

ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT: REFLECTIONS ON MANAGING CONFLICT, IDENTITIES AND VALUES IN A SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATION

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Keywords:

managerial values and identities; organisational conflict; South African automotive industry; organisational case study; employee identity

Dates:

Received: 27 Oct. 2008
Accepted: 29 Apr. 2009
Published: 26 June 2009

How to cite this article:

Mayer, C.H., & Louw, L. (2009). Organisational conflict: Reflections on managing conflict, identities and values in a selected South African organisation. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, 7(1), Art. #172, 13 pages. DOI: 10.4102/sajhrm.v7i1.172

This article is available at:

<http://www.sajhrm.co.za>

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a case study on organisational conflict in a selected international organisation in the South African automotive industry to increase the contextual understanding of the topic. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with 45 senior and middle managers in the selected international organisation at the head office and two branches in Gauteng and at one branch in KwaZulu-Natal. The data analysis was conducted through content analysis as well as triangulation of data. The research results show that managers in this industry in post-apartheid South Africa experience organisational conflicts that are associated with their managerial values and identities.

INTRODUCTION

Look, you have got two sides of conflict you have got the conflict in the company, the departmental conflict... each got its own goals... its own targets... and everything and so you have got the conflict inside. And then you have got the conflict outside. You have got the branch and the leader network and then you've got the branches that are owned by us and then you've got the conflict from the independent people, because it's their enterprise, it's their money, it's their investment. So, that is the three kind of... but any specific... I mean... that is... is... very difficult...

(Mayer, 2008a, p. 374)

The complexity, uncertainty and conflict potential of the early 21st-century business environment – as described in the opening citation – requires that fundamental transformation take place in organisational management, thinking and practices (Voelpel, Leibold & Tekie, 2006). Due to increasing trends of managers transcending geographic, economic and socio-cultural boundaries, conflict and the management thereof, particularly in international organisations, need further attention (Kriesberg, 2003a; Mayer & Louw, 2007). These trends often impact on managers and their daily work routine and are experienced by many of them as being conflictive and difficult to deal with (Mayer, 2008a, p. 374). As shown in the quote above, conflict in organisational contexts has diverse aspects, including conflict within the network of headquarters, branches and dealerships, referring to intra- and inter-organisational aspects.

In the following, the literature on human resource management with regard to organisational conflict, identities and values, and selected aspects of their interrelationship will be reviewed. Therefore, it is important to draw attention to the interconnectivity of these complexities and their management.

Organisational conflict and its management

Conflict research, particularly since the 1970s, has been embedded in (social) constructivist theories, which view reality as a construct created by the mutual inter-relationships between individuals and the environment (Applefield, Huber & Moallem, 2000; Coy & Woehrle, 2000; Demmers, 2006; Lederach, 2000). In these terms, conflict can be defined as 'a feeling, a disagreement, a real or perceived incompatibility of interests, inconsistent worldviews, or a set of behaviours' (Mayer, 2000, p. 3). At the same time, 'conflict is a psycho-social process' (Northrup, 1989, p. 54), which includes social interactions and is shaped by individual and cultural meanings (Augsburger, 1992; Avruch, 1998; Lederach, 2000). These cultural meanings are constructed by including 'perceptions, interpretations, expressions and intentions' (Lederach, 1996, p. 9), which result in conflict. Thus, 'conflict situations are those unique episodes when we explicitly recognize the existence of multiple realities and negotiate the creation of a common meaning' (Lederach, 1988, p. 39). This means that, in conflict situations, people experience the relativity of realities while simultaneously negotiating and creating their shared meaning. Conflict is linked to the inner processes of people and their relationship with the environment and is, therefore, an inevitable part of organisational life (Jones & George, 2003).

According to studies done by Pondy (1992), organisations are riddled by conflict, and the need for conflict analysis and conflict management in organisations is, therefore, essential. The potential for conflict in internationally acting organisations continues to grow, both through globalisation trends and (re-)structuring processes in international business. In parallel, scientific research on conflict and the management thereof has continued worldwide (Coleman, 2003) and has further attracted the interest of management scientists in analysing organisational and managerial conflict scenarios (Francis, 2003; Pondy, 1992; Rahim, 2001; 2002). This has rarely taken place in the Southern African organisational context (Mayer, 2008a).

A broad variety of conflict research has been conducted concerning special aspects of 'types of conflict' (Jehn, 1997), 'sources of conflict' (Gobeli, Koenig & Bechinger, 2003) or 'conflict management styles' (Antonioni, 1998). However, these aspects and categories are not relevant for this case study.

A wide range of theories and practical tools has been developed for the management of conflict, both internationally (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 2000) and by the South African scientific community (Shonhiwa, 2006). Conflict management is the art of appropriate intervention to achieve conflict settlement (Nye, 2005). It is the positive and constructive management of difference and

divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, conflict management

addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict, namely, how to deal with it in a constructive way; how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process; and how to design a practical, achievable and cooperative system for the constructive management of difference.

(Ghai, Bloomfield & Reilly, 1998, p. 18)

Accordingly, conflict management does not necessarily imply the avoidance, reduction or termination of conflict. Rather, it helps in the design of effective strategies to both 'minimise dysfunctions and enhance the constructive functions of conflict', thereby enhancing learning and effectiveness (Rahim, 2002, p. 208).

Organisational conflict can result in strong intra- and interpersonal distress, distraction from work, difficulties in decision making and interpersonal contact, and has a negative affect on effectiveness, productivity and creativity (Cowan, 1995). Organisational conflict therefore is at the centre of theoretic and practical discourses on the international management of human resources (Harris, Brewster & Sparrow, 2003; Hiltrop & Partner, 1996; Sparrow & Hiltrop, 1997), as well as that of organisational behaviour (Garcia-Prieto, Bellard & Schneider, 2003; Mullins, 2007).

Relationships and communication processes, as well as identity and value aspects of the managers in the organisation, are highly influenced by conflict and its management. The inter-connectivity of these aspects in the setting of international organisations in South Africa is highly complex and requires further attention, especially as the international South African automotive industry is driven by the 'double transition' (Webster & Adler, 1999) of the country: on the one hand, international co-operation, such as joint ventures driven by globalisation, has changed the way business is conducted in South Africa (Bornman, 2003). On the other hand, the internal socio-political transition of South Africa from an apartheid state to a new democracy subsequent to 1994 influenced globalisation and management trends, as well as conflict and the management thereof in organisations (Webster & Adler, 1999).

Because of the recent trends in South Africa, which have been described, managing diversity has become a relevant topic in the area of human resource management and international behaviour (Horwitz, Bowmaker-Falconer & Searll, 1996; Human, 1996; Wood & Mellahi, 2001). Cultural diversity not only encompasses differences in visible characteristics such as race, gender and ethnicity, but also includes differences that are not necessarily visible, such as religion, professional background and sexual preference (Francesco & Gold, 2005). It can be described as a mosaic in which all component pieces form an image (Kandola, 1995) and is understood as possessing an acute awareness of characteristics common to cultures, races, genders and ages, while at the same time managing staff members as individuals (Overman, 1991). Diversity includes value diversity (Fryzel, 2004; Mujtaba, 2006), which can be distinguished into different kinds of values, such as business, individual, corporate or organisational values (De Anca & Vega, 2006).

However, there is a gap in the literature on the inter-linkage of conflict, values and identities in the international South African organisational conflict. This case study wants to begin to fill this void by addressing these issues through a qualitative case study.

Identity in organisational conflict

Interdisciplinary, identity and intra-personal processes comprise popular research topics that have, during the past decades, drawn interest from the management sciences (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2002; Hatch & Schulz, 2002; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). In the

fields of management and organisational studies in particular, identity is viewed as an overall topic that interlinks individual and organisational management levels in organisations (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). At the same time, both managers and organisations are constructed by identities, and (re-)construct these with regard to self and others across managerial and organisational levels.

According to various authors (Alvesson, 2000; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994), the increasing complexity of social patterns and social fragmentation in organisations has increased the importance of inter-related identity constructions, leading to a sense of organisational belonging and organisational identity. This increasing multiplicity of organisational patterns results in the individual identity being viewed as a kind of 'patchwork identity' (Keupp, 1988, p. 425), which forms the depending equivalent patterns to the social and organisational multiplicity. Such 'patchwork identity' (Keupp, 1988, p. 425), carrying multiple and diverse identity aspects, can lead either to positive effects, such as the creation of synergies and *Kreativitätsspielräume* (creativity spaces) (Keupp, 1994, 1997), or the creation of conflict and tension (Rahim, 2002). At the same time, conflict is always created through aspects of identity (Lederach, 2005; Mayer, 2005) and can, therefore, be defined as a 'psycho-social process' (Northrup, 1989, p. 54).

Individual identities can be constructed from a variety of identity aspects that evolve from inner processes and self-ascriptions, such as being pedantic, self-convinced and ambitious. Conversely, identity aspects can derive from social identities and group membership, such as culture, race, gender, nationality and/or profession. Managerial identities, therefore, are bound to inner processes and to both social interaction and communication (Lindgren & Wåhlin, 2001). In this article it is argued that identities cannot simply be reduced to certain stable institutionalised aspects such as race, gender or profession, but should rather be seen as a dynamic process of (re-)construction of self-ascriptions and social identities that are flexible in reconstruction and contextualisation.

In the management sciences, however, identity aspects and their dynamics in relationship to conflict need to be assessed and evaluated further to both understand and manage the origins of conflict in organisations, as well as to develop tools for intra- and inter-personal conflict management (Mayer, 2008b).

Values in organisational conflict

The challenge for South African managers is to find creative solutions for integrating diversity characteristics, identity aspects and value differences, while simultaneously overcoming deeply entrenched discriminatory practices and social division created by valuing people according to their cultures (Jackson, 2002). There is evidence that diversity, if not managed well, can contribute to an increase in conflict (Church, 1995). In this context, the management of conflict has emerged as a vital issue in human resource management. Diversity and conflict management, therefore, not only need to be conceptually integrated to raise consciousness and awareness across managerial levels (Horwitz *et al.*, 1996), but should further be contextualised within the organisation to create a better understanding of managers within an organisation.

Conflict and ambiguity may arise from situations in which beliefs and values work at cross purposes with one another in groups and organisations (Martin, 2002). Research on value orientations has recently intensified, with an increasing focus on the African region (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001; Schwartz *et al.*, 2001). Sub-Saharan Africa is, however, still under-represented in (cross-cultural) value research, even though values and value conflicts have played a considerable role in different sectors in South Africa, both throughout its history and at present (Mayer & Louw, 2007).

Values and value orientations are patterns of thoughts and actions (Kluckhohn & Stroedbeck, 1961) and are important to most members of a community or group. The consensus on values themselves is subject to change over time, and group members are principally able to adopt the values of others (Burton, 1990). Values are often un-reflected and unconscious until conflicts occur and the conflicting parties realise that their conflict derives from differences in patterns of thought and action. Contradictory or competing values can cause intra- and interpersonal conflicts (Coy & Woehrl, 2000; Kriesberg, 2003a; 2003b; 2003c) that are context and situation bound.

Booyesen (in Nel *et al.*, 2004) is of the opinion, however, that there is a definite lack of cultural awareness – in a broad sense – in organisations in South Africa, and that only 24% of organisations have implemented diversity-management programmes. He further states that new recruits are expected to assimilate the organisational culture and that resistance to change in organisations is expected from members of all cultural groups. An urgent need therefore exists to assess and understand organisational conflict and values as part of diversity so as to manage them effectively. Organisational conflict and the negotiation of values are often inter-related (Berkele, 2005; Wallace, Hunt & Richards, 1999), particularly with regard to organisational processes (Gandal, Roccas, Sagiv & Wrzesniewski, 2005; Smith, Peterson & Schwartz, 2002) and to the organisational culture, which plays a major role in managing organisational conflicts constructively (Pool, 2000).

The discourse on international human resource management – including aspects of conflict, diversity, identity and values and their management – is growing (Kamoche, 1997; 2002). Challenges can definitely be defined in areas of constructing organisational cultures that integrate diverse managerial and organisational aspects (Thomas & Bendixen, 2000). Jackson (1999) particularly emphasises that organisations in South Africa need to focus on issues concerning the value attached to people in organisations, as this has not yet been addressed properly.

The contribution of this paper is toward increasing the clarity and interdisciplinary understanding of these complexities and to provide recommendations for managing organisational conflict, identity and values in international organisations acting in the South African context. This discourse imparts new stimuli for the scientific debate, as well as for managers, practitioners and consultants active in this field.

The purpose of this paper is to approach the issue of conflict, identity and values, and their inter-connection, in a selected organisation to improve the understanding of human resource management in this specific South African organisational context by addressing perceptions on values and identities of managers from – as far as possible – an emic perspective. In addition, it presents selected qualitative research results on organisational conflict from a case study in the described setting.

The aim of this paper is to answer the following research questions in investigating such managerial perspectives:

- Which organisational conflicts are perceived by managers in the selected organisation in the international South African automotive industry?
- Which identity aspects do the managers regard as being important in organisational conflict?
- Which value orientations, according to the managers, play a role in these organisational conflicts?
- How do the managers resolve these organisational conflicts?

These research questions can only lead to specific answers referring to the selected organisation, and are not necessarily generalisable. However, they can serve as new stimuli in the discourse on the abovementioned topics.

The research design and the selected results will be discussed next, followed by a discussion of the results and recommendations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This case study is based on the postmodernist premise that there is no single true reality and that there is no absolute truth (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). This premise asserts that human beings inhabit different realities that are socially constituted and that may, therefore, vary quite dramatically across cultures, time and context (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1994); and that multiple selves are socially constructed in the context of increasingly varied and constantly changing relationships (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

The organisational case study presents managerial perspectives on conflict, identities and values, and views them as one option to (re-)construct the contextual truth referring to these topics. It can therefore only be one piece within a 'mosaic' of reality constructs.

Research approach

Given the qualitative nature of this research, the phenomenological and interpretative paradigms were considered to be the most relevant approaches (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Within these paradigms, the theoretical and methodological approaches used are found in both the epistemological tradition of constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 2000) and interpretative hermeneutics (Habermas, 1999). Various theoretical stances reflect a post-modern epistemology and can be grouped under terms such as constructivism or social constructivism, which share the notion of multiple realities. Here, constructivism is used as an umbrella term for both constructivism and social constructivism (McLeod, 1996) and is generally defined as postulating the objective world as a construct of social interaction or, alternatively, as a process of the observed and the observer, the last giving meaning to what is observed (Jonassen, 1991). Constructivism, therefore, implies that all stories or interpretations are equally valid and that there is no single truth or interpretation (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996). This means that the research results from this organisational case study need to be (re-)confirmed through parallel case studies conducted under different contextual parameters.

Research strategy

While quantitative research is often based on analytical empiricism, with a strong emphasis on objectivity, qualitative research focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the research issue (Cheldelin, Druckman & Fast, 2003), deep data and 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1987). Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003, p. 1164) assert that few studies address 'the understanding of specific processes and situations of identity construction in and around work and organizations'. In order to 'share an interest in personal views and circumstances' and to gain an understanding of processes and situations of identity in the selected organisation, a single-case explanatory study approach was used (Stake, 2005, p. 448). This organisational case study approach was used because of its focus on collecting and understanding the perspectives of managers in a selected organisation on the abovementioned issues within this context, which provides – with its organisational cultures and structure – a frame for conflicts, their management and their interpretation. Using an organisational case study turned out to be a good research strategy, because the managers of the organisation reflected a broad and diverse workforce that reflected aspects of the South African society. At the same time, this organisation is a valuable example of a successful international organisation in which the managers succeed in managing conflicts, identities and values across cultures and nations. Finally, the organisation acted as an adequate platform for exploring the issue and for the process of the research (see below). This choice of research strategy led – as expected – to a broad variety of data, as shown in the presentation of selected results.

This organisational case study approach was used to assess the association between organisational conflict and the managerial values and identity constructions of senior and middle managers in the selected organisation in conflict situations. The assessment was done using in-depth interviews. The interviews were guided by predetermined research questions, as stated previously, which focused on the subjective elements of the managers' perceptions, narrations and interpretations relating to the selected topics according to four levels of text reconstruction (Ricoeur, 1979; Wolff, 2000), which are explained in the section on data analysis. The results cannot be generalised, but provide in-depth insight into the described contexts and could possibly be replicated in other organisations in South Africa.

As stated previously, the aim of this study was to gain deeper understanding of the subject described above in the South African automotive context, as well as to formulate appropriate recommendations for theorists and practitioners working in similar fields. Depth in the understanding of the reality was achieved in that the researcher and managers had a mutual relationship. The research results were obtained from the interdependent relationship between the 'issue of research' and the 'process of research' (Stellrecht, 1993, p. 36). In this study, the issue of research pertained to identity and values in conflict and its management, while the process of research encompassed the identification of keywords with regard to organisational conflict, values and identity and the management thereof, hermeneutical reconstruction and the presentation and interpretation of the mentioned concepts. The 'issue of research' was narrated in the interviews and was highly dependent on the trustful relationship between the researcher and the managers, particularly referring to the challenging core issues of this research. The 'process of research' included the analysis and evaluation of the data. By interlinking the issue and the process of research, the research results were constructed based on the inter-personal relationship.

Research method

An explanatory case study was used to understand and explain organisational conflict and related managerial values and identity aspects. The research method used in this organisational case study approach is explained in this section by considering the research setting, data collection and data analysis methods.

Research setting

The German organisation used for this case study operates in 120 countries worldwide and belongs to one of Europe's leading engineering groups. As a technical leader in the automotive industry it is ranked among the top three suppliers in each of its worldwide markets. The organisation employs 58 000 people

worldwide in its five core areas of activity, namely Commercial Vehicles, Industrial Services, Printing Systems, Diesel Engines and Turbomachines (Organizational Paper, 2006a). One of its largest sales regions is Southern Africa (Organizational Paper, 2006a) where the organisation consists of a head office, Parts Division and Bus and Coach Manufacturing plant in Gauteng, as well as a Chassis Assembly Plant in KwaZulu-Natal (Organizational Paper, 2006b). Central to this research were the key issues of guiding organisational principles and policies. The organisation has adopted guiding principles pertaining to its customers, investors, employees and the society within which it operates (Organizational Paper, 2006b), as shown in Table 1.

These guiding principles are objectives for the corporate culture of the organisation. The relevant diversity-related and conflict-handling policies, such as the Employment Equity, Affirmative Action and Conflict Management Policies of the organisation, are based on these principles, as well as others, and are in place and well managed (Organizational Paper, 2002a; 2002b).

The selection of this organisation for the case study was based on the following reasons:

- global and regional business involvement and standing, as discussed previously;
- diversity, due to the different plants and offices in various regions in South Africa;
- diversity-related and conflict-handling policies are in place and well managed;
- international management profile; and
- permissible access to the organisation.

Entrée and establishing researcher roles

The entrée of the researcher into the physical field of research was prepared through establishing contacts and meetings with key persons in the organisation at the German and South African headquarters. These meetings included discussions on the topic, and on the content and the process of the research, whilst building a trustful relationship. Managers were identified and asked by the human resource office to participate in the research. They then received information on the research project.

The role of researcher was constructed through the discussions with the key persons in the organisation. The role was defined as being an 'external, independent researcher' who aimed to understand the abovementioned issues from the point of view of the organisation and its managers. This role could be maintained throughout the project, even though a long and intensive period of time was spent in the organisation.

Permission to undertake the research was granted by the human resource offices of the German and South African headquarters and by the branches themselves. Each manager agreed to participate voluntarily. Permission was obtained from the Board, the HR office and the managers after discussions and agreements on the content and process of the research. Permission to conduct the research was also given by the ethics committee of the university involved.

Confidentiality was guaranteed by the researcher and maintained throughout the research process and when the data was published. The names and positions of the managers were therefore not linked with the content of the data to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

Sampling

This sample was representative of the senior and middle management levels at the selected organisation's head office and three of its branches. The sample comprised managers from South Africa, Germany, the Netherlands, England and Zimbabwe respectively. A total of 95 senior and middle managers were approached to participate in the research and 45 managers

TABLE 1
Guiding principles of organisation

SHAREHOLDERS	GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Customers	Value for customers Listen to customers and meet their requirements Measurement according to success with products and services
Investors	Set attractive yield targets Expand leading market position in core areas of activity Ensure tomorrow's success with today's research and development
Employees	Provide a modern management culture Promote knowledge and experience among staff members as most important source Believe in fairness, tolerance and equal opportunity
Society	Ensure social acceptance Guided by principles of sustained yield Respect dignity of human beings

Source: Author's own construction, adapted from Organizational Paper, 2006a:16

(37 male and eight female) eventually agreed to participate. In terms of nationality, 37 managers were South African (SA); three were German; four managers each hailed from the Netherlands, Zimbabwe and England; and one manager neglected to record nationality. Of the 45 managers, 31 worked at the head office (Gauteng), three worked at branch I (Gauteng), four worked at branch II (Gauteng), six worked at branch III (KwaZulu-Natal) and one manager neglected to record a place of work.

Data-collection methods

Triangulation of data was used in this organisational case study by conducting in-depth interviews and reviewing secondary literature and the internal documents of the organisation.

An open-ended questionnaire was constructed as the main data-collection method for this research. Seven interview questions were asked in a face-to-face interview to stimulate conversation. The questions referred to conflicts experienced in the organisation, conflict management, actions to resolve conflict, identity, value orientations, management style, need for improvement of the organisation and (future) conflict-intervention strategies. Aspects of validity and reliability were of importance in this study.

Four major concepts – conformability, credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness – were defined as criteria for judging the qualitative research. Johnson (1997) supports the approach that constructivism may facilitate the aim of qualitative research – which is fundamental to this research – to create a deeper understanding of the research objective with regard to changing multiple-reality constructions (Hipps, 1993). Parallel to the interviews, organisational documents and secondary literature were analysed to guarantee triangulation of the data.

Recording of data

The managers' in-depth interviews were recorded in full to ensure precise transcription. The transcripts were viewed as selective constructions that reproduced aspects of the conversation and which were transcribed, according to Von Steinke (2000, p. 327), in a 'manageable' way, which is 'simple to write, easy to read, easy to learn and to interpret'. This means that standard orthography was used throughout the transcription processes: the transcription procedure focused mainly on the verbal aspects of the communication, in the interest of analysis and evaluation controlled by factual words. Analytical data evaluation was included (as described below under Data analysis, Level 4), subsequent to the texts being transcribed.

Data analysis

After the data had been gathered, it was collected and analysed according to four levels of text reconstruction (Ricoeur, 1979; Wolff, 2000):

- Level 1: The manager experienced a (trans-cultural) conflict situation and specific identity and value aspects.
- Level 2: The manager narrated the conflict identity aspects and values during the interview.
- Level 3: The researcher transcribed the interview and categorised this transcribed text through content and keyword analyses.
- Level 4: The researcher interpreted the categorised text through content analysis (Mayring, 2003), based on a systematic approach to accidental perceptions. Key terms are defined as words that occupy key positions in the text through the import of their content, their significance in the text structure, and conception or repetition or other emphasis. This culminates in the construction of categories; hence, content analysis serves as a technique of research that leads to conclusions that can be generalised (Kromrey, 1998).

Data analysis was conducted according to the five-step process of Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006: 322-326): Step 1: Familiarisation and immersion, Step 2: Inducing themes, Step 3: Coding, Step 4: Elaboration and Step 5: Interpretation and checking, to ensure a transparent process of data analysis and reconstruction.

However, in reality, interpretative analysis rarely proceeds in as orderly a manner as may be suggested by our step-wise presentation (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006, p. 322-326). Following these steps in data analysis enhances the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973).

The text has been (re-)constructed by content analysis using categorisation (e.g. as organisational conflicts) and coding (e.g. with regard to values and identities), which leads to elaboration and interpretation. Content analysis¹ comprises a subjective process between the text and the person coding the text: 'Verifying the reliability of content analysis is primarily done by inter-individual and intra-individual verification' (Yin, 2002, p. 45), as in this study. Objectivity in analysis is guided by inter-subjective validation, such as adhering to particular rules and regulations and/or verifying that the same (or similar) results have been attained by different researchers. In this study, the coding of the text and its analysis and re-categorisation through content analysis are considered in this way. This process includes the 'constant comparison' method (Strauss, 1987, p. 12) that is used to look for similarities and differences in the data. From this process, the researcher identifies underlying uniformities in the indicators or incidents (actions, events, perspectives) and produces a coded category or concept. These categories are compared with one another and with new incidents to sharpen the definition of the concept and to look for possible new categories. Categories are clustered together to form themes, which are used to describe the phenomena.

Strategies to ensure data quality and reporting

Strategies that were employed to ensure data quality were based on specific criteria. The criteria to ensure qualitative data research include confirmability, credibility, transferability and trustworthiness for this organisational case study. Relevant strategies of qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation were used.

This research is based on research ethics that ensure the quality of data with regard to ethical guidelines, which have been implemented in the research and which have been accepted by the research ethics commitment of the university involved as well as by the organisation studied. Ethical considerations include, among others, the respect accorded to and the rights of the managers, the creation of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and transparency (Mayer, 2008a, p. 111).

Data was stored on a voice recorder, transcribed and again stored on electronic equipment. ATLAS.ti software was used to analyse the data by content analyses.

In the following sections, the results will be reported by presenting selected results in a qualitative reporting style according to the research methods used in the research for this case study.² Organisational conflict, identity and value concepts will be introduced by describing the conflict scenarios and contributing aspects that were narrated by the interviewees.

In the following section, selected data on organisational conflict are presented by giving short summaries of the conflict stories.

1. For a more detailed description of content analysis with regard to the data, please see Mayer (2008a: 117ff).

2. Interview narrations were coded according to the interviewees and conflict stories narrated: P7:2 means, for example, interview person number 7, conflict story number 2.

These summaries are followed by subsections in which the conflict is interpreted, referring to the values and identity of the managers.

RESULTS

The research results presented here focus on managerial perspectives on organisational conflict; identity and values involved in these experienced and narrated conflicts; and the management thereof in the selected international organisation. The ways in which managers were challenged by the conflict that occurred, and how they met these challenges in a diverse organisational context, will be discussed. Finally, recommendations for international human resource management in the context of the South African automotive industry will be made.

The main results from this case study indicate that managers from diverse backgrounds experience organisational conflict mainly when values are not considered adequately and identity concepts clash. Conflict experiences were related primarily to five conflict categories, namely: Communication and Treatment; Position and Competition; Organisation; Race and Gender; and No Conflicts. Selected conflicts from the category Organisation will be presented in the following section, specifically with regard to underlying identity and value concepts and attempts to manage such conflicts. These are focused on because the category Organisation provides a deep insight into the value and identity concepts of managers in the described context.

Organisational conflict

This conflict category mainly includes conflicts which provide a deeper understanding of the structure and function of the organisation. Organisational conflicts were only narrated by managers who defined themselves as white. All instances of organisational conflict, except one (P7:2), were narrated by male managers. This category is the only one in which the managers did not connect the conflict to racial or cultural belonging, but only to the structure and operational aspects of the organisation. A summary of the conflicts reported and biographical data is presented in Table 2. This is followed by a discussion of the results pertaining to the selected organisational conflicts. *P3:1 Warranty*: P3 experienced the issue of warranties as very conflicting in the organisation. He was in the position

to decide on the 'validity of warranties'. This could be difficult, especially when colleagues, particularly salesmen, had given the customers 'incorrect information about the warranty', which then forced P3 into rejecting the customers' claims. He would often be accused of dishonesty, even if the warranty conditions were set by the organisation and not by him personally. Therefore, his nickname in the organisation was 'Mr No'. This name made him feel very uncomfortable. Conflicts relating to warranties, therefore, often not only entailed conflicts with customers, but also entailed a deeper conflicting aspect, namely that of the 'information policy of the organisation and the question of corporate identity'.

The conflict experienced by P3 touched on the core values of honesty, transparency and truth which he claimed for himself and for the organisation and its employees. These values, however, were not linked to individual identity, but rather to the organisational system or work-related organisational identity aspects, which he viewed as being the base of the organisation's corporate identity. These values provided objectivity in the organisation and all persons involved. P3 felt strengthened by these common values, which led to his strong-mindedness as a manager.

Transparency and truth as core values – leading to direct and honest communication and strong-mindedness – helped P3 solve his conflicts in the organisation. In his opinion, the management of conflict included 'mediation' and 'exchange of interpretation with regard to truth'. He claimed that 'warranties helped follow the truth'. He was prepared to give his subordinates 100 per cent support and assistance, at a medium-distance level, whilst keeping his focus on power and success.

P4:1 Training in workshops: P4 wanted to offer training at the headquarters' training centres, but experienced conflict because the workshop managers wanted the training to be conducted in their workshops, mainly to 'save money and time'. In his opinion, the workshop owners did not have enough 'interest in education' and were 'not flexible' enough to send their employees for training.

This conflict touched on P4's value of flexibility. He did not feel personally hurt by the conflict, but felt that his position as a manager gave him the authority to lead and decide. He felt that

TABLE 2
Conflicts experienced and related biographical data

ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT EXPERIENCED	RESPONDENT	BIOGRAPHICAL DATA PER RESPONDENT					
		GROUP	MOTHER TONGUE	OCCURRENCE OF CONFLICT	GENDER	AGE GROUP	CITIZENSHIP
Warranty	P3:1	White	Afrikaans	Headquarters	Male	40–49 years	SA
Training in workshops	P4:1	White	English	Headquarters	Male	40–49 years	SA
Departmental conflict	P7:2	White	Afrikaans	Headquarters	Female	30–39 years	SA
Mentality of mistrust	P9:1	White	Dutch	Headquarters	Male	50–59 years	The Netherlands
Conflict with union	P13:2	White	English	Headquarters	Male	30–39 years	SA
Operational conflict with staff members	P19	White	Afrikaans	Headquarters	Male	50–59 years	SA
Conflict with a branch	P20	White	English	Headquarters	Male	20–29 years	SA
Work time company rules	P32	White	Afrikaans	Branch III	Male	30–39 years	SA
German or local contract in SA	P41	White	German	Branch I	Male	30–39 years	Germany

Source: Author's own construction

he had developed a 'strong, conservative identity' concerning his managerial position in the organisation, which helped him to cope with 'personal injuries' that might have been caused by conflict. He did not view discussions and arguments as desirable options for conflict resolution. He therefore first analysed all the available information to gain an 'objective overview on the issue' to obtain clarity on how to proceed.

P4 deemed objectivity in conflict to be 'successful and strong' in a managerial position. He was able to compromise by considering the interests of the other parties and by engaging in 'interactive, two-way communication', whilst still adhering to the rules and procedures of the organisation. He preferred to submit the issue to the objective formal disciplinary system in the 'event that such rules were not respected'.

P7:2 Departmental conflict: P7 generally felt 'over-controlled by the junior manager' in her department and experienced neither co-operation nor sharing of information. When she explained herself she experienced negative comment from senior management and did not receive any support:

Direct conflict, yes, ahm...one manager towards me and that is one of the reason why I am leaving, permanently shouting, ahm, not open for an embetterment of a working environment, refusing to work in a more logical way, I am sorry, I can't work like that. Resolution? Get another job. I have discussed it in top management board in front of him on two situations, about his behaviour and his mannerism and this board has chosen that being shouting at (by) people is correct. Talking bad about people is correct.

She felt that her junior manager did not follow the 'ethical guidelines of the organisation', because whilst he was very friendly to her he also 'talked negatively about her behind her back'. She described him as 'discriminative and racist'. P7 further felt unfairly treated as a result of the high work pressure placed on her: She worked daily until 10 pm, whereas her superior left at 5 pm. She defined her experienced conflicts as gender based, as she suspected that the junior manager would have 'dismissed her to replace her with a male colleague' if he had the power. Her managerial values of racial equality, gender equality and respect, as well as adequate conduct and ruling by senior managers, were not considered. She felt that her identity was consequently weakened by the conflict and she felt intimidated and hesitant to speak out about it.

P9:1 Mentality of mistrust: P9 had experienced many instances of conflict, ranging from conflict with the managing director to conflict based on the organisation's mentality, which he described as 'mistrustful and over-controlled'. He felt that the conflict recounted had 'shaken his personal identity'. He particularly experienced mistrust with regard to the relationship between the German and South African headquarters, mainly due to miscommunication.

He missed the value of transparency and open communication within the whole organisation, as well as the building of trust through social networking, sharing of information and 'opening up of files'. His vision for the organisation was one of more open and trustful communication, direct work approaches and open-door policies. Sharing information was his key to trustful relationships, rather than that of following hidden agendas.

P13:2 Conflict with union: The core conflict presented by P13 dealt with union activities and the organisation. He described the staff as 'politically active' in a certain trade union, thereby 'polarising themselves and the managers'. The blue-collar workers were demanding higher wages and increased benefits and emphasising their demands with go-slow work methods. He believed that cultural issues and a fight over distribution between white management and black workers underpinned the strikes.

P13's identity seemed to be very strong; he understood his colleagues and felt that his identity was 'guided by diplomacy'.

He was, however, convinced that an organisation's highest value was in working in harmony. His value of harmony was accompanied by a mature sense of collaboration: mature in the sense of not standing against each other due to incompatible interests, but rather joining together and pursuing higher common goals. P13, therefore, emphasised the valuing of and paying respect to one another. He stressed honesty, but admitted that some powers could, for certain periods, undermine his ideas of peaceful harmony and freedom to achieve the organisational targets. With regard to the value of harmony, he managed his conflicts through team discussions and mediation, guided by his identity: 'I am not trained to do that, but what I am trained in is to tell you what is in my heart. So, I will tell you that.'

P19: Operational conflict with staff members: P19 described the situation as an operational conflict that had emerged between staff and management. In general terms, P19 reported that staff members refused to 'carry out work orders as a result of either lack of commitment or work pressure'. He stated that conflict was a 'normal operational thing'. His conflicts concerned the different interests of managers and staff; a lack of commitment; and the achievement of good results for the organisation. To him, conflict was limited and manageable, because he was leading by exerting strict control and displaying the correct behaviour. He also felt that his identity was driven by 'strictness and control'.

P20: Conflict with a branch: P20 experienced severe conflict when he made a mistake with the pricing of some spare parts whilst working at the headquarters. Salesmen at a branch immediately sold the parts at these very low prices, although they should have perceived that a pricing mistake had been made. P20 felt abused by these colleagues, as he felt they were supporting their customers at the expense of a superior: 'We should work together and not against each other in the company.'

P20 experienced a lack of cooperation, an abuse of weakness and a break of confidence with regard to this branch when he made the pricing mistake. His values of truth and trustful networking seemed undermined. P20 experienced this conflict as a real threat to his identity, because he felt his identity was based on truth and harmony. He partially experienced the conflict on a personal level, even though he realised he should not take his organisational conflict personally. The values of trust and cooperation should, according to P20, be organisational values, rather than the values of single individuals. For him, the conflict was not managed, but he would have appreciated a pricing system that would not have allowed such mistakes.

P32: Work time company rules: The conflict reported by P32 involved a staff member who refused to 'follow the company rules and regulations regarding working hours'. It was common practice in the company that, in the event of a public holiday falling on a Monday, the working hours would be prolonged for one hour on the Friday preceding the public holiday. One staff member applied for overtime payment for this hour and waged a strike in protest against the rules. P32 tried to solve the conflict through discussion, but was severely 'offended in the process'. The staff member complained of being 'exploited by a capitalistic company'.

The conflict included four keywords: company, work, rules and time. These words represented certain values that the managers had to abide by. P32 supported a corporate identity within the company based on these values. According to him, the staff member had acted irresponsibly, as the staff member valued his leisure time more than corporate company rules and procedures. P32, therefore, considered the company values endangered. The interviewee wanted to avoid negotiating about the organisational rules and values. He felt that his direct and clear communication influenced his identity strongly. The challenges arising from the conflict in which he had been engaged were so strong that P32 felt disrespected and personally hurt. He referred the conflict to a disciplinary hearing and regained personal integrity.

P41: *German or local contract in SA:* P41 reported an intra-personal conflict. He had moved from Germany to South Africa, married a South African citizen and, after six years, had to decide whether he wanted to remain in the South African company and receive a local contract (until then he was working as an expatriate) or return to Germany. He decided to remain in South Africa, but felt angry about 'being forced to make his decision quickly'. He further complained about changing management structures and a 'lack of the right people in the organisation'. Finally, P41 was very unhappy to receive a South African salary, but continued to obey the rules and procedures of the organisation. Generally, he felt that his concept of identity had been shaken terribly by the conflicting changes and that he had lost the 'dedication to his job'.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper was to assess managerial perspectives and to gain deeper understanding of organisational conflict with regard to values and identities, and the management thereof, in a selected international South African organisation in the automotive industry.

Managing organisational conflicts

Some authors (e.g. Northrup, 1989, p. 55ff) view organisational conflict as 'psycho-social processes' that are constructed by managers through their external realities and their internal perceptions and in relationship to aspects of their values and identity (Demmers, 2006; Lederach, 2000; Rahim, 2002). This study supports this assumption.

Organisational conflict

Generally, it can be concluded that managers have to deal with a broad variety of organisational conflict in the described context. These conflicts are influenced by external realities such as globalisation trends (such as the South African headquarters depending on the mother company in Germany); national guidelines and policies for the organisation (such as guiding principles and the construction of a corporate national identity); as well as aspects of post-apartheid transitions (such as interlinking of cultural aspects and the fight for redistribution through formal organisational structures). At the same time, these organisational conflicts are created by 'cognitive-affective process dynamics' (Mischel & Shoda, 1998, p. 229ff), such as thoughts, intentions, cognitive structures, feelings and emotions that impact on the conflict and its management, as shown in the excerpts from the narrations discussed in the previous section. Organisational conflict, therefore, needs to be assessed in the context of diverse influences that are shaped by managerial values and identities. This study focuses on the emic perspective of managers, referring to conflicts being mediated through the inner realities of the managers. It also ties to the Geertzian concept of 'webs of significance' and therefore to how managers are embedded in and influenced by multiple significant contextual layers:

man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretative one in search of meaning.

(Geertz, 1973, p. 5)

TABLE 3
Overview of organisational conflicts

I ¹	MANAGERIAL VALUES	IDENTITY ASPECTS	CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACH	MANAGERIAL VALUES AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND CONGRUITY WITH ORGANISATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES
P3:1	Transparency; truth; strong-mindedness; corporate identity	Work-related identity aspects, strong identity based on strong-mindedness	Direct and honest communication; support staff; mediation	Value for customers and their requirements; promote modern organisational culture; promote knowledge and experience of staff
P4:1	Flexibility; authority; decision making by authority; objectivity	Strong conservative identity to cope with personal challenges and injuries	Compromise; consideration of all interests; formal rules and procedures; two-way communication	Guided by principles of sustained yield; respect for dignity of human beings
P7:2	Co-operation; sharing of information; ethics; racial and gender equality; respect; adequate managerial conduct	Weakened, intimidated identity aspects	Interaction and communication with, and support from, the Board; resignation	Belief in fairness, tolerance and equal opportunity; respect for dignity of human beings
P9:1	Trust; control; social networking; sharing of information; 'open up files'	Identity shaken by conflict	Open and direct communication	Promote knowledge and experience among staff members
P13:2	Harmony; confidence; collaboration; respect; honesty; join together to pursue higher goals; corporate identity	Diplomatic and strong identity aspects	Team discussion; mediation	Promote knowledge and experience among staff members as most important source; guided by principles of sustained yield
P19	Carrying out orders; commitment towards organisation; coping with work pressure; development of joint interests of managers and staff (corporate identity); achievement of good results for the organisation	Strict and controlling identity	Control; correct behaviour	Set attractive yield targets; guided by principles of sustained yield
P20	Co-operation; support throughout weakness; confidence; truth and trustful networking; trust and co-operation as organisational values of corporate identity	Truth and harmony-based identity	Structural changes to help avoid mistakes	Ensure tomorrow's success with today's research and development; guided by principles of sustained yield
P32	Organisation comes first; work; organisational rules; time management; corporate identity; corporate organisational rules and procedures; personal integrity	Identity based on directness and clarity	Disciplinary hearing	
P41	Time for decision making; stability in management structures; accept rules and procedures of organisation	Identity concept shaken by intra-personal conflict	Obedience to rules and procedures	

Source: Author's own construction

Table 3 provides an overview of the narrated conflicts and the analysed aspects, which will be discussed with regard to recent literature.

The experience of conflict is not only an external reality, but rather a result of how each person perceives and approaches existing problems (Gaziano, Jensen-Campbell & Hair, 1996) and therefore, at least in part, a result of 'cognitive-affective process dynamics' (Mischel & Shoda, 1998, p. 251). Most of the managers mentioned that constructive conflict management needs inner distance or objectivity. The managers further asserted that negative personal feelings of hurt and anger do not contribute positively to conflict management in the organisation. The managers who succeeded in managing the conflict constructively (P3:1; P4:1; P9:1; P13:2; P19; P20 and P32) reconstructed and reinforced their managerial values through their way of conflict management and, therefore, contributed to the (re-)creation of aspects of the corporate identity.

Conflict in organisations, therefore, often relates to issues of identity and value and their priority, and may start when an individual or a group perceives differences and opposition between the self and the other about interests, beliefs, needs and values (De Dreu, Harinck & Van Vianen, 1999), as analysed in the conflicts described in this and the previous section.

Organisational conflict and managerial identity aspects

This interplay of intra- and interpersonal conflict has been explored by many psychologists, who assume that the human mind consists of 'different parts in which the psyche, the value system and the behaviour is created' (Folger, Scott Poole & Stutman, 2001, p. 45). This interdependence could also be seen in the interplay of the experienced organisational conflicts and the described aspects of the identities and values of the interviewed managers. According to Rahim (2002, p. 207), 'an interactive process does not preclude the possibility of intra-individual conflict, for it is known that a person often interacts with self'. In some cases, the inter-personal conflict was at the same time experienced as an intra-personal conflict (P7:2, P20). This interaction is also described as either a process of the 'many faces of a person' (Satir, 2001) or the communication of the 'inner team' (Schulz von Thun, 1998), in which outer experiences are transformed into inner voices that reconstruct both the multiple identity aspects, and the internal and external realities of a person. It is apparent, therefore, that conflict relates to aspects of identity or even forms part of identity and this, in turn, can lead to 'identity crisis' (Mayer, 2005). In these two narrated conflict situations (P7:2, P20), the managers also reconstructed parts of their identities and their inner voices according to the inter-personal conflict experienced and felt deeply irritated with regard to their individual identity concept.

Aspects of the identity of managers are viewed as important aspects of organisational conflict and its management across managerial and organisational levels (Humphreys & Brown, 2002), as described in the conflict narrations. The managers felt that they were influenced by different identity aspects, which are interlinked and which may be compared to the concept of 'patchwork identity' (Keupp, 1988) discussed previously. In most of the cases evaluated, the conflict experienced and multiple identity aspects led either to a re-creation of identity and values or to an 'identity and value crisis'.

Four managers highlighted that they felt strong in and strengthened by the conflict they experienced and that they were guided by aspects of their strong identity, which opened up ways to manage the conflict constructively (P3:1, P4:1, P3:2, P20). Five managers highlighted their shaken identity, their irritation and the weakening of their identity (concept). These impacts on identity aspects were experienced as negative and as causing tension, leading to a type of individual 'identity crisis' (Maringer & Steinweg, 1997).

Organisational conflict and managerial values

Values are viewed as aspects that interlink individual and organisational management levels in organisations, particularly in the fields of management, leadership and organisational studies (Humphreys & Brown, 2002), and which further represent aspects of the organisational culture (Schein, 2004). They have a major, underlying impact on conflict and its management (Moore, 1996) – as shown in this case study – as they are essentially dialectic and contradictory (Gandal *et al.*, 2005; Smith *et al.*, 2002; Stewart, Danielian & Foster, 1998). Furthermore, conflict management often relates to the negotiation and management of values (Berkel, 2005; Wallace *et al.*, 1999). Clashing value concepts are common in diverse settings (Miller, Glen, Jaspersen & Karmokolias, 1997) and are further interlinked with the cultural background of a person (Kitayama & Markus, 1991), as highlighted above.

The research results from this case study indicate that organisational conflict and value orientations, and the management thereof, often relate to aspects of individual managerial perceptions. The managers linked their individual managerial values with the quest for the corporate identity (P3:1, P13:2, P19, P20 and P32). In some cases, the managers wished to promote their individual managerial values – particularly with regard to the concepts of truth, honesty, information sharing, working and joining together for higher goals – as part of the corporate identity of the organisation. In this organisational case study, therefore, values contribute to the organisational culture.

Managing conflict in organisations should include 'cutting across cultures' (Burton, 1990, pp. 211-212) and values, even if there are culturally defined means of dealing with conflict (Horowitz, 1985). Post-apartheid South Africa is on its way to managing and reconciling differences with regard to language, culture and values (Moodley & Adam, 2000; Slabbert, 2001). Thomas and Bendixen (2000) suggest that international organisational and management contexts in South Africa promote diversity through management effectiveness and an inclusive organisational culture. According to Schein (2004), a 'set of values that become embodied in an organizational philosophy can serve as a guiding principle toward managing conflicts or difficult events'. It has been established (Druckmann, Broom & Korper, 1988) that parties are generally more willing to move further from their initial position and become more cooperative when they have talked about value orientations before negotiations. However, this could not be estimated in this study and needs to be researched further.

Managing organisational conflict from the manager's viewpoint

Managing aspects of structural and operational organisational conflict and value orientations lies in the area of tension regarding individual managerial values. These are perceived as being unfulfilled in the described conflicts (truth, honesty, transparency, harmony) and in the guiding principles that form part of the corporate identity values (such as the endeavour for equality of all levels, respectful and fair mutual treatment). In some cases, the managerial values are congruent with the guiding principles with regard to the corporate identity of the organisation, as shown in Table 3. In most of the instances of organisational conflict experienced, however, the guiding principles of the organisation did not meet the managers' needs for values and guidance.

With regard to the limitations of this study, it needs to be mentioned that it cannot be generalised and thereof only gives answers to very concrete research questions with regard to the context described. It also does not reach a theoretical level, but stays at the practical level of describing conflict, values and identities in the selected organisation. The recommendations that can be made follow below.

Recommendations

With regard to recent literature on conflict, values, identities and their management, and the results of this research, the challenge for international human resource management in international organisations in South Africa lies in the construction of a corporate identity that cares for the diverse interests, identity aspects and value orientations of the different parties, and the levels involved: the international level, with regard to co-operation between the German and South African headquarters; the national level, with regard to the guidelines and principles for the national organisation; and the local level, including individual managerial perceptions, values and identities. The challenge for the selected organisation is in the transformation of organisational structures that support:

- managerial competencies, which support direct and open communication as well as regular exchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings on conflict;
- informal and alternative conflict management strategies, such as the implementation of non-violent communication, trans-cultural mediation, team discussions and sharing sessions, which also address issues of identity and values;
- the implementation of working and coaching sessions on identity with managers, focussing on the development of a congruent managerial identity that aims at conflict management practices. This work on identity should include the strengthening of positive identity aspects and individual resources in managers, and their reflection in the corporate culture of the organisation, as well as the promotion of constructive conflict management practices that are connected to the managerial identity and values;
- reflection of the value orientations and value priorities of the managers in their different roles as team members, subordinates and superiors, and in actively constructing the corporate culture of the organisation (human resource development and individual managerial development); and
- active engagement to transform and influence structural and operational processes, globalisation trends, national guidelines and post-apartheid structures in a non-violent and constructive way.

The transformation of these aspects in the organisation could lead to a reduction in organisational conflict potential and could, therefore, create synergies which might lead to the improvement of human resource and conflict management in the organisation. The (re-)construction of managers' identities through work on their identity and particularly through managerial coaching is a major source of success in individual and organisational (conflict) management. The understanding of the complex (managerial) identity constructions from an emic perspective can lead to creative spaces and synergies in a diverse organisation. It can further help to develop an awareness of multiple identities and process synergies across managerial and departmental lines. Professional human resource management, with regard to identity and value, will then lead to an improvement in organisational strategies and organisational integrity, and successful identity-based diversity and conflict management.

Finally, based on the outcome of this research and the limitation of not being about to make generalisations from this case study on a single organisation, the following can be recommended for future research on organisational conflict in South Africa:

- to replicate this study in a couple of different international organisations based in South Africa to gain deeper insight into and understanding of a culture-specific point of view;
- to conduct a study on conflict, identities and values in a different South African (work) context to gain a broader view of these issues in the South African society;
- to replicate this study within this organisation in different countries to gain insight into culture-specific and/or culture-general issues of conflict, identities and values in different national cultures in one international organisation within a global context; and

- to develop a study on the abovementioned topics of conflict, values and identity by using qualitative and quantitative research approaches to deepen and widening the focus of research.

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