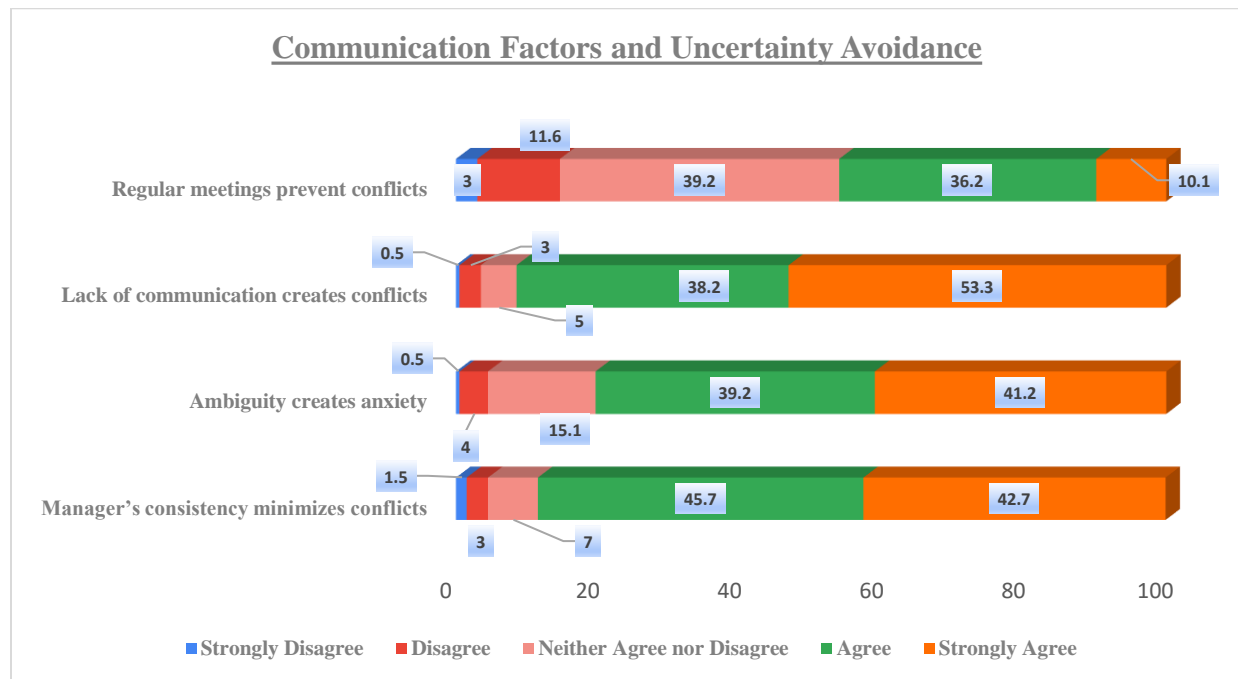


Diagram 4.1.3

Diagram 4.1.3 above verifies that most of the employees agree (either Agree or Strongly Disagree) that effective communication, minimized ambiguity and manager's consistency, play an important role in conflict management. Particularly, 88.4% (with a Mean of 4.25) of the respondents agree that lack of manager's consistency can be a root of conflict. Additionally, a percentage of 80.4% (with a Mean of 4.17) supports the view that ambiguity in written rules and procedures may result to conflict. Then, the incredibly large percentage of 91.5% of the sample, with relatively low standard deviation, believe that lack of communication does create conflict (Mean 4.41, St. Dev. 0.766).

It is also worth noting that fewer people tend to agree (46.3%) with the opinion that having regular meetings may prevent conflicts in the banking environment. Mean (3.39) however appears relatively high, as many people (39.2%) have not decided yet.

The findings reveal that theory is applied and "noise" in the communication channel, along with jargon and inadequate information can block the communication and cause conflict (Robbins & Judge, 2017). It is also proved that people when feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations may become more conflicting (uncertainty avoidance).

Scarcity of Resources, Incompatible Goals and Task Interdependence

Scarcity in financial and human resources creates conflicts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	2	11	42	104	40	3.85	0.839
Percentage	1.0	5.5	21.1	52.3	20.1		
Different goals of different units may lead to conflicts							
Frequency	2	18	32	101	46	3.86	0.91
Percentage	1.0	9.0	16.1	50.8	23.1		
When you rely on others to complete your task creates conflicts							
Frequency	3	15	58	88	35	3.69	0.9
Percentage	1.5	7.5	29.1	44.2	17.6		

Table 4.1.4

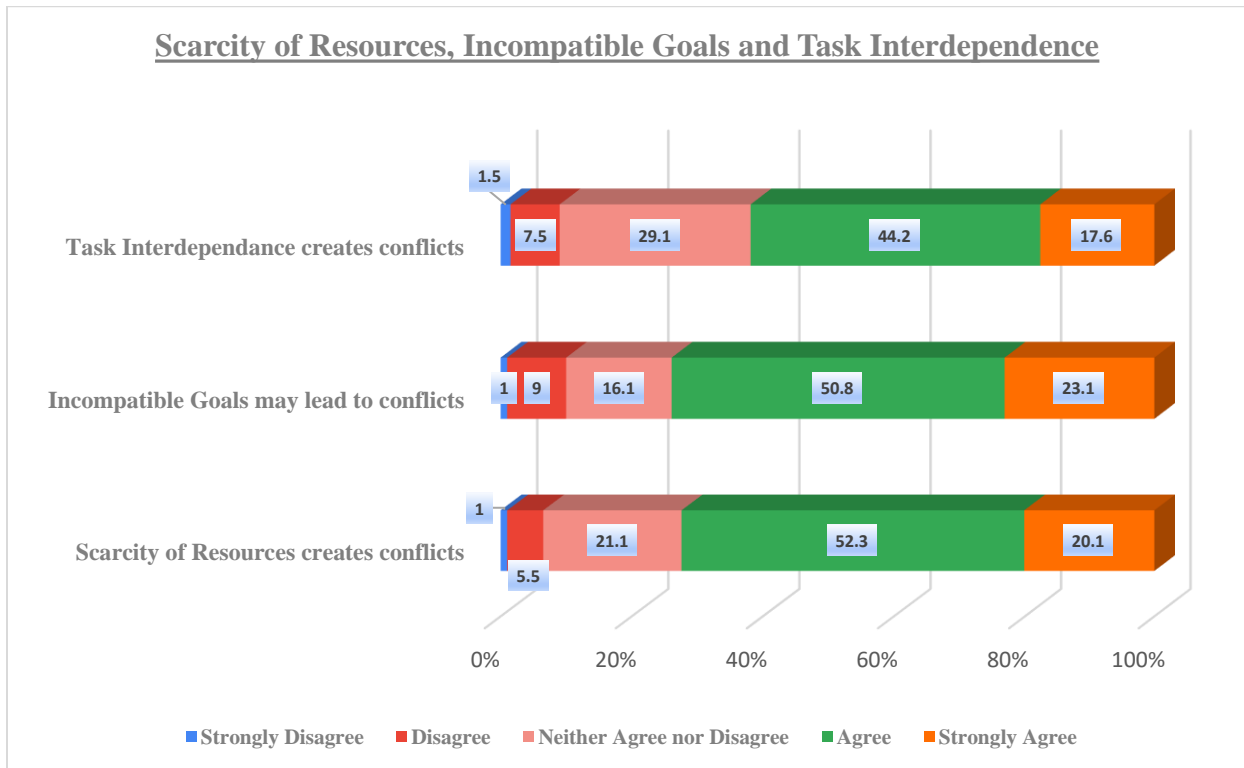


Diagram 4.1.4

The chart above illustrates that conflict is somehow increased with task interdependence (61.8% of the sample is in agreement). There is though, a considerable share of the sample (around 29%) that have not decided yet.

There is no doubt however, that conflict is increased when goal attainment by one person interferes with goal attainment by others. As depicted above, 73.9% (Mean 3.86) of the sample agreed that incompatible goals may lead to conflicts. Finally, 72.4% (Mean 3.85) of the sample admitted that lack of financial and human resources can generate conflicts.

Obviously, findings converge with literature and scholars' views.

Power Imbalance and Bullying creates Conflicts

Power imbalance and bullying creates conflicts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	3	7	18	82	89	4.24	0.872
Percentage	1.5	3.5	9.0	41.2	44.7		

Table 4.1.5

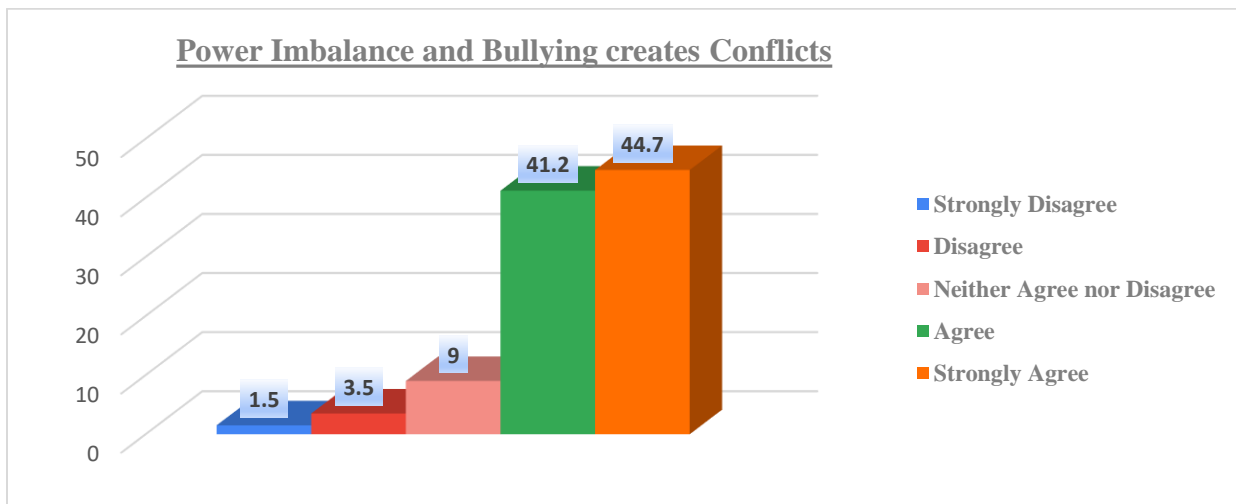


Diagram 4.1.5

As indicated by the level of responses above, the majority of the respondents (85.9%, Mean 4.24, St. Dev.0.87) agreed that Power Imbalance and Bullying factors can generate conflicts in their work environment, confirming the application of theory.

4.2. Part B: Conflict Management Practices

The second section of the survey investigates the factor “Time”, denoting the right timing conflict should be handled and by whom. For better understanding the current fourteen-query section has been divided into two sub-sections.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Who CURRENTLY handles Conflicts and Who SHOULD handle Conflicts

Conflicts are USUALLY handled by Managers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	9	44	77	61	8	3.08	0.932
Percentage	4.5	22.1	38.7	30.7	4.0		
Conflicts SHOULD be handled by Managers							
Frequency	2	10	32	86	69	4.06	0.894
Percentage	1.0	5.0	16.1	43.2	34.7		
Conflicts are USUALLY handled by Employees							
Frequency	10	33	88	64	4	3.1	0.874
Percentage	5	16.6	44.2	32.2	2.0		
Conflicts SHOULD be handled by Employees							
Frequency	26	61	66	36	10	2.71	1.065
Percentage	13.1	30.7	33.2	18.1	5.0		

Table 4.2.1

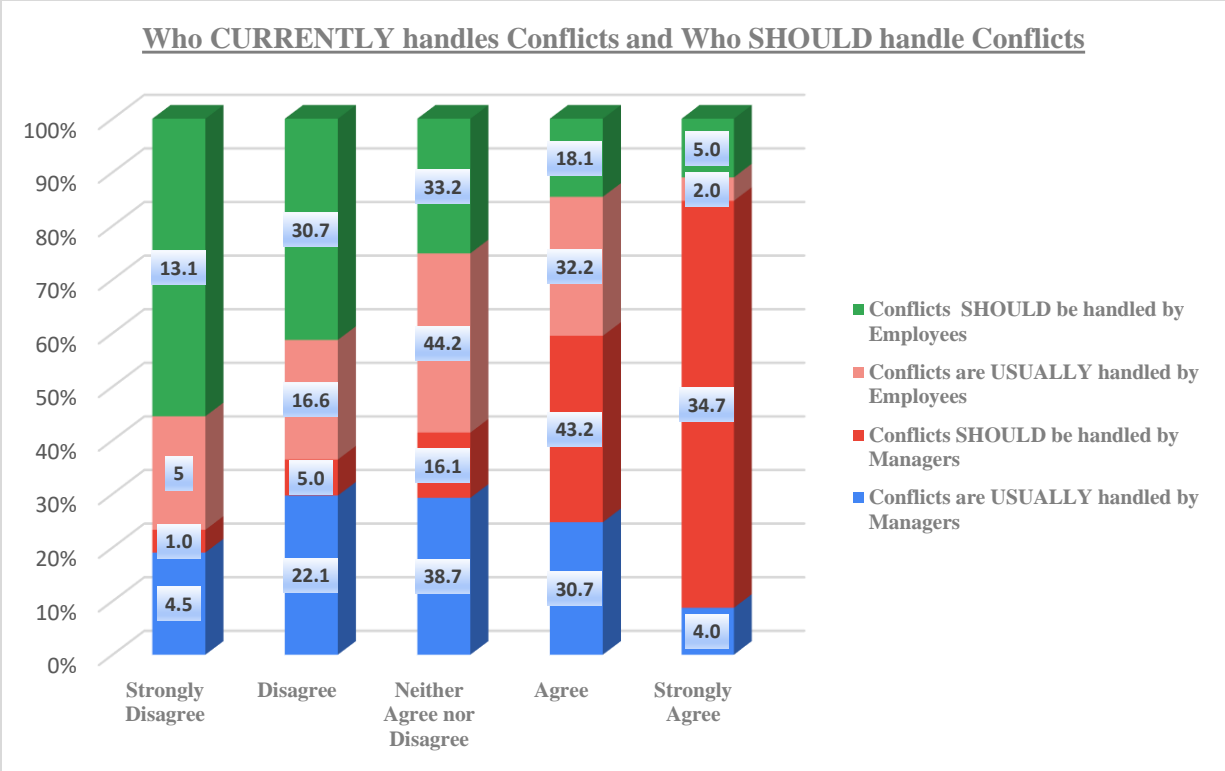


Diagram 4.2.1

This section examines whether conflicts in the banking sector are currently handled by managers or employees. Moreover a couple of questions were added, to clarify employees’ opinion about which person in the hierarchy should deal with conflict resolution.

It seems that people are in some way unsure about who currently handles conflicts in their workplace. Both answers regarding current practice adopted, exhibit similar results around 65-66% (38.7% and 44.2% Neither Agree nor Disagree, 26.6% and 21.6% Disagree, with a Mean of 3.08 and 3.1 respectively). The results though tend towards statement “Conflicts are USUALLY handled by Employees”, as the level of disagreement 21.6% is smaller than 26.6% “Conflicts are USUALLY handled by Managers”. It is worth noticing that standard deviation for “Conflicts are USUALLY handled by Managers” statement is larger (0.932) and answers are more widely spread, while “Conflicts are USUALLY handled by Employees” option presents a lower standard deviation (0.874), which means that answers are more concentrated to the Mean.

Hence it is clear that employees believe that conflicts should be handled by Managers (77.9% Agree or Strongly Agree, Mean 4.06) and not employees (23.1% Agree or Strongly Agree, Mean 2.71).

The above outcome is more probably due to the fact that employees might be facing problems to deal with conflict issues or disagreements on their own, ending up to become more stressed and anxious. The above conclusion supports the theory which states that unresolved conflict generates many serious consequences and it may lead to frustration, tension, low morale, missing meeting deadlines, lack of self-confidence, low trust level, communication problems, absenteeism, and legal proceedings (Buss, 2009).

Finally, the results emphasize the need that managers should use different conflict management tools to help employees solve any disagreements among them, or manage any conflict episodes, by either being proactive or by generating solutions.

When Conflict is CURRENTLY Being Resolved and When it SHOULD be Resolved

Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when they are located	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	18	52	84	40	5	2.81	0.945
Percentage	9	26.1	42.2	20.1	2.5		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when they are located							
Frequency	4	9	25	82	79	4.12	0.935
Percentage	2.0	4.5	12.6	41.2	39.7		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle							
Frequency	11	39	98	45	6	2.98	0.876
Percentage	5.5	19.6	49.2	22.6	3.0		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle							
Frequency	7	22	65	73	32	3.51	1.004
Percentage	3.5	11.1	32.7	36.7	16.1		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when they become personal							
Frequency	7	38	64	68	22	3.3	1.015
Percentage	3.5	19.1	32.2	34.2	11.1		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when they become personal							
Frequency	23	39	33	63	41	3.3	1.31
Percentage	11.6	19.6	16.6	31.7	20.6		

Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when they identified through communication							
Frequency	8	40	68	66	17	3.22	0.996
Percentage	4.0	20.1	34.2	33.2	8.5		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when they are identified through communication							
Frequency	12	25	32	77	53	3.67	1.172
Percentage	6.0	12.6	16.1	38.7	26.6		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when conflicts are finalized and consequences are apparent							
Frequency	14	31	52	65	37	3.4	1.163
Percentage	7.0	15.6	26.1	32.7	18.6		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when conflicts are finalized and consequences are apparent							
Frequency	54	50	17	35	43	2.81	1.534
Percentage	27.1	25.1	8.5	17.6	21.6		

Table 4.2.2

When Conflict is CURRENTLY being Resolved and When it SHOULD be Resolved

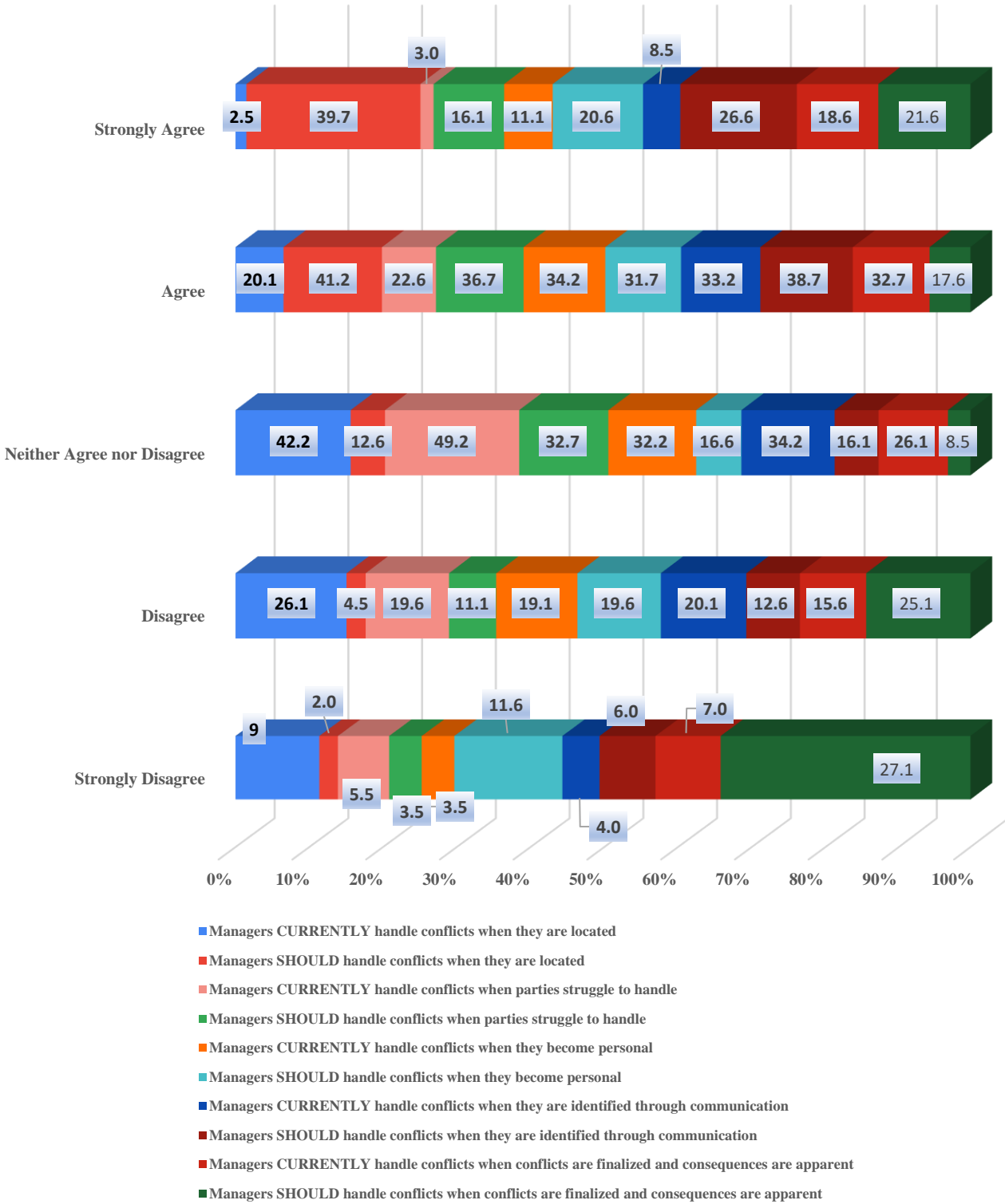


Diagram 4.2.2

The above information has been collected with respect to the 2nd and 3rd research questions: “In what ways do managers prevent or resolve interpersonal conflicts and what approaches need to be implemented to improve conflict management and employee engagement”. More specifically, the factor “Time” has been selected in order to measure how important is, or is not, to intervene at the early stages before conflict is escalated, or at the middle stages when parties struggle to handle, or later on, when conflict is finalized and managers have no alternatives.

The current paragraph examines the existing practice adopted by managers, as drawn from the responses of the current questionnaire. In light of the above findings it seems that respondents are either not certain about existing practices, or they tend to disagree that “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when they are located” (77.3% Disagree or Neither Agree nor Disagree, Mean 2.81, St. Dev. 0.945). A different response with a slight direction towards “Agreement” has been obtained from statement “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle” (74.8% Agree or Neither Agree nor Disagree, Mean 2.98, St. Dev. 0.876). However, as indicated by the level of responses in the next statement “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when they become personal”, the majority of the respondents generally do not disagree (77.5% Agree or Neither Agree nor Disagree, Mean 3.3, St. Dev. 1.015), which means that this is somehow, in average, the starting point in time where managers currently become involved in conflict situations. Similar results are identified in the statement “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when they are identified through communication” (Mean 3.22, St. Dev. 0.996). Finally, the last statement “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts when conflicts are finalized and consequences are apparent”, shows that only 22.6% of the sample disagrees, which documents the conclusion that in practice managers in the banking sector do handle conflicts situations only when they become personal and disruptive (relationship or emotional conflict).

Following the existing status presented above, employees were also requested to make suggestions on the ideal timing of conflict resolution. At first glance, diagram 4.2.2 above, indicates that a considerable proportion of the sample (60.7%) has not selected Agree or Strongly Agree (Mean 2.81, high St. Dev. 1.534) for the statement “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts at later stages when conflicts are finalized and consequences are apparent”. Of even greater significance is the fact that respondents agree (80.9% Agree or Strongly Agree, Mean 4.12, St. Dev. 0.935) that “Conflicts SHOULD be handled immediately when located”. As far as the middle stages are

concerned, responses and opinions on the “what it SHOULD be done” section, (i.e. Managers should handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle, or when conflicts become personal, or when conflicts are identified through communication), vary. In fact 85.5% of the sample, with a Mean 3.51 and St. Dev. 1.004, does not disagree that “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle”. Likewise, less proportion of the sample 68.9%, Mean 3.3 and St. Dev.1.31 which is relatively high, does not disagree that “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when they become personal”. At the same time only 18.6% of the sample stated clearly that they do not agree that “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts when they are identified through communication”. Mean (3.67) is well above moderate although standard deviation is relatively high (1.172), which means that answers are widely spread.

The above results verify the assumption that employees agree that conflict episodes should be resolved at the early stages of conflict, before conflict perceptions and emotions manifest themselves in the decisions and manners of one party toward the other. Undeniably, when people experience high levels of conflict emotions, they have difficulty in finding the words and expressions that communicate effectively without further irritating the relationship (Von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett, 2004).

4.3. Part C: Management's Attitude towards Conflict

The third section of the current survey studies the manager's conflict handling style.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Managers' Attitude Towards Conflict

Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using FORCING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	13	31	97	48	10	3.06	0,92767
Percentage	6.5	15.6	48.7	24.1	5.0		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using FORCING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	58	57	63	16	4	2.25	1.0297
Percentage	29.1	28.6	31.7	8	2.0		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using PROBLEM-SOLVING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	10	38	88	53	10	3.08	0.92624
Percentage	5	19.1	44.2	26.6	5.0		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using PROBLEM-SOLVING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	3	6	25	80	85	4.2	0.88007
Percentage	1.5	3.0	12.6	40.2	42.7		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using OBLIGING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	15	66	81	29	8	2.74	0.93725
Percentage	7.5	33.2	40.7	14.6	4.0		

Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using OBLIGING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	44	72	48	27	8	2.41	1.09685
Percentage	22.1	36.2	24.1	13.6	4.0		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using COMPROMISING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	10	34	90	58	7	3.09	0.89435
Percentage	5	17.1	45.2	29.1	3.5		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using COMPROMISING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	8	23	58	82	27	3.49	1.00122
Percentage	4.0	11.6	29.1	41.2	13.6		
Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using AVOIDING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	12	43	65	54	25	3.19	1.09664
Percentage	6	21.6	32.7	27.1	12.6		
Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using AVOIDING style	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	88	58	30	16	7	1.97	1.11209
Percentage	44.2	29.1	15.1	8	3.5		

Table 4.3.1

Managers' Attitude Towards Conflict

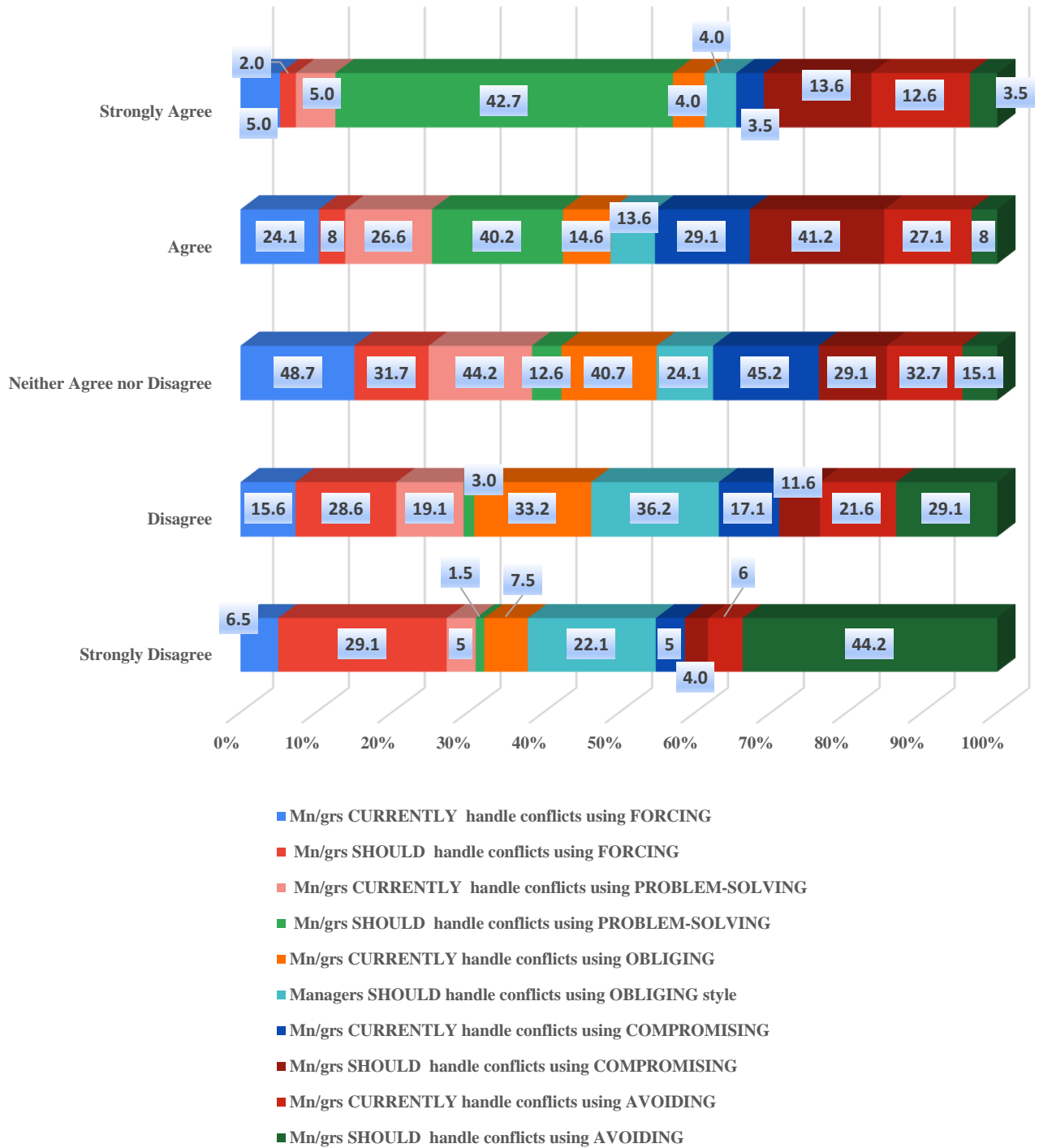


Diagram 4.3.1

As already mentioned in Chapter 2 there is no good or bad handling style and any choice depends on both circumstances and personality of managers. The preferred conflict handling style infers the manager's actual *intention* to act in a certain way (Robbins & Judge, A.J., Organizational Behavior, 2017). The current paragraph compares results linked with existing practice and results from employees' suggestions, as derived from the replies of the current questionnaire.

“Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using FORCING style” statement, has collected a large proportion (48.7%) of “Neither Agree nor Disagree” answers. Nevertheless, responses given from the rest of the sample indicate some tendency towards “Agreement”, as 29.1% of the sample agrees and 22.1% disagrees (Mean 3.06, St.Dev.0.93). On the other hand, it is obvious that a large percentage of the sample disagrees (57.7%) on the statement that “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using FORCING style”, which outlines the need for involvement and participation in decision making. It is worth mentioning that standard deviation is relatively high (1.03), indicating some spread in opinions.

Although “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using PROBLEM-SOVLING style” statement has collected a large proportion (44.2%) of “Neither Agree nor Disagree” responses, nearly 1 out of 3 respondents (31.6%) agreed that managers support this conflict handling behavior. It should be pointed out that the huge majority of the respondents (82.9%, Mean 4.2, St. Dev.0.88) agreed with the statement that “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using PROBLEM-SOVLING style”. The results depicted above, support the view that the majority of people acknowledge that by exchanging information, looking for alternatives, examining differences to solve the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties (Rahim, 2002), and thus creating a win-win situation, is the best practice. Obviously above results confirm Pruitt's argument (Pruitt, 1983) that problem-solving is the preferred method when seeking mutually beneficial options.

Meanwhile, both “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using OBLIGING style” and “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using OBLIGING style” statements, have collected more number of disagreements (40.7%, Mean 2.74 and 58.3%, Mean 2.41 respectively). This reflects the view that the majority of employees like fairness and detest seeing managers attempting to satisfy the concerns of other parties by accommodating and yielding, and thus creating win-lose situations (Yeung, 2014). It is also worth stating that for the “SHOULD” question, standard deviation is fairly high (1.097), designating some spread in employees' views.

Next, “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using COMPROMISING style” statement, displays a lot of “don’t know” answers (45.2% Neither Agree nor Disagree, Mean 3.09, St. Dev. 0.89) and a relative direction towards agreement (32.6% “Agree” and 22.1% “Disagree”). However, opinions on “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using COMPROMISING style” statement are more transparent, displaying fewer “don’t know” (29.1%) and more “Agree” answers (54.8%) with a Mean 3.49 and St. Dev. 1.001. With respect to the above statistics, it seems that employees admit that in some conflict episodes there is a need to create a give-and-take situation, in which both parties will give up something after negotiation in order to reach an agreement (Yuan, 2010).

Finally, regarding “Managers CURRENTLY handle conflicts using AVOIDING style” statement, almost 40% of the sample were in agreement (39.7% Agree and 32.7% Neither Agree nor Disagree) thus demonstrating managers’ current tendency to avoid being involved in employees’ conflicts. Contrary to that, 73.3% of the sample disapproved the statement that “Managers SHOULD handle conflicts using AVOIDING style”. There is no doubt that people agree with the view of Barki & Hartwick (2001) as they might feel that when managers exhibit such behavior are indifferent to their feelings and as the conflict remains unresolved they might feel angry or frustrated.

4.4. Part D: Techniques to Manage Conflict

The fourth section of the current questionnaire examines the techniques used by managers to resolve conflicts.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Techniques to Manage Conflicts

Managers CURRENTLY use Negotiation to resolve conflicts (i.e. dialogs and bargaining)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	4	33	79	67	16	3.29	0.90759
Percentage	2	16.6	39.7	33.7	8.0		
Managers SHOULD use Negotiation to resolve conflicts (i.e. dialogs and bargaining)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	1	4	19	87	88	4.29	0.76242
Percentage	0.5	2.0	9.5	43.7	44.2		
Managers CURRENTLY use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	26	55	78	31	9	2.71	1.02764
Percentage	13.1	27.6	39.2	15.6	4.5		
Managers SHOULD use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	19	32	64	63	21	3.18	1.12107
Percentage	9.5	16.1	32.2	31.7	10.6		
When the above efforts do not work, the managers CURRENTLY refer the case to a mediator (e.g. Department of Labor Relations whose decision may be binding)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	25	44	78	44	8	2.83	1.04008
Percentage	12.6	22.1	39.2	22.1	4.0		
When the above efforts do not work, the managers SHOULD refer the case to a mediator (e.g. Department of Labor Relations whose decision may be binding)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	14	30	47	82	26	3.38	1.10777
Percentage	7.0	15.1	23.6	41.2	13.1		

Table 4.4.1

Techniques to Manage Conflicts

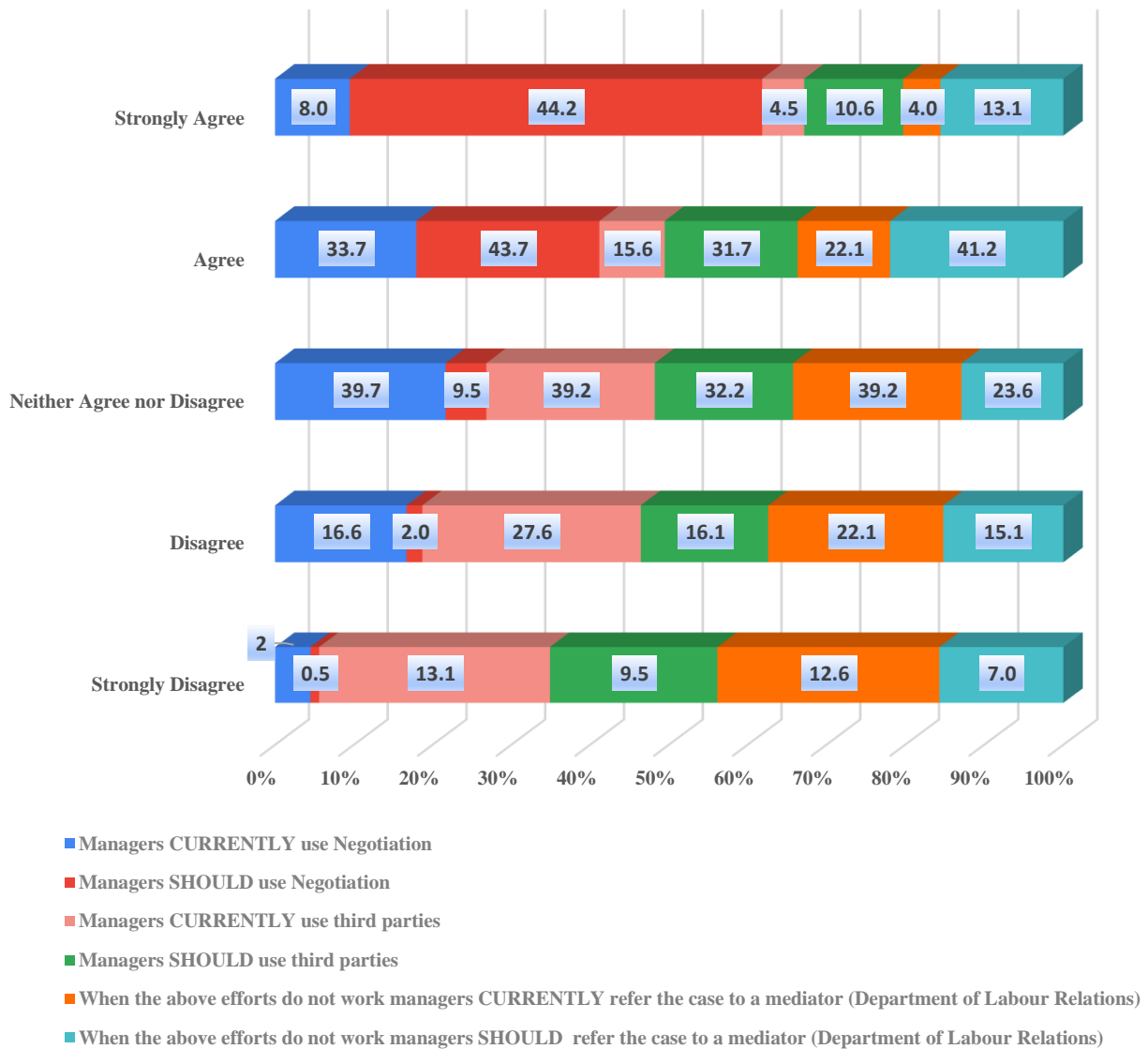


Diagram 4.4.1

As Pondy (1967) correctly noted the effectiveness and appropriateness of a conflict technique depends on the nature of the conflict. Therefore it is possible that employees' opinions might be somehow dissimilar. Only 18.6% of the sample expressly disagreed that "Managers CURRENTLY use Negotiation to resolve conflicts". On the other hand, 41.7% of the employees agreed with the above statement and 39.7% of the sample has not decided yet. The above findings tend to support the "Agree" decision. Of even greater importance though, is the fact that 87.9% (Mean 4.29% with a relatively low St. Dev. 0.76) of the sample is in agreement with the statement "Managers SHOULD use Negotiation to resolve conflicts". It seems that employees are aware that interaction created during negotiation between the parties helps to resolve conflict in a mutually beneficial way, forming a win-win situation (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Backsliding to Chapter 2, just to refresh our memory, "Third-party conflict resolution is any attempt by a relatively neutral person to help conflicting parties resolve their differences" (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010, p346). There are generally three forms of third-party dispute resolution activities: mediation, arbitration and inquisition. These activities can be categorized by their levels of control over the process and control over the final decision.

With regards to statement "Managers CURRENTLY use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)", respondents were somehow unmoved (39.2% Neither Agree nor Disagree, Mean 2.71 and relatively high St. Dev.1.03) with some tendency (40.7% "Disagree" and 20.1% "Agree") towards disagreement. On the other hand "Managers SHOULD use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)" statement, has collected an increased amount of "Agree" answers (42.3% "Agree", Mean 3.18) with some variation (St. Dev.1.121). By this declaration people acknowledge and agree with the theory that there are occasions where mediation can provide an opportunity for early intervention prior to escalation and can resolve disputes that may otherwise result in costly legal proceedings (Kasserman, 2016). They also seem to recognize the need for Mediation allowing them to have "their say" in a facilitated environment where power imbalances are, ideally, managed and parties are encouraged to find a resolution themselves rather than having it imposed upon them (Saundry et al., 2018).

Last but not least, respondents were asked to state whether they agree with the statements "When the above efforts do not work, the managers CURRENTLY refer the case to a mediator (e.g. Department of Labor Relations whose decision may be binding)" and "When the above efforts do

not work, the managers SHOULD refer the case to a mediator (e.g. Department of Labor Relations whose decision may be binding)". Above statistics indicate that existing banking environment does not support such solutions (26.1% "Agree" only and 34.7% "Disagree") although 54.3% (Mean 3.38, St. Dev. 1.108) of the sample agrees that it should.

It is also worth mentioning that the proportion 39.2% of the sample which is unsure ("Neither Agree nor Disagree") is equal to the percentage attained from the previous statement regarding third party conflict resolution (i.e. "Managers CURRENTLY use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)", confirming the fact that today bank employees are hardly ever given the opportunity to use third parties or mediators to resolve workplace conflict.

4.5. Part E: Conflicts and Employee Engagement

The fifth unit of this questionnaire considers how proper conflict management may lead to employee engagement and improved employee performance.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Conflicts and Employee Engagement

Conflicts can be constructive and improve things (bringing-up problems, issues or inefficiencies)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	5	14	45	106	29	3.7	0.89190
Percentage	2.5	7	22.6	53.3	14.6		
Conflicts may lead to problems (i.e. stress, low morale, low productivity, absentees)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	3	3	15	117	61	4.16	0.74593
Percentage	1.5	1.5	7.5	58.8	30.7		
Rewarding, giving feedback and training employees minimizes conflicts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	2	7	29	87	74	4.13	0.85829
Percentage	1	3.5	14.6	43.7	37.2		
Proper Delegation (i.e. passing out, allocation) of work minimizes conflicts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	1	3	11	97	87	4.34	0.69791
Percentage	0.5	1.5	5.5	48.7	43.7		
Manager's ability to help employees accept changes, minimizes conflict	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	1	3	12	94	89	4.34	0.70626
Percentage	0.5	1.5	6	47.2	44.7		

Manager's ability to 'read' other people's emotions reduces conflicts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	1	3	16	89	90	4.33	0.73088
Percentage	0.5	1.5	8	44.7	45.2		
Meritocracy ('Αξιοκρατία') minimizes conflict	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	St. Deviation
Frequency	2	2	14	63	118	4.47	0.75745
Percentage	1.0	1.0	7	31.7	59.3		

Table 4.5.1

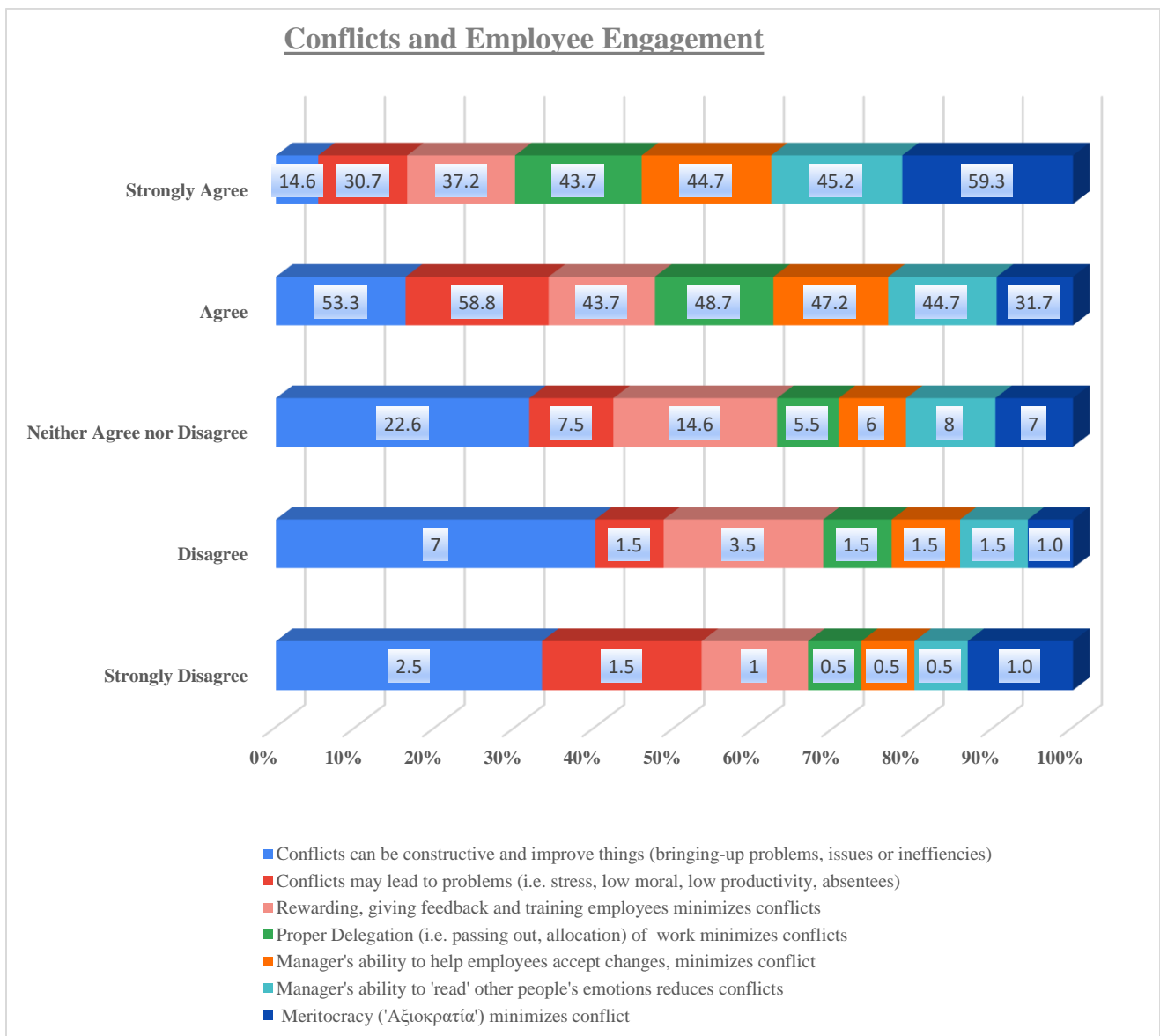


Diagram 4.5.1

As pointed out earlier in this dissertation, existing literature states that conflicts can be constructive and although relationship conflict hurts team effectiveness, task related conflict, under certain circumstances, can be impressively valuable to team efficacy (Jehn K. , 1995). In order to examine whether the above theory is applicable in real life, the following statement has been inserted in the questionnaire: “Conflicts can be constructive and improve things (bringing-up problems, issues or inefficiencies)”. The majority of the respondents (7 out of 10) with a Mean 3.7 are in agreement and only 9.5% have clearly expressed their disagreement. The above figures confirm the application of theory.

Next, “Conflicts may lead to problems (i.e. stress, low morale, low productivity and absentees)” statement, has collected 89.5% “Agreements” with a Mean 4.16 and relatively low spread (St. Dev. 0.75). The above high scores, substantiate theory and specifically the view of Robbins & Judge (2017), who argued that even in cases of task-oriented conflicts that are supposed to be constructive, if conflict grows too high may easily become highly personalized and quickly evolve into relationship conflict.

The next two statements of this unit investigate how Motivation and Proper Delegation of work may minimize conflicts in the banking sector: “Rewarding, giving feedback and training employees, minimizes conflicts” statement, has raised 80.9% “Agreements” (with a Mean of 4.13 and St. Dev. 0.86). Further “Proper Delegation (i.e. passing out, allocation) of work minimizes conflicts” statement, has collected the enormous percentage of 92.4% (with a Mean of 4.34 and a relatively very low St. Dev. 0.698). The above figures support the view of Xin and Pelled (2003) who established a negative relationship between emotional conflict and supervisors’ emotional support and creativity encouragement, two leadership behaviors that are in turn similar to the inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation dimensions of transformational leadership. More specifically, they found that employees who experience relationship conflict perceive their leaders as expressing less confidence in achieving goals and encouraging their creativity to a lesser extent.

The last three statements of this division examine how emotional intelligence and meritocracy affect conflict episodes. Above diagrams depict a huge proportion of the sample (91.9% “Agree”, Mean 4.34 and St. Dev. 0.71) to agree with the statement that “Manager's ability to help employees accept changes, minimizes conflict”. Similarly 89.9% of the sample agreed (Mean 4.33 and St.

Dev. 0.73) that “Manager's ability to 'read' other people's emotions, reduces conflicts”. Analogous results (91% “Agree”, Mean 4.47 and St. Dev. 0.76) are derived from the statement “Meritocracy ('Αξιοκρατία') minimizes conflict”. In view of the above outcomes, it seems that employees acknowledge that managers’ ability to apply emotional intelligence, demonstrate high level of empathy by interpreting other people’s emotions and showing concern for others, makes a positive contribution toward de-escalation. Thus it seems that managers’ emotional intelligence can significantly improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness (Skiba, 2020).

4.6. Part F: Demographics

The last part of the current survey presents the demographic picture of the respondents.

4.6.1. Age

As already mentioned above the current questionnaire has been answered by 199 bank employees. The majority of the respondents was in the age-range of 36–45, with a percentage rate of 44%. Second in line follows the age in-between 46–55, with a percentage rate of 32%. Third, comes the group of employees in-between 26-35, with a percentage rate of 21%. Finally, people with ages below 25 and above 55 were very few (3% of the sample).

Age	Frequency	Percentage Rate
18 - 25	1	0,5%
26 - 35	41	20,6%
36 - 45	87	43,7%
46 - 55	64	32,3%
55 +	6	3,02%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.1

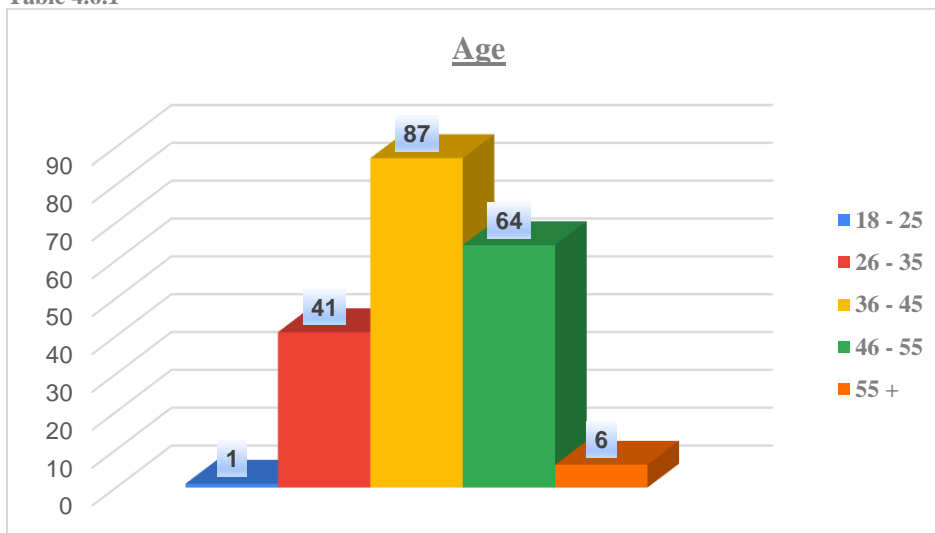


Diagram 4.6.1

4.6.2. Gender

The second question of this section has also been answered by 199 individuals, where 132 of them were females (percentage rate 66%), and 67 of them were men (percentage rate 34%).

Gender	Frequency	Percentage Rate
Male	67	34%
Female	132	66%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.2

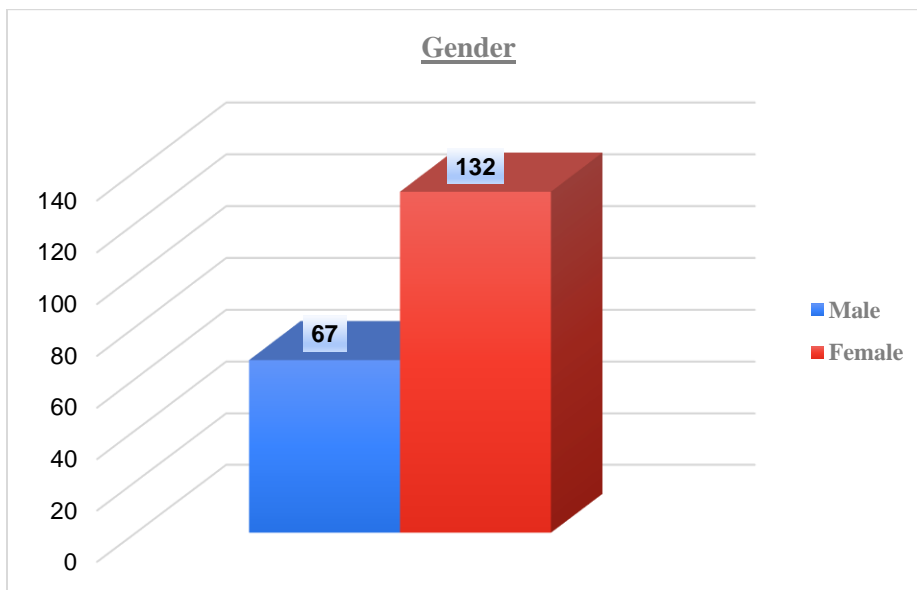


Diagram 4.6.2

4.6.3. Education

The educational level of the vast majority of the respondents (94%), holds a university or postgraduate degree. This reflects the trend in the Cyprus banking sector to employ highly educated individuals with specialized knowledge and competencies. Further, these numbers indicate the general tendency and culture in Cyprus for personal and educational development.

Education	Frequency	Percentage Rate
Secondary	11	6%
University / College	80	40%
Postgraduate	108	54%
Doctorate	0	0%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.3

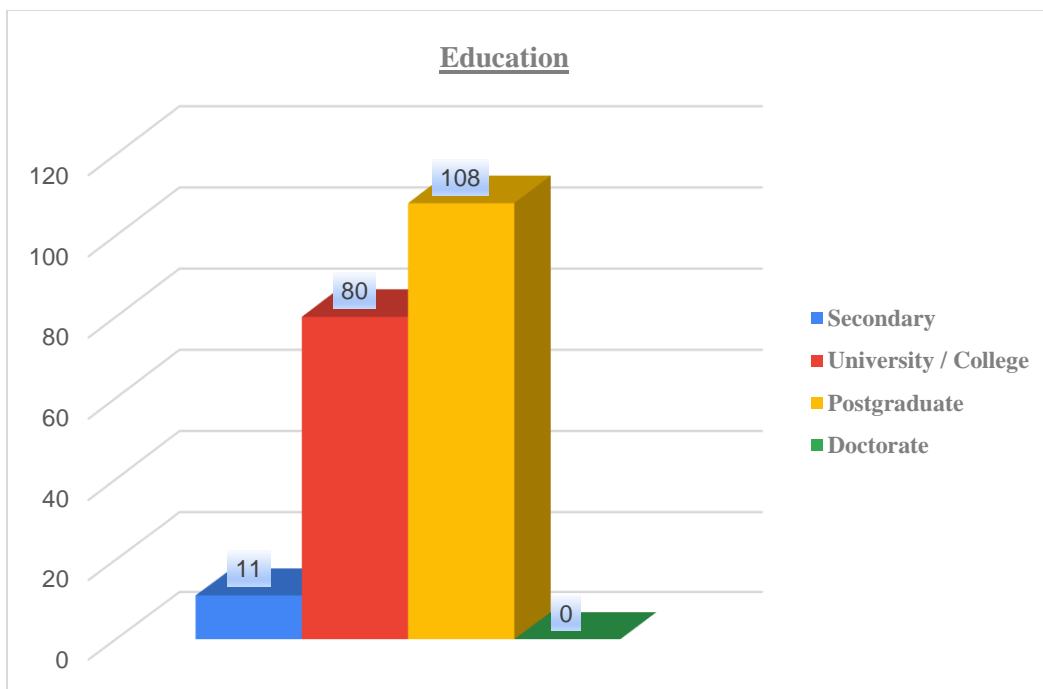


Diagram 4.6.3

4.6.4. Marital Status

The below charts demonstrate that the majority of the respondents (with a percentage of 78%) is married. This reflects the fact that nearly the whole sample consists of employees with ages above 26. It is also true that the majority of couples in Cyprus follow the tradition and get married. As per Chrysostomou (2020), Cyprus has the highest rate of marriages in the European Union.

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage Rate
Single	34	17%
Married	156	78%
Other	9	5%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.4

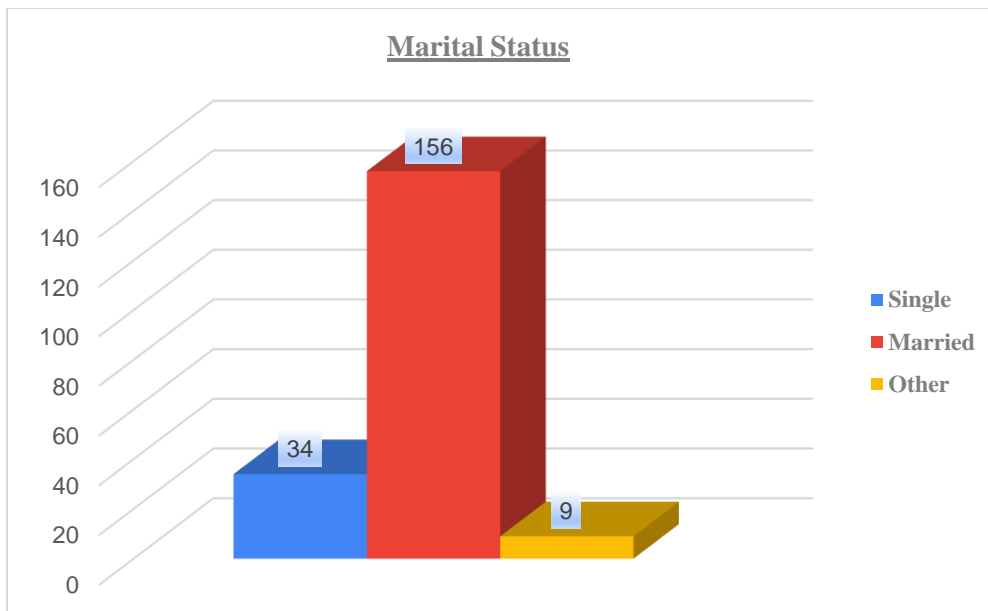


Diagram 4.6.4

4.6.5. Employment Relationship

Backsliding fifteen years from now, bank employees used to take their job safety for granted. No one would ever foresee that early retirement plans would come up and people would have being exposed to a lot of pressure from their working environment, and eventually leaving their jobs. As a result, many bank employees have been employed by other banks on a contract-basis relationship. There is no doubt however, that the 6% rate is about to increase in the years to come.

Employment Relationship	Frequency	Percentage Rate
Permanent	188	94%
Contract basis employment	11	6%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.5

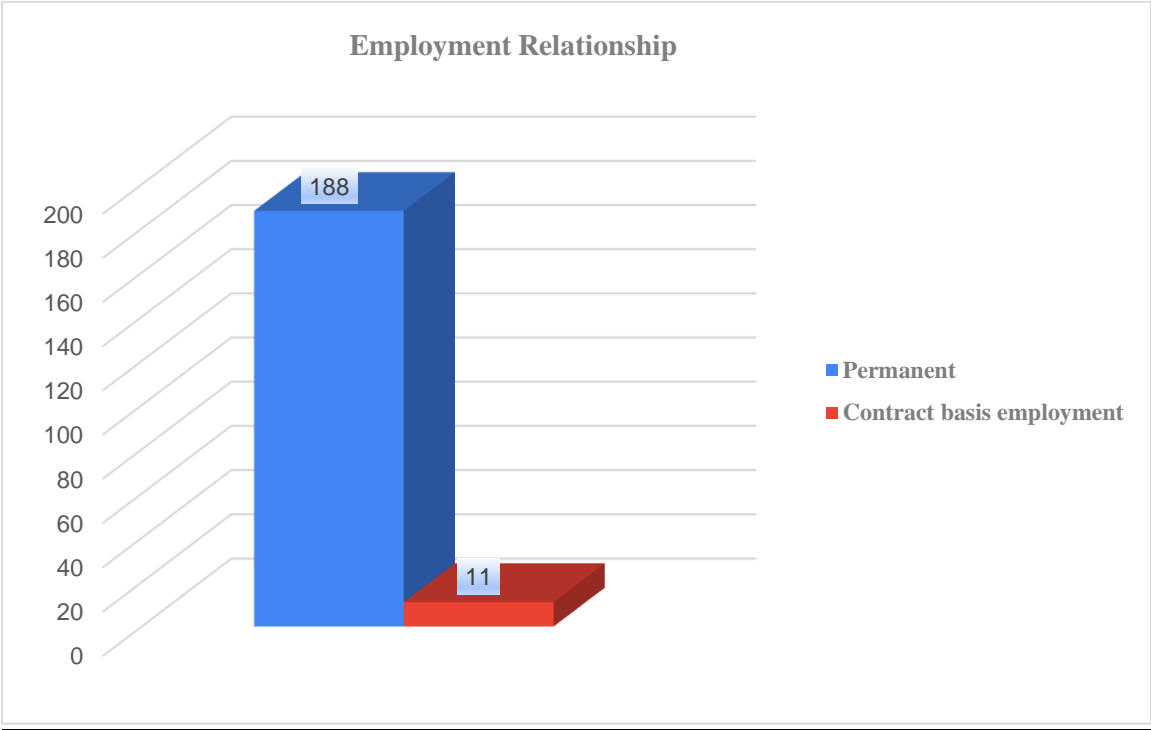


Diagram 4.6.5

4.6.6. Years of Experience in the Banking Sector

As illustrated below, 73% of the sample has been working in the banking sector for more than 11 years and less than 30. This is explained by the fact that after the financial crisis of 2013, banks have minimized new employments and they also offered to their existing employees a number of early retirement plans. In addition, smaller banks have been using head hunting process of recruitment, to employ experienced personnel from larger bank organizations, with specialized, technical knowledge. Their intention is to avoid extra training and be competitive in the marketplace.

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage Rate
0 - 5	24	12%
6 - 10	21	11%
11 - 20	64	32%
21 - 30	81	41%
30 +	9	5%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.6

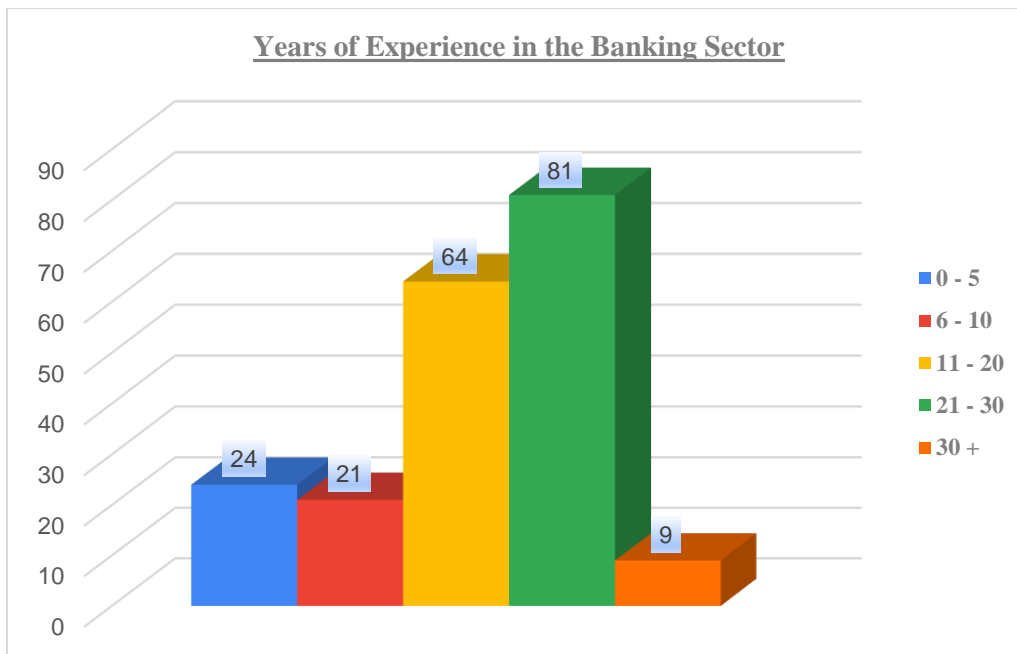


Diagram 4.6.6

4.6.7. Position

As demonstrated below, only 19% of the respondents holds managerial position. This means that 1 out of 5 bank employees is a manager.

Position	Frequency	Percentage Rate
Managerial	38	19%
Non-Managerial	161	81%
Total	199	100%

Table 4.6.7

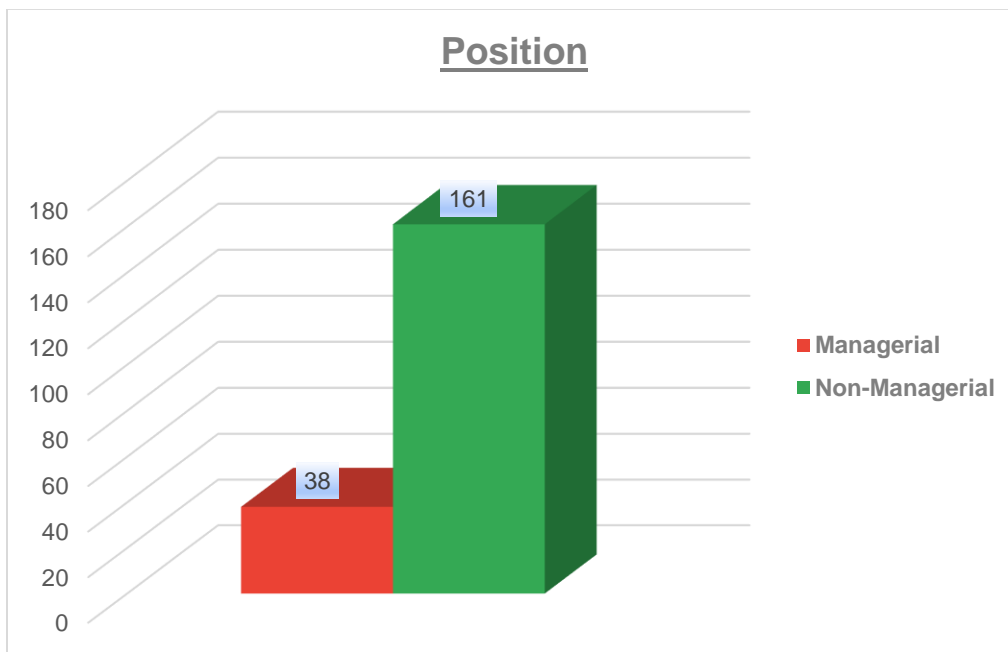


Diagram 4.6.7

4.7. Qualitative Data Analysis (Face-to-Face Interviews)

As already quoted above the research methodology used in the current dissertation is the Mixed Method Approach. Generally speaking “mixed methods can be conceptualized as the use or blending of research methods from both quantitative and qualitative traditions” (Pole, 2007, p1).

In later years, quantitative researchers are becoming gradually aware that some of their data may not be exact and valid. Respondents may not understand the meaning of questions to which they reply, people’s ability to recall events is faulty, and it is difficult to control human experiences. On the other hand, qualitative investigators have developed better practices for classifying and analyzing descriptive data. “They view an individual and the world as so interconnected that one does not exist without the other. The only way to understand human behavior is to emphasize on the meanings that events have for the participants by looking at what people think, feel, and do in a comprehensive way” (Pole, 2007, p2).

As the researcher agrees with Pole (2007) who specifically stated that researchers can combine approaches so that one verifies the findings of the other or complements each other to explore different aspects of the same question, she chose to communicate to the interviewees-managers the three research questions of the current study in order to derive some qualitative data.

4.7.1. Question 1: Which do you believe are the main sources of conflicts in the banking environment?

All managers agreed that heavy workload, distress and scarcity of human resources are undoubtedly major sources of conflict in the banking workplace. In fact during the latest years, after the economic crisis of 2013, several early retirement schemes have been put into place by bank organizations. The plan was to encourage certain groups or classes of employees to retire early. Henceforward employees have been asked to work extra, unpaid, hours and they refuse to do so, insisting that their salaries are already too low. Managers admitted that salaries are often very low and such obstacle consists a main root of conflict.

Then managers confessed that different characters, attitudes, personalities and cultures, can indeed become sources of conflict. For instance, there was a time that a young employee, not a permanent member of the staff, had decided to submit his resignation on the basis that his was over-qualified

and he was eager to become a manager in a very short period of time. Obviously, he was too ambitious to survive in such an environment.

Finally, as per managers' point of view, consistency, clarity of instructions, regular meetings and good communication can definitely minimize conflict episodes.

4.7.2. Question 2: In what ways do you usually prevent or resolve interpersonal conflicts?

As specifically reported by the majority of managers, they believe that conflicts should be resolved immediately, as soon as they are located and not at later stages. However, there are incidents where conflicts are resolved between employees and there is no need for managers to get involved as things might become more complicated.

Related interviews have shown that managers usually handle conflicts using Problem-Solving and Compromising styles, in order to satisfy all parties. However, there are occasions, such as insignificant episodes, that they might adopt Avoiding Style. Forcing style is selected in cases where there is no other alternative, or in emergencies. Obliging style is not a choice.

With regards to Conflict Management Techniques, it seems that managers prefer to use Negotiation. They agree that dialogs and bargaining are the most suitable and effective tools. However, one of the interviewing managers who is employed by a bank organization which has recently been acquired by another bigger organization, has specifically reported that a group of employees had referred a dispute to the Human Resources department (HR), for resolution. As the HR had failed to reach an acceptable solution for all parties, the group of employees have forwarded the case to the Union of Bank Employees (ETYK).

A different manager has reported a number of cases that were referred to HR for resolution. They involved mostly differences in transferring employees from one department to another.

The above findings reveal that third party conflict resolution technique is in fact applicable in the banking sector. The third party in such conflict situations is HR department. This outcome is in fact contrasting to the findings gathered from quantitative research.

4.7.3. Question 3: In your opinion what approaches need to be implemented to improve conflict management and employee engagement?

The majority of the respondents agreed that being fair, having listening skills, letting people express their opinion, accepting other people's views and recommendations, making others feel appreciated, financial rewarding, making annual appraisals, giving regular feedback, offering adequate training, delegating work properly and meritocracy, are some of the factors which definitely improve employee commitment. All managers agreed that having regular meetings can be an essential tool to draw a plan for every team member and at the same time to resolve any conflicts or disagreements before further escalation.

Furthermore as change is inevitable in every aspect of work, managers agreed that suitable preparation and communication during all phases of change should be applied in order to help people accept the new status. Recent mergers and acquisitions in the banking sector have actually revealed the need to properly educate people about changes to come. Continuous support and communication, before, during and after change, leads people to embrace change hence avoiding unnecessary conflict episodes.

Finally, managers agreed that showing understanding and empathy towards employees and being emotionally intelligent truly improves conflict management.

Reviewing, interpreting and evaluating research findings are the key issues of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Backsliding to Chapter 1, there is no doubt that workplace conflict is inevitable and therefore frequently found. Thus proper conflict management and conflict resolution techniques are means used to minimize or even terminate relationship or “bad” conflict, by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem.

In light of the above, the current thesis aimed to identify the possible sources of conflict in the banking environment, in Cyprus. A further scope was to explore the ways that managers prevent or resolve interpersonal conflicts and discover approaches that need to be implemented in order to improve conflict management, employee engagement and overall organizational performance.

In order to answer the above mentioned research questions the writer has reviewed the existing literature, which was analyzed and presented in Chapter 2, aiming to compare and contrast theory with actual practice and to determine whether theory is really applicable.

5.1. Sources of Conflict in the Banking Workplace

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis performed in Chapter 4, it has been found that workplace conflict appears and escalates when people are exposed to a lot of workload. Extant psychological and physical outcomes of stress and burnout occupying their body, leads to bad stress or “distress” which may not surprisingly result to conflict episodes. In fact managers in their personal interviews pointed out that early retirement plans have intensified workload and burnout due to scarcity in human resources.

Similarly, findings revealed that employees with diverse personalities and different values, goals and objectives, assess things differently and act differently. Thus conflicts frequently arise.

Furthermore, it has been verified by quantitative data analysis and also confirmed by managers during their personal interviews, that ambiguity in written rules, lack of effective communication among team members, inconsistency and unclear instructions, are indisputably sources of conflict.

Last but not least it was revealed that when one employee's performance depends on the outcome of the performance of another co-worker and when the two performance outcomes do not match according to each employee's expectations then the drive to defend becomes alert, initiating conflicts. Furthermore it was evidenced that sometimes two units' goals cannot exist simultaneously. Thus it seems that sometimes task interdependence and incompatible goals could become roots of conflicts.

Clearly, the above findings converge with literature and scholars' views although qualitative research has discovered another source of conflict; the factor "money or salary" and fair rewarding, which if not satisfied may become a major source of conflict.

5.2. Current and Suggested Conflict Management Practices

Following the research outcomes it was shown that employees roughly agree that conflict episodes are currently being resolved by employees and not managers and when managers choose to become involved at later stages of conflict escalation, they realize that conflict has become personal and disruptive (relationship or emotional conflict). On the other hand, respondents' answers confirmed their view that conflicts should be resolved by managers at the earlier stages of conflict, before conflict perceptions and emotions manifest themselves in the decisions and manners of one party toward the other. Findings support the literature which suggests that when people experience high levels of conflict emotions, they have difficulty in finding the words and expressions that communicate effectively without further irritating the relationship (Von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett, 2004).

As we noted earlier in this dissertation popular dual-dimensional models of conflict management behaviors include the intention to satisfy own needs (concern for self) and the intention to satisfy other's needs (concern for others); that is being assertive or cooperative. The common modes of conflict management behavior are Integrating or Problem Solving, Compromising, Avoiding, Obliging, and Dominating or Forcing. Research findings have shown that managers currently use all above methods depending on the conditions. It seems though that Avoiding style is currently pretty popular. However, employees supported the view that managers should predominantly use Problem-Solving approach and then Compromising. We should not fail to recognize that the

absolute majority of the sample stated that managers should avoid Forcing, Obliging and especially Avoiding styles.

Next, the current research has disclosed that managers regularly use the Negotiation technique to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Further, employees have expressed a vivid opinion that managers “should” be using this technique; in fact 90% of the sample was in agreement.

As far as third party conflict resolution and incidents of referring cases to mediators or arbitrators are concerned, respondents were rather undecided about the actual current practice, leading to the conclusion that such practice is not encompassed in the banking sector.

Contrary to quantitative research findings, managers’ interviews have revealed that third party conflict resolution technique is in truth applicable in the banking sector. The above contradiction leads to the assumption that a large proportion of employees may not be informed about such practices or their rights to refer to third parties for conflict resolution. Anyhow, both quantitative and qualitative research have evidenced that employees would like to have the right to access a neutral person to help them resolve their differences (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010).

Following the existing practices and respective suggested practices on conflict resolution techniques and conflict management styles examined above, one can draw the conclusion that a considerable number of employees currently resolve their differences on their own, using negotiation where possible, without receiving any assistance from their managers who are often reluctant to become involved (Avoiding).

5.3. Conflicts and Employee Engagement

As already noted earlier in Chapter 2, extant theory suggests that there is distinction between constructive (or task-related) conflict and relationship (or affective) conflict. If one could make a distinction between good and bad conflict, constructive would be good and relationship conflict would be bad. To support the above view, during the last years there has been a growing tendency in the literature to assume that although relationship conflict hurts team effectiveness, task conflict, under certain circumstances, can be impressively valuable to team efficacy (Jehn K. , 1995). It seems that findings support the above theory that supports that conflicts could definitely improve things but they might lead to problems as well.

Hence the outcomes of this survey have clearly indicated that when managers demonstrate a high level of empathy and apply the theory of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), this eventually contributes positively toward conflict de-escalation. The saying “what you say isn’t as important as how you say it” may be the case when it comes to managing interpersonal or intragroup conflict (DeChurch & Marks, 2001).

Furthermore both qualitative and quantitative research conducted in this master thesis, confirmed existing theory which suggests that there is a negative relationship between emotional conflict and manager’s emotional support and creativity encouragement, two leadership behaviors that are in turn similar to the inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation dimensions of transformational leadership (Xin & Pelled, 2003). More specifically, the authors found that employees who experience relationship conflict perceive their managers as expressing less confidence in achieving goals and encouraging their creativity to a lesser degree.

Obviously in a Bank Organization, as it applies to any industry, there is a clear need to enhance employee motivation and engagement.

5.4. Discussion and Recommendations

The significance of this study is determined by the results of the research and the factors which have been assessed. Specifically, these study may provide input and give feedback to various banking institutions in Cyprus. In my view, banks may review their existing practices on Conflict Management and may provide better training or introduce new processes, at all hierarchy levels, in order to improve employee relationships and overall organizational performance.

While this study makes an important and meaningful contribution to literature on conflict management in Cyprus, the limitations already analyzed in Chapter 3, could be confronted by enhanced future studies, where the time would not be a barrier and where the research would possibly incorporate more detailed and effective testing processes, using bigger and better samples, more representative of the banking population.

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APPENDICES

- A. Table demonstrating the relationship between research questions, literature and questionnaire
- B. Cover Letter in Greek Language
- C. Questionnaire in Greek Language
- D. Cover Letter in English Language
- E. Questionnaire in English Language

Appendix A

CONFLICT HANDLING IN THE BANKING SECTOR IN CYPRUS		
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	MANAGEMENT THEORIES / TERMS	QUESTIONNAIRE
Sources of conflict	Schwartz Theory of Basic Values (Differentiation)	A. 3
	Big Five Personality Model (Differentiation)	A. 4, 5, 6
	Four-Drive Theory of Motivation - Drive to Defend (Task Interdependence)	A. 13
	Incompatible Goals	A. 12
	Scarce Human & Financial Resources	A. 11
	Ambiguous Communication	A. 7, 8, 9, 10
	Uncertainty Avoidance	B. 8, 9
	Stress & Burnout Syndrome	A.1,2
	Maslow's Pyramid (Social needs)	A. 10
	Power Imbalance, Bullying & Workplace Victimization	A. 14
How managers currently manage conflicts? -and- How to improve conflict management and employee engagement	Relationship & Constructive Conflict, Consequences of Unresolved Conflict & Need for Effective Conflict Management	B. 1 - 14
	Relationship Vs Constructive Conflict	E. 1, 2
	Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) (Conflict Handling Styles, Assertiveness or Cooperativeness)	C. 1 - 10
	Conflict Resolution Techniques	D. 1 - 6
	Transformational Leadership & Emotional Intelligence (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management)	E. 5, 6
	Maslow's Pyramid - Motivation	E. 3 - 7
	Expectancy Theory of motivation	E. 3 - 7

Appendix B



Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών «Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (MBA)»

ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ

Αγαπητοί/ες,

Το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο αφορά στοιχεία που θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για την εκπόνηση της μεταπτυχιακής μου διατριβής στο μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα σπουδών Διοίκησης Επιχειρήσεων του Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου, με θέμα:

Συγκρούσεις στον Τραπεζικό Εργασιακό Τομέα

Αιτίες, Πρόληψη και Στρατηγικές Επίλυσης

Σκοπός της έρευνας είναι να διερευνηθούν οι αιτίες που προκαλούν συγκρούσεις, διενέξεις και αντιπαραθέσεις στον τραπεζικό εργασιακό τομέα και ο χειρισμός των περιπτώσεων αυτών από τους μάντζερς. Έπιπλέον επιδιώκεται ο εντοπισμός καλύτερων μεθόδων αποτελεσματικότερης διαχείρισης των συγκρούσεων μέσω μιας σωστής στρατηγικής, πετυχαίνοντας έτσι και την ικανοποίηση και αφοσίωση του προσωπικού.

Θα σας παρακαλούσα να διαθέσετε **8 λεπτά** από τον πολύτιμό σας χρόνο για την απάντηση του συγκεκριμένου ερωτηματολογίου. Όλες οι απαντήσεις σας θεωρούνται απόλυτα εμπιστευτικές και δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για κανένα άλλο λόγο, πέραν της εξαγωγής ανώνυμων, ποσοτικοποιημένων και συνολικών συμπερασμάτων της έρευνας.

Ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων για τη συνεργασία και τη βοήθειά σας.

Με εκτίμηση,

Σοφία Μιλητού

email: smilitou@gmail.com

Appendix C

ΜΕΡΟΣ Α – ΑΙΤΙΕΣ ΣΥΓΚΡΟΥΣΕΩΝ ΣΤΟΝ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΚΟ ΧΩΡΟ

Για τις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις, επιλέξτε τον αριθμό που σας εκφράζει περισσότερο, ως η αντιστοίχιση στην πιο κάτω κλίμακα:

1= Διαφωνώ απόλυτα 2= Διαφωνώ 3= Ούτε συμφωνώ, ούτε διαφωνώ

4= Συμφωνώ 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Ο μεγάλος φόρτος εργασίας οδηγεί σε συγκρούσεις					
2	Το εργασιακό άγχος ('distress') οδηγεί σε συγκρούσεις					
3	Οι πολύ φιλόδοξοι υπαλλήλοι προκαλούν συγκρούσεις					
4	Οι πολύ παρορμητικοί υπαλλήλοι προκαλούν συγκρούσεις					
5	Οι πολύ κοινωνικοί υπαλλήλοι προκαλούν συγκρούσεις					
6	Οι συνεργάσιμοι υπαλλήλοι δεν προκαλούν συγκρούσεις					
7	Η σταθερότητα /συνέπεια του μάνατζερ μειώνει τις συγκρούσεις					

8	Η ασάφεια στις καταγεγραμμένες διαδικασίες προκαλεί άγχος					
9	Η έλλειψη επικοινωνίας προκαλεί συγκρούσεις					
10	Οι συχνές συναντήσεις μειώνουν τις συγκρούσεις					
11	Η έλλειψη οικονομικών και ανθρώπινων πόρων προκαλεί συγκρούσεις					
12	Διαφορετικοί στόχοι διαφορετικών τμημάτων συχνά προκαλούν συγκρούσεις					
13	Όταν βασίζεσαι σε άλλους για να ολοκληρώσεις την εργασία σου προκαλεί συγκρούσεις					
14	Η ανισορροπία ισχύος και το bullying προκαλούν συγκρούσεις					

ΜΕΡΟΣ Β – ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΕΣ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΡΟΥΣΕΩΝ

Σε ποιο ΣΤΑΔΙΟ αντιμετωπίζονται ΤΩΡΑ οι συγκρούσεις / Σε ποιο ΣΤΑΔΙΟ

ΠΡΕΠΕΙ να αντιμετωπίζονται οι συγκρούσεις

Για τις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις, επιλέξτε τον αριθμό που σας εκφράζει περισσότερο, ως η αντιστοίχιση στην πιο κάτω κλίμακα:

1= Διαφωνώ απόλυτα 2= Διαφωνώ 3= Ούτε συμφωνώ, ούτε διαφωνώ

4= Συμφωνώ 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Συνήθως οι συγκρούσεις τυγχάνουν χειρισμού από τους μάνατζερς					
2	Οι συγκρούσεις πρέπει να τυγχάνουν χειρισμού από τους μάνατζερς					
3	Συνήθως οι συγκρούσεις τυγχάνουν χειρισμού από τους υπαλλήλους					
4	Οι συγκρούσεις πρέπει να τυγχάνουν χειρισμού από τους υπαλλήλους					
5	Οι μάνατζερς χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις αμέσως μόλις εντοπιστούν					
6	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις αμέσως μόλις εντοπιστούν					

7	Οι μάνατζερς χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις στο στάδιο που τα συγκρουόμενα μέρη αγωνίζονται για την εξεύρεση των αιτιών					
8	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις στο στάδιο που τα συγκρουόμενα μέρη αγωνίζονται για την εξεύρεση των αιτιών					
9	Οι μάνατζερς χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις όταν γίνουν δυσλειτουργικές (συναισθηματική διάσταση, προσωποποίηση της σύγκρουσης)					
10	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις όταν γίνουν δυσλειτουργικές (συναισθηματική διάσταση, προσωποποίηση της σύγκρουσης)					
11	Οι μάνατζερς χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις όταν γίνονται αισθητές μέσω της επικοινωνίας					
12	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις όταν γίνονται αισθητές μέσω της επικοινωνίας					

13	Οι μάνατζερς χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις όταν η κατάσταση φτάσει στο απροχώρητο και οι συνέπειες είναι εμφανείς					
14	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις όταν η κατάσταση φτάσει στο απροχώρητο και οι συνέπειες είναι εμφανείς					

ΜΕΡΟΣ Γ - Η ΣΤΑΣΗ ΤΩΝ ΜΑΝΑΤΖΕΡΣ ΑΠΕΝΑΝΤΙ ΣΤΙΣ ΣΥΓΚΡΟΥΣΕΙΣ ΜΕΤΑΞΥ ΑΤΟΜΩΝ ΚΑΙ/Η ΤΜΗΜΑΤΩΝ

Για τις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις, επιλέξτε τον αριθμό που σας εκφράζει περισσότερο, ως η αντιστοίχιση στην πιο κάτω κλίμακα:

1= Διαφωνώ απόλυτα 2= Διαφωνώ 3= Ούτε συμφωνώ, ούτε διαφωνώ

4= Συμφωνώ 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω της "Διεκδίκησης" (κατάσταση τύπου win-lose)					
2	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω της "Διεκδίκησης" (κατάσταση τύπου win-lose)					
3	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω της "Συνεργασίας" (κατάσταση τύπου win-win)					
4	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω της "Συνεργασίας" (κατάσταση τύπου win-win)					
5	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις κάνοντας πολλές υποχωρήσεις προς ικανοποίηση της άλλης πλευράς					

6	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις κάνοντας πολλές υποχωρήσεις προς ικανοποίηση της άλλης πλευράς					
7	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω του "Συμβιβασμού" (κατάσταση τύπου give-and-take)					
8	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω του "Συμβιβασμού" (κατάσταση τύπου give-and-take)					
9	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω της 'Αποφυγής'					
10	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να χειρίζονται τις συγκρούσεις μέσω της 'Αποφυγής'					

ΜΕΡΟΣ Δ – ΤΕΧΝΙΚΕΣ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΡΟΥΣΕΩΝ

Για τις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις, επιλέξτε τον αριθμό που σας εκφράζει περισσότερο, ως η αντιστοίχιση στην πιο κάτω κλίμακα:

1= Διαφωνώ απόλυτα 2= Διαφωνώ 3= Ούτε συμφωνώ, ούτε διαφωνώ

4= Συμφωνώ 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως επιλύουν τις διαφορές μέσω της "Διαπραγμάτευσης" (π.χ. διάλογος)					
2	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να επιλύουν τις διαφορές μέσω της "Διαπραγμάτευσης" (π.χ. διάλογος)					
3	Οι μάνατζερς συνήθως παίρνουν βοήθεια από τρίτα μέρη για την επίλυση των διαφορών (π.χ. HR ή Συντεχνία)					
4	Οι μάνατζερς πρέπει να παίρνουν βοήθεια από τρίτα μέρη για την επίλυση των διαφορών (π.χ. HR ή Συντεχνία)					
5	Όταν οι πιο πάνω προσπάθειες δεν αποδώσουν οι μάνατζερς συνήθως παραπέμπουν την υπόθεση σε διαμεσολαβητή (π.χ. Τμήμα Εργασιακών Σχέσεων του οποίου η απόφαση μπορεί να είναι δεσμευτική)					

6	Όταν οι πιο πάνω προσπάθειες δεν αποδώσουν οι μάντζερς πρέπει να παραπέμπουν την υπόθεση σε διαμεσολαβητή (π.χ. Τμήμα Εργασιακών Σχέσεων του οποίου η απόφαση μπορεί να είναι δεσμευτική)					
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ΜΕΡΟΣ Ε – ΣΥΚΡΟΥΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΚΗ ΙΚΑΝΟΠΟΙΗΣΗ

Για τις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις, επιλέξτε τον αριθμό που σας εκφράζει περισσότερο, ως η αντιστοίχιση στην πιο κάτω κλίμακα:

1= Διαφωνώ απόλυτα 2= Διαφωνώ 3= Ούτε συμφωνώ, ούτε διαφωνώ

4= Συμφωνώ 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Οι συγκρούσεις μπορεί να γίνουν εποικοδομητικές (π.χ. επίλυση προβλημάτων)					
2	Οι συγκρούσεις μπορεί να οδηγήσουν σε προβλήματα (π.χ. άγχος, χαμηλό ηθικό, χαμηλή παραγωγικότητα, απουσίες)					
3	Η ανταμοιβή , η αξιολόγηση και η εκπαίδευση των εργαζομένων μειώνουν τις συγκρούσεις					
4	Η κατάλληλη κατανομή (delegation) των εργασιών μειώνει τις συγκρούσεις					
5	Η ικανότητα των μάνατζερς να διαχειρίζονται τις αλλαγές μειώνει τις συγκρούσεις					
6	Η ικανότητα των μάνατζερς να ‘διαβάζουν’ τα συναισθήματα των άλλων μειώνει τις συγκρούσεις					
7	Η Αξιοκρατία μειώνει τις συγκρούσεις					

ΜΕΡΟΣ ΣΤ – ΔΗΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΑ

1. **Ηλικία:** α. 18-25 β. 26-35 γ. 36-45 δ. 46-55 ε. 55+
2. **Φύλο:** α. Άνδρας β. Γυναίκα γ. Άλλο
3. **Εκπαίδευση:** α. Δευτεροβάθμια β. Πανεπιστήμιο/Κολλέγιο γ. Μεταπτυχιακό δ. Διδακτορικό
4. **Οικογενειακή Κατάσταση:** α. Έγγαμος/η β. Άγαμος/η γ. Άλλο
5. **Εργασιακή Σχέση:** α. Μόνιμη β. Απασχόληση βάσει σύμβασης
6. **Χρόνια Εμπειρίας στον Τραπεζικό Τομέα:** α. 0-5 β. 6-10 γ. 11-20 δ. 21-30 ε. 30+
7. **Θέση:** α. Διευθυντική β. Μη-διευθυντική

ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΩ

Appendix D



Master's Degree Program "Business Administration (MBA)"

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participant,

The following questionnaire was prepared in the context of my research for the preparation of my postgraduate thesis in the program of Business Administration of the Open University of Cyprus, on:

Conflicts in the Banking Sector

Causes, Strategies and Prevention

The study aims (a) to gain an insight of the main sources of conflict in the banking environment, (b) to examine in what ways do managers prevent or resolve interpersonal conflicts and (c) to explore alternative approaches to improve conflict management and employee engagement.

I would ask you to spare **8 minutes** of your precious time to answer this questionnaire. The completion of the questionnaire is anonymous and the resulting data will be used exclusively for the purposes of the above postgraduate thesis.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and help.

Yours sincerely,

Sophia Militou

email: smilitou@gmail.com

Appendix E

PART A - SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Too much workload leads to conflict episodes					
2	Bad stress (or ' distress ') leads to conflict					
3	Very ambitious employees cause conflicts					
4	Very impulsive employees cause conflicts					
5	Very sociable employees cause conflicts					
6	Cooperative employees do not cause conflicts					
7	Manager's consistency minimizes conflicts					
8	Ambiguity in written rules creates anxiety					

9	Lack of communication creates conflicts					
10	Regular meetings prevent conflicts					
11	Scarcity in financial and human resources creates conflicts					
12	Different goals of different units may lead to conflicts					
13	When you rely on others to complete your task creates conflicts					
14	Power imbalance and bullying creates conflicts					

PART B - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

At what STAGE conflict is handled NOW / At what STAGE conflict SHOULD be handled

**To what extent do you agree with the following statements;
 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree**

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Conflicts are usually handled by managers					
2	Conflicts should be handled by managers					
3	Conflicts are usually handled by employees					
4	Conflicts should be handled by employees					
5	Managers currently handle conflicts when they are located					
6	Managers should handle conflicts when they are located					

7	Managers currently handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle					
8	Managers should handle conflicts when parties struggle to handle					
9	Managers currently handle conflicts when conflicts become personal					
10	Managers should handle conflicts when conflicts become personal					
11	Managers currently handle conflicts when conflicts are identified through communication					
12	Managers should handle conflicts when conflicts are identified through communication					
13	Managers currently handle conflicts after conflicts are finalized and consequences are apparent					
14	Managers should handle conflicts after conflicts are finalized and consequences are apparent					

PART C – MANAGERS’ ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONFLICT

To what extent do you agree with the following statements;

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Managers currently handle conflicts using Forcing style (i.e. creating a win-lose situation)					
2	Managers should handle conflicts using Forcing style (i.e. creating a win-lose situation)					
3	Managers currently handle conflicts using Problem-Solving style (i.e. creating a win-win situation)					
4	Managers should handle conflicts using Problem-Solving style (i.e. creating a win-win situation)					
5	Managers currently handle conflicts using Obliging style (i.e. trying to satisfy the concerns of the other party)					

6	Managers should handle conflicts using Obliging style (i.e. trying to satisfy the concerns of the other party)					
7	Managers currently handle conflicts using Compromising style (give-and-take situation)					
8	Managers should handle conflicts using Compromising style (give-and-take situation)					
9	Managers currently handle conflicts using Avoiding style					
10	Managers should handle conflicts using Avoiding style					

PART D – TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE CONFLICTS

4) To what extent do you agree with the following statements;

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Managers currently use Negotiation to resolve conflicts (i.e. dialogs and bargaining)					
2	Managers should use Negotiation to resolve conflicts (i.e. dialogs and bargaining)					
3	Managers currently use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)					
4	Managers should use third parties to resolve conflicts (i.e. HR or Union)					
5	When the above efforts do not work, the managers currently refer the case to a mediator (e.g. Department of Labour Relations whose decision may be binding)					
6	When the above efforts do not work, the managers should refer the case to a mediator (e.g. Department of Labour Relations whose decision may be binding)					

PART E – CONFLICTS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

5) To what extent do you agree with the following statements;

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Conflicts can be constructive and improve things (bringing up problems, issues or inefficiencies)					
2	Conflicts may lead to problems (i.e. stress, low morale, low productivity, absentees)					
3	Rewarding , giving feedback and training employees minimizes conflicts					
4	Proper delegation (i.e. passing out, allocation) of work minimizes conflicts					
5	Manager's ability to help employees accept changes minimizes conflicts					
6	Managers' ability to ' read ' other people's emotions reduces conflicts					
7	Meritocracy (i.e. Αξιοκρατία) minimizes conflicts					

PART F – DEMOGRAPHICS

1. **Age:** a. 18-25 b. 26-35 c. 36-45 d. 46-55 e. over 55

2. **Gender:** a. Male b. Female c. Other

3. **Education:** a. Secondary b. University/College c. Postgraduate d. Doctorate

4. **Marital Status:** a. Single b. Married c. Other

5. **Employment Relationship:** a. Permanent b. Contract basis employment

6. **Years of Experience in the Banking Sector:** a. 0-5 b. 6-10 c. 11-20 d. 21-30 e. Over 30

7. **Position:** a. Managerial b. Non-managerial

THANK YOU