

**CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WITHIN A SOUTH
AFRICAN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS CONTEXT**

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beautiful, amazing children:

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I dedicate this thesis to you, my children, as a token of my appreciation, respect and love for you. Being your mother is my biggest achievement in life.

DECLARATION

I, Magdalena Maria Elizabeth Holtzhausen, student number 4997816, declare that this thesis entitled “**Constructing a framework for conflict management within a South African employment relations context**” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

I further declare that ethics clearance to conduct the research has been obtained from the Department of Human Resource Management, University of South Africa, as well as from the participating organisations. I also declare that the study has been carried out in strict accordance with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (Unisa). I took great care that the research was conducted with the highest integrity, taking into account Unisa’s Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism. The ethics clearance certificate to conduct the research has been attached as Appendix A. The invitation letter and consent form are attached as Appendix B and Appendix C.



M. M. E. Holtzhausen

2020-01-30

**CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WITHIN A SOUTH
AFRICAN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS CONTEXT****by****MME Holtzhausen**

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies

SUBJECT: Human Resource Management

SUPERVISOR: Professor Melinde Coetzee

The general aim of the research was to investigate the components and nature of a psychosocial framework for conflict management in organisations. The research investigated the way in which such a framework manifests by exploring the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as moderated by socio-demographic factors (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme). The associations between individuals' personal and organisational characteristics were further explored to determine significant differences between these variables. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted amongst a non-probability sample of adult workers who were employed in South African-based organisations (n = 556). Canonical correlation analysis, mediation modelling, and structural equation modelling were conducted to identify the core empirical components of the framework. A critical review of the interrelated dynamics of the framework components revealed that the mediating variables of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment,

dependability, integrity) were vital in intensifying the direction and strength of the link between leadership behaviour, organisational culture, conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential), and various interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, compromising). Stepwise multiple regression revealed that number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme, and job level were the three most important socio-demographic variables to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age. The hierarchical moderated regression analysis showed that age, union membership, job level, number of employees, and formal employee engagement programme were important moderating factors to consider in the framework. Tests for significant mean differences indicated significant dissimilarities in terms of the socio-demographic variables. Theoretically, the study advances the understanding of conflict management behaviour and its antecedents in the South African workplace. The empirically tested psychosocial framework informs workplace conflict management interventions from an employment relations perspective which may contribute to enhanced organisational performance.

Keywords: conflict, conflict management, conflict types, employee engagement, employee voice, employment relations, interpersonal conflict handling styles, leadership, organisational culture, organisational trust, socio-demographic characteristics, South Africa.

**DIE SKEPPING VAN 'n RAAMWERK VIR KONFLIKBESTUUR IN DIE KONTEKS VAN SUID-
AFRIKAANSE WERKSVERHOUDINGE**

deur

MME Holtzhausen

GRAAD: Doktor in die Filosofie in Bestuurskunde

VAK: Mensehulpbronnebestuur

STUDIELEIER: Professor Melinde Coetzee

Die algemene doel van die navorsing was om ondersoek in te stel na die komponente en aard van 'n psigososiale raamwerk vir konflikbestuur in organisasies. Die navorsing het die manier waarop so 'n raamwerk manifesteer, bestudeer – deur verkenning van die verhoudingsdinamika tussen die voorgangers (leierskap, organisasiekultuur en werknemer se stem), bemiddelaars (werknemerbetrokkenheid en vertroue in 'n organisasie), en uitkomsveranderlikes (konflikbestuur – tipes konflik en hanteringstyle ten opsigte van interpersoonlike konflik), soos getemper deur sosiodemografiese faktore (ras, geslag, ouderdom, kwalifikasie, posvlak, inkomstevlak, ampsbekleding, aanstellingstatus, vakbondverteenvoording, vakbondlidmaatskap, sektor, werknemergetalle, organisasiegrootte, werknemerbetrokkenheidprogram). Die assosiasies tussen individue se persoonlike en organisasiegebonde eienskappe is verder bestudeer om betekenisvolle verskille tussen hierdie veranderlikes te bepaal. 'n Kwantitatiewe deursnee-opname is gemaak onder 'n nie-waarskynlikheidssteekproef van volwasse werkers in diens van Suid-Afrikaans-gebaseerde organisasies (n = 556). Kanoniese korrelasie-ontleding, bemiddelingsmodellering, en strukturele vergelykingsmodellering is gedoen om die kern-empiriese komponente van die raamwerk te identifiseer. 'n Kritiese beskouing van die onderling verwante dinamika van die raamwerkkomponente het getoon dat die bemiddelende veranderlikes

van werknemerbetrokkenheid (werksbetrokkenheid en organisasiebetrokkenheid) en vertroue in die organisasie (toewyding, betroubaarheid, integriteit) deurslaggewend was in die intensifisering van die rigting en sterkte van die skakel tussen leierskapsgedrag, organisasiekultuur, konfliktpes (taak-, relasionele, proses- en statuskonflik, groeopatmosfeer en konflikoplossingspotensiaal), en verskillende hanteringstyle ten opsigte van interpersoonlike konflik (integreerend, vermydend, dominerend, inskiklik, kompromitterend). Stapsgewyse meervoudige regressie het getoon dat die aantal werknemers, 'n formele werknemerbetrokkenheidsprogram, en posvlak die drie belangrikste sosiodemografiese veranderlikes was om mee rekenskap te hou in 'n konflikbestuursraamwerk, gevolg deur ouderdom. Die hiërgargiese gemodereerde regressie-ontleding het getoon dat ouderdom, vakbondlidmaatskap, posvlak, aantal werknemers, en formele werknemerbetrokkenheidsprogram belangrike modererende faktore was om in gedagte te hou in die raamwerk. Toetse vir noemenswaardige gemiddelde verskille het aansienlike ongelyksoortighede ten opsigte van die sosiodemografiese veranderlikes getoon. Teoreties bevorder die studie die begrip van konflikbestuursgedrag en die voorgangers daarvan in die Suid-Afrikaanse werkplek. Die empiries getoetste psigososiale raamwerk vorm konflikbestuursintervensies in die werkplek vanuit 'n werksverhoudingeperspektief wat kan bydra tot verbeterde organisasieprestasie.

Sleutelwoorde: konflik, konflikbestuur, tipes konflik, werknemerbetrokkenheid, werknemer se stem, werksverhoudinge, hanteringstyle ten opsigte van interpersoonlike konflik, leierskap, organisasiekultuur, vertroue in die organisasie, sosiodemografiese kenmerke, Suid-Afrika.

**UKWAKHA UHLAKA LOKUPHATHA KOKUNQUBUZANA ELITHINTA IZINDABA
ZABASEBENZI NGAPHAKATHI ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA**

ngu

MME Holtzhausen

IZIQU: UDokotela weFilosophi Ezifundweni zokuPhatha

ISIFUNDO: Ukuphathwa kwabasebenzi

UMPHATHI: Ungcweti uMelinde Coetsee

Inhloso jikelele yocwaningo kwaba ukuphenya izingxenye nemvelo yohlaka lwezengqondo lokuphathwa kokungqubuzana ezinhlanganweni. Ucwanningo luphenye indlela lapho uhlaka olunjalo lubonisa ngokuhlola amandla obudlelwano phakathi kwezinqumo (ubuholi, isiko lenhlangano nezwi lesisebenzi), abalamuli (ukuzibandakanya kwesisebenzi kanye nokwethembana kwenhlangano), kanye nemiphumela eguququkayo (ukuphathwa kokungqubuzana - izinhlobo zokungqubuzana nezindlela zokuphatha ukungqubuzana phakathi kwabantu), njengoba kuhlaziywe yizici zenhlayo yeningi labantu (uhlanga, ubulili, ubudala, imfanelo, izinga lomsebenzi, izinga lomholo, ukusebenzisa umhlaba, isimo somsebenzi, ukumelwa yinyunyana, ubulunga benyunyana, imboni, izinombolo zabasebenzi, ubungako benhlangano, uhlelo lokuzibandakanya kwesisebenzi).

Ukuhlangana phakathi komuntu siqu kanye nezici zenhlangano kuphinde kwahlola umehluko omkhulu phakathi kwalokhu okuguququkayo. Inhlolovo esezingeni eliphansi yesigaba yenziwe phakathi kwesampula elula yabasebenzi abadala abebeqashwe ezinhlanganweni ezisekelwe zaseNingizimu Afrika (n = 556). Ukuhlaziya kokuxhumanisa kohlu lwezincwadi, ukulamula kwesifanekiso, kanye nesifanekiso sesakhiwo kwenziwa ukukhomba izingxenye ezisemqoka ezinokwehla kohlaka. Isibuyekezo esibucayi samandla ahambisana nezingxenye zohlaka siveze ukuthi ukulamula okuguqukayo kokuzibandakanya kwesisebenzi (ukuzibandakanya komsebenzi

nokuzibandakanya kwenhlangano) kanye nokwethembana kwenhlangano (ukuzinikela, ukwethembeka, ubuqotho) kwakubalulekile ekwandiseni ukuqondiswa namandla oxhumano phakathi kokuziphatha kwabaholi, isiko lenhlangano, izinhlobo zokungqubuzana (umsebenzi, ezingubudlelwano, inqubo nesimo sokungqubuzana, isimo sokuzwana eqenjini kanye namandla okuxazulula ukungqubuzana), kanye nezindlela zokuphatha ukungqubuzana okuhlukahlukene phakathi kwabantu (ukuhlanganisa, ukugwema, ukubusa, ukubopha, ukuyekethisa). Ngokuhamba kwesinyathelo ekuhleleni okuningi kwaveza ukuthi inani labasebenzi, uhlelo lokuzibandakanya olusemthethweni lwesisebenzi, kanye nezinga lomsebenzi kwakuyizinguququko ezintathu ezibaluleke kakhulu zenhlalo yeningi abantu okufanele bazicabange ohlakeni lokuphathwa ukungqubuzana, kulandelwe ubudala. Ukuhlaziywa okuphezulu kokuhlehla kokuhlaziya kubonise ukuthi ubudala, ubulunga benyunyana, izinga lomsebenzi, inani lezisebenzi, kanye nohlelo lokuzibandakanya olusemthethweni lwesisebenzi kwakuyizici ezibalulekile zokulinganisa okufanele zicatshangwe ohlakeni. Uvivinyo lokwehlukahlukana lukhombise ukungafani okubalulekile ngokuya kweziguququkayo zenhlalo yeningi labantu. Ngokucatshangwayo isifundo sikhuthaza ukuqondisisa ukuphathwa kokungqubuzana kokuziphatha kanye nezinqumo zako endaweni yomsebenzi eNingizimu Afrika. Ukuhlolwa okunamandla kohlaka lwezengqondo lwazisa ukungenelela kokuphathwa kokungqubuzana endaweni yomsebenzi ngombono wobudlelwano emsebenzini okungaba nomthelela ekwenzeni ngcono ukusebenza kwenhlangano .

Amagama Asemqoka: INingizimu Afrika, isiko lenhlangano, izici zenhlalo yeningi labantu, izindlela zokuphatha ukungqubuzana okuhlukene phakathi kwabantu; izinhlobo zokungqubuzana, izwi lesisebenzi; ubudlelwano bomsebenzi, ubuholi, ukungqubuzana, ukuphathwa kokungqubuzana, ukuzibandakanya kwesisebenzi, ukwethembana kwenhlangano.

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on constructing a framework for conflict management within a South African employment relations (ER) context. This chapter explains the contextual framework and importance of the research. The problem statement and the research questions are set against the context of conflict management within the South African employment relations environment. The aims of the research and the paradigm perspectives are given. In addition, the chapter elaborates on the research design and the research method. Finally, a brief outlay of the chapters is given. The core themes of Chapter 1 are illustrated schematically in Figure 1.1 below.

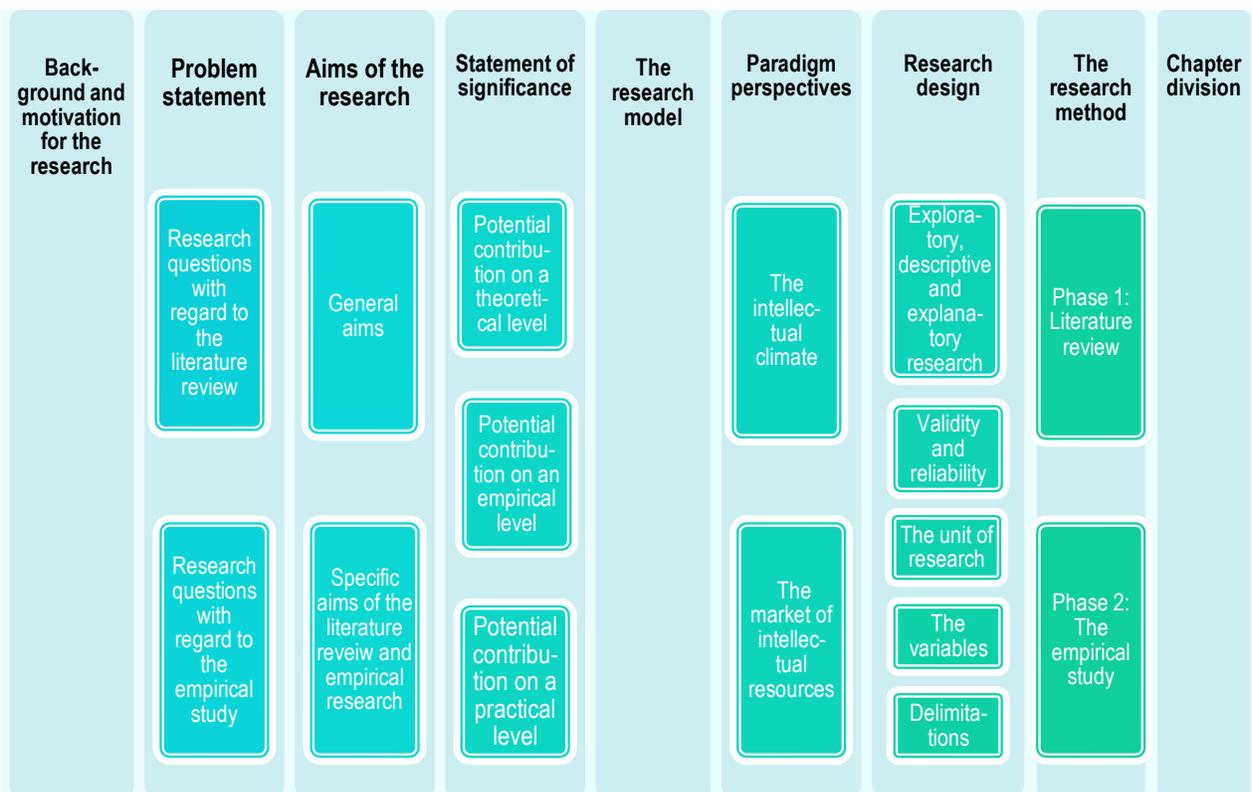


Figure 1.1 Core Themes of Chapter 1

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

For many years, scholars have agreed that conflict is intrinsic to the human condition, and thus inevitable in organisations (Avgar, 2017; Budd, Colvin, & Pohler, 2017; García, Munduate, Elgoibar, Wendt, & Euwema, 2017; Lipsky, Avgar, & Lamare, 2017; Litterer, 1966; Ma, Yang,

Wang, & Li, 2017; McKibben, 2017; Shaukat, Yousaf, & Sanders, 2017; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017). Additionally, the goals of employers and employees are generally incompatible, contributing to the fact that workplace conflict is unescapable (Zhou, Xi, Zhang, & Zhao, 2017). Owing to its ever-present and unending nature (Avgar, 2017; Thomas, 1992), continuous conflict management is imperative (Avgar, 2017; McKibben, 2017). All organisations have to deal with various forms of conflict, and do so either proactively (thus preventatively), reactively (e.g. by settling disputes), or by contending with it (e.g. through avoidance) (Avgar, 2017; Bingham, Lipsky, Seeber, & Fincher, 2003). Often these choices are driven by environmental factors such as unionisation or legal issues, as well as organisational motivations, such as the organisational culture (Lipsky et al., 2003). Nonetheless, conflict is also characterised by emotion and thus shapes behaviour on the individual, dyadic and group level within organisations, ultimately resulting in either cooperative, harmonising and conforming behaviour, or competitive, conflictive and deviant behaviour (Van Kleef & Côté, 2018).

The context of this study is the management of conflict in South African-based organisations through the development of a theoretical and empirically tested conflict management framework within an ER context, allowing for both an individual employee and a collective (union) dimension. This is necessary because union membership is still strong in South Africa (Benjamin, 2016, Scully, 2016; Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016; Webster, 2013), thus necessitating an approach where unions are acknowledged in the workplace, as is the relational wellbeing of individual employees.

Various conflict management approaches are evident in the literature. However, for the purposes of this study, conflict management is regarded as part of an organisation's proactive strategic approach that aligns with both its internal and external environment in order to remain competitive (Avgar, 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lipsky, Avgar, Lamare, & Gupta, 2014). Avgar (2017) points out that conflict management decisions are based on the extent to which specific practices are believed to deliver on specific goals and objectives. Such a strategic approach to conflict management identifies and intervenes in emotive and practical organisational conflict that may manifest at interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels through the implementation of conflict management styles and strategies to manage this conflict (Rahim, 2002).

Because of the potentially negative consequences of conflict, managing conflict in a positive way results in better workplace relationships, greater job satisfaction, lower turnover and absenteeism rates, increased productivity and mutual respect for the various roles in organisations, as well as increasing staff retention and employee wellbeing (Avgar, 2017; Ayoko, 2016; Hayter, 2015;

McKibben, 2017; Smith & Diedericks, 2016). In its various manifestations on the shop floor, conflict results in low morale and general ineffectiveness (Hayter, 2015), a loss in production and employment and a high rate of employee dismissals (Zhou et al., 2017). Scholars (Ilesanmi, 2017; Zhou et al., 2017) stress the importance of finding ways to sustain workplace relationships by managing conflict and resolving disputes effectively in order to cut costs and increase efficiency on both the macro- and the micro-economic levels. There is evidence to show that the way employees choose to manage conflict predicts its impact on organisational performance, regardless of the intensity or the source of the perceived conflict (Wombacher & Felfe, 2017).

To determine how conflict should be managed holistically, this research considers various approaches, choices, activities and practices on numerous levels and by different actors – as suggested by scholars (Avgar, 2017; Humphrey, Aime, Cushenbery, Hill, & Fairchild, 2017; Kochan, Katz, & McKercie, 1986; Smith & Diedericks, 2016). The current research evaluates the relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Kochan et al. (1986) accordingly recommend that conflict management should be considered on a strategic, a functional and a workplace level. A few examples follow.

On the strategic level, the overarching long-term choices and motivations regarding conflict management made by top management are weighed up (Kochan et al., 1986). This is important, as Lipsky et al. (2017) argue that although it is common practice for managers to take organisational decisions based on strategic choice, such a strategic approach rarely applies to conflict management. In order to consider conflict management strategically, the leadership of the organisation should decide on their longer-term approach to managing conflict, including for instance how dysfunctional conflict may be prevented and conflict resolved. In this research, it is argued that the relationship dynamics between aspects such as leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management are some of the issues that should be deliberated strategically.

Consideration should be given to how the different parties and role players engage with each other on a functional level (e.g. as part of leadership, the organisational culture and employee voice opportunities) so that conflict management practices can be enabled and adopted, and strategic objectives attained (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). The relationships between the various stakeholders are of importance in this regard. For instance, how do the organisation's

culture and employee voice strategies influence the buy-in of employees and trade unions in a conflict management approach? Do employees voice their concerns in a culture conducive to conflict management? Do employees participate in decision-making practices regarding conflict management strategies? How does employee engagement or organisational trust influence the adoption and implementation of conflict management strategies?

The workplace level (i.e. where daily activities occur and conflict manifests between employees) is where, for example, relational ties between and within work departments are deliberated (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). For instance, is there a relationship between the antecedents and the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), and the type of conflict that manifests, or the interpersonal conflict management style employed to manage the conflict? Hence, this research addresses these three levels of conflict management through the choice of antecedent, moderating and mediating variables. Such an approach aligns with the three-tier (strategic, functional and workplace levels) framework suggested by the seminal work of Kochan and others (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986).

According to scholars, a conflict management framework should acknowledge five propositions (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). Firstly, it proposes that conflict may manifest on multiple levels of an organisation. Secondly, stakeholders have to make strategic choices in regard to the way conflict is managed and, related to this matter as a third proposition, such strategic choices are influenced by a variety of external challenges. Fourthly, actions and decisions that are taken on the various levels will influence one another; while fifthly, conflict manifestations and management efforts will affect the outcomes of organisational activity at the different levels (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). Avgar (2017) sees this framework (Kochan et al., 1986) as a way to integrate conflict and conflict management research across disciplines and different levels of analysis, while also acknowledging the external environment and various possible outcomes.

A further aspect to contemplate is the various disciplines from which scholars may approach conflict-related research; for instance, an employment relations (ER), industrial relations (IR), law or organisational behaviour perspective (Avgar, 2017; Samantara & Sharma, 2016). Human resources (HR) specialists and industrial psychologists also study conflict. For instance, conflict research in the field of organisational behaviour has focused mainly on different types of conflict (e.g. Jehn, 1994, 1995); how individuals and teams respond to conflict by adapting certain conflict management styles (e.g. Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 2002; Thomas, 1976); and how conflict manifestations affect organisational performance (Avgar, 2017). Research done by IR scholars

has concentrated mainly on formalised conflict manifestations, including such research areas as negotiation practices, organisational arrangements and procedures (e.g. grievance procedures), processes (e.g. alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes such as mediation) and institutions (e.g. dispute resolution institutions) that are specifically designed to contain, manage and diffuse inherent conflict on both a group and an individual level, and in union and non-union environments (Avgar, 2017; Godard, 2014a; Zhou et al., 2017). Legal scholars consider broader societal issues, and how ADR practices contribute to or substitute for other legal processes (Avgar, 2017).

Subsequently, scholars (Avgar, 2017; Budd et al., 2017; Patra, Mahapatra, & Patnaik, 2016; Zhou et al., 2017) argue that conceptual and empirical research on conflict and its management is conducted in silos, resulting in little cross-disciplinary engagement and, in turn, leading to the loss of valuable insights. Therefore, Avgar (2017) suggests that researchers work across disciplinary confines, and integrate knowledge gained from various conflict and conflict management phenomena by applying a variety of underlying assumptions, methodologies and approaches across different levels of analysis and involving different stakeholders. Research across disciplines better explains how organisational, team and individual level issues influence the different types and levels of conflict and its management (Avgar, 2017). Additionally, not enough cohesive research has been conducted on the antecedents of conflict, or on how other organisational and environmental factors affect conflict management (Avgar, 2017). Hence, a unified approach to studying conflict is suggested (Avgar, 2017; Avgar & Kuruvilla, 2011; Budd et al., 2017; Rahim, 2002). In considering an integrated conflict management framework, the research aims to test and expand existing knowledge on conflict management. This was done by analysing the statistical relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within the set parameters of working individuals in South African-based organisations.

To acknowledge the various issues at play and to consider knowledge from various disciplines, it is suggested that research is undertaken from an ER context, thus recognising conflict that manifests in organisations from both an individual and collective perspective (Meyer & Abbott, 2015). While the individual dimension refers to relationship aspects typically associated with, for instance, the human resource management (HRM), the industrial and organisational psychology

(IOP) and organisational behaviour fields, the collective dimension focuses on those aspects mostly associated with IR and sociology (Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus, & Jordaan, 2016). Similarly, scholars distinguish between individual conflict (involving for instance an employer and an individual employee) and collective conflict (involving employers and trade unions in collective bargaining and other processes) (Currie, Gormley, Roche, & Teague, 2017; García et al., 2017; Ilesanmi, 2017).

An ER approach aims at implementing practices that enable the achievement of organisational objectives that are compliant with relevant legislative frameworks and that take cognisance of socioeconomic conditions (Meyer & Abbott, 2015; Nel et al., 2016; Rust, 2017). Organisations face countless ER and other challenges in their macro (e.g. high levels of poverty and unemployment), meso (e.g. changes in the world of work within industries) and micro environments (e.g. a lack of trust between employers and employees) (Briken, Chillias, Krzywdzinski, & Marks, 2017; Budhwar, Varma, & Patel, 2016; Festus, Kasongo, Moses, & Yu, 2016; ILO, 2016a; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Not only do they have to constantly adapt to these challenges, but they also need to manage internal interdependencies (Avgar, 2017; Du Plessis, 2012; Miles, Snow, Meyer, & Coleman, 1978), as well as consider revised strategies to adapt to the changing environment (Avgar, 2017; Budhwar et al., 2016; CCMA, 2016, 2017; Rust, 2017). It is deduced that such challenges naturally lead to the manifestation of conflict in the workplace.

Additionally, management has to consider the various mutual but also opposing interests of employers and labour (Avgar & Kuruvilla, 2011; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Nel et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2017) in an endeavour to find the ideal fit between the organisation, the employee, the job and the environment. The King IV Report on Corporate Governance South Africa (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016) stresses these issues as part of a stakeholder-inclusive approach, and recognises the importance of formal engagement and communication mechanisms such as those related to dispute resolution and associated processes. The way employees are managed and business decisions aligned within a volatile and unsure environment is key to achieving productivity, competitiveness and organisational success (Jooste & Fourie, 2009; Nettleton, Sebbens, Fairhall, & Firth, 2016; Rust, 2017).

The seminal work of Dunlop's industrial relations open systems theory (Dunlop, 1958) and later critique and expansion of his theory, support the importance of considering the macro-, meso- and micro-level environment. Dunlop's theory (1958) argues that IR is a subsystem of a wider social system and that the parties to this system (employers, employees and the state) are

governed by a set of complex rules in the workplace, operating within an environmental context and ideological setting that both directly and indirectly affects the respective parties, shaping their behaviour – also regarding potential conflict. However, some of the criticisms of Dunlop's theory relate both directly and indirectly to his view on conflict. Dunlop (1958) argued that a shared ideology between the role players holds an IR system together, while the rules governing the system contain any form of conflict. Hyman (1975), however, criticises this assumption, arguing that the institutions, procedures and rules within which the IR system operates contribute to conflict being self-correcting, thereby dismissing the certainty of conflict as inherent and ever-present in the workplace (García et al., 2017; Jayeoba, Ayantunji, & Sholesi, 2013; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Hyman (1975) argues that too much focus is placed on how conflict is contained and controlled to ensure stability, rather than on the processes generating the differences and disputes.

It is reasoned that the current research will shed light on some of the aspects that may generate conflict, and in addition, on how it should be managed. It does this by investigating the relationships between the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Further, the research reflects on the mediating effect of employee engagement and organisational trust on the relationship dynamics between the dependent and independent variables. Deliberating the mediating relationship may provide further answers on aspects that generate or curb differences and disputes, as manifested in conflict management behaviour.

The influential work of Craig (1975) and Hyman (1975) emphasises the importance of goals, values and power in an IR system, acknowledging the differences in these for the various role players – a view still relevant in explaining the inherent nature of conflict in work relationships (Colvin, 2016; Hayter, 2015; Loudon, McPhail, & Wilkinson, 2013; Rust, 2017; Tapia, Ibsen, & Kochan, 2015). The expanded view of Dunlop's theory allows for a viewpoint where both conflict and cooperation are possible in employment relationships (Adams, 1983; Avgar & Kuruvilla, 2011; Dulfer, 1996; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Singh, 1976). Cooperation is viewed as the process through which people (as individuals, groups or organisations) meet and work together to cultivate different relationships that are mutually beneficial (Ayoko, 2016; Smith, Carroll, & Ashford, 1995).

In this research, it is argued that the antecedents of leadership and employee voice relate specifically to how mutually beneficial relationships may be cultivated to enhance cooperation, thereby constructively benefitting conflict management. Moreover, it is debated that an

organisational culture conducive to cooperation may be of value – hence the choice of organisational culture as an antecedent. Lastly, it is argued that without organisational trust, no cooperative relationships will be possible, and thus the mediating variable of organisational trust and its relationship to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are investigated.

Additionally, Craig (1975) expanded Dunlop's (1958) consideration of the environment (having a technological, market and budgetary context) to include a social, ecological, political, economic and legal context. Adams (1983) maintains that Dunlop's theory does not necessarily presume the existence of trade unions, and is therefore relevant to non-unionised environments and studies relating to both the collective and individual dimension of the employment relationship. Although Dunlop (1958) acknowledged three types of IR behaviour, namely, collective bargaining, management-union organisation and individual employee behaviour, he did not include these in his theory (Singh, 1976). Dunlop's theory was further extended by including the psychological dimension of behaviourism as part of the IR context (Hameed, 1982). This was an important contribution to explain the behaviour of the role players (Jayeoba et al., 2013). The changing nature of organisations and industries, and the constraining and facilitating role that the environment can play, are thus both emphasised by ER scholars (Blain & Gennard, 1970; Jayeoba et al., 2013; Kochan & Riordan, 2016; Nettleton et al., 2016; Rust, 2017). Clearly, the criticisms and expansions by various influential scholars (Blain & Gennard, 1970; Craig, 1975; Flanders, 1965; Hameed, 1982; Hyman, 1975) of Dunlop's (1958) theory have led to a point where it is argued that Dunlop's (1958) revised systems framework provides a theoretical background for studies focusing on the employment relationship (Adams, 1983; Singh, 1976).

The current research acknowledges the impact of the macro environment on organisations and the employment relationship in line with Dunlop's open system theory (1958) and Craig's (1975) expanded view (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of this point). Additionally, the research contends that conflict management is needed in both unionised and non-unionised firms. The chosen variables were selected in order to study their relationships with conflict management in an ER context, including the psychological dimension of behaviourism as part of the IR context (Hameed, 1982). For example, the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust are studied. In addition, it is reasoned that the findings will contribute to the ER discipline and shed light on issues that may benefit collective bargaining, the management-

union organisation and individual employee behaviour. These aspects may thus inform a conflict management framework on a strategic, functional and workplace level, as discussed above.

The impact of the wider environmental system within which organisations function and how it affects ER and vice versa are clearly visible in South Africa (Alexander, 2013; CCMA, 2013, 2016, 2017; Rust, 2017; World Bank, 2015, 2017c). According to the World Bank, difficult South African IR contribute to the country's poor growth performance (World Bank, 2017c). A variety of external factors give rise to the levels of conflict, dispute, intimidation, violence and protest action evident in the South African workplace, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality and injustice (Alexander, 2013; Benjamin, 2016; Beresford, 2016; Bernards, 2017; Department of Labour, 2016; Mmanoko, 2016; Rust, 2017; Von Holdt, 2013; World Bank, 2017c). In addition, slow economic growth contributes to role players taking a strong and inflexible stance on their collective bargaining positions (CCMA, 2016).

Growing social tensions and intensified class conflict (Alexander, 2013; Dickinson, 2017; World Bank, 2015) are a reality in South African life. An increase in (often violent) conflict-related incidents among citizens in general (e.g. through protest action), as well as in incidents involving organisational industrial action, are evident (Alexander, 2013; Breakfast, Bradshaw, & Nomarwayi, 2016; COSATU, 2012; Department of Labour, 2014, 2016a, 2017b; Mmanoko, 2016; Paton, 2013; Pressly, 2013; Von Holdt, 2013). Public and workplace outbursts of conflict and protest voice the frustrations of South African citizens (Benjamin, 2016; CCMA, 2013, 2016; Department of Labour, 2016; Von Holdt, 2013; World Bank, 2015, 2017c). Moreover, high levels of conflict (e.g. strike action) contribute to inefficient production processes and unemployment (Jordaan, 2016; Schoeman, Botha, & Blaauw, 2010; World Bank, 2017a), which in turn increase conflict because of amplified frustrations and hardship. These reactions are in line with research that suggests that often when organisations operate in difficult circumstances, even the best of efforts may not be enough to counteract unrest and discontent or threats of violence (Ganson, 2014; Zandvliet & Anderson, 2009). Competing for limited employment may lead to increased conflict between employees when organisations are faced with a variety of macro and micro challenges (Dimitriu, 2016, 2017). Moreover, South Africa's ER are generally regarded as adversarial, and characterised by high levels of conflict and low levels of trust; subsequently, ER matters are of grave concern to the sustainability of business (ILO, 2016a; Schoeman et al., 2010). In fact, the Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018 (Schwab, 2017) places South Africa last in terms of labour–employer cooperation (ranked 137 out of 137 countries), and in the bottom

12 countries for hiring and firing practices (ranked 125 out of 137 countries) – figures symptomatic of the high levels of adversarialism and conflict in South African ER (ILO, 2016a).

These views on higher conflict risk because of fragile settings, and adversarial workplace relationships hampering labour–employer cooperation, emphasise the importance of business finding ways to manage conflict in volatile environments (Ganson, 2014). Understanding the dynamics between the antecedents, mediating variables and outcome variables in this research may assist businesses to find constructive ways of managing conflict so that it is beneficial to all.

Although many workplace challenges and conflicts result from the country's economic and political situation which spill over into South African workplaces (Benjamin, 2016; CCMA, 2013, 2016, 2017; Department of Labour, 2013a; ILO, 2016a; Rust, 2017; Von Holdt, 2013; World Bank, 2015, 2017b), organisations still need to consider their ER practices. This is necessitated by the high numbers of prolonged and violent strikes both pre- and post-South Africa's democratic dispensation (Benjamin, 2016; Department of Labour, 2017b; Jordaan, 2016), as well as by the levels of intolerance evident in the increasingly adversarial workplace relationships and disputes declared (CCMA, 2016, 2017). Wages and other aspects such as racial tension and adversarial relationships all play a part in industrial action and other workplace disputes and conflict situations (Alexander, 2013; CCMA, 2013, 2016; Department of Labour, 2016; Rust, 2017). Internal aspects further contribute to the adversarial relationships. For example, workers express a need for fair treatment (COSATU, 2012) and employers for higher productivity levels and commitment to the organisation. This may sound easily achievable, but is in fact not so. Rather, it is clear that employees and employers are struggling to find each other amongst the ER and other challenges faced by both parties (Alexander, 2013; COSATU, 2012; Department of Labour, 2013a, 2016a; Rust, 2017; Schwab, 2017).

Examples of non-physical manifestations of conflict are also palpable in organisations, such as the occurrence of intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment and verbal abuse (Baillien et al., 2016; Benitez, Medina, & Munduate, 2018; Van den Brande et al., 2017). Indeed, increased levels of workplace disputes are unmistakable (Business Tech, 2013; ILO, 2016a), as seen in the rise in cases referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) (Benjamin, 2016; CCMA, 2016, 2017). In this regard, the Institute of Directors Southern Africa (2016) urges organisations to combat labour conflict through expedient, efficient and effective dispute management and resolution (Baillien et al., 2016). Accordingly, constructing a conflict management framework based on the findings of this research may assist in the given objective

of the Institute of Directors Southern Africa (2016) of efficient, effective and beneficial conflict management and dispute resolution in South African-based organisations.

A conflict management framework is important in combatting the high levels of ER conflict and low levels of labour–employer cooperation in South African organisations. Some research points to the value of an integrated approach for conflict management (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). However, no research studies were found that integrated the specific antecedents and mediating variables, as set out in this research, into a framework for conflict management, especially not in the South African ER context. Other research problems and gaps were also identified, as will be shown in the brief introduction of the variables that follows.

Hence, the research considers the relationships between a selection of antecedents (comprising the constructs of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); psychosocial processes (comprising the mediating constructs of employee engagement and organisational trust); socio-demographic factors (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations. In line with the seminal work of Jehn (1995, 1997) and Jehn and Mannix (2001), conflict dimensions (conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms, and group atmosphere) were also considered in relation to the independent, mediating and outcome variables. Understanding the overall relationship dynamics between the independent, dependent, mediating and moderating constructs will allow the researcher to construct a framework for conflict management within a South African ER context. The constructs of relevance to the research are illustrated in Figure 1.2 below, followed by a brief introduction to the constructs and related research gaps.

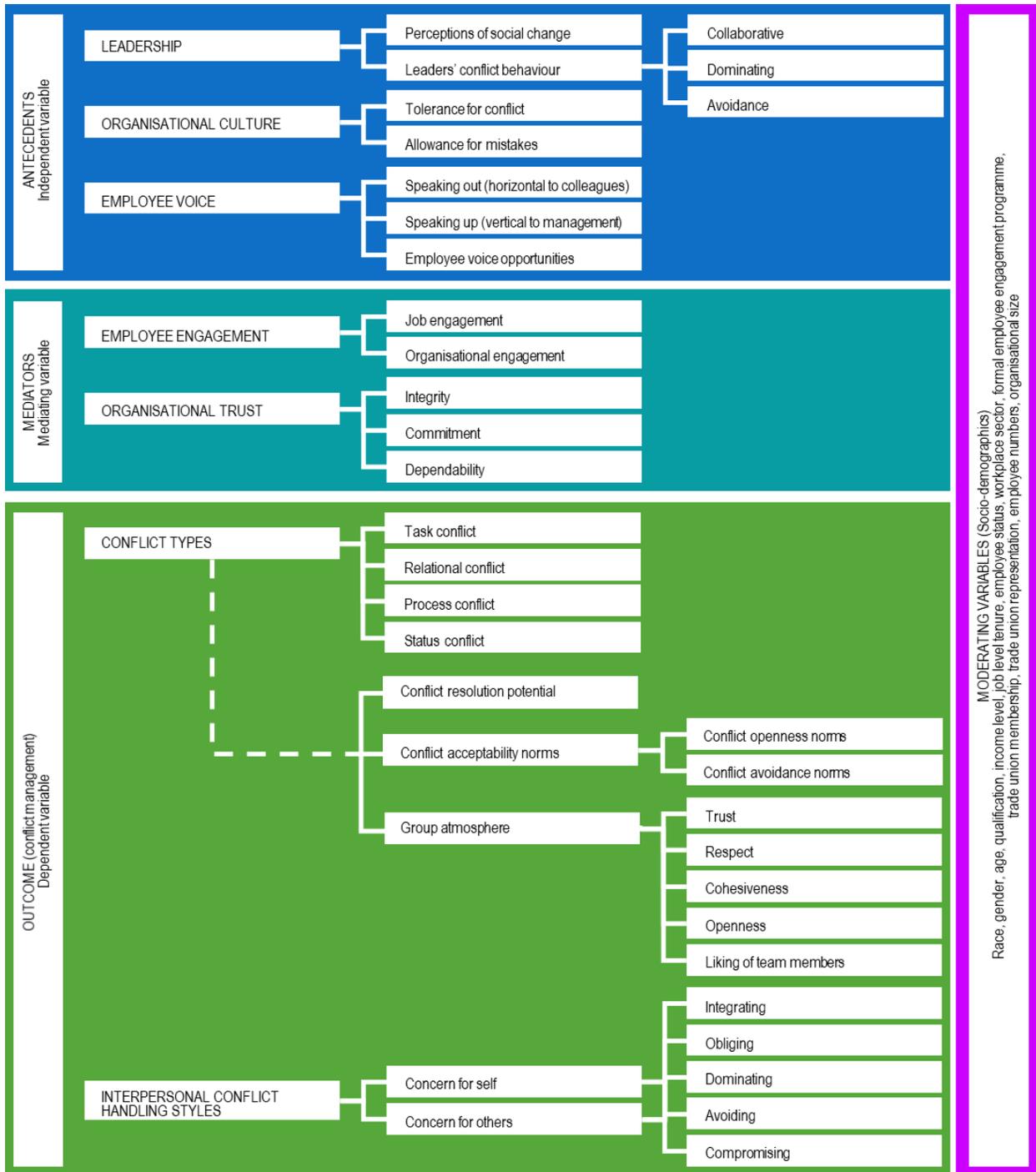


Figure 1.2 An Illustration of the Constructs of Relevance to the Research

Organisational and management structures, roles, responsibilities, practices and processes should constantly be evaluated to find effective and efficient ways of dealing with ER and other challenges, while staying relevant and in line with the organisational vision (Nel et al., 2016;

Venter, Levy, Bendeman, & Dworzanowski-Venter, 2014). This is confirmed by research that emphasises that managers who understand business processes and their possible effect on organisations have the potential to ensure a positive outcome for their organisations (Harris, Kaefer, & Salchenberger, 2013; Rust, 2017). It is acknowledged that organisational practices send explicit but often unspoken signs to employees on how much they are appreciated and trusted, which in turn result in employees feeling obligated to the employer, reciprocating this obligation by demonstrating positive behaviours towards the employer (Blau, 1964; Smith & Diedericks, 2016). Positive employment relations result in an organisation thriving at an optimum level (Smith & Diedericks, 2016). Smith and Diedericks (2016) found that positive employment relations are affected by 21 key constructs, of which four are covered in this research: leadership, trust, transparent communication (which may be argued to include employee voice) and conflict management.

Within this context, this research focuses on antecedents that may ultimately contribute to organisational success through constructive conflict management. The choice of antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) was firstly informed by studies on conflict management (e.g. Acar, 2010; Benharda, Brett, & Lempereur, 2013; Bruk-Lee, Nixon, & Spector, 2013; De Vries, Jehn, & Terwel, 2012; Dillon, 2012; Ma, Liang, Erkus, & Tabak, 2012; Prause & Mujtaba, 2015; Tjosvold, Wong, & Wan, 2010). Additionally, typical 'best-employers-to-work-for' surveys were considered in deciding on the selected antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (some examples may be found in the surveys of Deloitte, 2014; Flores-Araoz & Furphy, n.d.; Top Employers Institution, n.d.; Wiley, 2010). This was based on the assumption that aspects and criteria included in these surveys will be of importance in the workplace.

Increasing the body of knowledge on the relationship dynamics among these constructs is vital. Collective bargaining processes may be strengthened by a positive organisational environment and management–union relationships, transparent and fair grievance procedures, conflict resolution mechanisms, as well as solid interpersonal relations and leadership development (Bankole, 2010; Ibietan, 2013). According to Ibietan (2013), applying ER approaches and practices that take care of the needs and psychological side of the employee (as may be evident from the chosen constructs) is highly commended, as such an approach has the potential to reduce labour conflict occurrences. Other research also supports this view of a more humane approach to the way organisations are managed (Bagraim, 2001; Bankole, 2010; Schein, 1996).

The above discussion highlights some reasons for choosing the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture, and employee voice for this study. These antecedents and their relationship to conflict management are discussed in more detail below.

Leadership, the first antecedent, is regarded as an important contributor to both the existence and the management and resolution of conflict (McKibben, 2017). Leadership has been a topic of study for many years (e.g. Banks, Gooty, Ross, Williams, & Harrington, 2018; Gordon & Yukl, 2004; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Landis, Hill, & Harvey, 2014; Lord, Day, Zaccaro, Avolio, & Eagly, 2017; Nienaber, 2010) and scholars agree that leaders play an especially important role in volatile business environments (Banks et al., 2017; Cote, 2017; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Siira, 2012). Such an environment potentially amplifies conflict manifestations to the point where conflict is regarded as endemic to organisations (Siira, 2012). The style, behaviours and perceptions of leaders are key in influencing an organisation's management processes (Zanda, 2018), including conflict perceptions (Katz & Flynn, 2013), and thus conflict management. Hence, clear direction, purpose, alignment and focus from leaders is necessary (Binyamin, Friedman, & Carmeli, 2017; Van Eeden, 2014).

Academics describe leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2002). However, this is one of many definitions. The challenge of finding a universal definition of leadership for the modern world stems from the fact that there are seemingly multiple styles of leadership which exist and which may prove effective in different environments (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Landis et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017; Zaccaro, Green, Dubrow, & Kolze, 2018).

Nonetheless, it is agreed that leadership stems from the ability to influence followers, which depends on both the skills a leader possesses and the environment within which the leader operates (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Silva, 2016). Strong leadership provides followers in organisations with clear direction, purpose, alignment and focus, and assists in creating an inspiring business culture (Van Eeden, 2014).

Moreover, leaders play a cardinal role in the way organisational conflict is managed (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Binyamin et al., 2017; Gelfand, Leslie, Keller, & De Dreu, 2012; Illes, Ellemers, & Harinck, 2014; Siira, 2012) and resolved (Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2017), and potentially play an important role in boosting morale and enhancing performance when conflict is well handled

(Ayoko & Konrad, 2012). This is especially important as Katz and Flynn (2013) established that, in general, conflict is not managed. Rather, most organisations avoid conflict altogether in the hope that it will resolve itself (e.g. by avoiding the person they are upset with), or they avoid confronting the conflict directly and either complain about it to someone else or ask another person to deal with it (Katz & Flynn, 2013). In only a few exceptions was conflict dealt with in an organisational culture of engaging management and employees.

A pertinent question to ask is thus how managers can influence conflict interaction through their leadership (Ayoko, 2016; Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Siira, 2012; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017), considering that organisations are continuously exposed to increased levels of conflict (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Although the literature acknowledges the benefits of strong leadership, few studies have addressed leadership as part of an integrated conflict management approach.

The second antecedent is organisational culture. Simply put, organisational culture can be defined as the way things are done in an organisation. This culture is partly shaped by the larger external culture within which the organisation functions (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Over the years organisational culture has been explained as a combination of ideologies (Harrison, 1972) rooted in a shared value system and a set of beliefs (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983). The seminal work of Schein (1985) describes organisational culture as the basic assumptions of the organisation's members that are shaped through the process of resolving internal and external challenges. It is argued that as organisational members handle problems, guidelines are formed based on what is regarded as good; thus directing future actions in various circumstances (Schein, 1985). Over time, these form the basic assumptions and values of an organisation (Schein, 1985). This implies different levels of organisational culture (Schein, 1985) – firstly, the level of artefacts is identified, representing visible behaviours in organisations. The next level of organisational culture represents those values that assist in explaining specific detected behaviours. The third level refers to the underlying assumptions of an organisational culture that are not easily recognisable by the holders of these assumptions, nor easy to change or amenable to observation by others (Schein, 1985).

Furthermore, organisational culture refers to the joint conditioning of how humans think (Hofstede, 1983) and is influenced by the behaviour of the organisation's leader (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Organisational culture encompasses the norms, attitudes and a social structure that direct the conduct and interactions visible in everyday organisational life (Geiger, 2013; Illes et al., 2014; Sales, 2006). The seminal work of Smircich (1983) differentiates between two approaches to

organisational culture: On the one hand, it refers to the foundational reasoning, symbolisms and psycho-dynamics of organisational perspectives (Smircich, 1983). On the other hand, it is explained as a variable that either refers to the perspectives of a corporate culture – something that the organisation has rather than what the organisation is, thus representing the collective consensus of all members of the organisation – or multicultural management (Smircich, 1983).

The organisation's culture depicts the strategic direction of the organisation (Özçelik, Aybas, & Uyargil, 2016). Additionally, it explains how work is organised and the organisation structured, the various role expectations, how to act in a job and resolve problems, handle interrelationships, and promote beliefs and practices on a variety of issues such as diversity, handling of feedback and so forth (Geiger, 2013; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Sales, 2006; Schloegel, Stegmann, Van Dick, & Maedche, 2018). An organisational culture is managed and designed according to organisational needs, and with the aim of ensuring organisational success (Bagram, 2001); however, this is no easy task (Schein, 1996). Increasingly it is accepted that a more humane approach is necessary in the management of organisations and that such an approach should be embedded in the organisational culture (Bankole, 2010; Katz & Flynn, 2013). The concept of an employee-friendly culture, embedded in fairness, is imperative from an ER perspective (Fauver, McDonald, & Taboada, 2018; Venter et al., 2014).

Organisational culture, including a conflict subculture characterised as a safe space within which to function, plays an important role in conflict management systems and strategies (Gelfand et al., 2012; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lipsky & Avgar, 2010), and may prevent dysfunctional conflict (Dillon, 2012, Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). It makes sense that the organisational culture can potentially influence conflict levels in organisations – either in assisting to resolve conflict or contributing to lessening conflict levels. Organisations need a culture that is conducive to problem solving and conflict management (Rahim, 2002). For this to happen, the organisational culture should promote conflict competencies (Lynch, 2001). No research study was found that combined organisational culture, or more specifically a conflict culture, with other organisational and psychosocial processes in an integrated approach to conflict management.

The third antecedent is employee voice. Employee voice is often described in one of two ways (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Firstly, it is regarded as voice opportunities afforded to employees to state their opinions on aspects that affect their place of work (Mowbray, Wilkinson, & Tse, 2015). The second reference to employee voice (Van Dyne et al., 2003) describes process procedures which exist to increase fairness judgements and enable employee participation in

decision-making (Gollan & Lewin, 2013; Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa, & Xu, 2018). In this regard, employee voice is explained as a set of rules or procedures that allows employees who would be affected by specific decisions to voice their opinion (Farndale, Van Ruiten, Kelliher, & Hope-Hailey, 2011). In other words, the first reference to voice opportunities focuses on employee behaviour, while the second reference to employee voice focuses on the organisational processes that enable voice behaviour (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Liu, Zhu, and Yang (2010) distinguish between two kinds of voice behaviour, namely, speaking out (voice towards peers) and speaking up (voice towards the supervisor), explaining that employees are likely to voice their opinions to those they identify with. Additionally, employee voice on a macro-level (Wilkinson et al., 2018) may for instance refer to social dialogue (ILO, 2016a).

Employee voice displays industrial democracy in times when unions are on the decline (see for instance Benjamin, 2016), and voice is prevalent in union and non-union workplaces (McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). It holds the potential for shaping employment relationships that are built on trust, fairness and respect (Emmott, 2015), as employee voice increases perceptions of procedural justice (Hoogervorst, De Cremer, & Van Dijke, 2013b). Employees who feel free to voice their opinions at work have a better attitude towards management as they feel more recognised and heard, thus enhancing relationships between management and staff (Rees et al., 2013), while contributing significantly to team and organisational performance (Weiss, Kolbe, Grote, Spahn, & Grande, 2018). The converse is also true (Farndale, Van Ruiten, et al., 2011). Apart from fostering stronger relationships with management, employee voice also contributes in other ways to conflict management. For instance, a lack of employee participatory practices (e.g. employee voice) when confronting conflict situations results in feelings of unjust conflict resolution (Mestry & Bosch, 2013).

Hence, employee voice is regarded as imperative in conflict management strategies. However, as employee voice may challenge organisational processes (Emmott, 2015), and may influence negative behaviours, it may also result in negative employment relationships and induced conflict (Addison & Teixeira, 2017). Therefore, it is important for managers to allow their employees to voice their concerns and perspectives in a beneficial manner (Siira, 2012), as employees not only influence conflict directly but also indirectly and from a distance. Nonetheless, employees are often reluctant to voice their opinions at work (Liu et al., 2010), or cannot do so as no mechanisms exist for aiding employee voice (Wilkinson et al., 2018).

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that all three of the antecedent variables are important for the constructive management of conflict in organisations. Some research studies indicate a relationship between leadership (e.g. Purcell, 2014; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017), organisational culture (e.g. Gelfand et al., 2012; Katz & Flynn, 2013) and employee voice (e.g. Siira, 2012), and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Nonetheless, no research was found that considered the overall relationships between these three constructs and conflict management.

Similarly, a limited amount of research was found that considered the mediating role of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). A brief introduction to the constructs of employee engagement and organisational trust follows.

The seminal work of Kahn (1990) introduces employee engagement as personal engagement and personal disengagement, depending on employees' psychological presence. Kahn (1990) describes personal engagement as the behaviour employees display that indicates the extent to which they incorporate or do not incorporate their personal selves when performing their work roles. When personal engagement is at its highest, employees express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during their work performance (Kahn, 1990). The converse is also true. With disengagement (Kahn, 1990), employees withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during their work role performance – in other words, they uncouple themselves from their work roles. Numerous other descriptions of employee engagement have since emerged (Macey & Schneider, 2008). For instance, Saks (2006a) points out that employee engagement is not an attitude but rather refers to the degree to which employees are focused on and absorbed in their role performance as members of the organisation, or in their jobs. Furthermore, one of the best known definitions of work engagement refers to a positive workplace mind state that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002).

According to Emmott (2015), a significant relationship exists between employee engagement, a supportive conflict culture and conflict management. Even so, research suggests that although employee engagement contributes to lesser conflict, it does not eliminate conflict completely (Soieb, Othman, & D'Silva, 2013). Additionally, a negative relationship was found between unresolved workplace conflict and employee engagement (Soieb et al., 2013). In fact, Bakker and Demerouti (2018) posit that conflict is regarded as a job demand and therefore negatively

influences engagement. Engagement is dependent on effective interpersonal interactions and processes, including the management of conflict (Costa, Passos, Bakker, Romana, & Ferrão, 2017). However, a limited number of studies have researched the relationship between employee engagement and conflict management, and Jungst and Blumberg (2016) confirm that the consequences of conflict on engagement are relatively unknown. At the time of writing, no studies could be found on whether employee engagement mediates conflict management (conflict styles and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The second mediating variable refers to organisational trust. Two key dimensions are identified in the seminal works that define trust. The first of these refers to the positive expectation of trustworthiness in the trustee (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). The second dimension refers to a willingness to accept vulnerability, thus referring to the willingness to take risks and be dependent on a trustee, even in times of uncertainty (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). According to Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), these two dimensions are present in most definitions of trust across all levels (individual, team and organisation).

Research indicates the important role trust plays during conflict situations (Gounaris, Chatzipanagiotou, Boukis, & Perks, 2016; Guenter et al., 2016). Without trust, increasing harmony through change processes is not possible (Du, Ai, & Brugha, 2011; Pruitt, 1983). Successfully managing organisational conflict contributes to organisational trust (Bendeman, 2007; Chu, Yang, & Chen, 2011); this is an important finding as strong trust levels enhance communication and cooperation in organisations (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gounaris et al., 2016). Moreover, seminal works confirm that conflict has a negative relationship with trust levels, leading to team complications, while simultaneously obstructing the formation of trust and enhanced group interconnectedness (Jehn, Greer, Levine, & Szulanski, 2008).

Nonetheless, scholars confirm that relatively few conflict-related research studies have considered trust as a mediator (De Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012; Jehn et al., 2008). Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argue that more research on organisational trust is needed. To the knowledge of the researcher, no research has been carried out on the mediating role of organisational trust in an integrated conflict management framework.

Conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) is considered in this research as the dependent variable. The extensive literature and research on workplace conflict (Avgar, 2017; Wall & Callister, 1995) varies in terms of definitions and classifications of

conflict, how conflict manifests, the various factors influencing it, and how to manage it (Katz & Flynn, 2013). As discussed above, this is aggravated by the various disciplines from which conflict is researched (Avgar, 2017). Conflict is an intricate process (Bergiel, Gainey, & Bergiel, 2015), and forms part of social relationships and organisational life (Avgar, 2017; Coleman, Kugler, Bui-Wrzosinska, Nowak, & Vallacher, 2012; Erbert, 2014). Conflict is described in various seminal works as a process in which a party(ies) perceives that its interests are negatively affected or opposed by another party(ies) (Wall & Callister, 1995). Conflict is furthermore described as incompatible activities (Tjosvold et al., 2010) and interpersonal disagreements or discord between two or more parties (McKibben, 2017), and occurs when one person's behaviour obstructs or interferes with the other person's actions (Deutsch, 1973).

Organisational (workplace) conflict is defined as the inharmoniousness state that results from objectives, interests or values of diverse individuals or groups that are incompatible; and which may lead to these individuals or groups blocking one another's efforts to realise those goals (Jones & George, 2016; Litterer, 1966). Conflict is regarded as central to the employment relationship (Anstey, 2014; Avgar, 2017; Ntummy, 2015). The inherent presence of conflict because of the skewed power relationship between employers and employees (Fox, 1966; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Hayter, 2015), and the differences in and incompatibility of interests and goals held by the various individuals and groups within organisations (Colvin, 2016; Hayter, 2015; Hyman, 1972), emphasise the importance of considering ways to manage workplace experiences of conflict. Hyman (1977) predicted years ago that, over time, changes in business (e.g. increased technology and changes in the average size of businesses) would intensify the importance of finding sustainable solutions to deal with organisational conflict. In South Africa, organisational conflict has escalated, and institutions such as the CCMA acknowledge that the answer does not lie in dispute resolution processes alone, rather there is a dire need for the prevention of disputes in workplaces (CCMA, 2016, 2017). Considering conflict from an ER context is therefore imperative.

Conflict manifests on three different levels, namely interpersonal, intergroup and interorganisational (Jehn, 1997; Wall & Callister, 1995). Intergroup conflict holds potentially destructive effects for teams and their members (Avgar & Neuman, 2015) and significantly influences group effectiveness (De Wit et al., 2012). The potential effect of intergroup conflict on organisations has resulted in many and diverse research studies. Even so, most research up to now has considered the individual perceptions of conflict at the group level, thus implying that

group members perceive conflict in similar ways (De Wit, Jehn, & Scheepers, 2013). However, it is important to consider individual-level processes, as individuals' perceptions on conflict differ, which again influences the way conflict is managed (De Wit et al., 2013).

The current research considers ways to manage conflict by focusing on various variables that may influence the manifestation of different workplace conflict types and various interpersonal conflict handling styles, as indicated by individual working adults on various levels in a variety of organisations. The four types of intragroup conflict that were identified are task, relational, process (Jehn, 1995, 1997) and status (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) conflict. Additionally, it considers the choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles on an interpersonal level (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a). The conflict handling styles differentiate between the two dimensions of concern for self and concern for others (Rahim, 1983). Combining these two styles results in five specific interpersonal conflict handling styles, namely, integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding and compromising (Rahim, 1983).

Much of the research on conflict focuses on the four types of conflict (especially task and relational conflict) and how such conflict affects group outcomes. Differentiating between the different types of conflict and its dimensions contributes to a better understanding of their effect on group dynamics and outcomes (Jehn et al., 2008), and how conflict should be managed (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). This is especially important as research remains inconclusive about whether and what conflict type may potentially benefit performance (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; De Wit et al., 2012; Maltarich, Kuckenberger, Reilly, & Mathieu, 2018; O'Neill, Allen, & Hastings, 2013; Shaukat et al., 2017). Some scholars consider conflict solely as dysfunctional (e.g. Bergiel et al., 2015). Others argue that it can also be functional when organisations manage the various conflict types constructively (Bollen & Euwema, 2013; Chen, Zhao, Liu, & Dash Wu, 2012; De Wit et al., 2012; Holban & Mocanu, 2011; Humphrey et al., 2017; Iqbal & Fatima, 2013; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016; O'Neill et al., 2013; Tjosvold, 2008). Nevertheless, research indicates that various conflict management approaches or models are rarely applied when organisations experience conflict (Katz & Flynn, 2013).

Conflict management approaches are predominantly divided into either shorter-term conflict resolution approaches through third-party intervention models; or longer-term, strategic approaches to conflict management (Bendeman, 2007; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Siira, 2012). Research indicates that the current South African dispute resolution system developed to deal with conflict in organisations does not sufficiently address the needs of South African

organisations (Bendeman, 2007; CCMA, 2016, 2017). Longer-term approaches focus on conflict style frameworks based on people's orientation, behaviour or mindsets and the tactics used in conflict management (Katz & Flynn, 2013). The longer-term approach has a preventative focus (Emmott, 2015). Rahim (2002) proposes change at the broader organisational level, namely the leadership, culture and design of the organisation, and not only at the level where conflict may occur.

It is with this aim in mind that the present research investigates the development of a theoretical and empirically tested integrated conflict management framework at the broader organisational level. The framework recognises both the shorter-term conflict resolution processes and the preventative longer-term options, but focuses on a strategic management approach that considers the various antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust). An understanding is necessary of the relationship dynamics between these antecedents and mediating variables, and the manifestation of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. This will enhance the construction of a theoretical and empirically tested conflict management framework. Although third-party intervention models (ADR models) fall outside the scope of this research, they are recognised as integral to any conflict management framework.

Although the conflict and conflict management literature is vast, definite gaps in the research were identified. A substantial number of studies have investigated the different types of conflict (e.g. De Vries et al., 2012; De Wit et al., 2012, 2013, Jehn, 1994, 1995; Jehn et al., 2008). Additionally, various conflict theories and models are suggested (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2012; De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Rahim, 1983, 2002, Thomas, 1976, 1992; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). Conflict management behaviour modes and processes are considered (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; De Wit et al., 2013; Gelfand et al., 2012). Moreover, conflict resolution through ADR processes is advocated (Bollen & Euwema, 2013; Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Saundry & Wibberley, 2016), especially from an IR perspective. However, although research highlights the significance of an integrated conflict management approach in organisations (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007, Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001, Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001), no current framework was found that addresses the various dimensions of a broader organisational conflict management approach as suggested in this research. Therefore, it is concluded that a more methodical effort is needed in collecting evidence

on the prevention, manifestation and management of conflict (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and how best to integrate this with organisational and psychosocial strategies, processes and procedures.

Empirical studies vary on the way conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) relates to specific socio-demographic characteristics. In this research, the socio-demographic factors of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size and employee engagement programme are researched in relation to conflict management to develop a theoretical and empirically tested conflict management framework.

As a result of globalisation and changes in the demographics of workplaces, diversity management has become a universal necessity and imperative in effective ER management (Acar, 2010; Isiaka, Aliyu, Abogunrin, Aremu, & Abdullah, 2016). According to Jehn et al. (1999), the labour force is increasing in diversity on numerous dimensions such as ethnicity, age and gender. Group diversity can be defined as a group's heterogenic composition and refers to a wide-ranging number of individual attributes which range from the obvious and instantly apparent characteristics such as gender and race (referred to as surface-level diversity) to the more indirect and difficult to detect aspects of, for instance, values (referred to as deep-level diversity) (Acar, 2010). Conflict is regarded as a negative outcome of diversity factors (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012) and conflict potential increases when situations occur where different patterns of thinking, mother tongues and attitudes towards work and ways of life are present (Dulfer, 1996). Discriminatory practices and prejudices increase conflict (Dulfer, 1996).

South Africa's population is often fondly referred to as the rainbow nation. This is an apt description, fitting for a country with a population of more than 50 million people from a range of different cultures, ethnic groups, languages and religious beliefs (Deloitte, 2014, 2017). Race and gender are still the most important diversity issues South African workplaces are dealing with, while global workplaces focus diversity inclusion aspects on generational differences, and aspects such as sexual orientation and religion (Deloitte, 2017). In South Africa, the black African group dominated the labour force at 77,3% in 2015, with the labour force being characterised mainly by males (Festus et al., 2016). The biggest increase of the labour force when considering age groups was the cluster between 24 to 34 years of age, followed by the group of 35 to 44 years of age (Festus et al., 2016).

Diversity issues remain a sensitive, emotional and politically loaded aspect amongst South African citizens – the potential of perceived organisational injustice from both the designated (blacks, women and people with disabilities) and non-designated groups is a reality (De Beer, Rothmann Jr., & Pienaar, 2016). The South African Constitution and other labour legislation (e.g. the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (EEA) (Republic of South Africa, 1998) protect and regulate anti-discriminatory principles and practices such as affirmative action and employment equity. In contrast to most other employment equity and affirmative action legislation (with the exception of Malaysia), South Africa's legislation focuses on protecting the majority groups in the population and not minority groups (De Beer et al., 2016). A variety of perceptions exists among the different genders and racial groups in South Africa regarding affirmative action and discriminatory practices (Bowen, Edwards, & Lingard, 2013; De Beer, Rothmann Jr., et al., 2016; Shteynberg, Leslie, Knight, & Mayer, 2011). Non-designated groups perceive affirmative action as a form of reversed discrimination (De Beer, Rothmann Jr., et al., 2016; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Shteynberg et al., 2011). Subsequently, South African managers deal with a wide variety of discrimination and diversity issues, potentially leading to organisational conflict practices such as bullying (De Beer et al., 2016; Deloitte, 2014b; Mayer & Louw, 2011).

Perceptions of conflict, diversity and the need for a different approach have changed over the years (Prause & Mujtaba, 2015). Over the last two decades, organisational conflict has no longer been viewed from an authoritative approach, indicating ignorance towards parties; the emphasis is now increasingly on cultural awareness, value creation, and an increase in negotiation, advocacy and listening skills (Prause & Mujtaba, 2015). Cultural awareness and diversity management are imperative in managing workplace conflict; and hold the further potential benefit of productive partnerships, creativity and the like (Prause & Mujtaba, 2015). Leadership and an organisational culture characterised by tolerance and mutual respect are vital in managing conflict stemming from diversity issues (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; De Beer, Rothmann Jr., et al., 2016). At the same time organisations should realise that diversity aspects (gender, age differences and different levels of workers) influence the style of conflict management applied (Soieb et al., 2013). Clearly, diversity issues may affect conflict management at workplaces. Yet, the specific set of socio-demographical variables in relation to the other constructs and as it affects a conflict management framework for South African organisations has not been researched previously.

In conclusion, the above discussion indicates the adversarial nature of ER evident in South Africa (Benjamin, 2016; CCMA, 2017; Schwab, 2017; World Bank, 2017c). In the past, conflict

management models or frameworks specific to the South African ER context focused on conflict resolution through ADR methods such as mediation, arbitration and the like (see for instance Bendeman, 2007; CCMA, 2013). The literature review indicated that not enough attention is given to a proactive, strategic and integrated approach to managing conflict at organisational level (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Deutsch, 1973; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). Nonetheless, research indicates that South Africa is amid various macro external impediments that affect organisational level factors (Alexander, 2013; Benjamin, 2016; Rust, 2017; Von Holdt, 2013; World Bank, 2015, 2017c). Additionally, the high number of dispute referral cases to institutions such as the CCMA (2017) indicates that conflict in South African organisations may also be ascribed to other reasons. ER and related practitioners (e.g. industrial psychologists) face the challenge of delivering empirically tested and scientifically developed approaches to manage organisational conflict successfully. Although much has been written on conflict, conflict resolution and conflict management in general, there seems to be a lack in studies considering conflict management specific to South African organisations.

The background above indicates that the antecedents, the mediating variables and the moderating variables are all important when considering conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations. Investigating the relationship dynamics among these constructs will therefore assist in the construction of a framework for conflict management in South African organisations within an open-system paradigm.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Scholars of various disciplines (ER and organisational behaviour specialists, industrial psychologists, and the like) face the challenge of constructing empirically verified and scientifically improved approaches to the management of conflict in organisations. Seemingly, a lack of research is evident on an integrated conflict management approach. The problem is that there appears to be an absence of research investigating how conflict may be prevented and managed through a strategic and cohesive approach – especially in the diverse South African work context.

Exploring the overall relationship dynamics between the antecedent constructs (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (organisational trust and employee engagement) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) may assist in the construction of a theoretically and

scientifically researched conflict management framework for South African organisations which acknowledges the importance of all stakeholders. The study is a point of departure in adopting a dynamic, strategic and preventative approach to exploring the relationships between the research variables. It also deliberates on the way certain socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) contribute to the dynamic relationships between these variables.

A review of the current literature on leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) indicates the following research problems:

- Theoretical models do not clarify, in a single study, the relationship dynamics in organisations between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating effect of psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and how the relationship dynamics may contribute to a cohesive framework for understanding conflict management.
- There is a lack of research that investigates the research variables jointly in a single study, and the way socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) add to the dynamic interplay between these variables, especially in the diverse and challenging business and ER environment of South Africa.
- In the context of South African ER, industrial psychologists, ER (HR and IR) specialists and organisational behaviour practitioners require knowledge regarding the nature and direction of the theoretical and empirically observed relationship between the research variables. The knowledge derived from this research may possibly inform conflict management strategies for diverse groups of employees in organisations.

Research on the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), in a constantly changing and diverse ER context, could make a valuable contribution to ER and other relevant disciplines, specifically regarding conflict management. As

a final point, the results of this empirical study could encourage additional research and new directions in conflict management practices.

The above problem statement points to the following general research question:

What is (1) the nature of the relationship dynamics among the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and (2) what are the elements of the associations that can be used to inform a conflict management framework for a diverse group of employees?

From the above, the following specific research questions were formulated:

1.2.1 Research questions with regard to the literature review

As regards the literature review, the particular research questions are as follows:

Research question 1: How does the literature conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations?

Research question 2: How do the relationship dynamics among the constructs inform the elements of an integrated framework of conflict management?

Research Question 3: What are the possible implications for practice and research of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management within the South African ER context?

1.2.2 Research questions with regard to the empirical study

In terms of the empirical study, the following specific research questions apply:

Research question 1: What is the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles),

as demonstrated in the context of ER within a sample of South African-based organisations? (This research question relates to research hypothesis H1.)

Research question 2: What is the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables? (This research question relates to research hypothesis H2.)

Research question 3: Do employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)? (This research question relates to research hypothesis H3.)

Research question 4: Based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research, what is the fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework? (This research question relates to research hypothesis H4.)

Research question 5: Do employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) significantly moderate (1) the effect of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) on the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust); (2) the effect of the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles); and (3) the effect of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) on individuals' conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). (This research question relates to research hypothesis H5.)

Research question 6: How do employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences

of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in South African-based organisations? (This research question relates to research hypothesis H6.)

Research question 7: What recommendations can be articulated for ER specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers and human resource professionals with regard to conflict management practices in South African-based organisations and future research?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

From the above research questions, the following general and specific aims were formulated.

1.3.1 General aim of the research

The general aim of the research was to investigate the components and nature of a psychosocial framework for conflict management in organisations; the way in which such a framework manifests from exploring the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles); and to explore whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding these variables.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

The specific aims formulated for the literature review and the empirical research follow below:

1.3.2.1 Literature review

The specific aims of the theoretical study were the following:

Literature research aim 1: To conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations.

Literature research aim 2: To construct a theoretically integrated framework for conflict management based on the relationship dynamics among the constructs.

Literature research 3: To outline the possible implications for practice and research of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management within the South African ER context.

1.3.2.2 *Empirical study*

The specific aims of the empirical study were the following:

Empirical research aim 1: To determine the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as demonstrated in the context of ER in a sample of South African-based organisations.

Empirical research aim 2: To determine the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

Empirical research aim 3: To determine whether employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Empirical research aim 4: To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.

Empirical research aim 5: To ascertain whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust)

as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Empirical research aim 6: To determine whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within South African-based organisations.

Empirical research aim 7: To make recommendations for ER specialists, LR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers and human resource professionals with regard to conflict management practices in South African-based organisations and future research.

1.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Aspects underlying the challenge of developing an integrated framework for conflict management are varied and compound. Numerous factors appear to hinder or promote the development of an integrated conflict management framework. The influence of the respective variables – in combination or independently – on conflict management have not yet been well researched. Although some of the selected constructs (antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes) have been researched individually and in various relationships to each other, no research studies were found that integrated the combination of variables in a framework for managing conflict for the diverse ER context of South African organisations in a single study.

Considering ways to enhance organisational effectiveness through effective and efficient organisational processes and practices is essential (Isiaka et al., 2016). Conflict management may be considered to be one such necessary process. The current research is a starting point in investigating the relationship dynamics between leadership (as defined by Yukl, 2002), organisational culture (as defined by Schein, 2010), employee voice (as defined by LePine & Van

Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), organisational trust (as defined by Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012), employee engagement (as defined by Kahn, 1990, 1992), and conflict management (as defined by Swanepoel & Slabbert, 2012) – specifically in relation to conflict types (as defined by Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (as defined by Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a).

The research holds the potential to contribute significantly on three important levels, namely the theoretical, empirical and practical levels, as will be discussed below.

1.4.1 Potential contribution on a theoretical level

This study sought to explore the relationships between a selection of organisational processes and psychosocial factors that influence conflict management within an ER context from a strategic, proactive and integrated viewpoint. This is necessary as the literature review indicates that scant research has been conducted on the combinations of variables related to the research and that research has not integrated knowledge from various disciplines – rather, research remains within disciplinary silos (see for instance Avgar, 2017).

Thus, on a theoretical level and in general, the research hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge on ER, with specific reference to conflict management, within the diverse context of South African organisations. Besides contributing to an understanding of conflict management specific to the South African ER context, any newfound information may add to the broader body of knowledge on conflict management. More specifically, the research may prove useful as it identifies the relationship dynamics between the different antecedent, mediating and outcome variables. Furthermore, on a theoretical level the research potentially contributes to the body of knowledge on how the moderating socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) relate to the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Moreover, a unique perspective is taken to studying the relationship dynamics between the constructs of relevance to the study, as the current research considers conflict management by integrating the theoretical lens of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual-concern (Rahim, 1983) theories to link the relational

components of the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables. The research findings may expand the existing theories as it considers conflict management through an expanded integration of the premises of these three theories.

Furthermore, should strong relationships be found during the research, then the findings will lead to the construction of an integrated, proactive and strategic conflict management framework in an ER context, specific to the diverse nature of South African organisations, and which may be empirically tested. Such a framework may prove useful in understanding the influence of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice; and the psychosocial processes of organisational trust and employee engagement on conflict management, specifically as they relate to the manifestation of different conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

1.4.2 Potential contribution of the empirical level findings

The research potentially contributes to the development of an empirically tested conflict management framework within the context of ER for South African-based organisations. The research may shed light on the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations. Should no relationship be found between the suggested variables, or any one set of variables, then the contribution of the research would be restricted to eliminating those variables from future research on conflict management within an ER context in South African-based organisations.

In addition, empirically manifested associations may contribute to extending theory by integrating the theoretical premises of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual-concern (Rahim, 1983) theories. The empirically manifested relationship dynamics between the constructs of relevance to the research may produce new knowledge and insights regarding the psychosocial behavioural dynamics influencing the management of conflict in organisations.

Furthermore, the research potentially indicates whether individuals of a different race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme differ in terms of their experiences of conflict management. Perhaps most importantly,

the research may be breaking new ground because to date no study has incorporated the relationship dynamics between the variables related to the research in a single study. Although research has been conducted on some of the singular constructs, as well as on the relationships between multitudes of these constructs, empirical research on the development of a psychosocial integrated framework for conflict management based on the relationship dynamics between the research variables in a single study in South African-based organisations has not been undertaken.

1.4.3 Potential contribution on a practical level

The research holds significant practical potential for managing conflict in diverse organisations based in South Africa. The focus of the suggested framework is not on dispute resolution, but rather takes a preventative, strategic and integrated view on conflict management. The CCMA (2016, 2017) reports that the adversarial nature of South African workplace relationships necessitates a proactive, preventative approach to managing conflict, in addition to the existing focus of resolving disputes through ADR methods.

The relationship dynamics between the chosen constructs may assist organisations to manage conflict on a strategic, functional and workplace level (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). The antecedent variables and their relationship with the outcomes of conflict management will inform a framework for conflict management regarding the role leadership, organisational culture and employee voice play on all three of the above levels during the conflict management process. Thus, interventions based on the elements of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice may be planned that are informed by the findings of the study. This may enhance conflict management within organisations. Furthermore, if evidence is found of mediating effects between the antecedents and outcome variables, organisations may consider initiatives to strengthen the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. This holds the potential of various organisational benefits, as discussed in Chapter 4, but may also contribute to the way conflict is managed in organisations. Additionally, if evidence exists of moderating effects between the socio-demographic variables and the other chosen constructs, it may inform conflict interventions and strategies in managing conflict in South African-based organisations and their diverse employees and work groupings. If the research points to links between the antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes, it will support the construction of an integrated conflict management framework that may promote less adversarial employment relationships in South

African workplaces, and help to combat the high levels of conflict in South African-based organisations.

More specifically, the research potentially increases knowledge on organisational factors and psychosocial processes that influence (or not) the manifestation of various conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Such knowledge may shed light for ER and IR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers and human resource professionals on the possible interventions and strategic directions organisations may take to assist them in combatting and preventing poor workplace relationships through effective conflict management. In addition, the research may instil greater awareness on how employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) differ regarding the variables related to the research. This may assist in diversity management appreciation initiatives. Should this study contribute to ER and other practitioners developing a better understanding of how any one of the variables of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust influence (or not) the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), the results of the research would be significant enough to have justified the continuation of this research.

1.5 THE RESEARCH MODEL

To increase the valid and objective understanding of social reality, Mouton and Marais (1996) in their seminal work suggest a model for research in the social sciences, which includes five dimensions of social sciences research, namely, the (Burrell & Morgan, 2016; Mouton & Marais, 1996; Tuli, 2011)

- sociological dimension (considering data about human nature derived from human participants in an exact quantifiable manner)
- ontological dimension (the quintessence and reality of the phenomena being researched)
- ideological dimension (a set of normative beliefs held by an individual, group, or society)
- epistemological dimension (knowledge theories informing the research in a quest for truth), and

- methodological dimension (methods used to examine and gain an understanding about the social world).

Mouton and Marais' (1996) seminal research model is explained as a systems theoretical model containing three interacting subsystems (the intellectual climate, the market of intellectual resources and the research procedure itself). These subsystems interact with each other, as well as with the research domain of a specified discipline – in this case ER within the business management environment. This model (Mouton & Marais, 1996) was used as the framework for the research. In addition, the researcher incorporated certain philosophical assumptions underpinning the paradigmatic perspective of the research as discussed below.

1.6 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

A paradigm refers to a discipline's broad orientation or way of thinking (intellectual climate and definitive boundaries) about its subject matter, based on the shared assumptions predominant in that discipline. In other words, a paradigm refers to the theories, models, methodologies and body of knowledge of a specific viewpoint (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The foundation of a paradigm is mainly philosophical and is not meant to be tested. It defines the way science should be conducted within the boundaries of legitimate knowledge production (Collis & Hussey, 2013; O'Leary, 2007; Tuli, 2011; Vogt, 2005).

This research was conducted within an ER context. In the following sections, the paradigm perspectives relating to the literature review and empirical research are explained.

1.6.1 The intellectual climate

In this research, the literature review is presented from humanistic and open-system paradigms, whilst the empirical research is presented from a positivist research paradigm.

1.6.1.1 Literature review

The literature review is conducted from humanistic and open-system paradigms, as explained below.

(a) *The humanistic paradigm*

A humanistic paradigm is based on a number of assumptions (Brockett, 1997; Leonard, 2002; Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 1989; Moore et al., 2016):

- *Human beings have freedom of personal choice, and are dignified and active beings*

Humankind differs from other objects such as plants based on its unique qualities. Humans make choices and are responsible for the way their lives are lived. The current research probes the opinions and perceptions of participants regarding their experiences of specific organisational elements and how these relate to conflict management. However, in doing so, the researcher adheres to accepted ethical standards.

- *Humanity is inherently good and positive*

Individuals have responsibilities towards the self but also to society. Humans are intrinsically good, and any destructive behaviours are the result of environmental influences such as poverty, unemployment, racism, discrimination, bullying and the like. This research accepts that the environment influences the way organisations are managed, as well as on how individuals react. Aspects such as unemployment and poverty significantly influence South African society, as discussed elsewhere. Thus, the research is interested in how participants view conflict management in organisations that function within a broader macro and meso environment.

- *Individuals have unlimited growth potential and are drawn to self-actualisation*

Humans regard the development of the self-concept as critical in the process of maturation. The current research variables (e.g. employee voice and employee engagement) fundamentally recognise the individual's need for self-actualisation.

- *Human beings have conscious processes*

Conscious, mindful processes dictate an individual's choices. The focus of the study on conflict management guides the information that is collected on how individuals at various levels in organisations act towards others through conscious decisions and processes. These decisions, actions and processes are evident in the chosen antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice.

- *The individual forms part of an integrated whole*

In this research, the perspectives of individuals as members of an organisation are investigated from the viewpoint of the organisation influencing the individual. For instance, the organisation may influence the individual through its leadership, its organisational culture, its approach to aspects such as employee voice, and whether employees feel that the organisation can be trusted or not. Thus, it is not only the perspective of the individual that is deliberated but also how the organisation as a collective unit influences the individual. Furthermore, it stands to reason that external stakeholders (e.g. trade unions), holds the potential of influencing both the collective organisational unit and the individual employee. These aspects potentially influence employees' engagement levels, and more specifically, the way employees experience conflict and the management of conflict in organisations.

Thematically, the humanistic paradigm thus relates to the constructs of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

(b) The open-system paradigm

Within an open systems paradigm, individuals are studied as part of an organisation that interrelates with the external environment. An open systems paradigm assumes that open systems such as organisations constantly interact with the external environment (Cunliffe, 2008; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Thompson, 1967). The organisation is seen as a set of interdependent systems that function together as a unified whole that changes as necessary to ensure growth and expansion (Hodge, Anthony, & Gales, 1996). Cunliffe (2008) explains that in a bid to sustain activity, open systems constantly strive towards finding a balance between inputs, throughputs and outputs, and initiate feedback mechanisms. Such open systems engage in production and maintenance activities that are continuously adapted to ensure optimum functionality (Hodge et al., 1996).

Thematically, the open systems paradigm relates to the constructs of the research within an ER context. The ER system of an organisation is interconnected with its environment; that is, other systems globally and nationally such as a country's political and economic systems, role players, institutions and the like (Rust, 2017; Venter et al., 2014). In addition, focusing specifically on the organisation from an open systems approach, ER is viewed as an organisational subsystem of the organisation and its surrounding environment (Craig, 1975; Dunlop, 1958; Nel et al., 2016;

Rust, 2017). From this perspective, organisations with healthy ER view employees as the cornerstone of their organisations, playing a vital role in reaching their objectives (Venter et al., 2014).

(c) *Developmental contextual framework*

The developmental contextual framework posits that humans' progress because of complex interactions between individuals and their surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vondracek, Lerner, & Schulenberg, 1986), and as such it elaborates on the open systems framework and paradigm. When a change or a conflict is experienced in one system, it may affect changes in other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Accordingly, individuals are influenced by four environmental subsystems (Puffer, 1999):

- *The micro system*

Individual development is subject to ecological influences in close proximity. Individuals function within several micro systems, such as family, peers, colleagues and the organisation in which they work. In this research, the relationship dynamics within the micro system of the organisation are considered. Within an organisational context, an employee's micro system would be where immediate interactions take place, for instance in a sub-department, a team, or within the organisation. Thematically, an organisation's leadership (e.g. supervisors), team members, colleagues, and so forth may influence organisational members generally, as well as in the way they regard conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

- *The meso system*

Environmental forces form when two or more micro systems interact, creating reciprocal links. Subsequently, a wide-ranging network of socialising agents forms that jointly interact, influence and shape participants, offering more developmental influences than would a single microsystem. The current research acknowledges that various microsystems exist that create reciprocal links, for instance employees, other organisations such as trade unions, employers, teams, organisational departments and management, and that these links may affect conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

- *The exosystem*

The exosystem comprises environmental elements from other settings that profoundly influence the individual through a trickle-down effect, without the individual being directly involved in them

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this research, it is acknowledged that various systems influence organisational members indirectly, such as the educational institutions they have been part of, or the workplaces of a friend or family member.

- *The macro system*

The macro system describes the components of an individual's cultural background. It includes aspects that differentiate a specific culture and subculture from others, for instance a developed versus developing country, poverty and socioeconomic status, ethnicity, historical events and the like (Berk, 1998; Rice, 1996). A composite mixture of social relations in the economic, social, political and other contexts form part of present-day society (Tereshina, Bolshakov, Ivanov, & Khramova, 2016). Workplaces operate within this environment and are part of a cultural context, and therefore are part of the employees' macro system, as are other aspects such as the ones mentioned above. The current research considers how employees' socio-demographic characteristics moderate the relationship dynamics of the variables.

To conclude, the application of this theory thematically relates to the constructs of the research as it helps to explain the interaction between the environment and the individual.

1.6.1.2 *Empirical research*

The empirical study is presented from the positivist research paradigm. In social science research, a positivist viewpoint searches – in an organised and deductive manner (Neuman, 2011) – for consistencies and causal relationships in order to clarify and envisage what happens in the social world (Burrell & Morgan, 2016), thereby providing scientific clarifications (Tuli, 2011). As such, the positivist research paradigm is a philosophical framework that guides researchers in terms of how scientific research should be conducted using objective methods to explain in a quantifiable manner how constructs interact, shape events and result in conclusions (Collis & Hussey, 2013; O'Leary, 2007; Tuli, 2011; Vogt, 2005).

In general, positivism is a term used for an approach where a scientific method is applied to the study of human action; in other words, reality is based on scientific research and the discovery of theory (Schwandt, 2007). Research stemming from a positivist approach focuses on theories that predict or explain social phenomena, as well as logical reasoning to ensure accuracy, rigour and objectivity. As it is believed that variables of social phenomena can be observed and measured, the statistical analysis of quantitative research data based on a positivist approach allows for the explanation and/or prediction of phenomena through deductive reasoning and by testing theory

(Collis & Hussey, 2013). The approach thus allows for the establishment of relationships between variables, linking these to deductive or integrated theory.

Thematically, the empirical study consists of a quantitative survey dealing with the statistical relationship dynamics between the antecedents, mediators, moderators and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as experienced within organisations.

1.6.2 The market of intellectual resources

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), the market of intellectual resources encompasses the gathering of beliefs directly affecting the standing of scientific accounts. In the following sections the theoretical models, meta-theoretical statements and conceptual descriptions of the constructs of the research are discussed and the main hypothesis and the theoretical and methodological assumptions are presented.

1.6.2.1 Meta-theoretical statements

Every research study is grounded in underlying theories, models and paradigms, which form the definitive context of the specific study (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Meta-theoretical statements represent these assumptions and a chosen meta-theoretical framework forms the boundaries of the research. Meta-theoretical statements thus assist in choosing a particular approach to follow when interpreting the research results.

This research was conducted within the context of ER as a field of application in the business management discipline. ER is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field, which includes aspects of business management, HRM, IR, IOP, industrial sociology, law and organisational behaviour (Adams, 1983; Avgar, 2017; Bamberger, 2008; Emmott, 2015; Godard, 2014b; Kochan, 1980; Nel et al., 2016; Wilkinson & Wood, 2017). Avgar (2017) supports the integration of various disciplines in conflict management studies, criticising the fact that research on conflict is often conducted in one specific area, thus not acknowledging the influence of other fields of study.

The following meta-theoretical statements are applicable:

(a) Employment relations

By its very nature, ER cannot be studied from one discipline only, as it encompasses aspects of a variety of disciplines. Conducting the current research from an ER perspective thus allows for the integration of various disciplines. ER takes theories from a diversity of disciplines and studies the phenomena of employment relationships through these theories (Loudon et al., 2013).

It is generally acknowledged that the management of an organisation's people is key to its success (Jones & George, 2016). ER (as one of the functional areas of business management) focuses on the management of all aspects of people within organisations (Kaufman, 2014). It has a broader focus than HRM, which traditionally emphasises the individual aspects of the employee, and IR, which takes a collective approach to people at work (Loudon et al., 2013). HRM focuses on all the actions managers engage in to ensure that employees are attracted to the organisation and then retained, and that employees' performance adds to the achievement of organisational goals (Jones & George, 2016). IR is mainly concerned with the relationship between employers (management) and trade unions and their collective bargaining processes (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Emmott, 2015; Godard, 2014b; Ilesanmi, 2017; Kaufman, 2008; Nel et al., 2016; Piore, 2011). However, ER considers both the collective (typically IR) and individual (typically HRM) perspectives on people management.

Additionally, Emmott (2015) indicates a visible shift from IR as a field of study closely related to sociology to that of industrial and organisational psychology. Sociology explains how the social world functions, thus considering behaviours, relations, interactions and patterns of social organisation among humankind (Turner, 2013). IOP is defined as the study of factors influencing work behaviour (e.g. socio-demographic and socio-cultural influences, diversity issues, and the like) by applying workplace psychological principles, theories and research (Landy & Conte, 2017). Thus, IOP explains how organisations respond to psychological, socioeconomic and political forces. Similarly, other intellectuals (Boxall, 2014; Godard, 2014b) not only confirm that the field of ER has moved progressively closer to the field of IOP, but that it is also increasingly associated with the organisational behaviour discipline. Organisational behaviour is described as the study of aspects that effect the way individuals and groups react to and act in organisations (Jones & George, 2016). Consequently, this research recognises the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of ER.

The current research considers the relationship dynamics of the various organisational and psychosocial constructs from both the individual (HR) and the collective (IR) dimensions of the employment relationship – specifically as they relate to the management of conflict (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and how it contributes to organisational success. This is a necessary approach, as conflict may manifest on either the individual or the collective level, and within unionised and non-unionised organisations. Additionally, evidence exists that workplaces are increasingly emphasising individualism and that the employee voice is becoming less audible in collective channels and relationships (e.g. trade unions) (Dimitriu, 2016). This is also the case in South Africa (Benjamin, 2016; Scully, 2016), although arguably to a lesser extent than in, say, the USA.

Thus, the study examines the relationship dynamics between the mediating psychosocial variables of employee engagement and organisational trust and the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the moderating socio-demographic variables and outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Considering the research from this multidisciplinary ER and business management perspective may assist in explaining how employees on various levels of the organisation respond to conflict and other organisational aspects such as organisational culture, leadership, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement interventions, as well as their relationships with the management of conflict within a broader open system (Dunlop, 1958) that recognises the role and importance of all stakeholders (e.g. trade unions). In other words, thematically, the current research aims to explain the relationship dynamics visible between people in organisations in such a way that an effective and efficient organisation results.

(b) Business management

Business management entails the coordination of the activities and functions of organising, planning, controlling and leading in the organisation in such a way that the objectives of the organisation are met (Erasmus et al., 2013; Jones & George, 2016). Business management within a free-market and profit-making system considers what a business is and how to effectively and efficiently establish and manage the business (Jones & George, 2016). ER is regarded as an important business management function as the human resources of an organisation are commonly considered to be an organisation's biggest asset when productive.

Thematically, this study therefore has a business management focus within the broader context of ER. Accordingly, it is designed to enhance the overall effectiveness of organisations by constructing a conflict management framework for South African-based organisations.

1.6.2.2 *Conceptual descriptions and theoretical models*

The ensuing conceptual descriptions, with a short definition of each construct, and the underpinning theoretical model and measuring instrument for each, are set out below.

(a) Antecedents: leadership, organisational culture and employee voice

For the purposes of this study, the antecedents are leadership, organisational culture and employee voice.

- *Leadership*

Two theories guide the research on leadership. The first theory underpinning leadership in this research is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which explains leader–follower social exchange on a daily basis (Murry, Sivasubramaniam, & Jacques, 2001). The second theory relates specifically to the role leaders play in conflict management, namely conflict cultures theory (Gelfand et al., 2012).

In the context of this study, leadership is defined as the process of adapting to given situations while influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2002).

Leadership is measured by two instruments, of which the first is known as the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001). This scale measures the sub-construct of “Perceptions of social exchange leadership” that transpires between leaders and their subordinates in their daily dealings. The second scale is the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) that assesses the sub-construct of “Leaders’ conflict behaviours”; in other words, how leaders influence conflict cultures and the consequences of their behaviour, be it collaborative, dominating or avoidant conflict management behaviour.

- *Organisational culture*

For the purposes of this research, organisational culture is defined as the patterns of shared assumptions that are internally integrated as organisations adapt to external problems in ways that are considered valid and thus carried over to new employees as the correct way to think, perceive or feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2010). In this research, the theoretical foundation of organisational culture (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) is based on the principles of social constructionism (Denison, 1996) and Schein's theory (2010).

Organisational culture is measured by the Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010b, 2010a), which measures the sub-constructs of "Tolerance of conflict" and "Allowance for mistakes".

- *Employee voice*

Blau's seminal social exchange theory (1964) forms the basis for the employee voice construct. For the purposes of this study, employee voice is regarded as the deliberate but optional, informal and/or formal, upward communication between employees and their managers (speaking up), or outward communication with colleagues (speaking out), with the main aim of improving (rather than criticising) organisational performance by either suggesting constructive and appropriate action in relation to customary work procedures and other work-related issues because of challenges and potential problems (prohibitive voice); or by sharing original and constructive thinking, ideas, plans, recommendations, clarifications or observations for change (promotive voice) (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Two instruments, namely the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst, De Cremer, & Van Dijke, 2013a), were used. The Voice Behaviour Measure assesses the sub-constructs of "Speaking out" (employees speaking to colleagues) and "Speaking up" (employees speaking to management), while the Voice Measure assesses "Employee voice opportunities", indicating whether leaders grant voice to employees in order for employees to express their opinions (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a).

(b) Mediating psychosocial processes: employee engagement and organisational trust

For the purposes of this research, the mediating effect of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust are considered.

- *Employee engagement*

In this research, employee engagement is informed by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). For the purposes of this study employee engagement is defined as employees being psychologically present (Kahn, 1990) in their job and organisational roles (Saks, 2006a) by indicating physical (indicating energy and vigour), emotional (being dedicated) and behavioural (being absorbed and engrossed) components (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

To measure employee engagement, the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006a, 2006b) was used to assess two distinct sub-constructs or types of employee engagement, namely “Job engagement” (relating to an employee’s work role) and “Organisational engagement” (relating to the employee as a member of the organisation).

- *Organisational trust*

The main theoretical perspective for the trust construct is Blau’s (1964) social exchange theory. The definition of organisational trust by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) is used for the purposes of this study; that is, organisational trust is a psychological state indicating a willingness to accept vulnerability based on the positive expectations of an organisation.

Using the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth, Mak, Sim, Jauhari, & Manaktola, 2011), three sub-constructs are measured as part of the organisational trust construct, namely, the three dimensions of integrity, commitment and dependability (Chathoth, Mak, Jauhari, & Manaktola, 2007; Chathoth et al., 2011). Integrity is defined as the element of organisational trust that encompasses the values and principles (e.g. fairness and justice, honesty and transparency) the trustee adheres to, and the trustor accepts (Albrecht, 2002). Commitment is described as the feeling of belonging to an organisation and actions towards the organisation over time (Chathoth et al., 2011). Dependability refers to the consistent and reliable actions of an organisation, indicating that it will follow up on its promises (Paine, 2003, 2012).

(c) Outcomes: conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)

For the purposes of this study, conflict is described as a process where one party perceives its interests to be adversely affected or opposed by another party because of perceived incompatibilities (Wall & Callister, 1995). Conflict management is regarded as having a strategic, long-term focus on managing conflict by considering the internal and external organisational environment (Lipsky et al., 2014), and aligning conflict management strategies and processes

with other business and ER strategies, policies and procedures (Bingham et al., 2003; Currie et al., 2017; Nash & Hann, 2017). This thus ensures a constructive conflict management process in which opposing sides are brought together in a cooperative manner; and practical, reachable and cooperative strategies are designed to manage and monitor differences constructively (Ghai, Bloomfield, & Reilly, 1998; Wright, Mazziotta, & Tropp, 2017), with the overall aim of enhancing the performance and effectiveness of organisations (Lipsky et al., 2014).

To design a framework for conflict management, this research studies conflict management in organisations by acknowledging different conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles as sub-constructs.

- *Conflict types*

This research considers four types of intragroup conflict, as experienced by individual employees, namely, task, relational and process conflict (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001), as well as status conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). In the process of determining whether conflict can be beneficial to organisations and group effectiveness, scholars have considered (amongst other things) the relationships between certain conflict dimensions, namely, that of conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms (openness versus avoidance norms), and group atmosphere (based on the levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, and liking of group members and low competition) and the various types of conflict; and how these aspects influence group performance (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Theoretically, the research done by Jehn (1995, 1997) supports a multidimensional intragroup conflict grounded theory, while negotiated order theory forms the basis of Bendersky and Hays' (2012) work on status conflict and the way it influences organisational performance.

Four measuring instruments were used to assess these sub-constructs. The first was Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995), which measures task conflict, relationship conflict, conflict norms (considering openness norms versus avoidance norms) and conflict resolution (potential to resolve conflict). Secondly, Jehn and Mannix's (2001) work measuring group atmosphere, conflict norms and liking of fellow group members was used. The third measuring instrument used is an expansion of Jehn's first instrument (Jehn 1995), incorporating the process conflict scale (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Fourthly, the Status Conflict in Groups measuring instrument (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) was used to evaluate status conflict.

- *Interpersonal conflict handling styles*

Dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) informs the research on conflict management through a choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising). To measure these interpersonal conflict handling styles, Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) was used.

(d) Overarching meta-theoretical lens

Tapia et al. (2015) caution that, generally, theories have no common basis for comparison and therefore scholars' group theories so as to facilitate particular research questions. However, through meta-triangulation, theory may be informed from multiple paradigms, thereby exploring the theoretical and analytical potential of various theories concurrently. According to Tapia et al. (2015), such an approach bypasses the ontological and normative divisions between different theories, and may therefore explain the potential of different theories in, for instance, simultaneously emphasising managerial domination and employee mobilisation, the constraints and resources of various institutions, or integrating various managerial strategies to enable employees to have a voice. This is an important argument as new forms of work (e.g. changes in workplace forms, employment contracts and the like) influence traditional avenues of employee voice (e.g. being represented by trade unions). This also necessitates a different way of considering the various interests, actors and actions (e.g. industrial action) evident in global workplaces (Hayter, 2015; Sen & Lee, 2015; Tapia et al., 2015). Considering alternative ways to counter the imbalance of worker power is evident, necessitating new ways of working together (Tapia et al., 2015).

Accordingly, for the purposes of this research, three theoretical models provide the meta-theoretical lens for this research, as set out in Table 1.1 below. A discussion follows the table, explaining the reasoning behind choosing these three theories.

Table 1.1

Meta-theoretical Lens of the Research

Meta-theoretical lenses	Scholars
Collaborative pluralism	Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017
Social exchange theory	Blau, 1964
Dual concern theory	Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976

A discussion of the three theories that provide the meta-theoretical lens for the research, as indicated in Table 1.1 above, follows below.

- *Collaborative pluralism*

A collaborative pluralist perspective (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) to constructing a framework for conflict management from an ER perspective is regarded as the point of departure for the current study. The pluralist perspective is based on the seminal work of Fox (1966) who contrasted two perspectives on IR, namely unitarism and pluralism (Heery, 2016; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017).

According to the unitarist approach, there is only one source of authority (management) and one force of loyalty in an organisation, which is the organisation itself (Loudon et al., 2013). As such, no outside intrusion (e.g. the interference of trade unions) is tolerated (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Johnstone and Wilkinson (2017) differentiate between autocratic, hard unitarism (where no challenge to managerial prerogative is tolerated and employee voice and consultation are limited) and consultative, soft unitarism (where employee voice and limited consultation are supported, but without the interference of unions). The common interest for employers and employees is the success of the organisation, and thus there is no division between the interest of employers and employees (Loudon et al., 2013). Conflict is therefore unnecessary and when it does exist, it is relatively minor and only temporary (Kaufman, 2008; Loudon et al., 2013).

In contrast, a pluralistic viewpoint argues that there are different sources of authority and loyalty in organisations, for instance to trade unions or among groups within an organisation (Kaufman, 2008; Loudon et al., 2013). Moreover, there are differences of interest, particularly regarding aspects relating to the distribution of status, income and power (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Loudon et al., 2013; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011); and thus an integral and irremovable conflict of interest is at the heart of any employment relationship (Heery, 2016). Consequently, even though the success of the organisation still prevails as a common goal, inequality in risk, effort and

benefits will inevitably result in conflict as some people will gain and reap benefits at the expense of others (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Loudon et al., 2013; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011). This necessitates that conflict sometimes be managed from outside the organisation through the interference of, for instance, government or trade unions (Loudon et al., 2013).

Power among actors stems from social relations, which entail a mutual dependence between parties – implying dependence in that each party holds (to some extent) the power to award or deny, or assist or hamper, the other party's fulfilment (Emerson, 1962). Pluralism accepts that an employer holds more power than an employee does (Heery, 2016). Notwithstanding, employees may challenge management prerogative as it is viewed as legitimate and inevitable, as well as manageable (Gould & Desjardins, 2014). A balance between the interests of employees versus those of management is thus possible, and serves the interests of both parties (Heery, 2016). Pluralists argue that workers should participate in shaping the regulations of the employment relationship, and in ensuring the goal of employee-wellbeing (Heery, 2016). Hence, collaborative pluralism (i.e. where role players work collaboratively to enhance common workplace interests) is supported, as opposed to adversarial pluralism (where role players develop their own interests) (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017).

Choosing a perspective from which to study conflict management is no simple feat. There are various reasons for this. Scholars comment that there are “different shades of unitarism and pluralism” (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017, p. 3). According to IR meta-theories, unitarism predicts that ER will experience a steady decline in autonomous unions and/or additional forms of worker representation based on the assumption that management will increasingly become more skilled in harmonising workplaces and building trust (Tapia et al., 2015). On the other hand, a pluralist frame of reference assumes that innovative organisations and practices (in the form of unions or other means of employee representation) will surface. With time, these will increasingly adapt in order to uphold an equitable and adequate power balance between the various interests of the participants in the employment relationship (Hayter, 2015; Tapia et al., 2015). It is the latter argument that is supported in this research.

- *Social exchange theory*

The second meta-theoretical lens of the research is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), according to which social behaviour results from an exchange process (Emerson, 1976; Soieb et al., 2013). Employees reciprocate their leaders' behaviour towards them by matching it with their own behaviour as part of their social exchange relationship (Hansen, 2011). Employees

participate in these relationships of give and take should they perceive that general rules of exchange are followed (Saks, 2006a).

- *Dual-concern theory*

The dual concern theory is an established model for describing individual conflict handling styles (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) that has been validated across a variety of cultures (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). According to Rahim (1983), two dimensions are evident in conflict management, namely concern for self, and concern for others. Concern for self is indicated by the degree to which organisational members may attempt to address to their own concerns, whereas concern for others relates to the degree to which organisational members may endeavour to satisfy the concerns of others (Rahim, 1983). These two dimensions explain or predict the occurrence of the five modes of interpersonal conflict handling styles as discussed above. Accordingly, the dual concern theory predicts a strategic theory of choice from which to manage conflict, depending on diverse motivational conditions in conflict (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). According to Pruitt (1983), dual concern theory suggests that parties' strategic choices may be influenced and altered, should one party encourage the other to be concerned about their outcomes.

Figure 1.3 is a contextual illustration of the three core theoretical lenses of the current research, as discussed above.

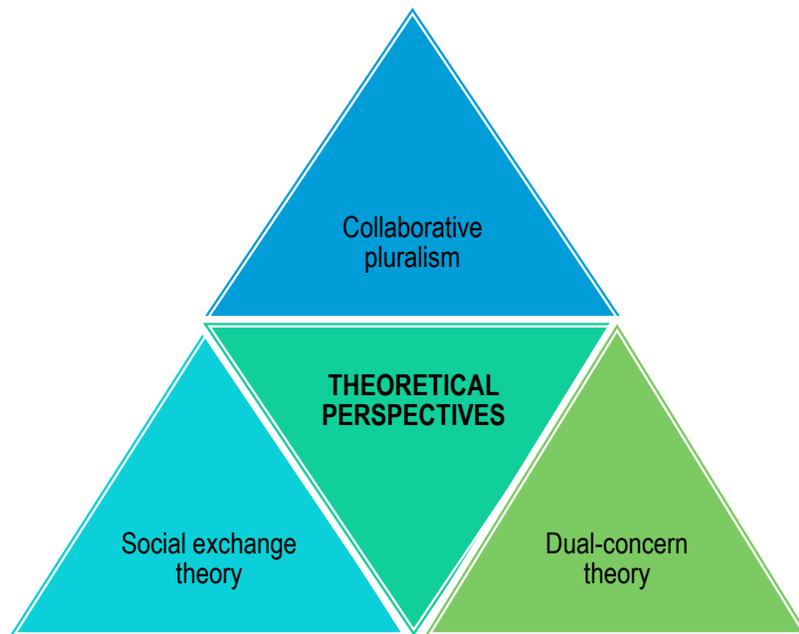


Figure 1.3 An Illustration of the Core Theoretical Perspectives of the Current Research

Table 1.2. summarises the core constructs below. The table outlines the core aspects that were measured and the relevant theories and models underlying the constructs, and summarises the measuring instruments for this study.

1.6.2.3 *Central hypothesis*

The central hypothesis of the research is outlined below:

The mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust are significant mechanisms in explaining the relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations. In addition, perceptions of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediating psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations will be experienced differently by members of homogenous socio-demographic subgroups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), and will have different implications for conflict management practices in combination than they do individually. The hypothesis furthermore assumes that a conflict management framework can be constructed from the elements that emerge from the empirical links between the constructs.

The above is illustrated in Figure 1.4 below, providing an overview of the theoretical elements and the two-pronged approach informing the conflict management framework. On the first level, the variable-centred approach is illustrated which explores the relationship dynamics between the antecedents, mediating psychosocial processes and outcome variables. On the second level, Figure 1.4 illustrates the consideration of whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme as a set of relatively stable traits modify (moderate) the strength or direction of the relationships between the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables. Thus, a person-centred approach complements the variable-centred approach. The levels of investigation that inform the development of a framework for conflict management in South African-based organisations are illustrated below.

Table 1.2

Constructs, Core Aspects, Measuring Instruments and Theoretical Models of the Research

Construct	Core aspects to be measured	Measuring instrument	Core theoretical model
Independent variables			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of social exchange leadership • Leaders' conflict behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) • Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) • Conflict cultures theory (Gelfand et al., 2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerance of conflict • Allowance for mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social constructionism (Denison, 1996)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice behaviour (speaking out, speaking up) • Employee voice opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) • The Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)
Mediating variables			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job engagement • Organisation engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Commitment • Dependability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)
Dependent variables			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict management (multidimensional conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict) • Interpersonal conflict handling styles (Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, compromising) • Conflict resolution potential • Conflict norms • Group atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) • Status Conflict in Groups (Bendersky, & Hays, 2012) • ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Model (Jehn, 1995, 1997) • Dual-concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976)

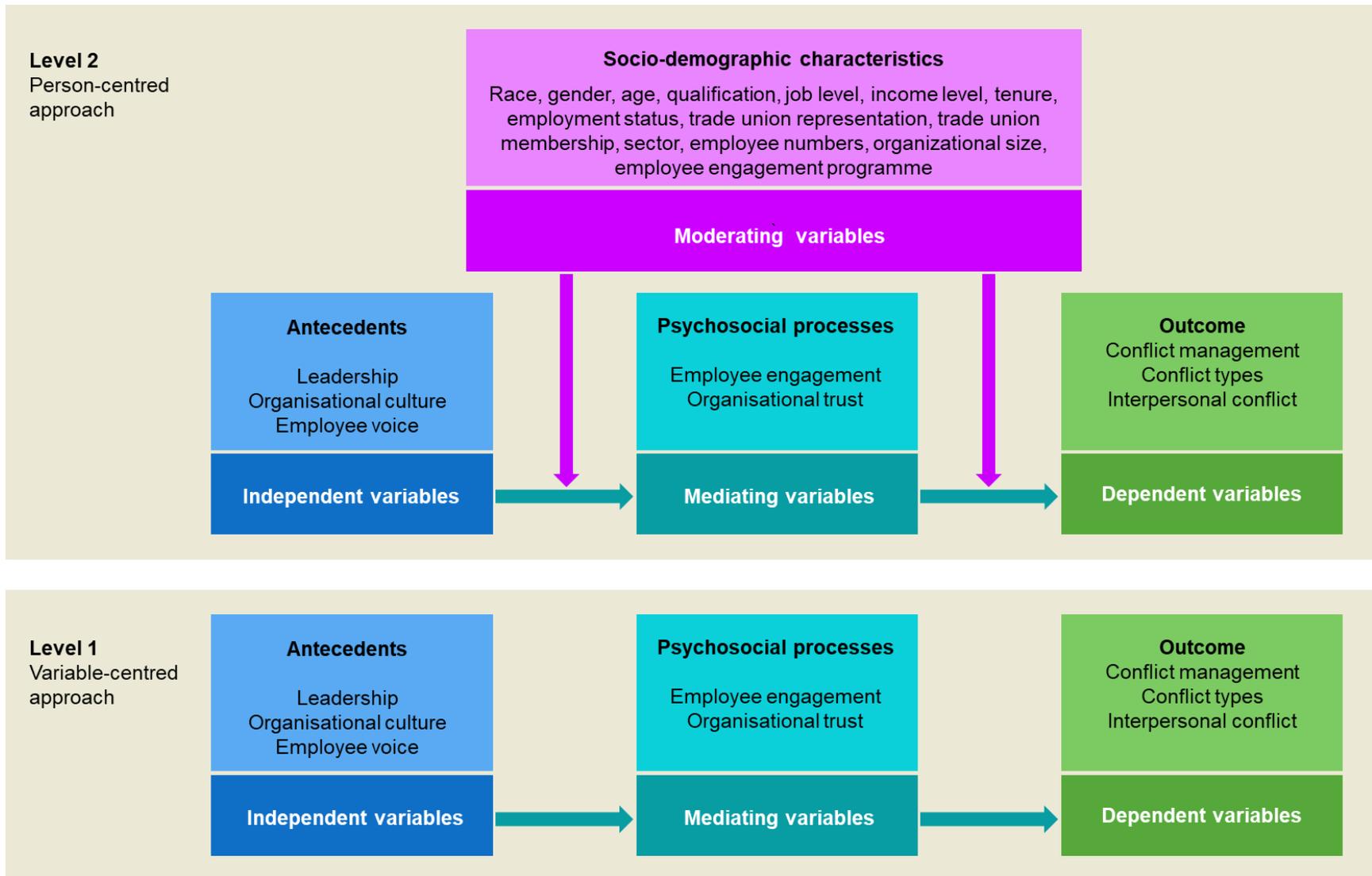


Figure 1.4. An Overview of the Two-Pronged Approach to the Research

1.6.2.4 *Theoretical assumptions*

Based on the literature review the following theoretical assumptions are addressed in this research:

- There is a need to conceptualise, by means of theoretical models in the literature, the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), psychosocial processes as mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcomes (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within an ER context in South African organisations.
- Socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme will influence the experience and perceptions of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust), and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The suggested variables constitute a psychosocial framework that can be empirically tested and may guide conflict management practices in organisations.

1.6.2.5 *Methodological assumptions*

Methodological assumptions can be regarded as views about the social sciences and scientific research (Mouton & Marais, 1996). In addition, Collis and Hussey (2013) identify certain philosophical assumptions underpinning the positivist paradigm. These methodological and philosophical assumptions and beliefs are described in more detail below as they guide the methodological choices made for this research.

(a) Sociological dimension

The sociological dimension requires sociological research ethics as it is dependent on a research community as a source of theory development. This dimension emphasises the social nature of scientific research, viewing it as a shared human activity. When research follows a quantitative approach within the realms of this sociological dimension, it is regarded as analytical and exact (Mouton & Marais, 1996). For the purposes of this study, the research was non-experimental and

focused on the quantitative analysis of variables and concepts as discussed in Chapter 6 (Research Method) and Chapter 7 (Research Results).

(b) Ontological dimension

This dimension focuses on the nature of reality. According to the positivist paradigm, social reality – and there is only one reality – is objective and independent from, or external to, the researcher (Collis & Hussey, 2013). This dimension relates to the study of people and institutions whose conduct can be assessed (Mouton and Marais (1996). This research focused on the study of people in organisations, and measured the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), psychosocial processes as mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within an ER context in South African organisations.

(c) Teleological dimension

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), the teleological dimension accentuates goal-directed, systematic science and research. Thus, a research problem should be formulated that relates to the goals of the research project. For this research, the goal was to develop and test a psychosocial framework for managing conflict within a diverse ER context. In practical terms, the teleological dimension of this research project therefore aims to expand the body of knowledge within the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of ER (including aspects of business management, human resource management, industrial relations, industrial and organisational psychology, sociology, and organisational behaviour), specifically as it relates to conflict management within organisations. Additionally, the teleological dimension aims to expand on the field of employment relations, providing employment relations practitioners, IR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, sociologists, managers and human resource professionals with knowledge that will enable conflict management in organisations.

(d) Epistemological dimension

The focus here is on what constitutes valid knowledge, and involves the examination of the relationship between the researcher and that which is being researched, and thus with the theory of knowledge (Grix, 2002). The epistemological dimension pursues the quest for truth (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Grix (2002) explains that the word epistemological is derived from two Greek

words, namely *episteme* (meaning knowledge) and *logos* (meaning reason), and therefore it focuses on how knowledge can be gathered to develop new or expand existing models and theories. Grix (2002) distinguishes between two contrasting epistemological positions, namely positivism (applying natural sciences methods to investigate social realities and beyond, thus focusing on recognisable and quantifiable social occurrences) and interpretivism (requiring a strategy that respects differences among people and natural science objects, and thus understands the subjective meaning of social action). According to the positivist approach, knowledge is derived from objective evidence based on observable and measurable phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2013). In terms of this approach, the researcher endeavours to remain distant, independent and objective from the phenomena being studied, aiming to produce reliable and valid findings through the compilation and application of an effective research design (Collis & Hussey, 2013).

(e) Methodological dimension

This dimension focuses on the process of the research through the application of scientific methods to investigate phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Grix, 2002; Mouton & Marais, 1996). The research method is linked to the research questions that are asked and therefore to the data collection sources (Grix, 2002). According to the positivist paradigm in social sciences, a deductive approach is followed, leading to a scientific explanation (Tuli, 2011) based on organised methods of combining logic and exact empirical explanations of behaviour to enable the discovery and confirmation of probabilities to envisage broad patterns of behaviour amongst humans (Neuman, 2011). Relationship dynamics are studied between variables, using a static design with pre-identified categories to explain in quantifiable terms how constructs interrelate, shape events and lead to specific outcomes (Tuli, 2011). Concepts are defined in a way that allows measurement; and subsequently hypotheses are set (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Generalisations will lead to predictions, understanding and explanations (Neuman, 2011). Validity and reliability measures ensure accurate and reliable results. In the current study, quantitative (exploratory) research is presented in the form of a literature review on the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice; mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Quantitative (descriptive and explanatory) research is presented in the empirical study.

(f) Axiological dimension

This dimension focuses on the roles of values. According to the positivist approach, results are unbiased and value free as the researcher is independent of the phenomena being studied (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The phenomena being studied are thus regarded as objects, which are of interest to the researcher because of their relationships to each other. In social sciences research, this assumption is often questioned because research focuses mainly on the behaviour and doings of people, which may be influenced by the inquiry process. In this study, the researcher aimed to produce unbiased and value-free results by applying an effective research design.

(g) Rhetorical dimension

This dimension focuses on the assumptions underlying positivism that concern the language of the research. In applying a positivist paradigm, the researcher uses the passive voice, set definitions and recognised quantitative words when reporting findings (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Accordingly, the findings of this research are reported in the passive voice, using recognised quantitative terms.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design of a study is described as the plan which lays out the most rational and logical structure and methods used to guide the researcher in addressing the identified research problems; as well as in answering subsequent research questions through collecting and analysing data (Salkind, 2018). The research design is discussed below. This discussion is followed by a brief explanation of validity and reliability.

Research is clustered into exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and evaluative groups. Exploratory and descriptive research study the correlational relationships among variables, while explanatory and evaluative research focus mainly on causal relationships (Salkind, 2018; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

1.7.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research (Neuman, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016) investigates a new issue in order to gain more information and to learn about it. Should other researchers not have studied the topic before, this may entail exploring a very new field of study. The goal of exploratory research is to

articulate additional but specific research questions that can be addressed through future research. Thus, exploratory research is often seen as the first of many stages of study as it enables the design and execution of other more extensive follow-up studies (Saunders et al., 2016).

This research was exploratory in that it compared various theoretical perspectives on the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

1.7.2 Descriptive research

Although there are different types of descriptive study, the one component found in all of these is the objective of the researcher to describe as accurately as possible the characteristics of existing phenomena (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Salkind, 2018). According to Salkind (2018), this consequently provides the researcher with a broader picture of a specific phenomenon. Although this objective can stand on its own, it often forms the basis for other research, as the information provided by descriptive research is frequently necessary before the significance of possible differences can be addressed. Descriptive researchers generally use data-gathering techniques such as surveys, field research and content analysis (Saunders et al., 2016).

In the literature review, descriptive research applies to the conceptualisation of the antecedent constructs, the mediators and the outcome variables. In the empirical study, descriptive research is applicable in terms of the means, standard deviations and internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability) with reference to the constructs of relevance to the research.

1.7.3 Explanatory research

In explanatory research, the researcher aims to find reasons and to give a deeper meaning to what was found in other preceding studies, for instance through an exploratory research study. This kind of research thus explains and adds depth to the research results of the exploratory and descriptive parts of the study (Neuman, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016) by providing explanations on cause and effect between variables (Saunders et al., 2016). However, owing to the exploratory and cross-sectional design of the research approach, this research focused on the direction, magnitude and nature of the links between the constructs, and not on cause and effect.

Accordingly, mediating and moderating effects were evaluated within the constraints of a cross-sectional research design approach, focusing on exploring the relationship dynamics among the variables. Explanatory research begins with social theories or past research as existing explanations of phenomena. Thereafter the research aims to extend what is known or to explain a new aspect in order to ascertain how well the clarification of the phenomena holds up, needs to be modified, or has limited applicability (e.g. based on specific conditions) (Neuman, 2011).

In the empirical study, the researcher endeavours to explain the nature, trends and extent of the relationships between the variables. Explanatory research was thus applied to explain the relationship between the constructs relevant to the research.

1.7.4 Validity

Validity is used to determine the trustworthiness of the results of an assessment tool (Salkind, 2018). To have validity in research, the study should indicate that the measurement process assesses what it set out to measure (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Salkind, 2018).

Three types of measurement validity should be considered, namely, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity (Salkind, 2018). Content validity is described as the degree to which the study represents the totality of items from which it is drawn. Criterion validity focuses on how well a test assesses present performance (referred to as concurrent validity), or how well it foretells future performance (predictive validity) (Salkind, 2018). Construct validity (convergent validity and discriminant validity) refers to the extent to which the outcomes and results of a study relate to the primary set of related variables (Salkind, 2018) and the extent to which the tests and measures being used measure what the researcher intends to assess (Saunders et al., 2016). According to Salkind (2018), construct validity links the practical components of the test score to an underlying theory or model of behaviour. Discriminant validity is found when there is no relationship between diverse methods used to assess different variables; in other words, the method and trait share nothing but are instead distinctive from one another (Salkind, 2018). Discriminant variance is thus an element of construct validity in which trait variance is shared when the same method is shared (Salkind, 2018). Convergent validity is found when methods used to measure variables differ from one another but a relationship is found in the analysis of the variables, indicating that the methods converge upon one another (Salkind, 2018). Convergent validity is therefore an element of construct validity in which method variance is shared when measuring the same trait or variable (Salkind, 2018).

In addition, the research literature refers to internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to how correctly the relationships between variables were interpreted (Punch, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016), while external validity is defined as how generalisable the findings are to relevant settings and populations beyond the conditions of the current study (Rubin & Babbie, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016).

1.7.4.1 Validity regarding the literature

The validity of the literature review was safeguarded by incorporating literature that is relevant and up to date in terms of the research question and aims of the study. Moreover, seminal works were introduced owing to their relevance to the main constructs of the research. In addition, reputable publications were used as resources of information.

1.7.4.2 Validity regarding the empirical research

The research endeavoured to establish measurement validity, as well as internal and external validity. Internal validity in the empirical study was achieved using appropriate and standardised measuring instruments, which were scrutinised to confirm content, criterion and construct validity. These instruments included standard instructions and information for all participants. The statistical procedures controlled for socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme). Additionally, internal validity was ensured by minimising selection bias by using non-probability sampling to target the population of individuals working in any South African-based organisation. Furthermore, statistical procedures were undertaken to test for common method bias. In order to confirm external validity, the population consisted of working employees on any organisational level in any South African-based organisation. Participants from different socio-demographic groups, including race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme, were included to reflect the socio-demographic profile of the population.

1.7.5 Reliability

According to Salkind (2018), a test can be reliable but not valid, but cannot be valid without firstly being reliable. Reliability is thus a condition of validity. A measurement procedure is regarded as

reliable when it is able to produce (nearly) identical results when used repeatedly to measure the same participants under the same conditions (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012).

In the literature review, reliability was addressed by ensuring that information collected was accurate, unbiased and comprehensive (Fink, 2010), while internal consistency was used in the empirical study to assess the reliability of the measuring instruments. Internal consistency measures the extent to which multiple items all measure the total construct (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). In the present study, internal consistency reliability of the instruments was tested by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient, a less biased measure of internal consistency reliability (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012).

1.7.6 The unit of research

The unit of analysis in most social sciences research is individual people, differentiating between features and characteristics of individuals, groups, organisations, social artefacts and social actions (Rubin & Babbie, 2014).

This study focuses on the constructs of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within the diverse context of South African organisations. For this study, the individual scores on each measuring instrument (the individual level), the overall scores on all the measuring instruments (the group level), and the socio-demographic characteristics (subgroup level) were considered.

1.7.7 The variables

The research investigated the relationship dynamics between moderators (socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

In doing so, the research examined whether employees' socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size,

employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the strength or direction of (1) the effect of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) on the psychosocial processes variables (employee engagement and organisational trust); (2) the effect of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles); and (3) the effect of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). A moderator (also referred to as an effect modifier) influences the pathway and strength of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable; and moderation helps explain whether the associations are conditional on the mean scores of the biographical groups (i.e. for whom and when) (Kraemer, Stice, Kazdin, Offord, & Kupfer, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016).

Additionally, the study evaluated the effect of employee engagement and organisational trust (as mediating variables) on the relationship between the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (as independent variables) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as dependent variables. A mediator is an intermediate variable within the causal pathway of an independent to a dependent variable, which potentially causes a change in the dependent variable, and which, in itself is caused to vary through the effect of the independent variable. A mediator variable thus explains how or why another variable affects the outcome (Kraemer et al., 2001; Saunders et al., 2016). However, owing to the exploratory nature and the cross-sectional design of the present study, the focus was not on causality. Rather, the focus was on the direction and magnitude of the relationships among the variables and the mediating effect of the employee engagement and organisational trust variables on the relationship between the antecedents and dependent variables.

1.7.8 Delimitations

This research dealt only with the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), moderators (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles); and whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership,

sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding these variables.

The information, results and data were in no way manipulated or classified based on family or spiritual background. The study is envisaged as new and original research that restricts its focus to the relationship dynamics of the constructs relevant to the research; it is not intended to establish the cause and effect of the relationships. The relationships that were found between the variables could be useful for future research in addressing other related issues and are discussed in Chapter 8.

1.8 THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research comprised two phases, namely, a literature review and an empirical study.

1.8.1 Phase 1: Literature review

The literature review consisted of a review of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcomes (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as well as the socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) with a focus on conflict management in organisations. The steps taken in Phase 1, the literature review, are illustrated in Figure 1.5 below, which is followed by a brief discussion of each step.

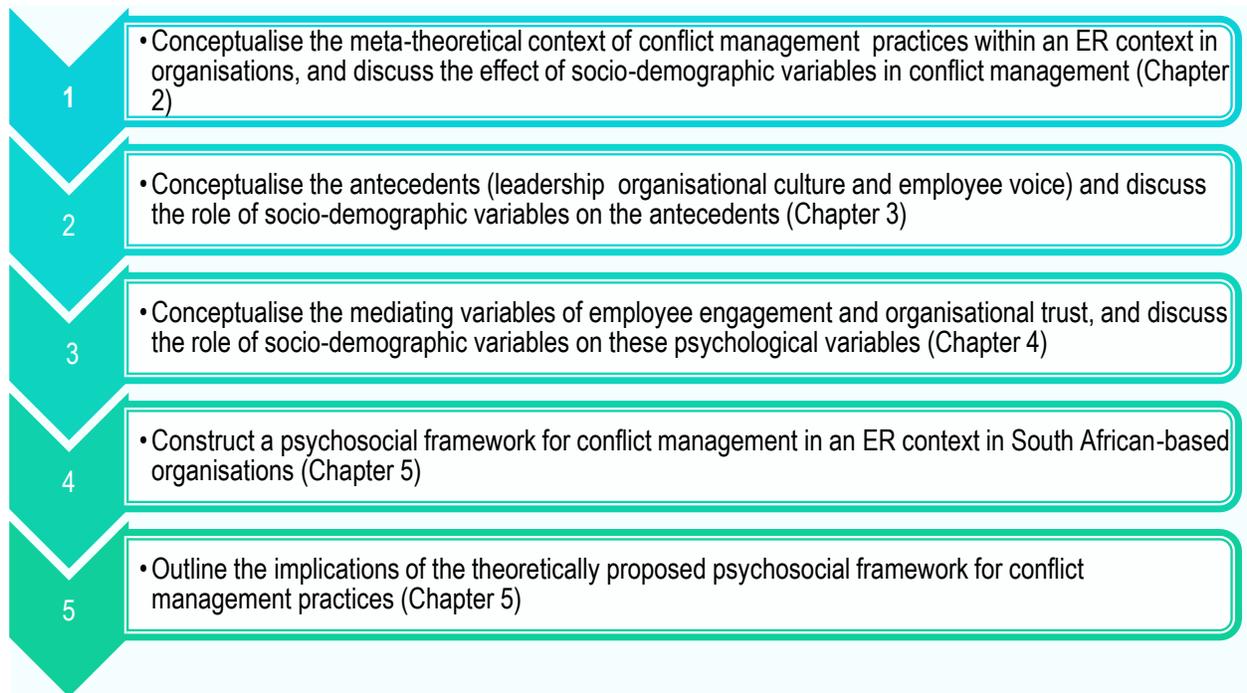


Figure 1.5 Overview of the Literature Review

Step 1: Conceptualising the meta-theoretical context of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within an ER context in organisations

This phase involved the conceptualisation of organisational conflict management within an ER context by means of theoretical models in the literature. The role of the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) pertaining to the outcome of conflict management was explored. This step is addressed in Chapter 2 and answers research aim 1 of the literature review.

Step 2: Conceptualisation of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)

In this phase, the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice were conceptualised using theoretical models in the literature. The role of the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational

size, employee engagement programme) pertaining to the antecedents was also explored. Chapter 3 addresses this step and, thus, research aim 1 of the literature review.

Step 3: Conceptualisation of the psychosocial mediating processes of employee engagement and organisational trust

Also using theoretical models in the literature, this phase conceptualised the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. The role of the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) pertaining to the mediating variables was also explored. This step, which addressed research aim 1 of the literature review, is addressed in Chapter 4.

Step 4: To construct a psychosocial framework for conflict management in an ER context in South African-based organisations

In this phase, a psychosocial framework for conflict management in an ER context in organisations was constructed that is grounded in the theoretical relationship dynamics between the constructs relevant to the research. Chapter 5 addresses this step and research aim 2 of the literature review.

Step 5: To outline the implications of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management practices within a South African ER context

During this phase, the implications of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management practices within a South African ER context were outlined. This step addresses research aim 3 of the literature review in Chapter 5.

1.8.2 Phase 2: The empirical study

An empirical study was conducted in the context of South African organisations. This study comprised six steps, as illustrated and briefly discussed below.



Figure 1.6 Overview of the Empirical Research Process

Step 1: Choosing and justifying the measuring instrument

The measuring instruments that assess the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial factors of employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations are discussed in Chapter 6: Research Method.

Step 2: Determination and description of the sample

In this step, the population of the research was identified and the sample determined. This is discussed in Chapter 6: Research Method.

Step 3: Administer measuring instrument considering ethical considerations

During this step, data were collected from the sample as discussed in Chapter 6: Research Method.

Step 4: Capturing of criterion data

The responses of participants to each of the items in the questionnaires were electronically captured to a database, and consequently adapted to an SPSS data file.

Step 5: Formulation of research hypotheses

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, research hypotheses were formulated from the central hypotheses to be empirically tested. This is discussed in Chapter 6: Research Method.

Step 6: Statistical processing of data

The statistical process comprised three major stages, each consisting of various steps of statistical analysis, as depicted in Figure 1.7 below. This is discussed in Chapter 6: Research Method.



Figure 1.7 Statistical Processing of Data

Step 7: Reporting and interpreting the results

The results of the research were portrayed in graphs, tables and/or diagrams. A discussion of the findings was presented in a systematic framework, conveying the analysis and interpretation of the findings in a clear and articulate manner. This is discussed in Chapter 7: Research Results.

Step 8: Integration of the research findings

The literature review findings and results of the empirical research were integrated. This is discussed in Chapter 8: Discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

Step 9: Formulation of conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

Finally, in Chapter 8 conclusions are made based on the results and their integration with the theory. The limitations of the research are discussed, and recommendations in terms of the empirical psychosocial framework for conflict management in organisations are made. Future research is also suggested.

1.9 CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters are presented in the following manner:

Table 1.3

Chapter Division

Chapter	Topic
Chapter 1	Scientific overview of the research
Chapter 2	Meta-theoretical context of the study: Conflict management in South African organisations
Chapter 3	Antecedent variables: leadership, organisational culture and employee voice
Chapter 4	Mediating psychosocial processes: employee engagement and organisational trust
Chapter 5	Towards constructing a theoretical framework of conflict management
Chapter 6	Research method
Chapter 7	Research results
Chapter 8	Discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter deliberated the scientific orientation of the study. It described the background to and the motivation for the research, the aim of the study, the research model and paradigm perspectives, the theoretical research, design and methodology, as well as the central hypothesis and research method. The purpose of the research was to construct a psychosocial framework

for conflict management within an ER context in South African-based organisations. This was achieved by exploring the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), and the socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) on the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This research informs ER and IR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, sociologists, managers, as well as human resource professionals on more effective conflict management practices.

In the next chapter, the meta-theoretical context of the study (conflict management in South African organisations) is discussed, addressing research aim 1 of the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: META-THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN-BASED ORGANISATIONS

Chapter 2 is the beginning of Phase 1 of the research study. Phase 1 highlights the literature review on leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict, as well as the socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), all with a focus on conflict management viewed from an ER context in organisations. As explained in section 1.8.1, the literature review consisted of five steps, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. This chapter focuses on step 1 of this five-step process, thus in part concluding literature research aim 1; namely, to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations.

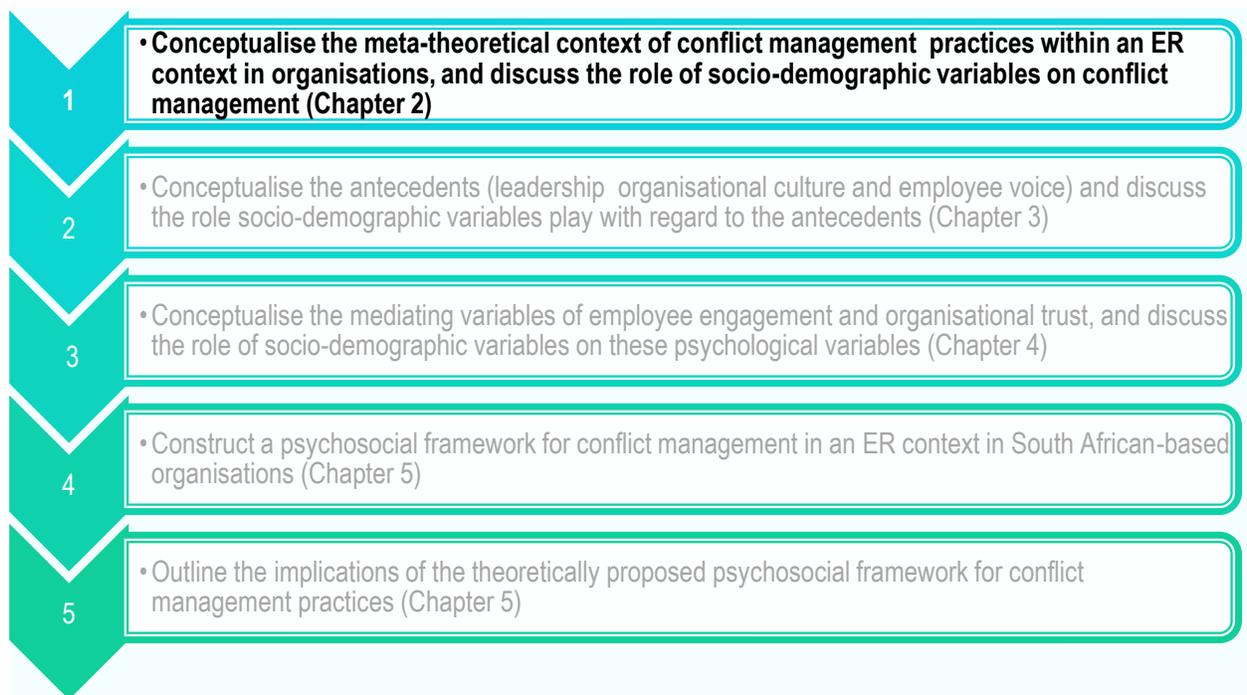


Figure 2.1 Step 1 of Stage 1, the Literature Review Process

The research considers conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in South African organisations within an employment relations (ER) context. Although many studies have been conducted on conflict and its management worldwide, this is not the

case in South Africa (Havenga & Visagie, 2006; Mayer & Louw, 2009). During an extensive literature review, only a limited number of more recent conflict-related journal articles could be found specific to the South African workplace. These studies focus on conflict and dispute resolution (Bendeman, 2007; De Bruyn & Nienaber, 2013; De Bruyn & Sotshononda, 2017; Jantjies, 2016; Nupen, 2013); labour unrest, industrial action and violence at work (Barchiesi, 2016; Meyer & Abbott, 2015; Mmanoko, 2016); conflict prevention (Ganson, 2014); interpersonal conflict handling styles (Havenga & Visagie, 2006; Van Niekerk, De Klerk, & Pires-Putter, 2017); influence of demographic variables (e.g. gender, culture and age) in role-conflict, work–family conflict and conflict management (Du Plessis, 2012; Geldenhuys & Henn, 2017; Havenga, 2005; Mayer, Surtee, & Mahadevan, 2018; Opie & Henn, 2013); intergroup conflict and inequality (Kerr, Durrheim, & Dixon, 2017); as well as understanding organisational conflict and managerial challenges in South Africa (Madlala & Govender, 2018; Mayer & Louw, 2009, 2011; Mestry & Bosch, 2013). One may thus conclude that there is a paucity of South African conflict management research in general. Moreover, no other research has considered the relationship dynamics of this particular set of constructs in a single study with the research focus of constructing a psychosocial conflict management framework for South African-based organisations.

This chapter aims to sketch and critically evaluate the nature of ER in a South African context by considering factors on a macro, meso and micro level that affect the quality of the employment relationship nationally and internationally. It gives a synopsis of scholarly work on the conceptualisation, theories and models, as well as important approaches to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The chapter concludes by discussing the impact of ER on conflict management practices (and vice versa), specifically evaluating current knowledge and considering research gaps as identified by the literature research.

These core themes of Chapter 2 are graphically illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

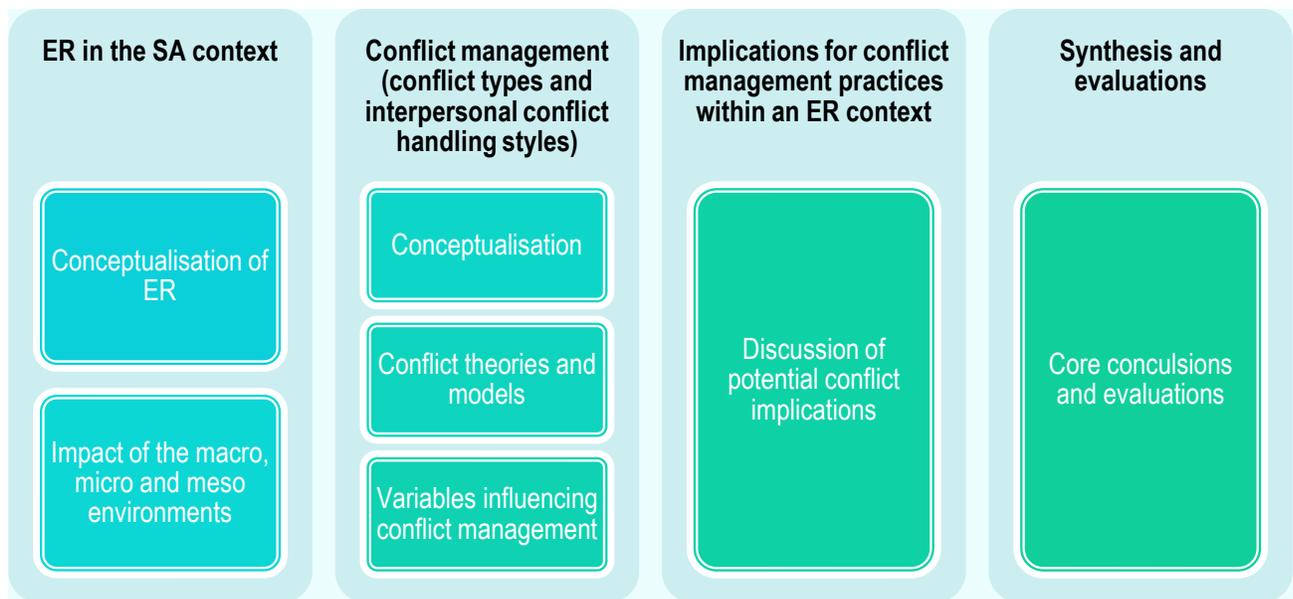


Figure 2.2 Core Themes of Chapter 2

2.1 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The following section expands on the concept and nature of ER in general and in the South African context in particular. Scholars (Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee, & Tse, 2009; Olsen, Sverdrup, Nesheim, & Kalleberg, 2016; Quero, Ventura, & Kelleher, 2017) stress the significance of providing context in studies aiming to understand how value is co-created among stakeholders internal and external to organisations. From an employment relationship perspective, this relates firstly to management and employees (including supervisors, teams and co-workers); however, other external stakeholders such as trade unions, customers and competitors may also come into play (Olsen et al., 2016). Role-conflict that may emerge from employees who become more committed to their clients than their own employers is a case in point (Olsen et al., 2016). When conflict is not well managed, it will affect all stakeholders, although not necessarily in the same way.

For many years, scholars have agreed that every conflict incident resides in an environmental context (Wall & Callister, 1995) and that conflict is present in almost any human activity, including the economic sphere; and may arise on the scale of a whole society, or within individual organisations (Tereshina et al., 2016). In this research, the focus falls on organisational conflict from an ER perspective. Organisations have been described as consisting of a gathering of people with a stated purpose and a mechanism, established and coordinated to achieve the

desired purpose (Jones & George, 2016; Miles et al., 1978). However, there is no “one-size-fits-all” recipe for organisational success or for achieving their set purpose. In fact, scholars have argued that organisations are unique in their combination of structures and relationships, each with their own characteristics, and should therefore manage their employees according to their specific strategies (e.g. on employee engagement and communication) and organisational culture (Jaimez & Bretones, 2011; Nettleton et al., 2016). One may rather reason that each organisation is created and managed as a purposeful, articulated and formalised entity that continually evaluates what it is doing, seeking new ways of best interacting with its complex and ever-changing environment (Du Plessis, 2012; Jones & George, 2016; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Miles et al., 1978; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2015).

The following section discusses the reasoning and movement behind focusing on conflict management in organisations within the context of ER from a business management perspective, arguing that the management of challenges related to trust, legitimacy and conflict is imperative to ER (Delaney & Godard, 2001). The research considers how conflict management in an ER context, and from a business management perspective, is informed by study fields such as IR, HRM and IOP. ER terminology is conceptualised.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation of employment relations

Providing context in management research is important as it prevents the splintering of the field of management and also sensitises the outcomes of research to possible situational and temporal theoretical conditions and boundaries, resulting in different focus areas depending on the various disciplines (Avgar, 2017; Bamberger, 2008). The given context describes the conflict setting, as well as how elements in that setting may affect conflict (Wall & Callister, 1995). Nonetheless, scholars such as Avgar (2017) and Zhou et al. (2017) caution against following a silo approach, where research in the various disciplines is not integrated. According to Avgar (2017), a wealth of research on conflict is available, but this is found in various disciplines and has not been sufficiently assimilated into one body of knowledge.

This research takes place within the context of ER. This field of study considers the process of accommodating and managing the various interests of the different role players involved in the employment relationship with the practice of getting work done within an open, complex system (Nel et al., 2016). An employment relationship exists when a formal or informal contract between the employer and the employee is established (Wilkinson & Wood, 2017). ER is an

interdisciplinary field, studying all aspects of people at work (Kochan, 1980) and, in its purest form, thus refers to the management of people (Emmott, 2015). Each country's ER is shaped by the development of and, by implication, the history of ER in that country – ER is accordingly somewhat distinctive since countless variables contribute to the progression thereof (Nel et al., 2016).

ER is closely related to the area of study originally named industrial relations (IR). In fact, Kaufman (2008) explains that formerly IR had a wider approach, which included aspects related to the full employment relationship. However, a narrower focus developed where IR (also referred to as labour relations, a term largely used interchangeably) refers mainly to the relationship between employers (management) and trade unions (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Emmott, 2015; Nel et al., 2016) and their collective bargaining processes (Godard, 2014b; Ilesanmi, 2017; Kaufman, 2008; Nel et al., 2016; Piore, 2011). IR has also been defined as the regulation of work and employment through a combination of collective bargaining, state involvement and market forces (Hyman, 2005). IR thus focuses mainly on the collective dimension of the employment relationship. It is a multidisciplinary field (Adams, 1983) which originated in reaction to the perceived shortfalls of economic models versus Marxist thinking when dealing with the employment relationship and power imbalance between employer and employee (Greenwood & Rasmussen; 2017; Tapia et al., 2015). Power may be defined as the capability of those who have power to either generate a sought-after outcome, or (from a more negative point of view) to enforce their will in a relationship (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011).

Originally, conflict was managed in unionised organisations from such an IR perspective – trade union representatives of the affected employees and management addressed the disputes, often through a formal grievance or disciplinary procedure (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017). Similarly, in non-unionised organisations these processes are used to address disputes, although conflict management is often handled more informally (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017). In both unionised and non-unionised environments, the last phase of these processes is usually some form of adjudication or conflict resolution process through an external agency (Currie et al., 2017), for example the CCMA in South Africa. According to Currie et al. (2017), these formalised procedures made sense in organisations as they provided order and predictability. Initially, IR was therefore regarded as a way to manage conflict and to avoid or minimise industrial action, as well as to maintain wider social and political order (Currie et al., 2017; Kaufman, 1993; Piore, 2011).

Conflict management was therefore historically seen as interrelated with collective IR practices and procedures both inside and outside organisations and as imperative for counteracting power imbalances between employees and employers (Budd & Colvin, 2014; Hayter, 2015; Sen & Lee, 2015; Zhou et al., 2017). Unions and collective bargaining were seen as vital in the prevention of conflict (Currie et al., 2017; Ilesanmi, 2017) and critical in giving voice to employees and ensuring procedural fairness in processes (Godard, 2014a, 2014b; Hayter, 2015). According to Currie et al. (2017), the collective voice of unions was viewed as necessary in ensuring organisational commitment and fewer organisational challenges, while conflict was seen as inevitable in the employment relationship. This view was the only acceptable view for many developed countries in the 1960s and 70s as strike activities were threatening economic and social stability, and often resulted in public disorder (Currie et al., 2017).

However, this pluralistic view of IR and conflict management has changed over the last few decades in many (often-developed) countries. Increasingly, an individualised approach has become apparent in workplaces (Currie et al., 2017; Dimitriu, 2017; Zhou et al., 2017), mainly due to a decline in collective industrial action and union membership in many developed countries since the 1980s (Godard, 2011; Kelly, 2015; Zhou et al., 2017). Scholars argue that HRM – with its individual rather than collective people management focus – became the way to manage conflict (Currie et al., 2017). The individual people management focus is typically associated with customary HRM issues (Boxall, 2014). Traditionally, HRM focused on hiring, retaining and managing employees (Delaney & Godard, 2001) but increasingly it also relates to performance-related remuneration systems, direct voice representation initiatives, employee engagement initiatives and talent management, to name but a few (Currie et al., 2017). According to Godard (2014b), HRM is a multidisciplinary subject area that is closely related to IR; however, it focuses on the management of people to ensure good organisational performance in contrast to the IR focus of employee welfare (Currie et al., 2017). From an HRM approach, conflict is therefore regarded as a managerial failure, and neither desirable nor inevitable, but rather something that needs to be managed and controlled as it detracts from the goal of being a high-performance organisation (Currie et al., 2017).

However, the world of work is constantly changing, challenging organisations to adapt. Worldwide, unions (and thus the institution of collective bargaining) and management are challenged by a variety of issues. Innovative organisational structures and work practices lead to differing types of workplace conflict, thus requiring new and innovative ways of managing it.

Examples of the new world of work include corporate restructuring resulting from the ushering in of the international era; digitalisation; the individualisation of workplaces; changes in employment contracts; transnational regulation gaps associated with globalisation; as well as an increase in informalisation of the workplace (Benjamin, 2016; Crouch, 2017; Dimitriu, 2017; Fichter, 2011; Fichter, Sydow, Helfen, Arruda, & Agtas, 2013; Greer & Hauptmeier, 2016; Helfen & Fichter, 2013; Kochan & Riordan, 2016; Scully, 2016).

Colvin (2016) argues that a new era has dawned. According to Colvin (2016), the seminal IR works (e.g. Clegg, 1970; Dunlop, 1958; Flanders, 1970; Hyman, 1972; Kaufman, 1993; Webb & Webb, 1897) all focused on understanding and explaining the collective interaction in union–management relations, collective bargaining processes, and IR on the shop floor. However, Colvin (2016) maintains that subsequent IR works focused on the decline in collective bargaining and action. In fact, scholars (Emmott, 2015; Godard, 2014b; Hayter, 2015; Piore, 2011) debate that IR became irrelevant because of the decline in trade union membership and power worldwide, including in South Africa (Department of Labour, 2016b, 2017a; Phungo, 2016; Sidimba, 2013). This decline resulted in the marginalisation of IR because it misses the mark of explaining how employment relationships should be managed within an environment where fewer employees belong to trade unions. IR failed to address the transformation of ER (Colvin, 2016), and was unsuccessful in conceptualising the needs of employees where “human beings are more than economic men, and society more than a market” (Piore, 2011, p. 800). This confirms the critique of Dunlop’s system approach (1958), which states that the theory ignores the possibility of conflict experiences and inconsistencies (Hyman, 2002).

Furthermore, Dimitriu (2016) maintains that the need for solidarity as provided through the kinship of union membership is diminishing as people address these needs through other means, such as online solidarity in the form of discussion forums and other social media. During the same period of union decline in many countries, individual employee rights increased and became the mechanism for structuring the employment relationship (Colvin, 2016; Dimitriu, 2016), resulting further in employees counting less on unions to be their voice. The general decline in trade unionism has generated a void in practice, which is only partly addressed by alternative forms of employee voice (Tapia et al., 2015).

In South Africa, similar trends are experienced, although to a more limited extent. It is estimated that most of the South African workforce (74%) is non-unionised (ILO, 2016a). Although union membership is still strong and growing in the public sector, trade unionism in the private sector

has been declining for a number of years and unions' power has been weakened (Benjamin, 2016; Bhorat, Naidoo, Oosthuizen, & Pillay, 2015; Scully, 2016; Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016; Webster, 2013). Union membership coincided with employment growth in the public sector and now dominates private sector union membership (Bhorat et al., 2015). Union density (the proportion of the workforce that belongs to a union) in the public sector increased from 55% in 1997 to approximately 70% in 2013 (Bhorat et al., 2015). At the same time, private sector union density declined from 36 to 24% (Bhorat et al., 2015). According to the Department of Labour (2016b) (providing only total union member statistics and not separately for public and private sectors), union membership declined by about 4% (approximately 160 000 members) from 2012 to 2015. While unions blamed retrenchments for this decline, the Department of Labour confirmed workers' dissatisfaction with unions in meeting their expectations (Department of Labour, 2013b; Sidimba, 2013). When one considers union statistics over a longer period, the decline is even more evident. In 1997, a total of 417 unions were registered with the Department of Labour, representing 45,2% of total employment. However, this figure declined to 180 registered unions in 2015, representing 24,7% of total employment (Phungo, 2016). Nonetheless, membership figures increased again by a total of 9% during the period 2015–2016 (Department of Labour, 2017a). It is expected that unions in South Africa will remain relatively strong in the coming years, even if a decline is again evident (Scully, 2016).

Nevertheless, South African unions are criticised for poor service delivery to their members. COSATU, for instance, is accused of not showing interest in education activities (Bernards, 2017). Research reports that 36% of employees regarded the effectiveness of unions in representing their concerns on a national basis as limited (e.g. in NEDLAC) (ILO, 2016a). Union rivalry perpetuates the challenges (Madlala & Govender, 2018). Increasingly, a growing social distance between union leaders and their members is evident (Bernards, 2017; Luckett & Mzobe, 2016; Palo & Rothmann, 2016; Sidimba, 2013; Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016). These feelings of discontent may contribute to the fact that tripartite institutions such as NEDLAC, which is based upon the notion of cooperation and compromise between the role players, are not succeeding (Bernards, 2017). In fact, cooperation and compromise are not characteristics of the current South African ER environment (Schwab, 2017), and workers are disappointed in the outcomes of tripartite deliberations (Bernards, 2017). According to Madlala and Govender (2018), during dispute resolution and negotiations, compromise and consensus seeking are often considered only during the dispute phase of the bargaining process when emotions are already high.

Like their international counterparts, South African unions acknowledge a number of challenges which they face in staying relevant and, thus, in surviving as organisations (CIPD, 2012; Dickinson, 2017; Dimitriu, 2017; Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016). Unions find it difficult to represent workers from poor communities and those in vulnerable employment (Bernards, 2017; Dickinson, 2017; Scully, 2016). It is estimated that about 42% of South African workers are in some form of vulnerable employment (Scully, 2016). Dickinson (2017) explains that when permanent workers work side by side with temporary workers who earn much less than their full-time counterparts, toxic workplace relationships develop between co-workers. Workers feel discriminated against and often do not have the protection of unions, and have strained relationships with management and their labour brokers (Dickinson, 2017). Additionally, union leaders are often accused of becoming involved in politics (both South Africa and the United Kingdom are cases in point), distracting them from their workplace agendas (CIPD, 2012; Crouch, 2017; Department of Labour, 2013b; Lockett & Mzobe, 2016; Macmillan, 2017; Schoeman et al., 2010; Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016). Additionally, in South Africa, organised labour is accused of benefitting financially from deals with employers and the country's ruling party, thus blurring necessary boundaries (Beresford, 2016).

As a result of these challenges, the last couple of decades have been indicative of a world of IR that is described as confused and challenged, in crisis and transforming (Colvin, 2016; Crouch, 2017; Emmott, 2015; Hyman, 1994, 1995; Sen & Lee, 2015). The general global decline in trade unionism and strike action, especially in developed countries (Benjamin, 2016; Bernards, 2017; Frege, Kelly, & McGovern, 2011; Godard, 2011; Novicevic, Hayek, & Fang, 2011), has resulted in a diminishing importance of IR as a field of study (Colvin, 2016; Crouch, 2017; Godard, 2011; Sen & Lee, 2015; Wilkinson & Wood, 2012). Subsequently, the term ER developed, thereby acknowledging the broader reference to and application of this field of study to encompass more than the typical traditional collective bargaining issues, but also to focus on the individual dimension of employees (CIPD, 2012; Meyer & Abbott, 2015; Nel et al., 2016). ER takes a wider view on the study of how people are managed, thus considering the full employment relationship (Kaufman, 2014). Scholars therefore argue that ER as a field of study deals with the formal and informal relationships between an organisation and its employees; embracing all collaborations and processes by which the role players adjust to the needs, requirements and expectations of each other in the employment relationship (Dundon & Rollinson, 2011).

This is argued to be a necessary approach, as individual interests and rights may be lost in the collective view of trade unionism (Gilliland, Gross, & Hogler, 2014). On the individualised level the employer deals directly with the employee, without intermediation from trade unions (Currie et al., 2017; Imoisili, 2011), even though the employer may still consult with trade union/shop floor representatives (Imoisili, 2011). Simultaneously, on the collective representative level, employers deal with their employees who are trade union members through collective bargaining channels (Ilesanmi, 2017; Imoisili, 2011). Considering these characteristics of ER, it is described as the management of both individual and collective relationships in organisations by implementing good practices to ensure that organisational goals are met, that organisations remain compliant with the legislative framework, and that the socioeconomic conditions the organisation operates in are recognised (Meyer & Abbott, 2015). These arguments are supported by scholars (Avgar & Kuruvilla, 2011), who point out that an accurate picture of workplace relationships can only be portrayed when it integrates an evaluation of the various actors' strategies, behaviour and perceptions on the strategic, functional and workplace levels.

Observing the employment relationship from such a broader perspective is not completely new, but has come a long way. During the 1980s, workplaces increasingly emphasised the importance of improved performance, advocating certain workplace practices such as the creation of autonomous teams and a greater emphasis on employee voice initiatives (Currie et al., 2017; Godard, 2014b). Additionally, the changed ER focus led to scholars considering further workplace issues from a variety of disciplines. Scholars (e.g. Boxall, 2014; Emmott, 2015; Godard, 2014b) state that ER now includes all areas of study pertaining to the employment relationship at the workplace (e.g. law, organisational behaviour, HRM, traditional IR issues such as union-management relations, IOP, sociology, management and the like) – ER is thus multidisciplinary. Such a multidisciplinary perspective is necessary for a variety of reasons. For instance, scholars argue that, progressively, the boundaries between work and home are becoming blurred, both physically and psychologically (Godard, 2011; Runge, 2016). Scholars (CIPD, 2012, Emmott, 2015) further reason that the ER focus today is on employee engagement. Such a broader viewpoint, together with the marginalisation of IR as explained above, has led to the psychologisation of the field of study of HRM and IR – thus of ER in general. Additionally, globalisation and managing the HR of an organisation in multinational companies hold their own challenges (Isiaka et al., 2016). Nonetheless, scholars (Boxall, 2014; Kaufman, 2012) warn against focusing solely on the psychological issues, and advocate for the inclusion of a more economic view. Even so, scholars caution that in order to maintain a strategic approach to ER,

shared values and workplace fairness remain vital (Marchington, 2015a). In summary, researchers advise both an interdisciplinary approach (Paul, Geddes, Jones, & Donohue, 2016) and a multidisciplinary approach (Runge, 2016) in conflict studies.

The above arguments about the multidisciplinary focus of ER are supported by what ER specialists do. A report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the United Kingdom (CIPD, 2012) states that senior ER managers are undertaking a whole range of tasks. These tasks include the traditional emphasis on the management of trade union relationships, complying with relevant legislative requirements and diversity issues; but additionally also comprise aspects such as managing communications with employees, corporate social responsibility, employee engagement, employee expectations, employee commitment and managing aspects of the organisational culture.

All the developments described above have an impact on the increased focus on conflict management systems. It is argued that the general decline in unionism, the increased focus on high-performance systems, and the changes in the social contract between employer and employee from collective rights to individual statutory rights, explain the increase in conflict management systems (Benjamin, 2016; Bhorat et al., 2015; Bingham et al., 2004; Scully, 2016; Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016; Webster, 2013). However, conflict and cooperation coexist in workplaces (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Gould & Desjardins, 2014; Hyman, 1979; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), even if only to a limited extent. For instance, research indicates that roughly a third of shop stewards agree with management on the aims and objectives of business (Bischoff, Masondo, & Webster, 2018). Despite a rise in individual employment rights, the imbalance of power in the relationship between employers and employees is still present (e.g. Godard, 2014b; Hayter, 2015).

This research therefore considers the employment relationship from a collaborative pluralist perspective. In this regard, the research acknowledges trade unions as a potentially important role player, as they still hold a great deal of power and may influence the employment relationship. In fact, scholars maintain that employees who have sufficient bargaining power and who are weary of any changes introduced by management may block any change initiatives, such as a conflict management framework that is to be introduced. Unions may thus contribute significantly to either opposing initiatives or to facilitating cooperation (Bryson, Barth, & Olsen, 2013; Delaney & Godard, 2001). The relationship between the trade union and management has a significant impact on the way conflict situations and disputes are resolved – should there be a low-trust

relationship, unions may be more adversarial in their approach (Lucy & Broughton, 2011). When unions and employers work together on policies and procedures by focusing on a combination of integrative and distributive issues in their relationships (as opposed to having an adversarial, distributive focus), mutual gains over the longer term may be possible (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Employers have to acknowledge unions as a legitimate partner and voice of employees (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Therefore, any conflict management framework should ideally acknowledge this context and should be applied with due recognition of the collective voice of trade unions should they be active at the organisation.

The next section expands on the impact of the internal and external environment on ER in South Africa.

2.1.2 The impact of the macro, meso and micro environment on ER within South Africa

In this section, factors influencing ER on a macro, meso and micro level both globally and in South Africa are discussed. The section elaborates on the link between South African ER and conflict management in organisations, as well as addressing some of the antecedents and consequences of effective versus ineffective ER.

It is imperative to acknowledge the daily challenges organisations face in the macro, meso and micro environments. Scholars such as Hackman (1987) maintain that environmental factors present organisations with a context that holds implications for team effectiveness and, for instance, leadership challenges (Oc, 2018). When such contextual factors are ignored in organisations, conflict understanding is incomplete (Bear, Weingart, & Todorova, 2014). It is generally accepted that organisations (including the function of ER and the capacity of labour legislation to achieve its goals) are structured and shaped by occurrences in their internal and external environments, such as broader economic and social transformation (Benjamin, 2016; Currie et al., 2017; Madlala & Govender, 2018; McDonald & Thompson, 2016; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Rust, 2017; Singh, 1976). Organisations are intricate and constantly adapting to changing and dynamic situations while managing their business, including the management of conflict (Avgar, 2017; Du Plessis, 2012; Isiaka et al., 2016; McDonald & Thompson, 2016; Miles et al., 1978; Runge, 2016; Rust, 2017). Environmental challenges influence the strategic choices that stakeholders of organisations (e.g. parties in the employment relationship) make on how to deal with conflict (Avgar, 2017). Aspects such as technological advancements, global supply chains,

increased migration patterns, demographic and cultural changes, competitiveness, new organisational forms and employment contracts (Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015), to name but a few, all hold the potential to increase organisational conflict (Budd et al., 2017). Budd et al. (2017) argue that for such conflict to be resolved, the root cause of the conflict must first be understood.

Many years ago, Hyman (1995) stated that issues prevalent in this field of study necessitate that the level of analysis should link the macro-, meso- and micro-level dimensions of the ever-changing world of work and employment. Similarly, scholars (Bamberger, 2008; Budhwar et al., 2016; Dasborough et al., 2009) emphasise that the dynamic interplay and linkage that exist between the micro, meso and macro environments are essential in creating a better understanding of the complexities of social realities – individuals (and one may argue, organisations) shape their context but are simultaneously also shaped by it. Organisations need to be aware of their external and internal environment and need to act proactively in order to pre-empt potential causes of conflict (Budd et al., 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Onyinyechi, 2016) and to adapt to new forms of conflict that result from changes in their environments (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017).

Often conflict research is undertaken either from an IR perspective (focusing on the macro-level orientation of economics, law and politics, and recognising a societal view), an HRM perspective (focusing predominantly on the micro level orientations of human resources and industrial psychology), or a legal perspective (e.g. conflict resolution through mediation, arbitration or adjudication) (Avgar, 2017; Delaney & Godard, 2001). Godard (2011) argues that the broader view of IR links the causes and appearances of workplace conflict to reasons both inside and outside the workplace. Delaney and Godard (2001) argue that considering both the (predominantly micro) HRM and the IR (mainly macro) perspectives may provide greater insight into organisations. Avgar (2017) and Zhou et al. (2017) stress that this results in conflict and conflict management research being conducted in silos, and that an integrated view is necessary to bring the various disciplines together. This viewpoint also relates to the discussion above, which argues for an ER perspective that includes both the individual and collective dimensions.

Additionally, Kaufman (2012) contends that too much emphasis is placed on the micro aspects of organisations, and not enough on the external environment (economics, ER aspects, and the macro sociological issues). Other scholars agree that ER aspects are directly influenced by significant changes in the social, economic and political environments; in fact, ER is often shaped by the organisational structure and environment within which it functions (Budhwar et al, 2016;

CIPD, 2012; Currie et al., 2017; Gaile & Sumilo, 2016; Kochan & Riordan, 2016). Organisations have to recognise the importance of considering the macro environment, including the wider community and society (and indeed global society) within which the individual employee functions (Avgar, 2017; Boxall, 2014; Isiaka et al., 2016). Boxall (2014) elaborates that a societal perspective will focus on aspects such as the renewal of a society's human resources to keep up with environmental changes and challenges. Additionally, taking cognisance of the external environment is widely accepted as one of the success factors of high performance organisations (Budhwar et al., 2016; De Waal, 2012; ILO, 2016b; Nettleton et al., 2016; Rust, 2017). Clearly, it is important to consider the macro, meso and micro environments influencing ER.

Generally, the macro level is regarded as external, global, societal, national and international level influences (e.g. economic and political developments, demographics, socio-cultural traditions, and the like) (Budhwar et al., 2016; Foresight Cards, n.d.; Gaile & Sumilo, 2016). The macro level also includes those role players (e.g. trade unions or other institutions such as dispute resolution agencies) affecting the organisation (Budhwar et al., 2016; Nel et al., 2016). The macro context is regarded as the existence of larger, complex networks consisting of different actors within different dyads and triads that co-create added value through synergy (Quero et al., 2017).

The second level, namely the meso environment, is the transactional level of the organisation – in other words, aspects such as supply and demand, customers, competitors and strategic alliances come into play (Foresight Cards, n.d.). The meso context includes industry-level factors and variables (Budhwar et al., 2016) and is described as a stakeholder system where exchange takes place on a triad level, thus directly on the micro level, but also between different actors (Quero et al., 2017). It may be further explained as relationships between the systems in an environment, for example the relationships evident on the level of industries (Briken et al., 2017), or with customers, investors and communities (Ulrich, 2010) or sector-specific trade unions (Budhwar et al., 2016). Organisations placing more pressure on their suppliers to meet certain labour, environmental and wellbeing standards are a case in point (Marchington, 2015b). Other examples at play at this level are sector-specific standards (or charters), strategic alliances and the availability of skills or benchmarking of compensation levels (Budhwar et al., 2016). It is described as a level midway between the macro and micro environments and may act as an intermediate level of ER determinants (Budhwar et al., 2016; Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016).

Aspects such as the presence or absence of employee voice via trade unions is another example of influences at the meso level (Budhwar et al., 2016). Additionally, examples are found in the

quest of organisations to succeed in the goals of shareholders and senior management, often neglecting other stakeholders (Marchington, 2015b). The King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016) emphasises the importance of the meso level for organisations as knowing and understanding the needs and expectations of all major stakeholders, including internal stakeholders (e.g. management and employees) and external stakeholders (e.g. trade unions, customers and consumers). Such an approach acknowledges the African interdependency principle of Ubuntu – I am because you are; you are because we are (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016; Tomaselli, 2016). Interestingly though, Budhwar et al. (2016) argue that these kinds of business philosophies may influence the ER function on all three levels – one example may be to use the philosophy of Ubuntu to foster cultural sensitivity at the organisational or micro level (Tomaselli, 2016) – but will influence ER least on the meso level. This viewpoint may be contested, considering the importance of cooperation between the various role players, especially from the view of managing potential conflict.

The third, the micro context, refers to the organisational dyadic level where a relationship of direct exchange is present between two parties (Budhwar et al., 2016; Quero et al., 2017) – in the current context, between the organisation (represented by management) and the employee (at times represented by trade unions). At the micro, internal or organisational level, one would consider aspects such as the vision and mission and strategies of the organisation, as well as resources, processes, policies and the like (Foresight Cards, n.d.). Budhwar et al. (2016) provide examples of leadership in, for instance, the HR department. Additionally, internal labour markets may have an influence on the micro level, depending on their nature of being formal (based on rules) or being informal (based on connections and relationships) (Budhwar et al., 2016).

The macro, meso and micro environments, as discussed above, are illustrated in Figure 2.3 below. The figure stresses that no organisation functions in isolation but within a broader environment. Consequently, any conflict management strategies, practices and procedures have to consider these wider environmental influences.



Figure 2.3 The Macro, Meso and Micro Environments

From an ER management perspective, various environmental factors, interactions, relationships and processes exist that organisations have to manage and nurture in a just and equitable way. All parties need to be aware of the economic conditions within which businesses operate (Budhwar et al., 2016; Department of Labour, 2013b; Rust, 2017). Hyman (1995) concludes that an integrated approach includes structures, actors and practices, while Avgar (2017) furthermore emphasises a strategic approach. This results in the desired outcomes set by the organisation – an intricate challenge because of the balance that needs to be created between the convergent and divergent interests of employers and labour, and the influences on the macro, meso and micro levels (Budhwar et al., 2016; Nel et al., 2016; Rust, 2017). Enterprises strive to find an ideal fit between the organisation, the employee, the job and the environment through a process of strategic management, including strategic ER management – if they succeed in this both the employees’ and the organisation’s needs are addressed. It is generally recognised that the way people function within this environment and their organisation is key to achieving organisational success (Budhwar et al., 2016; Isiaka et al., 2016; Jooste & Fourie, 2009; Rust, 2017).

Part of the strategic focus of organisations thus resides in managing the broader environmental influences on organisations’ ER (Budhwar et al., 2016; Gaile & Sumilo, 2016; Godard, 2011; Jayeoba et al., 2013; Rust, 2017). As discussed in Chapter 1, this is in line with Dunlop’s seminal

work, namely, IR open systems theory (Dunlop, 1958). Dunlop (1958) proposed that an organisation's IR system is a subsystem of a wider social system – an argument still considered today, also in current South African ER writings (see for instance Budhwar et al., 2016; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Nel et al, 2016).

Ironically, some aspects of Dunlop's theory (1958) are critiqued as not being currently relevant *because* of the environmental challenges of today's global world. It is argued that the traditional tripartite model regulating the employment relationship is not relevant to global supply chains where different sets of rules and ethical principles prevail (Donaghey, Reinecke, Niforou, & Lawson, 2014). Nonetheless, the very argument which concludes that the environment affects ER, and the co-dependency between the macro system within which organisations function and how it affects ER – and vice versa – is often reported on (e.g. Isiaka et al., 2016; Runge, 2016), also in South Africa (Alexander, 2013; CCMA, 2013, 2016; World Bank, 2015, 2017c).

A good example of this is found in the general decline in collective conflict (e.g. strike action) in open economies, which results in higher levels of risk of damaging employers and/or unions who still engage in these actions. This is because of the possibilities of loss of exports or domestic markets to competitors (Brown, 2014). These risks lead to organisations considering other less confrontational and more collaborative kinds of collective bargaining, focusing on mutual gain outcomes (Brown, 2014). However, this is not currently the case in South Africa. Social dialogue between government and other social partners acknowledges the need to moderate workplace conflict (CCMA, 2016; Department of Labour, 2017b; Jacobs, 2016; Nkwinti, 2017). Nevertheless, examples such as recurring workplace disputes and the often-marginal role unions play in making policy are indications that social dialogue is failing dismally at present (Bernards, 2017; Jordaan, 2016).

An ER example of the meso environment is found in a situation of centralised bargaining (Webster, 2013), for example conflict arising among the parties to a South African bargaining council. Although aspects such as industrial action, disputes and the like are evident on a centralised level, other forms of conflict are also evident. The extension of bargaining council agreements to non-parties in the industry is a case in point (ILO, 2016a). Another ER meso-environmental example is seen in industries such as agriculture, construction and retail, which increasingly make use of non-standard employment contracts (temporary, part-time or seasonal employment, often using labour brokers) (Mmanoko, 2016). The continent of Africa is characterised by an enormous informal sector and has the highest rate of vulnerable employment

in the world – according to the ILO it is estimated at almost 78% and at approximately 33% in South Africa (ILO, 2014, 2016a; Meagher, 2016). Evidence exists of a growing informal sector (Bernards, 2017). An example of how these aspects influence the workplace is found in the South African mining sector where casualisation and globalisation are cited as some of the main reasons for the significant (often negative) changes seen in the sector (Macmillan, 2017). It is argued that non-standard employment contracts and informalisation increase conflict as vulnerable workers are frequently exploited because they do not have the same legal protection as permanent employees, and are often not members of unions (Benjamin, 2016; Mmanoko, 2016). Unions also struggle to organise within these sectors (Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016).

Additionally, some scholars argue that the meso level refers to organisational management, considering the structures, and behaviours and routines of an organisation (Delport, Hay-Swemmer, & Wilkinson, 2014; Gonzales, 2010; Syed & Pio, 2010) – all of which potentially may lead to higher levels of conflict. One example found relates to discriminatory practices and the effect of diversity policies in this regard to regulate behaviour internal to the organisation, but also for instance in the public domain such as customer care (Syed & Pio, 2010). This description of the meso level relates to references to the meso level as being the group or team level within organisations (as opposed to the macro societal environment and a micro individual level within organisations) (Cilliers, 2011; Erez & Gati, 2004; Faems, Janssens, Madhok, & Looy, 2008; Heyns & Rothmann, 2015).

One aspect affecting both the macro and meso perspectives relates to the way employment structures and industries are changing in the digital economy and among knowledge networks. The innovative world of work results in new forms of employment and work, and changes employment relationships and contracts (e.g. increasing flexibility through outsourcing and temporary contracts) (Briken et al., 2017; Mmanoko, 2016; Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016), as well as the nature of conflict, thus asking for innovative conflict management practices (Zhou et al., 2017). For example, technological advancement raises questions about the effect it has on worker autonomy and discretion; whether it allows opportunities for increased worker self-organisation; which jobs will become obsolete; or what impact it may have on skills and competency requirements (Briken et al., 2017). Virtual work, social media and other related changes blur the boundaries related to time and space, and work and home life, while also increasing conflict as workplaces struggle to find answers that are fair and just (McDonald & Thompson, 2016; Runge, 2016; Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016). The use of social media gives rise to conflict in organisations

and various disputes in this regard have been declared because of profiling, derogatory remarks and private use of social media during work time (McDonald & Thompson, 2016).

All these aspects relate to changes that take place on a meso level in industries, where new ways of organising work and employment structures are evident and where new skills are required to work with technological advancements (Briken et al., 2017; Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016). It is expected that technological advancement will have a greater influence on employment structures than on employment numbers, although this point is highly contested by scholars (Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016). Types of jobs will change, creating jobs in some industries, while eliminating them in others. According to Valenduc and Vendramin (2016), the repercussions of these changes will be more positive in service-based sectors than in industrial sectors. In a digital workplace environment, individualised ER is strengthened (Briken et al., 2017). The global economy and technological advancement (e.g. though virtual work and cloud computing) allow for the parallel use of hardware infrastructure, changing the way employers are thinking about time and spatial relations, resulting in online outsourcing and redefining tasks using technology-mediated channels (Briken et al., 2017; Deloitte, 2017; Kuek, Paradi-Guilford, Pina, & Singh, 2015).

Virtual work results in new forms of employment (relating to the nature of the employer–employee relationship and to the work model) and employment contracts, often in unconventional workplaces (Runge, 2016; Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016). Nine new forms of employment have been identified (Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016):

- employee sharing (individual workers are employed by a group of employers and rotated among the various organisations)
- job sharing (a job is shared on a rotational basis by two individuals in one organisation)
- interim management (hiring experts on a temporary basis to complete a specific project)
- casual work (employing employees on temporary basis as and when needed)
- mobile work (where workers work remotely from various locations but do not work from the employer's premises)
- voucher-based work (an employment relationship where services are paid with a voucher bought from a third party – generally a government institution)
- portfolio work (a self-employed individual working for many clients)
- crowd working (an online platform where workers and projects are matched through a virtual cloud), and

- collaborative self-employment (workers engage in more flexible forms of collaboration by, for instance, sharing work spaces rather than forming traditional partnerships).

These new forms of employment, characterised by increased flexibility, online outsourcing of tasks and other forms of innovative work practices, create challenges for unions in organising and representing workers (Briken et al., 2017; Runge, 2016; Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016). Unions need to reinvent themselves to stay relevant and to be able to meet the challenges they face (Runge, 2016). In fact, outsourcing in general may lead to challenges for both workers and unions. According to Wilkinson and Wood (2017), ER requires some form of predictability, which is not the norm in emerging markets where, for instance, the use of illegal immigrants and other unwarranted workplace practices are prevalent. Even where ER is more formalised, external pressures exist for greater informalisation and externalisation practices such as outsourcing, temporary employment and subcontracting because of cost considerations and the ease of exiting from these employment relationships (Doellgast, Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, & Benassi, 2016; Wilkinson & Wood, 2017). This is also evident in South Africa. A case in point is the example of South African universities, which outsourced many of their workers during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Cleaning and security workers who were outsourced then fell into different sectors, which influenced and changed their membership of sectoral unions (Lockett & Mzobe, 2016). During the last couple of years, conflict has escalated in this regard and widespread industrial and protest action against outsourcing has been prevalent (Webster, Joynt, & Sefalafala, 2016).

Although environmental influences on ER are often negative, positive implications also emerge. For example, the CIPD (2012) reports that the harsh economic circumstances over the past two decades resulted in the growth of organisational communication and consultation practices in the United Kingdom (UK), mainly because employers realised the need to keep employees informed of business challenges during tough times. Additionally, cost pressures resulted in more emphasis being placed on employee engagement to motivate staff, and often forms the framework of wider ER strategies – in contrast with earlier practices of using wages to motivate staff (CIPD, 2012). In addition, research found that staff are hesitant to take industrial action in tough times, not wanting to damage their own interests, frequently resulting in trade unions and employers consulting widely to find alternatives to address various challenges (CIPD, 2012). Similarly, more focus is placed on preventing conflict altogether. Nonetheless, environmental influences are not always positive. The situation in the UK is a case in point. Collective action is still visible in the UK – for instance, a rise in industrial action ballots and threats of ballots, anti-brand and boycott

campaigns, as well as street demonstrations. These are used as tools of persuasion with employers (CIPD, 2012).

South Africa holds its own challenges. As in other countries, for example the UK (Emmott, 2015), ER history and development in South Africa is largely intertwined with the country's political history. Militant South African unions played an important role in the anti-apartheid struggle to achieve a democracy-driven society where social contracts between major role players promised a more wide-ranging and participatory ER arrangement (Webster, 2015). Subsequently, South Africa was widely congratulated on its peaceful transition to a democratic country. In the ER arena, the ILO praised the country's adoption of an ER system which, through compromise from all parties involved, focused on greater individual and worker rights within a more cooperative environment (Webster, 2015). However, South Africa's apartheid legacy greatly influenced and challenged this delicate compromise (Webster, 2015). African and specifically South African democracy is described as struggling with a situation in which the socioeconomic structure is persistently exclusionary and characterised by high levels of unemployment, poverty and severe inequality (Beresford, 2016; Development Policy Research Unit, 2013; Festus et al., 2016; Meagher, 2016; Von Holdt, 2013; World Bank, 2015, 2017b). The transition to a democracy resulted in a "symbolic and institutional rupture", resulting in an unsound social order where intra-elite conflict and violence are increasingly resulting in a state of "violent democracy" (Von Holdt, 2013, p. 589).

Since 1994, the average unemployment rate in South Africa has been around 25%, one of the highest levels in the world (Bhorat et al., 2014; Festus et al., 2016; Mackay, 2017; World Bank, 2015, 2017b), placing strain on the labour market (CCMA, 2016). In fact, during the first quarter of 2015, one of the highest levels of unemployment in the history of South Africa was measured, namely, 5,5 million unemployed people (Festus et al., 2016), a figure which subsequently increased to 27,7% (6,2 million unemployed) in the first semester of 2017 (World Bank, 2017b). Youth unemployment remains a huge challenge, as 55,9% of South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 years (1,6 million youth) are unemployed (World Bank, 2017b). These are alarming figures for a number of reasons, but also because scholars acknowledge that a country's IR climate partly explains outcomes such as unemployment (Addison & Teixeira, 2017). Similarly, scholars argue that economic and other difficulties at the organisational level may affect unemployment, poverty and the like (Tereshina et al., 2016).

In regard to inequality levels, and specifically income inequality, an equally bleak picture is painted (Bhorat et al., 2014; Department of Labour, 2017b; Festus et al., 2016; Wentzel, Diatha, & Yadavalli, 2016; World Bank, 2015, 2017a). In fact, high unemployment, severe poverty and widespread inequality are regarded as the South African economy's triple challenge, intensified by a lack of skills (Benjamin, 2016; Department of Labour, 2015; ILO, 2016b; World Bank, 2015, 2017c). These aspects are widely regarded as some of the underlying reasons for the poor general state of labour relations in the country (World Bank, 2017c), as can be seen in the number of disputes referred to the CCMA, the increase in incidents of industrial action and difficult negotiation conditions (CCMA, 2016; Department of Labour, 2017). Low skills levels inhibit economic growth (Kaplan & Höppli, 2017) and contribute to wage inequality (Kochan & Riordan, 2016). Webster (2015) argues that ER will have to consider solutions beyond collective bargaining to address the high level of inequality, poverty and unemployment that have resulted in the era of globalisation.

The number of strike incidents in South Africa has increased substantially. During the period 2009 to 2013, an astonishing 124% increase in strike incidents was reported (Department of Labour, 2014). This number increased again from 88 strikes in 2014, to 110 strikes in 2015 (Department of Labour, 2015), and again with 10% to 122 strikes during 2016 (Department of Labour, 2016a). Not only are these incidents increasing in frequency and duration, but they are often accompanied by aggressive and violent behaviour (CCMA, 2013; COSATU, 2012; Department of Labour, 2016). Moreover, incidences of industrial action are increasingly characterised by a reluctance to find the middle ground by both employees and employers (Southall, 2013).

In a survey of more than 3000 employees in 27 urban areas undertaken by COSATU, about half of the respondents indicated that violence is necessary in strike action, with about two in five workers indicating that a violent response from management or the police was appropriate (COSATU, 2012). In South Africa, various examples are found where conflict in and around the organisation escalated to the point of violent industrial action, and the Department of Labour confirms the viewpoint held by some union leaders that violence is the only answer (Department of Labour, 2016). The Marikana incident, extending over a period of more than two years from 2012 onwards, is perhaps the best known of these, even though it was not the first violent strike in the history of South African ER. Alexander (2013) argues that Marikana was a rift that spurred on more of the same incidences, and specifically a number of violent strikes and incidents of intimidation. Marikana also serves as an example of the possible disorder that may result from

the breakdown in communication, leadership, social dialogue, and other related issues (Bernards, 2017; Jordaan, 2016).

The CCMA in South Africa reports that the adversarial nature of ER in the country leads to a large number of workplace disputes, which are then referred to the CCMA for resolution – a task that is complicated by an economic environment that is characterised by job losses, poverty, inequality and a recession (CCMA, 2016). Violence and lawlessness in industrial conflict and other protest actions are evident, and employers seem hostile to collective bargaining institutions (Benjamin, 2016; Dickenson, 2017; Madlala & Govender, 2018; Webster, 2013). This is aggravated by South Africa's disadvantaged socioeconomic context which results in unions that mobilise workers around external injustices as well as workplace issues (Wöcke & Marais, 2016). In fact, an extensive, mounting sense of injustice is prevalent in the country, mainly because of failing political and economic systems (Colvin, 2016; Department of Labour, 2016b; Dickinson, 2017; ILO, 2016b; World Bank, 2017c; Webster et al., 2016). Webster (2013) explains that any compromise between the social partners is hampered by the complexities of South Africa's apartheid legacy. The Department of Labour (2016) confirms that the incidents of violence and intimidation in industrial action and states that all establishments are affected by strikes, regardless of the size of the organisation.

In fact, scholars (e.g. Dickinson, 2017) argue that South Africa's IR system is in crisis. Any changes in workplace systems have to contend with the legacies of inequality, migrant labour, the segmentation of the workforce into racial, gender and ethnic divisions, and high structural unemployment and underemployment (Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi, & Yu, 2017; Festus et al., 2016; Jordaan, 2016; Schoeman et al., 2010; Webster, 2013). High unemployment is especially rife among the previously disadvantaged groups and the youth, mainly because of the poor educational levels that persist, despite the many advances made after democracy was introduced in 1994 (Bhorat et al., 2015; Business Monitor International, 2017; Festus et al., 2016; Meagher, 2016; Wentzel et al., 2016). This is despite the fact that the bulk of the increase that was evident in employment between 1995 and 2015 (5,6 million people) is attributed to the employment of black Africans (Festus et al., 2016). Racial division in the workplace, consisting of mainly white management and a black workforce, continues and results in a workplace culture characterised by low levels of trust and skills and high adversarialism (Webster, 2013). These factors, together with slow economic growth (aggravated by educational challenge, high HIV/Aids prevalence, etc.), place additional pressure on workplaces, as collective bargaining positions are increasingly

uncompromising and relationships adversarial in nature and intolerant towards the different needs of the various role players (Business Monitor International, 2017; CCMA, 2016).

Godard (2011) maintains that the decline in trade unionism and collective bargaining, together with the rise in individual employment rights, may result in alternative forms of workplace conflict, apart from industrial action. In South Africa these factors, together with the poor socioeconomic conditions, have resulted in this becoming a reality. In fact, it is estimated that, on average, South Africa has more protest action per person than any other country in the world (Webster et al., 2016). Workers cite the increase and exploitation of vulnerable workers (i.e. non-standard employment such as workers in the informal sector or on temporary contracts) as part of the reason for increased (and often violent) protest action (Dickinson, 2017; Mmanoko, 2016). Additionally, issues such as the perceived conspiracy between the police and employers and/or the state, the view of workers that employers are stubborn and inflexible, and the protracted duration of industrial action all encourage violence in strikes (Benjamin, 2016). These hold potential significant costs for organisations and the country.

Indeed, the Department of Labour (2014) reported a plea from the State President to mining companies and trade unions to not let conflict situations destroy the South African economy. However, the mining industry (like many other industries) experiences high levels of conflict because of the legacies of migration, harsh working conditions and the like, contributing to the prevalent adversarial relationships (Humby, 2016; Macmillan, 2017). Jordaan (2016) refers to the unintended but intensely damaging consequences of the 2012 strike in the mining sector in South Africa, and stresses that it negatively influenced GDP growth and employment, and had a roll-over effect on other sectors, amongst other factors.

Hostile IR – and specifically labour conflict – plays a major part in South Africa's high levels of underemployment and unemployment as it contributes to a capital-intensive production system and generally low confidence in the economy (Bhorat et al., 2015; Jordaan, 2016; Schoeman et al., 2010). Poor labour relations and the high levels of labour unrest are regarded as contributing to the sluggish growth of the South African gross domestic product (GDP), which slowed from 2013 to 2017 (World Bank, 2017c). According to the World Bank report (World Bank, 2015), South African ER will remain difficult in the light of weak growth in the economic environment. Statistics show that industrial action, although generally associated with wages, is also related to socioeconomic and political factors (Benjamin, 2016; Department of Labour, 2014, 2017; Jacobs & Yu, 2013; Rust, 2017). Wage growth has been below inflation rates in South Africa since 2012;

nonetheless, wage levels are high compared to other BRICS countries (World Bank, 2017c). Moreover, collective bargaining for unionised workers results in wages growing at a faster rate than productivity in many sectors (World Bank, 2017c). These are troublesome figures, as research has shown that there is a significant positive relationship between the number of strikes and the ratio of capital to labour; more capital-intensive techniques are chosen by organisations to avoid the result of poor ER, which is evident in the huge number of strikes in the workplace (Beukes et al., 2017). Poor IR, labour disputes and labour conflict negatively affect economic growth and job creation (Bhorat et al., 2015; Jordaan, 2016; World Bank, 2017c), contributing to the negative spiral of increased violence in the workplace because of the poor economic outlook (Schoeman et al., 2010).

The fact that businesses are increasingly becoming more capital-intensive is reflected in the fact that the South African economic system has increasingly become services-driven since 1994; a matter of concern as research has shown that no country has succeeded in transiting from middle-income to high-income status without an active, healthy, labour-intensive manufacturing industry (Bhorat et al., 2015). Moreover, the high unemployment levels exacerbate the levels of poverty in the country. Although poverty decreased initially after 1994, it increased again between 2011 and 2015, mainly because of the poor performance of the South African economy; this negative trend was expected to continue into 2018 (World Bank, 2017b). Almost 80% of South Africa's population experienced poverty between 2008 and 2015 (World Bank, 2017c).

Globalisation brought its own challenges to ER, including in South Africa (CCMA, 2016). Business and consumer confidence remain low (World Bank, 2017b). One of the challenges South Africa faces is low productivity levels (e.g. the ILO reports a negative productivity growth in 2015) (ILO, 2016a). Globally, the decline in trade union membership, increased competition and the mobility of capital have all led to greater responsibility falling onto the relationship between multinationals, consumers and labour to ensure good governance and fair treatment of staff, as traditional labour governance systems have failed to address global governance gaps (Donaghey et al., 2014; Isiaka et al., 2016). This is especially important as collective bargaining practices are on the decline (Zhou et al, 2017).

Nonetheless, evidence exists that the impact of unions on business can be either positive or negative, depending on the employment relationship between the union and management (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). On the one hand, union density in workplaces is associated with higher incidences of strike action in those workplaces (Addison & Teixeira, 2017). Other

complexities may exist in unionised workplaces, such as union representatives (referred to as shop stewards in South Africa) being in a precarious position within the management–union partnership because they are both employees and represent union interests, resulting in role conflict (Harrisson, Roy, & Haines, 2011).

On the other hand, evidence of positive union effects also exists. Some research indicates that workplaces with a union presence have better employee relations (Gill & Meyer, 2013). For instance, an Australian study found that when sound ER exists in organisations, trade unions facilitate the implementation and adoption of high performance work practices, and as such contribute to organisational competitiveness (Gill & Meyer, 2013). In addition, unions may enhance decision-making because they consider organisational decisions from the perspective of their members and may therefore have a more logical view (Gill & Meyer, 2013). Additionally, unionism improves individual and collective voice, as well as providing effective communication infrastructure (Gill & Meyer, 2013). Similarly, examples exist in Korea where union participation is part of a cooperative management participation model which specifically creates positive roles for individual workers and unions (Lee & Lee, 2009). A cooperative, innovative and harmonious relationship, rather than an adversarial one, is therefore advocated (Gill & Meyer, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2009). This is easier said than done within a global environment where employers and unions are dealing with multinational organisations with inherent political differences and conflicting leadership styles, different types of investment, cultural differences and so on, which challenge employers and employees alike (Bose & Mudgal, 2016; Helfen & Fichter, 2013; Isiaka et al., 2016).

Subsequently, it is argued that more than a purely pluralist perspective is needed (Delaney & Godard, 2001) as such an approach regards a partnership merely as a project to promote cooperative union–employer relations (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). In such a pluralist perspective, too much focus may be placed on the inherent conflictive relationship between employer and employee; rather, a partnership approach focusing on mutual gain may enhance the potential positive effect of unionism (Delaney & Godard, 2001). Today, it is acknowledged that a cooperative relationship characterised by mutual gain is difficult to develop and maintain, although not impossible (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). A good relationship between labour and management enhances organisational trust and commitment (Gill & Meyer, 2013), and some form of employee representation in workplaces is regarded as a vehicle for improving workplace relationships (Addison & Teixeira, 2017). Nonetheless, the often adversarial approach between

management and trade unionism is widely accepted (Gilliland et al., 2014), and many arguments exist against the workings of trade unionism.

South Africa's Constitution protects labour rights such as freedom of association and the right to strike and engage in collective bargaining (Dickinson, 2017). These rights are entrenched in the Labour Relations Act (1995) (LRA) (amended) (Republic of South Africa, 2014), which regulates the IR environment by providing a framework for employers and employees within which to manage and resolve conflict. The LRA also institutionalises collective bargaining and workplace conflict through bargaining councils, the CCMA, as well as the Labour and Labour Appeal Courts. Additionally, government aims to moderate workplace conflict through several initiatives, such as introducing workplace mediation programmes (CCMA, 2016). This is in line with a worldwide trend to strengthen conflict management within organisations by supporting various types of workplace mediation programme (Currie et al., 2017). Another initiative relates to the introduction of a South African national minimum wage in 2018 (Festus et al., 2016; Nkwinti, 2017). The implementation of a minimum wage was addressed in a media briefing by Minister Nkwinti as a way of moderating workplace conflict and reducing inequality in South Africa (Nkwinti, 2017). However, it is not likely that this will provide an answer to all the problems faced by South African citizens and workplaces. The World Bank (2017b) cautions, for instance, that the proposed national minimum wage may result in job losses – an aspect directly affecting workplaces through retrenchments and possible workplace conflict.

From the above discussion, one may deduce that South African organisations, specifically from an ER perspective, are not immune to the environment, but rather influenced by it (CCMA, 2013; Department of Labour, 2014, 2017). These complexities are fittingly summarised by the 2013 CCMA Annual Report (CCMA, 2013) which states that the South African workplace has historically been the place where conflict originating from employees' rights and freedoms blends with the demands on the shop floor. The wider national occurrences of increased voter intolerance, public protests and political developments are all mirrored in current South African workplace relationships and manifestations of industrial action (CCMA, 2013; Jordaan 2016). It may be argued that not only does the external environment influence an organisation and its ER system, but also vice versa (Godard, 2011; Jordaan, 2016). Similarly, circumstances that foster wide-ranging societal conflict may be initiated within or outside the employment relationship (Godard, 2011). Accordingly, conflict is embedded in an environment or context and thus is affected by the elements of that environment (Sheppard, 1992).

The challenges South Africa experiences on a macro level, thus also influence organisations on a micro level. The incidents and happenings described above – even though the reasons for them may be varied and myriad – should provide the necessary motivation for South African policy makers to search on for workable solutions a macro level. Furthermore, it is evident that organisations need to combat the high levels of internal organisational conflict. It may be that conflict becomes increasingly entrenched and reflected in circumstances of economically, socially and politically dysfunctional behaviours both outside and within the employment relationship (Godard, 2011; Tereshina et al., 2016). The occurrence of strikes is for instance seen as indicative of the extent to which workplaces are able to create positive relationships between employees and management in a climate of trust (Addison & Teixeira, 2017). However, the prevalence of conflict may not necessarily appear as specific acts (e.g. strikes), and is often not attributed to underlying sources of conflict such as inequality (Godard, 2011). In addition, Godard (2011) cautions that these types of conflict behaviour often supersede more obvious forms of conflict, and are more difficult to deal with because of their level of embeddedness.

The conflict literature distinguishes between aggressive and violent behaviour in workplaces and among co-workers (Dillon, 2012), and notes that while all violent behaviour is aggressive, not all aggressive behaviour will turn necessarily violent. Examples of non-physical violence and conflict such as intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, verbal abuse and fighting may also be evident (Benitez et al., 2018; Dillon, 2012, Van den Brande et al., 2017). In fact, evidence suggests a strong relationship between various forms of conflict and bullying at work (Baillien et al., 2016). In South Africa, incidents of workplace conflict (apart from industrial action) are on the increase. Nerine Khan, the (then) director of the CCMA, for instance, indicated a 25% increase in the caseload relating to workplace disputes at the CCMA over the five-year period 2008–2012 (Business Tech, 2013). During the period 2015–2016, on average 721 new cases were referred daily to the CCMA (CCMA, 2016).

It is not only wages and working conditions that play a part in industrial action and other workplace disputes and conflict situations (Alexander, 2013; CCMA, 2013; Department of Labour, 2014; MacMillan, 2017). In the Marikana incident, for example, whilst wage disputes were indicated as the main reason for the strike, employees also cited other reasons for the industrial action. These included their poor living conditions, workplace health and safety issues, the type of work they do such as working with heavy drills in air full of dust and chemicals and the difficulty levels of their jobs, often caused by chasing production targets through shifts lasting 12 hours or more

(Alexander, 2013; MacMillan, 2017). These issues contributed to feelings of humiliation and disrespect by mineworkers (MacMillan, 2017). Managers – and specifically white managers – were accused of being rude and adversarial, thus indicating the effect of perceived racial tension that often exists in South African companies (Alexander, 2013).

This view is confirmed by the Department of Labour's Annual Industrial Action Report (2014), which explains that on the one hand management judged the attitudes of trade unions, accused the unions of having irrational wage increase demands, and complained that unions resort too quickly to industrial action. The perspectives of trade unions, on the other hand, are that employers make huge profits but do not invest in their workforce. This view by workers was reiterated in a COSATU survey (2012) which asked the question of employees as to what they want from their employers. Consequently, two main issues were highlighted, namely, higher pay and fair treatment. Oversimplified thus, one may perhaps conclude from the COSATU survey (2012) that employees are asking for a more humane and fair approach in business, while the employer is asking for higher productivity levels and commitment to the organisation. However, one wants to summarise the divide, it seems clear that employees and employers are struggling to find each other amidst the challenges faced by both parties (Alexander, 2013; COSATU, 2012; Department of Labour, 2014).

Kahn (CCMA, 2013) stresses that the increase in caseload at the CCMA could be construed as the presence of a serious state of discontent in South African society (Business Tech, 2013; CCMA, 2013). Khan (CCMA, 2013) argues that while the focus tends to be on dispute resolution, had it rather been on dispute prevention and management less resolution of conflict would have been necessary. The influence of globalisation and thus the lesser importance of geographical, political and socioeconomic boundaries, flatter organisational structures, amplified pressure on cutting costs, and the increased diversification of the workforce all add to the greater emphasis needed on effective ER and conflict management in organisations (Helfen & Fichter, 2013; Isiaka et al., 2016; Mayer & Louw, 2009; Siira, 2012). This accentuates the importance of conflict management research that may assist South African-based organisations functioning in these unpredictable times (Alexander, 2013; CCMA, 2013, 2016; Department of Labour, 2017; World Bank, 2017b; Von Holdt, 2013) to find effective ways in which to constructively manage conflict in organisations.

Scholars report on a shift in emphasis in African ER approaches. For instances, African ER practices are beginning to change their emphasis from human capital development (focusing on

improving individual skills and competencies) to include social capital development (where cooperation and trust-building become the focus) (CIPD, 2012; Imoisili, 2011; Isiaka et al., 2016; Novicevic et al., 2011). Within this context, productivity improvement measures equally emphasise economic performance, work-life quality and environmental protection (Imoisili, 2011; *Tools for the High Road to Productivity and Competitiveness*, n.d.). Monetary and non-monetary rewards combine to form the total reward system – for instance through individual growth, a positive workplace and an exciting future (Godard, 2005). Imoisili (2011) concludes that any African ER system that does not promote both organisational and national competitiveness in Africa is unproductive. To accomplish this goal, the social partners – particularly employers and employees – must work together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect (Godard, 2005; Imoisili, 2011). The buzzwords in such an environment are cooperation, consultation, collaboration and dispute resolution (Imoisili, 2011). In addition, the focus of employees' performance is not merely on competence (i.e. the ability to do the work) but also on compatibility (the ability to work together) and integrity (seen as being trusted with people and resources) (Imoisili, 2011).

South African organisations are encouraged to follow similar principles. In South Africa, the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) – a professional body for the HR profession in South Africa – promotes fair ER by adopting an employment relations standard (Meyer & Abbott, 2015). This standard sets ER-related objectives for organisations to meet, amongst others the creation of a climate of trust, cooperation and stability, creating a harmonious workplace, and providing a framework for conflict resolution (Meyer & Abbott, 2015). This viewpoint is supported by research that indicate that employees' willingness to forgive after conflict episodes in the workplace is an important aspect to foster cooperation and increase performance after conflict manifestations (Ayoko, 2016).

Focus on the divergent interests of the parties, as well as the convergent and cooperative elements of the employment relationship from both the collective and individual dimensions, has been supported by other scholars over the years (Bray, Waring, Cooper, & MacNeil, 2014; Deery, Plowman, Walsh, & Brown, 2001; Kaufman, 2008; Nel et al., 2016; Poole, 1986). For instance, scholars argue for a social contract between all parties in the employment relationship which should not be limited to the top leadership of the most important South African ER role players, but should reach down into employers' and employee organisations, and their leadership (Cheadle, Le Roux, & Thompson, 2011). Such an approach, it is argued, should not address

issues of wages, but should rather focus on workplace culture, productivity and change (Webster, 2013). Emmott (2015) also suggests that a social partnership and national dialogue between the main role players are key factors to increasing productivity.

Sound IR (and one may argue, ER) is evident in harmonious and cooperative relationships (rather than conflictual relationships) between management and employees (the primary parties), and the primary parties and the state (De Silva, 1998). Fashoyin (2004) argues that sound IR enhances labour peace and social stability and, therefore, leads to greater economic and social development, as well as organisational success. Organisational performance, proficiency and productivity increase in an environment with positive ER (Addison & Teixeira, 2017; Fashoyin, 2004; Pyman, Holland, Teicher, & Cooper, 2010), while issues of equity, justice and employee development are also enhanced (De Silva, 1998). Other outcomes resulting from a climate of constructive ER are positive organisational perceptions, good relationships between supervisors and employees, reduced absenteeism and turnover levels, and enhanced service delivery and product quality (Lee & Lee, 2009). In addition, it may be argued that sound ER forms part of good corporate governance, and should aim to find best practice regarding conflict management and minimisation, dispute resolution, and the promotion of harmonious relations among all stakeholders, as well as in society (De Silva, 1998; Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016).

Clearly, considering best practice for conflict management and other organisational challenges from an ER perspective on the macro, meso and micro levels is imperative for organisational success (Budhwar et al., 2016). Nonetheless, although the macro and meso environments are acknowledged in this research as fundamental in understanding the causes of conflict in the workplace, they are not the focus of the research. This study focuses on constructing a conflict management framework for workplaces – thus on the micro-environmental level.

2.2 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (CONFLICT TYPES AND INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES)

From the discussion above, it is evident that the challenges organisations face on a macro, meso and micro level within the ER context potentially influence the construction of a conflict management framework. In addition, scholars acknowledge the inherent nature of conflict in all human interaction (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Van Kleef & Côté, 2018); specifically also the coexistence of conflict and cooperation in the employment relationship (Avgar, 2017; Bélanger & Edwards, 2007; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; García et al., 2017; Gould & Desjardins,

2014; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Managing this coexistence is imperative; however, as research shows, South Africa fails dismally in this regard (Schwab, 2017). Apart from managing labour–management conflict, scholars consider team and dyadic conflict in organisations as it is accepted that conflict is inescapable because of individual differences in personality traits – two or more people interacting in an organisation will inevitably result in conflict (Ayub, AlQurashi, Al-Yafi, & Jehn, 2017; Löhr et al., 2017). Additionally, with changing workplace practices and a decline in union membership the focus is less on collective issues (Currie et al., 2017).

Employment relations practices may moderate the transformation of dysfunctional conflict to functional conflict, thus reducing conflict to enhance organisational effectiveness (this is also true when unions and their shop floor representatives are present and perceived as competent) (Budhwar et al., 2016; García et al., 2017; Mukhtar, Siengthai, & Ramzan, 2011). Achieving a harmonious environment is key to organisational effectiveness (Madlala & Govender, 2018). Nonetheless, rather than having a phlegmatic viewpoint on the prevalence of conflict in organisations, often it is regarded by the HRM and related professions as something to be avoided as it distracts from the effectiveness of organisations (Currie et al., 2017). However, conflict avoidance is generally not the answer. Increasingly (albeit often reluctantly), workplace management acknowledges the existence and the central role conflict plays in organisations, necessitating a proactive, strategic approach (Boroş, Van Gorp, Cardoen, & Boute, 2017; Budhwar et al., 2016; Lipsky et al., 2017; Rao, 2017; Zhou et al., 2017).

This section expands on conflict and conflict management as relevant to the present research. Firstly, the section conceptualises various explanations and definitions of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This is followed by a discussion of the different causes and types of conflict, as well as of interpersonal conflict handling styles. Next, the section deals with conflict management theories and models. The section concludes with a critical evaluation of possible antecedents and consequences of conflict management.

2.2.1 Conceptualisation of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)

The literature on conflict in the business world is extensive and is viewed from a variety of disciplines (Avgar, 2017; Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Wall & Callister, 1995; Wu, Zhao, & Zuo, 2017). Types of conflict identified fluctuate and views on what conflict is, or how to manage it, differ at length (Katz & Flynn, 2013; Wu et al., 2017). Scholars view conflict either as a process or as an

occurrence, as will be discussed below. The intricate conflict process is influenced by various factors (Bergiel et al., 2015; Rust, 2017) and scholars agree that conflict is nearly unescapable and part of social relationships and organisational life (Avgar, 2017; Coleman et al., 2012; Currie et al., 2017; Erbert, 2014; Zhou et al., 2017). The essentially hostile relationship between management and employees is reflected in various types of workplace conflict, such as strikes and other disruptive collective and workplace actions (Kelly, 2015; Zhou et al., 2017). Conflict is not static, and different patterns of conflict may occur over time, or conflict may flare up again (Ayoko, 2016; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Pondy, 1967). This section firstly describes conflict and conflict management, secondly, it elaborates on the causes of conflict and differentiates between the types of conflict and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

2.2.1.1 Defining conflict and conflict management

Conflict is regarded as both multidimensional and multilevel. Seminal writings on conflict describe conflict on three different levels, namely, interpersonal, intergroup and interorganisational conflict (Jehn, 1997; Wall & Callister, 1995). Wall and Callister (1995) clarify that interpersonal conflict refers to conflict within the person, for instance because of the role conflict a working mother may experience; or the conflict that occurs when individuals are in conflict with one another. Intergroup conflict manifests when the conflict occurs between or among groups because of perceived incompatibilities among the members of the group(s) (Wall & Callister, 1995), while interorganisational conflict refers to conflict between or amongst organisations (Wall & Callister, 1995).

Considering conflict on these different levels compares well to the Level of Analysis model (Pettigrew, 1996) that proposes that intergroup relations are best understood as processes and changes on the individual level; at the level of cross-group dealings and relations between people; and/or the institutional level featuring policies, strategies, processes and practices that encompass the broader intergroup relationship. De Dreu (2008) explains that group level conflict may affect group processes and outcomes (group level), but may also influence an individual's state of mind (individual level) on job satisfaction, turnover intention, and the like. Simultaneously, group-level conflict may affect the stability and profitability of an organisation (organisational level). Furthermore, positive outcomes on the one level may not necessarily be the same on another level; for example, although the organisation may benefit from the conflict episode, increased levels of individual stress may be present among employees (De Dreu, 2008). As such, it is very difficult (but nevertheless possible) to determine the impact of conflict from a multilevel

perspective (De Dreu, 2008). Similarly, it is very difficult to compare the outcomes of conflict over the short (e.g. creative ideas) and longer term (e.g. increased turnover) (De Dreu, 2008).

Various definitions of conflict exist. Earlier works (Litterer, 1966) explain conflict as behaviour between two or more parties who oppose each other because of the interaction with, or actions of, the other which may result because of a perceived deprivation. Many conflict definitions include some form of emotion, for instance the inclusion of hostility or aggressive behaviour (Ilies, Johnson, Judge, & Keeney, 2011). For instance, conflict is defined as a social situation or process that results because two social beings are linked by at least one hostile interaction or psychological reaction (Fink, 1968). Similarly, conflict has been defined in terms of opposing interests because of antecedents such as scarce resources, different goals, interference in goal achievement and subsequent frustrations resulting in competitive behaviour (Pondy, 1967). Likewise, conflict is described as conflicting views on the entitlement of resources (Abel, 1982).

Another approach to conflict definitions is to associate it with competitive intentions, in other words a deliberate interference with another's goals, such as the usage of the word conflict in the IR context (Deutsch, 1973; Thomas, 1992; Tjosvold et al., 2014). Conflict may involve grievances and disputes among individuals or between groups, and their employers, in the presence or absence of unions (Currie et al., 2017).

Organisational conflict is described as an inharmoniousness state in an organisation where objectives are either not met, or threatened because of incompatible goals, interests or values amongst dissimilar individuals or groups (Jones & George, 2016; Litterer, 1966), and where such ongoing disputes threaten employees' wellbeing, individuality, security or sense of belonging (LeBlanc, Gilin Oore, & Axelrod, 2014). However, academics (Kabanoff, 1985) maintain that even when people agree on a common goal and believe that they should work together, they still experience difficulty working together effectively as conflict develops primarily from people's normal attempts to cooperate and coordinate efforts.

Apart from competition, some additional conflict management behaviour styles are documented in the literature, giving rise to more general considerations of the conflict construct. For instance, Tjosvold et al. (2014) point out that often people without any opposing interests may experience conflict. Other authors focus on more than one aspect, for example on the conflict process, cognition, emotions involved and behaviour. For instance, interpersonal conflict is described as

an active process of negative emotional reactions because of apparent differences and obstacles to goal attainment that occurs between two mutually dependent parties (Barki & Hartwick, 2004).

Barki and Hartwick (2004) highlight three general themes that are rooted in most descriptions of conflict, namely disagreement, interference and negative emotions. The seminal work of Pondy (1967) suggests that conflict considerations should entail affective states (e.g. stress, hostile behaviours and the like), cognitive states (such as the perception of conflict), and conflicting behaviour (for instance confrontation or explicit differences). Ma et al. (2017) considered the various definitions of organisational conflict from as early as 1957 up to 2017, and concur with Pondy (1967) and De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) that four aspects are integral to the concept of conflict, namely, cognition, emotion, interest and behaviour. Ma et al. (2017) explain these four dimensions – cognitive (e.g. different opinions, ideas and understandings); affective (including negative emotional-related aspects such as sighing, antipathy, rolling eyes, etc.); interest-based aspects (differing sources regarding power, status and the like); and behavioural aspects (e.g. fist fighting, obstruction, backstabbing).

Furthermore, some of the conflict definitions emphasise a situation or a specific occurrence, while others see it as a process occurring over time (Coleman et al., 2012; Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017). For example, conflict is described as incompatible activities (such as conflicting goals, values, feelings) (Deutsch, 1973; Tjosvold et al., 2010) that occur when one person's behaviour obstructs or interferes with another person's goals or actions (Deutsch, 1973). Acknowledging that conflict may occur over time, Wall and Callister (1995) (similar to De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008 and Thomas, 1976) describe conflict as a process during which one party(ies) perceive(s) that its interests or goals are negatively affected or opposed by another party(ies), or about to be negatively affected by it. It is not necessarily a once-off event, but rather a process arising from the perceived or actual differences in values, work styles and thinking (DeChurch, Mesmer-Magnus, & Doty, 2013), which manifests in incompatibility, disagreements or dissonance between or within social entities on various levels (individual, group, organisational) (Rahim, 2002). Likewise, conflict is described as a relational process affected by the manifestation of irreconcilable activities or doings (Coleman et al., 2012).

Scholars argue that there is thus no one acceptable definition of conflict, but rather groups of definitions that are identified (Thomas, 1992). Nonetheless, three themes are present in most definitions on conflict, namely, the interdependence present among the parties, meaning that each has the potential to affect the other party; the perception of incompatibility among the parties,

and lastly, interaction in some form between the conflicting parties (Putman & Poole, 1987). As such, for the purposes of this study, conflict is described as a process where one party perceives its interests to be adversely affected or opposed by another party because of perceived incompatibilities (Wall & Callister, 1995).

Conflict management is generally regarded as imperative. From a broad perspective, conflict management is regarded as a strategic process that takes cognisance of the internal and external environment of the organisation with the aim to enhance overall performance and effectiveness (Lipsky et al., 2014). From a narrower (and perhaps more practical) perspective, this implies that conflict management may be described as the identification of, and intercession in, emotional and practical conflict in organisations at the interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels, and the conflict management styles and strategies used to handle this conflict (Rahim, 2002). Additionally, scholars (Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2003; Lipsky et al., 2014; Nash & Hann, 2017) accentuate that a strategic approach to conflict management necessitates the alignment of conflict management with the overall business strategy, organisational policies and procedures, and other ER and conflict management practices and strategies. This is done through a process of planning, discussions and negotiations, and methodical change processes. The seminal work of Thomas (1992) emphasises the importance of both process (i.e. the sequence of events that occurs during conflict episodes, such as the mental and behavioural actions of the parties in conflict); and structural interventions (i.e. the stable conditions controlling the process such as norms and standardised procedures) in conflict management.

Conflict management is described as a process not aimed at removing, avoiding, preventing or halting conflict. Rather, it is a process of managing conflict constructively, thus bringing opposing sides together in a cooperative manner; as well as focusing on the design of practical, reachable and cooperative arrangements or strategies to manage and monitor differences constructively (Ghai et al., 1998; Wright et al., 2017). Strategies are formulated and applied to decrease or remove any undesirable consequences of conflict (e.g. high absenteeism in the workplace), and to escalate positive outcomes of conflict (e.g. higher productivity levels). Tjosvold et al. (2014) argue that conflict management is the fundamentally intellectual and practical task of determining in what manner and when the respective parties (e.g. managers and employees) should deliberate and deal with their conflict so that both the organisation and they may benefit. Conflict management is also described as having a continuous strategic focus on any indications of underlying conflict by detecting, considering and assessing the conflict, and subsequently

developing and implementing measures to prevent it from becoming destructive or dysfunctional (Swanepoel & Slabbert, 2012). The importance of this is reflected in the definition of conflict management as actions taken to reduce conflict related to work stress (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018; Rahim, 2002).

For the purposes of this research, conflict management is regarded as having a strategic, long-term focus on managing conflict by considering the internal and external organisational environment (Lipsky et al., 2014), and aligning conflict management strategies and processes with other business and ER strategies, policies and procedures (Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2003; Lipsky et al., 2014; Nash & Hann, 2017), thus ensuring a constructive conflict management process of bringing opposing sides together in a cooperative manner; and designing practical, reachable and cooperative strategies to constructively manage and monitor differences (Ghai et al., 1998; Wright et al., 2017), with the overall aim of enhancing the performance and effectiveness of organisations (Lipsky et al., 2014).

The argument is further made that in order to manage conflict in this way, the type of conflict has to be identified, while attention should also be given to interpersonal conflict handling styles in order to foster greater understanding of an individual's behaviour in a conflict situation (DeChurch et al., 2013; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017). These aspects are discussed below.

2.2.1.2 Conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles

Scholars (e.g. Tjosvold et al., 2014) argue that should one refer in general to the broad concept of conflict, it may incur different assumptions on what conflict means. Conflict has been categorised as competitive versus cooperative (e.g. Hempel, Zhang, & Tjosvold, 2009); and cognitive or emotional (e.g. Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Pelled, 1996); and as being of a different character, e.g. task, relationship, process and status conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Jehn 1995, 1997). According to O'Neill and McLarnon (2018), Jehn's classification of conflict types became the preferred choice of scholarly works because of the expansion of her conflict model to include task, relational and process conflict, and because of her measurement scale, which is considered psychometrically sound. Scholars (Van Kleef & Côté, 2018) argue that conflicts resulting from interest disputes (e.g. disagreements about resource distributions such as time and money) and value differences (e.g. personal values, norms and beliefs on right and wrong behaviour) is the most rampant and far-reaching. In this research, the classifications of Jehn on

task, relational and process conflict (1995, 1997), as well as Bendersky and Hays on status conflict (2012), are followed.

To understand the effect of conflict on the workplace dynamics at individual, group and organisational level, it is necessary to firstly distinguish between the different types of conflict – task, relationship, process and status conflict – and the state of the conflict (referring to its strength and dimensions) (Avgar, 2017; Bendersky & Hays, 2012; DeChurch et al., 2013; Jehn et al., 2008). Secondly, various conflict processes (DeChurch et al., 2013) through interpersonal conflict handling (behaviour) styles (also referred to as conflict modes, conflict behaviour or strategic conflict processes) are identified (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978) this research, integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising conflict handling styles (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a) are considered. According to Fotohabadi and Kelly (2018), organisational leaders mainly use an integrating conflict handling style, followed by a compromising and then a dominating conflict handling style. Additionally, their research (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018) suggests that the obliging and avoiding styles are least used. Similarly, results from another study suggest that the compromising conflict handling style is used most, followed (in order of preference) by the integrating, obliging and dominating styles (Woodtli, 1987).

Conflict states are described as the perceptions among individuals about the strength of task, relationship or other types of conflict, while conflict processes engage individuals to interact in order to work through their disagreements (Costa, Passos, & Bakker, 2015; DeChurch et al., 2013). Conflict processes include the interactions employees engage in to manage (handle) task, interpersonal, or other differences (DeChurch et al., 2013; Maltarich et al., 2018). Employees do this by behaving in a certain way. Conflict behaviour is therefore described as the way individuals react when they perceive that their own objectives and those of another party(ies) cannot be accomplished concurrently (Deutsch, 1973; Euwema, Van de Vliert, & Bakker, 2003). Earlier it was suggested that only one mode of conflict behaviour was possible within a conflict episode; however, it is now believed that more than one mode of behaviour is possible, for instance being firm on one aspect but more flexible on another may lead to a different conflict handling style for each specific aspect (Euwema et al., 2003).

When considering a conflict management framework as is done in this research, it is imperative to consider both conflict states and conflict processes. This is because, as research advances (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008; DeChurch et al., 2013; Maltarich et al., 2018), that

organisational performance is jointly affected by conflict states (including the different types of conflict, conflict patterns and thus team conflict profiles) and the way conflict is handled (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018). Wombacher and Felfe (2017) explain that the way conflict is handled seems to influence immediate organisational performance on, for example, how a task is completed. However, the perceptions of conflict states influence employees' perceptions and satisfaction on how conflict is handled, and therefore aspects such as employees' capacity to work together in future (Wombacher & Felfe, 2017).

Conflict resolution was considered from the perspective of conflict norms, referring to the way conflict is resolved, for example by openly and honestly confronting conflict or by compromising or avoiding conflict (Jehn, 1995). Group norms, such as conflict norms, are explained as accepted standards of behaviour among group members (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985) that will thus determine how conflict is perceived. Jehn (1995) considered openness norms versus conflict avoidance. For instance, openness norms encourage the open expression of misgivings, views, and reservations (Tjosvold, 1991a) and thus encourage an openness and acceptance about disagreements in groups (Jehn, 1995). However, conflict avoidance norms may also be adopted among group members, creating the perception that conflict is destructive and should be avoided at all costs (Jehn, 1995). The sub-construct of group atmosphere (Jehn & Mannix, 2001) is described as the atmosphere existing within groups based on trust, respect and cohesiveness (Chatman, 1991), open communication and discussion norms (Jehn, 1995) and the liking of team members (Jehn, 1995). It is argued that group atmosphere also may affect the various conflict types and organisational performance (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

In addition to the many questions that exist on the various types of conflict and how they influence each other, the question may well be asked whether employees accurately identify conflict as either task, relational, process or status conflict. Avgar and Neuman (2015) point out that it is not easy for team members to recognise conflict amongst their team members, and that conflict accuracy in detecting the presence or absence of conflict between team members differs from individual to individual. Conflict accuracy may be affected by, for instance, individual biases, diversions, relationships between individuals, information differences among team members, and is thus dependent on individual, interpersonal and network-related factors (Avgar & Neuman, 2015). It follows that conflict accuracy may affect decision-making and social-exchange relationships within organisations, and thus also on conflict management (Avgar & Neuman,

2015). Avgar and Neuman (2015) conclude that even though conflict is usually present in teams, not all members will have the ability to recognise and identify the conflict.

Similarly, conflict asymmetry (referring to how perceptions of team members vary regarding the level of conflict present in a specific team) (Jehn, Rupert, & Nauta, 2006) and conflict frames (referring to varying experiences, or framing, of a specific dispute or conflict episode by team members) (Pinkley & Northcraft, 1994) influence conflict management within organisations. Conflict asymmetry may be problematic for team performance, as it points to different mental models within teams (Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2010) and may in itself be disturbing for members of a group working together (Ayub et al., 2017). These different perceptions of conflict amongst team members reduce performance and creativity (Jehn, Rupert, Nauta, & Van den Bossche, 2010). In fact, potentially neglecting the fact that members may have different perceptions about the amount of conflict existing in a group has been acknowledged as a shortcoming of earlier conflict research (Jehn, Rupert, et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, further research has indicated that teams perform best when they have both high levels of task conflict and high dyadic task conflict asymmetry (Humphrey et al., 2017). Additionally, it was found that individual conflict styles and methods of dealing with conflict have an impact on experiences of conflict (Friedman, Tidd, Currall, & Tsai, 2000). These (and other) aspects may all affect the outcomes of research on conflict, and emphasise the complexity of the subject matter. Table 2.1 below summarises the conflict-related terminology (as referenced in text) discussed above for ease of reference.

Table 2.1

*Clarification of Conflict Terms**

Conflict aspect	Definition
Conflict types	Task, relational, process and status conflict
Conflict states	Refers to the strength and dimensions of conflict
Conflict processes	The way organisational members engage and interact in order to work through their disagreements
Interpersonal conflict handling styles (also referred to as conflict modes, conflict process types)	Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising conflict handling styles
Conflict behaviour	Refers to how individuals react when in conflict

Conflict aspect	Definition
Conflict accuracy	Refers to how accurately team members identify the presence or absence of conflict, as well as the type of conflict
Conflict asymmetry	Refers to varying perceptions of team members about the level of conflict present in a specific team or group
Conflict frames	Varying experiences, or framing, of a particular dispute or conflict episode by team or group members
Conflict resolution potential	Refers to the way conflict is resolved, e.g. through openly and honestly confronting conflict or by compromising or avoiding conflict
Group atmosphere	The atmosphere existing within groups based on trust, respect and cohesiveness, open communication, discussion norms and liking of team members
Conflict acceptability norms	Refers to whether conflict is openly accepted or avoided

*Note: See references in text

The various conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles are discussed next.

(a) *Conflict types*

The seminal work of scholars such as Jehn (1995, 1997) and De Dreu (1997) distinguish between different types of workplace conflict. One of the most well-known typologies identified three types of conflict, namely, task, relational and process conflict (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Additionally, a fourth type of conflict was later identified, namely, status conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). These concepts are described next.

- *Task conflict*

Task (cognitive) conflict is defined as the disagreement on viewpoints, approaches, opinions and ideas (Avgar, 2017; Jehn, 1995, 1997) and/or disagreements on resource distribution, policies and procedures, or conclusions and interpretations of facts (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003) between two or more people about a task that has to be accomplished (Sonnentag, Unger, & Nägel, 2013). Task conflict is summarised as conflict about the content and goals of the task at hand (Jehn, 1995, 1997); or as explained by Avgar (2017), task conflict refers to conflict and differences about work being conducted within a group or team. However, if team members understand what a task is about, and understand their team mates' strengths and weaknesses, they will be less likely to

disagree about how to conclude the task at hand (Bergiel et al., 2015). This is an important finding as research indicates that a group's effectiveness is reduced by emotionality (Jehn, 1997).

- *Relationship conflict*

Of the various types of conflict that have been identified, relationship conflict is the one most frequently manifested in workplaces (Tanveer, Jiayin, Akram, & Tariq, 2018). Relationship (also referred to as relational, affective or socio-emotional) conflict is defined in the seminal work of Jehn (1995, 1997) as the existence of interpersonal incompatibilities on, say, differences in norms and values (De Wit et al., 2012) experienced between two or more parties and which includes feelings of annoyance, animosity and tension (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn, 1995). Avgar (2017) explains relationship conflict as interpersonal strain and conflict that are not directly related to the tasks done by a group or team, but that focus rather on how well team members get along. Jehn (1997) aptly summarises it as interpersonal relationship conflict.

Relationship conflict is generally triggered by differences of a personal nature between team members (Benitez et al., 2018). Scholars argue that relationship conflict represents an expression of a particular immediate dyadic interaction within a team based on value differences (Humphrey et al., 2017). Research shows that relationship conflict holds significant negative interpersonal effects (Bear et al., 2014). Some examples of relationship conflict stem from differences in interpersonal style or political preferences (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Mentoring processes and supervisor–subordinate dyad tenure moderate relational conflict (Ismail, Richard, & Taylor, 2012); a much weaker influence on trust is experienced as a result of relational conflict when a supervisor mentors a subordinate. Group size significantly predicts relationship and status conflict, suggesting that these two types of conflict may transpire largely in bigger teams (Chun & Choi, 2014).

Relationship conflict experienced by subordinates is affected by their negative or positive moods (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017), an effect which is strengthened by collectivist values (Ismail et al., 2012; Shaukat et al., 2017). Collectivist values relate to the fact that people in collectivist cultures regard themselves as inherently interdependent of the group to which they belong. This promotes cooperation amongst people (DeChurch et al., 2013; Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Shaukat et al., 2017) but it also results in team members taking on the mood or emotional state (negative or positive) of other individuals (Benitez et al., 2018). Likewise, Shaukat et al. (2017) found that a society characterised by collectivist traits values social harmony, and that relational conflict is thus

regarded as extremely negative, with the potential to manifest in burnout. Conversely, people in individualistic cultures are regarded as individuals who are independent, characterised by their own unique qualities and may therefore ignite destructive conflict (DeChurch et al., 2013; Goncalo & Staw, 2006). Relational conflict with subordinates is lower when they experience high levels of positive moods and low levels of negative moods (Ismail et al., 2012). The coexistence of negative and positive mood encourages employees to repair negativities in order to enhance their positive mood (Ismail et al., 2012). Nonetheless, scholars caution that in the end, the value of a positive mood amongst members is imperative in conflict management (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017).

- *Process conflict*

Process conflict refers to differences about procedural and administrative aspects of how tasks should be accomplished, thus relating specifically to logistical matters and how a task is organised, for instance resource distribution or the delegation of task responsibilities (Avgar, 2017; Jehn, 1997). Thus, process conflict relates to differences in opinion between group members on how the completion of a task should proceed (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Process conflict differs from task conflict in that the latter focuses on the content of the task, whereas the former focuses more on how to get a task done (Jehn et al., 2008). Jehn et al. (2008) aptly explain that process conflict focuses on who should do what, whereas task conflict answers the question of what should be done. Avgar (2017) explains that it refers specifically to how team members organise their work responsibilities, rather than how they are executed. This often results in conflict because task assignment carries a personal connotation that implies capabilities or respect within groups (Avgar, 2017).

- *Status conflict*

Power (having control over socially valued resources) and status (the extent to which one is admired and respected by others) are central to conflict (Greer & Bendersky, 2013). Status conflict refers to differences over employees' comparative status position in their group's social hierarchy, a position that may be negotiated and challenged (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). When the root of the pecking order (either status or power) is challenged, it increases a team's proclivity for conflict (Hays & Bendersky, 2015). Status conflict results from people's struggles within organisations to

have higher standing, greater power, access to information, better evaluations and the like (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

According to Bendersky and Hays (2012), status conflict commonly manifest in four ways. Firstly, status conflict is displayed when affirming superior legitimacy or competence, and secondly in proclaiming influence or domination. Thirdly, status conflict manifests in either inflating one's particular contributions, or diminishing another's contributions to the team. Fourthly, status conflict is displayed when rallying supporters during conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

Although status conflict appears independently, it more regularly appears with task, relationship or process conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Task type significantly predicts status conflict, signifying that status conflict transpires largely in production teams (Chun & Choi, 2014). Additionally, research has found that status conflict is not a significant predictor of group performance when considered with respect to task and relationship conflict, although when considered in isolation, it had a negative effect on group performance (Chun & Choi, 2014). This suggests that relationship conflict may have a dominant effect on status conflict (Chun & Choi, 2014). Nonetheless, some scholars have found that high status conflict is consistently associated with relatively greater fairness (Blader & Chen, 2012).

Group members' differing psychological needs – specifically the three fundamental needs of achievement, affiliation and power – are significantly related to task, relational and status intragroup conflict (Chun & Choi, 2014). Moreover, drawing on the work of Jehn (1995, 1997), De Dreu (2008) points to different combinations of issues that give rise to possible groupings of the varying types of conflict. For instance, conflict stemming from the way a team does a job (task conflict) may result in conflict about people and their behaviour – subsequently giving rise to relationship conflict. However, relationship conflict may hamper the exchange of information in organisations, which may in turn result in task conflict (Humphrey et al., 2017). Similarly, Bendersky and Hays (2012) state that status conflict (especially when co-happening with other types of conflict) often results in intense and competitive exchanges, which hamper free information sharing among group members.

The above information on the various conflict types is summarised in Table 2.2 below (sources referenced in text). The table sets out the various types of conflict, as well as the core aspects of each type. It also indicates associated elements of importance.

Table 2.2

*Core Concepts of Conflict Types**

Conflict type	Definition	Core aspects
Task conflict	Conflict about the content and goals of the task at hand (Jehn, 1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid task conflict, a clear understanding of the task is necessary • May be beneficial under certain circumstances to team performance as it stimulates ideas and debate • Beneficial when relationship conflict is low • Timing of task conflict is important • Effective leadership is imperative • Open communication is necessary
Relationship conflict	Interpersonal relationship conflict stemming from interpersonal incompatibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triggered by differences of a personal nature • Based on value differences • Moderated by mentoring processes • Effective leadership is imperative • Relationship conflict increases as team size increases • Negative or positive moods of team members affect relationship conflict, especially in teams with collectivist values • Relationship between task and relational conflict is complex, and may be positive when team performance is low • Relationship conflict increases as team size increases
Process conflict	Process conflict relates to how a task should be done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences about procedural and administrative aspects • Logistical matters and how to organise tasks play a role • Focuses on who should do what • Implied capabilities of and respect for group members may give rise to process conflict

Conflict type	Definition	Core aspects
Status conflict	Refers to differences over employees' comparative status position in their group's social hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power and status central to conflict • Position may be negotiated and challenged • Structural, as such predictions are possible on who may engage in status conflict • It appears more regularly with task, relationship or process conflict, but may appear independently • Task type is a significant predictor of status conflict • Negatively influences performance • Relationship conflict has a dominant effect on status conflict • High status is often associated with greater fairness
Combined effect	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three fundamental needs of achievement, affiliation and power are significantly related to task, relational and status intragroup conflict • Various combinations of issues give rise to different groupings of conflict

*Note: See references in text

- *The functionality or dysfunctionality of the various types of conflict*

Traditionally, conflict was seen as having an undesirable influence on group performance (Blake & Mouton, 1984). Avgar et al. (2014) posit in this regard that there is a tendency among scholars to focus too much on the effect of conflict on performance, and not on other detrimental aspects such as employees' health, welfare and job satisfaction. In fact, it was found that conflict manifestations, irrespective of the type of conflict, were fundamentally regarded as a negative and stressful experience, and could adversely affect the wellbeing of team members – an argument still held today by many scholars (Ayoko, 2016; Benitez et al., 2018; Bruk-Lee et al., 2013; Dijkstra, 2006; Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017; Sonnentag et al., 2013). This may be the case even if only two of the members of a team experience conflict (Humphrey et al., 2017). As such, it may be argued that any type of conflict is deemed undesirable and has to be managed constructively.

Nonetheless, whether conflict is good or bad from an organisational perspective remains a point of debate (Avgar, 2017; De Wit et al., 2012; Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017; Humphrey et al., 2017; Litterer, 1966; Maltarich et al., 2018; O'Neill et al., 2013). Whereas functional conflict is seen as constructive, dysfunctional conflict is regarded as deconstructive (Rahim, 2015). The many research studies done on organisational performance and conflict indicate that there are no easy answers. Scholars argue that some types of conflict improve organisational performance, while others hinder performance; nonetheless, the likelihood remains that all types of conflict have negative consequences (Avgar, Kyung Lee, & Chung, 2014).

Jehn (1995) argues that task conflict may stimulate the flow of ideas and debate, thus aiding performance. This view has been contested (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), however, and later adapted to state that task conflict may be helpful under certain conditions (De Wit et al., 2012). For instance, when mild levels of task conflict are present, it may lead to more information attainment, which in turn may lead to employees feeling more energised, interested and excited (Todorova, Bear, & Weingart, 2014). Similarly, a meta-analytical study (Bradley, Anderson, Baur, & Klotz, 2015) indicates that task conflict associated with complex or important non-routine tasks positively contributes to performance, as vigorous debate is then viewed as necessary. Bradley et al. (2015) found that task conflict benefits teams when there is low relationship conflict, the timing of task conflict is right, and when team processes, virtual interactions and open discussions are present, as well as under effective leadership.

The relationship between task and relational conflict is deemed especially important in the debate on team effectiveness and performance (Bergiel et al., 2015; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Sonnentag et al., 2013). Nonetheless, research also stresses the complexity of the connection between task and relational conflict (Humphrey et al., 2017). The majority of research studies focus on how task conflict relates to relationship conflict, while much less research focuses on how relationship conflict correlates with task conflict (Guenter et al., 2016). Nevertheless, although support was found for a positive correlation between relationship and task conflict (Chun & Choi, 2014; De Wit et al., 2012), according to some scholars this occurs only when perceived team performance is low (Guenter et al., 2016). Thus, while relationship conflict may negatively affect the effectiveness of organisations, task conflict may enhance performance (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn, De Wit, Barreto, & Rink, 2015). According to De Dreu and Weingart's (2003) meta-analysis of the literature concerning task and relationship conflict done between 1994 and August 2001, relationship conflict is harmful to team performance, but task conflict may – under specific circumstances – be beneficial to team effectiveness, while relationship conflict has a negative relationship with team effectiveness. For instance, it was found that the effect task conflict has on performance depends on specified dimensions (Jehn, 1997), but can be advantageous to team performance in non-routine tasks requiring higher team input (Jehn, 1994, 1995, 1997).

Specifically, employee wellbeing is negatively affected by experiences of task and relational conflict (Benitez et al., 2018; Sonnentag et al., 2013). Some scholars have found that relationship and task conflict have a significant negative influence on the outcome and processes of groups, with group members experiencing feelings such as emotional exhaustion, frustration, strain and unease, tension and antagonism (Benitez et al., 2018; Chun & Choi, 2014; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995). For example, some scholars found that conflict does not always have a negative association with emotion, but that emotion may be invigorating and may contribute to employees engaging in finding solutions – thus some emotions may be beneficial for conflict (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017). Moreover, research has found that there is a positive ancillary link between task conflict and bullying through relationship conflict (Baillien et al., 2016). Scholars thus conclude that relationship conflict has a negative effect on employee health and wellbeing, resulting in symptoms of emotional exhaustion (Benitez et al., 2018; Ghislieri, Gatti, Molino, & Cortese, 2017). Psychological detachment from work during off-times was found to moderate the negative affect between employee wellbeing and relational conflict, but not for employee wellbeing and task conflict (Sonnentag et al., 2013).

Furthermore, relationship conflict negatively affects team satisfaction and team performance (Benitez et al., 2018; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), regardless of the type of task group members are engaged in. Relationship conflict interferes with getting tasks effectively completed, as group members' concentrate on decreasing threats, increasing power and creating unity instead of focusing on the task (Jehn, 1997). Additionally, research indicates that relationship conflict often leads to distrust, dislike and incompatibility (Jehn, 1995). Although a collaborative environment will minimise the negative effects of task conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), relationship conflict should be avoided in both collaboration and contention (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001). Similarly, research suggests that task conflict is significantly related to project success; however, process and relationship conflict are negatively related to project success, contributing to poor communication in teams (Wu, Liu, Zhao, & Zuo, 2017). De Wit et al. (2012) do not agree and caution that although earlier studies suggested that task conflict potentially benefits group outcomes, later research has found that it generally has a negative impact on group outcomes.

Further research indicates a negative direct effect between task conflict and team performance from a group perspective, as well as a negative effect between task conflict and satisfaction with the team from an individual perspective (Dimas & Lourenço, 2015). Nonetheless, De Dreu and Weingart (2003) disagree and argue that, generally, both task and relational conflict negatively affect team performance. For example, when task conflict happens in a situation where relationship conflict is also present, group members are more biased towards processing information, often choosing less optimal solutions (De Wit et al., 2013). However, these findings of the meta-analysis have been criticised, with scholars arguing that the studies considered had a limited view of group conflict as they only considered task and relationship conflict, and not process conflict (Jehn et al., 2008). De Wit et al. (2012) found that task, relationship and process conflict are more negatively associated with proximal group outcomes (such as group viability and group member satisfaction) than with distal group outcomes (such as group performance).

In addition, it is argued that there is a negative relationship between task conflict and team performance in decision-making terms (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). However, in contrast to the De Dreu and Weingart meta-analysis (2003), a later meta-analysis done by De Wit et al. (2012) did not find that task type (e.g. decision-making) moderates the effect of task conflict on group performance. Rather, task conflict has a positive relationship with team performance in decision-making terms (O'Neill et al., 2013). Other scholars argue that conflict is necessary in high-level strategising among top management as it stimulates creative thinking; nonetheless, relationship

conflict is harmful in decision-making processes (Camelo-Ordaz, García-Cruz, & Sousa-Ginel, 2014).

However, this very negative view on the effect of conflict on group performance has changed, and other research has suggested that intragroup conflict does not necessarily have a negative relationship with group effectiveness (e.g. Euwema et al., 2003; Tjosvold, 1997). For instance, Litterer (1966) found that conflict energises organisational activity and may stimulate innovation and change in organisations, as initiatives to resolve conflict and ameliorate organisational inadequacies are deliberated. Additionally, scholars have found that moderate levels of task and process conflict may enhance performance (Jehn & Chatman, 2000; Rispens, Greer, & Jehn, 2007). Further research has found that teams characterised by high task conflict but low process and relationship conflict will be more effective in their interactions and will have excellent performance results (O'Neill, McLarnon, Hoffart, Woodley, & Allen, 2018). For instance, Chun and Choi (2014b) agree that task conflict is positively related to group performance.

Process conflict may distract group members from accomplishing tasks and create ineffectiveness (Jehn, 1997), but may also focus a group's attention on processes, resources and the like, thus enhancing group outcomes (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Further research found no statistically significant relationship between process conflict and group performance, nor did process conflict affect the relationship between task, relational and status conflict and group performance (Chun & Choi, 2014). This is in line with other research that found that process conflict is conceptually different from task and relationship conflict, with separate effects on group outcomes such as group effectiveness (Jehn et al., 2008; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Nonetheless, in two meta-analyses (De Wit et al., 2012; O'Neill et al., 2013), it was indicated that process conflict has a negative correlation with team performance.

Similarly, reporting on the effect of status conflict has been negative. Research on status conflict found that it has a significant negative main effect, moderates the effects of task conflict on group performance and hurts performance because it undermines the quality of a group's information sharing (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Also, status conflict results in more competitive behaviour amongst group members because of its longer-term perspective, involves other group members more often, and has higher distributive justice components (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Additionally, research found that status conflict is not a significant predictor of group performance when considered with respect to task and relationship conflict; however, when considered in isolation, it had a negative effect on group performance (Chun & Choi, 2014). This suggests that

relationship conflict may have a dominant effect on status conflict (Chun & Choi, 2014). Nonetheless, there are scholars who found that high status conflict was consistently associated with relatively greater fairness (Blader & Chen, 2012). Moreover, research suggests that hierarchy may both benefit and harm group performance, increasing performance when coordination takes place, but performance is less effective during conflict situations; in fact, the positive effects of hierarchy is eliminated when conflict occurs (Greer, De Jong, Schouten, & Dannals, 2018). Greer et al. (2018) thus conclude that the relationship between hierarchy and group performance is, on the whole, negative, especially in teams that are prone to conflict.

Since De Dreu and Weingart's meta-analysis (2003) discussed above, further studies have been conducted to determine the effect of intragroup conflict on team performance under varying circumstances (e.g. De Wit et al., 2012; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018). De Wit et al. (2012) undertook another meta-analysis of 116 studies in order to provide an update on the De Dreu and Weingart (2003) meta-analysis, considering the effect of relationship and task conflict on group outcomes. De Wit et al. (2012) also aimed to conduct a meta-analysis on process conflict for the first time. They (De Wit et al., 2012) subsequently reported that both relationship and process conflict generally have a negative effect on group outcomes, although some potentially positive outcomes of process conflict have been reported. In their meta-analysis, De Wit et al. (2012) thus conclude that past research and theory suggest that all types of conflict may negatively affect group outcomes, although the negative effect may be reduced or reversed under certain circumstances. De Wit et al. (2012) maintain that the overall relationship between task conflict and group performance is neither negative nor positive, although it is more consistently negative for relationship and process conflict. In their meta-analysis on the effect of conflict on performance, O'Neill and McLarnon (2018) concur that, generally speaking, no significant relationship exists between task conflict and team performance. Additionally, the co-occurrence of conflict types and the organisational level of the group moderates the effect of conflict on group outcomes (De Wit et al., 2012). Perhaps, De Dreu (2008:6) summarises it best when stating that conflict will only be positive "under an exceedingly narrow set of circumstances".

To conclude, although scholars often deliberate one or the other of the task or relational conflict types, others caution that all types of intragroup conflict are present in conflict manifestations, and that it is never just one or the other (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017); thus, all conflict types should be considered. In this regard, scholars generally argue that while moderate levels of cognitive (task) conflict may be potentially functional in organisations, affective (relationship) and process conflict

are mostly dysfunctional, and have a negative effect on group performance (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018). In fact, in their meta-analysis, O'Neill and McLarnon (2018) argue that relationship and process conflict consistently affect team performance negatively. Additionally, O'Neill and McLarnon (2018) conclude that in considering the various viewpoints on the positive and negative effects of task conflict, it may be argued that the effect of task conflict is more complex than merely capturing direct relationships. The various conditions provided by scholars (as discussed above) under which task conflict may hold some benefits emphasise the complexity of the functionality of conflict. To recap, scholars argue that mild (Todorova et al., 2014) task conflict may be beneficial, depending on the type of task, for example complex tasks or important, non-routine tasks (Bradley et al., 2015; Jehn, 1997); when open discussions take place (Bradley et al., 2015); whether under effective leadership (Bradley et al., 2015); and whether they take place in a collaborative environment (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Similarly, status conflict generally results in lower team performance (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

Thus, notwithstanding the important work done by scholars such as Jehn, De Dreu, Tjosvold and others (see for instance the meta-analysis of De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; De Wit et al., 2012; O'Neill et al., 2013), research on the various types of conflict remains inconclusive. Wu et al. (2017) aptly summarise all the above arguments when maintaining that task, relation and process conflict closely interact with each other and are not independent, the one easily giving rise to the next. A number of studies have seen the light with a variety of findings (O'Neill et al., 2018). Hjerto and Kuvaas (2017) conclude that it is not the occurrence or amount of conflict that may affect performance, but rather the composition of the different types of conflict – although some emotion may be beneficial during task conflict, relational conflict is not.

Clearly, as research about conflict continues, the complex nature of the phenomenon is emphasised. Distinguishing between the different types of conflict is important as it necessitates different approaches and management interventions (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). For instance, in conflict management interventions, relationship conflict should be minimised as much as possible, while task conflict should be managed constructively to ensure team performance. Significant levels of openness, trust and psychological safety are necessary for such an approach (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Undoubtedly, the statement about the necessity for further research on conflict management (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003) is still relevant today.

In addition to the various types of conflict described above, the literature clarifies the different styles of handling interpersonal conflict (also referred to as the modes of conflict behaviour) individuals use when confronted with a conflict situation. The interpersonal conflict handling styles considered in this research relate to dual-concern theory, which stems from the work of various scholars who studied different conflict management styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976; Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Dual-concern theory is discussed in more detail in section 2.2.2.1 below, but for the sake of clarity, the various conflict-handling styles relevant to this study are now described.

(b) Interpersonal conflict handling styles

Scholars (DeChurch et al., 2013) emphasise that the focus in research is often on conflict states, and not so much on conflict management processes such as the interpersonal conflict handling styles used. However, successfully managing conflict in organisations necessitates an understanding of when each style should be used during a specific conflict incident (Parmer, 2018). This implies that conflict management styles should be varied according to the situation (Hendel, Fish & Aviv, 2005; Rahim, 1983). Additionally, managers implementing any conflict management initiative should acknowledge that people do not easily engage in conflict, and will handle it differently based on their personality types (Ayub et al., 2017). Nonetheless, as conflict is a discomforting experience, individuals will engage in a process to handle the conflict according to a specific style (Van de Vliert, 1997). As discussed in more detail in section 2.2.2 below, theories on interpersonal conflict handling styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas, 1976; Rahim, 1983) differentiate between two basic dimensions in style when handling interpersonal conflict, namely, concern for self and concern for others. When these two dimensions are combined, it results in five specific styles of handling conflict (Rahim, Antonioni, & Psenicka, 2001).

Firstly, when there is high concern for self and others, an integrating (also called collaborating) style is recognised that includes a discussion and examination of information, openness and an analysis of the differences in order to seek a mutually acceptable solution (Ayub et al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). The focus is on problem solving to find creative, mutually fulfilling solutions, often allowing for a collaborative solution (Benitez et al., 2018; Parmer, 2018), thus affecting team effectiveness and performance positively (Thomas, 1992). An integrating style has the aim of ensuring a win–win result, especially over the long term (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Parmer (2018) and De Dreu (2008) note that it requires an open-minded approach and a willingness to listen to other viewpoints. An integrating style is indicated in recent conflict management studies as most

strongly linked to organisational performance (Tjosvold, Wong, & Feng Chen, 2014; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017) and seems to be the preferred choice of style (Ayub et al., 2017). Integration (collaboration) tends to relate to open communication and a coordination of effort and cooperation amongst team members (Boroş et al., 2017; Deutsch, 2006).

Successful conflict management and resolution occur when there is collaboration among parties, resulting in better relationships (Siira, 2012). In an approach where employees perceive cooperative outcome interdependence, more value will be placed on their own and their colleagues' interests, opinions and values (De Dreu, 2008). Should these parties be in conflict, they will engage in integrative negotiations (De Dreu, 2008). Research suggests that an integrating style can solve most complex irregular tasks (Chen et al., 2012). An integrative organisational conflict resolution style yields organisational commitment (Fenlon, 1997), and has a significant positive effect on relationships (Lu & Wang, 2017) and team effectiveness because of the way in which coordination within the team improves (Boroş et al., 2017). Although research has found only modest support for management practices as a moderator for conflict management styles within organisations, significant effects have been found for an integrative conflict handling style as a predictor of organisational commitment and vocational strain (Fenlon, 1997).

Secondly, when there is low concern for self and high concern for others, an obliging style (also referred to as an accommodating or yielding style) results (Ayub et al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). Differences are toned down while commonalities are emphasised, thereby addressing the concerns of the other party (Rahim et al., 2001). Scholars argue that this style necessitates self-sacrifice as the one party foregoes his or her concerns to the benefit of the other party (Parmer, 2018).

Thirdly, when there is high concern for self but low concern for others, a dominating style (also referred to as a competing, confronting or contending style) associated with a win–lose positioning is identified, and actions are geared to driving behaviour that will allow one's personal position to triumph (Rahim et al., 2001). Parmer (2018) argues that such a style focuses on winning at all costs, with little respect shown for the other party's needs and viewpoints. This style often results in deadlocks, a breach in trust relationships and an increase in conflicting emotions (Boroş et al., 2017; De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001), as well as diminished coordination within teams (Boroş et al., 2017).

Fourthly, low concern for self and others gives rise to an avoiding style (or called a withdrawal or ignoring style) of handling interpersonal conflict (Ayub et al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). This style is associated with withdrawal, shifting the blame and bypassing situations (Rahim et al., 2001). Parmer (2018) explains that a person with an avoiding conflict style not only neglects to fulfil his or her needs and concerns, but would do the same with the other person's requirements, hopes and the like. Often this style leads to team ineffectiveness, as coordination within the team is weakened (Boroş et al., 2017). Although avoidance may assist in staying out of conflict situations, in general the conflict remains unresolved and continues to be problematic (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001). Research indicates that when the level of task conflict increases, avoidance shows a positive correlation with the relationship quality (Lu & Wang, 2017).

Fifthly, a compromising style (also called a cooperative style) is identified when there is an intermediate concern for self and others (Ayub et al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). Typically, with this approach both parties will give and take, and will relinquish something in order to reach a mutually satisfactory and harmonious decision (Rahim et al., 2001; Tanveer et al., 2018). A happy medium is therefore proposed by a compromising style (Benitez et al., 2018; Parmer, 2018), thus promoting healthy workplace relationships (Saeed, Almas, Anis-ul-Haq, & Niazi, 2014). Research suggests that employees are inclined to adopt problem-solving styles and compromising strategies when they want to reach an agreement and anticipate reaching one (Lucy & Broughton, 2011). Nonetheless, when the level of task conflict increases, it weakens the positive relationship between the compromising type of conflict management style and relationship quality (Lu & Wang, 2017). Still, Rahim (1983) postulates that a compromising conflict handling style is effective in handling conflict, resulting in stronger relationships and more effective organisational performance.

DeChurch et al. (2013) suggest that collaborative and cooperative-type styles be referred to as collectivist conflict management processes. Such processes suggest a healthy conflict profile, as ideas are debated and a variety of perspectives acknowledged within a perceived safe environment (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Tjosvold, 2008), and thus without relational or process conflict interference (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018). Conflict handling styles that are either competitive or avoidant are referred to as individualistic (DeChurch et al., 2013). These conflict management processes are not as open to different viewpoints, thus struggling with relational and process conflict (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018), as they encourage competition and withdrawal (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Tjosvold, 2008).

Results on which conflict style is more effective than another have been contradictory (Benitez et al., 2018; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017), although as indicated above, an integrating conflict handling style seems to be preferred (Ayub et al., 2017). Research has shown that members of a team often develop a shared conflict management style (Benitez et al., 2018). For instance, members may have an integrating style that developed through searching for a solution that may be acceptable to all members, or for instance a dominating style through using authority or influence. Research done on personality traits and the use of the various conflict handling styles suggests that extroverts are likely to use one of four styles, namely, integrating, obliging, compromising or avoiding (Ayub et al., 2017). Whereas the integrating style is used by emotionally stable people, neurotics will choose a dominating style (Ayub et al., 2017). Regarding relationship conflict, research suggests that it is positively linked to emotional exhaustion, and especially so when a compromising conflict management style is followed (Benitez et al., 2018). In contrast, an avoiding or integrating conflict management style buffers the relationship between conflict and emotional exhaustion (Benitez et al., 2018). Additionally, research has found that integrating, accommodating and compromising conflict handling styles are directly related to trust (Ndubisi, 2011). The five styles of handling interpersonal conflict are summarised in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3

Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Interpersonal conflict handling style	Concern for self	Concern for others	Characteristics
Integrating	High	High	Open, exchange of ideas, problem-solving
Obliging	Low	High	Downplay of differences, focus on shared aims
Dominating	High	Low	Win–lose behaviour
Avoiding	Low	Low	Withdrawal, buck-passing, sidestepping
Compromising	Intermediate	Intermediate	Give and take

Source: Adapted from Rahim et al. (2001)

Several further studies have investigated similar constructs related to team conflict management processes or behaviours, including research on team collaboration, competition, avoidance and openness (DeChurch et al., 2013). According to DeChurch et al. (2013), team collaboration,

competition and avoidance relate to the writings on interpersonal conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Deutsch, 2002; Lewin, 1948; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Thomas, 1976) that have been adapted to portray interaction patterns within a team resolving conflict and/or integrating their differences. Most of these studies were conducted on team or group level.

Research has been done on the behaviour styles and the specific types of conflict. Jehn's seminal work (1995, 1997) considered an integrated model on organisational intragroup conflict, researching the relationship between intragroup conflict and outcomes. Her research (Jehn, 1995, 1997) found that team outcomes such as effectiveness in performance depend on the fit between the type and level of conflict, the nature of the task, the interdependence of the group, and group norms (conflict-openness versus conflict-avoidance). Apart from the type of conflict, four other dimensions of conflict influence the way different conflict types may affect group outcomes (Jehn, 1997). These are emotionality and importance (both of which may intensify the negative effects of conflict), acceptance norms (which may enhance the potential positive effects of conflict) and resolution effectiveness or potential (which may alleviate the negative effects of conflict) (Jehn, 1997; Jehn et al., 2008).

Jehn (1995) argues that while openness norms increase the beneficial effects of task conflict on performance, relationship conflict has a negative effect on performance. Jehn's results (1995) show that teams with conflict-avoidance norms have more satisfied team members than those with openness norms. When relationship conflict is present in groups working together, it was found that an avoiding conflict management style is better than a collaborative or contending style in assisting the team to function more effectively (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001). De Dreu and Van Vianen (2001) explain that team members are distracted from their tasks when the responses to relationship conflict are either collaborative or contending, whereas avoidance allows team members to continue their focus on the task.

Scholars (Humphrey et al., 2017; Maltarich et al., 2018; O'Neill et al., 2018) have considered the effect of time on conflict states and processes. Humphrey et al. (2017) conclude that the effect of task conflict on organisational performance is only established over time. Whereas team performance demonstrates a null relationship with task conflict at the outset, it may show a positive relationship later on (Humphrey et al., 2017). Additionally, various scholars (e.g. Hempel et al., 2009; Maltarich et al., 2018) investigated two types of conflict process. The first relates to a competitive conflict management approach where the individual members of a team will regard their goals as mutually exclusive versus a cooperative conflict management approach where an

individual team member's goals are seen as corresponding with those of the other team members. Secondly, Maltarich et al. (2018) considered a shared linkage between conflict types and approaches. According to Maltarich et al. (2018), task conflict at the end of a team's life cycle will have a negative effect on the performance of a team – similar to relationship conflict – when the conflict handling style is competitive (rather than cooperative) (Maltarich et al., 2018). Additionally, their research suggests that the type of conflict a team may exhibit at the beginning of the lifecycle of the team influences whether team members use a cooperative or a competitive approach (Maltarich et al., 2018). Moreover, Maltarich et al. (2018) found that relationship conflict has a negative effect on performance when a cooperative conflict management approach is found in teams. The researchers (Maltarich et al., 2018) speculate that this happens because of shared norms that are developed within teams with cooperative conflict management approaches, and that relationship conflict may imply a violation of these norms. Nonetheless, their research found that task and relationship conflict may negatively influence performance at the end of a team's life cycle, when conflict management approaches are competitive rather than cooperative (Maltarich et al., 2018).

These findings differ from research that indicates that team effectiveness is enhanced by collaborative and cooperative conflict behaviours, but suffers when a challenging conflict management approach indicative of competitive behaviour or avoidance is present (Tjosvold, 1997). Similarly, in a study done in China, research found that integrating and compromising conflict management behaviour relate positively to job satisfaction and innovative practices (Chen et al., 2012). Wu et al. (2017) found that a collaborating strategy ensures the functional effect of task and process conflict in adding value to a project.

Team collaboration, competition and avoidance are sometimes described as moving towards (collaborating), moving against (competing), and moving away (avoiding) (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001). Blake and Mouton's dimensions (1964) of concern for self, and concern for the other party, are similar to the dimensions of moving towards and moving away (DeChurch et al., 2013). Team openness (constructive controversy), similar to team collaboration, refers to open discussions among team members to establish change by reaching mutually beneficial solutions (DeChurch et al., 2013). Collaboration explicitly aims to derive mutually favourable solutions (DeChurch et al., 2013).

Additionally, differentiating between concern for self and concern for others points to a broad distinction between a team's conflict processes, showcasing either high collectivism or high

individualism (Hofstede, 1980b), depending on whether the members' behavioural patterns indicate either concern for self, or concern for their team members (DeChurch et al., 2013; Goncalo & Staw, 2006). Teams supporting a high collectivism conflict management approach will show more concern for others and will prefer to work and cooperate as a team, thereby accomplishing the goals set for the team (DeChurch et al., 2013; Goncalo & Staw, 2006). In contrast, teams with high individualism focus on managing individual or sub-team goals and concerns – goals are thus seen as mutually exclusive (Maltarich et al., 2018). It is argued that behavioural norms are based on the concern for and reliance on the group, as well as the acceptance and prioritising of group norms and goals (DeChurch et al., 2013; Goncalo & Staw, 2006). Consequently, teams scoring high on collectivism indicators are not likely to embrace conflict management processes characterised by competition or avoidance, but rather collectivist processes such as openness and collaboration, as team members incorporate different viewpoints while simultaneously preserving the unity of the team (DeChurch et al., 2013).

Maltarich et al. (2018) argue that a competitive conflict management approach leads to individual members to a team regarding their goals as mutually exclusive. This is in contrast to a cooperative conflict management approach where an individual team member's goals are seen as corresponding with those of their team members. Similarly, avoiding and competing conflict processes are associated with individualistic team characteristics, as team members preserve the individuality of team members by suppressing the unity of the team in order to protect the different views of the team members (DeChurch et al., 2013). This is depicted in Figure 2.4 below.

Later studies researched the effect of these behaviours on teams and organisations. Research suggests (Parmer, 2018) that a significant relationship exists between human, pragmatic and intellectual philosophical value orientations (Boyatzis, Murphy, & Wheeler, 2000) and the various conflict management styles (Rahim, 1983, 1995). This research (Parmer, 2018) demonstrated that employees bring a set of values to organisations, which influence their conflict handling style and the way they react to their supervisors in conflict situations.

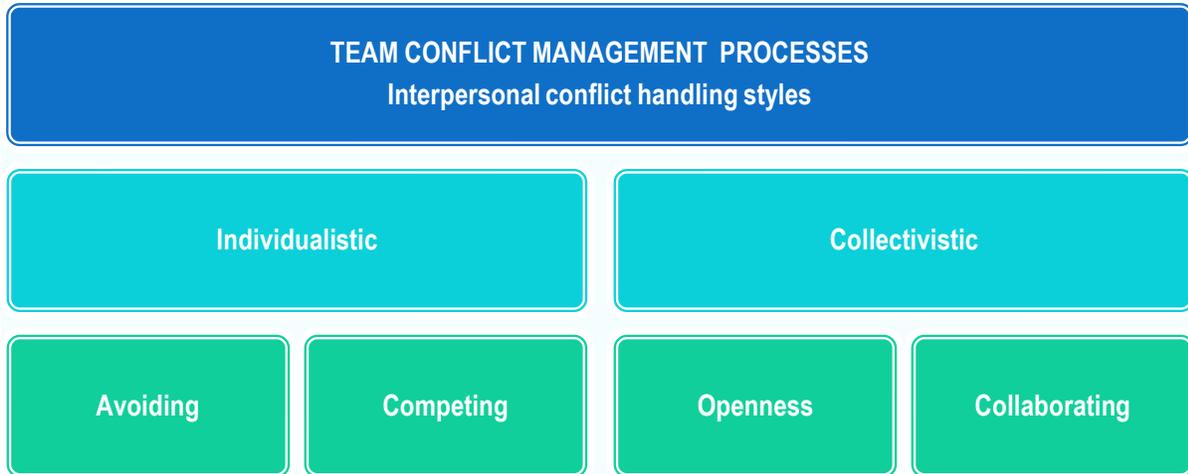


Figure 2.4 Individualistic and Collectivist Management Processes

Source: Adapted from DeChurch et al. (2013)

A meta-analysis done recently, which considered team behaviours (cooperative, competitive or avoidance) and team conflict management, suggests that both task and relationship conflict have a negative relationship with cooperative team behaviours but are positively associated with competitive team behaviours (O'Neill et al., 2013). Additionally, they found that relationship conflict was positively related to avoidance behaviour (Benitez et al., 2018; De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001a; O'Neill et al., 2013) but that task conflict does not lead to members avoiding each other. However, as relationship conflict leads to interpersonal difficulties, avoidance may be a way of dealing with the conflict to ensure continued team performance (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; O'Neill et al., 2013). Researchers argue that status differences can give rise to conflict and competition between individuals and groups; and that the two primary strategies that exist for attaining high social status include cooperation (or generosity and behaving in ways that benefit the group) and competition (or dominance, assertiveness) (Greer & Bendersky, 2013). Nonetheless, it was found that avoiding conflict management practices is negatively associated with innovative performance (Chen et al., 2012). These findings have important implications for conflict management strategies as they imply that both process and relationship conflict should be minimised, but that task conflict may have potential benefits if managed correctly (De Wit et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2013).

In summary, one may conclude that managing conflict is a complex and unavoidable task that organisations need to consider. Not only are there different types of conflict, but these types differ regarding their impact on organisational performance, as well as on how it should be managed. Simultaneously, one has to acknowledge that the handling styles of interpersonal conflict also

vary. For instance, the level of conflict – expressed as either the frequency (e.g. Rahim, 1983) or the severity (e.g. Andrews & Tjosvold, 1983) of the conflict – affects the effectiveness of specific conflict management styles. For instance, during high levels of conflict, an integrating style may be best for managing the conflict and for the purposes of the relationship (Lu & Wang, 2017). However, the compromising and avoiding conflict management styles negatively influence relationships during low levels of conflict but positively influence the relationship during high levels of conflict (Andrews & Tjosvold, 1983).

Unmistakeably, the conflict phenomenon must first be understood before it can be managed. Studying the conflict types, as well as how individuals behave in conflict situations, may contribute to a better understanding of the relationship dynamics between the various types of conflict and interpersonal conflict handling styles. In constructing a framework for conflict management in South African organisations, the research will furthermore consider the various relationship dynamics between the antecedents, mediating variables and types of conflict (task, process, relational, status conflict) using the seminal work of Jehn (1995, 1997) and Bendersky and Hays, (2012). Similarly, the relationship dynamics together with the different interpersonal conflict handling style will be considered, measured by the Organisational Conflict Inventory-II of Rahim and Magner (1995b).

The next section elaborates on conflict management models and theories with relevance to workplaces.

2.2.2 Conflict management theories and models

This section explores the writings on the importance of conflict management, various approaches that are followed, and lastly, considers various seminal theoretical contributions, as well as recent developments in the field. This is not a field of study with clear-cut answers and, thus, various arguments, theories, models and strategies are proposed in the literature.

2.2.2.1 The importance of conflict management in organisations

Conflict is inescapable and inherent to the workplace (Avgar, 2017; Bollen & Euwema, 2013; De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; García et al., 2017; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Ntumy, 2015; Tjosvold et al., 2014) and is managed with varying degrees of success. Often the symptoms of conflict (e.g. declared disputes) are addressed instead of looking for the root causes of conflict (Ntumy, 2015). Systems, the processes and policies to manage conflict and resolve problems in complex

relationships are frequently unclear (Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017). Additionally, as discussed above, research is inconclusive on whether and what conflict type may potentially benefit performance (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Humphrey et al., 2017; Tjosvold et al., 2014). Some scholars declare outright that they consider conflict dysfunctional (e.g. Bergiel et al., 2015, Currie et al., 2017). Others argue that conflict is not necessarily dysfunctional but may be functional, depending on the circumstances and on how constructively organisations manage their conflict (Ayub et al., 2017; Bollen & Euwema, 2013; Chen et al., 2012; Holban & Mocanu, 2011; Humphrey et al., 2017; Iqbal & Fatima, 2013; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016; Lu & Wang, 2017; Tjosvold, 2008; Van Niekerk et al., 2017).

Moreover, scholars argue that managing conflict produces a distinctive set of outcomes, such as a resolution in the format of an agreement or a deadlock (Wall & Callister, 1995), with either positive or negative results. Therefore, a resolution is either integrative (where both sides gain something) or distributive (where one party benefits at the expense of the other party) (Wall & Callister, 1995).

Examples of research indicating the benefits of conflict and conflict management are many (e.g. Budhwar et al., 2016; García et al., 2017). Apart from the various studies done on this matter relating to the different conflict types (as discussed previously), other more general studies have been conducted. So, for instance, is it argued that functional conflict results from skilfully managing disagreements considering a variety of aspects such as organisational commitment among organisational members and teams, and manifests in stronger group performance as employees come to better understand varying perspectives and solutions (Katz & Flynn, 2013; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017). It has been established that conflict may lead to better innovation and more effective interpersonal relationships as employees confront issues (Tjosvold, 1997); nonetheless, affective and behavioural conflict negatively affect group innovation (Ma et al., 2017). However, according to O'Neill and McLarnon's meta-analysis (2018), generally, no relationship exists between team innovation and conflict. Furthermore, functional conflict is productive and characterised by advice-giving interactions (Dillon, 2012); in fact, research suggests that a positive supervisory conflict management approach effectively reduces anxiety among subordinates (Way, Jimmieson, & Bordia, 2016). Functional conflict may enhance group efficiency, increased creativity and collaboration (e.g. across generations), and personal development (Urlick, Hollensbe, Masterson, & Lyons, 2016; Wall & Callister, 1995). Additional

studies support this notion, determining a significant positive relationship between functional conflict and organisational effectiveness (Mukhtar et al., 2011; Patra et al., 2016).

Simultaneously, much has been written on the fact that dysfunctional conflict may be detrimental to organisations. Research suggests that even though some conflict may be beneficial, too much or too high levels of conflict have a negative effect on team performance (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), a situation further complicated by the type of conflict (Bradley et al., 2015). For instance, although some initial disagreements about tasks may stimulate better decision-making in a group, too much or too intense conflict will break down the initial advantage (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; De Wit et al., 2012). According to De Dreu (2008), the conclusion that conflict and conflict management may hold functional qualities is often criticised on methodological grounds.

Dysfunctional conflict results in the breakdown of interpersonal relationships and affects individuals and groups, manifesting in feelings of tension, betrayal, hurt, distrust, personal frustrations and anger (Ghislieri et al., 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Wall & Callister, 1995). It lowers psychological and physical employee welfare (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016; Kisamore, Jawahar, Liguori, Mharapara, & Stone, 2010; Loughry & Amason, 2014; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016; Spector & Jex, 1998) and leads to emotional exhaustion (Benitez et al., 2018). It negatively affects group and organisational performance, loyalty, motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, turnover, communications and behaviours; and has an undesirable impact on organisational structures (e.g. group cohesion) and workplace issues (Benitez et al., 2018; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Shaukat et al., 2017; Wall & Callister, 1995, Zhou et al., 2017). Additionally, research indicates a causal relationship between interpersonal conflict experiences at work and employees leaving the organisation for another job (especially when the conflict experience is between the supervisor and employee), as well as having an impact on employees' health and wellbeing (Ayoko, 2016; De Raeve, Jansen, Van den Brandt, Vasse, & Kant, 2009; Ghislieri et al., 2017; Raver, 2013).

Moreover, dysfunctional conflict threatens an organisation's interests – for instance, conflict that turns violent, as is often the case in South African workplaces. Conflict that escalates to levels of violence includes psychological and physical acts of violence, as both hold the potential to harm workers and the organisation (Dillon, 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016; Shallcross, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013). Abusive leadership significantly contributes to such toxic environments. In fact, abusive supervision and actions are detrimental to subordinates and organisations (Breevaart & De Vries, 2017). Frustration and anger amongst employees may result in them purposefully decreasing productivity and work quality, damaging organisational property, or stealing from the organisation,

as well as displaying lower job satisfaction and commitment and emotional exhaustion (Breevaart & De Vries, 2017; Dillon, 2012; Sharma, 2018).

Dillon (2012) explains that two of the most important causes of violent workplace aggression are continued destructive outside influences on the part of the wrongdoer, and organisations that fail to respond adequately to the workplace violence. Breevaart and De Vries (2017) point out that abusive supervision often results from provoked workplace aggression or conflict with colleagues. Nonetheless, should the workplace tolerate examples of poor leadership and abusive behaviour amongst employees, or does not have the correct policies and procedures in place to deal with these issues, an environment of resentment and negative attribution on the part of the employee is created. Dillon (2012) concludes that although this does not excuse any violent or aggressive behaviour on the part of the employee, it does indicate that organisations can take steps to minimise or eliminate these kinds of behaviour.

Clearly, dysfunctional workplace conflict may result in sizeable costs and loss of productivity (De Dreu, 2008). In fact, De Dreu and Weingart (2003) concluded that although there was a shift during the eighties and nineties toward a more optimistic view on the stimulating and functional qualities of conflict, their research found that both relationship and task conflict are disruptive for team performance. De Dreu (2008) thus questioned her previous research findings on workplace conflict being beneficial, arguing that this conclusion may be criticised. De Dreu (2008) states that positive aspects of conflict are only found under very rare circumstances, and even then, many negative consequences will be found as well. Moreover, the negative results of conflict often outweigh any positive results (Bruk-Lee et al., 2013; De Dreu, 2008; Wall & Callister, 1995), thereby barring the emergence of functional conflict (De Dreu, 2008). De Dreu (2008) continues to caution that organisations are in need of cooperative conflict management not only to bring about positive conflict, but also in particular to mitigate or prevent the negative potential consequences of workplace conflict.

The challenge is therefore to avoid, minimise or rectify dysfunctional conflict, while enhancing functional conflict (Rahim, 2002). Ideally, this should be more than a once-off action of conflict resolution (Siira, 2012), even though conflict resolution leads to the lessening or elimination of conflict (Wall & Callister, 1995). Rather, the concerted and ongoing action of managing conflict in the organisation is necessary (Siira, 2012). The benefits of such an approach are evident, for instance research has found that conflict management increases organisational trust (Bendeman, 2007; Chu et al., 2011). Nonetheless, scholars argue (Katz & Flynn, 2013) that the majority of

organisations avoid conflict altogether (e.g. by avoiding the person they are upset with) in the hope that it will be resolved by itself; or they avoid confronting the conflict directly and either complain about it to someone else, or ask another person to deal with it.

Even when implementing conflict management strategies, it may still result in either functional or dysfunctional conflict (Jehn, 1995). Conflict management does not diminish conflict, but rather encourages functional conflict and discourages dysfunctional conflict (Leung & Tjosvold, 1998). The success and stability of organisations depend on the ability to recognise conflict and the subsequent management competencies to manage these types of conflict constructively (Doherty & Guylar, 2008) by deciding on the need for (or not), and type of, conflict intervention (Rahim, 2002). Organisations need to decide on the ideal approach they will take regarding conflict management.

2.2.2.2 Different approaches to conflict management

Acknowledging that conflict is continuously escalating, Cornell scholars (Bingham et al., 2003) at the well-known Institute of Conflict Resolution at Cornell University's School of Labor and IR in the USA, predicted that conflict management processes and systems will become as necessary in workplaces as any other feature of HRM (Katz & Flynn, 2013). This research is based on the broad principles of both conflict and cooperation being inherent in the employment relationship; and that conflict may manifest between individuals in a dyadic or group relationship (as discussed above).

Generally, it is accepted that ignoring or avoiding conflict, or merely employing short-term solutions, often does not bring necessary and sustainable results. Nonetheless, research indicates that very little use is made of conflict management approaches or models when organisations experience conflict (Currie et al., 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013). Despite significant changes in the fields of HRM and IR (e.g. HRM being viewed more strategically and the increase in individual employment rights), various research surveys have reported no significant changes in organisational management (Wood, Saundry, & Latreille, 2014). This may be because research shows that although managers indicate the importance of resolving conflict swiftly and well, they do not believe that there is any one specific way to manage or eliminate conflict entirely. Furthermore, organisations are often wary of introducing changes in the way conflict is managed because of the possible effect these changes may hold for their ER (Currie et al., 2017).

Currie et al. (2017) conclude that when conflict is addressed (rather than avoided or ignored), many differences of opinion exist on the best way to proceed. Many organisations deal with conflict by improvising and making haphazard changes to conflict management procedures as and when conflict happens (Roche & Teague, 2014). Alternatively, organisations implement team processes, aiming to resolve conflict either informally or formally, for example through mediation (Van de Vliert, 1981), or through informal and behind the scenes discussions with trade unions and management (Budd & Colvin, 2014). Often, conflict is handled indirectly through, for instance, the way business decisions are taken (e.g. by not involving team members who are in conflict to participate in the same project) (Avgar & Neuman, 2015).

Although scholars categorise conflict management approaches differently, many similarities exist. One school of thought argues that two predominant approaches to conflict management in organisations exist, while a third approach is encouraged. The first is a shorter-term conflict resolution approach through third-party intervention models such as ADR methods. The second is a longer-term, strategic approach to conflict management that focuses on conflict style frameworks based on people's orientation, behaviour or mindsets, and the tactics that are used in conflict management (Bendeman, 2007; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Siira, 2012). The third is an integrated conflict management approach. These three approaches are addressed in more detail below.

(a) Approach 1: Third-party intervention models (alternative dispute resolution)

There is much support for third-party intervention models aimed at the resolution of conflict mainly on an individual level, although collective disputes may also be resolved through this approach (Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017). Conflict resolution aims to reduce, eliminate or terminate conflict (Behrens, Colvin, Dorigatti, & Pekarek, 2017; Rahim, 2002, 2015) and forms part of a strategic approach to conflict management although the focus remains on the resolution of conflict (Currie et al., 2017). ADR is typically regarded as an ER initiative. Individual and collective ADR methods foster a positive and cooperative ER climate; resulting in lower absenteeism and turnover rates, and higher job satisfaction (Currie et al., 2017). As early as 2003, scholars (Lipsky et al., 2003) reported that there was a broad acceptance and institutionalisation of ADR methods in the USA. These methods are increasingly gaining popularity in many countries and are widely used, especially in the USA (Currie et al., 2017; Emmott, 2015; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lipsky et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2014).

ADR has much support as it aims to involve all parties to a dispute in a conciliatory process, thus empowering them to find a mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute (Behrens et al., 2017; Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007; Lipsky et al., 2017; Saundry & Wibberley, 2016). Further reasons given for the rise in ADR methods being used worldwide are the increased focus on individual employment rights and the decline in trade unionism and power (Currie et al., 2017; Currie & Teague, 2016). Similar institutions (e.g. the CCMA and bargaining councils), processes and instruments (e.g. mediation, arbitration, negotiation, fact-finding and the ombudsman concept as ADR methods) are in place in South Africa to deal with conflict in the workplace (Benjamin, 2016). Increasingly, organisations are investing in empowering supervisors with mediation skills to ensure that in-house mediation can be deployed, rather than purely relying on outside mediators. However, the focus of this approach is on dealing with conflict when it has manifested in disputes – it does not have a longer-term, preventative focus.

Previously, formalised procedures (e.g. on discipline and grievances) were embedded in collective agreements (Currie & Teague, 2016) – this is still mostly the case in South Africa. However, workplace conflict seldom has need of a legal solution alone; it often requires interventions that can deal with employees' strong emotions as well – only then will the approach taken provide an ongoing and constructive answer (Bollen & Euwema, 2013). Additionally, other initiatives have also seen the light, such as conflict coaching, conflict mapping and monitoring (Currie & Teague, 2016). However, although conflict resolution through, for instance ADR, is acknowledged as imperative for the resolution of manifested workplace conflict, it is not the focus of this study.

(b) Approach 2: Conflict style frameworks through problem-solving approaches

Generally speaking, conflict management approaches concentrate on different levels of conflict experiences within organisations. On the one hand, the focus is on how management and employees may address conflict manifestations to ensure the best outcome for the organisation – the focus is therefore on the organisational level (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000; Rahim, 2002; Shaukat et al., 2017; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001; Urick, Hollensbe, & Fairhurst, 2017). On the other hand, the conflict management literature focuses on how teams approach the management of conflict as it manifests within the team; this is usually referred to as team conflict processes (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; DeChurch et al., 2013; Jaikumar & Mendonca, 2017; Jehn, Greer, Rispens, & Jonsen, 2013; Jehn, Rispens, et al., 2010; Maltarich et al., 2018). Rahim (2002) cautions that many of the interventions designed to deal with conflict

on the dyadic or group level are not appropriate for changes on the organisational level. However, Humphrey et al. (2017) argue that teams (perhaps the same argument may be made for organisations) are in fact firstly a collection of relationships and that conflict may stem from a dyadic relationship within the team. A better understanding of the nature of conflict management is therefore necessary, as it will ultimately lead to how conflict is perceived in organisations, and determines the behaviour and responses of team members toward the conflict management processes that are implemented (DeChurch et al., 2013; Lu & Wang, 2017; Rahim, 2002; Way et al., 2016).

Strategies aimed at conflict management on an organisational level should minimise affective conflict on various levels within the organisation but manage and maintain moderate amounts of substantive (e.g. task) conflict (Rahim, 2002). Rahim (2002) suggests the selection and implementation of an effective conflict management strategy, together with an appropriate interpersonal conflict handling (management) style (see for instance Table 2.3). To do this, Rahim (2002) suggests a process consisting of problem recognition (sensing and formulating the problem and considering solutions), planning and then implementing change intervention initiatives. It can thus be referred to as a problem-solving approach to conflict management (Rahim, Civelek, & Liang, 2018). Lastly, outcomes should be reviewed, and the necessary corrective steps taken. Such an approach involves analysing a problem collaboratively from the different perspectives parties bring to the table, evaluating the differences, and searching for creative solutions, considering even the seemingly impossible solutions (Gary, 1989; Rahim, 2011). For this to happen, open communication is necessary, considering misunderstandings and conflict causes, and seeking for answers that offer the best solutions for the concerns of all parties involved (Rahim et al., 2018). This problem-solving approach thus relates to the dual concern conflict management theory (Rahim, 1983; Rahim et al., 2018). Clearly, Rahim (2002) supports a broader approach that advocates the management of conflict, and not only the resolution of conflict. According to Rahim (2002), this does not necessarily mean that conflict should be avoided, reduced or terminated. Rather, Rahim (2002) suggests the design of an effective organisational strategy that will aim to minimise dysfunctional conflict and enhance functional conflict, thereby increasing organisational effectiveness. Rahim (2002) further cautions that for such an approach to work, conflict management should advance organisational learning, be considerate of all stakeholders and consider ethical principles.

(c) *Approach 3: An integrated conflict management framework*

In this research, a long-term integrated conflict management approach is supported. Scholars explain such a conflict management system as one that coordinates the processes and mechanisms put in place to manage conflict strategically, in order to prevent, manage and resolve disputes and conflict manifestations (Löhr et al., 2017). Research suggests that an integrated approach should mainly consider four pathways in its application (Currie et al., 2017). Firstly, adopting a strategic conflict management approach involves judicial and non-judicial ADR practices (Currie et al., 2017, Lipsky et al., 2017). Secondly, conflict is approached by improvising changes and approaches for each conflict episode. A problem-solving approach as discussed above (Rahim et al., 2018) may be the ideal approach for this step. Thirdly, line managers are involved in resolving conflict by playing a mentoring and coaching role, thus assisting employees to make sense of the conflict and/or resolve the conflict amicably. However, the literature shows that this is easier said than done, as line managers every so often view conflict management of lesser importance than the operational role they need to play; or do not buy into conflict management policies and processes; or aggravate conflict because of the organisational pressures they experience to perform (Currie et al., 2017). Additional initiatives may be necessary, such as training and making this responsibility part of their performance management (Teague & Roche, 2012; Tjosvold et al., 2014). As a fourth step (or pathway) conflict prevention initiatives through social programmes such as employee engagement or organisational commitment initiatives are implemented (Currie et al., 2017). Such an approach to conflict management in organisations suggests a framework that is based on mutually beneficial relationships, open-minded discussions and constructively managing conflict (Tjosvold et al., 2014).

Thus, an integrated approach moves beyond merely settling disputes to consider a strategic conflict management system that contemplates all aspects of conflict from the viewpoint of various disciplines (Avgar, 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001). A comprehensive systems approach deliberates on the prevention, management and resolution of conflict (Avgar, 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). This entails encompassing a combination of the different procedures and practices necessary to manage conflict in organisations (Avgar, 2017; Colvin, 2016; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016; Tjosvold et al., 2014) and considering the causes of conflict (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001).

Additionally, the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (2001) argues that an integrated conflict management system encourages timely and constructive employee and manager voice, as well as providing and coordinating alternative options and structures for a variety of problems and all people across the various functions of the organisation. Such a system incorporates a cooperative problem-solving approach in the organisational culture that aligns with the mission, vision and values of the organisation, thus backing a transformation of the internal culture (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). Lastly, the system should be flexible, accessible and easy to use, and comprehensible to all (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001).

Emmott (2015) argues that many organisations still think of conflict handling from an ER context as merely managing discipline and grievances. However, it is evident that organisations are considering more flexible mechanisms for resolving conflict, for instance by acknowledging the importance of employment engagement in the process. When viewing conflict management from a broader, long-term organisational perspective, organisations invest resources in conflict prevention (Currie et al., 2017; Emmott, 2015). It is argued that the ideal approach in today's business world is flexible, adjustable to a variety of cultures, situations and leadership styles, practical and cost-effective, and easily communicated to all in the organisation (Katz & Flynn, 2013). The chosen approach should relate and contribute to the organisational effectiveness and efficiency (Katz & Flynn, 2013).

The seminal work of Hyman (1977) suggests that solutions for conflict management are found in setting changed priorities in businesses, and considering the character and nature of work, as well as workers' relationships with each other. Ideally, conflict management needs a continuing strategic focus where indications of underlying conflict are identified, considered and evaluated, with subsequent measures developed and implemented to prevent it from becoming destructive or dysfunctional (Swanepoel & Slabbert, 2012). According to Rahim (2002), conflict management strategies will only be effective if they enhance organisational learning, consider the need of all stakeholders and reflect ethical principles. Additionally, the focus should be on people's orientation or mindsets and the tactics that are used in workplace conflict management (Siira, 2012).

According to Lynch (2001), conflict management viewed strategically should consist of four phases. In the first phase, power plays a significant role and a senior manager in the organisation deals in an authoritarian and task-orientated manner with the conflict as part of his management prerogative (Lynch, 2001). In the second and rights-based phase, parties rely on the legislative

regulations, organisational policies and procedures, and contracts to assist them in dealing with their relationship of mistrust and uncertainty (Lynch, 2001). The third phase is characterised by an interest-based approach focusing on the ADR processes of mediation and arbitration (Lynch, 2001). Scholars argue that mediators hold the potential to assist parties in understanding their underlying emotions in conflict situations (Jameson, Bodtker, & Linker, 2010). In Lynch's (2001) fourth phase, a different approach to conflict management in organisations is introduced, namely, an integrated conflict management system. This coincides with the deliberation above on an ideal conflict management approach for organisations.

An integrated conflict management system functions well in a healthy ER culture that reflects conflict competence and that consists of a people-oriented management approach that focuses on not only preventing conflict but also managing manifested conflict (Avgar, 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001). Organisations will be required to change their philosophies and organisational cultures to create an internal conflict competency culture, both focusing on the causes of conflict and offering assistance in resolving the conflict. It thus requires more than merely treating the symptoms of conflict (Avgar, 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001). The current research supports such an integrated conflict management system, and considers the relationship dynamics between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust.

To summarise, conflict management approaches have either a preventative or a reactive focus, or a combination of the two. Reactively, conflict is dealt with through internal, organisational and agreed processes such as the grievance procedure (Avgar, 2017; Osezua & Osezua, 2007). To prevent conflict, a strategic approach is suggested with practices that proactively respond to internal and external environments in a bid to reach organisational objectives (Avgar, 2017). Structural changes are suggested, for instance adapting and integrating the aims of groups with diverse views; clarifying authority issues by emphasizing the responsibilities and relationships of groups; developing new ways of managing work activities; and the re-organisation of work and tasks locations (Kontz & Welhrich, 1988).

The importance of informal and different conflict management strategies are also advocated (Mayer & Louw, 2009), for example implementing peaceful communication strategies with trans-cultural mediation and team deliberation and sharing sessions, also addressing aspects such as organisational characteristics, identity and standards. A learning culture concerning conflict

management practices in organisations is important (Katz & Flynn, 2013; Rahim, 2002), including training in communication skills (e.g. enhancing active and reflective listening), conflict resolution skills, and in cross-functional job awareness (Katz & Flynn, 2013). However, scholars (Osezua & Osezua, 2007) conclude that there is no particular conflict management strategy suitable for all situations, and therefore it remains important to develop structures and processes that are of benefit to conflict management.

The three broad approaches discussed above are depicted in Figure 2.5 below. The current study falls neatly into the concept of the third approach – an integrated conflict management system. The relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) inform and enhance the current understanding of an integrated approach.

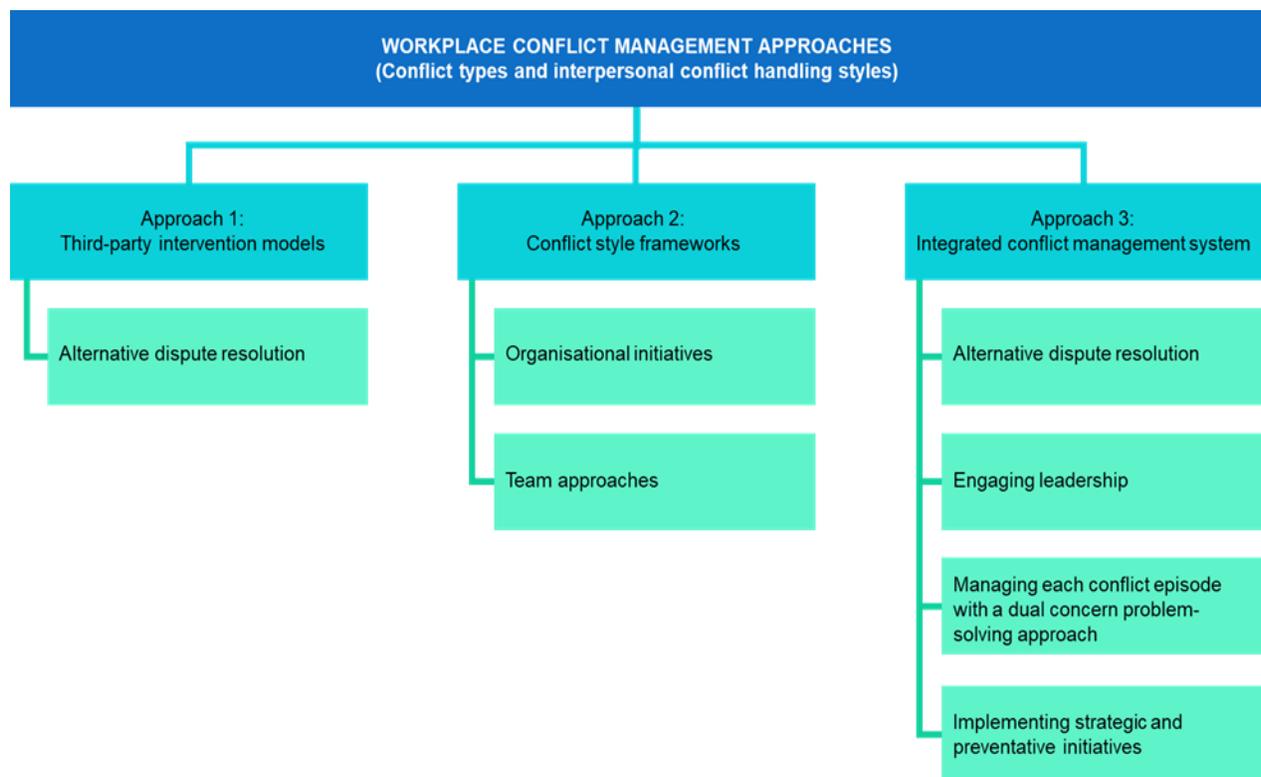


Figure 2.5 Three Broad Approaches to Conflict Management in Organisations

Source: Author's own interpretation of the literature

Chen et al. (2012) conclude that four main strategic conflict management perspectives should be considered when choosing a possible approach or theory. The first perspective emphasises the

importance of a cooperative approach (Alper et al., 2000; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Kuhn & Poole, 2000). According to this perspective, groups perform best when they cooperate and work towards what is best for the group. Secondly, a contingency (or situational) perspective is advocated (Rahim, 2002; Wall & Callister, 1995), arguing that the best approach to managing conflict is determined by the specific situation – not all modes of conflict management are appropriate for all circumstances. A flexible approach considering all factors of the situation is advised when selecting the most appropriate conflict management style to handle the conflict situation (Rahim, 2002). More recently, the research done on a situated model of conflict within the context of social relations, also referred to such a flexible approach (Coleman et al., 2012). Thirdly, a time perspective is suggested (Thomas, 1992), which maintains that short-term problems can be resolved through a contingency approach but that the cooperative approach discussed above may, for instance, be better for longer-term challenges. In other words, different challenges necessitate a different perspective. The fourth perspective refers to the theory of conglomerate behaviour (Euwema et al., 2003), which advocates a conglomerate approach (Euwema et al., 2003), whereby more than one conflict management behaviour mode is used during conflict management situations. These aspects are further deliberated on in the next section.

Whatever conflict management approach or perspective is chosen, one should consider that conflict interactions may, amongst others, impact on future relations and workplace climates (Jameson et al., 2010). Transformation – explained as change, which is all encompassing and long-term in nature, rather than negligible and on a small scale, linear or fleeting – is an essential goal in conflict management (Jameson et al., 2010). Three levels of change are identified which differentiate it from purely settling, and not resolving, conflict (Northrup, 1989). At a basic level, change is often only marginal and manifests for instance in an authorised ceasefire; however, even though the conflict is momentarily stopped, the underlying issues remain the same. At a secondary level, change may for instance lead to improved communication patterns between the parties; however, there is still no change in their basic identities. It is only at the third level where changes in the core identities of the parties is seen and transformation results; not only in how they observe themselves and the other party but also in the relationship between them (Northrup, 1989).

Therefore, striving for creative conflict transformation is necessary, recognising the attitudes of parties to the conflict, their manifest behaviours and the conflict issue itself – all three of these aspects need to be out in the open and understood by all the parties; then only can they be

interactively addressed in order to resolve the conflict (Galtung, 1996). According to Galtung (1996), parties often fail to deliberate the attitudes (or emotions) underlying the conflict. However, attention to the underlying emotions of parties is imperative in achieving conflict transformation (Jameson et al., 2010).

Various theories, models and styles of conflict management (including interpersonal conflict handling styles and conflict types) are found in the literature (Avgar, 2017; Erbert, 2014). However, no framework exists that brings the various theories of conflict dynamics together (Avgar, 2017; Coleman et al., 2012; Thomas, 1992; Tjosvold et al., 2014) and, as such, findings on conflict research are often incongruous, out of context, or too focused on negative outcomes, hampering the possibility of effective conflict resolution and management (Avgar, 2017; Coleman et al., 2012). Additionally, conflict research is criticised for being removed from practical realities and limitations (Coleman et al., 2012). The myriad of theories and models that exist in the literature – often very closely related – confirms this matter, even if each theory, model or framework serves to build the body of knowledge available on this very comprehensive topic. Consequently, in this section, only some of the most well-known theories focusing on conflict at the dyadic and group levels are discussed.

2.2.2.3 *Theories relating to conflict types*

In this research, conflict types are based on the work of Jehn (1995, 1997), who identified task, relationship and process conflict, and Bendersky and Hays (2012), who identified status conflict. Jehn's research (1995, 1997) resulted in a grounded theory supporting the existence of multidimensional intragroup conflict. Jehn's theory (1997) postulates that task, relationship and process conflict exist within groups despite their having similar goals.

Bendersky and Hays (2012) considered how status conflict affects organisational performance. These scholars (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) study status conflict from the perspective of negotiated order theory which suggests that the social order within groups is constantly repositioned as role players negotiate their standing and compete for legitimacy (Strauss, Bucher, Ehrlich, Sabshin, & Schatzman, 1963).

Four measuring instruments were used to assess these sub-constructs. The first is Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995), measuring task conflict, relationship conflict, conflict norms (considering openness norms versus avoidance norms) and conflict resolution (potential to resolve conflict). Secondly, in measuring group atmosphere, Jehn and Mannix (2001)

considered the work of Chatman (1991) on trust, respect and cohesiveness; and Jehn's (1995) work on conflict norms and liking of fellow group members. The third measuring instrument is an expansion of the first instrument (Jehn 1995), incorporating the Process Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) to assess process conflict. Jehn's measuring scale (1995, 1997) considers conflict in organisational groups that are defined as having two or more members in a social system with boundaries so that members realise they form a group, and operating within an organisation with environmental factors that provide context (Hackman, 1987). Jehn's Conflict Measuring Scale (1995, 1997) has been used in nearly 80% of conflict research studies (De Wit et al., 2012; Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017). Fourthly, the Status Conflict in Groups measuring instrument (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) was used to evaluate status conflict.

2.2.2.4 A synopsis of conflict management theories on interpersonal conflict handling styles

In addition, the research considers ways conflict is handled. Five of the most well-known conflict management theories on the dyadic level are social interdependence theory, social motivation theory, dual concern theory, power dependence theory and game theory (Coleman et al., 2012). These theories (discussed below) focus mainly on conditions and processes of conflict management leading to either functional or dysfunctional conflict outcomes and dynamics (Coleman et al., 2012; De Dreu, 2008; Deutsch, 1973, 2006; Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2009). Additionally, Gelfand et al. (2012) developed a theory on conflict culture, which will also be discussed below.

(a) Social interdependence theory of conflict management

One of the first theories on cooperation and competition during conflict manifestations stems from Deutsch's (1949) work on goal interdependence. A goal is seen as a desired future state of affairs (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Deutsch (1949) distinguishes between the concepts of competition and cooperation by arguing that (at least two) individuals direct both these constructs towards the same social end. However, with competition, not all individuals can achieve the end in equal amounts, whereas with cooperation the same social end may be achieved by most (if not all) of the concerned individuals. In cooperation, goals are thus "promotively interdependent" (positive goals) versus "contritely interdependent goals" (negative goals) as is evident during a state of competition (Deutsch, 1949:132).

Deutsch (1949) explains that positive versus negative goals are not mutually exclusive. He gives the example of a team playing a game where all team members would like to score the goal (and

thus as a team share a promotively interdependent goal), but may still be competitively interrelated towards reaching the goal of being appointed star of the game (a contriently interdependent goal). These different types of goal will affect both functional or dysfunctional processes and outcomes (Deutsch, 1949). The theory argues that the way goals are structured determines how individuals will interact, resulting in a specific outcome (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Social interdependence is found when individuals' actions affect each other's outcomes, which may be either positive or negative (Johnson & Johnson, 2005).

In later research, Deutsch (1973) found that constructive dispute-resolution processes are similar to cooperative problem-solving processes that regard conflict as a mutual problem to be solved together, versus destructive conflict processes that are similar to competitive processes that regard conflict as a struggle to either win or lose. Cooperative behaviour is linked to various benefits, for instance increased friendliness, respect and better communication and coordination between parties; while conflicting interests are regarded as mutual challenges to be resolved together (Deutsch, 1949; Johnson & Johnson, 2005).

Subsequent work on the theory of cooperation and competition led to the social interdependence theory of conflict management, further defining and elaborating the team behaviours of cooperation and competition, and adding avoidance behaviour as well (Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Deutsch et al., 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). According to the theory of social interdependence, a state of interdependence will naturally lead to some form of conflict; however, the effectiveness of the team outcomes (functional versus dysfunctional conflict) will depend on whether team members behave with cooperation, competition or avoidance – conditional on their perceptions of the other party's intentions (Deutsch, 2006). Three major categories of conflict outcomes exist, depending on the level of cooperation. These categories are explained as zero-sum conflict (one party wins while the other loses), mixed-method conflict (both parties can either win or lose, or one can win, while the other loses), and lastly, cooperative conflict (where both can win or lose) (Deutsch, 1990).

Although this theory is in high regard, it has been criticised by scholars based on its assumption that both parties have equal power and are highly interdependent (Coleman et al; 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). This led to various studies indicating the importance of cooperative interdependence in relationships skewed in power (Hayter, 2015; Tjosvold, 1985, 1997), with cooperative goals leading to higher trust, support and assistance in relationships where power is not equal (Hayter, 2015; Tjosvold, 1997). Tjosvold et al. (2014) explain that in the cooperation

and competition theories, the interaction of conflict will be determined by whether individuals believe that their goals are competitive, cooperative or independent.

Nonetheless, scholars point out (Coleman et al., 2012) that there are contradictory studies that show that in asymmetrical power relationships, the higher-power party often acts in a domineering, coercive and exploitative manner, even when sharing common goals. These findings are important from the perspective of ER, and the recognised skewed relationship between employers and employees.

(b) Social motivation theory

According to social motivation theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), individual and situational differences relating to how interdependence is experienced will have an effect on the social motives of people (e.g. selfless, competitive or individualistic) (Coleman et al., 2012), and therefore also on their values and behaviours when negotiating disputes. Generally, the social motives of selflessness (altruism) and cooperation are combined into pro-social motivation, while individualistic and competitive goals are combined into pro-self-motives (Coleman et al., 2012). Negotiators of disputes with pro-self-motives will act competitively, focusing on winning and wielding power; while negotiators with pro-social motives will aim for fair outcomes, also displaying cooperation to ensure harmony, fairness and solidarity (Coleman et al., 2012; De Dreu, Beersma, Steinel, & Van Kleef, 2007).

(c) Dual-concern theory

According to Coleman et al. (2012), dual-concern theory stems from the work of various scholars considering different conflict handling styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976; Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). To better illustrate the theory, these scholarly contributions are discussed briefly. The managerial grid of Blake and Mouton (1964) posits that management behaviour can be categorised into five types of social conflict management approach (Blake & Mouton, 1964) – problem-solving, smoothing, forcing, withdrawal and compromising – based on the manager's attitude of concern either for production or for people. A nine-point dimensional scale indicates one as minimum concern with nine being maximum concern.

Thomas (1976) extended the work of Blake and Mouton (1964) to a two-dimensional taxonomy of conflict-handling modes (as depicted in Figure 2.6 below), considering the first dimension of

competitive versus cooperative behaviour, but also adding a second dimension of self-concern (assertiveness) versus other-concern (cooperativeness). According to dual concern theory, people in conflict show two basic concerns ranging from weak to strong – namely concern for their own outcomes or for those of others. These concerns result in strategies (or conflict handling modes) that entail either avoiding, accommodating, competing, collaborating or compromising.

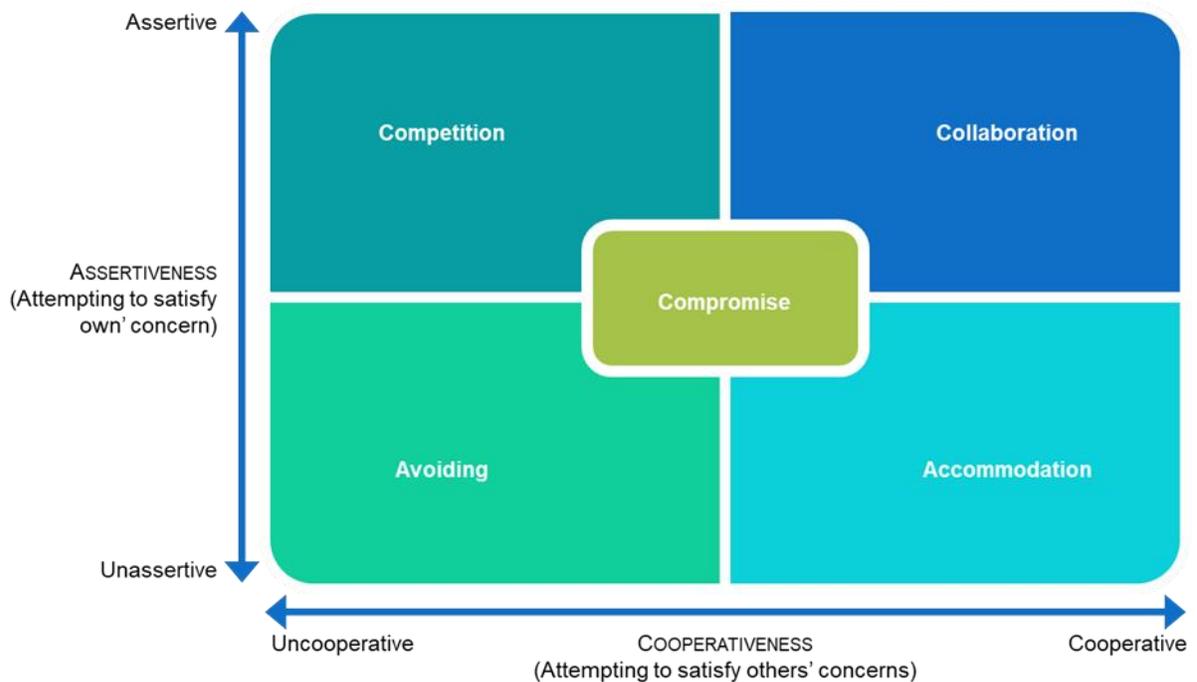


Figure 2.6 Two-dimensional Taxonomy of Conflict Handling Modes

Source: Adapted from Kilmann and Thomas (1977) and Thomas (1976, 1992)

In addition to the above, Thomas (1976, 1992) developed a process model and a structural model where he differentiated between conflict processes (a sequence of events, namely, frustration, conceptualisation, behaviour, outcome) and structures in which the process occurs (the conditions that shape and control the process, e.g. standardised procedures or the personalities of the conflicting parties). Thomas (1976) argued that the structural aspects shape the conflict process and encourage (but not predict or determine) different conflict handling modes, which, in turn, influence the conflict management process. Thomas (1976) identified four classes of structural variables, namely behavioural dispositions (i.e. preferred conflict styles of conflicting parties), social pressures (e.g. stakeholder pressures on conflicting parties), incentive structures (e.g. what is at stake for the conflicting parties) and rules and procedures (e.g. decision rules).

In later years, Thomas (1992) adapted his process and structural models. According to Thomas's later process model (1992), rational-economic and normative thinking, as well as emotions, shape conflict intentions conjointly. These processes informed Thomas's (1992) structural model as reflected in the following functions: firstly, providing collaborative reasons and viable conditions; secondly, to universally endorse collaboration; and thirdly, to create the necessary emotional conditions (nonthreatening and supportive) to enable successful collaboration.

Rahim (1983) expanded on the dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) by dividing approaches to conflict management into two main dimensions, namely concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension indicates the degree (high or low) to which people attempt to satisfy their own concerns, while the second dimension considers the degree to which people attempt to satisfy the concerns of others (Rahim, 1983). Five specific styles of interpersonal conflict management result from the combination of these two dimensions. Combined, this results in five specific conflict management behaviour styles of handling interpersonal conflict with managers, subordinates and peers. Integrating style relates to a high concern for self and others, collaborating with conflicting parties to reach a mutually acceptable agreement (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). An obliging style refers to low concern for self, but high concern for others enacted by playing down any differences and emphasising commonalities. A dominating style shows high concern for self and low concern for others, indicating a win-lose orientation to conflict. Avoiding conflict shows low concern for self and others by withdrawing or sidestepping any conflicting situations. A compromising style indicates a moderate concern for self and others, and is associated with a give-and-take style in handling conflict (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). These different options are depicted in Figure 2.7 below.

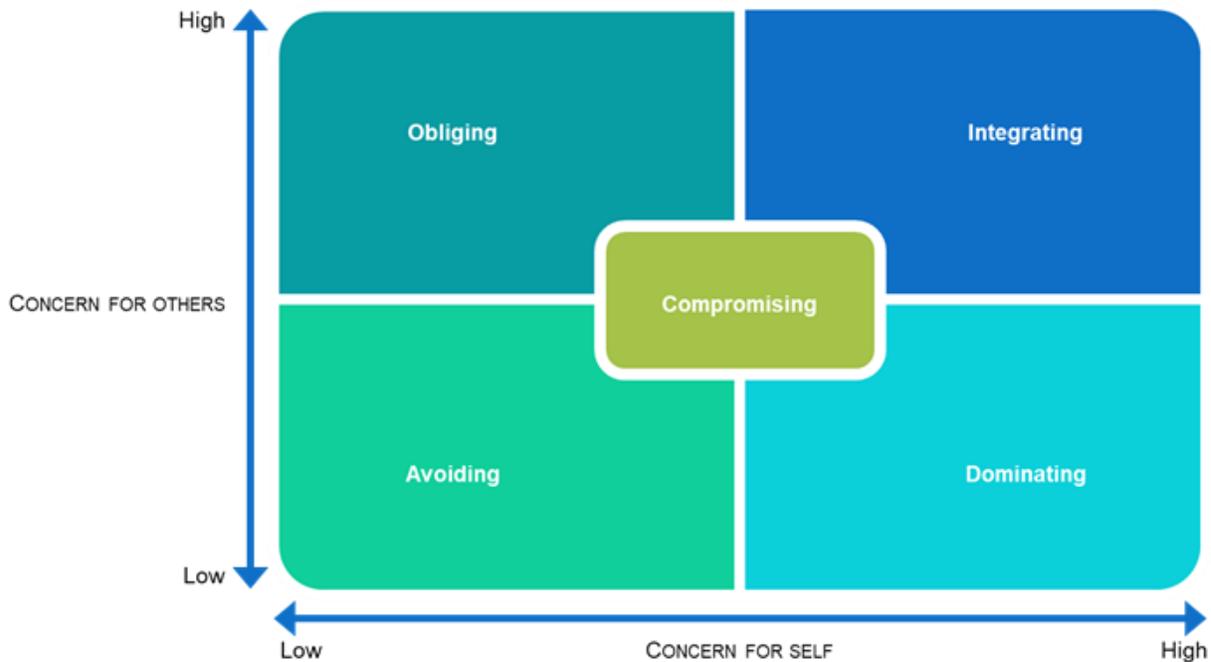


Figure 2.7 Styles for Handling Interpersonal Conflict

Source: Adapted from Rahim (1983)

In later years, Thomas (1992) reviewed his two-dimensional model, pointing to further research done since its inception, also by other scholars. Firstly, he points out that there is no consensus among scholars on what exactly the modes of conflict handling are – be it strategies, behaviours, orientation or other. Thomas (1992) argues that the conflict handling modes should rather be described as the strategic intentions of parties in conflict, referring to whether the parties have the strategic intent to satisfy their own or the other parties' goals. Thomas (1992) differentiates his version of dual concern theory from the work of other scholars such as Blake and Mouton (1964) and Rahim (1983) by separating the strategic intent of the parties from the causes of the modes.

Nonetheless, other researchers (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) confirm that the two dimensions explain or predict the occurrence of the five modes. Dual concern theory is therefore also said to predict a theory of choice and strategy depending on different motivational conditions in conflict (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). According to Pruitt (1983), dual concern theory suggests that in encouraging the other party to become concerned about one's outcomes, that party's strategic choice may be influenced. Later research suggested that the measuring instrument of both Kilmann and Thomas (1977) and Rahim (1983) are moderately valid in measuring its underlying theory (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990). Nonetheless, the work of

Kilmann and Thomas (1977) has been criticised for not addressing situations of intense conflict that are extremely negative and destructive, leading to behaviours of exclusion and sabotage (Trippe & Baumoel, 2015).

Furthermore, Thomas (1992) expanded on his original approach (1976) by adding that two further dimensions should be considered, namely, the choice of recipient and the period involved. He explains that with regard to the recipient, three choices exist: benefiting the welfare of one party (a 'partisan choice'), or all parties ('joint-welfare choice'), or the larger system to which the parties belong ('a systemic choice') (Thomas, 1992:270). Thomas (1992) notes that when one manages conflict within an organisation, the wider systemic perspective will be most appropriate.

With respect to the period that is involved, Thomas (1992) argues that the choice between contingency and collaboration theories on conflict management depends on whether the challenge is short term or longer term. Contingency conflict management theories tend to provide shorter-term solutions, and are more pragmatic. As an example, he explains that should parties have insufficient problem-solving skills, do not trust each other, or there are time pressures, competition or compromise will be better ways to deal with the conflict than trying to collaborate (Thomas, 1992). Nonetheless, the contingency approach suggests that employees and managers should have more than one option in the way conflict is managed to allow for the most appropriate choice (Thomas, 1976). However, moving beyond these short-term issues requires a different approach where structural variables are considered through a normative approach characterised by intra-system collaboration that provides a long-term focus to leadership and change processes (Thomas, 1992). At times, successful conflict management requires a short-term pragmatic focus to determine what immediate action is necessary. Nevertheless, a visionary focus remains necessary to determine what should to be done over the longer term to reach goals of excellence. This kind of improvement needs visionary leadership, changes in organisational procedures, organisational culture and norms, and so forth (Thomas, 1992). This is also the focus of this study.

Dual concern theory is mainly criticised for not differentiating between the skewness in power between the parties, and how this would affect its predictions of strategy in a particular context (Coleman et al., 2012). Additionally, the inclusion of compromising as a way of dealing with conflict has been criticised, suggesting that it is a form of lazy problem solving aimed at unenthusiastically satisfying all interests and is similar to collaborating (Pruitt, 1983). Other scholars disagree with this viewpoint (Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990), arguing that compromising and collaborating behaviours are distinguishable from one another, although the respective outcomes of a

settlement or a resolution may have common features. Scholars such as Pruitt (1983) suggest that an explicit problem-solving strategy – characterised by being firm but flexible in an effort to be responsive to the interests of the other party – may be more successful than incorporating the principles of dual concern theory.

(d) *Power dependence theory*

Power dependence theory stresses the importance of dependence and independence in negotiations, and also falls under the umbrella of interdependence theories (Coleman et al., 2012; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). According to this theory, “the power of A over B is equal to, and based upon the dependence of B on A” (Emerson, 1962, p. 32–33). In other words, dependence is proportionate to the significance a party places on a conceivable outcome that is at stake, and inversely proportionate to the accessibility of the outcome that is at stake by means of other sources (Coleman et al., 2012).

Although this theory is generally accepted in distributive or competitive negotiations, it is criticised as viewing power only from the perspective of how symmetrical dependence is, thereby ignoring other types of power and influence that may impact on conflict situations, such as social status, scarcity of resources and others (Coleman et al., 2012). It also fails to acknowledge that dependencies among parties in conflict may change over time (Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005).

(e) *Game theory*

This theory formulated conflict of interest in mathematical terms (Von Neuman & Morgenstern, 1944). Coleman et al. (2012) explain that according to this theory, conflicting parties have interdependent interests, behaviours and fates. Nonetheless, there is a rational choice to be made as the best counter choice to that of an opponent, based on efficiency, goal maximisation and the like. The theory is used mainly in competitive situations, such as distributive conflict. Research has found that concentrating on winning and pursuing self-interest only has more negative outcomes over time than considering the needs of others when making choices. The research thus shed considerable light on rational, competitive dynamics in conflict, but still did not present a broader theory for conflict involving both cooperative and competitive goals with rational and irrational characteristics (Coleman et al., 2012).

The above discussion on the five theories and their critique indicates a need for a more comprehensive theory. This is because, generally speaking, these theories differ in relation to

underlying assumptions, emphasis, types of interdependence, influence of power on conflict, degree of importance of issues, external conditions and individual approaches (Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2012; Scully, 2016). Scholars argue that a more coherent framework is thus necessary (Coleman & Kugler, 2014). Subsequently, a theory of social relations and psychological orientations was developed, referred to as a three-dimensional situated model (Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2012; Coleman, Kugler, Mitchinson, Chung, & Musallam, 2010; Coleman, Kugler, Mitchinson, & Foster, 2013).

(f) *Three-dimensional situated model*

This theory stems from the work of Deutsch (1982, 1985) and other theories as summarised above. It consists of three dimensions, namely, the mix of goal interdependence (cooperative versus competitive goal interdependencies), power differences (high, equal or low) relative to the other party, and degree of goal interdependence (also referring to the degree of importance of the relationship between the parties in conflict) (Coleman et al., 2012). It provides a framework for conflict interactions in dyadic social relations that combines and integrates the above three dimensions (Coleman et al., 2012). These three social relations dimensions combine to create the conscious or unconscious representation of a person's perceived external environment. In other words, each party in conflict sees themselves in a specific type of situation that afford specific psychological orientations to conflict, for instance a variety of emotions, values and behaviours to fit each situation (Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2010, 2013). In conflict situations, the respective parties see themselves in a specific region (i.e. a particular type of situation) that lead to specific psychological orientations (PO), and that result in specific emotions, behaviours and values that fit the type of situation (Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2010, 2013). The different psychological orientations (PO) are either domination (stemming from high power, competitive goals and high interdependence); benevolence (afforded by high power, cooperative goals and high interdependence); support (based on low power, cooperative goals high interdependence); appeasement (afforded by low power, competitive goals, high interdependence); and lastly autonomy (afforded by low degrees of interdependence) (Coleman & Kugler, 2014). This theory is depicted in Figure 2.8 below.

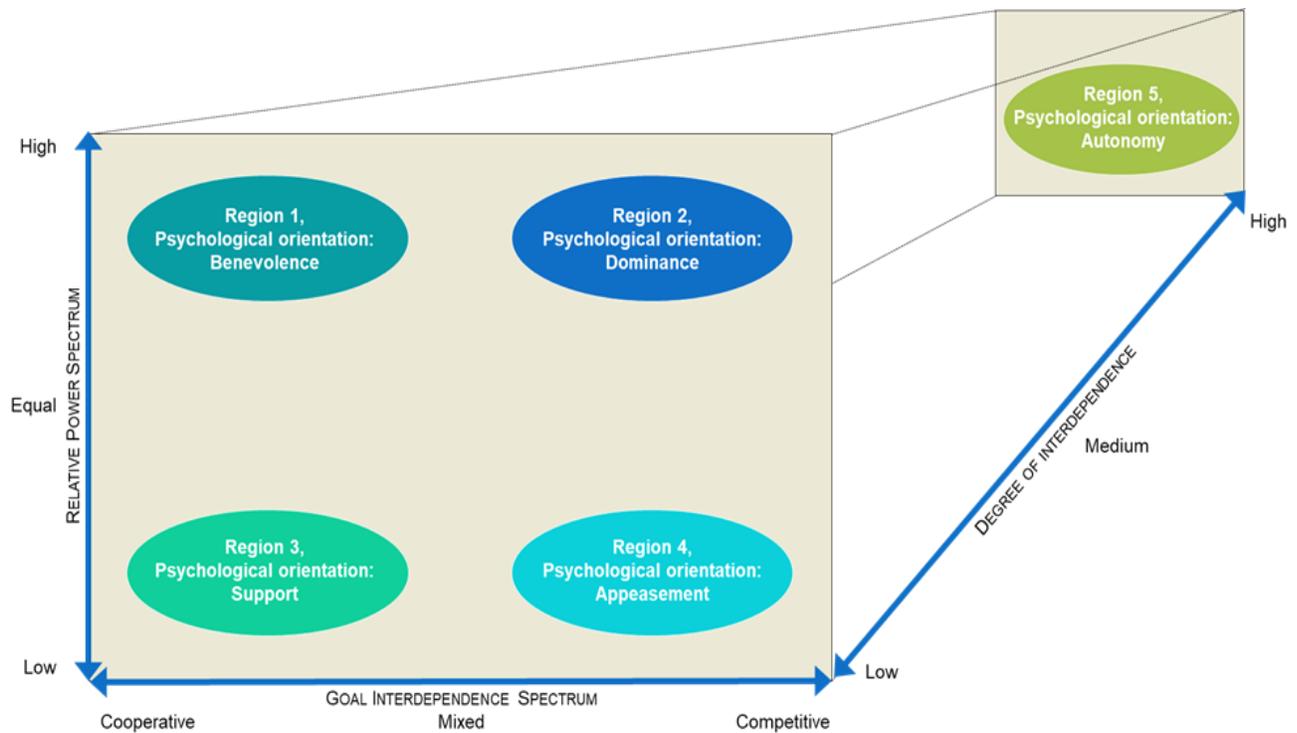


Figure 2.8 Situated Model of Conflict in Social Relations

Source: Coleman and Kugler (2014)

Coleman et al. (2012) explain that the values of these three dimensions is to produce different social experiences and outcomes. For instance, traditionally, people in power tend to act dominantly and controlling when approaching conflict situations, and may be more exploitative, using pressure or more contentious tactics (Coleman & Kugler, 2014). However, being flexible and adaptive when approaching constructive conflict resolution is emphasised, depending on the situation (Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2012).

Accordingly, an approach is advocated in terms of which skills are developed for situations where either domination (e.g. employing power), good will (e.g. demonstrating benevolence through collaborative leadership skills), support (e.g. reaching out to the other side), conciliation (appeasement through, for instance, learning to tolerate attacks) or autonomy (through developing a Plan B to achieve goals) are necessary (Coleman et al., 2012). In other words, a strategy of conflict management is suggested to fit the specific set of conditions, showing that conflict can be managed satisfactorily when the parties can move between different orientations, strategies and tactics, depending on the specific situation (Coleman & Kugler, 2014).

(g) The theory of a conglomerate approach

This theory (Euwema et al., 2003; Tjosvold, 1997; Van de Vliert, 1997) states that the effectiveness of behaviour displayed during conflict episodes can only be evaluated by accounting for the incidence and co-variation of the behavioural components used during a conflict episode (Van de Vliert, 1997). A mix of conflict behaviour modes is thus possible during conflict management during a conflict episode (Euwema et al., 2003). Additionally, two modes of conflict behaviour are added, arguing that previous theories did not make room for more assertive behaviours during conflict, namely, process controlling (e.g. dominating procedures by, for instance, setting the agenda) and confronting (e.g. demanding attention) (Euwema et al., 2003).

The theory differs from traditional theories on conflict management such as those of Blake and Mouton (1964) and Thomas (1992) that claim that behaviours during conflict episodes (e.g. problem solving and forcing) are mutually independent in their manifestations and consequences, and that only one mode of behaviour will be plausible during each conflict episode (Euwema et al., 2003).

(h) Conflict cultures theory

Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that the conflict literature focuses mainly on three distinct styles of conflict management, namely cooperation, avoidance and competition (see for instance Blake & Mouton, 1964; De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001a; Deutsch, 1949; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). A cooperative method is seen as proactive and constructive in its approach to negotiate and collaborate to resolve conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012). With a competitive approach, negotiation with the conflicting partner is not open-minded; rather a competing and domineering approach is followed in order to win the battle (Gelfand et al., 2012). An avoiding style is followed when the parties recoil and do not confront the conflict; instead they would rather suppress any conflict expression than face the problem (Gelfand et al., 2012).

Gelfand et al. (2012) maintain that even though individual employees may have their characteristic approach to conflict management, organisations present a strong context (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996) for suggesting a communally shared and acceptable way of addressing and managing conflict, referred to as conflict cultures (Gelfand et al., 2012). Conflict cultures guide the approaches and behaviours of organisational members when managing conflict, thereby limiting individual variations in conflict management. It may perhaps be argued that a conflict

culture thus forms part of a broader organisational culture, although this has been little researched (Gelfand et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, Gelfand et al (2012) explain that conflict cultures develop around shared norms, repeated actions and a stable organisational context. Through compositional processes on the organisational level, conflict cultures thus take shape that are either avoidant (conflict is collectively suppressed or avoided), collaborative (conflict is approached with collective and constructive communication, negotiation, problem-solving and decision-making) or competitive/domineering (rivalry and success is collectively strived for through outwitting others (Gelfand et al., 2012). In order to have a collaborative conflict culture, psychological safety within teams is necessary for teams to believe that it is safe to speak up (thus indicating a relationship with employee voice as well) (Gelfand et al., 2012). It is argued that leadership plays an important part in shaping an organisation's conflict culture, as their own conflict management style is regarded as a driver of congruent conflict cultures (Gelfand et al., 2012). In sum, it is argued that conflict management is not only shaped by individual styles of conflict management, but that a conflict culture, shaped in part by the leadership of an organisation, influences the dynamics of organisational conflict management (Gelfand et al., 2012).

2.1.1.1 Conclusion

Notwithstanding the research done on how to manage conflict in organisations, it remains a topic with many unanswered questions. As stated at the beginning of the section, apart from the ones discussed above, various other studies have considered possible conflict theories. For instance, dialectical theory assists in explaining how oppositions and tensions in everyday life – in the workplace – are managed (Erbert, 2014). Other studies have considered coalition and role conflict theories that suggest that third parties to conflict – influenced by the conflict and conflict-handling styles – react by either taking sides, compromising or avoiding conflict resolution (Van de Vliert, 1981). However, the theories discussed above seem to be those most often referred to and regarded as seminal works; accordingly, they were considered for the purposes of this study.

In this research, conflict management is considered through the meta-theoretical lens of dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983, 1995). This is a theory that has stood the test of time and has provided a way to integrate various interpersonal conflict handling styles in the conflict management framework being developed. It informs a strategic choice on how conflict should be managed, based on a concern for the self and for others. To foster such a concern will need

strong leadership and an organisational culture conducive to the management of conflict issues, amongst others, through promoting employee voice. These reasons informed the chosen theory. To measure the various conflict management behaviour styles of handling interpersonal conflict, Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) was used.

From an ER perspective, the main limitation of dual concern theory lies in the fact that some scholars argue that the theory does not provide for the skewness in power between employers and employees (Coleman et al., 2012). Nonetheless, the research aims to determine the relationship dynamics between issues such as employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement – with the decline in trade unionism, these aspects may very well become the way through which strong ER will remain, addressing the limitation of dual concern theory. For these reasons, dual concern theory was also chosen as one of the overarching theories of the current research.

Secondly, conflict cultures theory (Gelfand et al., 2012) is considered for this research. As discussed above, this theory relates to how conflict cultures are formed in organisations, also arguing that leaders strongly influence the choice of conflict culture.

Four measuring instruments were used to assess the sub-constructs related to conflict types, namely Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995), which measures task conflict, relationship conflict, conflict norms and conflict resolution. Secondly, group atmosphere is measured by a scale developed by Jehn and Mannix (2001). The third measuring instrument is an expansion of the first instrument (Jehn 1995), incorporating the Process Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) to assess process conflict. Fourthly, the Status Conflict in Groups measuring instrument (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) was used to evaluate status conflict.

2.2.3 A critical evaluation of variables influencing conflict management

The next section briefly considers the antecedent, mediating and moderating variables of this study in relation to conflict management from an ER perspective. As will be seen below, the literature indicates that leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement all significantly relate to conflict and conflict management in organisations. Additionally, the moderating variables influence conflict management in organisations. Nonetheless, little research has been done on the topic in a South African ER context. Understanding the various relationships between the antecedents, the mediating and the

moderating constructs will enable the researcher to contribute to the knowledge necessary to manage conflict in South African organisations from an ER context.

2.2.3.1 *Antecedent variables*

Avgar (2017) states that the antecedents of conflict are under-researched, pointing to a research gap on organisational, group and individual level factors that may influence different forms of conflict (Avgar, 2017). Thus, a wider approach is supported where a selection of antecedents and mediating variables are considered in their relationships to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). However, practically implementing these suggestions (should positive relationship dynamics be found) requires dedication to creating an organisation that has the necessary policies and procedures in place to deal with conflict management and acts of aggression or violence (Dillon, 2012, Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). Such an organisation additionally needs to enforce the policies and procedures; should place a high value on communication; and should continuously evaluate the organisational culture (Dillon, 2012). An organisation seen to tolerate workplace conflict and violence (whether bullying, verbal abuse, theft, insubordination and the like) will need strong commitment to change the work culture (Dillon, 2012). ER managers will play an integral part in developing and implementing such policies and procedures.

The next sections introduce the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice and their relationship with conflict and conflict management.

(a) *Leadership*

Leadership has been a topic of study for many years (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, & Vogelgesang Lester, 2018; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Landis et al., 2014; Nienaber, 2010) and many scholars agree that leaders play an especially important role in today's fickle business environment (Banks et al., 2017; Cote, 2017; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Rust, 2017; Siira, 2012). Leaders' (supervisors, line managers, top management) style, behaviours and perceptions are key in influencing conflict perceptions and in successfully implementing conflict initiatives (Dunford, Mumford, Boss, Boss, & Boss, 2017; Hopkins & Yonker, 2015; Katz & Flynn, 2013). Parmer (2018) agrees that leadership is imperative in the success of managing conflict in organisations. Maintaining harmony amongst various interpersonal relationships contributes to organisational success (Odetunde, 2013).

According to scholars (Bendeman, 2007; Lynch, 2001; Siira, 2012), traditional conflict management models look at leadership mostly from the view that managers exert influence by mediating between the parties in the dispute – either through making certain suggestions, using persuasive messaging or by behaving in ways that will influence and ensure a preferred outcome by the parties in dispute. In these traditional models, managers will exert influence mainly from the position they hold within the organisational structure, thus on the employees over which they hold some authority (Siira, 2012). Influence is typically constrained and exerted from the top down – the supervisor’s role is therefore to instruct, to communicate what is needed for change, and to rectify any divergences from necessary performance (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

However, such an approach only addresses conflict challenges in part (Bradley et al., 2015; Lynch, 2001; Siira, 2012) and an integrated approach is supported (Lynch, 2001; Rahim, 2002). Leadership plays an important role in such an integrated approach (Lynch, 2001). A significantly positive relationship exists between leadership and conflict management. Leadership and leadership styles are important components of conflict resolution and management in general (Bradley et al., 2015; Fenlon, 1997; Gelfand et al., 2012; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Ndubisi, 2011; Roche & Teague, 2012).

Leadership enhances performance in conflict situations. For example, effective leadership (such as transformational leadership) depletes the negative effects of task and relationship conflict on group performance, and may boost the morale of staff in such situations (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012). Other positive organisational outcomes resulting from strong leadership include increased productivity levels, enhanced acceptance of change and relatively low absenteeism (Teague & Roche, 2012). Furthermore, partial support was found for leadership as a moderator of the indirect and negative effect of diversity on group performance, mediated by conflict (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012). Strong leadership significantly minimises negative emotions and fosters a positive work climate, thereby enhancing performance (Hopkins & Yonker, 2015).

Besides, employees who perceive their leaders to be flexible, host a more positive approach towards conflict management (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Lower conflict levels were found in organisations when leaders employ a collaborative leadership style, taking shared responsibility for addressing conflict through mediation, negotiation or facilitation – this was found to be more successful than using grievance procedures (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Organisations that implemented innovative ways of managing conflict also presented significant levels of cultural capabilities (including but not limited to an awareness of different group orientations), had a

learning approach to conflict management and made use of flexible conflict management practices (Katz & Flynn, 2013). These are but some examples indicating the positive relationship between good leadership and functional conflict management.

Scholars (Kinicki & Fugate, 2016; Roche & Teague, 2012) reiterate that proactive managers will take appropriate action to manage and resolve conflict, thus keeping conflict levels functional. Emotional intelligence and communication skills in leaders contribute significantly to such processes (Bankole, 2010). Managers who engage in conflict management are associated with commitment practices in organisations (Teague & Roche, 2012). Researchers argue that in today's business world, managers need to be adaptive during conflict situations in order to have constructive conflict resolution results, and higher levels of workplace satisfaction and wellbeing (Ayoko, 2016; Coleman & Kugler, 2014). Nonetheless, often little organisational support (e.g. training and monitoring performance) is given to the organisational leadership team, even though managers frequently lack the confidence to resolve conflict independently (Teague & Roche, 2012). In part, this may be attributed to the fact that frequently a distinctive lack of awareness exists of the importance and value conflict management systems and strategies may hold (Katz & Flynn, 2013).

The above brief discussion on the relationship between leadership and conflict management illustrates the importance of leadership in a conflict management framework. This is especially so from an ER context, as research shows that leaders and employees hold very different opinions on the meaning and views of conflict and related systems. The field of ER recognises the possible detrimental effects of power imbalances between employers (represented by management and thus the leadership of the organisation) and employees, also during conflict management (e.g. Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Hayter, 2015; Scully, 2016). For instance, Coleman and Kugler (2014) point out that in skewed power relationships, those in powerful positions every so often exploit others by using pressure tactics and offering fewer concessions. People in power commonly have higher ambitions and may engage in more antagonistic strategies during conflict management. They underrate the resources of lower-power parties and may undermine their relationships. Such dominating behaviour by leaders and managers results in less successful negotiations, with lower levels of commitment to decisions made by these leaders and managers. Negativity and resentment are consequently cultivated in subordinates (Coleman & Kugler, 2014). Clearly, leadership potentially plays an important role when considering conflict management.

Additionally, leadership influences the other constructs of this study. For instance, leadership is vital in its effect on organisational culture and trust (Eacott, 2017; Herbst, Maree, & Sibanda, 2008; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). In fact, leadership is one of the most important aspects in the formation of an organisational culture (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Rahim (2002) stresses the importance of strong leadership in creating an organisational culture conducive to a broader conflict management approach. Subsequently, the importance of leadership in providing clear direction, purpose, alignment and focus in organisations is reiterated (Van Eeden, 2014).

(b) Organisational culture

Organisational culture, and specifically the subculture of conflict, greatly influences conflict management systems and strategies (Katz & Flynn, 2013, Parmer, 2018, Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). Parmer (2018) draws on the work of Schein (2010) to argue that organisational culture potentially shapes an employee's value system; which in turn may influence an employee's perceptions, attitudes and behaviour – also in relation to the way conflict is managed. Creating and sustaining a positive organisational culture where both employees and management are treated fairly and with respect, where work of a good quality is recognised and where conflict is effectively dealt with as it arises, may prevent dysfunctional levels of conflict such as workplace aggression and violence (Dillon, 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). Other scholars support this view. Research (Restubog, Zagenczyk, Bordia, Bordia, & Chapman, 2015) has shown that when psychological contracts are violated, employees may act with revenge, especially when they perceive the organisational culture to be aggressive. A culture of zero-tolerance on workplace aggression and violence is thus necessary (Dillon, 2012).

In South Africa, institutions such as the CCMA recognise the importance of organisational culture in dealing with the high levels of workplace conflict, and conflict management at workplace level is seen as a key strategy to organisational success (CCMA, 2016). The CCMA acknowledges that the answer does not only lie in the dispute resolution processes, but that there is a dire need for the prevention of disputes in workplaces, thus ensuring that workplace relations are maintained (CCMA, 2016, 2017). Subsequently, a new strategy for advocating workplace conflict management – amongst other initiatives by instilling a conflict management-conducive workplace culture in organisations – is adopted as a key performance area (CCMA, 2016, 2017).

However, challenges in creating the ideal organisational culture exist. Organisations are faced with a variety of ever-changing circumstances, such as globalisation that necessitates a

worldwide approach to organisational culture, but with a strong focus on a single set of corporate values that show respect for national differences among various countries (CIPD, 2012; Isiaka et al., 2016). In fact, cultural competency (an awareness of different group orientations e.g. race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, job categories and the like) and cultural sensitivity are imperative for conflict management (Isiaka et al., 2016; Katz & Flynn, 2013). Additionally, a supportive ER and leadership culture is essential within organisations, necessitating the integration of organisational values with employees' personal individual values (Slabbert, Theron, & Roodt, 2001). A culture is suggested where conflict competencies are enhanced (Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lynch, 2001; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001) through training initiatives, and where options such as an ombudsman or peer review are suggested as possible alternatives to handle conflict (Bendeman, 2007). C-operation and trust building on an individual and collective level amongst the various role players become essential (Bendeman, 2007). Organisations need a culture that encourages members to recognise and deal with conflict by engaging in problem-solving processes without being defensive and resisting change (Rahim, 2002). ER plays an important role in this process, and should instil, sustain and maintain the organisational culture (CIPD, 2012).

(c) *Employee voice*

Effective communication is widely regarded as vital in facilitating an understanding of various parties' intent, opinions, needs and the like, and thus may assist in preventing or reducing conflict, and in a better understanding of the conflict (Wu et al., 2017). Employee voice directly relates to communication. Emmott (2015) suggests that the advancement of effective employee voice is imperative to the success of ER in the UK in contributing to increased workplace outputs and organisational effectiveness. Although Emmott (2015) refers to the UK, it is argued that this is globally relevant. Employee voice represents industrial democracy in today's ER (Emmott, 2015). In fact, it is argued that issues of social justice, class inequality and effective employee voice are as relevant today as they were in earlier years because of economic globalisation, the increase in income inequality and the decline in unionism (Frege et al., 2011).

According to Emmott (2015), employee voice holds the promise of an effective employment relationship with the foundations of trust, fairness and respect; and is regarded as the tool with which to change organisational culture. Godard (2011) concurs that sharing information and implementing participatory practices (e.g. through increased employee voice) may address the natural distrust between the employment relationship parties. This is contrary to the initial,

somewhat negative, view of employee voice as being equal to trade unions expressing concerns and challenging management's prerogative. In workplaces where unionism is absent, scholars propose that individual voice substitutes the collective voice (Gill & Meyer, 2013). As discussed in section 2.1 above, trade unionism is on the decline, and the question is asked whether employee voice will be regarded as the new pluralism, counteracting the skewness in power between employers and employees (Emmott, 2015; Hickland, 2017; Scully, 2016) that so often lead to conflict.

Nonetheless, the collective dimension is still important, and partnerships between employers and unions remain vital (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) – employee voice aids such a partnership (Emmott, 2015). Although employee voice recognises the need for dialogue between the employment relationship parties, it does not necessarily imply fundamental conflicts of interest between the parties (Emmott, 2015). However, employee voice challenges managers on issues influencing organisational performance (Emmott, 2015). Subsequently, scholars often argue that the collective employee voice may influence negative behaviours, which may result in a more strained ER climate (Addison & Teixeira, 2017).

In his seminal work on conflict, Deutsch (1990) maintains that a cooperative approach limits conflicting areas in workplaces. A cooperative approach necessitates open and honest communication between the parties (Deutsch, 1990). Similarly, using collaborative and unprejudiced collectivist conflict processes enhances positive team functioning, regardless of the underlying reason for the conflict (DeChurch et al., 2013; Tjosvold, 1985). According to research (DeChurch et al., 2013), applying conflict approaches characterised by constructive disagreements (Tjosvold, 1985) and openness (Jehn, 1995), while vigorously and openly voicing ideas and discussing the feasibility of issues, enhances team functioning. On the other hand, avoiding and competing conflict processes to the detriment of group solidarity impairs effectiveness (DeChurch et al., 2013). These findings support the notion of employee voice, as no transparency or collaboration is possible without it. Additionally, an organisational culture and leadership practices conducive to such an approach are necessary.

2.2.3.2 Mediating variables

A limited number of research studies have considered the importance of employee engagement and organisational trust in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as will be seen from the discussion below.

(a) *Employee engagement*

Often, employee engagement is regarded as the measure of effectiveness of ER (CIPD, 2012) and indicates a relationship of trust between the role players (Emmott, 2015; Currie et al., 2017). Additionally, a significant relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture (Emmott, 2015). Currie et al. (2017) maintain that preventing conflict is an important aspect of conflict management and that considering psychological alignment between employees and their organisations assists in better alignment with the goals, vision and mission of their place of work. Organisational citizenship behaviour is thus advocated (Currie et al., 2017), and workplace conflict is seen to interfere in these goals (Purcell, 2014). Nonetheless, research has found that employee engagement contributes to lesser conflict but cannot eliminate conflict completely (Soieb et al., 2013). However, various studies have considered the effect of conflict on work-related wellbeing – a concept said to include the variables of engagement and burnout (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Rothmann, 2008). Burnout includes two dimensions, namely exhaustion and disengagement – it is often regarded as the opposite of engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Research emphasises the continuous management of conflict in organisations, as a distinct negative relationship exists between unresolved workplace conflict and employee engagement (CIPD, 2012).

Notwithstanding the importance of the results as conveyed in the research above, almost no further research could be found on the relationship between employee engagement and conflict. Rather, it seems as if organisational citizenship behaviours partly aim to create a view of conflict as being apart from the everyday realities of organisational life (Currie et al., 2017; Purcell, 2014). Available research on employee engagement focuses mainly on the antecedents or mediators of employee engagement (see for instance Albrecht, 2012; Breevaart et al., 2014; Dromey, 2014; Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Macleod & Clarke, 2009; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Despite an extensive literature search on how employee engagement may mediate conflict or conflict management in organisations, little information in this regard could be found, indicating an important gap in the current conflict research.

For instance, research indicates that external organisational conflict-related stresses may distract employees from being engaged at their workplace (Karam, 2011); however, the study did not research internal organisational conflict situations. Another study considered the influence of task and relationship conflict on performance, mediated by work engagement (Jungst & Blumberg,

2016). Jungst and Blumberg (2016) confirm that little research has been done on the consequences of conflict on psychological outcomes, such as job engagement, and do not mention any research that has considered job or employee engagement in a mediating relationship with conflict. Other research considered the relationship of task and relationship conflict with work (but not employee) engagement and knowledge sharing, and found a positive indirect effect of task conflict on work engagement; while a negative indirect relationship exists with relationship conflict (Chen, Zhang, & Vogel, 2011). Similarly, it was found that work engagement mediates the relationship between job demands (i.e. interpersonal work conflict) and negative extra-role behaviours (i.e. counterproductive work behaviours) (Sulea et al., 2012). Likewise, a lack of research is noted on conflict-related stressors and the impact on employee behaviour (Avgar, 2017; Karam, 2011). In the same vein, it is pointed out that the engagement literature lacks attention to the complexities of external and internal organisational contexts, and issues of power and control are not considered (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). This research will therefore contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on the way employee engagement may mediate conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations.

(b) Organisational trust

Generally, it is accepted that trust plays an important role in good ER. Trust is regarded as both an antecedent to, and a result of, successful collective actions in a workplace, and in the broader sense of, for instance, a social pact between the various parties – it is thus a complex construct (Anstey, 2014; Leana & Van Buren, 1999). Scholars argue (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Nash & Hann, 2017; Wu et al., 2017) that trust improves cooperation between parties, and as such is an important contributor to the way conflict in organisations is managed to ensure a culture of stability, trust and cooperation (Madlala & Govender, 2018). In fact, it is argued that a relationship of mutual trust is imperative to manage conflict (Elgoibar, Munduate, & Euwema, 2016).

It is only over time that trust is established as relationships are maintained (Parmer, 2018). In organisations, trust amongst employees (e.g. in a team context) is an important strength when task conflict threatens the possibility of relationship conflict (Guenter et al., 2016; Parayitam & Dooley, 2007). Parayitam and Dooley (2007) posit that trust weakens the connection between task and relationship conflict, and enhances the positive outcomes of task conflict while reducing the negative effects of relationship conflict. Higher levels of trust lower task, process and relationship conflict (Wu et al., 2017). Scholars argue that (team) trust encourages behavioural

integration, which in turn reduces the possibility of relationship conflict (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2014).

Furthermore, research indicates that strong employee representative structures and relationships characterised by high trust levels contribute greatly to minimising discipline problems at the workplace (Saundry, Jones, & Antcliff, 2011). Similarly, research suggests that trustworthiness in leaders based on the moral compass leaders portray is imperative in building good relationships. Trust is vital during negotiation, and trustworthiness is necessary to follow through on agreements, thereby again preserving and enhancing trust (Davidson, McElwee, & Hannan, 2004). Effective collective consultation, whether with trade unions or with non-union representatives, can help to reinforce employees' trust in management, but needs to be supported by appropriate information and training (Emmott 2015). Research suggests that trust increases organisational and team performance, as well as job satisfaction, because it enhances employees' effort, attitudes and cooperation (Jehn et al., 2008). Research has confirmed that trust is seen as the driver and force in adapting actions to increase harmony and to have a win-win outcome (Du et al., 2011). Trust contributes to resolving problems and conflict situations as the parties believe that a mutually beneficial solution may be found (Pruitt, 1983).

However, the presence of conflict may be detrimental to levels of trust as it leads to team problems and inhibits trust formation, and thus group cohesion (Jehn et al., 2008). Additionally, Madlala and Govender (2018) reiterate that poor living conditions and the like will hamper a trust relationship with employees. The effectiveness of handling conflict situations is imperative, as it is generally accepted that the way conflict is managed in an organisation affects workplace trust (CIPD, 2012). In fact, positive organisational conflict management has been found to consistently contribute to organisational trust (Chu et al., 2011), as do conflict handling styles which are integrating, accommodating and compromising (Ndubisi, 2011).

According to Bendeman (2007), resolving the conflict through an integrated conflict management system will enhance trust levels in the organisation. A cooperative conflict approach also leads to increased trust in the organisation where each party's interests are acknowledged, and where parties work towards finding a solution to conflict that is mutually beneficial (Deutsch, 1990; Hempel et al., 2009). Research shows that the combination of transformational leadership and organisational conflict management increases organisational trust (Chu et al., 2011), as do collaboration and problem-solving styles (Lucy & Broughton, 2011). Trust is positively related to cooperation behaviour, continued commitment to the organisation, as well as attitudinal

commitment, but has a negative relationship with monitoring and competitive behaviour (Adam, 2014; Deutsch, 1982). Research suggests a stronger positive relationship between trust and cooperation in situations comprising larger (rather than smaller) degrees of conflict (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). Conflict is, in fact, more likely to be resolved with a basis of trust (Lucy & Broughton, 2011).

Research indicates that task, relationship and process conflict are negatively related to trust (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). However, little research was found on the relationship between trust as a mediator of conflict management, and scholars confirm that relatively few conflict-related research studies have considered trust as a mediator (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 2008). Nonetheless, a few studies were found that considered trust as a mediator. For example, research has considered the effects of conflict on trust, and suggests that while trust partially mediates the impact of task conflict on performance, it fully mediates the effect of relationship conflict on performance (Rispen et al., 2007). This research further determined that task and cognitive connectedness in groups limit the negative effect of conflict on trust (Rispen et al., 2007). Another study found that organisational trust partially mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and constructive deviance (i.e. departing from organisational norms to contribute to the wellbeing of organisations). This finding is in line with the fact that trust is seen as a predictor of both constructive and destructive deviant behaviour (Kura, Shamsudin, & Chauhan, 2016). Additionally, research suggests that a compromising conflict management style may enhance trust. Undoubtedly, more research in this regard is necessary.

2.2.3.3 *Moderating variables*

Organisational demographics are defined by three groups of employee characteristics (Lawrence, 1997). The first of these is those undisputable characteristics such as gender, age or ethnicity; the second category refers to characteristics that explain individual relationships with organisations, such as tenure or functional area; while the third category refers to the employee's position in society, for instance attributes such as marital status (Lawrence, 1997). Lawrence (1997) explains that these categories are easily identifiable and mostly unchanging. In this research, the moderating variables fall into these three socio-demographic groupings.

Similarly, scholars (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999) posit that three kinds of diversity can be identified. Informational diversity refers to differences that are knowledge-based, bringing specific

perspectives to a group. These differences are based on educational, experience or expertise differences, for instance lower-level jobs versus managerial positions (Jehn et al., 1999). In this research, the moderating variables of qualification, job level and tenure fall within this category. Social category diversity relates to categorical and clear differences in a group, for instance race, gender and ethnicity (Pelled, 1996). Tajfel and Turner (1985) explain that social category diversity influences group interactions because of differences in social identity that lead to groups affiliating with members of their own social category. In this research, the moderating variables of race, gender and age fall within this category. Value diversity is the third category identified by Jehn et al. (1999) and refers to differences in goals and values resulting from diverse social category characteristics (Dougherty, 1992). Although no specific moderating variable thus falls within this category, it is argued that various demographic groups may hold different goals and values. Jehn et al. (1999) confirm that the different types of diversity induce different conflict types, as discussed below.

Africa as a continent is known for its rich diversity of ethnicities, cultures and languages – characteristics lending themselves to potential conflict (Kets de Vries, Sexton, & Ellen, 2016). Diversity in workplaces has been shown to increase levels of conflict (Nash & Hann, 2017). Typically, subgroups form in teams or organisations based on similarities in demographics or shared characteristics such as age, seniority, information and the like, consequently impeding group performance as this often leads to ingroup–outgroup rivalry, and constrained and diminished communication and information sharing (Adair, Liang, & Hideg, 2017). Additionally, macro-environmental influences (e.g. economics, politics, societal events and climate) affect the way different groups view themselves and others (Urlick et al., 2016).

Globalisation means that organisations often have to deal with expatriates, which often results in cultural distance (i.e. the distance between the home and host country's culture) (Godiwalla, 2016; Zhang, Wei, & Zhou, 2017). Scholars (Budd et al, 2017; Stura & Johnston, 2018; Tanveer et al., 2018) maintain that conflict manifestations in individuals differ based on the intricate spinoff of their history, culture, accrued experiences and interactions. For instance, cultural differences influence the objectives and tactics people use when managing conflict manifestations (Brett, 2018; Brett, Behfar, & Kern, 2006; Ohbuchi, Fukushima, & Tedeschi, 1999). Brett (2018) explains that from childhood, socialisation prepares individuals to express and respond to conflict in different ways, based on the cultural ideologies and practices of the cultural groups from which

their social identity stems. Subsequently, significant conflict may be experienced in multicultural organisations.

As a case in point, while western cultures value individuality, self-affirmation and a direct approach to conflict management, eastern cultures prefer harmonious relationships and managing conflict through self-control, avoidance and subdual (Chen, Hou, & Wu, 2016; Yeh & Xu, 2010b). Cross-cultural conflict is explained as conflict that manifests between individuals or groups separated by cultural boundaries; nonetheless, these authors argue that members of various groups exist in the same societies (Stura & Johnston, 2018). Although specific demographic variables influence conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles differently, all potentially result in conflict. For instance, the presence of various cultures stemming from religious or racial differences may increase the possibility of conflict experiences (Mestry & Bosch, 2013), as is often evident in South African ER (Schoeman et al., 2010). However, some research suggests that cultural context (e.g. eastern versus western cultures) does not moderate the relationship between intragroup conflict and group outcomes (De Wit et al., 2012).

Notwithstanding, globalisation and changes in the demographics of workplaces necessitate the acknowledgement of diversity in the workplace for effective ER management (Acar, 2010; Isiaka et al., 2016; Macmillan, 2017). Successful diversity management in organisations reduces conflict between organisational members (Joubert, 2017). Scholars argue that this may be because conflict is often a promoter of discussions and deliberations, and may enhance engagement and innovation (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017). Additionally, black economic empowerment, affirmative action and employment equity legislation in South Africa are regarded as important regulatory frameworks to guide the process of integrating a diverse workforce. South Africa is fondly referred to as the rainbow nation. This is an apt description, fitting for a country with a population of more than 50 million people from a range of different cultures, ethnic groups, languages and religious beliefs (Deloitte, 2014, 2017). The rich diversity we have in South African organisations thus holds its own challenges.

Discrimination negatively affects group interaction (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn et al., 1999) and diversity issues often result in conflict (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Gounaris et al., 2016; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999), also influencing the choice of conflict management style (Gounaris et al., 2016; Soieb et al., 2013). In fact, research suggests that demographic differences (e.g. language, ethnicity, culture) significantly promote conflict (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005; Pelled, 1996), although age, gender and tenure have not been found to be significantly related to conflict

in some research (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005). Workgroup diversity either increases task-related debate, higher quality outcomes and innovation; or it leads to disparaging emotional conflict, reduced social integration and bigger member turnover (Acar, 2010). Nonetheless, group member congruence diminishes conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). As such, Jehn (1999) cautions that the effectiveness of culturally diverse groups is dependent on how disagreements are managed.

Research undertaken on diversity and conflict types has found that diversity increases task conflict but not relational conflict (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012) and it may have a negative (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), positive or neutral effect on group processes and performance (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Relationship conflict potentially increases among group members with visible dissimilarities, or who feel different from others and not part of the group, or in cases where there is variation in social categories and views (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn, 1997; Pelled, 1996). According to Pelled (1996), there is a significant and stronger positive relationship between relational conflict and the diversity aspects of race, gender, age and tenure, than with aspects such as qualification or job level (Pelled et al, 1999). In addition, scholars (Jehn et al., 1999; Jehn & Greer, 2013) explain that diversity issues such as race, gender and suchlike result in individuals forming their own value systems which they bring to the workplace; value diversity increases relationship, task and process conflict.

A later study done by Chun and Choi (2014) suggests that the consequences of diversity may be contingent on the domain and conceptualisation of diversity. Jehn et al. (1999) also advise that mixed outcomes of the effect of diversity may be ascribed to the tendency to refer to diversity in general, and that the various forms of diversity have an impact on the type of conflict influenced by it.

The various socio-demographic variables of this research study as they relate to conflict management are discussed in more detail below.

(a) *Race*

Race is classified as a social category diversity aspect (similar to age and gender) based on obvious differences that may result in conflict (Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996). Categorising individuals into diverse groups potentially enflames antagonism or dislike within groups working together (Jehn et al., 1999) because of feelings of inequality and disrespect (Hogg, 1996). Social category diversity (e.g. race) increases relationship conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996), task conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn & Greer, 2013) and process conflict (Pelled,

1996) should members rally around others in similar categories, or because of different backgrounds (Pelled, 1996).

Prior to the inception of South Africa's democracy in 1994, South African citizens were categorised as whites, coloureds, Africans and Indians (Healy & O'Brian, 2015). With the introduction of affirmative action legislation, a previously disadvantaged categorisation was introduced, with blacks (Indians, Africans, coloureds), women and the disabled included in this group as the foci of affirmative action initiatives through, for instance, the Employment Equity Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Black women (as in many other African countries) are regarded as the most negatively affected by discrimination based on social class, race and gender (Mabokela, Kaluke, & Mawila, 2004).

Research suggests that discrimination, self-segregation and stereotyping negatively affect group interaction (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn et al., 1999), while the presence of a variety of cultures stemming from religious or racial differences may increase the possibility of conflict experiences (Mestry & Bosch, 2013). According to Brett (2018), cultural groups differentiate themselves from others based on their unique values, norms, beliefs and behaviours. These findings present their own challenges, as intragroup hostility may lead to relationship conflict (Jehn, 1995; 1997). Further research has confirmed that race diversity is positively associated with relationship conflict (Pelled, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999) and often correlates with a loss of trust (Coleman et al., 2017). Additionally, it is possible that different racial groups will approach conflict situations in different ways. For instance, Parmer's research (2018, p. 244) shows that in the USA, ethnicity has a strong relationship with an avoidance conflict style – "other ethnic groups" have a much higher avoidance style than "Whites versus others" have. Thus, it is necessary to understand the cultural background of employees and teams when handling various conflict situations and their possible consequences (Dimas & Lourenço, 2015). It is argued that differences in race also imply differences in culture, especially in a country as diverse as South Africa with so many different ethnic groups within one race.

In South Africa, the likelihood of employment remains highest among the white population, followed by Indians and coloureds (Festus et al., 2016) – workplaces are characterised by various racial groups, potentially influencing conflict management. This poses a big challenge for any South African conflict management framework. Research was done by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) – a partnership between the University of Johannesburg, the University of the Witwatersrand, the Gauteng government, and the South African Local Government

Association – on the quality of life in Gauteng, a South African province (“Xenophobia on the rise – survey,” 2014). The research, which surveyed more than 25 000 people, found that racial attitudes are hardening in South Africa, with 73% of Africans agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would never trust whites. These issues are important, as are the many layers of culture presented through the different religious and ethnic groups in the country (Mestry & Bosch, 2013).

Scholars argue that the characteristics of transnational teams (e.g. cultural differences amongst group members) diminish team identity, leading to withholding effort in work activities, high levels of ethnocentrism and in-group biases which may result in relational and task conflict (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007). Moreover, group diversities stemming from cultural differences may influence the effects of the different conflict types on group outcomes (De Wit et al., 2012).

Research (Mayer & Louw, 2011) suggests that cross-cultural conflict is often labelled as cross-racial conflict in South Africa, based in part on the country’s apartheid legacy. Identity is based on race and restricts positive conflict resolution because of the highly emotional contextual connotations (Mayer & Louw, 2011). Most of the differences and conflict experienced in South African organisations originate from a racial point of view, and are often based on racial stereotyping stemming from the country’s historical context (Mayer & Louw, 2011). However, not enough research has been undertaken on cross-cultural conflict sprouting from differing identities and values held by managers in diverse South African organisations (Mayer & Louw, 2011).

Nonetheless, research also suggests that when diversity is managed successfully, societal and organisational equity goals are advanced (Phillips, Liljenquist, & Neale, 2009). Additionally, increased creativity, innovation and decision-making result from considering various perspectives in the workplace (Phillips et al., 2009). However, when diversity is mismanaged, it results in various negative outcomes, one of which is the manifestation of conflict. Hence, Coleman et al. (2017) support an organisational culture that promotes diversity. Coleman et al. (2017) draw on the seminal works of Schein (1983) to argue that some tension deriving from diversity conflict may potentially be good, as it may induce greater awareness and actions necessary to engage in change. Coleman et al. (2017) thus advocate an approach to managing conflict stemming from diversity issues through seeking harmony and trust building, as well as working effectively with multicultural conflict and tension.

(b) *Gender*

Additionally, gender contributes to specific forms of conflict. Gender is a social category diversity facet (comparable to race), as obvious differences are present which may lead to conflict (Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996). As stated above, the fact that individuals are categorised into diverse groups may increase hostility or dislike within groups working together (Jehn et al., 1999) based on feelings of discrimination and contempt (Hogg, 1996). Gender, as a social category diversity aspect, potentially increases relationship, task and process conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn & Greer, 2013; Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996) when members of a specific category group together to the exclusion of others, or because of substantially different backgrounds (Pelled, 1996).

Evidence exists of more women joining the workforce (CIPD, 2012; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), also in South Africa (Festus et al., 2016). The South African labour market indicates gender inequality across all industries, with males still holding more positions than females during the 2015/2016 reporting year (Department of Labour, 2016b). Nonetheless, more women are entering the labour market (World Bank, 2017b). During the period 1995 to 2015, the labour force participation rate of females in South Africa increased from 39,1% to 43,7% (Festus et al., 2016). Stereotyping in workplaces about women is often present (Ayub & Jehn, 2014), potentially contributing to conflict. According to Budd et al. (2017), different cultures and genders not only create conflict but also influence the way conflict is handled.

Moreover, the increase in women in workplaces has further implications. Scholars acknowledge the role conflict women experience as they endeavour to balance work and family life (Kuschel, 2017), and work–family conflict is on the increase (Ghislieri et al., 2017). This results from demographical changes (such as an increase in dual-career couples, single-parent families, and an increase in women entering the job market) and changing employment conditions (e.g. the increase in alternative employment contracts and the blurring of work–life boundaries) (Ghislieri et al., 2017). Nonetheless, gender diversity becomes less relevant over time (Jehn et al., 1999). Improved balance in work life is becoming more apparent, resulting in a need for greater flexibility at workplaces (Shacklock & Brunetto, 2011).

Contradictory results have been found in studies on how gender differs in terms of handling conflict. For instance, research has found that males and females differ significantly in their choice of conflict resolution style (e.g. negotiation, mediation and arbitration) and approaches (e.g. woman being more submissive and men being more daring) (Ome, 2013). However, other

research has shown that after controlling for personality differences, no significant differences were found in the conflict resolution styles of women and men (Ome, 2013). Nonetheless, according to Rahim (1983), females are more integrating, avoiding and compromising in their conflict management styles. Bear et al. (2014) argue that an avoiding conflict management style in the context of relational conflict, mitigates the negative feelings of emotional exhaustion in men but not in women. Nonetheless, women are more likely to use an avoidant conflict management style to influence others' perceptions of them when confronting conflict or engaging in problem-solving (Bear et al., 2014). In fact, women feel pressured to behave cooperatively (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), thus avoiding direct conflict confrontation (Bear et al., 2014). Nonetheless, Bear et al. (2014) posit that avoiding relational conflict leads to higher levels of emotional exhaustion, and as such women need to find alternative ways of managing conflict. Other research suggests that men experience significantly more relational conflict than women (Ismail et al., 2012). Research also suggests that males are much less interested in managing conflict as part of their leadership role than their female counterparts (Brandl, Madsen, & Madsen, 2009; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017).

(c) *Age*

Another social category diversity aspect (similar to race and gender) is age or generational cohorts (Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996). Feelings of dislike and anger may result when individuals categorise themselves or others into diverse groups, often influenced by stereotyping (Jehn et al., 1999). Such behaviour results in negative states of mind based on feelings of inequality and disrespect (Hogg, 1996). Social category diversity (e.g. age-related classifications) increases relationship conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996), task conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn & Greer, 2013) and process conflict (Pelled, 1996) because of different backgrounds or because groups are formed around these differences, thus excluding others (Pelled, 1996). Pelled et al. (1999) explain that similar to age differences, relational conflict can be explained by age similarity that triggers social comparison; hence the relational conflict (Pelled et al., 1999).

Although it is generally accepted that age may influence aspects such as conflict, not all researchers agree on the value of generational cohorts (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2016; Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015; Urick et al., 2016), some noting that limited empirical evidence exists to support age and generational differences, and that plausible alternative explanations exist on why differences may occur (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012; Costanza &

Finkelstein, 2015; Lyons, Urick, et al., 2015). Moreover, Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) argue that no support is found for the effectiveness of interventions designed with generational differences in mind, and that generational categorisation is, in fact, a form of stereotyping that potentially leads to discriminatory practices. However, although Lyons, Urick, et al. (2015) concur with Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) on the dangers of oversimplification and stereotyping, they do acknowledge the potential value of an in-depth consideration of generational differences and state that this is grounded in sound theoretical arguments (Mannheim, 1970). According to Lyons, Urick, et al. (2015), the challenge lies not in a lack of evidence that generational differences exist, but rather in a lack of comparability, thus necessitating a detailed description of the demographics of the sample and other contextual factors. For instance, a specific age within a generational cohort may indicate a specific phase of the life cycle (Lyons, Urick, et al., 2015). Moreover, Lyons and Schweitzer (2016) caution that although generations are used as a social category by some, others do not identify with it, rather it is used to make sense of young versus old.

Four generations are present in workplaces today (Lyons, Schweitzer, et al., 2015). Although some minor discrepancies exist in how the generational cohorts are classified, generally these four generations are referred to as Millennials or Generation Y (born in the latter half of the 1990s and the late 1970s to early 80s); Generation X (born in the early sixties to late seventies); Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and the mid-1960s), and the fourth generation called the Traditionalists, Veterans or Mature generation (born prior to 1946) (Urick et al., 2016). Mannheim's seminal theoretical contribution on generational differences (1970) maintains that experiences of common context and historical events during the formative years result in similar opportunities and experiences that shape individuals' values, attitudes, thoughts and behaviours, subsequently generational cohorts exist.

Baby Boomers are the largest generation and are therefore competitive in nature and although they typically respect authority, they want to be regarded as equals (Lowe et al., 2008). This generation is often consensus-seekers and dislike authoritarian leadership (Lowe et al., 2008). Older employees are more involved in their jobs (Akinbobola, 2011). Generation X employees are likely to be independent and individualistic (Karp & Sirias, 2001), and often have a lack of trust in big organisations (Lowe et al., 2008). Nonetheless, they are more team-oriented than Baby Boomers (Karp & Sirias, 2001). Generation X employees prefer a coaching management style, desire swift feedback which includes credit for work they have done, and are not likely to work long hours (Lowe et al., 2008). Generation Y employees have trouble in communicating with

superiors and are less likely to accept leadership from older generations; they also do not like a chain of command (Shacklock & Brunetto, 2011). They frequently lack communication and problem-solving skills (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007).

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), individuals group together based on perceived similarities and differences. Hence, diversity in age groups (and it may be argued, other factors) often gives rise to conflict as employees from different generations hold unique values, emotions, beliefs and preferences, defined by historical events in their lives (Guo & Cionea, 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lowe et al., 2008, Williams, 2016). Workplaces have to consider the different needs of different age or generational groups. In South Africa, the biggest increase in the labour force participation rate during the period 1995 to 2015 was in the employment of the age groups between 25 and 34, and 35 and 44 (Festus et al., 2016).

Scholars argue that social category diversity, such as age, potentially results in increased workplace conflict (Urlick et al., 2016) such as relationship conflict (Ismail et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 1999). This is so because of various perceptions (real or not) that are formed through interactions at the workplace, often resulting in stereotyping (Urlick et al., 2016). In fact, research indicates that diverse generations may be susceptible to conflict, even when no interactions have yet taken place (Urlick et al., 2016). Age diversity is negatively associated with emotional conflict (Pelled et al., 1999). It is also found that employees are more likely to be competing with group members similar in age for a variety of valued organisational resources (Jehn et al., 1999). However, as with gender diversity, age diversity was found to become less relevant over time (Jehn et al., 1999).

Nonetheless, Parmer's research (2018) suggests that the collaborating and competing styles of conflict management has a strong relationship with age. Although no dissimilarities were indicated between the age groups 18–25 and 26–35 in the collaborating style, participants older than 35 scored significantly higher in the collaborating conflict management style than the previous two groups. In relation to the competing style, Parmer (2018) explains that although no difference was found between participants of 26–35 and over 35, the age group 18–25 showed a significantly higher correlation with a competing conflict management style. Furthermore, research suggests that age influences the use and effectiveness of avoiding and constructive conflict management strategies, with older employees showing higher professionalism than their younger colleagues and being more likely than younger colleagues to avoid conflict (Beitler, Machowski, Johnson, & Zapf, 2016). Moreover, because of older employees' greater conflict management skills and

effective use of conflict management strategies, lower levels of burnout are reported among these employees (Beitler et al., 2016).

Additionally, it should be noted that scholars argue that not all conflict stemming from generational and age differences is negative (Urick et al., 2016). Their research suggests that, when effectively managed, generational tensions result in collaborative responses, learning, increased visibility and effective task results (Urick et al., 2016).

This research focuses on employees of working age, amongst others indicated within the generational groups of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. As suggested by scholars, researchers need to consider both maturation (relating to the effect of age) and generational cohort (relating to the year of birth effect) (Lyons, Schweitzer, et al., 2015)

(d) Qualification and job levels

Both qualification and job level have an impact on the way employees react in organisations during various situations, also relating to conflict and conflict management (Church, 1995). For instance, differences in educational background, training and work experience intensify the probability that various perspectives and opinions exist in a workgroup (Jehn et al., 1999). Moreover, groups consisting of members with different educational qualifications find it more difficult to determine how to proceed than groups consisting of members with similar educational backgrounds, thus potentially resulting in task conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). Scholars further explain that differences in group members' educational background, training and work experience increase the probability of diverse opinions in a workgroup (Strasser, 1992). Research has established that variances in educational background lead to an increase in task and process conflict at work (Jehn, Chadwick, & Thatcher, 1997; Pelled et al., 1999). This is explained by group members with dissimilar backgrounds who rely on diverse work methods and how best to approach a task (Jehn et al., 1999).

Research on status conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) is relatively new and has not considered the characteristics of the group or the group members to predict high or low levels of group status conflict. Nonetheless, Bendersky and Hays (2012) state that individual differences among team members may influence the appearance of status conflict and the level at which it will manifest. However, resource allocation in a workgroup may benefit from diversity in power or status, although individuals with status may abuse their power and allocate more sources to themselves than to others, resulting in the potential for conflict (De Cremer, 2003). However, diverse status

and power may also lead to noticeable feelings of inequality, injustice, rivalry and competition (Muller, 1985). Jehn and Greer (2013) note that not enough research has been done on status conflict, and heed a call for more research on this aspect.

Research suggests that women are less effective in gaining status and power than men at any stage of their careers (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999). Furthermore, Rahim (1983) found that status in organisational groups, for example being supervisors, subordinates or peers, influences the way employees react to conflict. For instance, employees are more obliging with their supervisors, and more integrating and compromising with their peers and subordinates, when handling conflict. Research also indicates that a group's position in the hierarchal level of the organisation determines its conflict dynamics (Jehn & Greer, 2013), as teams higher up in the hierarchy of an organisation may be better equipped to handle difficult interpersonal situations (De Wit et al., 2012). Furthermore, conflict reactions are linked to the status of employees, and peers, supervisors and subordinates react differently during conflict situations. For instance, while supervisors are angered by incompetency, subordinates are angered by perceived unjust behaviour (Fitness, 2000). Additionally, subordinates are less likely to confront issues in order to have them resolved than supervisors (Fitness, 2000).

In South Africa, educational level remains a huge challenge (Business Monitor International, 2017; Festus et al., 2016; Wentzel et al., 2016). Even though skills levels are increasing, workplaces still have to deal with the problem of low education levels and a lack of workplace skills amongst the workforce, especially among the black African population group (Festus et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017b). The need for cutting-edge education and skills levels because of technological advancements in a global environment gives rise to wage inequality (Kochan & Riordan, 2016). The general lack of skills in South Africa is aggravated by the significant brain drain resulting from the vast numbers of skilled workers emigrating (Kaplan & Höppli, 2017). South Africa is losing higher numbers of professionals than it is gaining (World Bank, 2017c). These issues may potentially increase conflict, as workplaces have to abide with relevant labour legislation to combat employment equity while dealing with these structural challenges.

(e) *Income level*

Research indicates that income inequality is a worldwide challenge associated with, for instance, the decline in unions and collective bargaining practices, globalisation, skills biases for highly qualified individuals, as well as changes to the composition of the labour supply such as women

entering the labour market and changes to employment relationships (Kochan & Riordan, 2016). South Africa is no exception. In fact South Africa ranks as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Benjamin, 2016; Bhorat et al., 2014; World Bank, 2015, 2017c), a factor often connected to discriminatory practices. Statistics show that industrial action is generally associated with wages (Benjamin, 2016; Department of Labour, 2014, 2017; Jacobs & Yu, 2013). Inequality and injustice are mentioned together with factors such as low pay and racial discrimination in incidents of violent industrial action (Alexander, 2013; Benjamin, 2016; Department of Labour, 2014, 2016a; Lockett & Mzobe, 2016; Macmillan, 2017).

Compensation issues potentially result in organisational conflict, with an organisation's compensation system directly influencing employees' behaviour, satisfaction levels and feelings of justice (Spaho, 2013). Conflict may for instance result from inconsistencies in criteria used in decisions on compensation levels and the overall design of compensation systems in organisations (Spaho, 2013). These issues relate to distributive justice perceptions and negatively influence trust levels in organisations (Katou, 2013). As previously indicated, trust is an important factor when considering conflict and conflict management. Research has shown that people of different cultures have different perceptions of distributive justice with regard to, for instance, income and reward (also non-monetary) (Gelfand et al., 2007).

Research has also found that status conflict is linked to distributive justice components (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Furthermore, research has found that women are discriminated against when considering income levels (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), a factor which may easily give rise to conflict.

(f) *Tenure*

Tenure influences conflict experienced in organisations. Research indicates that the longer a subordinate and a supervisor are engaged in a working relationship, the less relational conflict is likely to result in the intent to quit; however, when dyad tenure is low, relationship conflict is strongly associated with subordinates' intent to quit (Ismail et al., 2012). One reason for this is found in the fact that the effect of tenure on relationship conflict mediates behavioural integration (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2014). Research suggests that tenure heterogeneity is negatively associated with relational conflict, as well as with task conflict (Pelled et al., 1999). In fact, Pelled et al. (1999) advance the notion that tenure has a stronger relationship with task conflict than age, gender or race (Pelled et al., 1999).

(g) Conclusion

Undoubtedly, South African managers deal with a wide variety of potential organisational conflict in the described context of diversity (Deloitte, 2014, 2017; Mayer & Louw, 2011). Research suggests that intercultural competencies such as conflict management are necessary in order for employees to enhance cohesion and work cooperatively in culturally diverse organisations (Lloyd & Härtel, 2010). Nonetheless, few research studies were found on conflict and conflict management specific to South African organisations, nor on the impact of these socio-demographic issues on conflict in South Africa. The research will therefore contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on this matter. Acknowledging the potential effect of diversity issues on conflict management, the research considers the socio-demographic factors of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme as moderating variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). A more detailed discussion on these moderating variables is presented in further chapters.

2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WITHIN AN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS CONTEXT

Brett (2018) maintains that workplace conflict occurs in circumstances where social interdependence is prevalent but incompatible activities occur that interfere with goal achievement (e.g. Tjosvold et al., 2014). A conflict cycle manifests within a specific context or environment where conflict is linked to certain causes, follows a core process which has results or effects and which feeds back into the causes of conflict (Wall & Callister, 1995). This cycle will often repeat itself and may either escalate or de-escalate (Wall & Callister, 1995). Scholars ascribe these conflict cycles to various factors or conflict causes (McKibben, 2017; Mestry & Bosch, 2013; Wall & Callister, 1995). These range from individual characteristics leading to differences of opinion (such as values and personality) to interpersonal factors relating to poor communication (e.g. insults and misunderstandings), behaviour (e.g. power struggles, low levels of interaction, competitive behaviour) or structure (e.g. status differences and poor role clarification), as well as other issues (e.g. being vague versus clear). Nonetheless, as aptly stated by Brett (2018), the only way out of workplace conflict is reaching an agreement because of the social interdependence parties share.

This research argues that organisational management has to bear in mind the broader environment when considering any conflict management framework. Rust (2017) and Avgar (2017) are but two of many scholars who maintain that conflict in the workplace is often linked to environmental aspects. South African organisations are exposed to racial and ethnic diversity, and historical and structural backgrounds, organisational structures and cultures that still reflect the racial and ethnic divide (Mayer & Barnard, 2015). Evaluating socio-demographic variables that are linked to a broader cultural context is thus imperative. Other aspects also play a role. For instance, Currie et al. (2017) distinguish between grievances and disputes about market-related issues (e.g. wages) and about managerial relations (e.g. conflict about managerial authority). In another explanation, conflict is attributed mainly to three elements, namely, power (in other words having the ability and means to achieve things); organisational demands (for instance expectations of work duties, and the speed with which they should be finalised); and worth (described as self-esteem and emotional needs) (Illes et al., 2014).

Other scholars argue that conflict is inevitable, as not only do opinions, attitudes and perspectives differ among working individuals but, in addition, ever-present inherent conflict, power imbalance and distrust in interest between employer and employee are evident (Avgar, 2017; Delaney & Godard, 2001; García et al., 2017; Greenwood & Rasmussen; 2017; Hayter, 2015; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Additional potential causes of conflict are apparent, such as the scarcity of resources, a lack of transparency between management and staff, as well as poor participative practices on work-related issues (Mestry & Bosch, 2013; Onyinyechi, 2016).

Some of these conflict sources may have stronger effects on conflict experiences. Wall and Callister (1995), for instance, explain that personal values may have a stronger effect on conflict than, for instance, personality characteristics. As an example, Wall and Callister (1995) explain that whereas conflict is seen in western cultures as being acceptable and potentially beneficial, eastern cultures, such as those of Korea and Japan, believe that conflict should be avoided.

Many sources of conflict relate directly to the ER field. Another example is found in discrepancies relevant to appropriate confrontation norms when cultures differ (e.g. western cultures being more direct in addressing and articulating problems than their eastern counterparts) (Weingart, Behfar, Bendersky, Todorova, & Jehn, 2015). Hyman's seminal work (1972), for instance, identified four sources of conflict inherent and endemic to the employment relationship within a capitalist environment. These sources are aspects associated with the distribution of income, employment security, control and decision-making power at the workplace, and lastly conflict that stems from

the fact that an employee's ability to work is regarded as a commodity, and has to be so accepted by employees (Hyman, 1972). It follows that perceived injustices or threats regarding these issues of fairness may result in experiences of conflict (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005; Matta, Scott, Colquitt, Koopman, & Passantino, 2017).

Additionally, unmet (and perhaps unrealistic) expectations, organisational complexities and interdependent tasks, distrust, variances in human relations, employee differences, inadequate communication, participation and decision-making models, intricate and complex organisational structures, intergroup and individual competition for scarce resources, and global competition contribute to organisational conflict experiences (Bankole, 2010; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016; Watson & Hoffman, 1996). In fact, managers spend up to 42% of their time in conflict-related negotiations; a figure said to increase as organisations deal with trends of diversifying the workforce, having flatter organisational structures, the burdens of continuous changes in external environments, globalisation, and cost-cutting exercises (Burke, 2006). According to a Canadian study, around 99% of HR managers spend time on managing conflict in their organisations. Understanding and managing conflict are thus imperative (Guo & Cionea, 2017).

Even so, Hyman (1972) reiterated many years ago that potential sources of conflict are contradicted (although not cancelled out) by a variety of sources that enhance harmonious relationships, such as the common interest shared by both employer and employee in the survival of the business, as well as accepting the socially accepted value and habit of managerial authority. In fact, as stated before, various scholars (Bélanger & Edwards, 2007; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; Gould & Desjardins, 2014; Hyman, 1979; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) recognise the possibility that conflict and cooperation may both simultaneously be present and possible within organisations.

In this research, ER is regarded as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary concept, which considers all aspects related to the management of people at the workplace. It acknowledges that from a collective viewpoint, both conflict and cooperation coexist in workplaces (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Gould & Desjardins, 2014; Hyman, 1979; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017); as does conflict among individual employees in various positions and within groups (Löhr et al., 2017). Although workplace interests are shared, an imbalance in power remains between employers and employees (e.g. Godard, 2014b; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Hayter, 2015; Scully, 2016). ER therefore considers the employment relationship from a pluralist perspective, and

acknowledges the importance of an approach involving cooperation and collaboration. Nonetheless, it also accepts the reality of conflict being embedded in the employment relationship, and that conflict forms part of organisational life (Bollen & Euwema, 2013; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Tjosvold, 1991b; Zhou et al., 2017). Although collaboration is often seen as a means to lessen uncertainty and resolve challenges and conflict, it is nevertheless important to realise that stakeholders may have different goals, values and beliefs, as well as an unequal power base (Hardy & Phillips, 1998).

From an ER perspective it is imperative to develop and maintain good relations and manage conflict constructively – these aspects will greatly contribute to the overall effectiveness of organisations (De Dreu, 1997; Tjosvold, 1997, 2006, 2008). Research overwhelmingly supports an approach in which conflict is constructively managed in a cooperative rather than a competitive context (Deutsch, 1973; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Lloyd & Härtel, 2010; Tjosvold, 2006).

Considering positive interdependence when opposing goals are evident will lead to a more respectful and open-minded conflict approach, characterised by constructive discussions of diverse views (Tjosvold, 1991b). Additionally, research indicates that such an approach will lead to people with high and low power (as in the employment relationship) giving their support and persuasion to resolve conflict, while expressing opposing views in mutual trust and respect (Tjosvold, 1991b). According to Johnson and Johnson (2005), the application of social interdependence theory in the workplace indicates the importance of highlighting the positive interdependence among the goals of opposing parties, as well as the need to cooperate effectively in order to reach future and present objectives. Although Deutsch (1949) originally assumed a focus on a single goal, it is now recognised that, in most situations, a variety of mutual goals, opposing goals and independent goals exist that are simultaneously pursued (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Johnson and Johnson (2005) explain that the most prominent goal will define the situation as cooperative, competitive or individualistic.

The roles unions will play in this regard remain to be seen. On the one hand, it is argued that although unions give employees voice, their focus remains on the collective, and individuals and their individual rights get lost in the process (Gilliland et al., 2014). On the other hand, scholars argue that unions are on the decline because individual rights are gaining more prominence. According to Gilliland et al. (2014), an approach that involves embracing organisational justice principles is thus advocated. Nonetheless, other viewpoints exist about the potential role unions can play in organisations (see for instance Delaney & Godard, 2001).

However, an integrated approach to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) seems imperative, also from an ER perspective. The various types of conflict (explained in section 2.2 above) necessitate different approaches and conflict-handling styles and result in different organisational performance outcomes. One may argue that a one-size-fits-all approach will not be best practice; and that the different types of conflict may necessitate different actions and different conflict management styles. Similarly, considering various interpersonal conflict handling styles will inform a conflict management framework, as it will enhance an understanding of how these styles differ amongst individual employees in their approaches to handling conflict. In addition, it is argued that apart from considering the details of each type of conflict and its management, it is also necessary to have a more holistic approach. Considering the antecedents of organisational culture, leadership and employee voice, mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, as well as the demographic moderating variables in constructing a conflict management framework, may provide some of the answers in a very complex ER environment. As discussed above, all these variables have been shown to influence organisational conflict. It is argued that an integrated approach recognises the individual and collective dimensions of ER, and advocates a holistic long-term approach in which an organisational culture conducive to employee voice and conflict management is advocated, where the impact of leadership on conflict manifestations are realised and where the importance of engaged employees who trust their organisations is considered.

The current research sheds light on the relationship dynamics in organisations between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating effect of psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) – something the various theoretical models do not yet clarify. From the literature review, it is concluded that a lack of research is evident that investigates the various constructs jointly in a single study. Additionally, in the diverse and challenging South African business environment (as worldwide), not enough research has been conducted on how socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) add to the dynamic interplay between these variables. This research strives to inform conflict management strategies for diverse groups of employees in organisations.

2.4 SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION

The conflict and conflict management literature is vast but often fragmented, focusing on specific aspects of conflict management (Avgar, 2017; Tjosvold et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2017). For instance, considerable research was done on the different types of conflict (e.g. Bendersky & Hays, 2012; De Vries et al., 2012; De Wit et al., 2012, 2013; Jehn, 1994, 1995; Jehn et al., 2008). Research has focused extensively on the performance outcomes of conflict (Avgar et al., 2014; Jehn, 1995; Jehn et al., 1999). Furthermore, different conflict theories, models and handling styles have been researched (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2012; De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Rahim, 1983, 2002; Thomas, 1976, 1992; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). In addition, conflict management behaviour modes are studied (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; De Wit et al., 2012; Gelfand et al., 2012). Additionally, the prospect of conflict resolution through ADR processes is advocated (Bollen & Euwema, 2013; Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Saundry & Wibberley, 2016).

Various research studies point to the importance of an integrated conflict management approach in organisations (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Deutsch, 1973; Löhr et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2014). Often these systems are still theoretical and more research is needed on their effectiveness (Budd & Colvin, 2014; Löhr et al., 2017; Roche & Teague, 2014). Nonetheless, no specific framework has addressed the various dimensions of a broader multidisciplinary approach; rather, the various disciplines have each researched conflict from their perspective (Avgar, 2017). Similarly, although the relationship dynamics between conflict types and conflict handling styles are at times considered (e.g. Benitez et al., 2018; Ma et al., 2017; Maltarich et al., 2018), not all conflict types are reflected upon. However, research shows that should conflict types and conflict handling styles be modelled together, a better understanding of conflict would result (Maltarich et al., 2018; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018). Both these aspects are considered in this research.

Furthermore, a systematic effort at gathering evidence on the manifestation of conflict is necessary, as well as how best to integrate it with organisational strategies, processes and procedures, considering the various stakeholders, environmental challenges, and the strategic, functional and workplace level at which conflict manifests (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014). Scholars point to the importance of finding the right fit between the source of the conflict and the way it is approached and resolved, which may

necessitate considering a multidimensional approach (Budd et al., 2017). Avgar (2017) stresses the importance of various disciplines working together in such an integrated approach and draws on the work of Kochan et al. (1984, 1986) to suggest a conflict management framework on the strategic, functional and workplace level. Tjosvold et al. (2014) alert scholars to concept proliferation in conflict management scholarly works, which results in a variety of descriptions of the same phenomena, thus obscuring consistent findings and guiding practice. It is argued that an ER approach may answer the need to integrate scholarly work on conflict, as ER is by its very nature interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary – this is elaborated upon in section 2.1.1.

Suggesting a conflict management framework is not an easy process given the challenges organisations face on a macro, meso and micro level, and the fact that workplace relationships are characterised by conflict and power imbalances (e.g. Delaney & Godard, 2001; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Hyman, 1972; Rust, 2017). Additionally, the number of and complexities associated with the role players involved from an ER perspective further complicate such an integrated approach. For instance, in South Africa, unions still have a strong political focus and some members and leaders of organised labour have profited from their relationship with the ruling party, consequently affecting unions' organisational integrity (Beresford, 2016). Lipsky and Avgar (2010) posit that organisations should involve all stakeholders (e.g. employees and unions) in the design of a conflict management system. This is important, as unions are prone to view such systems as a strategy of union avoidance (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Similar political agendas amongst unions are found in other countries as well (Crouch, 2017). Additionally, South Africa is battling with the problems of unemployment, inequality and poverty. Scholars acknowledge that these problems and sources of discontent influence the workplace (Hyman, 1972, 2002; Rust, 2017), as is evident from the often violent and aggressive behaviour at South African workplaces (Festus et al., 2016; Jordaan, 2016; Macmillan, 2017).

Questions on how to answer the intricacies of all these factors playing into the workplace remain. For instance, Jenkins and Delbridge (2013) point to the difficulties of getting employees engaged at their workplaces because of the intricacies of the external environment (e.g. technological advancements) and the aspects associated with driving employee engagement (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008; Oosthuizen, Rabie, & De Beer, 2018). Moreover, creating a conducive organisational culture and addressing issues of trust and leadership in organisations are complex and not easily resolvable (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). These challenges and their potential effect on conflict management are highlighted above.

Subsequently, in constructing an integrative conflict management framework, a variety of arguments must be considered. The first of these is the number of seminal works on conflict and conflict management theories. Current research tends to focus on the different theories, but fails to address the structural challenges organisations face in order to incorporate these theories into long-term strategies (Avgar, 2017). Rarely does current research integrate the various theories and models (Avgar, 2017).

Additionally, while this research recognises the importance of a cooperative pluralist perspective, rather than a competitive conflict management approach, the question remains as to how this may be achieved from an ER perspective. The very nature of the employment relationship is characterised by the contrasting interests of cooperation and competition present, as accepted from a pluralist perspective. Central to the pluralist perspective is an economic citizenship model, which acknowledges this perspective and argues for union representation and negotiation to achieve fairness in conflict management (Currie et al., 2017). Still, a worldwide move away from a purely IR approach is evident, and much greater consideration is given to issues such as employee engagement, organisational justice perceptions and individual rights (e.g. Currie et al., 2017; Gilliland et al., 2014). The movement towards organisational citizenship behaviours through, for instance, employee engagement initiatives arguably does not hold a place for a pluralistic, economic citizenship viewpoint. Rather, it rejects the viewpoint of the fundamental differences that exist between employers and employees, and views conflict from a neoliberal perspective, regarding it as the result of ill management to be resolved internally in the workplace. Obtaining social justice and organisational commitment through psychological processes such as employee engagement is realised with or without unions, as organisations regard the interests and behaviours of employees as identical to those of organisations (Currie et al., 2017). Conflict management research focuses currently predominantly on the organisation, as opposed to labour management (Lipsky, Seeber, & Avgar, 2015). However, the neoliberalist view of workplace relationships is questioned as evidence exists that employees do not necessarily agree that their interests coincide with those of management – the large number of disputes referred for conciliation and other dispute resolution methods is a case in point (CCMA, 2016; Currie et al., 2017).

Notwithstanding the complexities, it is believed that a cooperative approach is imperative, as it results in greater organisational support and more trusting relationships between supervisors and employees (Gounaris et al., 2016; Hempel et al., 2009; Tjosvold, 2006; Tjosvold et al., 2010;

Zhang, Cao, & Tjosvold, 2011). From a South African perspective, another challenge lies in how to approach such a framework given a powerful union presence, even though a decline in union membership is evident (see section 2.1 for a detailed discussion on this matter). Although there is evidence of a growing movement in South African workplaces to foster organisational citizenship behaviours through social justice initiatives, the collective dimension remains strong. The IR perspective cannot be ignored and acknowledging the power imbalance in the workplace remains important (Hayter, 2015; Rust, 2017). The question then remains whether it is possible to combine psychological processes such as employee engagement initiatives with a pluralistic perspective on workplaces. If a move toward an ER approach could be supported (rather than merely focusing on either HRM or IR, for instance), is it possible that aspects of both the individual and collective dimensions can be combined in a conflict management system? It is for this reason that a broader, holistic, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary ER conflict management approach is suggested. This is in line with the work of Kaufman (2008), which proposes the acknowledgement of trade unions while simultaneously seeking solutions to labour problems from an ER perspective.

A traditional unitarist HRM focus is thus not supported. Although this approach recognises that employees and employers have different goals, these are not viewed as conflicting interests inherent to the relationship (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Novicevic et al., 2011). Rather, it is argued that through the correct design of workplace practices, employees are enabled to achieve their goals, while organisations maximise their performance. Organisations are viewed as being effective in circumstances of, for instance, high productivity and good organisational citizenship behaviour achieved through employee empowerment and engagement and the like (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Delaney & Godard, 2001). All these aspects are supported. However, rather than seeing conflict as inherent to the employment relationship and on occasion as a good thing, it is viewed as a sign of poor management (Novicevic et al., 2011). This approach fails to acknowledge the power differences between employers and employees, which manifest in one party being able to impose its interests on the other party, thus creating conflict (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Hayter, 2015).

Rather, in this research, a cooperative, pluralistic view is supported, acknowledging the overarching commonality of interests, namely, the organisation's health and success. The fact that the interests of employers and employees are nonetheless markedly unlike and may lead to conflict is acknowledged, as is the firm belief in the necessity of cooperation between these parties

(Delaney & Godard, 2001; Gould & Desjardins, 2014). Notwithstanding this acknowledgment, effort should be made for greater collective cooperation, for instance through addressing conflict by using middle and lower-level supervisors as “catalysts of cooperation” and the link between top management and employees (Novicevic et al., 2011, p. 135). However, even when conflict is minimised through a process of cooperation, it remains potentially palpable owing to the nature of the working relationship.

A number of research gaps were identified during the literature study on conflict management. In general, conflict research seems to be fragmented and no holistic approach is evident from the research (Avgar, 2017). For instance, even though research indicates that conflict management significantly contributes to shop floor productivity, effectiveness and overall success, a distinct lack of awareness of the value of effective conflict management systems and strategies within organisations is evident (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Avgar (2017) maintains that research should consider how different strategic perspectives on conflict management vary in approach and how organisational conflict is dealt with, considering each perspective. Moreover, conflict management from the perspective of interpersonal conflict handling styles has mostly been studied from a group or organisational perspective and in supervisor–subordinate relationships (Ayub et al., 2017).

The underlying differences in interests between employers and employees affect their trust relationship. Employees are wary of employers’ motives in implementing HRM policies that create a better fit in the organisation, or that are aimed at establishing a trust relationship through fair treatment initiatives (Delaney & Godard, 2001). Because of the complexities of establishing a trust relationship in an organisation, as well as the acknowledgement that conflicts of interest will inevitably be present (Fichter, Helfen, & Sydow, 2011), a need exists for organisational procedures through which employees may voice their concerns (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Kochan & Riordan, 2016; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011), particularly in the absence of trade unionism. It is imperative to investigate how conflict and conflict management systems vary between unionised and non-union environments and whether a difference in conflict manifestation and management is evident at the workplace level (Avgar, 2017). Nonetheless, this aspect has not been well researched (Avgar, 2017; Bingham et al., 2004). Unionisation may be regarded as an environmental factor that contributes to and shapes an organisation’s conflict management strategy (Bingham et al., 2004). Current research studies focus on individualised conflicts of interest, aiming to align individual goals with organisational goals, often avoiding union and

collective bargaining issues (Godard, 2014b). Rather, the focus falls on individual values, beliefs and attitudes (Godard, 2014b). Additionally, Avgar (2017) points out that little research has been conducted addressing how activities and decisions on the functional level affect conflict in the workplace. This research addresses this research gap by addressing the issue of employee voice in both unionised and non-unionised firms.

Related to the aspect of employee voice is the fact that research on conflict management frameworks mainly investigates the challenges from the viewpoints of management, in other words, a top-down approach. The seminal work of Lipsky et al. (2003) is a case in point (Bingham et al., 2004). However, employees may have completely different viewpoints of conflict management systems – this aspect is addressed in the current research by including all levels of staff (managerial and non-managerial) in the sample. In addition, current research does not adequately address the way interpersonal conflict handling styles (e.g. Rahim, 1983, Rahim et al., 2001) affect a broad strategic overarching approach to conflict management, and how these aspects affect organisational outcomes such as performance (Avgar, 2017).

Furthermore, research focusing on the relationship between work practices and organisational arrangements and conflict management systems and practices is necessary. Additionally, to the knowledge of the researcher, no previous studies have been done that considered the combination of antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as part of a conflict management framework. In fact, research on the antecedents of conflict management is limited, and little research has been done focusing on conflict management as a dependent variable (Avgar, 2017). Furthermore, scholars (Bradley et al., 2015) comment that surprisingly little research has been undertaken on the role of leadership in conflict. The current research may contribute greatly to these gaps in research, and can shed light on the relationship between the antecedents, mediating variables and conflict management as dependent variables.

One of the biggest gaps identified in the literature on conflict research is the apparent lack of research on the role employee engagement and organisational trust play in conflict management. Employee engagement research focuses mainly on the antecedents or mediators of employee engagement, and the value employee engagement holds (e.g. Albrecht, 2012; Bakker, 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, Sleebos, & Maduro, 2014; Dromey, 2014; Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Despite an extensive literature search on how employee engagement may mediate conflict or conflict management in organisations, no articles in this regard could be found, indicating an important gap in the current

conflict research. These aspects are discussed in more detail in section 2.2.3.2. The current research will therefore contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on whether employee engagement mediates conflict management in organisations. Additionally, as pointed out in section 2.2.3.2, little research is evident that focuses on the mediating role of organisational trust in conflict management. Scholars confirm that relatively few conflict-related research studies have considered organisational trust as a mediator (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 2008).

Considering the moderating variables of the current research, it was found that although the literature and previous research acknowledge collectivist and individualist approaches to conflict management, little research has been done on this matter. Culture is normally considered from the viewpoint of different countries, and not so much as culture stemming from the diversity within one country, such as South Africa. In fact, little research could be found on any of the various moderating factors that will influence the South African situation from a conflict management perspective, as few South African studies on workplace conflict management per se have been undertaken (Mayer & Louw, 2011). With relevance to the overall study, consideration should also be given to the fact that the conflict literature mainly evolved in westernised countries and is based on western conventions (Guo & Cionea, 2017); little conflict research has been undertaken specific to African countries (Mayer & Louw, 2011). However, this research follows an emic approach (Berry, 1989) that investigates conflict in organisations from within the culture, thus as understood and experienced by the members of a specific culture (Guo & Cionea, 2017) – in this case from a South African perspective.

When considering the various types of conflict, it becomes evident that not all conflict is getting the same amount of attention in research. Although task and relationship conflict have been extensively researched, much less focus has been placed on process conflict. Status conflict, only identified much later, is arguably less researched. Furthermore, the research on status conflict does not consider the effect of different stages in life or other group characteristics (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

Additionally, research is lacking on how differences between the various types of conflict should be approached (DeChurch et al., 2013). Existing research seems to combine the presence of all kinds of conflict with how conflict is managed and how employees react to the conflict (Dijkstra, 2006). O'Neill et al. (2018) considered a holistic approach where the different types of conflict were considered together when determining their effect on performance. More specifically, O'Neill et al. (2018) considered the influence of four types of conflict profile that combined task,

relationship and process conflict in different patterns, finding that these different patterns across teams may explain how conflict affects a specific team. For instance, teams with relatively high task conflict, and very low relationship and process conflict, performed best. Moreover, O'Neill et al. (2018) found a relationship between the different conflict profiles and individuals' perceptions of learning, burnout and performance ratings by colleagues. This suggests that a group's conflict profile not only affects its performance as a team but also on the individual level (O'Neill et al., 2018).

However, few studies have considered conflict occurrences according to the different conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Moreover, research does not focus on the management of the different types of conflict from an organisational point of view, but rather from the viewpoint of team processes. Even so, the research then mostly considers individuals' reactions to the different types of conflict, and not how the team as an entity reacts to the conflict (Benitez et al., 2018). Furthermore, there is a paucity of research on how the various types of conflict relate to aspects of employee wellbeing (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Sonnentag et al., 2013). As the current research addresses all types of conflict and considers several independent, mediating and moderating variables, some of these gaps are addressed. Additionally, all four identified types of conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Jehn, 1995, 1997) are considered in the present research. These aspects are highlighted in section 2.2.3.

Similarly, much of the focus is directed at conflict resolution through ADR processes and much less on the role of other organisational strategies and processes. The current research addresses this research gap. Additionally, many of the conflict management approaches deal with the way in which conflict should be managed when it has already manifested. Accordingly, the suggested framework will not only consider how manifested conflict may be handled, but also how dysfunctional conflict may be prevented through conflict management. This forms part of a holistic ER approach.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This research supports the notion that strategies, mechanisms and an organisational culture should be developed that create a deeper understanding of employee engagement, while also enhancing employee voice and organisational trust, and considering conflict management (Emmott, 2015). To reach the objective of an integrated conflict management approach, an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary ER view is suggested, considering the psychologisation of

the field (e.g. incorporating elements, principles and ideas of IOP, OB, IR and HRM) in a combined, integrated approach. There is no one-size-fits-all approach and thus a variety of aspects should be deliberated. Therefore, to achieve a holistic conflict management process that is sustainable over the longer term, a multidisciplinary focus is necessary. This is not to say that short and medium-term conflict resolution processes such as ADR should not have a place in a suggested framework. However, this research supports a broader approach where strategies, processes, procedures and mechanisms with a long-term conflict management focus are incorporated, rather than focusing merely on conflict resolution.

Chapter 2 considered the first research question of the literature review, namely: 'How does the literature conceptualise conflict management in the employment relations context?' The first section of the discussion conceptualised the term ER. It discusses how this multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of study developed over the years from being purely IR or HRM driven, to a point where it now considers various dimensions from a variety of fields, including IOP and OB, sociology and management. It stresses the importance of a cooperative pluralistic perspective to the notion of conflict management. This was followed by a discussion that highlighted the impact of the macro, micro and meso environments on ER in South Africa. Clearly, a number of challenges exist in these environments and the importance of regarding ER from a systems perspective was therefore stressed.

This section was followed by a literature review on conflict management, starting firstly by conceptualising the meaning of the concept. Secondly, various types of conflict were discussed, namely task, relational, process and status conflict. The impact of these conflict types on organisational performance was stressed. Thirdly, the importance of conflict management to lessen dysfunctional conflict and enhance functional conflict was considered. The various approaches on how conflict management may be addressed were differentiated and considered. Fourthly, the most important conflict management theories and models for the workplace were deliberated by studying the seminal works of various scholars. Fifthly, a critical evaluation of the variables that may influence conflict management was addressed. The section specifically introduced independent variables (organisational culture, employee voice and leadership), mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust); and moderating demographical variables of this research. Sixthly, the implications of conflict management for ER practices were reflected upon. The chapter concluded with a critical evaluation and synthesis of the literature.

CHAPTER 3: ANTECEDENTS (LEADERSHIP, ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE VOICE)

Chapter 3 focuses on the chosen antecedents (namely, leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) of the research. Section 1.8.1 explained that the literature review consisted of five steps, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. This chapter addresses step 2 of the literature review process.

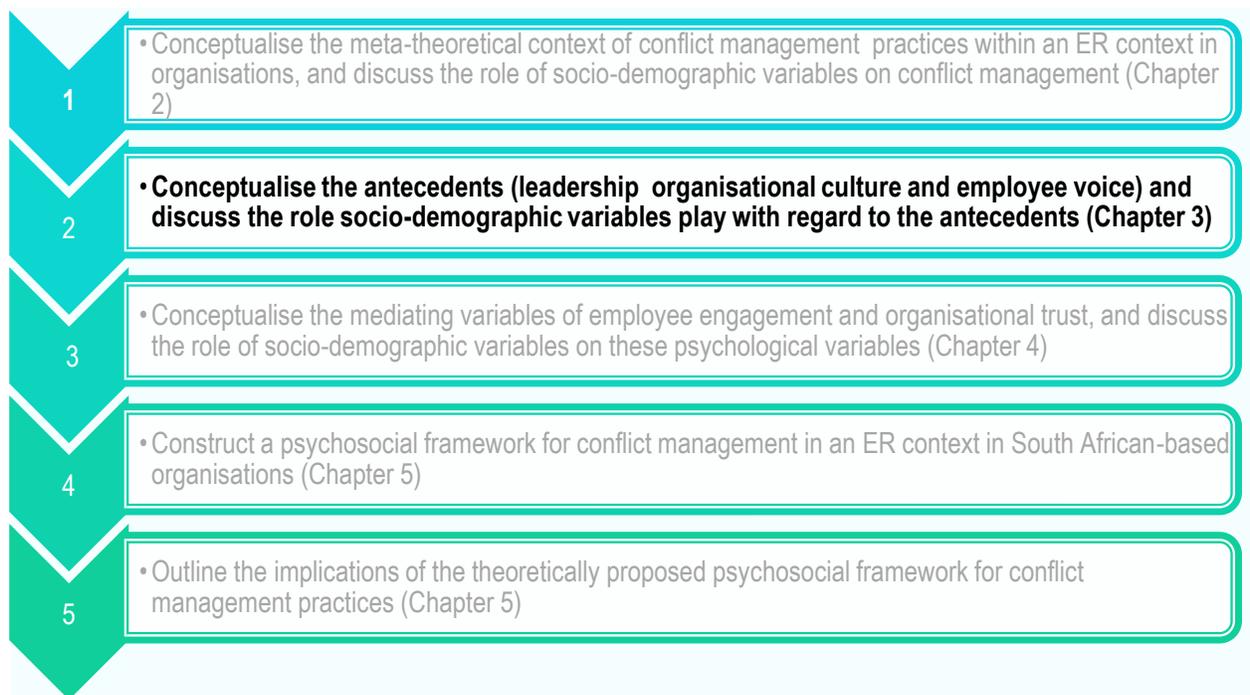


Figure 3.1 Step 2 of Stage 1, the Literature Review Process

Therefore, this chapter addresses the first literature research aim of the study by conceptualising the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and investigating how the socio-demographical variables may influence these aspects in the workplace. The chapter also explores the theoretical models of the antecedents. Additionally, the potential influence these constructs may hold for conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) is considered. Figure 3.2 below sets out the core themes of the research as discussed in this chapter.



Figure 3.2 Core Themes of Chapter 3

Research confirms that managers who understand business processes and their subsequent possible effects on organisations have the potential to contribute to a positive outcome for their organisations (Godard, 2005; Harris et al., 2013; Jones & George, 2016). The seminal works of scholars (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976) maintain that organisational practices send explicit (even if unspoken) signs to employees on how much they are appreciated and trusted, which in turn result in employees feeling obligated to the employer, reciprocating this obligation by demonstrating positive behaviours towards the employer. Increasingly, organisations consider the value of strategies and processes that focus on the psychological aspects of employees in the workplace (Currie et al., 2017; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Gilliland et al., 2014; Lipsky et al., 2015; Purcell, 2014). The movement to a more psychological citizenship model coincides with the general weakening of the traditional collective economic citizenship model of collective bargaining and agreements to formalise conflict management procedures in the workplace (e.g. grievance and disciplinary procedures) (Currie & Teague, 2016). This does not imply that collective bargaining processes are entirely marginalised, as these processes continue to be an important facet of determining workplace conditions and managing conflict (Currie & Teague, 2016). In South Africa, unionisation remains relatively strong (Benjamin, 2016; Scully, 2016; Uys &

Holtzhausen, 2016) and it is reasoned that any conflict management framework should also consider the collective influence of unions.

Against this background, the research focuses on antecedents that arguably remain important in organisations – whether unionised or not. According to Avgar (2017), the antecedents of conflict are not well researched, as most of the focus in past studies has fallen on the various conflict types and handling styles, and on the performance outcomes of conflict. As such, very little is known about organisational, group and individual level factors that may influence different forms of conflict (Avgar, 2017). In fact, scholars argue that not enough research has been undertaken on how conflict management should form part of the strategic direction of organisations (Teague, Roche, Gormley, & Currie, 2015). Rahim (2002) postulates that effective conflict management will consider the structure and processes in organisations to determine deficiencies that cause dysfunctional conflict.

To minimise dysfunctional conflict, the seminal work of Rahim (2002) proposes change at the broader organisational level, and not only at the level where conflict may occur. Consequently, Rahim (2002) emphasises that change will be necessary in the leadership, culture and design of the organisation. Other research maintains that employee voice (through trade union relationships and communication practices) and organisational culture are two of the three key challenges faced by ER managers today, the third being employee engagement (CIPD, 2012). The four drivers of employee engagement are regarded as employee voice, leadership and their strategic narrative, integrity and engaging management (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). Furthermore, Emmott (2015) states that employee voice is the product of a workplace culture that enables employees to communicate their feelings freely without fear of being victimised in an employment relationship characterised by trust and fairness. Moreover, scholars argue that taking a broader perspective on workplace conflict management – for instance viewing it from the perspective of organisational culture and structure (Gelfand et al., 2007) – enriches the conflict theory and situates it within the organisational sciences literature (Schein, 1983). Conflict research has been separated from its organisational basis and has been isolated from other central topics in organisational behaviour, such as leadership and organisational culture (Gelfand et al., 2012), making this broader viewpoint even more important.

Additionally, in a bid to overcome the possible negative implications of conflict, scholars argue that social context antecedents to conflict should be considered – support is given to deliberating behaviour and psychological antecedents such as leadership, trust and communication issues

(Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2014; Korsgaard, Soyoung Jeong, Mahony, & Pitariu, 2008) – thus suggesting behavioural integration. The meta-construct of behavioural integration refers to how members of an organisation participate in shared, collective relations through exchanging information (considering quality and quantity of the exchange), cooperative behaviour and joint decision-making (Hambrick, 1994; Lubatkin, Simsek, Ling, & Veiga, 2006). It is argued that the chosen antecedents of this study may all be relevant in such an approach, as it is evident that scholars regard aspects such as leadership, organisational culture, open and transparent communication (including employee voice) and good trusting relationships as necessary in building sustainable organisations that are successful over the long term (De Waal, 2012).

Each of the constructs of relevance to the study is discussed below.

3.1 LEADERSHIP

The number of research studies undertaken and theories and models developed on leadership behaviour point to the importance of leadership in individual and organisational success, as well as in influencing societal wellness and sustainability (Banks et al., 2017; Gordon & Yukl, 2004; Grobler, 2017; Nienaber, 2010; Yukl, 2012). Similarly, leadership is imperative in conflict management (Binyamin et al., 2017). For instance, the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (2001) states that an integrated conflict management framework can only succeed if there is discernible buy-in and direction from the workplace and union leaders. Additionally, the Society maintains that at least one senior manager should act as the visionary leader who inspires a conflict competent organisational culture and who leads the process of developing, implementing and maintaining an integrated conflict management system (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). This view is supported by earlier seminal research that maintains that employees' performance is affected by (amongst other aspects) their attitude towards their leadership – an aspect known as the Hawthorne effect (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1947). There are high expectations of leadership with regard to the success of organisations (Alvesson & Blom, 2018). In other words, a leader's approach affects performance and, importantly, the way conflict is managed. Similarly, leaders such as supervisory line managers play an important role in shaping and managing employment relations in organisations (Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017)

Managing and leading people is a multifaceted and multilevel phenomenon (Leroy, Segers, Van Dierendonck, & Den Hartog, 2018). Leadership aspects are not stagnant and organisations need

to ensure that they stay abreast of changes to ensure optimal organisational success (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Landis et al., 2014; Lombard & Crafford, 2003; Mosia & Veldsman, 2004). A Global Human Capital Trends Survey (Deloitte, 2017) summarises this aptly, stating that we live in an era where leadership development is being redefined. In accordance with their clients, previous leadership theories do not stay abreast of the swiftness and rapidly changing and unruly business world. According to this survey (Deloitte, 2017), organisations are in search of an innovative leadership model to deal with the swiftness of change in current business affairs. Leaders today must be able to build and lead teams, keep employees engaged, drive a culture of innovation, improvement and inclusion, and lead in an environment where crowd talent, various employment contracts and contingencies are relevant (Deloitte, 2017). In the Deloitte survey (2017), more than 75% of South African companies that participated in the survey were alert to their management struggles with leadership on all levels of the organisation – from first-line supervisors to top management level. Leadership skills, namely agility, innovation, emotional intelligence, social flexibility and resilience, need to be developed for today's challenges (Deloitte, 2017). Moreover, indirect practices of leadership should be considered in the form of, for instance, management systems and the use of organisational culture procedures, such as ceremonies, rituals or symbols; these must be compatible with direct leadership forms (Gordon & Yukl, 2004).

The next sections (3.3.1 to 3.3.3) define leadership, explain theoretical leadership models and evaluate the influence of socio-demographic aspects on leadership.

3.1.1 Conceptualisation of leadership

The challenge of finding a universal definition of leadership for the modern world is understandable when considering the seemingly multiple conceptual, theoretical, empirical and methodological advances in the leadership field (Banks et al., 2018; Dinh, Lord, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014; Lord et al., 2017). For instance, various styles of leadership exist which may prove effective in different environments (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Landis et al., 2014; Silva, 2016), thus necessitating that a variety of issues be considered. The vast number of leadership behaviour constructs makes comparison and integration of findings cumbersome (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Banks et al., 2018; Silva, 2016; Yukl, 2012). Traits, behaviours, impact, followers perceptions, various aspects of influence, relational patterns and roles, followership, context and occupation of specific position, a set of skills are all aspects that are used to explain leadership (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Dinh et al., 2014; Silva, 2016; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 1989, 2013). Additionally,

some scholars argue that a definition of leadership should consider the situation or context within which the term is used (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Silva, 2016; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Other scholars consider the influence of power on leadership (Day, Schleicher, Unckless, & Hiller, 2002; French & Raven, 1959; Jeuken, 2016; McCall, 1978; Meuser et al., 2016; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Yukl & Falbe, 1991).

Thus, leadership scholars of seminal works agree that although thousands of studies have been conducted on leadership over the years, no one specific understanding exists on what makes a leader, and more importantly, what makes an effective leader (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Lord et al., 2017; Silva, 2016; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 1989). The following sections describe the various arguments related to the development of some influential definitions of leadership. The discussion concludes with the choice of definition for the purposes of this study.

3.1.1.1 Leadership versus management

When contemplating a leadership definition, various aspects are considered. Some scholars argue about what constitutes leadership versus management, and what the overlap between these two concepts is (Alvesson & Blom, 2018; Yukl, 1989). For instance, the well-known argument of Bennis and Nanus maintains that management is about doing things right while leadership entails doing the right things (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

3.1.1.2 Leadership and followership

A further leadership argument considers whether a leadership definition should focus on the influence exerted by the leader, ensuring commitment from followers. This is an important question in the light of the generally accepted fact that followers are regarded as one of the three components of leadership (with the leader and context being the other two components) (Oc, 2018). Leadership is regarded as a process of influence and, as such, requires followers (Breevaart et al., 2014; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Nienaber, 2010; Silva, 2016; Vroom & Jago, 2007). In fact, the role followers play has become more prominent since the 1990s, when Bass noted that leadership is an interaction process between leaders and followers in which anyone can play a leadership role (Bass, 1990). For instance, Silva (2016) defines leadership as an interactive influencing process where a leader is accepted within a given context to lead the followers to the achievement of mutual goals. The argument stems from the ability to influence followers by, for instance, exercising power (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Mosia & Veldsman, 2004; Silva, 2016).

Influencing followers will depend on both the skills of the leader and the environment within which the leader operates (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015).

3.1.1.3 The role of leadership influence on stakeholders to ensure goal achievement

Another debate centres on whether leadership influence is a specialised role, or a collective effort stemming from all members of a group (Yukl, 1989). The argument advances that multiple actors contribute to leadership over various time spans, from either a top-down or a bottom-up approach (Dinh et al., 2014). This is in contrast to the many leadership definitions that focus on the elements of the leader as an individual who is able to influence others; who engages with and directs group activities in order to reach shared, set objectives that relate to organisational success (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016; Mosia & Veldsman, 2004; Nienaber, 2010; Yukl, 2002, 2012).

Subsequently, seminal works of scholars supporting this view argued that the focus of leadership research on challenges or traits should shift to an interactive process between individuals participating in goal-oriented group activities (Stogdill & Shartle, 1948). As a case in point, Yukl (2002, 2012) suggests that leadership in organisations is a process of stakeholder influence intended to ensure goal achievement. Yukl (2002, 2012) emphasises that the objective of leadership is to ensure that shared organisational goals are met, and much of the leadership research focuses on what behaviour will ensure this objective (Yukl, 2012). According to Yukl (1989), leadership firstly involves influencing tasks, objectives and strategies; secondly, influencing levels of commitment and compliance in order to reach the set objectives; thirdly, influencing groups' identity and maintenance; and lastly, influencing organisational culture. Yukl (2012) emphasises that leadership influences the individual and collective dimensions of an organisation – in contrast with some other definitions that focus only on the individual's role in leading others. Thus, although most leadership definitions focus on the dyadic relationship between a leader and a follower, scholars argue that such a view ignores the diverse stakeholders and divergent challenges a leader must face (Gordon & Yukl, 2004). Clearly, leadership is also a relational process with stakeholders that develops over time (Den Hartog & Koopman, 2001).

Scholars often emphasise the role of the leader in contributing to organisational success through the influence the leader exerts. For instance, leadership is defined as the ability to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisation (House et al., 1999); or similarly, as a series of actions and interactions between leaders and followers that will ultimately lead to group goal attainment (Wren, 1995). The argument is thus

that organisational effectiveness is an indication of effective leadership (Vroom & Jago, 2007). At the very least, it may thus be argued that leadership directs organisations to the goal of achieving objectives and being effective. According to the seminal works of Selznick (1957) and Barnard (1938), leadership directs an organisation to become an institution with a unified purpose; and a set of values, a vision and mission, objectives and processes and procedures is established to reach its purpose (Barnard, 1938; Selznick, 1957; Zanda, 2018). Barnard (1938) maintains that leadership is a higher-order function that directs the other organisational functions of planning, control and organising.

However, other scholars suggest that rather than referring to effectiveness, one should focus on leadership as a process of meaning-making, a view supported by Vroom and Jago as they argue that organisational effectiveness relies on various factors and aspects, and not only on leadership (Podolny, Khurana, & Hill-Popper, 2005; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Vroom and Jago (2007) thus define leadership as a process that motivates employees to work together collaboratively as a unified team in order to achieve great things. As explained by Vroom and Jago (2007), no intrinsic or extrinsic incentives form part of their definition; rather the influence of the leader is to ensure that individuals work together in pursuit of a common goal. Although both the leader and the followers have the end goal (achieving great things) in mind, other parties may not necessarily view this goal as desirable (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

3.1.1.4 *Trait-related versus behaviour-related definitions*

Early research focused primarily on the traits that differentiate leaders from non-leaders (Lord et al., 2017). Trait theorists define leadership from the perspective of the individual differences (traits, abilities and the like) leaders possess that assist them in effectively leading organisations (Dinh et al., 2014). However, in the beginning of the 1950s through the 1960s, scholars moved away from considering the traits of a good leader toward behavioural approaches, with definitions focusing on these aspects (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 1989). Research conducted at the Ohio State University and the University of Michigan focused on how leaders behave and the consequences of their behaviour – for instance having consideration for followers (dealing with issues of trust, communication and the like) and creating structure (e.g. compiling work schedules and methods) (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 1989). Leadership was thus regarded from the point of view that certain methods influence leadership behaviour, for instance appeals to moral values (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

Thus, researchers argue that when one considers a definition for leadership, it is necessary to differentiate between what leaders do (leader competencies) and how leaders act (engaging behaviour that determines the leadership style) (Alban -Metcalf & Alimo -Metcalf, 2013). For instance, Barnard (1938) contends that leadership is based firstly on the moral code of the leader which also influences the code of conduct of the organisation, and secondly, the personal qualities (vivacity, fortitude, intellectual capacity, persuasiveness and accountability, integrity, courage and vision) a leader displays. Leaders who behave with integrity, foster a trust relationship with their subordinates (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). Similarly, Alvesson and Blom (2018) define leadership as an interpersonal process of inducing meaning, values and feelings across the hierarchical organisational structure.

3.1.1.5 Definitions relating to the style of leadership

Vroom and Jago (2007) argue that in the quest to define leadership, some scholars use a specific form of influence to differentiate between various styles of leadership. A leadership style indicates a leader's inclination towards engaging in a fairly unwavering behaviour pattern, for example maintaining a transformational or servant leadership style (Fleishman, 1953a; Zaccaro et al., 2018). Research suggests that leadership style greatly influences the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation and affects the total management process (Zanda, 2018). Various leadership styles have been identified. According to Dinah et al. (2014), these styles can be thematically grouped.

Neo-charismatic leadership styles include for instance transformational leadership. Transformational leaders motivate and support followers by 1) using their personal power to perform above expectation (idealised influence); 2) creating a clear collective purpose and vision to motivate followers (inspirational motivation); 3) developing employees' intellectual capabilities (individualised consideration); and 4) motivating employees to take part in the critical and novel thinking that is needed for effective problem-solving (intellectual stimulation) (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Another neo-charismatic leadership style is transactional leadership (Dinah et al., 2014). Transactional leaders influence behaviour through an exchange relationship of goal-setting and having a clear focus on sought-after outcomes and rewards depending on performance (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership includes contingent reward which can be either transactional (material incentives such as bonuses) or transformational (e.g. praise) (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014). Transactional leaders tend to follow rules and get the job done (Bowers, Hall, & Srinivasan, 2017).

A second thematic category includes social exchange or relational styles (Dinah et al., 2014). Relational leadership acknowledges that leadership is a multidirectional process of social influence in which relationships play a key role in ensuring effective leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011).

A third theme relates to behaviour theories (Dinah et al., 2014), including for instance participative leadership and autocratic leadership. Participative leadership fosters co-determination, shared decision-making and information, as well as promoting autonomy (Alfes & Langner, 2017). An autocratic style of leadership is characterised with the concentration of power and authority lying within the leader; however, it is not to be confused with authoritarian leadership which characterises a domineering style with negative implications (Harms et al., 2018; House, 1997).

Fourthly, Dinah et al. (2014) identify the theme of contingency theories and styles. Situational or contingency leadership is based on the premise that there is no one best leadership approach, rather, leaders need to lead, make decisions and motivate according to the specific situation they are confronted with (Rahim, 2002).

Fifthly, Dinah et al. (2014) identify the theme of strategic leadership styles. For instance, directive leadership refers to a strong and decisive leader, providing clear direction and shared goals (Alfes & Langner, 2017; Bowers et al., 2017).

A sixth theme considers ethical, moral and value-based leadership theories and styles. A well-known example is ethical leadership. Ethical leaders demonstrate moral, normatively appropriate behaviour in their personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and instil these values in their followers through open two-way communication, giving employees voice, reinforcement and when making decisions (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009). Ethical leadership is thus characterised by power sharing (giving voice to employees), morality and fairness (honest, caring, trustworthy, and fair and just in their conduct) and ethical role clarification (being transparent and clear on expectations and responsibilities) (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009; Grobler, 2017). Research suggests that ethical leaders motivate their followers to act with proficiency, adding value to the organisation; this behaviour signals to followers their potential for success (Dust, Resick, Margolis, Mawritz, & Greenbaum, 2018). However, their research (Dust et al., 2018) also indicates that psychological states such as emotional exhaustion of followers, neutralise the positive effect of ethical leadership; followers must have the psychological resources to internalise what the ethical leader models.

Seventh, leadership styles may fall into the category of contextual, complexity and system perspectives (Dinah et al., 2014). An example of such a style is collegial leadership, referring to the complexities of today's world and the necessity to have a community within which to share leadership (Singh, 2013).

Dinah et al. (2014) postulate that other emerging approaches are also evident, for instance e-leadership, where leading takes place through technological interactions in virtual teams when individuals or teams are geographically dispersed (Avolio et al., 2009). An overarching approach to leadership is lastly identified, called allostatic leadership, suggesting an umbrella-type leadership to ensure that various leadership types do not compete but rather complement each other, depending on the leader, followers or situations (Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017). An allostatic leader is defined as an ideal leader who responds, adapts, learns and changes with experience to become more effective in subsequent situations (Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017).

Finally, a study (Ali, Katoma, & Tyobeka, 2018) considering the leadership styles of 259 young managers working in Southern Africa (71% in South Africa) found four main leadership orientations in the African context, namely, achievement, reward, conformity and innovativeness. The first orientation refers to leaders driven by achievement, requiring challenge and ambition in their leadership roles, Secondly, leaders may be motivated by the rewards found in their leadership roles, such as prosperity, wealth and security. Thirdly, some leaders require loyalty and conformity from their followers; and lastly, others are transformational leaders who consider innovativeness and would challenge existing managerial standards. However, the managers often displayed more than one orientation. Ali et al. (2018) argue that these orientations are important, as leaders (managers) may be selected for certain roles based on the specific needs of the organisation.

Even though the importance of the various leadership styles is recognised, for the purposes of this study, no particular leadership style was considered. Rather, this research is interested in the broader concept of leadership and, specifically, leader conflict behaviour within the social exchange process.

3.1.1.6 Conclusion

With the focus moving away from the traits of leaders to the way leaders behave and sets of specific leadership styles, scholars began to consider that leaders' behaviour is not only influenced by leaders' dispositions, but also by the situations with which they are confronted

(Vroom & Jago, 2007). Thus, leadership definitions that draw attention to the importance of leaders also consider a situational approach. Leaders need to adapt to their situations, as not all traits and behaviours are relevant in all situations (Yukl, 2002). Therefore, scholars shifted the focus away from defining leadership as a specific set of traits and behaviours (the person), or solely considering the context (the situation), to finding answers that can deal with differences both in leaders and in situations (Lord et al., 2017; Vroom & Jago, 2007).

It is this last argument that is considered for this research. Subsequently, for the purposes of this research a definition was chosen that considers the probable influence of leadership behaviour on conflict management (Gelfand et al., 2012); and the importance of leaders having a democratic approach in a flourishing environment (Bass, 1990). Consequently, a leadership definition derived from the work of Yukl (2002) is chosen for the context of the current study. Leadership is defined in this research as the process of adapting to given situations while influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2002).

The current study measures leadership using two instruments. Firstly, the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) based on Blau's social exchange theory (discussed below in section 3.1.2.6) considers the perceptions of social exchange that transpire between leaders and their subordinates in their daily dealings. The second measuring scale, the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012), focuses specifically on how leaders behave during conflict. In other words, it considers how leaders influence conflict cultures and the consequences of their behaviour, be it collaborative, dominating or avoidant conflict management behaviour. This measuring instrument is based on conflict cultures theory (Gelfand et al., 2012) (as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.4(h) above), arguing that employees in a group tend to adopt comparable attitudes to managing conflict, thus developing a conflict culture. Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that leaders' drive the conflict culture in a group or in an organisation through their own conflict management behaviour.

In order to clarify the development of leadership theories and models, a selection of some of the most important theoretical models are discussed next, including Blau's (1964) social exchange theory. This theory forms the foundation of the leadership, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust constructs, and is one of three meta-theoretical lenses of the study.

3.1.2 Theoretical models

Dinh et al. (2014) thematically divide the various theoretical domains in established versus emerging theories. Established theories include neo-charismatic theories (e.g. transformational and charismatic leadership); leadership and information processes (e.g. leader and follower cognition); social exchange and relation theories (e.g. LMX theory); trait theories; leadership and diversity; follower-centric theories (e.g. the romance of leadership); behavioural theories (e.g. participative and shared leadership); contingency theories (e.g. path-goal) and the power and influence of leadership (Dinh et al., 2014). Emerging theories include strategic leadership; team leadership, contextual, complexity and systems perspectives on leadership; leader emergence and development theories; ethical/moral leadership theories (e.g. authentic leadership theory); leading for creativity, innovation and change; identity-based theories; and lastly, other emerging theories such as e-leadership (Dinh et al., 2014).

Lord et al. (2017) suggest another leadership categorisation in a meta-analysis of seminal scholarly work published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. According to these scholars, leadership theories can be divided into three waves of research (Lord et al., 2017). The first wave (1948–1961) considered behavioural style approaches and included for instance the seminal works of Stogdill and Shartle (1948), who initially described the Ohio State leadership programme that focused on leadership behaviour; the introduction of leaderless group discussions (Bass, 1949); and the factor analysis of leader behaviour measuring instrument (Fleishman, 1953a). The second wave (1969–1989) emphasised cognitive explanations (Lord et al., 2017). For instance, Schein's seminal work on leadership gender role stereotypes (Schein, 1983) indicated the importance of rater perceptions (Lord et al., 2017). Additionally, the second wave (Lord et al., 2017) included social cognitive theories, contingency approaches and early transformational leadership research. The third wave (1999–2007) (Lord et al., 2017) revisited traits and leadership styles through various meta-analyses, LMX (Gerstner & Day, 1997), team leadership, trust as a key social process in any social exchange (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001), and transformational and charismatic leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). The third wave thus considered the agents of change in leadership research, namely individuals, dyads, teams and leaders (Lord et al., 2017).

Yukl (1989) argues that most research approaches to leadership can be categorised as focusing either primarily on the influence of power, leadership traits (the characteristics of leaders), leadership behaviour, or on the way leader traits, power, or behaviour interact with a given

situation. These categorisations (Dinh et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017; Yukl, 1989) are followed loosely to discuss some of the most seminal theoretical models. Specifically, social exchange theory (as the theoretical basis of on most of the constructs in the current research) is deliberated. Although further categories of leadership theories exist as stated above (Avolio et al., 2009; Dinh et al., 2014; Landis et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017; Zaccaro et al., 2018), these will not be discussed in detail as they fall outside the scope of this research.

3.1.2.1 *Power-influence theories*

Scholars approaching leadership from a power-influence perspective, concentrate on explaining a leader's effectiveness on the grounds of the amount or type of power the leader possesses, or how power is exerted (Silva, 2016; Yukl, 1989). Firstly, research focuses on the different types of power, arguing for instance that position power stems from the qualities of a specific situation, whereas personal power is shaped by the personal qualities of the leader (Yukl, 1989). Other scholars argue that being in the right place at the right time is a source of leadership power (McCall, 1978). Moreover, leadership power depends on the followers' perceptions of the leader's resources, qualities and standing (French & Raven, 1959).

Secondly, scholars consider how power is acquired and lost by leaders (Yukl, 1998). In this regard, social exchange theory (discussed in more detail further down) has been important, as it discusses how status and expert power afforded to a leader is gained by the leader showcasing loyalty and competence in resolving challenges and taking decisions (Hollander, 1978). Furthermore, Yukl (1998) maintains that strategic contingency theory (Brass, 1984; Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck, & Pennings, 1971) explains how the characteristics of a person and position in the organisation combine to determine relative power.

Thirdly, research on power-influence considers how effective leaders use power in their leadership role (Yukl, 1998). Various examples exist. Leadership research suggests that personal power is more relied on by effective leaders than position power (Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985). Legitimate power is an important source of influence in routine matters in organisations with a formal structure and culture (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The manner power is exercised (e.g. subtle versus arrogant) influences the effectiveness of leaders (McCall, 1978), as do influencing tactics (Yukl, 1989). Thus, it may be argued that when considering how leaders use their power, one needs to consider how leaders share their power. For instance, one of the characteristics of ethical leadership is power sharing by providing employees with voice – thus allowing employees to

participate in decision-making and to share their views (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009; Grobler, 2017).

Fourthly, the power-influence research considers how much power a leader should have. This is a natural phenomenon as an increase in authority leads to an increase in power in the organisation (Zanda, 2018). Scholars argue that the correct amount of power depends on the type of organisation, followers and tasks, but that a moderate amount is advisable (Yukl, 1998). Nonetheless, effective leadership shapes the organisational functions of planning, control and organising, also by sharing their power, for instance sharing decision-making powers (Zanda, 2018).

3.1.2.2 *Trait theories*

Trait theories consider how individual differences (e.g. intelligence) in leaders contribute to leader effectiveness (Dinh et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017). Trait theories are categorised by Lord et al. (2017) as the first wave of leadership theories. Studies on individual characteristics and differences that contribute to leadership have been ongoing for decades and are still of interest, resulting in a variety of complex models to explain leadership outcomes (Dinh et al., 2014; Tuncdogan, Acar, & Stam, 2017; Zaccaro et al., 2018). Although support for trait theories has varied over the years, renewed interest is again being shown (Lord et al., 2017; Tuncdogan et al., 2017). Zaccaro et al. (2018) point out that various meta-analyses were published on individual leader differences between 1986 and 2010. Moreover, between 2011 and 2016, there was a six-fold increase in the annual mean number of articles focusing on leadership traits being published compared to the period 1986–2010 (Zaccaro et al., 2018). According to Zaccaro et al. (2018), these meta-analytical studies considered varying leadership personalities and motives (Bono & Judge, 2004; Scott DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011); leader intellect (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004; Tuncdogan et al., 2017); gender (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995); and social abilities such as self-monitoring of appearance in social settings (Day et al., 2002) and emotional intelligence (Harms & Credé, 2010; Schlaerth, Ensari, & Christian, 2013). Additionally, more recent research often considers traits, a case in point is the research on the curvilinear effect of intelligence on perceived leader behaviour (Antonakis, House, & Simonton, 2017).

Most of the earlier research on leader individual differences was descriptive. However, later research focused mainly on two aspects. The first aspect focuses on matching the performance

requirements and expectations of leaders with leadership qualities and attributes – a good match holds the promise of leadership effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2018). With this approach, traits are linked to certain requirements of leadership performance roles. For instance, leadership performance requirements may be defined by cognitive, social and self-motivational requirements, linking leadership attributes to each set (Zaccaro, LaPort, & Jose, 2013). Some examples include complex problem-solving and cognitive complexity as part of cognitive requirements; or communication and conflict management skills as part of the social requirements set; and resilience and emotional stability as part of the motivational requirements set (Zaccaro et al., 2013). A recent study highlights nine critical cognitive skills that determine leadership performance: defining the problem or challenge, analysing causes and goals, analysing limitations, planning, making predictions, creative thinking, evaluation of ideas, wisdom, and lastly, making sense of and envisioning the results (Mumford, Todd, Higgs, & McIntosh, 2017). Zaccaro et al. (2018) posit that this approach relates to the actuality trait route (Antonakis, 2011) which validates traits in terms of their actual effectiveness in leadership roles. The argument holds that the different traits of a leader affect leadership and follower behaviours, and thus it is argued that a leader's traits influence performance outcomes on the individual, group and organisational levels (Tuncdogan et al., 2017).

The second aspect is referred to as a social information processing approach (Zaccaro et al., 2018). This approach connects the individual differences of leaders with the cognitive schemas and information processes of observers, who then determine whether they will endorse leaders or not (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984). According to Zaccaro et al. (2018), this approach relates to Antonakis's (2011) ascription trait route which determines that when individuals showcase characteristics that are generally perceived as expected of leaders, they will be more likely to attain leadership positions.

Researchers link a wide range of traits with leaders, grouped into cognitive abilities, social abilities, personality, motives, core beliefs, knowledge, as well as physical traits such as age (Zaccaro et al., 2013). Although some of these traits are relatively stable (e.g. intelligence and personality), others may vary over time (e.g. knowledge and social skills) (Zaccaro et al., 2018). Nonetheless, the so-called Big Five leadership traits (agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism) are significantly related to leader emergence (i.e. being perceived as a leader) and leader effectiveness (i.e. a leader's ability to influence others towards goal accomplishment) (Judge et al., 2002). According to Lord et al. (2017), these findings

support trait theories. Moreover, millennium research on leadership focuses on aspects such as neuroleadership to explain the gene responsible for leadership, considering for instance the influence of genetics on transformational and transactional leadership (Tuncdogan et al., 2017). Additionally, physical appearance such as size (e.g. height) and facial appearance are considered with regard to their influence on leader emergence and performance, as well as followers' perceptions of leaders (Bell & Sinclair, 2016; Tuncdogan et al., 2017).

Although the focus of leadership trait theories is on individual leadership differences, scholars acknowledge that situational characteristics necessitate specific sets of leaders' traits and abilities – for instance, conflict management skills are mentioned (Zaccaro et al., 2018). Nonetheless, attention has moved away from leadership trait theories to focusing on leadership behaviour (Lord et al., 2017).

3.1.2.3 *Behaviour theories*

Behavioural theories emerged in earnest in the 1950s (Lord et al., 2017). These are categorised by Lord et al. (2017) as the second wave of leadership theories. Leadership research by the Ohio State Group resulted in new insights into measuring leadership behaviour, motivational forces (Lewin, 1947) and employee morale (Katz, 1949). Using surveys to measure leader behaviour also saw the light (Fleishman, 1953b). Consideration was given to follower attitudes and rating outcomes of leadership behaviour (Bass, 1956). According to Lord et al. (2017), research during this time found that relational-orientated behaviours are linked to positive attitudes and outcomes; however, the task-orientated behaviours are more diverse.

The important research on leader behaviour scales and factor analysis paved the way for the situational theories that emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on how a situation moderates the relationship between leader behaviour and the outlooks, drive and outcomes of followers. However, behaviour theories have been criticised for lacking a strong theoretical foundation (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Additionally, research done in the 1970s and 1980s pointed to various problems in the factor analysis structures of behavioural measuring instruments, noting that often these measures reflect the implicit theories of those who rate, rather than the behaviours of leaders (Lord et al., 2017). The use of interviews and surveys fails to differentiate between leadership behaviour and perceptions of leadership behaviour (Behrendt, Matz, & Göritz, 2017). Moreover, the group performance of a leader's followers influences the behaviour ratings of leaders (Lord et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, research (Scott DeRue et al., 2011) indicates that the four leadership perceptions of boundary spanning (i.e. managing external relationships with significant stakeholders), empowerment of subordinates, creating structure and transformational leadership characteristics best predict leadership success (Behrendt et al., 2017). More recently, behaviour theorists (Behrendt et al., 2017) suggest a model that includes task-oriented leadership behaviour (enhancing understanding, motivation and facilitating implementation) and relations-oriented leadership behaviour that fosters and promotes coordination and cooperation while activating resources.

3.1.2.4 *Situational (contingency) theories*

Leadership theories ebb and flow in popularity as new theories are developed and existing ones re-evaluated. Scholars agree that contextual leadership has again resurfaced over the last decade (Oc, 2018). Part of the second wave of leadership theories as categorised by Lord et al. (2017) includes situational theories. The foundation of situational theories postulates that the best leadership approach will depend on the situation; there is thus no one best approach (Lord et al., 2017; Rahim, 2002). Rather, research suggests that leadership is a dynamic construct that changes according to the specific context in which it is measured (Lord et al., 1984), as well as with other attributes such as race, gender and ethnicity (Lord et al., 2017). According to Zaccaro et al. (2018), most researchers accept that when considering the role of the situation, two possibilities are presented. Leaders may be confronted by specific indications of a situation, and either react with their dominant leadership style (Fiedler, 1967) or with the leadership activity they consider necessary to deal with the situation (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

Thus, contingency theories consider the kind of leader and behaviours that will be effective in different situations (Lord et al., 2017; Vroom & Jago, 2007). According to Zaccaro et al. (2018), situations may be integrated with specific leadership traits to influence leadership outcomes. Moreover, Zaccaro et al. (2018) maintain that leaders will select, form or respond to specific situations in accordance with the perceived performance and leadership requirements. Furthermore, functional leadership behaviours are cued by particular situations, resulting in specific traits being necessary. Lastly, Zaccaro et al. (2018) posit that situations offer leadership choice and actions that are derived from individual leader differences. In other words, individual leader traits may come to be intricately bound up with situational features (Zaccaro et al., 2018).

Several situational theories are regarded as seminal works, such as Fiedler's (1964) contingency theory of leadership, House's (1971) path-goal theory of leadership, and Vroom and Yetton's (1973) decision theory of leadership. These theories are discussed below.

(a) Fiedler's contingency model

Fiedler was the first scholar to consider the situation and leader traits (Lord et al, 2017; Vroom & Jago, 2007), finding that there was no best leadership style (Fiedler, 1964, 1967). According to Fiedler's contingency model (Fiedler, 1964), leaders can be divided into relationship-oriented or task-oriented groups. While task-oriented leadership focuses on goal attainment, relationship-oriented leaders focus on establishing a relationship of trust and respect (Cote, 2017). Fiedler (1964) argued that the characteristics of a leader that determine a relationship versus a task-oriented leader are not adaptable or subject to change. Fiedler (1967) considered how effectively these two groups of leader function within eight situational circumstances based on combinations of three dichotomous constructs, namely, leader-position power, follower-task structure, and lastly, leader-member relations. Fiedler's research (1967) found that although the relationship-oriented leader outperforms the task-oriented leader in four of the eight situations, the converse was also true. Fiedler's findings (1967) suggest that leaders should therefore be placed in situations that favour their style of being either task or relationship-oriented, or that a job should be designed to fit the specific style.

Although Fiedler's model (1964) has been criticised over the years (Lord et al., 2017; Vroom & Jago, 2007), it has also been partially supported by other scholars (Peters, Hartke, & Pohlmann, 1985; Strube & García, 1981) and acknowledged for the ground-breaking work of considering a contingency approach.

(b) Path-goal theory

Various scholars (Evans, 1970; House, 1971; House & Dessler, 1974; House & Mitchell, 1974) considered an advanced situational theory to resolve some of the challenges scholars of the Michigan and Ohio State universities encountered. According to the path-goal theory, leaders create and manage their subordinates' paths so that individual and group objectives are met (Cote, 2017; Evans, 1970; House & Mitchell, 1974). Additionally, leaders clarify their subordinates' expectations and supplement the environment should it lack sufficient reward (House, 1971; Vroom & Jago, 2007). The effectiveness of achievement-oriented leadership, participative leadership, consideration and initiating structure depend on situational factors found in both

followers' and environmental characteristics (House & Mitchell, 1974). Research suggests that when behaviours and situations are correctly matched, leaders are accepted, job satisfaction increases, and performance is enhanced (House & Mitchell, 1974).

Scholars vary in their opinion of the path-goal theory. In one meta-analysis conducted on path-goal theories, scholars criticise much of the research that tested path-goal theories for being flawed (Wofford, 1993). Nonetheless, another meta-analysis is predominantly supportive of the key proposals of the theory (Indvik, 1986). Additionally, various path-goal hypotheses are confirmed in research. For instance, research shows that should leaders initiate structure when subordinates lack structure, it would be well received; however, this would not be the case should leaders do so in followers' highly structured task conditions (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

(c) Normative and descriptive leadership and decision-making models

Similar to the path-goal theory, these theories hold the perspective of behavioural situations, but from the narrower perspective of how and to what level leaders involve followers in decision-making processes (Vroom, 2000; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Vroom & Yetton, 1973). Leadership decision theory specifies five choices of leadership style, varying from highly autocratic, through a consultative approach, to highly participative (referring to consensus-seeking), depending on the situation (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). Additionally, Vroom and Yetton (1973) identified seven situational variables, varying according to a range of factors normally encountered in the decision-making process such as decision importance, the need for commitment and the potential for conflict. These aspects should guide the most suitable reaction, together with a set of decision rules that were developed and later updated into linear equations (Vroom & Jago, 2007). The theory considers two types of situation: firstly, the quality of the decision based on the extent to which group processes are influenced by the decision; and secondly, the acceptance of the decision (referring to the degree of commitment needed from employees to have the decision implemented). When both the decision quality and acceptance are low, the theory suggests that leaders should use an autocratic style. Contrariwise, if the decision quality and acceptance are both high, leaders should use a participative leadership style (Rahim, 2002; Vroom & Yetton, 1973).

This theory focuses only on the decision-making process, and not on any other aspects of leadership (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Although this may be seen as a negative aspect of the theory, it has the benefit of focusing very specifically on one important aspect of leadership. The seminal

studies of Vroom, Yetton and Jago (Jago, 1978; Vroom, 2000; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Vroom & Yetton, 1973) highlighted three specific aspects relating to leadership (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Firstly, although organisational effectiveness is often said to be an indication of good leadership, research shows that it is rather affected by situational factors from its external and internal environment that leaders have little or no control over. Nonetheless, some situations determine when leaders do make a difference. Secondly, situations shape the way leaders behave. Leaders are affected by their environment and by their set of characteristics, determining their inclined behaviours. Thirdly, the consequences of leaders' behaviour are influenced by situations – a leadership style that may be good in one situation is not necessarily good in another set of circumstances (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

It is interesting to note that during the current millennium, contingency theories feature less in scholarly research, as meta-analysed by Dinh et al. (2014). This may be because of the findings that behavioural ratings not only reflect rater behaviours but also rater processes; as such, they do not clearly explain performance outcomes (Lord et al., 2017).

3.1.2.5 *New-genre leadership*

According to Lord et al. (2017), a third wave of leadership theories considered an expanded focus on leadership. In a meta-analysis done on articles on scholarly leadership theory published in the ten top-tier academic publishing outlets during the millennium, it was found that neo-charismatic theories that evolved from charismatic leadership theory received the most attention, followed by research on transformational and charismatic leadership (Dinh et al., 2014). New-genre leadership emphasises leadership behaviour that is charismatic, visionary, ideological, inspirational, ethical and transformational (Avolio et al., 2009), a change initiated by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). It includes a number of established theories such as transformational, charismatic and transactional leadership theories (Dinh et al., 2014).

Lord et al. (2017) argue that leadership scholars often link charismatic and transformational leadership together, partly because of the work of Bass (1985), who included charisma in his work on a multidimensional theory of transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leadership considers leaders who engage with followers to raise their aspirations and to awaken higher order values and morals in a way that inspires followers to follow the leader's vision, engage in their work with renewed thinking and learning, and perform beyond basic expectations (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass, 1985). The seminal work of Burns (1978) emphasises the focus on

developing followers and displaying high-level ethical conduct in transformational leadership. A seminal and extensive meta-analytical study (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) suggests that transformational leadership and transactional-dependent reward (i.e. when specified goals as set by leaders are accomplished and followers rewarded for completing the tasks) equally contribute to performance.

Charisma in leadership was originally viewed (Wilner, 1984) as an attribute followers saw in their leaders, or put differently, charisma was viewed as existing only in the eye of the beholder (the followers) who perceive their leader to be charismatic – charisma was thus not regarded as part of a leader's personality, nor as something shaped contextually. Rather, charisma was viewed as relational and perceptual (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Vergauwe, Wille, Hofmans, Kaiser, & De Fruyt, 2018) – an “idealized influence” (Judge & Piccolo, 2004, p. 755). However, later studies considered a trait-based perspective on leadership (e.g. Zaccaro et al., 2013), and it is acknowledged that charismatic leaders possess certain qualities and characteristics that non-charismatic leaders do not have (DuBrin, 2012; Vergauwe et al., 2018). Empirical studies emphasise the behavioural characteristics of charismatic leadership, such as having and imparting confidence and inspiration, and having a vision coupled with clear ideological aims (Bass, 1985; House, 1997). Nonetheless, research has found that too high levels of charisma have a negative effect on effectiveness as appraised through a 360-degree observer rating, and that leaders with moderate levels of charisma are more effective (Vergauwe et al., 2018). Leaders with too high levels of charisma are ineffective operationally, while leaders too low on charisma lack strategic behaviour (Vergauwe et al., 2018).

One may deduce by the large number of publications on charismatic and transformational leadership theories that these forms of leadership are highly valued. Nonetheless, criticism of these two theories does exist regarding their conceptualisation and measurement (Lord et al., 2017; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013; Yukl, 2012). Although different dimensions are linked to charismatic and transformational leadership, scholars fail to explain inclusion and exclusion criteria, or how these various dimensions combine to form a clear conceptualisation of it. Moreover, scholars question the lack of a clear theory explaining the connection of transformational and charismatic leadership dimensions to the role of mediators in explaining performance outcomes and its relationship with moderators (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013; Yukl, 2012).

Further developments in new-genre leadership theories include the increased emphasis placed on the role of followership in leadership, although scholars highlighted the role of followers decades ago (Avolio et al., 2009; Tuncdogan et al., 2017). The meta-analysis of Dinh et al. (2014) indicates that leader-followership research elicits significant interest from scholars. Follower-centric approaches consider follower characteristics that relate to leadership processes (Dinh et al., 2014), for instance the active role followers may play in promoting organisational values. In view of the importance of followership, the positive effect transformational leadership have on followers is significant. A working example is found in research that suggests that transformational leaders provide social support for followers, resulting in followers being more positive (Bono, Foldes, Vinson, & Muros, 2007).

Some of the other new leadership theories are briefly explained. The first of these is cognitive leadership approaches, which consider how leaders and their followers think and process information (Avolio et al., 2009). Secondly, complexity leadership approaches consider three main leadership roles, namely, adaptive (e.g. considering ways of overcoming challenges through for instance brain storming); administrative (e.g. following a specific dogma to consider planning initiatives); and enabling (e.g. enhancing follower potential by minimising any constraints posed by bureaucratic activities) (Avolio et al., 2009; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). The focus of complexity theories is on nascent processes within complex systems where leaders play an enabling rather than a controlling role (Dinh et al., 2014). Leaders function within a global environment that is never certain and in which macro-, meso- and micro-level influences are complex (Dinh et al., 2014). A third movement is towards shared leadership (also referred to as collective or distributed leadership), referring to members of a team who collectively lead each other (Avolio et al., 2009). Fourthly, a leaders-substitute theory has developed, referring to contingency factors that enhance, neutralise or totally substitute the role of the leader through, for instance, electronic brainstorming where the participating leadership guidance comes from the rules of the operating system (Avolio et al., 2009). Dinh et al. (2014) refer to this theoretical theme as e-leadership, explaining that theories in this category consider how leadership is affected by tasks, technology and distance in virtual teams. Fifthly, leadership is increasingly considered cross culturally to expand on the leadership theories that have predominantly been researched in western cultures (Avolio et al., 2009). A sixth development is the consideration of biological or neurological perspectives on leadership, a relatively new but growing field that considers how genetics and the environment influence the occurrence, development and effectiveness of leaders (Dinh et al., 2014; Tuncdogan et al., 2017). The effect of hormones on leadership are also gaining

traction, considering how hormones such as testosterone or dopamine influence empathy, dominance and ethical behaviour (Tuncdogan et al., 2017). Additionally, Dinh et al. (2014) emphasise a seventh theoretical theme, namely, the importance of considering how leaders influence underlying processes that result in organisational outcomes. An eighth theme considers strategic leadership, focusing mainly on top-level leadership (Dinh et al., 2014).

Team leadership, another leadership development, considers how leadership in groups or teams at middle and lower levels of the organisation facilitates group performance, learning and the like (Dinh et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017). Other theories include destructive leadership (where leaders behave badly, resulting in toxic leadership); ethical and moral leadership theories (philanthropic behaviours form the core of these theories); negative and positive emotions in leadership and how they affect leaders and followers; and a number of other theoretical categories (Dinh et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017).

3.1.2.6 *Exchange theories*

As stated above, Blau's (1964) social exchange theory is one of three meta-theoretical lenses for this research, and the foundational theory of the leadership, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust variables. Blau's seminal work (1964) on social exchange theory assists in explaining workplace relationships either at the dyadic level or when accommodating larger numbers of actors, for example in organisations (Emerson, 1976). This theory is generally regarded as one of the leading conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Elsetouhi, Hammad, Nagm, & Elbaz, 2018) and is still regarded as an important theme for research (Dinh et al., 2014).

According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976), commitments are created through a succession of voluntary interactions between parties who are mutually dependent on each other (Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Karanges, Beatson, Johnston, & Lings, 2014; Saks, 2006a) and motivated by the reciprocal benefits derived from the relationship (Blau, 1964). No specific timeframe is attached to the reciprocal obligation, with such a timeframe being mostly unspecified – in fact, the perceived balance of exchange is usually considered over the long term (Blau, 1964). In other words, as Emerson (1976) explains, resources will continue to flow on condition that a valued return is contingent on them, and thus reinforced or exchanged.

Constructive behaviour and attitudes will be evident should employees believe that their contributions to the organisation are valued (Saks, 2006a). Should employees find that the

potential benefits of the relationship outweigh the risk of the relationship, they will continue in the relationship, while the converse is also true (Soieib et al., 2013). Given time, the relationship (characterised initially with low trust levels and with constricted obligational control) will develop into a relationship characterised by high trust levels, low levels of control and long-term obligations (Hansen, 2011). Cote (2017) explains this process as leaders and followers who first get together as strangers with low exchange and subsequently progress to maturity in a high social exchange relationship. Such a relationship is characterised by high levels of mutual trust and respect, as well as obligations (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Social exchange is therefore predictive of future expected behaviour (Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008).

Additionally, according to social exchange theory, employees who perceive their organisational relationships as ethical will emulate this positive behaviour in their workplace (Hansen, 2011). Furthermore, Hansen (2011) explains that these social exchange relationships are the outcome of constructive experiences, which result from mutual risk-taking (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). A substantial amount of trust on the part of the exchanging parties is required, and specifically from the viewpoint of the level of trust leaders have in their subordinates (Hansen, 2011).

(a) Leader-member social exchange theory

Exchange relationships often develop with leaders (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). The interpersonal dyadic relationship that develops, resulting in the exchange that happens between leaders (e.g. supervisors) and their subordinates, is referred to as leader-member-exchange (LMX) (Dinh et al., 2014; Graen & Scandura, 1987). According to LMX, in order to form relationships with individual subordinates, leaders will adopt different leadership styles based on their subordinates' needs, attitudes and personalities (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Dansereau et al. (1975) refer to this relationship as a vertical dyad linkage approach, explaining that it denotes a unique relationship on a dyadic level that is formed over time as the parties influence each other and negotiate their respective roles on an ongoing basis. At its core, LMX involves reciprocal interaction processes (Tse, Troth, Ashkanasy, & Collins, 2018). According to Lord et al. (2017), LMX is the most widely researched relationship-based approach to leadership. In an LMX relationship, each party offers something that is regarded of value to the other party, thus ensuring that the exchange is regarded as reasonably fair and just (Graen & Scandura, 1987). The higher the perceived value attached to the tangible or intangible commodity of

gratification that is exchanged, the higher the perceived quality of the relationship (Wayne et al., 1997).

The fundamental principle of LMX theory is that the different exchange relationships that are formed between leaders and their followers are altered by the quality of the relationship and thus affect the outcomes of leaders and followers (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The emphasis on the quality and uniqueness of the relationship between leaders and their followers differentiates LMX from other leadership theories (Cote, 2017; Lord et al., 2017). In high quality relationships, employees would feel obligated to respond not only by performing satisfactorily but also by engaging in behaviours that benefit the leader directly, beyond the scope of normal expectations (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Social exchange theory provides the foundation for the LMX theoretical model (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). Antecedents to LMX include the degree of mutual liking and the expectations leaders have of subordinates (Wayne et al., 1997). LMX significantly influences employees' perceptions of their organisational support, and thus their commitment to the organisation (Wayne et al., 1997) and generally, performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Based on the number of positive relationships between LMX and performance outcomes, scholars suggest that the relationship with their direct supervisor influences the way employees view their whole work experience (Gerstner & Day, 1997). A significantly positive relationship was found between organisational citizenship behaviours and LMX (Ilies et al., 2007). Additionally, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) advance the notion that LMX leads to increased follower effort and thus performance and organisational effectiveness, as well as empowerment and job satisfaction.

Concerns about LMX have been raised, despite the number of studies conducted that are related to the theory (Lord et al., 2017). These criticisms highlight inconsistencies in conceptualisation and measurement, and whether LMX is considered on the dyadic level in line with its theory (Lord et al., 2017; Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). Cote (2017) further cautions against the creation of inequities between followers.

3.1.2.7 *Conclusion*

As mentioned above, scholars (Batistič, Černe, & Vogel, 2017; Eacott, 2017; Tuncdogan et al., 2017; Yukl, 1989) maintain that the disarray concerning leadership definitions and theories is in large a result of the many different viewpoints, methodologies and approaches in leadership

research, often with a very specific and narrow focus on what leadership entails. This results in little integration of findings, as researchers apply their primary focus and preferential methodology (Dinh et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2017; Yukl, 1989). As a case in point, Dinh et al. (2014) indicate that during the first 12 years of the current millennium, 66 different theoretical domains were identified.

For the purposes of this study, two theories act as the basis for the study of leadership, namely, the social exchange theory of Blau (1964) (discussed above) and the conflict culture theory of Gelfand et al. (2012) (refer to section 2.2.2.4 (h) for a full discussion of this theory). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) assists in explaining workplace relationships in organisations, including the dyadic level (Emerson, 1976), between for instance leaders and their followers. It explains leader–follower social exchange on a daily basis (Murry et al., 2001). As one of the leading theories in understanding workplace behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), and a key theme for research (Dinh et al., 2014), it serves as the theoretical base from which leadership is studied. It forms the theoretical basis for the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001), assessing perceptions of social exchange between leaders and their followers. Note that social exchange theory is also regarded as one of three meta-theoretical lenses for this research.

In addition, conflict cultures theory (Gelfand et al., 2012), as it relates specifically to the role leaders play in conflict management, is the second theory considered for leadership (see section 2.2.2.4(h)). It is the theoretical basis for the second leadership measuring scale, the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012). It is theorised that employees in a group tend to adopt comparable attitudes about managing conflict, thus developing a conflict culture. In other words, individual conflict management preferences unite around normative means for handling conflict that are (at the very least) in some measure shared by others in the organisation, due to recurrent interactions and established organisational structures (Gelfand et al., 2012). Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that leaders drive the conflict culture in a group or in an organisation through their own conflict management behaviour, being either collaborative, dominating or avoiding when dealing with conflict.

The current study measures leadership using two instruments. Firstly, the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001), based on Blau’s social exchange theory (discussed below in section 3.1.2.6), considers the perceptions of social exchange that transpire between leaders and their subordinates in their daily dealings. The second measuring scale, the

Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012), is used to deliberate on the influence of leadership on conflict management practices.

3.1.3 Socio-demographic variables influencing leadership

The current research considers the moderating effect of socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) for the purposes of constructing a conflict management framework. As such, the relationship between some of these variables and leadership is discussed next.

In South Africa, with its diverse population and ethnic cultural variety, race has to be considered. Perceived social incompatibility may generate challenges, necessitating the creation of favourable conditions for diverse individuals to interact (Zanda, 2018). In fact, leadership effectiveness is harmed when leaders do not recognise culture in environments of intercultural interactions (such as the South African workplace) (Hendrickson, 2016). Scholars argue that aspects such as gender and race affect the quality of LMX and that certain social psychological processes (e.g. self-knowledge and cultural competency) and contextual aspects (e.g. organisational composition and culture, diversity support) moderate the quality of exchange relationships (Scandura & Lankau, 1996). Additionally, research (Pauliené, 2012) advances that collectivist societies, such as African countries (Patterson & Winston, 2017), view effective leadership as an objective that stems from followers who are dependent on leaders for security and direction. Conversely, individualistic cultures view effective leadership in the light of ensuring strong financial results (Pauliené, 2012). African leadership has a humane and person-centric relational approach that acknowledges the interdependence between people (Patterson & Winston, 2017).

Today's multicultural workplaces necessitate that leaders view cultural differences as a situational characteristic, and to adapt their leadership styles accordingly (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). In fact, a multicultural mindset is required of leaders (Ayman & Korabik, 2010), cultivating their cultural intelligence (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). Wren (1995) argues that leadership exists in all societies as a necessity for its functioning. Distinctive leadership theories form within these societies, based on the views and specific ideas of individuals on what leadership entails. The cultural background of individuals, stemming from their social environment, shapes their perceived ideas of leadership.

Thus, the perception of ideal characteristics of leadership will vary between cultures (Den Hartog et al., 1999). This implies that South Africa with its multicultural composition may have different views on ideal leadership.

The increased participation of women in leadership roles brought a focus on gender-related research on leadership (Lord et al., 2017). Nonetheless, even though research suggests little difference in leadership ability, women are less represented in top jobs and leadership positions (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018). Leadership is still defined as masculine and substantial difficulties remain for accomplished and proficient women hopeful for top jobs (Bell & Sinclair, 2016). Scholars agree that women are often labelled with perceptions that may not be accurate and face intense scrutiny in positions of leadership (Eklund, Barry, & Grunberg, 2017; Meister, Sinclair, & Jehn, 2017). Oc (2018) confirms that stereotyping of female leaders hampers their advancement. In South Africa, women leaders experience conflict based on various diversity issues, such as gender, race, ethnicity and status (Mayer et al., 2018). Indeed, this study shows that within the South African context, female leadership is not only judged in terms of biological sex, but also from a sociological perspective where women have prejudicial societal labels attached to them (Mayer et al., 2018). These issues influence conflict stemming from diversity issues and, moreover, these sexist stereotypical beliefs negatively influence perceptions of women as effective leaders (Mayer et al., 2018).

According to Lord et al. (2017), gender-related leadership research focuses mainly on four categories: male and female leaders who emerge from initially leaderless groups; gender-related differences in leadership styles; gender bias in leadership evaluations; and the performance outcomes and effectiveness of male and female leaders.

- *Male and female leaders who emerge from initially leaderless groups*

A study done years ago (Megargee, 1969) considered differences in leadership emergence between males and females in masculine-type tasks and gender-neutral tasks. It was found that as a result of gender-role conflict, women leaders would emerge less, even when having dominant personalities (Megargee, 1969). Further research (Carbonell, 1984) done in the 1980s replicated and expanded on the work of Megargee (1969) to reassess the effect of gender-role conflict on the emergence of women leaders. Carbonell (1984) found that even with increased consciousness on women and men role conflict, women still tend to emerge less in leadership roles than their male counterparts when confronted with masculine-type tasks, but not when confronted with typical female roles. Carbonell (1984) concluded that the Megargee effect (1969)

was thus task-related. Lord et al. (2017) point out that the Megargee (1969) study was again part of a meta-analysis done in the 1990s (when women increasingly entered the labour market, aspiring to leadership positions) to determine conditions that will exacerbate or diminish the general trend for men to emerge more often as leaders than their female counterparts (Eagly & Karau, 1991). Again, the study confirmed the greater extent to which men emerged as leaders, especially during tasks not requiring complex social interaction (Eagly & Karau, 1991). However, women emerged slightly more as social leaders (Eagly & Karau, 1991). Eagly and Karau (1991) concluded that gender differences in emergent leadership can be mainly ascribed to the role-induced tendencies of men to be more task oriented and women more socially facilitated.

- *Gender-related differences in leadership styles*

It is generally accepted that women differ in leadership style from men, displaying higher people skills such as empathy, communication and cooperativeness (Lammers & Gast, 2017). This perception is in line with a meta-analysis done a number of years ago on differences in leadership styles of males and females (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), which found that women tend to have a more participative and democratic leadership style than men. Additionally, women tend to build supportive relationships by being more transformational in style than men (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003). In addition, women tend to use transactional rewards as incentives more than men do (Eagly et al., 2003). Nonetheless, scholars point out that the gender effect is small, and that similarities far outweigh any significant differences (Eagly et al., 2003; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011; Lammers & Gast, 2017). Stereotyping gender leadership significantly contributes to various leadership challenges; even when the stereotyping is seemingly positive it still may reinforce women's subordinate position in society (Lammers & Gast, 2017).

- *Gender bias in leadership evaluations*

Scholars (Eagly et al., 1995, 1992; Meister et al., 2017; Tuncdogan et al., 2017) have found that when men and women of relatively equal experience are evaluated in comparable leadership roles, women are evaluated less favourably, especially when the evaluations are done by men, or when these women used culturally masculine, autocratic and directive leadership styles. More recent research confirms that gender bias is still a concern of workplaces today (Koch, D'Mello, & Sackett, 2015; Meister et al., 2017). According to Koch et al. (2015), men are still preferred for jobs traditionally dominated by males; moreover, male raters show greater gender-role congruity bias than female raters for male-dominated jobs. Nonetheless, gender-role congruity bias

decreased when supplementary information indicating high proficiency of those being evaluated was provided to raters (Koch et al., 2015). Furthermore, experienced professionals showed less gender-role congruity bias than undergraduates or working adults when rating male-dominated jobs (Koch et al., 2015). Additionally, the tendency of men to regard leadership as more masculine than women do has been found to decrease as a greater demand for interpersonally skilled behaviour grows (Koenig et al., 2011). Nonetheless, when decisions are made about selection and promotions, research shows that greater attention is given to the presence and absence of masculine traits in candidates than to the presence or absence of feminine qualities (Powell & Butterfield, 2017). This results in women potentially being passed over, while male candidates receive greater scrutiny in decisions on who should move ahead (Powell & Butterfield, 2017).

- *Performance outcomes and effectiveness of male and female leaders*

Research suggests that even when women are afforded leadership roles, they have difficulties in convincing others to see them as the leader (Meister et al., 2017). This may perhaps contribute to the fact that research confirms a sisterhood and esprit de corps existing between women who align themselves with other women in role-model positions (Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat, 2018). However, according to earlier research, this does not happen; the label of ‘queen bee’ may be given to the female leader (Kanter, 1977). This label is explained by researchers as women who distance themselves from their female counterparts in situations where the majority of leadership positions are filled by men (Arvate et al., 2018; Kanter, 1977, 1987). To succeed, women in such positions adjust to the masculine organisational culture – it is thus not so much their male counterparts that necessitate this approach, but rather stereotyping within organisations (Kanter, 1977). However, recent research (Arvate et al., 2018) suggests that in public organisations, women leaders strongly consider the fact that they act as role models, overshadowing the queen bee effect. In fact, no support was found for the queen bee label (Arvate et al., 2018). Nonetheless, research suggests that to succeed, a female leader needs a favourable organisational environment that gives her power and discretion to make decisions (Arvate et al., 2018).

Leadership behaviour and outcomes are influenced by a leader’s age in two ways. Firstly, with age, the ability to regulate emotions increases. Secondly, increased age contributes to maintaining a positive orientation. These two aspects are moderated by a leader’s functional (e.g. as influenced by health) and psychosocial age, as well as cognitive and emotional workplace context demands (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Rudolph, Rauvola, & Zacher, 2018).

Women, specifically, find it easier to be in leadership positions when in their late 40s or 50s, married or divorced and with grown children (if any) (Meister et al., 2017). These women indicated that with age, their sexuality or sexual status became less significant for others, making it easier for them to be who they are (Meister et al., 2017). Nonetheless, research confirms that, in general, older individuals are more experienced and therefore better leaders (Tuncdogan et al., 2017). Further research found that leaders older than 46 rate highest with regard to transformational leadership (Barbuto Jr, Fritz, Matkin, & Marx, 2007).

The hierarchical position of a leader influences their leadership. Research advances the notion that leaders in varying positions are responsible for different functions and responsibilities (Zanda, 2018) and that leaders in senior positions inspire behaviour in junior leadership through a trickle-down effect (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). Moreover, research suggests a strong relationship between tenure and trust in leadership (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017), also with regard to women who, over time, succeed in being accepted in leadership roles (Meister et al., 2017). Employees with more experience have increased self-confidence (Purani & Sahadev, 2008), while inexperienced employees are more sensitive and have stronger reactions to work-related aspects such as leadership behaviour or work difficulties (Johnston, Parasuraman, & Futrell, 1989). It is accepted that experience assists employees to cope with work stress and challenges, but that more inexperienced employees need stronger communication and direction from their leaders (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1976).

Research confirms that education and experience play an important role in leader outcomes and behaviour (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007; Echevarria, Patterson, & Krouse, 2017). Nonetheless, scholars point out that little research has been done on the relationship between educational level and leadership and, where it has been done, mixed results were found (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007). However, in research that was done by Barbuto Jr et al. (2007), level of education significantly influenced followers' perceptions regarding transactional versus transformational leadership behaviours. Leaders with advanced degrees showed higher levels of individualised consideration than leaders with lower educational levels (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007).

3.1.4 Leadership and its implications for conflict management practices within an employment relations context

Management theory expanded in the mid-fifties to consider a human resources model (Miles et al., 1978), which contended that the ability to take effective decisions in order to reach

organisational objectives was widely dispersed and that most employees represented available resources which, if properly managed, hold the potential to considerably enhance organisational effectiveness (Miles et al., 1978). In holding this view of employees being an untapped source of ideas, the manager becomes the facilitator of organisational members in search of ways to contribute meaningfully to the organisation, rather than the manager being the controller or blocker of these ideas (Miles et al., 1978). Thus, a partnership is formed between management (the appointed organisational leaders) and their subordinates.

It is generally accepted that leaders play a vital role in the success of organisations and specifically also in the management of conflict (Mayer et al., 2018). Scholars agree that line managers' and top management's behaviour and traits, and how these are applied in various situations, are key to success and the influence leaders have on the wellbeing of their groups, organisations or societies (Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017; Tuncdogan et al., 2017) and in how workplace conflict is managed (Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017). In fact, conflict management is regarded as a key leadership competency (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018). Leaders should ideally follow a win-win style in resolving conflict, but in reality the situation (e.g. time constraints, the situation itself, role players' maturity, status and power) may dictate the ideal conflict management style (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Marquis & Huston, 1996; Rahim, 1983). Leaders who use cooperative conflict management styles (i.e. integrating, obliging and compromising conflict management styles that indicate greater concern for self and others) enhance the social exchange process, improving trust and cooperation as well as improved voice behaviour (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst, et al., 2013b).

However, organisational members in leadership positions can also act negatively. Apart from wage disputes, other forms of disputes with employees (e.g. abusive management behaviour) often stem from conflict with direct supervisors and other senior management (Purcell, 2014; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017). This is worrying, as one of the roles of management is the prevention and resolution of individual or collective workplace conflict (Teague & Roche, 2012; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017). Yet, research shows that the converse is sometimes true. Aggressive leader workplace behaviour (e.g. destructive behaviour, bad-mouthing, bullying) every so often exacerbates toxic organisational environments (Breevaart & De Vries, 2017; Sharma, 2018).

This is a very real and present challenge, as research indicates that in South Africa approximately 20% of workers are exposed to workplace aggression (Eschleman, Bowling, Michel, & Burns,

2014). Moreover, research shows that strong leadership is severely lacking in many South African sectors (Herbst et al., 2008). People feel powerless when there is a lack of leadership (Herbst et al., 2008). Moreover, supervisors who are insecure in their jobs, often giving rise to diminishing employee engagement levels (Gupta, Ravindranath, & Kumar, 2018; Wrape, 2015), and may even create obstacles so that they are not outperformed by their followers (Scharff, 2014; Stander & Rothmann, 2010).

On the other hand, strong leadership is generally regarded as a good indicator of positive organisational behaviour. To be successful, organisations need a leadership culture that supports an ER culture where organisational values are integrated with employees' personal individual values (Slabbert et al., 2001). Strong leaders who act with integrity, and honour ethical values, instil trust in their followers (Chu et al., 2011; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Lawal & Oguntuashe, 2012). Studies confirm the importance of leadership in creating trust, which in turn has a positive impact on relationships (Martins & Von der Ohe, 2002).

Furthermore, scholars confirm the importance of managerial processes and strong leadership in positively enhancing engagement at work (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, et al., 2014; Caniëls, Semeijn, & Renders, 2018; Sahoo & Mishra, 2012). The seminal work of Kahn (1990) states that, should employees perceive their managers to be trustworthy and respectful towards them, employee engagement levels are developed and maintained. Specifically, empowering leadership behaviour influences positive work engagement (Mendes & Stander, 2011), while transformational leadership behaviours lead to employees who recognise the importance of their work and thus set work and personal goals important to them – this leads to greater organisational commitment, engagement and trust between leaders and their followers (Bono & Judge, 2003; Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014). However, transactional leadership also contributes to increased employee engagement through contingent reward (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014). It is confirmed that followers flourish when leaders create a supportive environment (Bass, 1990).

In fact, leadership that creates an organisational climate of wellbeing by fostering a joint sense of belonging, inclusion, meaning, purpose, growth-mastery and flexibility-autonomy creates a sense of engagement and thriving at workplaces (Geiger, 2013). These findings are in line with Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, which holds that employees will reciprocate what they receive. It follows then that strong leaders showcasing positive behaviours and indicating trust in their employees will significantly contribute to employee engagement (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti,

& Derks, 2016; Caniëls et al., 2018; Hsieh & Wang, 2015; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996) and other organisational citizenship behaviours.

Furthermore, in this research it is argued that leaders hold the potential to influence workplace conflict management practices in a significantly positive and just way. Hence, the role of leadership in conflict management practices within an ER context is emphasised. As a case in point, the role leaders' play in the collective bargaining process is considered. Research indicates that transparent and fair grievance procedures or conflict resolution mechanisms, as well as healthy interpersonal relations and leadership development (Bankole, 2010; Ibietan, 2013) may strengthen collective bargaining processes. For instance, research has determined a significant relationship between the shared and relative effect of communication skills and emotional intelligence on the conflict management behaviour of labour leaders (Bankole, 2010).

Additionally, a positive relationship exists between leadership styles, conflict type and interpersonal conflict handling styles (Tanveer et al., 2018). This research points out that leadership style is specifically related to relationship conflict (Tanveer et al., 2018). Additionally, leadership style influences the interpersonal conflict handling style (Rahim, 2002) that is applied (Tanveer et al., 2018). For instance, leaders with a transformational style are generally more facilitative, hence they tend to prefer an integrating conflict handling style, whereas transactional leaders often use a collaborative style and *laissez-faire* leaders an avoidance conflict handling style (Hendel et al., 2005; Tanveer et al., 2018). According to Hendel et al. (2005), the organisation's leadership influences the tone of conflict management for the whole organisation and leaders should set an example by varying their choice of conflict handling style according to the situation.

Other examples indicating the importance of leadership in conflict management are widespread. Research shows that a combination of transformational leadership and organisational conflict management increases organisational trust (Chu et al., 2011). Also, scholars maintain that leaders who are perceived to act with integrity are trusted and, thus, empowering leadership behaviours (e.g. participative decision-making) are significantly enhanced, which in turn increases employee voice (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). Indeed, leadership is considered a vital antecedent of voice behaviour (Ali Arain, Bukhari, Hameed, Lacaze, & Bukhari, 2018). It is generally accepted that strong leaders enable their employees to grow and develop (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). In fact, a lack of employee participatory practices in dealing with problems

arising from conflict situations relates to feelings of conflict not being resolved fairly (Mestry & Bosch, 2013).

Additionally, leadership is key to a positive and strong organisational culture (Warrick, 2017), while a strong organisational culture influences the relationship of supervisors and their subordinates (Gupta et al., 2018). In fact, as previously indicated, research suggests that leaders' conflict management styles significantly influence the conflict culture of organisations (Gelfand et al., 2012) – in other words, how conflict management is generally approached. Gelfand et al. (2012) draw on seminal works to show that leaders' personality affects the development of organisational culture (Schein, 1983). Thus, Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that leadership behaviour in conflict management situations is a critical driver as it influences the conflict styles of other organisational members, eventually leading to the formation of a specific conflict culture in an organisation.

Likewise, leadership style, competencies and traits affect the way conflict is managed. For instance, research maintains that leaders with high emotional intelligence have a number of personal abilities (e.g. self-awareness, confidence and conscientiousness) and social competencies (e.g. empathy and social skills such as communication) that assist them in managing conflict (Goleman, 1995). When leaders fail to exercise their formal authority, they may be perceived as weak, too aware of being liked and afraid of conflict (Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2017). However, when leaders exercise their formal authority as and when needed, they mostly achieve their set objectives – resolving and managing conflict is a case in point (Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2017). Thus, part of leading others entails creating a work environment where followers feel safe enough to display innovative and creative behaviour, voice their disagreements, be accountable for and admit mistakes and engage in potentially conflictual discussions (Binyamin et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990).

Clearly, leadership has the potential to affect organisations meaningfully. Yet, leaders and followers often view their effectiveness differently; and self-bias significantly influences differences in perceptions about situations or expectations of leaders (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Yang & Li, 2018). Task accomplishment (providing structure) and facilitating team interaction (Stogdill & Shartle, 1948) are two aspects closely related to lesser conflict manifestations (Burke, 2006). Importantly, how leaders manage this conflict reflects on relationships in organisations rather than on the conflict itself (Tjosvold, 1997). For instance, conflict avoidance (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978) is frustrating for followers because of the inherent

uncertainty it creates (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and because it indicates low concern for followers (De Dreu et al., 2001). Moreover, when avoiding conflict, not all parties may realise that a conflict has occurred. Although leaders may perceive all to be well, followers may experience conflict which the leader does not even realise. Perceptions of the leader's conflict avoidance style may thus differ significantly from that perceived by followers (Yang & Li, 2018).

Research suggests that leadership conflict and decision-making styles may vary according to the situation. Vroom and Yetton (1973) studied more than 1000 participants, subsequently suggesting that managers known to be conflict confronters became more participative in high conflict situations, while 58% of conflict avoiding type managers became more autocratic in situations with high conflict. Additionally, Vroom and Jago (2007) explain that in further research on their decision-making theory of leadership, they found that the way leaders respond to conflict depends on whether they need their followers to accept or commit to a decision. Their research suggests that should the acceptance of a decision be irrelevant, leaders become more participative in situations where conflict is likely – perhaps indicating that leaders in such a situation argue that conflict may be constructive, leading to better decision-making (Jago, 1978). However, when acceptance of a decision is important, leaders become less participative in situations where conflict is likely. In this instance, it is argued that leaders may perhaps believe that participation might aggravate conflict, thus reducing acceptance of decision-making (Jago, 1978). These studies indicate that behaviour varies according to situation (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

Likewise, leadership style influences the management of conflict. For instance, ethical leadership reduces workplace conflict (Babalola, Bligh, Ogunfowora, Guo, & Garba, 2017), arguably because employees trust their leaders to act with integrity. Another example is found in charismatic leaders where agreeableness is a strong predictor of idealised influence; however, the driving force behind agreeableness is the avoidance of conflict and striving for harmony (Banks et al., 2017).

A further example of how leadership style influences conflict management is found in transformational leadership style research. It is argued that a transformational leadership style has a significantly positive relationship with engagement (Caniëls et al., 2018). Specifically, transformational leadership moderates the relationship between work engagement and a proactive personality should employees have a growth mindset (Caniëls et al., 2018). Thus, scholars argue that a transformational leadership style inspires employees to pursue cooperative team and organisational goals and organisational commitment (Billikopf, 2010; Bono & Judge,

2004; Lord et al., 2017), and accordingly contributes significantly to performance. Because of the shared vision and organisational commitment that are cultivated through transformational leadership, collective norms and values develop that assist in increasing a cooperative conflict management approach, rather than a win–lose competitive approach (Zhang et al., 2011). This leads to conflict being openly and constructively discussed as it is regarded as a mutual problem to be resolved (Tjosvold, 2008).

Gender plays a role in conflict management, specifically also from the perspective of leadership. Men often miss subtle cues and emotions, and tend to focus on achievement, whereas women show more sensitivity and may perceive emotions better, engage more in transformational and charismatic leadership styles, and show more empathy (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly et al., 1995, 1992; Koenig et al., 2011; Mayer et al., 2018). Yang and Li (2018) thus argue that female leaders will not as easily avoid conflict as their male counterparts do. Yang and Li's research (2018) confirmed that although perceptual distance exists regarding male leaders' conflict behaviour, it does not exist for female leaders and their teams. Nonetheless, a softer approach is often criticised. For instance, a South African study advances that a feminine leadership approach is still regarded as weak and ineffective, while a masculine leadership approach is generally regarded as the preferred and dominant approach (Mayer et al., 2018).

In the research of Mayer et al. (2018), South African women leaders indicate that they deal with conflict through open communication that often differs according to the situation (e.g. avoiding some difficult topics versus verbally confronting others), internally managing conflict episodes (e.g. through reflection) and systemic management (e.g. using disciplinary or grievance procedures) (Mayer et al., 2018). This research clearly points to the many obstacles faced by leaders in regard to diversity issues (gender, race, language, status etc.) and accompanying stereotyping (Mayer et al., 2018). However, the research also highlighted that often conflict is enlarged beyond the interpersonal context because of South Africa's socio-political and historical context; overcoming structural imbalances of power is highly politicised (Mayer et al., 2018).

Scholars argue that leadership theories should consider an organisational view and not only a dyadic view in organisations (Gordon & Yukl, 2004); it is argued that any conflict management framework should consider a similar approach. Leadership directly and indirectly (e.g. through facets of organisational culture) contributes to a positive conflict culture in organisations (Gelfand et al., 2012); the enhancement of employee voice (Binyamin et al., 2017; Duan, Li, Xu, & Wu, 2017; Lee, Choi, Youn, & Chun, 2017); employee engagement (e.g. Caniëls et al., 2018; Saks,

2006a) and organisational trust (Boxall, 2016; Cheung, Wong, Yiu, & Pang, 2011; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Mayer et al., 1995). Consequently, leadership's potential in affecting the management of conflict in organisations is clear.

In agreement with other scholars who have for many years suggested a more integrated conflict management approach (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Lynch, 2001), this research searches for answers to the way the constructs of relevance to the research, including the leadership construct, may contribute to this objective. No other study was found that considered an integrated conflict management strategy that included leadership in combination with the other constructs of this research.

3.2 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

This research argues that it is necessary to consider an organisation's culture when constructing a framework for conflict management. Not only does an organisation's culture contribute to a sustained competitive advantage and organisational performance (Cui, Liu, & Mou, 2018; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Özçelik et al., 2016; Warrick, 2017) but it also explains how things are done in a specific organisation (Schein, 2010). More specifically, Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that organisations take on a conflict culture – in part influenced by the leaders' conflict handling styles and in part based on what employees see as accepted behavioural norms and values – indicating to employees how conflict is handled in their organisation or group.

Organisational values reflect the organisational culture and thus influence the strategic direction of an organisation in aspects such as change initiatives or decision-making (Özçelik et al., 2016). Thus, aligning the organisation's culture with the organisation's strategies assists the successful implementation of strategy (Harrison & Bazzzy, 2017). Scholars advise that an analysis of the organisational culture is necessary before any planned changes and strategies can be aligned with the organisational culture and only thereafter should the strategies be implemented (Heine, Beaujean, & Schmitt, 2016).

Drawing on the work of Hofstede, Neuijen, Daval Ohayv, and Sanders (1990), highly diverse organisations should consider the impact of national culture on organisational culture. Research suggests that substantial differences are evident between organisations on various dimensions of organisational culture, which are closely related to the dimensions of national culture (Hofstede et al., 1990).

Additionally, research suggests that organisational culture positively influences organisational commitment (Albrecht, 2012; Ellinger et al., 2013; Fenlon, 1997), employee performance (Ellinger et al., 2013), employee engagement (Greco, Laschinger, & Wong, 2006; Men, 2012; Rofcanin, Las Heras, & Bakker, 2017), internal organisational communication effectiveness (Men, 2012), job satisfaction (Fenlon, 1997), trust in leadership (Geiger, 2013; Jason, 2014; Schein, 1983), while also contributing to successfully implementing organisational change programmes (Smollan, 2013). Organisational culture can boost the morale and productivity of its employees, and contribute to the attraction and retention of talented people (Warrick, 2017). Furthermore, organisational culture has been directly and positively associated with job and team resources, engagement and extra-role behaviour, and indirectly exerts influence on commitment and extra-role behaviour (Albrecht, 2012). Additionally, research has found that employee-friendly organisational cultures that provide good benefits and compensation, training opportunities and equal prospects, show increased organisational value, performance and efficiency, especially in countries with high labour market flexibility (Fauver et al., 2018). In other words, organisations that invest in their employees are valued at a higher level and perform better – the emphasis is thus not so much on claiming that employees are valued but rather behaving in a way that shows that employees are of value (Fauver et al., 2018). Similarly, supporting employees with a family supportive culture leads to increased engagement and performance (Rofcanin et al., 2017). Thus, an employee-friendly culture encourages employees to work harder and more effectively (Fauver et al., 2018). It thus shapes employee commitment and other relationships, such as those with external stakeholders (Özçelik et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, there is also research that paints a bleaker picture of organisational culture. For instance, in contrast with the positive effects listed above, research in China suggests that promoting organisational culture is negatively related to the market value of an organisation, not significantly related to financial performance, but positively related to innovative output when having an innovation culture (Zhao, Teng, & Wu, 2018). At the very least one may conclude that specific outcomes may be obtained by a strong organisational subculture, such as innovation, or conflict management. Overall, one may deduce that organisational culture has a potentially profound bearing on organisations and its members (Schein, 1996).

Organisational culture and organisational climate appear to be two constructs that stimulate much debate, as scholars view these two concepts in many different ways (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Denison, 1996). Some view organisational culture as a broader concept than organisational

climate (Evan, 1968; Fleishman, 1953a), while others argue that climate is the broader concept (Argyris, 1958) or that the two terms are similar constructs to be used interchangeably (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Other scholars argue that the constructs are complementary as both are used to understand psychological phenomena and influence social contexts (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). However, for the purposes of this study, organisational culture is regarded as a separate construct and is considered as such. Further, the research addresses the matter of organisational culture in the light of the proposed conflict management framework. The following sections conceptualise organisational culture and discuss the most important theoretical models on organisational culture, followed by a brief overview of the relationship between certain socio-demographic variables and organisational culture.

3.2.1 Conceptualisation of organisational culture

Culture is explained as a socially constructed assemblage of aspects such as practices, schemes, ideas, values, rules, goals, and the like (Fiske, 2002). Organisational culture is one form of culture where one may argue that all these aspects are realised on an organisational level. Organisational cultural studies have been ongoing since the late 1970s; nonetheless, no agreement has yet been reached on a common meaning of the concept of organisational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). As such, organisational culture has been described in various ways. The first work on organisational culture applied anthropologists' knowledge of norms and beliefs in different cultures to the organisational setting, stating that organisational culture is about purpose, commitment and order being created in the early lives of organisations by creating meaning for a specific group at a specific time (Pettigrew, 1979).

Thus, scholars argue that references to organisational culture refer to a common awareness of aspects shared by members of a social unit (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Smircich, 1983). In other words, organisational culture reflects how individuals perceive attitudes and behaviours that will assist them in fitting in and being part of a group (Schneider et al., 2013) and thus it guides acceptable behaviour by providing standards (Martins & Martins, 2015). Thus, from the perspective of providing fit in an organisation (O'Reilly et al., 1991), organisational culture can be explained as the cement that holds the various sections and individuals of an organisation together by providing group cohesiveness (Özçelik et al., 2016). It is lasting, constant and unified (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

Likewise, it is argued that successful organisations develop an esprit de corps – explained as shared feelings of enthusiasm and devotion to a specific cause, and a camaraderie among organisational members (Jones & George, 2016). Organisational culture thus provides meaning through socialisation as employees converge in the workplace (Denison, 1996). Organisational culture is an important indicator of person–organisation fit (Schein, 1985), because individual aspects (such as values, expectations and the like) interact with organisational aspects (e.g. values and norms) (O’Reilly et al., 1991). The interactions in the symbolic world form the development of an organisation’s culture, which gives it its stability but also explains its fragile nature – an organisation’s culture is dependent on individual awareness and action (Denison, 1996).

Additionally, organisational culture has been described as “the collective programming of the mind” which leads to differentiating the members of one organisation from another (Hofstede, 1991, p. 262). In other words, it clarifies the boundaries of one organisation from the next, giving organisational members a sense of identity (Martins & Martins, 2015). Organisational culture is a combination of ideologies (Harrison, 1972); a set of beliefs (Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983); a grouping of shared values (Peters & Waterman, 1982); basic assumptions, beliefs, norms and values (Schein, 1985). Furthermore, it is an indicator of person–organisation fit (O’Reilly et al., 1991); widely shared norms and values (O’Reilly et al., 1991); behavioural norms and expectations (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988); and the joint way humans think (Bagram, 2001). Organisational culture combines the characteristics of being holistic, determined by past experiences, related to anthropology concepts, constructed socially, focusing on organisational soft factors and behaviours, and is not easily changed (Cui et al., 2018; Hofstede et al., 1990). Martins and Martins (2015) argue that organisational culture thus facilitates something that is bigger than the employee’s self-interest.

Organisational culture is more than what is verbally shared, but rather relates to the actions of an organisation (Zhao et al., 2018). As such it has been described as the norms, attitudes and a social structure that direct the conduct and the interactions of everyday organisational life (Chatman & O’Reilly, 2016; Illes et al., 2014; Geiger, 2013; Sales, 2006). For instance, organisations will promote a certain culture according to the characteristics of the organisation, for example Apple having an innovative culture, while Walmart as a customer-oriented company fosters a culture of integrity (Zhao et al., 2018). Simply put, organisational culture is the way things are done in an organisation, partly shaped by the larger external culture within which the

organisation functions (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015) but also by its values (Özçelik et al., 2016). Organisational culture is thus shaped predominantly by perceptions of everyday practices (e.g. conventions/customs) within an organisation, which are rooted in symbols (words, gestures, pictures and so forth, carrying a particular meaning for the organisation), heroes (persons – dead or alive; real or imaginary – serving as inspiration to the organisation) and rituals (socially essential collective activities) (Hofstede et al., 1990). Weber (1948) referred to the transfer of values from founders to members' practices (Hofstede et al., 1990), but also maintained that as employees become part of an organisation, they learn the practices of symbols, heroes and rituals, which assist them in their organisational socialising processes (Hofstede et al., 1990) – all these aspects become part of an organisational culture. According to the Institute of Directors Southern Africa (2016), organisational culture is the way things are done, even when no one is watching.

Organisational culture has been extensively considered in the consultancy field (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). For instance, Deloitte (2017) views organisational culture as all behaviours that influence business performance, an aspect closely related to the level of employee engagement in organisations. Thus, aspects such as employee wellbeing and leadership practices are important elements of an organisation's culture (Deloitte, 2017). However, should one consider the seminal work of Schein (e.g. 2010), such an explanation may not take into account the three basic levels of assumptions and beliefs, norms and values, and cultural artefacts (Schein, 1985). Thus, according to Schein (2010), culture begins with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group. Should the group be successful and the assumptions taken for granted, this defines the organisation's culture, which will include the kind of leadership that is acceptable (Schein, 2010).

Furthermore, scholars explain that an organisation's culture will depict how work is organised and the organisation structured, the various role expectations, how to act in a job and resolve problems, interrelationships, as well as beliefs and practices with regard to a variety of issues such as diversity management (Geiger, 2013; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Sales, 2006). In general, organisations are results and reward driven. In general, the organisational culture thus revolves around optimal achievement of organisational goals – in fact, a strong organisational culture (which also focuses on supporting the line of business the organisation is in) is regarded as imperative in organisational success (Bagram, 2001; Ellinger et al., 2013; Fauver et al., 2018; Hofstede et al., 1990; Sales, 2006).

The seminal work of Smircich differentiates between two lines of thought around organisational culture (Smircich, 1983), the first relating organisational culture to what an organisation is, shaped by its organisational awareness, symbolism and psycho-dynamics; the second, alternatively conveying organisational culture as something the organisation has, shaped by social and cultural qualities that developed within organisations. In other words, organisational culture is “the deep structure of organizations” (Denison, 1996, p. 624) that are rooted in the value system, beliefs, and assumptions of the organisation’s members (Denison, 1996; Geiger, 2013) and the behaviour of the organisation’s leader (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Denison (1996) advances the idea that the underlying values, beliefs and principles simultaneously form the basis for the management systems of an organisation, and are a combination of management principles and behaviours that typify and strengthen those values, beliefs and principles. As such, they “facilitate shared meaning and guide behaviour at varying levels of awareness” (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014, p. 4).

Organisational culture has thus also been defined as the things that are valued or rewarded in organisations; in other words, the pattern of expectations and beliefs organisational members hold, and the behaviours resulting from these (O’Reilly et al., 1991). As O’Reilly and Chatman (1996) explain, organisational culture is regarded as a system of shared values that highlights important aspects, as well as the norms of the organisation that direct organisational members’ appropriate behaviour and attitudes. Organisational norms thus render observable behaviour and attitudes, which can be articulated and reported upon (Chatman & O’Reilly, 2016).

From the above examples, it is clear that there is a myriad of explanations and definitions on what organisational culture is and is not. Nonetheless, Hofstede’s quantitative and Schein’s qualitative work on organisational culture (e.g. Hofstede, 1980a; Schein, 1985), as well as the work of O’Reilly et al. (1991) and Denison (e.g. 1996), are seen as the foundation of the organisational culture concept (Cui et al., 2018; Chatman & O’Reilly, 2016). According to Cui et al. (2018), Hofstede focuses more on cross-national and cross-organisational culture, while Schein focuses on analysing organisational culture from within the organisation.

The theoretical roots of organisational culture are grounded in social constructionism (Denison, 1996). Social constructionism argues that individuals cannot be analytically detached from their environment, therefore they represent their environment and are subjects of their environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1996). The person–organization fit theory (O’Reilly et al., 1991) (discussed below) forms the theoretical basis for the organisational culture construct. O’Reilly et al. (1991) acknowledge the seminal work of Schein (2010) in their research. Therefore, Schein’s seminal

work (Schein, 1985, 1996, 2000, 2010) serves as a basis for the definition of organisational culture for this research. Schein (2010) explains organisational culture as a set of organisational assumptions that groups acquire as they resolve problems to adapt externally and integrate internally. Hence, for the purposes of this study, organisational culture is understood as patterns of shared assumptions that are internally integrated as organisations adapt to external problems in ways that are considered valid, and thus carried over to new employees as the correct way to think, perceive or feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2010). Organisational culture is measured by the Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010b, 2010a), measuring the sub-constructs of “Tolerance of conflict”, and “Allowance for mistakes”.

3.2.2 Theoretical models

The various models in which organisational culture is grounded are discussed next.

3.2.2.1 Social constructionism

Research recommends that cross-cultural studies need to consider a multilevel approach, ranging from the global cultural level to the national, organisational, group and individual levels (Erez & Gati, 2004). Desired and shared existing values determine the boundaries of each level, as well as the organisational culture level (Erez & Gati, 2004). Within this domain, the theoretical roots of organisational culture are grounded in social constructionism (Denison, 1996). Theorists face a dilemma when considering organisational culture because of the phenomenon that social context is simultaneously the product of individual interaction, but also provides context to the interaction (Denison, 1996; Ehrhart, Schneider, & Macey, 2014).

According to social constructionism, individuals cannot be analytically separated from their environment, therefore members of social systems are at once representatives and subjects of their environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1996). Generally, the organisational culture literature focuses on how social contexts develop out of the interactions of individuals – the work of Schein (1985) (discussed below) is a case in point (Denison, 1996). Denison (1996) explains that this dilemma implies that social context should be both the medium and the outcome of social interaction. Nonetheless, Denison (1996) is of the opinion that social constructionist theory is valuable in understanding how social contexts are shaped over time for each organisation. However, comparing and/or generalising the organisational cultures of different organisations is questionable. This is because organisational culture is viewed from the perspective of developing

unique social constructions that create distinctive meaning for organisational members (Denison, 1996). This implies that any attempt at comparison is futile as each environmental context is unique, and that the goal of organisational culture research should rather lie in understanding and describing each unique organisational cultural setting and meaning (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Denison, 1996). Nonetheless, comparisons are possible on the intermediate level of the values and traits of organisational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Denison, 1996).

3.2.2.2 *Schein's three-level organisational culture model*

The seminal theoretical framework of Schein (1985, 1996, 2000, 2010) on organisational culture is generally regarded as the foundation of work on the topic and most researchers accept Schein's framework and conceptualisation (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Cui et al., 2018). Schein (1985) advanced an organisational culture model that posits that organisational culture consists of three interrelated levels. Firstly, the level of norms and values (taken up or genuine) explains observed behaviour (i.e. the expressed beliefs about how and why things are done); and secondly (and more importantly), underlying conscious or unconscious assumptions and beliefs. Organisational members often do not recognise these assumptions as such, but rather see them as interpretations that are taken for granted as the unquestioned basis on which employees act. The third level is one of artefacts, referring to visible forms and practices within the organisation (e.g. symbols, languages, rituals), which are easily assessable and observable and that reflect the underlying assumptions, norms and values. According to Schein (1985), these three levels shape an organisation's culture, and develop as organisations resolve internal and external problems. Schein (1985) argued that these invisible layers are formed in the subconscious, and as such, that they can only be measured through qualitative studies (Cui et al., 2018).

3.2.2.3 *The person–organisational culture fit*

Nonetheless, scholars have developed quantitative models to measure organisational culture (Cui et al., 2018), arguing that measurements on the level of organisational culture characteristics and values are possible (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Denison, 1996). The influential work of O'Reilly and colleagues (O'Reilly et al., 1991) advanced an Organisational Culture Profile assessment instrument by utilising a Q-sort method (explained as template-matching) on 54 value indicators to measure person–organisational culture fit. O'Reilly et al. (1991) acknowledge the three-level notion of Schein's theory (2010), concentrating explicitly on the norms and values that characterise organisational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). The theory considers

organisational culture as a form of social control that arises in organisations when the organisational members are in agreement on the behavioural norms that characterise their group or organisation (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). The central theme of this theory is that organisational members may be more or less attracted to organisations with different cultures, and thus find a fit with the organisation, or not (O'Reilly et al, 1991).

Scholars (O'Reilly et al., 1991) draw on Schein's theory (2010), concentrating specifically on dimensions relating to the norms and values associated with organisational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). The eight dimensions that relate specifically to organisational culture are considered in the Organisational Culture Profile: innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome or result orientation, aggressiveness and competitiveness, supportiveness, emphasis on growth and rewards, a collaborative team orientation, and decisiveness (O'Reilly et al., 1991). As can be seen from the above, O'Reilly et al. (1991) identified innovation as one of eight dimensions to consider in work on organisational culture; and as such their person-organisation fit theory forms the theoretical basis for the organisational culture construct.

Four steps are advocated, namely, to describe the organisational values, assessing organisational characteristics, assessing individual preferences regarding organisational must-haves, and lastly, calculating the person–organisation fit score (O'Reilly et al., 1991). When completing the assessment, organisational members are asked to rank the value statements according to accurate descriptions of the way things are in the organisation, thus ensuring a clear indication of the characteristics most and least representative of the organisational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Apart from the dimension of attention to detail, all seven other dimensions found a significant correlation with personality dimensions. For instance, should an individual have a high need for achievement, a strong preference for an aggressive, results-driven organisational culture will be prevalent (O'Reilly et al., 1991).

More recently, an update and validation of the Organisational Culture Profile was published, confirming six dimensions: adaptiveness or innovation, orientation to results, orientation to detail, orientation to customers, collaboration or teamwork, and lastly, integrity (Chatman, Caldwell, & O'Reilly, 2014; O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, & Doerr, 2014). Nonetheless, Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) acknowledge that the instrument may not measure all possible norm dimensions; however, the Organisational Culture Profile is the only instrument designed specifically to measure organisational culture by considering shared organisational norms based on normal – as opposed to dysfunctional – behaviour in organisations.

For the purposes of this research, organisational culture is defined as patterns of shared assumptions that are internally integrated as organisations adapt to external problems in ways that are considered valid and thus carried over to new employees as the correct way to think, perceive or feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2010). The theoretical work of O'Reilly et al. (1991), based on the principles of social constructionism (Denison, 1996) and Schein's theory (2010), is regarded as the theoretical foundation of organisational culture in this research. O'Reilly et al.'s (1991) person–organisation fit theory underlies the current research as it pertains to organisational culture, even though Yeh and Yu's (2010a) measuring instrument is used.

Although the measuring instrument of O'Reilly et al. (1991) is not used in this research, Yeh and Xu (2010a) considered the dimension of innovation (one of the eight dimensions for the Organisational Culture Profile in their work). Yeh and Xu (2010b) draw on the work of scholars (Miron, Erez, & Naveh, 2004), who argue that organisations need to have an innovative organisational culture in order to survive in today's competitive global environment. As stated above, innovation is recognised by scholars as a measure of organisational culture (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Rousseau, 1990). Innovation in organisations is defined as the effective implementation of creative ideas through significant levels of initiative (Amabile, 2000). To ensure innovation, an organisational culture is necessary that allows employees to act creatively (Miron et al., 2004). But then again, employees only realise their full potential in a work context where the organisational culture reflects their own values, interests and capabilities (Schneider, 1975). Thus, the current research argues that to manage conflict successfully, organisations need to consider innovative approaches. However, Yeh and Xu (2010b) propose that cultural differences influence whether conflict is tolerated, and mistakes allowed. Since employees' values, interests and capabilities should be congruent to the organisational culture in order for organisational members to be effective (Schneider, 1975), it is important to consider how these two aspects (conflict tolerance and allowance of mistakes) are viewed in diverse South African organisations when planning innovative conflict management strategies.

3.2.2.4 Theoretical Model of Organisational Culture Traits

Another organisational culture theoretical model that was developed stems from the work of Denison and Mishra (1995). To indicate the issue of organisational culture and organisational effectiveness, the theoretical model of organisational culture traits considers four cultural traits that may influence an organisation's effectiveness, namely, involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Mission refers to the strategic direction and measurement

of the organisation; employee involvement refers to the empowerment of employees through granting decision-making power and training; internal consistency relates to the set of adopted and consistent values that are adhered to; and adaptability refers to how organisations learn from customers and competitors and change accordingly (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). While employee involvement and adaptability indicate a flexible, open and responsive organisational culture, consistency and mission indicate integration, direction and vision (Denison & Mishra, 1995). According to the research of Denison and Mishra (1995), these four cultural traits are thus indicative of performance perceptions and objective measurements, such as return on investments. Therefore, organisational culture is measurable and significantly related to organisational performance outcomes (Denison & Mishra, 1995).

Denison and Mishra's 1995 model is criticised for a number of reasons (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Firstly, it is argued that apart from adaptability, the traits do not reflect organisational culture. For instance, an organisation's mission gives strategic direction as it defines the organisation's purpose (Torrington, Hall, Atkinson, & Taylor, 2017), while culture is defined by Schein (2010) as shared expectations of what would be regarded as acceptable behaviour. Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) argue that an organisation can have a strong mission, while not having a strong organisational culture. Similarly, employee involvement is independent of organisational cultural values, norms and assumptions; organisations may have a strong culture without having employee involvement (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Additionally, Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) argue that consistency (the third trait) measures the strength of organisational climate, not organisational culture. These scholars (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016) conclude that while Denison and Mishra's theory (1995) measures overall organisational effectiveness, it does not measure organisational culture.

3.2.2.5 *The Hofstede multidimensional model of organisational culture*

The Hofstede multidimensional model of organisational culture (Hofstede, 1998) was developed to consider the subcultures an organisation may hold in various parts of it, such as professional, administrative or customer-interface subcultures. The dimensions of Hofstede's model (1998) include whether organisations are process versus goal orientated, internally versus externally driven, have an easy-going or a strict work discipline, are narrow-minded or professional, have an open versus a closed system, are normative or pragmatic, and lastly, are either employee or task orientated.

3.2.2.6 *Organisational Culture Inventory*

Furthermore, an Organisational Culture Inventory was designed to identify the pressures organisations place on organisational members to behave in dysfunctional ways and to improve individual development (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). The Culture Inventory was based on an inventory assessing 12 lifestyles (Lafferty, 1973). It was argued that organisational members at times all display similar dysfunctional behaviour that may be due to pressures to conform and the Organisational Culture Inventory was then designed to determine how individuals were expected to think, considering pressures to either fit in or to conform (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). The inventory included the following 12 norms: humanistic, helpful, avoidant, power, perfection, competitive, affiliative, approval, conventional, dependent, self-actualising and oppositional (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). The norms indicate one of two underlying organisational dimensions, namely, being either task or people-oriented (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). These two dimensions are associated with three types of organisational culture, namely, constructive, passive-defensive and aggressive-defensive. Thus, the instrument is used to indicate employees' behaviour, but also to identify organisational behaviour norms, thus reflecting organisational culture (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988). An example related to the current research is found in the oppositional culture style, reflecting an organisational culture characterised by rewarding criticism and subsequent high levels of conflict (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

3.2.2.7 *Competing Values Framework*

A further theory on organisational culture is called the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 1998; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981, 1983; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). The framework consists of two dimensions: firstly, flexibility versus control; and secondly, internal focus and integration versus external focus and differentiation. These two dimensions are depicted in four quadrants, indicating four types of organisational culture, namely, clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy. The measuring instrument of this model (the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument) has 16 items that reflect three underlying dimensions, referred to as competing values (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981). These competing values are focus (indicating people versus task orientation), structure (flexibility versus control) and time (short term versus long term) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981). Four organisational effectiveness models are identified from the 16 items, namely, the human relations model, open systems model, internal process model, or rational goal model (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981, 1983).

Although Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1981) never mention organisational culture in their article, scholars later referred to the Competing Value Framework model of effectiveness as a cultural model (Cameron & Quinn, 1998; Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). The measuring instrument for the Competing Value Framework assesses six categories, namely, dominant characteristics, organisational leadership, managing of employees, organisational glue, strategic emphasis, and success criteria (Cameron & Quinn, 1998). Again, it may be argued that these categories do not relate to the generally accepted three-level framework of Schein (1985, 2010), but rather to organisational effectiveness criteria.

Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) posit that although these characteristics indicate the competing values, on scrutiny the cultural types identified are actually *not* competing. In fact, research has indicated that more than one of the values of the Framework can exist simultaneously in organisations (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Additionally, the assessment instrument is criticised because some items appear in multiple categories, while the reasoning for placing items in certain categories is at times unclear (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Additionally, the construct validity of the assessment instrument is questioned as it is not only the norms and values of an organisation that are measured, but also other aspects such as leadership, strategy and the like that do not form part of the organisational culture construct (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011).

3.2.2.8 *Conclusion*

From studying various theoretical frameworks and models, it becomes clear that despite thousands of studies and articles on organisational culture, as well as it being a popular topic in the consultancy field, some important gaps remain as highlighted above. The work on organisational culture stems from organisational behaviour theories, and specifically organisational development theories, which form the basis of cultural studies on national, organisational and individual level, as well as from a global perspective (Erez & Gati, 2004). Within this domain, the theoretical roots of organisational culture lie in social constructionism (Denison, 1996).

For many scholars researching the construct of organisational culture per se, the seminal work of Schein (1985, 1996, 2000, 2010) on organisational culture remains the point of departure. O'Reilly et al. (1991) draw on Schein's theory (2010), concentrating specifically on eight dimensions relating to the norms and values associated with organisational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016), amongst others on elements such as innovation, aggressiveness and competition,

collaboration and the like. As such, the theoretical work of O'Reilly et al. (1991), based on the principles of social constructionism (Denison, 1996), is regarded as the foundation of organisational culture in this research.

3.2.3 Socio-demographic variables influencing organisational culture

According to scholars (Martins, 1992, 2002), organisational culture can be viewed from three different perspectives. Firstly, the integrationist perspective argues that organisations have one culture shared by all and thus no conflict or differences are present and, if they do exist, they should be resolved. This is thus close to a unitarist viewpoint (Fox, 1966). Secondly, the fragmented perspective on organisational culture focuses on ambiguity rather than sharing; and argues that individual organisational members at different levels, occupations and so forth, would not share the same experiences, or attach the same meaning to that which organisations value. The third approach to organisational culture is referred to as the differentiation perspective. This perspective argues for a compromise (Schneider et al., 2013), noting that individual members may have subcultures based on their function, gender, occupation and the like, which implies that they will have different experiences of the organisational values and may apply different meanings to it. Martins (2002) advocates that organisations should apply all three of these perspectives so that the general culture is integrated, the subcultures are differentiated, and cultural strength is taken from the fragmented viewpoint.

Often these individualistic behaviours lead to uncooperative behaviour and work cultures. However, Chatman and Barsade (1995) argue that individualistic behaviours may be altered to more cooperative behaviour because of appealing payoffs; in other words, should individual reward be based on cooperation. This emphasises the importance of fair and prudently assembled reward schemes (Peterson, 1992) and income level in shaping a cooperative organisational culture. This is an important point of view to consider in diverse organisations.

Diversity issues such as different national cultures potentially have a negative influence on organisational culture, and may lead to conflict (Schloegel et al., 2018). Research suggests that an organisational culture that promotes collectivist rather than individualist cultural values moderates the relationship dynamics between socio-demographic aspects of race, gender and nationality, and cooperative behaviour (Chatman & Spataro, 2005). In later research, Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) point to the differences experienced between collectivist versus individualist national cultures, and the influence these may have on organisations. With collectivism, objectives

are shared, interests are interchangeable and various commonalities are present. Maintaining harmony is imperative in collectivist societies, and cooperation thus becomes important (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

This is in line with research that indicates a direct relationship between conflict management and trust among differing cultures, emphasising the importance of diversity considerations in organisations (Ndubisi, 2011). Diversity issues such as different national cultures potentially have a negative influence on organisational culture, and may lead to conflict (Schloegel et al., 2018). Subsequently, a culture of inclusion and tolerance with respect for diversity is imperative (Deloitte, 2017). In fact, research has found that organisations that apply a strong diversity culture, succeed in developing a unique organisational culture (Lee & Kramer, 2016).

Additionally, employees expect an integrated focus and a culture that highlights their workplace experiences as productive, engaging and enjoyable (Deloitte, 2017). According to Deloitte (2017), the digital world necessitates organisational cultures to adapt to augmented transparency and the influence of an increasing number of millennials in the workplace. However, research has found that age stereotyping may hinder communication, trust, knowledge exchange and coordination (Schloegel et al., 2018). In their research, Schloegel et al. (2018) found a significant bias towards older and younger employees in a technology-driven environment, with high performance expectations directed at middle-aged employees (Schloegel et al., 2018).

Considering race, research (De Beer, Rothmann, et al., 2016) indicates that in South Africa, white male employees perceive more job insecurity than their black counterparts, although employees from designated groups perceive more discrimination. For instance, research shows that employees from designated groups are perceived to be more incompetent (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). However, previous research has indicated that employees from both the designated and non-designated groups experienced discrimination equally (Bowen et al., 2013). Both groups identify with experiences of victimisation, harassment and racism based on discriminatory ethnic and gender practices (Bowen et al., 2013; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Integrating a diverse workforce, which stems from this array of people, is thus a huge challenge that concerns people management – regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, disability and sexual orientation (Isiaka et al., 2016). This is particularly true because organisations have failed to combine diversity management with the inclusive organisational culture needed to add value (Deloitte, 2017). Nonetheless, it was found that negative stereotypes can be buffered when an

organisational culture emphasises trust and team performance, rather than individual performance and control (Schloegel et al., 2018).

Related to the question of diversity and age are requirements of employees to have a better work–family balance with increased flexible workplace patterns (Rofcanin et al., 2017). Research indicates that all generations express a need for a flexible work culture (Eversole, Venneberg, & Crowder, 2012). Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are exposed to higher life expectancy and are therefore interested in remaining busy and adding value in organisations. This group express the need for continuous development, for contributing to societal needs, and for performing meaningful work (Eversole et al., 2012). Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) express the need to be kept happy, to be engaged in meeting the goals of the organisation and to maintain stability (Eversole et al., 2012). This generation wants to be there for their family, and thus wants flexible workplace cultures. Generation X individuals are not loyal to the organisation they work for, and thus the organisational culture and other aspects of the organisation should make it worth their while should they wish them to remain (Eversole et al., 2012). Generation Y, also referred to, as the Millennials (born after 1980) are highly skilled employees, with high levels of technological skills. Similarly, they express a need for a flexible work culture (Eversole et al., 2012). Furthermore, a family supportive organisational culture that considers organisational practices and norms supporting family life (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999) assists in lessening work–family conflict, but also contribute to higher work engagement and performance (Rofcanin et al., 2017).

The organisations of today function within an environment that faces constant changes and challenges and that requires an organisational culture that promotes learning so that the organisation can stay abreast of difficulties and reach its set objectives. For this to happen, a learning organisation (Senge, 1990) is necessary. Thus, a learning culture that fosters the acquirement and transfer of knowledge to all in the organisation is essential. The focus is therefore not so much on individual learning, but rather on an organisational culture that promotes a collective orientation towards learning (Dajani & Mohamad, 2017). It is argued by the researcher that the higher employees' education level, the more open and supportive they will be of an innovative and learning culture that also considers creative ways of managing conflict; however, there seems to be a paucity of research that explores this relationship. To the knowledge of the researcher, no other research has been conducted which considered this specific moderating variable as it relates to organisational culture within a conflict management framework. Thus, this

study contributes to the organisational culture by considering the moderating effect of educational level on organisational culture.

In addition, research suggests that the leadership of an organisation significantly influences an organisation's culture (Zanda, 2018). Leaders in the higher hierarchical structure of an organisation have a great impact on setting the organisational climate and culture, which then trickles down to lower level supervisory leadership. Together these influences from higher job levels are shaped into an organisational culture, which is then again imitated by employees, thus enforcing the organisational culture (Zanda, 2018).

3.2.4 Organisational culture and its implications for conflict management practices within an employment relations context

An integrated conflict management approach implements a number of conflict management practices and processes that are aligned with the organisation's conflict management and general strategic orientation (Lipsky et al., 2017). It thus makes sense that the organisational culture potentially affects conflict levels in organisations – either in assisting to resolve conflict, or more negatively, to contribute to conflict levels. Research suggests that negative stereotypes could be buffered when an organisational culture emphasises trust and team performance (Schloegel et al., 2018). Subsequently, it is argued that organisational culture potentially influences the way conflict is managed in an organisation.

Organisational culture focuses on the organisational context or environment. It is an important construct to consider for a conflict management framework, as the influence of the environment is imperative in understanding individual behaviour (Ehrhart et al., 2014). In fact, research shows that organisational members' inclination to cooperate depends on both the individual and the collective situation (Chatman & Barsade, 1995). For instance, Hofstede defines organisational culture as the way organisational members relate to each other and to the outside world, as well as the work they do, in comparison to other organisations (Hofstede, 1998). Simply put, organisational culture is defined as the way things are done in an organisation; partly shaped by the larger external culture within which the organisation functions (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Global organisations (and one may argue organisations functioning in a country rich in cultural and ethnical diversity, such as South Africa) have to consider the influence of cultural differences on management practices (Martins & Martins, 2015).

Cross-cultural conflict is a natural occurrence in multicultural contexts (Du Plessis, 2012; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018), and not all organisational members will have the same view regarding the tolerance of conflict, or when mistakes are made (Yeh & Xu, 2010b). Thus, different cultural viewpoints of organisational members potentially influence the way conflict is viewed, and the manner in which innovative ways of managing conflict are regarded (Yeh & Xu, 2010b). The current research argues that a creative and innovative approach is necessary in constructing a conflict management framework for diverse South African organisations. Amabile (2000) explains that innovative organisations successfully implement creative ideas by applying substantial initiatives, an aspect which, it may be argued, is also necessary in resolving conflict. To ensure innovation, it is thus necessary to consider an organisational culture conducive to creativity (Miron et al., 2004).

Additionally, organisations should be aware of the changing nature of the organisational culture, and also of the broader culture within which it functions – only focusing inward and on each department as a separate entity and not being part of a bigger picture – contribute to conflict in organisations (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). This is because an external focus (e.g. the organisation's customers) gives members of the organisation a common goal (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Such an approach is seen as stakeholder inclusivity, where the legitimate needs, interests and expectations of all stakeholders are considered (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016). Changes in the external environment can lead to contradictions in what employees believe to be true of their organisation (Hofstede et al., 1990), thus leading to potential conflict situations. In addition, organisational culture may be a stumbling block if it is in conflict with the organisational strategy or direction (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010; Sales, 2006). Organisations need to create a conflict culture that is conducive to constructive conflict management (Gelfand et al., 2012).

Values play an important role in organisational culture, and to create an employee–organisation fit, values and priorities need to be shared between the two parties (Chatman, 1991). Moreover, organisational values embodied in an organisational philosophy serve as guiding principles in conflict management (Mayer & Louw, 2009), necessitating continuous reflection on the organisation's managerial values and priorities (Mayer & Louw, 2011). This includes an evaluation of the different roles of team members, subordinates and supervisors, as well as actively constructing the organisational culture (Mayer & Louw, 2009, 2011). For instance, research proposes that workplace bullying (a form of conflict manifestation) is more prevalent in hierarchy-oriented cultures (i.e. high in control, formalisation and competitiveness) than in relation-oriented

(fostering mutual trust and respect) cultures (An & Kang, 2016). O'Neill and McLarnon (2018) emphasise the importance of understanding the core values of a group working together, as differences in group values may result in conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). According to the seminal works of Chatman and Barsade (1995) and O'Reilly et al. (1991), a greater person–organisation fit is established between an individual's values and his/her organisational culture with, for instance, longer tenure and better job performance.

From an ER perspective, an enabling organisational culture is seen as a work culture which creates a positive environment for employees to perform at their best – for instance by investing in human and social capital (Ellinger et al., 2013; Imoisili, 2011). Labour–management cooperation is seen as integral to this process (Imoisili, 2006). Furthermore, the concept of fairness is imperative from an ER perspective (Venter et al., 2014) and should be actively advocated (Smollan, 2013). Other studies also point to the importance of workplace and management factors, practices and processes such as participative management, leadership in creating trust, and generally enhancing the way organisations deal with challenges they may face (see for instance Fenlon, 1997; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2003; Mestry & Bosch, 2013; Siira, 2012).

Additionally, the organisation's beliefs and values (and thus the organisational culture) should be aligned to the beliefs, values and culture of its employees, thereby minimising the need for policies and procedures to ensure discipline and rather fostering an approach where teamwork and performance are enhanced (Sales, 2006). Values, as part of an organisational culture, direct the behaviour of employees to achieve common goals, but may also be a source of conflict should the value system that is communicated not lead to increased employee commitment or satisfaction (Özçelik et al., 2016). A strong organisational culture significantly influences the behaviours and practices of employees because of a clear understanding of the values and norms of the organisation (Warrick, 2017), thus impacting on organisational functioning and performance (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). It is being progressively accepted that a more humane approach is necessary in the management of organisations and that such an approach should be embedded in the organisational culture (Bagram, 2001; Bankole, 2010; Katz & Flynn, 2013). Fostering a culture of engaged employees is an attribute of successful companies (Wiley, 2010).

Changes in organisational culture and subculture may lead to conflict, inconsistency and integration, as do different views and ideologies (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Scholars have found that when organisations promote a specific culture, it benefits the organisation in that specific field. For instance, Zhao et al. (2018) found a positive output in innovation in organisations that

foster an innovative culture. It is thus argued that having a positive conflict culture in an organisation may contribute to organisational performance because of the way conflict is managed.

From this perspective, organisational culture potentially influences the way conflict manifests and is managed in an organisation. As it prompts behaviour of fit in organisations, and focuses on shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991), it may be argued that it will direct the accepted behaviour towards managing conflict in the organisation. Norms such as openness, collaboration and the like potentially influence the conflict culture of the organisation (Gelfand et al., 2012). For instance, Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) argue that organisational culture has a prescriptive power as it suggests attitudes and behaviours deemed appropriate in specific situations – such as it being unacceptable to disagree with others in public. Failing to adhere to the suggested norms and behaviours may result in individuals being excluded from a group (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

An organisational culture thus provides the holistic and acceptable norms and values that characterise the organisation (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016), and more specifically, its conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). In fact, conflict as a subculture is an important aspect of overall organisational culture (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Research shows that not only individuals but also departments and organisations may develop a conflict handling style (e.g. integrating, avoiding and the like) – an aspect greatly influenced by leaders' conflict management style (Gelfand et al., 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). The importance of management development programmes in which managers reflect on the organisational culture, and the advancement of positive conflict management practices that are linked to the managerial identity and values, are advocated (Mayer & Louw, 2011). Research indicates that conflict cultures can be challenged and may change (Schein, 1983).

Gelfand et al. (2012) refer to the socially shared and normative ways of managing conflict in groups, departments or organisations as conflict cultures, and state that even if an individual deals with conflict in one way, the conflict culture of the group may result in dealing with the conflict according to the group culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). Gelfand et al. (2012) suggest that an avoidant, dominating and collaborative conflict culture may exist in organisations, similar to the way individuals deal with conflict. Gelfand et al. (2012) posit that where a dominating conflict culture reflects conflict management norms that advocate active confrontation of the conflict, an avoidant conflict culture will be characterised by agreeable and passive conflict norms. Conflict is

thus regarded as potentially troublesome and should be suppressed (Gelfand et al., 2012). A collaborative conflict culture is characterised by a conflict management that supports active constructive and cooperative discussions of the problem at hand (Gelfand et al., 2012). Research shows (García et al., 2017) that when employees and their representatives are perceived as competent, it positively affects cooperative conflict behaviour and relates negatively to competitive conflict behaviour (García et al., 2017). Ideally, a conflict culture should tolerate conflict and aim for early resolution of the conflict (Lipsky & Avcı, 2010). Additionally, it is of grave importance that such a culture should be integrated with the organisational culture and strategic objectives. Employee voice should be part of such an organisational culture, so that employees may have meaningful discussions (Gupta et al., 2018; Lipsky & Avcı, 2010).

From the above, one may conclude that organisational culture has the potential to play a decisive role in an integrated conflict management framework. No research was found that deliberated on the relationship dynamics of the antecedent of organisational culture in isolation, or in combination with the other constructs of this research, for the purposes of constructing an integrated conflict management framework.

3.3 EMPLOYEE VOICE

A range of employee involvement research has seen the light over the last couple of decades, including the field of research on the commonly used term 'employee voice mechanisms' in the workplace (e.g. Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2017; Foster & Farr, 2016; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Marchington, Goodman, Wilkinson, & Ackers, 1992; Pyman, Cooper, Teicher, & Holland, 2006; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Wilkinson, Dundon, Donaghey, & Freeman, 2014; Wilkinson, Townsend, & Burgess, 2013). One reason for this may be found in the many advantages of employee voice, as confirmed by the literature. For instance, employees who speak up and voice either problems or new ideas contribute to team and organisational effectiveness (Frazier & Bowler, 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2015; Weiss et al., 2018) and job performance by providing a vehicle for empowerment and other high performance management practices (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2018). Additionally, employee voice may lead to organisational citizenship behaviour (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, & Porter, 2001), either job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction (Colquitt et al., 2001; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), organisational commitment (Farndale, Van Ruiten, et al., 2011), loyalty, decreased absenteeism (Wilkinson et al., 2018) and a decline in turnover (Morrison, 2011). Employee voice

is regarded as one way through which employees can do more than what is expected of them (Morrison, 2014) and show their worth (Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013). However, Bashshur and Oc (2015) caution that none of the above benefits will be realised should the voice that is expressed not result in action, or at least, acknowledged. Nonetheless, this is not to say that voice does not also have negative outcomes. Research argues that when employees do not see voice as helpful behaviour, it may have a negative effect on their performance (Bashbur & Oc, 2015).

Originally, employee voice was seen as the domain of trade unions, however, scholars now recognise that there are alternative voice measures and systems for non-unionised employees (Mowbray, Wilkinson, & Tse, 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2013). Often, unionised voice is negatively correlated with job satisfaction, a phenomenon that improves as union voice is complemented with other forms of employee voice (Bashbur & Oc, 2015). Nowadays, it is argued that employee voice is relevant to the organisation from an internal and/or external perspective, for unionised and non-unionised workplaces, as well as on the macro, meso and micro levels (McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018).

For instance, scholars consider employee voice from a societal, macro perspective (Wilkinson et al., 2018). In this regard, social dialogue, imperative for the development and success of businesses (ILO, 2016a), serves as an example. Social dialogue is viewed as all forms of negotiations, consultations and exchanges of information between representatives of the primary and secondary role players of ER on matters of common interest regarding economic or social policy (ILO, 2016a). On a macro level, this takes place in South Africa at, for instance, NEDLAC. However, NEDLAC has been criticised for its weakening effectiveness in consensus seeking; rather, parties are locked in antagonistic deliberations while growing unrest at workplaces is evident (ILO, 2016a). Nonetheless, a Code of Good Practice on Collective Bargaining, Industrial Action and Picketing was agreed upon and released during 2017, in the hope of increasing good faith bargaining and less disruptive and violent industrial action (Business Monitor International, 2017). This Code of Good Practice is the result of social dialogue – voice on a macro level.

Although such a consensus-seeking process at macro level is vital in combatting the adversarial and conflictual nature of ER in South Africa, it is argued that this process starts already at the organisational and individual levels, thus stressing the importance of organisational employee voice. Interestingly, it was found (Appelbaum et al., 2013b) that it is not necessarily the involvement with shaping long-term organisational goals that is most influential in the workplace relationship, but rather employee voice in day-to-day operational decisions. Employee

participation in decision-making and voice processes leads to increased positive perceptions of organisational fairness, which facilitates satisfactory organisational outcomes (Appelbaum et al., 2013b). Employee voice is hampered on the organisational and individual level if no mechanisms exist through which to voice opinions, or should employees perceive that no one listens – either because of other organisational noise, or because employee voice is actively blocked, or because the organisational culture does not permit voice (Gupta et al., 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). It is argued that these aspects will play a role in the management of conflict; subsequently, this research considers the effect of employee voice on an integrated conflict management framework.

3.3.1 Conceptualisation of employee voice

Scholars often use terms that refer to the practice of involving employees in some format in the organisation interchangeably; these include for instance industrial (or organisational) democracy, employee participation (or involvement, representation and the like), co-partnerships, empowerment, and also employee voice (Cathcart, 2014; Mowbray et al., 2015). The overarching term used for these concepts is employee participation, referring to employers and employees (with or without union representation) working together to reach objectives that are mutually beneficial (Cathcart, 2014). According to Cathcart (2014), many scholars regard employee voice as central to any employee participation process. However, employee voice does not necessarily equate to influence or power-sharing (as opposed to worker participation) (Wilkinson et al., 2018); still, without employee voice there cannot be any form of worker participation (Glew, O’Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Van Fleet, 1995). Thus, employee voice is defined as a separate construct in the research literature (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

The voice concept originated from dissatisfied customers expressing their views to organisations (Hirschman, 1970). Hirschman (1970) advocates that loyal employees will, like unhappy customers, voice their dissatisfaction rather than to leave the organisation. Thus, Hirschman (1970) defined voice as an opportunity to ensure change, rather than to escape from a disagreeable set of circumstances. According to Hirschman (1970, p. 16), voice is a “messy” concept that may range from a “faint grumbling to violent protest”. The voice concept was later introduced into the ER field, promoting voice through union presence (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). In fact, Rees et al. (2013) point out that voice was originally associated with trade union membership and collective bargaining, Today, voice is often applied in unionised and non-unionised workplaces, acting as a partnership vehicle (Hickland, 2017) and giving employees a

say on what happens in organisations, including suggestions to change current practices (Ruck, Welch, & Menara, 2017).

Although one may perhaps argue that both ER and organisational behaviour definitions consider employee voice as part of an upward problem-solving process, even if with a different focus, scholars from various disciplines disagree. The focus of the employee voice construct differs depending on the discipline from which it is defined (Kwon & Farndale, 2018). According to Bashshur and Oc (2015), five areas and/or disciplines dominate the research on voice, namely, organisational justice, proactive work behaviour (organisational behaviour), HRM, IR and feedback literature (these aspects and their discussion are summarised in Table 3.1 below).

From an ER (LR and HRM) perspective, the focus of employee voice is mainly on the mechanisms (e.g. collective or individual, informal or formal, direct or indirect, union or non-union) employees have to influence decision-making in organisations (Gollan & Lewin, 2013; Gollan & Patmore, 2013; Wilkinson et al., 2018) and having a say (Mowbray et al., 2015). ER scholars argue that any description of employee voice inherently refers to some form of opportunity or vehicle an employee may utilise in order to influence an element of the organisation (Glew et al., 1995). It may include direct (e.g. individual voice such as attitude surveys) and indirect (e.g. collective bargaining) mechanisms (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington, & Ackers, 2005; Kaufman, 2015; Kwon, Farndale, & Park, 2016), and voice is often equated to employee involvement, participation or engagement (Mowbray et al., 2015; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Scholars argue that the decline in trade unionism results in the focus of employee voice shifting to high performance practices such as open-door policies, self-managed teams and other forms of voice (McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018; Mowbray et al., 2015). Employee voice is thus no longer just in the domain of traditional LR, but is rather regarded as a continuous, daily management task and a foundation stone of HRM (Kwon et al., 2016).

In the same way, organisational behaviour scholars are interested in employee voice. From an organisational behaviour perspective (Wilkinson et al., 2018), employee voice is regarded as informal, proactive work behaviour by employees to change and improve current workplace practices (Parker & Collins, 2010). Mowbray et al. (2015) explain that organisational behaviour scholars emphasise that employee voice entails voluntarily challenging the status quo, with no formal rewards being associated with the voice behaviour. Increasingly, organisational behaviour scholars focus on discretionary, extra-role behaviour (Morrison, 2014). Employee voice is thus

regarded as how concerns are raised, interests expressed and problems resolved, and how participation happens regarding decisions that are made (Pyman et al., 2006).

Mowbray et al. (2015) argue that two main streams of employee voice are thus evident, namely, pro-social voice (typically studied by organisational behaviour scholars) and justice-related voice behaviour (typically studied by ER (IR and HRM) scholars (Mowbray et al., 2015). According to Bashshur and Oc (2015), organisational justice scholars look at voice from the perspective of the procedures that are used to get to an outcome. Thus, whereas ER scholars focus on voice mechanisms (e.g. the grievance procedure) because of some form of dissatisfaction, following due process and participating in decision-making, organisational behaviour scholars focus on the utilisation of discretionary voice as part of prosocial behaviour (Mowbray et al., 2015). Bashshur and Oc (2015) explain that the proactive literature explains voice as prosocial behaviour with the aim of improving the way things are done. Organisational justice, organisational behaviour and prosocial literature indicate a specific interest in the relational outcomes of voice behaviour, finding that it normally improves as the amount of voice behaviour is increased (Bashshur & Oc, 2015).

Moreover, where organisational justice scholars consider the perceptions of employees, feedback literature considers behavioural change (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). In the organisational justice, HRM and IR literature, the focus is not on the voice behaviour as it is in the case or organisational behaviour literature, but rather on the opportunities to express voice (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Colquitt et al., 2001). When considered from the organisational justice perceptions, it is mainly distributive justice (perceptions on the fairness of the outcomes) and procedural justice (the perceived fairness of the process that was followed) that are considered (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Colquitt et al., 2001). In the feedback literature, voice is defined as the action of evaluating, complaining or offering one's opinion (Bashshur & Oc, 2015).

Scholars emphasise that a significant difference lies in the fact that organisational behaviour scholars regard voice as discretionary behaviour (Morrison, 2011), and therefore it differs significantly from the ER and HRM disciplines that often consider voice to be mandatory (e.g. using formal voice mechanisms such as grievance procedures that form part of organisational policy). Still, scholars conclude that employee voice can either be prosocial, benefitting the organisation, or it can be used as a means to challenge management, either formally or informally (Mowbray et al., 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2018). While ER scholars argue that voice behaviour may (directly or indirectly) benefit the organisation, organisational behaviour scholars regard it only as

voice behaviour once it benefits the organisation (Mowbray et al., 2015). Nonetheless, increasingly scholars argue that research is needed with an integrated view, thus recognising voice from different disciplines (Donaghey, Cullinane, Dundon, & Wilkinson, 2011; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Klaas, Olson-Buchanan, & Ward, 2012; Morrison, 2014; Mowbray et al., 2015). One such a definition that claims to incorporate the viewpoints of various scholars defines voice as employee behaviour that aims to suggest either organisational improvement and/or to raise complaints about work-related issues they are dissatisfied with by using either formal or informal channels (Kwon & Farndale, 2018).

Table 3.1 below summarises the debate on how voice is regarded from different disciplines, as discussed above. As stated, the fact that voice is considered in silos is argued to subtract from the value of considering voice through a multidisciplinary lens (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2018). As explained in prior chapters, the current research has an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary ER focus from a business management perspective (while acknowledging the move towards the integration of the ER discipline with IR, IOP and organisational behavioural phenomena) (Adams, 1983; Avgar, 2017; Bamberger, 2008; Emmott, 2015; Godard, 2014b; Kochan, 1980; Nel et al., 2016; Wilkinson & Wood, 2017). It is interesting to note that no specific mention is made to the business management discipline in current voice research. This may be because ER is commonly considered one of the functional areas of any business management environment. Nonetheless, it is the view of the researcher that an integrated conflict management framework needs to be developed that pays heed to the numerous scholarly arguments that consider the various constructs from a multidisciplinary view (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Lord et al., 2017; Wilkinson & Wood, 2017).

Table 3.1

Voice Characteristics per Research Domain

Research area	Voice characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unions represent voice opportunities (e.g. through collective bargaining) Considers number of formal (e.g. grievance procedures) or informal (e.g. feedback loops) mechanisms or opportunities; i.e. focus is on opportunities to express voice Challenge management (formally or informally) with a change-oriented aim (Mowbray et al., 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resource Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance ratings of leadership effectiveness by subordinates; also part of feedback literature (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Considers voice opportunities through decision and process control (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Considers number of formal (e.g. grievance procedures) or informal (e.g. feedback loops) mechanisms or opportunities; i.e. focus is on opportunities to express voice, rather than the behavioural aspects of voice opportunities (Bashshur & Oc, 2015)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairness considerations, e.g. perceptions of voice opportunities (e.g. Colquitt, 2001). Distributive and procedural justice of voice are mainly considered (Bashshur & Oc, 2015, Colquitt et al., 2001) Voice enhances feelings of being in control of processes and decisions leading to employee outcomes (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Lind et al., 1990) Perception forming is in part based on the consideration of the number of formal (e.g. grievance procedures) or informal (e.g. feedback loops) mechanisms or opportunities (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Focus is thus on justice perceptions based on the opportunities to express voice (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Voice is improvement oriented, and signals commitment and concern for the organisation (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Interested in relational outcomes of voice, employees feel valued (Bashshur & Oc, 2015)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive and prosocial, supports cooperation, organisational citizenship and extra-role work behaviour (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998); change oriented aim (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Focus is on the voice behaviour, rather than opportunities to express voice (Bashshur & Oc, 2015) Interested in relational outcomes of voice (Bashshur & Oc, 2015)

Scholars emphasise though that the common factor in most definitions relates to the aim of change – voice does not just refer to a form of communication, but is rather seen as an attempt to change current undesirable aspects (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Hirschman, 1970). As stated above, voice was first defined as the attempt to alter or object (rather than escape) to the current state of affairs by petitioning either individually or collectively to management or a higher authority with the intention to ensure change via various types of action or protest, including the mobilisation of public opinion (Hirschman, 1970).

Thereafter the concept was extended to refer specifically to employee voice, for instance through employees voicing their job dissatisfaction (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988), and by providing “meaningful input into decisions” (Budd, 2004, p. 23). For instance, employee voice is defined as behaviour that aims to actively and constructively change conditions at work through discussions with supervisors and/or co-workers, thus engaging in active behaviour to suggest solutions, express opinions, resolve challenges or seek help from outside the organisation such as from a trade union or through whistle-blowing (Rusbult et al., 1988). Similarly, voice is described as optional or formal expressions of thoughts, views or submissions for alternative methods and approaches, directed at a particular target that may be internal or external to the organisation, with the aim of changing a disagreeable state of affairs and enhancing the existing organisational, team or individual workings (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). According to Bashshur and Oc (2015), voice is thus focused on challenges, and is change-oriented and constructive.

Nonetheless, the definitions of Rusbult et al. (1998), as well as of Bashshur and Oc (2015), are broader than many other current employee voice definitions, and not all scholars agree with such a broad approach. Morrison (2014) points to the fact that often these broader definitions refer to help being sought externally and actions such as whistle-blowing that have since developed into independent constructs (Morrison, 2014).

The influential work of LePine and Van Dyne (1998) describes employee voice as the voluntary, informal, discretionary communication and behaviour of innovative and constructive thinking, ideas, propositions, recommendations, clarifications or observations for change that may assist organisations to perform better by suggesting adjustments to customary work procedures (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Similarly, Kwon et al. (2016) define employee voice practices from a direct, individual perspective as those organisational practices that present employees with opportunities to participate in the decision-making practices of the organisation.

The intent of the voice behaviour is thus not to merely criticise, but rather to constructively improve (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Correspondingly, employee voice is regarded as voluntary communication efforts by employees with managers in order to influence and challenge current workplace practices by suggesting creative and innovative solutions (De Vries et al., 2012). Morrison (2014) equally stresses that upward voice happens when employees voluntarily, informally and discretionally communicate work-related problems or opinions to people in higher organisational positions who may be able to bring about changes or improvements.

One may conclude that the two elements included in most employee voice definitions are firstly that the status quo is challenged; and secondly, employees are actively engaging in behaviour to change work procedures or practices by voluntarily communicating with their leadership (Carnevale, Huang, Crede, Harms, & Uhl-Bien, 2017; De Vries et al., 2012; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Employee voice thus relates to speaking up in order to alert leadership of challenges and potential problems that may hamper organisational performance (prohibitive voice) and of challenging and generating ideas, initiatives and opportunities (promotive voice), and communicating these to their leaders (Carnevale et al., 2017; Chamberlin et al., 2017; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). However, there are scholars that indicate that voice may also be directed at other organisational members, and not only leadership. For instance, Liu et al. (2010) distinguish between two kinds of voice behaviour, namely speaking out (voice towards peers) and speaking up (voice towards the supervisor), explaining that employees are likely to voice their opinions to those they identify with.

To summarise, the ER and organisational behaviour disciplines conceptualise employee voice differently (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Firstly, from an organisational behaviour point of view, an opportunity is afforded employees to voice their opinions on aspects which affect their place of work (De Vries et al., 2012). As such, voice behaviour is regarded as extra-role behaviour (De Vries et al., 2012). Voice behaviour is discretionary (and therefore voluntary), challenge-oriented but constructive (it aims to result in change), and holds the potential of risk because of possible negative associations made with those who challenge the current status (De Vries et al., 2012; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b; Liu et al., 2010). According to the influential work of Van Dyne and LePine (1998), the intent of the voice behaviour is to improve a situation, rather than to merely criticise. Employee voice thus relates to speaking up or out in order to alert leadership to challenges and potential problems that may hamper organisational performance (prohibitive voice), as well as challenging and generating ideas, initiatives and opportunities (promotive

voice), and communicating these to their leaders (Carnevale et al., 2017; Chamberlin et al., 2017; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998).

However, there are scholars that point to the fact that voice is not necessarily challenging in nature, but may also be supportive (Burriss, 2012). Such voice supports the current way of doing things and aims to stabilise or preserve existing organisational policies or practices and is thus reactive in nature (Burriss, 2012). Consideration should be given to whether the supportive nature of voice is authentic, or whether it hides the true feelings of organisational members (Burriss, 2012).

The second reference to employee voice, an ER perspective (Van Dyne et al., 2003), describes process procedures which exist to increase fairness judgements and enable employee participation in decision-making. In this regard, employee voice can be described as a set of rules or procedures which allow employees who would be affected by the decisions to voice their opinions (Farndale, Van Ruiten, et al., 2011).

In this research, the call is heeded for an integrated approach to voice behaviour between disciplines (Donaghey et al., 2011; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Klaas et al., 2012; Morrison, 2014; Mowbray et al., 2015). Subsequently, employee voice is described considering the scholarly works of various academics (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). For the purposes of this study, employee voice is regarded as the deliberate but optional, informal and/or formal upward communication between employees and their managers (speaking up), or outward communication with colleagues (speaking out), with the main aim of improving (rather than criticising) organisational performance through either suggesting appropriate action to modify customary work procedures and other work-related issues because of challenges and potential problems (prohibitive voice); or sharing original and constructive thinking, ideas, plans, recommendations, clarifications or observations for change (promotive voice) (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

The focus is therefore not on the rules or procedures and institutional allowance of employee voice, but rather the voluntary discretionary behaviour as it relates to conflict management. Nonetheless, the research also acknowledges that trade unions still feature strongly in South African workplaces, and may be regarded as an avenue of voice in unionised workplaces. However, it is interesting to note that research advances that employees in workplaces with strong unionisation do not necessarily perceive employee voice positively (Benson & Brown, 2010).

Nonetheless, the formal institutions, rules and procedures of workplaces enhancing fairness through being voice mechanisms (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018) are acknowledged.

Two instruments, namely, the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) were used. The Voice Behaviour Measure assesses the sub-constructs of “Speaking out” (employees speaking to colleagues) and “Speaking up” (employees speaking to management). The Voice Measure assesses “Employee voice opportunities”, indicating whether or not leaders grant voice to employees in order for employees to express their opinions (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). As voice behaviour is based on a reciprocal relationship, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) serves as its theoretical lens (discussed in more detail below).

3.3.2 Theoretical models

Generally, research on voice is done through the theoretical lens of social exchange theory, although other theoretical models are at times discussed in the employee voice literature. One example of such an alternative discussion is found in the work of Bashshur and Oc (2015), which discusses process and decision control theory (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990) as one of the theories stemming mainly from the organisational justice and the decision-making literature of the HR field. According to this theory (Lind et al., 1990), employees’ performance outcomes are enhanced when they perceive that they have control over the processes and decisions that influence their performance outcomes. Additionally, it enhances employees’ feelings of being of value (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). As voice enhances employees’ perceptions of being valued, and being more in control of the processes and decisions that influence them, they engage in voice (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Lind et al., 1990).

However, the key underlying theory of employee voice relates to mutually beneficial relationships, namely social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), as discussed in section 3.1.2 above. It is also the theoretical lens of voice in this study. According to Bashshur and Oc (2015), the organisational behaviour and ER (HRM and IR) scholars in particular make use of this voice theory. In the organisational behaviour discipline, voice is mainly regarded as prosocial behaviour that focuses on organisational improvement (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). In contrast, the ER (HRM and IR) and organisational justice literature consider voice from the perspective of voice opportunities through formal and informal mechanisms such as unionised voice or two-way feedback systems

(Bashshur & Oc, 2015). Nonetheless, in both the ER and the organisational behaviour fields, reciprocal behaviour is evident.

Organisational behaviour scholars argue that, according to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), in relationships that are regarded as mutually beneficial, managers and employees open-mindedly discuss diverse ideas (Tjosvold et al., 2014). In a similar vein, Hoogervorst et al. (2013b) suggests that leaders grant voice to their subordinates when they perceive a reciprocal relationship, arguing that when subordinates show that they want to belong to the organisation, they will use their voice in ways that benefit it. Voice is therefore equated to organisational commitment and indicates a concern for the organisation, thus, in exchange, management will recognise and reward employees who engage in voice (Burriss, 2012). Employee voice is accordingly regarded as an organisational citizenship behaviour stemming from reciprocal actions because of perceived benefits bestowed by the organisation on the employee (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Additionally, Tjosvold et al. (2014) maintain that in mutually beneficial relationships, leaders will assist employees in achieving their goals. Bashshur and Oc (2015) argue that ER (HRM and IR) and organisational justice scholars consider reciprocal behaviour from the perspective of the number of voice opportunities that are afforded in the organisation. Leaders can, through social exchange, ensure employee voice by offering relational support (Carnevale et al., 2017). In fact, social exchange in the form of leader-member-exchange is positively related to employee voice (Carnevale et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2018). Employees reciprocate voice opportunities by showing their commitment to the organisation (Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, & Purcell, 2004). Similarly, scholars focusing on conflict research refer to employer–employee relationships as dual concern relationships (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986), or cooperative goals (Deutsch, 1973), or prosocial motivation – similar to voice behaviour (De Dreu et al., 2001; Morrison, 2014).

Burriss (2012) argues that managerial responses differ depending on whether employees use voice in a supportive or challenging manner. When employees engage in challenging voice behaviour, disagreements and confrontations with management may result (Grant, Hofmann, & Carolina, 2011), potentially increasing the risk of task conflict between management and employees (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Moreover, Burriss (2012) cautions that voice that results in task conflict (e.g. voice relating to specific tasks or routines) can lead to relational conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Additionally, research (Grant et al., 2011) shows that proactive behaviour such as voice potentially threatens leaders as it may result in undesirable changes (Grant, Parker,

& Collins, 2009), or may lead to leaders feeling uncomfortable, exposed and incompetent (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). According to Grant et al. (2011), highly extraverted leaders who prefer relationships in which they can dominate may in particular experience that their status is being threatened, thus experiencing status conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Such leaders react in ways that do not allow proactive behaviour such as employee voice, resulting in employees potentially feeling undervalued (Grant et al., 2011).

When employees have positive perceptions of their own voice behaviour, they also have better relationships with their line manager. Subsequently, perceptions of voice behaviour mediate engagement, as well as trust in senior management and the employee–line manager relationship (Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby, 2013). As these authors explain, engagement will probably be higher in organisations that have high-quality social exchange relationships (Rees et al., 2013). An indirect relationship exists between employee voice and employee engagement when mediated by the exchange relationships experienced by employees, based on the levels of trust between employees and management (Rees et al., 2013). In the same vein, research shows that employees who experience voice opportunities merely as a smoke screen (pseudo-voice), with no real effect or no real intention to listen to their views, will reduce their voice behaviour (De Vries et al., 2012). This also results in increased intragroup conflict (De Vries et al., 2012).

Employees' voice-related role perceptions influence their voice behaviour. Voice role perception is regarded as the extent to which employees believe that voice behaviour forms part of their jobs (Van Dyne et al., 2008). Employees' in-role perceptions determine their engagement with specific behaviour (Katz & Kahn, 1966). In other words, employees will behave in a certain way because of an internal reason, for instance believing that proactive behaviour, such as employee voice, is part of their work role (Duan et al., 2017). Leadership plays an important role in this respect, as leaders' guide the standards followed by their followers, and will influence how followers' view their role expectations and behaviours (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMX theory suggests that employees are normally concerned with leaders' expectations, as each party's perceptions of the others' expectations define their respective roles (Van Dyne et al., 2008). Should subordinates view employee voice as in-role behaviour, high quality LMX will strengthen voice behaviour (Van Dyne et al., 2008). Research considering the effect of transformational leadership on voice behaviour confirms that leaders' voice expectations of their followers have a significant positive relationship with employees' voice role perceptions (Duan et al., 2017). Scholars thus argue that employees will develop their own role perception on how

worthwhile it is for them to speak up, depending on the reciprocal behaviour they receive (Morrison, 1994; Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997).

Mowbray et al. (2015) suggest a model that incorporates both the ER and the organisational behaviour literature in one integrated and expanded model. Their model considers how organisational aspects such as LMX may influence employees' choice of voice channel. Stage one considers a variety of voice behaviours, such as prosocial behaviour, justice perceptions and job dissatisfaction that uniquely relate to either a personal or an organisational work-related issue. According to Mowbray et al. (2015), it is possible that these aspects will motivate employees to engage in voice behaviour. Together with aspects such as voice management and LMX, these mediate or moderate the choice of employee voice mechanism (e.g. suggestion scheme, informal discussion) and target (e.g. leader, line manager, or peer), which in turn determines whether a formal or informal channel may be necessary during voice behaviour (Mowbray et al., 2015).

As stated above, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is the theoretical model that is applied to employee voice in the current research.

3.3.3 Socio-demographic variables influencing employee voice

Research indicates that different socio-demographic aspects influence the way employees perceive and react to voice (Benson & Brown, 2010; Howell, Harrison, Burris, & Detert, 2015). Voice experiences are affected by differences in employees' practices, capabilities, intellects (e.g. emotional and cultural intelligence), talents and skills (Botero, 2013; Jiang, Le, & Gollan, 2018).

As with other constructs, employees vary in their perceptions of employee voice (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). For instance, scholars maintain that there is no clear understanding of the relationship between employee engagement and other organisational practices, such as employee voice, especially in multicultural contexts (Kwon et al., 2016). Often organisations fail to consider that different countries have their own unique national culture that may impact on how employees relate to voice behaviour (Brockner et al., 2001), thus resulting in well-known western style practices being implemented in non-western societies, without due consideration for cultural constraints. This is an important oversight, as Hofstede (1980a) maintains that power distances vary among countries. This refers to the degree to which members of a society accept that power in institutions and organisations is not distributed equally, and that it is natural and even desirable for employees in different hierarchical positions not to have equal power (Brockner et al., 2001;

Kwon et al., 2016). Countries with high power distances (Hofstede, 1980a) accept that decision-making power differs between high power positions and low power positions; whereas low power distance cultures believe that they should have a voice in decision-making and thus should have voice (Brockner et al., 2001). These aspects influence the way various workplace practices (e.g. voice) are viewed, and how these practices influence behaviour such as employee engagement (Kwon et al., 2016).

Thus, one of the aspects that has a significant relationship with employee voice is national culture. Research deliberates the effect of national cultural values on conflict avoidance by comparing the relationship dynamics between LMX and employee voice in a western, individualistic culture versus an eastern collectivist national culture (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). The research suggests that the influence of conflict avoidance differs depending on national culture (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). In individualistic national cultures, conflict is resolved through active and assertive behaviour, by confronting the conflict as it is viewed as natural and an accepted part of social life (Hofstede, 1980a; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). However, in more collectivist countries, conflict is viewed with dislike and resolved through passive, collaborative or avoiding tactics – employees will thus not easily engage in voice behaviour to resolve conflict (Hofstede, 1980a; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). Park and Nawakitphaitoon (2018) found that LMX has a significantly positive relationship with employee voice, both in collectivist and individualistic national cultures. This is in line with social exchange theory (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Nonetheless, research is lacking on how employees from different cultures exercise voice behaviour (Brockner et al., 2001; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018).

Theoretically, it is maintained that the inclination individuals have to react less positively to fairly low levels of voice hinges on the degree to which they assess the voice behaviour as valid, in other words, endorsed by their cultural norms (Brockner et al., 2001). In all probability, people will respond unfavourably to low voice levels the more their cultural norms legitimise voice (Brockner et al., 2001). Hence, it is not so much to the lack of voice per se to which people object; rather, they object to the violation of cultural norms (Brockner et al., 2001). For instance, in western democratic countries, people will regard voting rights as normal practice and, similarly, giving their input in decisions in the workplace will be regarded as normal behaviour – in such systems, a lack of voice will be regarded unfavourably (Brockner et al., 2001). Research thus suggests that power differences based on cultural norms moderate employee voice (Brockner et al., 2001). Scholars

(Brockner et al., 2001; Kwon et al., 2016) propose that further research be done on how other cultural dimensions (e.g. collectivism versus individualism) shape employee voice behaviour.

Increased diversity in workplaces influences organisational voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Aspects such as gender, age, race, sexuality and minority or majority groupings may influence employees' tendency to voice their opinions and perceptions, or rather to remain silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). For example, research (Ali Arain et al., 2018) suggests that employees younger than 25 years use prohibitive voice more frequently than their colleagues aged 31 to 35, which contributes to the possible differences in experience, work pressure and tolerance for dysfunction between the two groups. Voice structures in organisations should take cognisance of all the diverse groupings in organisations (Van Dyne et al., 2003), especially as a significant increase in diversity is part of the global workplace (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Subsequently, cultural intelligence among employees who work in diverse groups is necessary for voice to be successful (Jiang et al., 2018). For workplace practices to be successful, they must be inclusive of all (Townsend, Wilkinson, & Burgess, 2013). However, scholars point to the fact that despite high diversity workplaces that employ individuals with a variety of different attitudes and perceptions of voice (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018), most voice systems are designed as a one-size-fits-all initiative (Bell, Ozbilgin, Beauregard, & Surgevil, 2011).

However, research indicates the influence of diverse demographic characteristics on voice behaviour and perceptions, although a paucity of research is identified on the impact of diversity on voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Nonetheless, the following research was found. Studies indicate that tenure moderates the relationship between turnover intentions and employee voice (Avery, McKay, Wilson, Volpone, & Killham, 2011). However, the research also indicates that the benefits of employee voice lessen the longer employees remain with an employer (Avery et al., 2011). Additionally, regarding the influence of age, research advances that employees from various generational cohorts evaluate employee voice differently, with older employees perceiving the value of having a voice as more important; nonetheless, employees from all cohorts indicated the importance of having a voice (Palumbo, McIntosh, Rambur, & Naud, 2009). Moreover, different generations may have a need for different forms of voice. For instance, research indicates that Millennials (Generation Y) rely more on informal mechanisms of communication, such as social media, and that this may influence their perceptions of voice (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018) and other aspects such as job satisfaction (Holland, Cooper, &

Hecker, 2016). Regarding ethnicity, Morrison (2011) remarks that ethnic groups with minority status will be less inclined to voice. Moreover, gender plays a role in style of voice, as males tend to use a harsher style when voicing than their female counterparts (Zhang, 2013). This may perhaps be the reason why managers tend to respond better to voice expression by females when compared to males (Howell et al., 2015). Qualification influences the perception of voice, with higher qualified employees experiencing voice initiatives better, emphasising the importance of implementing voice mechanisms all employees can relate to (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). As stated aptly by scholars (Guarana, Li, & Hernandez, 2017), it is both who expresses voice and to whom it is expressed that are important.

Scholars argue that when managers pursue an organisational culture of openness, they are likely to also reward voice behaviour. For this reason it is assumed that income level may influence voice behaviour (Detert & Burris, 2007). Mayer and Davis (1999) advise that should managers' believe that their employees are committed to the organisation and its wellbeing and are speaking up to improve the organisation, they may be convinced to react in an encouraging way by rewarding the employee accordingly.

Additionally, the elaboration likelihood model of social persuasion states that a recipient will adhere to a communication from a specific source should they perceive the source as credible and convincing (Brinol & Petty, 2009). For instance, a manager may be persuaded by an employee who is speaking up about a suggested organisational change should such a manager see the employee as credible and convincing (Burris, 2012). Research (Howell et al., 2015) suggests that supervisors act on their perceptions of status when considering voice behaviour – leaders tend to more easily acknowledge voice from employees with higher perceived status (e.g. based on majority ethnicity, full-time positions, centrality in social structures).

3.3.4 Employee voice and its implications for conflict management practices within an employment relations context

Voice behaviour is becoming increasingly important as organisations need innovative and quick responses to deal with the challenges of today's world (Farh & Chen, 2018; Liu et al., 2010). In addition, voice contributes to employees participating in organisational decision-making, an aspect that assists the management of conflicts of interest between employees and employers (García et al., 2017). In fact, scholars agree that seeking input from organisational members, increases the chance of employees complying with decisions (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018).

Moreover, as union membership declines, other voice opportunities are becoming progressively essential (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). Subsequently, scholars question the importance of voice and representation, and how this should be applied in workplaces where unions often play a lesser role, and where representative collective voice then shifts to direct individual level voice (Bryson, Freeman, Gomez, & Willman, 2017).

According to Morrison and Milliken (2000), organisations having a unitarist perspective do not view differing viewpoints in a positive light and suppress diverse viewpoints, thus enforcing employee silence. Such a perspective has shown to negatively influence organisational performance. By contrast, a pluralistic view accepts and welcomes varying viewpoints and simultaneously sees conflict as potentially beneficial – this perspective has been shown to enhance the quality of decisions and, as such, organisational performance (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Thus, from a pluralist perspective, the necessity for meaningful employee voice in the workplace is stressed (Heery, 2016; Hickland, 2017). Clearly, employees want to participate in (or at least influence) the decision-making processes of organisations (e.g. Bischoff et al., 2018; Chamberlin et al., 2018; Marchington, 2015a; Heery, 2016).

Morrison (2014), one of the seminal writers on employee voice, maintains that two assumptions about employee voice and silence are prevalent from research: Firstly, employees do not necessarily share their thinking, ideas or apprehensions, but rather keep silent about them. In other words, employee silence dominates employee voice (Morrison, 2014), as employees are often reluctant to voice their opinions at work (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Liu et al., 2010). In non-unionised organisations, the employer has a choice to offer voice opportunities, but then the employee has the same choice to take them up or not (Morrison, 2011). In general, employees would rather remain silent than speak out (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2003), and will carefully consider whether to speak out, calculating the cost-benefit risk of doing so.

Morrison's second assumption (2014) postulates that if employee voice is regarded as beneficial to organisations, it also implies that employee silence is harmful (Morrison, 2014). However, employee silence (i.e. deliberately withholding important ideas, opinions or concerns about organisations) is not the opposite of employee voice, or merely the absence of voice (Van Dyne et al., 2003); rather employee silence is often related to disengagement and fear, whilst voice is associated with champions, constructive behaviour, engagement and positive contributions made to organisations (Morrison, 2014). Nonetheless, leaders are at times unaware that employees are

not engaging in employee voice, as leaders often view voice as potentially negative or threatening behaviour (Detert & Burris, 2016). However, as discussed above, leaders play an important role in whether employee voice is heard or not. For instance, research maintains that the perceived integrity of leader behaviour significantly influences empowering leader behaviours, as well as employee voice (Elsetouhi et al., 2018).

This aspect relates to trust issues, as risk is an integral aspect of trust (see for instance Heyns & Rothman, 2018). Employee voice will only have a basis of trust if it is consistently applied and ingrained as part of the workplace relationship between employers and employees (Isiaka et al., 2016). Isiaka et al. (2016) stress that to enable relationship building, and ensure cooperative workplace behaviour between the role players (Deutsch, 1990), open communication (including employee voice) should be a fundamental part of organisational life. In fact, employee voice increases perceptions of fair procedural justice (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b) and fairness in general (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). The meta-analytical research done by Colquitt et al. (2001) indicates that a significantly positive relationship exists between the opportunity to express voice and the trust held in the authority of an organisation.

When employees engage in voice behaviour, they often do so with the hope of initiating change regarding undesirable factors at the workplace – they speak up, rather than merely remaining silent (Hirschman, 1970). Employee voice is thus used as a method to bring about change, rather than avoiding the problem, or escaping from the undesirable aspects (Hirschman, 1970). In other words, by expressing their concerns and offering alternatives (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014), they may improve task completion (Farh & Chen, 2018). Workplaces with high levels of trust in management, and with open communication (such as the usage of voice) as part of the organisational culture (Gupta et al., 2018; Rees et al., 2013), enhance such behaviour. Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2018) draw on the work of Benson and Brown (2010) to argue that employees' perceptions of voice behaviour are more important than the existence or features various voice avenues hold.

However, employees realise that voicing their thoughts is risky behaviour (Detert & Edmondson, 2011) that may lead to interpersonal conflict, or the risk of negative feedback, or being labelled a troublemaker (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014). According to Morrison (2014), employees will therefore only express themselves through voice behaviour should they feel that is safe to do so, and should they regard voice as effective, in other words, resulting in the possibility of change. Employee voice often challenges colleagues and managers about the status

quo, and implicitly or explicitly disagrees with how things are done, as well as confronting issues (Lee, Choi, Youn, & Chun, 2017). Because voice is potentially seen as challenging behaviour (rather than, for instance just complaining, or affiliative helping, or whistle-blowing behaviour), it may trouble interpersonal relationships and lead to conflict (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998) and create tension and awkwardness, leading to damage to relationships (Liu et al., 2010). As it may, in theory, damage relationships (Liu et al., 2010), it may also weaken team or organisational effectiveness (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011).

Nonetheless, research shows that avoiding conflict negatively relates to employee voice, and furthermore damages the exchange relationship between leaders and their followers (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). Research shows that when leaders rather use cooperative conflict management styles (integrating, cooperation and obliging styles), social exchange behaviours that may increase employees' perceptions of psychological safety, trust and use of employee voice are enhanced (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015).

Therefore, employee silence may occur, referring to employees withholding potentially valuable information from organisations or failing to express their thoughts when it may be useful to share (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2014; Morrison & Milliken, 2003). According to Morrison (2014), employee silence is often linked with perceptions of injustice. Thus, employee silence does not refer in general to a lack of speech, but rather to withholding valuable information (Milliken et al., 2003). The phenomenon of employee silence manifests when employees feel that they do not have a vehicle or structure through which they can express themselves (such as a grievance procedure), or that it is not safe to do so freely because of a fear of the consequences, a lack of resources, or because of a lack of motivation (Morrison, 2014).

As stated above, employees only speak up should they feel safe to do so – an aspect which is positively influenced by transformational leadership and managerial openness (Detert & Burris, 2007; Kwon & Farndale, 2018). Amah's (2018) research indicates that servant leadership (as opposed to autocratic leadership) is important for creating a supportive environment in which followers feel comfortable to voice their concerns, as well as increasing employee engagement levels. Encouraging employee voice in organisations necessitates a conducive organisational culture and strong leadership (Gupta et al., 2018; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). From an ER perspective, effective managerial practices leading to, for instance enhanced employee engagement, and an organisational culture conducive to good ER, are equally important (Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge, 2013; Dillon, 2012; Gupta et al., 2018; Ibietan, 2013; Kinicki

& Fugate, 2016). Antecedents of voice behaviour include individual disposition (e.g. extraversion versus introversion), job and organisational perceptions (e.g. perceived support) and attitudes, emotions and beliefs (e.g. feelings of psychological safety), supervisor or leader behaviour (e.g. transformational or ethical leadership) and contextual factors (e.g. a positive organisational culture and climate) (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2018; Morrison, 2014).

The potential of conflict stemming from employee voice, and the role employee voice may play in conflict scenarios, as well as the role leaders play herein, should be considered. In addition, aspects such as the role of a diverse workforce should be considered, as they may influence the usage of voice significantly. Currently, a paucity in research is identified on the impact of diversity on voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018).

Moreover, aspects such as leadership considerably influences voice. It is generally accepted that strong leaders enable their employees and do not focus only on control aspects in the relationship, thereby allowing their employees to grow and develop (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Scholars advise managers to provide their employees with support and, importantly, to allow their employees to voice their concerns and perspectives (Amah, 2018; Siira, 2012). Supporting employee voice is important, as employees not only influence conflict directly, but also indirectly and from a distance (Siira, 2012). According to Siira (2012), managers exert continuous influence over conflict dynamics by behaviour that fosters, changes or adapts the conversational context in relation to which people take decisions and understand organisational occurrences. Managers should avoid pushing their views in conflict situations in which they are engaging or acting as third parties and should rather influence the conflict interaction by helping people gain insight into what they actually talk about and say in these situations (Siira, 2012).

This is important as studies (Friedman et al., 2000) show that how employees engage in conflict interaction has a huge influence on the workplace climate and culture they create. When employees participate in cooperative behaviours (such as employee voice), their feelings regarding the workplace are more positive and they are more likely to be satisfied and collaborative in general. One may thus conclude that increased levels of trust and cooperation by, say, giving employees greater voice, may lead to better conflict management. Thus, Morrison (2014) maintains that supervisors' behaviour significantly influences their subordinates' behaviour and plays an important role in employee voice behaviour. Moreover, employee voice helps the successful resolution of disputes, while simultaneously resulting in lower turnover intentions (Van Gramberg, Teicher, Banber, & Cooper, 2017).

Additionally, employee voice is regarded as an important driver of employee engagement (Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees, & Gatenby, 2010; Amah, 2018; Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Ruck et al., 2017). When employees perceive that they are able to voice their opinions, they feel valued and involved and their engagement levels subsequently increase (Rees et al., 2013; Ruck et al., 2017). Likewise, should employees perceive that they are able to share their ideas, opinions and concerns within their work environment, they will also demonstrate higher levels of employee engagement (Rees et al., 2013).

Voice channels in organisations are either formal or informal and research argues that multiple channels of direct and indirect voice are more successful than only one voice channel (Wilkinson et al., 2013). According to Bashshur and Oc (2015), employees' outcomes are positively affected by having a voice in processes and decisions, as it enhances feelings of being in control of the practices and processes that lead to outcomes. This is in line with theory relating to processes and decision-making (Lind et al., 1990). Employees, who perceive a satisfactory number of opportunities to communicate their concerns with management are also more likely to demonstrate positive outlooks and higher levels of performance (Rees et al., 2013). In fact, research shows that a significant positive relationship exists between employee voice and engagement, mediated by trust in senior management and, to a lesser extent, by the employee–line manager relationship (Rees et al., 2013). Relatedly, voice mechanisms reduce emotional exhaustion that, if not addressed, may lead to burnout among employees (Conway, Fu, Monks, Alfes, & Bailey, 2016).

The question remains as to how one determines the impact of voice. Employees regard the hierarchy present in organisations as an important contributing factor to them not having a voice in the organisation (McKibben, 2017). Non-managerial employees stress the importance of having meaningful voice, as merely being allowed to express opinions has little effect (Cathcart, 2014). Foster and Farr (2016) draw on the work of Marchington and Wilkinson (2005), who suggest four dimensions when considering the level of employee voice and other participation interventions. The first relates to the extent to which employees are able to effect management decisions; in other words, are they merely informed of changes, consulted, or are they involved in decision-making. Secondly, considering the level at which employees participate or voice their opinions, for instance at operational, departmental or organisational level. Thirdly, determining the subject matter range, that is, whether it involves rather trivial matters, or strategic decision-making. Fourthly, the form of participation should be considered, for example whether voice opportunities

allow indirect voice through representation or, for instance, through suggestion schemes versus face-to-face communications (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005). At the highest level, employees will take responsibility for decision-making and, as such, be able to express their voice (Marchington, 2015a).

In South Africa, labour has opted for a worker participatory process of engagement with employers at plant level on the basis of a trade union agenda and union independence (Bischoff et al., 2018). However, research indicates that workers feel disempowered and believe that they have very little influence on decision-making (Bischoff et al., 2018). This is problematic, given the high levels of conflict in South African workplaces.

Lipsky and Avgar (2010) suggest an integrated conflict management system that will provide answers to employees who feel disempowered. Such a system should grant voice to employees by, amongst other things, giving employees the mechanisms through which to raise individual and collective concerns and suggestions through a bottom-up approach (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Lipsky and Avgar (2010) argue that an integrated approach will welcome a diverse workforce by developing an inclusive organisational culture that welcomes all differences and that addresses any conflict constructively. These scholars suggest that such an integrated approach has various facets, such as providing mediation and adjudication, but also other conflict management tools, such as coaching, negotiation, problem-solving techniques and the like (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Disputes must be avoided and, should they occur, should be resolved constructively and quickly where possible, as well as at the lowest possible level. However, the causes of conflict should be addressed and not just the symptoms (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Should the conflict culture of the organisation be supportive, both employees and managers will have a safe environment in which all can voice their concerns or disputes without fear (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). To enable an integrated conflict management system, a conflict culture should be established that advocates a new way of doing – emphasising discussions, communication and participation in problem-solving (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001) through strong leadership and employee voice. For instance, ADR is seen as a form of employee voice, also for non-union workplaces (Avgar, 2017).

To conclude, it has been commented (Schein, 2000) that to understand organisations and to know why things happen the way they do, one need several concepts. Perhaps the same argument can be made for understanding conflict in organisations; and is it necessary to consider more than one aspect of organisational life when considering how to manage conflict effectively and

constructively. As stated in the previous chapter, the existing research on workplace conflict is fragmented (Katz & Flynn, 2013) and, thus, the need for an integrated conflict management approach was highlighted (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Deutsch, 1973; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001). In this chapter, it became clear that the constructs of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are imperative for the successful functioning of organisations, and more specifically, for consideration in an integrated conflict management framework for South African organisations.

3.4 EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS

Changes in the world of work and the general decline in union membership (Uys & Holtzhausen, 2016) and non-standard forms of work (Briken et al., 2017; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017) have reopened the debate on conditions of work and on issues such as employee voice (Foster & Farr, 2016; McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). Van Eeden (2014) maintains that working towards the goal of creating and building a partnership within which all can prosper equates to development and growth, bolstering financial and non-financial aspects, mutual trust and the fair distribution of created wealth. To enable such a prosperous partnership, it is emphasised that aspects such as a clear direction and purpose must be available for all, performances should be aligned, effective leadership must be build, employees should be engaged, innovation and improvements should be welcomed and, lastly, a culture should be built that fosters measurement, positive accountability, recognition and reward (Van Eeden, 2014). Subsequently, it is argued that the changing nature of the workplace influences ER in organisations, and that it furthermore affects leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. A discussion of these aspects follows below.

Scholars argue that conflict research has generally been done away from other central organisational topics such as leadership, organisational culture and the like (Gelfand et al., 2012). Seldom has conflict been discussed in terms of organisational processes and procedures. In fact, scholars assert that not enough research is done on the antecedents of conflict (Avgar, 2017). The chosen antecedents for this study are interrelated – both organisational culture and employee voice seem to be influenced by leadership. Leadership processes are embedded in the organisational culture of the organisation and, as leadership shapes the organisational culture, so too does the organisational culture shape leadership (Schein, 1985).

The first antecedent discussed in this research and in this chapter is leadership. Leadership influences both organisational culture and employee voice – the two other antecedents considered in this research. Leaders are in a better position than others to attempt to influence culture. In fact, it is stated that organisational culture is shaped by the broader culture within which it functions and by the organisational leader (Geiger, 2013; Gupta et al., 2018; Hofstede et al., 1990; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Kwon et al., 2016; Men, 2012; Schein, 1983). At the same time, the organisational culture may influence the development of leaders (Geiger, 2013). Additionally, leaders play an important role in motivating and encouraging voice behaviour (Duan et al., 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). For instance, transformational leadership, with its characteristics of developing, supporting and intellectually stimulating employees with the aim of reaching a shared vision (Bass, 1985), is seen as an antecedent for employees' voice behaviour (Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu et al., 2010).

Leadership is thus imperative for strong voice behaviour, and research shows that employees will participate more enthusiastically in voice behaviour when leaders are open to and appreciative of such behaviour, using inclusive language that refers to first person plural nouns such as 'we' (Weiss et al., 2018). Moreover, a significantly positive relationship has been found between ethical leadership and employees' moral voice (i.e. when employees speak up about ethical issues) (Lee et al., 2017). Research has found that there is a positively significant relationship between a proactive personality and transformational leadership, and employee engagement (Caniëls et al., 2018). Nonetheless, Kwon et al. (2016) argue that not enough research has been undertaken on the perceptions employees hold of employee voice practices that are implemented in organisations. According to Kwon et al. (2016), even when employees welcome the opportunity of using such involvement practices, they may still only use these practices when there is convergence between their own socio-cultural values and the organisational climate (and arguably, organisational culture) as supported by leadership.

The role of ethical leadership is also stressed. According to the King IV report on corporate governance (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016), ethical and effective leadership should be complementary, reinforcing each other. According to this report, such leadership demonstrates integrity, proficiency, responsibility, accountability, fair-mindedness and transparency (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016). Transformational and ethical leadership enhances trust in leadership (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Herbst et al., 2008). Supervisory trust has to be earned (Grobler & Holtzhausen, 2018). Organisations strive to produce an environment that is conducive

to work engagement, an aspect where leadership plays a significant role (Scheepers & Elstob, 2016). Authentic leadership has been found to positively affect followers regarding engagement (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Nonetheless, the relationship between followers and their leaders does not exist in isolation, and contingency theories suggest that leaders need to adjust to their situations (House, 1971). Research on leadership often focuses on the leader–follower relationship (Yukl, O’Donnell, & Taber, 2009), and not enough on the organisational context (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). However, leadership in organisations happens amidst various complex and interacting factors, and organisations and their leaders need to adapt to challenging environments (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

However, leadership studies are often done in silos and highly fragmented with little integration (Eacott, 2017; Tunçdoğan et al., 2017). Leadership research lacks multilevel research and conceptual and methodological clarity (Batistič et al., 2017). Additionally, leadership research has focused mainly on how leaders are perceived, and not so much on how leaders contribute to organisational effectiveness (Dinh et al., 2014). However, a key aspect of leadership processes is considering how organisational output may be enhanced by guiding and structuring the way organisational members combine their inputs (Dinh et al., 2014). Lord et al. (2017) emphasise the importance of a multidisciplinary approach when considering leadership phenomena in organisations.

Moreover, it is necessary to consider how multi-generations consider leadership aspects and when leadership succeeds or fails between generations (Lord et al., 2017). How does leadership differ when not face-to-face, across continents, cultures and so on in virtual teams and the like? (Lord et al., 2017). The Millennial generation (Millennials), roughly those born since 1980, is the current biggest age cohort. Millennials are attracted to companies that have integrated financial, manufactured, human, intellectual, natural, social and relationship capital business models (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016). Leadership is increasingly required to deal with diversity across national boundaries and with multiple individual, relational and collective processes, which necessitates an integrative leadership system (Lord et al., 2017). Leadership in organisations is tested because of the new global realities in business, such as inequality, globalisation, social and economic tensions, climate change resulting from aspects such as population growth, and fast-paced technological and scientific development (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016). These and other issues lead to great expectations from stakeholders.

Nonetheless, leadership scholars (Rudolph et al., 2018) criticise leadership research that is related to generational cohorts as it is argued that no valid conclusions can be drawn about the influence and effects of cohorts versus age when considering single time-point (cross-sectional) data. Additionally, it is argued that triangulation using common analytical methods when considering generations does not yield the same results (Rudolph et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the intricate role of age in the social world, and in complex and often time-related processes, explains why scholars find it easier to consider group-based generational differences, rather than maturational differences (Rudolph et al., 2018).

Gordon and Yukl (2004) state that although numerous studies have been conducted to ascertain the aspects of leadership that advance organisational performance, no clear-cut answers exist. According to these scholars, part of the problem lies with converging practical leadership issues with theoretical views. Other reasons include a lack of studies on top-management strategic leadership; focusing on universal answers, and not considering situation and content-specific aspects; and lastly, focusing on leadership outcomes, rather than on processes underlying leadership (Gordon & Yukl, 2004). Leadership theorists are criticised for having too narrow a view on a specific leadership aspect (e.g. focusing only on either the traits, power, behaviour of leaders, or the situation within which leaders exert influence) (Yukl, 1989).

Additionally, leadership can be either a dependent or an independent variable (Yukl, 2002), and research should consider the reciprocal influence process (Gordon & Yukl, 2004) – also regarding the influence of leadership on strategic conflict management, as leaders influence followers but are also influenced by followers and the situation (Yukl, 2002). Scholars also argue for the necessity of doing multilevel research about aspects that influence, or are influenced by, leadership performance as it gives a more thorough and accurate representation of leadership (Dasborough et al., 2009).

The second antecedent in this research and discussed in this chapter is organisational culture. Organisational culture is a complex construct to research. Without a unified definition on the meaning of the construct, or one unified theory on organisational culture, plus a lack of consistency on how to measure organisational culture, inconsistencies in research result, such as on construct validity (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). In general, there is a lack of a unified approach to organisational cultural theory, identifying the sources of cultural variation in groups and in organisations, as well as its psychological basis and the impact it has on organisations and their members (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). According to Chatman and O'Reilly (2016), a

functionalist approach to organisational culture is necessary, focusing more narrowly on the norms and values that guide behaviour within organisations and that act as a social control system. Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) argue that even if there is general acceptance of Schein's (1985, 2010) organisational culture theory, too little attention is given to what organisational culture is and how it affects individual and organisational outcomes.

Furthermore, scholars argue about whether organisational culture should be measured qualitatively or quantitatively (Schein, 2000; Smircich, 1983). From a qualitative emic perspective, it is argued that organisational culture is unique and distinctive and thus not comparable to other organisations' culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Additionally, unconscious beliefs and assumptions that underlie organisational culture can only be observed and are ill suited to quantitative research (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). However, scholars (e.g. Smircich, 1983) also consider a more functionalist etic approach, arguing that organisational culture is "something an organization *has*, and not something an organization *is*" (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016, p. 205) and, as such, can be compared with other organisations through quantitative measures. A quantitative approach thus focuses on the norms and values that characterise an organisation's culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Accordingly, this research considers organisational culture from a quantitative approach.

A research gap is evident in the way organisational culture influences organisational outcomes (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Although this is, as explained above, in part because of construct and measurement issues, it is furthermore difficult to do studies that have big enough samples that will allow for comparisons while controlling for confounds such as prior performance, organisational size, differences in strategies, and the like (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Moreover, organisational culture research rarely deals with the topic of conflict as part of the organisational culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). As such, the current research may assist in closing this important gap in the research.

A limitation of the study may be found in the consideration of organisational culture measured on an individual level and not on organisational level. This is because scholars argue that for a meaningful study of organisational culture, a reasonably homogenous unit should be studied in order to justify statements about a culture as a whole (Hofstede, 1998; Sinclair, 1993). Nonetheless, Hofstede (1998) points out that organisational culture is part of all members of an organisation and not only, for instance, the leadership. Thus, information on organisational culture should be collected from all levels within organisations (Hofstede, 1998), necessitating a

multilevel analysis. Core assumptions present the deepest level of organisational culture, beliefs and values are regarded as the intermediate level, while norms and artefacts are identifiable on the surface level (Denison, 1996).

The third antecedent to be discussed for the purposes of this research is that of employee voice. Research confirms that employees view voice as a reciprocal exchange commodity (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2011; Farndale, Van Ruiten, et al., 2011). Despite scholars highlighting the advantages of employee voice such as the relationship between employee voice (e.g. in decision-making) and job satisfaction (e.g. Appelbaum et al., 2013b; Jacobs & Roodt, 2011), increased organisational commitment (Farndale, Van Ruiten, et al., 2011) improving employee performance, redesigning jobs, increasing workplace democratisation, enhancing employee power and the like (Bashshur & Oc, 2015), research has not managed to predict employee voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Nonetheless, research has confirmed that workers who have an influence on decision-making are more likely to have an appreciation for the outcomes that result from that decision, which, it is argued, will reinforce satisfaction (Appelbaum et al., 2013b). The greater the level of involvement, the higher the level of satisfaction – this occurs for instance when employees are involved in the generation of alternatives, of participating in planning processes and in evaluating results (Appelbaum et al., 2013b). However, the more dissatisfied employees are, the less likely they are to share suggestions for change (De Vries et al., 2012). However, research indicates that when employees believe that they have a voice that may have an impact on decision-making, organisational commitment increases (Farndale et al., 2011). Increased feelings of trust, fairness, decision-control, group-inclusion and respect are also recorded (De Vries et al., 2012).

Additionally, research suggests that employee voice opportunities enhance engagement, and thus act as a resource for engagement (Conway et al., 2016). Engaged employees will more easily voice ideas, suggestions and trepidations (Morrison, 2014). This view is supported by findings that a significant relationship exists between employee voice and engagement, mediated by trust in management (Maymand, Abdollahi, & Elhami, 2017). Nonetheless, scholars (Ruck et al., 2017; Saks & Gruman, 2014) suggest that even though it has been shown that employee voice opportunities predict employee engagement (e.g. Rees et al., 2013; Conway et al., 2016), more research in this area is necessary.

Considering all the above benefits of employee voice behaviour, it is no surprise that so much research has been undertaken on ways of encouraging employees to participate in voice

behaviour (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Liu et al. (2010) remark that research has been undertaken on the importance of voice for job satisfaction (e.g. LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), how psychological factors such as general self-efficacy (Gupta et al., 2018; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison & Phelps, 1999) and situational factors such as team psychological safety (Chou & Barron, 2016; Chou & Chang, 2017; Detert & Edmondson, 2011) contribute to voice behaviour in the workplace, as well as on the importance of leadership in this process (Burriss, Rockmann, & Kimmons, 2017; Detert & Burriss, 2007, 2016; Liu et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, scholars recognise the risks involved in sharing decision-making processes with employees, arguing that employees may choose to pursue self-interested goals that could leave leaders and organisations vulnerable (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). Considering the relationship dynamics between employee voice and trust thus becomes imperative (Appelbaum et al., 2013b, 2013a). It is argued that leaders contemplate the degree to which employees (their followers) need to belong to the organisation, subsequently acting in the best interests of the organisation when using their voice, and not merely for their own benefit (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). It is suggested that leaders' trust in their followers mediate the shared effect of employees' needs for control and a sense of belonging on leaders' voice enactment (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). Trust therefore plays a vital role in the enactment of fair procedures and practices.

Hoogervorst et al. (2013b) emphasise that having confidence in the goodwill of employees towards the organisation is important, as views about benevolence have been indicated as antecedents of trust (Mayer et al., 2008). In other words, should a leader regard an employee as someone who wants to be part of the organisation and wants to take part in decision-making, they will also regard this employee as someone they can trust to use his or her voice to the benefit of the organisation (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). These employees are more likely to be involved in decision-making processes by their leaders. This is an ongoing process, as employee voice may then again increase the level of trust in the organisation, where trust is defined as a positive belief that another person will not act deviously through words, actions or the decisions that are taken (Appelbaum et al., 2013b, 2013a).

However, this issue leads to another challenge. As discussed, research proposes that an employee voice system will only work should employees have trust in their leadership (Gao, Janssen, & Shi, 2011; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Employees are more likely to engage in voice behaviour if they perceive an open relationship with management (Detert & Burriss, 2007, 2016).

Nonetheless, Morrison and Milliken (2000) note that often managers exhibit various practices that inhibit employee voice. Moreover, should employees place a high level of trust in their leaders, they may also consider voice behaviour unnecessary (Gao et al., 2011). Hence, organisations benefit from employee voice only when an environment and organisational culture are created in which employees want to participate and where they are encouraged to speak up and discuss their needs with management (Gupta et al., 2018; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b).

This may result in a positive spiral as leaders are more likely to involve employees in decision-making processes when employees feel free to voice their need to do so, which in turn positively influences employees' perceptions, motivation and behaviours (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). The spiral is then further enhanced, as this will result in a more meaningful workplace, which will probably result in employees wanting to participate in it, which, in turn, will inspire leaders to continue involving employees (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). Line managers play a critical role in the success of employee voice and engagement (Gupta et al., 2018; Townsend, 2013). Research suggests that by allowing employees to voice their concerns, the negative effect that supervisors' insecurity has on their engagement levels is reduced (Gupta et al., 2018). Nonetheless, for this to happen there should be support from management for employee voice. In fact, when line managers are sceptical and noncommittal about voice behaviour, a voice scheme will not succeed (Townsend, 2013). Tjosvold et al. (2014) maintain that acknowledging the concept of mutual benefit relationships is key to successfully sharing diverse ideas openly in the workplace. Furthermore, research (Tjosvold et al., 2014) confirms that effective leaders involve their followers in open-minded discussions about ideas.

A further challenge to employee voice may be the participation (or not) of unions in employee voice (Hickland, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2009; McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). Nonetheless, unions are not the only channel through which employee voice may be heard (Lee & Lee, 2009); however, individual voice does not substitute collective voice (Gill & Meyer, 2013). Still, collective voice through unions may be more effective as voice mechanisms are extended, and different outcomes may be delivered (Gill & Meyer, 2013). Nonetheless, as union membership declines, so too may this form of employee voice (Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011); a fact supported by research that shows that non-unionised forms of workplace voice are on the increase (Marchington, 2015a)

Furthermore, employees are often given a variety of voice channels. However, too many voice channels, although viewed positively by employees, results in competing with each other rather

than complementing each other, as employees may become confused with which channel to use under which circumstances (McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). Holland et al. (2016) remark that a paucity in research is evident on new voice channels, such as Facebook and Twitter, and how (and if) social media can contribute positively to voice behaviour, especially among Generation Y employees who grew up with social media and who belong to the least unionised age group (Holland et al., 2016). Nonetheless, seeking ways to enhance voice behaviour is important, as employee silence negatively influences decision-making and may negatively influence the employment relationship (Milliken et al., 2003). Employee silence and the shifting of boundaries in employment relations due to an increase in social media may potentially increase workplace conflict, although it is argued that social media may be able to break the silence (McDonald & Thompson, 2016).

Another question regarding employee voice relates to the skills level of employees. As stated previously, South Africa lacks a skilled workforce (World Bank, 2017c). However, research shows (García et al., 2017) that when employees and their representatives are perceived as competent, it positively affects cooperative conflict behaviour and relates negatively to competitive conflict behaviour (García et al., 2017). This poses the question as to how successful employee voice will be in organisations where employees have low skills levels, as it may lead to competitive conflict behaviours. South African businesses need to find new and pragmatic ways to foster bottom-up cooperation and to ensure that the needs of the various parties are reconciled (Heald, 2016). According to Heald (2016), traditional collective bargaining practices are failing because parties do not engage in a process of social dialogue to address the question of how to balance the economic challenges of remaining competitive, employment creation and achieving an ecologically sustainable environment. This is at national level (social dialogue) but should start at business level as research shows that socioeconomic problems are becoming part of the bargaining agenda.

Employee voice faces additional challenges (Godard, 2014b; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Employee voice lacks conceptual consistency as the various disciplines have all adopted their own idea on what is meant by employee voice (Mowbray et al., 2015). Although this approach contributes to the overall understanding of the components of employee voice, it does not clarify the nature, characteristics and conceptualisation of the construct (Mowbray et al., 2015). Organisational behaviour specialists consider voice behaviour from an individual discretionary perspective, considering why employee voice is enacted, or whether employees prefer to remain silent (Barry

& Wilkinson, 2016). However, organisational cultures to create employee silence or voice are not considered in the organisational behaviour disciplines. Similarly, the ER discipline (LR and HRM) often has too narrow a focus on employee voice, focusing purely on aspects such as the grievance process (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Changes in the IR and HRM fields (discussed earlier) have resulted in a position where the focus of the human resources department is mainly on reaching short-term and long-term employer goals, neglecting the importance of fostering an open consultative organisational culture and channels that allow employees to voice their concerns (Foster & Farr, 2016; Marchington, 2015a).

Managers elicit more favourable and responsive behaviour to supporting voice in contrast with proactive, change-oriented voice (Burriss, 2012). Nonetheless, Morrison and Milliken (2000) argue that proactive voice is the more valuable for organisational change. Mackenzie et al. (2011) argue that voice is by its very nature challenging and includes the risk of damaging relationships, but it is also promotive, as it is constructive and change-oriented. Hence, research should consider how employees implement voice and the consequences of various approaches (Burriss, 2012). For instance, voice may be supportive or challenging (Burriss, 2012), and may have an upwards (speaking up) or sideways direction (speaking out) (Liu et al., 2010). Burriss (2012) argues that managers respond differently to supportive versus challenging voice behaviours, and that supportive voice yields more favourable outcomes. In fact, challenging (voice) behaviour may result in damaging relationships because of the accompanied uncertainty, bickering or in-fighting, and thus poor work performance (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Mackenzie et al., 2011) – these are all elements related to relationship conflict as defined by Jehn (1995). Mackenzie et al. (2011) suggest that managers need to caution organisational members on the risk of increased relational conflict because of challenging voice behaviour. Subsequently, it is argued that different kinds and tones of voice may influence conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) differently. The current research acts as a beginning for such research.

Bashshur and Oc (2015) posit that not enough research has yet been undertaken on the role of culture and other diversity issues in voice success or failure. Hence, more research is necessary on the impact of socio-demographic variables on voice. In fact, Wilkinson et al. (2018) suggest considering employee voice on three levels: a societal level (i.e. macro level, e.g. the regulatory framework); the organisational level (i.e. the meso-level, such as the employee voice system of the organisation), and the individual level (i.e. the micro level, considering individual-level motivators of voice, e.g. emotions and perceptions). As with the conflict construct, a

multidisciplinary approach is advocated to consider employee voice from a wider, integrated perspective. Mowbray et al. (2015) urge scholars to consider all forms of voice behaviour in their research, as often scholars will omit research from one discipline (e.g. by not considering the institutional opportunities available for voice behaviour (Donaghey et al., 2011). Scholars should complement each other's work and not operate in silos. Rather, it is argued that the various disciplines bring different perspectives to the voice literature, and key findings and research can be incorporated from various disciplines (Mowbray et al., 2015).

From the above it is clear that research on the antecedents of conflict has been limited, as stated by scholars (Avgar, 2017). Many questions remain as to the various possible antecedents. The current research should contribute to this important gap in the research.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter considered three possible antecedents to an integrated conflict management framework for South African organisations. The notion that these antecedents may be valuable for such a framework were explored. Research confirms that leadership significantly influences the strategies, processes and procedures of an organisation, and in the end, the leaders of the organisation will be responsible for championing such a framework. It also became clear that organisational culture, although influenced strongly by leadership, also influences leadership. Moreover, a conflict culture should form the basis for an integrated conflict management approach. Lastly, employee voice is a necessary component of a communication system build around a conflict framework. Without employee voice, it may be very likely that an integrated conflict management system will not succeed.

Chapter 3 addressed part of the first literature research aim, namely to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations.

In this regard, the chapter conceptualised the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and discussed the various theoretical models for each construct. In addition, the chapter considered how the chosen socio-demographic variables of the study might moderate the antecedents by discussing some findings in the literature on these constructs.

Chapter 4 conceptualises the mediating variables (the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust) of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

CHAPTER 4: PSYCHOSOCIAL PROCESSES: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL TRUST

Chapter 4 clarifies the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. Figure 4.1 below illustrates the literature review process, as explained in section 1.8.1. The literature review consisted of five steps, of which the current chapter represents step 3.

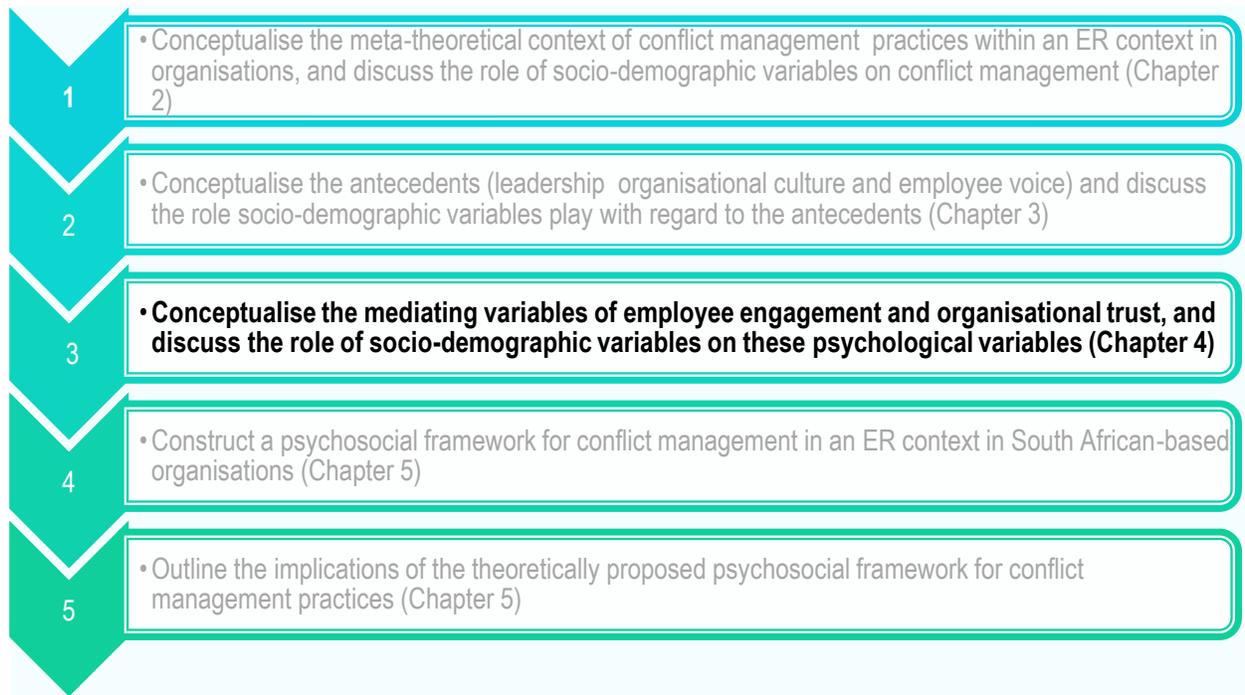


Figure 4.1 Step 3 of Stage 1, the Literature Review Process

This chapter addresses the first literature research aim, namely to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations. More specifically, Chapter 4 conceptualises the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust). Mediators are regarded as intermediary variables in the causal pathway of an independent to a dependent variable. These mediators potentially cause a change in the dependent variable, and which in turn is caused to vary through the effect of the independent variable (Kraemer et al., 2001; Saunders et al., 2016). This research is interested in exploring the way in which employee engagement and organisational trust may explain how or why the antecedents (leadership, organisational trust and employee voice) influence the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). However, owing to the cross-sectional design of the present study, the focus was not on causality but rather on

the direction and magnitude of the relationships among the variables and the mediating effect of the employee engagement and organisational trust variables on the relationship between the antecedents and dependent variables. The research also investigates the relationship between the moderating socio-demographic variables and these psychosocial processes in the workplace. The chapter explores the theoretical models of employee engagement and organisational trust. Additionally, the potential influence of these mediating constructs on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and ER is considered. Figure 4.2 below indicates the main themes of Chapter 4 for ease of reference.

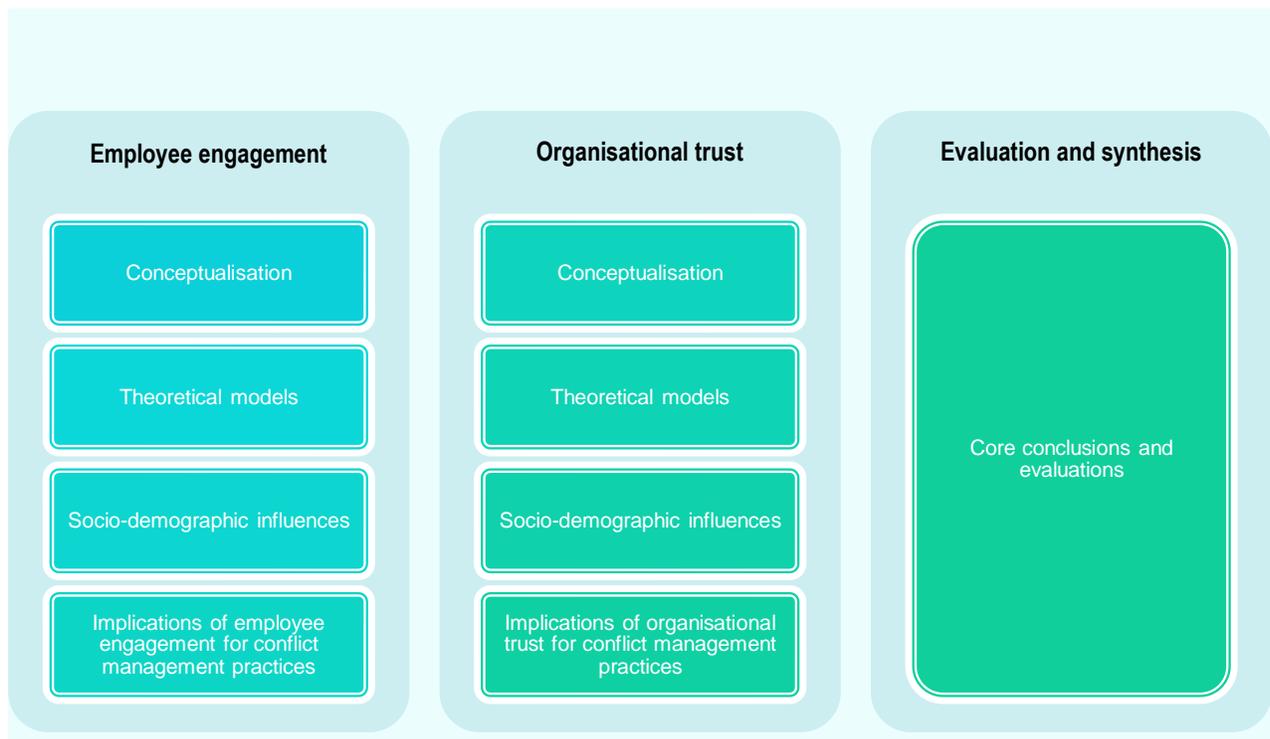


Figure 4.2 Core Themes of Chapter 4

Organisations are increasingly facing renewed challenges economically, financially and globally, which have an impact on the world of work (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Briken et al., 2017; Budhwar et al., 2016; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017; ILO, 2016b). Work experiences differ, with constant changes taking place in the types of workplace contract, rules and employment conditions and circumstances such as boundary-less workplaces with virtual and global teams (Briken et al., 2017; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017). This is giving rise to progressively more emphasis being placed on revisiting employees' psychosocial experiences in the workplace and on their general wellbeing (Bakker, 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017). Emotions are

inherent to employees' psychological makeup and affect not only their private lives but also their work lives (Kular et al., 2008). Consequently, scholars are increasingly considering positive psychology, focusing on functioning optimally and considering human strengths (Heyns & Rothmann, 2018; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli, 2013). Scholars conduct research on psychological processes in order to ascertain how performance may be enhanced by, for instance, increasing engagement levels (see for instance Breevaart et al., 2016; Bryson, 2017; Mackay, Allen, & Landis, 2017).

The benefit of engagement to both the employee and the organisation has been acknowledged since the work of Kahn (1990, 1992), who argues that authentically expressing oneself when experiencing engagement is psychologically advantageous for the employee. Today, the benefits of engagement to both the organisation and the employee are still acknowledged, as engaged employees are not only healthier physically and mentally, but also perform better – thus benefiting the organisation (e.g. Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Mackay et al., 2017; Schaufeli, 2018). Additionally, organisational trust is widely regarded as an important predictor of organisational commitment (Cho & Park, 2011), cooperative workplace behaviour (Hansen, Dunford, Boss, Boss, & Angermeier, 2011; Kramer, 1999), and organisational citizenship behaviour (Yakovleva, Reilly, & Werko, 2010), to name but a few. DeConinck (2010) stresses the importance of organisational trust in organisational performance, and maintains that organisational trust refers to the interactions and dealings of various groups within the organisation. As such, the current research considers the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust in relation to a conflict management framework.

4.1 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

For decades now, scholars have argued that changes in the world of work require more effort and innovative practices from today's businesses to survive, mainly because of an increasingly competitive and global environment (Kahn, 1992; Kwon et al., 2016; Schaufeli, 2013). Much has been written over the years in scholarly articles and in management magazines about the importance of engagement in this quest for success (Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli, 2013, 2018). For instance, meta-analysis research suggests a strong correlation between job satisfaction and employee engagement levels, and positive business outcomes (Green, Finkel, Fitzsimons, & Gino, 2017; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Schaufeli's research conducted in Europe (2018) suggests a moderately positive relationship between engagement and job satisfaction on a

countrywide level in Europe. Importantly, Schaufeli (2018) indicates that engagement at country level significantly and positively relates to economic activity and productivity.

In South Africa too, the value of employee engagement is acknowledged (Du Plessis & Martins, 2017). For instance, a Deloitte survey on South African human capital trends (2017) indicates that 66% of participants measure employee engagement (explained in this survey as how employees feel about their workplaces, indicating their level of commitment to the organisation) at least once a year. The following sections conceptualise the concept of engagement and discuss various theoretical models. Lastly, the relationship between several moderating socio-demographic variables and employee engagement is considered, followed by a consideration of the possible implications of employee engagement for conflict management practices within a South African ER context.

4.1.1 Conceptualisation of employee engagement

Employee engagement is a highly popular but disputed and fragmented concept (see for instance Du Plessis & Martins, 2017; Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli, 2017b). Four key approaches exist in the scholarly domain of engagement (Shuck, 2011), namely, Kahn's (1990) need-satisfying approach, a burnout-antithesis approach (Maslach et al., 2001), a satisfaction-engagement approach (Harter et al., 2002), and Saks's (2006a) multidimensional approach. Schaufeli (2013) posits that these four approaches consider distinct aspects of engagement. Firstly, Kahn's approach (1990) stresses the relationship between engagement and role performance. Secondly, Maslach et al. (2001) and other scholars consider the positive nature of employee engagement as opposed to the burnout construct. This view of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002) is the most widely adopted (Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017). The third approach considers the relationship between engagement and resourceful jobs (Harter et al., 2002). Fourthly, Saks (2006a) highlights the relationship between engagement and the job, as well as the relationship existing between employee engagement and the organisation. The discussion below roughly follows the same layout.

4.1.1.1 A psychological presence and need-satisfying approach (Kahn, 1990, 1992)

The first work that considered aspects of psychological presence in a work role – to be fully there, attentive and absorbed – was the work of Kahn (1990, 1992). Kahn's seminal work (1990, 1992) argues that employees perform in their work roles by using varying degrees of themselves

physically, mentally and emotionally, thus determining the extent to which they are psychologically present at work. Employees that are psychologically present feel attentive and open to others (Gibb, 1961), without being disabled because of anxiety (Kahn, 1992). Employees that are psychologically present are seen to be positively present when performing work duties, readily offering intellectual energy whilst feeling a combination of constructive emotions and meaningful associations with others (Alfes et al., 2010). Engaged employees are enthusiastic, focused, adaptable, proactive, persistent and energised (Macey & Schneider, 2008). They are connected to their work and others, for instance through indicating empathy (Kahn, 1990). They have an integrated focus; in other words, they have various dimensions of themselves engaged in the given context – this provides a sense of wholeness, rather than fragmentation (Kahn, 1990). They focus on the present, although they take cognisance of the past and refer to the future (Kahn, 1992). Lastly, psychologically present employees are focused in, and attached to, their work roles (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014). For instance, such employees offer advice and enable employee voice (Kahn, 1992).

The more employees draw from themselves in their work roles in order to perform, the more at ease they are with their fit in the organisation (Kahn, 1990). Thus, Kahn (1990) argues that employees' psychological experiences of the work situation shape the processes of employees to be present (personally engaged) or absent (personally disengaged) during their performance of tasks. Kahn (1990) theorises that this is similar to the argument that critical psychological states influence employees' internal motivation to work (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). In this regard, Kahn (1990) regarded engagement as a motivational variable, considering both extrinsic and intrinsic elements, in order for employees to promote their full selves in their work roles.

Therefore, Kahn (1990) defines personal engagement as the joining of employees' selves to their work roles by employing and expressing themselves physically, mentally and emotionally. Not only does personal engagement promote employees' connections to work and to other employees, but it also ensures vigorous and full role performance without sacrificing employees' selves within their roles (Kahn, 1990). While the mental or cognitive expression concerns the beliefs held by employees about the organisation, its leaders and working conditions, the emotional aspect indicates how employees feel about it (Kular et al., 2008). The physical element indicates the amount of energy exerted by employees in fulfilling their respective roles (Kular et al., 2008).

Contrariwise, personal disengagement is the separation of employees from their work roles by withdrawing and protecting themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally from it, thus resulting in impassive and partial role performance (Kahn, 1990). Employees thus remove their personal internal energies from physical, mental and emotional work (Kahn, 1990). Scholars further maintain that a lack of job resources – including not being involved in decision-making practices – is associated with disengagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a). The rational and unconscious aspects of the work context, mediated by the perceptions of employees, shape the conditions in which employees either engage or disengage from their work roles (Kahn, 1990).

Like Kahn (1990), other scholars also considered the engagement concept. For instance, Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) define engaged employees as being physically engrossed in their tasks, mentally alert, and indicating an emotional connectedness to their jobs. This results in these employees hiding their true identity and their thoughts and feelings while executing their various roles. Moreover, engagement is defined as a two-dimensional motivational variable that includes attention (defined as the amount of time one spends on thinking about a role, thus being cognitively available) and absorption (indicating the level of intensity of focus on a role) (Rothbard, 2001). Saks (2006a) hypothesises that based on the work of Kahn (1990) and Rothbard (2001), engagement refers to being psychologically present in a specific role. Rothbard (2001) points out that within the organisational context, employees often engage in multiple roles – making it necessary to be specific about the role in question (Saks, 2008). Saks's (2006a, 2008) view is discussed in more detail in section 4.1.1.4 below.

4.1.1.2 A burnout-contrast approach (Maslach et al., 2001)

Nonetheless, Kahn's work (1990, 1992) has been criticised for not operationalising the engagement construct (Schaufeli, 2013; Schaufeli et al., 2002). With the increased focus on positive psychology, scholars researching the burnout construct became interested in the field of engagement. In terms of the burnout concept, exhaustion is regarded as a measure of fatigue, cynicism relates to an indifference towards work, while professional efficacy reflects social and non-social elements of work accomplishments (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a). Maslach et al. (2001) considered six work areas that may lead to either burnout or engagement. To ensure engagement, they argue that a sustainable workload, having choices and feeling in control, being fittingly rewarded and recognised, working with a supportive community, doing meaningful and valued work, as well as having a fair and just work environment will lead to engagement. Subsequently, Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggested that in contrast with the characteristics of

burnout (exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy), engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy; hence, the direct opposites on a continuum with burnout being the negative pole and engagement being the positive pole. Accordingly, employees with high energy levels and that are effectively connected to their work roles are deemed to be engaged (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In essence, Maslach and Leiter (1997) argued that burnout is an erosion of job engagement. There is still some support for the notion that engagement and burnout are opposite constructs of the same dimension (Cole, Walter, Bedeian, & O'Boyle, 2012).

Nevertheless, Schaufeli et al. (2002) disagreed with the approach of Maslach and Leiter (1997), suggesting that while burnout and engagement may be opposite constructs, they should be measured independently and with different measuring instruments as the constructs are not perfectly negatively correlated. For instance, the argument cannot be made that an employee who is low in engagement is necessarily burnt out, and vice versa (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a). Schaufeli et al. (2002) draw on the work of Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) to argue that work-related wellbeing is characterised by activation (exhaustion versus vigour) and identification (cynicism versus dedication); whereas burnout is described by a combination of low activation (exhaustion) and low identification (cynicism), engagement is characterised by high activation (vigour and energy) and strong identification (dedication to work). Additionally, engagement indicates absorption, while burnout is characterised by reduced work efficacy (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). Today it is confirmed that burnout relates mainly to high job demands such as workload and role conflict, while engagement relates to job resources such as social and supervisor support and work appreciation (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017).

Subsequently, engagement is defined as a positive and fulfilling workplace state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Schaufeli, 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a; Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74), of which energy and identification are the two key dimensions (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011). Although engagement is described as an enduring state of mind, research indicates that it can also fluctuate within individuals on a daily basis, and from task to task (Bakker, 2014; Sonnentag, 2003). The engagement elements are explained as follows (Bakker et al., 2011; Schaufeli, 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001): Vigour is indicative of high levels of stimulation, energy and mental resilience, even when things get tough. The employee is willing to invest in the job, and wants to invest time and effort. Dedication displays a sense of significance and enthusiasm, devotion and pride in one's work, and being sturdily involved with it. Employees pursue their work with significance and

meaningfulness. Absorption means concentrating fully and being deeply engrossed in one's work so that time flies and one does not easily detach from work (Schaufeli, 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). Thus, one may perhaps summarise that when employees are engaged, they wholeheartedly and energetically embrace their work, and feel empowered, devoted and involved. Engagement does not focus on a particular event, task, individual or behaviour (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a) and is not a specific, momentary state (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Schaufeli (2018) summarises it aptly by saying that engaged employees work hard (indicating vigour) and are deeply involved (dedication) and engrossed (absorbed) in what they do. Another similar definition explains employee engagement as a positive, affective motivational state of high energy and dedication levels, and a strong work focus (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Similarly, it is explained as a positive state of mind that manifests through enthusiastic intellectual energy, optimistic attitudes and meaningful relations with others (Alfes et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) caution that although burnout and engagement are to some extent opposites of one another, professional efficacy is not included as an element of engagement, although professional inefficacy is the third element of burnout (as discussed above). This is first related to research that suggests that fatigue and cynicism form the core of burnout, and that professional efficacy plays a less important role (Maslach et al., 2001). Secondly, engagement is characterised by a third element of absorption, which is not the opposite of professional inefficacy (as in burnout) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004a). Thus, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) confirm that work engagement constitutes elements of vigour, dedication and absorption that lead to a fulfilling state of mind.

Nonetheless, the debate on whether engagement is a redundant concept that may be reduced to the antipode of burnout, or a construct in its own right, is still ongoing (Leon, Halbesleben, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015; Schaufeli & De Witte, 2017). Maslach and Leiter (1997) concluded that work engagement is both redundant, as it is negatively related to burnout, and real, as it has unique other relationships. Leon et al. (2015) suggest that burnout and engagement cannot be considered without acknowledging that they implicate each other. According to their research (Leon et al., 2015), burnout and work engagement are both independent and opposing in their relationship, mutually contradict each other, and form a dynamic relationship that fluctuates with time. Leon et al. (2015) conclude that burnout and engagement can thus coexist in an individual, each with its own independent properties, yet acting upon their opposites. Schaufeli and De Witte

(2017) conclude that although burnout and engagement are distinct entities, they can only be fully grasped in relation to each other.

4.1.1.3 *Employee satisfaction and engagement approach (Harter et al., 2002)*

Harter et al. (2002) define employee engagement as individuals' involvement in, satisfaction with and enthusiasm for their work. This is also the definition used by the Gallup organisation. Although this view is the one generally used by consultants, it has also been linked to scholarly works as it indicates significant links between the engagement construct and business outcomes such as customer satisfaction, turnover, productivity and the like (Harter et al., 2002; Mackay et al., 2017; Schaufeli, 2013). Similar to Harter et al. (2002), engagement is described as a positive outlook held by employees for their organisations and the principles it follows (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004).

4.1.1.4 *Multidimensional engagement (job engagement and organisation engagement)*

Saks (2006a) explains employee engagement as distinct and unique, and consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioural elements that are related to employees' role performance. Rothbard (2001) posits that more than one role is performed by employees in their daily work lives. Accordingly, Saks (2006a) identifies the two most prominent roles of organisational members as their particular work role, and being members of the organisation. Subsequently, Saks (2006a) identifies employee engagement as consisting of two related but distinctive constructs, namely job engagement (i.e. performing the work role) and organisational engagement (i.e. performing the role of being a member of the organisation). Employee engagement is thus a multilevel and multidimensional construct (May et al., 2004; Nienaber & Martins, 2015; Saks 2006a, 2008).

Similar to Sak's (2006a) consideration of employees' dual workplace roles (their individual work roles and their organisational member roles), employee engagement is defined as fully absorbed employees being enthusiastic about their organisational and individual level work roles who take positive action with the goal of furthering their organisations' interests and reputation (Nienaber & Martins, 2015). Nienaber and Martins (2015) argue that this definition encompasses all elements, as it acknowledges that organisations are made up of different teams and groupings that consist of individual employees; and furthermore, these employees work towards reaching the organisational goals as set out by the organisation's strategy. Their definition, they argue, thus acknowledges all the elements in relation to the roles of organisational members, which can and should not be separated (Nienaber & Martins, 2015). Other scholars (e.g. Welch, 2011) also

consider employee voice from the perspective of employees' jobs and organisational roles. Thus, employee engagement has also been defined as an active and non-static psychological state that indicates the relationship between employees and their organisations as it manifests in the role performances of employees, and is conveyed physically, cognitively and emotionally (Welch, 2011).

Drawing on the work of other engagement-related scholars (Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001), as well as on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), Saks (2006a) presents an employee engagement model, identifying some of the antecedents of employee engagement (e.g. job characteristics, perceived supervisor support, procedural and distributive justice and rewards and recognition). Saks (2006a) further considers Kahn's (1990) suggestion that engagement results in individual level outcomes, such as the quality of employees' work and their experiences of doing their work; and organisational level outcomes, for example organisational growth. Additionally, Maslach et al. (2001) maintain that engagement is a mediator between working conditions and work outcomes, such as job satisfaction. Subsequently, Saks (2006a) postulates that the outcomes of employee engagement are, for instance, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment – an aspect confirmed in later years (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). The work done by Saks (2006a) and other scholars that considered the various antecedents and outcomes of engagement, resulted in employee engagement being defined as an individual employee's cognitive, behavioural and emotional state that is directed towards desired organisational outcomes (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

4.1.1.5 Engagement and other similar constructs

In addition, engagement has been compared to other similar constructs (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015) such as organisational commitment (Robinson et al., 2004), organisational citizenship behaviour (Robinson et al., 2004), job involvement (Brown, 1996) and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and workaholics (Bakker et al., 2008). However, Robinson et al. (2004) conclude that although organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour are closely related to the engagement construct, they are not similar as engagement involves a reciprocal relationship between the organisation and the employee (organisations need to invest in their employees to ensure their engagement).

Nonetheless, scholars (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004) argue that the social science concepts of job involvement (Brown, 1996) and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) are closely associated with engagement. For instance, job involvement is defined as the cognitive state of psychological identification between a job situation and a person's identity (Kanungo, 1982; Lawler & Hall, 1970) resulting from the abilities of the job to satisfy the needs of its incumbent (May et al., 2004). Even so, engagement relates more to how employees employ themselves during role performance, as well as their use of emotions and behaviours (May et al., 2004). May et al. (2004) conclude that engagement may be regarded as an antecedent of job involvement, as identification of jobs will flow from deep levels of engagement.

Flow is defined (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) as the overall feeling individuals experience when motivated by the challenges of a task, thus acting with total involvement and in such a way that there is little distinction between the environment and the self. In other words, individuals fuse with the work role they are busy with, focusing narrowly on the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Nonetheless, May et al. (2004) argue that Kahn's description of engagement (1990, 1992) differs from flow, as individuals have varying degrees to which they immerse themselves in their role performance and that all aspects (cognitive, emotional and physical) of themselves are emerged in the task.

Other concepts are also considered in relation to engagement. For instance, scholars contend that work engagement is not the same as being a workaholic (even though this is at times so argued), as the latter concept refers to excessively hard workers who are reluctant to disengage from their work, while work engagement indicates vigour, dedication and absorption (Bakker et al., 2008).

4.1.1.6 Conclusion

Scholars (Bakker, 2017; Bakker et al., 2011, 2014; Schaufeli & De Witte, 2017) argue that engagement is a stand-alone, specific and well-defined concept about an operationalised state of mind that can be empirically researched and practically applied. Similarly, the construct is regarded as distinct and unique (Saks, 2006a), although not all scholars agree with this view, arguing that as the construct is not aligned but subject to various characterisations, it is fluid and unclear (Green et al., 2017). Nonetheless, Truss et al. (2013) confirm that scholars agree on engagement being a positive state of mind, and that interpersonal and contextual aspects (Schaufeli, 2013) influence engagement levels. A developing field of research considers

engagement as a management practice, and something that is done or created, rather than a state of being (Bailey et al., 2017; Truss et al., 2013).

Clearly, little agreement exists about the exact meaning of the various engagement constructs (Bakker et al., 2008; Truss et al., 2013), and constructs that are related but not identical (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). For instance, scholars propose that employee engagement is the overarching, umbrella term, with various other forms of engagement being categorised under the umbrella term (Macey & Schneider, 2008), a view that has been criticised by various scholars (see for instance Saks, 2008). A further distinction is found in whether the construct is considered in relation to management (then referred to as employee engagement, thus focusing on the employee), or in psychology (then referred to as work engagement, focusing on the object of the engagement, thus the work) (Schaufeli, 2017b). According to Schaufeli (2017b), in reality all these terms (employee engagement, work engagement, job engagement etc.) are used interchangeably and no psychological reason exists as to why they should be restricted to either work or the employee.

Kahn (1990, 1992) and Saks (2006a) consider engagement as related to a work role. Other scholars (e.g. González-Romá et al., 2006; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schneider & Blankenship, 2017) originally considered engagement in relation to the burnout concept and focuses on the job, task or work activity of the employee and how job demands and job resources influence engagement levels of the employee. However, scholars agree that the JD-R work engagement construct and theory of Demerouti, Bakker, Schaufeli and related scholars are the most often used (Bailey et al., 2017).

Bailey et al. (2017) differentiate between the work of Kahn (1990), who views engagement as a behavioural and passing experience that changes with the happenings of daily activities, and the Utrecht group (Schaufeli et al., 2002, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004b), which views engagement as a stable and lasting attitudinal frame of mind – a view that also considers the psychologisation of the employment relationship as earlier discussed (Godard, 2014b). Nonetheless, Schaufeli (2013) clarifies that there is agreement in the conceptualisation of Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al. (2002) on what the engagement construct entails – engagement involves a physical and energetic component (vigour), an emotional component (dedication) and a cognitive component (absorption). Furthermore, it may be argued that Saks's (2006a) explanation of engagement also indicates some overlap. Like the views of Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al. (2002), who argue that engagement includes physical, emotional and cognitive components, Saks (2006a) explains engagement as consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioural elements. Furthermore, Saks

(2006a) relates these components to two of employees most dominant role performances – again a similarity to Kahn’s work (1990) is evident. Lastly, Saks (2006a) advances that employees’ role performance relates to the work that is done (job engagement) (indicating a similarity to Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al. (2002), and as a member of the organisation (organisational engagement).

Subsequently, for the purposes of this study, employee engagement will be viewed from the work of Saks (2006a) and his consideration of employees’ dual roles – that of their work roles (job engagement) and that of their roles as organisational members (organisational engagement). The research of Saks (2006a) shows that these are two distinct, although related, constructs. Distinguishing between these two role performances and constructs is necessary, as the current research studies conflict management from a multidimensional and multilevel point of view that encompasses both the individual employee and organisational-level constructs such as organisational culture and organisational trust. Furthermore, the research considers aspects such as employee voice and leadership, both constructs that studies have shown to strongly influence employees’ views on their organisations and subsequent employee behaviours (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Caniëls et al., 2018; Chamberlin et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2018; Mashamba & Govender, 2017; Maymand et al., 2017; Ruck et al., 2017; Saks, 2006a). Bakker and Demerouti (2018) agree that organisational behaviour and employee wellbeing are influenced by elements found at the organisational, team and individual level, and that these aspects affect each other in present situations and in the future. In addition, Saks (2006a) advances that organisational support predicts both job and organisational engagement.

Therefore, in this research, employee engagement is described as employees being psychologically present (Kahn, 1990) in their job and organisational roles (Saks, 2006a), indicating physical (indicating energy and vigour), emotional (being dedicated) and behavioural (being absorbed and engrossed) components (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli et al., 2002). To measure employee engagement, the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006a, 2006b) was used to assess two distinct sub-constructs or types of employee engagement, namely “Job engagement” (relating to an employee’s work role) and “Organisational engagement” (relating to the employee as a member of the organisation). The work of Saks (2006a) is based on the theoretical arguments of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which is discussed together with other engagement theories below.

4.1.2 Theoretical models

Schaufeli (2013) argues that no unique framework for engagement exists. Although theoretical models exist on engagement (e.g. Kahn's work on psychological presence (1990,1992); and work flowing from the burnout literature (e.g. Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002), these models cannot be integrated in one overarching theoretical model (Schaufeli, 2013). In a narrative synthesis of employee engagement it was found the JD-R framework (Schaufeli et al., 2002) was used most widely as a theoretical framework for research studies, followed by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964); while Kahn's 1990 theory was also considered as a theoretical framework in some studies (Bailey et al., 2017). Although their synthesis (Bailey et al., 2017) indicates that other theories are also used at times, the above three widely used theoretical models (JD-R, social exchange theory and Kahn's engagement theory) are discussed next.

4.1.2.1 Kahn's theoretical model of engagement

Kahn (1990) determined through an inductive process that three psychological conditions – meaningfulness, safety and availability of resources – indicate the level of engagement employees hold at work. According to role theory, Kahn suggests that should these conditions be psychologically present, employees engage in their work roles. However, if these conditions are absent, employees disengage from their work roles (Kahn, 1990, 1992). Engagement levels of employees are thus intrinsically and extrinsically motivated (Kahn, 1990). Interpersonal, intergroup and organisational factors are regarded as the extrinsic aspects influencing engagement. Moreover, Kahn (1990, p. 703) explains that employees unconsciously ask themselves three questions in each work situation on which they base their decision to engage in or to disengage from their work roles, namely: “(1) How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this performance? (2) How safe is it to do so? and (3) How available am I to do so?” In other words, Kahn (1990) suggests that employees' engagement levels are intrinsically motivated by the three dimensions of meaningfulness, safety and availability. Research that empirically tested Kahn's (1990) model confirmed that meaningfulness, safety and availability relate significantly to engagement (May et al., 2004).

When referring to psychological meaningfulness, Kahn (1990) refers to how beneficial it is for employees to engage fully with their work roles – therefore, it is linked to elements at work that either encourage or discourage employees to engage. According to Kahn (1990), psychological meaningfulness implies that employees perceive a heightened physical, cognitive or emotional

energy in return for investing themselves in their work roles. Employees experience meaningfulness when they feel that they are not taken for granted, but rather that they make a difference and contribute to something worthwhile. When experiencing meaningfulness, employees are able to give and receive of themselves in their work roles (Kahn, 1990).

Generally, three factors influence psychological meaningfulness, namely, the characteristics of tasks and of roles, and interactions at work (Kahn, 1990). Tasks with clear objectives and characterised as stimulating, well defined, diverse and resourceful contribute to experiences of meaningfulness, as do the ability to work somewhat independently and take ownership (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Kahn, 1990). Moreover, tasks encompassing both routine and novel aspects ensure that employees feel competent but also experience growth (Kahn, 1990). With relation to role characteristics, Kahn (1990) suggests that two elements of work roles affect the experience of psychological meaningfulness. Firstly, employees are implicitly required to assume certain work identities that they may either like or dislike. Secondly, different work roles have varied influence or status (Kahn, 1990). When employees perceive themselves to be needed and valued in their respective roles; and as having influence because of their role status, they experience heightened power and, subsequently, increased meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990); the last aspect contributes to meaningfulness is work interactions (Kahn, 1990). Employees experience increased psychological meaningfulness when they have good interpersonal interactions – characterised by mutual appreciation and respect, as well as constructive feedback – with colleagues, clients and the like. Employees are more likely to give to and receive from others in situations of good work interactions (Kahn, 1990). Rewarding interactions endorse self-respect, self-appreciation and worth (Kahn, 1990).

As stated above, the second aspect employees consider when deciding to engage or disengage relates to psychological safety (Kahn, 1990). According to Kahn (1990), psychological safety refers to guarantees evident in work situations, concerning aspects of social systems that increase or decrease nonthreatening, foreseeable and stable social conditions in which to engage (Kahn, 1990). An element of trust is evident when employees feel safe to engage in their work roles, as they experience no fear of any destructive consequences to their self-perception, standing or careers. Through their organisational cultures, organisations create safe environments and contexts that leave perceptions of safety (or not) to take the risk of expressing themselves and engaging in processes of change (Schein, 1987). According to Kahn (1990), trust is created in situations that are nonthreatening, anticipated and constant, with clear boundaries

between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and their consequences. In such contexts, employees deem it safe to engage.

Kahn (1990) postulates that four factors most directly affect psychological safety, namely, employees' interpersonal relationships, the underlying group and intergroup forces, the styles and processes adapted by management, and organisational norms. Perceptions of psychological safety flow from interpersonal relationships perceived as supportive and trusting and in which the flexibility exists to try – and perhaps fail – without fear of consequence (Kahn, 1990). Additionally, the various underlying and unconscious characters or roles adapted by individuals and groups influence psychological safety (Kahn, 1990), as social systems connect individuals in such a system through unconscious processes of association and involvement (Wells, 1980). The third factor refers to management style and processes, arguing that supportive, robust, and advisory management styles and processes heighten perceptions of psychological safety. Supportive managerial environments allow employees to engage in their work roles without fear of the results (Kahn, 1990). Fourthly, Kahn (1990) found that when work roles are performed within the boundaries of organisational norms, they result in perceptions of psychological safety.

Additionally, Kahn (1990) proposes that the third question employees ask themselves unconsciously when either engaging with or disengaging from their work roles relates to the availability of resources. The presence or absence of resources refers to the resources within employees themselves; thus, those individual interferences that concern employees to various degrees, leaving them with more or fewer resources with which to engage in their work roles (Kahn, 1990).

Kahn (1990) explains that the availability of resources is influenced by psychological availability, as well as physical and emotional energy. Employees' psychological availability refers to the readiness of employees to engage at a given point in time, based on their levels of physical, emotional, or psychological means. In other words, it considers employees' readiness to engage in light of the various distractions present in a social system (Kahn, 1990). Kahn's research (1990) indicates that four types of distraction affect psychological ability, namely, depletion of physical energy, depletion of emotional energy, individual insecurity and outside lives. Kahn (1990) draws on the seminal work of Goffman to argue that personal engagement demands physical energy, strength and a readiness from employees (Goffman, 1961). Similarly, Kahn (1990) postulates that employees need emotional resources to engage; without it they are too depleted to engage and rather withdraw from the situation. Furthermore, employees who feel insecure in their work roles

(e.g. because of low self-esteem or increased self-consciousness) are distracted by their insecurities and thus do not engage or express themselves in the work context as their energy is taken up by their anxieties and a feeling that they do not fit (Kahn, 1990). Lastly employees' outside lives may potentially hamper (or benefit) their psychological presence in their work roles.

Systematic and individual demands either enhance psychological presence, or move employees away from it (Kahn, 1992). For instance, employees need for self-actualisation may move them closer to psychological presence (Kahn, 1992; Maslow, 1954). Nonetheless, employees may also withdraw from psychological presence to avoid the risks and vulnerabilities of being fully present. In fact, being fully present all the time may lead to job burnout (Kahn, 1992). Thus, Kahn (1992) maintains that organisational members continuously fluctuate between being fully present and absent. To ensure the right balance between being fully present all the time, or absent, organisations may structure jobs and roles in specific ways to ensure room for employees to be fully present (Kahn, 1992).

Later works by scholars confirmed the work of Kahn (1990, 1992). Research suggests that Kahn's (1990) three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability have significant positive relationships with engagement (May et al., 2004). In May et al.'s (2004) research, job enrichment and work-role fit were found to be significantly related to meaningfulness – with meaningfulness having the strongest relationship with engagement. A positive relationship between psychological safety and rewarding and supportive co-worker and supervisor relationships is evident; while psychological availability positively relates to availability of resources (May et al., 2004).

4.1.2.2 Job demands–resources (JD-R) theory

According to the job demands-resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017, 2018; Demerouti, Nachreiner, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2001), working conditions are categorised according to two broad categories, namely job resources and job demands, which have an impact on the levels of exhaustion and disengagement an employee may experience and which may lead to burnout. Both job demands and job resources have distinctive properties and predictive significance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). JD-R theory outlines the way in which job demands and resources influence employee wellbeing, organisational behaviour and job performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2018), JD-R theory proposes that job demands and resources are distinctive and independent aspects affecting employee wellbeing. Demerouti et al. (2001) explain that job demands refer to the physical, social and organisational elements of an employee's job (e.g. workload, time pressures) that are linked to physiological and psychological costs such as fatigue. Job demands may lead to high levels of stress, chronic fatigue and health impairments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018; Taris & Schaufeli, 2016). Conflict is one example of a job demand at work that costs energy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). In fact, workplace conflict is regarded as an acute social job stressor (Spector & Bruk-Lee, 2008), which is negatively related to employee wellbeing (Sonnentag et al., 2013).

Bakker and Demerouti (2018) draw on the seminal work by LePine and scholars (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005), which distinguishes between hindrance and challenge work stressors. Whereas hindrance stressors directly influence performance negatively, challenge stressors have a positive direct effect on performance (LePine et al., 2005). While aspects such as workload and complexity qualify as challenge demands that help employees to perform well, conflict is an example of hindrance job demands that undermine performance (Bakker, 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; LePine et al., 2005). As such, it is concluded that while lesser conflict will prevent burnout, it will not necessarily enhance engagement (Schaufeli, 2017a). This is because although conflict is potentially stressful, it may be regarded as challenging and less challenging jobs do not lead to higher engagement (Schaufeli, 2017a). This is in line with the argument of Sonnentag et al. (2013) which posits that not all stressors will result in negative effects in all situations. Rather, the way in which the person (and it may perhaps be argued, how an organisation) deals with the stressor (e.g. conflict) will influence the possible consequences. Schaufeli (2017a) concludes that as conflict can lead to burnout, it should be monitored and managed.

Job resources relate to the physical, psychological, social and organisational elements of an employee's job (e.g. feedback, rewards, participatory practices and supervisor support) that are either functional and assist in achieving work goals, or reduce job demands, or stimulate personal development and growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources are social, organisational, physical and psychological in nature (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Personal resources include, for instance, the locus of control held by employees (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Job resources initiate an intrinsic motivational process by providing meaning and satisfying basic needs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Work experiences that meet the expectations of employees

in terms of need fulfilment (e.g. the desire to be authentic) are energising and enhance employees' work behaviour and engagement (Green et al., 2017). Resources also have extrinsic motivational purposes as they assist in reaching work goals and assist workers in coping with high job demands (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a), a significant positive relationship exists between job resources and engagement. Thus, job resources, such as having a voice in decision-making processes (Kwon et al., 2016), contribute to work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018).

While job demands are primarily related to exhaustion and burnout, a lack of resources is primarily related to disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). Thus, when job demands are high, it leads to fatigue but not to disengagement, and a lack in resources leads to disengagement but not to exhaustion. Burnout follows when both exhaustion and disengagement are present (Demerouti et al., 2001) and should therefore not be regarded as the antipode of engagement. Scholars explain that burnout is thus “an erosion of engagement with the job” (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the JD-R model postulates that job resources cushion the effect of job demands on negative strain – although job demands and resources result in independent main effects, they also act in unison (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Job resources are important as they assist employees in coping with job demands, and specifically affect motivation and work engagement when job demands are very high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). In fact, job resources (together with personal resources and job demands) predict variance in work engagement and exhaustion (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

Similarly, personal resources such as optimism and self-efficacy assist in dealing with high job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Lastly, JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018) postulates that while motivation positively influences performance, strain negatively influences performance because it undermines an employee's ability to focus. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) suggest that employees play an active role in influencing their work conditions. Depending on their wellbeing, employees may influence their working conditions negatively should they be stressed, thus initiating a cycle of loss through job demands and strain; or alternatively, when they are engaged, employees positively influence their work environment – thus initiating a positive gain cycle of job resources and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In fact, JD-R theory research suggests that employees who are engaged in their jobs want to stay engaged and thus create their own resources over time (e.g. through job crafting) to be able to do so (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018).

To conclude, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) summarise the JD-R theory theoretical propositions as: (1) all job characteristics can be divided into either job demands or job resources; (2) job demands lead to health-impairment processes, while job resources contribute to motivational processes; (3) job resources can buffer the experiences of job demands on strain; (4) job resources influence motivation in circumstances where job demands are high; (5) personal resources (e.g. self-efficacy and optimism) play a similar role to job resources; (6) whereas motivation positively influences job performance, job strain negatively influences job performance; and (7) when employees are motivated by their work, they are likely to use job crafting behaviours which increase job and personal resources, and motivational levels.

4.1.2.3 *Social exchange theory*

Saks (2006a) criticises the work of Kahn (1990) and Maslach et al. (2001), arguing that although both these models indicate the psychological conditions necessary to ensure engagement, they do not entirely clarify why employees will respond to them with varying degrees of engagement. Saks (2006a) argues that individual employees respond to resources they receive from the organisation by engaging themselves to varying degrees. Saks (2006a) subsequently suggests that the principles of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) provide a stronger theoretical foundation for employee engagement scholars. This view is supported by Nienaber and Martins (2015), who argue that both motivational and exchange theories thus explain employee engagement.

As explained in previous chapters, Blau's social exchange theory (1964) argues that a reciprocal relationship exists between parties who are interdependent of each other. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), social exchange theory maintains that relationships will grow to be trusting and loyal with mutual commitments should parties abide by exchange guidelines (e.g. the actions of the one party will lead to a reciprocal action of the other party). In a similar vein, Robinson et al. (2004) argue that engagement is a reciprocal relationship between the employer and its employees.

Thus, Saks (2006a) argues that engagement is one way in which employees can repay organisations for the resources they receive, such as economic and sociological resources (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Saks (2006a) posits that being fully present in one's work role psychologically, emotionally and cognitively (Kahn, 1990) is a profound reciprocal response by employees. Accordingly, the amount of cognitive, emotional and psychological resources offered by employees is contingent on the economic and sociological resources given by the organisation

(Saks, 2006a). It is also debated that should employees invest significant amounts of effort and personal resources in their work, without receiving reciprocal rewards such as appreciation, working conditions and the like, in time it may result in burnout (Schaufeli, 2006). This phenomenon is not only evident on the interpersonal level but also on the team and organisational levels (Schaufeli, 2006). Although the current research focus is not on burnout, it does shed light on engagement theory to the extent that the concepts of engagement and burnout are related.

Nonetheless, Schaufeli (2013) argues that the use of social exchange theory for engagement is limited, as Saks's (2006a) research indicated relatively weak relationships for both organisational and job engagement.

4.1.2.4 Conclusion

Engagement is grounded mainly in three theoretical models, namely, Kahn's model of psychological presence (1990, 1992), JD-R theory (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), depending on the specific viewpoint of each of the above seminal writers. As stated above, this research views employee engagement through the theoretical lens of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

4.1.3 Socio-demographic variables influencing employee engagement

Hoole and Bonnema (2015) comment that a one-size-fit-all approach does not exist when considering ways of improving engagement in organisations. Similarly, Kahn (1992) maintains that organisational groups (e.g. based on age, race or gender) may have either more or less psychological presence, as people from different ethnic groups, cultures and group affiliations are subjected differently to self-in-role behaviours. For instance, when individuals are exposed to desired norms and subscribe to the notion of being connected, focused, integrated and attentive, they will in all likelihood strive to be more psychologically present (Kahn, 1992). Many of these aspects influencing the psychological presence or psychological absence of organisational members relate to the level of adult development in organisational members (Kahn, 1992). In fact, research specific to South Africa (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011) advances that significant differences are prevalent between the socio-demographic variables of home language, ethnicity, qualification and the level of work engagement of the respective groups.

For instance, the roles employees occupy in organisations influence their levels of engagement displayed. Kular et al. (2008) indicate that seniority plays an important role in engagement, and

that senior executives are the most engaged, with hourly workers being the least engaged. Role characteristics such as authority, stimulation, resources and the like may significantly affect this finding, as employees in high-level jobs have more exposure to all these resources (Kular et al., 2008). Kahn (1992) agrees and explains that it is in part due to the influence and status that are evident in these roles. Individuals in central, powerful roles have a bigger voice – also in shaping their own roles. As such, the role that is established may allow the individual more space to be fully engaged. However, Kahn (1992) also maintains that because of the higher status associated with these kinds of jobs, individuals are more vulnerable and may perceive no choice in being present or not. This implies that in order to remain authentic, present and focused, individuals in such central roles constantly draw from their inner self (Kahn, 1992).

Furthermore, tenure, job level and occupational groupings all influence engagement levels. Tenure influences engagement levels, with employees' engagement declining the longer they stay with an organisation (Robinson et al., 2004). Additionally, research shows that both new employees and employees who have been involved in their work roles for longer periods of time, comment on situations where the other category employees made them feel unsafe, resulting in lower engagement levels (Kahn, 1990). New and lower status organisational members in particular, mentioned this particular insecurity, thus indicating a dimension that relates to a lack of self-confidence (Kahn, 1990). Although Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) research indicates small differences in engagement based on occupational groups, the differences are of practical insignificance. Nonetheless, research suggests that South African public sector employees experience employee engagement differently to private sector employees (Martins, 2015). This finding is similar to a British study that also showed public sector employees to be less engaged than their private sector counterparts (Kular et al., 2008).

Relatively little research has been conducted on the relationship between engagement, and gender and ethnicity (Truss et al., 2013). A South African study (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011) suggests that groups with different home languages and ethnicity experience work engagement differently. However, scholars (Nienaber & Martins, 2014) caution that cultural differences may affect the validity of various research instruments utilised in engagement research. Considering gender aspects, Kahn (1990) confirms that women at times experience that men undermine their work roles, resulting in women feeling unsafe to fully engage in their work roles. Subsequently, the anxieties they experience take away some of the energy that could have been directed at higher engagement (Kahn, 1990). Schaufeli (2018), who indicates that countries with no gender

inequality have higher levels of engagement in their workforce than countries with gender inequality, confirms Kahn's (1990) research finding. However, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) considered the effect of gender on engagement and suggest that although men show slightly higher levels of engagement than their women counterparts, the differences are almost irrelevant. Nonetheless, gender may influence leadership's impact on engagement levels, as research shows that, generally, male supervisors have higher levels of engaged employees than female supervisors (Kular et al., 2008).

Research furthermore suggests that there are significant differences in the way varying qualifications predict employee engagement at work (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011). Their research suggests that employees with matriculation were more engaged than employees with postgraduate qualifications. This partially confirms prior research (Jackson & Rothmann, 2004) that confirmed that individuals with lower education levels were more engaged. Nonetheless, Jackson and Rothmann (2004) explain that the smaller sample sizes of the postgraduate individuals may explain this difference. Moreover, other research findings contradict these findings, suggesting that academics with doctoral degrees are more engaged than their counterparts with a four-year degree (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). The results are thus inconclusive, and more research is necessary on this aspect.

Age influences engagement levels, although scholars have conflicting views on the matter (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Research suggests that based on different types of demands and resources, emotional exhaustion in different age groups may be predicted (De Lange et al., 2006). Future research should consider how this might apply to engagement, also considering generational cohorts and life stages of employees. Hoole and Bonnema (2015) submit that a significant relationship exists between various generational cohorts and their experience of engagement. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a), engagement is only weakly positively related to employees' age. Other research advocates that engagement levels decline as employees get older until they reach the age of 60, where after it increases significantly, making this older group the most engaged group of employees (Robinson et al., 2004). Still, De Lange et al. (2006) posit that various demands and resources (as per the J-DR engagement model of Schaufeli et al. (2002) predict emotional exhaustion in the different age groups. For instance, Schaufeli et al. (2002) maintain that older workers are often more engaged, a view supported by other scholars (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). In fact, a significant difference was found between Baby Boomers who are mostly engaged in their work, and Generations X and Y with

lower engagement (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Although no clear reasons are given for the difference, Hoole and Bonnema (2015) suggest that it may be attributed to Baby Boomers being very ambitious, engaged and competitive in their work roles. As the current economic circumstances contribute to older workers working after their pensionable age, higher engagement levels for this age group are important (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Additionally, Hoole and Bonnema (2015) caution that South African organisations should take note that as Baby Boomers will leave the workplace soon, organisations risk losing their most engaged employee group. Further, it is of great concern that Baby Boomers are the most engaged employee group in the South African workforce, as it implies that the majority of workers (Generations X and Y) are not as engaged (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015).

Kular et al. (2008) draw on the work of the Gallup Institute to report that married employees tend to have higher engagement levels than unmarried employees, suggesting that it may be because married employees are more settled in their work and personal lives. Furthermore, research advances that employees who are motivated to maintain a balance between their personal and family commitments and welfare, and their work commitments, generally result in higher engagement levels (Coetzee, Schreuder, & Tladinyane, 2014).

Maslach et al. (2001) argue that engagement is boosted by manageable workloads, feelings of control and having choices, suitable recognition and reward systems, a kind, supportive and loyal work community, fair and just behaviour, and perceiving one's job as meaningful and appreciated. It is therefore concluded that income level may affect employee engagement as other scholars confirm that rewards and recognition are factors that contribute significantly to employee engagement (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; Kahn, 1990).

These findings suggest that various groupings may experience engagement differently. However, a paucity of research on the moderating effect of socio-demographic variables on the mediator of employee engagement within the context of ER in South Africa was found. Nonetheless, one study did confirm that significant differences are evident between South African demographic groupings and their work engagement (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011). Moreover, no research that considered the relationship dynamics of the constructs in combination as relevant to the current research was found. Thus, it is necessary to consider the moderating role of socio-demographic variables on the psychosocial mediating variable of employee engagement as it might inform the proposed integrated conflict management framework.

4.1.4 Employee engagement and its implications for conflict management practices within an employment relations context

Managing conflict to ensure that it is functional can only be done in a conflict-positive organisation, necessitating persistent, continuous action from an organisation's leadership (Hendel et al., 2005). This is in line with the development of positive psychology and the way it influences an organisation's approach and orientation to manage conflict constructively and proactively in order to ensure a competitive advantage for the organisation (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018). Positive psychology creates meaning in workplaces through employees who obtain value from their experiences at work, thus feeling energised and engaged in their workplace (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Employee engagement and the role it plays is often seen as a measure of ER effectiveness (Amah, 2018; CIPD, 2012). Research maintains that employee engagement is a highly effective process of assessing employees' attitudes towards their jobs (Mackay et al., 2017). Moreover, reviewing, developing and implementing organisational policies that reflect procedural and distributive justice enhances engagement and creates a culture of trust and cooperation in organisations (Lee & Raschke, 2018). Research (Kular et al., 2008) also indicates that high-engagement workplaces have leaders who create safe trusting organisational cultures, where employees are willing to express their ideas. Additionally, leaders who use more than one leadership style in order to fit the situation increase the engagement levels of their followers (Mashamba & Govender, 2017).

Although little research has been undertaken on the topic of conflict management and engagement, scholars agree that a strong positive relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture (Emmott, 2015). Currie et al. (2017) stress the importance of conflict prevention in conflict management processes by, for instance, psychologically aligning employees with the organisation's goals, vision and mission. In view of the fact that workplace conflict interferes with these objectives (Purcell, 2014), it is argued in this research that employee engagement initiatives may be one way of psychologically aligning employees to the organisation's goals, vision and mission, while also contributing to effective conflict management. While this may be the case, research suggests that employee engagement contributes to lesser conflict but cannot eliminate conflict completely (Soieb et al., 2013). Nonetheless, research indicates the importance of team and co-worker relationships for employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Thus, the importance of constructively

managing conflict is obvious. This is especially true as research suggests that relationship conflict is regarded as extremely negative in a collectivist society (such as South Africa), with the potential to manifest in burnout (Shaukat et al., 2017) and emotional exhaustion (Bear et al., 2014) – opposing the objective of increasing engagement levels in organisations.

Considering ways of lessening conflict is imperative for engagement initiatives, as research suggests that good workplace relationships and social support at workplaces foster work engagement by affirming employees' workplace identities, easing anxieties and enhancing organisational trust (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014). Moreover, supportive supervisor behaviour and strong workplace relations with colleagues (De Beer, Tims, & Bakker, 2016; Saks, 2006a) enhance perceptions of meaningfulness (Locke & Taylor, 1990), a necessary element in fostering engagement (Kahn, 1990).

Additionally, Bakker and Demerouti (2018) argue that conflict is part of job demands, and thus affects work engagement. Similarly, employees who have high levels of job strain such as chronic fatigue will communicate poorly, and will make mistakes and create conflict. As such, the cycle of already high job demands is escalated further through negative job strains that lead to self-undermining behaviours (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Bakker and Demerouti (2018) draw on scholarly works about the phenomenon of self-undermining behaviour (Bakker & Wang, 2016) to show that self-undermining behaviour such as conflict leads to higher levels of work pressure and emotional demands, resulting in an increase in exhaustion on the side of the employee, and on lower performance ratings from supervisors.

Jungst and Blumberg (2016) confirm that little is known about the consequences of conflict on psychological work outcomes such as engagement. In fact, their research was one of the few scholarly works found that deliberated the relationship between conflict and engagement. Their research suggests that work engagement mediates the relationship between task conflict and performance. Additionally, task conflict is negatively associated with work engagement – employees are less engaged in environments they find unpleasant, such as environments riddled with conflict (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016). In fact, task conflict disrupts work norms and increases work-related frustrations (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Nonetheless, the research of Jungst and Blumberg (2016) considered task and relationship conflict as antecedents to organisational performance mediated by work engagement. The current research considers conflict (conflict types and interpersonal conflict management styles) as an outcome variable.

Kahn (1990) suggests that employees are quicker to disengage and withdraw from situations indicating potential conflict with organisational members of higher ranks than they are to withdraw from conflict and disengage with their peers. This may be because of a lack of trust in the supervisor-leader relationship. Trust in leadership influences the level of employee engagement in organisations (Deloitte, 2017). For instance, various studies support the positive relationship dynamics between individuals with proactive characteristics, transformational leadership and employee engagement (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Caniëls et al., 2018). Additionally, research indicates that supervisors' behaviour, such as inconsistent management styles, can lead to the disengagement of employees as it gives rise to perceptions of unfairness (Maslach et al., 2001). Conversely, employee engagement is facilitated by employees working in highly resourceful jobs stemming from high quality LMX relationships (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Van den Heuvel, 2015). Indeed, research advances that strong, stable relationships between employees and their supervisors, as well as amongst peers, assist in interpersonal work conflict being resolved and enable a sense of belonging that enhances trust and engagement (Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, & Schaufeli, 2016).

From an ER perspective it is vital that managerial practices should be effective and lead to enhanced employee engagement, as well as an organisational culture that is conducive to good ER (Truss et al., 2013; Dillon, 2012; Ibietan, 2013). Certainly it is argued that aligning organisational policies and practices to creating a culture of engagement and trust is necessary in combatting the challenges of today's workplace (Smith, Peters, & Caldwell, 2016), also, it may be argued, with regard to ER. However, this is no easy feat. Increasingly, scholars are considering the phenomenon that engagement fluctuates within persons across time and in various situations (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Although employee engagement definitions thus originally described engagement as an enduring state of mind, it should be noted that employees' state of mind might fluctuate on a daily basis and from task to task (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018).

Furthermore, research suggests that psychological states and behaviour may be transferred from one person to another, and among group members (Schoenewolf, 1990). This phenomenon is called crossover or emotional contagion (Barsade, 2002; Schoenewolf, 1990; Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). The crossover process implies that an emotion as perceived in an individual is transferred to another individual through an unconscious process of response and imitation, thus eliciting similar emotions and behaviour in the interacting individual (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). This process may also happen consciously by purposefully tuning into others' emotions and

experiences, and may be applied to basic as well as complex positive or negative emotions and psychological states (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). In fact, research suggests that crossover effects have a ripple effect (Barsade, 2002). Scholars considered the crossover effect on engagement and found that engagement is transferred from women to men (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009), as well as more generally on a dyadic level among colleagues and on the group level, particularly when the most engaged group member has high engagement levels (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018).

Moreover, Barsade's (2002) research considers the processes through which people interact and influence each other to obtain cooperation. According to Barsade (2002), when group members experience positive emotional contagion, it improves cooperation and performance, while decreased levels of conflict prevail (Barsade, 2002). In other words, when positive emotional contagion occurs, a movement towards positivity is created with a concurrent decrease in negativity, which again decreases internal group conflict (Barsade, 2002). Crossover of engagement may thus result in positive gain spirals at the individual and group level, with increased levels of visible engagement (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). This emphasises the importance of engagement in a conflict management framework, as it is argued that engaged workers may counteract the negative effect of conflict manifestation in organisations through the positive emotions and energy associated with engagement. However, the crossover effect may equally have a negative effect in organisations when negative emotions persevere and conflict is not constructively dealt with (Baron, 1984).

Similarly, scholars argue that on a team or group level, engagement is dependent on how effective interpersonal processes, such as conflict management, are implemented (Costa et al., 2017; Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). Should the team be able to prevent, control or resolve team conflict, it is regarded as effectively managing the team process of conflict management (Marks et al., 2001). Additionally, it is necessary to regulate team members' emotions as they relate to positive team outcomes and lesser relationship conflict (Curşeu, Boroş, & Oerlemans, 2012). Should teams not be able to regulate their emotions, negative energy results in these teams, which may hamper engagement (Costa et al., 2017). This is an important aspect as research suggests that the energy dimension of engagement significantly predicts team work engagement (Costa, Passos, & Bakker, 2016).

It is evident from the above that employee engagement plays a potentially vital role in the management of conflict. Nonetheless, no research was found on the relationship dynamics of

employee engagement as a psychosocial process mediator in a conflict management framework, or on the combination of constructs as suggested in this research. Therefore, the current research may contribute significantly to filling this important gap in the body of knowledge on conflict management practices. The mediating psychosocial process variable of organisational trust is discussed next.

4.2 ORGANISATIONAL TRUST

The second mediating variable of this research refers to the psychological process of organisational trust. Parties that need to work together cannot do so without trust, as working together involves an interdependence between different parties; a factor that has intensified with the impediments faced by business (Costa, 2003; Mayer et al., 1995) over the last decades. Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2018) remark that trust (or, one may argue, distrust) originates from the social and economic exchanges that take place at either the organisational or individual level. Changes in organisational structures and traditional management strategies have given way to more cooperative approaches that emphasise coordination, shared accountability and participation in decision-making processes (Costa, 2003; Keen, 1990). One example of this is, for instance, increased voice behaviour. Moreover, research shows a positive relationship between trust and organisational citizenship behaviour (Yakovleva et al., 2010), organisational commitment and employee satisfaction (Chathoth et al., 2007; Cho & Park, 2011; Lewicka, Karp-Zawlik, & Pec, 2017), and constructive deviant behaviour (Kura et al., 2016). Additionally, organisational trust increases cooperative behaviour amongst employees (Hansen et al., 2011; Kramer, 1999). The next section conceptualises the organisational trust construct.

4.2.1 Conceptualisation of organisational trust

Scholars agree that trust is not easily defined and that no one universal definition exists for the concept of trust (Bozic, Siebert, & Martin, 2018; Costa, 2003; Kramer, 1999). Moreover, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argue that although a myriad of research studies have been undertaken on trust, indicating the importance of trust in organisations, trust research mostly focuses on the individual level (Kramer, 1999; Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006; Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). However, because organisations are multilevel systems, and trust a phenomenon operating at the individual, team and organisational level of analysis, considering trust on various levels is empirically and theoretically vital (Klein,

Dansereau, & Hall, 1994). Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) advise scholars to clearly indicate the specifics of trust-related research for the purposes of clarity. This research considers organisational trust as perceived by working individuals.

Kramer (1999) draws on the seminal writings of scholars (Coleman, 1990; Hardin, 1998; Williamson, 1993) to explain that trust is a behaviour of choice, based on either a rational or a relational choice (these theories are discussed in more detail in section 4.2.2 below). Other scholars (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; McAllister, 1995) refer to these two choices as the affective versus cognitive components of trust. From the rational choice perspective, trust is regarded as a choice made in terms of the perspective that the risks of the choice are outweighed by the benefits of trust (Coleman, 1990; Hardin, 1999; Kramer, 1999; Williamson, 1993). From a relational choice or behaviour perspective (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998), it is argued that trust is based on a reciprocal choice. It has an emotional element that considers aspects such as making a commitment and expectations made on the belief that the trustee will behave and treat the trustor similar to the way the trustor treated the trustee (Newman, Kiazad, Miao, & Cooper, 2014).

Seminal writers define trust as a multidimensional concept with two key dimensions (Costa, 2003; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). The first of these dimensions refers to the positive expectation of trustworthiness in the trustee, considering aspects such as perceptions, beliefs or expectations about the trustee's reliance and intentions (Costa, 2003; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Trust encompasses certain expectations, inspiring confidence in others, and predictability (McAllister, 1995). General beliefs on how others will behave and the expected treatment that will be received influence these expectations (Mayer et al., 1995). The second dimension refers to a willingness to accept vulnerability, to take risks, and to be dependent on a trustee – even in times of uncertainty (Costa, 2003; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). These aspects are prominent in trust definitions. For instance, trust refers to the prospects and assumptions an individual holds that in all likelihood, another's impending behaviour and actions will be constructive and positive or, at the very least, not harmful to one's interests (Robinson, 1996).

These two dimensions, referring to the three conditions of trust (i.e. vulnerability, risk and interdependence) are present in most trust definitions across all levels (individual, team and organisation) (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie, 2015). In fact, scholars agree that risk creates an opportunity for trust (Gillespie, 2015; Hosmer, 1995). Hence, trust implies the absence of any assurances of a positive outcome (Gillespie, 2015). Kramer (1999) concludes that when considering the variety of definitions on trust, it is clear that although scholars may not agree on

one universal definition, they do agree that vulnerability, risk and interdependence are three key components of any trust definition, and that trust is a psychological state (Kramer, 1999).

Additional facets of the multidimensionality of trust are considered in the literature. For instance, scholars (Mishra, 1996) argue that organisational trust is reflected in the willingness to be vulnerable to another party, based on the fact that the other party is perceived to be proficient and competent, transparent, concerned and trustworthy. Similarly, researchers refer to trust dimensions relating to honesty, competency, integrity, openness, concern, accountability and reliability (see for instance Kramer, 1999; Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). This is in line with a longitudinal study (Gabarro, 1978) on workplace relationship development between managers and subordinates that considered various foundations to trust such as ability and character. Gabarro (1978) regards character as a starting point for trust, referring to elements such as honesty, openness, predictability and the like. According to Mayer et al. (1995), character can be divided into two elements, namely benevolence and integrity. Chathoth et al. (2007) point to various overlaps in these dimensions of trust, condensing it into four main dimensions, namely, integrity, commitment, dependability and competence.

Three of these elements are considered in the current research as part of the measurement of organisational trust, namely, integrity, commitment and dependence (Chathoth et al., 2011). Firstly, it is argued that integrity is an essential concept to consider in conflict research, as it contributes to developing trust (Mayer et al., 1995), which may have been diminished as conflict has been shown to negatively affect trust levels (e.g. Nešić & Lalić, 2016). Likewise, conflict may be detrimental to relationships, necessitating actions to recuperate from the conflict (e.g. Benitez et al., 2018). In this regard, Granovetter (1985) argues that integrity plays a vital role in sustaining frail relationships. According to Pirson and Malhotra (2011), integrity enhances trust which in turn ensure cooperation and coordination in organisations (Gulati & Westphal, 1999; Tyler, 2000). Hence, scholars argue that trust fosters cooperative organisational behaviour (Tyler, 2000).

Secondly, the argument is made that trust substantially augments commitment (Brockett, 1997; Cho & Park, 2011; Tyler, 2000) by contributing to the creation of long-term, high-quality social exchange relationships (Blau, 1964, Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Indeed, scholars argue that employees' commitment to the organisation is significantly affected by how committed they experience the organisation to be towards them (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). Commitment is described as a continuing desire to sustain a worthy relationship (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992), a desire that positively relates to integrity (seen in, for instance,

ethical behaviour) and trust (Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009; Hansen, Alge, Brown, Jackson, & Dunford, 2013). For instance, Mishra (1996) argues that high trust levels motivate employees to be committed towards organisational goals. Organisational trust and commitment are thus two distinct constructs (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Drawing on the work of scholars (Kumar, Scheer, & Steenkamp, 1995; Ndubisi, 2011), the current research argues that constructively managing conflict may increase levels of trust and commitment through by the mutual interdependence of the reciprocal exchange workplace relationship (Blau, 1964, Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). To constructively manage conflict, Rahim's (1983, 2002) contingency conflict management theory postulates that based on the level of concern for self, versus the concern for another, one of five conflict handling styles may be chosen. The current research is interested in considering these relationships and, as such, considers commitment as a dimension of trust.

Thirdly, the current study reasons for the importance of dependence when considering organisational trust. Dependence is defined as an organisation's need to maintain relationships with various parties in order to reach organisational goals (Beier & Stern, 1969; Frazier, 1983). Scholars (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998) argue that dependent relationships are characterised by the fact that the outcomes of the various parties in the relationship are contingent upon the actions of each other; there is thus a mutual dependency in the relationship. Research suggests that relationships displaying total interdependence have higher levels of trust and commitment, and lower levels of conflict because of what the parties stand to lose should conflict become dysfunctional (Kumar et al., 1995).

Integrity is defined as the element of organisational trust that encompasses the values and principles (e.g. fairness and justice, honesty and transparency) the trustee adheres to, and the trustor accepts (Albrecht, 2002; Chathoth et al., 2007), based on the unceasing behaviour of the trustee according to adopted values (Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). Integrity has also been described as the consistency between what is said and what is done (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). According to Mayer et al. (1995), integrity may be described as the level to which the trustee displays strong moral and ethical behaviour, displayed in, for instance, fulfilling promises and acting consistently and fairly. In other words, the trustee acts according to values the trustor finds satisfactory (Mayer et al., 1995). From an organisational trust perspective, it thus refers to the fairness and justice an organisation displays (Paine, 2003, 2012). Scholars advance that organisational level integrity has a positive relationship with organisational trust (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). Commitment is described as the feeling of belonging to an organisation and

actions towards the organisation over time (Chathoth et al., 2011) based on the belief that it is a relationship worth maintaining, hence indicating a preparedness to be identified with the organisation (Paine, 2003; Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). Various organisational characteristics, especially organisational practices, affect trust at the organisational level. One of the important studies in this regard refers to the importance of a relationship-oriented culture, for instance by implementing practices and policies to enhance relationships and organisational commitment (Collins & Smith, 2006; Six & Sorge, 2008). Dependability refers to the consistent, faithful and reliable actions of an organisation, indicating that it will follow up on its promises (Chathoth et al., 2007; Paine, 2003, 2012). It indicates a concern for organisational members (Mishra, 1996). Research indicates a positive relationship between integrity, commitment and dependability, and the construct of trust (Chathoth et al., 2007, 2011).

Scholars further maintain that in order to understand the concept of trust as explained above, it is necessary to distinguish between trust, perceived trustworthiness and trusting behaviour, as these concepts are all distinct and should not be treated as one construct (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2014; Gillespie, 2015; Mayer et al., 1995). Perceived trustworthiness is explained as the beliefs and perceptions the trustor holds about the trustworthiness (i.e. the ability, benevolence and integrity) of the trustee (Colquitt et al., 2007). Akin to individuals, organisations are also exposed to some important antecedents before they are deemed trustworthy. These antecedents include perceptions of abilities (the propensity to trust), benevolence (the degree to which it is believed that a trustee wants to do good for the trustor), consistency, loyalty, openness (being transparent) and having integrity (Appelbaum et al., 2013b; Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Heyns & Rothmann, 2015; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Trust propensity is defined by Colquitt et al. (2007) as being characteristically inclined to rely on another. The portrayal or enactment of trust is referred to as trusting behaviour (Gillespie, 2015).

Bozic et al. (2018) propose that four definitions of trust stand out in the literature; based on the number of citations the articles received in which the definitions were published (as measured by Google Scholar at the time of publication of Bozic et al., 2018) and how often academics considering trust use these definitions. All four of these definitions include either one of, or both the dimensions as explained above, namely to hold some expectations of the trustee and to accept vulnerability. The first definition Bozic et al. (2018) draw on explains trust as the preparedness to rely on another party in an exchange relationship because one has confidence in the other (Moorman et al., 1992). The second definition (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) defines trust as

the trustor having confidence in the dependability and integrity of the exchange partner. The third definition describes trust in an organisational context, defining it as one party being willing to be vulnerable to the actions of another party, when an expectancy exists that the other party is going to engage in a specific action which is significant to the trustor – regardless of the fact that the trustor will not be able to monitor or control the other party (Mayer et al., 1995). This definition is still widely accepted and cited by scholars of trust (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015). Similarly, the fourth definition mentioned by Bozic et al. (2018) describes trust from an organisational and multidisciplinary perspective, explaining trust as a psychological state that encompasses the intent to accept vulnerability because of the positive expectations of the behaviours and intentions of another (Rousseau et al., 1998).

This research considers organisational trust as it relates to the above general discussion of the trust concept. Similar to other forms of trust, organisational trust is based on the positive expectations organisational members hold about the organisation, based on the intentions and actions of multiple others in the organisation – it is trust that derives from a multitude of relationships, organisational roles, interdependencies and experiences in the organisation (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, & Winograd, 2000). Thus, organisational trust refers to the trust between employees and an organisation when employees identify with the organisation (Yu et al., 2018), and is reflected in employees being willing to take risks with their organisation (Eckel & Wilson, 2004; Schoorman et al., 2007), indicating a mutual interdependence (Chathoth et al., 2011). Accordingly, based on these dimensions, feelings of confidence and support in an organisation develop (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) explain organisational trust as the combined amount of trust that is shared among organisational members, resulting from acceptable levels of agreement and consensus.

To conclude, scholars agree that one universally accepted trust definition does not exist. Nonetheless, the components of risk, vulnerability and interdependence are commonly regarded as conditions of trust, leading to the trustor accepting vulnerability and taking the risk to trust (e.g. Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). These aspects are mentioned in most trust definitions across all levels (individual, team and organisation) (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Trust is also multidimensional (see for instance Chathoth et al., 2007, 2011; Kramer, 1999; Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). While trust is at times defined from the viewpoint of having confidence in the expectancy that another may be relied upon (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995), other definitions consider the outcomes of trust

(Brockner, Siegel, Daly, Tyler, & Martin, 1997; Ndubisi, 2011). The current research deliberates the former.

Thus, trust in this research is studied from an individual point of view, with the trust referent being the organisation. The seminal definition of Mayer et al. (1995) described above serves as the point of departure in selecting a suitable definition for organisational trust for the current research. Similarly, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) base their definition of trust in an organisation at the individual level (as in this research) on the two dimensions identified in the Mayer et al. (1995) definition. According to the Mayer et al. (1995) definition, trust relates to the positive expectation of trustworthiness in the trustee and, secondly, the willingness to accept vulnerability and take risks, and to be dependent on a trustee – even in times of uncertainty (Costa, 2003; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

Hence, for the purposes of this study, organisational trust is defined as a psychological state indicating a willingness to accept vulnerability based on the positive expectations of an organisation (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). To consider the role of organisational trust in the current research, the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) was used to measure three specific trust dimensions, namely, integrity, commitment and dependability (these sub-constructs and their relevance to the study are explained above) (Chathoth et al., 2007, 2011). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) serves as the theoretical model for the organisational trust construct, as supported by other scholars such as Chathoth et al. (2011) and Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), based on these scholars' view that reciprocity and interdependency form part of any trust relationship. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) as it relates to trust is discussed below, together with other theoretical trust models.

4.2.2 Theoretical models

During the literature review, it was determined that many seminal scholarly works on organisational trust consider one of three theoretical models. Firstly, Kramer (1999) considered two main streams to a theoretical trust model, namely trust as a psychological state versus trust as a rational choice. These two theoretical models are discussed below, followed by a discussion of Blau's (1964) social exchange theory in relation to trust. Blau's theory is the theoretical lens through which organisational trust is considered in this research.

4.2.2.1 *Trust as a behaviour of choice*

According to the seminal writings of Kramer (1999), it is useful to consider trust in relation to a choice that is made by an individual, as this implies observable behaviour. According to this theoretical model, trust is a choice either based on a rational, calculative decision, or based on social and relational criteria (Kramer, 1999). Kramer explains that rational choice theory is derived from the sociological work of Coleman (1990), the economic perspective of Williamson (1993) and Hardin's (1992) political theory. Kramer (1999) argues that this theory is one of the most influential views in the organisational science on trust. According to this perspective, individuals make efficient and rational choices while calculating the possible risks, advantages and disadvantages of their choices (Kramer, 1999). Hardin (1992) argues that a rational choice on trust includes two aspects, namely, the knowledge enabling one to trust another, and secondly, the incentives of the trustee to honour that trust. Hardin (1992) suggests that another will be trustworthy when it is in their interest to be trustworthy, a notion not based on self-interest but rather on an understanding of the trustor's interest. In other words, in Hardin's words (1992, p. 189), "you can more confidently trust me if you know that my own interest will induce me to live up to your expectations. Your trust then encapsulates my interests".

Rational choice theory is criticised for being empirically weak, arguing that it is questionable to assume that risky trust-based decisions are always internally evaluated and consciously calculated (Kramer, 1999). Additionally, rational choice-based decisions are regarded as cognitively too narrow, allowing too little room for social or emotional stimuli (Granovetter, 1985; Kramer, 1999). Additionally, scholars (March & Olsen, 1989) criticise such a rational approach, arguing that if trust is based purely on an economic choice and reciprocal expectation, then it is just another form of economic exchange.

4.2.2.2 *Trust as a psychological state*

The second theory relates to trust as a psychological state based on interrelated cognitive processes and orientations (Kramer, 1999). Scholars (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995) argue that any organisational trust theory must consider the social and relational aspects that underpin trust decisions. Kramer (1999) explains that according to this argument, trust decisions cannot merely be based on rational choice, but have to consider the social implications for other people and society in general.

The seminal writings on sociological theory (Granovetter, 1985) served as the initial point of departure in considering the influence of social aspects on economic transactions and theories, arguing that rational choice decisions do not acknowledge the influence of sociological elements, but focus too narrowly on individual and economic goals. Granovetter (1985) argues that when situational and social contexts are considered, irrational behaviour may appear to be the reasonable response. Such an approach also considers affability, power, status and support.

Granovetter's work (1985) gave rise to other social theory developments in social psychology (Kramer, 1999), and the notion of trust based on relational aspects considered theories such as social identity theory (Kramer, Brewer, & Hanna, 1996). These theories emphasised social motives and not only resource, rational-based motives as drivers of trust behaviours (Kramer, 1999). According to Kramer (1999), scholars often consider the disparity between the rational choice versus the relational choice models. However, Kramer (1999) argues that this is unnecessary, as both these models have a place in trust behaviour considerations, thus incorporating the calculative processes and the social and situational factors when considering trust behaviour. This is in line with the seminal work of Hardin (1992) that proposes a three-part conceptualisation of trust that guides trust considerations as necessitated by the organisational context, namely, the properties of the trustor, the qualities of the trustee, and a specific context within which trust is deliberated.

4.2.2.3 *Social exchange theory*

Blau's (1964) social exchange theory posits that a reciprocal social relationship exists between employers and employees, which is based on trust formed gradually over time (Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006). It is a relationship of give and take, where employees give of their time, energy, knowledge and the like, and the organisation reciprocates by taking care of its employees (Shore et al., 2006), thus enhancing organisational trust through this perceived reciprocal relationship of support (Eisenberger et al., 1990). In fact, trust is at times defined as the preparedness of parties to rely on another exchange party, based on the confidence that is held in that party (Moorman et al., 1992). Thus, relationships based on social exchange show evidence of parties investing in the relationship in a socioemotional fashion, without any guarantees that the investment will yield reciprocal results (Rousseau, 1995) – such an investment will not happen when trust is lacking (Blau, 1964; Shore et al., 2006). Tsai (2017) explains that trustworthiness is central to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964); without it an effective reciprocal relationship between parties is not possible (Zapata, Olsen, & Martins, 2013).

According to Blau (1964), an exchange relationship is long term and ongoing, and feelings of obligation result. Employee behaviour is better understood by considering the nature of the exchange relationship between employers and employees (Shore et al., 2006). The quality of the relationship between employers and employees is thus a good indicator of the existing level of organisational trust (Yu, Mai, Tsai, & Dai, 2018). In fact, scholars argue that organisational trust mediates between the employment relationship and employee behaviours (Hom et al., 2009).

4.2.2.4 Conclusion

Theoretical models of trust consider trust from either a rational choice or a relational choice perspective (Kramer, 1999). It is argued that this is similar to the dimensions of affective versus cognitive trust behaviour (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; McAllister, 1995). According to Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), definitions of trust should be carefully considered to determine the appropriate measurement and theory, as it is possible to misinterpret results should the construct, theory and measurement not be aligned. Subsequently, these aspects are explained in the sections above.

Furthermore, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argue that different theoretical perspectives may relate to various antecedents and outcomes of trust. Moreover, if commonalities exist between theories on the individual, team or organisational levels, new theoretical viewpoints on trust may be offered (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Theoretical diversity is thus seen as a strength which should be explored (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). This viewpoint explains the use of more than one theoretical model for the various constructs of the current research.

However, during the extensive literature review, little research was found on the relationship dynamics between the psychosocial process mediator of organisational trust and the other constructs of relevance to the research in combination. In addition, no research was found on the influence of organisational trust as mediator in relation to an integrated conflict management framework in an ER context for South African-based organisations.

4.2.3 Socio-demographic variables influencing organisational trust

Trust is an essential aspect in the quest of binding a diverse group of individuals together (Mayer et al., 1995), as conflict occurs when differences exist between various parties (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). Trust is affected by diversity issues (Williams, 2016). Another example is found in research that suggests that perceptions of organisational trust are influenced by dynamics resulting from differences between collectivist versus individualistic national cultures (Huff &

Kelley, 2003) and cultures in general (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) draw on the seminal work of Markus and Kitayama (1991), arguing that social processes differ across cultures, and subsequently it is argued that trust at the various levels may also differ amongst different cultures. Similarly, scholars argue that differences in national culture may hamper trust, as different problem-solving and communication processes are followed, an aspect that often leads to conflict (Schloegel et al., 2018). Moreover, Ndubisi (2011) argues that the relationship between interpersonal conflict handling styles and trust and commitment is affected by differences in national culture.

This stresses the need for understanding diversity in workplaces, not only in relation to trust but also for contributing to theories on human behaviour (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010b). Joubert (2017) concurs that diversity management is necessary to increase trust between organisational members operating in a diverse environment. A study done on the antecedents of organisational trust further supports this notion (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). This study (Gilbert & Tang, 1998) considered the relationship between organisational trust and various demographic antecedents after the organisation in which the research was conducted had undergone diversity training for a period of more than two years. Gilbert and Tang (1998) found that no apparent differences existed regarding the relationship between organisational trust and men and women, or between organisational trust and various races, or organisational trust among races (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Nonetheless, Gilbert and Tang (1998) emphasise that this may not be the case in workplace cultures that do not value diversity.

Tenure influences organisational trust. Scholars (Gilbert & Tang, 1998) hypothesise that employees who have been with organisations for a long period of time may feel trapped, which may negatively influence organisational trust, or may have increased loyalty towards the organisation; however, their research did not indicate a significant direct relationship between organisational trust and tenure (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Nonetheless, their research also suggests that tenure and status positively relate to group cohesion, and that group cohesion is positively related to organisational trust. Integrity in leaders positively relates to supervisory trust (especially in cases of low tenure), which, in turn, positively relates to job satisfaction and negatively to turnover intention; these relationships are significantly moderated by tenure (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). Additionally, reduced voice behaviour based on, for instance, managers allowing voice behaviour without the real intention to give attention to what is being said, hampers informational

diversity based on different expertise and education types or work experience and increases conflict (De Vries et al., 2012).

Research on the relationship between organisational trust and age groups of organisational members is inconclusive. Some research suggests that trust is influenced by differences in age and generations, for instance the Millennial generation has less trust in others than other generations (Tsai, 2017). Gilbert and Tang (1998) found that age significantly predicts organisational trust. Additionally, negative age stereotyping obstructs trust, but this negativity may be shielded by an organisational culture that holds achievement and trust in high regard (Schloegel et al., 2018). However, other research considering levels of trust suggests that no difference exists between Generation X and older group employees (Ferres, Travaglione, & Firms, 2003). Nonetheless, scholars argue that a significant research gap is evident on how different age groups experience trust (Ferres et al., 2003).

Scholars (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007) indicate a significant positive relationship between trust and trustworthiness. According to Dietz and Den Hartog (2006), ability, benevolence and integrity are three strong predictors of trustworthiness. Equally, Gillespie (2003) contends that the perceived ability of the other party significantly influences the trustor's view on the trustworthiness of the trustee. Mayer et al. (1995) define ability in their seminal work as a combination of expertise, capabilities and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within a particular field. Aspects such as knowledge, as well as cognitive and emotional skills, influence perceptions of competence (Heyns & Rothmann, 2006). It is thus argued that qualification level would significantly predict organisational trust as higher qualifications increase expertise and capabilities.

Despite the important role diversity plays in organisations, very little research was found relating specifically to how socio-demographic variables in South Africa, as well as other countries, may moderate the mediating variable of organisational trust. No research in this regard could be found on South Africa and its diverse population, and it is thus concluded that a dearth in research on this important aspect is evident. A significant research gap is thus identified on the moderating relationship between socio-demographic variables and the mediator of organisational trust. Moreover, no research, either in isolation or in one combined study, was found indicating the relationship between the moderating variables and the other constructs of relevance to the research regarding conflict management practices within an ER context.

4.2.4 Organisational trust and its implications for conflict management practices within an employment relations context

In the main, conflict is seen as a phenomenon that undermines trust (Nešić & Lalić, 2016). On the other hand, conflict is reduced by the positive effects of trust (Zaheer, McEvily, & Perrone, 1998). Scholars caution that in countries with many unresolved social conflict, individuals may find it hard to trust anyone outside their own kin or group (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018), an aspect that may be very true of the South African conflict-ridden society. Clearly, once trust is lost, it is not easily rebuilt (Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017). Drawing on Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, this emphasises the importance of trust in teams and organisations. Trustworthy relationships enhance collaboration (Jensen, 2003) and cooperation (Schoorman et al., 2007).

Various trust levels result over time based on relational qualities (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Rousseau et al., 1998). Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2018) explain the first level as calculus, referring to a rational choice based on an economic exchange. Secondly, trust may be based on knowledge, stemming from prior predictability. Thirdly, it may derive from relational aspects that form from repeated interactions and shared affection. Fourthly, trust may be identification based, in other words having confidence in shared interests (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018).

While organisational trust encourages fairness in organisations, organisational justice and fairness are also seen as important predictors of organisational trust (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, et al., 2011; Komodromos, 2013; Oosthuizen et al., 2018). For instance, trust is regarded as the driving force for the change necessary to increase harmony and to have mutually acceptable outcomes (Du et al., 2011; Pruitt, 1983). Similarly, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) and Gounaris et al. (2016) point out that communication, cooperation and conflict are all possible effects and outcomes of trust. Trust also influences types of conflict, for instance research shows that when trust in teams is low, it may be misinterpreted as relational conflict (Simons & Peterson, 2000). The importance of trust in conflict situations is thus evident (Gounaris et al., 2016; Guenter et al., 2016). Nonetheless, maintaining trust in conflict situations is not easy – by way of illustration, research suggests that expressions of anger are detrimental to trust (Belkin & Rothman, 2017).

Conflict between employers and employees decreases when the collective perception exists that the organisation is trustworthy (Currie et al., 2017; Hodson, 2004). For example, Addison and Teixeira (2017) maintain that trust versus distrust is evident in the number of strikes experienced

in workplaces, indicating that organisations are unable to establish a trust relationship between employees and management. However, interorganisational trust decreases conflict and increases a willingness to cooperate and collaborate, and thus improves workplace relations (Currie et al., 2017; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Additionally, a cooperative conflict management strategy that focuses on resolving conflict to the benefit for all enhances trust (Hempel et al., 2009). Trust not only positively influences behaviour in circumstances when a conflict of interest is evident, but research shows that a positive relationship between trust and cooperation is stronger when larger (compared to situations with smaller degrees) conflict of interest situations occur (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). This is an important finding as research states that cooperation leads to increased trust, acknowledging each parties' interests and working towards shared conflict solutions (Deutsch, 1990; Gounaris et al., 2016; Hempel et al., 2009).

Furthermore, organisational conflict management consistently contributes to organisational trust (Bendeman, 2007; Chu et al., 2011), as do interpersonal conflict handling styles that are integrating, accommodating and compromising (Ndubisi, 2011). Moreover, the research done by Ndubisi (2011) indicates that these three conflict handling styles also relate positively to commitment. Bendeman (2007) confirms that a cooperative conflict approach through an integrated conflict management system may benefit organisational trust levels. Gounaris et al. (2016) argue that an accommodating style, when refraining from an avoiding style, increases trust. Scholars also argue that should trust levels be significant, organisational members will be willing to compromise when conflict arises, and also to be vulnerable to potential conflict (Prati & Prati, 2014). Similarly, combining accommodating and integrating conflict-handling styles contributes to higher trust levels (Gounaris et al., 2016). These findings confirm the importance of conflict management; moreover, as seminal works confirm, trust levels are negatively influenced by the presence of conflict, potentially leading to team complications, thus hindering trust formation and group interconnectedness (Jehn et al., 2008). Research further indicates that task, relationship and process conflict are reliably negatively related to trust (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

Nonetheless, scholars confirm that relatively few conflict-related research studies have considered trust as a mediator (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 2008). One study investigated the effects of conflict on trust and suggests that while trust partially mediates the influence of task conflict on performance, it fully mediates the effect of relationship conflict on performance (Rispen et al., 2007). Further, task and cognitive connectedness in groups limit the negative

effect of conflict on trust (Rispens et al., 2007). Similarly, it is argued that groups sharing high levels of trust may be willing to challenge another by expressing different viewpoints as they do not fear that the conflict will be regarded as a personal assault (Porter & Lilly, 1996). The research by Porter and Lily (1996) suggests that organisational trust is negatively related to task conflict.

Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argue that more research at the organisational trust level is necessary to explore possible antecedents, specifically also on the relationship between organisational trust and conflict within organisations. The current research is not investigating conflict as an antecedent, but conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as an outcome – nonetheless, as limited research in this regard has been found, the researcher accepts that this is equally needed. Additionally, to the knowledge of the researcher, no research exists on the mediating role of organisational trust in an integrated conflict management framework.

Trust has been widely researched in terms of many facets such as its relationship to leadership, management, ER and the like (Cheung et al., 2011; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Mayer et al., 1995). For example, employee engagement indicates a trust relationship between employers and employees (Emmott, 2015; Currie et al., 2017). Additionally, research shows that when managers respond sincerely to the concerns of workers, trust levels increase (Boxall, 2016). In fact, when conflict is evident vertically (e.g. in communication channels between management and employees), horizontal trust levels also diminish (Wintrobe & Breton, 1986). In addition, organisational trust is seen as imperative for good workplace relationships and successful collective actions, as well as managing workplace discipline (Anstey, 2014; Leana & Van Buren, 1999; Saundry et al., 2011). Scholars conclude that it is more likely that conflict with a basis of trust will be resolved (Lucy & Broughton, 2011).

Cooperation is important in considering the effect of organisational contexts on trust. Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) posit that a cooperative organisational context, characterised by cooperation rather than competition in values and reward systems (e.g. sharing similar goals), encourages teamwork and promotes trust in co-workers. Trust in organisations increases cooperative ER (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Moreover, research shows that when conflict is managed constructively, it reinforces trust in organisations (Tjosvold, Wan, & Tang, 2016).

4.3 EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS

Globalisation, digitalisation and robotisation has affected jobs and the workplace considerably (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017). The changing world of work necessitates more research to understand the implications for the relational wellbeing of employees, as well as how it affects organisations (Oosthuizen et al., 2018). Job demands and resources are changing (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017), and continued research is necessary to address the challenges this holds for ER, employee wellbeing and, more specifically, employee engagement and organisational trust in relation to conflict management.

Scholars agree that workplace conflict is detrimental to employee wellbeing (Sonnentag et al., 2013). Researchers (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017) maintain that one of the principal problems with research on constructs related to occupational wellbeing is that a simple stimulus-response model is used to explain how employees respond to the working conditions they are exposed to. However, this is too simplistic, as aspects of organisational life on various levels continuously influence each other. As such, it is argued that a multilevel approach is necessary, considering interaction initiatives and their effects on the organisational, team and individual levels (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), integrating multilevel constructs when conducting research assists in capturing the complex nature of organisational phenomena, resulting in more sophisticated research models. It is argued that this should also be the approach followed when constructing a framework for organisational conflict management.

In the previous chapter, the antecedents of this research were discussed. Scholarly works confirm that the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice enhance employee engagement, trust and, ultimately, organisational success (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Bryson, 2017; Chen, Hwang, & Liu, 2012; Rees et al., 2013; Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Truss et al., 2013; Welbourne & Schramm, 2017). This emphasises the importance and relevance of the chosen constructs in considering a framework for conflict management.

This is further supported by Marchington (2015a), who draws on the work of the Involvement and Participation Association in the United Kingdom to argue that there are four main drivers of employee engagement. The first is an inclusive, reciprocal type leadership. The second is engaging managers who are willing to facilitate and empower their staff. Thirdly, it is important to promote employee voice by implementing practices that ensure employees share their views and

opinions, and that it counts. The fourth driver of employee engagement refers to integrity in behaviours that reinforce the organisation's stated values and organisational culture (Marchington, 2015a). Albrecht (2012) confirms that organisational resources can be regarded as motivational constructs that assist in explaining how higher levels of employee engagement and wellbeing can be obtained. Clearly, the chosen independent variables of this study (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) have the potential to influence the mediating variable of employee engagement.

Kahn (1990, 1992) defines personal engagement as a state of mind when employees are harnessing themselves physically, emotionally and cognitively to their work roles, thus being psychologically present. When all three of these dimensions are optimised in a connected fashion, engagement is optimal (Kahn, 1990). Similarly, Rothbard (2001) defines engagement as psychological presence, considering the two dimensions of attention and absorption. Maslach et al. (2001) consider engagement from the perspective of being the antipode of the burnout construct, arguing that engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy, whereas burnout is characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and a lack of efficacy. However, scholars disagreed and found that while two of these constructs are direct opposites (vigour and dedication versus exhaustion and cynicism), efficacy is not (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). Subsequently, Schaufeli et al. (2002) define work engagement as a positive and fulfilling persistent and pervasive job-related affective-cognitive frame of mind, displaying vigour, dedication and absorption. Saks (2006a) refers to employee engagement, arguing that it relates to the level of engagement in one's work role, distinguished by being engaged on two levels: the employee's work role and organisational role. According to Schaufeli and Salanova (2011), employee engagement is thus a broader concept than work engagement. Clearly, no consensus exists on the exact meaning of the construct, and subsequently, also not on its measurement (Knight, Patterson, & Dawson, 2017).

Research advocates the potential importance of managerial processes and leadership for employee engagement (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014; Geiger, 2013; Kwon et al., 2016; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Wiley, 2010). Employees engage easier in their work roles should they perceive their leadership as competent and providing the psychological safety to create pathways subordinates can follow (Kahn, 1990, 1992). In fact, it is argued (Purcell, 2014) that at the root of employee disengagement is poor management, where employees are denied the opportunity to communicate with, or receive information from, their line managers.

Additionally, Bakker and Demerouti (2018) draw on the work of Bass (1985) on transformational leadership to argue that strong leadership provides the inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation to inspire its followers to invest in common goals by developing and using their personal strengths. Research confirms that transformational leadership influences daily work engagement (Caniëls et al., 2018) by providing followers with job resources (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, et al., 2014; Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014). Interestingly, self-leadership is another form of leadership that contribute to employees' engagement levels (Breevaart et al., 2016). Transformational leader behaviours lead to employees viewing their work as more important and therefore setting goals which are important to them, leading to greater organisational commitment, engagement and trust between the leader and the followers (Bono & Judge, 2003; Breevaart et al., 2016; Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014). Furthermore, transactional leadership contributes to increased employee engagement through contingent reward (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014). In addition, research maintains that supporting and serving managers (e.g. servant leadership) create a highly engaged environment (Rees et al., 2013).

Heyns and Rothmann (2018) suggest that leaders should take care in their interaction with their followers, considering how their behaviour may influence followers to disclose or contribute to workplace matters (in other words, to use their employee voice), thus encouraging autonomy, as disclosure-based trust in leadership predicts autonomy satisfaction and employee engagement. Additionally, the research of Jaimez and Bretones (2011) suggest that structural strategies can increase employee engagement, but only when employees truly feel empowered and autonomous. When employees experience psychological empowerment (e.g. through employee voice) (Bryson, 2017; Rees et al., 2013), it facilitates the advancement of healthy organisational practices (Jaimez & Bretones, 2011). It may be argued that strategies and practices implemented to deal with conflict in organisations may be an example of such healthy organisational practices. Empowering leadership behaviour specifically positively influences work engagement (Mendes & Stander, 2011). For instance, a positive relationship between employee voice and engagement was found (Bryson, 2017; Rees et al., 2013), mediated by trust in senior management and, to a lesser extent, by the employee–line manager relationship (Rees et al., 2013).

To encourage employee autonomy, an authentic organisational culture is needed (Ryde & Sofianos, 2014). Kahn's (1990, 1992) work argues that employees will engage in their work roles and express themselves when experiencing feelings of psychological meaning and safety, as well

as the availability of resources necessary to engage within themselves. Kahn (1990) draws on the work of Schein (1985, 1987) to indicate the importance of an organisational culture that provides the psychological safety within which to engage. Employees who do not deviate from the accepted organisational norms, but remain within set organisational boundaries by performing their work roles according to generally accepted ways of doing things, perceive psychological safety, thus resulting in engagement with work roles (Kahn, 1990).

Similarly, trust significantly influences a positive and well-maintained organisational culture, while strong organisational values of trust, integrity and respect enhance engagement and participatory practices such as employee voice (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Marchington, 2015a). Effective leadership and employee engagement will be facilitated by a supportive organisational culture which reinforces the effectiveness of team-based structures, thus aligning team and organisational values (Albrecht, 2010). Additionally, organisational culture positively influences trust in leadership (Geiger, 2013; Jason, 2014; Schein, 1983) and internal organisational communication effectiveness (Men, 2012). Research confirms that strong organisational culture is directly and positively associated with engagement and workplace practices such as employee voice (Albrecht, 2012; Greco et al., 2006; Marchington, 2015a; Men, 2012; Welbourne & Schramm, 2017). Thus, to motivate and engage employees, as well as to contribute to their wellbeing, organisations should have open, supportive and fair organisational and team cultures (Albrecht, 2012; Welbourne & Schramm, 2017).

Employee voice is a driver of employee engagement (Robinson et al., 2004). Nonetheless, scholars argue that to date, the relationship between employee voice and employee engagement has not been sufficiently investigated, and scholars (Kwon et al., 2016) maintain that this relationship should be considered on a macro level, considering the influence of national cultures on voice behaviour and subsequently on engagement. However, they also advise that in order to understand the voice–engagement relationship, this relationship should be considered on a meso-level, considering organisational climates, as well as on the micro level, considering the importance of the relationship between line managers and their subordinates, as this is the level where employees' attitudes are shaped (Kwon et al., 2016).

Moreover, drawing on the JD-R model (Schaufeli et al., 2002), employee voice has been identified as a mechanism that acts as a resource which reduces the effects of emotional exhaustion and positively relates to engagement (Conway et al., 2016). Furthermore, this research suggests that high levels of voice mechanisms have the potential of weakening the negative relationship

between demands and emotional exhaustion (Conway et al., 2016). According to Conway et al. (2016), this finding suggests the likelihood of employees managing tensions within the employment relationship through voice behaviour – should they have access to voice mechanisms. This finding is supported by previous research that indicates that, should voice mechanisms exist, employees will even accept decisions that have potentially negative outcomes (Farndale, Van Ruiten, et al., 2011). Any intervention to foster engagement in organisations requires sustained effort and continuous senior leadership support; once-off or short-term interventions will not positively affect employees' energy or work identification (Bakker et al., 2011). Additionally, an open communication strategy is required to ensure engagement (Bakker et al., 2011). Furthermore, a strong positive correlation was found in research between organisational trust and employee engagement (Hofmeyr & Marais, 2013).

Although a lot of research has been undertaken on employee engagement, some important research gaps on engagement in general and, more specifically, in relation to the present research are identified. For instance, researchers argue that although much research has been done on the job-level and on the individual-level demands and resources related to employee engagement, less attention has been given to contextual-level variables and how these may influence engagement (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Although Albrecht et al. (2015) mention organisational climate as an example, it is argued that organisational culture may similarly be considered. Albrecht et al. (2015) draw on the work of Bowen and Ostroff (2004) to explain that strategic HRM policies, practices and procedures that are clear and consistent convey to employees the expectations of the organisation about aspects such as the norms, values and behaviours that are accepted. Schein (2010) argues that organisational culture shares with employees the norms and values that guide acceptable ways of thinking, perceiving and feeling in their organisation (Schein, 2010). It is thus concluded that contextual-level variables also refer to organisational culture and, more specifically, to fostering an engagement culture that will contribute to a conflict management framework for organisations.

Scholars (Bailey et al., 2017; Mackay et al., 2017; Nienaber & Martins, 2014; Saks, 2006a; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Schaufeli, 2017b; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011) conclude that one of the biggest challenges facing engagement research is the difference in conceptualisation and measurement of the engagement construct, as well as a lack in clear engagement theory. A variety of definitions on engagement has been offered, as discussed in section 4.1.1 above. Scholars also differ on how they refer to engagement. While employee engagement seems to be the preferred choice

by consultants and in business, scholars predominantly prefer work engagement (Bailey et al., 2017; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011). Although this may be true, it is argued that clarity in construct definition is necessary to ensure correctness in describing one's findings, and that a more distinct clarification is thus necessary (Bailey et al., 2017; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011).

Additionally, further theoretical model development is necessary, as models of engagement are not yet well linked to psychological theories (Heyns & Rothmann, 2018; Shuck, Zigarmi, & Owen, 2015). Heyns and Rothmann (2018) draw on the work of Macey and Schneider (2008) and Shucks et al. (2015) to argue that established theories assist in clarifying the processes that would explain how engagement could be enhanced. For instance, Heyns and Rothmann (2018) suggest that it is important to consider the relationships between the psychological processes of trust and engagement and leadership. Moreover, despite an intensive literature search, scant research is evident on the relationship dynamics between engagement and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). A dearth in this line of research is thus clear.

Various scholars considered the outcomes and mediating role of engagement (e.g. Rees et al., 2013; Anitha, 2014; Bailey et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001; May et al., 2004). However, no research was found on the mediating role of engagement on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Nevertheless, it is expected that the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) will predict employee engagement, that employee engagement may predict the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and that, as such, employee engagement mediates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Scholars maintain that measurement invariance is a key requirement in measuring instruments that compare groups, especially in South Africa where diversity (especially with relevance to race, education, language and ethnic groups) is paramount (Du Plessis & Martins, 2017; Meiring, Van de Vijver, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2005; Nienaber & Martins, 2014). Measurement invariance psychometrically tests the properties of a measuring instrument to ascertain the possible variance among different groupings (Moore, Neale, Silberg, & Verhulst, 2016). No evidence could be found that Saks's (2006a, 2006b) engagement measuring instrument used in this study has been tested for measure invariance in South Africa, a factor which may be a limitation of the current study, as well as for the other measuring instruments used.

Clearly, leadership, organisational culture and employee voice influence employee engagement. Nonetheless, scholars argue that still more research is needed to determine the effect of organisational and team variables such as leadership support and organisational culture on employee engagement (Albrecht, 2010, 2012). Moreover, there seems to be a paucity of research on the relationship dynamics between employee engagement and conflict management practices, conflict types and conflict handling styles.

Regarding the second mediating variable, namely organisational trust, the following aspects are noted. Trust is generally regarded as an important topic for a number of disciplines such as management (Colquitt et al., 2007). Scholars (Colquitt et al., 2007) argue that although such a multidisciplinary view strengthens the knowledge base of trust, it also creates confusion, for instance in the conceptualisation of the trust construct.

As with employee engagement, the antecedents discussed in the previous chapter significantly influence organisational trust. Studies reiterate the importance of workplace and management factors, practices and processes, as well as leadership, in creating trust and generally enhancing the way organisations deal with various challenges (including ER challenges) they may face (e.g. Fenlon, 1997; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2003; Mestry & Bosch, 2013; Siira, 2012). Moreover, engagement is regarded as an indication of organisational trust and that employees are committed to their organisation and its values (Jena, Pradhan, & Panigrahy, 2017). While research suggests that high levels of organisational trust enhance engagement (Victor & Hoole, 2017), research also suggests that when employees are engaged, organisational trust is enhanced (Jena et al., 2017).

Additionally, scholars agree that trust plays an important role in intra-organisational cooperation (Gulati & Westphal, 1999; Kramer, 1999; McAllister, 1995). Researchers proclaim that no other single variable influences interpersonal and group behaviours as strongly as trust (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975), with organisational trust significantly influencing individual and organisational performance (McAllister, 1995). Nonetheless, organisational trust is fickle, and the challenges presented by the ever-changing environment within which organisations function, as well as whether conflict is managed constructively, affect the trust relationship between management and employees (Elgoibar et al., 2016). Moreover, scholars (Pirson & Malhotra, 2011) suggest that although much has been written about the various dimensions of trust (as discussed above), no clear indication exists on which of these may be relevant to the various stakeholders of the

organisation. Subsequently, it is challenging to know how various parties may view organisational trust as it is strengthened or weakened (Pirson & Malhotra, 2011).

Trust in leadership at various organisational levels (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012) is important in ensuring positive leadership outcomes (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). Additionally, organisational trust is enhanced through trust in leadership (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, et al., 2011). It is not easy for leaders to build a trust relationship (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015), nonetheless it is vital to the employment relationship. Organisational trust is a multidimensional construct and scholars argue that although employees may, for instance, have horizontal trust in their colleagues, the same may not apply to the employee's supervisor or top management, hence vertical trust (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Fox, 1974; Fulmer & Ostroff, 2017). Research supports this notion, showing that trust in leadership at various levels of the organisations (e.g. top management and direct supervisors) does not form and exist independently; rather trust in leadership trickles upwards across hierarchical structures (Fulmer & Ostroff, 2017).

Employees who trust their senior management are an important mediating link between a range of workplace occurrences, such as facilitating employee voice and participating in decision-making, which again enhance employee engagement and job commitment (Appelbaum et al., 2013b; Rees et al., 2013). Without trust, employees will not use voice (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). In fact, scholars have established a positive relationship between trust in senior management, employee voice and employee engagement (Kwon et al., 2016; Rees et al., 2013). Scholars stress the importance of open communication for any trust relationship (Tsai, 2017).

Trust is viewed as a vital element for social exchange (Blau, 1964; Guo, Lumineau, & Lewicki, 2017). According to the principles of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976), employees who have a relationship of trust with senior management, and who perceive their relationship with their line managers as being one of support, will most probably respond in a positive manner, and will experience increased levels of engagement (Kwon et al., 2016; Rees et al., 2013). In general, trust is necessary for a reciprocal relationship (Tsai, 2017).

Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) advocate that research should differentiate between the specific level of research and the specific target of the trust (in other words, the trustee). Furthermore, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) emphasise the importance of considering trust on the individual, team and organisational level. As stated above, in this research trust is considered on an individual level but with the aim of determining trust levels at the individual participant's organisation.

Researchers (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012) argue that trust research focuses mostly on the individual level, despite ample evidence of its importance on the organisational level (Lewicki et al., 2006; Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). The current research thus addresses the need for doing more research on organisational trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Trust research related to HRM policies and practices to foster good relationships and trust in fellow organisational members is lacking (Six & Sorge, 2008). Additionally, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) posit that while conflict at the lower individual level has been adequately researched, studies on conflict within organisations and its relation to organisational trust are still needed.

Mixed-model research to determine the relationships of various cross-level constructs are advocated (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). As discussed above, one may deduce that significant relationships exist between the antecedents of this research (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. Nonetheless, scholars still maintain that not enough is known about the relationships between constructs such as employee voice and engagement in various cultures – a necessity in today's global business world (Kwon et al., 2016). Similarly, no research was found that considers the relationships of the constructs relevant to the research in one combined study, considering how the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) relate to employee engagement and organisational trust as psychosocial process mediators of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

However, some limitations regarding the organisational trust construct and the current research are evident. The first possible limitation of the study is the fact that organisational trust is assessed in organisational members of a multitude of organisations, posing some practical problems. For instance, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) explain that should this be the case, one cannot ascertain whether other organisational members, as indicated by an individual, share trust. A further limitation to the current study may be the fact that as participants were not selected from one organisation, comparisons across levels of trust are not possible; had this been possible it would have enhanced the research (Klein et al., 1994). A third limitation in the research as it relates to organisational trust is based on the fact that the vast majority of research on the trust concept is done in western societies (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010a, 2010b), and although this research draws from this knowledge base, organisational trust in an African context may be very different. Specifically, Henrich et al. (2010b) point out that only rarely does behavioural research consider ethnicity. However, this also addresses an important research gap, and answers to the

expressed need by scholars (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012) for cross-cultural and intercultural research, specifically also related to trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Kramer, 2010; Lee & Kramer, 2016). A fourth limitation is evident in selecting three specific trust dimensions for the purposes of this research, even though the reasoning behind selecting these sub-constructs was explained in section 4.2.1 above. Nonetheless, other trust dimensions (e.g. Chathoth et al., 2007; McAllister, 1995; Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998) are not included in the current research.

As with engagement, scholars argue that further research should be conducted on how trust influences the processes and mechanisms related to organisational context outcomes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Heyns & Rothmann, 2018; Mayer & Gavin, 2005). However, this is complicated by the intricacy of the trust variable (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Mayer et al., 1995) and the different levels and various contexts in which trust is studied (Costa, 2003). Various disciplines ignore scholarly work done in other disciplines, resulting in trust research being fragmented and considered in silos (Costa, 2003; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Considering common factors across various disciplines and factors provides valuable insight into the trust topic (Costa, 2003; Hosmer, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998); nonetheless, Costa (2003) advises that clear boundaries be set for understanding the specific trust context.

Scholars often fail to differentiate between trust as an action (i.e. trust as a verb) or an antecedent or outcome variables (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007). As a case in point, although concepts such as trust (what someone does) and trustworthiness (a quality the trust target holds) are related, they are not to be seen as synonyms (Mayer et al., 1995) but rather acknowledged for the fact that they are distinct concepts (Gillespie, 2015). This problem relates to the gap that is identified between the conceptualisation and measurement of the trust construct. Researchers often fail to link their conceptual and operational definitions of trust (Gillespie, 2003). According to Gillespie (2015), scholars fail to use trust measurements that directly measure the vulnerability aspects of trust as defined by Mayer et al. (1995) and Rousseau et al. (1998). Gillespie (2015) suggests that three reviews on trust research indicate that the majority of research uses instruments measuring trustworthiness rather than trust (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Gillespie, 2015; McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011; PytlikZillig et al., 2016). However, according to Gillespie (2003), trustworthiness does not encompass vulnerability, as it involves no risk or interdependence (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). According to Heyns and Rothmann (2018), trustworthiness focuses on the trust beliefs that are held about the behaviour of the other party in the relationship – it thus indirectly indicates trust.

Gillespie (2015) advises that trust behaviour is best predicted by measuring a willingness to be vulnerable, as this is closer to trust behaviour than measuring the perceived trustworthiness of another. Scholars (PytlikZillig et al., 2016) maintain that measuring trust per se is fitting, and can be done by unambiguously asking respondents how willing they are to either give their support or control to the trustee; or to rely upon the trustee; or to be vulnerable to the trustee either generally or specifically. In fact, scholars advise that measuring both trust and trustworthiness is advisable as both these concepts are distinct with specific relationships with other variables (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Gillespie, 2003, 2015; Schoorman et al., 2007). Additionally, the specific situational context should be considered, as Gillespie (2015) points out that the nature of vulnerability and interdependence may differ according to the specific context and form of the relationship. Measuring instruments are therefore not necessarily generalisable, an aspect that should also be considered in situations where various nationalities are considered (Gillespie, 2015).

To conclude, the principle of fairness in ER is paramount. Considering the principles of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and dual-concern theory (Rahim, 1983, 1995), this study addresses the relationship dynamics of the employee–employer (organisation) exchange relationship. Blau (1964) explains social exchange as a process where individuals voluntarily act because they are motivated by the expected returns such actions will bring and, in fact, do bring. As such, scholars (e.g. DeConinck, 2010) argue that trust and fairness are elements of social exchange, and that organisational trust increases when employees perceive their workplaces to be fair. Furthermore, the research argues that workplaces will be regarded as fair when conflict is considered from the viewpoint of considering both oneself and another (Rahim, 1983). Research supports the notion that a positive relationship exists between organisational fairness and organisational trust, which in turn is positively related to employee engagement (Agarwal, 2014; Oosthuizen et al., 2018). Employee engagement is regarded as a positive experience, and as engagement levels increase in employees, so do their positive experiences (Sonnentag et al., 2013). It is argued that these findings are important for ER in general, but specifically also in relation to how conflict might be managed in organisations.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter considered two mediating variables, namely employee engagement and organisational trust, and how these two psychosocial process mediators may influence an integrated conflict management framework for South African organisations. Research confirms

that significant relationships exist between the antecedents of this research, and the psychosocial process mediators. Additionally, both these mediators positively relate to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Without considering these mediators, it may be very likely that an integrated conflict management system will not succeed.

Chapter 4 addressed part of the first literature research aim, namely, to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations.

In this regard, the chapter conceptualised the psychosocial process mediators of employee engagement and organisational trust, and discussed the various theoretical models for each construct. In addition, the chapter considered how the chosen socio-demographic variables of the study might moderate the mediators by discussing some relevant research in the literature.

Chapter 5 integrates the literature on the constructs of relevance to the research and as discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The insights derived from these chapters inform the formulation of research hypotheses relevant to the research, and will be presented in Chapter 5. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how a conflict management framework may inform conflict management practices within an ER context in South Africa.

CHAPTER 5: INTEGRATION – TOWARDS CONSTRUCTING A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Chapter 5 concludes the literature review by conducting steps 4 and 5. This is illustrated in Figure 5.1 below, as also explained in section 1.8.1.

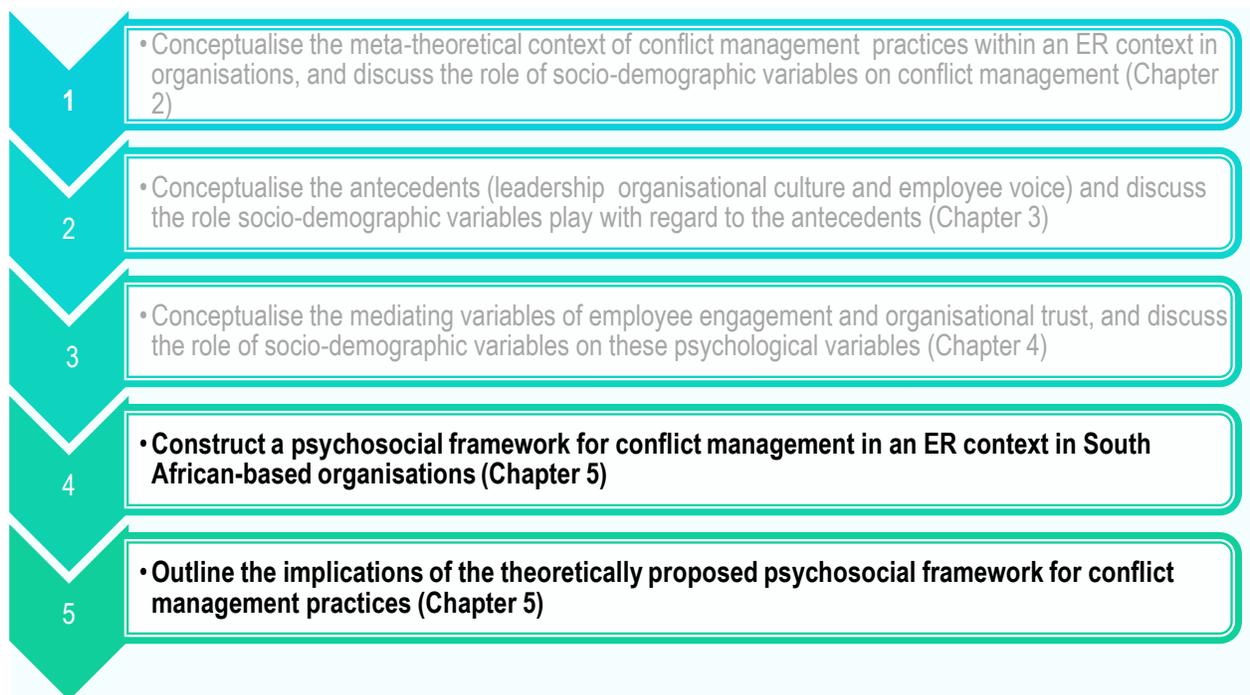


Figure 5.1 Steps 4 and 5 of Stage 1, the Literature Review Process

Thus, Chapter 5 addresses literature research aims 1, 2 and 3, which are related to the literature review. Literature research aim 1 refers to the conceptualisation of the various constructs of relevance, while literature research aim 2 pertains to the construction of an integrated framework for conflict management based on the relationship dynamics among the constructs. The chapter considers the theoretical elements of the conflict management framework that emerged from the literature review on the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, employee voice and organisational culture), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, the moderating socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), and the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict

handling styles). Literature research aim 3 refers to the possible implications for practice and research of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management within the South African ER context. Figure 5.2 below gives an overview of the core themes of the chapter for ease of reference.

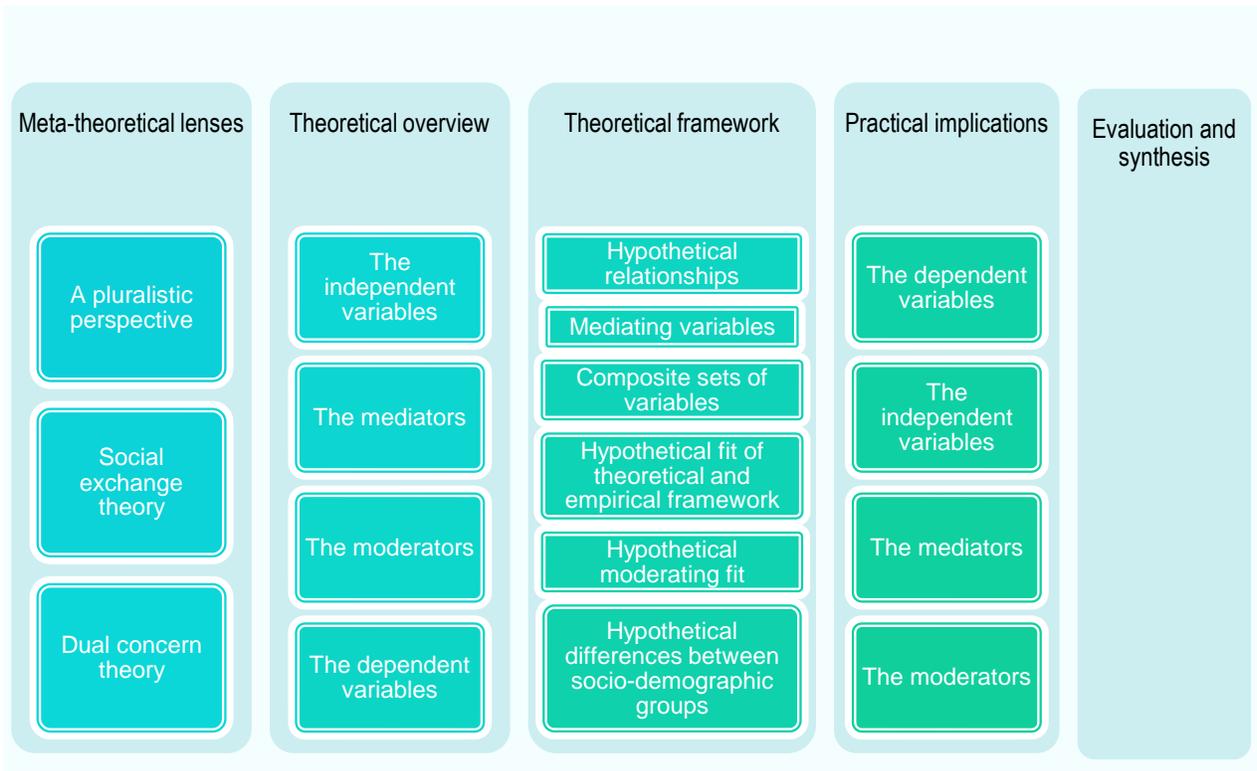


Figure 5.2 Core Themes of Chapter 5

5.1 OVERARCHING META-THEORETICAL LENSES FOR THE PURPOSES OF CONSTRUCTING A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Constructively and strategically managing conflict in organisations is vital, as conflict is regarded as a common occurrence in most workplaces (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Tanveer et al., 2018; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018), including South African workplaces (Mayer et al., 2018). Scholars acknowledge the coexistence of conflict and cooperation in the employment relationship (Avgar, 2017; Bélanger & Edwards, 2007; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; García et al., 2017; Gould & Desjardins, 2014; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Dealing constructively with this coexistence is vital for organisational success; however, in general, South African workplaces do not succeed in this regard (Schwab, 2017).

Various studies point to the dysfunctionality of conflict. For instance, it may lead to poor interpersonal relationships that result in feelings of stress, disloyalty, hurt, suspicion, personal frustrations and anger (Ghislieri et al., 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Wall & Callister, 1995), thus negatively affecting employee wellbeing (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016; Kisamore et al., 2010; Loughry & Amason, 2014; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016; Spector & Jex, 1998). In fact, the list of potentially negative consequences because of conflict is extensive, as discussed in Chapter 2. Yet, because conflict may also be functional (e.g. through inspiring innovation, creativity and new viewpoints), it can lead to desired change when constructively managed (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). However, when not strategically and constructively managed, the consequences are detrimental as a harmonious setting is fundamental to organisational effectiveness (Madlala & Govender, 2018).

Although much research has been undertaken on conflict, it is often fragmented and only focuses on certain aspects of conflict (Avgar, 2017; Tjosvold et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2017). For instance, research considers the different types of conflict (e.g. Bendersky & Hays, 2012; De Vries et al., 2012; De Wit et al., 2012, 2013; Jehn, 1994, 1995; Jehn et al., 2008); performance outcomes of conflict (Avgar et al., 2014; Jehn, 1995; Jehn et al., 1999); different conflict theories, models and handling styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Coleman & Kugler, 2014; Coleman et al., 2012; De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Rahim, 1983, 2002; Thomas, 1976, 1992; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978); conflict management behaviour modes (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; De Wit et al., 2013; Gelfand et al., 2012); and conflict resolution (Bollen & Euwema, 2013; Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2017; Saundry & Wibberley, 2016).

Scholars acknowledge the fragmentation of conflict literature and support the importance of an integrated conflict management approach in organisations (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Deutsch, 1973; Löhr et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2014). However, suggested approaches and systems are still theoretical, necessitating more research (Budd & Colvin, 2014; Löhr et al., 2017; Roche & Teague, 2014). Furthermore, no specific framework has addressed the various dimensions of a broader multidisciplinary approach (Avgar, 2017). Similarly, although the relationship dynamics between conflict types and conflict handling styles are at times considered (e.g. Benitez et al., 2018; Ma et al., 2017; Maltarich et al., 2018), not all conflict types are reflected upon. Moreover, according to

Maltarich et al. (2018), studying conflict types and conflict handling styles together will result in a better understanding of conflict.

Furthermore, scholars argue that North American and northern European research still dominates management and organisation studies in theory and in practice (Cairns & Śliwa, 2008), also relating to organisational conflict-related research. There is a paucity in research from countries that fall outside this scope, such as South Africa, on the experience of conflict and its management, and how these aspects interact in organisations with diverse settings. To the knowledge of the researcher and after an extensive literature review, no other study was found that considered in a single study the relationship dynamics of the specific antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as a plausible approach to strategic conflict management in organisations.

Such an approach considers the appearance of conflict and how best to incorporate it with organisational strategies, processes and procedures, while also allowing for the various stakeholders, environmental challenges and the strategic, functional and workplace level at which conflict manifests (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014). Avgar (2017) stresses the significance of various disciplines working together in an integrated approach and draws on the work of Kochan et al. (1984, 1986) to suggest a conflict management framework on the strategic, functional and workplace level. This research argues that an ER context may answer to the need for the integration of scholarly work on conflict, as ER is by its very nature interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary – as elaborated on in section 2.1.1. Part of the strategic process is the decisions taken by role players on ER and how conflict and cooperation are viewed in the organisation. The next section discusses the theoretical perspective taken in this regard.

5.1.1 Collaborative pluralism

Three theoretical models act as overarching meta-theoretical lenses, providing depth to the theoretical foundation of the study. The first of these theoretical models is collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), which explains the philosophy and perspective behind dealing with the coexistence of conflict and cooperation in the employment relationship (Avgar, 2017; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; García et al., 2017; Johnstone & Wilkinson,

2017). Fox's (1966) seminal work contrasted two perspectives on IR, namely unitarism and pluralism (Heery, 2016; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Contrary to unitarism (explained in section 1.6.2.2(d)), a pluralistic viewpoint acknowledges the different authorities and sources of loyalty within organisations (Kaufman, 2008; Loudon et al., 2013), as well as differences of interest between the role players (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Loudon et al., 2013; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011). As such, it accepts that conflict is at the heart of any employment relationship (Heery, 2016). Indeed, pluralism argues that although all parties have the success of the organisation at heart, inequality in risk, effort and benefits leads to conflict (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Loudon et al., 2013; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011). Conflict is thus inevitable and should be managed constructively and strategically.

According to pluralism (Fox, 1966), a mutual dependence exists between parties in the employment relationship, which stems from their social relations. However, this also suggests the existence of power. Dependence implies that each party holds – to some extent – the power to award or deny, or to support or obstruct the other parties' achievement (Emerson, 1962). Nonetheless, a pluralistic viewpoint also accepts that within the employment relationship, the powerbase is not balanced, and that the employer holds more power (Heery, 2016). Notwithstanding, when a pluralistic viewpoint is held, employees may contest management, as it is regarded as legitimate, inevitable and manageable (Gould & Desjardins, 2014). This implies that a balance between the interests of employees versus those of management is conceivable and benefits both parties (Heery, 2016). A pluralist viewpoint supports the participation of employees in shaping the employment relationship and in safeguarding employee wellbeing (Heery, 2016). Therefore, a collaborative pluralist viewpoint (i.e. where role players work collaboratively to enhance common workplace interests) is supported (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) in the construction of a conflict management framework for organisations. It is argued that based on the above arguments, a collaborative pluralist perspective on ER guides the spirit of such a conflict management framework, and thus sets the tone against which the parties in the relationship view the respective antecedents and mediators of this research.

5.1.2 Social exchange theory

The second meta-theoretical lens of the research is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). According to this theory, social behaviour results from a mutually dependent, reciprocal exchange process (Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Emerson, 1976; Soieb et al., 2013). Employees reciprocate their employers' and/or leaders' behaviour towards them through corresponding behaviour – thus, a

formal or an informal social exchange relationship is formed (Hansen, 2011; Hom et al., 2009; Yu et al., 2018). Saks (2006a) argues that employees participate in such give-and-take relationships as long as the general rules of exchange, as well as the norms of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), are followed. According to Ali Arain et al. (2018), when such a relationship is not based on equal reciprocity, equity will be re-established by one party investing less in the exchange relationship. Thus, a fluid and long-term relationship (Blau, 1964) forms between employees and their organisation, displaying shared commitment and emotional investment (Hom et al., 2009; Shore et al., 2006) that reflect the quality and level of the employment relationship (Shore et al., 2006). Emerson (1976) explains that resources will continue to flow as long as the reciprocal return is reinforced or exchanged. In other words, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) explains workplace relationships between two or more actors (Emerson, 1976). As a leading conceptual paradigm in understanding workplace behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Elsetouhi et al., 2018), social exchange theory is still an important theme for research (Dinh et al., 2014).

As clarified in Chapters 3 and 4, Blau's (1964) social exchange theory is the foundational theory of two of the antecedents (leadership and employee voice) and both mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) of this research. Social exchange predicts future expected behaviour (Van Dyne et al., 2008) and the outcome of constructive experiences that results from mutual risk-taking (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). As such, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) was applied in this research to critically evaluate the reciprocal nature of the constructs of leadership, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust; and as a meta-theoretical lens through which to consider how conflict may be managed from an employment relationship perspective that values collaborative pluralism. This view further acknowledges that central to the social exchange theory is the notion that workplace social relationships consist of (amongst other factors) unequal power resources (Blau, 1964). Fox (1974) thus argues that the employment relationship is shaped by both a social and an economic exchange. Hence, it is reasoned that as this theory explains the reciprocal nature of the employment relationship, it will shed light on how the various constructs relevant to the research may be applied to maximise the constructive and functional handling of conflict in organisations.

In this regard, the following is relevant to the antecedents of the research. Firstly, social exchange theory is applicable to the antecedent of leadership. Cote (2017) explains the social exchange process between leaders and followers as emanating from a position of strangers with low exchange to progressing to maturity in a high social exchange relationship, characterised by high

levels of mutual trust (Hansen, 2011), respect and obligations (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). As both parties provide something of value to the other party, such a reciprocal exchange process is regarded as reasonably fair and just (Graen & Scandura, 1987). The perceived value of the tangible or intangible commodity of exchange determines the perceived quality of the relationship (Wayne et al., 1997). In high-quality relationships, employees feel obligated to react and engage in behaviours beneficial to their leaders, often above normal expectations (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Thus, this research argues that a reciprocal relationship between employees and their leaders will aid the process of conflict management, especially where this relationship is mediated by positive employee engagement and especially in the presence of high levels of organisational trust.

Additionally, employee voice is based on the principles of social exchange. Organisational behaviour scholars argue that according to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), mutually beneficial relationships between managers and employees lead to open-minded discussions about varied ideas (Tjosvold et al., 2014). Hoogervorst et al. (2013b) propose that reciprocal relationships between employees and their leaders result in leaders granting voice to their subordinates based on the argument that when subordinates show their commitment to the organisation, employee voice will be used in beneficial ways. This research argues that a reciprocal relationship between organisational members will ensure employee voice even in times of conflict, and especially in a situation where this relationship is mediated by positive employee engagement and organisational trust.

As mentioned above, the only antecedent of this research that is not based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is organisational culture. Rather, the theoretical sub-lens of social constructionism (Denison, 1996) is mainly used (also in this research) as the basis for studying organisational culture. Theorists argue that organisational culture is unique because the phenomenon of social context is both the product of individual interaction and provides the context for the interaction (Denison, 1996; Ehrhart et al., 2014). Social constructionism postulates that individuals (in this case employees) cannot be analytically separated from their environment, therefore members of social systems are at once representatives and subjects of their environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1996). As such, the organisational culture literature focuses on how social contexts develop out of the interactions of individuals. Within the social constructionism paradigm, scholars draw largely on the seminal work of Schein (1985, 1996, 2000, 2010) when considering organisational culture. Indeed, other scholars such as O'Reilly et

al. (1991) and Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) also draw on the work of Schein (1985, 1996, 2000, 2010) when considering organisational culture dimensions such as innovation, aggressiveness, competition and collaboration. In this research, organisational culture is thus studied from these perspectives (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991). It may perhaps be argued that social constructionism (Denison, 1996) relates to some extent to the social exchange theory of Blau (1964), as both these theories recognise that the interaction between organisational members shapes relationships and their organisational context (Denison, 1996; Ehrhart et al., 2014).

In a similar vein, social exchange theories are also relevant to the psychosocial processes that act as mediating variables in this research. Robinson et al. (2004) argue that employee engagement is based on a reciprocal relationship between the employer and its employees. Saks (2006a) posits that being fully psychologically, emotionally and cognitively present in one's work role (Kahn, 1990) is a profound reciprocal response by employees. Accordingly, the amount of cognitive, emotional and psychological resources offered by employees is contingent on the economic and sociological resources given by the organisation (Saks, 2006a). Similarly, organisational trust is based on the principles of social exchange. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) maintains that should parties abide by exchange guidelines, relationships will grow to be trusting and loyal with mutual commitments. As employees give of their time, energy, knowledge and so forth, and the organisation reciprocates by taking care of its employees (Shore et al., 2006), organisational trust is enhanced through the perceived reciprocal supportive relationship (Eisenberger et al., 1990).

Based on the theoretical arguments set out above, this research hypothesises that a significantly positive relationship will exist – based on social exchange theory and social constructionism – between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as mediated by the psychological processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. Further, it is argued that this relationship will be enhanced by a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) on the employment relationship.

5.1.3 Dual concern theory

The third meta-theoretical lens used in this research is dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976), a time-honoured model used to

explain individual interpersonal conflict handling styles (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Dual concern theory has been validated across a variety of cultures (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Rahim (1983) expanded on the theory by explaining that two broad dimensions are evident in conflict management: organisational members have either a concern for self, or a concern for others. A concern for self is shown by the degree to which organisational members attempt to answer to their own concerns, whereas concern for others relates to the degree to which organisational members may attempt to gratify the concerns of others (Rahim, 1983).

These two dimensions explain or predict the choice of one of five modes of interpersonal conflict handling styles when dealing with conflict with managers, subordinates and peers. An integrating style relates to a high concern for self and others, collaborating between conflicting parties to reach a mutually acceptable agreement (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). An obliging style refers to low concern for self but high concern for others enacted by playing down any differences and emphasising commonalities. A dominating style shows high concern for self and low concern for others, indicating a win–lose orientation to conflict. Avoiding conflict shows low concern for self and others by withdrawing or sidestepping any conflicting situations. A compromising style indicates a moderate concern for self and others, and is associated with a give-and-take style in handling conflict (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). As a result, dual concern theory envisages a strategic theory of choice from which conflict can be managed, depending on diverse motivational conditions in conflict (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). According to Pruitt (1983), dual concern theory suggests that parties' strategic conflict management choice may be influenced and altered, should one party encourage the other to be concerned about their outcomes.

5.1.4 Conclusion

Collaborative pluralism, social exchange and dual concern theories thus offer theoretical frameworks to link the relational components of the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables. In other words, this study argues that based on the literature review and the above arguments, organisations that hold a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) on their ER will accept conflict and cooperation as a natural phenomenon in organisations (Fox, 1966). Additionally, it is argued that such a collaborative pluralist approach to the employment relationship will foster an organisational culture based on social constructionism (Denison, 1996) that acknowledges the existence of conflict but advocates a conflict-positive culture where conflict is strategically managed on all levels of the organisation (Dillon, 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). Hence, this will lay the foundation for an approach to organisational

conflict where, according to dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), organisational members show concern for both themselves and others, resulting in positive reciprocal behaviour through social exchange (Blau, 1964), thus ensuring the constructive management of conflict.

Thus, in taking collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the sub-theory of social constructionism (Denison, 1996) and dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) into account in the study, it is assumed that the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust will significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

By applying these theories, and in addressing literature research aim 2, this study proposes a theoretical relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as mediated by the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. As a result, and based on the theoretical relationship between the variables, the theoretical integration resulted in the construction of a theoretically integrated conflict management framework that may be utilised to inform conflict management practices.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 delivered a wide-ranging evaluation of the literature on the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the psychosocial mediating processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The literature review was relevant to this study and addressed literature research aims 1 and 2; that is, to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations; and to construct a theoretically integrated framework on conflict management based on the relationship dynamics among the constructs. This chapter provides a summary of the main insights and core conclusions derived from Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and which facilitated the construction of a theoretically integrated framework on conflict management from an ER perspective within South-African-based organisations.

5.2 AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 presented the literature review on the constructs related to conflict management. Scholars (Grace & Bollen, 2008) stress that theoretical knowledge plays an important role in both the construction and evaluation of frameworks or models, and in the interpretation of their results. This section provides a synopsis of the main findings of that literature review.

5.2.1 Conflict management within contemporary organisations

In section 2.2 (Chapter 2) of the literature review, it became evident that conflict is an everyday phenomenon in today's organisations and inherent to our existence (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Van Kleef & Côté, 2018). Because conflict and cooperation coexist in the employment relationship (Avgar, 2017; Bélanger & Edwards, 2007; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; García et al., 2017; Gould & Desjardins, 2014; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), it has to be managed. When considering how to manage conflict, it is vital to also deliberate on environmental factors that provide context to and help us understand the conflict (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018; Todorova et al., 2014). Four different types of conflict are deliberated in this research, namely task, relational and process conflict (Jehn, 1995, 1997), and status conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

Scholars debate the functionality of conflict in organisations (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018), specifically also regarding the different types of conflict. Generally speaking, cooperative conflict (as opposed to a competitive) is regarded as functional because the parties consider mutually agreeable solutions (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018; Tjosvold, 1991a, 2008), thus enhancing teamwork and effectiveness (Wong, Liu, Wang, & Tjosvold, 2018). Some scholars regard task conflict as functional, as long as it remains focused on the task and occurs at moderate levels (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018); however, it has also been described as dysfunctional (Jehn, 1995). Its functionality flows from the fact that moderate task conflict stimulates debate, emphasises possibly neglected work areas, and may encourage increased loyalty among team members (Jehn, 1995). Nonetheless, O'Neill and McLarnon (2018) caution that task conflict is only functional under certain circumstances. In contrast, relational conflict is generally regarded as dysfunctional as it mostly results in anger and bitterness, feelings of doubt and distrust, and indifference amongst team or organisational members (Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; O'Neill & McLarnon,

2018), as well as, for instance, emotional exhaustion (Benitez et al., 2018). The challenge with relational conflict lies in the fact that maintaining conflict-free relationships in the workplace is difficult (if not impossible), and scholars argue that relationship conflict is the conflict type that manifests most often (Tanveer et al., 2018). Status conflict is generally regarded as dysfunctional (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Greer et al., 2018), especially in teams that are prone to conflict. Process conflict is also regarded as dysfunctional as it contributes to poor communication (Wu et al., 2017), generally limits project success and team performance (De Wit et al., 2012; O'Neill et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2017) and distracts group members in accomplishing tasks and creates ineffectiveness (Jehn, 1997).

This research considers the handling of conflict from the perspective of dual concern theory, thus showing either a concern for self or a concern for others (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a). Five styles for handling conflict are identified (Rahim, 1983, 2002), namely, competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating and compromising. Although a considerable number of research studies have been undertaken to ascertain the best conflict handling style, scholars conclude that the situation and context dictate the ideal choice of style (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Tanveer et al., 2018). Nonetheless, scholars generally argue that a cooperative conflict handling style is best for ensuring positive results (e.g. Tjosvold, 2008).

Although research points to the importance of an integrated conflict management approach in organisations (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Deutsch, 1973; Löhr et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2014), scholars still differ about what an ideal approach will consist of considering all the facets of conflict management. Developing such a framework is not an easy process, given the macro-, meso- and micro-level challenges organisations face (discussed in section 2.1), and the fact that workplace relationships are characterised by conflict and power imbalances (e.g. Delaney & Godard, 2001; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Hyman, 1972; Rust, 2017). Scholars need to consider a multidimensional approach on how best to integrate the management of conflict with organisational strategies, processes and procedures, considering the various stakeholders, environmental challenges, as well as the strategic, functional and workplace level at which conflict manifests (Avgar, 2017; Budd et al., 2017; Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014). As discussed in section 2.1.1, this research suggests an ER approach because, amongst other reasons, it may assist in the integration of scholarly work on conflict because of its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature.

5.2.2 The antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice)

Three antecedents are considered for the purposes of constructing a conflict management framework, as summarised below.

5.2.2.1 Leadership

A myriad of research studies has been undertaken and theories and models developed on leadership behaviour over the years, pinpointing the importance of leadership in individual and organisational success, and societal wellness and sustainability (Banks et al., 2017; Gordon & Yukl, 2004; Grobler, 2017; Nienaber, 2010; Yukl, 2012). Similarly, leadership is imperative in constructive conflict management (Binyamin et al., 2017; Hendel et al., 2005; Tanveer et al., 2018). In fact, conflict management is regarded as a key leadership competency (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018). For instance, Fotohabadi and Kelly (2018) suggest that the five interpersonal conflict handling styles (Rahim, 1983) provide an opportunity for leaders to give cognisance to differences in individuals and situations when managing conflict. Scholars argue that conflict can only be managed to the benefit of the organisation in a conflict-positive organisation, which requires untiring, constant action from the organisation's leadership (Hendel et al., 2005).

Moreover, the suggested conflict management framework for this research acknowledges the importance of leadership in all the chosen antecedents and mediators. For instance, leaders are advised to promote an organisational culture that is conducive to quality, cooperation and creativity and, as such, a culture conducive to constructive conflict management (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018). Additionally, leadership is vital in promoting voice, as employees reciprocate with voice should they perceive their organisation as fair (Ali Arain et al., 2018). Likewise, leadership contributes greatly to employee engagement (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Caniëls et al., 2018) and organisational trust (Cheung et al., 2011; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017; Mayer et al., 1995). Leadership is discussed in more detail in section 3.1 of Chapter 3.

5.2.2.2 Organisational culture

Organisational culture stimulates specific behaviour and fit in organisations, and focuses on shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991). It is thus argued that the organisational culture, specifically its conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012), directs the conflict managing behaviours in the organisation. Norms and values such as openness, collaboration, integrity and the like potentially influence the conflict culture of the organisation

(Gelfand et al., 2012). Therefore, organisations must consider the dynamic nature of their organisational culture, as well as that of the broader culture within which they function – merely focusing inward and not being part of a bigger picture contributes to conflict in organisations (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). Organisational culture is discussed in more detail in section 3.2 of Chapter 3.

5.2.2.3 Employee voice

Section 3.3 of the literature review highlights the importance of offering employee voice opportunities in today's workplaces because of their changing nature and the general global decline in trade union membership (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). Through employee voice behaviour, suggestions and concerns about current processes and practices are made known to management, ensuring performance and positive workplace behaviours (Ali Arain et al., 2018). Also, voice behaviour assists employees in participating in organisational decision-making, thereby aiding the management of conflicts of interest between the role players in the employment relationship (García et al., 2017); and increasing the chance of employees accepting and complying with decisions (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). Nonetheless, employees see voice as risky behaviour (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), which may result in interpersonal conflict, negative feedback, or being labelled a troublemaker (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014). Morrison (2014) thus cautions that employees will only express their views should they feel safe to do so and regard voice as effective and as leading to the possibility of change.

5.2.3 The mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust

Two psychosocial processes are considered as mediators in this research, namely, employee engagement and organisational trust. The benefits of both these concepts are many, and organisations are advised to consider ways of enhancing engagement (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Knight et al., 2017; Kwon et al., 2016) and trust levels (e.g. Kura et al., 2016; Lewicki, Polin, & Lount, 2016). A brief summary follows below.

5.2.3.1 Employee engagement

The first work on employee engagement was that of Kahn (1990), who suggests that employees who are engaged are physically, cognitively and emotionally involved in their work roles.

According to Kahn (1990), such employees experience psychological safety through feelings of trust and work security; a sense of meaningfulness based on the motivational rewards they receive for being engrossed in their work roles; and resource availability, referring to the sense of having the physical and psychological resources necessary to do the job. Saks (2006a) expanded on the employee engagement work of Kahn (1990) by arguing that an employee has different roles in the organisation. Saks (2006a) thus distinguishes between job and organisational engagement. Another school of thought considered employee engagement from the perspective of burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggested that whereas burnout is characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy, engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy, and thus the antipode of burnout. Nonetheless, Schaufeli et al. (2002) do not agree with this view and argue that engagement has to be considered as a distinct and separate construct, and not merely as the antipode of burnout. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), engagement is characterised by a state of mind displaying vigour (high mental resilience and energy), dedication and absorption. Their Job Demands-Resources model (Schaufeli et al., 2002) postulates that job resources (e.g. constructive feedback and support) drive work engagement and job demands (such as workload and conflict situations) hamper work engagement. Further definitions and theories are deliberated in research, in popular media and by consultants. However, the research by the scholars discussed above is generally accepted as the leading work on engagement (Knight et al., 2017).

The development of positive psychology in the ER field (Smith & Diedericks, 2016) advocates a constructive and proactive approach in workplaces, also regarding conflict management, thus creating a competitive advantage for the organisation (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018). Positive psychology creates meaning in workplaces through employees who obtain value through their experiences at work, thus feeling energised and engaged in their workplace (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Although scant research has been done on the (mediating) effect of employee engagement on conflict management, Emmott (2015) argues that a significant relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture. Employee engagement is discussed in more detail in section 4.1 of Chapter 4.

5.2.3.2 *Organisational trust*

In section 4.2 (Chapter 4) of the literature review, it became clear that conflict generally weakens trust levels (Nešić & Lalić, 2016), although trust is necessary to reduce conflict (Zaheer et al., 1998). It is argued that trust in countries such as South Africa may be especially hard to establish,

as Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2018) caution that in countries with much unresolved social conflict, individuals may find it hard to trust anyone outside of their own kin. Moreover, once trust is lost, it is not easily rebuilt (Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017).

Nonetheless, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) and Gounaris et al. (2016) point out that cooperation and conflict are both possible effects and outcomes of trust. As such, trust is vital, also because it drives change initiatives aimed at increasing harmony and reaching mutually acceptable organisational outcomes (Du et al., 2011; Pruitt, 1983). The significance of trust in conflict situations is thus evident (Gounaris et al., 2016; Guenter et al., 2016), especially as conflict between employers and employees decreases when the collective perception exists that the organisation is trustworthy (Currie et al., 2017; Hodson, 2004).

5.2.4 The moderating socio-demographic variables

Organisations functioning in Africa are exposed to its rich diversity of ethnicities, cultures and languages, which despite having various advantages such as increasing creative and innovative ideas and viewpoints (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018), also lends itself to potential conflict (Kets de Vries et al., 2016). Diversity in workplaces increases conflict levels (Nash & Hann, 2017). Additionally, macro environmental influences (e.g. economics, politics, societal events and climate) affect the way different groups view themselves and others (Urlick et al., 2016). Fotohabadi and Kelly (2018) assert that employment relationships and conflict management practices vary according to individual differences found in, for instance, national cultures, gender, age groups and the like. Thus, the current research considers the moderating effect of socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) on the construction of a conflict management framework.

Discrimination, self-segregation and stereotyping negatively affect group interaction (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn et al., 1999), and different cultures stemming from racial differences may increase the possibility of conflict experiences (Mestry & Bosch, 2013). Additionally, the literature shows that gender affects conflict, an aspect gaining importance as more women enter the job market (Bear et al., 2014). Similarly, many scholars argue that age, and specifically generational differences, potentially lead to conflict (Karp & Sirias, 2001; O'Bannon, 2001; Parry & Urwin, 2017) because of the differences in attitudes and behaviour of employees from different age groups

(Parry & Urwin, 2017). A communication disconnect is often present between various generations (e.g. between Baby Boomers and Generation X members), leading to conflict (O'Bannon, 2001). Furthermore, both educational level and job level influence the way employees react during conflict and conflict management (Church, 1995). For instance, differences in educational background, training and work experience strengthen the likelihood that various perspectives and opinions exist in a workgroup, making it more difficult to determine how to proceed (Jehn et al., 1999). Additionally, income levels and compensation issues may result in organisational conflict, as an organisation's compensation system directly influences employees' behaviour, satisfaction levels and feelings of justice (Spaho, 2013). South Africa rates as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Benjamin, 2016; Borat et al., 2014; World Bank, 2015, 2017c), an aspect contributing significantly to conflict in organisations. Lastly, tenure is not significantly related to conflict (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005).

5.2.5 Conclusion

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provided a comprehensive review of the literature on the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderating socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was relevant to this research study and addressed literature research aim 1; that is, to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations. This chapter (Chapter 5) offers a brief summary of the core understandings and main conclusions resulting from Chapters 2, 3 and 4, which enabled the researcher to construct an integrated theoretical psychosocial framework for conflict management within a South African ER context.

The general research aim of the study was to consider the components and nature of a psychosocial framework for conflict management in organisations; how such a framework manifests by exploring the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and to explore whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment

status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding these variables.

The study assumed that the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust are significant mechanisms in clarifying the relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables and outcome variables. In addition, the study assumed that perceptions of the antecedents, mediating psychosocial processes, and the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations, will be experienced differently by members of homogenous socio-demographic subgroups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and will have different implications for conflict management practices in combination than they do individually. The central hypothesis furthermore assumed that a conflict management framework can be constructed from the elements that emerge from the empirical links between the constructs.

5.3 AN INTEGRATED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATION

This section discusses the various research hypotheses of the current research. Each research hypothesis is regarded as a building block towards constructing a conflict management framework. The core elements of the framework will involve testing the mediation and moderating effects. The framework will further be informed by differences as experienced between biographical groups. This is schematically illustrated in Figure 5.3, which presents an overarching conceptual model that will be tested in Phase 2 of the research. Figure 5.3 illustrates and summarises the various relationships considered in the theoretical background to the hypothetical relationships between the constructs, as stipulated in research hypotheses one to six, which are presented below.

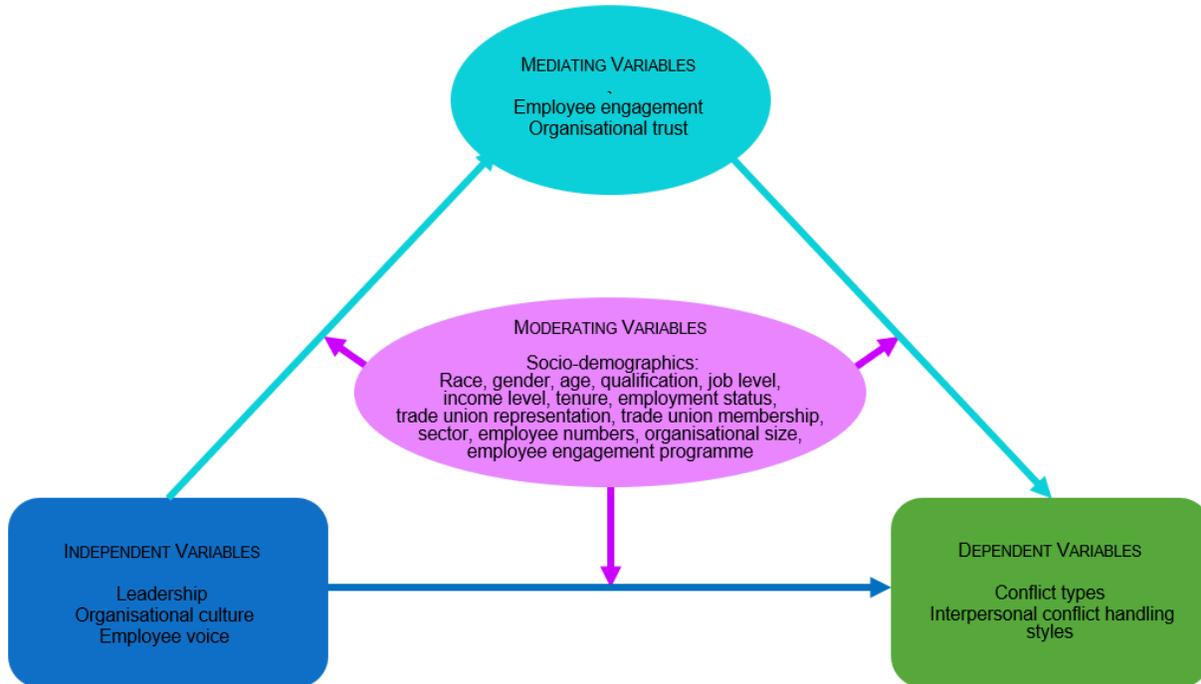


Figure 5.3 Overarching Conceptual Conflict Management Framework

The following research hypotheses are stated:

Research hypothesis 1: There are statistically positive interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 2: An association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

Research hypothesis 3: Employee engagement and organisational trust meaningfully mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 4: The theoretically hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.

Research hypothesis 5: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 6: Employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

As clarified in Figure 5.3, the theoretical framework for conflict management within a South African ER context involves the relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as mediated by the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust and moderated by employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme). In addition, to assist organisations, ER and IR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers, and human resource professionals meaningfully, this research developed a theoretically supported psychosocial conflict management framework with specific recommendations for conflict management practices that may advance positive and cooperative ER in South African-based organisations.

Figure 5.3 (the overarching conceptual conflict management framework) and Figure 5.5 (a conceptual framework illustration of the practical implications of conflict management) include the following components:

- The context of the research is related to ER within the South African work environment. A pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966) on ER recognises the coexistence of conflict and cooperation in the employment relationship (Avgar, 2017; Bélanger & Edwards, 2007; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017); however, South African workplaces increasingly face high levels of dispute and conflict (CCMA, 2016, 2017). Additionally, contemporary South African and other workplaces are characterised by a number of complex challenges on a macro, meso and micro level. As discussed in section 2.1 (Chapter 2) of this research, environmental challenges such as demographic, socioeconomic and political intricacies hold the potential to increase organisational conflict (Budd et al, 2017), thus influencing the strategic choices role players make in dealing with conflict (Avgar, 2017). The South African democracy faces a daily battle of high levels of unemployment, poverty and severe inequality (Beresford, 2016; Development Policy Research Unit, 2013; Festus et al., 2016; Meagher, 2016; Von Holdt, 2013; World Bank, 2015, 2017b) – complexities that are spilling over into the workplace, leading to escalating levels of workplace conflict and disputes. The adversarial nature of South African employment relationships requires a pre-emptive approach to managing conflict (CCMA, 2016, 2017).
- In line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), it is argued that conflict should be managed on the strategic, functional and workplace levels (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986) to the benefit of both the organisation and its employees. As informed by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), social (and thus also workplace) behaviour results from the mutually dependent, reciprocal exchange process between employers' and employees' behaviour (Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Emerson, 1976; Soieb et al., 2013). It is therefore argued that strong leadership, employee voice opportunities and a cooperative workplace culture will be reciprocated by positive exchange behaviour leading to the constructive management of conflict. Additionally, it is argued that a conflict management approach of dual concern (for self and for others) (Rahim, 1983) further promotes positive, reciprocal workplace behaviour. Thus, the main outcome variable of this research is conflict management. The theoretical components related to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are discussed in Chapter 2.

- Subsequently and as explained above, in line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) are regarded as organisational elements that may be utilised to attain the outcome of conflict management. It is also argued that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are workplace elements that may be implemented to achieve the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) through the mediating variables of employee engagement (Emmott, 2015; Lee & Raschke, 2018) and organisational trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gounaris et al., 2016). The theoretical elements related to leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are discussed in Chapter 3.
- According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), reciprocal social behaviour is evident between parties – be it positive or negative behaviour. Positive reciprocal behaviour is based on trust formed over a period of time (Shore et al., 2006), and which, it is argued, is enhanced by conflict management behaviour that indicates dual concern for self and others (Rahim, 1983). Therefore, in line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), psychological processes such as employee engagement and organisational trust are regarded as psychosocial sources that may be used to achieve, improve, reinforce, uphold and/or weaken other behaviour, such as the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust may explain (by mediating the relationships by either strengthening or weakening it) the relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The theoretical elements related to the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust are discussed in Chapter 4.
- The mediating effects of employee engagement and organisational trust may be conditional on the mean scores of the biographical moderating variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme). The socio-demographic variables of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size,

employee engagement programme for each of the constructs are discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

- The theoretical model further assumes that significant differences exist between the various socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) as related to each of the research constructs. It is postulated that certain groups may have a greater propensity to respond to and utilise the organisational elements of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and subsequently be able to achieve the outcome of conflict management better than other groups. The group differences, found in previous research, between the respective socio-demographic variables of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme for each of the constructs are discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

5.3.1 The hypothetical relationships between the variables

H1: There are statistically significant interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 1 assumes that a significant and positive link exists in this research between the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables. Additionally, it is assumed that further analysis can be performed to explore the relationship dynamics among the variables.

The sub-constructs of the variables were studied to determine whether significant theoretical relationships exist between the various elements of the conflict management framework. It is trusted that this relationship framework will provide organisations, ER and IR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers, and human resource professionals with valuable

insights that will assist organisations in managing conflict constructively within an ER context. The hypothesised relationships between the constructs, based on information collected from the literature review, are discussed in the following sections.

Research hypothesis 1 assumes that (see Figure 5.3):

- Conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles are manifestations of various conflict management aspects that are predicted by the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), and mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust.
- A relationship exists between the respective conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict types) and the respective interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising), as it manifests in conflict management practices and as predicted by the variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust. More specifically, positive relationships exist between task, process and status conflict types and integrating, obliging and compromising conflict management styles, as opposed to a negative relationship between task, process and status conflict types and dominating and avoiding conflict management styles.
- Positive relationships exist between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. More specifically, a positive relationship exists between perceptions of social exchange leadership and leaders' positive conflict behaviours, and between organisational culture and employee voice.
- A relationship exists between the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice).
- A positive relationship exists between the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- A positive relationship exists between employee engagement and organisational trust.

The current research study is interested in determining how certain factors in the organisational ER context predict, mediate and moderate the appearance of various conflict types, as well as interpersonal conflict handling styles. Subsequently, expanding on the knowledge around these aspects contributed to the construction of a conflict management framework.

In this research, conflict management is viewed as a strategic process that unfolds over the long term. Such a proactive approach to conflict management acknowledges and critically evaluates the influence of the macro, meso and micro environments on conflict in organisations (Lipsky et al., 2014). Therefore, conflict management strategies, policies, practices and processes are aligned with those of other business areas, and specifically also as they relate to ER strategies, policies and procedures (Bingham et al., 2003; Currie et al., 2017; Nash & Hann, 2017). Practical, reachable and cooperative strategies should be designed to manage and monitor differences and disputes constructively (Ghai et al., 1998; Wright et al., 2017), with the general purpose of enhancing the performance and effectiveness of organisations (Lipsky et al., 2014). This ensures a constructive conflict management process where conflicting sides are brought together in a cooperative manner to seek workable solutions. It is predicted in this research that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice will contribute significantly to the successful management of conflict in organisations.

For the purposes of this study, leadership is regarded as a process of adapting to given situations, while simultaneously influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively and by facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared goals (Yukl, 2002). Hence, it is argued that leaders play a cardinal role in the way conflict is managed in organisations (Mayer et al., 2018). Research by Tanveer et al. (2018) confirms a positive relationship between leadership style, conflict type (especially relationship conflict) and the leader's interpersonal conflict handling style. When leaders utilise cooperative conflict management styles (integrating, cooperation and obliging styles), social exchange behaviours increase employees' perceptions of psychological safety, trust and use of employee voice (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). Thus, based on the theory by scholars (Blau, 1964) that reciprocating social exchange behaviour is evident between leaders and their followers, it is assumed that the way leaders deal with conflict will influence the way followers respond to conflict behaviour.

Moreover, research confirms that the way an individual group member perceives conflict (for instance relational conflict) predicts group dynamics and how the group reacts (Thiel, Griffith, Hardy, Peterson, & Connelly, 2018). This is in line with conflict cultures theory (Gelfand et al., 2012) that postulates that organisational members adopt similar attitudes and styles of conflict management behaviour. In this way, a conflict culture develops within the organisation. According to Gelfand et al. (2012), generally accepted conflict norms for handling disagreements develop amongst organisational members due to recurrent interactions and established organisational

structures (Gelfand et al., 2012). The conflict culture in a group or in an organisation is driven by leaders' own conflict management behaviour in terms of being either collaborative, dominating or avoiding when dealing with conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012). Moreover, research shows that leadership meaningfully influences both organisational culture (Warrick, 2017) and employee voice (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). Hence, this research argues that the way leaders perceive conflict significantly predicts how organisational members perceive conflict, and how conflict is approached and managed in organisations.

When conflict management practices are designed, the important role of leaders' conflict management behaviours should be acknowledged, specifically as it relates to the shaping of a conflict culture and based on the principles of social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964). Leaders should receive training in conflict management practices in order to understand the process of conflict management.

Similar to leadership, this research regards organisational culture as a predictor of effective conflict management. Organisational culture is regarded in this study as the way shared organisational values are internally integrated, as organisations adapt to challenges in such a way that organisational members regard them as valid and carry them over to new employees as the ideal way to think, perceive, or feel in relation to those challenges (Schein, 2010). Thus, an organisational culture prompts certain behaviours and ensures organisational fit through shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Subsequently, Zhao et al. (2018) recommend that organisations benefit from promoting specific organisational cultures or subcultures, such as having an innovative organisational culture or a specific conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). Additionally, Warrick (2017) postulates that a strong organisational culture influences employees' behaviours and practices because they clearly understand what is expected of them. It is therefore argued that the organisational culture (and/or the conflict subculture) will direct the accepted behaviour towards managing conflict in the organisation.

As stated above, a conflict culture is formed in organisations based on how leaders and other organisational members react to conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012). Additionally, Emmott (2015) postulates that a significant relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture. Furthermore, Yeh and Xu (2010b) argue that an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and allows mistakes is necessary. Yeh and Xu (2010b) regard these aspects (amongst others) as indicative of an innovative organisational culture. This research argues that such an approach will assist organisations to seek new and

creative ways of dealing with conflict. Nonetheless, it is cautioned that in order for an organisational culture to be conducive to organisational success, employees' values, interests and capabilities should correspond with the organisational culture (Schneider, 1975). Thus, it is further argued that in order to have a successful conflict culture, organisations need to consider how a diverse South African workforce will respond to conflict tolerance and permit mistakes when planning innovative conflict management strategies. This research argues that such an approach to an organisational conflict culture will enable organisations to develop sound conflict management practices.

The final predicting variable weighed up in this research is employee voice. Employee voice is defined (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) as deliberate but voluntary, informal and/or formal, upward communication (speaking up) or outward communication with colleagues (speaking out) (Liu et al., 2010; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). The main aim of employee voice is to improve (rather than to criticise) organisational performance through either prohibitive or promotive voice. Prohibitive voice takes place by suggesting constructive and appropriate adaptations to customary work procedures and other work-related issues because of challenges and potential problems that are experienced. Alternatively, employees may share original and constructive thinking, ideas, plans, recommendations, clarifications or observations for change (promotive voice) (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Three sub-constructs, namely, speaking up and speaking out (Liu et al., 2010, Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), and the provision of voice opportunities (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b) are considered in this research. Employee voice opportunities indicate whether leaders grant voice to employees in order to allow them to express their opinions (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b).

Employee voice hold several advantages for organisations and specifically for the management of conflict. For instance, voice behaviour assists organisations to deal with fast-paced organisational challenges (Farh & Chen, 2018; Liu et al., 2010) through employee participation in organisational decision-making. Such a participative process aids the management of conflicts of interest between employees and employers (García et al., 2017) and increases the chances of employees complying with decisions that are taken (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018).

Scholars argue that as union membership declines, other voice opportunities are becoming progressively essential (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018). Although scholars at times question the importance and soundness of voice and representation, it is

recognised that voice – even when the representative collective voice shifts to direct individual-level voice (Bryson et al., 2017) – acknowledges a pluralistic approach to the employment relationship, accepting varying views and regarding conflict as potentially beneficial (Heery, 2016; Hickland, 2017). Should employees withhold voice, this may indicate disengagement and fear (Morrison, 2014), and thus acts as a warning light to management that their organisation's ER are at risk.

Nonetheless, employees are aware that voicing their thoughts holds potential risks (Detert & Edmondson, 2011) and may lead to interpersonal conflict, or negative feedback, or being labelled a troublemaker (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014). Therefore, it is argued that organisational trust is important for voice behaviour. In fact, Morrison (2014) postulates that employees only express themselves through voice behaviour should they feel safe and see the possibility of change; and should voice opportunities be given to employees (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). However, research shows that leaders are at times unaware that employees are not engaging in employee voice, or regard employee voice as potentially negative or threatening behaviour (Detert & Burris, 2016). Hence, leaders that ensure employee voice opportunities that are regarded as safe and valued are vital. Boosting employee voice in organisations thus requires strong leadership and a favourable organisational culture (Gupta et al., 2018; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018).

The advantages of voice behaviour far outweigh the disadvantages. For instance, voice is regarded as an important driver of employee engagement because employees feel valued when their opinions are considered; hence, they engage in cooperative workplace behaviour (Alfes et al, 2010; Amah, 2018; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). Subsequently, Lipsky and Avgar (2010) argue that an integrated conflict management system should aim to provide answers to disempowered employees by, for instance, giving employees the mechanisms through which to raise individual and collective concerns and suggestions via a bottom-up voice approach.

For these reasons, a conflict management framework should include voice opportunities for speaking up (i.e. opportunities to engage with management on workplace matters) and speaking out (thus engaging with colleagues). Additionally, a conflict management framework should address leadership and organisational culture aspects that may enhance voice opportunities, accepting that voice is regarded as risky behaviour and will only happen when organisational trust is evident. The value of such an approach to employee voice will be evident in, for instance,

greater employee engagement. As such, employee voice is regarded as a predictor of effective conflict management.

Hypothesis 2 is discussed below.

5.3.2 Hypothetical association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent variables and the dependent variables as a set of latent construct variables

H2: A significant association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

Research hypothesis 2 assumes that an association exists between the organisation-related factors of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (the independent variables) and employee engagement and organisational trust (the mediating psychosocial process variables) as a composite set of latent construct variables, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as a composite set of latent construct variables.

Scholars (Grace & Bollen, 2008) explain that composite variables represent possible diverse collections of causes and indicate the effects of collections of variables, thereby assisting in modelling assorted concepts. In other words, composite variables (either as an individual variable or a group of variables) may indicate either cause or effect (Bollen, 2002).

According to the literature, leadership has a significant positive relationship with organisational culture (Gupta et al., 2018; Schein, 1985). Leadership both shapes the organisational culture and is shaped by it (Geiger, 2013; Warrick, 2017). Leadership also shapes the conflict culture of the organisation (Gelfand et al., 2012). In addition, leadership either discourages or encourages employee voice (Duan et al., 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018), employee engagement and organisational trust (Lee & Raschke, 2018). An organisational culture conducive to voice behaviour leads to greater engagement (Conway et al., 2016), while more engaged workers participate more in voice opportunities (Morrison, 2014). Moreover, research suggests that trust mediates the relationship between employee voice and engagement (Maymand et al., 2017). Leadership is vital in fostering employee engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014) and organisational trust (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015), and is significant in any conflict management strategy (Mayer et al., 2018). Hence, it is expected that an association exists between the antecedent variables and

mediating variables as a composite set of latent variables and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as a composite set of latent variables. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 5.4.

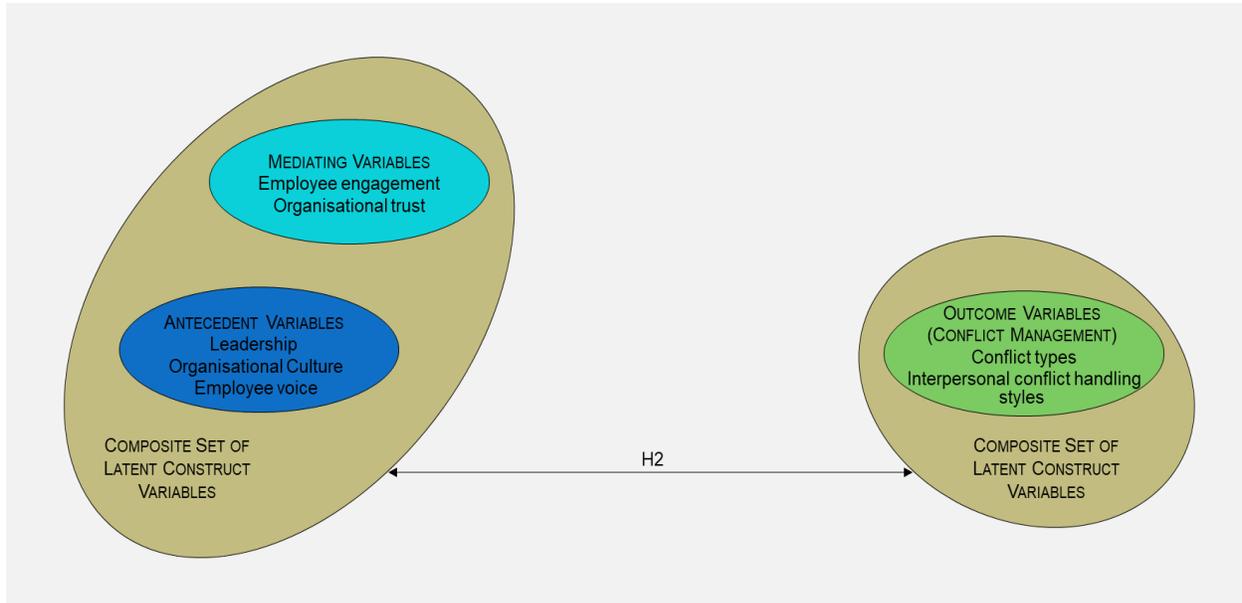


Figure 5.4 Conceptual Diagram of Hypothesis 2

The mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust are discussed next.

5.3.3 Employee engagement and organisational trust as mediating variables

H3: Employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 3 assumes that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice will have a positive indirect relationship with the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), through the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.

More specifically, research hypothesis 3 assumes that (see Figure 5.3):

- Positive perceptions of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice will be associated with significantly lower levels of conflict experiences (conflict types and

interpersonal conflict handling styles) through individuals' levels of employee engagement and organisational trust.

- Employees' experiences of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are significantly and positively related to the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.
- Employees' experiences of engagement and organisational trust are significantly and positively related to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in the organisation.
- Employees' experiences of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are significantly and positively related to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in the organisation.
- Employees' experiences of engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (as the set of antecedent/independent variables) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations (as the outcome/dependent variable).

The current research concurs that aligning organisational policies and practices to create a culture of engagement and trust is necessary in combatting the challenges of today's workplace (Smith et al., 2016). As such, this study considers the relationship dynamics between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice policies and practices, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, in ensuring effective conflict management.

Employee engagement is described in this research as employees who are show that they are psychologically present (Kahn, 1990) in their job and organisational roles (Saks, 2006a) by indicating physical (demonstrating energy and vigour), emotional (demonstrating dedication) and behavioural (demonstrating absorption and immersion in the job and organisation) components (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Two distinct sub-constructs (Saks, 2006a), namely, job engagement (relating to an employee's work role) and organisational engagement (relating to the employee as a member of the organisation) are measured in this research.

Despite the potentially negative influence conflict holds for engagement, Jungst and Blumberg (2016) point out that few studies have focused on this relationship and therefore they confirm that little is known about the consequences of conflict for psychological work outcomes such as engagement. Similarly, there seems to be a paucity of research on the way psychological processes such as employee engagement and organisational trust may influence conflict and its

management in organisations. One of the few studies undertaken in this regard suggests that employee engagement contributes to lesser conflict, even though it does not entirely eliminate conflict (Soieb et al., 2013). Additionally, scholars (Costa et al., 2017; Marks et al., 2001) argue that engagement levels are influenced by the effectiveness with which groups manage their interpersonal processes (e.g. preventing, controlling or resolving their conflict).

As such, constructive conflict management is vital, especially because collegial relationships are necessary for employees to feel engaged in their workplaces (Anitha, 2014). Negative energy in teams hampers their engagement (Costa et al., 2017), while employees use their positive emotions and energy associated with engagement to counteract the negative emotions resulting from conflict (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). Indeed, a crossover effect is evident in workplaces, implying that engagement is transferred amongst employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009; Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). Additionally, good workplace relationships and social support in workplaces foster engagement as they affirm employees' workplace identities, which eases anxieties and enhances organisational trust (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014). Furthermore, supportive management behaviour and strong workplace relations (De Beer, Tims, et al., 2016) augment perceptions of meaningfulness (Locke & Taylor, 1990), a necessary element in fostering engagement (Kahn, 1990), and thereby the conflict management process.

Apart from the natural phenomenon of conflict in relationships, De Dreu (2008) points out that other types of conflict (e.g. task conflict) often lead to relational conflict. Research shows that when members of a group trust each other, task conflict is less likely to result in relationship conflict; however, the converse is also true (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Ensuring good relationships is thus no easy task. In South Africa, this is of concern as research advances that relationship conflict is extremely negative in a collectivist society. Collectivist societies strive for harmony, and thus experiencing conflict may lead to burnout (Shaukat et al., 2017) and emotional exhaustion (Bear et al., 2014). Other conflict types, such as task conflict, are also negatively associated with engagement as employees are less engaged in environments they find unpleasant, such as situations riddled with conflict (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016). Research confirms that task conflict disrupts work norms and increases work-related frustrations (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Accordingly, Bakker and Demerouti (2018) regard conflict as a job demand factor, thus diminishing the achievement of increased levels of employee engagement amongst staff.

From the above literature, it is deduced that conflict manifestation negatively influences employee engagement levels; however, increased levels of engagement may assist in lessening conflict and increasing constructive conflict management behaviour. It is therefore anticipated that employees who indicate job and organisational engagement may experience conflict differently, thereby influencing conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, employee engagement may have either a positive or negative relationship with conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

For these reasons, organisations need to consider initiatives that assist in enhancing job and organisational engagement (Saks 2006a) in order to strengthen the relationship between employee engagement and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Subsequently, this research considers how the managerial practices of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as mediated by employee engagement, may predict conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The literature emphasises the importance of leadership in organisations, as well as how it relates to fostering employee engagement (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Caniëls et al., 2018). Strong, unwavering relationships between employees and their supervisors and colleagues help to resolve interpersonal work conflict and enable a sense of belonging that enhances both trust and engagement (Consiglio et al., 2016). Additionally, highly resourceful jobs that flow from high quality LMX relationships facilitate employee engagement (Breevaart et al., 2015). On the other hand, according to the seminal work of Kahn (1990), employees disengage and pull out of situations that indicate potential conflict with leaders, and do so quicker than in similar situations with their peers. Furthermore, inconsistent leadership behaviour may lead to disengagement of employees because of perceived unfairness (Maslach et al., 2001). Employee engagement may thus have either a positive or negative effect on the relationship dynamics between leadership and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Similarly, research suggests that a positive organisational culture enhances employee engagement (Greco et al., 2006; Men, 2012; Rofcanin et al., 2017). In order to create an employee–organisation fit, shared values and priorities are necessary between role players (Chatman, 1991); more specifically, these organisational values should guide conflict management practices (Mayer & Louw, 2009). To do this, an organisational culture that speaks to the values of the organisation and that is conducive to organisational effectiveness (including

effectively managing conflict) should be constructed (Mayer & Louw, 2009, 2011). Effective leadership and employee engagement are facilitated by a supportive organisational culture which reinforces the effectiveness of team-based structures, thus aligning team and organisational values (Albrecht, 2010). Hence, when a strong cooperative organisational culture is absent, it negatively influences engagement levels. Employee engagement may thus have a positive or negative effect on the relationship dynamics between organisational culture and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Moreover, research suggests that in line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), perceptions of voice behaviour mediate engagement (Rees et al., 2013). Thus, high-quality social exchange relationships (as enhanced by employee voice opportunities) may lead to more engaged employees (Rees et al., 2013). However, when employees experience voice opportunities merely as a smoke screen (pseudo voice), with no real effect or intention of listening to their views, voice behaviour decreases (De Vries et al., 2012), while intragroup conflict increases (De Vries et al., 2012). Hence, according to social exchange behaviour, engagement will decrease (Rees et al., 2013). Employee engagement may thus have either a positive or negative effect on the relationship dynamics between employee voice and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

For these reasons, organisational practices that focus on conflict management should emphasise the development of job and work employee engagement in order to strengthen the relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research indicates a positive relationship between engagement and organisational trust (Jena et al., 2017). While research suggests that high levels of organisational trust enhance engagement (Victor & Hoole, 2017), research also suggests that when employees are engaged it enhances organisational trust (Jena et al., 2017). Therefore, the mediating psychological process variable of organisational trust is discussed next.

In line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), organisational trust is defined in this research as a psychological state that indicates a willingness to accept vulnerability, based on the positive expectations of the organisation (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Three specific trust dimensions, namely integrity, commitment and dependability, are deliberated (Chathoth et al., 2007, 2011).

Conflict is generally regarded as a phenomenon that undermines trust (Jehn et al., 2008; Nešić & Lalić, 2016), as trust that is lost is not easily rebuilt (Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017). According to research (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018), individuals in countries riddled with unresolved social conflict find it hard to trust others outside of their own kin. It may be argued that this is also true for South African society where so much conflict is evident. This aspect further complicates the attainment of organisational trust. Seminal works confirm that low levels of trust lead to potential team complications, and hinder trust formation and group interconnectedness (Jehn et al., 2008).

Furthermore, trust influences conflict types, for instance teams with low trust levels often experience relational conflict (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Research further indicates that task, relationship and process conflict consistently have a negative relationship with trust (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Furthermore, while trust partially mediates the relationship between task conflict and performance, it fully mediates the relationship between relational conflict and performance (Rispen et al., 2007). In addition, research suggests that groups that have high levels of trust are willing to challenge another by debating varying viewpoints as they have confidence that the other party will not regard the conflict as a personal attack (Porter & Lilly, 1996).

Nevertheless, when trust is evident in a relationship, it reduces conflict (Zaheer et al., 1998) and enhances collaboration and cooperation (Currie et al., 2017; Jensen, 2003; Schoorman et al., 2007). This may result in a positive spiral, as research suggests that cooperation increases trust because such an approach acknowledges all parties' interests, while seeking shared conflict solutions (Deutsch, 1990; Gounaris et al., 2016; Hempel et al., 2009). Research confirms that when organisational trust is significant, employees are willing to accept vulnerability and to compromise on issues during conflict situations (Prati & Prati, 2014). Hence, a cooperative conflict management strategy that focuses on resolving conflict to the benefit of all improves organisational trust (Bendeman, 2007; Hempel et al., 2009), while organisational trust may also enhance conflict management in organisations (Currie et al., 2017; Jensen, 2003; Schoorman et al., 2007). Additionally, Ndubisi (2011) advances that integrating, accommodating or compromising conflict management styles increase trust. Similarly, Gounaris et al. (2016) postulate that a combination of accommodating and integrating conflict-handling styles contributes to higher trust levels.

While organisational trust thus inspires fairness in organisations, organisational justice and fairness are also regarded as predictors of organisational trust (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, et al.,

2011; Komodromos, 2013; Oosthuizen et al., 2018). Organisational trust drives changes that are necessary in order to increase harmony and reach mutually acceptable solutions (Du et al., 2011; Pruitt, 1983). In fact, conflict between employers and employees decreases when the collective perception exists that the organisation is trustworthy (Currie et al., 2017; Hodson, 2004). Because conflict diminishes when organisational trust is evident, it positively influences an organisation's employment relationships (Currie et al., 2017; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Clearly, trust is vital in conflict situations (Gounaris et al., 2016; Guenter et al., 2016). Nonetheless, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) and Gounaris et al. (2016) reiterate that cooperation and conflict are both possible outcomes of trust. Thus, organisational trust may have either a positive or negative relationship with conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Therefore, organisations need to consider initiatives that assist in enhancing values such as integrity, commitment and dependability in order to strengthen the relationship between organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Additionally, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) posit that more research at the organisational trust level is necessary to explore possible antecedents to trust, specifically also regarding the relationship between organisational trust and conflict in organisations. Subsequently, this study deliberates the way in which the managerial practices of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as mediated by organisational trust, may predict conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Trust in leadership enhances organisational trust (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, et al., 2011). Nonetheless, it is not easy for leaders to build a trust relationship (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015). Research confirms that organisational and management factors, practices and processes, as well as leadership, are vital in creating trust and assist organisations to deal with the various challenges they may face (e.g. Fenlon, 1997; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2003; Mestry & Bosch, 2013; Siira, 2012). In fact, organisational trust is imperative in ensuring positive leadership outcomes (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). Research indicates that trust levels increase when managers respond sincerely and openly to the concerns of workers (Boxall, 2016). Organisational trust is vital for good ER, successful collective actions and in managing workplace discipline (Anstey, 2014; Leana & Van Buren, 1999; Saundry et al., 2011). However, when conflict manifests between an organisation's leadership and its employees, it not only diminishes vertical trust but also trust on a horizontal level (Wintrobe & Breton, 1986). Organisational trust may thus have

either a positive or negative effect on the relationship dynamics between leadership and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

A cooperative organisational culture that is characterised by values that enhance cooperation rather than competition (e.g. sharing similar goals) is important to ensure organisational trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Such an organisational culture encourages teamwork and promotes trust in colleagues and in the organisation's leadership (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Likewise, trust significantly inspires a strong, positive organisational culture, while robust organisational values of trust, integrity and respect boost engagement and participatory processes such as employee voice (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Marchington, 2015a). Additionally, organisational culture positively influences trust in leadership (Geiger, 2013; Jason, 2014; Schein, 1983). Thus, to motivate and engage employees, as well as to contribute to their wellbeing, organisations should have open, supportive and fair organisational and team cultures (Albrecht, 2012; Welbourne & Schramm, 2017). It is argued that such a culture supports effective conflict management, while the converse is also true when a strong cooperative culture is lacking. Organisational trust may thus have either a positive or negative effect on the relationship dynamics between organisational culture and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

When employees do not have organisational trust, they will not engage in voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). However, a positive relationship between trust in senior management, employee voice and employee engagement has been confirmed by research (Kwon et al., 2016; Rees et al., 2013). Moreover, research shows that cooperative management strategies emphasising coordination, shared accountability and participation in decision-making processes (e.g. through employee voice) lead to reciprocal levels of organisational trust (Costa, 2003; Keen, 1990). Organisational trust may thus have either a positive or negative effect on the relationship dynamics between employee voice and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Therefore, organisational practices that focus on conflict management practices should accentuate the development of organisational trust in order to strengthen the relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Clearly, it may be argued that supporting organisational policies and practices to create a culture of engagement and trust is necessary in combatting the challenges of today's workplace (Smith

et al., 2016). The hypothetical fit between the empirical and theoretical framework (depicted as hypothesis 4) is discussed next.

5.3.4 Hypothetical fit between the elements of the empirically manifested framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework

H4: The theoretical hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.

Research hypothesis 4 was articulated based on the understandings, insights and predictions deliberated in regard to research hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. Consequently, research hypothesis 4 anticipated that, based on the overall statistical relationships between the antecedents, the mediating psychosocial processes, the moderating socio-demographic variables and the outcome variables, there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework (see Figure 5.3).

The concluding hypothesised model is likely to disclose relationships between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. In addition, employee engagement and organisational trust may significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedents and outcome variables.

ER (HR and IR) practitioners, industrial psychologists and organisational behaviour specialists may implement the main elements of the final hypothesised framework. It is hoped that the framework assists in the functional and constructive management of conflict in organisations.

The next section discusses the predicted moderating effect of the socio-demographic variables on the respective research variables.

5.3.5 Hypothetical moderating effect of socio-demographic variables

H5: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

More specifically, research hypothesis 5 assumes that employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), as a set of relatively stable traits, modify (moderate) the strength or direction of the effect of (see Figure 5.3)

- The independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) on the psychosocial processes' mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) (H5a)
- The psychosocial process mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust on individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) (H5b), and
- The independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) on individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) (H5c).

Moderating variables determine the strength or nature of the relationship between variables (Dawson, 2014). In this research, socio-demographic or person-centred moderators were considered, as they relate to individual factors (e.g. race, gender, and age) (Becker, 1964).

5.3.5.1 *Race*

Research hypothesis 5 assumed that race would significantly moderate the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, it was expected that race would significantly predict the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This hypothesis was

premised on previous research that found that racial and cultural backgrounds significantly affect conflict experiences in the workplace (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn et al., 1999; Mestry & Bosch, 2013). South African organisations are characterised by the presence of various racial groups, potentially influencing conflict management. This poses a significant challenge for any South African conflict management framework. Nonetheless, the various perspectives brought by racial and cultural differences may also improve resourcefulness, innovation and decision-making (Phillips et al., 2009).

Research hypotheses 5 holds that race will significantly predict leadership, as leaders play an important role in the process of effectively managing diversity and diversity-related conflict (Coleman et al., 2017). Leaders will be negatively affected should they not succeed in generating favourable conditions to deal with perceived social incompatibilities (Hendrickson, 2016; Zanda, 2018). According to Scandura and Lankau (1996), racial differences potentially affect the quality of LMX. Furthermore, Pauliené (2012) suggests that collectivist societies – such as African countries (Patterson & Winston, 2017) – observe leadership from the perspective that it flows from followers who are reliant on their leaders for security and direction. In other words, African leadership has a humane and person-centric relational approach that acknowledges the interdependence between people (Patterson & Winston, 2017). Leaders should view cultural differences as a situational characteristic to which they need to adapt their leadership styles (Solomon & Steyn, 2017), especially in a country such as South Africa with its multiracial and multicultural composition.

Furthermore, it was hypothesised that race would predict organisational culture. Scholars stress the importance of an organisational culture that promotes diversity in order to avoid conflict (Coleman et al., 2017; Schloegel et al., 2018). Schein (1983) argues that manageable tension deriving from diversity conflict may induce greater awareness and change initiatives. However, for this to happen the organisational culture should embrace racial and cultural diversity, and should manage diversity conflict by promoting harmony and trust building (Coleman et al., 2017). Research advocates that an organisational culture that promotes collectivist values moderates the relationship dynamics between socio-demographic aspects of race, gender and nationality, and cooperative behaviour (Chatman & Spataro, 2005).

It was hypothesised that race would predict employee voice. Research suggests that cultural differences influence the way employees relate to voice behaviour (Brockner et al., 2001). The seminal research by Hofstede (1980a) maintains that power distances vary among different

cultures. Power distances relate to the degree to which members of a society accept as natural and desirable the fact that unequal power exists in organisations (Brockner et al., 2001; Kwon et al., 2016). Similarly, whereas individualistic cultures view conflict as natural and tend to resolve conflict through active and assertive behaviour, collectivist societies view conflict with dislike and resolve it through passive, collaborative or avoiding tactics – employees will thus not easily engage in voice behaviour to resolve conflict (Hofstede, 1980a; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). South Africa is host to a variety of racial groups, all with their own cultures. Within these racial groups, ethnic differences are rife, and minority and majority groupings are also evident. Morrison (2011) postulates that ethnic groups with minority status will be less inclined to voice behaviour, especially in conflict situations.

Scholars explain that even though relatively little research has been conducted on the relationship dynamics between engagement and racial ethnicity (Truss et al., 2013), a one-size-fits-all approach does not exist in enhancing employee engagement, as various groupings experience engagement differently (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Research specific to South Africa (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011) proposes that significant differences are prevalent between the socio-demographic variables of home language, ethnicity and the level of work engagement of the respective groups. Therefore, it was hypothesised that race would significantly predict employee engagement.

Similarly, a paucity in the research on relationship dynamics between socio-demographic characteristics and organisational trust seems evident. Gilbert and Tang (1998) researched this aspect in a company that had undergone diversity training over the medium term, finding no apparent differences in the relationship between organisational trust and various races, or organisational trust among races. Nonetheless, Gilbert and Tang (1998) emphasise the necessity of a workplace culture that values diversity for this to happen. Ndubisi (2011) suggests that cultural diversity affects interpersonal conflict handling styles and trust. Moreover, the way organisational trust is viewed differs between collectivist and individualistic national cultures (Huff & Kelley, 2003) and cultures in general (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As previous research has indicated the importance of trust to bind together people from different cultures and race (Mayer et al., 1995), it was anticipated that racial differences would also predict organisational trust in this research.

5.3.5.2 Gender

It was also hypothesised that gender would be a significant predictor of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). As more women join the labour market (Festus et al., 2016), discrimination and stereotyping on the basis of gender increases, as does conflict (Budd et al., 2017; Ayub & Jehn, 2014). According to Budd et al. (2017), women also handle conflict differently from men, although contradictory results are found on how the genders differ (Ome, 2013). Role conflict is increasing (Kuschel, 2017), as is work–family conflict (Ghislieri et al., 2017). Research confirms that males and females differ in their choice of interpersonal conflict management styles (Ome, 2013; Rahim, 1983).

Additionally, it was expected that gender would significantly moderate the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, based on previous research findings (Mayer et al., 2018), it was predicted that traditional gender roles and stereotyping would affect the role of leadership in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). In the South African context, female leadership is judged in terms of biological sex and from a sociological perspective where women have prejudicial societal labels attached to them. These issues influence conflict stemming from diversity issues and, moreover, these sexist stereotypical beliefs negatively influence perceptions of women as effective leaders (Mayer et al., 2018). According to Scandura and Lankau (1996), gender affects the quality of exchange relationships. Additionally, research suggests that women are more affected than men by the quality of their leader-member-exchange role (e.g. with relevance to their perceptions of organisational justice) (Wang, Kim, & Milne, 2017).

It was also expected that gender would be a significant predictor of organisational culture. According to Isiaka et al. (2016), integrating a diverse workforce (e.g. because of an increased labour force participation rate of women) is an enormous challenge. Scholars advocate that organisations that apply a strong diversity culture succeed in developing a unique organisational culture (Lee & Kramer, 2016). Since previous research has indicated that to voice or rather to remain silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018) is significantly predicted by gender, it was hypothesised that gender would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between employee voice and the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

It was also predicted that gender would be a significant predictor of employee engagement. Scholars confirm that relatively little research has been conducted on the relationship dynamics between engagement and gender (Truss et al., 2013). Kahn (1990) maintains that women, who are often undermined, may feel unsafe fully engaging in their work roles and are then less engaged as their anxieties limit the energy they have to fully engage (Kahn, 1990). This finding has been confirmed by recent research by Schaufeli (2018), who indicates that countries that have no gender inequality experience higher levels of employee engagement. It was also expected that gender would significantly predict organisational trust. This is hypothesised based on previous research findings (Gilbert & Tang, 1998; Joubert, 2017) that support diversity management in order to increase trust between organisational members from different groupings, such as males versus females. Often, conflict is rife in diverse groupings (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008).

5.3.5.3 Age

It was expected that age would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This research focuses on individuals of working age. As suggested by Lyons et al. (2015), both maturation and generational cohort are considered. It was expected that age would significantly predict the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was theorised based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), which states that individuals will form groups according to perceived likenesses and dissimilarities, as found in generational cohorts. According to the literature, each of these groups hold distinctive principles, feelings, beliefs and inclinations, which are defined by past events in their lives (Guo & Cionea, 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lowe et al., 2008, Williams, 2016), potentially increasing workplace conflict (Urick et al., 2016), for instance relationship conflict (Ismail et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 1999). Parmer (2018) argues that interpersonal conflict management styles also have a significant relationship with age.

Additionally, it was theorised that age would predict leadership. The various generations differ regarding their expectations of leadership (Lowe et al., 2008). Age influences leadership behaviour and outcomes, as older leaders have more ability to regulate their emotions and to maintain a positive outlook (Carstensen et al., 1999; Rudolph et al., 2018). In addition, they are more experienced and, as a result, better leaders (Tuncdogan et al., 2017). It was also expected

that age would modify organisational culture. This is based on previous research that suggests that stereotyping according to age and generations hampers communication, trust, knowledge exchange and coordination (Schloegel et al., 2018), necessitating an organisational culture that values diversity. Different age groups have differing needs and may have different requirements for, for instance, a flexible workplace culture (Eversole et al., 2012; Rofcanin et al., 2017). Moreover, based on the literature, it was hypothesised that age would predict employee voice, for instance research suggests that older employees regard voice as more valuable than younger employees, even though all individuals regard voice as important behaviour (Ali Arain et al., 2018; Palumbo et al., 2009).

It was also expected that age would modify the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. This assumption is based on previous research on employee engagement. Kahn (1992) proposes that different organisational groups (e.g. based on age, race or gender) may have either more, or less, psychological presence, as people from different group affiliations are subjected differently to self-in-role behaviours. Moreover, according to Hoole and Bonnema (2015), a significant relationship exists between various generational cohorts and their experience of engagement. Nonetheless, scholars have conflicting views on the strength of the relationship (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). For instance, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) argue that engagement is only weakly positively related to employees' age. It was also assumed that age would modify organisational trust. Although research on the relationship between organisational trust and the age of individuals is inconclusive, there are research findings that postulate that diverse generations have different inclinations regarding trust (Lowe et al., 2008; Tsai, 2017). Furthermore, Gilbert and Tang (1998) found that age significantly predicts organisational trust, while negative age stereotyping obstructs trust.

5.3.5.4 *Qualification level*

It was hypothesised that qualification would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, based on the literature, it was expected that qualification would significantly predict the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Church (1995) argues that an individual's educational level influences the way that employee will react in various situations, for instance during conflict and conflict management (Church, 1995). Moreover, research shows that differences in educational background increase the probability of

differing perspectives and opinions in a workgroup (Jehn et al., 1999). Often such workgroups find it more difficult to determine how to proceed with tasks, potentially increasing process and task conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). Additionally, potential conflict is amplified in South Africa because of educational inequality, the so-called brain-drain, and rapid technological advancement (Festus et al., 2016; Kaplan & Höppli, 2017; World Bank, 2017c).

It was predicted that qualification would significantly predict leadership. This is according to research that confirms the importance of education and experience in leader outcomes and behaviour (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007; Echevarria et al., 2017). Research (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007) indicates that educational level significantly influences perceptions of followers regarding leaders' transactional versus transformation style behaviours. Higher levels of individualised consideration were found in leaders who hold advanced degrees than leaders with lower educational levels (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007).

Furthermore, it was assumed that education would significantly predict organisational culture. This is based on the premise that organisations function within a fast paced and ever-changing environment, necessitating a learning organisation (Senge, 1990) that can stay abreast of challenges in order to reach its objectives. For this to succeed, a learning culture is necessary that embraces the formation, acquirement and transfer of knowledge for all in the organisation; in other words, an organisation with a collective orientation towards learning (Dajani & Mohamad, 2017). It is argued that employees with higher qualifications will be more open to innovative and learning organisational cultures that also consider creative ways of managing conflict and the formation of a conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). Nonetheless, to the knowledge of the researcher, no other research has been conducted which considers this specific moderating variable as it relates to organisational culture in a conflict management framework.

It was also hypothesised that education would significantly predict employee voice, as research shows that voice behaviours are influenced by aspects such as the different practices, capabilities, or intellects, talents and skills of employees (Botero, 2013; Jiang et al., 2018). Education level also influences the way voice is perceived (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018) and expressed (e.g. one study found that the higher the level of education, the lower the level of defensive silence) (Katou, 2018). Additionally, when voice behaviour is reduced, the benefits of informational diversity based on diverse levels of expertise and education types or work experience are lost while conflict increases (De Vries et al., 2012).

Additionally, it was conjectured that education would significantly predict the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. Research suggests that there are significant differences in the engagement of individuals with differing qualifications (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011), a finding that is in part confirmed by prior research (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Jackson & Rothmann, 2004). Although there are differing findings on which qualification grouping are most engaged, there is agreement that engagement levels differ amongst individuals with varying qualifications (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Jackson & Rothmann, 2004). Research (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007) shows that the decision to trust is significantly influenced by the belief that the other party is trustworthy. Scholars (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006) suggest that ability, benevolence and integrity significantly influence perceptions of trustworthiness. Likewise, Gillespie (2003) argues that perceptions about another's ability influence the individual's view about the trustworthiness of the other party, while aspects such as knowledge, cognitive and emotional skills influence perceptions of competence (Heyns & Rothmann, 2006). It is thus argued that educational level would significantly predict organisational trust.

5.3.5.5 *Job level*

It was expected that job level would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, it was probable that job level would significantly predict the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was hypothesised based on previous research findings that indicate that employees of different job levels react differently in various situations such as conflict and its management (Church, 1995). According to Rahim (1983), status amongst organisational members (for instance, being on the job level of management versus non-management) affects the way employees react to conflict. Furthermore, a group's hierarchal position in the organisation determines its conflict dynamics (Jehn & Greer, 2013). The more advanced in the hierarchy of an organisation, the better equipped individuals are to manage difficult interpersonal situations (De Wit et al., 2012).

It was hypothesised that job level would significantly predict leadership. This is based on research that confirms that leaders at varying hierarchical levels are responsible for differing functions and responsibilities (Zanda, 2018), and that leaders at higher levels may influence leadership at lower levels through a trickle-down effect (Mayer et al., 2009). Additionally, based on previous writings,

it was proposed that job level would significantly predict organisational culture. Research suggests that organisational culture is firstly engrained by leadership (Schein, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013) and that leadership in the top hierarchy of the organisation influences the organisational climate and culture, as lower-level leaders imitate higher-level leaders, and organisational members imitate their leaders and supervisors (Zanda, 2018). Over time, this informs the organisational culture of the organisation (Zanda, 2018). It was also expected that job level would significantly predict employee voice. Guarana et al. (2017) explain that employee voice behaviour is affected by whom voice is expressed to, as well as by the person expressing voice. According to Kahn (1992), influence and status ensure a bigger voice. Howell et al. (2015) postulate that managers acknowledge voice behaviour from employees who they perceive to have status, from amongst other things the position they hold in an organisation.

Based on previous research findings, it was predicted that job level would significantly predict employee engagement. Kular et al. (2008) indicate that while senior executives are the most engaged, hourly workers are least engaged. Role characteristics such as authority, stimulation, resources and the like, affect this finding (Kular et al., 2008). Kahn (1992) explains that the more influence and status that are evident in a work role, the more the incumbent individuals can shape their own roles, allowing for an increase in engagement levels. However, Kahn (1992) points out that higher status results in employees who perceive no choice but to be engaged, and in order to remain authentic, present and focused they constantly draw from their inner self (Kahn, 1992). Additionally, it was hypothesised that job level would significantly predict organisational trust. Gilbert and Tang (1998) suggest that job status positively relates to group cohesion, and that group cohesion is positively related to organisational trust.

5.3.5.6 *Tenure*

It was expected that tenure would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, it was likely that tenure would significantly predict the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). According to Jehn et al. (1999), differences in work experience lead to a variety of opinions and perspectives amongst organisational members, which may lead to conflict. In fact, tenure diversity is negatively associated with emotional conflict (Pelled et al., 1999). However, research shows that the longer organisational members are engaged in a working relationship, the less the relational conflict that results (Ismail et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, a contradictory finding shows that subordinates with longer tenure have a more negative perception of their leaders than those with shorter tenure (Murry et al., 2001).

It was hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict leadership. This is based on previous research findings that suggest that a strong relationship exists between tenure and trust in leadership (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). Additionally, over time, women are accepted in leadership roles (Meister et al., 2017). While increased experience results in increased self-confidence (Purani & Sahadev, 2008), inexperienced employees react more strongly to leadership behaviour and work difficulties (Johnston et al., 1989). It was theorised that tenure would significantly predict organisational culture. This is based on the argument by scholars (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; O'Reilly et al., 1991) that a greater person–organisation fit is established between individual organisational members' values and their organisational culture with longer tenure. It was also hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict employee voice. Studies indicate that tenure moderates the relationship between turnover intentions and employee voice (Avery et al., 2011). However, the research also indicates that the benefits of employee voice lessen the longer employees remain with an employer (Avery et al., 2011).

It was hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict employee engagement. This is based on research that suggests that employee engagement declines the longer employees stay with an organisation (Robinson et al., 2004). Length of service (both new and more experienced) is linked to lower engagement levels because employees feel threatened by either the lack of experience or the presence of experience (Kahn, 1990). This is especially true for new and lower status organisational members (Kahn, 1990). Additionally, it was hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict organisational trust. This assumption is based on previous research findings, for instance Gilbert and Tang (1998) indicate that the longer employees stay with an organisation, the higher the possibility that they may experience feelings of being trapped, which may negatively influence organisational trust, or they may experience increased loyalty towards the organisation. Nonetheless, no significant direct relationship between organisational trust and tenure was found (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). However, tenure and status positively relate to group cohesion, which in turn is positively related to organisational trust (Gilbert & Tang, 1998).

5.3.5.7 Income level

It was expected that income levels would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the

outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Thus, it was expected that income levels would significantly predict the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was based on research that emphasises the trend of worldwide inequality (Kochan & Riordan, 2016), with South Africa ranked as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Benjamin, 2016; Borat et al., 2014; World Bank, 2015, 2017c). Discriminatory practices and industrial action are often associated with wages (Benjamin, 2016). Thus, wage inequality may lead to perceptions of injustice, giving rise to conflict (Spaho, 2013).

It was hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict leadership. This is based on the argument by scholars (Ali et al., 2018) that four leadership orientations exist in Africa, of which the one group comprises leaders who are motivated by leadership rewards such as wealth and job security. In fact, these scholars found that material rewards have a significant influence on how leaders are most likely to behave (Ali et al., 2018).

Also, it was hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict organisational culture. This assumption was based on the seminal work of Martins (1992, 2002) that argues that organisational culture holds three perspectives, an integrated, fragmented and differentiation perspective. According to the differentiation perspective, it is acknowledged that individual organisational members differ according to gender, occupational level and the like, and that subcultures are subsequently formed within organisations (Martins, 1992, 2002). Thus, subgroups, and therefore subcultures, may form around income differentiation in the organisation.

It was hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict employee voice. This is based on prior research findings that indicate that voice behaviour is encouraged in a culture of openness, and that managers who are inclined to be open may also be inclined to reward voice behaviour (Detert & Burris, 2007). Additionally, according to the elaboration likelihood model of social persuasion, a recipient who receives a communication may be persuaded to adhere to the communication depending on how credible and compelling they view the source and the message to be (Brinol & Petty, 2009). For instance, a manager may be persuaded by an employee who is speaking up to endorse a beneficial change in the organisation (Burris, 2012). Scholars advise that should managers believe that their employees are committed to the organisation and its wellbeing and are speaking up to improve the organisation, they may be persuaded to respond in a favourable way by rewarding the employee accordingly (Mayer & Davis, 1999).

It was hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict employee engagement. This is based on the seminal research finding (Maslach et al., 2001) that engagement is enhanced by a maintainable amount of work, feelings of being in control and having choices, a fitting recognition and reward system, a kind and loyal collegial community, fairmindedness and perceptions of justice, as well as having a meaningful and appreciated job. Rewards and recognition was also listed by other scholars as a factor contributing significantly to employee engagement (Crawford et al., 2010; Kahn, 1990).

It was hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict organisational trust. This was based on the literature that postulates that perceptions of distributive injustice negatively influence trust levels in organisations (Katou, 2013). This is further complicated by research that suggests that people of different cultures have different perceptions of distributive justice regarding, for instance, income and reward (also non-monetary) (Gelfand et al., 2007).

5.3.5.8 *Organisational size (number of employees)*

It was predicted that number of employees (organisational size) would significantly affect leadership, even though extant literature reports contradictory results on whether smaller or larger organisations (as measured by, for instance, number of employees) are optimal for leadership (García-Morales, Lloréns-Montes, & Verdú-Jover, 2008; McGill & Slocum, 1993; Vaccaro, Jansen, Van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2012). However, it is generally accepted that the bigger the organisation, the more complex it becomes, and therefore the more important leadership becomes.

Additionally, it was hypothesised that number of employees (size) would significantly predict organisational culture. Scholars confirm that organisational size plays an important role in various organisational aspects (e.g. the organisational structure and culture), owing to the changes that occur with variations in organisational size (Beer, 1964; Vaccaro et al., 2012).

It was hypothesised that size of an organisation would predict employee voice. Scholars (Constantin & Baias, 2015) acknowledge that communication in organisations of different sizes holds its own challenges. When employees perceive that they are not being heard and that their voice behaviour is meaningless, they will refrain from enacting voice behaviour (Hickland, 2017).

It was hypothesised that number of employees (size) would significantly predict organisational trust. Organisational context (e.g. task accomplishment, resource dependencies) may influence

organisational structures and behaviours, which in turn influence trust levels (Six & Sorge, 2008). Hence, organisational trust is generally more prevalent in smaller organisations than in larger ones (Gould-Williams, 2003).

It was hypothesised that number of employees (size) would significantly predict conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Extant literature (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) argues that increased group numbers result in diverse viewpoints on interpersonal conflict handling, values, attitudes and the like. Attaining synergy amidst such diversity holds numerous challenges.

5.3.5.9 Trade union membership and representation

It was hypothesised that trade union membership would significantly predict the relationship between the independent variables and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Extant literature on pluralism emphasises that unions and collective bargaining are vital for preventing and managing conflict (Currie et al., 2017; Ilesanmi, 2017) and are also regarded as a voice mechanism (Godard, 2014a, 2014b; Hayter, 2015). Scholars argue that employees may experience a lesser need for unions when the workplace context is safe (Snape & Redman, 2012). It may then perhaps be argued that in high-conflict work environments, the need for unions would increase, leading to the influence of unions on workplaces increasing and vice versa; this remains an area for further research. Currently, a paucity of research on the influence of trade unionism and the constructs of relevance was noted, especially as it relates to the South African context.

5.3.5.10 A formal employee engagement programme

Relevant research on the relationship between a formally implemented employee engagement programme and the constructs of relevance to the study could not be found. Nonetheless, extant literature suggests that organisational human resource practices (it is argued that these may include formal employee engagement practices) significantly predict organisational trust (Gould-Williams, 2003). As such, it may perhaps be inferred that such human resource practices (in this case, a formal employee engagement programme) may also predict the other variables of the current research. Hence, it is assumed that a formal employee engagement programme in an organisation will predict the relationship between the independent variables and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 6 is discussed next.

5.3.6 Hypothetical differences between the respective socio-demographic groups

H6: Employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 6 assumes that employees from various socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) will differ significantly regarding their experiences of leadership, organisational trust and employee voice, the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

More specifically, research hypothesis 6 assumes that:

- The relationship between the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) is moderated by an individual's socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme). The relationship is more negative for certain socio-demographic groups than others.
- An employee's experiences of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are significantly related to their race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme.
- An employee's experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust are significantly related to their race, gender, age, qualification, job level,

income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme.

- An employee's race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme are significantly related to their experience of conflict (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 6 is based on the literature review (see section 2.2.3.3; section 3.1.3; section 3.2.3; section 3.3.3; section 4.1.3 and section 4.2.3), which points to significant differences between the socio-demographic variables (e.g. race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Tajfel and Turner (1985) maintain that individuals categorise others, as well as themselves, into groups based on perceived differences and similarities. Classifying oneself into a group addresses the need of individuals to belong, such as the feeling individuals experience during inclusion in a group (Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Brown, 1998; Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Simultaneously, it addresses the individual's need to differentiate, based on the need to be unique (Brewer & Brown, 1998). In other words, by comparing themselves to other groups, individuals may experience a sense of belonging to another group (Brewer & Brown, 1998). South African organisations are characterised by diverse groupings based on racial, ethnicity, age and gender diversity, by a set of structural and historic frameworks, and by related organisational structures, rules and regulations (Mayer & Barnard, 2015; Mayer & Louw, 2011; Mayer et al., 2018; Shteynberg et al., 2011).

Comparisons between groups potentially result in positive in-group and negative outgroup bias (Brewer, 1979), which may give rise to identity-based conflict (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2016; Urick et al., 2016). Hence, diversity factors potentially increase conflict in organisations (e.g. Adair et al., 2017; Brett, 2018; Coleman et al., 2017). According to Urick et al. (2016), identity-based conflict results from deep-rooted reservations about diverse groups of people, complicating the

management of ensuing conflict. For instance, De Beer, Rothmann, et al. (2016) indicate that in South Africa, white male employees perceive more job insecurity than their black counterparts, while employees from designated groups perceive more discrimination. However, previous research has indicated that employees from both the designated and non-designated groups experience discrimination equally (Bowen et al., 2013). Thus, it is argued that a better understanding of how diverse groups may view the various elements of the proposed conflict management framework is necessary to inform its construction. As such, it was hypothesised that the antecedent variables, mediating variables and outcome variables might be experienced differently by members of homogenous socio-demographic subgroups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), and may have different implications for conflict management practices in combination than they do individually.

5.3.6.1 *Race*

It was hypothesised that individuals from different race groups (black Africans, coloureds, Indian/Asians and whites) would differ significantly in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Race, a social category diversity issue, often results in individuals being categorised into diverse groups. Such behaviour may lead to induced hostility or dislike within groups working together (Jehn et al., 1999) because of feelings of inequality and disrespect (Hogg, 1996). Moreover, Brett (2018) explains that cultural groups often distance themselves from others because of their distinctive ideals, standards, principles and behaviours. In other words, forming groups according to a social category such as race is a natural phenomenon as individuals voluntarily group together, but also because of stereotyping. Both these approaches may give rise to intragroup hostility. In fact, social category diversity (e.g. race) increases relationship conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996), task conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn & Greer, 2013) and process conflict (Pelled, 1996) should members rally around others in similar categories, or because of different backgrounds (Pelled, 1996). Additionally, research conducted in the United States of America determined that different racial groups tend to adopt different interpersonal conflict handling styles (Parmer, 2018), with Ndubisi (2011) confirming that cultural diversity influences such styles. Scholars suggest that all racial (and gender) groups in South Africa experience discrimination through practices of, for instance,

victimisation and harassment (Bowen et al., 2013; De Beer, Rothmann, et al., 2016; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). These aspects are a breeding ground for race-related conflict in workplaces.

It was proposed that individuals from different race groups (black Africans, coloureds, Indian/Asians and whites) would differ significantly in respect of their experiences of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. More specifically, it was hypothesised that leadership will be experienced differently by diverse racial groups. This is based on research that shows that although much progress has been made since the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, inequality is still rife in South African workplaces, with white males dominating leadership positions (Alexander, 2013; Festus et al., 2016; Webster, 2013). South Africa's racial background generally explains the adversarial relationships between organisational leadership (management) and employees (ILO, 2016a; Thomas & Bendixen, 2000; Rust, 2017). According to scholars, employees typically take decisions and make choices based on their own cultural backgrounds and value systems, and relate to individuals that they identify with (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2016; Urick et al., 2016).

It was hypothesised that organisational culture will be experienced differently by diverse racial groups. South Africa has been exposed to socio-political transformation after democratisation, as well as globalisation (Webster & Adler, 1999), influencing the distinctiveness of organisations and their values and how they are managed (Mayer & Louw, 2011). An inclusive organisational culture is necessary to promote effective management (Thomas & Bendixen, 2000). Moreover, organisational culture in South African organisations is largely modelled on individualistic European and American examples, which differ substantially from the collectivist values reflected by African scholars (Thomas & Bendixen, 2000). Research indicates that whereas European collectivism focuses on socialism and communism, black African collectivism focuses on the notion of people coming together as a core united group (Senghor, 1965). Additionally, research indicates dissimilarities in the experiences of individualistic versus collectivistic cultures and racial groups. Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) explain that collectivist values include shared objectives, interchangeable interests and the presence of various commonalities. Collectivist societies strive to maintain harmony, and therefore view cooperation as important (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

Senghor (1965) explains black African collectivism as communalism,¹ which can coexist with the personal freedom provided by individualism (Bendixen & Schneier, 1997).

It was hypothesised that employee voice would be experienced differently by diverse racial groups. This is based on previous findings that theorise that increased workplace diversity based on, for instance, race influences individuals' tendency to voice their sentiments and views, or to refrain from voice behaviour by remaining silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018).

It was hypothesised that individuals from different race groups (black Africans, coloureds, Indian/Asians and whites) would differ significantly in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. This is based on South African research that suggests that different racial groups experience employee engagement and organisational trust differently (Hofmeyr & Marais, 2013). A South African study (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011) suggests that groups with different home language and ethnicity (and thus race) experience work engagement differently. Ndubisi (2011) confirms that trust is influenced by cultural diversity; more specifically, perceptions of organisational trust are influenced by dynamics that flow from the differences evident between national cultures, as well as between collectivist and individualistic cultural groups (Huff & Kelly, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is in line with research by Kahn (1992), which explains that different organisational groupings (e.g. based on race) may experience higher or lower levels of psychological presence because individuals from dissimilar ethnic groups, cultures and group affiliations are subjected in different ways to self-in-role behaviours.

5.3.6.2 *Gender*

As previous research has found significant differences in conflict experiences and conflict management between males and females, it was hypothesised that this research would find significant differences based on gender in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Research advances that social category diversity such as gender often results in conflict (Pelled, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999). For example, previous findings on conflict types indicate that men experience significantly more relational conflict than women

¹ Communalism is explained as, for instance, the notion of an extended family, including anyone and not only those related by blood, relationship or marriage (Schutte, 1993).

(Ismail et al., 2012). Nonetheless, generally speaking, the propensity of relationship conflict increases amongst members with visible dissimilarities, such as gender differences (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn, 1997; Pelled, 1996). Regarding conflict management styles, differences between males and females are also noted. While Rahim's research (1983) indicates that females are more integrating, avoiding and compromising in their conflict management styles, Bear et al. (2014) propose that women mostly use an avoidant conflict management style in order to influence others' perceptions of them. Because women feel pressured to behave cooperatively (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly et al., 1992), they avoid direct conflict confrontation (Bear et al., 2014). Similar to racial discrimination, scholars' state that gender differences give rise to discriminatory practices in South Africa (Bowen et al., 2013; De Beer, Rothmann, et al., 2016; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Such practices potentially contribute significantly to race-related conflict in workplaces.

It was hypothesised that individuals from different gender groups (males and females) differ significantly in respect of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. Specifically, leadership is viewed differently by males and females. This is theorised on the basis of research findings that suggest that male leaders are much less concerned with conflict management as a function of their leadership role compared to women (Brandl et al., 2009; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017). Research on women leaders in South Africa indicates that conflict based on various diversity issues, such as gender, race, ethnicity and status, is a regular occurrence (Mayer et al., 2018). In addition, stereotyping of women leaders is common (Oc, 2018) and South African women in leadership positions are often discriminated against (e.g. feminine leadership being a weaker leadership) and experience conflict based on their gender (Mayer et al., 2018; Meister et al., 2017). This is confirmed by Lord et al. (2017), who point to perceptions relating to gender differences in leadership styles, for example that women display higher people skills such as empathy, communication and cooperativeness (Lammers & Gast, 2017).

Similarly, it was predicted that males and females would have different experiences of organisational culture, as research indicates that organisational cultures in South Africa are still very masculine, with stereotypical beliefs and perceptions about women in the workplace (Mayer et al., 2018). Furthermore, it was expected that men and women would have different experiences of employee voice. This is based on research findings that suggest that males tend to use a tougher voicing style than their female counterparts (Zhang, 2013). Research also indicates that managers often respond better to female voice (Howell et al., 2015). Additionally, scholars

suggest that increased diversity in workplaces influences organisational voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Gender has been shown to be a variable that may affect employees' tendency to voice their opinions and perceptions, or to remain silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018).

Based on South African research that suggests that males and females experience employee engagement and organisational trust differently (Hofmeyr & Marais, 2013), it was hypothesised that individuals from different gender groups (males and females) would differ significantly in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. According to Kahn (1990), women often experience that men undermine their work roles, leading to women not fully engaging in their work roles. Schaufeli (2018), who maintains that countries with no gender inequality have higher levels of engagement in their workforce than countries with gender inequality, confirms this viewpoint. As South African research indicates that gender inequality is prevalent in South Africa (Department of Labour, 2016b), it is predicted that women will be less engaged than men (Mayer et al., 2018; Meister et al., 2017).

5.3.6.3 Age

Additionally, it was hypothesised that individuals of different ages and different age cohorts would differ significantly in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This is based on previous findings that suggest that age and generational cohort may influence conflict management. According to scholars (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn, 1997; Pelled, 1996), relationship conflict is more widespread among individuals with visible differences such as differences in age. For instance, Parmer (2018) posits that age strongly correlates with a collaborating versus a competitive conflict management style. Whereas participants older than 35 scored significantly higher in the collaborating conflict management style, the age group of 18 to 25 showed a significantly higher correlation with a competing conflict management style. Likewise, research suggests that age influences the effective use of either an avoiding or a constructive conflict management strategy – older employees are more likely to avoid conflict than younger employees (Beitler et al., 2016).

It was expected that individuals of different ages and from different age cohorts would differ significantly in respect of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. With regard to leadership and employee voice, this expectation is based on research that

shows that the various generational cohorts have diverse work values and attitudes (Costanza et al., 2012) because of dissimilar societal influences and factors that give meaning to each cohort and form their opinions on exchange relationships (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). As both leadership and employee voice are considered through the lens of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), it is assumed that individuals of different ages and from different age groups may experience leadership and voice differently. Other research findings confirm that increased workplace diversity such as age influences organisational voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Aspects such as age have been found to influence employees' propensity to engage in voice behaviour or to refrain from it (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Schloegel et al. (2018) state that age pigeonholing may hinder trust, communication and knowledge exchange and coordination; hence, all elements relating to voice behaviour.

Research suggests that older employees regard voice as more valuable than younger employees (Ali Arain et al., 2018; Palumbo et al., 2009). In addition, it was theorised that individuals of diverse ages or from diverse generational cohorts may experience organisational culture differently. This was based on research findings that suggest that the various generational cohorts hold diverse expectations of their organisational culture, for instance Generation X and Y individuals want a flexible, family-supportive organisational culture to enable them to spend time with their families (Eversole et al., 2012).

It was expected that individuals of different ages and from different age cohorts would differ significantly in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust, based on South African research that suggests that different age groups experience employee engagement (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Hofmeyr & Marais, 2013) and organisational trust (Hofmeyr & Marais, 2013) in diverse ways. This is in line with research that postulates that generational cohorts form diverse work values and work attitudes (Costanza et al., 2012) which are shaped by unique societal influences and factors (e.g. norms and values) that create meaning for each cohort and that predict their understanding of exchange relationships (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). As employee engagement and organisational trust are explained from a social exchange theoretical perspective (Blau, 1964), it is assumed that age groups may experience employee engagement and organisational trust differently. In addition, De Lange et al. (2006) postulate that the various demands and resources (Schaufeli et al., 2002) associated with individuals' work roles predict emotional exhaustion in the different age groups. Nonetheless, scholars maintain that older workers are often more engaged (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; Hoole

& Bonnema, 2015). Baby Boomers are generally more engaged than Generation X and Y individuals (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Schloegel et al. (2018) also confirm that age stereotyping and bias hinder trust (Schloegel et al., 2018).

5.3.6.4 *Qualification level*

In addition, it was hypothesised that individuals with different qualifications would differ significantly in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was predicted because of research findings suggesting that educational level affects the way in which employees react to conflict and conflict management (Church, 1995). Moreover, differences in educational background and training give rise to various standpoints and thoughts in a workgroup, making it more difficult to determine how to proceed and potentially leading to task conflict (Jehn et al., 1999; Strasser, 1992). Furthermore, variances in educational background also increase the propensity for process conflict at work (Jehn et al., 1997; Pelled et al., 1999). Jehn et al. (1999) reason that group members with dissimilar backgrounds would rely on dissimilar work methods or on how best to approach a task (Jehn et al., 1999).

It was hypothesised that individuals with different qualifications would differ significantly in respect of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. More specifically, it was expected that different education levels would influence leadership. This is based on research that posits that education plays a significant role in leader outcomes and behaviour (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007; Echevarria et al., 2017). For example, Barbuto Jr et al. (2007) suggest that the level of education of followers significantly influences their perceptions of transactional versus transformational leadership behaviours. Also, leaders with advanced degrees show greater individualised consideration towards followers than leaders with lower educational levels (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007). In addition, it was predicted that individuals with different levels of qualification would experience organisational culture differently. This is based on the argument by the researcher that employees with more advanced qualifications and educational levels would be open and supportive to an innovative and learning organisational culture that also deliberates on resourceful conflict management initiatives. However, there seems to be a paucity of research that explores this relationship in general, as well as how it relates to the South African workplace. Furthermore, it was predicted that qualification levels would affect employee voice. This is based on the finding that better qualified employees experience voice initiatives better (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Additionally, according to the elaboration likelihood model of social persuasion, individuals would be persuaded by the credibility of a communicator to adhere to the

communication (Brinol & Petty, 2009). As employees with higher education levels are likely to be more credible and convincing, managers may be more easily persuaded to adhere to their suggested change (Burriss, 2012). This would in turn support the likelihood of using voice again.

It was hypothesised that individuals with different qualifications would differ significantly in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. In particular, in line with research findings (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011; Jackson & Rothmann, 2004), it was predicted that significant differences would exist in the way varying qualifications predict employee engagement. Although research findings differ on how qualification level influences engagement, they do concur on the fact that qualification influences the engagement levels of individuals.

In addition, it was hypothesised that organisational members with different qualifications would experience organisational trust differently. Researchers (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007) concur that a significant positive relationship exists between trust and trustworthiness. Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) postulate that trustworthiness is predicted by ability, benevolence and integrity. Correspondingly, Gillespie (2003) contends that the perceived ability of the other party significantly contributes to perceptions of trustworthiness. According to Mayer et al. (1995), ability can be defined as a blend of expertise, capabilities and features that enable a party to have influence within a particular field. Knowledge, as well as cognitive and emotional skills, all contribute to perceptions of competence (Heyns & Rothman, 2006). Hence the argument that educational level would significantly predict organisational trust.

5.3.6.5 *Job level*

It was hypothesised that individuals with different job levels would differ significantly in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This is based on previous research findings that suggest that status in organisational groups, for example being supervisors, subordinates or peers, affects individuals' conflict experiences (Rahim, 1983). For example, employees tend to be more obliging with their supervisors' while being more integrating and compromising with their peers and subordinates. Moreover, research indicates that a group's hierarchical position often determines its conflict dynamics, as teams at higher levels are more equipped to deal with conflict (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Greer, 2013). Employees at varying job levels respond in different ways to conflict situations and their management (Church, 1995).

Additionally, diverse status and power based on job level may result in feelings of inequality and unfairness (Muller, 1985).

In addition, it was assumed that individuals with different job levels would differ significantly in respect of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. In particular, it was expected that individuals at different job levels would experience leadership differently. Leaders at the different hierarchical levels of the organisation in terms of their functions and responsibilities (Zanda, 2018), with more senior leaders often influencing lower-level leadership (Mayer et al., 2009). Moreover, it was predicted that organisational members at different job levels would experience their organisational culture differently. This is based on previous research that suggests that leaders in the higher hierarchical structure of an organisation significantly influence the organisational culture through a trickle-down effect to lower-level supervisory leadership; thus, shaping and engraining the organisational culture (Zanda, 2018). A fragmented perspective on organisational culture (Martins, 1992, 2002) emphasises ambiguity rather than sharing; thus, one may argue that organisational members at different job levels would not share the same experiences or attach the same meaning to that which organisations value, and therefore to their organisational culture. In addition, it was expected that individuals at different job levels would experience employee voice differently. According to Kahn (1992), individuals in central, powerful roles have a bigger voice than their junior and thus less powerful counterparts.

It was hypothesised that individuals on different job levels would differ significantly in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. The hypothesis specific to employee engagement is based on research that indicates that the type and complexity of work that organisational members do influences their engagement experiences (Bakker, 2017), implying that lower job levels may be less engaged than higher level, more complex jobs. According to Kular et al. (2008), individuals occupying higher job levels (e.g. senior executives) are the most engaged, with hourly workers being the least engaged. In addition, Kahn (1990) indicates that employees on lower job levels that have lower status often experience insecurity, leading to lower engagement levels (Kahn, 1990). In addition, it was expected that organisational members at differing job levels would experience organisational trust in different ways. This is based on research by Gilbert and Tang (1998), who maintain that job status is positively related to group cohesion, which again relates significantly positively to organisational trust.

5.3.6.6 *Income level*

It was hypothesised that individuals on different income levels would differ significantly in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Income levels and compensation issues regularly result in organisational conflict, as an organisation's compensation system directly affects employees' behaviour, satisfaction levels and feelings of justice (Spaho, 2013). Gelfand et al. (2007) postulate that people of different cultures (e.g. based on race or ethnicity) would hold different distributive justice perceptions on income and reward (including non-monetary rewards). Furthermore, discriminatory income levels are prevalent for women (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999). Research shows that perceptions of injustice may lead to conflict (Gelfand et al., 2007). For example, research suggests that status conflict is linked to distributive justice components (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). South Africa rates as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Benjamin, 2016; Borat et al., 2014; World Bank, 2015, 2017c) and struggles with huge racial, income and gender inequalities (Department of Labour, 2016a), leading to various conflict situations (Rust, 2017). As such, it was predicted that South African individuals with different income levels would differ in how they manage and perceive conflict.

It was hypothesised that individuals with different income levels would differ significantly in respect of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. Moreover, it was expected that individuals with different income levels would differ in the way they experience leadership. This is based on the research finding of Ali et al. (2018) that four leadership orientations exist in Africa, of which the one comprises leaders who are motivated by leadership rewards such as wealth and job security. In fact, these scholars found that material rewards have a significant influence on how leaders behave (Ali et al., 2018). In addition, it was expected that individuals with different income levels would differ in how they experience organisational culture. This is based on research findings that explain how reward may be used to foster a specific type of culture. For example, research stipulates that fair and sensibly assembled reward schemes (Peterson, 1992) assist in modelling a cooperative organisational culture. This is in line with research by Chatman and Barsade (1995), who argue that individualistic behaviours may be transformed to behaviour that is more cooperative, should these individuals be rewarded based on their cooperation. In addition, it was expected that individuals with different income levels would differ in their voice behaviour. This is based on the argument by Detert and Burris (2007) that managers who want to pursue an organisational culture of openness would support voice

behaviour by rewarding it. It is thus argued that employees who have higher income levels would use voice more often.

It was hypothesised that individuals with different income levels would differ significantly in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. According to scholars (Crawford et al., 2010; Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001), suitable and fair recognition and reward systems contribute to employee engagement levels. As such, it was predicted that different income levels would contribute to different engagement levels. In addition, it was hypothesised that individuals with different income levels would experience organisational trust differently. This was based on research findings that postulate that perceptions of distributive injustice negatively influence trust levels in organisations (Katou, 2013). This is further complicated by research that proposes that people of different cultures have different perceptions of distributive justice regarding, for instance, income and reward (also non-monetary) (Gelfand et al., 2007).

5.3.6.7 *Tenure*

It was hypothesised that individuals who have been with the organisation for different periods of time (tenure) would differ significantly in respect of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This is based on research (Jehn et al., 1999) that shows that variance in work experience increases the possibility of differing viewpoints and ideas within a workgroup, which may result in task or process conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). Moreover, Pelled (1996) maintains that a significant and stronger positive relationship exists between relational conflict and race, gender, age and tenure diversity, than with aspects such as qualification or job level (Pelled et al, 1999). Nonetheless, research shows that the longer employees' tenure, the less relational conflict that would result (Ismail et al., 2012).

It was hypothesised that individuals who have been with the organisation for different periods of time (tenure) would differ significantly in respect of the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice. More specifically, it was expected that different tenure would influence leadership aspects as research confirms that diverse levels of experience result in different leader outcomes and behaviour (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007; Echevarria et al., 2017). For example, inexperienced employees react more strongly to leadership behaviour and work difficulties than their more experienced counterparts (Johnston et al., 1989). Also, leaders who have been with their organisations for a longer period of time may experience higher trust levels

from their followers (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). Moreover, research shows that over time, women are accepted in leadership roles (Meister et al., 2017).

In addition, it was proposed that individuals with different tenure would experience organisational culture in diverse ways. This is based on the argument by scholars (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; O'Reilly et al., 1991) that with longer tenure, a greater person–organisation fit is established between individual organisational members' values and their organisational culture. It was also hypothesised that different levels of tenure would significantly change the way employees experience voice. For instance, research indicates that the longer employees remain with an employer, the less positive they experience voice behaviour (Avery et al., 2011). Based on this finding, it is predicted that the effect of voice behaviour would be meaningfully more distinctive for individuals who have been with organisations for a shorter period than for individuals who have been there for longer.

It was hypothesised that individuals who have been with the organisation for different periods of time (tenure) would react significantly differently in respect of the mediating psychosocial process variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. More specifically, it was expected that tenure would influence individuals' level of engagement, as research suggests that the longer an employee remains with an organisation the less engaged they become (Robinson et al., 2004). Kahn (1990) explains that the length of service (thus both newly appointed and very experienced employees) often results in significantly lower levels of engagement because employees feel threatened by either the lack of, or the presence of, experience. According to Kahn (1990), this is particularly true for new and lower-status employees. Additionally, it was proposed that employees with diverse lengths of service would differ significantly regarding their experiences of organisational trust. This assumption is based on previous research findings (Gilbert & Tang, 1998) that indicate that length of service has one of two effects on organisational trust. Either employees who have been with an organisation for a long period of time feel trapped, impacting negatively on organisational trust; or they have an increased sense of loyalty towards the organisation. Nevertheless, tenure and status positively relate to group cohesion, which in turn is positively related to organisational trust (Gilbert & Tang, 1998).

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The variables of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, and the relationship dynamics between these constructs, give the impression

of having practical implications for the constructive and functional management of conflict in organisations. Figure 5.5 below gives an overview of the practical implications of the predicted conflict management framework. It illustrates the importance of acknowledging the influence of the macro, meso and micro environments on organisations and, specifically, in the employment relations context. In addition, it depicts the need for practical conflict management interventions on a strategic, functional and workplace level. It also illustrates how the constructs relevant to the research align with the practical objective of conflict management. It includes the conflict dimensions of conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms and group atmosphere in line with the seminal work of Jehn (1995, 1997), as the research also considered these dimensions and how they relate to the independent, mediating and dependent variables.

A discussion of the practical implications and recommendations follows (as illustrated in Figure 5.5) below, and is then summarised in Table 5.1.

5.4.1 Practical implications based on the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)

Scholars worldwide concur that conflict is endemic to daily organisational life (e.g. Hurt & Welbourne, 2018; Tanveer et al., 2018; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018); likewise, conflict is prevalent in South African organisations (Mayer et al., 2018). ER practitioners and scholars concede to the fact that employment relationships are characteristic of both conflict and cooperation (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Deutsch, 1990; García et al., 2017). Although it may be assumed that organisations realise the need for constructive conflict management in order to achieve success, it is evident that many South African-based and international workplaces do not succeed in this regard (Schwab, 2017).

Scholars (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001) recommend an integrated approach to conflict management. An integrated approach acknowledges the appearance of conflict, and considers its management from a strategic, functional and workplace level by considering ways to best incorporate conflict management strategies in organisational strategies, processes and procedures (e.g. Avgar, 2017, Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014). In addition, an integrated approach to conflict management acknowledges the roles played by various stakeholders (on an individual and organisational level), as well as the influence of macro, meso and micro-environmental challenges (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014). Considering phenomena across levels gives a more comprehensive and accurate portrayal of the issues under consideration (Dasborough et al., 2009).

An integrated conflict management approach implements various conflict management practices and processes that are aligned with the organisation's conflict management and general strategic orientation (Lipsky et al., 2017). Top management considers the key long-term strategies, choices and motivations to enable strategic decision-making on conflict management issues by all stakeholders (Kochan et al., 1986). This research argues that the implementation of a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) on the employment relationship is necessary to ensure the cooperation of all role players on an individual and organisational level. A cooperative conflict management strategy enhances organisational trust (Hempel et al., 2009) and research suggests that organisational trust in turn decreases conflict and increases a willingness to cooperate and collaborate, and thus leads to healthier workplace relations (Currie et al., 2017; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). External organisational challenges that

contribute to organisational conflict should be acknowledged, and where possible, managed. Accordingly, the organisational leadership should address the prevention of dysfunctional conflict, as well as how conflict should be resolved. Additionally, the role of top management, the organisational culture and management commitment should be reflected upon (Bingham et al., 2003). Moreover, leaders need to strategise on how to obtain the buy-in of employees through granting employee voice opportunities and employee engagement initiatives, as research shows that both voice and engagement positively influence conflict levels (Emmott, 2015).

Secondly, on the functional level, consideration should be given to how the different parties and role players engage with each other so that conflict management practices can be enabled and adopted, and strategic objectives attained (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). Examples include reflecting on how the organisation's culture and employee voice strategies influence the buy-in of employees and trade unions to an integrated conflict management approach. Diversity management issues must be deliberated (Joubert, 2017) to determine the health of diversity issues in organisations and how these aspects should be managed. Other aspects to consider include employees' voice behaviours (e.g. whether employees use voice or choose to remain silent) and instilling an organisational culture conducive to the management of conflict. Moreover, consideration should be given to employees sharing in decision-making practices regarding conflict management strategies, while initiatives and implementation strategies for employee engagement should be introduced (Emmott, 2015). Management should also study the levels of organisational trust in the organisation and their influence on the adoption and implementation of conflict management strategies. Some researchers (DeChurch & Marks, 2001; Maltarich et al., 2018; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018) support an approach where the different conflict types and conflict management approaches are considered together as it is argued that these aspects influence one another. Additionally, research that identifies and determines patterns of different types of conflict in groups is supported, as its holistic approach assists in pinpointing the specific educational and development needs of groups; and may influence what organisational members see as expected and appropriate conflict management processes and behaviours (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018; O'Neill et al., 2018).

At the workplace level, conflict may be experienced on a regular basis as it manifests between organisational members or groups. At this level it is thus necessary to consider conflict interventions on an organisational, team and individual level to ensure healthy workplace relationships (Avgar, 2017; De Beer, Tims, et al., 2016; Kochan et al., 1986). Likewise, channels

to provide employee voice opportunities must be created, and leadership and employee engagement initiatives should be introduced in order to create a conflict culture conducive to individuals and teams, thus ensuring that conflict is managed constructively (Emmott, 2015). Therefore, consideration should be given to the relationship between the antecedents and the mediating variables of this research, the type of conflict that manifests, and the interpersonal conflict management style employed to manage the conflict so that informed interventions can be planned. Scholars also suggest that psychologically aligning organisational members with the goals, vision and mission of the organisation is necessary to ensure that conflict is prevented (Currie et al., 2017). In addition, there is a need for interventions to build solid workplace relationships and social support at workplaces, thus enhancing employee engagement by confirming organisational members' workplace identities, dealing with unease and increasing organisational trust (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014). Moreover, supportive management and leadership behaviour (De Beer, Tims, et al., 2016; Saks 2006a) and diversity management initiatives (Joubert, 2017) are imperative. Workplace interventions should be well thought out to deal with all these aspects and to offer the necessary training and development opportunities.

Hence, this research addresses individual and organisational conflict management on the strategic, functional and workplace levels by considering the relationships between the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and the antecedent, moderating and mediating variables. Such an approach aligns with the three-tier (strategic, functional and workplace levels) framework suggested by the seminal work of Kochan and others (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). In line with the work of Avgar (2017) and Kochan et al. (1986), this approach acknowledges that a conflict management framework should take cognisance of the influence of the broader environment, and how conflict may manifest on multiple levels of an organisation. Furthermore, actions and decisions taken on the various levels affect one another, while conflict manifestations and management efforts may also affect the outcomes of organisational activity at different levels (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986).

Subsequently, should the various hypotheses on the relationship between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and the antecedent and mediating variables be supported, the current study will inform a framework for conflict management on a theoretical and empirical level that will expand on the dual concern and social exchange theories in the following ways:

- Current research on dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) focuses on how a concern for self and concern for others influence the choice of conflict management style. This research expands on this theory by considering whether leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, influence dual concern and choice of conflict management style.
- In addition, the research may expand social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between the antecedents, mediators and conflict management outcomes.
- Additionally, the research may shed light on whether there is a relationship between conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, thus expanding the dual concern theory in this regard. Considering the issues of conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution together in one study should inform a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange and dual concern.
- Lastly, the research broadens knowledge on how different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience dual concern theory and how it affects their choice of conflict management style.

The practical implications of the various antecedents in the research are discussed next.

5.4.2 Practical implications based on the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice

Leaders (line managers and top management) play a vital role in the successful management of conflict (Mayer et al., 2018). The way leaders behave, their leadership qualities and styles and how they apply these in different situations are key to the impact leaders have on the wellbeing of their organisations, their employees and teams, and their organisations or societies (Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017; Tuncdogan et al., 2017). Conflict management is a key leadership competency (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018) and includes the ability of leaders to adjust their conflict management style according to the situation (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Marquis & Huston, 1996; Rahim, 1983).

Employees feel powerless when there is a lack of leadership (Herbst et al., 2008) and this results in weakening employee engagement (Gupta et al., 2018; Wrape, 2015). However, effective leadership often leads to positive organisational behaviour and ensures an organisational culture

where the organisational values are integrated with employees' personal individual values (Slabbert et al., 2001). In addition, organisational trust is enhanced by strong ethical leaders who act with integrity (Chu et al., 2011; Krapfl & Kruja, 2015; Lawal & Oguntuashe, 2012). Also, strong leadership enhances employee engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014). In fact, leaders who enhance employee wellbeing by fostering a joint sense of belonging, inclusion, meaning, purpose, growth-mastery and flexibility-autonomy, create a sense of engagement and thriving at workplaces (Geiger, 2013). In line with Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, employees reciprocate such behaviour with productive, engaged work ethics. Thus, it is argued that leaders potentially influence workplace conflict management practices in a significantly positive and just way. To ensure such positive outcomes, conflict competencies such as communication skills and emotional intelligence should be developed (Bankole, 2010).

Research points to a positive relationship between leadership styles, conflict type and interpersonal conflict handling styles (Tanveer et al., 2018). Research findings suggest that leadership style is specifically related to relationship conflict (Tanveer et al., 2018) and influences the choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles that are applied (Rahim, 2002; Tanveer et al., 2018). According to Hendel et al. (2005), the organisation's leadership influences the tone of conflict management for the whole organisation; therefore, leaders should set an example by varying their choice of conflict handling style according to the situation.

Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that leadership behaviour in conflict management situations is a critical driver of an organisational conflict culture, as leaders influence the conflict styles of other organisational members, eventually leading to the formation of a specific conflict culture in an organisation. For instance, when leaders avoid conflict, followers are frustrated because of the inherent uncertainty it creates (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and because it indicates low concern for them (De Dreu et al., 2001). When conflict situations are avoided, it also holds the danger that some parties may remain oblivious of the conflict occurrence. Hence, although leaders may perceive all to be well, followers may experience conflict that the leader does not even notice – perceptions of the leader's conflict avoidance style may thus differ significantly from what is perceived by followers (Yang & Li, 2018). Clearly, leadership significantly influences individuals and organisations regarding conflict management. Therefore, interventions should be designed to enable the development of leaders. Such interventions should take cognisance of the situation, the choice of leadership style and conflict management style, as well as the type of conflict that leaders need to deal with.

In addition, scholars argue that the combination of transformational leadership and organisational conflict management increases organisational trust (Chu et al., 2011), as do leaders who are perceived to act with integrity (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). Empowering leadership behaviours (e.g. through participative decision-making) increase employee voice behaviour (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). Indeed, leadership is considered a vital antecedent of voice behaviour (Ali Arain et al., 2018). This is important as research findings confirm that when employees do not participate in resolving conflict, they often perceive its resolution as unjust (Mestry & Bosch, 2013). Moreover, leadership is key to a positive and strong organisational culture (Warrick, 2017), which again positively influences the relationship between supervisors and their subordinates (Gupta et al., 2018). Transformational leaders enhance employee engagement (Caniëls et al., 2018). In fact, scholars argue that a transformational leadership style inspires employees to pursue cooperative team and organisational goals and increase organisational commitment (Billikopf, 2010; Bono & Judge, 2004; Lord et al., 2017). Transformational leadership thus contributes significantly to performance and assists in increasing a cooperative conflict management approach (Zhang et al., 2011). This leads to conflict being openly and constructively discussed with various role players, as conflict is regarded as a mutual problem to be resolved (Tjosvold, 2008).

It is evident that leadership style, competencies and traits affect the way conflict is managed. Leading others involves creating a work environment and organisational culture where followers feel free to display innovative and creative behaviour, voice any disparities and disagreements, are accountable for and admit mistakes, and engage in potentially conflictual discussions (Binyamin et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990). Subsequently, organisational interventions should develop emotional intelligence, personal abilities such as self-awareness, confidence and conscientiousness, and social competencies such as empathy and communication skills – these competencies assist in effective conflict management (Goleman, 1995). This will also equip leaders with the skills to exercise their formal authority as and when needed, so that organisational objectives can be achieved and not be hampered by unresolved conflict (Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2017). Additionally, leaders should focus on task execution by giving the necessary structure and leadership and by facilitating team interaction (Stogdill & Shartle, 1948), as these aspects are shown to relate to lesser conflict manifestations (Burke, 2006).

To conclude, this research argues that in order for a conflict management framework to succeed, strong and ethical leadership on an organisational and dyadic level is imperative. Leadership

contributes significantly to a positive organisational culture, and specifically a conflict culture in organisations (e.g. Gelfand et al., 2012), the enhancement of employee voice (e.g. Binyamin et al., 2017), employee engagement (e.g. Caniëls et al., 2018; Saks, 2006a) and organisational trust (e.g. Boxall, 2016, Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017).

Should the hypothesis on the relationship between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and leadership be supported, the current study will contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership and conflict management:

- Firstly, the research may point to the role leadership plays in relation to the antecedents of organisational culture and employee voice.
- Secondly, it considers the mediating effect of employee engagement and organisational trust between leadership and conflict management.
- Specifically, the research reflects on the role of leadership as a predictor of the way conflict is managed, contributing to a theoretically and empirically based framework for conflict management within organisations.
- It may also shed light on how leadership informs dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976). This research expands on dual concern theory by considering whether leadership, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, predicts the choice of concern and, thus, the choice of conflict management style.
- The research informs social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between leadership, the mediators and conflict management outcomes.
- Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberates the way in which leadership predicts conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange.
- Lastly, the research broadens knowledge on how different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience leadership through the lens of dual concern and social exchange theories and how this influences their choice of conflict management style and other conflict-related aspects of conflict types, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution.

The practical implications of organisational culture as a predictor of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are discussed next.

An organisational culture potentially affects conflict levels in organisations – either in assisting with the management of conflict or, more negatively, by contributing to conflict levels. For instance, research proposes that an organisational culture that focuses on organisational trust and performance, safeguards organisations against stereotyping (Schloegel et al., 2018). Subsequently, it is argued that organisational culture potentially influences the way conflict is managed in an organisation.

An organisational culture reflects the organisational context, as well as the larger external culture within which it functions (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). According to Ehrhart et al. (2014), the environmental influences help explain individual behaviour. Moreover, according to Chatman and Barsade (1995), the inclination of organisational members to cooperate depends on the individual, as well as the situation. Therefore, organisations should consider the effect of cultural and ethnic diversity on management practices (Martins & Martins, 2015) and, one may argue, conflict management practices. Scholars concur that cross-cultural conflict naturally occurs in multicultural contexts (Du Plessis, 2012; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018), and that employees will differ with respect to their conflict tolerance levels, or how mistakes are viewed (Yeh & Xu, 2010b).

Thus, different cultural viewpoints held by organisational members potentially influence the way in which conflict is approached (Yeh & Xu, 2010b); hence the argument that a creative and innovative approach is necessary in constructing a conflict management framework for diverse South African organisations. Nonetheless, an organisational culture is not stagnant, nor is the broader culture within which it functions. Krapfl and Kruja (2015) caution that should organisations focus mainly inward or solely on individual departments, thus ignoring the bigger external and internal picture, conflict may result as no common goal is prevalent in the organisation. In other words, a culture of stakeholder inclusivity is needed to ensure that the valid needs, wellbeing and expectations of all stakeholders are considered (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016). Moreover, conflict may result because of external environmental changes that potentially lead to paradoxes in what organisational members believe to be true for their organisation (Hofstede et al., 1990). Likewise, should the organisational culture be in conflict with the organisational strategy or direction, conflict may result (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010; Sales, 2006). Thus, organisations need to create a conflict culture that is conducive to constructive conflict management (Gelfand et al., 2012) and that also considers the above concerns.

Chatman (1991) postulates that values determine whether there is an employee–organisation fit between the organisation and the individual, as no fit is possible should values not be shared.

Because conflict may flow from differences in values, conflict may result (O'Neill & McLarnon, 2018). In addition, the organisational values that are reflected in the organisational philosophy guide conflict management processes and should be continuously reviewed (Mayer & Louw, 2009, 2011).

An organisational culture that generates a positive environment in which employees can function productively may lead to greater labour–management cooperation (Imoisili, 2006). Such a positive organisational culture is shaped in part through the development of human and social capital (Ellinger et al., 2013; Imoisili, 2011). Additionally, organisational members need to hold perceptions of fair and just organisational behaviour (Venter et al., 2014), as it may be argued that conflict will result from organisational perceptions of injustice. Organisations should also consider additional workplace and management factors, practices and processes (e.g. voice behaviour, leadership and trust, and generally enhancing the way organisations deal with the challenges they face) in order to maintain an organisational culture conducive to organisational success (see for instance Fenlon, 1997; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2003; Mestry & Bosch, 2013; Siira, 2012). Teamwork and performance should be boosted (Sales, 2006). Additionally, a more humane approach is advocated in the management of organisations and entrenched in the organisational culture (Bagraim, 2001; Bankole, 2010; Katz & Flynn, 2013). Organisations that succeed in creating a culture of employee engagement are generally successful organisations (Wiley, 2010)

According to Mishra and Denison (1995), changes to the organisational culture and subcultures (e.g. the conflict subculture) may result in conflict and unpredictable behaviour if not introduced effectively. However, organisations benefit from the promotion of specific cultures (Zhao et al., 2018). Therefore, it is argued that having a positive conflict culture in an organisation may contribute to organisational performance because of the way conflict is managed. Subsequently, it is argued that the organisational culture potentially influences the way conflict manifests and is managed in the organisation. Because an organisational culture results in person–organisation fit by creating shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991), it may direct the accepted conflict management behaviour by setting an acceptable and functional conflict culture. For this to happen, openness and collaboration norms are important (Gelfand et al., 2012). If possible, a conflict culture should accept conflict and strive to resolve it amicably (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). The conflict culture should be integrated with the organisational culture and strategic objectives. Employee voice should be part of this culture to enable employees to

have meaningful discussions about conflict situations and other aspects that may potentially give rise to conflict (Gupta et al., 2018; Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Chatman and O'Reilly (2016) explain that an organisational culture suggests the accepted and appropriate attitudes and behaviours for specific situations. When these suggested norms and behaviours are not adhered to, individuals may be excluded from a group (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

Individuals and organisations are thus guided by the general and suitable norms and values that give each organisation its unique culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016), and more specifically, its conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). Scholars maintain that conflict as a subculture forms an essential part of the overall organisational culture (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Furthermore, research shows that apart from a general organisational culture, individuals, teams, departments and organisations generally develop unique conflict handling styles (e.g. integrating, avoiding and the like) which are significantly shaped by the organisational leaders' conflict management styles (Gelfand et al., 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). As such, scholars emphasise the importance of management development programmes that assist managers in reflecting on the organisational culture and the development of positive conflict management practices linked to the organisational identity and values (Mayer & Louw, 2011).

The discussion above indicates that organisational culture potentially plays a pivotal role in an integrated conflict management framework. Therefore, should the prediction on the relationship between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and organisational culture be realised, the following will hold:

- The research will add scholarly and practical knowledge to the topic of organisational culture and conflict management.
- The research may point to the role of organisational culture in relation to the antecedents of leadership and employee voice.
- The results will shed light on the mediating effect of employee engagement and organisational trust on the relationship dynamics between organisational culture and conflict management.
- Specifically, the research reflects on the role of leadership as a predictor of how conflict is managed, contributing to a theoretically and empirically based framework for conflict management within organisations.
- It may also shed light on how organisational culture informs dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976). This research

expands on dual concern theory by considering whether organisational culture, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, predicts the choice of concern and, thus, the choice of conflict management style.

- The research informs social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between organisational culture, the mediators and conflict management outcomes.
- Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberates on how organisational culture predicts conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange.
- Lastly, the research broadens knowledge on the way in which different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience organisational culture through the lens of the dual concern and social exchange theories and how it influences their choice of conflict management style and other conflict-related aspects of conflict types, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution.

As such, the findings will contribute to a theoretically and empirically based framework for conflict management within organisations. The practical implications of employee voice, as an antecedent of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), are discussed next.

Today's business world requires organisations to respond to challenges with innovation and rapid reactions. Scholars argue that employee voice may contribute to the achievement of this aim (Farh & Chen, 2018; Liu et al., 2010). Voice offers employees opportunities to participate in organisational decision-making, and apart from other potential benefits this may hold, it also assists in managing the inherent conflicts of interest that exist between employees and employers (García et al., 2017). Additionally, employee voice often results in employees buying into decisions (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). Moreover, the general decline in union membership necessitates the formation of other voice opportunities in workplaces (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; McCloskey & McDonnell, 2018).

Morrison and Milliken (2000) argue that organisations that hold a unitarist viewpoint on ER would view opposing standpoints between the different role players in a negative light (Fox, 1966), resulting in employee silence. However, as a pluralistic viewpoint accepts and welcomes different perspectives (Fox, 1966), employee voice will be enhanced, as well as the quality of decisions and, hence, organisational performance (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Subsequently, the

importance of meaningful employee voice in organisations is highlighted (Heery, 2016; Hickland, 2017).

However, Morrison (2014) explains that employee silence dominates employee voice, as employees do not automatically share their thoughts or trepidations. According to scholars (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2003), employees carefully calculate the cost–benefit risk of voice before engaging in it, as it may lead to interpersonal conflict, or negative feedback, or being labelled a troublemaker (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014). Isiaka et al. (2016) advance that cooperative relationships only exist when trust is evident, thus promoting open communication (including employee voice) in organisations. Furthermore, employee voice increases perceptions of fairness (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018), thus leading to higher trust in management (Colquitt et al., 2001). In fact, employee voice will only happen when trust is prevalent in organisations, partly based on voice being consistently applied and ingrained in the organisational culture (Isiaka et al., 2016).

Whereas employee silence is related to disengagement and anxiety among employees, voice relates to winners, constructive behaviour, engagement and positive organisational contributions (Morrison, 2014). Even though leaders play a vital role in the outcome of employee voice, leaders are often oblivious of employee silence, an aspect linked to leaders finding voice potentially negative or threatening (Detert & Burris, 2016). As voice is potentially seen as challenging behaviour, it may lead to conflict (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), creating strain and discomfort in relationships (Liu et al., 2010); it may also subsequently weaken team or organisational effectiveness (Mackenzie et al., 2011). Nonetheless, one reason for employees to engage in voice behaviour is the hope of instigating change regarding unwelcome workplace dynamics (Hirschman, 1970). Subsequently, by voicing their concerns and offering alternatives (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2014), employees hope to improve task completion (Farh & Chen, 2018). In fact, employees will only express themselves through voice behaviour should they feel that is safe to do so, and that it may potentially result in change. Hence, one may conclude that encouraging employee voice in organisations necessitates a conducive organisational culture and strong leadership (Gupta et al., 2018; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Enhanced employee engagement results from employees who perceive that they can voice their opinions, and feeling valued and involved (Rees et al., 2013; Ruck et al., 2017). Relatedly, voice reduces emotional exhaustion that may lead to burnout among employees (Conway et al., 2016). Another factor to

consider is the role diversity plays in voice behaviour. However, there is a paucity of research explaining the effect of diversity on voice behaviour (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018).

These aspects are important, as Friedman et al. (2000) propose that when employees participate in cooperative behaviours (such as employee voice), their feelings regarding the workplace are more positive and they are more likely to be satisfied and collaborative in general. One may thus conclude that increased levels of trust and cooperation through, say, giving employees greater voice, may lead to better conflict management. Moreover, employee voice helps in the successful resolution of disputes, while simultaneously resulting in lower turnover intentions (Van Gramberg et al., 2017).

Lipsky and Avgar (2010) advise an integrated conflict management system that will assist in empowering employees by, for instance, granting employees voice to deliberate individual and collective concerns and suggestions by speaking up (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). In addition, Lipsky and Avgar (2010) suggest an integrated approach that supports diversity through an inclusive organisational culture that addresses any conflict constructively. Such an integrated approach has various facets (e.g. mediation, adjudication, coaching, negotiations, and problem-solving techniques) (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Should conflict occur, it should be resolved constructively and quickly at the lowest possible level. In addition, the causes of conflict should be addressed and not just the symptoms (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Conflict can be managed within a culture that promotes a safe environment in which all can voice their concerns or disputes without fear (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Such a conflict culture should emphasise discussion, communication and participation in problem-solving (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001) through strong leadership and employee voice.

From the above discussion on employee voice behaviour, it is deduced that such behaviour has the potential to considerably influence an integrated conflict management framework. Therefore, should the prediction on the relationship between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and employee voice be proven, the following will hold:

- This research will add scholarly and practical knowledge to the topic of employee voice and conflict management.
- The research may point to the role of employee voice in relation to the antecedents of leadership and organisational culture.

- The results will shed light on the mediating effect of employee engagement and organisational trust on the relationship dynamics between employee voice and conflict management.
- Further, the research reflects on the role of employee voice as an antecedent to conflict management.
- It may also shed light on how employee voice informs dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976). This research expands on dual concern theory by considering whether employee voice, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, predicts the choice of concern and, thus, the choice of conflict management style.
- The research informs social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between employee voice, the mediators and conflict management outcomes.
- Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberates the way employee voice predicts conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange.
- Lastly, the research broadens knowledge on the way in which different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience employee voice through the lens of dual concern and social exchange theories and how it influences their choice of conflict management style and other conflict-related aspects of conflict types, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution.

As such, the findings will contribute to a theoretically and empirically based framework for conflict management within organisations. Clearly, leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are imperative for the successful functioning of organisations, and more specifically, for consideration in an integrated conflict management framework for South African-based organisations. The practical implications of employee engagement and organisational trust are discussed next.

5.4.3 Practical implications based on the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust

Scholars (Hendel et al., 2005) assert that constructive conflict management is only possible under strong leadership in conflict-positive organisations. This notion relates to positive psychology and the way such a philosophy may influence an organisation's approach and orientation to conflict

management (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018). Maintaining a positive psychological philosophy in organisations generates workplace meaning, as employees gain value from their work experiences, and subsequently feel energised and engaged (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). In fact, the presence or absence of employee engagement is a highly effective process of assessing employees' attitudes towards their jobs (Mackay et al., 2017). Kular et al. (2008) maintain that high-engagement workplaces have leaders who ensure safe, trusting organisational cultures within which employees are willing to engage in voice behaviour.

A paucity of extant literature is evident on the topic of conflict management and employee engagement. Nonetheless, scholars agree that a significantly positive relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture (Emmott, 2015). According to Currie et al. (2017), conflict may be prevented by, for instance, psychologically aligning employees with their organisation's goals, vision and mission. In view of the fact that workplace conflict hinders these objectives (Purcell, 2014), this research argues that employee engagement initiatives may be one way of ensuring psychological alignment between employees and their organisation's goals, vision and mission, thus contributing to effective conflict management.

Research suggests that less conflict is prevalent when there is higher employee engagement in organisations, although some conflict still remains (Soieib et al., 2013). As collegial relationships significantly influence employee engagement (Anitha, 2014), it is argued that relational conflict may potentially have a negative relationship with employee engagement. For instance, research shows that relationship conflict is regarded as extremely negative in a collectivist society (such as South Africa), with the potential to manifest in burnout (Shaukat et al., 2017) and emotional exhaustion (Bear et al., 2014). On the other hand, healthy relationships and social support at workplaces increase employee engagement because employees' workplace identities are affirmed, anxieties eased and organisational trust strengthened (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014), while meaningfulness is augmented (Locke & Taylor, 1990). Hence, engagement is improved (Kahn, 1990).

According to Jungst and Blumberg (2016), little is known about how conflict influences psychological work outcomes such as engagement. Their research suggests that task conflict is negatively associated with work engagement because unpleasant conflict-ridden environments hinder engagement. In fact, task conflict unsettles workplace norms and escalates frustrations (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Kahn (1990) proposes that employees are quicker to disengage

from potential conflict situations with superiors than they are to withdraw from conflict with their peers. In contrast, employee engagement is augmented when employees work in highly creative jobs that result from high quality LMX relationships (Breevaart et al., 2015). Strong, stable relationships between organisational members of all levels assist in interpersonal work conflict being resolved, and enable a sense of belonging that enhances trust and engagement (Consiglio et al., 2016).

Furthermore, research shows that positive individual engagement experiences may lead to positive and noticeable gain spirals for individuals and groups (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). Therefore, it is argued in the current research that engagement in a conflict management framework is vital, as engaged employees may counteract the negative effects of conflict manifestation in organisations through the positive emotions and energy related to engagement. Nevertheless, the crossover effect may also negatively influence a conflict spiral when negative emotions persevere and conflict is not positively dealt with (Baron, 1984).

Engagement is thus dependent on effective interpersonal processes such as conflict management (Costa et al., 2017; Marks et al., 2001). Effective processes are regarded as the prevention, control or resolution of team conflict (Marks et al., 2001). Additionally, to ensure engagement, team members' emotions have to be regulated to ensure positive team outcomes and lesser relationship conflict (Curşeu et al., 2012).

Although it is evident that employee engagement plays a potentially vital role in the management of conflict, a paucity of research is evident on the relationship dynamics of employee engagement as a psychosocial process mediator in a conflict management framework, or in the combination of constructs of the current research. It is deduced that employee engagement has the potential to considerably influence an integrated conflict management framework. Therefore, should the prediction on the relationship between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and employee engagement be met, the following will hold:

- This research will add scholarly and practical knowledge to the topic of employee engagement and conflict management.
- The research will indicate the mediating role of employee engagement in relation to the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- It may also shed light on how employee engagement informs dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976). This research

expands on dual concern theory by considering whether employee engagement mediates the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and whether such mediation will influence conflict types and the choice of concern and, thus, the choice of conflict management style.

- The research informs social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between the antecedents, the mediator of employee engagement and conflict management outcomes.
- Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberates on the way in which employee engagement mediates the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange.
- Lastly, the research broadens knowledge on the way in which different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience employee engagement through the lens of dual concern and social exchange theories and how it influences the outcome of conflict management.

Consequently, the current research may contribute significantly by increasing the body of knowledge on the relationship dynamics between employee engagement and conflict management. The mediating psychological process variable of organisational trust is discussed next.

Whereas conflict destabilises trust (Nešić & Lalić, 2016), high levels of trust reduce conflict (Zaheer et al., 1998). Although the importance of trust in conflict situations is evident (Gounaris et al., 2016; Guenter et al., 2016), maintaining trust in conflict situations is not easy (Belkin & Rothman, 2017). Once trust is lost, it is not easily rebuilt (Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017). Trust is vital for any conflict management scenario, as trustworthy relationships enhance collaboration (Jensen, 2003) and cooperation (Schoorman et al., 2007). Trust is regarded as the driving force necessary to increase harmony and have mutually acceptable outcomes (Du et al., 2011; Pruitt, 1983).

According to Hempel et al. (2009), trust is further enhanced when a cooperative conflict management strategy is in place that focuses on conflict resolution strategies that benefit all role players. Trust is further heightened by considering interpersonal conflict handling styles which are integrating, accommodating and compromising (Ndubisi, 2011). Similarly, other research

suggests that combining accommodating and integrating conflict-handling styles contributes to higher trust levels (Gounaris et al., 2016). When employees have significant levels of trust, they are willing to compromise in conflict situations (Prati & Prati, 2014). Nonetheless, scholars confirm that relatively few conflict-related research studies have considered trust as a mediator (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 2008).

Regarding conflict types, research suggests that task, relationship and process conflict are reliably negatively related to trust (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Another study found that trust partially mediates the influence of task conflict on performance and fully mediates the effect of relationship conflict on performance (Rispen et al., 2007). Similarly, when groups share high levels of trust, they are willing to express different viewpoints, as they do not fear misunderstandings and relational-type conflict (Porter & Lilly, 1996). The research by Porter and Lily (1996) suggests that organisational trust is negatively related to task conflict.

Clearly, organisational trust is regarded as vital to good workplace relationships and successful collective actions, as well as managing workplace discipline (e.g. Anstey, 2014) and conflict resolution (Lucy & Broughton, 2011). Nonetheless, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argue that more research at the organisational trust level is necessary to explore possible antecedents, specifically also on the relationship between organisational trust and conflict within organisations. Additionally, to the knowledge of the researcher, no research exists on the mediating role of organisational trust in an integrated conflict management framework.

Although it is evident that organisational trust plays a potentially vital role in the management of conflict, a paucity of research is evident on the relationship dynamics of organisational trust as a psychosocial process mediator in a conflict management framework, or in the combination of constructs of the current research. It is deduced that organisational trust has the potential to considerably influence an integrated conflict management framework. Therefore, should the predictions on the relationship between conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and organisational trust be met, the following will hold:

- The research will add scholarly and practical knowledge to the topic of organisational trust and conflict management.
- The research will indicate the mediating role of organisational trust in relation to the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

- It may also shed light on how organisational trust informs dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976). This research expands on dual concern theory by considering whether organisational trust mediates the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and whether such mediation will influence conflict types and the choice of concern and, thus, the choice of conflict management style.
- The research informs social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between the antecedents, the mediator of organisational trust and conflict management outcomes.
- Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberates on the way in which organisational trust mediates the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange.
- Lastly, the research broadens knowledge on the way in which different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience organisational trust through the lens of the dual concern and social exchange theories and how it influences the outcome of conflict management.

The practical implications of an increase in knowledge on the moderating effect of socio-demographics are discussed next.

5.4.4 Practical implications based on the moderating variables

Hurt and Welbourne (2018) explain that conflict may result from diverse perspectives offered by organisational members from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds. The African continent with its rich diversity of ethnicities, cultures and languages thus lends itself to potential conflict (Kets de Vries et al., 2016). Conflict increases in workplaces with high diversity (Nash & Hann, 2017), partly because subgroups form based on similarities or shared characteristics such as age, or race (Adair et al., 2017). Furthermore, macro-environmental influences affect the way different groups view themselves and others (Urlick et al., 2016). In addition, globalisation increases cultural diversity (Godiwalla, 2016). Scholars (Budd et al, 2017; Stura & Johnston, 2018; Tanveer et al., 2018) argue that conflict between organisational members is often based on the complex by-product of their past, of differing cultures, accumulated experiences and particular interactions.

Brett (2018) explains that socialisation prepares individuals from childhood to express and respond to conflict in varying ways, based on their cultural ideologies and practices.

Consequently, significant conflict may be experienced in multicultural organisations. Although varying socio-demographic variables may influence conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles in diverse ways, all potentially result in conflict. Research suggests that effective diversity management in organisations decreases conflict between organisational members (Joubert, 2017). Diversity interventions are imperative as workgroup diversity may increase task-related conflict and influence relational conflict (Acar, 2010). Jehn (1999) cautions that the effectiveness of culturally diverse groups is dependent on how disagreements are managed.

Should the research hypothesis on the moderating effect of the socio-demographic variables of this research be supported, the research will inform social exchange theory and dual concern theory by determining the moderating influence of employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) on the relationship dynamics of relevance to this research.

5.4.5 Conclusion

It may be argued that the literature review in this study benefits academics as it expands on available research relating to the relationships among the various constructs of relevance to this research, thus increasing levels of understanding. Furthermore, the literature review provides ER practitioners and those in related disciplines with the knowledge to make decisions pertaining to managing conflict in organisations. Practitioners are advised to consider various interventions and aspects related to conflict management on the strategic, functional and workplace levels (Avgar, 2017). This may be done through leadership and employee voice initiatives, ensuring a positive organisational culture (including the subculture of conflict management), driving employee engagement and organisational trust by means of relevant interventions. Table 5.1 below summarises the practical implications and recommendations, as discussed in the previous sections, for conflict management practices and interventions on an organisational and individual level. It does this by stipulating interventions on the strategic, functional and workplace levels. It also recaps the implications for leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust.

Table 5.1
Practical Implications and Recommendations for Conflict Management Interventions

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
Strategic level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and incorporate conflict management strategies on the strategic, functional and workplace levels • Ensure stakeholder inclusivity • Consider macro, meso and micro-environmental challenges • Consider ER strategic direction (collaborative pluralism advised) • Reflect on strategic decision-making regarding conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider strategies to ensure psychological alignment of organisational members with the goals, vision and mission of the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate prevention of dysfunctional conflict • Consider conflict resolution strategies • Reflect on top, middle and supervisory leadership roles • Reflect on the organisational culture and conflict sub culture • Clarify social exchange – mutual expectations • Consider a philosophy of dual concern in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a general culture of openness norms, inclusivity, trust and care that is in line with organisational strategic direction and philosophy • Develop acceptable organisational and conflict norms and values to ensure employee–organisation fit • Consider the organisational strategic direction regarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider current status and strategic direction regarding employee voice, specifically regarding speaking out and speaking up • Consider strategic direction of voice opportunities and channels • Consider social exchange – mutual expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider employee engagement levels and strategic direction on this matter guided by the organisation • Evaluate social exchange – mutual expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider organisational trust levels and strategic direction on this matter by the organisation • Clarify social exchange – mutual expectations

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	<p>management aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure top management's commitment to conflict management strategy • Consider strategic direction of diversity management • Form a top level task team to strategically direct the management of conflict (including the management of violent conflict during industrial action) 		<p>managing conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ways of leading the direction to be taken to prevent and combat conflict (including violent industrial action) 	<p>tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture should be reflective of a social exchange philosophy, and give consideration to concern for self and others 			
Functional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote principle of social exchange in the way role players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage employee decision-making by promoting and utilising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a conflict management champion and office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate on current organisational culture and conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure employee buy-in by creating voice opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate employee engagement changes and enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate organisational trust levels and consider change and

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with each other Implement strategic conflict management objectives by enabling and adopting conflict management practices and procedures Implement the strategic decisions of the top management task team to manage conflict Form a specialised task team at operational level to deal with conflict prevention and management (including violent conflict during industrial action) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> voice opportunities Pinpoint educational and development needs Consider expected and appropriate conflict management processes and behaviours Ensure healthy workplace relations Ensure psychological alignment of organisational members with the goals, vision and mission of the organisation Consider implications and needs of diverse socio- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate leaders' conflict behaviours Determine health of diversity issues in organisations Implement diversity management practices and policies Safeguard against stereotyping Instil a conflict-conducive culture of dual concern Determine patterns of different conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles to ensure intelligent conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subculture to determine whether change interventions are necessary Instil conflict culture of tolerance, integrity, openness, diversity appreciation and trust based on a dual concern philosophy Promote stakeholder inclusivity through the organisational culture Promote organisational and conflict norms and values to ensure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> based on a social exchange philosophy Determine employee voice behaviour (voice versus silence) Consider ways of promoting a safe environment within which to voice concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interventions based on a social exchange philosophy Provide social support Clarify social exchange – mutual expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisational trust enhancement interventions based on mutual social exchange expectations

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement diversity management policies and practices • Incorporate conflict management strategies on the functional level • Ensure stakeholder inclusivity • Ensure compliance with ER strategic direction (collaborative pluralism advised) • Ensure and evaluate top management commitment to conflict management strategy 	<p>demographic groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider interventions to ensure employee-organisation fit 	<p>behaviour based on dual concern principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure healthy workplace relations • Consider conflict resolution practices (e.g. mediation, coaching, negotiations, problem-solving) • Train a specialised task team to deal with conflict (including violent conflict during industrial action) 	<p>employee-organisation fit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a positive and safe organisational environment 			

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategic direction of diversity management • Develop conflict interventions on an organisational, team and individual level • Develop interventions to promote emotional and conflict intelligence, and personal abilities conducive to conflict management 						
Workplace level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement conflict interventions on an organisational, team and individual level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement conflict interventions on a team and individual level • Consider individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the situation when applying leadership and conflict management style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement change interventions if necessary • Create shared meaning of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ways of ensuring employee buy-in to voice opportunities • Act on the valid needs, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce employee engagement interventions • Deal with unease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce organisational trust interventions • Deal with unease

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement interventions to develop emotional and conflict intelligence, personal abilities such as self-awareness, confidence and conscientiousness, and social competencies such as empathy and communication skills Apply diversity management initiatives Promote organisational culture Promote employee engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpersonal conflict handling styles Offer training and development initiatives Provide social support Confirm employees' workplace identities Deal with unease Acknowledge needs of diverse socio-demographic groups Acknowledge social exchange behaviour conducive to the organisation and employee wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide supportive leadership Develop conflict management competencies to create conflict intelligence Provide strong leadership Indicate concern for self and others Drive the organisational conflict culture Empower subordinates Facilitate team and task executions Resolve conflict quickly and constructively Foster high-quality leader-member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> values and norms Instil a conflict culture of tolerance, integrity, openness, diversity appreciation and trust based on a dual concern philosophy Promote stakeholder inclusivity through the organisational and conflict culture Promote organisational and conflict norms and values to ensure employee-organisation fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wellbeing and expectations of all stakeholders Negate pseudo voice Create voice channels to empower employees Honour the principles of social exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure employee wellbeing Instil a joint sense of belonging, inclusion, meaning, purpose, growth-mastery and flexibility-autonomy Create a culture of employee engagement, based on the principles of social exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure employee wellbeing Promote ethical leadership Ensure fair and just organisational behaviour Create a culture of organisational trust based on the principles of social exchange

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote organisational trust • Promote employee voice behaviour • Promote principle of social exchange in the way role players engage with each other • Implement strategic conflict management objectives by enabling and adopting conflict management practices and procedures • Implement diversity management policies and practices • Incorporate conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider individual perceptions and expectations, and incorporate handling of conflict in performance management systems • Give regular feedback • Implement interventions to ensure employee–organisation fit • Affirm individuals' workplace identities • Provide positive individual engagement experiences to ensure gain spirals with 	exchange relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a positive organisational environment • The organisational culture should advocate a humane approach • Create a culture of employee engagement and organisational trust based on the principles of social exchange • Enable a sense of belonging 			

Conflict management	Interventions at organisational level	Interventions at individual level	Implications for leadership	Implications for organisational culture	Implications for employee voice	Implications for employee engagement	Implications for organisational trust
	management strategies on the functional level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure stakeholder inclusivity • Ensure compliance with ER strategic direction (collaborative pluralism advised) • Implement strategic direction of diversity management • Implement conflict interventions on an organisational, team and individual level 	other employees					

5.5 EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS

This chapter provides an overview of the literature that supports the researcher in the construction of a theoretical hypothesised framework for conflict management in South African-based organisations. It is hoped that this research will add to the current understanding and knowledge on the linkage between the antecedents of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice; the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust; and the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). It is also hoped that knowledge of these relationships will make a significant contribution to the existing research on the antecedents of conflict management, and the mediating effect of employee engagement and organisational trust. Furthermore, it is hoped that the key elements of the final hypothesised framework for conflict management will assist ER (HR and IR) practitioners, industrial psychologists and organisational behaviour specialists to develop holistic interventions for conflict management on the strategic, functional and workplace levels.

Leadership (Binyamin et al., 2017; Tanveer et al., 2018), organisational culture (Gelfand et al., 2012), employee voice (García et al., 2017), as well as the psychological processes of employee engagement (Emmott, 2015) and organisational trust (Gounaris et al., 2016), each facilitate the management of conflict. Hence, it was hypothesised that the relationships between these constructs would lead to a holistic approach to constructive conflict management in South African-based organisations.

The research hypothesised that a significant relationship is present between leadership (perceptions of social exchange leadership and leader's conflict behaviour) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This hypothesis is based on evidence that leaders play a vital role in the management of workplace conflict (Mayer et al., 2018). According to Tanveer et al. (2018), a positive relationship exists between leadership style, conflict type (especially relationship conflict) and the leader's interpersonal conflict handling style.

Additionally, the research hypothesised that organisational culture (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) predicts conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This hypothesis is premised on findings that an organisational culture stimulates certain behaviours and cultivates a person–organisational fit because of shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991) – also an organisational culture may

cultivate specific subcultures (Zhao et al., 2018), such as a conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). Moreover, it was hypothesised that employee voice behaviour (speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) predicts conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), because employee participation assists organisations to deal with fast-paced organisational challenges (Farh & Chen, 2018; Liu et al., 2010). Research suggests that a participative process assists in managing conflicts of interest between employees and employers (García et al., 2017).

It was hoped that the knowledge arising from an understanding of the relationship dynamics between the variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice would inform conflict management practices in terms of organisational level strategies, practices and processes that lead to greater levels of functional conflict and conflict management. Furthermore, it was hoped that the knowledge gained from the research into the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict management would inform ER (HR and IR) practitioners, industrial psychologists and organisational behaviour specialists about the risks related to dysfunctional conflict and the negative impact it may have on organisational performance.

The chapter hypothesised that employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) meaningfully mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was based on findings that suggest that employee engagement contributes to lesser conflict (Soieb et al., 2013). Moreover, research (Costa et al., 2017; Marks et al., 2001) confirms that engagement levels are subjected to the way effective groups manage interpersonal processes such as preventing, controlling or resolving conflict. The hypothesis was furthermore based on the premise that low trust levels lead to team complications and hamper group interconnectedness (Jehn et al., 2008). However, relationships displaying trust, reduce conflict (Zaheer et al., 1998) and enhance collaboration and cooperation (Currie et al., 2017; Jensen, 2003; Schoorman et al., 2007). Although research indicates the importance of psychological processes in the workplace, Jungst and Blumberg (2016) point out that not enough is known about how conflict influences psychosocial work outcomes such as engagement and vice versa. In fact, there seems to be a paucity of research on the way in which psychosocial processes such as employee engagement and organisational trust may influence conflict and its management in organisations. Based on these findings, it was hoped that considering the

relationship dynamics together with employee engagement and organisational trust may enrich a well-rounded psychosocial conflict management framework.

Furthermore, the chapter hypothesised that an association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables. It was hoped that considering the relationship dynamics in such a way would increase the understanding and depth of the suggested conflict management framework. It was hoped that this knowledge would contribute to various strategies, practices and processes by ER (HR and IR) practitioners, industrial psychologists and organisational behaviour specialists to ensure the constructive management of conflict in organisations.

It was predicted in this chapter that the theoretically hypothesised framework would have a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework. Such a fit would be based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.

Based on the literature review, the chapter hypothesised that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) would significantly moderate the relationship between the independent variables, the mediating psychosocial process variables and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). It was hoped that the insights gained from the findings would inform current knowledge on the management of conflict.

Lastly, the research hypothesised that employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) would differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Increasing the

understanding on the way different socio-demographic groups experience leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and subsequently, conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) may benefit relevant scholars and practitioners in managing diverse groups of individuals in a harmonious and constructive fashion. It was hoped that the final conflict management framework developed would be used to put proactive measures and interventions in place to assist specific groups in their management of conflict.

It was anticipated that the relationship dynamics that were found between the variables would inform current theory in respect of the constructs of relevance to the research. It was expected that dual concern theory and social exchange theory would be advanced by understanding the way the antecedents and mediators affect the construction of a comprehensive, holistic conflict management framework. It was hoped that the research would contribute to dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) as regards managing conflict. Firstly, the research may inform dual concern theory by considering whether leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, influence dual concern decisions and choice of conflict management style. Secondly, the research may shed light on whether there is a relationship between conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, thus expanding dual concern theory in this regard. Thirdly, the research will inform scholars on how different socio-demographic groups (specific to the South African environment) experience the choice between concern for self and concern for others in their choice of conflict management style. Fourthly, investigating the issues of conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution together in one study should inform a conflict management strategy based on the principles of dual concern, while also expanding dual concern theory.

It was also hoped that the research would contribute to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Firstly, the research may expand social exchange theory by considering the relationship dynamics between the antecedents, mediators and conflict management outcomes. Considering how the various constructs of relevance to the research relate to each other will inform the theory of social exchange, specifically as it relates to conflict management. Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberates on the way the antecedents predict conflict management, and how employee engagement and organisational trust mediate the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group

atmosphere and conflict resolution, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange. Secondly, investigating the issues of conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict may significantly enhance social exchange theory, as a paucity of research regarding this matter seems evident. Lastly, the research would expand social exchange theory by highlighting how members from different socio-demographic groups respond to leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types, interpersonal conflict management styles) and other conflict-related aspects (conflict norms, group atmosphere and conflict resolution). In addition, it was trusted that the final hypothesised framework of conflict management would guide practical interventions related to the development of such a framework. At the time of the study, little seemed to have been done within an ER context in terms of an empirically tested conflict management framework worldwide, but also specifically for South African-based organisations. A gap in the research on conflict management within the South African context seemed evident. In addition, the relationship dynamics between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) seemed to have been under-researched in South Africa. Furthermore, a need to study the mediating effect of the psychosocial process constructs of employee engagement and organisational trust on the relationship dynamics between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice and conflict management was evident. The role of the socio-demographic variables of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme have also not been researched as moderators of the relationship between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within the South African ER context. Finally, the differences between the socio-demographic variables of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme in relation to the variables of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) have not been studied in the South Africa context, either jointly or in a single study.

The various overall interdependent theoretical relationship dynamics between the constructs relevant to the research enabled the researcher to construct a theoretical psychosocial conflict

management framework, as illustrated in Figure 5.3. Moreover, the practical implications of a conflict management framework were illustrated in Figure 5.5.

The chapter summary is presented next.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addressed research aims 1 to 3 of the literature review; namely, to conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study; to construct a theoretically integrated framework for conflict management based on the relationship dynamics among the constructs; and to outline the possible implications for practice and research.

Accordingly, literature research aims 1, 2, and 3 were achieved. The specific aims of the theoretical study were the following:

Literature research aim 1: To conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations.

Literature research aim 2: To construct a theoretically integrated framework on conflict management based on the relationship dynamics among the constructs.

Literature research aim 3: To outline the possible implications for practice and research of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management within the South African ER context.

Chapter 5 thus concludes the first phase of the research, namely the literature review. The second phase, which elaborates on the empirical study, commences next. Phase 2 consists of Chapter 6 (the research method), Chapter 7 (the research findings) and Chapter 8 (a discussion of the conclusions, limitations and recommendations). Chapter 6, the next chapter, discusses the empirical research that was conducted with the specific aim of formulating the statistical approach adopted.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHOD

The second phase of the current research commences with this chapter. Chapter 6 is the beginning of the empirical study, as outlined in section 1.8.2 and Figure 1.5 of Chapter 1. This chapter explains the research method and the statistical approach that were applied to test the various research hypotheses in support of the general research aim of constructing a psychosocial conflict management framework for South African-based organisations. The research investigates the components and nature of such a psychosocial framework, as well as the way in which such a framework manifests in exploring the relationship dynamics between (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); (2) mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust); and (3) outcome variables (conflict management - conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). In addition, the research explores whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (including race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size and employee engagement programme) differ. The second phase of this research (i.e. the empirical research phase) consisted of nine steps which had the goal of addressing the empirical research aims. Chapter 6 explains the research method, hence the first six steps of Phase 2 which form the empirical research process, as indicated in Figure 6.1. The chapter covers a number of core themes, as illustrated in Figure 6.2.

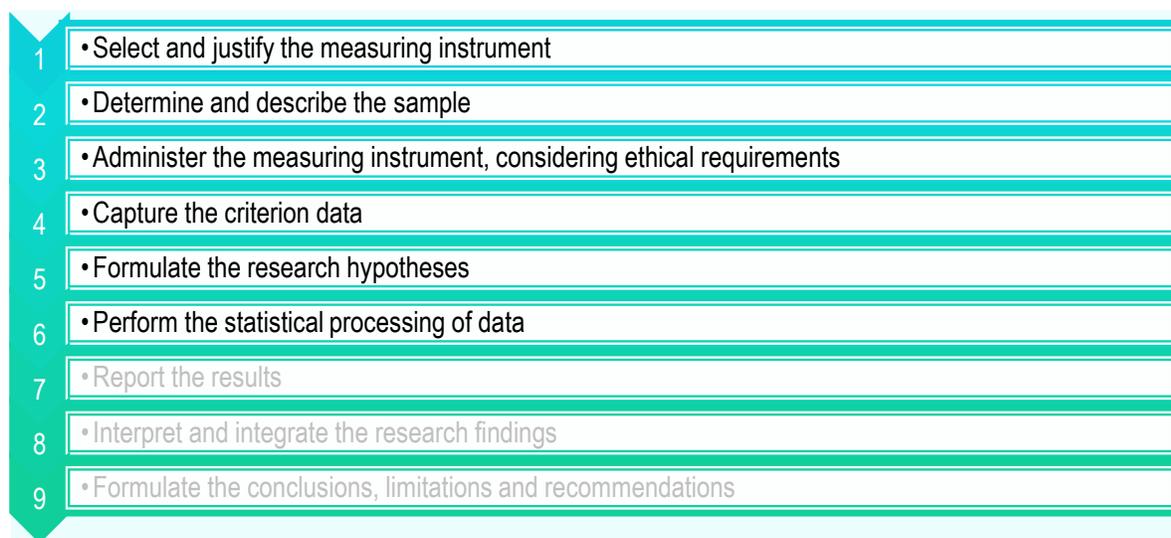


Figure 6.1 Steps 1 to 6 of Phase 2, the Empirical Research Process

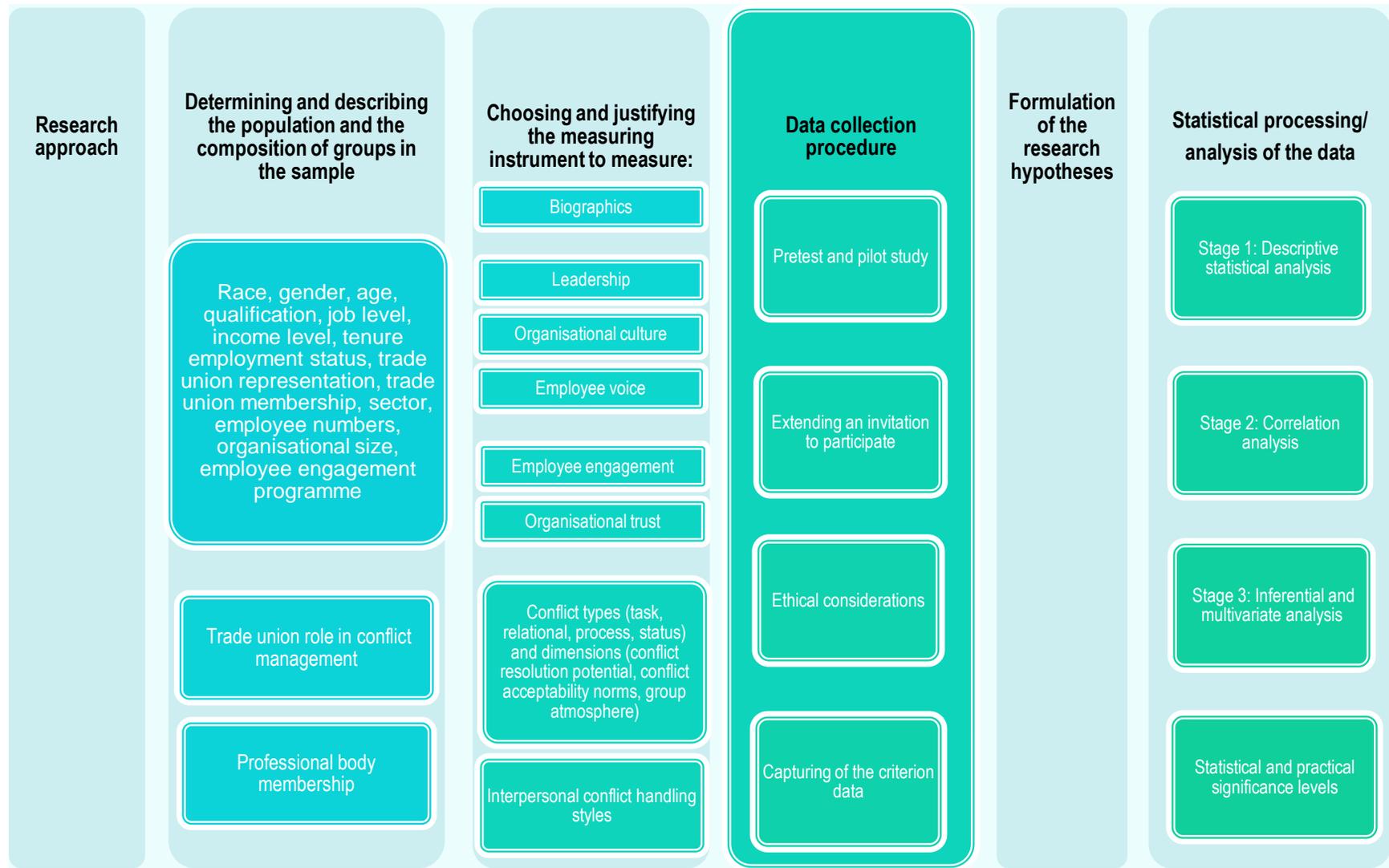


Figure 6.2 Overview of Core Themes of Chapter 6

Thus, Chapter 6 acts as a point of departure for addressing the empirical research aims. The chapter presents a synopsis of the research population and sample; explains the selection of measuring instruments; discusses the data gathering and analysis process; outlines the way in which ethical considerations were addressed; formulates the research hypotheses and, finally, describes the process followed to analyse the data. The remaining outstanding steps in the empirical research process (outlined above in Figure 6.1) are addressed in Chapter 7 (research results) and Chapter 8 (discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations).

The research approach is discussed next.

6.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research problem is described as an area of concern that the researcher wishes to explore because it reveals a specific knowledge gap concerning a social issue or problem deliberated in scientific writings (Salkind, 2018). To answer the research problem as discussed in Chapter 1, the current research followed a deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2016; Welman & Kruger, 2003) in order to test – by considering the empirical data – the theoretically hypothesised relationships between the constructs of relevance to this research. A deductive approach enabled the researcher to (1) identify and conceptualise variables relevant to the proposed conflict management framework; (2) suggest relationships between these variables based on the review of research findings in extant literature; (3) compare arguments with existing theories; and (4) analyse the data to obtain empirical evidence and/or verification of the hypothesised relationships (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Saunders et al., 2016).

Welman and Kruger (2003) explain that a research design is like a blueprint or plan for obtaining the appropriate data to investigate the research hypotheses. Accordingly, a cross-sectional quantitative research design was followed to support the deductive approach. As explained in Chapter 1, the joint study of the dynamics among the variables in a single study is under-researched. This gap in research justifies the cross-sectional research design because new links and dynamics between the various constructs were explored in order to assess the viability of potential future longitudinal studies.

To enable a deductive process in the formulation of hypotheses based on accepted theories (Saunders et al., 2016; Welman & Kruger, 2003), a conceptual analysis was done. Scholars (Saunders et al., 2016; Welman & Kruger, 2003) describe the process of conceptual analysis as

the careful analysis of the constructs of relevance and their relationships as suggested by a theory, considering all their implications and inconsistencies, as well as plausible, necessary modifications to enable construct operationalisation. Primary data were collected, which safeguarded the process of how variables were operationalised, as it was possible to ensure that this process was in line with the conceptualisation of the variables, and that the information that was gathered was aligned with the specific aims of the research (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). Such a process enhances construct validity as it ensures that the operationalisation of variables is in line with their conceptualisation (Welman & Kruger, 2003).

Research data were collected by means of an electronic survey distributed to individuals who, at the time of the data collection, worked in any organisation based in South Africa. Thus, the study used a nonexperimental, cross-sectional, survey research method and, as such, did not set out, or endeavour, to test the causal relationships between the respective variables (Salkind, 2018). Rather, a cross-sectional method investigates a phenomenon as it manifests among several individuals or groups of people at a specific point in time and may thus point to the magnitude and direction of relations as well as differences among but not to changes in participants (Salkind, 2018). Survey research is often used to investigate frequencies and relationships between psychological and sociological variables (Salkind, 2018). Gravetter and Forzano (2012) explain that a cross-sectional design uses surveys that classify individuals into groups or subgroups. Accordingly, a cross-sectional design met the purposes of this research because it supports the collection of extensive data from a wide-ranging target population which could be impartially analysed so that conclusions could be drawn about the relationship dynamics between the chosen variables (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Cross-sectional research has several disadvantages. Arguably, the most important disadvantage is that it cannot measure causal paths as these can only be measured without bias in longitudinal studies (Aguinis, Edwards, & Bradley, 2017; Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Additionally, it is argued that common method variance may occur because of transient time factors that result in different measures being biased in the same way (Spector, 2019). Nonetheless, it is also argued that correlation comparisons between cross-sectional and longitudinal designs are inconclusive on the argument that larger correlations are found in cross-sectional designs (Pindek & Spector, 2016), and whether differences in correlations are, indeed, a result of common method variance (Spector, 2019). Furthermore, it is argued that a cross-sectional design limits the comparability of groups or individuals (Salkind, 2018).

Nonetheless, cross-sectional research has the advantage of being inexpensive as research is conducted over a shorter time span that does not imply longer-term administration (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Salkind, 2018). This is a distinct advantage in cases where little is known about the relationship dynamics between various constructs, especially in under-researched contextual settings as is the case in the current research. Such an approach first clarifies potential causal links by establishing covariation between constructs (Spector, 2019). It also provides initial indications that the research question is worth considering, thus holding the potential for more complex research designs (Spector, 2019). Additionally, a lower dropout rate is evident, as it does not require long-term cooperation from the participants or the researchers (Salkind, 2018). Subsequently, it is often used in social studies (Welman & Kruger, 2003), especially in exploratory research where little is known about the dynamics of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Spector, 2019).

Descriptive research (stage 1 of the data analysis process as discussed in section 6.6.1) was conducted to describe the characteristics of existing phenomena relating to the chosen variables, thus providing a broad picture and background to the study (Salkind, 2018). Additionally, a correlational research approach (stage 2 of the data analysis process, discussed in section 6.6.2) was followed to provide information on the relationship dynamics (correlations) among the different variables of the current research. The unit of analysis (individual organisational members) was randomly selected (Salkind, 2018; Welman & Kruger, 2003). This approach ensured that predictions could be made on certain conflict management outcomes. The third stage of the research (discussed in section 6.6.3) entailed inferential and multivariate statistical analysis (e.g. multi-level mediation modelling, regression analysis and tests of significant mean differences).

6.2 DETERMINING THE POPULATION AND THE SAMPLE

A population is defined as a group of likely cases (for instance individuals or objects) to whom the research findings obtained from a sample (a subset of the population) will be generalisable (Salkind, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, a vital step when conducting research is the process of selecting a population from which a sample is chosen. Factors to consider when choosing a population include considering the characteristics of the population identified so that the research objective may be met (Salkind, 2018). In addition, the ideal type and size of the sample relate to

the type of research to be done; nonetheless a larger sample usually represents a specific population's characteristics more accurately (Salkind, 2018; Wilson van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007).

Wilson van Voorhis and Morgan (2007) state that a $p = .05$ significance level should be met in order to yield useful results. One way of increasing the probability of obtaining a statistically significant level and to reduce the mean squared error of prediction is to consider larger samples as they decrease estimation errors and increase power (the probability of rejecting an untrue null hypothesis) (Oliker, 1978; Wilson van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). A rule of thumb in determining sample size is to calculate the ratio of cases to independent variables; in other words, the number of variables influences the sample size (Salkind, 2018). The sample size of a study should be large enough to obtain acceptable statistical power (Wilson van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). To calculate the ratio of cases to the number of independent variables, the sample size should be equal to at least $n \geq 50 + 8k$ (k is the number of independent variables) (Green, 1991). Using this equation to calculate the minimum required sample size in this study, a figure of 146 cases with three independent variables (i.e. leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and their nine subconstructs was indicated.

However, when the dependent variables are skewed or a small practical effect is anticipated or substantial measurement error is expected, the sample size should be enlarged (Wilson van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). If other statistical measurements are considered (e.g. measuring group differences, relationships through correlations or regressions, chi-square or factor analysis), a larger sample ($n \geq 50 + 8k$) is necessary. Moreover, if the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) are also observed as antecedents (thus considering five variables and their 14 subconstructs), the required sample size increases to 202. Additionally, some scholars (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010, 2014) recommend 500 cases for models with large numbers of constructs when some of these constructs share fewer communalities or have fewer than three measured items – the current sample meets this requirement. Hence, it was deduced that the sample size of 556 obtained in this study was deemed adequate for achieving satisfactory statistical power for identifying effects by means of the correlation and regression analyses.

A sampling strategy and sampling techniques should be chosen that assist in maximising the degree to which the selected sample represents the population, thereby increasing the accuracy of the research (Salkind, 2018). Apart from sample size, other criteria should also be considered in choosing the ideal sampling strategy. For instance, researchers (Salkind, 2018; Saunders et

al., 2016) propose that the availability of a suitable sampling frame (a list of all cases in the population from which a sample could be drawn) and the availability of resources (e.g. funding) and time should be considered. Furthermore, the ease of access to the population (for instance, based on geographic dispersion) and the sample size needed should be deliberated. Moreover, scholars (Salkind, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016) emphasise that the heterogeneity (where members of a population have diverse characteristics) or homogeneity (where members of a population are alike, thus a particular subgroup is selected) of the population should also be reflected upon.

The current research aimed to construct a psychosocial conflict management framework for South African-based organisations. Subsequently, it was deemed necessary to obtain data from a group of heterogeneous organisational members employed in such organisations, rather than merely selecting members of specific organisations. Thus, the unit of research was individual organisational members (employed individuals) working with at least one other individual in a South African-based organisation. In choosing the sampling technique (Cohen et al., 2018; Salkind, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016), the following aspects were considered:

- The research questions to be answered in order to address the research objectives.
- The fact that working individuals in South African-based organisations are not listed or known, thus no sampling frame existed.
- The ideal sample size, based on aspects such as categories of analysis, number of variables and reliability issues.
- The number of variables to be used.
- The fact that limited resources (time and money) were available.

It is important to note that the chief aim of the current research was not to draw conclusions or to generalise about the whole population. The principal objective was rather to explore the characteristics, direction and magnitude of the proposed relationships between the chosen constructs of relevance. Consequently, the following sampling strategy was designed (Cohen et al., 2018; Salkind, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016; Welman & Kruger, 2003):

- Non-probability sampling – it was implausible that all South African-based employees who worked with at least one other individual would have an equal chance of being included in the sample owing to the size of the population, the absence of a sampling frame, and because of time and money constraints. Although a probability sample would have increased the generalisability of the research findings (Hair et al., 2017) because of higher

representivity levels, a non-probability sampling method was deemed more appropriate to answer the research aims as set out in section 1.3.

- Heterogeneous sampling – by using a variety of wide-ranging publicising forums (including social media, professional bodies, employers' organisations and other databases), participation from employed individuals with diverse characteristics was encouraged to ensure maximum variation in the collected data. This was considered necessary because of the diverse nature of the South African population.
- Convenience sampling – cases were randomly selected by using various platforms to invite participation (e.g. permission was obtained to invite members of the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP) and the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa (SEIFSA), while social media platforms such as LinkedIn were also used). Nonetheless, inclusion criteria were set (discussed below).
- Self-selection sampling – invitations were published in a number of ways to attract working individuals who might be interested in participating in the study, should they meet the inclusion criteria (discussed below). This ensured inputs from participants passionate about the selected research topic (Saunders et al., 2016).

Saunders et al. (2016) point out that many research projects necessitate a combination of various sampling techniques. The combination of chosen sampling techniques for this research ensured that

- although no sampling frame existed, the participants in the study met the inclusion criteria
- participants had an interest in the research question, and
- participants had ample diverse characteristics to provide optimal variation in the collected data.

As indicated above, boundaries were set by stating inclusion criteria. The first inclusion criterion was that participants should be employed individuals within the South African-based organisational context. Because of the conflict management focus of the research, the second inclusion criterion was that participants had to work with one or more individuals. To ensure the inclusion criteria in the selected sample, two precautions were taken. Firstly, in the invitation letter it was explained that participants had to be working with at least one other individual in a South African-based organisation: "If you are working together with one or more individuals in either a South African or foreign organisation with branches in any industry or sector in South Africa, you are an eligible candidate and your participation would be greatly appreciated." Secondly, the first

question in the survey asked participants to confirm the following: “I am working in a South African-based organisation.” If participants answered no, they were thanked for their interest but not allowed to continue with the survey. Therefore, the unit of analysis was individual employees working with at least one other individual in South African-based organisations. The unit of analysis allowed for reflection on the attitudes and behaviours of both individual employees and groups of employees in organisational settings.

Thus, using various platforms, prospective participants were invited to complete an online survey once ethical clearance was obtained (discussed in sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.3). A total of $n = 556$ fully completed questionnaires were received. In addition, $n = 1586$ partially completed surveys were received. Incomplete surveys normally result because of response fatigue, refusal to answer all the questions, not knowing how to answer all the questions, or respondents not meeting the research requirements (Saunders et al., 2016). The representativeness of the sample is unclear, as the active response rate could not be calculated because the number of the total population was unknown. This is due to the open nature of the invitation on LinkedIn and Facebook. Nonetheless, it may be assumed that because of the potential magnitude of the population, the sample represented only a miniscule percentage of the target population.

However, as the aim of the research was not to generalise the findings but rather to gain a better understanding of the relationship dynamics of the chosen variables, a(n) (implied) low response rate is acceptable, albeit acknowledged as a limitation of the study. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the research results may not be a reflection of the views, experiences, attitudes and behaviours of all working individuals in South African-based organisations. Still, it is argued that the sample distribution characterises the heterogeneity of South Africa’s diverse population and, hence, that a greater understanding of conflict management behaviours, attitudes and styles was obtained through the research. The present research was an exploratory study, which could potentially open up new directions for future research initiatives. The sample was therefore deemed acceptable for the purposes of this research.

The profile of the sample is described according to the following moderating socio-demographic variables: race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level and tenure, employment status, union representation and membership, sector, organisational size and number of employees, the presence/absence of an employee engagement programme, as well as membership (or not) of a professional body. These socio-demographic variables were incorporated based on the findings of the literature review (see Chapter 5 for a summary), which pointed to the potential influence

they could have on a theorised psychosocial conflict management framework that considered leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

6.2.1 Composition of racial groups in the sample

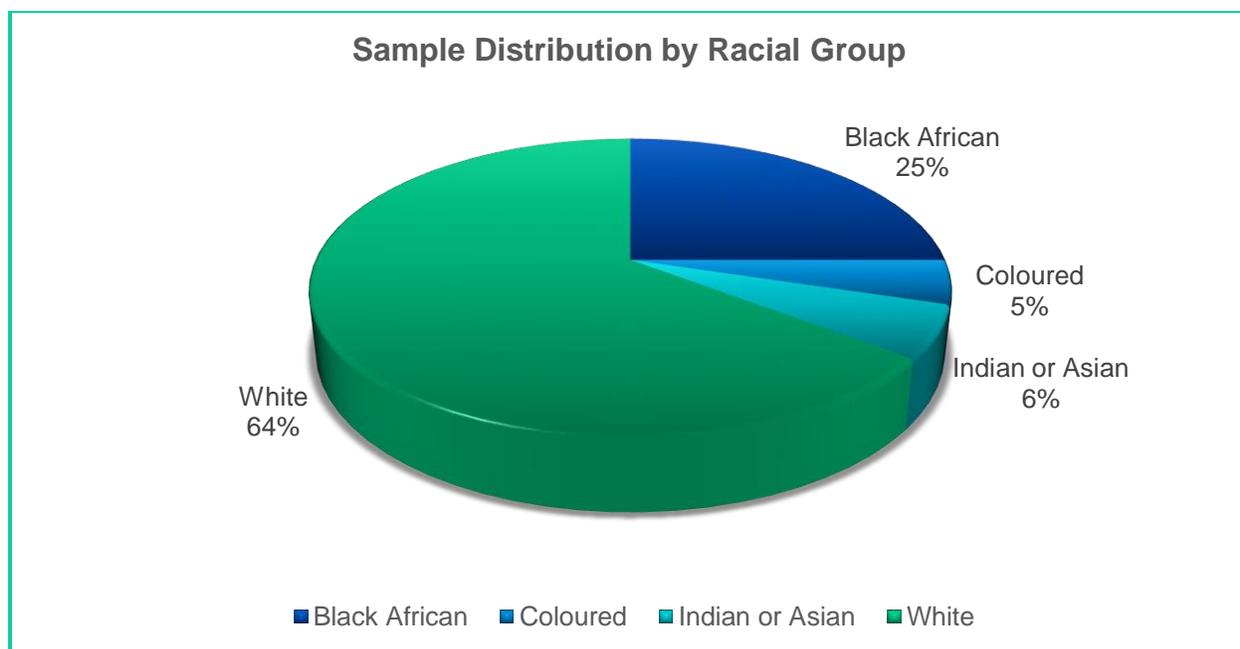
Table 6.1 and Figure 6.3 illustrate the racial group distribution of the sample (n = 556). Whites comprised the majority of the sample at 63.67 per cent, followed by black Africans (24.64%), Indians or Asians (5.58%) and coloureds (4.67%). Some of the participants (1.44% of the total sample) preferred not to disclose their population group, hence, they were regarded as missing values in ensuing analyses. This category was also not indicated in the pie diagram, as it was too small to reflect. When comparing this distribution to that of the South African working population, it became clear that the sample is not a true reflection of the composition of the South African national labour force. At the time of data collection (November 2017 to April 2018), black Africans constituted the majority of the national labour force (approximately 80.28%), while coloureds were the second biggest group (9.11%), followed by whites (8.05%) and Indians or Asians (2.66%) (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Thus, an underrepresentation of black Africans and an overrepresentation of white participants in the sample are evident when comparing the racial distribution of the sample to the South African national labour force. However, it was reasoned that the sample was representative of the wider subtleties of the South African workforce in terms of race.

Table 6.1

Sample Distribution by Racial Group

Racial group	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Black African	137	24.64	24.64
Coloured	26	4.67	29.31
Indian or Asian	31	5.58	34.89
White	354	63.67	98.56
Other	8	1.44	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.3. Sample Distribution by Racial Group

6.2.2 Composition of gender groups in the sample

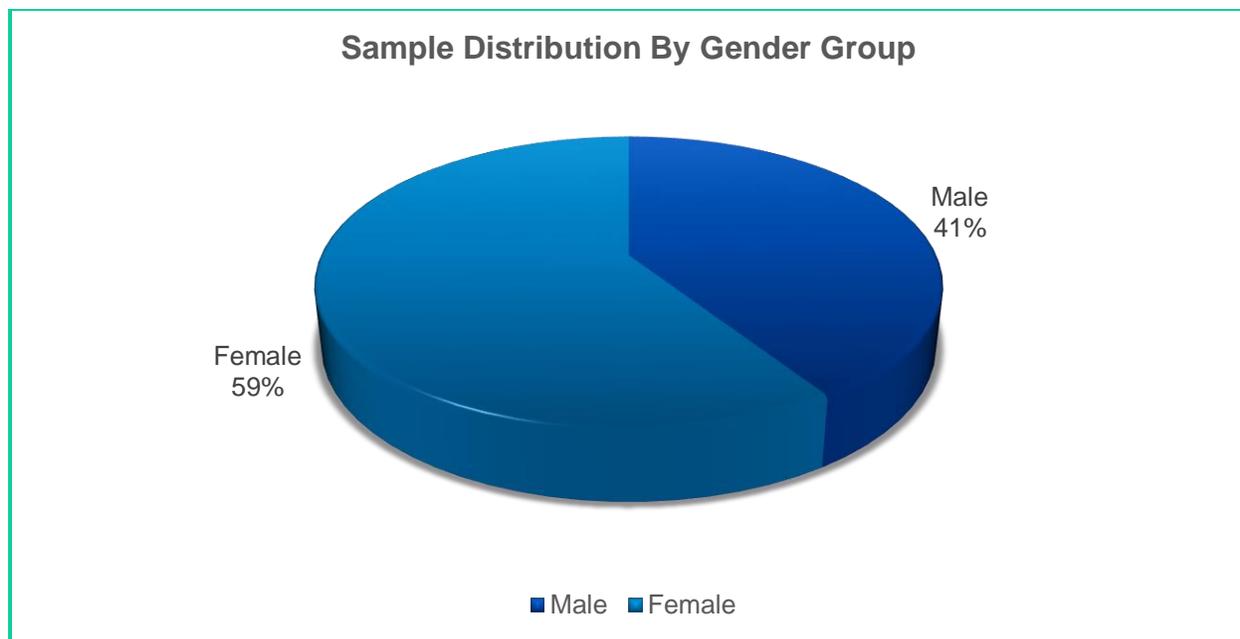
Table 6.2 and Figure 6.4 illustrate the gender distribution of participants in the sample. Females comprised 59.17 per cent and males 40.83 per cent of the respondents (n = 556). According to Statistics South Africa (2018), the national labour force at the time of data collection constituted 50.55 per cent females against 49.45 per cent males. Although women are therefore slightly overrepresented, the gender distribution of the current sample may be regarded as representative of the South African labour force.

Table 6.2

Gender Group Distribution of the Sample

Gender group	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Male	227	40.83	40.83
Female	329	59.17	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.4. Sample Distribution by Gender Group

6.2.3 Composition of age groups in the sample

Table 6.3 and Figure 6.5 show the composition of the age groups in the sample. The age of the respondents was measured in categories similar to accepted generational cohorts (Jehn et al., 1999; Lyons & Schweitzer, 2016; Pelled, 1996; Urick et al., 2016). In total, three age categories were set, namely 18 to 34 years (Generation Y/Millennials), 35 to 49 years (Generation X), and lastly, 50 years and older (Baby Boomers). Baby Boomers formed the largest percentage of respondents (37%), closely followed by Generation X (36%), with Generation Y/Millennials being least represented at 27%. The distribution was deemed heterogeneous in nature in terms of age distribution, as all three of the generational cohorts were well represented.

Respondents' actual age was also obtained because research on cohorts may hold an internal validation threat in cross-sectional designs (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Salkind, 2018). Apart from the validation threat, it was regarded as important to consider both chronological age and year of birth (generational cohorts), as scholars explain that age has descriptive value but not necessarily explanatory value (Salkind, 2018). This will allow the researcher to determine whether age and cohort are confounded (i.e. both variables explain the same thing and the effects of the

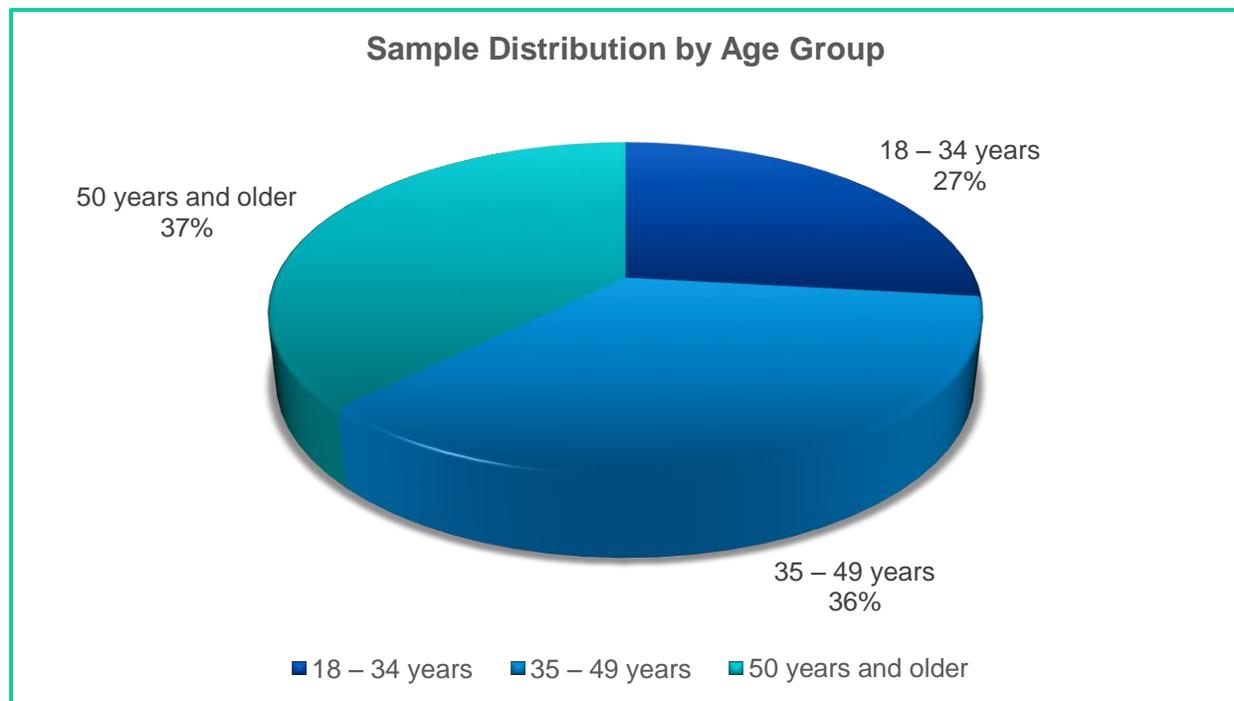
two variables cannot be separated) (Salkind, 2018). While the oldest respondent was 74 years of age, the youngest respondents were 21 years old. The mean age of the sample of participants was 44.35 (SD = 17.14). This implies that, on average, people from the Generation X cohort were formed the largest representation in the sample.

Table 6.3

Age Group Distribution of the Sample

Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
18–34 years	149	26.80	26.80
35–49 years	199	35.79	62.59
50 years and older	208	37.41	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.5. Sample Distribution by Age Group

6.2.4 Composition of qualification groups in the sample

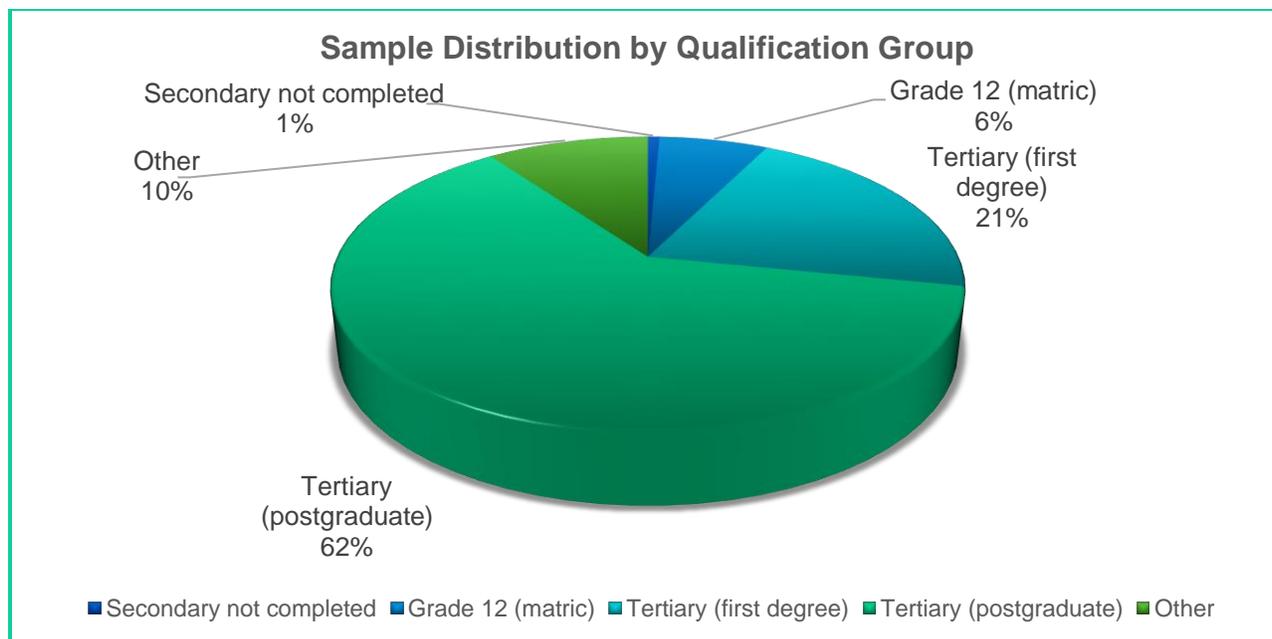
The composition of the sample in terms of the participants' qualifications is illustrated in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.6. Respondents with tertiary qualifications were in the majority (82.37%), with 61.69 per cent of respondents holding a postgraduate qualification, and 20.68 per cent of respondents holding a post-Grade 12 qualification. Two of the respondents (0.36% of the total sample) elected not to reveal their highest qualifications and were then regarded as missing values in further analyses. According to Statistics South Africa (2018), in the first quarter of 2018 (at the time of gathering data), 34.15 per cent of employed individuals in South Africa had not completed their secondary school education, while 21.08 per cent of the workforce held a tertiary qualification. Clearly, the research results represent respondents with higher educational levels, and not the unskilled or semi-skilled employee, whose views may differ from higher skilled employees.

Table 6.4

Qualification Level Distribution of the Sample

Highest qualification obtained	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Secondary not completed	4	0.72	0.72
Grade 12 (matric)	37	6.66	7.38
Tertiary (first degree)	115	20.68	28.06
Tertiary (postgraduate)	343	61.69	89.75
Other	55	9.89	99.64
Missing (not specified)	2	0.36	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.6. Sample Distribution by Qualification Group

6.2.5 Composition of job level groups in the sample

Table 6.5 and Figure 6.7 represent the job level distribution in the sample: 23.02 per cent of the participants worked as staff members (non-managerial), 24.10 per cent as middle managers and 23,56% at the senior/executive level. Furthermore, 23.38 per cent of respondents were in professional but non-managerial positions. Therefore, in the main an equal distribution was presented in the various categories, apart from junior management which only represented 5.94 per cent of the sample. Overall, the managerial group (junior, middle and senior/executive level group) was in the majority (53.6%), with the non-managerial group comprising 46.4 per cent of the sample.

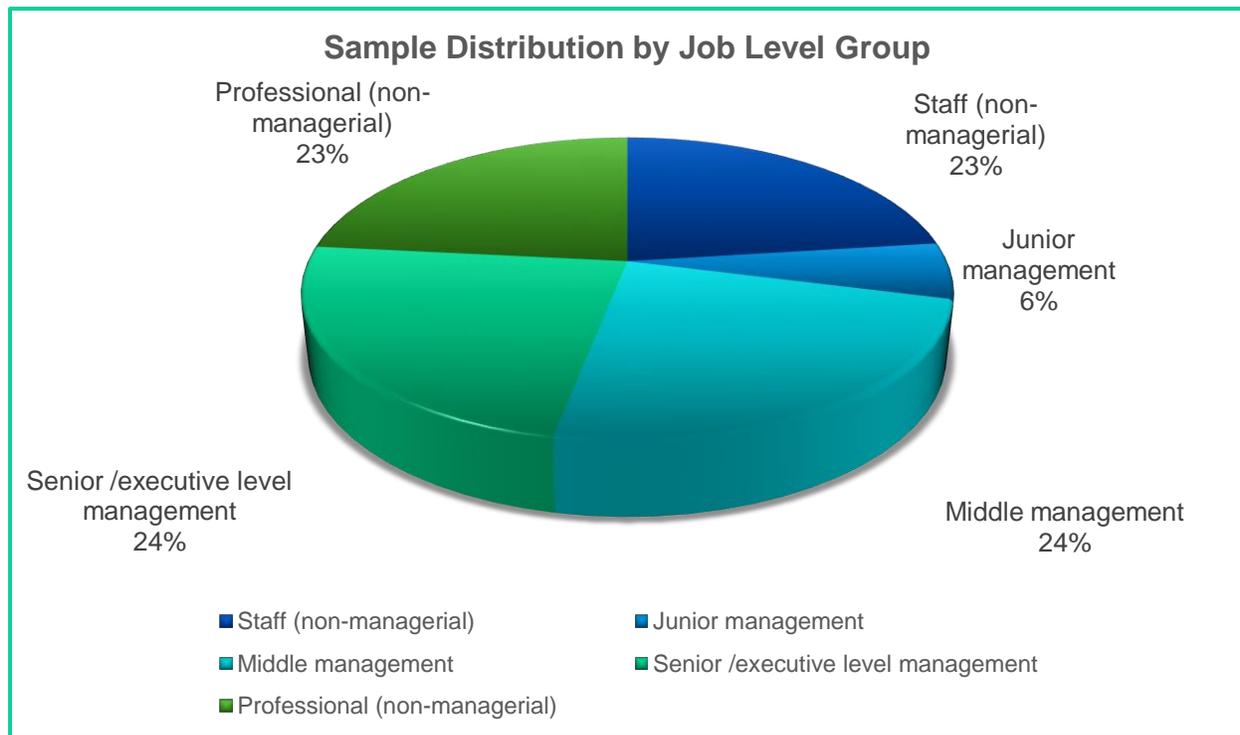
Lipsky et al. (2003) point out that most conflict management research considers the various challenges from a managerial viewpoint, hence the current research chose to include organisational members from all job levels (managerial and non-managerial) in the sample. The mostly equal sample representation for managerial versus non-managerial job levels is thus regarded as one of the strengths of the current study.

Table 6.5

Job Level Distribution of the Sample

Job Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Staff (non-managerial)	128	23.02	23.02
Junior management	33	5.94	28.96
Middle management	134	24.10	53.06
Senior management/executive	131	23.56	76.62
Professional (non-managerial)	130	23.38	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.7. Sample Distribution by Job Level Group

6.2.6 Composition of annual nett income level groups in the sample

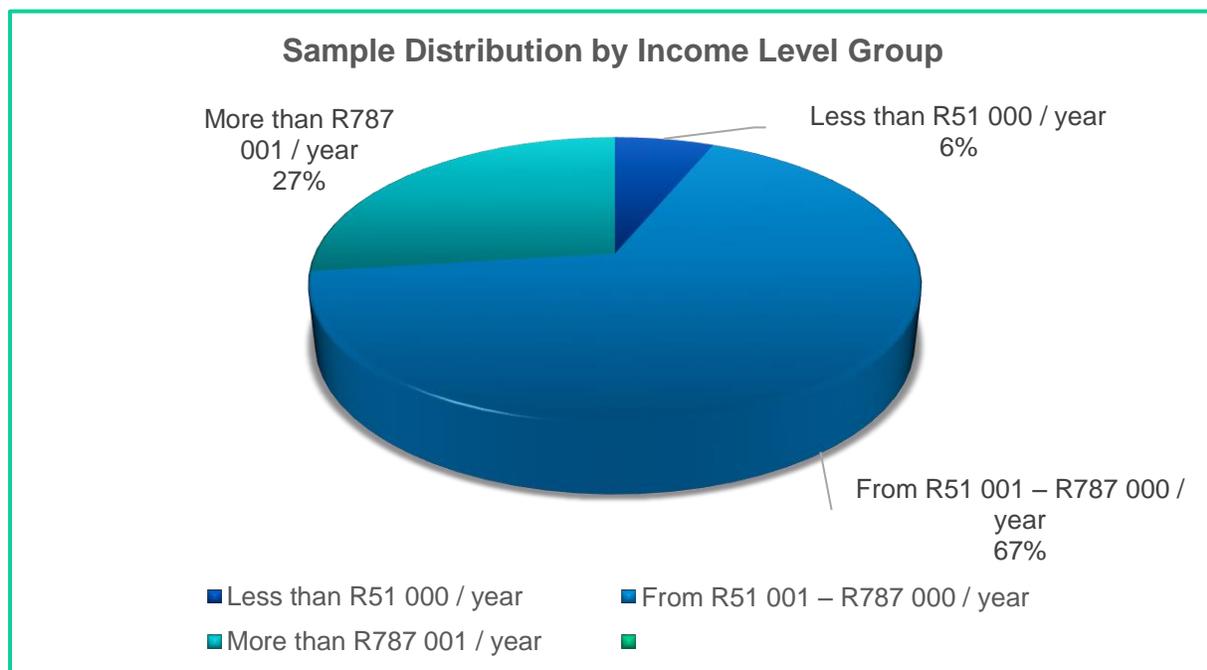
Table 6.6 and Figure 6.8 represent the annual nett income level (income after deductions) distribution in the sample. Most of the respondents (66.73%) fell into the nett income category of between R51 001 and R787 000 per year.

Table 6.6

Annual Nett Income Level Distribution of the Sample

Annual Nett Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Less than R51 000/year	35	6.29	6.29
From R51 001 – R787 000/year	371	66.73	73.02
More than R787 001/year	150	26.98	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.8. Sample Distribution by Income Level Group

6.2.7 Composition of tenure groups in the sample

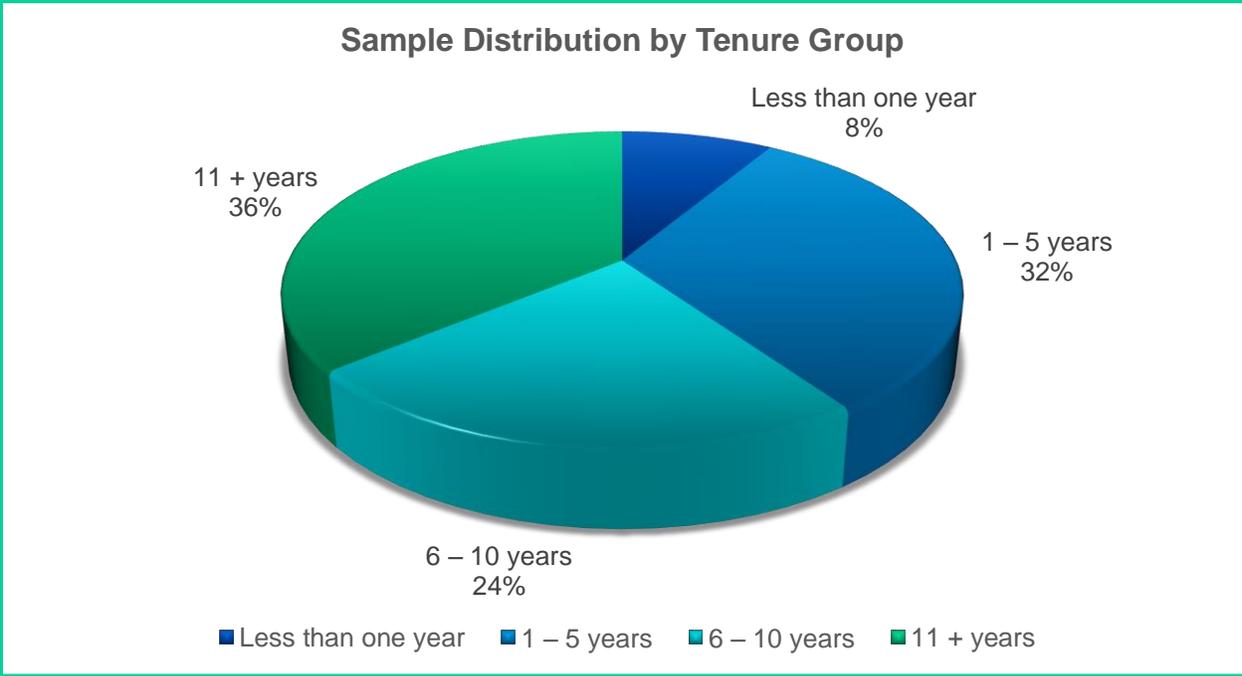
The composition of the tenure groups in the sample is reflected in Table 6.7 and Figure 6.9. As

indicated in Table 6.7 below, it may be deduced that the majority (35.97%) of respondents (n = 556) had been employed by their current organisations for more than ten years, with the second largest group at 31.65 per cent being individuals who had been with their employer for a period of one to five years.

Table 6.7
Tenure Group Distribution of the Sample

Tenure	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Less than one year	48	8.63	8.63
1–5 years	176	31.66	40.29
6–10 years	132	23.74	64.03
11 + years	200	35.97	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.9. Sample Distribution by Tenure Group

6.2.8 Composition of employment status groups in the sample

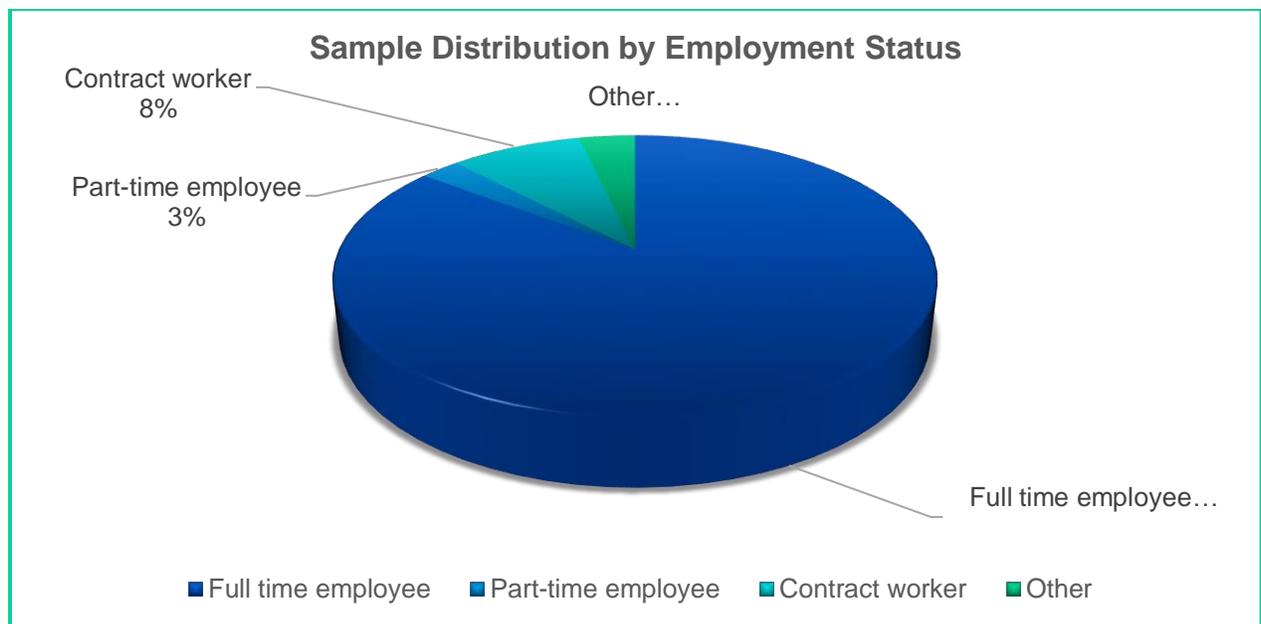
Table 6.8 and Figure 6.10 illustrate the composition of the groups in terms of employment status. Employment status was measured in terms of either permanent full-time employees, part-time employees, contract employment or casual workers. Respondents could also indicate other forms of employment. Most respondents who did not fall within the above categories indicated that they were the owners of businesses and thus self-employed. The majority of respondents (85.07%) were employed on a permanent (full-time and with an indefinite time period) basis. According to Statistics South Africa (2018), formal, long-term employment relationships are typical of the South African labour market.

Table 6.8

Employment Status Group Distribution of the Sample

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Full-time employee	473	85.07	85.07
Part-time employee	14	2.52	87.59
Contract worker	47	8.45	96.04
Casual worker	2	0.36	96.40
Other	20	3.60	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.10. Sample Distribution by Employment Status Group

6.2.9 Trade union representation and union membership as groups in the sample

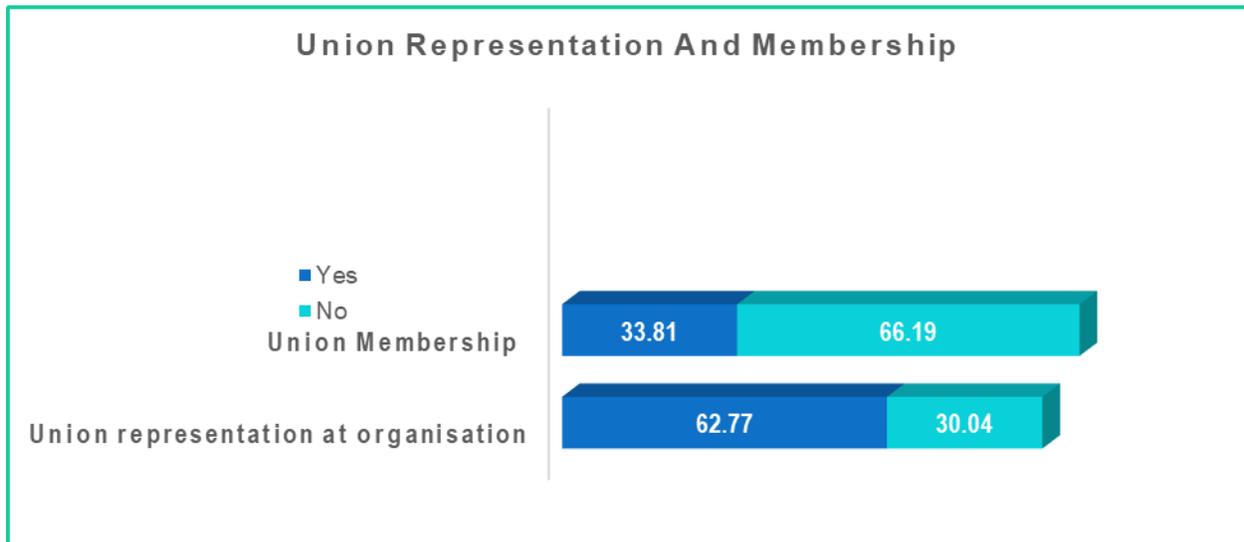
Table 6.9 and Figure 6.11 illustrate the composition of the sample in terms of organisations with union representation, as well as the state of union membership in the sample. The majority of respondents (62.77%) were employed by organisations with trade union representation; nonetheless, only 33.81% of respondents were members of unions. In other words, as shown in Table 6.9 and Figure 6.11, the majority of respondents (66.19%) indicated that they were not members of a trade union. These figures reflect the reported trade union membership in South Africa at the time of data collection, when approximately 30 per cent of employees were reported to be trade union members (Statistics South Africa, 2018). However, another plausible explanation for this is the fact that as indicated above, the majority (53.6%) of respondents in this sample were on a managerial level and, as such, would perhaps not be union members.

Table 6.9

Trade Union Representation at Organisational Level and Trade Union Membership Groups

Trade union representation	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Union representation at organisation	349	62.77	62.77
No union representation at organisation	167	30.04	92.81
Don't know	40	7.19	100.00
Total	556	100.00	
Trade union membership	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Union members	188	33.81	33.81
Non-members	368	66.19	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.11. Sample Distribution by Union Representation and Membership Group

Lastly, one additional question was asked, namely: "Trade unions contribute to effective conflict management in organisations". Like the other measuring scales that formed part of the questionnaire, participants had to indicate on a seven-point Likert scale whether they agreed (or not) with the above statement (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). This question was asked

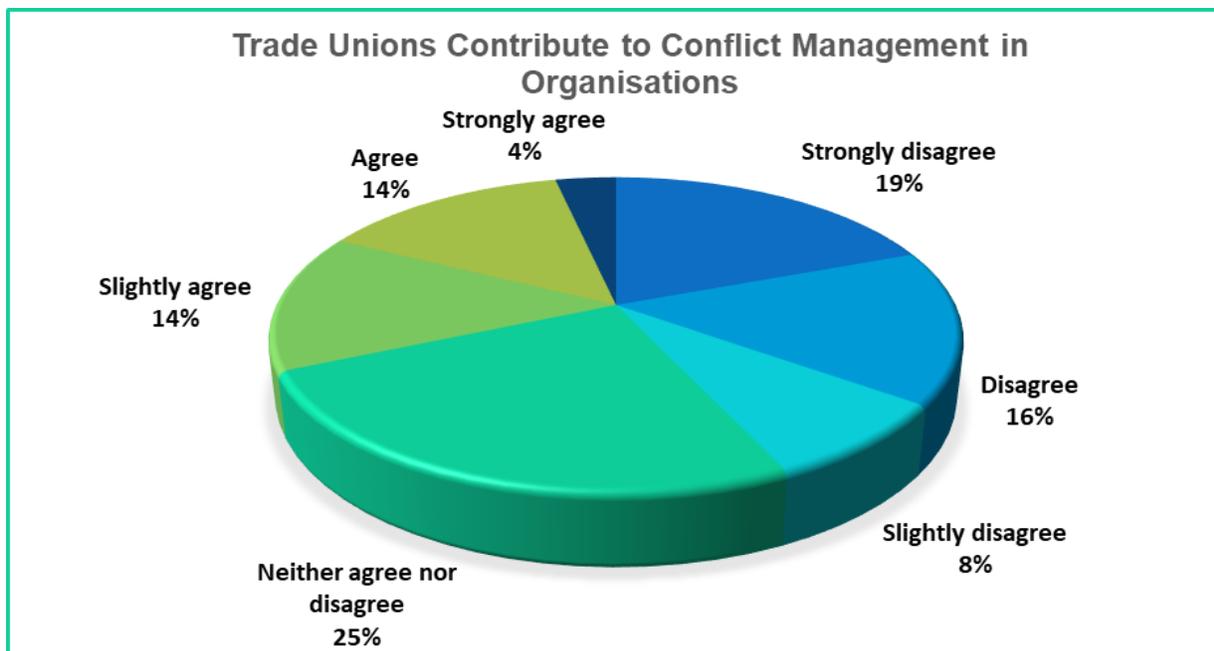
to establish the perception of respondents on the role unions might play in South African-based organisations in managing conflict effectively. According to the data received, the majority of respondents (140 from 556 participants; 25.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 107 participants (of a total of 556; 19.2%) strongly disagreed. When one considers all the respondents who did not agree versus those who did agree that unions play a significant role, it became clear that unions could play a much greater role than they do currently. Whereas a total of 43% disagreed to some degree with the statement that trade unions contribute to effective conflict management, only 31.6% agreed (to varying degrees) that they do contribute. It may thus be concluded that the majority of respondents do not agree (albeit to differing degrees) that unions play an effective role in conflict management in South-African based organisations. These aspects are summarised in Table 6.10 and illustrated in Figure 6.12 below.

Table 6.10

Distribution of the Sample Concerning Perceptions about the Contribution of Trade Unions to Conflict Management in Organisations

Organisational Sector	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	107	19.2	19.2
Disagree	88	15.8	35.1
Slightly disagree	45	8.1	43.2
Neither agree nor disagree	140	25.2	68.3
Slightly agree	79	14.2	82.6
Agree	78	14.0	96.6
Strongly agree	19	3.4	100.0
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.12. Sample Distribution Relating to the Perceptions of Participants on the Effective Contribution of Trade Unions to Conflict Management

6.2.10 Organisational sector groups in the sample

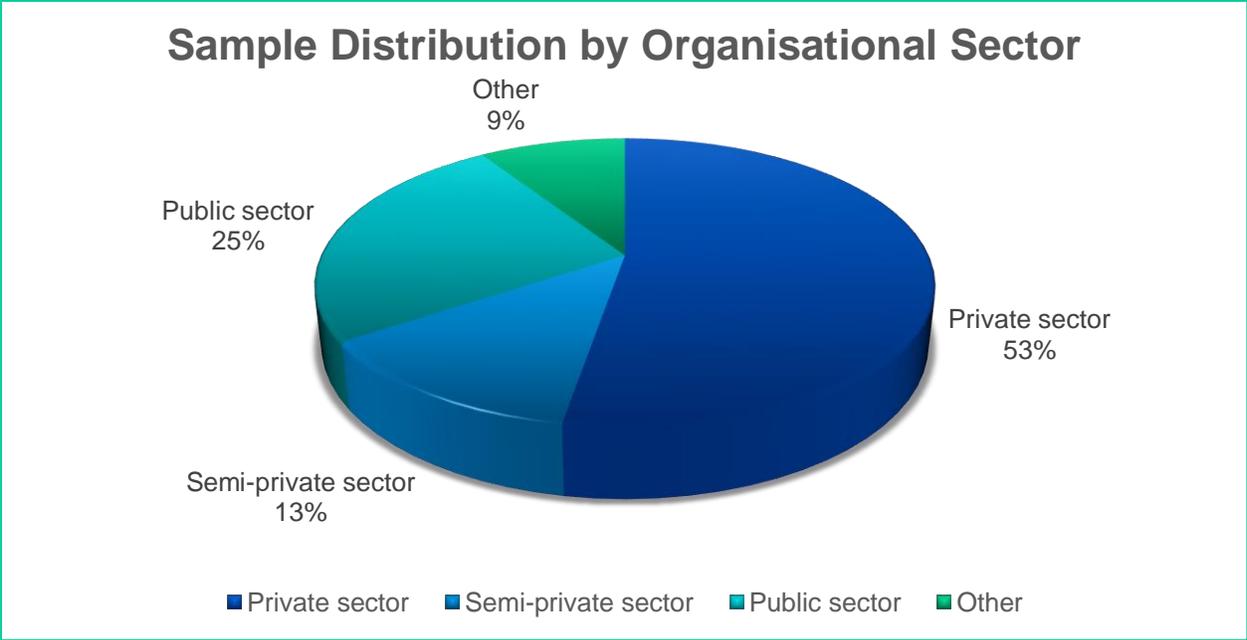
Table 6.11 and Figure 6.13 illustrate the composition of the sample groups in terms of whether the organisations in which respondents worked are in the private, semi-private or government (public) sectors. Respondents could also indicate other organisational sectors. Most respondents, who indicated that their organisations were in other sectors indicated non-profit organisations. However, of the total sample the majority of respondents were employed by private sector organisations (52.70%), followed by the public sector.

Table 6.11

Organisational Sector Distribution of the Sample

Organisational Sector	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Private sector	293.00	52.70	52.70
Semi-private sector	72.00	12.95	65.65
Public sector	140.00	25.18	90.83
Other	51.00	9.17	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.13. Sample Distribution by Organisational Sector

6.2.11 Workplace size and number of employees as groups in the sample

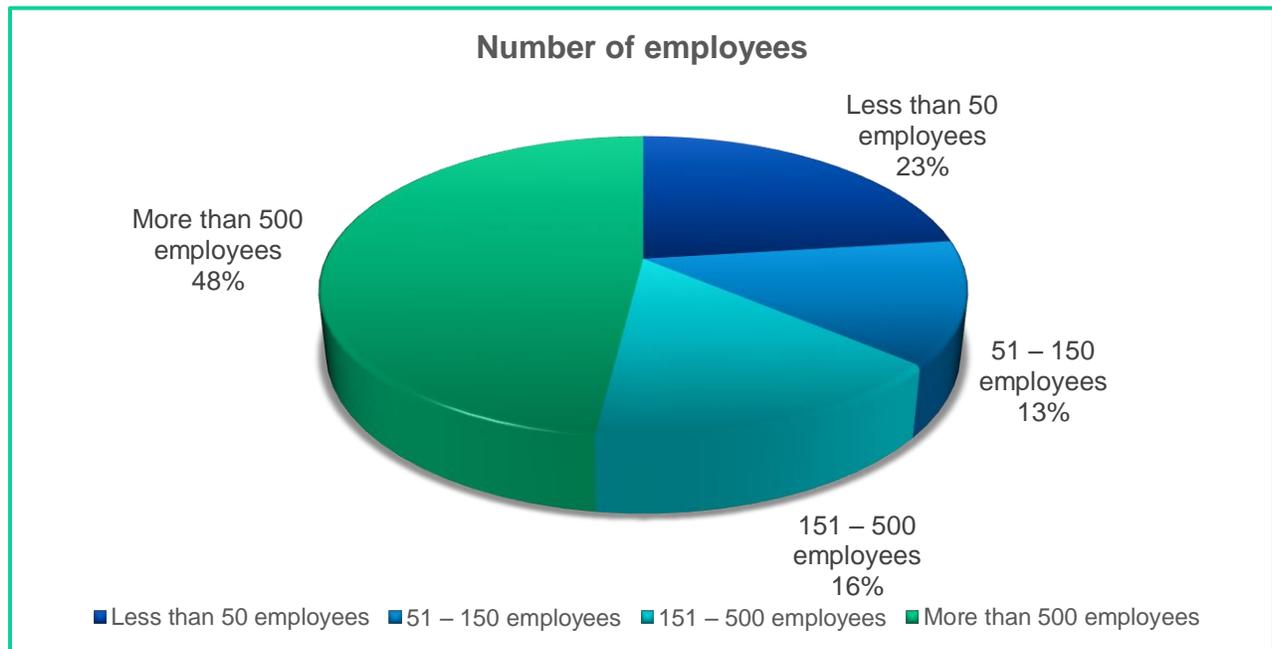
Table 6.12 and Figures 6.14 and 6.15 illustrate the composition of the sample in terms of the number of employees at respondents' workplaces, as well as respondents' perceptions on whether their organisations are micro, small, medium or large. Of the total sample, the majority of respondents perceived that they worked for large organisations (47.12%), which employ more than 500 employees (48.02%). This is followed by organisations employing less than 50 employees (23.02%).

Table 6.12

Sample Groups Indicating Number of Employees and Workplace Size

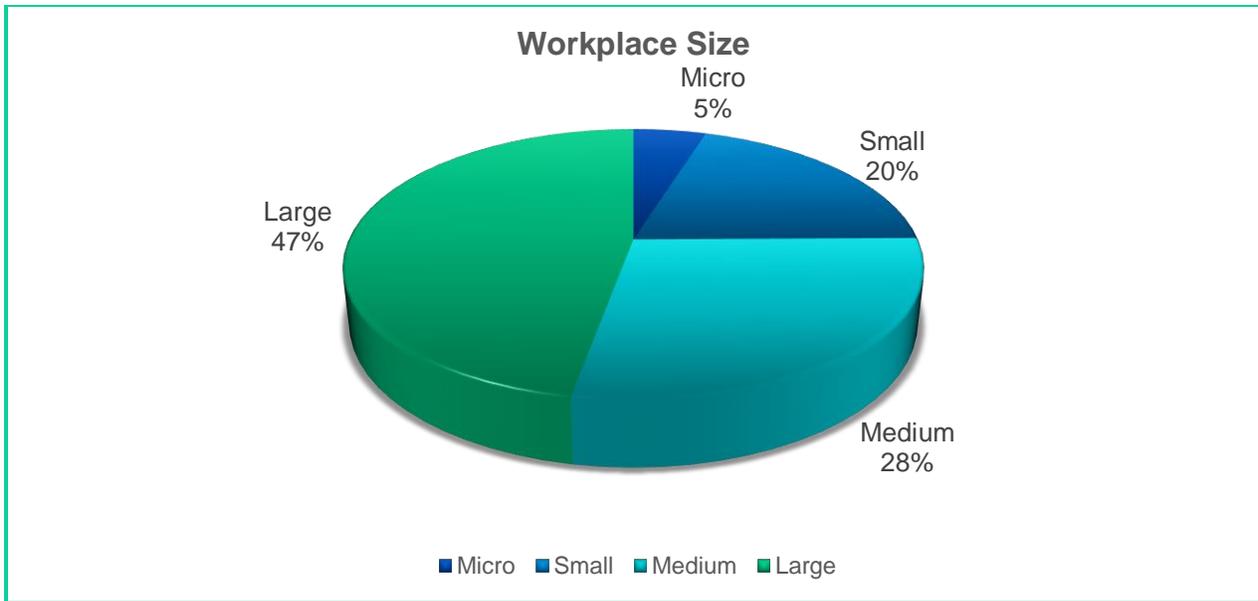
Number of Employees	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Less than 50 employees	128	23.02	23.02
51–150 employees	73	13.13	36.15
151–500 employees	88	15.83	51.98
More than 500 employees	267	48.02	100.00
Total	556	100.00	
Workplace Size	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Micro	27	4.86	4.86
Small	111	19.96	24.82
Medium	156	28.06	52.88
Large	262	47.12	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.14. Sample Distribution by Number of Employees



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.15. Sample Distribution by Organisational Size

6.2.12 Organisations with formal employee engagement programmes as groups in the sample

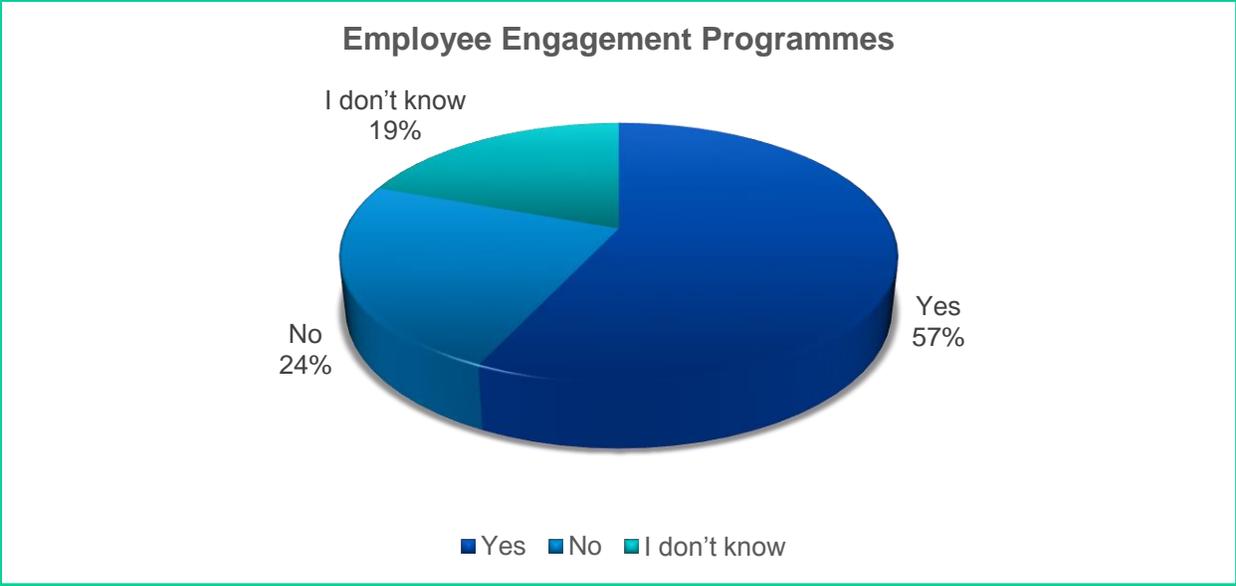
Table 6.13 and Figure 6.16 illustrate the sample group in terms of the whether there is a formal employee engagement programme in place or not. Accordingly, it can be seen that the majority (57%) of organisations have a formal employee engagement programme, while 23.56 per cent of respondents indicated that their organisations do not have such a programme. However, a relatively large number of employees indicated that they do not know whether their organisations have such a programme or not (19.42%).

Table 6.13

Distribution of the Sample in terms of Organisations with Employee Engagement Programmes

Employee Engagement Programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Yes	317	57.01	57.01
No	131	23.56	80.57
I do not know	108	19.43	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.16. Sample Distribution by Employee Engagement Programme

6.2.13 Professional body registrations as groups in the sample

Table 6.14 and Figure 6.17 illustrate the sample group in terms of the whether respondents are members of professional bodies or not. They indicate that the majority (54.50%) of respondents belong to a professional body, whereas 45.5 per cent of respondents indicated that they are not registered with a professional body.

Table 6.14

Distribution of the Sample regarding Professional Body Registrations

Registration with Professional Body	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
No	253	45.50	45.50
Yes	303	54.50	100.00
Total	556	100.00	

Note: n = 556.



Note: n = 556.

Figure 6.17. Sample Distribution by Professional Body Registration

6.2.14 Summary and interpretation of the socio-demographic profile of the sample

The socio-demographic profile that was obtained for the sample, as discussed above, clearly indicates that the sample characteristics that should be deliberated in the interpretation of the empirical findings include work-related aspects such as employment status, tenure, job level and union membership, as well as individual characteristics such as race, gender, age and qualification level.

Table 6.15 shows the main individual and organisational characteristics of the sample. Respondents in the sample were predominantly white females of 35 years and older (the mean age of the sample is 44.35 years of age) and thus from the Generation X cohort. Most had obtained a tertiary, postgraduate qualification. All respondents were employed (as per the set inclusion criteria). More specifically, the socio-demographic data shows that respondents were mostly permanently employed in large (employing more than 500 employees) organisations that operated mainly in the private sector. Respondents were typically at middle or top management level and had been with their current employer for more than 11 years. Their annual nett income level was between R51 001 and R787 000, which is regarded as the middle-income group relative to South African personal income circumstances (Coetzee & Van Aardt, 2018). Their employers

generally had employee engagement programmes in place. Further, the majority of the respondents belong to professional bodies such as the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP). In the main, participants were not trade union members, although most of the organisations they worked for had trade union representation. They generally did not agree with the statement that trade unions contributed to effective conflict management in organisations.

For ease of reference, Table 6.16 provides an overall summary of the socio-demographic data of the sample as discussed above.

Table 6.15

Main Characteristics of the Sample Profile per Individual and Organisational Characteristics

Socio-demographic variable	Predominant characteristic	Percentage (%)
Individual characteristics		
Race	White	63.67
Gender	Female	59.17
Age	35–49 years/50 years and older	35.79/37.41
Qualification	Tertiary: first degree/postgraduate	20.68/61.69
Job level	Managerial (junior, middle and senior/executive)/non-managerial (staff and professional)	53.6 /46.4
Income level	From R51 001–R787 000 per year	66.73
Tenure	11 years +	35.97
Employment status	Full-time (permanent)	85.07
Registration with professional body	Yes/No	54.50/45.50
Organisational characteristics		
Trade union representation	Union representation at organisation	62.77
Trade union membership	Non-members	66.19
Unions play a role in conflict management	Neither agree nor disagree	25.2
Workplace sector	Private sector	52.70
Perception of workplace size	Large	47.12
Number of employees	More than 500 employees	48.02
Formal employee engagement programme	Yes	57.01

Note: n = 556.

Table 6.16

Summary of Frequency Distribution: Socio-demographic Profile of Sample

Biographical characteristic		Frequency (n = 556)	Percentage	Cumulative %
Race	Black African	137	24.64	24.64
	Coloured	26	4.67	29.31
	Indian or Asian	31	5.58	34.89
	White	354	63.67	98.56
	Not specified	8	1.44	100.00
Gender	Male	227	40.83	40.83
	Female	329	59.17	100.00
Age	18–34 years	149	26.80	26.80
	35–49 years	199	35.79	62.59
	50 years and older	208	37.41	100.00
Highest qualification	Secondary not completed	4	0.72	0.72
	Matric (Grade 12)	37	6.66	7.38
	Tertiary (first degree)	115	20.68	28.06
	Tertiary (postgraduate)	343	61.69	89.75
	Other	55	9.89	99.64
	Missing (not specified)	2	0.36	100.00
Job level	Staff (non-managerial)	128	23.02	23.02
	Junior management	33	5.94	28.96
	Middle management	134	24.10	53.06
	Senior management/executive	131	23.56	76.62
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	23.38	100.00
Employment status	Full-time employee	473	85.07	85.07
	Part-time employee	14	2.52	87.59
	Contract worker	47	8.45	96.04
	Casual worker	2	0.36	96.40
	Other	20	3.60	100.00
Tenure (current employer)	Less than one year	48	8.63	8.63
	1–5 years	176	31.66	40.29
	6–10 years	132	23.74	64.03
	11 + years	200	35.97	100.00
Nett income level	Less than R51 000 per year	35	6.29	6.29

Biographical characteristic	Frequency (n = 556)	Percentage	Cumulative %	
	From R51 001–R787 000 per year	371	66.73	73.02
	More than R787 001 per year	150	26.98	100.00
Trade union membership	Union members	188	33.81	33.81
	Non-members	368	66.19	100.00
Trade union representation	Union representation at organisation	349	62.77	62.77
	No union representation at organisation	167	30.04	92.81
	I do not know	40	7.19	100.00
Trade union role in conflict management	Strongly disagree	107	19.2	19.2
	Disagree	88	15.8	35.1
	Slightly disagree	45	8.1	43.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	140	25.2	68.3
	Slightly agree	79	14.2	82.6
	Agree	78	14.0	96.6
	Strongly agree	19	3.4	100.0
	Strongly disagree	107	19.2	
Workplace sector	Private sector	293.00	52.70	52.70
	Semi-private sector	72.00	12.95	65.65
	Public sector	140.00	25.18	90.83
	Other	51.00	9.17	100.00
Perception of workplace size	Micro	27	4.86	4.86
	Small	111	19.96	24.82
	Medium	156	28.06	52.88
	Large	262	47.12	100.00
Formal employee engagement programme	Yes	317	57.01	57.01
	No	131	23.56	80.58
	I do not know	108	19.42	100.00
Professional body registration	No	253	45.50	45.50
	Yes	303	54.50	100.00

6.3 CHOOSING AND JUSTIFYING THE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

Data was collected using a web-based electronic self-administered questionnaire made up of applicable and standardised measuring instruments. The literature review directed the choice of measuring instruments, based mainly on their reliability, validity and suitability in evaluating the constructs of the study, namely, the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice), the mediators (employee engagement, organisational trust) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). In order to provide a holistic picture of conflict, some additional aspects were included under the conflict types construct so that the relationships of the various constructs with the conflict dimensions of conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms and group atmosphere could be determined. This is similar to the approach taken by Jehn (1995, 1997), who also considered these conflict dimensions in her seminal work on conflict types. The socio-demographic variables were considered from a moderating perspective. The choice of measuring instruments was informed by the level at which the instruments reflected the conceptualisation of the variables in terms of the theories, models and paradigms adopted in this research. Finally, the cost-effectiveness of the instruments and ease of availability were considered. The selected measuring instruments have all been previously validated and published in relevant scholarly journals.

For ease of reference, Table 6.17 summarises the measurement instruments by giving a brief description of each, as well as listing the various subconstructs (dimensions) of each variable. The table is followed by a discussion of the purpose, administration, interpretation, validity and reliability, as well as the justification for choosing each of the selected instruments.

Table 6.17

A Synopsis of the Various Constructs, Subconstructs and Their Measuring Instruments

Construct	Subconstructs/Dimensions	Purpose of Instrument	Measuring Instrument
Leadership	Perceptions of social exchange leadership (based on the exchange aspects of trust and fairness)	The scale measures the social exchange behaviours between a leader and a subordinate in their daily interactions.	Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001)
	Leaders' conflict behaviour (collaborative, dominating or avoidant)	The scale assesses a manager's (leader) conflict management behaviours to determine how leaders shape an organisation's conflict culture.	Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012)
Organisational culture	Tolerance of conflict; allowance for mistakes	The instrument considers characteristics of innovative organisational cultures.	Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a)
Employee voice	Voice behaviour (speaking out, speaking up)	The instruments consider positive, constructive and proactive voice challenge behaviours within an organisation between employees and their co-workers and supervisors.	The Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) adapted from Morrison and Phelps (1999); Van Dyne & LePine, 1998)
	Employee voice opportunities	This measure assesses how supervisors allow their subordinates to voice their opinions.	The Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a)
Employee engagement	Job engagement; organisational engagement	The scales consider individuals' job engagement and organisation engagement.	Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b)
Organisational trust	Integrity; commitment; dependability	The instrument assesses the significance of the organisational trust dimensions for employees.	Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011)
Conflict types	Task; relational; process	The scales measure the presence of task, relational and process conflict in organisational groups.	Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Shah & Jehn, 1993)
	Status	The scale measures the presence of status conflict between members of a group	Status Conflict in Groups (Bendersky, & Hays, 2012)
	Conflict resolution potential*	The scale assesses the extent to which individuals see potential to resolve conflict.	Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001)

Construct	Subconstructs/Dimensions	Purpose of Instrument	Measuring Instrument
	Group atmosphere* (high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking for group members and low competition)	The scale considers the effect of a positive or negative group atmosphere on the different types of conflict.	
	Conflict acceptability norms# (openness norms versus avoidance norms)	The instrument assesses how conflict acceptability norms within a group affect conflict	
Interpersonal conflict handling styles	Integrating; obliging; dominating; avoiding; compromising	The scale measures five styles of handling interpersonal conflict with one's co-workers, supervisor(s) and subordinates.	ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b)
Biographical information	Socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, trade union role in organisational conflict management, sector, employee numbers, organisation size, employee engagement programme and professional body membership	A self-reporting biographical instrument was developed to collect data on individual and organisational socio-demographic variables	-

Note:

*Although the two conflict dimensions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere are not seen as types of conflict per se, they were included to enhance the holistic consideration of conflict as per Jehn's (1995, 1997) measuring scale and are therefore described.

#The scale measuring conflict norms and related data was later excluded from the analysis to improve model fit. Refer to Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion.

The various measuring instruments are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

6.3.1 Biographical instrument

As reported in the previous section, a biographical data section was included in the questionnaire to obtain socio-demographic characteristics. Accordingly, the instrument collected data on individual characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union membership, professional body membership) and organisational characteristics (trade union representation, sector, employee numbers, organisation size, existence of an employee engagement programme). These person-centred variables were carefully chosen based on findings in the literature review (refer to Chapters 2, 3, and 4, as well as the summary in section 5.2.4 of Chapter 5) that indicated their relationships with the constructs of relevance to this study.

In addition, as previously explained, because the current study considers conflict management from an organisational employment relations perspective, one item was added to the research to ascertain respondents' perceptions on whether trade unions contribute to effective conflict management, namely: "Trade unions contribute to effective conflict management in organisations". For the purposes of this specific item, a Likert scale was used to respond to the statement, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

6.3.2 Measurement of leadership

Leadership was measured by two instruments, namely, the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) and the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al, 2012).

6.3.2.1 Purpose of the leadership scales

The Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) measures the perceptions of social exchange leadership that transpire between leaders and their subordinates in their daily dealings. In so doing, it considers the perceptions of fairness and trust subordinates hold of their leaders (Murry et al., 2001). The scale was developed in a study (Murry et al., 2001) that investigated the role of direct supervisors in mitigating the negative consequences of sexual

harassment experiences. Murry et al. (2001) argue that sexual harassment is a form of conflict and that leaders play a vital role in the way conflict is managed.

The second leadership scale, namely the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012), assesses leaders' conflict management behaviours. More specifically, it considers how leaders influence conflict cultures and the organisational level consequences of their behaviour, be it collaborative, dominating or an avoidant conflict management behaviour. According to Gelfand et al. (2012), the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale is closely related to instruments such as ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b), which was used in this research to determine the interpersonal conflict handling styles of participants (discussed in section 6.3.8). As such, it is possible to compare the two sets of data. Whereas the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) focuses on how leaders' conflict management styles differ (and influence a conflict culture in organisations), ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) focuses on individual conflict management styles. Gelfand et al. (2012) adapted their scale from the Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (De Dreu et al., 2001).

6.3.2.2 Dimensions of the leadership scales

The Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) assesses the dimension of social exchange leadership by rating four questions (see section 6.3.2.3 below) that consider the trust and fairness perceptions followers hold of their leaders. Secondly, the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) measures the construct of conflict management by considering the three dimensions of collaboration, domination and avoidance.

6.3.2.3 Administration of the leadership scales

The Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) measures the three dimensions of collaborating (four items), dominating (three items) or avoidant (four items) conflict management behaviours by means of 11 items and takes about five to ten minutes to complete. The items were slightly adapted from beginning with the words "My branch manager..." to starting the sentence with "Management...", as it was argued that not all organisations would necessarily have branches. An example of a statement testing a collaborative approach is "Management encourages people to resolve conflicts through a problem-solving approach". An example of an item measuring a dominating conflict behaviour is "Management allows employees to argue until someone wins". Lastly, to assess an avoidant conflict management behaviour, the following statement serves as an example: "Management does not get involved in employees' conflict". The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), although Gelfand et al.

(2012) originally only used a five-point Likert scale. Apart from the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001), as discussed below, all other scales were modified to a seven-point Likert scale, thus ensuring ease of comparison between the various scales that were combined to create the questionnaire for this research.

The Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) is a four-item self-administered questionnaire, which takes about four minutes to complete. The four questions are: (1) Do you trust your supervisor? (2) Does your supervisor ensure that all assigned personnel are treated fairly? (3) Is there a conflict between your supervisor and the people who report to him/her? (4) Is your work performance evaluated fairly? The items are thus phrased as questions. Answers could be marked on a five-point Likert rating scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very large extent). Because of the nature of the questions, this was the only instrument that did not have a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Clear instructions were given on the completion of the four items. Additionally, respondents who formed part of the executive level of the organisation and did not report to a supervisor were given the option to move on to the next section.

6.3.2.4 Interpretation of the responses

As explained above, the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) has four items that respondents rate to indicate their daily exchange interactions with their supervisors. Items with the highest scores indicate interactions that takes place to a large extent, while items with lower scores indicate that the interaction did not take place at all (Murry et al., 2001). It takes about four minutes to complete the scale.

The Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) assesses conflict management behaviours by considering the three dimensions of collaboration, domination and avoidance in one measuring scale of 11 items. It takes about five to ten minutes to complete the 11 items. The response scale ranged from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree).

6.3.2.5 Psychometric properties of the leadership scales

Murry et al. (2001) reported an internal consistency reliability factor of .84 for the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001). Additionally, the 11-item Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) reported internal consistency reliabilities of .74 alpha on the collaborative items, .70 alpha on the dominating items and .70 alpha on the avoidant

items. Additionally, according to Gelfand et al. (2012), an exploratory factor analysis (including a maximum likelihood estimation and Varimax rotation) supported a three-factor solution (collaborative, dominating, and avoidant conflict management behaviours). High internal consistency reliabilities are reported in later studies that used either the original Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (De Dreu et al., 2001) or the adapted version of Gelfand et al. (2012), as used in this research (Beitler et al., 2016; Way et al., 2016).

6.3.2.6 *Rationale for using the leadership scales*

In choosing the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001), two aspects were considered; namely, the ER context of this research and the development of a conflict management framework through the lens of social exchange. The rationale for using this measuring scale was therefore because of its specific consideration of two social exchange aspects, namely fairness and trust – two important ER and conflict considerations (Emmott, 2015; Fauver et al., 2018; Matta et al., 2017).

This research considers leadership and organisational culture as two antecedents to conflict management that play a role in the management of organisational conflict. Therefore, the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012) was regarded as a suitable instrument to determine how leaders' conflict behaviours influence the conflict culture of the organisation. The research by Gelfand et al. (2012) confirms that leaders' conflict behaviours affect the conflict cultures in their work units, creating a specific conflict culture in the organisation.

Using these two scales as part of the current research further holds two advantages. Firstly, data obtained from these scales could contribute to a better understanding of the role leadership plays in conflict management. Secondly, at the time of writing and to the knowledge of the researcher, no other studies have used these scales in the South African context. Accordingly, the research may contribute to establishing the reliability and validity of the instruments in a South African sample.

Note: It should be noted that in the statistical analysis, the subscale constructs of each scale were treated as an overall leadership measure. That is, the two scales (the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale and the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) were treated as a multidimensional measure of the leadership construct measuring perceptions of social exchange leadership (based on the exchange aspects of trust and fairness) and leaders' conflict behaviour (collaborative, dominating or avoidant).

6.3.3 Measurement of organisational culture

In this research, organisational culture is assessed using the Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a). Yeh and Xu (2010b) used the scale to determine the effect of Confucian work ethics on learning about science and technology knowledge and morality, considering amongst other things the values of tolerance for conflict and allowance for mistakes. The use of this scale is discussed in more detail below.

6.3.3.1 Purpose of the Innovative Cultures Scale

The purpose of the Innovative Cultures Scale is to assess the characteristics of organisational innovation cultures (Yeh & Xu, 2010a). This is based on the argument that organisational values such as tolerance for conflict and mistakes (Hempel & Chang, 2002; Miron et al., 2004) potentially drive the innovative behaviours of employees. Yeh and Xu (2010b) note that employees with different cultural backgrounds will perceive these values differently. The scale was chosen because an organisational culture that creates an environment where organisational members feel safe enough to display innovative and creative behaviour, voice their disagreements, be accountable for and admit mistakes and engage in potentially conflictual discussions is important (Binyamin et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990).

6.3.3.2 Dimensions of the Innovative Cultures Scale

In this research, the construct of organisational culture is assessed using the Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a), thus measuring the subconstructs of Tolerance of conflict and Allowance for mistakes. The original scale included other subscales as well (e.g. valuing competence and autonomy), however, not all subscales were considered relevant to the current research.

6.3.3.3 Administration of the instrument

The original 15-items of Yeh and Xu's (2010a) measuring instrument were divided into five subscales. Only two of these subscales, containing six items, were considered for the current research. Firstly, the original subscale "Tolerance of conflict" was used, although it was adapted from three items to four items for the purposes of the current research, as explained in Table 6.18. A number of other adaptations were also made. Firstly, the wording was changed slightly. For instance, the wording "Employees in my organisation ..." was used instead of "Employees here..." This was done to ensure uniformity throughout the questionnaire. Secondly, the second item was

divided in two items, in line with a suggestion from one of the peer reviewers during the pre-test for this research. The rationale behind this change was grounded in the fact that the current research specifically also considers the construct of employee voice (speaking up and speaking out) as an antecedent to conflict management. Hence, it made sense to distinguish specifically between employee voice in situations where they speak out (e.g. “attended by fellow employees...”) or speak up (e.g. “where management is present...”). Table 6.18 below clarifies these changes.

Table 6.18

Adaption of Tolerance of Conflict Subscale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a)

Original items	Adapted items
Despite conflicts, employees <i>here</i> respect the opinions of others (Item 1)	Despite conflicts, employees <i>in my organisation</i> respect the opinions of others
Employees <i>here</i> are willing to <i>talk in meetings</i> , even when they disagree with others (Item 2)	Employees <i>in my organisation</i> are willing to talk in meetings <i>attended by fellow employees</i> , even when they disagree with others
	Employees <i>in my organisation</i> are willing to talk in meetings <i>where management is present</i> , even when they disagree with others
Employees <i>here</i> communicate and compromise when there are conflicts at work (Item 3)	Employees <i>in my organisation</i> communicate and compromise when there are conflicts at work

The second subscale used was the “Allowance for mistakes” subscale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a). Allowance for mistake was measured by means of three items such as: “Failure is tolerated if it is not due to purposeful mistakes or indolence”. The word “laziness” was added in brackets after this item for the purposes of clarifying the meaning of the word *indolence*. This change was suggested during the peer-review pre-test phase of the research. Additionally, in order to remain consistent throughout the questionnaire, the words “This firm” were changed to “This organisation” in the second and third items.

Similar to the original scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a), the adapted seven-item measure made use of a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The seven items take about five minutes to complete.

6.3.3.4 *Interpretation of the responses*

Both dimensions were measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a specific statement on the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly disagree
- 4 = Neither disagree nor agree
- 5 = Slightly agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

The scale from one to seven reflects the degree to which participants viewed the tolerance of conflict and mistakes in their organisations and, thus, the higher the score, the higher the tolerance of conflict and the more mistakes that are allowed in their organisation.

6.3.3.5 *Psychometric properties of the Innovative Cultures Scale*

Varimax rotation was used to do a factor analysis of the Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a), indicating a six-factor measure that included the two subscales of Tolerance of conflict and Allowance for mistakes. Yeh and Xu (2010a, 2010b) reported Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales ranging from .70 to .86, thus displaying internal consistency and reliability for the constructs. The various subscales of the Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a) showed significant correlations.

6.3.3.6 *Rationale for using the Innovative Cultures Scale*

Yeh and Xu (2010b) considered the dimension of innovation in their organisational culture research. In so doing, they considered the eight dimensions of the Organisational Culture Profile of O'Reilly et al. (1991). One of these eight dimensions is innovation. Furthermore, Yeh and Xu (2010b) draw on the work of Miron et al. (2004), who argue that organisations need an innovative organisational culture if they want to survive in present-day globally competitive environments. Amabile (2000) defines innovation in organisations as the successful enactment of creative ideas through substantial levels of initiative. Miron et al. (2004) postulate that to ensure innovation, an organisational culture is necessary that allows employees to act creatively. Moreover, Schneider

(1975) argues that employees only achieve their full potential in a work environment and culture that echo their own values, interests and capabilities, thus creating a fit between the organisation and the employee. Hence, the current research supports innovative approaches to conflict management situations. Because cultural differences may affect conflict tolerance and allowance of mistakes (Yeh & Xu, 2010b), considering these aspects may be of great value when deliberating innovative conflict management strategies for diverse South African organisations.

6.3.4 Measurement of employee voice

Two instruments, namely, the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) (as adapted from Morrison & Phelps, 1999 and Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) were used to measure employee voice as conceptualised in Chapter 3.

6.3.4.1 Purpose of the employee voice scales

The Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) was used to assess constructive and proactive challenging voice behaviours between employees and their co-workers and supervisors in an organisation. This measure considers to whom employees are most likely to voice their opinions (Liu et al., 2010).

The second employee voice scale that was used, namely, the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a), considers the question of when leaders grant voice to their subordinates. It deliberates the perceptions leaders hold about followers' control and belongingness needs. It is argued that these perceptions would affect the portrayal of fair procedures. Thus, the purpose of the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) is to assess the extent to which supervisors grant employees voice opportunities.

6.3.4.2 Dimensions of the employee voice scales

The Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) assesses to whom employees are likely to voice their point of view. Therefore, the subconstructs of "speaking out" (employees speaking to colleagues) and "speaking up" (employees speaking to management) are considered. The Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a), on the other hand, assesses "Employee voice opportunities", indicating whether leaders grant voice to employees in order to allow them to express their opinions.

6.3.4.3 Administration of the instrument

The Voice Behavior Measure adopted for this research was a peer-reported scale that was developed to consider voice behaviour, employee identification and transformational leadership in order to ascertain to whom employees would voice their thoughts (Liu et al., 2010). Liu et al. (2010) adapted their Voice Behavior Measure from the seminal work of Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) six-item voice behaviour scale, which assesses challenge behaviour in co-workers (thus speaking out), as well as from Morrison and Phelps's (1999) taking charge scale.

Liu et al. (2010) replaced the word *others* in the original items of Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) scale with *colleagues* so that the target of behaviours could be specified. For instance, a sample question of Liu et al.'s (2010) research now read: "This person communicates his/her opinions about work issues to colleagues even if his or her opinion is different and with others who disagree with him/her." Hence, a scale was developed that assessed speaking out voice behaviours (Liu et al., 2010). Additionally, Liu et al. (2010) adjusted Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) six-item measure to focus on behaviours toward supervisors (speaking up). A sample question is "This person communicates his or her opinions about work issues to the supervisor even if his or her opinion is different and the supervisor disagrees with him or her". Furthermore, Liu and colleagues added three additional items from Morrison and Phelps's taking charge scale (Liu et al., 2010; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). For example, one of the questions (Morrison & Phelps, 1999) reads: "This person often tries to persuade his or her supervisor to change organizational rules or policies that are non-productive or counterproductive." Liu et al. (2010) explain that the six items in Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) measure emphasise innovative voice, whereas Morrison and Phelps's (1999) three items place more emphasis on the effectiveness of voice.

Liu et al.'s (2010) adaptation of Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) and Morrison and Phelps's (1999) measures were altered slightly for purposes of this research. Firstly, instead of the words "This person", the items were changed to first person sentences. For instance, rather than saying, "This person communicates his or her opinions about work issues to the supervisor even if his or her opinion is different and the supervisor disagrees with him or her", the statement was changed to "I communicate my opinions about work issues to management even if my opinion is different, and management disagrees with me". This was done in order to use the scale in any setting, as the population of the sample was not limited to known organisations or teams. Secondly, the item "If his or her colleagues made mistakes in their work, this person would point them out and help them correct them", was changed into two items as peer reviewers pointed out during the pre-test

phase of this research that the item was a double-barrelled question. Hence, it was changed to “I give constructive suggestions to colleagues to improve their work” and “If my colleagues made mistakes in their work, I would point them out”. Thirdly, although Liu et al.’s (2010) Voice Behavior Measure uses a six-point response format ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 6 (“strongly agree”), this was changed to a seven-point Likert scale for ease of reference among the different constructs of relevance to this research. Lastly, after completion of the “Speaking out” section of the questionnaire, respondents were given the option to complete the “Speaking Up” section, or alternatively, if they part of the executive managerial level of the organisation and as such did not report to a supervisor, to proceed to the next section.

The Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a), the second voice behaviour scale of the current research, was based on organisational justice-related work (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Colquitt, 2001). This measure uses a three-item scale to assess the extent to which leaders grant voice. Like the “Speaking up” subscale (Liu et al., 2010) above, only respondents who reported to a supervisor completed this scale. Although all three items began with the stem, “My supervisor...” in Hoogervorst et al.’s (2013a) research, this was changed to (1) Management listens to my opinion when making decisions; (2) Management involves me in their decisions and (3) Management takes my opinion into consideration when making decisions. Furthermore, while respondents in the research by Hoogervorst et al. (2013b) completed a five-point scale of agreement, this was adapted to a seven-point Likert scale of agreement for the purposes of the current study.

6.3.4.4 Interpretation of the responses

All three dimensions, “Speaking out”, “Speaking up” and “Employee voice opportunities”, were measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a specific statement on a scale where 1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree. The “Speaking out” and “Speaking Up” scales from one to seven reflect the degree to which respondents participated in speaking out and up. Hence, the higher the score, the more it indicated participation in speaking out and up voice behaviour in the respondents’ respective organisations. Similarly, in Hoogervorst et al.’s (2013a) scale measuring the extent of voice opportunities, a higher score indicated the presence of more voice opportunities afforded by the leaders of an organisation to their employees.

6.3.4.5 *Psychometric properties of the employee voice scales*

The Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 for the scale measuring “Speaking up”, and .91 for the scale measuring the dimension of “Speaking out”. Additionally, according to Liu et al. (2010), all intercorrelations were significant (.01 level). Liu et al. (2010) based their work on Van Dyne and LePine (1998), who also reported high internal consistencies and inter-rater agreement for the scale ($\alpha = .95$, mean RWGM = .88, SD = .20). The Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83, also indicating internal consistency.

6.3.4.6 *Rationale for using the employee voice scales*

The Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) was developed for the purpose of measuring to whom employees are likely to voice their thoughts – up, to leadership, or out, to colleagues. It was thus subsequently deemed applicable to the current study of conflict management. It was argued that conflict may manifest between peers, as well as with supervisors, and that it is therefore necessary to consider both up and out voice behaviours. Hence, it was assumed that the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) might fulfil the need to obtain valuable information on the construct of employee voice for the purposes of this research.

The Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) was developed as part of a study investigating when organisational leaders provide their employees with voice opportunities. This was deemed important as the current research also considers how leadership predicts conflict management. It was thus regarded as important to specifically determine the behaviour of leaders with regard to voice opportunities.

Note: It should be noted that in the statistical analysis the subscale constructs of each scale were treated as an overall employee voice measure. That is, the two scales (the Voice Behavior Measure and the Voice Measure) were treated as a multidimensional measure of the employee voice construct, measuring speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities.

6.3.5 **Measurement of employee engagement**

The Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006b) was used to assess employee (work) engagement. This instrument is briefly discussed below.

6.3.5.1 *Purpose of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale*

The purpose of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b) is to assess job engagement and organisation engagement.

6.3.5.2 *Dimensions of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale*

Two distinct subconstructs or types of employee engagement are measured. Firstly, job engagement is considered in relation to an employee's work role and, secondly, organisational engagement is assessed in relation to the employee as a member of the organisation. Items to determine job engagement include for instance: "Sometimes I am so into my job that I lose track of time." An example for organisational engagement is "One of the most exciting things for me is getting involved with things happening in this organisation".

6.3.5.3 *Administration of the instrument*

The Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006b) assesses job and organisational engagement through an 11-item, self-administered measuring scale. Five items on the scale evaluate respondents' psychological presence in their job role and the remaining six items assess respondents' psychological presence in their organisational role. For the purposes of this study, the responses on the five-point Likert scale (Saks, 2006b) were adapted to a seven-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Clear instructions were given on how to complete the scale which takes between five and ten minutes to complete.

6.3.5.4 *Interpretation of the responses*

The two subscales (job engagement and work engagement) are measured separately and indicate the respondents' level of engagement for each of these forms of engagement. Using a rating scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), the researcher is then able to evaluate respondents' engagement levels. Two items (one in the job engagement scale and one in the organisational engagement scale) were negatively worded in order to control for agreement response bias.

6.3.5.5 *Psychometric properties of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale*

According to Saks (2006a), principal components factor analysis with a promax rotation resulted in two factors corresponding to job and organisation engagement. For the job engagement scale (Saks, 2006a), five items loaded 0.70 or higher with cross-factor loadings of less than 0.20; hence,

the low-loading item was removed, resulting in a five-item scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 being reported. The organisational engagement scale had all six items loading 0.75 or higher, while all of the cross-factor loadings were less than 0.30 (Saks, 2006a). Therefore, all six items remained (alpha = 0.90) (Saks, 2006a). Saks' (2006a) research findings suggest a significant moderate correlation between job and organisational engagement ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). However, a paired T-test showed significant mean differences ($t(101) = 2.42$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that although the two measures of engagement are related, significant differences are also recorded (Saks, 2006a).

The instrument has also been used in other studies (Andrew & Sofian, 2012; S. Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013; Soumendu Biswas, Varma, & Ramaswami, 2013; Ghosh, Rai, & Sinha, 2014; Malinen, Wright, & Cammock, 2013; Selmer, Jonasson, & Luring, 2013), which indicated satisfactory internal consistencies.

6.3.5.6 *Rationale for using the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale*

The Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006b) was designed to assess the engagement of organisational members' in their work role, as well as in their role as members of the organisation. It is hoped that these two dimensions shed further light on specific aspects of engagement that may mediate the constructs of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The scale (Saks, 2006b) is based on principles related to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) – one of the overarching theories of this research – and was, therefore, relevant to this study. Hence, for the purposes of this research study, the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006b) had the potential to provide valuable information on the employee engagement variable.

6.3.6 **Measurement of organisational trust**

The Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) was used to assess organisational trust and is discussed in more detail below.

6.3.6.1 *Purpose of the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey*

The Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) aims to evaluate the importance of organisational trust dimensions for employees.

6.3.6.2 *Dimensions of the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey*

Three subconstructs of organisational trust, namely, the dimensions of integrity, commitment and dependability (Chathoth et al., 2011), are assessed as outlined below.

Integrity as part of organisational trust incorporates the values and principles (e.g. fairness and justice, honesty and transparency) the trustee adheres to and the trustor accepts (Albrecht, 2002). Seven items were used to measure the subconstruct of organisational trust. For example, two of the items that were asked to measure the dimension of integrity were “My organisation treats me fairly and justly” and “My organisation takes significant measures to lead me in the right direction” (Chathoth et al., 2011).

Commitment is described as a feeling of belonging to an organisation, which leads to certain actions towards the organisation (Chathoth et al., 2011). Seven items measured commitment as a subconstruct of organisational trust, for example “My organization shows confidence in my knowledge” (Chathoth et al., 2011). Minor word changes were made to the items to ensure that the focus was on organisational trust, for instance the wording of the following example item was changed from “My organization tries to maintain a long-term commitment with me” to “My organisation tries to maintain a long-term commitment with employees”. In the current research, only six items were considered in this subscale; these six items all focused on participants’ views of their organisations’ commitment to their employees, for instance one of the statements that was assessed reads, “My organisation is willing to invest in employees”. The six chosen statements were deemed relevant to the study of organisational trust as conceptualised in the current research. The seventh (omitted) item focused on the individual (“I feel loyal to my organisation”).

Dependability refers to the unfailing and reliable actions of an organisation, which indicate to its members’ that it will follow up on its promises (Paine, 2003, 2012). Five items assessed dependability, for instance “Employees can rely on my organisation's management to keep its promises” and “Employees are willing to let my organisation make decisions for them” (Chathoth et al., 2011).

6.3.6.3 *Administration of the instrument*

For the purposes of this study, the ten-point Likert-type scale (Chathoth et al., 2011) was adapted to a seven-point scale with anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Clear

instructions were given on how to complete the scale, which takes between five and ten minutes to complete.

6.3.6.4 Interpretation of the responses

A Likert-type scale of seven points was used in the self-administered survey (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). Each of the organisational trust subscales (i.e. integrity, commitment, and dependability) is measured separately and indicates the participant's response in respect of a particular dimension. The researcher is thus able to determine which dimensions contribute to higher levels of organisational trust. A higher score (e.g. 7 = strongly agree) indicated that respondents strongly agree with a statement, whereas a lower score (e.g. 1 = strongly disagree) indicated disagreement with the statement.

6.3.6.5 Psychometric properties of the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey

To ensure the construct validity of the measuring instrument, factor analysis was undertaken by Chathoth et al. (2011), revealing the three factors of integrity (seven items), commitment (seven items) and dependability (five items). Moreover, for each variable, high factor loadings were found for all items of that variable. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the respective items in each of the variables all had high coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.98 (Chathoth et al., 2011).

6.3.6.6 Rationale for using the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey

This instrument is based on research that considered trust as a latent factor that may be operationalised through organisational members' integrity, commitment and dependability. It is vital to consider integrity in conflict research, as it enhances trust relationships (Mayer et al., 1995) that may have been damaged by conflict (e.g. Benitez et al., 2018). According to the seminal work of Granovetter (1985), integrity plays a vital role in sustaining frail relationships and enhances trust without which cooperation and coordination in organisations is not possible (Gulati & Westphal, 1999; Tyler, 2000).

Furthermore, trust boosts commitment (Brockett, 1997; Cho & Park, 2011; Tyler, 2000) by contributing to high-quality social exchange relationships (Blau, 1964, Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Scholars such as Kumar et al. (1995) and Ndubisi (2011) support the current study's argument that managing conflict constructively may increase levels of trust and commitment by enhancing the mutual interdependence of the reciprocal workplace exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Lastly, dependence reflects an organisation's need to maintain relationships with various parties in order to reach organisational goals (Beier & Stern, 1969; Frazier, 1983). Sheppard and Sherman (1998) argue that dependent relationships are characterised by a mutual dependency. Research suggests that higher levels of trust and commitment are visible in relationships that display total interdependence. This also leads to lower conflict levels because of what the parties in the relationship may lose should dysfunctional conflict manifest (Kumar et al., 1995). Hence, the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) was deemed a good choice to operationalise the conceptualisation of organisational trust as defined for the purposes of the current research (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1), which focuses on conflict management within an employment relationship context.

6.3.7 Measurement of conflict types

Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Shah & Jehn, 1993) was used to measure task, relational and process conflict, as well as the conflict dimensions of conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms and group atmosphere. Additionally, the Status Conflict in Groups measuring instrument (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) measured status conflict. These instruments are discussed below.

6.3.7.1 Purpose of the scales measuring conflict types

The purpose of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995; 1997) is to assess the occurrence of task, relationship and process conflicts in organisational groups. Additionally, Jehn (1995, 1997) and Jehn and Mannix (2001) considered whether some types of conflict may be beneficial to organisations. On the other hand, the Status Conflict in Groups measuring instrument (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) was used to evaluate status conflict. To determine the effect of group atmosphere on experiences of conflict types, conflict resolution potential and group performance, Jehn and Mannix (2001) considered the Group Atmosphere Scale, as adapted from the previous work of scholars measuring trust, respect and cohesiveness (Chatman, 1991), open conflict discussion norms (Jehn, 1995) and liking of fellow group members (Jehn, 1995).

6.3.7.2 Dimensions of the scales measuring conflict types

The different conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict) are subconstructs of the outcome variable, conflict types, in this research. In addition, in the process of determining whether some conflict may be beneficial to organisations, Jehn (1995, 1997) and Jen and Mannix

(2001) deliberated the relationships between various conflict dimensions and the different conflict types; the current research followed suit. Hence, in the present research, the conflict dimensions (sub-constructs) of conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms (conflict openness versus conflict avoidance norms), group atmosphere (including liking of fellow group members), and the various types of conflict were considered (Jehn, 1995; 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). In addition, status conflict was assessed (Bendersky. & Hays, 2012).

6.3.7.3 Administration of the instruments

A self-administered rating scale was used to assess the multi-dimensional conflict types' construct using a seven-point Likert scale, although Jehn (1995, 1997), Jehn and Mannix (2001) and Bendersky and Hays (2012) used a five-point Likert scale. The rating scale consisted of various subscales that took about ten to 15 minutes to complete. The subscales are discussed below.

(a) Task conflict

Four items measured task conflict (Jehn, 1995), for instance "Members in my work unit experience conflict of ideas with others". Again the items were slightly changed to reflect items that could answer to a seven-item Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). For instance, the original research item of Jehn and Mannix (2001) now read, "How much conflict of ideas is there in your work group?" with responses being recorded on a Likert scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot).

(b) Relational conflict

Similarly, relational conflict was measured using a four-item scale. Items sought to ascertain, for example, "How often do people get angry while working in your work group?" (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Subsequently, some items were changed slightly, for example to "Members in my work unit often get angry while working as a group". Respondents answered on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

(c) Process conflict

Like task and relationship conflict, the subscale of process conflict includes four items. An example item of the process conflict scale (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Shah & Jehn, 1993) included, "How often are there disagreements about who should do what in your work group?" This was changed slightly to read, "Members in my work unit often disagree about who should do

what". Respondents answered a seven-item Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

(d) *Status conflict*

Originally, the status conflict subscale was a nine-item survey scale, however factor analysis revealed that although four items loaded positively and uniquely as a separate factor, two other items loaded negatively on status conflict and one other item loaded on relationship conflict, leaving only four items remaining (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). The Cronbach's alpha measuring the reliability of the four remaining items of the status conflict scale was found to be 0.90. Discriminant validity was also considered by conducting comparative confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether the four-factor model represented the data adequately, meeting standard criteria (comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.95). Additionally, research confirmed that the four conflict subscales (task, relationship, process and status conflict types) are significantly positively correlated with each other (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Nonetheless, the full scale was considered in this research.

An example of one of the items (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) is, "Members in my work unit frequently take sides (i.e., form coalitions) during conflict". The word 'team' in the original survey was changed to 'work unit' for the purposes of the current research to ensure that organisational members who do not work in teams could still complete the survey. In other words, the original item above was slightly changed to "Members in my work unit frequently take sides (i.e., form coalitions) during conflict". Items were phrased in such a way as to allow a seven-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), instead of the original seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "to no extent" (1) to "to a great extent" (7) (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

(e) *Group atmosphere*

Example items from the 13-item self-reported survey subscale of group atmosphere included, "I trust my fellow work unit's members" and "My work unit's members are truthful and honest". The scale measures group atmosphere to determine how the dimensions of trust, respect, cohesiveness, open conflict norms and liking of fellow group members influence conflict patterns (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

(f) *Conflict acceptability norms*

Acceptability as a dimension of conflict refers to group norms about conflict and communication (Jehn, 1997). Group norms are standards that determine how group members behave (Jehn, 1997). According to Jehn (1997), acceptability group norms determine how conflict is perceived within groups or organisations – while some groups have more open norms and encourage the expression of doubts or opinions, other groups may avoid such confrontations (Tjosvold, 1991a). Both openness and avoidance conflict norms have positive and negative outcomes for conflict (Jehn, 1997). Moreover, different norms may be evident within one group depending on the type of conflict; for instance, whereas relational conflict may be avoided, task conflict may be openly discussed (Jehn, 1997). The dimension, conflict acceptability norms (Jehn, 1995), was measured with a seven-item scale, which included four items with reversed scores. An example of an item includes “Conflict is dealt with openly in my work unit”, while the next item with a reversed score was phrased as “People in my work unit try to avoid conflict at all costs”.

(g) *Conflict resolution potential*

In Jehn’s (1995, 1997) seminal work, it was found that the potential of conflict resolution is a dimension of conflict that occurs in task, relational and process conflict. Conflict resolution potential refers to the degree to which the impression is given that the conflict will be possible to resolve (Jehn, 1997). Jehn (1997) explains in her seminal work on conflict types that various scholars have focused their research on conflict resolution (Davidson et al., 2004; Gounaris et al., 2016; Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2016; Lewicki, Weiss, & Lewin, 1992; K. Lewin, 1948). However, not all forms of conflict are regarded as negative, as positive outcomes (e.g. enhanced decision-making) may flow from moderate levels of task conflict (Jehn, 1997). She (Jehn, 1997) further notes that not all conflicts are easy to resolve but may escalate into very negative outcomes. Jehn’s (1997) seminal research indicates that while process conflict is more easily resolved, relationship conflict is viewed as harder to resolve, with aspects such as status differences and the history preceding the conflict influencing conflict resolution potential (Wall & Callister, 1995). Jehn (1997) argues that individual characteristics, group structure (e.g. leader involvement) and dimensions of conflict (e.g. emotionality) have the biggest influence on whether individuals view conflict as resolvable, or not. Moreover, when individuals perceived conflict as resolvable they were more motivated to resolve the conflict and thus these conflicts were resolved (Jehn, 1997). Conflict resolution potential (Jehn, 1995) is a subscale of three items that includes

items such as “Disagreements about specific work being done are usually resolved in my work unit” and “Emotional work conflicts are usually resolved in my work unit”.

6.3.7.4 *Interpretation of the responses*

Originally, items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 = (A lot). However, to measure group atmosphere the scale was changed to a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This was done to facilitate comparisons with other scales in this study that predominantly used this Likert scale. To enable these comparisons between questionnaire items, questions by Jehn and Mannix (2001) were changed to statements. For instance, whereas Jehn and Mannix (2001, p. 243) asked the question: “How much do you trust your fellow work group members?” (to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale), this was changed in this research to a statement, reading: “I trust my fellow work unit’s members”. Likewise, the question: “Were your group members truthful and honest?” was adapted to read, “My work unit’s members are truthful and honest”. Clear instructions were given for completing the self-rating scales. Four items measuring conflict acceptability norms had reversed scores (i.e. items were negatively worded) – this controls for potential agreement response bias.

6.3.7.5 *Psychometric properties of the scales measuring conflict types*

According to Jehn’s research (1995), during which she conducted regression and factor analyses of 589 responses, a two-factor solution was confirmed that supported the distinction of relationship conflict (4 items) and task conflict (4 items). The coefficient alphas for the scales of relationship conflict and task conflict were found to be .92 and .87 (Jehn, 1995) respectively and in the research conducted by Jehn and Mannix (2001), Cronbach’s alpha of .94 for both relational and task conflicts, and .93 for process conflict were found.

Later studies (Babalola, Stouten, Euwema, & Ovadje, 2018) found good internal consistency for items measuring relationship conflict ($\alpha = 0.92$), task conflict ($\alpha = 0.91$) and process conflict ($\alpha = 0.90$). Babalola et al. (2018) tested the discriminant validity of the three conflict types (relationship, task and process conflict) by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) – comparing and testing a three-factor model (including the three conflict types) with a one-factor model. The results supported the three-factor model with a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 167.91$, $df = 74$, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07). RMSEA values that are not greater than .08 propose an adequate fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). This provided further support for the discriminant validity of relationship, task

and process conflict measures (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Babalola et al. (2018) also confirmed convergent validity as all factor loadings ranged from .55 to .87.

Regarding the Status Conflict Scale (Bendersky & Hays, 2012), four of the nine status conflict items loaded together, positively and uniquely, on a separate factor. Two additional items loaded negatively on the status conflict factor, and three others loaded (or cross-loaded) on the relationship conflict factor. Bendersky and Hays' (2012) four-item conflict scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90. Additionally, strong construct validity is evident ($\chi^2= 114.60$, SRMR = 0.05, CFI = 0.95) (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

The subscales measuring the conflict dimensions of group atmosphere, conflict acceptability norms, liking of fellow group members and conflict resolution potential had Cronbach's alphas ranging from .73 to .94 (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). The conflict resolution potential subscale has three items to measure the potential of conflict resolution, and a coefficient alpha of .84 (Jehn, 1995). In addition, this subscale (Jehn, 1995) has a coefficient alpha of .74 (Jehn, 1995). Four items measured attitudes towards others (i.e. liking of group members) – with a coefficient alpha of .73 (Jehn, 1995).

6.3.7.6 *Rationale for using the scales measuring conflict types*

Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Shah & Jehn, 1993) effectively operationalises the conceptualisation of conflict types comprising task, relational and process types, as described in Chapter 2. Furthermore, it allows for the measurement of conflict dynamics that may influence these conflict types (conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms and group atmosphere). This scale (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Shah & Jehn, 1993) is recognised by scholars worldwide as the most-used and well-known instrument to determine conflict types and related dimensions – in fact, this scale has been used in nearly 80% of conflict research studies worldwide (De Wit et al., 2012; Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017).

The Status Conflict in Groups measuring instrument (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) used to assess status conflict was considered important for the current research on conflict management, as it incorporates Jehn's research (1995, 1997) to validate an additional conflict type (status conflict). The scale has also been used in subsequent studies (e.g. Hays & Bendersky, 2015; Chun & Choi, 2014).

Note: It should be noted that in the statistical analysis the subscale constructs of each scale were treated as an overall measure of conflict types. In other words, the two scales (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale and the scale Status Conflict in Groups) were treated as a multidimensional measure of the conflict types construct, measuring task conflict, relational conflict, process conflict, status conflict, conflict resolution potential, conflict acceptability norms, and group atmosphere.

6.3.8 Measurement of interpersonal conflict handling styles

Dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) informs the research on conflict management through a choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles. To measure these interpersonal conflict-handling styles, Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) was used.

6.3.8.1 Purpose of the Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II

The 28-item ROCI-II questionnaire was developed to assess five styles of handling interpersonal conflict (Rahim, 1983).

6.3.8.2 Dimensions of the Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II

The selected factors of the ROCI-II questionnaire represent the five independent dimensions of conflict styles and were labelled integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising styles, respectively. These styles were explained in Chapter 2, section 2.2.1.2. Rahim and Magner (1995a) explain that because of poor fit indices for their original five-factor model, some solution had to be considered, even though poor fit is a common occurrence with measuring scales that have about four to seven items per subconstruct, or when sample sizes are large (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994). Errors occur easily in such circumstances. To address the issue of fit, subsets of items within factors are summed to get aggregate variables (e.g. Integrating 1 and 2; Avoiding 1 and 2). Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994) suggest that two aggregate variables per factor is appropriate for scales with four to seven items and Rahim and Magner (1995a) achieved satisfactory fit by considering the interpersonal conflict handling styles in this manner. Hence, the same approach was followed in this research. The aggregate interpersonal conflict handling styles variables (based on the ROCI-II) (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) applied in the current research were the following:

- Integrating 1 (items 1, 4, 5, 12); Integrating 2 (items 22, 23, 28)
- Obliging 1 (items 2, 10, 11); Obliging 2 (items 13, 19, 24)
- Dominating 1 (items 8,9, 18); Dominating 2 (items 21, 25)
- Avoiding 1 (items 3, 6, 16); Avoiding 2 (items 17, 26, 27)
- Compromising 1 (items 7, 14); and Compromising 2 (items 15, 20).

In other words, items measuring, for example, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 assessed similar content to that which an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2, assessed. Each style was merely divided by Rahim and Magner (1995a) to ensure better fit.

6.3.8.3 *Administration of the instrument*

The self-administered inventory questionnaire consists of 28 items that are randomly ordered and rated on a five-point Likert scale, with higher values representing greater use of a particular conflict style. For the purposes of this research, the reference to “my boss” was changed to “management”. The instrument takes between five to ten minutes to complete. Sample questions of the different styles are for instance:

- Integrating: I try to work with (my boss) management to find solutions to a problem that satisfy our expectations.
- Avoiding: I avoid an encounter with (my boss) management.
- Dominating: I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
- Obliging: I generally try to satisfy the needs of (my boss) management.
- Compromising: I use “give and take” so that a compromise can be made.

One item of the original ROCI-II was divided into two as it was pointed out during the pre-pilot test that the item addresses two separate issues in one. The original item read, “I attempt to avoid being ‘put on the spot’ and try to keep my conflict with management to myself” (Rahim, 1983), whereas it was changed in this study to the following two items: “I attempt to avoid being ‘put on the spot’ in conflict situations” and “I try to keep my conflict with management to myself”.

6.3.8.4 *Interpretation of the responses*

The various items in the survey assist in determining the predominant style individuals use to manage conflict. Participants are required to rate each item on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), indicating their level of agreement with each statement.

6.3.8.5 *Psychometric properties of Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II*

After extensive research and when developing the questionnaire, Rahim (1983) considered 105 items to include in the instrument (items that loaded $< .40$ and/or loaded on an uninterpretable factor were discarded or rewritten). This led to the preparation of a final instrument containing 35 randomly organised items, seven per style of handling conflict. The responses received to these 35 conflict items were factor analysed using principal factoring with iteration and varimax rotation. Eight factors with eigenvalues ≥ 1.00 were extracted. In the final instrument, 28 items with factor loadings $\geq .40$ were retained. Satisfactory internal consistency reliability was determined with alphas that ranged from $\alpha = .72$ to $\alpha = .77$. Test-retest correlations and Cronbach's alphas compared positively with those of other existing measurements (Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). According to Rahim (1983), evidence of the empirical validity of the scales was provided through discriminant analyses.

6.3.8.6 *Rationale for using the Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II*

Rahim's (1983) conflict inventory compares favourably with other instruments measuring conflict management styles (Thomas & Kilmann, 1978) and has been used extensively in other research (Cheung et al., 2011; Green, 2008; Johansen & Cadmus, 2016; Rahim et al., 2001; Rahim & Magner, 1995a).

6.3.9 Limitations of the measuring instruments

Self-reported measurements, as applied in this research, are commonly used to assess the perceptions, behaviours and attitudes of individuals. Self-reporting entails participants' consideration of their behaviours, attitudes and perceptions using surveys, questionnaires or interviews (Demetriou, Ozer, & Essau, 2015). Nonetheless, a number of disadvantages are linked to self-reporting. In anticipation of the potential negative effects it might hold, participants were clearly informed of the aims and relevance of the study, while brief but clear instructions were given throughout (Cohen et al., 2018). Potential limitations of the measuring instruments are discussed below.

One of the potential limitations of the current study is that it incorporated a variety of constructs resulting in a measuring instrument that contained many items. This may result in lower response rates and incomplete surveys, and may also influence the accuracy of the data because of response fatigue (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, Podsakoff et al.

(2003) note that longer surveys have the advantage that respondents are less influenced by previous answers, which they might still have remembered had the survey been short. Another limitation of self-reporting questionnaires (whether web-based, mailed or through an email link) is that the response rate tends to be low (Salkind, 2018).

One of the main disadvantages of self-report questionnaires relates to potential bias in responses which may be subjective or exaggerated (Demetriou et al., 2015), or lacking in necessary introspection regarding respondents' behaviours, attitudes or perceptions (Cohen et al., 2018). These aspects may result in imprecise replies to the items asked, even when questionnaires are completed with the intention to offer factual, accurate and honest answers (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, when participants are aware that their answers are being monitored, they may potentially be influenced to react differently to questions – a phenomenon called reactivity which may influence the reliability of the findings (Coaley, 2014). Another phenomenon that may influence the reliability of the results is that of social desirability – the tendency to respond in an exaggerated manner that makes respondents appear more desirable, while negative behaviour is underreported (Coaley, 2014; Demetriou et al., 2015). In other words, respondents may attempt to mask their own behaviours, perceptions and attitudes by providing false or fabricated responses, particularly when their true answers may not be socially desirable (Babbie & Roberts, 2018; Rubin & Babbie, 2014).

A further disadvantage of self-report surveys is that they are prone to challenges associated with common method bias. This challenge is aggravated when the same sample is used to gather data on both antecedents and outcome variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Common method bias is found when the conclusions on a relationship between variables diverge from the true and accurate relationship because a single data collection method was used (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Nonetheless, scholars such as Podsakoff et al. (2003) advise on ways that may reduce this bias – their advice was applied in this study. Firstly, participants were assured that their participation in the research was anonymous and confidential; that they should respond as honestly as possible; that their opinions and perceptions were valued, and therefore, there were no right or wrong answers (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010). Secondly, all measuring instruments were previously validated instruments, thus enhancing construct validity (Salkind et al., 2018), with some items in the instruments being negatively worded and reverse coded. Lastly, intricate and multifaceted relationships between the antecedents and outcome variables, such as mediating and moderating effects, were guided by relevant existing theories and then

conceptualised (Chang et al., 2010).

The researcher thus acknowledges that some limitations exist, even though the chosen measuring instruments were carefully selected with the aim of the current research in mind. The limitations are noted and were taken into consideration when interpreting the research findings derived from the empirical research results.

6.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

As discussed above, nine measuring instruments were used in this study (see Table 6.17), as discussed in section 6.3. For the purposes of this study, these instruments were integrated in an electronic, web-based questionnaire that could be completed online. Various steps were undertaken in the collection process, as discussed below.

6.4.1 Pre-test and pilot study

Scholars (e.g. Hair et al., 2017) advise the use of a pre-test and a pilot study to enhance the reliability of a research instrument. In this study, a small group of experts (three members) in related fields were asked to pre-test the questionnaire to ensure that the test ran smoothly, that instructions were clear, and that the questions were understandable and suitable to the South African working individual. Some minor changes were made based on comments received. Once the pre-test was concluded, a pilot study was undertaken with 15 individuals who met the inclusion criteria of the study (individuals who worked with at least one other person in a South African-based organisation). These individuals were invited to complete the questionnaire and to provide feedback on any matter related to the questionnaire (e.g. instructions given, order of questions, length of survey and how long it took to complete the survey, difficulty of questions, any discomfort that may have been experienced and any technical challenges). Telephonic, face-to-face and email feedback were received, upon which final amendments could be made to ensure the face validity of the measuring instrument (Salkind, 2018). Amendments made to specific items were discussed in section 6.3 above.

6.4.2 Extending an invitation to participate in the research

The target population for this research was individuals working with at least one other individual in South-African based organisations. Two institutions were asked to assist with the distribution of the survey, namely SABPP and SEIFSA. Members of SABPP and SEIFSA were invited to participate by sending an email invitation to a contact person in their respective head offices. This person distributed the invitation letter, the consent form and the electronic questionnaire link to their members. An electronic link was provided through LimeSurvey, the electronic platform used for this purposes of data gathering in this study. Two further reminders were sent in similar fashion to SABPP and SEIFSA members. As advised by Saunders et al. (2016), each invitation (and reminder) stressed the meaning and importance of completing the questionnaire. SEIFSA is a national umbrella federation for 25 independent employers' organisations representing a combined membership of approximately 1290 organisations in the metal and engineering industry in Southern Africa ("Home – Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa," n.d.). The SABPP, the South African professional body for human resource practitioners, has approximately 5000 members (SABPP, n.d.).

Additionally, invitations (including three reminders) were placed on LinkedIn, a professional, online, social media site, and on the social media platform of Facebook, clearly stating the inclusion criteria and providing the electronic link and consent form. Reminder emails and social media postings thanked individuals who had responded and asked those who have not yet done so to consider completing the survey. The hyperlink was again provided. Once again the importance of participation was stressed (Saunders et al., 2016).

6.4.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from Unisa's Human Resource Management Department. The ethics clearance certificate is attached as Appendix A. Unisa's Research Ethics Policy (UNISA, 2013) sets out a number of moral rules and principles that were strictly followed according to the following guidelines:

- The research should respect and protect the rights, autonomy and dignity of participants (autonomy).
- The research should enhance, protect and respect the welfare of all members of society (beneficence).

- The research should cause no harm to anyone – not participants or anyone else (non-maleficence).
- The research should justly distribute the risks and benefits among people (justice).
- The research should respect and clearly explain participants' right to confidentiality at all times.
- The research should protect and clearly explain participants' anonymity at all times.
- No data may be used unless participants' informed consent has been provided.

As explained in the previous section (section 6.4.2), invitations were sent via the SABPP and SEIFSA to their members, as well as via social media avenues (LinkedIn, Facebook, email). Consent was received from SEIFSA and SABPP senior management to distribute the link via their network. However, to abide by regulations of the South African Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013, no information on members was provided to the researcher, as all correspondence went through a specified representative of each organisation, who distributed the invitation letter with the electronic link to the consent form and the survey to their members.

In order to contact research participants via Facebook (using the researchers' own Facebook friends address book) and the professional network website known as LinkedIn, messages were posted on the media source. A LinkedIn message functionality (comparable to an email) was used to send out a survey hyperlink to the researcher's professional network on LinkedIn. Both the Facebook and LinkedIn participants were advised that their participation in the research was voluntary. LinkedIn and Facebook were used as they provide access to a large and diverse population of individuals from various industries and backgrounds. In 2017, LinkedIn had more than 400 million members in over 200 countries and territories. Users of LinkedIn are not permitted to use the platform unless they accept the terms of use and of confidentiality. It is not necessary to obtain permission from LinkedIn to share information, as users may do so freely with each other. In cases where users feel that their privacy is violated, they may choose to remove themselves from LinkedIn or to complain to the website administrators and the United States of America legislative authorities. Besides, the South African Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013, stipulates that personal information may not be used for research or other purposes without the participants' consent. This offers further protection to South African LinkedIn or Facebook users. As users invite others to connect (for both Facebook and LinkedIn) a choice exists on becoming a connection or not. However, if an invitation is declined, no connection between the two parties will ensue, in other words, invitees provide their informed consent to become

connected to the inviter. Thus, the researcher only connected with users of Facebook and LinkedIn who gave their consent.

Additionally, the link to the research opened to a cover letter (refer to the invitation letter in Appendix B) that outlined the objective, relevance and potential contribution of the research (enhancing sound employment relations in South Africa by constructing a conflict management framework). The letter clearly stated that participation in the research was voluntary. No form of direct or indirect coercion took place, nor was any unjustifiable incentive provided in the name of research. This ensured that no individuals participated in the research against their better judgement. Additionally, inclusion criteria were stated, namely that participant should (1) be individuals who work with at least one other individual in (2) a South-African based organisation. Similar invitation messages invited prospective participants via SEIFSA and SABPP. Participants were provided with a hyperlink to “click” on, which then took them to the consent form (Appendix C) and the questionnaire.

By agreeing to participate in the survey via the consent form, participants confirmed that that they were aware of the nature of the research, the method to be followed, the potential contributions of the study and the expected inconveniences of participating. No harm was anticipated to individuals because of their participation, and thus the inconvenience related mainly to the time spent (approximately 25 minutes) on completing the survey. Any potential concerns could be addressed to the researcher (none were received), only relevant information was gathered and participants could withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. Participants were assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality, as no personal or contact information was required, nor is there any way to connect participants to their organisations. Because of the non-identifiable nature of the data, it was not possible to withdraw from the study once it was submitted, an aspect which participants were duly informed about. The questionnaire was administered via Lime Survey, which is a web application that is set up on the user’s (Unisa’s) server. Data gathered via Lime Survey was stored on the Unisa server, therefore, no third party could gain access to it. Participants’ responses were recorded using a coding system and data outputs were captured.

Lastly, to take due consideration of any possible discriminatory actions, regulations according to the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 were considered. According to the Act, psychological tests or any related assessment techniques must be administered and interpreted in a fair and objective manner. Additionally, only assessments that are valid, reliable and free from prejudice against any individual or group may be used. The current research complied with the legislation as only

research instruments that had been proven scientifically valid, reliable and free from prejudice were included in the test battery. Great caution was taken to administer the research instruments with due consideration of the rights of the participants.

Finally, the researcher made every effort during the data collection process to ensure that the data was reliable and that it was analysed, reported and interpreted in a fair, valid and reliable manner. The researcher endeavoured to act with integrity, and to strive for objectivity and legitimacy during the collection, capturing and interpreting phases of the research. The researcher also acted with due diligence to avoid any plagiarism.

6.4.4 Capturing of the criterion data

As discussed above, LimeSurvey, an online survey application, was utilised to develop and publish the electronic survey so that responses from participants could be collected, thus providing response-related statistics. Clear instructions for completing the questionnaire and for navigating the survey were provided (Babbie & Roberts, 2018).

Once the survey was closed, the LimeSurvey web-based interface was used to export the captured data to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for further processing and examination. By using an electronic platform to record the data, the capturing process was free of any human error, thus contributing to the accuracy of the captured data (Salkind, 2018).

An independent statistician was contracted to assist with statistical processes. The statistical programs that were used to import and analyse the data were SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 (IBM, 2017).

6.5 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Research hypotheses were formulated in order to achieve the empirical research aims of the study. According to Salkind (2018), a research hypothesis proposes directional or nondirectional relationships between variables. A research hypothesis rationally, yet cautiously, suggests a reason for a phenomenon and links a research problem to a research solution by proposing a suggested answer to the research (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2016).

Note: Overarching research hypotheses were stated in order to achieve the overall aim of the doctoral study, which was to construct an empirically tested framework for conflict management

from a large number of construct variables. For reasons of parsimony, the overarching research hypotheses were more suitable for achieving the overall purpose of the doctoral research rather than the micro-level research hypotheses that one would expect in a research article.

Table 6.19 lists the formulated research hypotheses.

Table 6.19
Research Hypotheses

Research Aims	Research Hypothesis	Statistical Procedures
<p>Empirical research aim 1:</p> <p>To determine the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as demonstrated in the context of ER in a sample of South African-based organisations.</p>	<p>H1:</p> <p>There are statistically significant interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common method variance • Construct validity • Internal consistency reliability • Bivariate correlations
<p>Empirical research aim 2:</p> <p>To determine the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.</p>	<p>H2:</p> <p>A significant association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.</p>	<p>Canonical correlation analysis</p>
<p>Empirical research aim 3:</p> <p>To determine whether employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<p>H3:</p> <p>Employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<p>Path modelling (mediation modelling)</p>

Research Aims	Research Hypothesis	Statistical Procedures
<p>Empirical research aim 4:</p> <p>To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.</p>	<p>H4:</p> <p>The theoretical hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.</p>	<p>Path modelling (mediation modelling – structural equation modelling)</p>
<p>Empirical research aim 5:</p> <p>To ascertain whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences 	<p>H5:</p> <p>Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<p>Stepwise multiple regression Hierarchical moderated regression</p>

Research Aims	Research Hypothesis	Statistical Procedures
<p>of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>		
<p>Empirical research aim 6:</p> <p>To determine whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within South African-based organisations.</p>	<p>H6:</p> <p>Employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<p>Tests for normality</p> <p>Tests for significant mean differences</p>

6.6 STATISTICAL PROCESSING/ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

As outlined in section 1.8.2 (Chapter 1), the statistical processing of the data comprised three main stages, with each stage consisting of various steps of statistical analysis, as depicted in Figure 6.18 below.

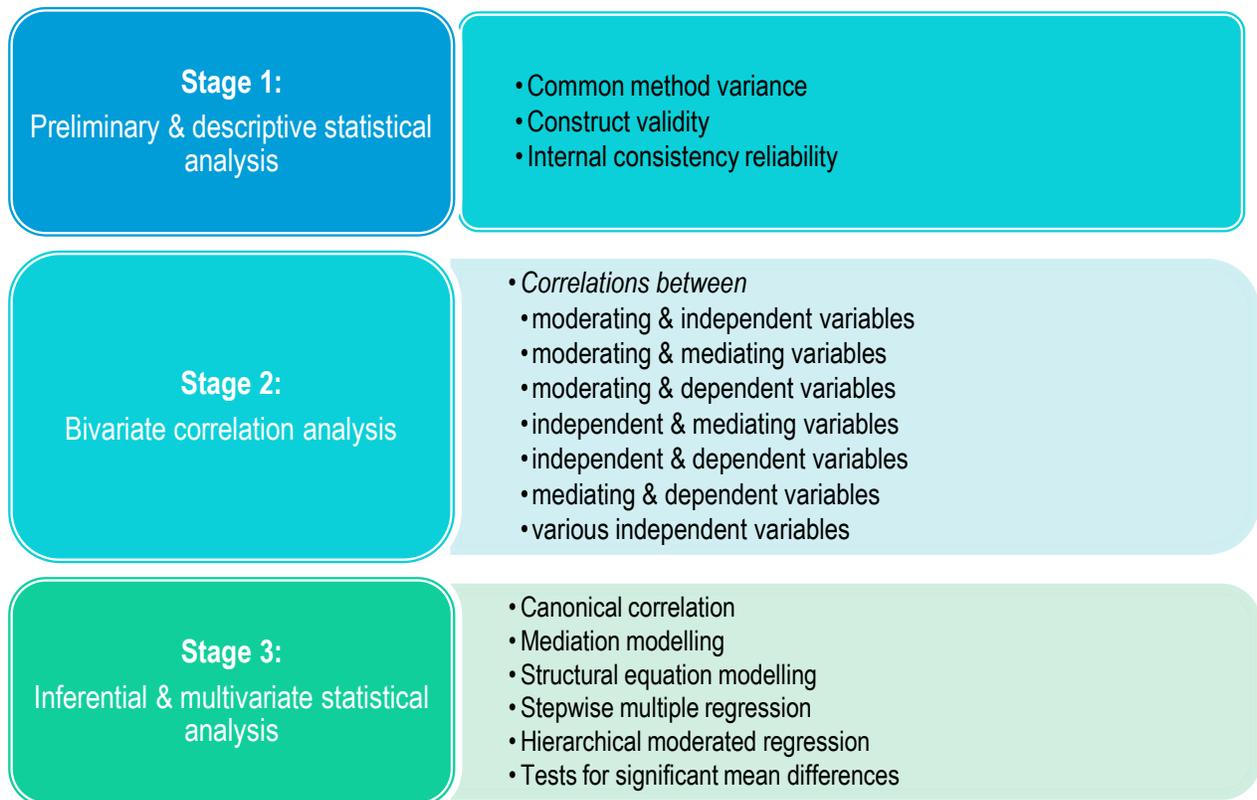


Figure 6.18 Statistical Processing of Data

During stage 1, cases and variables were screened for data accuracy, followed by a description of the socio-demographic detail of the sample. Subsequently, the psychometric suitability of the selected measuring instruments was evaluated. Stage 1 concluded with a description of the construct-level data (e.g. by determining means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis). The second stage consisted of a bivariate correlational analysis to test the strength between the variables of relevance in the current research. The final stage (stage 3) encompassed the inferential and multivariate analysis. The three stages of the statistical analysis as depicted in Figure 6.18 are discussed in more detail below.

6.6.1 Stage 1: Preliminary and descriptive statistical analysis

Salkind (2018) explains that the first step in analysing data is depicting the distribution of scores by computing descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe large amounts of data in a practical and logical way (Babbie & Roberts, 2018). Hence, descriptive statistics were obtained in the current research to explain the characteristics of the constructs of relevance to the research.

Stage 1 consisted of two main actions. Firstly, the preliminary screening of data, and secondly, the descriptive analysis process. This phase generally entails an analysis consisting of common method variance, measurement model validity and internal consistency reliabilities. The step-by-step process that was followed is outlined below.

6.6.1.1 Case screening

During the preliminary descriptive analysis – the start of the statistical process – all cases and variables were screened to ensure they had been recorded accurately and to ascertain whether the data was usable. During this first step, actions are taken to ensure that cases are recorded accurately and that there is no missing data, outliers or unengaged responses.

In this study, the questionnaire was distributed and accessed through an electronic link; responses were thus recorded according to a pre-coded format. Salkind (2018) points out that such a process eliminates human error during the recording of data. Additionally, a complete case approach was followed, as answering all questions in the survey was compulsory. Forcing respondents to answer all questions is being used increasingly in internet-based research and holds the advantage that accurate and usable responses are captured in the database; however, it may negatively influence the participation rate (Albaum, Roster, Wiley, Rossiter, & Smith, 2010), and may increase the dropout rate and negatively affect the quality of answers (Décieux, Mergener, Neufang, & Sischka, 2015). This may in part explain why $n = 1586$ partially completed surveys were received during this research, whereas only $n = 556$ fully completed questionnaires were received. Ethical and other concerns in forced answering were addressed by informing respondents that participation was voluntary and that they could exit the survey at any time.

Additionally, part of the process of the preliminary statistical analysis is determining whether the sample size was adequate for the number of constructs in the research. As explained in section 6.2, the sample size in the current study was deemed adequate to obtain reasonable statistical

power.

Additionally, the data set was checked for any outliers. Whereas multivariate outliers are defined as any extreme or unusual values in a combination of variables, univariate outliers refer to only one variable (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2017). Authors (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Hair et al., 2017) caution that outliers may influence the validity of research findings, and should thus be dealt with. In the current research, no outliers were detected, as the demographic data was pre-coded and categorical (apart from actual age), or involved Likert scales, and thus all cases were retained for the purposes of analysis.

Once the data has been checked for general errors, the process of exploratory data analysis may begin, as described in the next step (Saunders et al., 2016).

6.6.1.2 *Variable screening*

During the second step of the preliminary data analysis, the variables in the research are screened to obtain an all-purpose feel for variations in the data (Tukey, 1977). Variances and standard deviations are calculated to identify any monotone or unengaged responses, for example where respondents mark all answers in a set pattern, such as choosing the same option for all questions (Saunders et al., 2016). Additionally, visual inspections (e.g. by inspecting histograms indicating deviations from normal distributions and looking for unengaged responses) and calculations of means, standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness for all variables were undertaken.

The mean provides an average score that is computed by dividing the total sum of the data by the number of values in the group. Thus, the mean score indicates the central tendency of the research sample (Salkind, 2018). The degree to which a group varies from the mean score is referred to as a standard deviation (SD) (Saunders et al., 2016).

Skewness is a measure describing the symmetry (or lack thereof) of a dataset. When a dataset is perfectly symmetrical, it will have a skewness value equal to 0. A normal distribution thus has a skewness of 0, meaning that it appears symmetrical on both sides of the middle viewpoint of the distribution (Saunders et al., 2016). The rule of thumb applied to determine skewness of a dataset is as follows:

- If the skewness is between -0.5 and 0.5, the data is fairly symmetrical.
- If the skewness is between -1 and -0.5 or between 0.5 and 1, the data is moderately skewed.
- If the skewness is less than -1 or greater than 1, the data is highly skewed.

Kurtosis presents the measure of outliers present in the distribution (Salkind, 2018). It is a measure of the combined sizes of the two tails of a distribution, measuring the amount of probability in the tails (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, it measures how the data is distributed around the mean score. The value is often compared to the kurtosis of the normal distribution, which is equal to approximately 3 (Salkind, 2018). If the kurtosis is greater than 3, then the dataset has heavier tails than a normal distribution, while a kurtosis of less than 3 indicates that the dataset has lighter tails than a normal distribution. Saunders et al. (2016), explain kurtosis as the pointedness or flatness of the distribution when compared with a normal distribution. If a distribution peaks more (i.e. if it is more pointed), it indicates a positive kurtosis value, versus a negative value when the kurtosis is flatter (Saunders et al., 2016). A normal distribution is assumed when the kurtosis is close to 0, referred to as mesokurtic distributions (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). If the kurtosis is less than zero, then the distribution has light tails and is called a platykurtic distribution. If the kurtosis is greater than zero, then the distribution has heavier tails and is called a leptokurtic distribution (Pituch & Stevens, 2016).

For both skewness and kurtosis, a measurement of + or -1 is ideal, while + or -2 is still regarded as an acceptable normal distribution. However, Pituch and Stevens (2016) caution that the skewness and kurtosis statistics appear to be highly dependent on the sample size. Nonetheless, these initial actions of visual inspection and calculation may enable the researcher to determine possible areas of deviation or other additional relationships in the data (Saunders et al., 2016), which may assist in improving model fit at a later stage. The inspection confirmed that all cases could be retained for analysis.

6.6.1.3 *Description of the categorical data*

Categorical scales (also referred to as nominal scales) are used for variables with mutually exclusive characteristics (e.g. gender), and thus merely offer a label for different characteristic values (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Part of the preliminary statistical process is to describe the various characteristics.

Hence, once the case screening and the variable screening were concluded, a sample feature description followed (see section 6.2). Respondents' individual (race, gender, age, qualification, professional body membership) and work-related (job level, income level, tenure, union membership, union representation at place of work, organisational sector, workplace size, number of employees, formal employee engagement programmes) characteristics were described in

tabular and graphical format. Main values or characteristics (i.e. modes) were pointed out and the role unions play in conflict management was assessed. Describing the respondents' socio-demographic profiles (see Tables 6.15 and 6.16 for a summary of the profiles) enabled the researcher to examine whether significant mean differences existed between participants because of their individual and work-related characteristics, which might affect conflict management in organisations.

6.6.1.4 Assessing the psychometric suitability of the scale measures

The following step in the descriptive statistical analysis involved an assessment of the psychometric suitability of the measuring instruments. The various instruments that were used in this research have all been published in extant literature, confirming their validity and reliability. Nonetheless, the instruments were developed outside South Africa, where this study was undertaken and subsequently no South African study was found which had used these measuring instruments. Hence, it was considered necessary to consider the validity and reliability of the respective measuring instruments for this particular sample, so that any measuring errors could be determined. According to Salkind (2018), validity refers to the extent to which scales measure what they intend to measure, while reliability reflects the consistency a scale displays in measuring a specific construct.

Various steps were followed to assess the psychometric suitability of the respective measuring scales. Brough (2018) explains that this process normally consists of three steps. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis considers the core factorial structures of items in a measuring instrument to ensure that all items are representative of the main construct (Brough, 2018). Secondly, alpha testing is conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the various scales (Brough, 2018). Lastly, a CFA is undertaken to determine the best-fit measurement model for each respective variable (Tramontano & Fida, 2019).

Exploratory factor analysis was not conducted in this research, as tests with proven construct validity and reliability were used in the measurement of the constructs. In contrast with the process of exploratory factor analysis when new theories are generated, confirmatory factor analysis is applied when existing theory is tested by setting hypothesis in a priori model and assessing whether the model fits the data (Matsunaga, 2010). Hence, alpha testing and CFA were conducted – CFA was done to test for multidimensionality and discriminant and convergent

validity (construct validity) of the combined scales (in the measurement of leadership, employee voice, and conflict types) and the other scales as well.

(a) *Confirmatory factor analysis*

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is based on theory and exploratory factor analysis (Bowen & Guo, 2011), thus testing hypotheses by proposing and testing a set of weights to determine whether the weights satisfactorily reproduce the observed variables (Ullman & Bentler, 2003). CFA is a process that evaluates how well theoretical notions about the underlying structures of the data fit the data (Cramer & Howitt, 2004) by looking for evidence that manifest variables effectively measure the constructs of relevance to the study (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). In addition, factor analysis and structural equation modelling provide statistical techniques to reduce the number of observed variables to smaller numbers of latent variables (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). Convergent and discriminant validity are assessed by CFA (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Furthermore, the CFA process assists in ensuring that no common method variance exists that may pose a threat to the current study (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013).

To conduct CFA, scholars argue that a larger sample is necessary with a threshold of between 200 and 300 observations (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). The sample size of $n = 556$ may thus be regarded as sufficient to conduct CFA. Still, it is pointed out that although this may be the necessary number of observations, it may not be a sufficient number to draw necessary core conclusions (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). A series of CFA analysis was conducted in this research with the aim of verifying the factor structures of the variables, evaluating their discriminant and convergent validity, and lastly, addressing any areas of concerns about common method variance (Ullman & Bentler, 2003). Numbers of latent factors and how items load onto a specific factor were informed by the literature review and the conceptualisation of the constructs of relevance to the study in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Absolute fit indices assist in determining how well an a priori model fits sample data and indicates a proposed model that has the best fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). When reviewing goodness-of-fit indices, a number of statistics and indices were considered. Firstly, as a starting point, absolute-fit indices (χ^2 and χ^2/df) were applied. The chi-square statistic (χ^2 or CMIN) determines fit ($p > .05$) as it indicates the degree of inconsistency between the variance and covariance patterns in the data, and that of the model being tested (Matsunaga, 2010). Models with good fit are indicated by smaller χ^2 values, hence an inconsequential χ^2 at a .05 threshold is

desirable (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, statistically insignificant chi-square values indicate that the hypothesised model has a pattern similar to the observed data (Chathoth et al., 2011). The chi-square is the only assessment that indicates significance using a direct statistical test.

Nonetheless, using chi-square has been criticised for being highly sensitive to departures from multivariate normality, as well as being sensitive to correlations amid observed variables, sample size and unique variance (Hair et al., 2014; Hooper et al., 2008). Because the chi-square is dependent on sample size, large sample sizes often produce significant chi-square results, indicating poor fit even when reasonably good fit to the data is evident (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). Scholars argue that larger sample sizes often lead to the results of the test becoming increasingly statistically significant (Hair et al., 2014). Hence, it is argued that the chi-square index tends to be upwardly biased with sample size (Matsunaga, 2010; Yanyun Yang, 2018).

In order to limit the sensitivity of the chi-square to sample size, scholars suggest the calculation and reporting of the relative (normed) chi-square (χ^2/df or CMIN/DF) (Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977). Scholars (Hair et al., 2014; Hooper et al., 2008; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019; Wheaton et al., 1977) argue that χ^2/df values ranging between 2.0 and 5.0 are acceptable for normed chi-square statistics. A chi-square per degree of freedom with a ratio between one and two indicates excellent fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). However, chi-square statistics continue to be problematic, as no general acceptable criterion for their interpretation has been found (Salkind, 2018). Accordingly, in this study, chi-square statistics (i.e. χ^2 and χ^2/df) were mainly used as a preliminary assessment of model fit, encompassing two of various indices considered to determine model fit. This is in line with suggestions by authors (e.g. Matsunaga, 2010; O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013) to use a variety of model fit indices. For instance, O'Rourke and Hatcher (2013) suggest the use of one absolute index (e.g. the standardised root mean square residual), a parsimony index (e.g. the root mean square error of approximation + 90% confidence limit) and an incremental index (e.g. comparative fit index).

Hence, to evaluate model fit and to address the issue of sample size, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), together with the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), are considered when testing the null hypothesis of model non-fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The SRMR, the comparative fit index (CFI), and the RMSEA and RMSEA CL90 indices are suggested to provide more accurate information regarding goodness of model fit (Matsunaga, 2010; O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). SRMR is described as the difference between the predicted correlations versus the observed correlations (Hair et al., 2014) and does not

penalise for model complexity (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). RMSEA is defined as a model fit index that assesses how close an implied matrix is to an observed variance-covariance matrix, taking the complexity of a model into consideration (Bowen & Guo, 2011). Generally, the SRMR is reported along with the RMSEA (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013).

RMSEA and SRMR range from zero (0) to 1. According to O'Rourke and Hatcher (2013), small RMSEA and SRMR values (≤ 0.05) indicate close fit, values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicate reasonable fit, whereas values $\geq .10$ indicate poor fit. An SRMR of 0 indicates perfect model fit (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest that the cut-off point for RMSEA should be below .06, and SRMR below .08. According to Hair et al. (2014), the RMSEA model specifically endeavours to correct for both model complexity and for larger samples (i.e. $n > 500$). Additionally, Hair et al. (2014) caution that SRMR measures lower when high numbers of parameters are evident in a model based on larger sample sizes. To summarise, for both the RMSEA and the SRMR, a well-fitting model will have a lower limit close to zero, and an upper limit of less than .08.

One of the main advantages of considering the RMSEA index is the ability to calculate a confidence interval, providing diverse RMSEA values for a given level of confidence. Furthermore, O'Rourke and Hatcher (2013) explain that the range of RMSEA confidence limits should be fairly narrow; 90% confidence limits (CL) between $.090 \geq \text{RMSEA CL}_{90} \geq .000$ are satisfactory, whereas limits between $.054 \geq \text{RMSEA CL}_{90} \geq .000$ are regarded as ideal. In other words, should the range of confidence levels be good, a researcher may have great confidence that the data fits the model well as there is only a 1 in 10 chance that the true RMSEA value within the population falls outside of this range (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013).

Furthermore, incremental (also referred to as comparative or relative) fit indices were applied in the study. Incremental indices compare a target model to a baseline model, and do not use the chi-square in its raw form to measure the proportionate improvement in fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The null hypotheses for these models are indicated as one in which all variables are uncorrelated (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In the current research, two incremental fit indices were applied, namely, the normed fit index (NFI) (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) and the comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990).

In their classical work, Bentler and Bonnet (1990) explain that an NFI value ranges from 0 to 1, with perfect model fit at 1. An NFI value between .90 and .95 is considered acceptable, higher

than .95 is good, whereas scores lower than .90 are considered inadequate, indicating a poor fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Hair et al. (2014) caution that when models are complex, it may result in higher index values and thus the estimate of model fit may be inflated. Subsequently, Bentler (1990) developed the comparative fit index (CFI) as an improved version of the normed fit index (NFI). As with the NFI, the CFI value compares a hypothesised model with an independent model to provide an assessment (ranging from 0 to 1) of the complete covariation of the data. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest a cut-off value close to .95.

Additionally, the Akaike information criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1987) was considered as it also addresses the assessment of fit under various data and model conditions (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The AIC is predominantly known as a predictive fit index. The AIC measurement uses χ^2 in comparing non-nested models while also taking into account model fit and model complexity; generally, models with smaller AIC values indicate good fit (Bowen & Guo, 2011).

Lastly, in order to statistically identify common method variance, Harman's post-hoc one-factor analysis (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) and a one-factor CFA were used. Common method variance is ascribed to measurement methods (Podsakoff et al., 2003), resulting for instance from using a single data collection method such as a self-reporting questionnaire to collect data on all variables simultaneously (Weiner, Schmitt, & Highhouse, 2013). According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), method biases are one of the main sources of measurement errors. Exploratory factor analysis is conducted with Harman's single-factor test by loading all the items presumably affected by common method variance to extract a forced single-factor solution. Common method variance may be prevalent when a single factor accounts for the majority of covariance between the measures, thus posing a threat to the research findings (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015). A Harman's one-factor test value of $> .50$ implies a one-factor scale and the presence of common method bias. In this research, the results of Harman's single-factor test were considered in conjunction with the CFA model fit statistics in order to evaluate common method variance (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015). With a one-factor model, all the research items of the various constructs are loaded onto a single latent factor.

Criteria as summarised in Table 6.20 were used for the model fit assessment of the current research. As explained above, the one-factor model was compared with other multidimensional indices that were used during the CFA process to ensure that the best model fit was determined. SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used to conduct the analysis.

Table 6.20

Summary of Measures/Indices and Criteria used in the Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Measure/Index	Description	Criteria applied
Absolute fit indices:		
Examine the fit of an a priori model with the sample data to indicate which suggested model has the best fit.		
Chi-square (χ^2 or CMIN) (Amemiya & Anderson, 1990)	A statistical assessment of difference used in comparing the degree of inconsistency between the variance and covariance patterns in the data, and that of the model being tested. Various other goodness-of-fit measures consider it as their basis.	A model is regarded as discrepant from the population's true covariance structure when the calculated χ^2 value is statistically significant. Thus, the lack of statistical significance (i.e. $p \geq .05$) supports the model.
Normed chi-square (χ^2/df or CMIN/df) (Wheaton et al., 1977)	Differences in the observed and implied variance-covariance matrices are indicated by a significant χ^2 value relative to the degrees of freedom.	An adequate model fit is indicated when the ratio of χ^2 to df (CMIN/DF) is ≤ 3 (≤ 5 is occasionally acceptable).
Standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR) (Hu & Bentler, 1995, 1999; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Joreskog KG & Sorbom D, 1989)	Specifies an average value of the standardised residuals between observed and predicted covariances.	Good fit is indicated by a low SRMR value, while higher values indicate a worse fit. The generally acceptable rule specifies that the SRMR should be $< .05$ for a good fit; however, values $< .10$ may be regarded as acceptable.
Relative or incremental fit indices:		
Compare a target model to a baseline model to indicate the degree to which the tested model accounts for the variance in the data.		
Normed fit index (NFI) (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)	A baseline null model is used to compare a restricted model with a full model.	Perfect fit is indicated by a NFI of 1 on a continuum of 0 to 1. The generally accepted rule for the NFI is that $.95$ points to a good fit relative to the baseline model. Values $> .90$ are regarded as satisfactory fit.
Comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990)	Compares a hypothesised model with an independent model to provide an assessment (ranging from 0 to 1) of the complete covariation of the data.	Higher values indicate better fit, with 1 indicating perfect fit. A CFI value of $\geq .95$ is recommended, although CFI values of $\geq .90$ are also associated with good model fit.

Measure/Index	Description	Criteria applied
Fit indices based on the noncentral chi-square distribution:		
Measurements based on the assumption that no model is 'fully correct', but rather only 'about correct'.		
Root mean square error of approximations (RMSEA) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993)	A model fit index that determines how close an implied matrix is to an observed variance-covariance matrix, taking the complexity of a model into consideration.	Lower RMSEA values indicate better fit. As a rule of thumb, values of $\leq .06$ or $\leq .08$ are generally recommended. A value $\leq .05$ is regarded as good fit, between $.05$ and $.08$ as a satisfactory fit, between $.08$ and $.10$ as a mediocre fit, and $> .10$ deemed unacceptable. For good model fit, the upper limit should be $< .08$, while the lower limit of the confidence interval should be close to 0.
Information theoretic fit measures:		
These assessments indicate the degree to which the current model will cross-validate in future samples with the same size and population.		
Akaike information criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1987)	The AIC measurement uses χ^2 in comparing non-nested models while also taking into account model fit and model complexity. It selects among statistical models based on an approximation of the relative quality of statistical models for a given set of data.	Lower AIC values indicate best fit.

Sources: Hair et al. (2014); Hooper et al. (2008); Hu and Bentler (1999); Krzanowski (2007); Matsunaga (2010); O'Rourke and Hatcher (2013); Schreiber et al. (2006).

(b) Establishing the validity and reliability of the measurement models

To establish the validity and reliability of the measurement models, a number of statistical steps were undertaken. Firstly, the standardised loading estimates as calculated in the CFAs were studied. Secondly, the average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) for each measurement model were calculated. The third step entailed considering item-to-total and item-to-item correlations; this was followed by the fourth step, which involved calculating the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) coefficients for each of the measures. A brief discussion on these measures and their applied criteria follows. These are also summarised in Table 6.21 for ease of reference.

Both convergent and discriminant validity need to be shown in order to indicate that a measurement model is logically interrelated to scales of similar constructs but also distinct from similar constructs (Chathoth et al., 2011). Convergent validity is shown when diverse indicators of theoretically similar concepts are strongly correlated, while discriminant validity indicates that theoretically diverse constructs are not highly intercorrelated (Brown, 2006). Brough (2018) argues that discriminant validity is necessary to ensure that items do not converge with unrelated constructs, and that a new construct is unique from constructs that already exist in the literature. Thus, discriminant validity indicates the extent to which factors are distinct and uncorrelated (Henseler et al., 2015). Convergent and discriminant validity are therefore converse characteristics, where convergent validity indicates high correlations between theoretically comparable constructs and discriminant validity shows low correlations with theoretically diverse constructs (Blumentritt, 2010; Vogt & Johnson, 2015).

To measure the convergent validity of the scales in the current research, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each instrument was computed and evaluated against its correlation with the other constructs. According to Henseler et al. (2015), AVE examines the level of variance captured by a construct versus the level resulting from measurement error. An AVE > .7 is regarded as excellent and levels of $\geq .5$ are acceptable, thus demonstrating construct reliability and convergent validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Instances where maximum shared variance (MSV) and the average shared variance (ASV) are both lower than the AVE for all of the scales indicate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2015). Discriminant validity is acceptable when $MSV < AVE$ and $ASV < AVE$ (Henseler et al., 2015). Where AVE is larger than the correlation of the construct with other constructs (i.e. $AVE \geq .5$), convergent validity is confirmed

(Hair et al., 2014). Moreover, significant factor loadings from items to their specified latent constructs delivers an indication of convergent validity for each of the scales (Hair et al., 2014).

Internal consistency considers the reliability of the scale by examining the homogeneity of a set of items that make up a measuring scale; in other words, how unified the set of items is in measuring a single construct (Barry, Chaney, Stellefson, & Chaney, 2011; Salkind, 2018). Internal consistency reliability ascertains the consistency (reliability) of measuring instruments in assessing what they are supposed to evaluate. It thus determines whether a test measures the same outcome every time it assesses the same research construct. Measuring instruments that deliver consistent results each time they are used will show increased reliability. Hair et al. (2014) explain that the pointers of highly reliable constructs are highly interrelated items. In other words, all the items of a measuring instrument should show a high and positive correlation; thus, when a certain item is responded to in a certain way, other related items should have a similar response (Supino & Borer, 2012). Thus, to determine internal consistency, the item-total correlation (i.e. the correlation of each item to the summated scale score) and the correlation between items were evaluated. Item-to-total correlations greater than .5 and inter-item correlations exceeding .3 were regarded as suggestive of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014).

Additionally, to measure internal consistency, each item in a scale is correlated with the performance of the overall scale in the form of a correlation coefficient, such as Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's coefficient alpha measures dichotomous or Likert-scale items (Thompson, 1992). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951; Meehl & Cronbach, 1955) is rated on a continuous scale ranging from 0 (indicating no consistency) to 1 (ideal reliability) (MacDougall, 2011). A coefficient alpha of < .60 is regarded as unacceptable, between .65 and .7 as acceptable, between .7 and .8 as respectable and between .8 and .9 as excellent (DeVellis, 2003). The current research computed Cronbach's alpha coefficients to determine the internal consistency reliability of the various measuring instruments, as well as the average interrelatedness between the various test items (Hair et al., 2014). The internal consistencies resulting in this manner revealed the consistency (or redundancy) of the measurement items and indicated extra support for the suitability of the measures for the specific sample (McCrae, Kurtz, Yamagata, & Terracciano, 2011).

However, Cronbach's alpha can either under- or over-estimate reliability (Raykov, 1997, 1998). To overcome this aspect, composite reliability was considered as it is viewed as a less biased estimate of reliability than the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Peterson & Kim, 2013). Hence,

Raykov's rho (ρ) coefficient (also referred to as coefficient omega [ω] or composite reliability coefficient) was also calculated. Raykov's rho is the ratio of explained variance over total variance (Kline, 2016). For both the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability coefficient, a value of $\geq .70$ is regarded as satisfactory (Geldhof, Preacher, & Zyphur, 2014). Table 6.21 provides a summary of the above discussion for ease of reference.

Table 6.21
Construct Validity of the Measurement Models

Indicator	Description	Criteria applied
Convergent validity: Items indicating a specific construct should share high proportions of variance		
Factor loadings	Standardised loading estimates were examined for all observed variables. High factor loadings indicate that they converge on a shared point, namely, the latent construct.	Ideally, standardised loading estimates should be at a value $> .7$ but $> .5$ is also acceptable. Nonetheless, all should be significant.
Average variance extracted (AVE)	The AVE was computed to establish the convergent validity of the measuring instruments. AVE determines the total amount of variance that can be attributed to a construct relative to the amount of variance ascribed to measurement error.	AVE of $\geq .5$ suggests adequate convergent validity.
Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha, α)	The reliability coefficient indicates the internal consistency reliability of a scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients determine the internal consistency reliability of scales and the average interrelatedness between the different test items.	A higher score on a continuum between 0 and 1 indicates a more reliable item or scale. An acceptable value for indicating satisfactory convergence is $\alpha \geq .7$.
Composite reliability (CR)	Raykov's rho (ρ) coefficient (known also as coefficient omega [ω] or composite reliability coefficient) indicates the ratio of explained variance over total variance.	$CR \geq .7$ was deemed to indicate adequate convergence.
Discriminant validity: The degree to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs		
Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)	Various alternative models were used to compare the theorised models, including one-factor models to test for homogeneity.	Table 6.20 indicates the criteria used to determine the best-fit models.
Comparing average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV)	The square of the highest correlation coefficient between latent constructs indicates MSV, while the mean of the squared correlation coefficients between latent constructs is indicated by ASV.	MSV < AVE ASV < AVE Discriminant validity is shown when the square root of AVE is greater than inter-construct correlations.

Sources: Arbuckle (2016); Fornell and Larcker (1981); Hair et al. (2014); Hu and Bentler (1999); Kline (2016); Teo (2011).

The various process as set out above were useful in determining the psychometric suitability of the respective measuring scales in the South African context. All the scales indicated satisfactory internal consistency when applied to a South African sample (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7). Additionally, the factor analysis that was conducted confirmed that the scale structures have internal validity. These analyses indicated, firstly, that the measures were psychometrically sound and, secondly, that they were suitable for use in the South African context.

6.6.1.5 *Description of the construct-level data*

Item-descriptive statistics were reported in order to determine the interrelationships between the respective constructs of relevance to the study. Average scores on the respective measuring instruments were described by applying measurements of central tendency. This process identifies tendencies and outliers. Central tendency refers to the most representative value of a group of scores, for instance the mean (Aron, 2014). The mean (a measure of central tendency, thus the sum of the scores divided by the number of scores) and standard deviations (a descriptive statistic for variation, indicating an average distance between the scores and the mean) were determined (Aron, 2014). The standard deviation therefore indicates the variability in the sample responses. When a small standard deviation is indicated, data points are clustered closely together around the mean; while a large standard deviation shows that the data set is spread out away from the mean (Field, 2013). Data points are the same in value when a standard deviation of zero is evident (Field, 2013). If a normal distribution is evident, a normal curve will follow. Kline (2016) explains that within a normal distribution, about two-thirds (68%) of scores lie within one standard deviation above or below the mean, while the majority of scores (about 95% of the scores) fall within two standard deviations above or below the mean; and about 99% of cases are located plus or minus three standard deviations from the mean.

The distribution of the data was furthermore described by calculating the skewness and kurtosis for the variables. Skewness is used to determine whether the data is skewed positively, negatively or normally. It indicates the symmetry of a distribution, with a symmetric distribution having a skewness value of zero (Hair et al., 2014). Pallant (2016) explains that a positive/right/non-parametric skew in the data indicates that the mean is to the right of (i.e. greater than) the median. Such a positively skewed distribution has relatively few large values (Meyer et al., 2019). A negative/left/non-parametric skew indicates that the mean is to the left of (i.e. less than) the median (Pallant, 2016). This distribution has relatively few small values (Meyer et al., 2017). Kurtosis indicates how flat (platykurtic) or pointed (leptokurtic) a data set is (Pallant, 2016). It is

thus a measure of the peakedness or flatness of a distribution when compared with a normal distribution; in other words, it describes the shape of a probability distribution (Pallant, 2016). A platykurtic distribution has a kurtosis of less than three, while distributions with kurtosis greater than three are leptokurtic (Pallant, 2016). A kurtosis value of zero indicates a normal distribution that is called mesokurtic. A positive, leptokurtic kurtosis indicates that the majority of scores are drawn in towards the middle, while negative, platykurtic values of kurtosis indicate that the scores are generally distributed across the whole continuum (Meyers et al., 2017). To summarise, a normal distribution has skewness and kurtosis values ranging from -1 to +1, which is recommended for conducting parametric tests (Hair et al., 2014).

6.6.1.6 *Testing the assumptions of multivariate analysis*

The next step in the statistical analysis is to make valid inferences from the data as obtained from the population sample. However, according to Salkind (2018), when research is categorised by a large, randomly selected sample, it may lead to challenges to provide exact values that can be ascribed to the entire population. Descriptive statistical methods are used to systematise, analyse and interpret the data at a construct level in order to ascertain the degree of confidence at which inferences could be made. The assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity, multicollinearity and singularity underlie the multivariate procedures and tests for significant mean differences (Ye Yang & Mathew, 2018) that were used in this study. These are discussed below.

(a) *Normality*

Multivariate normality is assumed when every individual variable has a normal distribution (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). In other words, each individual variable must have a normal distribution for the variables to follow a multivariate normal distribution (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Furthermore, Pituch and Stevens (2016) explain that two additional properties of a multivariate normal distribution are, firstly, that any linear combination of the variables should indicate normally distribution and, secondly, that all subsets of the set of variables have multivariate normal distributions (for instance, all correlated pairs of variables should indicate bivariate normality). Thus, as summarised by Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), all variables and all linear combinations of variables must be normally distributed.

(b) *Linearity*

Linearity assumes a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables in an analysis, indicated by a straight line on a bivariate scatterplot (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Variables that show normal distribution and linearity produce elliptical (i.e. oval shaped) scatterplots (Salkind, 2018).

(c) *Homoscedasticity*

According to Hair et al. (2014), homoscedasticity may be explained as the assumption that quantitative dependent variables display the same levels of variance across the range of independent variable(s); in other words, the variance of one variable is comparable to all values of another variable (Cramer & Howitt, 2004). Parametric statistical tests often assume homoscedasticity; however, when this assumption is violated, nonparametric statistics may be utilised (Ye Yang & Mathew, 2018).

(d) *Multicollinearity and singularity*

The challenges of multicollinearity and singularity transpire when variables are too highly correlated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). When moderate to high correlations exist among the independent variables (about $r \geq .80$), multicollinearity exists (Pallant, 2016), indicating a state of great redundancy between the different variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013). Singularity occurs when one independent variable is actually a combination of other independent variables (Pallant, 2016); in other words when there is a perfect correlation among variables ($r = 1.00$) (Cohen et al., 2013).

One of the problems with multicollinearity is that it hampers the determination of the importance of a specific independent variable, as the effects of predictors are confounded because of the high correlations among the variables. Another challenge lies in the fact that multicollinearity increases the variance of regression coefficients; the greater the regression coefficient, the more unstable the prediction equation (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Multicollinearity and singularity assumptions were tested in this study by means of correlational analysis between and among the scale variables. In addition, CFAs were conducted to assess for discriminant validity among these variables. The statistical procedures indicated that multicollinearity was not a threat to the interpretation of the findings.

6.6.2 Stage 2: Correlation analyses

In this research, correlation analysis was applied to test the strength and direction of the relationships between the various independent (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice), mediating (employee engagement, organisational trust), moderating (socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) and dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as hypothesised in Chapter 5 and indicated in research hypothesis H1 (see Table 6.19).

Empirical research aim 1: To determine the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as demonstrated in the context of ER in a sample of South African-based organisations.

Cohen et al. (2013) describe correlation analysis as the various statistical procedures and methods that are conducted in order to measure and describe the relationship between variables. Accordingly, when a relationship is present between variables, a change in one variable will lead to a continuous and anticipated change in another variable (Cohen et al., 2013). Salkind (2018) points out that correlational research describes the linear relationship between two or more variables, without attempting to show cause and effect.

The numerical index indicates the degree of relatedness is the correlation coefficient, with higher degrees of relatedness indicated by higher correlations (Salkind, 2018). Positive (direct) and negative (indirect) correlations indicate the direction of the relationship. Positive relations are indicated when movement in one variable is in the same direction as another variable (i.e. both variables either increase or decrease in value), whereas negative correlations indicate movement in opposite directions (i.e. whereas one variable increases in value, the other variable decreases in value) (Salkind, 2018). Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to

measure the strength and direction of the relationships between the respective variables, as demonstrated in a sample of participants employed in South African-based organisations.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) indicates the linear relationship between two variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). It is often squared (R^2) to show the strength of the relationship between two variables, making the measure interpretable in terms of the amount of variance in the one variable that may be explained by the other variable (Pallant, 2016; Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). Moreover, it serves as the basis for various multivariate calculations (Hair et al., 2014). The correlation coefficient measures on a continuum ranging from -1.00 to +1.00. While zero (0) indicates that no association is present between the variables, +1.00 indicates a perfect positive association and -1.00 represents a perfect negative relationship (Pallant, 2016). A negative or positive Pearson r thus indicates either a positive or a negative relationship, depending on the direction of the relationship between the respective variables (Hair et al., 2014). A positive Pearson r shows that higher values on one variable are consistently related to higher scores on another variable (and vice versa), while a negative value reflects an inverse relationship (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

In the current research, Spearman correlations were calculated using the SAS version 9.4 (2012) software program to determine correlations between the independent, mediating and dependent variables, and the moderating socio-demographic variables. The same SAS version 9.4 (2012) software program was used to calculate Pearson's correlations between these variables. To interpret significant associations, a threshold was set at a 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq .05$). A Pearson's r between .10 and .29 indicated a small practical effect, while $r \geq .30 < .50$ presented a medium practical effect and $r \geq .50$ a large practical effect (Cohen, 1988; Cohen et al., 2018). As advised by scholars (e.g. Field, 2013), these practical effects were interpreted against the background of extant literature, as reported in Chapters 2 to 4.

6.6.3 Stage 3: Inferential and multivariate statistical analysis

In order to draw conclusions about the data, the following six steps using inferential and multivariate statistics were performed:

- Canonical correlation analysis was conducted to assess the overall statistical relationship between two sets of variables, namely, the latent independent and dependent variables. These variables consisted of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational

trust) as a composite set of latent independent variables; and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as a composite set of latent dependent variables (research hypothesis H2). The CANCELL procedure in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used to conduct the analysis.

- Multilevel parallel mediation modelling was conducted to assess whether employee engagement and organisational trust statistically significantly mediated the relationship between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (independent variables) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles (dependent variables) (research hypothesis H3). The CALIS procedure and maximum likelihood estimation to conduct CFAs in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) were used to test the measurement model of each mediation mode. This was followed by a mediation path analysis using SEM.
- SEM was used to determine whether the theoretical hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust (research hypothesis H4). As explained above, the CALIS procedure and maximum likelihood estimation in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) were used to do SEM after CFAs were conducted.
- Because of the large number of socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme), stepwise multiple regression analysis – using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) – was conducted as a first step to determine the socio-demographic variables that were the most significant predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) (research hypothesis H5).
- Hierarchical moderated regression analysis – applying the Hayes PROCESS procedure for SPSS version 3 (Hayes, 2018a) – was conducted as a second step to determine the most significant socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) (considering those identified by the stepwise multiple regression analysis) that moderated

the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) (research hypothesis H5).

- Tests for significant mean differences were performed to ascertain whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) (research hypothesis H6). Normality testing was firstly conducted. Accordingly, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Cramer-von Mises and the Anderson-Darling tests were found to be significant thus indicating the non-normality of the data distribution. This was followed by the ANOVA procedure and post-hoc tests for detecting significant mean differences using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012). T-test and Tukey's studentised range tests were used to test for significant mean differences between the genders. Only those socio-demographic factors identified through the process of stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis to identify core variables that help to explain the conflict framework were reported

6.6.3.1 *Canonical correlation analysis*

The present study comprises a large number of construct variables and numerous dynamics were assumed that would inform the construction of an empirically tested framework for conflict management. The purpose of this doctoral research was to explore these dynamics among the construct variables from the perspective of a variety of multivariate statistics in order to assess the types of core common patterns and unique dynamics that would arise from the various multivariate statistical procedures. By applying a canonical correlation analysis before the mediation analysis, the researcher was able to assess whether a bi-directional link exists between two composite sets of multiple variables. In other words, the researcher could assess the explanatory power of the combination of the independent variables and mediating variables in relation to a large number of dependent variables. The canonical analysis also highlighted which dependent variables had the most significant explanatory power in terms of the independent and

mediating variables. Thus, a canonical correlation analysis was deemed suitable to determine the ways in which two multivariate composite sets of latent dependent and independent variables are related and to determine the magnitude and nature of these relationships. The CANCELL procedure in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used to conduct the analysis. This addressed the second empirical research aim:

Empirical research aim 2: To determine the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

Canonical correlation analysis is conducted when the researcher wants to better understand the potential relationships between two sets of canonical variates (Hair et al., 2014). Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) describe a canonical variate as a linear combination of variables between a combined set of variables on the side of the independent variables and another set of combined variables on the side of the dependent variables; such two combinations then forming a pair of canonical variates. Thus, canonical correlation is explained as having several variables on both sides of an equation to predict a value for each side that correlates best with the predicted values on the other side (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Canonical correlations do not imply a causal relationship (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), but rather a bi-directional interconnectedness between variates.

Canonical correlation analysis is therefore used to determine the associations between two composite sets of latent variables, rather than merely the relationship between individual pairs of variables (Krzanowski, 2007). When the variables form more than one group of variables, it is possible to determine the linear combinations of these groups with each other, thus maximising correlations between the different sets (Padgett, 2011). This explains the relationship between the two sets of variables, as a small number of linear combinations are found from each set of variables that indicate the highest between-set correlations (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013).

Latent variables are unobserved, hypothetical variables whereas manifest variables are observed variables (Grace & Bollen, 2008; O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Latent variables can only exist by concluding how they affect manifest or other latent variables (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Latent variables allow relationships to be generalised because they permit a class of variables that share common features to be described (Bollen, 2002). Composite latent sets are important as they potentially facilitate the ability to create empirically significant and theoretically relevant models

(Grace & Bollen, 2008). In addition, a canonical correlation analysis is beneficial in limiting the chances of committing Type I errors (the probability of establishing a statistically significant outcome where no relation exists, thus rejecting a true null hypothesis) (Salkind, 2018). In canonical correlation analysis, the null hypothesis states that the predictor variable set does not explain the variance in the set of dependent variables (Meyers et al., 2017). According to Hair et al. (2014), Type I errors occur more easily when comparable constructs in a data set are used for too many statistical measures. Thus, in models where there are large numbers of variables and substantial complexity, composites assist in the process of structural equation modelling so that questions can be answered effectively (Grace & Bollen, 2008). According to Grace and Bollen (2008), including composite variables into structural equation models is of great value in studies with multidimensional complex concepts and where the influence of sets of variables may be of interest. Nonetheless, other scholars see composite values as vague, with less general effects, and suggest that they should rather be avoided (Edwards, 2001).

Various criteria were considered in the decision on which canonical functions to interpret (Thompson, 2000). Firstly, to offset the possibility of a Type 1 error, consideration was given to the level of statistical significance of the functions. Hence, the significance value to interpret the results was set at a confidence interval level of 95% ($Fp \leq .05$). Furthermore, to conclude whether the canonical correlation coefficients related to the variates were statistically significant, four multivariate significance tests were calculated (Pillai's trace, Hotelling's trace, Wilks' lambda and Roy's greatest characteristic root) (Thompson, 2000). Statistical significance ($Fp \leq .05$) in these tests indicates that the overall squared canonical correlation was > 0 ; subsequently it may be concluded that the predictor variables would – as a minimum – explain some of the variance associated with the set of dependent variables (Meyers et al., 2017). Wilks' lambda r^2 -type effect size (yielded by $1 - \lambda$) was used to establish the practical significance of the findings (Cohen, 1992; Sherry & Henson, 2005). Effect sizes for the r^2 metric are indicated by $> .01$ to $< .09$ = small practical effect; $> .09$ to $< .25$ = moderate practical effect; and $> .25$ = large practical effect (Cohen, 1992).

In addition, statistical significance was determined by interpreting the canonical correlation coefficients and their squared values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The canonical correlation coefficient (R_c) assesses the strength of the association between two sets of canonical variates (i.e. the weighted sum of the variables in the analysis) for the whole model. These coefficients have only positive values, ranging from 0 to +1 (Vaidyanathan & Vogt, 1994; Vogt & Johnson,

2015). The size of the canonical correlation indicates the practical significance of the canonical functions and should be considered when determining which functions to interpret. A generally accepted cut-off criterion that considers an adequate size for the canonical correlations is set at an R_c loading $\geq .30$ (Blumentritt, 2010). However, for purposes of this study, a rigorous cut-off threshold value of $R_c^2 \geq .50$ was considered due to the large number of variables. The squared canonical correlation coefficient (R_c^2) demonstrates the proportion of variance that is shared by the two composites derived from the two-variate sets (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The interpretation of the squared canonical correlation (R_c^2) values of $\leq .12$ (small practical effect), $\geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect) and $\geq .26$ (large practical effect) (Cohen, 1992) was taken into consideration to interpret the strength and practical significance of the results.

According to Hair et al. (2014), the redundancy index (RI) should also be considered in determining the strength of the overall correlations between the pair of variates of a canonical function. Hair et al. (2014) explain that the redundancy index demonstrates how redundant one set of variables is when compared to the other set of variables. Thus, it represents another way of determining the practical significance of the predictive ability of the canonical relationship.

Moreover, the standardised canonical correlation coefficients (i.e. canonical weights) and structure coefficients (canonical loadings and cross-loadings) indicate the origin of the reported canonical correlations (Thompson, 2000). Only those functions with practically and statistically significant canonical correlations ($p \leq .05$) were interpreted. Additionally, the direction (positive or negative) and the strength of the canonical weight assigned to each variable in its canonical variate were interpreted. Accordingly, it was found that variables with higher canonical weights contributed more to the variates. Additionally, while canonical weights with opposite signs indicated an inverse relationship between the variables; those with the same signs indicated direct relationships (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019; Thompson, 2000).

Canonical loadings or R_c (structure coefficients) assess the linear correlations between an observed variable in a variable set and the canonical variate of that set (Dattalo, 2014). For the current study, the threshold for considering a loading to be practically significant was $R_c \geq .50$. Dattalo (2014) explains that the larger the structure coefficient is, the more it indicates the importance of the observed variable in deriving the canonical variate. Canonical cross-loadings (i.e. correlation of each observed independent or dependent variable with the opposite canonical variate) were also considered. This is necessary to improve the predictive ability of the model and is done by identifying meaningful relationships between the subsets of variables (Tabachnick &

Fidell, 2019). To assess the practical effect of the canonical cross-loadings, the squared multiple correlations (Rc^2) were used ($\leq .12$ = small practical effect; $\geq .13 \leq .25$ = medium practical effect; $\geq .26$ = large practical effect) (Cohen, 1992).

Therefore, research hypothesis H2 was considered during the process of performing canonical correlation analysis.

6.6.3.2 *Mediation analysis*

Mediation analysis was used to address empirical research aims 3 and 4 of the empirical study.

Empirical research aim 3: To determine whether employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Empirical research aim 4: To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.

The CALIS procedure and maximum likelihood estimation to conduct CFAs in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) were used in order to test the measurement model of each mediation model. This was followed by a mediation path analysis using SEM.

Mediation analysis statistically determines the relationship between independent and dependent variables as conveyed through an intervening variable, called a mediator (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). Historically, the seminal work of Baron and Kenny (1986) explains mediation as using regression analysis principles to determine the indirect mediating function of a third variable (the mediating variable, M), which represents the mechanism through which an independent variable influences a dependent variable, and thus accounts for the relationship between the independent and outcome variables. In the current research, employee engagement and organisational trust were theorised as mediating variables in the relationship between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (the independent variables), and conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles (the dependent variables) (see Chapter 4). Applying this model, the relationship may be depicted in the form of a path diagram (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Figure 6.19 illustrates Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-variable model. Two causal paths feed into the dependent variable, the first being Path c' which indicates the direct influence of the

independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) (thus not mediated through M), and secondly, the indirect influence of the mediator (Path *b*).

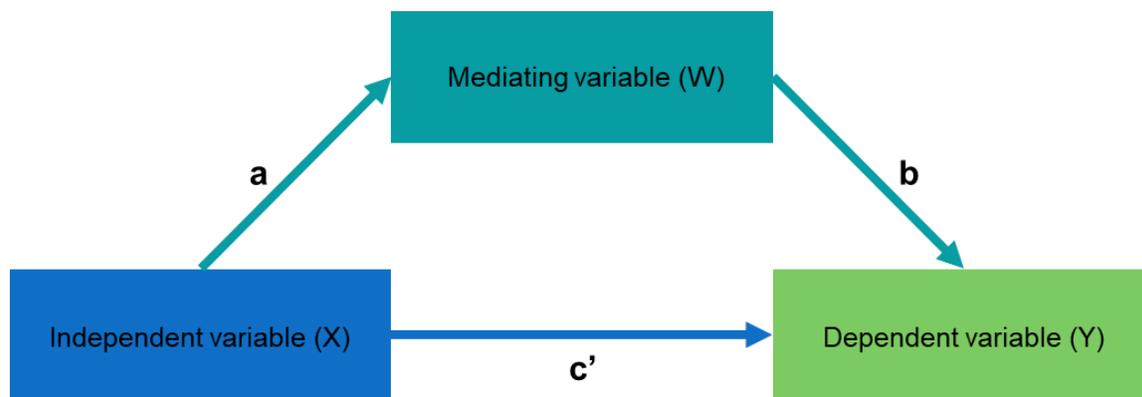


Figure 6.19. Path Diagram Illustrating the Direct and Indirect Effects of a Simple Mediation Model

Note: The rectangles depict the observed variables, while the arrows between two rectangles relate to regression coefficients (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014).

Baron and Kenny (1986, p. 1176) further explain that a variable will function as a mediator when the following conditions are met:

- Firstly, variations in levels of the independent variable significantly account for variations in the alleged mediator (i.e., Path *a*, Figure 6.19). Regarding the current research, this implies that significant relationships should exist between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Secondly, variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (i.e., Path *b*, Figure 6.19). Therefore, variations in the levels of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) should significantly account for variations in employee engagement and organisational trust (mediators) respectively.
- Thirdly, when Paths *a* and *b* are controlled, an earlier significant relation between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when Path *c'* (Figure 6.19) is zero. Consequently, the null hypothesis in process models states that the indirect effect of X on Y through M is zero. Hence, variations in employee engagement and organisational trust (mediating variables) should significantly account for variations in the dependent variables (conflict management

– conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Furthermore, when controlling Paths a and b (Figure 6.19), the previously significant relations between the independent (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), should no longer be significant.

Baron and Kenny (1986) clarify that the last condition may be envisaged as a continuum. Strong evidence exists of a singular and dominant mediator when Path c' (Figure 6.19) is reduced to zero. The operation of multiple mediating factors is suggested when the residual Path c' (Figure 6.19) is not zero. However, the scholars (Baron & Kenny, 1986) acknowledge that in fields such as psychology or other social behaviour areas of interest, a realistic goal would be to consider mediators that may seek to reduce the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Path c' , Figure 6.19), rather than aiming to abolish the relations between Variable X and Y completely. A significant reduction will theoretically demonstrate a strong mediator, even though it will not indicate the mediator as conditional for an effect to occur (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The third condition and final step in the causal steps approach (see figure 6.19), thus determines whether the mediating effects of employee engagement and organisational trust should be considered complete (full mediation as it is hypothesised that M will completely account for the effect of X on Y), or partial (X remains a direct cause of Y after accounting for M) (Howard, Dunlop, Patrick, & Zyphur, 2019).

However, scholars suggest that the distinction between full and partial mediation does not add theoretical value to the mediating results and should thus rather be avoided in mediation-related hypotheses and when reporting mediation results (Hayes, 2018b; Hayes & Rockwood, 2017; Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, & Petty, 2011). Claiming full mediation also suggests that only one variable can completely mediate the effect of X on Y (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). In addition, scholars (Hayes, 2009; Howard et al., 2019; Zhao, Lynch Jr., & Chen, 2010) criticise Baron and Kenny's causal model (1986) for not having enough power and for relying too heavily on logical inference to establish mediation, rather than quantifying the intervening effect. Traditionally, two further approaches were also often used, namely, the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) and resampling techniques (Bollen & Stine, 1990). However, these approaches are also criticised because of multiple problems and poor performance (Bakar, Mahmood, & Ismail, 2015; Fritz, Cox, & MacKinnon, 2015; Hayes, Montoya, & Rockwood, 2017; Hayes & Scharkow, 2013).

Thus, an approach is suggested where the existence of a significant relationship between the independent (X) and dependent (Y) variables is not regarded as a decisive factor in determining mediation (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). Howard et al. (2019) suggest a more acceptable approach commonly used today, namely, that of bootstrapping. This is a non-parametric method, thus not making a priori assumptions about $a \times b$ distribution. It is regarded as an accurate sampling distribution and statistically powerful in distinguishing indirect effects (Howard et al., 2019).

Although the above discussion refers to only one mediator process model, this model may be extended to include multiple mediators (Howard et al., 2019). Hence, incorporating more than one mediator will lead to multiple mediation models where it is hypothesised that X has an indirect effect on Y through both mediators (M1 and M2) – this is depicted in Figure 6.20 (Howard et al., 2019). Two indirect effects will thus be estimated; one for M1 ($a \times b$) and another for M2 ($c \times d$) (Howard et al., 2019).

In the current study, multilevel parallel mediation modelling (Tofighi, West, & MacKinnon, 2013) was conducted. The first mediator (M1) is employee engagement, whilst M2, the second mediator, is organisational trust. As a first step, Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria were considered to demonstrate mediation principles, while the mediation strength was assessed by considering the indirect practical effect size. For this purpose, the bootstrapped sampling distribution of the product $a \times b$ tests of mediation or indirect effects was conducted. This entails constructing a confidence interval (CI) and rejecting the null hypothesis $a \times b = 0$ when the CI mediation or indirect effects do not contain zero. Two competing approaches can be used in the estimation of confidence intervals, namely, the percentile-based bootstrap CI and the bias-corrected bootstrap CI (Howard et al., 2019). Because bootstrapped sample distribution does not have a normal distribution, a CI estimation from this distribution will be biased (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993). This research used the bias-corrected bootstrap CI as appropriate in testing the mediating effects of employee engagement and organisational trust on the relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables (conflict types and conflict management – interpersonal conflict handling styles). The bias-corrected bootstrap CI adjusts for the non-normal distribution and is regarded as the most powerful test for indirect effects (Hayes, 2009, 2018a; Zhang, Zyphur, & Preacher, 2009). A confidence interval (CI%) entirely above or below zero supports mediation with CI% confidence, whereas a confidence interval close to zero does not provide conclusive evidence of X's effect on Y being mediated through M1 and M2 (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017).

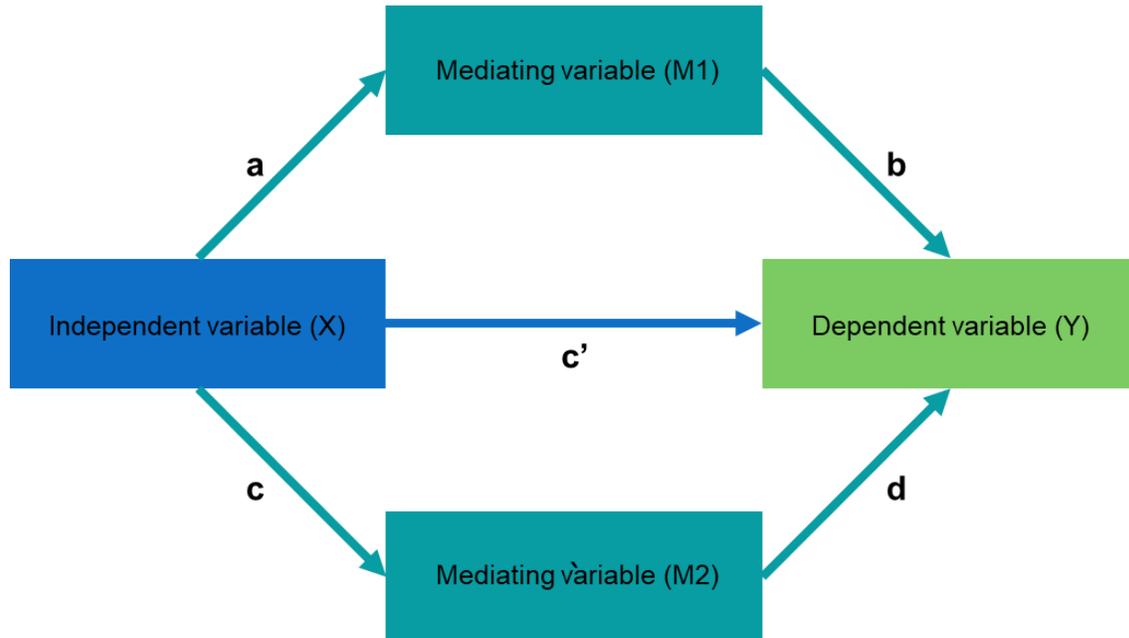


Figure 6.20. Path Diagram Illustrating the Direct and Indirect Effects of a Parallel Multiple Mediation Model

Note: The rectangles depict the observed variables, while the arrows between two rectangles relate to regression coefficients (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014).

Thus, the current research firstly considered the mediation of employee engagement (M1) and organisational trust (M2) using the present-day approach to multilevel parallel mediation analysis, thus interpreting mediation by considering the indirect effect of X on Y ($a \times b$) (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). To estimate the effects in mediation models, ordinary least squares regression-based analysis was used (Howard et al., 2019). The null hypotheses was rejected when the indirect effect ($a \times b$) was zero or did not include zero in the case of an interval estimate, as this was deemed sufficient to support a mediation effect of X on Y through M1 and M2 (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). A positive or negative sign (+ or -) indicated the indirect effect ($a \times b$) and its constituent components (paths *a* and *b*) (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). Because scholars (e.g. Hayes, 2018b) recommend that no distinction should be made between complete and partial mediation, none was made in the current research.

As previously mentioned, this research conducted multilevel parallel mediation modelling. A distinction is made between the classic mediation models (discussed above) and these newer

mediation models. The classic models assumed independent observations, where no clustering were considered (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). However, these models were extended to include clustered data, known as multilevel mediation modelling (Rucker et al., 2011; Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014; Tofighi et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2009). Clustered data includes data from participants that are nested within clusters (e.g. organisations), or data that is collected through repeated measures from the same respondents over time (Zhang et al., 2009). Tofighi and Thoemmes (2014) explain that data that is collected at a lower level (e.g. at the individual level) is labelled Level 1 data and data collected at a higher level (e.g. at the cluster level) is labelled Level 2 data. More than two levels of data may be collected, and these are then referred to as multilevel data. The objective of multilevel mediation methods is to model mediation at diverse levels of the analysis while accounting for bias in standard errors that result from a lack of independence among observations – a common occurrence in clustered data (Kenny, Korchmaros, & Bolger, 2003). Such a model is depicted as, for instance, 2→1→1, where the numbers (first to third) correspond in turn to the measurement levels of the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). Hence, resulting coefficient estimates are used to calculate the direct and indirect effects that are associated with each mediator in a model (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014).

The direct and indirect mediation effects were computed by considering a more dependable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% lower level (LLCI) and upper level (ULCI) (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). Four separate parallel multiple mediation models were tested. Because of the presence of multiple mediators, all four of the models hypothesised partial mediation as baseline model. Partial mediation comes about when the indirect effect $\beta_{yx.m}$ does not drop to zero and when the indirect mediation effect of X on Y is still significant (Preacher & Kelley, 2011). The four models (using SAS version 9.4 [SAS, 2012] with the CALIS procedure and maximum likelihood estimation to firstly conduct CFAs, followed by an SEM mediation path analysis) were as follows:

Model 1: This model included organisational culture with its two subscales (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) as independent variables and overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. Employee engagement (organisational engagement and job engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA

measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data were used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

Model 2: This model included leadership with its subscales (collaborative leader conflict behaviour, dominating leader conflict behaviour, avoiding leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of leader-member social exchange) as independent variables and overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. Employee engagement (organisational engagement and job engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best fit CFA multifactor data was used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

Model 3: This model included employee voice with its subscales (speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) as independent variables and overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. Employee engagement (organisational engagement and job engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data was used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

Model 4: Based on the canonical correlation results, this model included tolerance of conflict (organisational culture), collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership (leadership) and the three employee voice variables (speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) as independent variables. The model included group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential (conflict types) and integrating 1, integrating 2 and collaborative 2 (interpersonal conflict handling styles) as dependent variables. The parallel mediating variables included organisational engagement (employee engagement) and the organisational trust variables of integrity, commitment and dependability. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data was used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

The SEM process is explained below.

6.6.3.3 *Structural equation modelling (SEM)*

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted in order to test empirical research aim 4.

Empirical research aim 4: To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.

Four structural equation models were assessed to ensure the best model fit for the ensuing hypothesised model of significant constructs relevant to the final conflict management framework, based on the data from the multilevel parallel mediation modelling. Thus, conducting SEM explains whether the data from the sample supports the specified theoretical model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used with the CALIS procedure and maximum likelihood estimation to do SEM once the CFAs were conducted.

Mediation models with single-level data are often tested using SEM (Judd & Kenny, 1981). SEM may also be used to analyse covariance structures to describe models in which the likelihood of latent variables is hypothesised (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013), or to consider the effect of moderators on the indirect effect by, for instance, including background information such as socio-demographic characteristics (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). Additionally, SEM is used to model the measurement errors in mediators and dependent variables, for example by considering latent variables. The relationships between latent and observed variables are specified in the structural part of the SEM (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). SEM is similar in process to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), except that the latter assumes correlation between latent variables while the former uses predictions (Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Scholars argue that CFA is used to calculate the relationships between the latent variables; it is thus regarded as the measurement side of SEM (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Thus, mediator models can be extended by using SEM to concurrently propose and estimate relationships between numerous mediators, outcome variables, moderators and covariates (Tofighi & Thoemmes, 2014). For the purposes of the current research, the main purpose of conducting SEM was to ascertain whether the data from the sample supported the theoretically established model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

SEM can be described as a theory-driven statistical framework which is used to evaluate a priori specified relationships among one or more observed and/or latent independent variables and one or more observed and/or latent dependent variables (Ullman & Bentler, 2003; Yanyun Yang, 2018). SEM is regarded as a causal, interpretive statistical technique that measures the quality

of the measurement model (i.e. the part of the model that relates observed variables to latent variables) and the structural model (i.e. the strength of the hypothesised relationships between the respective variables) by combining aspects of factor analysis and multiple regression (Hair et al., 2014).

Kline (2016) suggests a three-step approach to SEM, which was followed in this study. Firstly, Kline (2016) advises that exploratory factor analysis be performed in order to reduce the data and to validate all the measurement scales. As all measurement scales used in this research were previously validated and widely published instruments, exploratory factor analysis was not conducted. Kline (2016) advises that this step is followed by conducting CFA with the goal of evaluating the various measurement model components in order to make any necessary adjustments to ensure an acceptable model fit (see section 6.6.1.4). Section 7.1 (Chapter 7) reports the results of these analyses. Thirdly, a path structure was drawn (see Figure 5.3) that represents the theoretically hypothesised conflict management framework. Figure 5.3 also illustrates the directional influences and mediation processes of the theorised framework.

Hereafter, the processing and the optimisation of the measurement model were computed in order to estimate the structural model. The structural model is tested to establish to what extent it fits the data, following a competing models strategy (Hair et al., 2014). This entails comparing various models to choose the model with the best fit between the theoretically hypothesised models (Chapters 2 to 4) and the empirically manifested structural model. The alternative models are compared to determine the best model fit in terms of the model fit criteria as summarised in Table 6.22. This fit was based on the statistical relationships between the independent and dependent variables, and employee engagement and organisational trust as mediating variables. SEM was thus used to test research hypothesis 4.

6.6.3.4 *Stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis*

Empirical research aim 5 of the empirical study was addressed by conducting stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis.

Empirical research aim 5: To ascertain whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and

employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Moderation models are often described as conditional modes that aim to understand the conditions under which a relationship between X and Y will either be present or absent, strong or weak, or positive or negative (Howard et al., 2019). Moderators are described as any variable(s) (say, W) that influence the strength and/or direction of the relationship between antecedents (X) and outcome (Y) variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). Moderation analysis can thus be explained as a process aiming to determine the extent of when (under what circumstances), for whom and how the relationship of X on Y will be effected by W (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017).

To determine these conditions, researchers can specify moderating (conditional) models. A simple moderation model is depicted in Figure 6.21, illustrating how a third variable (W) influences the magnitude and/or direction of the effect of an antecedent (X) on a dependent variable (Y) (Howard et al., 2019). Thus, questions in conditional models focus on answering when, whom, or where X influences Y (Howard et al., 2019).

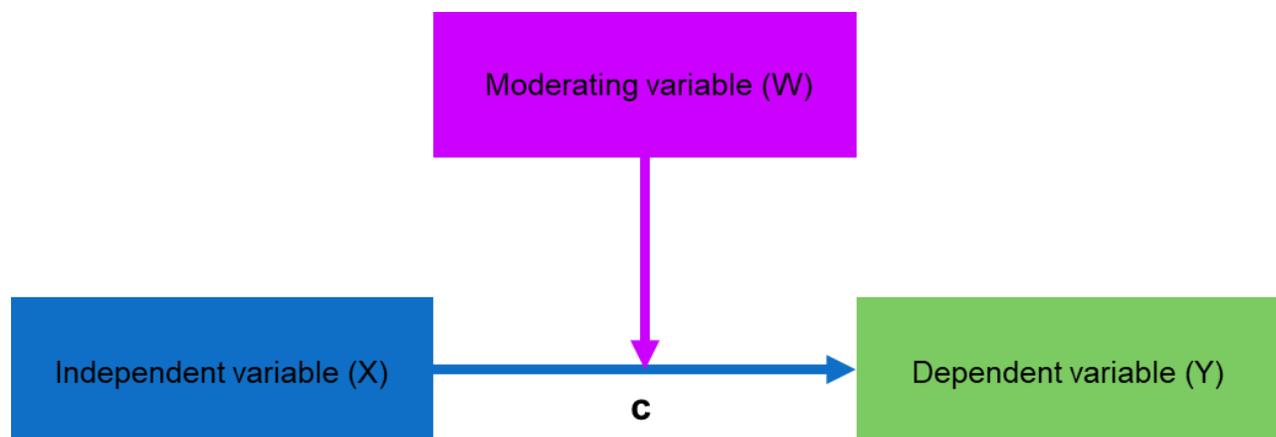


Figure 6.21 Path Diagram Illustrating a Simple Moderation (Conditional) Model

Notably, Howard et al. (2019) emphasise that it is not enough to propose that W influences the relationship of X with Y; rather, researchers should be clear as to the nature (direction and/or strength) of the conditional effect expected of the third variable on the effect of X on Y (depicted as the causal effect c in Figure 6.21). To determine the presence and significance of a moderating effect (Hair et al., 2014), an estimation of the original, unmoderated equation of the extent to which X predicts Y is firstly determined. Secondly, the moderated relationship is determined (i.e. the original equation plus the moderating variable). Thirdly, the change in R^2 is considered, reporting any statistically significant change (Hair et al., 2014).

In the current research, the moderating effect of employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) were considered as hypothesised in research hypothesis H5. Because of the number of moderators, stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis were performed. The stepwise regression analysis assisted in identifying the significant moderators for the purpose of including only these significant variables in the hierarchical moderated regression analysis. These two statistical techniques (stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis) are discussed next.

(a) Step 1: Stepwise multiple regression analysis

According to Hair et al. (2014), multiple regression analysis is a common statistical technique widely used to analyse the relationships between numerous independent variables and a dependent variable. Multiple regression is often regarded as an extension of traditional bivariate regression. Stepwise regression specifically lends itself to prediction, but not causal analysis (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). The technique thus lends itself to assessing the predicting influence of the moderating biographical variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) on the variables of relevance to this research. For this purpose, the moderating variables were regarded as independent variables. Hair et al. (2014) point out that for the purposes of regression analysis, variables should typically be metric in nature. However, because the moderating variables in the current research are socio-demographic characteristics, they are categorical (nominal) in nature, with no intrinsic ordering of the various categories. This required that the socio-demographic variables with more than two categories had to be recoded into binary measures.

Two stages of regression analysis were conducted. During stage 1, using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012), stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the best predictive socio-demographic moderators that could significantly moderate the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the dependent variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This was a necessary step because of the number of socio-demographic moderating variables in the current research.

Stepwise moderated regression analysis aims to determine the best combination of independent (predictor) variables to predict the dependent (predicted) variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). According to Darlington and Hayes (2017), stepwise regression exists in two forms, namely forward or backward regression. Forward regression begins with no predictors and then builds the model by adding predictors one at a time, whereas backward stepwise regression begins with a model that includes all the predictors and then removes them one at a time according to a set criterion for removal (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). Variables are added in forward stepwise regression if they increase R^2 the most, whereas in backward selection, each step entails removing a variable that lowers R^2 the least – relative to others still in the model. This process repeats itself until only one variable remains (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). The process only continues while supplementary variables add statistical significance to the regression equation, and stops when no further predictors add anything statistically significant to the regression equation (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). Thus, during stepwise multiple regression not all predictor variables may be entered into the equation. In this research, forward stepwise regression was performed. Accordingly, the following predictive moderating variables remained: number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme, job level, workplace size, qualification, workplace sector, age, and trade union membership.

The outcome of the multiple regression analysis process is therefore the development of a regression equation (indicating the line of best fit) between the independent and dependent variables (Cohen et al., 2013). A moderating effect thus occurs when a third variable (the moderating variable) influences the strength or direction of the relationship between two variables (Salkind, 2018).

(b) *Step 2: Hierarchical moderated regression analysis*

The stepwise multiple regression analysis was followed by hierarchical moderated regression analysis (step 2), applying the Hayes PROCESS procedure for SPSS version 3 (Hayes, 2018a). Similar to step 1, hierarchical moderated regression analysis is conducted to determine whether the relationship between a predictor variable and a criterion variable will be moderated by another predictor variable (known as the moderator or moderating variable) (Howard et al., 2019). This step entailed establishing whether the best predictive socio-demographic variables, as established in step one (stepwise multiple regression analysis), significantly moderated the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

In order to describe the strength of a moderating effect (i.e. the practical interaction effect size of moderated multiple regressions), scholars consider the effect-size metric f^2 (Aguinis, Beaty, Boik, & Pierce, 2005). The indicator (f^2) specifies the systematic variance ratio attributable to the moderating variable in relation to the unexplained variance in the criterion (Aguinis & Pierce, 2006). The practical effect sizes of f^2 are suggested as follows (Aguinis & Pierce, 2006; Cohen, 1992):

Cohen f-square (f^2 : $R^2/1-R^2$):

- $\geq .02 \leq .14$ = small practical effect
- $\geq .15 \leq .34$ = moderate practical effect
- $\geq .35$ = large practical effect

Tests for significant mean differences are discussed next.

6.6.3.5 *Tests for significant mean differences*

Two tests were undertaken to determine the significant mean differences of the various socio-demographic variables in order to address empirical research aim 6 of the empirical study.

Empirical research aim 6: To determine whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within South African-based organisations.

Firstly, a test for normality was conducted in order to establish whether the data had a normal distribution. The univariate procedure in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used to test for normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Cramer-von Mises and the Anderson-Darling tests were found to be significant and indicated the non-normality of the data distribution. Based on these tests for normality, the ANOVA procedure and post-hoc tests for detecting significant mean differences (for variables that had multiple different groups) were conducted to test research hypothesis H6. The following socio-demographic variables were tested using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012): race, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, (employment) sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme. A T-test and Tukey's studentised range test were used to test for significant mean differences between the genders. Because of the large number of socio-demographic variables, the results chapter will only report on the variances between variables that were significant: A significance level of $p \leq .05$ indicates that the tests of mean differences are significant and valid.

The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis tests were utilised in order to determine the significant mean differences of the socio-demographic variables. The Mann-Whitney U test for two independent samples is described as a non-parametric test based on ranks, which is comparable to the t-test (Cohen et al., 2018). The test is used with categorical variables (e.g. gender, trade union membership, trade union representation, formal employee engagement programmes and professional organisational membership) and aims to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between two independent ranked groups (Pallant, 2016). When samples are ≤ 20 , the statistical significance of the smaller U value is used (Cramer & Howitt, 2004). However, when samples are > 20 , the U value is adapted to a z value. According to Cramer and Howitt (2004), the value of z has to be ≥ 1.96 at the 0.05 two-tailed level or ≥ 1.65

at the 0.05 one-tailed level to be regarded as statistically significant.

The Kruskal-Wallis test, an extension of the Mann-Whitney U test, is also a non-parametric rank-based test to determine statistically significant mean differences between three or more groups (race, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, sector, employee numbers, organisational size) (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). This test is regarded as an alternative to the one-way ANOVA used in parametric data, allowing the researcher to compare more than two independent groups in nonparametric data (Cramer & Howitt, 2004).

6.6.4 Statistical and practical significance levels

The level of statistical significance is based on the likelihood of obtaining a certain statistical outcome merely by chance, which leads to making a Type I error, known as alpha, α . As explained above, a Type I error refers to the rejection of a true null hypothesis (Salkind, 2018). For this reason, researchers specify an acceptable level of statistical significance to be determined, thus limiting the possibility of error by concluding that significance exists when, in fact, it does not (Hair et al., 2014). For the purposes of this research, a statistically significant level of $p \leq .05$ was selected, in line with common practice in the social sciences (Cohen et al., 2018). This provided a 95% confidence level in the results of the research. Selecting a significance level of $p \leq .05$ indicates that, if the null hypothesis is rejected, there is only a 5% risk of being incorrect (Salkind, 2018). Should the test for significance indicate a $p \geq .05$ value, the researcher concludes that the results are not statistically significant (Saunders et al., 2016). However, results indicating a p -value less than 0.5 will result in the rejection of the null hypothesis and therefore the results will be statistically significant.

Additionally, an associated error (Type II error or beta, β) may be determined. According to Cohen et al. (2018), a Type II error occurs when the null hypothesis is supported when it is in actual fact false. The power ($1 - \beta$) of a statistical inference test may be regarded as an extension of a Type II error and relates to the probability of correctly rejecting the null hypothesis when it should be rejected (Hair et al., 2014). Salkind (2018) explains that Type II errors may be decreased and power increased by increasing the sample size, using reliable measuring instruments and ensuring the accurate recording of data. Salkind (2018) further emphasises the importance of statistical significance by firstly explaining that it is not meaningful unless paired with a strong conceptual base that gives it meaning. Secondly, statistical significance must be interpreted within the context within which it appears. Thirdly, Salkind (2018) cautions that statistical significance is

not the main goal of research; rather, hypotheses should be tested (not proved), and a null hypothesis outcome is an equally important result.

Moreover, research should have practical significance, suggesting its usefulness in achieving the research objectives (Meyers et al., 2017). Practical significance (reported in terms of practical effect size) relates to an estimation of the degree to which a phenomenon being studied exists in the population (Hair et al., 2014; Meyers et al., 2017). The advantage of reporting the practical effect size is found in the value of assessing the strength and importance of the statistically significant results obtained in the research (Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014).

The preceding sections described the various criteria that were applied in determining the statistical and practical significance of the research findings. Table 6.22 summarises the significance levels that were applied for each statistical technique used in the correlation, inferential and multivariate analyses.

Table 6.22

Criteria for Determining Statistical and Practical Significance for Correlation, Inferential and Multivariate Analyses

Statistical procedures	Statistical significance	Practical significance	Rejection of the null hypotheses
Correlation analysis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to measure the practical effect size and to determine practical significance. 	$p \geq .10$ = less significant $p = .01 - .05$ = significant $p = .001 - .01$ = very significant $p < .001$ = extremely significant	Pearson's r : $r \geq .10 \leq .29$ = small practical effect $r \geq .30 < .50$ = medium practical size $r \geq .50$ = large practical effect	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $r \geq .10$ (small practical effect)
Canonical correlation analysis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The practical significance ($1 - \lambda = r^2$-type metric of practical effect size) of the full canonical model was measured using Wilks' multivariate criterion lambda (λ). The overall canonical correlation coefficients (R_c), the squared canonical correlation coefficient values (R_c^2), and the redundancy index (d) were used to determine statistical and practical significance for the overall model. Canonical weights (i.e. the standardised canonical correlation coefficients) and canonical loadings and cross-loadings (i.e. structure coefficients) were interpreted to determine the model variance (i.e. the proportion of variance explained and the amount of shared variance). 	$p \geq .10$ = less significant $p = .01 - .05$ = significant $p = .001 - .01$ = very significant $p < .001$ = extremely significant Cut-off criteria for the canonical correlations: R_c loading $\geq .50$.	Effect sizes for the r^2 metric ($1 - \lambda$): $> .01 < .09$ = small practical effect $\geq .09 < .25$ = medium practical effect $\geq .25$ = large practical effect Squared canonical correlation (R_c^2) values: $\leq .12$ = small practical effect $\geq .13 \leq .25$ = medium practical effect $\geq .26$ = large practical effect	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$; Wilks' lambda r^2 -type effect size of $1 - \lambda \geq .09$ (moderate practical effect); $R_c \geq .50$, and $R_c^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect)
Mediation analysis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indirect and mediating effect (ab) was statistically calculated to estimate how the effect of X on M changes Y (Hayes, 2018b). Bootstrapping was conducted as part of the mediation analysis. Bootstrapping was done with 5000 bootstrap samples to investigate the mediation effects. Following the guidelines of Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007), the 	$p \geq .10$ = less significant $p = .01 - .05$ = significant $p = .001 - .01$ = very significant $p < .001$ = extremely significant To interpret the regression coefficients, the bootstrapping confidence interval (CI %) was calculated.	R^2 values: $\leq .12$ = small practical effect $\geq .13 \leq .25$ = medium practical effect $\geq .26$ = large practical effect	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$; bootstrapping confidence interval entirely above or below zero and $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect)

Statistical procedures	Statistical significance	Practical significance	Rejection of the null hypotheses
bootstrapping procedure was done three times: firstly, at the respective mean values of the moderator; secondly with the value one standard deviation above (+1 SD); and thirdly with the value one standard deviation below (-1 SD) the mean.	The main and interaction effects were construed using bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% lower level (LLCI) and upper level (ULCI) confidence levels.		
Structural equation modelling (SEM)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of measures is conducted during SEM that indicates how well a theoretical model clarifies the input data (i.e. the observed covariance matrix among measured variables). In order to estimate model fit, the correspondence between the observed covariance matrix and an estimated covariance matrix that results from the proposed model, is determined. 	<p>A range of model fit indices (CMIN/ <i>df</i>, NFI, CFI, RMSEA, SRMR and AIC) was utilised to assess the overall fit of the model.</p> <p>Interpretations about direct effects (i.e. how well the model predicted the endogenous variables) were made, based on the statistical significance of the standardised regression coefficients and an evaluation of the direction (+ or -) of the parameter estimates.</p>	<p>The value of the squared multiple correlations (R^2) were estimated by determining the amount of variance of the endogenous variables that were explained by the configuration of the model.</p> <p>Squared multiple correlation (R^2) values: $\leq .12$ = small practical effect $\geq .13 \leq .25$ = medium practical effect $\geq .26$ = large practical effect</p>	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$, CMIN/ <i>df</i> ≤ 3 (≤ 5 is also accepted); NFI $\geq .90$; CFI $\geq .90$; RMSEA $\leq .08$; SRMR $\leq .08$; lowest AIC.
Moderation analysis			
Step 1: Stepwise multiple regression analysis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1 of the moderation analysis was a stepwise multiple regression analysis, assessing the predicting influence of the moderating biographical variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) on the variables of relevance to this research. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the best predictive socio-demographic 	<p>$p \geq .10$ = less significant $p = .01 - .05$ = significant $p = .001 - .01$ = very significant $p < .001$ = extremely significant</p>	<p>Cohen <i>f</i>-square (f^2: $R^2/1-R^2$) $\geq .02 \leq .14$ = small practical effect $\geq .15 \leq .34$ = moderate practical effect $\geq .35$ = large practical effect</p>	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect)

Statistical procedures	Statistical significance	Practical significance	Rejection of the null hypotheses
moderators that could significantly moderate the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).			
Step 2: Hierarchical moderated regression analysis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 2 of the moderation analysis was a hierarchical moderated regression analysis to establish whether the best predictive socio-demographic variables, as established in step one (stepwise multiple regression analysis), significantly moderated the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). 	$p \geq .10$ = less significant $p = .01 - .05$ = significant $p = .001 - .01$ = very significant $p < .001$ = extremely significant	Adjusted R^2 values: $\leq .12$ = small practical effect $\geq .13 \leq .25$ = medium practical effect $\geq .26$ = large practical effect Cohen f -square ($f^2: R^2/1-R^2$) $\geq .02 \leq .14$ = small practical effect $\geq .15 \leq .34$ = moderate practical effect $\geq .35$ = large practical effect	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect)
Tests of significant mean differences			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Cramer-von Mises and the Anderson-Darling tests were used to assess the normality of the data distribution. Significant mean differences between the subgroups were determined using the Mann-Whitney U test (for two independent samples) and the Kruskal-Wallis test (for three or more independent samples). 	$p \geq .10$ = less significant $p = .01 - .05$ = significant $p = .001 - .01$ = very significant $p < .001$ = extremely significant A significance level of $p \leq .05$ indicated that the tests of mean differences were significant and valid.	Cohen's d was used to examine the practical effect size of the mean differences: $d = .20$ small practical effect $d = .50$ medium practical effect $d = .80$ large practical effect	Significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $d \leq .02$ small practical effect

Sources: Cohen (1992; 1989); Cohen et al. (2018); Field (2013); Hair et al. (2014); Hayes (2018b, 2018a); Hayes and Rockwood (2017); Meyers et al. (2017); Pallant (2016); Preacher et al. (2007); Tomczak and Tomczak (2014).

6.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As depicted in Figure 6.1, the first six steps of the empirical research were addressed in this chapter. These steps entailed determining and describing the research population and sample; describing and justifying the various measuring scales that were chosen for the purposes of this research; administering and scoring the measuring instruments; describing the ethical considerations followed; capturing the data; and the formulation of the research hypotheses. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the descriptive, correlational and inferential statistical analyses that were followed in processing the data in order to address the empirical research aims as stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.3.2.2). Finally, the chapter concluded by describing the criteria that were met to ensure statistical and practical significance levels when analysing and interpreting the data. In Chapter 7, the results of the statistical analysis of this study are reported and interpreted.

CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH RESULTS

Chapter 7 focuses on reporting the results of the statistical analysis. This chapter reports on the three main stages of the statistical processing and analysis of the data as discussed in Chapters 1 and 6. These stages include reporting the preliminary and descriptive statistics (stage 1), the correlational analysis (stage 2), and the inferential multivariate statistical analysis (stage 3). Thus, it addresses step seven of Phase 2, the empirical research process, as indicated below in Figure 7.1.

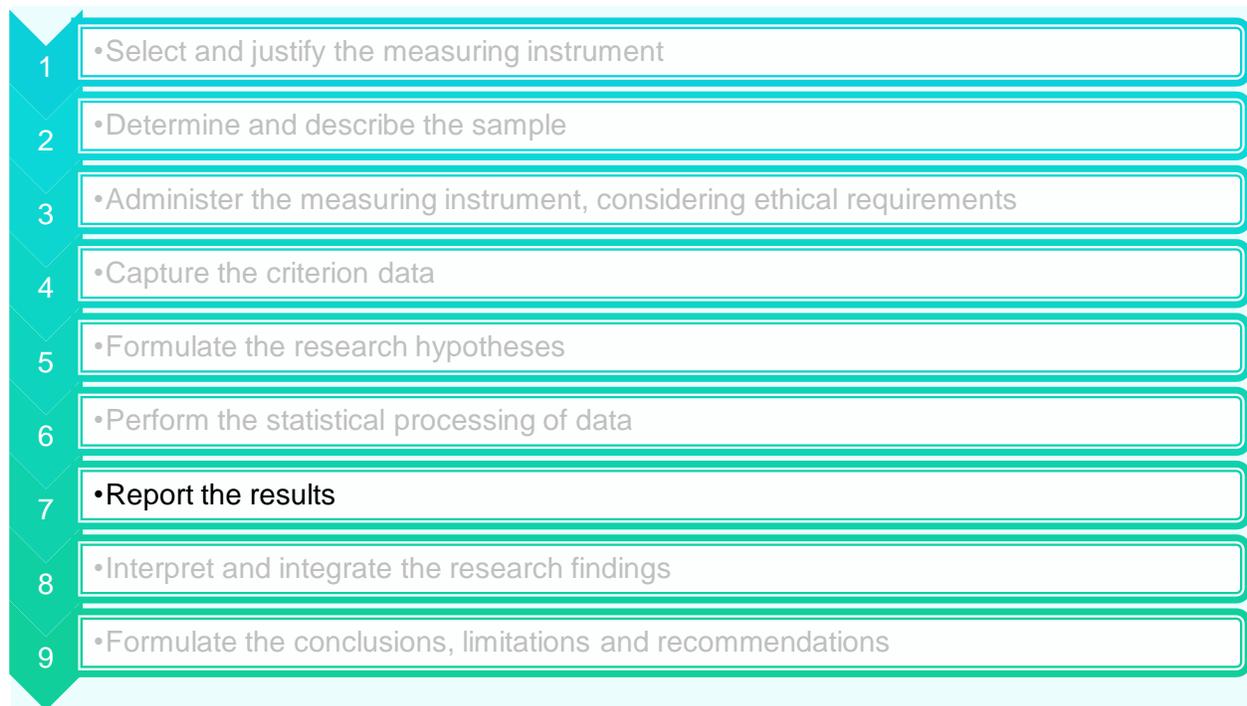


Figure 7.1 Step 7 of Phase 2, the Empirical Research Process

A number of statistical procedures are addressed in Chapter 7, as illustrated in Figure 7.2 below.

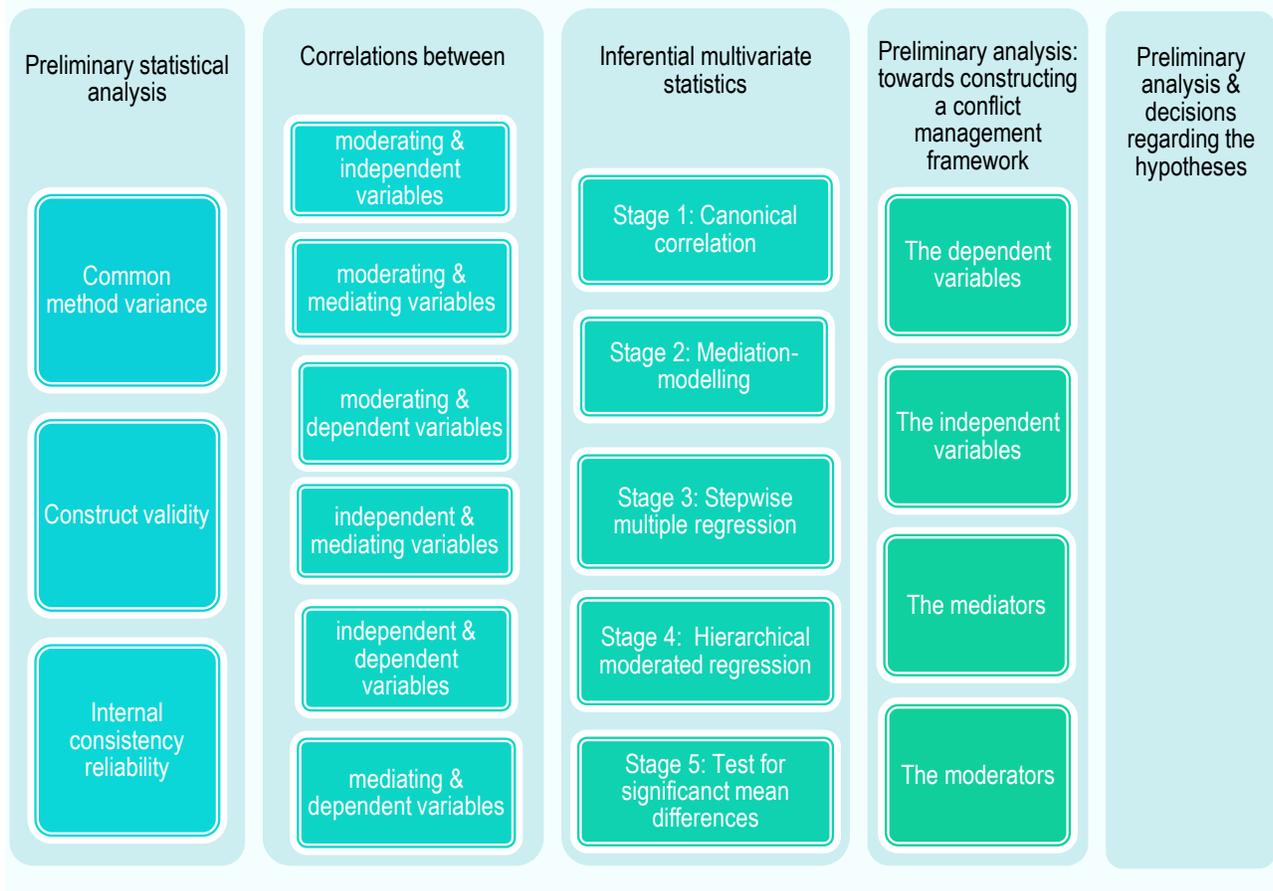


Figure 7.2 Statistical Procedures Relevant to Chapter 7

7.1 PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This section briefly discusses common method variance, measurement model validity as well as reporting on scale reliabilities.

During the exploratory analysis of the data, it was decided to drop the subconstruct of conflict acceptability norms, as measured by Jehn (1995, 1997), because it did not have a good fit with the chosen measurement model and data set. Therefore, no reporting will be done on conflict acceptability norms.

7.1.1 Common method variance

Because of the cross-sectional research design and self-reporting measurement scales used in this research, it was deemed necessary to test for common method variance. Common method variance (bias) is described as the systematic variance (i.e. the amount of false covariance shared between dependent and independent variables) resulting from the type of data collection method used in research, for example self-reporting surveys (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Scholars (e.g. Ullman & Bentler, 2003) emphasise that methodological limitations may be present even when the chosen methodology (e.g. self-reporting) is an appropriate choice. In behavioural sciences, self-reporting is often based on a cross-sectional design rather than a longitudinal design. This leads to participants reporting on their internal states (e.g. by reporting on their perceptions) simultaneously with their past behaviour as it relates to their internal states (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Measurement error may thus be attributable to method variance rather than to the constructs of relevance, threatening the validity of the conclusions that are drawn (Podsakoff et al., 2003). If measures are affected by common method variance, the inter-correlations among the factors could be inflated or deflated. When one factor emerges from the analysis or if one overall factor explains the majority of the variance, common method variance has occurred (Kock, 2015).

In this research, Harman's one-factor test and confirmatory factor analysis (one-factor solution) were used to test for common method variance (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Goodness-of-fit is indicated via various fit indices (refer to Table 6.20 in Chapter 6). A Harman's one-factor test value of $>.50$ implies a one-factor scale and the presence of common method bias. Similarly, good model fit of the one factor implies the presence of common method bias. According to O'Rourke and Hatcher (2013), goodness of fit indices to be considered include the chi-square, *df*, SRMR, RMSEA, and CFI indices. Lower RMSEA and SRMR values indicate better fit. A value $\leq .05$ is regarded as good fit, between $.05$ and $.08$ as a satisfactory fit, between $.08$ and $.10$ as a mediocre fit, and $> .10$ as unacceptable. For good model fit, the upper limit should be $< .08$, while the lower limit of the confidence interval should be close to zero. Additionally, the normed fit index (NFI) (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) and comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990) were also used. As summarised in Table 6.20 (Chapter 6), perfect fit is indicated by an NFI of one on a continuum of 0 to 1. The generally accepted rule for both the NFI and the CFI is that $.95$ indicates a good fit relative to the baseline model, while values $> .90$ are regarded as a satisfactory fit. Regarding the chi-square value, a lack of statistical significance (i.e. $p \geq .05$) supports the model. However, in

social science research, the chi-square is not regarded as a good measure of fit owing to variability in sample sizes, and SRMS, RMSEA and CFI are preferred ways to assess model fit.

SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used to conduct the analysis. Table 7.1 provides a summary of these results.

Table 7.1

Results of Harman's One-factor Test and One-factor Confirmatory Analysis

Measurement instrument	Harman's one-factor test: percentage variance explained by a single factor	One-factor (confirmatory analysis) solution factor
LEADERSHIP		
*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale	5.98%	Chi-square = 1658.56*** DF = 90
<i>Construct factors:</i> Perceptions of social exchange behaviour		Chi-square/DF = 18.43 SRMR = 0.16
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale		RMSEA = 0.20
<i>Construct factors:</i> Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour		CFI = 0.63 NFI = 0.62 AIC = 1718.56
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE		
Innovative Cultures Scale	3.97%	Chi-square = 407.61*** DF = 14
<i>Construct factors:</i> Tolerance of conflict Allowance for mistakes		Chi-square/DF = 29.11 SRMR = 0.10 RMSEA = 0.24 CFI = 0.80 NFI = 0.80 AIC = 435.61
EMPLOYEE VOICE		
*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of: The Voice Behavior Measure	9.93%	Chi-square = 2331.45*** DF = 135
<i>Construct factors:</i> Speaking out Speaking up		Chi-square/DF = 17.27 SRMR = 0.10 RMSEA = 0.19
The Voice Measure		CFI = 0.70
<i>Construct factors:</i> Employee voice opportunities		NFI = 0.69 AIC = 2403.45

Measurement instrument	Harman's one-factor test: percentage variance explained by a single factor	One-factor (confirmatory analysis)	solution factor
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT			
Job and Organizational Engagement Scales <i>Construct factors:</i> Job engagement Organisational engagement	5.31%	Chi-square = 920.65*** DF = 44 Chi-square/DF = 20.92 SRMR = 0.11 RMSEA = 0.20 CFI = 0.77 NFI = 0.76 AIC = 964.65	
ORGANISATIONAL TRUST			
Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey <i>Construct factors:</i> Integrity Commitment Dependability	12.16%	Chi-square = 1244.51*** DF = 135 Chi-square/DF = 9.22 SRMR = 0.04 RMSEA = 0.13 CFI = 0.89 NFI = 0.88 AIC = 1316.51	
CONFLICT TYPES			
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of: Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales <i>Construct factors:</i> Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere (High levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, and liking of group members and low competition)	18.3%	Chi-square = 9744.6*** DF = 819 Chi-square/DF = 11.9 SRMR = 0.13 RMSEA = 0.14 CFI = 0.58 NFI = 0.55 AIC = 9912.60	
Status Conflict in Groups Scale <i>Construct factors:</i> Status Conflict			
INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES			
Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory - II (ROCI-II) <i>Construct factors:</i> Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles	7.55%	Chi-square = 4563.07 DF = 377 Chi-square/DF = 12.10 SRMR = 0.17 RMSEA = 0.42 CFI = 0.46 NFI = 0.44 AIC = 4679.07	

Note: N = 556. *** $p \leq .000$

*For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

Leadership: The two leadership scales were treated as one multidimensional scale with the subdimensions of perceptions of social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale), and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, dominating leader conflict behaviour and avoidant leader conflict behaviour (Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale). Table 7.1 shows that Harman's one-factor solution accounted for only 5.98% of the covariance between the scale variables of the multidimensional scale. The one-factor CFA solution indicated poor model fit of the data: chi-square = 1658.56; $df = 90$ ($p < .0001$); chi-square/ df (=18.43); RMSEA (= .20) and SRMR (= .16) were above the threshold value of $<.10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= .63) and NFI (= .62) were below the threshold value of $>.90$ for model fit. These findings suggest that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the interpretation of the findings pertaining to the multidimensional leadership scale.

Organisational culture: In the case of the Innovative Cultures Scale (with its subdimensions of Tolerance of conflict and Allowance for mistakes), Harman's one-factor solution indicated that loading all its items onto a single factor accounted for only 3.97% of the covariance among the scale variables. Table 7.1 shows that the one-factor CFA solution indicated poor model fit of the data: chi-square/ df ratio = 29.11; $df = 14$ ($p < .0001$); chi-square/ df (= 29.11); RMSEA (= 0.24) and SRMR (= 0.10) were above the threshold value of $<.10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= 0.80) and NFI (= 0.80) were below the threshold value of $>.90$ for model fit. These findings suggest that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the interpretation of the findings pertaining to the organisational culture scale.

Employee voice: The two employee voice scales were treated as one multidimensional scale with the subdimensions of speaking out and speaking up (the Voice Behavior Measure), and employee voice opportunities (the Voice Measure). Table 7.1 shows that Harman's one-factor solution accounted for only 9.93% of the covariance between the scale variables of the multidimensional scale. The one-factor CFA solution indicated poor model fit for the data: chi-square = 2331.45***; $df = 135$ ($p < .0001$); chi-square/ df (= 17.27); RMSEA (= 0.19) and SRMR (= 0.10) were above the threshold value of $<.10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= 0.70) and NFI (= 0.69) were well below the threshold value of $>.90$ for model fit. These findings suggest that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the interpretation of the findings pertaining to the multidimensional employee voice scale.

Employee engagement: In the case of the employee engagement scale (with the subdimensions of Job engagement and Organisational engagement), Harman's one-factor solution indicated that

loading all its items onto a single factor accounted for only 5.31% of the covariance among the scale variables. The fit indices indicated that the single factor did not fit the model well, with a CFI value well below .90 and RMSEA and SRMR values above .10 (chi-square/*df* ratio = 20.92; $p < .000$; RMSEA = 0.20; SRMR = 0.11; CFI = 0.77; NFI = 0.76).

Organisational trust: Concerning the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey and its subdimensions of Integrity, Commitment and Dependability, Table 7.1 shows that Harman's one-factor solution accounted for only 12.16% of the covariance between the scale variables of the multidimensional scale. The one-factor CFA solution indicated poor model fit for the data: chi-square = 1244.51***; $df = 135$ ($p < .0001$); chi-square/*df* (= 9.22); RMSEA (= 0.13) and SRMR (= 0.04) were above the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= 0.89) and NFI (= 0.88) were well below the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. These findings suggest that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the interpretation of the organisational trust scale.

Conflict types: The two conflict types scales were treated as one multidimensional scale with the subdimensions of Task conflict, Relational conflict, Process conflict, Conflict resolution potential, and Group atmosphere (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales), and Status conflict (Status Conflict in Groups Scale). Table 7.1 shows that Harman's one-factor solution accounted for only 18.3%% of the covariance between the scale variables of the multidimensional scale. The one-factor CFA solution indicated poor model fit for the data: chi-square = 9744.6***; $df = 819$ ($p < .0001$); chi-square/*df* (= 11.90); RMSEA (= 0.14) and SRMR (= 0.13) were above the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= 0.58) and NFI (= 0.55) were well below the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. These findings suggest that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the interpretation of the findings pertaining to the multidimensional conflict types scale.

Interpersonal conflict handling styles: In the case of the interpersonal conflict handling styles measure (measuring the subdimensions of a(n) integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, or compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles), Harman's one-factor solution indicated that loading all its items onto a single factor accounted for only 7.55% of the covariance among the scale variables. When the variables of the interpersonal conflict handling styles measure were loaded onto a single construct in the CFA model, the fit indices indicated that the single factor did not fit the model well. The CFI value was well below .90 and RMSEA and SRMR values above .10 (chi-square/*df* ratio = 12.10; $p < .000$; RMSEA = 0.42; SRMR = 0.17; CFI = .46; NFI = 0.44).

These findings suggest that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the interpretation of the findings pertaining to the interpersonal conflict handling style scale.

In summary, based on the results reported, it was concluded that the one-factor results for the various scales met the guidelines of Podsakoff et al. (2003), signifying that no potential common method variance threat to the research findings was evident.

7.1.2 Measurement model validity: Construct validity and internal consistency reliability

This section reports on the measurement model validity of each scale separately. This procedure was necessary in order to obtain the best model fit measurement model for each scale before an overall measurement model for testing the research hypotheses could be constructed.

7.1.2.1 Construct validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been shown to be a powerful method for considering the construct validity of a measuring instrument (Schmitt & Stults, 1986) and indicates the overall fit and exact criteria for the assessment of convergent and discriminant validity (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). As explained in section 6.6.1.4(b) (Chapter 6), convergent validity is evident when different indicators of theoretically similar concepts show a strong correlation, whereas discriminant validity points out that theoretically diverse constructs do not show high intercorrelations (Brown, 2006).

A number of statistics are considered when reviewing goodness-of-fit indices (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). The following values of the various indices indicate an acceptable fit (refer to Table 6.20 in Chapter 6):

- Chi-square statistics: $p \geq .05$
- CMIN/DF: adequate model fit is ≤ 3 (≤ 5 is occasionally acceptable)
- RMSEA and SRMR: value $\leq .05$ indicates a good fit; $>.05$ and $\leq .08$ a satisfactory fit; $>.08$ and $\leq .10$ a moderate fit, and $> .10$ is unacceptable
- CFI and NFI: $\geq .90$ and $\leq .94$ = adequate fit; $\geq .94$ = ideal fit
- AIC: the lower the AIC, the better the model fit.

Thus, using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012), CFA was used to measure the structural (construct) validity of the measurement instruments. The results of the CFA are summarised in Table 7.2

below. In the SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) software, the CALIS procedure was applied in order to determine the optimised maximum likelihood fit indices using the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure (More, 1978). CFA is mainly undertaken to assess the validity of the measurement model of each scale. It thus allows researchers to draw valid conclusions in their research (Bollen & Pearl, 2013). Table 7.2 below summarises the results of the CFA.

Table 7.2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Construct Validity

Measurement instrument	Confirmatory factor analysis (original factor solution)	Optimised factor solution (confirmatory factor analysis)
LEADERSHIP		
*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:	Chi-square = 369.17***	Chi-square = 221.93***
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale	DF = 84	DF = 82
<i>Construct factors:</i>	Chi-square/DF = 4.39	Chi-square/DF = 2.71
Perceptions of social exchange behaviour	SRMR = .08	SRMR = .07
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	RMSEA = .10	RMSEA = .07
<i>Construct factors:</i>	CFI = .93	CFI = .97
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	NFI = .91	NFI = .95
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	AIC = 441.17	AIC = 297.93
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour		
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE		
Innovative Cultures Scale	Chi-square = 169.04***	Chi-square = 16.56*
<i>Construct factors:</i>	DF = 13	DF = 7
Tolerance of conflict	Chi-square/DF = 13	Chi-square/DF = 2.37
Allowance for mistakes	SRMR = .06	SRMR = .02
	RMSEA = .17	RMSEA = .08
	CFI = .92	CFI = .99
	NFI = .92	NFI = .99
	AIC = 199.04	AIC = 58.56
EMPLOYEE VOICE		
*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:	Chi-square = 1020.21***	Chi-square = 452.74***
The Voice Behavior Measure	DF = 132	DF = 117
<i>Construct factors:</i>	Chi-square/DF = 7.73	Chi-square/DF = 3.87
Speaking out	SRMR = .05	SRMR = .04
Speaking up	RMSEA = .13	RMSEA = .09

Measurement instrument	Confirmatory factor analysis (original factor solution)	Optimised factor solution (confirmatory factor analysis)
The Voice Measure	CFI = .88	CFI = .95
<i>Construct factors:</i>	NFI = .87	NFI = .94
Employee voice opportunities	AIC = 1098.21	AIC = 560.74
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT		
Job and Organizational Engagement Scales	Chi-square = 546.03***	Chi-square = 44.95***
<i>Construct factors:</i>	DF = 43	DF = 18
Job engagement	Chi-square/DF = 12.70	Chi-square/DF = 2.50
Organisational engagement	SRMR = .09	SRMR = .02
	RMSEA = .16	RMSEA = .07
	CFI = .87	CFI = .99
	NFI = .86	NFI = .99
	AIC = 592.03	AIC = 98.95
ORGANISATIONAL TRUST		
Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey	Chi-square = 845.1***	Chi-square = 407.85***
<i>Construct factors:</i>	DF = 132	DF = 121
Integrity	Chi-square/DF = 6.40	Chi-square/DF = 3.37
Commitment	SRMR = .03	SRMR = .02
Dependability	RMSEA = .11	RMSEA = .07
	CFI = .93	CFI = .97
	NFI = .92	NFI = .96
	AIC = 923.1	AIC = 507.85
CONFLICT TYPES		
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:	Chi-square = 3515.78***	Chi-square = 1453.15***
Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales	DF = 798	DF = 535
<i>Construct factors:</i>	Chi-square/DF = 4.41	Chi-square/DF = 2.72
Task conflict	SRMR = .07	SRMR = .04
Relational conflict	RMSEA = .08	RMSEA = .06
Process conflict	CFI = .87	CFI = .95

Measurement instrument	Confirmatory factor analysis (original factor solution)	Optimised factor solution (confirmatory factor analysis)
Conflict resolution potential	NFI = .84	NFI = .93
Group atmosphere (High levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, and liking of group members and low competition)	AIC = 3725.78	AIC = 1643.15
Status Conflict in Groups Scale		
<i>Construct factors:</i>		
Status Conflict		
INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES		
Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory - II (ROCI-II)	Chi-square = 1645.67	Chi-square = 930.29
<i>Construct factors:</i>	<i>DF</i> = 332	<i>DF</i> = 311
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles	Chi-square/ <i>DF</i> = 4.96	Chi-square/ <i>DF</i> = 2.99
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles	SRMR = .09	SRMR = .08
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles	RMSEA = .09	RMSEA = .06
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles	CFI = .83	CFI = .92
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles	NFI = .80	NFI = .89
	AIC = 1851.67	AIC = 1178.29

Notes: N = 556; *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

*For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

Leadership: The two leadership scales were treated as one multidimensional scale with the subdimensions of perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale), and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, dominating leader conflict behaviour and avoidant leader conflict behaviour (Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale). The CFA measurement model tested whether the various subscales had convergent validity in terms of being collated into one multidimensional scale. Modification indices and correlated error terms were used with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure to optimise the model. Table 7.2 shows that the best-fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity. The chi-square = 221.93; $df = 82$ ($p < .0001$) and the chi-square/ $df = 2.71$, thus within the acceptable range of ≤ 3 . The RMSEA (= .07) and SRMR (= .07) were below the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= .97) and NFI (= .95) were above the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 297.93.

Organisational culture: Modification indices and correlated error terms were used with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure to optimise the model. In the case of the Innovative Cultures Scale (with its subdimensions of tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes), the best-fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity: chi-square = 16.56*; $df = 7$ ($p = .0205$) and the chi-square/ $df = 2.37$, thus within the acceptable range of ≤ 3 . RMSEA (= .08) and SRMR (= .02) were below the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= .99) and NFI (= .99) were above the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 58.56.

Employee voice: The two employee voice scales were treated as one multidimensional scale with the subdimensions of speaking out and speaking up (the Voice Behavior Measure), and employee voice opportunities (the Voice Measure). The CFA measurement model tested whether the various subscales had convergent validity in terms of being collated into one multidimensional scale. Modification indices and correlated error terms with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure were used to optimise the model. Table 7.2 shows that the best-fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity: chi-square = 452.74***; $df = 117$ ($p < .0001$) and the chi-square/ $df = 3.87$, was still within an acceptable range of ≤ 5 . RMSEA (= .09) and SRMR (= .04) were below the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= .95) and NFI (= .94) were above the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 560.74.

Employee engagement: In the case of the employee engagement scale (with the subdimensions of Job engagement and Organisational engagement), modification indices and correlated error terms with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure were used to optimise the model. Table 7.2 shows that the best fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity: chi-square = 44.95***; $df = 18$ ($p = .0004$) and the chi-square/ $df = 2.50$, thus within the acceptable range of ≤ 3 . RMSEA (= .07) and SRMR (= .02) were below the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= 0.99) and NFI (= .99) were above the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 98.95.

Organisational trust: Concerning the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey and its subdimensions of integrity, commitment and dependability, modification indices and correlated error terms were used with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure to optimise the model. Table 7.2 shows that the best-fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity: chi-square = 407.85***; $df = 121$ ($p < .0001$) and the chi-square/ $df = 3.37$, was still within an acceptable range of ≤ 5 . RMSEA (= .07) and SRMR (= .02) were below the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= .97) and NFI (= .96) were above the threshold value of $> .90$ for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 507.85.

Conflict types: The two conflict types scales were treated as one multidimensional scale with the subdimensions of Task conflict, Relational conflict, Process conflict, Conflict resolution potential, and Group atmosphere (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales), and Status conflict (Status Conflict in Groups Scale). The CFA measurement model tested whether the various subscales had convergent validity in terms of being collated into one multidimensional scale. Modification indices and correlated error terms were used with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure to optimise the model. It was decided that the subscale measuring Conflict norms should not be used, as this subscale had low weights (standardised betas), indicating poor fit. Subsequently, from this point onwards, conflict norms were not considered in the interpretation of the findings. Table 7.2 shows that the best-fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity: chi-square = 1453.15***; $df = 535$ ($p < .0001$) and the chi-square/ $df = 2.72$, thus within the acceptable range of ≤ 3 . RMSEA (= .06) and SRMR (= .04) were below the threshold value of $< .10$ for model acceptability; CFI (= .95)

and NFI (= .93) were above the threshold value of > .90 for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 1643.15.

Interpersonal conflict handling style: In the case of the interpersonal conflict handling styles measure (measuring the subdimensions of a(n) integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, or compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles), modification indices and correlated error terms were used with the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure to optimise the model. Table 7.2 shows that the best-fit (optimised) CFA multidimensional model had a good fit with the model data, implying measurement model construct validity: chi-square = 930.29; $df = 311$ ($p < .0001$) and the chi-square/ $df = 2.99$, thus within the acceptable range of ≤ 3 . RMSEA (= .06) and SRMR (= .08) were below the threshold value of < .10 for model acceptability; CFI (= .92) and NFI (= .89) were above the threshold value of > .90 for model fit. The AIC for the optimised model was lower at 1178.29.

Subsequently, the structural (construct) validity of the seven measurement scales, as determined by the CFA results, are confirmed. Hence, it was concluded that further statistical analysis to test the research hypotheses was warranted and valid.

7.1.2.2 *Internal consistency reliability*

In this section, the internal consistency reliability of the following measuring instruments is reported:

- The multidimensional leadership scale consisting of the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001) and the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012)
- The Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a);
- The multidimensional employee voice behaviour scale consisting of the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) and the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a)
- The Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b)
- The Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011)
- The multidimensional conflict type's measure consisting of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) and the Status Conflict in Groups (Bendersky, & Hays, 2012), and
- Lastly, the ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b), measuring interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Because structural equation modelling (SEM) (confirmatory factor analysis [CFA]) were conducted as part of the current research, the average variances extracted (AVEs), the composite reliabilities – Raykov’s rho (ρ) coefficients (also known as coefficient omega [ω] or composite reliability coefficient) and the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients (internal consistency reliability) – were calculated for each measurement scale (Raykov, 1998). Generally, composite reliability is seen as a less biased estimate of reliability in comparison to the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient that tends to over- or underestimate reliability (MacDougall, 2011; Raykov, 1998). Generally, a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient of $\geq .70$ are considered acceptable. According to DeVellis (2003), a coefficient alpha of $< .60$ is regarded as unacceptable, between $.65$ and $.70$ as acceptable, between $.70$ and $.80$ as respectable and between $.80$ and $.90$ as excellent.

AVE assesses the level of variance portrayed by a construct versus the level owing to measurement error. Measurement error is explained as the variance between the value as measured through data collection and the correct value of a variable. AVE levels $> .70$ are regarded as excellent, and levels of $\geq .50$ are acceptable, thus demonstrating construct reliability and convergent validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Various aspects potentially result in measurement error, such as participants’ responses to the researcher, measuring instrument errors such as ambivalent questions, environmental aspects such as poor lighting or noise, and aspects directly related to the respondent such as fatigue (Melnyk & Morrison-Beedy, 2012). In addition, Henseler et al. (2015) explain that discriminant validity indicates the extent to which factors are distinct and uncorrelated. Discriminant validity is determined by considering the maximum shared variance (MSV) and the average shared variance (ASV). When MSV and ASV are both lower than the AVE, discriminant validity is evident. These factors (MSV, ASV and AVE) were determined for all of the measuring scales (Henseler et al., 2015). The results of the above measures are summarised in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3

Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the Measurement Model

Measurement instruments	Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α)	Composite reliability (CR)	AVE	MSV	ASV	Results of convergent validity ¹ CR>AVE ² AVE> .50	Results of discriminant validity ¹ MSV<AVE ² ASV<AVE
LEADERSHIP	.69						
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:							
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Perceptions of social exchange behaviour	.80	.69	.55	.67	.31	¹ No; ² No	¹ No; ² Yes
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	.93	.93	.77	.67	.29	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	.76	.77	.54	.12	.05	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour	.85	.83	.54	.23	.18	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	.82						
Innovative Cultures Scale							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Tolerance of conflict	.60	.88	.64	.49	.49	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
Allowance for mistakes	.83	.77	.53	.00	.00	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
EMPLOYEE VOICE	.95						
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:							
The Voice Behaviour Measure							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Speaking out	.90	.86	.52	.66	.45	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Speaking up	.95	.94	.66	.66	.54	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
The Voice Measure							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							

Measurement instruments	Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α)	Composite reliability (CR)	AVE	MSV	ASV	Results of convergent validity ¹ CR>AVE ² AVE> .50	Results of discriminant validity ¹ MSV<AVE ² ASV<AVE
Employee voice opportunities	.94	.79	.85	.43	.33	¹ No; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	.91						
Job and Organizational Engagement Scales							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Job engagement	.82	.69	.32	.89	.89	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² No
Organisational engagement	.94	.92	.79	.00	.00	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
ORGANISATIONAL TRUST	.97						
Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Integrity	.94	.84	.11	.94	.92	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² No
Commitment	.95	.82	.01	.90	.89	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² No
Dependability	.89	.75	.02	.94	.90	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² No
CONFLICT TYPES	.83						
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:							
Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Task conflict	.88	.79	.54	.59	.35	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Relational conflict	.93	.92	.75	.85	.52	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Process conflict	.94	.94	.79	.75	.50	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ Yes; ² Yes
Conflict resolution potential	.86	.86	.67	.69	.37	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Group atmosphere (High levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, and liking of group members and low competition)	.88	.95	.60	.69	.44	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Status Conflict in Groups Scale							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Status Conflict	.95	.95	.73	.85	.56	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes

Measurement instruments	Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α)	Composite reliability (CR)	AVE	MSV	ASV	Results of convergent validity ¹ CR>AVE ² AVE> .50	Results of discriminant validity ¹ MSV<AVE ² ASV<AVE
INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES	.88						
Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (ROCI-II)							
<i>Construct factors:</i>							
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles		.82	.53	.78	.32	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	.84						
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	.81						
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles		.70	.41	1.01	.29	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² Yes
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	.66						
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	.71						
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles		.53	.24	.92	.33	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² No
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	.62						
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	.59						
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles		.65	.36	.95	.24	¹ Yes; ² No	¹ No; ² Yes
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	.70						
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	.80						
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles		.61	.57	.70	.25	¹ Yes; ² Yes	¹ No; ² Yes
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	.71						
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	.67						

Notes: N = 556. AVE: average variance extracted. MSV: maximum shared value. ASV: average variance shared. Convergent validity CR > AVE and AVE > 50. Discriminant validity MSV < AVE and ASV < AVE.

*For statistical purposes, the respective scales for the constructs of leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

Leadership: Table 7.3 shows that the overall multidimensional leadership scale obtained an acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .69 (close to .70). The various subscales obtained acceptable internal consistency reliability coefficients. The subscale Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .76 to .93. The less biased composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged between .69 (close to .70) to .93. In terms of convergent validity, the AVE values of the subscales were above .50 and the CR values were higher than the AVE values. These findings provided evidence of convergent validity. With the exception of some of the MSV values, all the ASV values were smaller than the AVE values, indicating discriminant validity, which in turn suggested that multicollinearity did not pose a serious threat to the findings pertaining to the leadership subscales.

Organisational culture: As shown in Table 7.3, the overall organisational culture scale obtained an excellent Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82. However, while the subscale Allowance for mistakes obtained a very good internal consistency reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .83$), the subscale Tolerance of conflict measured lower than the guideline of $\geq .70$ ($\alpha = .60$) (DeVellis, 2003). However, the less biased composite reliability (CR) coefficient measured .77 for the subscale Allowance for mistakes and .88 for the subscale Tolerance of conflict. Thus, it is concluded that both subscales had very good internal consistency reliability. In terms of convergent validity, the AVE values of the subscales were above .50 and the CR values were higher than the AVE values. These findings provided evidence of convergent validity. The MSV and the ASV values were smaller than the AVE values, indicating discriminant validity, which in turn suggested that multicollinearity did not pose a serious threat to the findings pertaining to the organisational culture subscales.

Employee voice: Table 7.3 shows that the overall multidimensional employee voice scale obtained an excellent Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .95. The various subscales of the combined multidimensional employee voice measure (the Voice Behavior Measure and Voice Measure) all obtained excellent internal consistency reliability coefficients. The subscale Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .90 to .95. The less biased composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from .79 to .94. In terms of convergent validity, the AVE values of the subscales were above .50. Although the CR values for the Voice Behavior Measure (with subscales Speaking up and Speaking out) were higher than the AVE values, this was not the case for the Voice Measure (measuring employee voice opportunities) which had a CR value of .79 with an AVE value of .85. These findings provided evidence of convergent validity for the Voice Behavior Measure, but not

for the Voice Measure. This finding was considered during the interpretation of the results. With exception of some of the MSV values (Speaking up and Speaking out), all the ASV values were smaller than the AVE values, indicating discriminant validity, which in turn suggested that multicollinearity did not pose a serious threat to the findings pertaining to the employee voice subscales.

Employee engagement: The overall employee engagement scale obtained an excellent Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91. As shown in Table 7.3, the various subscales obtained acceptable internal consistency reliability coefficients. The subscale Cronbach's alpha coefficients were respectively .82 (Job engagement) and .94 (Organisational engagement). The more reliable composite reliability (CR) coefficients was acceptable at .69 (close to .70) (Job engagement) and .92 (Organisational engagement). In terms of convergent validity, the AVE value for Organisational engagement was well above .50, but Job engagement only had an AVE value of .32 – an aspect considered during the interpretation of the results. Nonetheless, for both subscales the CR values were higher than the AVE values. These findings provided evidence of convergent validity. For Job engagement, neither the MSV value nor the ASV values were smaller than the AVE value. This was considered during the interpretation of the findings. However, in the case of Organisational engagement, discriminant validity is indicated as both MSV and ASV are smaller than AVE. This suggests that multicollinearity did not pose a serious threat to the findings pertaining to the employee engagement subscales.

Organisational trust: Table 7.3 shows that the overall organisational trust scale obtained an excellent Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .97. The various subscales obtained good internal consistency reliability coefficients. The subscale Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .89 to .95. The less biased composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from .75 to .84. In terms of convergent validity, the AVE values of the subscales were all less than .50 and the CR values were higher than the AVE values. These findings provided evidence of convergent validity. However, all of the MSV values and all the ASV values were bigger than the AVE values, and therefore no support was found for discriminant validity – a matter considered during the interpretation of the results. As previously explained, discriminant validity indicates the extent to which factors are distinct and uncorrelated (Henseler et al., 2015). However, from a theoretical viewpoint, integrity, commitment and dependability are all dimensional components of organisational trust and are therefore not distinct but rather interrelated. Nonetheless, the possibility of multicollinearity was taken into consideration in the interpretation of the findings.

Conflict types: Table 7.3 shows that the overall Conflict Types scale obtained a good Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .83. The various subscales obtained excellent internal consistency reliability coefficients. The subscales' Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .86 to .95. The less biased composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from .79 to .95. In terms of convergent validity, the AVE values of the subscales were all above .50 and the CR values were higher than the AVE values. Thus, evidence of convergent validity was provided. With the exception of all but one of the MSV values (Process Conflict), all the ASV values were smaller than the AVE values, indicating discriminant validity, which in turn suggested that multicollinearity did not pose a serious threat to the findings pertaining to the Conflict Types subscales.

Interpersonal conflict handling styles: As indicated in Table 7.3, the overall interpersonal conflict handling styles scale achieved an excellent Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .88. The various subscales obtained unacceptable to acceptable internal consistency reliability coefficients. The subscale Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .59 to .84. The less biased composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from .53 to .82. The low reliabilities were taken into consideration with the interpretation of the findings as a limitation of the scale. Owing to the large sample size (N = 566) and the exploratory nature of this group-based research, .53 was regarded as acceptable to continue with testing the research hypotheses. However, the low reliabilities were taken into account in the interpretation of the findings. In terms of convergent validity, the AVE values of the subscales were above .50 for the integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles subscales, but lower than .50 for the obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles (.41), the dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles (.24) and the avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles (.36) subscales. This was considered during the interpretation of the findings. Nonetheless, the CR values were higher than the AVE values. These findings provided evidence of convergent validity. None of the MSV values was smaller than the AVE values. However, with the exception of the dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles subscale, all the ASV values were smaller than the AVE values, indicating discriminant validity, which in turn suggested that multicollinearity did not pose a serious threat to the findings pertaining to the interpersonal conflict handling styles' subscales.

In summary, it was concluded that the various measuring scales all showed acceptable internal consistency and scale reliability. Furthermore, apart from the Voice Measure subscale (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) and the ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) measuring scale, evidence was found for all other scales to support convergent validity. Similarly, discriminant validity was

supported for all subscales apart from the Job engagement subscale (a subscale of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales [Saks, 2006b]) and the subscales of the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) measuring organisational trust. These findings were taken into account during the statistical analyses and the interpretation of the research.

7.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics quantify a collection of data so that the features of the data set may be described and summarised (Salkind, 2018; Tramontano & Fida, 2019) This section provides the descriptive information on each of the measuring instruments and their subscales. SAS version 9.4 (2012) was used to calculate the descriptive statistics. The means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of the following scales are summarised in Table 7.4, followed by a discussion on the research findings:

- The multidimensional leadership scale consisting of the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001 and the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012)
- The Innovative Cultures Scale (Yeh & Xu, 2010a)
- The multidimensional employee voice behaviour scale consisting of the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) and the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a)
- The Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b)
- The Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011)
- The multidimensional conflict types measure consisting of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scales (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) and the Status Conflict in Groups (Bendersky, & Hays, 2012), and
- Lastly, the ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b), measuring interpersonal conflict handling styles.

7.2.1 Descriptive information on the measuring instruments

Leadership: The scores of the multidimensional leadership scale (consisting of the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure [Murry et al., 2001] and the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale [Gelfand et al., 2012]) were obtained by determining the mean scores for all items relating to the subscales of Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership, and the subscale Leader Conflict Behaviors (measuring collaborative -, dominating -, and avoidant leader conflict behaviour). To

calculate the mean score, all the individual scores for each of the respective subscales are summed, where after the summative results are divided by the number of scores within the subscale (Salkind, 2018).

- The first measuring scale of the leadership multidimensional scale was the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale (Gelfand et al., 2012). This scale had three subscales measuring collaborative, dominating and avoidant leader conflict behaviour on a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 indicated that participants strongly disagreed and 7 that participants strongly agreed with a statement assessing their views on their organisation's leader conflict behaviour. The subscale with the highest mean score indicated the style participants saw as the most frequently used conflict behaviour by the leadership of their organisations; i.e. whether management in their organisations mostly used collaborative, dominating or avoidant conflict behaviour. The subscale with the lowest mean score indicated the leader conflict behaviour least engaged in by their management. All participants could complete this section of the survey.
- Additionally, participants who reported to a supervisor at the time of the survey were asked to rate their management's social exchange leadership behaviour by completing a second scale, namely, the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Murry et al., 2001). This four-item scale comprised a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 indicated that participants did not agree with the statement (1 = not at all) and 5 indicated that participants agreed with the given statement (5 = to a very large extent). The purpose of this scale was to assess the exchange that occurs between leaders and their subordinates in their everyday interactions, based on levels of trust and fairness between the parties (Murry et al., 2001). A high mean score indicated that participants viewed their organisations' leadership as engaging in social exchange behaviour, while a low mean score meant that participants' viewed their organisations' leadership as not participating in daily social exchange behaviour.

Table 7.4 provides descriptive information on the leadership subscales.

Organisational culture: The Innovative Cultures Scale was scored by attaining the mean score for all the items relating to the two subscales, measuring an organisational culture showing tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes (Yeh & Xu, 2010b). Participants rated the statements on a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 indicated that participants strongly disagreed and 7 indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement. The overall mean score of each subscale

indicated to what extent participants viewed their organisations as having an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and allows for mistakes. A high mean score indicated that conflict is tolerated and mistakes allowed as part of participants' organisational culture, whereas a low mean score indicated that conflict is not tolerated and mistakes are not allowed. Table 7.4 provides descriptive information on the organisational culture subscales.

Employee voice: The multidimensional employee voice scale consisted of two subscales: the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010) and the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a). These scales were scored by calculating the mean score for each subscale.

- The first subscale, the Voice Behavior Measure (Liu et al., 2010), required participants to respond to statements on their voice behaviours (speaking up and speaking out) using a seven-point Likert-type scale. Whereas all participants completed the speaking out subscale, only those reporting to supervisors completed the speaking up behaviour subscale. A higher mean score indicated that participants engage in speaking up and speaking out behaviour, while a low mean score indicated that participants do not engage in such behaviour. The subscale with the highest overall mean score determined participants' dominant voice behaviour.
- The second subscale, the Voice Measure (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a), determined the extent to which leaders grant voice opportunities. Only participants reporting to supervisors completed this subscale. The overall mean score determined to what extent participants perceived their leaders as granting voice opportunities, with a high score indicating that leaders grant voice opportunities and a low mean score that voice opportunities are not granted.

Table 7.4 provides a summary of the descriptive information for the multidimensional employee voice construct as obtained in this study.

Employee engagement: In determining employee engagement, the scores of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b) were calculated by establishing the mean score for all the items relating to the two subconstructs of job engagement and organisational engagement. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements indicating their engagement with their jobs and their organisations on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree. The higher the mean score for the subscale, the more engaged the participants were with their jobs and/or their organisations.

A low mean score indicated that participants were not engaged with their jobs and/or their organisations. Table 7.4 provides the descriptive information for employee engagement.

Organisational trust: The Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011) was scored by attaining the mean score for all the items relating to the three subscales of integrity, commitment and dependability. Participants rated the statements on a seven-point Likert-type scale based on their trust in their organisations. One indicated that participants strongly disagreed that their organisations acted with (respectively) integrity, commitment and dependability, and a 7 indicated that they strongly agreed that their organisations' acted with integrity, commitment and dependability. The overall mean score for each subscale indicated the extent to which participants had organisational trust, with a high mean score indicating high levels of trust and a low mean score indicating low levels of organisational trust. Table 7.4 provides descriptive information on the organisational trust subscales.

Conflict types: The multidimensional conflict types scale consisted of two subscales, namely, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) and the Status Conflict in Groups (Bendersky, & Hays, 2012) measure. The multidimensional conflict types scale was scored by calculating the mean score for each of the two subscales.

- Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) required participants to respond to statements on the subconstructs of task conflict, relational conflict, process conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential. These subconstructs were measured by implementing a seven-point Likert-type scale. The subscale on the respective conflict types (task, relational, process conflicts) identified the presence or absence of a specific type of conflict. High mean scores indicated the incidence of a specific conflict type in participants' organisations, while a low mean score indicated its absence. The subscale measuring group atmosphere determined the general group atmosphere (based on high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members and low competition) between fellow work unit members. The higher the overall mean score, the more positive the atmosphere among group members; the lower the mean score, the more negative the group atmosphere. Group atmosphere was measured as it is argued that it may influence the prevalence of different conflict types (Jehn, 1995, 1997). The conflict resolution potential subscale determined participants' view on the probability of resolving conflict within their work units. The higher the overall mean score, the more participants

believed that the potential existed to resolve conflict in their specific work unit. A low mean score indicated that participants had a negative view of conflict resolution potential.

- The Status Conflict in Groups (Bendersky, & Hays, 2012) subscale measured the prevalence of status conflict in participants' work units. A high mean score indicated that status conflict was present, whereas a low mean score indicated a lower occurrence of status conflict in work units.

Table 7.4 provides a summary of the descriptive information for the multidimensional conflict types construct as obtained in this study.

Interpersonal conflict handling styles: The scores on the different interpersonal conflict handling styles were calculated by establishing the mean score for the various items relating to the different styles of handling interpersonal conflict (integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, compromising). The ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995b) measuring instrument was used for this purpose. As stated in section 6.2.8.2 of Chapter 6, the current research adapted the suggestion by Rahim and Magner (1995a) to create aggregate variables by summing subsets of items. This is recommended to eliminate poor fit when a measurement model has between four and seven items per factor, or because of large sample sizes (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994; Rahim & Magner, 1995a). In the current research, two subsets of items were thus formed for each factor, measuring one of the five (integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, compromising) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a specific statement relating to how they handle conflict on a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree. By answering the various items, a preferred style for handling conflict is determined. Higher mean scores on specific items indicated the inclination of participants to use that specific type of interpersonal conflict handling style. Therefore, the interpersonal conflict handling style with the highest overall mean score was the style of handling conflict mostly applied by participants. Low mean scores indicated that the particular conflict handling style was not often engaged in. Table 7.4 provides a summary of the descriptive information for the interpersonal conflict handling styles construct as obtained in this study.

The standard deviation indicates the variability in sample responses. A small standard deviation shows that data points are clustered closely together around the mean, while a large standard deviation shows that the data set is spread out away from the mean (Field, 2013). Data points are the same in value when a standard deviation of zero is evident (Field, 2013). If a normal

distribution is evident, a normal curve will follow. Kline (2016) explains that within a normal distribution, about two-thirds (68%) of scores lie within one standard deviation above or below the mean, while the majority of scores (about 95% of the scores) fall within two standard deviations above or below the mean, and about 99% of cases are located plus or minus three standard deviations from the mean.

Kurtosis is a measure of the combined sizes of the two tails and indicates the amount of probability in the tails (Pallant, 2016). Kurtosis measures outliers present in the distribution. The value is often compared to the kurtosis of the normal distribution, which is equal to 3 (Hair et al., 2014). If the kurtosis is greater than 3, then the dataset has heavier tails than a normal distribution (referred to as a leptokurtic distribution), while a kurtosis level less than 3 indicates that the dataset has lighter tails than a normal distribution, called a platykurtic distribution. If the kurtosis is close to 0, then a normal distribution is assumed, called a mesokurtic distribution.

Skewness is described as a measure of the symmetry or lack of symmetry of the dataset. A truly symmetrical data set will have a skewness of zero, thus indicating a normal distribution. The rule of thumb seems to be that if the skewness is between -.5 and .5, the data is fairly symmetrical; if the skewness is between -1 and -.5 or between .5 and 1, the data is moderately skewed; and lastly, if the skewness is less than -1 or greater than 1, the data is highly skewed. For both skewness and kurtosis, a value of + or - 1 is considered ideal, while a value of + or - 2 is considered an acceptable distribution.

Table 7.4 provides a summary for each of the scales and subscales in terms of their minimum score, maximum score, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis.

Table 7.4
Descriptive statistics: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis

Measuring instruments	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
LEADERSHIP						
<i>*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:</i>						
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure	1	5	2.93	0.72	-.19	-.32
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	1.2	5.55	3.68	0.68	-.34	.88
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	1	7	4.60	1.57	-.64	-.63
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	1	7	3.26	1.30	.16	-.67
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour	1	7	3.56	1.45	.26	-.78
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE						
Innovative Cultures Scale	1	7	4.75	1.25	-.76	.03
Tolerance of conflict	1	7	4.96	1.34	-1.00	.33

Measuring instruments	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Allowance for mistakes	1	7	4.47	1.49	-.53	-.54
EMPLOYEE VOICE						
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:						
The Voice Behavior Measure	1	7	5.06	1.26	.50	-.89
Speaking out	1	7	5.55	1.10	3.25	-1.58
Speaking up	1	7	4.79	1.41	.16	-.89
The Voice Measure	1	7	3.95	1.76	-.25	-1.10
Employee voice opportunities						
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT						
Job and Organizational Engagement Scales	1	7	5.08	1.19	-.79	.53
Job engagement	1	7	5.37	1.11	-1.10	1.69
Organisational engagement	1	7	4.71	1.58	-.61	-.43
ORGANISATIONAL TRUST						
Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey	1	7	4.65	1.41	-.65	-.36
Integrity	1	7	4.68	1.48	-.69	-.30
Commitment	1	7	4.86	1.52	-.78	-.21
Dependability	1	7	4.36	1.44	-.44	-.64
CONFLICT TYPES						
*Multidimensional conflict types scale consisting of:						
Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale	1	6.71	4.40	0.64	-.05	2.72
Task conflict	1	7	4.33	1.46	-.27	-.92
Relational conflict	1	7	3.94	1.63	-.02	-1.11
Process conflict	1	7	3.51	1.63	.27	-1.05
Group atmosphere	1	7	5.01	1.26	-.97	.39
Conflict resolution potential	1	7	4.85	1.33	-.82	.10
Status Conflict in Groups	1	7	3.86	1.60	-.00	-1.04
Status conflict						
INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES						
Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II	1	6.79	4.73	0.69	-0.87	3.37
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles						
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	1	7	5.21	1.11	-1.11	1.40
interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	1	7	5.38	1.08	-1.34	2.19
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles						
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	1	7	4.68	1.13	-.68	.39
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	1	7	4.92	1.07	-.79	1.02
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles						
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	1	7	4.32	1.15	-.44	.05
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	1	7	4.22	1.29	-.24	-.46
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles						
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	1	7	4.22	1.22	-.20	-.27
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	1	7	4.17	1.46	-.16	-.78
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles						
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 1	1	7	5.09	1.10	-1.12	1.42
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2	1	7	5.17	1.09	-1.14	1.62

Notes: N = 556.

*For statistical purposes, the respective scales measuring leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

Leadership: The multidimensional leadership scale consisted of two subscales measuring perceptions of social exchange leadership and leader conflict behaviour. Regarding the Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale, Table 7.4 shows that the participants obtained the highest mean score on collaborative leader conflict behaviour (Mean = 4.60; SD = 1.57) and the lowest mean score on dominating leader conflict behaviour (Mean = 3.26; SD = 1.30). Overall, the mean scores were in the mid-range of 1 to 7, indicating that no one specific leader conflict behaviour stands out above the other. In other words, although slightly more leaders behave in a collaborative manner when conflict is prevalent, they also often avoid conflict, or behave in a dominating manner. The standard deviations for each of the three subscales were fairly similar, falling within the range of 1.30 to 1.57; data points are thus clustered closely around the mean (Field, 2013). The skewness values for the subscale of leader conflict behaviours varied between -.64 and .26, with an overall skewness for the subscale of -.34, which indicated that the distribution for the subscale was negatively and moderately skewed to the left, but fairly symmetrical. The kurtosis indicated a range of between -.63 and -.78, which is lower than for a normal distribution, and indicates a negative, platykurtic (flat) kurtosis with scores that are generally distributed across the whole continuum (Meyers et al., 2017). The Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure had a mean of 2.93 and a standard deviation of .72. This implies that, in general, participants view their leaders as engaging only to a moderate extent in social exchange behaviour. The subscale is moderately and negatively skewed, but fairly symmetrical (its skewness value is -.19). This measure has a negative platykurtic distribution kurtosis value of -.32. The data falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

Organisational culture: The mean score for the Innovative Cultures Scale was 4.75 (SD = 1.25), with the subscale of Tolerance of conflict having a mean of 4.96 (SD = 1.34) and the subscale of Allowance for mistakes having a mean of 4.47 (SD = 1.49). This implies that, in the main, participants regarded their organisations as having a culture that somewhat allowed for mistakes and tolerated conflict. The mean scores for the Innovative Cultures Scale indicated a distribution moderately skewed to the left (skewness > 0 at -.76). The skewness value for the subscale of Tolerance of conflict was -1.00 (an ideal distribution) and for the subscale Allowance for mistakes a moderate skewness of -.53 was indicated. The kurtosis value for the overall Innovative Cultures Scale indicated a distribution slightly larger than zero (> 0) at -.03 (a kurtosis value of zero indicates a normal distribution). The kurtosis values for the subscale of Tolerance of conflict was .33 and for the subscale Allowance for mistakes .54. The data falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

Employee voice: The multidimensional employee voice scale consisted of two subscales that measured employee voice behaviour and whether leaders grant voice opportunities to employees. Regarding the Voice Behavior Measure, Table 7.4 shows that the participants obtained the highest mean score on Speaking out (Mean = 5.55; SD = 1.10) and the lowest mean score on Speaking up (Mean = 4.79; SD = 1.41). The data indicates that the participants engage more in speaking out behaviour (i.e. speaking to colleagues) than speaking up behaviour (i.e. speaking to management). The standard deviations for the two subscales were fairly similar, indicating that data points are clustered closely around the mean (Field, 2013). The skewness values for the Voice Behavior Measure was 3.25 for Speaking out (highly skewed) and 0.16 for Speaking up (fairly symmetrical) and an overall skewness for the subscale of .50, which indicated that the distribution for the overall subscale was fairly symmetrical. The kurtosis indicated a value of -1.58 for Speaking out, and -.89 for Speaking up, indicating a negative, platykurtic kurtosis with scores that are generally distributed across the whole continuum (Meyers et al., 2017). The overall kurtosis for the Voice Behavior Measure was -.89. The Voice Measure (considering whether leaders grant voice opportunities to employees) had a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.76. This indicates that, on average, participants slightly disagree or neither agree nor disagree that management grant voice opportunities. The subscale is fairly symmetrical (its skewness value is -.25) and has a kurtosis value of -1.10, indicating a negative, platykurtic value where the scores are generally distributed across the entire continuum (Meyers et al., 2017). The data falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

Employee engagement. The mean score for the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b) was 5.08 (SD = 1.19), with the subscale of Job engagement having a mean of 5.37 (SD = 1.11) and the subscale of Organisational engagement having a mean of 4.71 (SD = 1.58). This implies that, in the main, participants engage more with their jobs than with organisations. Furthermore, the overall mean (which is around the mid-range of one to 7 at 5.08) for the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales indicates that, in general, the participants were moderately engaged. The mean scores for the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales indicated a distribution skewed moderately to the left (skewness > 0 at -.79). The skewness value for the subscale of Job engagement was -1.10 (highly skewed to the left) and for the subscale Organisational engagement -.61 (moderately skewed to the left). The kurtosis value for the overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales indicated a distribution slightly > 0 at .53 (a kurtosis value of zero indicates a normal distribution). The kurtosis value for the subscale of Job engagement was 1.69 (a positive platykurtic value) and for the subscale Organisational

engagement -0.43 , indicating a negative, platykurtic value of kurtosis where the s thus falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

Organisational trust: The mean score for the Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey was 4.65 ($SD = 1.41$), with the subscales of Integrity, Commitment and Dependability ranging between 4.36 ($SD = 1.44$) and 4.86 ($SD = 1.52$). With all means being in the midrange between 1 and 7, this implies that, in the main, participants only indicate a moderate level of trust in their organisations. The mean scores for the Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey indicated a moderately skewed distribution to the left (skewness > 0 at -0.65). The skewness values for the subscales Integrity and Commitment were -0.69 and -0.78 (moderately skewed) respectively and for the subscale Dependability, a skewness of -0.44 (fairly symmetrical) was indicated. The kurtosis value for the overall Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey indicated a distribution slightly > 0 at -0.36 (a kurtosis value of zero indicates a normal distribution). The kurtosis values for the three subscales ranged between -0.21 and -0.64 , indicating a negative, platykurtic value of kurtosis where the scores are generally distributed across the whole continuum (Meyers et al., 2017). The data falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

Conflict types: The multidimensional conflict types scale consisted of two subscales. Regarding Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, Table 7.4 shows that the participants obtained the highest mean score for the subscale conflict type of Task conflict (Mean = 4.33 ; $SD = 1.46$) and the lowest mean score on Process conflict (Mean = 3.51 ; $SD = 1.63$). These scores are still highest and lowest when also considering the conflict type of Status conflict (Status Conflict in Groups) with a mean of 3.86 and an SD of 1.6 . This implies that task conflict is more prevalent than any other form of conflict amongst participants, while process conflict is least experienced by participants. Furthermore, the subscale measuring Group atmosphere (Mean = 5.01 ; $SD = 1.26$) indicates that generally, participants perceive the atmosphere in their work unit (based on high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members and low competition) as fairly positive. This may, in part, explain the relatively low mean of 3.94 ($SD = 1.63$) for Relational conflict. Regarding the Conflict resolution potential subscale, a mean of 4.85 ($SD = 1.33$) indicates that participants moderately perceive potential in resolving conflict. In addition, the standard deviations for the two overall subscales were fairly similar at 1.6 for Status Conflict in Groups and 0.64 for the overall measure of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, indicating that data points are clustered closely around the mean (Field, 2013). The skewness value for the overall Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale was -0.05 (fairly symmetrical). The overall kurtosis for Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale was

2.72, indicating a positive, platykurtic kurtosis with scores that are generally distributed across the whole continuum (Meyers et al., 2017). The skewness value of -.00 for the scale measuring Status Conflict in Groups, indicates a normal distribution; while the kurtosis value of -1.04 indicates a negative platykurtic distribution. The data falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

Interpersonal conflict handling styles: The mean score for the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II was 4.73 (SD = 0.69), with the subscales for the different interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising) ranging between 5.38 (SD = 1.08) for the integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2, and 4.17 (SD = 1.46) for the avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 2. This implies that participants mostly maintain an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style and least of all engage in an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. The compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2 are the next most indicated style used by participants (mean = 5.09 and 5.17; SD = 1.10 and 1.09). The mean scores for the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II indicated a moderately skewed distribution to the left (skewness > 0 at -.87). The kurtosis value for the overall Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II indicated a distribution of 3.37 (a kurtosis value of zero indicates a normal distribution). Distributions with kurtosis greater than three are leptokurtic (Pallant, 2016). A positive, leptokurtic kurtosis indicates that the majority of scores are drawn in towards the middle (Meyers et al., 2017). The data falls within an acceptable range and does not indicate any outliers.

7.2.2 Preliminary analysis 1: Toward constructing a framework for conflict management

The dominant mean scores are illustrated in Figure 7.3 below, depicting the mean score profile of the data.

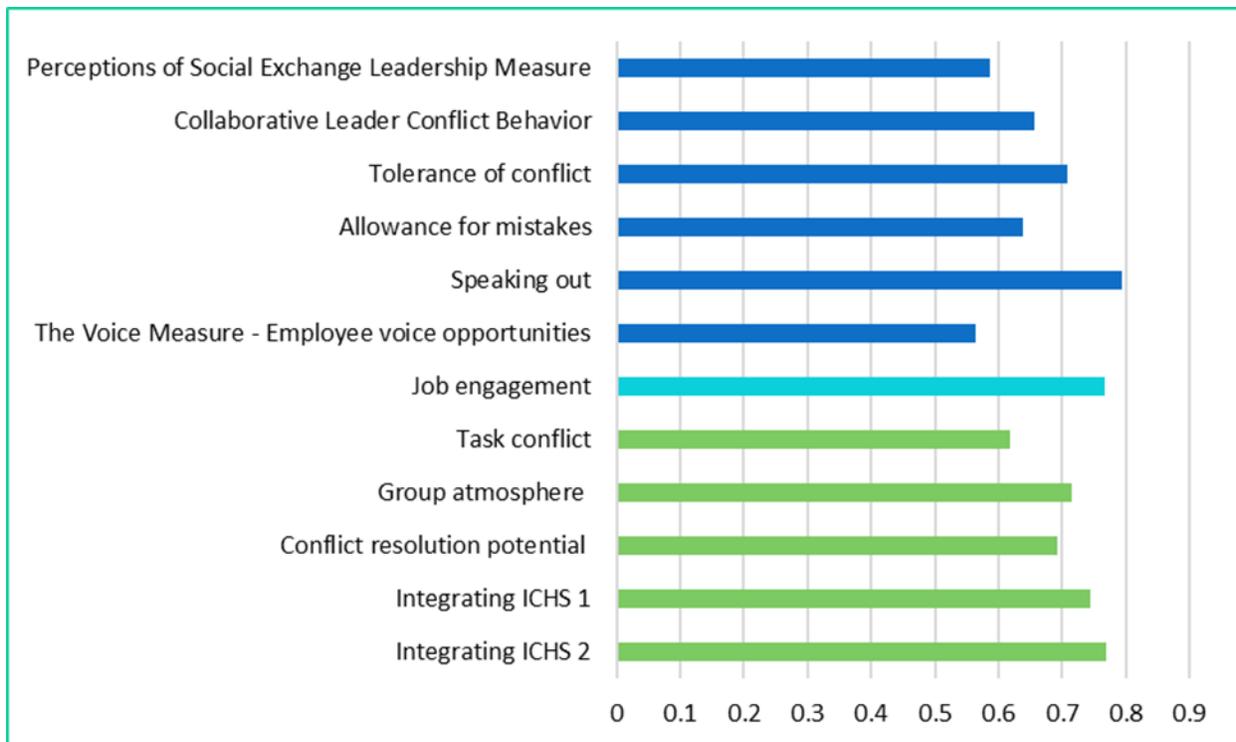


Figure 7.3 Mean Score Profile

Note: The dark blue scores reflect the independent subvariables with the highest mean scores, while the light blue bar indicates the only mediating subvariable that features in the profile of highest mean scores. The subvariables illustrated in green indicate the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Figure 7.3 indicates that overall, the mean scores of the sample groups indicated that participants perceived their leaders as engaging slightly more in a collaborative leader conflict behaviour, followed by an avoiding conflict behaviour and, lastly, in a dominating leader conflict behaviour. Additionally, participants viewed their leaders as engaging only moderately in social exchange leadership behaviour. Typically, participants regarded their organisations as having a culture of somewhat allowing for mistakes and tolerating conflict. The data further indicated that participants engage more in speaking out behaviour (i.e. speaking to colleagues) than speaking up behaviour (i.e. speaking to management) – voice behaviour that may be explained by the fairly neutral perceptions of leaders’ conflict and social exchange behaviours, as well as organisational cultures that only moderately allow for mistakes and tolerate conflicts. Besides, participants slightly disagreed, or could not agree or disagree, on whether their managers (leaders) were granting voice opportunities. Generally speaking, participants engaged more with their jobs than with their

organisations. Participants indicated only a moderate level of trust in their organisations, which may clarify why they do not easily engage with their organisations. Task conflict was more prevalent than any other form of conflict amongst participants, followed by relational conflict, status conflict, and lastly, process conflict, which was least experienced by participants. Generally, participants perceived the atmosphere in their work unit (based on high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members and low competition) as fairly positive. This may explain, at least in part, the relatively low incidence of relational conflict. Participants perceived to a moderate extent that potential to resolve conflicts exists. Similar to their leaders, participants mostly maintain an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style. However, although participants perceived their leaders as engaging in avoiding conflict leadership styles, they indicated that they least of all engaged in an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. A compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2) was the second most indicated style used.

7.3 CORRELATION STATISTICS

Correlational statistics were executed to investigate the magnitude and direction of the relationships between the respective research variables (Cohen et al., 2013). Additionally, correlational statistics are regarded as a bivariate analysis which was used in this study to assess whether the research results provided significant evidence to support research hypothesis H1.

Research hypothesis 1: There are statistically significant interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The SAS version 9.4 (2012) software program was utilised in calculating the Spearman correlations. The guidelines of Cohen (1988) were followed to interpret the practical effect of the associations at $p \leq .05$; namely a small practical effect is viewed as $r = .10$ to $.29$, medium $r = .30$ to $.49$, and lastly, a large practical effect as $r \geq .50$. To interpret significant associations, $p \leq .05$ was used as a threshold.

7.3.1 Correlations among socio-demographic variables and independent, mediating and dependent variables

Table 7.5 reports on the bivariate correlations between the socio-demographic variables and the independent, mediating and dependent variables.

Table 7.5

Bivariate Correlations between Socio-demographic Variables, Independent, Mediating and Dependent Variables

	Race	Gender	Age	Qualification	Job level	Income level	Tenure	Employment status	Trade Union representation	Trade Union membership	Workplace sector	Number of employees	Workplace size	Formal employee engagement programme
LEADERSHIP														
*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:														
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale	.01	0	.06	-.13**	.08	.01	-.07	.07	.17***	.13**	-.23***	-.23***	-.17***	-.15**
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	.02	-.04	.03	-.09	.01	-.02	-.04	.08	.13**	.14***	-.15***	-.22***	-.16***	-.10*
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	0	-.07	.05	-.15***	.11**	-.02	-.06	.04	.21***	.21***	-.31***	-.27***	-.18***	-.21***
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	.01	-.05	.01	.07	.06	.08	.05	.01	-.11**	-.04	.09*	.10*	.09*	-.04
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour	.01	.10*	-.02	.05	-.17***	-.07	.03	.02	-.07	-.10*	.21***	.06	.04	.18***
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE														
Innovative Cultures Scale	-.02	-.05	.06	-.13**	.11**	-.01	-.04	0	.19***	.18***	-.19***	-.28***	-.19***	-.16***
Tolerance of conflict	-.07	-.04	.06	-.11*	.10*	.01	0	-.01	.13**	.16***	-.14**	-.24***	-.15***	-.19***
Allowance for mistakes	.02	-.04	.03	-.13**	.08	-.02	-.07	.02	.20***	.16***	-.20***	-.25***	-.20***	-.10*

	Race	Gender	Age	Qualification	Job level	Income level	Tenure	Employment status	Trade Union representation	Trade Union membership	Workplace sector	Number of employees	Workplace size	Formal employee engagement programme
EMPLOYEE VOICE														
*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:														
The Voice Behavior Measure	.04	-.22***	.19***	-.08	.23***	.24***	.05	-.04	.12**	.19***	-.30***	-.20***	-.21***	-.23***
Speaking out	-.02	-.16***	.17***	-.05	.16***	.22***	.07	-.10*	.05	.12**	-.19***	-.12**	-.12**	-.20***
Speaking up	-.06	-.17***	.12**	-.08	.16***	.24***	.02	-.07	.03	.07	-.20***	-.09	-.12*	-.20***
The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities)	.01	-.06	.09	-.08	.14**	.10*	-.03	-.02	.12**	.10*	-.24***	-.12**	-.11*	-.20***
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT														
Job and Organizational Engagement Scales	-.11*	-.07	.16***	-.10*	.09*	.08	.07	-.05	.05	.06	-.17***	-.08	-.06	-.17***
Job engagement	-.08	0	.14**	-.09*	.04	.09*	.08	-.09*	-.04	-.01	-.08	.01	.02	-.15***
Organisational engagement	-.10*	-.11*	.17***	-.09*	.12**	.06	.07	-.02	.11**	.10*	-.21***	-.12**	-.09*	-.15***
ORGANISATIONAL TRUST														
Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey	-.01	-.07	.03	-.13**	.13**	.01	-.08	.05	.21***	.24***	-.31***	-.25***	-.17***	-.17***
Integrity	-.02	-.08	.06	-.12**	.12**	.02	-.06	.06	.2***	.22***	-.29***	-.27***	-.19***	-.16***
Commitment	0	-.05	.02	-.13**	.13**	.02	-.08	.04	.21***	.25***	-.32***	-.24***	-.15***	-.14***
Dependability	-.02	-.06	.01	-.11*	.12**	-.01	-.09*	.04	.16***	.20***	-.28***	-.20***	-.14**	-.18***

	Race	Gender	Age	Qualification	Job level	Income level	Tenure	Employment status	Trade Union representation	Trade Union membership	Workplace sector	Number of employees	Workplace size	Formal employee engagement programme
CONFLICT TYPES														
*Multidimensional conflict types' scale consisting of:														
Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale	-.12**	.02	-.11*	.03	.07	.03	.01	0	-.07	-.13**	.16***	.07	.08	-.02
Task conflict	-.11*	.02	-.09*	.05	.02	.05	0	-.03	-.14**	-.16***	.19***	.18***	.15***	0
Relational conflict	-.07	.09*	-.14***	.03	-.07	-.05	.01	.01	-.16***	-.20***	.24***	.19***	.17***	.05
Process conflict	-.01	.05	-.15***	.04	-.06	-.10*	0	.02	-.15***	-.21***	.24***	.17***	.15***	.05
Conflict resolution potential	-.03	-.09*	.17***	-.05	.14**	.16***	.08	-.08	.09*	.09*	-.15***	-.15***	-.10*	-.17***
Group atmosphere	-.02	-.10*	.09*	-.03	.16***	.11*	-.01	-.03	.14***	.17***	-.18***	-.20***	-.17***	-.07
Group Status Conflict Scale (Status Conflict)	-.07	.07	-.13**	.02	-.06	-.04	.02	0	-.15***	-.20***	.20***	.22***	.18***	.03
INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES														
Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II):														
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.02	-.14***	.14**	-.10*	.16***	.15***	.02	-.06	.10*	.11*	-.25***	-.16***	-.17***	-.20***
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2	0	-.12**	.14**	-.09	.13**	.12**	.01	-.03	.06	.08	-.15***	-.11*	-.10*	-.18***
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.10*	.03	-.10*	-.09	-.05	-.10*	-.12**	.05	.07	.03	-.12**	-.14**	-.11**	-.03
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 2	.06	-.05	-.05	-.09*	-.09*	-.04	-.08*	.05	.05	.02	-.02	-.09*	-.09*	.03
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.01	-.17***	.11**	.01	.12**	.13**	0	-.05	.09*	.09*	-.14**	-.09*	-.13**	-.08

	Race	Gender	Age	Qualification	Job level	Income level	Tenure	Employment status	Trade Union representation	Trade Union membership	Workplace sector	Number of employees	Workplace size	Formal employee engagement programme
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 2	-.01	-.17***	.12**	-.01	.08	.13**	.06	-.03	-.04	.03	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.07
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.02	.15***	-.13**	-.01	-.10*	-.14***	-.06	.02	.05	-.01	.04	-.04	-.01	.14***
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2	.08	.12**	-.07	.01	-.11**	-.15***	-.03	.07	.02	-.04	.06	0	.06	.16***
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1	-.09*	0	-.02	.02	.04	.13**	-.07	-.05	.06	.04	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.07
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2	-.02	-.04	.09*	-.05	.06	.18***	-.02	-.05	.03	.06	-.11*	-.10*	-.06	-.15***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

*For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

7.3.1.1 Leadership

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the leadership variables and the socio-demographic variables. The significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Gender correlated significantly with avoidant leader conflict behaviour ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Qualification correlated significantly with

- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect) and
- perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = .11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- avoidant leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with

- perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dominating leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with

- perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- avoiding leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Workplace sector correlated significantly with

- perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- a collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- dominating leader conflict behaviour ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- avoiding leader conflict behaviour ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with

- perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = -.22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dominating leader conflict behaviour ($r = .10$ $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with

- perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dominating leader conflict behaviour ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with perceptions of social exchange leadership ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)

- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($r = -.21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- avoiding leader conflict behaviour ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Contrary to what was expected, no significant relationships were indicated between leadership and race, age, income level, tenure and employment status. Moreover, apart from an avoidant interpersonal conflict handling styles, gender also did not show significant relationships with leadership.

7.3.1.2 Organisational culture

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the organisational culture variables and the socio-demographic variables. The significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Qualification correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- tolerance of conflict ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = .11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- tolerance of conflict ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- tolerance of conflict ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- tolerance of conflict ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Workplace sector of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- tolerance of conflict ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- tolerance of conflict ($r = -.24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = -.25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Innovative Culture Scale ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- tolerance of conflict ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with the

- Innovative Culture Scale ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect);
- tolerance of conflict ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- allowance for mistakes ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Instinctually, it was expected that significant relationships might exist between organisational culture and race, gender, age, income level, tenure and employment status. However, none of these significant relationships was indicated.

7.3.1.3 *Employee voice*

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the employee voice variables and the socio-demographic variables. With the exception of workplace sector which had a medium practical effect, the significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Gender correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = -.22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- speaking up ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Age correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- speaking up ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking up ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities) ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Income level correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking up ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities) ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Employment status correlated significantly with speaking out ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)).

Workplace sector of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = -.30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking up ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect; and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities ($r = -.24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = -.21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- speaking up ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)).

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Voice Behaviour measure ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking out ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- speaking up ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- the Voice measure (employee voice opportunities ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)).

Besides these significant relationships (as discussed above) between employee voice and some of the socio-demographic groups, it was unexpected to find that no significant relationships

existed between employee voice and race, qualification, tenure and employment status (with the exception of speaking out which showed a significant relationship with employment status).

7.3.1.4 *Employee engagement*

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the employee engagement variables and the socio-demographic variables. The significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Race correlated significantly with

- the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- organisational engagement ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Gender correlated significantly with the organisational engagement ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Age correlated significantly with

- the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect), job engagement ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- organisational engagement ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Qualification correlated significantly with

- the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- job engagement ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- organisational engagement ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- organisational engagement ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Income level correlated significantly with job engagement ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Employment status correlated significantly with job engagement ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with organisational engagement ($r = .11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with organisational engagement ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Workplace sector of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- organisational engagement ($r = -.21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with organisational engagement ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with organisational engagement ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- job engagement ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- organisational engagement ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Tenure was the only socio-demographic variable that showed no relationship with employee engagement (job and organisational engagement).

7.3.1.5 *Organisational Trust*

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the organisational trust variables and the socio-demographic variables. Apart from a moderate practical effect size in the correlation between the Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey, Commitment and Workplace sector, the significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ and $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Qualification correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Tenure correlated significantly with dependability ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = .25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Workplace sector of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = -.31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- integrity ($r = -.29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = -.32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = -.25$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = -.24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- commitment ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with

- the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- integrity ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- commitment ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- dependability ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Counterintuitive to expectations, none of the socio-demographic groupings of race, gender, age, income level, tenure (except for the sub-construct of dependability) and employment status indicated any significant relationships with the organisational trust variables.

7.3.1.6 *Conflict types*

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the conflict type variables and the socio-demographic variables. The significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ and $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Race correlated significantly with

- Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); and
- task conflict ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Gender correlated significantly with

- relational conflict ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- group atmosphere ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Age correlated significantly with

- Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- task conflict ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and

- Group Status Conflict Scale (status conflict) ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- conflict resolution potential ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- group atmosphere ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Income level correlated significantly with

- process conflict ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- group atmosphere ($r = .11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with

- task conflict ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Group Status Conflict Scale (status conflict) ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with

- Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$ small practical effect)
- task conflict ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Group Status Conflict Scale (status conflict) ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Workplace sector of organisations correlated significantly with

- Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- task conflict ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and

- Group Status Conflict Scale (status conflict) ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with

- task conflict ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Group Status Conflict Scale (status conflict) ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with

- task conflict ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Group Status Conflict Scale (status conflict) ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with conflict resolution potential ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

It was expected that significant relationships might be indicated between the multidimensional construct of conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict, as well as group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and the respective socio-demographic groupings of qualification, tenure and employment status. However, no such significant relationships were evident. Furthermore, apart from the two significant relationships that were indicated between Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale (1995, 1997), task conflict, and the socio-demographic grouping of race respectively, no other significant relationships were evident between race and any of the subconstructs of conflict types.

7.3.1.7 *Interpersonal conflict handling styles*

Table 7.5 shows a limited number of significant correlations between the interpersonal conflict handling styles variables and the socio-demographic variables. The significant correlations ranged between $r \geq .10$ and $r \leq .29$ (small practical effect). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Race correlated significantly with

- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Gender correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Age correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Qualification correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Job level correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Income level correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Tenure correlated significantly negative with

- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.08$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union representation in organisations correlated significantly with

- ROCI-II (overall interpersonal conflict handling styles) ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Trade union membership in organisations correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Workplace sector correlated significantly with

- ROCI-II (overall interpersonal conflict handling styles) ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and
- a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Number of employees in organisations correlated significantly with

- ROCI-II (overall interpersonal conflict handling styles) ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Workplace size of organisations correlated significantly with

- ROCI-II (overall interpersonal conflict handling styles) ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and
- a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect);

Formal employee engagement programme in organisations correlated significantly with

- an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Counterintuitive to expectations, employment status had no bearing on the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles. Employment status was therefore the only socio-demographic grouping that had no significant relationship with any of the styles of interpersonal conflict handling.

7.3.2 Correlations among the independent and mediating variables

Table 7.6 reports on the correlations between the independent and mediating variables.

Table 7.6

Bivariate Correlations between Independent Variables and Mediating variables

Variable	Job engagement	Organisational engagement	Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales	Integrity	Commitment	Dependability	Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey
LEADERSHIP							
<i>*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:</i>							
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Perceptions of social exchange leadership behaviour)	.32***	.56***	.49***	.71***	.67***	.67***	.72***
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	.33***	.59***	.51***	.78***	.74***	.74***	.79***
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	-.01	0	-.01	-.04	-.02	0	-.02
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour	-.17***	-.26***	-.24***	-.38***	-.34***	-.39***	-.39***
Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	.21***	.43***	.36***	.53***	.50***	.49***	.53***
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE							
Tolerance of conflict	.31***	.46***	.43***	.61***	.58***	.56***	.62***
Allowance for mistakes	.26***	.50***	.43***	.64***	.62***	.62***	.66***
Overall Innovative Cultures' Scale	.32***	.54***	.48***	.70***	.68***	.66***	.72***
EMPLOYEE VOICE							
<i>*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:</i>							
Speaking out	.41***	.43***	.47***	.30***	.30***	.24***	.30***
Speaking up	.34***	.38***	.40***	.32***	.32***	.29***	.33***
Overall Voice Behavior Measure	.32***	.50***	.46***	.61***	.56***	.57***	.61***
Overall Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities)	.34***	.38***	.40***	.32***	.32***	.29***	.33***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

*For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

7.3.2.1 Leadership

Table 7.6 shows a number of significant correlations between the multidimensional leadership variables and the mediating variables. Cohen's (1988) guidelines were followed to interpret the practical effect of the associations at $p \leq .05$; namely, a small practical effect is viewed as $r = .10$ to $.29$, medium $r = .30$ to $.49$, and lastly, a large practical effect as $r \geq .50$. The significant

correlations ranged from a small practical effect to a large practical effect. Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups. Dominating leader conflict behaviour did not correlate significantly with any of the employee engagement or organisational trust variables.

Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Perceptions of social exchange leadership behaviour) correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .49$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .71$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .67$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .67$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .72$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .59$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .51$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .78$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .74$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .74$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .79$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = -.26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = -.24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = -.38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = -.34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = -.39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = -.39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .50$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .49$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

7.3.2.2 *Organisational culture*

Table 7.6 shows significant correlations between all the organisational culture variables and the mediating variables. The significant correlations ranged from a small practical effect ($r = .10$ to $.29$) to a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). None of the significant correlations was negative.

Tolerance of conflict correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .58$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .62$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Allowance for mistakes correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .50$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .64$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .62$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .62$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and

- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .66$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Overall Innovative Cultures' Scale correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .54$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .48$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .70$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .68$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .66$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .72$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

7.3.2.3 *Employee Voice*

Table 7.6 shows significant correlations between all the Employee Voice variables and the mediating variables. The significant correlations ranged from a small practical effect ($r = .10$ to $.29$) to a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). None of the significant correlations was negative.

Speaking out correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .41$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .47$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Speaking up correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)

- Dependability ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Overall Voice Behavior Measure correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .50$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .57$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Overall Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) correlated significantly with the following mediating variables:

- Job engagement ($r = .34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Organisational engagement ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Integrity ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Commitment ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Dependability ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

7.3.3 Correlations among the independent variables and dependent variables

Table 7.7 reports on the correlations between the independent and dependent variables.

7.3.3.1 Leadership

Table 7.7 shows the significant correlations between leadership and the dependent variables. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (perceptions of leader-member social exchange behaviour) correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .49$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .55$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .42$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .35$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Collaborative leader conflict behaviour correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .58$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .44$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)

- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Dominating leader conflict behaviour correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and;
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Avoidant leader conflict behaviour correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = .27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = .34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Relational conflict ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

7.3.3.2 Organisational culture

Table 7.7 shows the significant correlations between organisational culture and the dependent variables. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Tolerance of conflict correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.35$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .60$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)

- An integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- A dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- An avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- A compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- The overall ROCI-II ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

With the exception of the avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1, *allowance for mistakes* correlated significantly with all the dependent variables and all their subconstructs. Specifically, *allowance for mistakes* correlated significantly negative with

- task conflict ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and
- status conflict ($r = -.25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Allowance for mistakes also showed significant positive relationships with

- conflict resolution potential ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- the overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Lastly, *allowance for mistakes* correlated significantly with the following interpersonal conflict handling style variables:

- An integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- A obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- A dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- An avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

The overall Innovative Cultures' scale correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .08$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

7.3.3.3 Employee voice

Table 7.7 shows the significant correlations between employee voice and the dependent variables. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Speaking out correlated significantly with

- relational conflict ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- status conflict ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .57$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and 2 ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .48$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- overall ROCI-II ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Speaking up correlated significantly with

- status conflict ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .64$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and 2 ($r = .58$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .42$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .42$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .51$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- overall ROCI-II ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Overall Voice Behavior Measure correlated significantly with

- relational conflict ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- status conflict ($r = -.20$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .42$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .42$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .67$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and 2 ($r = .62$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect); dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .44$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .51$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and
- overall ROCI-II ($r = .37$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities) correlated significantly with

- task conflict ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- relational conflict ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- process conflict ($r = -.22$; $p \leq .001$ small practical effect)
- status conflict ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- conflict resolution potential ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- group atmosphere ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect) and 2 ($r = .45$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .37$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and
- overall ROCI-II ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Table 7.7
 Bivariate Correlations between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

Variable	Task conflict	Relational conflict	Process conflict	Status conflict	Conflict resolution potential	Group atmosphere	Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale	Integrating ICHS 1	Integrating ICHS 2	Obliging ICHS 1	Obliging ICHS 2	Dominating ICHS 1	Dominating ICHS 2	Avoiding ICHS 1	Avoiding ICHS 2	Compromising ICHS 1	Compromising ICHS 2	Overall Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II)
LEADERSHIP																		
<i>*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:</i>																		
Overall Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure (Perceptions of social exchange leadership behaviour)	-.14**	-.28***	-.28***	-.32***	.49***	.55***	.15***	.42***	.36***	.24***	.21***	.22***	.21***	.05	-.02	.26***	.30***	.35***
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	-.19***	-.29***	-.31***	-.33***	.53***	.58***	.14***	.44***	.36***	.20***	.13**	.18***	.15***	.02	-.08	.22***	.29***	.30***
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	.15***	.18***	.21***	.22***	-.03	-.04	.22***	.01	.02	.12**	.03	.20***	.19***	.11*	.11*	.02	.03	.14***
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour	.15***	.27***	.34***	.32***	-.28***	-.27***	.12**	-.26***	-.2***	-.03	.03	-.01	.03	.18***	.23***	-.04	-.11*	-.01
Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	-.07	-.09*	-.06	-.08	.33***	.39***	.25***	.29***	.24***	.21***	.16***	.25***	.25***	.16***	.09*	.20***	.22***	.34***
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE																		
Tolerance of conflict	-.20***	-.32***	-.35***	-.38***	.53***	.60***	.12**	.33***	.33***	.08	.04	.12**	.09*	-.03	-.13**	.17***	.19***	.18***
Allowance for mistakes	-.11**	-.23***	-.21***	-.25***	.40***	.46***	.13**	.36***	.36***	.14**	.12**	.16***	.13**	-.03	-.11*	.20***	.23***	.24***
Overall Innovative Cultures' Scale	-.18***	-.31***	-.32***	-.36***	.53***	.61***	.14**	.39***	.39***	.12**	.08*	.15***	.12**	-.04	-.13**	.21***	.23***	.23***
EMPLOYEE VOICE																		
<i>*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:</i>																		
Speaking out	.03	-.11**	-.13**	-.13**	.36***	.36***	.20***	.57***	.56***	.06	.05	.34***	.33***	-.21***	-.26***	.40***	.48***	.32***
Speaking up	.06	-.06	-.09	-.10*	.32***	.32***	.22***	.64***	.58***	.14**	.04	.42***	.38***	-.2***	-.27***	.42***	.51***	.38***
Overall Voice Behavior Measure	-.03	-.17***	-.18***	-.20***	.42***	.42***	.18***	.67***	.62***	.10*	.05	.44***	.38***	-.24***	-.32***	.39***	.51***	.37***
Overall Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities)	-.15**	-.23***	-.22***	-.27***	.43***	.46***	.13**	.53***	.45***	.23***	.16***	.37***	.29***	-.04	-.15**	.32***	.39***	.39***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$. *For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership, employee voice and conflict types were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated. ICHS = Interpersonal conflict handling style

7.3.4 Correlations among the mediating variables and dependent variables

Table 7.8 reports on the correlations between the mediating and dependent variables.

7.3.4.1 *Employee engagement*

Table 7.8 shows the significant correlations between employee engagement and the dependent variables. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Job engagement correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Relational conflict ($r = -.14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .37$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Organisational engagement correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .49$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .52$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .14$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- An integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 ($r = .45$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .44$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- An obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- A dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- An avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- A compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.08$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .48$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .47$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .14$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .25$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = -.18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)

- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

7.3.4.2 Organisational Trust

Table 7.8 shows the significant correlations between organisational trust and the dependent variables. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Integrity correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.36$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .52$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .47$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .39$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 ($r = -.09$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .21$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Commitment correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.26$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .51$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .58$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)

- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .45$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .13$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.12$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Dependability correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Process conflict ($r = -.33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.35$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .52$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .59$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .45$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .15$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Overall Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey correlated significantly with the following dependent variables:

- Task conflict ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Relational conflict ($r = -.29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- Process conflict ($r = -.34$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Status conflict ($r = -.37$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Conflict resolution potential ($r = .54$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Group atmosphere ($r = .63$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Overall Jehn intragroup conflict scale ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .48$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect) and 2 ($r = .41$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .18$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .16$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 ($r = -.10$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($r = .22$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) and 2 ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Overall ROCI-II ($r = .32$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Table 7.8
Bivariate Correlations between Mediating Variables and Dependent Variables

Variables	Task conflict	Relational conflict	Process conflict	Status conflict	Conflict resolution potential	Group atmosphere	Overall Jehn Intragroup Conflict Scale	Integrating 1	Integrating 2	Obliging 1	Obliging 2	Dominating 1	Dominating 2	Avoiding 1	Avoiding 2	Compromising 1	Compromising 2	Overall Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROI-II)
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT																		
Job engagement	-.04	-.14***	-.16***	-.15***	.34***	.33***	.14**	.37***	.4***	.13**	.08	.17***	.23***	-.09*	-.16***	.24***	.29***	.24***
Organisational engagement	-.11**	-.27***	-.28***	-.29***	.49***	.52***	.14***	.45***	.44***	.12**	.08	.22***	.22***	-.13**	-.16***	.23***	.31***	.26***
Overall Job and Organizational Engagement Scales	-.08*	-.23***	-.25***	-.25***	.46***	.48***	.15***	.46***	.47***	.14**	.09*	.22***	.25***	-.12**	-.18***	.26***	.33***	.28***
ORGANISATIONAL TRUST																		
Integrity	-.16***	-.29***	-.32***	-.36***	.52***	.61***	.15***	.47***	.39***	.19***	.17***	.19***	.18***	0	-.09*	.21***	.27***	.31***
Commitment	-.16***	-.26***	-.33***	-.33***	.51***	.58***	.15***	.45***	.4***	.16***	.17***	.17***	.13**	-.03	-.12**	.23***	.29***	.29***
Dependability	-.15***	-.28***	-.33***	-.35***	.52***	.59***	.15***	.45***	.38***	.18***	.16***	.17***	.15***	.03	-.05	.18***	.24***	.31***
Overall Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey	-.17***	-.29***	-.34***	-.37***	.54***	.63***	.16***	.48***	.41***	.18***	.18***	.19***	.16***	-.01	-.10*	.22***	.29***	.32***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

7.3.5 Correlations among the independent variables

Tables 7.9 to 7.11 show a number of significant correlations among the independent variables. Cohen's (1988) guidelines were followed to interpret the practical effect of the associations at $p \leq .05$; namely, a small practical effect is viewed as $r = .10$ to $.29$, a moderate practical effect as a value between $r = .30$ to $.49$, and lastly, a large practical effect as $r \geq .50$. The correlations are reported below.

7.3.5.1 Leadership

Table 7.9 reports on the significant correlations between the independent variable of leadership, and organisational culture and employee voice. These correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = .41$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = .54$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .54$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .50$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = .37$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .76$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .68$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .68$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = .45$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect).

Dominant Leader Conflict Behaviour correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .01$; $p \leq .001$; very small practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .02$; $p \leq .001$; very small practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .00$; $p \leq .001$; very small practical effect).

Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = -.30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = -.30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = -.31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Table 7.9

Bivariate Correlations between the Independent Variable of Leadership and the Independent Variables of Organisational Culture and Employee Voice

	LEADERSHIP *Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:	Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale	Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour	Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour	Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE						
Innovative Cultures Scale		.61***	.54***	.76***	.01***	-.30***
Tolerance of conflict		.53***	.46***	.68***	.02***	-.30***
Allowance for mistakes		.56***	.50***	.68***	.00***	-.23***
EMPLOYEE VOICE						
*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:						
The Voice Behavior Measure		.41***	.3***	.45***	.03	-.27***
Speaking out		.30***	.24***	.33***	.05	-.17***
Speaking up		.31***	.19***	.30***	.03	-.19***
The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities)		.54***	.37***	.56***	-.03	-.31***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

*For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership and employee voice were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

7.3.5.2 Organisational culture

Table 7.10 reports on the significant correlations between the independent variable of organisational culture, and the independent variables of leadership and employee voice. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

Innovative Cultures Scale correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .61$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .54$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .76$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.30$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = .44$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect)
- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect).

Tolerance of conflict correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .53$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .68$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = .28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Allowance for mistakes correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .50$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .68$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.23$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- The Voice Behavior Measure ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Speaking out ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Speaking up ($r = .27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)

- The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities) ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Table 7.10

Bivariate Correlations between the Independent Variable of Organisational Culture and the Independent Variables of Leadership and Employee Voice

	ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	Innovative Cultures Scale	Tolerance of conflict	Allowance for mistakes
LEADERSHIP				
*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:				
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale		.61***	.53***	.56***
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale		.54***	.46***	.50***
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour		.76***	.68***	.68***
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour		.01	.02	.00
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour		-.30***	-.30***	-.23***
EMPLOYEE VOICE				
*Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:				
The Voice Behavior Measure		.44***	.38***	.40***
Speaking out		.33***	.30***	.29***
Speaking up		.31***	.28***	.27***
The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities)		.46***	.40***	.43***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

*For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership and employee voice were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

7.3.5.3 Employee voice

Table 7.11 reports on the significant correlations between the independent variables of employee voice, and leadership and organisational culture. The significant correlations ranged between a small practical effect ($r \geq .10$ to $r \leq .29$) and a large practical effect ($r \geq .50$). Some of the significant correlations were negative, indicating the possibility of differences among the socio-demographic subgroups.

The Voice Behavior Measure correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .41$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .45$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.27$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .44$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .38$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Speaking out correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .24$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.17$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .33$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .29$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

Speaking up correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .30$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.19$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .28$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect).

The Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities) correlated significantly with the following independent variables:

- Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale ($r = .54$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)

- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale ($r = .37$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = .56$; $p \leq .001$; large practical effect)
- Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour ($r = -.31$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Innovative Cultures Scale ($r = .46$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Tolerance of conflict ($r = .40$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect)
- Allowance for mistakes ($r = .43$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect).

Table 7.11

Bivariate Correlations between the Independent Variable of Employee Voice and the Independent Variables of Organisational Culture and Leadership

Variables	EMPLOYEE VOICE *Multidimensional employee voice scale consisting of:	The Voice Behavior Measure	Speaking out	Speaking up	The Voice Measure (Employee voice opportunities)
LEADERSHIP					
*Multidimensional leadership scale consisting of:					
Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale		.41***	.30***	.31***	.54***
Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale		.30***	.24***	.19***	.37***
Collaborative Leader Conflict Behaviour		.45***	.33***	.3***	.56***
Dominating Leader Conflict Behaviour		.03	.05	.03	-.03
Avoidant Leader Conflict Behaviour		-.27***	-.17***	-.19***	-.31***
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE					
Innovative Cultures Scale		.44***	.33***	.31***	.46***
Tolerance of conflict		.38***	.30***	.28***	.40***
Allowance for mistakes		.40***	.29***	.27***	.43***

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$. *For statistical purposes, the scales for leadership and employee voice were combined into multidimensional scales as indicated.

7.3.6 Integration: Bivariate correlations

The correlational statistical results provided evidence in support of research hypothesis 1.

Research hypothesis 1: There are statistically significant interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size and employee engagement programme) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Overall, the results showed significant bivariate correlations between the various subscales, which were small, moderate and large in practical effect. With regard to the conflict management framework, this suggests that a number of relationship dynamics are evident between the constructs of relevance to this study, which justified further examination. In summary, the following core conclusions were drawn:

7.3.6.1 Socio-demographic and independent, mediator and dependent variables

- Race was negatively correlated with the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, organisational engagement, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, task conflict and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1, but was positively related to an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1. No significant relationships were indicated between leadership and race, age, income level, tenure and employment status. Moreover, apart from an avoidant interpersonal conflict handling style, gender did not show significant relationships with leadership.
- In terms of gender, positive correlations were observed with avoidant leader conflict behaviour, avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2) and relational conflict. Significant negative correlations were observed with the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, organisational engagement, conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), and a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2).
- With reference to age, significant positive correlations were observed with the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out and speaking up. Furthermore, significant positive relationships were observed between age and employee engagement (the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement, and organisational engagement). A significant positive relationship was also found between age and conflict resolution

potential, group atmosphere, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), and lastly, a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2. Conversely, negative correlations were found between age and the subscales of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale and all four types of conflict (task, relational, process and status conflict). Furthermore, negative correlations are found between age and an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), as well as an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (2).

- Negative correlations were observed between qualifications and the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Negative correlations were found between qualifications and organisational culture (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes). Qualifications also correlated negatively with employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement, organisational engagement) and organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability). Two negative correlations were observed regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles, namely, with integrating (1) and obliging (2) styles. No positive correlations were observed between qualifications and any of the other variables.
- When considering job level, significant positive correlations were obtained for the subscale of collaborative leader conflict behaviour; however, a negative correlation was detected between job level and an avoidant leader conflict behaviour. In addition, positive correlations were found with the innovative cultures scale, tolerance of conflict, employee voice (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, and the Voice Measure granting of employee voice opportunities). Positive correlations were also observed with the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales and organisational engagement. Positive correlations were evident between job level and organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability). Positive correlations were observed with conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Positive correlations were also detected for the integrating (1 and 2) and dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles, while negative correlations were observed for the obliging (2) and avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.
- Income level correlated positively with all the employee voice subscales, job engagement, the subscales of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and the integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling

styles. Negative correlations between income level and the obliging (1) and avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles were evident. Negative correlations were observed with process conflict.

- Only a limited number of correlations were evident between the socio-demographic group of tenure and the various subscales. Negative correlations were observed with dependability and an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2).
- Similarly, employment status only negatively correlated with speaking out and job engagement.
- Significant positive correlations were found between both trade union representation and trade union membership, and the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement, the Leader Conflict Behavior Scale and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Positive correlations were found with all the organisational culture subscales, the Voice Behavior Measure, the Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), organisational engagement, all the organisational trust subscales, conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Positive correlations were observed with an integrating (1) and a dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style. Additionally, trade union representation correlated positively with the ROCI-II; and trade union membership with the subscale speaking out. Negative correlations were observed for both trade union representation and trade union membership, and the various conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict), while trade union membership also correlated negatively with Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale and avoidant leader conflict behaviour.
- Workplace sector correlated negatively with the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement, the Leader Conflict Behavior Scale and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. A positive correlation was observed for an avoidant leader conflict behaviour. Negative correlations were observed between workplace sector and all the organisational culture, employee voice and organisational trust subscales, as well as for the Job and Organizational Engagement Scale and organisational engagement. Negative correlations were also evident with conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Lastly, negative correlations were observed with ROCI-II, and an integrating (1 and 2), an obliging (1), a dominating (1) and a compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.
- Both number of employees and workplace size correlated positively with the dominating leader conflict behaviour subscale and negatively with the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement, the Leader Conflict Behavior Scale and collaborative leader

conflict behaviour. Negative correlations were observed with both number of employees and workplace size, and all the organisational culture subscales, the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, the Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), organisational engagement, all organisational trust subscales, conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Negative correlations were observed with the ROCI-II, and an integrating (1 and 2), an obliging (1 and 2) and a dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style. Number of employees furthermore has a negative correlation with a compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling style, while workplace size correlates negatively with speaking up. Positive correlations were observed for both number of employees and workplace size, and the various conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict).

- Formal employee engagement programmes correlated negatively with the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement, the Leader Conflict Behavior Scale and collaborative leader conflict behaviour; and positively with avoidant leader conflict behaviour. Negative correlations were observed with organisational culture and employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, and the conflict resolution potential subscales. Regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles, negative correlations were observed with an integrating (1 and 2) and a compromising (2) style, and a positive correlation with an avoiding style.

The majority of correlations had a small practical effect.

Table 7.12 below summarises the significant positive and negative relationships as observed in the current research between the socio-demographic moderating variables and the independent, mediating and dependent variables.

Table 7.12

Summary of Significant Correlations Observed between the Socio-demographic Moderating Variables, and the Independent, Mediating and Dependent Variables

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Race	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Task conflict Compromising (1) interpersonal conflict handling style	Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles
Gender	Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Organisational engagement Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Avoidant leader conflict behaviours Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Relational conflict
Age	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Qualifications	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall organisational culture (Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Allowance for mistakes Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales)	

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
	Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Integrating (2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (2) interpersonal conflict handling style	
Job level	Avoidant leader conflict behaviours Obliging (2) interpersonal conflict handling style Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Employee voice opportunities Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles
Income level	Obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Process conflict	Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Employee voice opportunities Job engagement Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
		Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles
Tenure	Dependability Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	
Employment status	Speaking out Job engagement	
Trade union representation	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Allowance for mistakes Voice Behavior Measure Employee voice opportunities (Voice Measure) Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Integrating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II)
Trade union membership	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Avoidant leader conflict behaviour	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Allowance for mistakes Voice Behavior Measure

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
		Speaking out Employee voice opportunities (Voice Measure) Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Integrating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style
Workplace sector	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Allowance for mistakes Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Employee voice opportunities (Voice Measure) Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style	Avoidant leader conflict behaviour

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Number of employees	Obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style	
	Compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling style	
	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure)	Dominating leader conflict behaviour
	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour	Task conflict
	Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	Relational conflict
	Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale)	Process conflict
	Tolerance of Conflict	Status conflict
	Allowance for mistakes	
	Voice Behavior Measure	
	Speaking out	
	Employee voice opportunities (Voice Measure)	
	Organisational engagement	
	Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey)	
	Integrity	
	Commitment	
	Dependability	
	Conflict resolution potential	
	Group atmosphere	
	Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II)	
	Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	
Dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles		
Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles		
Compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles		

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Workplace size	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Allowance for mistakes Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Employee voice opportunities (Voice Measure) Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Dominating leader conflict behaviour Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Formal employee engagement programmes	Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale Overall organisational culture (Overall Innovative Cultures Scale) Tolerance of Conflict Allowance for mistakes Voice Behavior Measure Speaking out Speaking up Employee voice opportunities (Voice Measure) Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability Conflict resolution potential Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Avoidant leader conflict behaviour Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style

7.3.6.2 *Independent and mediating variables*

- Regarding the independent variable of leadership, the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour and the overall Leader Conflict Behavior Scale correlated positively with all the employee engagement and organisational trust subscales. However, an avoidant leader conflict behaviour correlates negatively with all the employee engagement and organisational trust subscales.
- Concerning the independent variables of organisational culture and employee voice, positive correlations were observed with all the employee engagement and organisational trust subscales.

Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

Table 7.13 below summarises the significant positive and negative relationships as observed in the current research between the independent and the dependent variables.

Table 7.13

Summary of Significant Correlations Observed between the Independent and Mediating Variables

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Leadership		
Leader-member exchange (Perceptions of Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale)	social behaviour of Social Leadership	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Overall Leader Behaviors Scale	Conflict	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Collaborative leader behaviour	conflict	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Avoidant leader behaviours	conflict	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey)

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
	Integrity Commitment Dependability	
Dominating leader conflict behaviours	-	-
Organisational culture		
Overall organisational culture (Innovative Cultures Scale)	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Tolerance of conflict	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Allowance for mistakes	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Employee Voice		
Voice Behavior Measure	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Speaking out	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Speaking up	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability
Employee voice opportunities	-	Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales) Job engagement Organisational engagement Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey) Integrity Commitment Dependability

7.3.6.3 *Independent and dependent variables*

Leadership: With reference to the independent variable of leadership, negative correlations were observed between the Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour and the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status). The Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale also correlated negatively with relational conflict. In addition, negative correlations were observed between avoidant leader conflict behaviour and conflict resolution potential, and group atmosphere, as well as with an integrating (1 and 2) and compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Positive correlations were observed between the overall Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measure and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, and the subscales of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and all the interpersonal conflict handling styles apart from an avoiding (1 and 2) style. Similarly, the overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale and the subscales of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and all the interpersonal conflict handling styles apart from an avoiding (2) style, correlated positively. Positive correlations are also evident between dominating and avoidant leader conflict behaviours, and the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status) and Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale. Additionally, positive correlations are observed between a dominating leader conflict behaviour and the obliging (1) and dominating (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles, as well as ROCI-II. The avoidant leader conflict behaviour correlated positively with an avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling style.

Organisational culture: Negative correlations were observed between the organisational culture subscales (overall Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status) and an avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style. Positive correlations were observed between the organisational culture subscales and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, the overall Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Positive correlations were observed between the organisational culture subscales of allowance for mistakes and the Innovative Cultures' Scale, and the obliging (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling style.

Employee voice: Negative correlations were observed between the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, the overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), and relational, process

and status conflict. Speaking up also correlated negatively with status conflict. In addition, the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, and the overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), correlated negatively with an avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling style. Positive correlations were observed between the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up and the overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. In addition, positive correlations were observed between the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking up and the overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities) and an obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style. The overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities) also correlated positively with an obliging (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

Table 7.14 below summarises the significant positive and negative relationships as observed in the current research between the independent and the dependent variables.

Table 7.14

A Summary of Significant Correlations Observed between the Independent and Dependent Variables

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Leadership		
Leader-member social exchange behaviour (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale)	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Overall Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale	Relational conflict	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Collaborative leader conflict behaviour	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall interpersonal conflict handling style (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Dominating leader conflict behaviours	-	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II)
Avoidant leader conflict behaviours	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere	Task conflict Relational conflict

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
	Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Process conflict Status conflict Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Organisational culture		
Overall organisational culture (overall Innovative Cultures Scale)	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Tolerance of Conflict	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Allowance for mistakes	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Employee Voice		
Voice Behavior Measure	Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II)

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Speaking out	Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Speaking up	Status conflict Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style
Employee voice opportunities	Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style

7.3.6.4 *Mediating and dependent variables*

Employee engagement: All the employee engagement subscales (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement and organisational engagement) correlated negatively with task, relational, process and status conflict types and an avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling style. Positive correlations were observed between all the employee engagement subscales (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement and organisational engagement) and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), obliging (1), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. The Job and Organizational Engagement Scale also correlated positively with the obliging (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Organisational trust: All the organisational trust subscales (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability) correlated negatively with task, relational, process and status conflict types; and apart from dependability, also correlated negatively with an avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style. Positive correlations were observed between all the organisational trust subscales (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability) and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), obliging (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

Table 7.15 below summarises the significant positive and negative relationships as observed in the current research between the mediating and the dependent variables.

Table 7.15

Summary of Significant Correlations Observed between the Mediating and Dependent Variables

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Employee engagement		
Overall employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales)	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Job engagement	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style
Organisational engagement	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling style

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Organisational trust		
Overall organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style

Construct	Negative correlations	Positive correlations
Dependability	Task conflict Relational conflict Process conflict Status conflict Avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style	Conflict resolution potential Group atmosphere Overall conflict types (Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale) Overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (ROCI-II) Integrating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Dominating (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Compromising (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style Obliging (1 & 2) interpersonal conflict handling style

7.3.6.5 *Independent variables*

Leadership: The leadership subscales (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale; Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour) correlated positively with all of the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) and all the employee voice variables (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure). Avoidant leader conflict behaviour correlated negatively with all the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) and all the employee voice variables (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure). Significant positive correlations (but with a very small practical effect) were observed between dominant leader conflict behaviour and all of the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, and allowance for mistakes); however, dominant leader conflict behaviour did not correlate significantly with any of the employee voice variables. Very small, small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

Organisational culture: The organisational culture subscales (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) correlated positively with most of the leadership variables (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale; Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and all the employee voice variables (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure). However, all the organisational culture variables had a negative correlation with avoidant leader conflict behaviour, and had no significant correlation with dominant leader conflict behaviour. Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

Employee voice: All the employee voice subscales (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure) correlated positively with most of the leadership variables (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale; Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and all the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes). However, all the employee voice variables had a negative correlation with avoidant leader conflict behaviour, and had no significant correlations with dominant leader conflict behaviour. Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

7.4 INFERENCE (MULTIVARIATE) STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

An inferential statistical analysis was undertaken to test the research hypotheses on the dynamics between the construct variables with a view to constructing an empirically validated framework for conflict management. This analysis is reported and interpreted in five stages, as depicted in Figure 7.4 below.

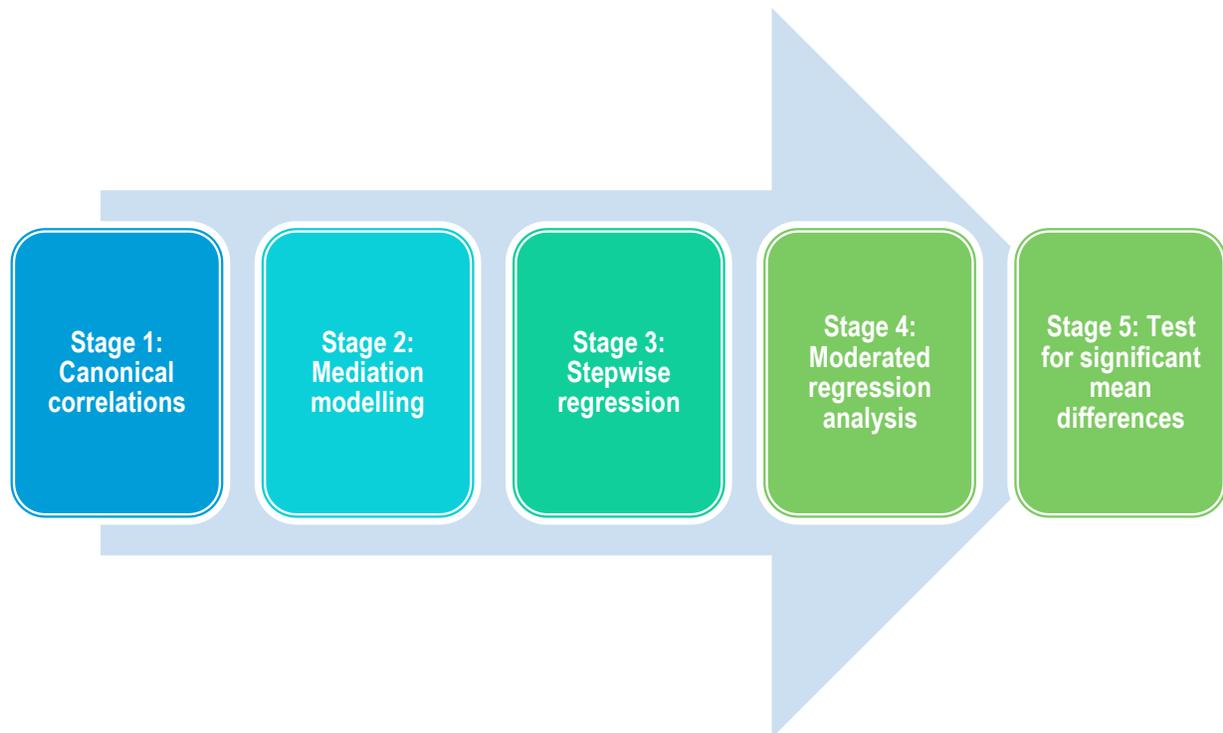


Figure 7.4 Five Stages of Inferential Statistical Analysis

7.4.1 Stage 1: Canonical correlation

A canonical correlation analysis was used to test research hypothesis H2:

Research hypothesis 2: A significant association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

The present study comprises a large number of construct variables and numerous dynamics were assumed that would inform the construction of an empirically tested framework for conflict management. The purpose of this doctoral research was to explore the dynamics among the

construct variables from the perspective of a variety of multivariate statistics in order to assess the type of core common patterns and unique dynamics that would arise from the various types of multivariate statistical procedures. By applying a canonical correlation analysis before the mediation analysis, the researcher was able to assess whether a bi-directional link exists between two composite sets of multiple variables. In other words, the researcher could assess the explanatory power of the combination of the independent variables and mediating variables in relation to a large number of dependent variables. The canonical analysis also highlighted which dependent variables had the most significant explanatory power in terms of the independent variables and mediating variables.

When a canonical correlation analysis is done, relationships between two composite sets of multiple (with a minimum of two) variables are examined. Canonical correlation analysis determines the way in which these sets of variables are related, and investigates the strength and nature of the relationships. One of the advantages of the analysis is that it limits the probability of committing Type 1 errors by concluding that a significant effect exists when this is not the case – hence the possibility of rejecting a true null hypothesis (Salkind, 2018). Therefore, it was considered appropriate and suitable for the purposes of this research study to conduct a canonical analysis. The CANCELL procedure in SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used to conduct the analysis.

Wilks' lambda chi-square test was applied to test for the significance of the overall canonical correlation between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), as a composite set of latent construct variables, and the dependent variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) of a canonical function. Wilks' multivariate criterion lambda (λ) was used because it allows researchers to assess the practical significance ($1-\lambda = r^2$ -type metric of effect size) of the full canonical model (Sherry & Henson, 2005).

Practical effect sizes for the r^2 metric are:

- $> .01 < .09$ = small practical effect
- $> .09 < .25$ = moderate practical effect
- $> .25$ = large practical effect

The cut-off criteria for the canonical correlations are generally accepted and set at R_c loading $\geq .30$. However, for purposes of this study, a rigorous cut-off threshold value of $R_c^2 \geq .50$ was

considered owing to the large number of variables. The squared canonical correlation (Rc^2) values of $\leq .12$ (small practical effect), $\geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect) and $\geq .26$ (large practical effect) (Cohen, 1992) were taken into consideration in the interpretation of the strength and practical significance of the results. Table 7.16 below sets out the various canonical functions.

Table 7.16

Canonical Correlation Analysis Relating Leadership, Organisational Culture and Employee Voice (Independent Variables) to Conflict Management (Conflict Types and Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles) (Dependent Variables)

Measures of overall model fit for canonical correlation analysis						
Canonical function	Overall canonical correlation (Rc)	Overall squared canonical correlation (Rc^2)	Eigenvalue	F statistics	Probability (p)	
1	.823	0.678	2.102	4.830	<.0001***	
2	.599	0.358	.559	2.620	<.0001***	
3	.417	0.174	.211	1.800	<.0001***	
4	.345	0.119	.136	1.510	0.0001***	
5	.307	0.094	.104	1.320	0.012*	
6	.266	0.071	.076	1.150	.144	
7	.248	0.061	.065	1.020	.430	
8	.208	0.043	.045	.850	.794	
9	.171	0.029	.030	.710	.935	
10	.141	0.02	.020	.600	.969	
11	.126	0.016	.016	.510	.977	
12	.082	0.007	.007	.350	.990	
13	.064	0.004	.004	.270	.975	
14	.029	0.001	.001	.120	.946	
Multivariate tests of significance						
Statistics			Value	Approximate F statistic	Probability (p)	
Wilks' lambda			.105	4.830	<.0001***	
Pillai's trace			1.675	3.750	<.0001***	
Hotelling-Lawley trace			3.375	6.420	<.0001***	
Roy's greatest root			2.102	57.920	<.0001***	

Notes: N = 556. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$.

Table 7.16 reports 14 canonical functions for the model derived from the canonical correlation analysis. Five of the 14 canonical functions were significant. The full canonical model was statistically significant across the five functions, with a Wilks' lambda (λ) of .105, $F = 4.83$, $p \leq .0001$. The r^2 metric of effect size of $1 - \lambda$ ($1 - .105$) was .895 (large practical effect), which indicates that the full model explained a substantial proportion (89.5%) of the variance shared between the two sets of variables. The canonical correlation of the first function was .823 and contributed 67.8% ($Rc^2 = .678$) of the explained variance relative to function one. The first function was therefore regarded as being practically sufficient for interpreting the links between the two sets of variables. The second canonical function explained 35.8% of the variance shared between the two canonical variate sets, the third function 17.3%, the fourth function 11.9% and the fifth function a mere 9.4%. Owing to the large number of variables, a rigorous cut-off threshold value of $Rc^2 \geq .50$ was considered (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, only the first canonical function was discussed. For the purpose of this study, only the singular canonical structure loadings and the squared canonical structure loadings were considered in the interpretation of the importance and practical significance of the derivation of the two canonical variate constructs.

Table 7.17 below represents the results of the standardised canonical correlation analysis for the first canonical function. These results indicate how the independent and mediating organisational factors (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust) canonical variate and the set of conflict management canonical variate variables correlated for the first canonical function.

Table 7.17

Results of the Standardised Canonical Correlation Analysis for the First Canonical Function

Variate/variables	Canonical coefficient (Weight)	Structure coefficient (Canonical Loading) (Rc)	Canonical cross-loadings (Rc)	Squared multiple correlation (Rc^2)
Independent (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and mediating (employee engagement and organisational trust) canonical variate (composite set of latent independent and mediating variables)				
Leadership				
Collaborative leader conflict behaviour		-.03	.65	.54
Dominating leader conflict behaviour		.00	.02	.02
Avoidant leader conflict behaviour		-.06	-.36	-.30
Perceptions of social exchange leadership		.11	.66	.55
Organisational Culture				
Tolerance of conflict		.17	.63	.51
Allowance for mistakes		-.03	.53	.43

Variate/variables	Canonical coefficient (Weight)	Structure coefficient (Canonical Loading) (Rc)	Canonical cross-loadings (Rc)	Squared multiple correlation (Rc ²)
Employee Voice				
Speaking out	.30	.76	.63	.39
Speaking up	.35	.81	.67	.44
Employee voice opportunities	.07	.74	.61	.37
Employee engagement				
Job engagement	.071	.07	.53	.44
Organisational engagement	.063	.06	.68	.56
Organisational Trust				
Integrity	-.01	.70	.57	.33
Commitment	.11	.69	.57	.33
Dependability	.17	.67	.55	.31
Percentage of overall variance of independent variables explained by their own canonical variables: 40%				
Percentage of overall variance of independent variables explained by the opposite canonical variables: 27%				
Dependent (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) canonical variate (composite set of latent dependent variables)				
Conflict Styles				
Task conflict	.10	-.08	-.06	.00
Relational conflict	.06	-.28	-.23	.05
Status conflict	-.06	-.35	-.29	.09
Process conflict	-.02	-.33	-.27	.07
Group atmosphere	.42	.74	.61	.37
Conflict resolution potential	.09	.70	.57	.33
Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles				
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.37	.85	.70	.49
Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2	.20	.79	.65	.42
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.05	.28	.23	.05
Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 2	-.01	.18	.15	.02
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.15	.46	.38	.14
Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 2	-.02	.44	.36	.13
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1	-.07	-.13	-.11	.01
Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2	-.15	-.26	-.22	.05
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1	.07	.55	.45	.21
Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2	-.01	.64	.53	.28
Percentage of overall standardised variance of dependent variables explained by their own canonical variables: 25%				
Percentage of overall standardised variance of dependent variables explained by the opposite canonical variables: 17%				
Overall model fit measure (function1):				
F(p) = 4.83 (p < .0001); df = 224; 4566.4				
Wilks' lambda (λ) = .105				
r ² type practical effect size: 1-λ = .895 (large effect)				
Overall proportion: Rc ² = .678 (large effect)				
Redundancy index: Rc ² = .68 (68%) (percentage of overall variance in conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles (dependent) canonical construct variables accounted for by the independent and mediating canonical construct variables: moderate effect				

Note: N = 556.

Using the cut-off criterion of $R_c \geq .50$, as indicated in Table 7.17, the independent canonical construct variate variables (the composite set of independent/mediating variables) contributed significantly ($Rc^2 = .17$ (17%); moderate practical effect) in explaining the variance in the conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) variables. The following independent variables contributed the most in explaining the variance in the conflict management variables:

- The leadership variables: collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($Rc = 0.54$; $Rc^2 = 0.29$; large practical effect), perceptions of social exchange leadership ($Rc = 0.55$; $Rc^2 = 0.30$; large practical effect)
- The organisational culture variables: tolerance of conflict ($Rc = 0.51$; $Rc^2 = 0.26$; large practical effect)
- The employee voice variables: speaking out ($Rc = 0.63$; $Rc^2 = 0.39$; large practical effect), speaking up ($Rc = 0.67$; $Rc^2 = 0.44$; large practical effect), employee voice opportunities ($Rc = 0.61$; $Rc^2 = 0.37$; large practical effect)
- The employee engagement variables: job engagement ($Rc = 0.53$; $Rc^2 = 0.44$; large practical effect), organisational engagement ($Rc = 0.68$; $Rc^2 = 0.56$; large practical effect)
- The organisational trust variables: integrity ($Rc = 0.57$; $Rc^2 = 0.33$; large practical effect), commitment ($Rc = 0.57$; $Rc^2 = 0.33$; large practical effect) and dependability ($Rc = 0.55$; $Rc^2 = 0.31$; large practical effect).

In addition, considering the cut-off criterion of $R_c \geq .50$, as indicated in Table 7.17, the dependent canonical construct variate variables (the composite set of conflict management variables) contributed significantly ($Rc^2 = .27$ (27%); large practical effect) in explaining the variance in the independent organisational-factor (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust) variables. The following dependent variables contributed the most in explaining the variance in the organisational-factor variables:

- Conflict types: group atmosphere ($Rc = 0.61$; $Rc^2 = 0.37$; large practical effect), conflict resolution potential ($Rc = 0.57$; $Rc^2 = 0.33$; large practical effect).
- Interpersonal conflict handling styles: integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 ($Rc = 0.70$; $Rc^2 = 0.49$; large practical effect); integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 ($Rc = 0.65$; $Rc^2 = 0.42$; large practical effect); and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 ($Rc = 0.53$; $Rc^2 = 0.28$; large practical effect).

Figures 7.5 and 7.6 graphically represent the overall canonical relationships between the set of independent/mediating variates and the set of dependent variates as they pertain to the cross-loading variables $R_c > .50$.

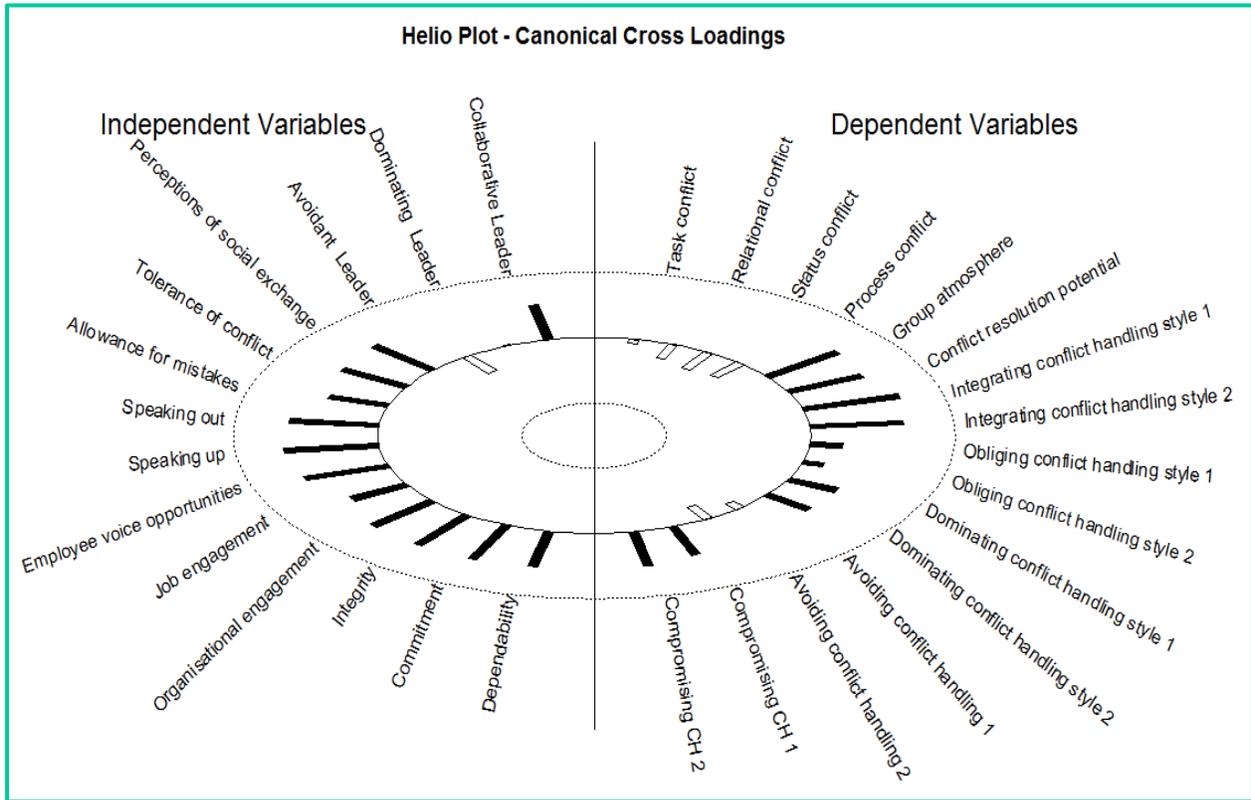


Figure 7.5 Canonical Correlation Helio Plot

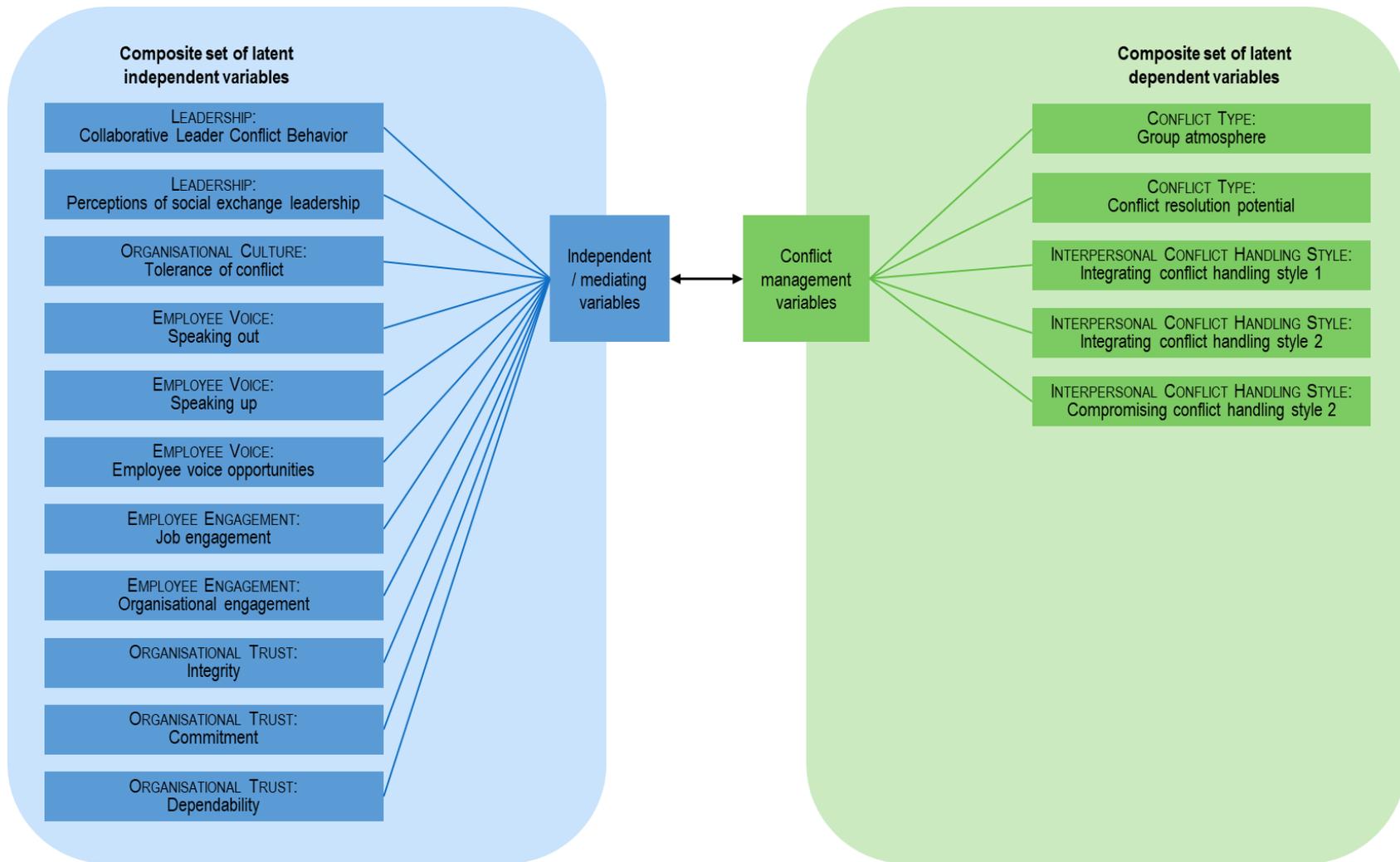


Figure 7.6 Canonical Correlations Between the Set of Latent Independent Variables and the Set of Latent Dependent Variables

7.4.1.1 *Preliminary analysis 2: Towards constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management*

Although 14 canonical functions for the model derived from the canonical correlation analysis were reported, only five of these were significant. The canonical correlation of the first function contributed 67.8% ($Rc^2 = .678$) of the explained variance relative to function 1. The first function was therefore regarded as being practically sufficient for interpreting the links between the two sets of variables.

The canonical correlation results highlighted significant associations between

- firstly, the composite set of independent variates (collaborative leader conflict behaviour, perceptions of social exchange leadership, tolerance of conflict culture, speaking out, speaking up, employee voice opportunities), including the mediating employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment, dependability) variables, and
- secondly, the composite set of dependent variables, namely, conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and 2, and compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2).

The dynamics between these construct elements were considered in the mediation modelling analysis. When comparing the preliminary analysis findings of the descriptive statistics (section 7.2.1) with the canonical results, a number of core elements come to the fore to consider in the construction of a conflict management framework.

Firstly, the findings suggest several important aspects leaders in organisations should consider when managing conflict. Participants suggested that their leaders mostly engage in collaborative conflict behaviour. This is in line with the second finding of the canonical analysis, namely, that an organisational conflict culture that tolerates conflict is important to consider as part of a conflict management framework. Further, the descriptive statistical findings (section 7.2.1) propose that participants in the current research mostly perceive their organisations to have an organisational conflict culture that tolerates conflict.

With relevance to employee voice, the findings of the canonical correlations highlight the importance of speaking out, speaking up, and employee voice opportunities. Nonetheless, the

descriptive statistical findings (section 7.2.1) indicated that participants mostly engage in speaking out behaviour (i.e. speaking to colleagues) and not in speaking up (i.e. speaking with their superiors) behaviour. This may be related to the finding of a relatively low mean score in the participants' perceptions regarding their leader–member social exchange behaviour. However, the canonical analysis points to the importance of leaders engaging in social exchange behaviour and encouraging employee voice behaviour of speaking up. Besides, the canonical findings stress the importance of leaders granting voice opportunities, an aspect that may assist in promoting employee voice behaviour.

According to the descriptive findings (section 7.2.1), participants engaged more in their jobs (i.e. performing the work role) than in their organisations (i.e. performing the role of being a member of the organisation). Nonetheless, the canonical findings emphasised the importance of both job and organisational engagement. One possible explanation for the finding of lower organisational engagement is the fact that participants scored leader social exchange behaviour (section 7.2.1) relatively low.

Subsequently, organisational trust may play a very important role in a conflict management framework. According to the canonical results, integrity, dependability and commitment are important aspects to consider in such a framework. Nonetheless, participants only indicated a moderate level of trust in their organisations (section 7.2.1), with dependability having the lowest mean score. This may explain the lower levels of organisational engagement found in this research.

The canonical analysis also supports the presence of group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential in a conflict management framework. Moreover, the current research findings indicate positive correlations between a conflict culture of tolerance and conflict resolution potential (large practical effect), group atmosphere (large practical effect), and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (medium practical effect). In other words, it may be deduced that a culture that tolerates conflict enhances perceptions of a positive group atmosphere and the possibility of resolving conflict, and supports an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style. This is in line with the current research finding that participants preferred the integrating (showing high concern for self and others) and compromising (showing moderate concern for self and others) interpersonal conflict handling styles.

To conclude, the constructs with dominant (i.e. having the highest and lowest) mean scores (section 7.2.1) were also evident in the canonical correlation results. Thus, the canonical correlation analysis confirmed that the variables that the participants scored highest or lowest are important to consider in constructing a framework for conflict management. These constructs thus inform conflict management interventions.

The findings provided evidence in support of research hypothesis 2:

Research hypothesis 2: A significant association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

This analysis was also useful in the SEM, which is discussed next.

7.4.2 Stage 2: Mediation modelling

Mediation modelling, including path modelling and SEM, were used to assess research hypothesis 3 and research hypothesis 4:

Research hypothesis 3: Employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 4: The theoretically hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.

Overarching research hypotheses were stated in order to achieve the overall aim of the doctoral study, which was to construct an empirically tested framework for conflict management from a large number of construct variables. For reasons of parsimony, the overarching research hypotheses were more suitable for achieving the overall purpose of the doctoral research rather than micro-level research hypotheses, which one would expect in a research article. SAS version

9.4 (SAS, 2012) was used with the CALIS procedure and maximum likelihood estimation to firstly conduct CFAs in order to test the measurement model of each mediation model, followed by a mediation path analysis by means of SEM. Table 6.20 (Chapter 6) outlines the indices and criteria used in CFA, which was applied in considering the mediation models.

Four separate parallel mediation models were tested:

Model 1: This model included organisational culture with its two subscales (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) as independent variables and overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. Employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data were used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

Model 2: This model included leadership with its subscales (leader conflict behaviour, namely collaborative leader conflict behaviour, dominating leader conflict behaviour, avoiding leader conflict behaviour, and perceptions of social exchange leadership) as independent variables and overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. Employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data were used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

Model 3: This model included employee voice with its subscales (speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) as independent variables and overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. Employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables. In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data were used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

Model 4: Based on the canonical correlation results, this model included tolerance of conflict (organisational culture); collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership (leadership); and the three employee voice variables (speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) as independent variables. The dependent variables were modelled as observed variables (overall scores). The model included group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential (conflict types) and integrating 1, integrating 2 and collaborative 2 (interpersonal conflict handling styles) as dependent variables. The parallel mediating variables included employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability). In order to test for discriminant validity, a one-factor CFA measurement model was tested, followed by a multifactor CFA measurement model including all the variables. The best-fit CFA multifactor data were used to test a parallel mediation model with SEM (path analysis).

7.4.2.1 Mediation model 1: Effect of organisational culture through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles

The results of mediation model 1 is reported in Table 7.18.

Table 7.18

Results: Mediation Model 1

Model	Chi-square	Df	Chi-square/Df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	AIC
One factor CFA	319.40***	27	11.83	.07	.15	.90	.89	355.40
Multifactor CFA	34.01***	21	1.62	.02	.05	.99	.99	82.01
Structural model: SEM	55.02	23	2.39	.04	.07	.99	.98	99.02

Note: N = 556. *** $p < .0001$

The table shows that the one-factor CFA did not fit the data well (chi-square = 319.40; $df = 27$; chi-square/ df ratio = 11.83; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .15; SRMR = .07; CFI = .90; NFI = .89; AIC = 355.40). However, the multifactor CFA measurement model did fit the data well (chi-square = 34.01; $df = 21$; chi-square/ df ratio = 1.62; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .02; CFI = .99; NFI = .99; AIC = 82.01), thus indicating discriminant validity (i.e. multicollinearity did not pose a threat to the findings). The SEM mediation model also fitted the data well (chi-square = 55.02; $df = 23$; chi-square/ df ratio = 2.39; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .04; CFI = .99; NFI = .98; AIC = 99.02).

Table 7.19 reports the standardised path loadings and the standardised indirect effects.

Table 7.19

Model 1: Standardised Path Loadings and Standardised Indirect Effects

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Organisational culture → Tolerance of conflict	.68***	.02	32.84
Organisational culture → Allowance for mistakes	.69***	.02	29.75
Employee engagement → Organisational engagement	.65***	.02	28.59
Employee engagement → Job engagement	.34***	.04	9.38
Organisational trust → Integrity	.95***	.01	144.41
Organisational trust → Commitment	.92***	.01	112.74
Organisational trust → Dependability	.90***	.01	96.75
Organisational culture → Employee engagement	.98***	.01	69.21
Organisational culture → Organisational trust	1.00***	.01	195.35
Employee engagement → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	1.43***	.08	18.87
Employee engagement → Conflict types	4.15	3.53	1.18
Organisational Trust → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	-1.08***	.08	-13.01
Organisational Trust → Conflict types	-3.93***	3.53	-1.11
Standardised indirect (mediation) effects			
Organisational culture through mediation variables on Conflict types	.17***	0.05	3.21
Organisational culture through mediation variables on Interpersonal conflict handling styles	.33***	0.04	8.29
Organisational culture through Commitment (Organisational trust)	.92***	0.01	97.09
Organisational culture through Dependability (Organisational trust)	.90***	0.01	86.16
Organisational culture through Integrity (Organisational trust)	.94***	0.01	116.4
Organisational culture through Job engagement	.33***	0.04	9.43
Organisational culture through Organisational engagement	.64***	0.02	30.1

Note: N = 556. t-values > 4.00 (***) $p \leq .0001$; t-values > 2.56 (**) $p \leq .01$; t-values > 1.96 (*) $p \leq .05$

Table 7.19 (path loadings/indirect effect) shows that the path loadings were significant. Organisational culture had significant positive direct pathways to employee engagement ($\beta = .98$; $t = 69.21$) and organisational trust ($\beta = .99$; $t = 195.35$). Employee engagement had a significant positive pathway to interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = 1.43$; $t = 18.87$), but no significant pathway to conflict types ($\beta = 4.15$; $t = 1.18$). Organisational trust had a significant negative direct pathway to interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -1.08$; $t = -13.01$), but no significant pathway to conflict types ($\beta = -3.93$; $t = 1.11$).

The standardised indirect pathways show that organisational culture had a significant positive indirect pathway to conflict types ($\beta = .17$; $t = 3.21$; $p = .0001$) and interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = .33$; $t = 8.29$; $p < .0001$). The following mediating organisational trust variables

accounted for the significant indirect pathways: commitment ($\beta = .92$; $t = 97.09$; $p < .0001$), dependability ($\beta = .90$; $t = 86.16$; $p < .0001$) and integrity ($\beta = .94$; $t = 116.40$; $p < .0001$). The employee engagement variables of job engagement ($\beta = .33$; $t = 9.43$; $p < .0001$) and organisational engagement ($\beta = .64$; $t = 30.10$; $p < .0001$) also accounted for the significant indirect effects.

The results imply that positive perceptions of organisational culture (as denoted by a culture of tolerance and allowance for mistakes) will link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through (1) perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and (2) employee engagement (job engagement and organisation engagement). Figure 7.7 graphically illustrates the results of mediation model 1 as discussed above.

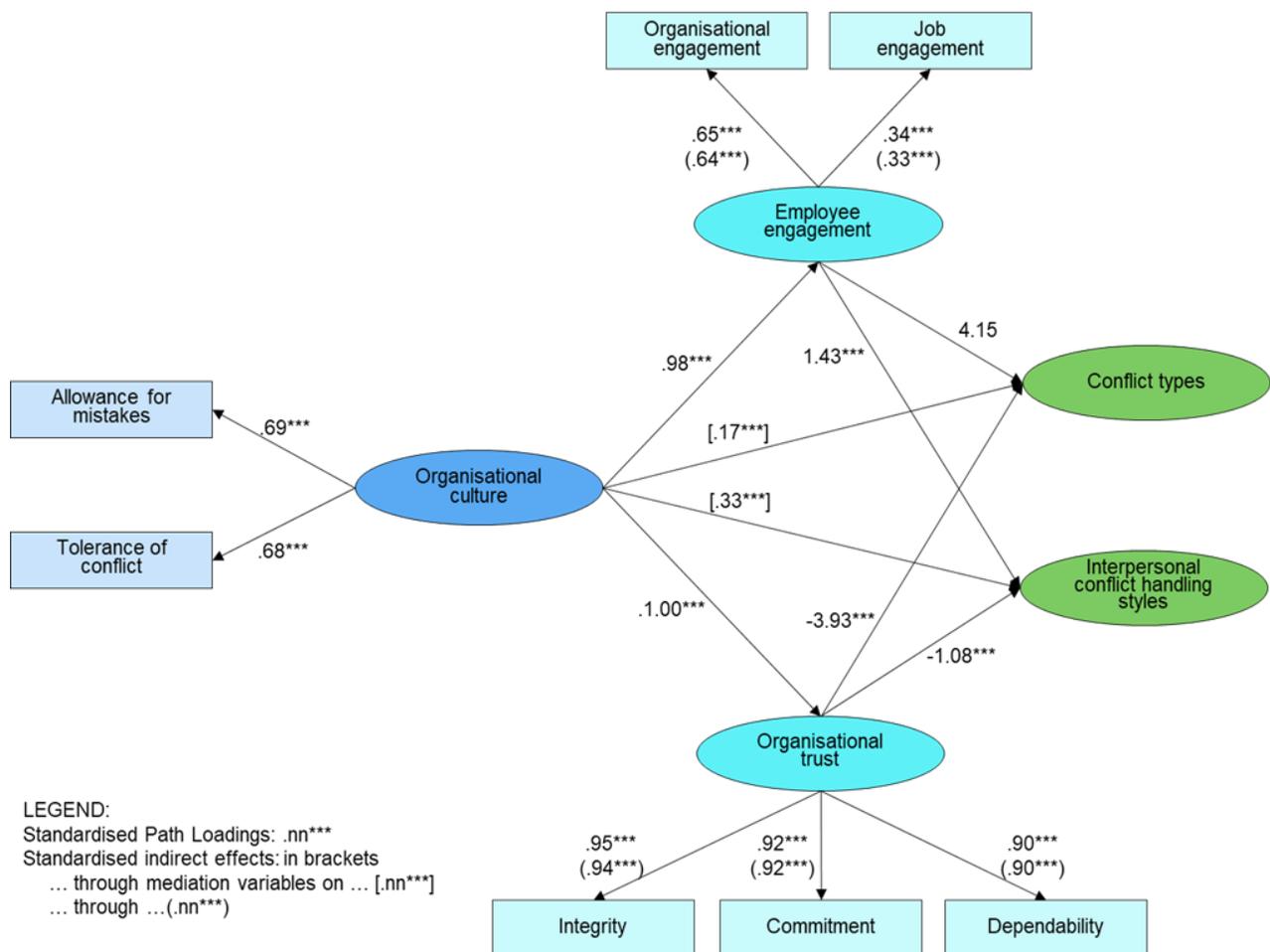


Figure 7.7 Mediation Model 1 Pathways

The results of mediation model 2 are discussed next.

7.4.2.2 *Mediation model 2: Effect of leadership through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles*

Table 7.20 reports the results of mediation model 2.

Table 7.20

Results: Mediation Model 2

Model	Chi-square	Df	Chi-square/Df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NFI	AIC
One factor CFA	341.58***	44	7.76	0.08	0.13	0.90	0.88	385.60
Multifactor CFA	126.33***	38	3.32	0.06	0.09	0.97	0.96	182.33
Structural model: SEM	114.47***	40	2.86	0.06	0.08	0.97	0.96	166.47

Note: N = 556. ***p < .0001

Table 7.20 demonstrates that the one-factor CFA did not fit the data well (chi-square = 341.58; *df* = 44; chi-square/*df* ratio = 7.76; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .13; CFI = .90; NFI = .88; AIC = 385.60). However, the multifactor CFA measurement model had acceptable fit (chi-square = 126.33; *df* = 38; chi-square/*df* ratio = 3.32; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .09; CFI = .97; NFI = .96; AIC = 182.33) indicating discriminant validity (i.e. multicollinearity did not pose a threat to the findings). In addition, the SEM mediation model fitted the data well (chi-square = 114.47; *df* = 40; chi-square/*df* ratio = 2.86; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .08; CFI = .97; NFI = .96; AIC = 166.47).

Table 7. 21 reports the standardised path loadings and the standardised indirect effects.

Table 7.21

Model 2: Standardised Path Loadings and Standardised Indirect Effects

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Leadership → Collaborative leader conflict behaviour	.81***	.02	49.96
Leadership → Dominating leader conflict behaviour	.01	.05	.15
Leadership → Avoiding leader conflict behaviour	-.36***	.04	-8.74
Leadership → Perceptions of social exchange leadership	.76***	.02	35.69
Employee engagement → Organisational engagement	.74***	.02	37.88
Employee engagement → Job engagement	.44***	.04	12.14
Organisational trust → Integrity	.95***	.01	145.68
Organisational trust → Commitment	.91***	.01	98.64
Organisational trust → Dependability	.90***	.01	87.78
Leadership → Employee engagement	.99***	.01	112.12
Leadership → Organisational trust	.99***	.01	171.02
Employee engagement → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	1.77***	.09	20.47
Employee engagement → Conflict types	2.39*	.98	2.45
Organisational trust → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	-1.33***	.09	-14.12

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Organisational trust → Conflict types	-2.14***	.98	-2.19
Standardised indirect (mediation) effects			
Leadership through mediation variables on Conflict types	.25***	.05	5.06
Leadership through mediation variables on Interpersonal conflict handling styles	.43***	.04	10.31
Leadership through Commitment (Organisational trust)	.90***	.01	83.54
Leadership through Dependability (Organisational trust)	.89***	.01	76.33
Leadership through Integrity (Organisational trust)	.94***	.01	111.89
Leadership through Job engagement	.43***	.04	12.13
Leadership through Organisational engagement	.73***	.02	37.69

Note: N = 556. t-values > 4.00 (** $p \leq .0001$); t-values > 2.56 (** $p \leq .01$); t-values > 1.96 (* $p \leq .05$)

Table 7.21 (path loadings/indirect effect) shows that the path loadings were significant. Leadership had a significant positive direct pathway to perceptions of social exchange leadership ($\beta = .76$; $t = 35.69$) and collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($\beta = .81$; $t = 49.96$), but not to dominating leader conflict behaviour ($\beta = .01$; $t = .15$). The pathway from leadership to dominating leader conflict behaviour was not significant; this limitation of the model was considered in the interpretation of the findings. Additionally, leadership had a significant negative pathway to avoiding leader conflict behaviour ($\beta = -.36$; $t = -8.74$). Leadership also had a significant positive direct pathway to employee engagement ($\beta = .99$; $t = 112.12$) and organisational trust ($\beta = .99$; $t = 171.02$). Employee engagement had significant positive pathways to organisational engagement ($\beta = .74$; $t = 37.88$), job engagement ($\beta = .44$; $t = 12.14$), interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = 1.77$; $t = 20.47$) and conflict types ($\beta = 2.39$; $t = 2.45$). Organisational trust had significant positive direct pathways to integrity ($\beta = .95$; $t = 145.68$), commitment ($\beta = .91$; $t = 98.64$) and dependability ($\beta = .90$; $t = 87.78$). Significant negative direct pathways are evident between organisational trust and interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -1.33$; $t = -14.12$) and conflict types ($\beta = -2.14$; $t = -2.19$).

The standardised indirect pathways show that leadership had a significant positive indirect pathway to conflict types ($\beta = .25$; $t = 5.06$; $p < .0001$) and interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = .43$; $t = 10.31$; $p < .0001$). The following mediating organisational trust variables accounted for the significant indirect pathways to leadership: commitment ($\beta = .90$; $t = 83.54$; $p < .0001$), dependability ($\beta = .89$; $t = 76.33$; $p < .0001$) and integrity ($\beta = .94$; $t = 111.89$; $p < .0001$). The employee engagement variables of job engagement ($\beta = .43$; $t = 12.13$; $p < .0001$) and organisational engagement ($\beta = .73$; $t = 37.69$; $p < .0001$) also accounted for the significant indirect effects.

According to the results, positive perceptions of leadership (as indicated by perceptions of social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) will link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement).

Figure 7.8 graphically illustrates the results of mediation model 2 as discussed above.

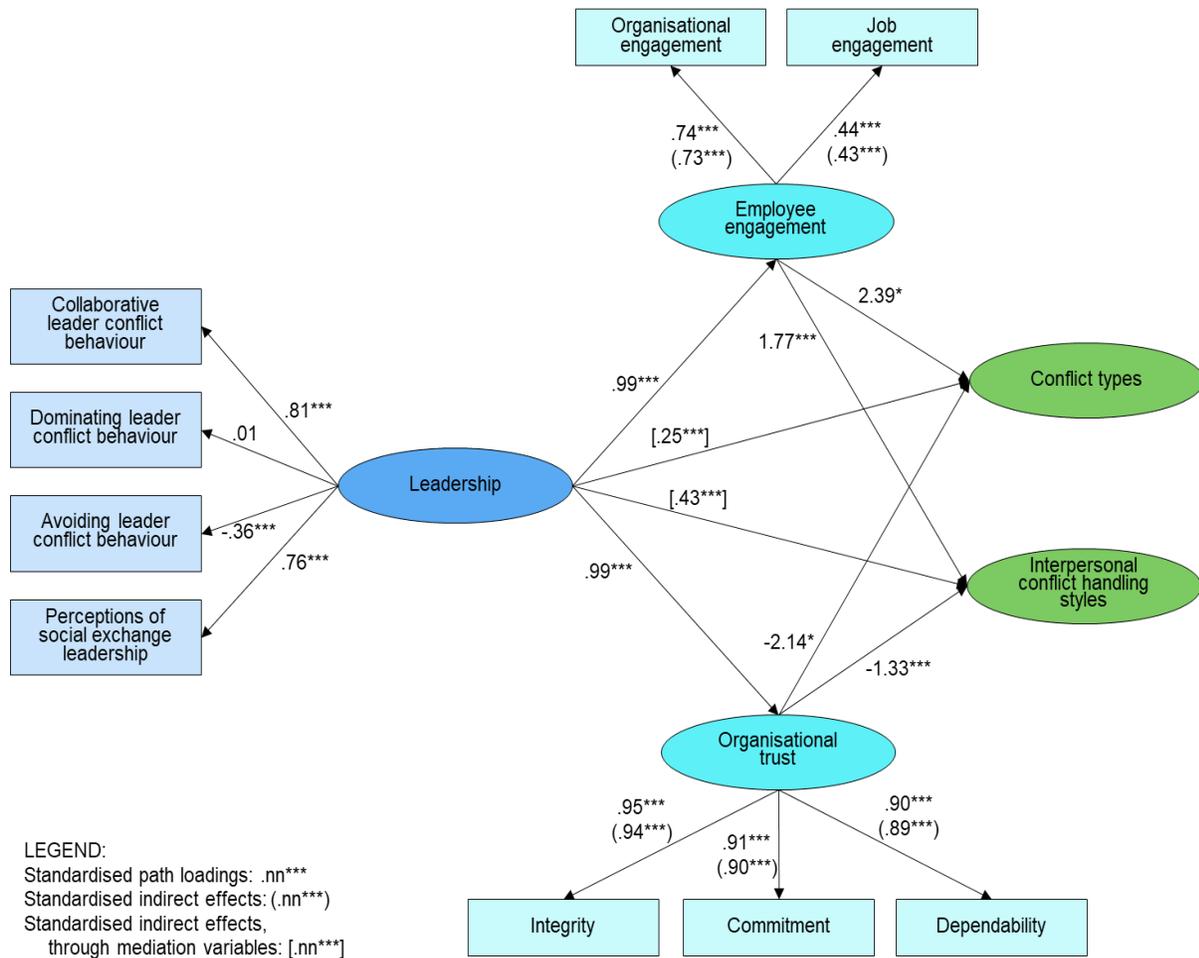


Figure 7.8 Mediation Model 2 Pathways

The results of mediation model 3 are discussed next.

7.4.2.3 Mediation model 3: Effect of employee voice through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles

Table 7.22 shows the results of mediation model 3.

Table 7.22

Results: Mediation Model 3

Model	Chi-square	Df	Chi-square/Df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NFI	AIC
One-factor CFA	768.41***	35	21.95	.14	.23	.74	.73	808.41
Multifactor CFA	224.65***	29	7.75	.09	.14	.93	.92	276.65
Structural model: SEM	597.33***	33	18.10	.12	.21	.80	.79	641.33

Note: N = 556. ***p < .0001

Table 7.22 indicates that the one-factor CFA did not fit the data well (chi-square = 768.41; $df = 35$; chi-square/ df ratio = 21.95; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .14; SRMR = .23; CFI = .74; NFI = .73; AIC = 808.41). The multifactor CFA measurement model indicates some measure of fit (chi-square = 224.65; $df = 29$; chi-square/ df ratio = 7.75; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .14; CFI = .93; NFI = .92; AIC = 276.65). However, the SRMR was too high for acceptable fit and the chi-square/ df ratio of 7.75 is also not a good fit indication. This indicates that the multifactor CFA measurement model showed unacceptable construct validity – a factor that was considered in the interpretation of the findings. The SEM mediation model did not fit the data well (chi-square = 597.33; $df = 33$; chi-square/ df ratio = 18.10; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .21; CFI = .80; NFI = .79; AIC = 641.33). Overall, the model had a poor fit and the results could not be interpreted in a valid manner. Although the results of the standardised path coefficients and indirect effects are reported, the findings suffer from validity limitations. Table 7.23 indicates the standardised path loadings and the standardised indirect effects.

Table 7.23

Model 3: Standardised Path Loadings and Standardised Indirect Effects

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Employee voice → Speaking out	.60***	.03	23.69
Employee voice → Speaking up	.54***	.04	14.90
Employee voice → Employee voice opportunities	.75***	.03	29.87
Employee engagement → Organisational engagement	.59***	.03	22.93
Employee engagement → Job engagement	.51***	.04	13.38
Organisational trust → Integrity	.95***	.01	125.50
Organisational trust → Commitment	.92***	.01	95.94
Organisational trust → Dependability	.90***	.01	83.27
Employee voice → Employee engagement	1.00***	.02	45.97
Employee voice → Organisational trust	.82***	.02	35.99
Employee engagement → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	1.06***	.05	19.76
Employee engagement → Conflict type	.50***	.10	5.03
Organisational trust → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	-.53***	.06	-8.37
Organisational trust → Conflict type	-.21*	.10	-2.15

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Standardised indirect (mediation) effects			
Employee voice through mediation variables on Conflict types	.32***	.05	6.87
Employee voice through mediation variables on Interpersonal conflict handling styles	.63***	.03	18.29
Employee voice through Commitment (Organisational trust)	.75***	.02	31.72
Employee voice through Dependability (Organisational trust)	.73***	.02	30.80
Employee voice through Integrity (Organisational trust)	.78***	.02	33.50
Employee voice through Job engagement	.51***	.04	13.12
Employee voice through Organisational engagement	.59***	.03	22.41

Note: N = 556. t-values > 4.00 (***) $p \leq .0001$; t-values > 2.56 (**) $p \leq .01$; t-values > 1.96 (*) $p \leq .05$.

Table 7.23 (path loadings/indirect effect) shows that the path loadings were significant. Employee voice had a significant positive direct pathway to speaking out ($\beta = .60$; $t = 23.69$), speaking up ($\beta = .54$; $t = 14.90$) and employee voice opportunities ($\beta = .75$; $t = 29.87$). Additionally, employee voice had a significant positive direct pathway to employee engagement ($\beta = 1.00$; $t = 45.97$) and organisational trust ($\beta = .82$; $t = 35.99$). Employee engagement had significant positive pathways to organisational engagement ($\beta = .59$; $t = 22.93$), job engagement ($\beta = .51$; $t = 13.38$), interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = 1.06$; $t = 19.76$) and conflict types ($\beta = .50$; $t = 5.03$). Organisational trust had significant positive direct pathways to integrity ($\beta = .95$; $t = 125.50$), commitment ($\beta = .92$; $t = 95.94$) and dependability ($\beta = .90$; $t = 83.27$). Significant negative direct pathways are evident between organisational trust and interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -.53$; $t = -8.37$) and conflict types ($\beta = -.21$; $t = -2.15$).

The standardised indirect pathways show that employee voice had a significant positive indirect pathway to conflict types ($\beta = .32$; $t = 6.87$; $p < .0001$) and interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = .63$; $t = 18.29$; $p < .0001$). The following mediating organisational trust variables accounted for the significant indirect pathways with employee voice: commitment ($\beta = .75$; $t = 31.72$; $p < .0001$), dependability ($\beta = .73$; $t = 30.80$; $p < .0001$) and integrity ($\beta = .78$; $t = 33.50$; $p < .0001$). The employee engagement variables of job engagement ($\beta = .51$; $t = 13.12$; $p < .0001$) and organisational engagement ($\beta = .59$; $t = 22.41$; $p < .0001$) also accounted for the significant indirect effects with employee voice.

Accordingly, it is concluded that positive perceptions of employee voice (as represented by speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) will link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job

and organisation engagement). However, the findings are interpreted with caution due to the validity limitations observed in terms of the models.

Figure 7.9 gives a graphic illustration of the results of mediation model 3.

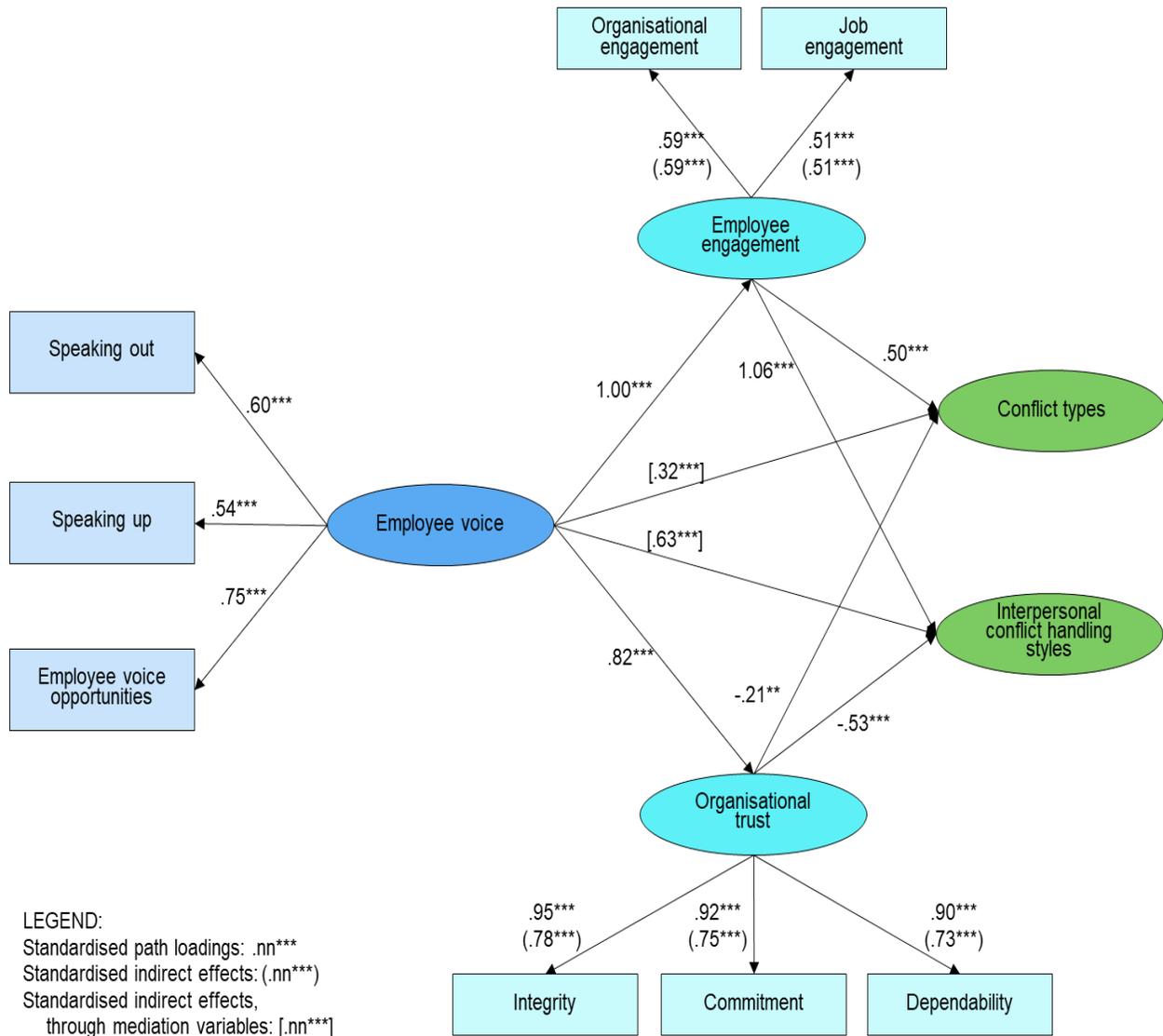


Figure 7.9 Mediation Model 3 Pathways

The results of mediation model 4 are discussed next.

7.4.2.4 *Mediation model 4: Effect of the independent variables indicated by the canonical results through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles*

Table 7.24 shows the results of mediation model 4.

Table 7.24

Results: Mediation Model 4

Model	Chi-square	Df	Chi-square/Df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NFI	AIC
One factor CFA	840.16***	65	12.93	.11	.17	.80	.79	892.16
Multifactor CFA	243.81***	44	5.54	.08	.11	.94	.93	311.81
Structural model: SEM	578.22***	57	10.14	.09	.15	.87	.86	646.22

Note: N = 556. *** $p < .0001$

Table 7.24 indicates that the one-factor CFA did not fit the data well (chi-square = 840.16; $df = 65$; chi-square/ df ratio = 12.93; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .11; SRMR = .17; CFI = .80; NFI = .79; AIC = 892.16). The multifactor CFA measurement model indicated a moderate fit with the data (chi-square = 243.81; $df = 44$; chi-square/ df ratio = 5.54; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .11; CFI = .94; NFI = .93; AIC = 311.81), indicating discriminant validity (i.e. multicollinearity did not pose a threat to the findings). The SEM mediation model did not fit the data well (chi-square = 578.22; $df = 57$; chi-square/ df ratio = 10.14; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .15; CFI = .87; NFI = .86; AIC = 646.22).

Table 7.25 specifies the standardised path loadings and the standardised indirect effects.

Table 7.25

Model 4: Standardised Path Loadings and Standardised Indirect Effects

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Leadership → Collaborative leader conflict behaviour	.86***	.02	56.17
Leadership → Perceptions of social exchange leadership	.76***	.02	34.96
Employee voice → Speaking up	.51***	.03	16.08
Employee voice → Speaking out	.60***	.04	17.25
Employee voice → Employee voice opportunities	.76***	.03	27.68
Employee engagement → Organisational engagement	.72***	.02	31.11
Employee engagement → Job engagement	.47***	.04	12.29
Organisational trust → Integrity (Organisational Trust)	.95***	.01	144.85
Organisational trust → Commitment (Organisational Trust)	.91***	.01	99.10
Organisational trust → Dependability (Organisational Trust)	.90***	.01	85.31
Employee voice → Employee engagement	.57***	.04	12.93
Employee voice → Organisational trust	.08*	.06	1.35
Leadership → Employee engagement	.63***	.06	10.39

Path	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value
Leadership → Organisational trust	1.06***	.08	13.34
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) → Employee engagement	-.18**	.05	-3.60
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) → Organisational trust	-.20**	.06	-3.54
Employee engagement → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	1.47***	.08	17.95
Employee engagement → Conflict types	.66***	.15	4.49
Organisational trust → Interpersonal conflict handling styles	-1.00***	.09	-11.01
Organisational trust → Conflict types	-.41**	.15	-2.76
Standardised indirect (mediation) effects			
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through mediation variables on Conflict types	-.04	0.03	-1.19
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through mediation variables on Interpersonal conflict handling styles	-.06	0.07	-0.94
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through Commitment (Organisational trust)	-.18	0.05	-3.54
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through Dependability (Organisational trust)	-.18	0.05	-3.54
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through Integrity (Organisational trust)	-.19	0.05	-3.54
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through Job engagement (Employee engagement)	-.08	0.02	-3.48
Tolerance of conflict (Organisational culture) through Organisational engagement (Employee engagement)	-.13	0.04	-3.57
Leadership through Conflict types	-.02	0.08	-0.19
Leadership through Interpersonal conflict handling styles	-.13	0.10	-1.27
Leadership through Commitment (Organisational trust)	.97***	0.07	13.21
Leadership through Dependability (Organisational trust)	.95***	0.07	13.16
Leadership through Integrity (Organisational trust)	1.01***	0.08	13.26
Leadership through Job engagement (Employee engagement)	.30***	0.04	8.07
Leadership through Organisational engagement (Employee engagement)	.46***	0.05	9.30
Employee voice through Conflict types	.35***	0.07	4.61
Employee voice through Interpersonal conflict handling styles)	.76***	0.07	11.27
Employee voice through Commitment (Organisational trust)	.08	0.06	1.35
Employee voice through Dependability (Organisational trust)	.07	0.06	1.35
Employee voice through Integrity (Organisational trust)	.08	0.06	1.35
Employee voice through Job engagement (Employee engagement)	.27***	0.03	8.97
Employee voice through Organisational engagement (Employee engagement)	.41***	0.03	13.82

Note: N = 556. t-values > 4.00 (** $p \leq .0001$); t-values > 2.56 (** $p \leq .01$); t-values > 1.96 (* $p \leq .05$).

Table 7.25 (path loadings/indirect effect) shows that the path loadings were all significant, apart from the pathway of employee voice to organisational trust. Leadership had a significant positive direct pathway to perceptions of social exchange leadership ($\beta = .76$; $t = 34.96$) and collaborative leader conflict behaviour ($\beta = .86$; $t = 34.96$). Leadership also had a significant positive direct pathway to employee engagement ($\beta = .63$; $t = 10.39$) and organisational trust ($\beta = 1.06$; $t =$

13.34). Employee voice had a significant positive direct pathway to speaking out ($\beta = .60$; $t = 17.25$), speaking up ($\beta = .51$; $t = 16.08$) and employee voice opportunities ($\beta = .76$; $t = 27.68$). Additionally, employee voice had a significant positive direct pathway to employee engagement ($\beta = .57$; $t = 12.93$), but not to organisational trust ($\beta = .08$; $t = 1.35$). Tolerance of conflict (organisational culture) had significant negative pathways to employee engagement ($\beta = -.18$; $t = -3.60$) and organisational trust ($\beta = -.20$; $t = -3.54$). Employee engagement had significant positive pathways to organisational engagement ($\beta = .72$; $t = 31.11$), job engagement ($\beta = .47$; $t = 12.29$), overall interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = 1.47$; $t = 17.95$) and overall conflict types ($\beta = .66$; $t = 4.49$). Organisational trust had significant positive direct pathways to integrity ($\beta = .95$; $t = 144.85$), commitment ($\beta = .91$; $t = 99.10$) and dependability ($\beta = .90$; $t = 85.31$). Significant negative direct pathways were evident between organisational trust and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -1.00$; $t = -11.01$) and overall conflict types ($\beta = -.41$; $t = -2.76$).

The standardised indirect mediation effects show that tolerance of conflict (*organisational culture*) had a negative indirect pathway to overall conflict types ($\beta = -.04$; $t = -1.19$; $p = .24$) and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -.06$; $t = -.94$; $p = .34$). The following mediating organisational trust variables accounted for the negative indirect pathways with tolerance of conflict (organisational culture): commitment ($\beta = -.18$; $t = -3.54$; $p = .0001$), dependability ($\beta = -.18$; $t = -3.54$; $p = .0001$) and integrity ($\beta = -.19$; $t = -3.54$; $p = .0001$). The employee engagement variables of job engagement ($\beta = -.08$; $t = -3.48$; $p = .0005$) and organisational engagement ($\beta = -.13$; $t = -3.57$; $p = .0004$) also accounted for the negative indirect effects with tolerance of conflict (organisational culture).

In addition, the standardised indirect mediation effects show that *leadership* had a negative indirect pathway to overall conflict types ($\beta = -.02$; $t = -1.19$; $p = .85$) and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -.13$; $t = -1.27$; $p = .21$). The following mediating organisational trust variables accounted for the significant positive indirect pathways with leadership: commitment ($\beta = .97$; $t = 13.21$; $p < .0001$), dependability ($\beta = .95$; $t = 13.16$; $p < .0001$) and integrity ($\beta = 1.01$; $t = 13.26$; $p < .0001$). The employee engagement variables of job engagement ($\beta = .30$; $t = 8.07$; $p < .0001$) and organisational engagement ($\beta = .46$; $t = 9.30$; $p < .0001$) also accounted for the positive indirect effects with leadership.

Employee voice had a significant positive indirect pathway to overall conflict types ($\beta = .35$; $t = 4.61$; $p < .0001$) and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = .76$; $t = 11.27$; $p < .0001$). The following mediating organisational trust variables accounted for the indirect pathways with

employee voice: commitment ($\beta = .08$; $t = 1.35$; $p = .18$), dependability ($\beta = .07$; $t = 1.35$; $p = .18$) and integrity ($\beta = .08$; $t = 1.35$; $p = .18$). The employee engagement variables of job engagement ($\beta = .27$; $t = 8.97$; $p < .0001$) and organisational engagement ($\beta = .41$; $t = 13.82$; $p < .0001$) also accounted for the significant indirect effects with employee voice.

Overall, model 4 had a poor fit and therefore the results could not be interpreted in a valid manner. Although the results of the standardised path coefficients and indirect effects are reported, the findings suffer from validity limitations. This was considered in the interpretation of the findings. The results imply that positive perceptions of organisational culture (as denoted by a culture of tolerance) will link positively to positive perceptions of overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisation engagement). Moreover, based on the results, positive perceptions of leadership will link positively to positive perceptions of overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). Lastly, it is concluded that positive perceptions of employee voice (as represented by speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) will link positively to positive perceptions of overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). However, the findings are interpreted with caution due to the validity limitations observed in terms of the models.

Figure 7.10 gives a graphic illustration of the results of mediation model 4.

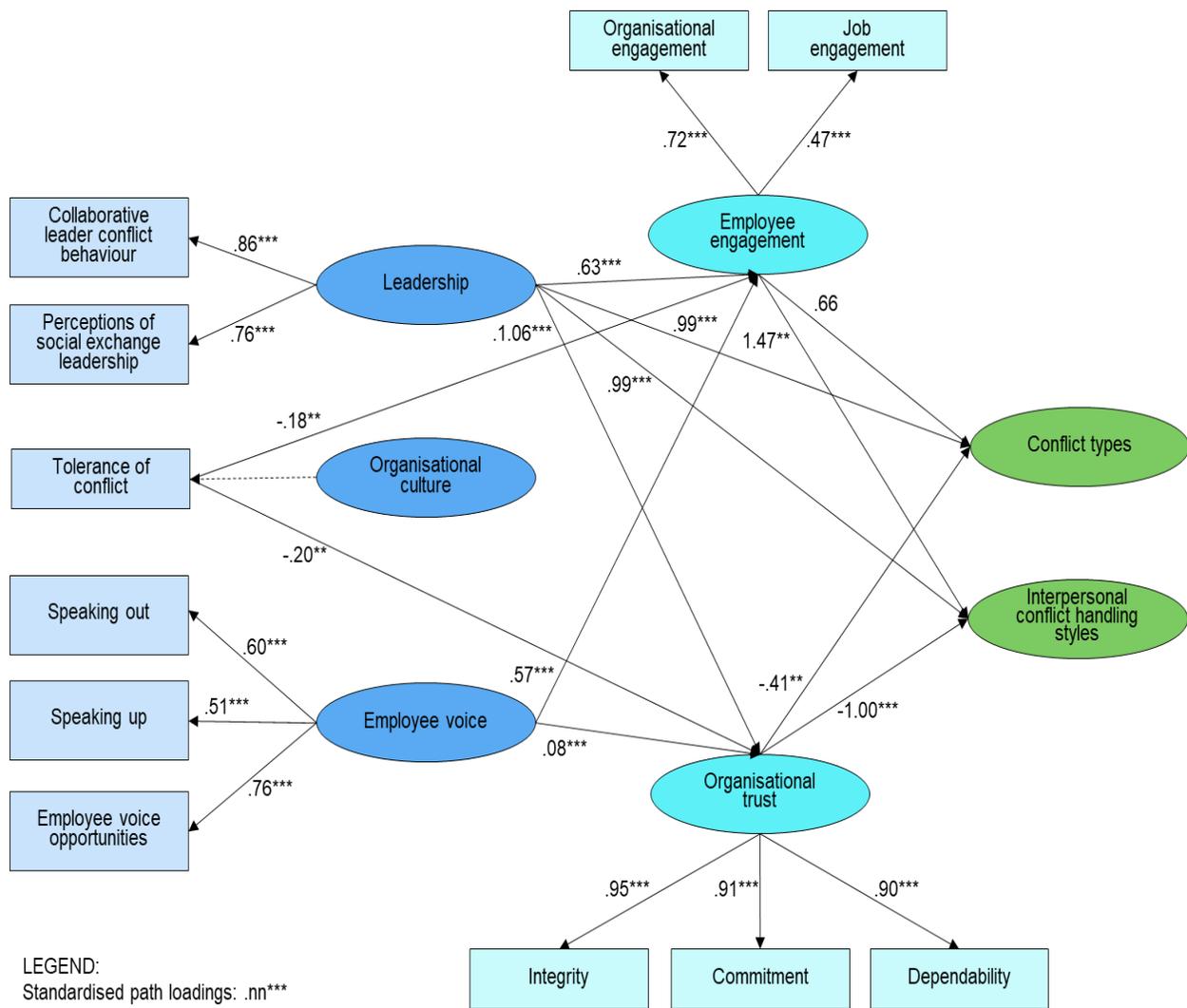


Figure 7.10 Mediation Model 4 Pathways

7.4.2.5 Preliminary analysis 3: Towards constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management

Mediation model 1 considered the effect of organisational culture through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. The results of model 1 implied that positive perceptions of organisational culture (as denoted by a culture of tolerance and allowance for mistakes) link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through (1) employee engagement (job engagement and organisation engagement) and (2) perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity). The mediation modelling indicated that leadership and organisational culture had significant indirect pathways through employee engagement (job engagement and organisational

engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Mediation model 2 considered the effect of leadership through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. According to the results of model 2, positive perceptions of leadership (as indicated by perceptions of social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). However, the pathway between leadership and a dominating leader conflict behaviour was not significant; this finding was considered in the interpretation of the findings.

Mediation model 3 considered the effect of employee voice through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. It was concluded that positive perceptions of employee voice (as represented by speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) will link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). However, the findings were interpreted with caution due to the validity limitations observed in the models. According to the results of model 3, the model had an overall poor fit and the results could not be interpreted in a valid manner.

Mediation model 4 measured the effect of the independent variables identified by the canonical results through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Overall, model 4 had a poor fit and, therefore, the results could not be interpreted in a valid manner. Although the results of the standardised path coefficients and indirect effects are reported, the findings suffer from validity limitations. This was considered in the interpretation of the findings. The results imply that positive perceptions of organisational culture (as denoted by a culture of tolerance) will link positively to positive perceptions of overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisation engagement). Moreover, based on the results, positive perceptions of leadership will link positively to positive perceptions of overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment,

dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). Lastly, it is concluded that positive perceptions of employee voice (as represented by speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) will link positively to positive perceptions of overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). However, the findings are interpreted with caution due to the validity limitations observed in terms of the models.

To conclude, the research indicated that the separate mediation models with organisational culture (model 1) and leadership as independent variables (model 2) had structural validity, while model 3 and model 4 did not have structural validity. According to the mediation modelling results, the following elements should be considered in constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management:²

² For the purposes of this research, *collaborative leader conflict behaviour* refers to how leaders influence an organisational culture by having a collaborative conflict leadership style (Gelfand et al., 2012). In addition, *perceptions of social exchange leadership* refer to the perceptions of reciprocal behaviour that transpire from the everyday dealings between leaders and their followers (Murry et al., 2001). *Tolerance of conflict* refers to an organisational culture where employees respect the opinions of others, are willing to express themselves even during disagreements, and are willing to make compromises (Yeh & Xu, 2010b). *Group atmosphere* describes the atmosphere existing within groups based on mutual trust, respect and cohesiveness (Chatman, 1991); open communication and discussion norms (Jehn, 1995) among team (organisational) members, as well as liking for team (organisational) members (Jehn, 1995). *Conflict resolution potential* refers to the way conflict is resolved in organisations, e.g. by openly and honestly confronting conflict, or by compromising on or avoiding conflict (Jehn, 1995). An *integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2)* shows high concern for self and for others, and refers to open collaboration on conflict through discussions, examinations and an analysis of information and of existing differences in order to seek mutually acceptable solutions (Ayub et al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). (Note that because of the number of items in ROCI-II, two subsets of items for each interpersonal conflict handling style were considered, numbered with a 1 and a 2). A *compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (2)* indicates cooperation based on an intermediate concern for self and others (Ayub et al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). Both parties are willing to compromise and to give and take in order to reach a mutually satisfactory and harmonious decision (Rahim et al., 2001; Tanveer et al., 2018). *Job engagement* refers to how engaged employees are in performing their work roles, whereas *organisational engagement* refers to how engaged employees are in performing their roles as members of an organisation (Saks, 2006a). *Integrity* (organisational trust) relates to the values and principles (e.g. fairness and justice, honesty and transparency) the trustee adheres to and the trustor accepts (Albrecht, 2002; Chathoth et al., 2007). *Commitment* relates to the feeling of belonging

- Generally, the mediating variables of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) are vital in intensifying the direction and strength of the link between leadership behaviour and organisational culture, and the multidimensional conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and various interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, compromising).
- Building on the canonical results, leadership – specifically collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership – seems to strengthen conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2; and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2) through the presence of high levels of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). These dynamics are important to consider in the framework for conflict management.
- Similarly, building on the canonical results, an organisational culture of conflict tolerance seems to strengthen the multidimensional variable of conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, and the various types of conflict namely task, relational, process and status conflict), and how these aspects influence group performance (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) through the presence of high levels of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). Tolerance of conflict (organisational culture) also seems to strengthen the use of certain interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2, and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2) through the presence of high levels of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). These dynamics are important to consider in the framework for conflict management.

to an organisation and subsequent actions towards the organisation over time (Chathoth et al., 2011). *Dependability* refers to the consistent, faithful and reliable actions of an organisation, indicating that it will follow up on its promises (Chathoth et al., 2007; Paine, 2003, 2012).

- Although employee voice does not appear to have an indirect link through employee engagement and organisational trust to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, employee voice did show a positive link to organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement), which in turn had a positive link with conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. As such, building on the canonical results, employee voice should also be considered in the framework, especially as variables explaining conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles as a composite set of variables (in group atmosphere, dispute resolution potential, integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2, and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2).

Additionally, the SEM provided sufficient empirical evidence for an acceptable fit between the theoretically hypothesised framework and the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance in the research.

Hence, it is concluded that evidence was found to support research hypothesis 3 and research hypothesis 4:

Research hypothesis 3: Employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research hypothesis 4: The theoretically hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.

7.4.3 Stage 3: Stepwise multiple regression analysis

Because of the number of socio-demographic variables, stepwise multiple regression analysis, using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012), was conducted to further inform the construction of the conflict management framework. This procedure assisted in identifying the significant moderating

variables for inclusion in further statistical analysis in order to identify the key variables to consider in constructing the framework.

This step (stepwise multiple regression analysis) involved the first of two stages of testing research hypothesis H5. Stage 1 was conducted to identify the most important and significant predictors to include in stage 2 – the hierarchical moderated regression analysis. Stages 1 and 2 were necessary because of the large number of socio-demographic variables; necessitating the elimination of non-significant variables.

Research hypothesis 5: H5: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Stepwise regression is the step-by-step iterative construction of a regression model and involves the automatic selection of independent variables. Darlington and Hayes (2017) explain that stepwise regression may be performed through either forward or backward regression; accordingly, forward stepwise regression was performed in the current study. Forward stepwise regression begins with no predictors and builds the model by adding predictors individually (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). In forward stepwise regression, variables are added according to the variables that increase R^2 the most. This process continues while supplementary variables add statistical significance to the regression equation, and stops when no further predictors add anything statistically significant to the regression equation (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). Thus, during stepwise multiple regression not all predictor variables may be entered into the equation.

Only significant predictors were reported in the hierarchical moderated regression analysis for parsimony reasons. ANOVA $F_p < .05$ was used as the cut-off point for significance in the findings (i.e. to indicate significant models). The ANOVA (F_p) and R^2 values were used to indicate the variance that was explained by each model. Practical effect size of the adjusted R^2 , was indicated by the following range:

- $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect)
- $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (moderate practical effect)
- $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect)

The sections below set out the results for the forward stepwise regression analysis of the socio-demographic variables as predictors of the independent, mediating and dependent variables.

7.4.3.1 *Socio-demographic variables as predictors in the independent variables*

The stepwise regression models setting out the significant socio-demographic predictors of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) are discussed below. As illustrated in Tables 7.26 to 7.28, stepwise regression analysis was performed in terms of each of the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) and each of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice).

(a) *Significant socio-demographic predictors of leadership*

Table 7.26 sets out the significant socio-demographic predictors of leadership.

Table 7.26

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Leadership

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Number of employees (in organisation)		
Less than 50 employees (= 1)	.46	5.33
51–150 employees (= 2)	.33	3.11
151–500 employees (= 3)	.18	2.05
More than 500 employees (= 4)	.00	-
Formal employee engagement programme (in organisation)		
Yes (= 1)	.15	1.73
No (= 2)	-.11	-1.09
I do not know (= 3)	.00	-
Model (final step)	F value	p
Number of employees	7.87	<.0001
Formal employee engagement programme	5.14	.01
Overall model F	6.87	p = .00
Adjusted R²	.06	

Note: N = 556; t > 4.0 (**p ≤ .0001); t-values > 2.56 (**p ≤ .01); t-values > 1.96 (*p ≤ .05)

Table 7.26 indicates the significant predictors of leadership as identified by step two of the stepwise multiple regression, namely, number of employees (in the organisation) ($\beta = 7.87$; $p < .0001$; positive predictor) and formal employee engagement programme ($\beta = 5.14$; $p < .01$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.06 (small practical effect) indicated that the model predicted approximately 6% of the variance in leadership.

(b) *Significant socio-demographic predictors of organisational culture*

The variables that yielded significant results pertaining to the socio-demographic predictors of organisational culture are reported in Table 7.27.

Table 7.27

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Organisational Culture

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Job level (i.e. employment position in organisation)		
Staff (non-managerial) (= 1)	-.13	-.81
Junior management (= 2)	-.11	-.41
Middle management (= 3)	.02	.10
Senior management/executive (= 4)	.41	2.48
Professional (non-managerial) (= 5)	.00	-
Number of employees (in organisation)		
Less than 50 employees (= 1)	.85	5.65
51–150 employees (= 2)	.45	2.47
151–500 employees (= 3)	.24	1.58
More than 500 employees (= 4)	.00	-
Formal employee engagement programme (in organisation)		
Yes (= 1)	.48	3.20
No (= 2)	-.10	-.54
I do not know (= 3)	0	-
Model (final step)		
	F value	p
Job level (employment position)	3.23	.01
Number of employees	7.86	<.0001
Formal employee engagement programme	11.88	<.0001
Overall model F	6.94	$p = .00$
Adjusted R^2	.11	

Note: N = 556; $t > 4.0$ (** $p \leq .0001$); t-values > 2.56 (** $p \leq .01$); t-values > 1.96 (* $p \leq .05$)

According to Table 7.27, the following socio-demographic variables were the most significant predictors of organisational culture, as indicated by step three of the regression analysis: job level

($\beta = 3.23$; $p < .01$; positive predictor), number of employees ($\beta = 7.86$; $p < .0001$; positive predictor) and formal employee engagement programme ($\beta = 11.88$; $p < .0001$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.11 (small practical effect) indicated that the model predicted approximately 11% of the variance in organisational culture.

(c) *Significant socio-demographic predictors of employee voice*

Table 7.28 below sets out the significant socio-demographic predictors of employee voice.

Table 7.28

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Employee Voice

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Job level (i.e. employment position in organisation)		
Staff (non-managerial) (= 1)	-.46	-3.16
Junior management (= 2)	-.38	-1.62
Middle management (= 3)	.49	3.33
Senior management/executive (= 4)	.95	6.34
Professional (non-managerial) (= 5)	.00	-3.16
Workplace size		
Micro (= 1)	.73	2.67
Small (= 2)	.38	2.67
Medium (= 3)	.29	2.45
Large (= 4)	.00	-
Formal employee engagement programme (in organisation)		
Yes (=1)	.53	3.90
No (=2)	.20	1.22
I do not know (=3)	.00	-
Model (final step)		
	F value	p
Job level	34.27	<.0001
Workplace size	7.72	.001
Formal employee engagement programme	4.43	.004
Overall model F	19.32	$p = .00$
Adjusted R^2	.28	

Note: N = 556; $t > 4.0$ ($***p \leq .0001$); t-values > 2.56 ($**p \leq .01$); t-values > 1.96 ($*p \leq .05$)

Table 7.28 indicates the best predictors of employee voice as identified by step three of the stepwise multiple regression, namely, job level ($\beta = 34.27$; $p < .0001$; positive predictor), workplace size ($\beta = 7.72$; $p < .001$; positive predictor) and formal employee engagement programme ($\beta = 4.43$; $p < .004$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.28 (large practical effect) indicates that the model predicted approximately 28% of the variance in employee voice.

7.4.3.2 Socio-demographic variables as predictors in the mediating variables

The significant socio-demographic predictors of the mediating variables are reported next.

(a) Significant socio-demographic predictors of employee engagement

Table 7.29 below sets out the significant socio-demographic predictors of employee engagement as determined in step four of the regression analysis.

Table 7.29

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Employee Engagement

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Race		
Black African (= 1)	.50	3.86
Coloured (= 2)	.23	.93
Indian or Asian (= 3)	.15	.65
White (= 4)	.00	-
Age		
18–34 years (= 1)	-.53	-3.88
35–49 years (= 2)	-.19	-1.49
50 years and older (= 3)	.00	-3.88
Qualification		
Secondary, not completed (= 1)	1.64	2.96
Grade 12 (= 2)	.22	1.11
Tertiary – first degree (= 3)	.22	1.76
Tertiary – postgraduate qualification (= 4)	.00	-
Job level		
Staff (non-managerial) (= 1)	-.09	-.59
Junior management (= 2)	-.19	-.76
Middle management (= 3)	.25	1.59
Senior management/executive (= 4)	.58	3.69
Professional (non-managerial) (= 5)	.00	-.59
Model (final step)		
	F value	p
Race	4.30	.01
Age	5.53	.00
Qualification	3.96	.01
Job level	6.89	<.0001
Overall model F	5.50	p = .00
Adjusted R²	.11	

Note: N = 556; t > 4.0 (***) $p \leq .0001$; t-values > 2.56 (** $p \leq .01$); t-values > 1.96 (* $p \leq .05$);

According to Table 7.29, the following socio-demographic variables were the most significant predictors of employee engagement: race ($\beta = 4.30$; $p < .01$; positive predictor), age ($\beta = 5.53$; $p < .00$; positive predictor), qualification ($\beta = 3.96$; $p < .01$; positive predictor) and job level ($\beta = 6.89$; $p < .0001$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of .11 (small practical effect) indicated that the model predicted approximately 11% of the variance in employee engagement.

(b) *Significant socio-demographic predictors of organisational trust*

Table 7.30 summarises the significant socio-demographic predictors of organisational trust as determined in step four of the stepwise regression analysis.

Table 7.30

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Organisational Trust

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Job level (i.e. employment position in organisation)		
Staff (non-managerial) (= 1)	-.36	-2.01
Junior management (= 2)	-.07	-.25
Middle management (= 3)	.06	.36
Senior management/executive (= 4)	.43	2.30
Professional (non-managerial) (= 5)	0	-
Workplace sector		
Private sector (= 1)	.44	2.88
Semi-private sector (= 2)	-.20	-1.04
Government sector (= 3)	0	-
Number of employees (in organisation)		
Less than 50 employees (= 1)	.78	4.50
51–150 employees (= 2)	.49	2.35
151–500 employees (= 3)	-.02	-.11
More than 500 employees (= 4)	.00	-
Formal employee engagement programme (in organisation)		
Yes (= 1)	.34	2.03
No (= 2)	-.36	-1.77
I do not know (= 3)	.00	-
Model (final step)	F value	p
Job level (employment position)	4.52	.001
Workplace sector	19.48	<.0001
Number of employees	6.72	.0002
Formal employee engagement programme	5.55	.004
Overall model F	8.51	$p = .00$
Adjusted R^2	.16	

Note: N = 556; $t > 4.0$ ($***p \leq .0001$); t-values > 2.56 ($**p \leq .01$); t-values > 1.96 ($*p \leq .05$)

Table 7.30 indicates that the following socio-demographic variables were the most significant predictors of organisational trust: job level ($\beta = 4.52$; $p < .001$; positive predictor), workplace sector ($\beta = 19.48$; $p < .0001$; positive predictor), number of employees ($\beta = 6.72$; $p < .0002$; positive predictor) and formal employee engagement programme ($\beta = 5.55$; $p < .004$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of .16 (moderate practical effect) indicated that the model predicted approximately 16% of the variance in organisational trust.

The next section summarises the significant socio-demographic predictors in the dependent variables as indicated by the forward stepwise regression analysis.

7.4.3.3 *Socio-demographic variables as predictors of the dependent variables*

The socio-demographic variables that significantly predicted the dependent variables of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles are reported in this section.

(a) *Significant socio-demographic predictors of conflict types*

Table 7.31 sets out the significant socio-demographic predictors of conflict types as indicated at step three of the analysis.

Table 7.31

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Conflict Types

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Job level (i.e. employment position in organisation)		
Staff (non-managerial) (= 1)	-.14	-1.67
Junior management (= 2)	-.29	-2.19
Middle management (= 3)	-.07	-.83
Senior management/executive (= 4)	.10	1.20
Professional (non-managerial) (= 5)	.00	-1.67
Age		
18–34 years (= 1)	.21	2.87
35–49 years (= 2)	.21	3.09
50 years and older (= 3)	.00	-
Trade union membership		
Yes (= 1)	.18	2.86
No (= 2)	.00	-

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Model (final step)	F value	p
Job level (employment position)	3.31	.01
Age	4.71	.01
Trade union membership	4.75	.03
Overall model F	3.97	$p = .00$
Adjusted R^2	.05	

Note: $N = 556$; $t > 4.0$ ($***p \leq .0001$); t -values > 2.56 ($**p \leq .01$); t -values > 1.96 ($*p \leq .05$)

Table 7.31 indicates that the following socio-demographic variables were the most significant predictors of conflict types: job level ($\beta = 3.31$; $p < .01$; positive predictor), age ($\beta = 4.71$; $p < .01$; positive predictor) and trade union membership ($\beta = 4.75$; $p < .03$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of .05 (small practical effect) indicated that the model predicted approximately 5% of the variance in conflict types.

(b) *Significant socio-demographic predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles*

Table 7.32 summarises the significant socio-demographic predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles as determined in step one of the stepwise regression analysis.

Table 7.32

Stepwise Regression Results: Significant Socio-demographic Predictors of Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Significant Socio-demographic Predictors	Estimate (β)	t
Number of employees (in organisation)		
Less than 50 employees (= 1)	.20	2.64
51–150 employees (= 2)	.14	1.41
151–500 employees (= 3)	.16	1.95
More than 500 employees (= 4)	.00	
Model (final step)	F value	p
Number of employees	2.95	.03
Overall model F	2.95	$p = .03$
Adjusted R^2	.01	

Note: $N = 556$; $t > 4.0$ ($***p \leq .0001$); t -values > 2.56 ($**p \leq .01$); t -values > 1.96 ($*p \leq .05$);

Table 7.32 indicates that the socio-demographic variable of number of employees was the most significant predictor of interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = 2.95$; $p < .03$; positive predictor). The adjusted R^2 value of .01 (small practical effect) indicated that the model predicted approximately 1% of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles.

7.4.3.4 *Preliminary analysis 4: Towards constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management*

In summary, the forward stepwise multiple regression analysis identified a number of significant predictors of the independent (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediating (employee engagement and organisational trust) and dependent (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) variables. Firstly, the stepwise regression model indicated that number of employees and formal employee engagement programme are significant predictors of leadership. The second stepwise regression model identified job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programme as significant predictors of organisational culture. The third stepwise regression model showed that job level, workplace size and formal employee engagement programme are significant predictors of employee voice. Regarding the mediating variable of employee engagement, race, age, qualification and job level were indicated as significant socio-demographic predictors. Job level, workplace sector, number of employees and formal employee engagement programme were indicated as significant predictors of organisational trust. Concerning the dependent variables of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, the following regression models were found: job level, age and trade union membership significantly predicted conflict types, while number of employees was the most significant predictor of interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.33 summarises the various socio-demographic predictors according to the respective variables of relevance to the study. It indicates that number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme and job level are the three most important socio-demographic variables to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age.

Table 7.33

A Summary of the Stepwise Regression Results Pertaining to Socio-demographic Predictors

Leadership	Organisational Culture	Employee Voice	Employee Engagement	Organisational Trust	Conflict Types	Interpersonal Conflict Handling Style
Number of employees	Number of employees			Number of employees		Number of employees
Formal employee engagement programme	Formal employee engagement programme	Formal employee engagement programme		Formal employee engagement programme		
	Job level	Job level	Job level	Job level	Job level	
		Workplace size				
			Race			
			Age		Age	
			Qualification			
			Workplace sector			
					Trade union membership	

The significant results that were obtained in the stepwise regression analysis informed the hierarchical moderated regression analysis, which is discussed next.

7.4.4 Stage 4: Hierarchical moderated regression analysis

This step (hierarchical moderated regression analysis) was the second of two stages which tested research hypothesis H5, with stage 1 (section 7.4.4) identifying the most significant predictors to include in stage 2. The hierarchical moderated regression analysis thus considered only the significant best predictors for parsimony reasons. Hierarchical moderated regression analysis, applying the Hayes PROCESS procedure in SPSS version 3 (Hayes, 2018a), was conducted to determine the interaction effect between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the best predictor socio-demographic variables in forecasting the dependent variables. This step further assisted in identifying those socio-demographic variables that should be considered in the conflict management framework

This step involved testing research hypothesis H5:

Research hypothesis 5: H5: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The socio-demographic variables identified through the stepwise regression analysis were outlined in section 7.4.3.4 and summarised in Table 7.33. However, for the purposes of testing research hypothesis 5 during this second phase, it was decided that only the core socio-demographic variables that predicted more than one variable would be included in the moderation analysis. Thus, for reasons of parsimony, it was decided to further reduce the socio-demographic variables to a core group which was considered in the moderation analysis. Respectively, the socio-demographic variables of workplace size, workplace sector, race and qualification all predicted only one variable and were thus excluded from the moderation analysis. Although the socio-demographic variable of trade union membership also only predicted one variable (i.e. conflict types), it was considered in the moderation analysis because of its importance in the context of the study. Through this process of elimination, five core socio-demographic variables remained from the nine biographical variables identified during the stepwise regression analysis.

The following dummy coding was used in the hierarchical moderated regression analysis:

- Age: 18–49 years = 0 (low); ≥ 50 years = 1 (high)
- Union membership (belonging to a union): Yes = 0 (low); No = 1 (high)
- Job level (employment position/status): staff/professional (non-managerial) = 0 (low); junior/middle/senior management = 1 (high)
- Number of employees: < 50 to 150 = 0 (low); > 151 = 1 (high)
- Employee engagement programme: Yes = 0 (low); No = 1 (high)

For parsimony reasons, only the model results of the moderated hierarchical regression analysis with significant interaction effects are reported on in this section. Ten models were tested, based on the results of the stepwise regression analysis:

- Model 1: Leadership (independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of conflict types.
- Model 2: Leadership (independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles.
- Model 3: Organisational culture (independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of conflict types.
- Model 4: Organisational culture (independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles.
- Model 5: Employee voice (independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of conflict types.
- Model 6: Employee voice (independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles.
- Model 7: Employee engagement (mediating variable functioning as an independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of conflict types.
- Model 8: Employee engagement (mediating variable functioning as an independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles.
- Model 9: Organisational trust (mediating variable functioning as an independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of conflict types.

Model 10: Organisational trust (mediating variable functioning as an independent variable) and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme (moderating variables) as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles.

ANOVA $F_p < .05$ was used as the cut-off point in order to indicate significant models. Furthermore, the range between LLCI and ULCI should not include zero (i.e. both have either a negative or a positive value) to be significant. The ANOVA (F_p) and R^2 values were used to indicate the variance that was explained by each model. The following range indicated the practical effect size of the adjusted R^2 :

- $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect)
- $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (moderate practical effect)
- $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect)

In addition, the practical effect size of Cohen (1992) (f^2) was considered to indicate significant moderating effects:

- $f^2 \leq .02 \leq .14$ = (small practical effect)
- $f^2 \geq .15 \leq .34$ = (moderate practical effect)
- $f^2 \geq .35$ = (large practical effect)

7.4.4.1 *Moderated regression model 1: Interaction effects between leadership and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of conflict types*

In this model, leadership functioned as the independent variable whilst the construct of conflict types functioned as the dependent variable. The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were used as the moderating variables. The model was not significant.

7.4.4.2 *Moderated regression model 2: Interaction effects between leadership and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles*

In this model, leadership functioned as the independent variable whilst the construct of interpersonal conflict handling styles functioned as the dependent variable. The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee

engagement programme were used as the moderating variables. However, age, union membership, job level and employee engagement programme did not have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between leadership and interpersonal conflict handling styles. On the other hand, number of employees had a significant interaction effect and is discussed next.

Table 7.34 summarises the results of the hierarchical moderated regression analysis that was conducted to establish the main effect and the interaction effects of leadership and number of employees on interpersonal conflict handling styles. The table shows that the regression model was significant ($F_p = 29.44$; $p = .00$). The change in R^2 was also significant (moderate practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .02$; $\Delta F_p = 11.88$; $p = .001$; $f^2 = .16$). The results indicated that leadership and number of employees explained a moderate ($R^2 \geq .14$ [14%]; $f^2 = .16$) practical moderating effect percentage of variance in the interpersonal conflict handling styles construct. In terms of main effects, leadership ($\beta = .54$; $t = 7.70$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range did not include zero: .40 to .68) was a significant positive predictor of interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that leadership may positively influence participants' use of interpersonal conflict handling styles. No significant effect was found between number of employees ($\beta = -.03$; $t = -.56$; $p = .58$; LLCI – ULCI range included zero: -.15 to .08) and interpersonal conflict handling styles, implying that number of employees (i.e. 50–150 employees versus more than 151 employees) does not have a main effect on organisational members' interpersonal conflict handling styles. In terms of the interaction effects in model 2, Table 7.34 shows that number of employees had a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between leadership and interpersonal conflict handling styles ($\beta = -.30$; $t = -3.45$; $p = .001$; LLCI – ULCI range did not include zero: -.46 to -.13). The results suggest that the effect of leadership on interpersonal conflict handling style is conditional on the number of employees in the organisation Table 7.34 is presented below.

Figure 7.11 below shows that those participants working in organisations with 150 and less employees and who scored high on leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours) had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants in organisations employing 151 and more employees.

Table 7.34

Model 2: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Leadership and Number of Employees on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.73	101.40***	.00	4.64	4.82
Leadership (A)	.54	7.70***	.00	.40	.68
Number of employees (B)	-.03	-.56	.58	-.15	.08
Interaction A X B	-.30	-3.45**	.001	-.46	-.13

Model info

$F_p = 29.44^{***}$

$R^2 = .14$

$\Delta F_p = 11.88^{***}$

$\Delta R^2 = .02$

$f^2 = .16$

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Figure 7.11 depicts the interaction effect between leadership and number of employees in predicting interpersonal conflict handling styles.

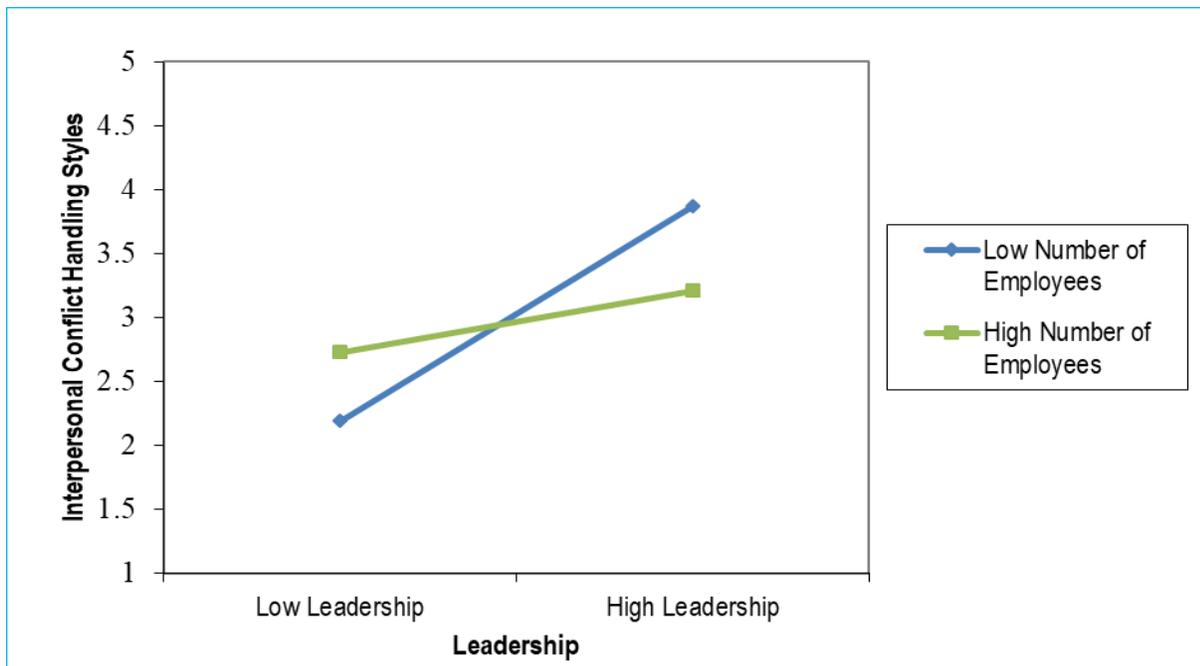


Figure 7.11 Interaction Effect between Number of Employees and Leadership and Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles.

Note: Number of employees: < 50 to 150 = 0 (low); > 151 = 1 (high)

Moderated regression model 3 is discussed next.

7.4.4.3 *Moderated regression model 3: Interaction effects between organisational culture and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of conflict types.*

In regression model 3, the construct of organisational culture was applied as the independent variable whilst the construct of conflict types was the dependent variable. The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Only one moderator variable, namely union membership, had a significant interactive effect between organisational culture and conflict types.

Table 7.35 summarises the results of the hierarchical moderated regression analysis that was conducted to establish the main and interaction effects of organisational culture and union membership on conflict types. The table shows that the moderation model was significant with $F_p = 17.22$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 9% ($R^2 = .09$; small practical effect) of the variance in conflict types. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 4.67$; $p = .03$; $f^2 = .10$). Table 7.35 shows that organisational culture ($\beta = .25$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .16 to .34) and union membership ($\beta = -.14$; $p = .01$; LLCI – ULCI = -.25 to -.03) had significant main effects on conflict types. The interaction effect between organisational culture and union membership was also significant ($\beta = -.12$; $p = .03$. LLCI – ULCI = -.23 to -.01). The results suggest that the effect of organisational culture on conflict types is conditional on union membership.

Table 7.35 sets out the interaction effect as discussed above, followed by a graphical representation of the effect in Figure 7.12.

Table 7.35

Model 3: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Culture and Union Membership on Conflict Types

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.48	102.36***	.00	4.39	4.57
Organisational culture (A)	.25	5.65***	.00	.16	.34
Union membership (B)	-.14	-2.61**	.01	-.25	-.03
Interaction A X B	-.12	-2.16*	.03	-.23	-.01

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI

Model info

$F_p = 17.22^{***}$

$R^2 = .09$

$\Delta F_p = 4.67^*$

$\Delta R^2 = .01$

$f^2 = .10$

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Figure 7.12 depicts the interaction effect.



Figure 7.12 Interaction Effects between Organisational Culture and Union Membership in Predicting Conflict Types

Note: Low belonging to union = yes (1) - union membership. High belonging to union = no (2) union membership

Figure 7.12 and Table 7.35 indicate that when participants belong to a trade union and are high on organisational culture (i.e. participants have positive perceptions about their organisations having a culture of allowing for mistakes and tolerating conflict), they tend to be more positive toward conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict) and group atmosphere and dispute resolution potential than those who do not belong to a union.

Model 4 is discussed next.

7.4.4.4 Moderated regression model 4: Interaction effects between organisational culture and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles

In regression model 4, the construct of organisational culture was applied as the independent variable, whilst the construct of interpersonal conflict handling styles was the dependent variable. The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Two of the moderating variables, namely age and employee engagement programme, showed significant interactive effects and are discussed below.

Table 7.36 summarises the interaction effects of organisational culture and age on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.36

Model 4: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Culture and Age on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.74	134***	.00	4.67	4.81
Organisational culture (A)	.27	7.81***	.00	.20	.34
Age (B)	.00	-.06	.95	-.12	.11
Interaction A X B	-.19	-2.85**	.01	-.32	-.06

Model info

$F_p = 21.03^{***}$

 $R^2 = .10$

 $\Delta F_p = 8.12^{**}$

 $\Delta R^2 = .01$

 $f^2 = .11$

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

The moderation model was significant with $F_p = 21.03$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 10% ($R^2 = .10$; small practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 8.12$; $p = .01$; $f^2 = .11$). Table 7.36 shows that organisational

culture ($\beta = .27$; $p = .03$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .20 to .34) had significant main effects on interpersonal conflict handling styles. No significant main effect was indicated for age ($\beta = .00$; $p = -.06$; LLCI – ULCI = -.12 to .11) on interpersonal conflict handling styles but the interaction effect between organisational culture and age was significant ($\beta = -.19$; $p = -2.85^{**}$; LLCI – ULCI = -.32 to -.06). The results suggest that the effect of organisational culture on perceptions of conflict handling styles is conditional on the age group

Figure 7.13 depicts the interaction effect.



Figure 7.13 Interaction Effects between Organisational Culture and Age in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Age: 18–49 years = 0 (low); ≥ 50 years = 1 (high)

Figure 7.13 shows that those participants who scored high on organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and who are younger than 50 years, are more positive than those participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles (differing styles – integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding and dominating – relating to various levels of concern for self and concern for others).

Table 7.37 summarises the interaction effects of organisational culture and employee engagement programmes on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.37

Model 4: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Culture and Employee Engagement Programme on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.73	128.5***	.00	4.66	4.80
Organisational culture (A)	.24	5.71***	.00	.16	.33
Employee engagement programme (B)	.09	1.37	.17	-.04	.23
Interaction A X B	-.15	-2.18*	.03	-.28	-.01
Model info					
$F_p = 12.32^{***}$					
$R^2 = .08$					
$\Delta F_p = 4.74^*$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .09$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

The moderation model was significant with $F_p = 12.32$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 8% ($R^2 = .08$; small practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 4.74$; $p = .03$; $f^2 = .09$). Table 7.37 shows that organisational culture ($\beta = .24$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .16 to .33) had significant main effects on interpersonal conflict handling styles. No significant main effect was indicated for formal employee engagement programme ($\beta = .09$; $p = .17$; LLCI – ULCI = -.04 to .23) on interpersonal conflict handling styles. The interaction effect between organisational culture and formal employee engagement programme was significant: ($\beta = -.15$; $p = .03$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: = -.28 to -.01). The results suggest that the effect of organisational culture on perceptions of conflict handling styles is conditional on whether a formal employee engagement programme is in place or not.

Figure 7.14 portrays the interaction effect.



Figure 7.14 Interaction Effects between Organisational Culture and Formal Employee Engagement Programme in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Formal employee engagement programme: Yes = 0 (low); No = 1 (high)

Figure 7.14 shows that those participants who scored high on organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and who are exposed to a formal employee programme are more positive toward overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (differing conflict handling styles based on the presence or absence of a concern for self and/or others) than those participants who are not exposed to a formal employee engagement programme.

Model 5, as determined through the moderated regression analysis, is discussed next.

7.4.4.5 Moderated regression model 5: Interaction effects between employee voice and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of conflict types

In regression model 5, the construct of employee voice was applied as the independent variable, whilst the construct of conflict types was the dependent variable. The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Two of the moderating variables, namely union membership and job level, showed significant interactive effects and are discussed below.

Table 7.38 summarises the interaction effects of employee voice and union membership on conflict types.

Table 7.38

Model 5: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Employee Voice and Union Membership on Conflict Types

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.53	100.90***	.000	4.44	4.61
Employee voice (A)	.21	6.11***	.000	.14	.28
Union membership (B)	-.20	-3.57**	.000	-.30	-.09
Interaction A X B	-.13	-2.90**	.004	-.21	-.04
Model info					
$F_p = 18.02^{***}$					
$R^2 = .09$					
$\Delta F_p = 8.43^{***}$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .10$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

The moderation model was significant with $F_p = 18.02$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 9% ($R^2 = .09$; small practical effect) of the variance in conflict types. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 8.43$; $p = .00$; $f^2 = .10$). Table 7.38 shows that employee voice ($\beta = .21$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .14 to .28) and union membership ($\beta = -.20$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: -.30 to -.09) had significant main effects on conflict types. The interaction effect between employee voice and union membership was significant: ($\beta = -.13$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: = -.21 to -.04). The results suggest that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types is conditional on union membership.

Figure 7.15 portrays the interaction effect.

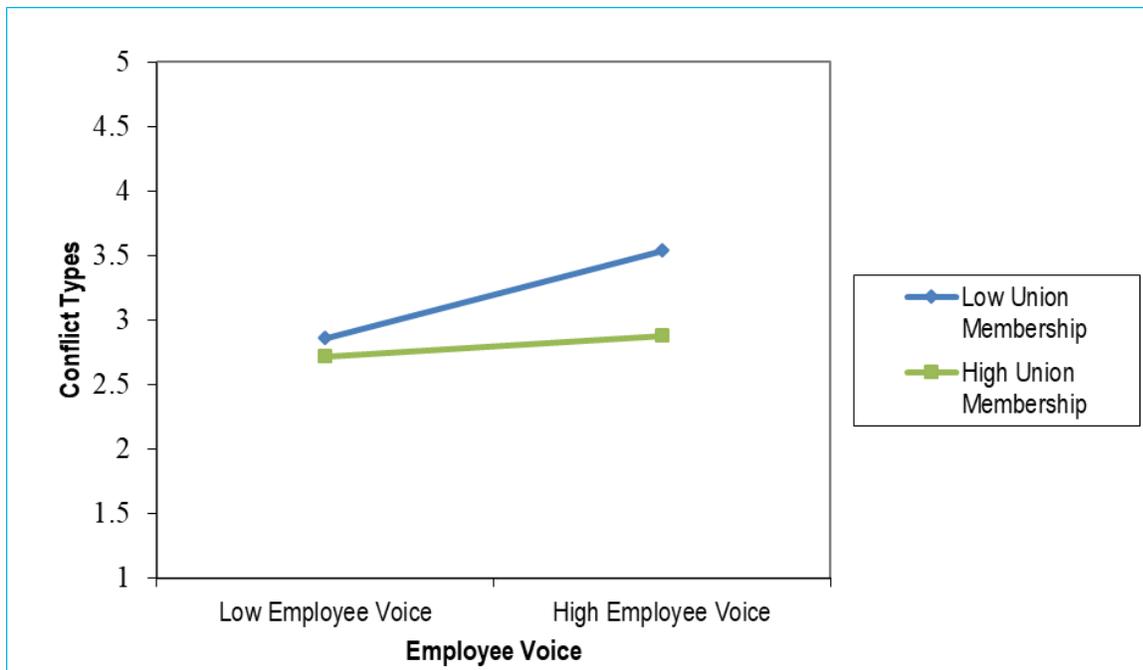


Figure 7.15 Interaction Effects between Employee Voice and Union Membership in Predicting Conflict Types

Note: Low belonging to union = yes (1) union membership. High belonging to union = no (2) union membership.

Figure 7.15 shows that those participants who scored high on employee voice (i.e. participants engaging in speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours and having voice opportunities) and who belong to unions are more positive regarding overall conflict types (including the various types of conflict – task, relational, process and status, and group atmosphere and potential for the resolution of conflict) than those participants who did not belong to a union.

Table 7.39, which summarises the moderation effect of job level (employment position) on employee voice and conflict types, is discussed next. The moderation model was significant with $F_p = 12.37$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 7% ($R^2 = .07$; small practical effect) of the variance in conflict types. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 6.72$; $p = .01$; $f^2 = .08$). Table 7.39 shows that employee voice ($\beta = .13$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .09 to .18) had a significant main effect on conflict types, while job level ($\beta = .00$; $p = .98$; LLCI – ULCI: -.15 to .16) did not. The interaction effect between employee voice and job level was significant: ($\beta = -.16$; $p = .01$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: = -.27 to -.04). The results suggest that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types is conditional on job level. Table 7.39 and Figure 7.16 portray the interaction effects.

Table 7.39

Model 5: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Employee Voice and Job Level on Conflict Types

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.39	161.54***	.00	4.34	4.44
Employee voice (A)	.13	6.08***	.00	.09	.18
Job level (B)	.00	.03	.98	-.15	.16
Interaction A X B	-.16	-2.59**	.01	-.27	-.04

Model info

$F_p = 12.37^{***}$

$R^2 = .07$

$\Delta F_p = 6.72^{**}$

$\Delta R^2 = .01$

$f^2 = .08$

Note: N = 536. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Figure 7.16 shows the interaction effect of employee voice and job level on conflict types.

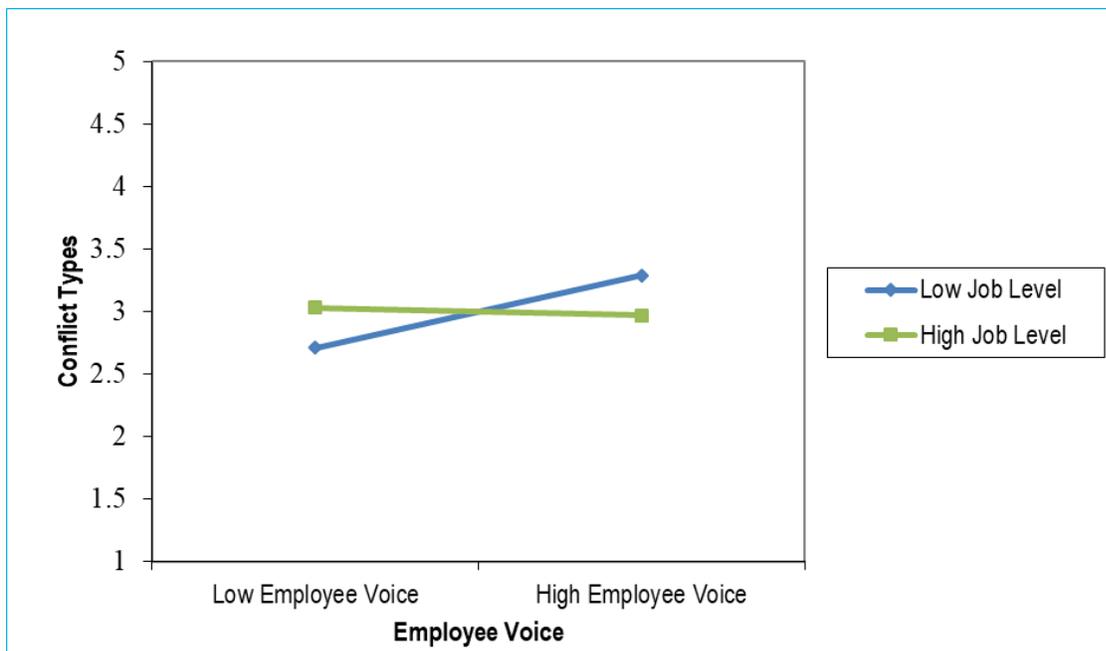


Figure 7.16 Interaction Effects between Employee Voice and Job Level in Predicting Conflict Types

Notes: Staff/professional (non-managerial) = 0 (low); junior/middle/senior management = 1 (high)

Figure 7.16 shows that participants working in organisations at staff or professional (low, non-managerial) level and who scored high on employee voice (holding positive perceptions about speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours and having voice opportunities) are also more positive toward overall conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants on management level.

Moderated regression model 6 is discussed next.

7.4.4.6 Moderated regression model 6: Interaction effects between employee voice and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles

In regression model 6, the construct of employee voice was applied as the independent variable whilst the construct of interpersonal conflict handling styles was the dependent variable. The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Only one of the moderating variables, namely age, showed a significant interactive effect and is discussed below.

Table 7.40 summarises the interaction effects of employee voice and age on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.40

Model 6: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Employee Voice and Age on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.75	136.98***	.00	4.68	4.82
Employee voice (A)	.24	8.81***	.00	.18	.29
Age (B)	-.03	-.57	.57	-.14	.08
Interaction A X B	-.10	-2.08*	.04	-.19	-.01
Model info					
$F_p = 30.31^{***}$					
$R^2 = .14$					
$\Delta F_p = 4.34^*$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .16$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.40 shows that the moderation model was significant with $F_p = 30.31$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 14% ($R^2 = .14$; moderate practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (moderate practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 4.34$; $p = .04$; $f^2 = .16$). Table 7.40 shows that employee voice ($\beta = .24$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .18 to .29) had a significant main effect on interpersonal conflict handling styles, while age ($\beta = -.03$; $p = .57$; LLCI – ULCI: -.14 to .08) did not. The interaction effect between employee voice and age was significant ($\beta = -.10$; $p = .04$; LLCI – ULCI: -.19 to -.01). The results suggest that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles is conditional on age. Figure 7.17 portrays the interaction effects.

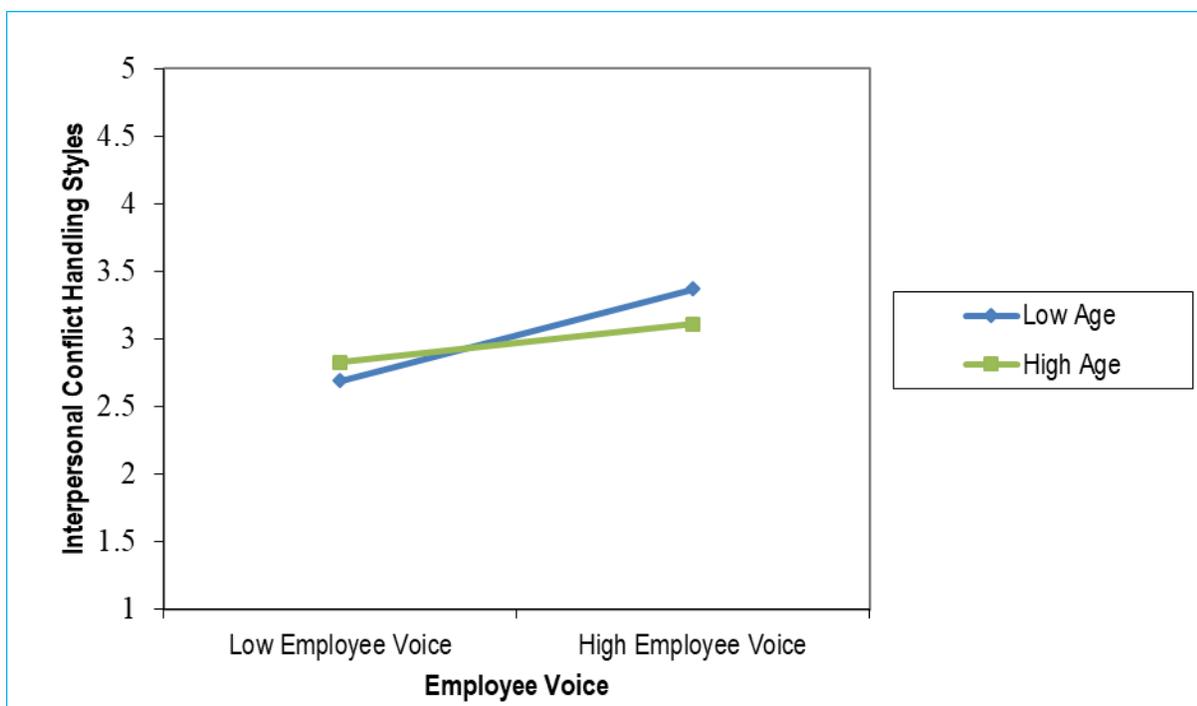


Figure 7.17 Interaction Effects between Employee Voice and Age in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Age: 18–49 years = 0 (low); ≥ 50 years = 1 (high)

Figure 7.17 shows that those participants who scored high on employee voice (positive perceptions of speaking up and out, and having voice opportunities) and who are 49 years and younger, are more positive regarding the various interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrative, compromising, avoiding, dominating and obliging styles) than those participants older than 50.

Model 7 is deliberated on next.

7.4.4.7 Moderated regression model 7: Interaction effects between employee engagement and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of conflict types

In regression model 7, the construct of employee engagement was applied as the independent variable, the construct of conflict types was the dependent variable and the socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Only one of the moderating variables, namely union membership, showed a significant interactive effect. This is discussed below.

Table 7.41 encapsulates the interaction effects of employee engagement and union membership on conflict types.

Table 7.41

Model 7: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Employee Engagement and Union Membership on Conflict Types

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.48	101.40***	.00	4.39	4.57
Employee engagement (A)	.19	5.27***	.00	.12	.26
Union membership (B)	-.14	-2.58*	.01	-.25	-.03
Interaction A X B	-.11	-2.42*	.02	-.20	-.02
Model info					
$F_p = 13.65^{***}$					
$R^2 = .07$					
$\Delta F_p = 5.86^*$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .08$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.41 indicates that the moderation model was significant with $F_p = 13.65$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 7% ($R^2 = .07$; small practical effect) of the variance in conflict types. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 5.86$; $p = .02$; $f^2 = .08$). Table 7.41 shows that employee engagement ($\beta = .19$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .12 to .26) and union membership ($\beta = -.14$; $p = .02$; LLCI – ULCI: -.25 to -.03) had a significant main effect on conflict types. The

interaction effect between employee engagement and union membership was significant: ($\beta = -.11$; $p = .02$; LLCI – ULCI: $-.20$ to $-.02$). The results suggest that the effect of employee engagement on perceptions of conflict types is conditional on union membership. Figure 7.18 portrays the interaction effects.

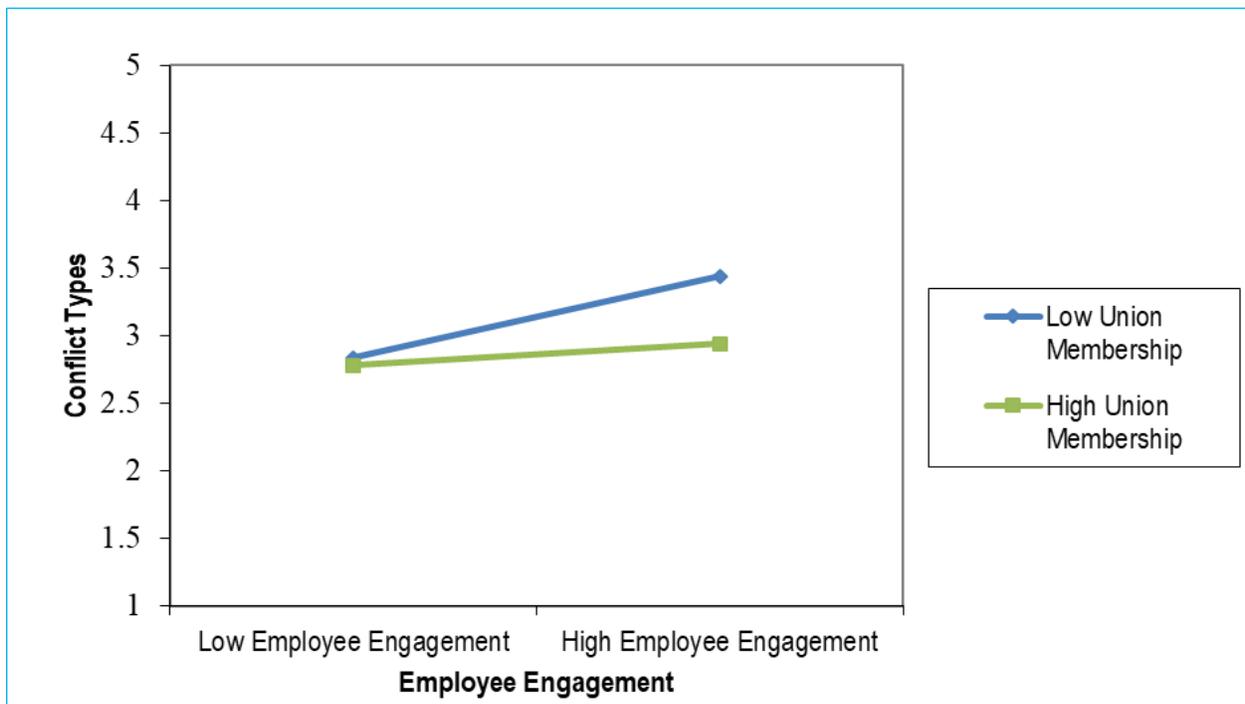


Figure 7.18 Interaction Effects between Employee Engagement and Union Membership in Predicting Conflict Types

Note: Low belonging to union = yes (1) union membership. High belonging to union = no (2) union membership.

Figure 7.18 shows that those participants who scored high on employee engagement (positive perceptions of job engagement and organisational engagement) and who belonged to a union are more positive towards overall conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict types, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants who did not belong to a union.

Moderated regression model 8 is discussed next.

7.4.4.8 *Moderated regression model 8: Interaction effects between employee engagement and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles*

In regression model 8, the construct of employee engagement served as the independent variable, the construct of interpersonal conflict handling styles was the dependent variable and the socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the corresponding moderating variables. Only one of the moderating variables, namely age, showed a significant interactive effect and is discussed below.

Table 7.42 summarises the interaction effects of employee engagement and age on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.42

Model 8: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Employee Engagement and Age on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.74	132.63***	.00	4.67	4.81
Employee engagement (A)	.20	7.10***	.00	.14	.25
Age (B)	-.01	-.19	.85	-.13	.11
Interaction A X B	-.12	-2.33*	.02	-.23	-.02

Model info

$F_p = 17.37^{***}$

$R^2 = .09$

$\Delta F_p = 5.41^*$

$\Delta R^2 = .01$

$f^2 = .10$

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.42 indicates that the moderation model was significant with $F_p = 17.35$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 9% ($R^2 = .09$; small practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 5.41$; $p = .02$; $f^2 = .10$). Table 7.42 shows that

employee engagement ($\beta = .20$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: 4.67 to 4.81) had a significant main effect on interpersonal conflict handling styles. No significant effect was found for age ($\beta = -.01$; $p = .85$; LLCI – ULCI: $-.13$ to $.11$). The interaction effect between employee engagement and age was also significant: ($\beta = -.12$; $p = .02$; LLCI – ULCI: $-.23$ to $-.02$). The results suggest that the effect of employee engagement on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles is conditional on age. Figure 7.19 portrays the interaction effects.

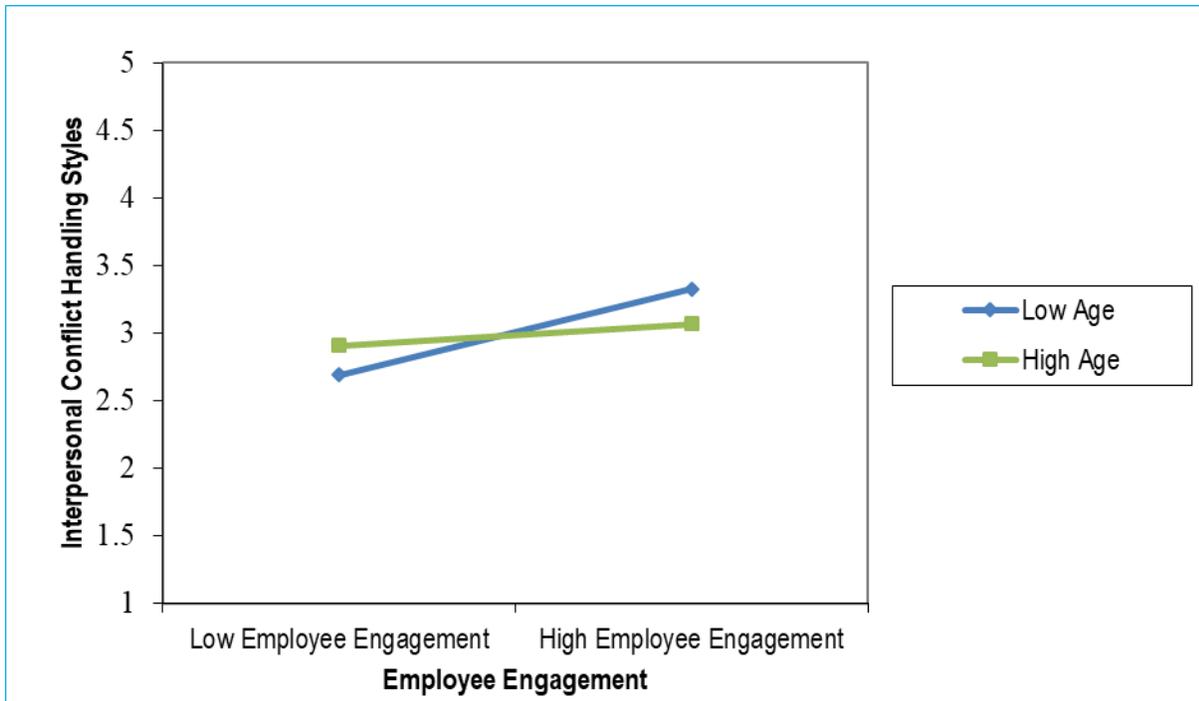


Figure 7.19 Interaction Effects between Employee Engagement and Age in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Age: 18–49 years = 0 (low); ≥ 50 years = 1 (high)

Figure 7.19 shows that those participants who scored high on employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and who are in the age group 18–49 years (low age) had significantly higher positive perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles (various styles based on a concern for self and/or others) than those participants who are 50 years and older (high age).

A discussion of moderated regression model 9 follows next.

7.4.4.9 *Moderated regression model 9: Interaction effects between organisational trust and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of conflict types*

In regression model 9, the construct of organisational trust was applied as the independent variable, the construct of conflict types was the dependent variable and the socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Only one of the moderating variables, namely union membership, showed a significant interactive effect and is discussed below.

Table 7.43 summarises the interaction effects of organisational trust and union membership on conflict types.

Table 7.43

Model 9: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Trust and Union Membership on Conflict Types

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.56	100.26***	.00	4.47	4.65
Organisational trust (A)	.22	6.85***	.00	.15	.28
Union membership (B)	-.23	-4.17***	.00	-.34	-.12
Interaction A X B	-.14	-3.58**	.00	-.22	-.06
Model info					
$F_p = 21.15^{***}$					
$R^2 = .10$					
$\Delta F_p = 12.84^{***}$					
$\Delta R^2 = .02$					
$f^2 = .11$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.43 summarises moderation model 9, indicating that it was significant with $F_p = 21.15$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 10% ($R^2 = .10$; small practical effect) of the variance in conflict type. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .02$; $\Delta F_p = 12.84$; $p = .00$; $f^2 = .11$). Table 7.43 shows that organisational trust ($\beta = .22$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .15 to .28) had a significant main effect on conflict type and on union membership ($\beta = -.23$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI: -.34 to -.12). The interaction effect between organisational trust and union membership was

significant ($\beta = -.14$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI: $-.22$ to $-.06$). The results suggest that the effect of organisational trust on conflict type is conditional on union membership.

Figure 7.20 below depicts these interaction effects. Figure 7.20 shows that those participants who scored high on organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about the dependability, commitment and integrity of their organisations) and who belong to a union had significantly more positive perceptions of conflict types (task, relational, process, status conflict, and group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants who did not belong to a union.



Figure 7.20 Interaction Effects between Organisational Trust and Union Membership in Predicting Conflict Types

Note: Low belonging to union = yes (1) - union membership. High belonging to union = no (2) union membership.

Moderated regression model 10 is discussed next.

7.4.4.10 Moderated regression model 10: Interaction effects between organisational trust and age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme as significant predictors of interpersonal conflict handling styles

In regression model 10, the construct of organisational trust was applied as the independent variable whilst the construct of interpersonal conflict handling styles was the dependent variable.

The socio-demographic variables of age, union membership, job level, number of employees and employee engagement programme were the respective moderating variables. Three of the moderating variables, namely age, union membership and number of employees, showed a significant interactive effect and are discussed below.

Table 7.44 summarises the interaction effects of organisational trust and age on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.44

Model 10: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Trust and Age on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.73	134.45***	.00	4.66	4.80
Organisational trust (A)	.19	7.62***	.00	.14	.23
Age (B)	.01	.21	.83	-.10	.13
Interaction A X B	-.09	-2.10*	.04	-.17	-.01
Model info					
$F_p = 22.35^{***}$					
$R^2 = .11$					
$\Delta F_p = 4.40^*$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .12$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.44 summarises moderation model 10, indicating that it was significant with $F_p = 22.35$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 11% ($R^2 = .11$; small practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 4.40$; $p = .04$; $f^2 = .12$). Table 7.44 shows that organisational trust ($\beta = .19$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: 4.66 to 4.80) had a significant main effect on interpersonal conflict handling styles. Age ($\beta = .01$; $p = .83$; LLCI – ULCI: -.10 to .13) did not have a significant main effect on interpersonal conflict handling styles. The interaction effect between organisational trust and age was significant: ($\beta = -.09$; $p = -2.10^*$; LLCI – ULCI: -.17 to -.01). The results suggest that the effect of organisational trust on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles is conditional on age.

Figure 7.21 below depicts the interaction effects between organisational trust and age. Figure 7.21 shows that those participants who scored high on organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who were within the age group 18 to 49 years, are significantly more positive about the various interpersonal conflict handling styles (based on a concern for self and/or others) than those participants in the age group 50 years and older.



Figure 7.21 Interaction Effects between Organisational Trust and Age in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Age: 18–49 years = 0 (low); ≥ 50 years = 1 (high)

Table 7.45 indicates the interaction effects of organisational trust and union membership on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.45

Model 10: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Trust and Union Membership on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.76	95.17***	.00	4.67	4.86
Organisational trust (A)	.24	6.94***	.00	.17	.31
Union membership (B)	-.03	-.43	.67	-.15	.10
Interaction A X B	-.13	-3.00**	.00	-.21	-.04
Model info					
$Fp = 24.04^{***}$					
$R^2 = .12$					
$\Delta Fp = 8.98^{***}$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .14$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.45 depicts moderation model 10, indicating that it was significant with $Fp = 24.04$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 12% ($R^2 = .12$; small practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (moderate practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta Fp = 8.98$; $p = .00$; $f^2 = .14$). Table 7.45 shows that organisational trust ($\beta = .24$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: .17 to .31) had a significant main effect on interpersonal conflict handling styles, while union membership ($\beta = -.03$; $p = .67$; LLCI – ULCI: -.15 to .10) did not. The interaction effect between organisational trust and union membership was significant: ($\beta = -.13$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI: -.21 to -.04). The results suggest that the effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles is conditional on union membership. The interaction effect is depicted in Figure 7.22 below.



Figure 7.22 Interaction Effects between Organisational Trust and Union Membership in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Low belonging to union = yes (1) union membership. High belonging to union = no (2) union membership.

Figure 7.22 demonstrates that those participants who scored high on organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who belong to unions are significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating compromising, obliging, dominating, avoiding) than those participants who did not belong to a union.

Table 7.46 sums up the interaction effects of organisational trust and number of employees on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Table 7.46

Model 10: Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Interaction Effects of Organisational Trust and Number of Employees on Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Variables	Estimate (β)	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
				LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.71	95.91***	.00	4.62	4.81
Organisational trust (A)	.22	6.01***	.00	.15	.30
Number of employees (B)	-.003	-.04	1.01	-.12	.12
Interaction A X B	-.10	-2.24*	.03	-.19	-.01
Model info					
$F_p = 22.64^{***}$					
$R^2 = .11$					
$\Delta F_p = 5.01^*$					
$\Delta R^2 = .01$					
$f^2 = .12$					

Note: N = 556. LLCI: lower level confidence interval. ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 7.46 depicts moderation model 10, indicating that it was significant with $F_p = 22.64$ ($p = .00$). The model showed that the independent variables accounted for 11% ($R^2 = .11$; small practical effect) of the variance in interpersonal conflict handling styles. The change in R^2 was also significant (small practical interaction effect: $\Delta R^2 = .01$; $\Delta F_p = 5.01$; $p = .03$; $f^2 = .12$). Table 7.46 shows that organisational trust ($\beta = .22$; $p = .00$; LLCI – ULCI range does not include zero: 4.62 to 4.81) had a significant main effect on interpersonal conflict handling styles while number of employees ($\beta = .00$; $p = 1.01$; LLCI – ULCI: -.12 to .12) did not. The interaction effect between organisational trust and number of employees was significant: ($\beta = -.10$; $p = -2.24^*$; LLCI – ULCI: -.19 to -.01). The results suggest that the effect of organisational trust on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles is conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. The interaction effect is depicted in Figure 7.23 below.

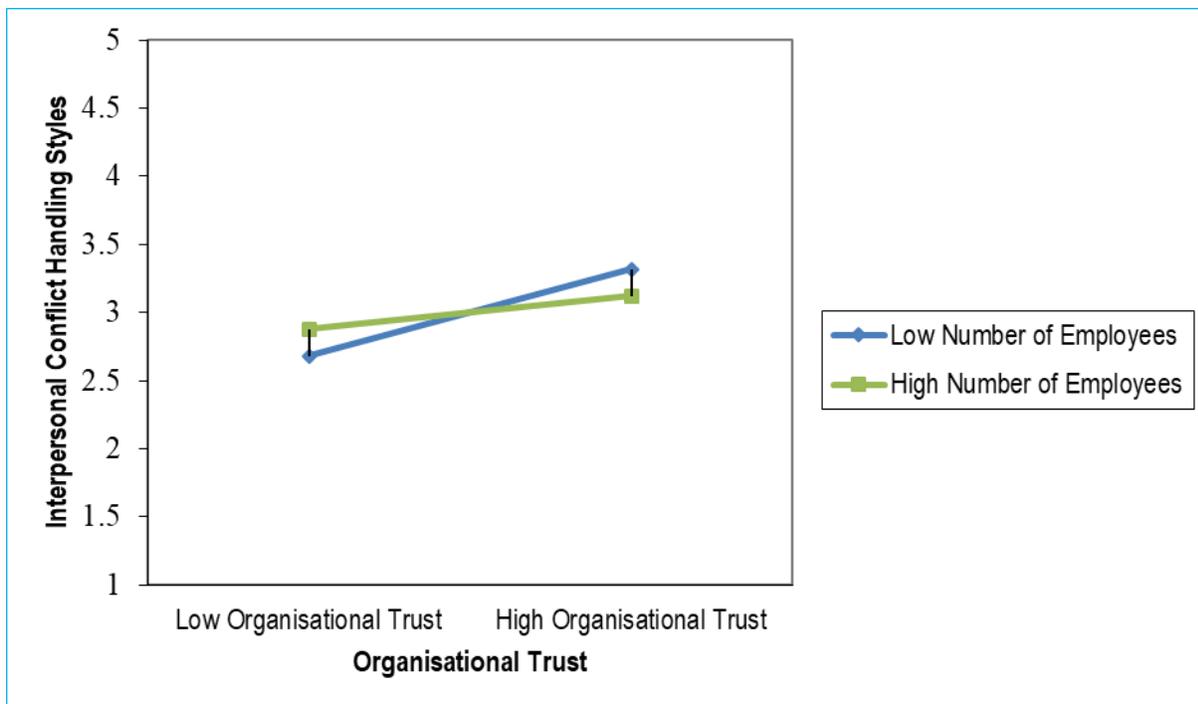


Figure 7.23 Interaction Effects between Organisational Trust and Number of Employees in Predicting Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles

Note: Number of employees: < 50 to 150 = 0 (low); > 151 = 1 (high)

Figure 7.23 shows that participants who scored high on organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who worked in organisations with smaller numbers of employees (less than 150 employees) are more positive about the various interpersonal conflict handling styles (based on a concern for self and/or others) than those participants from organisations with higher employee numbers (151 and more employees).

7.4.4.11 *Preliminary analysis 5: Towards constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management*

In summary, the empirical results attained from the moderated regression analysis provided partial supportive evidence for the acceptance of research hypothesis H5:

Research hypothesis 5: H5: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Because of the large number of socio-demographic variables, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was implemented as an initial step in identifying the most significant predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The socio-demographic variables identified through the stepwise regression analysis were outlined in section 7.4.3.4 and summarised in Table 7.33. They include the socio-demographic variables of number of employees, formal employee engagement programme, job level, workplace size, race, age, qualification, workplace sector and trade union membership.

This step was followed by a hierarchical moderated regression analysis to determine whether the significant socio-demographic predictor variables functioned as significant moderators in explaining the variance in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). For reasons of parsimony, only the core socio-demographic variables that predicted more than one variable during the stepwise multiple regression analysis were included in the moderation analysis to test research hypothesis 5. Through a process of elimination, five core socio-demographic variables remained from the nine biographical variables identified during the stepwise regression analysis, namely, age, number of employees, job level, formal employee engagement programme and trade union membership.

The hierarchical moderated regression analysis indicated that age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programmes had significant moderating effects that explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The following main predictive effects were found:

- The hierarchical moderated regression analysis indicated that main positive predictive effects on conflict types were evident between organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust. However, counterintuitive to expectations, no main predictive effect was found between leadership and conflict types – further research on this finding should be conducted to facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between leadership and conflict types.
- The hierarchical moderated regression analysis indicated that main positive predictive effects on interpersonal conflict handling styles were evident between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust (all the independent and mediating variables).
- According to the hierarchical moderated regression analysis, only one of the socio-demographic variables, namely union membership, had a significant (negative) main conditional effect on conflict types.
- No significant (negative) main conditional effects were evident between the respective socio-demographic variables and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

The following interaction effects were evident:

(a) *Age*

The results showed that the effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles were conditional on age. This finding indicates that those participants who scored high on (1) organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict); (2) employee voice (positive perceptions of speaking up and out, and having voice opportunities); (3) employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement); and (4) organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity); and who are younger than 50 years, are more positive than those participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles (differing styles – integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding and dominating – relating to various levels of concern for self and concern for others). Counterintuitive to expectations, the relationship between leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours) and interpersonal conflict handling styles was not conditional on age.

Age had no interactive effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) on conflict types.

(b) Union membership

Union membership showed important moderating effects. The effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on perception of conflict types were all conditional on union membership. Participants who scored high on (1) organisational culture (i.e. participants with positive perceptions about their organisations having a culture of allowing for mistakes and tolerating conflict); (2) employee voice (i.e. participants engaging in speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities); (3) employee engagement (positive perceptions of job engagement and organisational engagement); and (4) organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about the dependability, commitment and integrity of their organisations), and who belonged to a trade union, tend to be more positive toward perceptions of conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and dispute resolution potential) than those who do not belong to a union. However, it was interesting to note that the relationship between leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours) and conflict types was not conditional on union membership.

Furthermore, the results showed that the effects of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles were also conditional on union membership. This implies that those participants who scored high on organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who belong to unions are significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating compromising, obliging, dominating, avoiding) than those participants who did not belong to a union. Apart from the interaction effect of union membership on interpersonal conflict handling styles, no other interactive effect was present on any of the other independent variables and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

(c) Job level

Job level had only one moderating effect, namely, that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on the job level of participants. This implies that participants working in organisations at staff or professional level (i.e. on a non-managerial level) and who scored high on employee voice (holding positive perceptions about speaking up and speaking out

voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities) are more positive toward overall conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants on a managerial (junior, middle, senior) level.

Job level had no interaction effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

(d) Number of employees

The number of employees in an organisation showed important interaction (moderating) effects. The effect of leadership and organisational trust respectively on interpersonal conflict handling styles were conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Participants who worked in organisations with 150 and less employees (i.e. smaller organisations in terms of employee numbers) had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants in organisations employing 150 and more staff members. This implies that when participants scored high on (1) leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours); and (2) organisational trust (i.e. holding positive perceptions about the dependability, commitment and integrity of their organisations); and worked in organisations with 150 and less employees, they had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were employed in organisations with 150 and more employees. However, no interaction effect was noted for employee voice, organisational culture or employee engagement on interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Number of employees had no interactive effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and conflict types.

(e) Formal employee engagement programme

The results showed that the effect of organisational culture on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the existence of a formal employee engagement programme in organisations. This implies that those participants who scored high on organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and who are exposed to a formal employee programme are more positive toward overall interpersonal conflict handling

styles (differing conflict handling styles based on the presence or absence of a concern for self and/or others) than those participants who are not exposed to a formal employee engagement programme. Apart from organisational culture, a formal employee engagement programme had no interaction effects on the relationships between the other independent variables (leadership, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

A formal employee engagement programme also had no interaction effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and conflict types.

The results of the hierarchical moderated regression analysis as discussed above are illustrated in Figure 7.24 and summarised in Table 7.47 below. Figure 7.24 illustrates the interactive effect of the moderating socio-demographic variables on the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Table 7.47 encapsulates the main results of the 10 models reported on in the hierarchical moderated regression analysis as explained above. The results obtained from the stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis assisted in the process of constructing a conflict management profile.

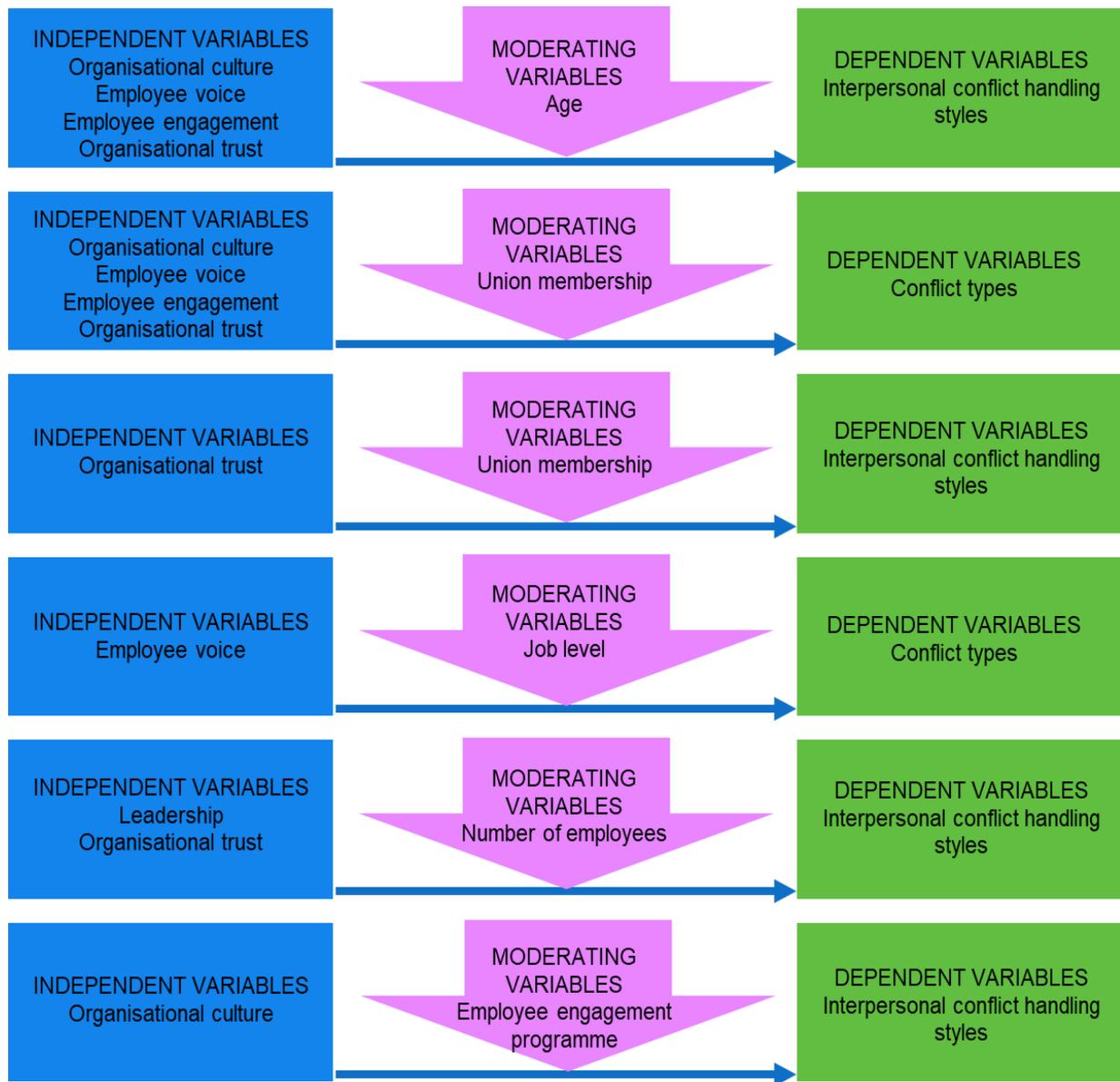


Figure 7.24 Summary of the Interaction Effects of a Selection of the Socio-demographic Variables on Conflict Management (Conflict Types and Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles). *Note: Employee engagement programme.

Table 7.47

Summary of the Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Examining the Moderating and Interactive Effects of a Selection of Variables on Conflict Management (Conflict Types and Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles)

Model	Model variables as indicated through stepwise regression analysis	Conditional socio-demographic variables yielding significant moderating effects	Significant moderating interaction effect
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV: Leadership • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Conflict types 	-	-
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV: Leadership • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Interpersonal conflict handling styles 	Number of employees	The effect of leadership on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on number of employees
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV: Organisational culture • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Conflict types 	Union membership	The effect of organisational culture on conflict types was conditional on union membership
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV: Organisational culture • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Interpersonal conflict handling styles 	Age	The effect of organisational culture on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age
		Employee engagement programme	The effect of organisational culture on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on a formal employee engagement programme
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV: Employee voice • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Conflict types 	Union membership	The effect of employee voice on conflict types was conditional on union membership
		Number of employees	The effect of employee voice on conflict types was conditional on number on employees
		Job level	The effect of employee voice on conflict types was conditional on job level

Model	Model variables as indicated through stepwise regression analysis	Conditional socio-demographic variables yielding significant moderating effects	Significant moderating interaction effect
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV: Employee voice • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Interpersonal conflict handling styles 	Age	The effect of employee voice on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MV: Employee engagement • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Conflict types 	Union membership	The effect of employee engagement on conflict types was conditional on union membership
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MV: Employee engagement • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Interpersonal conflict handling styles 	Age	The effect of employee engagement on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MV: Organisational trust • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Conflict types 	Union membership	The effect of organisational trust on conflict types was conditional on union membership
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MV: Organisational trust • ModV: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees, employee engagement programme • DV: Interpersonal conflict handling styles 	Age	The effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age
		Union membership	The effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on union membership
		Number of employees	The effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on number of employees

Note: IV = independent variable; MV = mediating variable; ModV = moderating variables; DV = dependent variable

7.4.5 Stage 5: Tests for significant mean differences

Stage 5 of the statistical analysis, namely, the test for significant mean differences, assisted in testing research hypothesis H6:

Research hypothesis 6: Employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

When considering the tests of normality, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Cramer-von Mises and Anderson-Darling tests were significant and indicated the non-normality of the data distribution (the p -value was greater than the chosen alpha level of $\leq .05$). Based on these tests for normality, the ANOVA procedure and post-hoc tests for detecting significant mean differences (for variables that had multiple different groups) were conducted to test research hypothesis 6. With sufficiently large sample sizes, the violation of the normality assumption should not cause major problems, implying that researchers can use parametric procedures even when the data is not normally distributed. Parametric tests usually have more statistical power than their non-parametric equivalents. In other words, one is more likely to detect significant differences when they truly exist.

The following socio-demographic variables were tested using SAS version 9.4 (SAS, 2012): race, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, (employment) sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme. A t-test and Tukey's studentised range test were used to test for significant mean differences between the genders and union membership, as these variables consisted of only two groups.

Because of the large number of socio-demographic variables, this section will only report on the significant mean differences between the socio-demographic variables that were identified as significant moderators through the stepwise multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis. This approach helped to identify the core variables that should

be considered in a meaningful manner in this research in the construction of the framework. The variables include age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programme. Furthermore, for parsimony reasons, this section will only report on the variances between variables that were significant; a significance level of $p \leq .05$ indicated that the tests of mean differences were significant and valid.

Cohen's d test was used to assess practical effect size in terms of the significant mean differences between the respective groups for each of the variables. Cohen's d is conceptualised as the difference between two means divided by a standard deviation for the data (Cohen et al., 2013). The descriptors for the practical effect sizes of d are provided below (Cohen et al., 2013):

- $d \geq .01$ (very small practical effect)
- $d \geq .20$ (small practical effect)
- $d \geq .50$ (moderate practical effect)
- $d \geq .80$ (large practical effect)
- $d \geq 1.20$ (very large practical effect)

7.4.5.1 Tests for significant mean differences: Age

The significant results of the ANOVAs and post-hoc tests examining the mean differences between the socio-demographic variable of age in the organisation and other variables of relevance are reported below and summarised in Table 7.48. For parsimony reasons, only the significant results are reported.

(a) Employee voice

Table 7.48 encapsulates the significant mean differences between employee voice and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age groups 18–34 years and 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.69$; $SD = 1.33$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.29$; $SD = 1.17$)
- Age groups 18–34 years and 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .31$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.69$; $SD = 1.33$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 5.09$; $SD = 1.23$).

The two subconstructs of employee voice, namely speaking out and speaking up, also showed differences of a small practical effect:

i) Speaking out

Table 7.48 summarises the significant mean differences between speaking out and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .40$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 5.27$; $SD = 1.18$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.71$; $SD = .99$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .28$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 5.27$; $SD = 1.18$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 5.58$; $SD = 1.10$).

ii) Speaking up

Table 7.48 captures the significant mean differences between speaking up and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .33$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.46$; $SD = 1.51$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 4.94$; $SD = 1.38$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .33$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.46$; $SD = 1.51$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 4.93$; $SD = 1.32$).

(b) *Employee Engagement*

Table 7.48 condenses the significant mean differences between employee engagement and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.69$; $SD = 1.39$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.30$; $SD = 1.03$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .35$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.69$; $SD = 1.39$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 5.13$; $SD = 1.13$).

The two subconstructs of employee engagement, namely job engagement and organisational engagement, also showed differences of a small practical effect:

i) Job engagement

Table 7.48 encapsulates the significant mean differences between job engagement and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .47$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 5.00$; $SD = 1.31$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.53$; $SD = .92$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .40$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 5.00$; $SD = 1.31$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 5.48$; $SD = 1.06$).

ii) Organisational engagement

Table 7.48 summarises the significant mean differences between organisational engagement and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .43$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.31$; $SD = 1.74$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.01$; $SD = 1.51$).

(c) Conflict types

Table 7.48 encapsulates the significant mean differences between conflict types and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 50 years and older and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .27$; $p = .03$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 4.30$; $SD = .62$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 4.47$; $SD = .62$).

The subconstructs of conflict types, namely relational conflict, status conflict, process conflict, and conflict resolution potential also showed differences of a small practical effect:

i) Relational conflict

Table 7.48 captures the significant mean differences between relational conflict and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 50 years and older and age group 18–34 years (small practical effect; $d = .36$; $p = .00$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 3.66$; $SD = 1.59$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.25$; $SD = 1.69$).

ii) Status conflict

Table 7.48 sums up the significant mean differences between status conflict and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 50 years and older and age group 18–34 years (small practical effect; $d = .33$; $p = .01$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 3.61$; $SD = 1.61$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.15$; $SD = 1.65$).

iii) Process conflict

Table 7.48 summarises the significant mean differences between process conflict and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 50 years and older and age group 18–34 years (small practical effect; $d = .39$; $p = .00$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 3.22$; $SD = 1.56$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 3.85$; $SD = 1.68$).

iv) Conflict Resolution Potential

Table 7.48 encapsulates the significant mean differences between conflict resolution potential and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.42$; $SD = 1.40$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.02$; $SD = 1.30$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .43$; $p = <.0001$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.42$; $SD = 1.40$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 4.99$; $SD = 1.24$).

(d) *Interpersonal conflict handling styles*

The following interpersonal conflict handling styles showed significant mean differences of a small practical effect:

i) Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1

Table 7.48 sets out the significant mean differences between integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .36$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.97$; $SD = 1.20$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.36$; $SD = .98$).

ii) Integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2

Table 7.48 gives the significant mean differences between integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .43$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.24$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.56$; $SD = .82$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .24$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.24$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 5.40$; $SD = 1.16$).

iii) Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1

Table 7.48 shows the significant mean differences between dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .35$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.02$; $SD = 1.29$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 4.44$; $SD = 1.06$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .34$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.02$; $SD = 1.29$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 4.43$; $SD = 1.08$).

iv) Dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2

Table 7.48 encapsulates the significant mean differences between dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .38$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.31$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 4.37$; $SD = 1.31$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .38$; $p = .00$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.31$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 4.34$; $SD = 1.20$).

v) Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 1

Table 7.48 summarises the significant mean differences between avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 50 years and older and age group 18–34 years (small practical effect; $d = .32$; $p = .01$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 4.06$; $SD = 1.23$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.45$; $SD = 1.23$).

vi) Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 2

Table 7.48 summarises the significant mean differences between avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 35–49 years and age group 18–34 years (small practical effect; $d = .25$; $p = .05$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 4.03$; $SD = 1.45$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.41$; $SD = 1.53$).

vii) Compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2

Table 7.48 encapsulates the significant mean differences between compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2 and age groups in organisations ((18–34 years), (35–49 years), (50 years and older)):

- Age group 18–34 years and age group 50 years and older (small practical effect; $d = .27$; $p = .02$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.23$; age group 50 years and older: $M = 5.25$; $SD = .97$)
- Age group 18–34 years and age group 35–49 years (small practical effect; $d = .25$; $p = .02$; age group 18–34 years: $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.23$; age group 35–49 years: $M = 5.24$; $SD = 1.08$).

As indicated in Table 7.48, the above results showed a number of significant mean differences between the generational age groups; nonetheless, only a small practical effect was observed in all instances. Typically, the mean differences were evident between the 18–34 years group, and the 35–49 years group and the 50 years and older group respectively. More specifically, the following significant differences were noted:

- The 18–34 age group scored significantly lower than the 35–49 age group on employee voice (speaking up and speaking out), employee engagement (also job engagement), conflict resolution potential and dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2.
- Additionally, the 18–34 age group scored significantly lower than the 50 years and older age group did on employee voice (also speaking up and speaking out), employee engagement (also job engagement and organisational engagement), conflict resolution potential and, lastly, a number of interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2; and compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2).
- It is interesting to note that the 35–49 age group scored lower on an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 than the 18–34 age group.
- The 50 years and older age group scored lower than the 18–34 age group on process, relational and status conflict, and on an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1.
- Also, the 50 years and older age group scored lower than the 35–49 age group on overall conflict types.

Table 7.48 below summarises the results on the various age groups.

Table 7.48

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Age

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)						
									Min	Max							
Employee Voice	18–34 years	149	4.69	1.33	31.55	10.32	<.0001	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.60***	-.91	-.29	.48					
	35–49 years	199	5.09	1.23									(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.40***	-.72	-.09	.31
	50 plus	208	5.29	1.17													
Speaking out	18–34 years	149	5.27	1.18	17.04	7.21	.00	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.44***	-.71	-.16	.40					
	35–49 years	199	5.58	1.10									(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.32***	-.59	-.04	.28
	50 plus	208	5.71	.99													
Speaking up	18–34 years	135	4.46	1.51	21.13	5.41	.00	(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.48***	-.85	-.10	.33					
	35–49 years	170	4.94	1.38									(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.46***	-.85	-.08	.33
	50 plus	157	4.93	1.32													
Employee Engagement	18–34 years	149	4.69	1.39	32.75	11.97	<.0001	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.61***	-.90	-.31	.49					
	35–49 years	199	5.13	1.13									(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.44***	-.74	-.14	.35
	50 plus	208	5.30	1.03													
Job engagement	18–34 years	149	5.00	1.31	27.84	11.78	<.0001	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.53***	-.80	-.25	.47					
	35–49 years	199	5.48	1.06									(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.47***	-.75	-.20	.40
	50 plus	208	5.53	.92													
Organisational engagement	18–34 years	149	4.31	1.74	42.65	8.80	.00	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.70***	-1.09	-.31	.43					
	35–49 years	199	4.70	1.46													
	50 plus	208	5.01	1.51													

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)						
									Min	Max							
Conflict types	18–34 years	149	4.43	.68	2.98	3.65	.03	(50 plus) – (35–49 years)	-.16***	-.31	-.02	.27					
	35–49 years	199	4.47	.62													
	50 plus	208	4.30	.62													
<i>Relational conflict</i>	18–34 years	149	4.25	1.69	31.13	5.94	.00	(50 plus) – (18–34 years)	-.59***	-1.00	-.18	.36					
	35–49 years	199	4.00	1.59													
	50 plus	208	3.66	1.59													
<i>Status conflict</i>	18–34 years	149	4.15	1.65	25.89	5.13	.01	(50 plus) – (18–34 years)	-.54***	-.94	-.14	.33					
	35–49 years	199	3.91	1.52													
	50 plus	208	3.61	1.61													
<i>Process conflict</i>	18–34 years	149	3.85	1.68	35.79	6.92	.00	(50 plus) – (18–34 years)	-.63***	-1.04	-.23	.39					
	35–49 years	199	3.57	1.60													
	50 plus	208	3.22	1.56													
<i>Conflict Resolution Potential</i>	18–34 years	149	4.42	1.40	37.69	11.04	<.0001	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.60***	-.93	-.27	.45					
	35–49 years	199	4.99	1.24									(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.57***	-.90	-.24	.43
	50 plus	208	5.02	1.30													
Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles																	
<i>Integrating ICHS 1</i>	18–34 years	149	4.97	1.20	13.64	5.64	.00	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.40***	-.67	-.12	.36					
	35–49 years	199	5.22	1.14													
	50 plus	208	5.36	.98													
<i>Integrating ICHS 2</i>	18–34 years	149	5.10	1.24	17.93	7.87	.00	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.45***	-.72	-.18	.43					
	35–49 years	199	5.40	1.16									(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.29***	-.56	-.02	.24
	50 plus	208	5.56	.82													

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)		
									Min	Max			
<i>Dominating ICHS 1</i>	18–34 years	149	4.02	1.29	18.01	7.01	.00	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.41***	-.70	-.13	.35	
	35–49 years	199	4.43	1.08					(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.40***	-.69	-.11	.34
	50 plus	208	4.44	1.06									
<i>Dominating ICHS 2</i>	18–34 years	149	3.87	1.31	26.31	8.13	.00	(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.50***	-.83	-.18	.38	
	35–49 years	199	4.37	1.31					(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.48***	-.80	-.16	.38
	50 plus	208	4.34	1.20									
<i>Avoiding ICHS 1</i>	18–34 years	149	4.45	1.23	13.65	4.63	.01	(50 plus) – (18–34 years)	-.40***	-.70	-.09	.32	
	35–49 years	199	4.22	1.19									
	50 plus	208	4.06	1.23									
<i>Avoiding ICHS 2</i>	18–34 years	149	4.41	1.53	12.61	2.96	.05	(35–49 years) – (18–34 years)	-.38***	-.75	.00	.25	
	35–49 years	199	4.03	1.45									
	50 plus	208	4.13	1.42									
<i>Compromising ICHS 2</i>	18–34 years	149	4.95	1.23	9.51	4.05	.02	(18–34 years) – (50 plus)	-.30***	-.57	-.03	.27	
	35–49 years	199	5.24	1.08					(18–34 years) – (35–49 years)	-.29***	-.57	-.02	.25
	50 plus	208	5.25	.97									

Notes: N = 556. 95% Confidence limit (CL). *** $p \leq .0001$. ICHS = interpersonal conflict handling style

7.4.5.2 Tests for significant mean differences: Job level

The significant results of the ANOVAs and post-hoc tests examining the mean differences between the socio-demographic variable of job level (employment position) in the organisation and other variables of relevance are reported below. For parsimony reasons, only the significant results were reported. A short description of the significant mean differences for the respective variables are given, followed by Table 7.49.

(a) Organisational culture

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between organisational culture and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .42$; $p = <.0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.70$; $SD = 1.23$; job level senior management: $M = 5.19$; $SD = 1.09$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.66$; $SD = 1.29$; job level senior management: $M = 5.19$; $SD = 1.09$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .61$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.46$; $SD = 1.30$; job level senior management: $M = 5.19$; $SD = 1.09$).

The two subconstructs of organisational culture, namely, tolerance of conflict and allowance of mistakes, also showed differences of a small to moderate practical effect:

i) Tolerance of conflict

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between tolerance of conflict and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .54$; $p = .00$; job level staff: $M = 4.62$; $SD = 1.50$; job level senior management: $M = 5.35$; $SD = 1.16$).

ii) Allowance of mistakes

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between allowance of mistakes and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = .00$; job level professional: $M = 4.34$; $SD = 1.52$; job level senior management: $M = 4.98$; $SD = 1.38$)
- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p = .00$; job level middle management: $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.52$; job level senior management: $M = 4.98$; $SD = 1.38$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .51$; $p = .00$; job level staff: $M = 4.25$; $SD = 1.47$; job level senior management: $M = 4.98$; $SD = 1.38$).

(b) Leadership

The leadership subconstructs (collaborative, dominating and avoiding leader conflict behaviour, as well as perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour) all had significant mean differences ranging from a small to a moderate practical effect:

i) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between collaborative leader conflict behaviour and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = <.0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.61$; $SD = 1.39$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.44$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .54$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.40$; $SD = 1.67$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.44$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .62$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.58$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.44$)

- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .66$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.23$; $SD = 1.60$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.44$).

ii) Dominating leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between dominating leader conflict behaviour and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level junior management and job level professional (moderate practical effect; $d = .58$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 2.71$; $SD = 1.29$; job level professional: $M = 3.43$; $SD = 1.22$).

iii) Avoiding leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between avoiding leader conflict behaviour and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level senior management and job level staff (moderate practical effect; $d = .73$; $p = <.0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.01$; $SD = 1.29$; job level staff: $M = 4.01$; $SD = 1.45$)
- Job level senior management and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .46$; $p = <.0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.01$; $SD = 1.29$; job level middle management: $M = 3.64$; $SD = 1.41$)
- Job level senior management and job level professional (small practical effect; $d = .37$; $p = <.0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.01$; $SD = 1.29$; job level professional: $M = 3.53$; $SD = 1.50$).

iv) Perception of leader social exchange behaviour

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between perception of leader social exchange behaviour and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level staff and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .42$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 2.79$; $SD = .73$; job level senior management: $M = 3.10$; $SD = .72$).

(c) *Employee Voice*

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between employee voice and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .55$; $p = <.0001$; job level middle management: $M = 5.33$; $SD = 1.00$; job level senior management: $M = 5.88$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .95$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.81$; $SD = 1.24$; job level senior management: $M = 5.88$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .46$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.81$; $SD = 1.24$; job level middle management: $M = 5.33$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (very large practical effect; $d = 1.20$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.55$; $SD = 1.20$; job level senior management: $M = 5.88$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .70$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.55$; $SD = 1.20$; job level middle management: $M = 5.33$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (very large practical effect; $d = 1.42$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.20$; job level senior management: $M = 5.88$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (large practical effect; $d = .91$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.20$; job level middle management: $M = 5.33$; $SD = 1.00$)
- Job level staff and job level professional (small practical effect; $d = .41$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.20$; job level professional: $M = 4.81$; $SD = 1.24$).

The employee voice subconstructs (speaking up, speaking out and leaders granting voice opportunities) all had significant mean differences ranging from a small to a large practical effect:

i) Speaking out

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between speaking out and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .76$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 5.31$; $SD = 1.16$; job level senior management: $M = 6.08$; $SD = .85$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 5.31$; $SD = 1.16$; job level middle management: $M = 5.78$; $SD = .89$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .99$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.12$; job level senior management: $M = 6.08$; $SD = .85$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .68$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.12$; job level middle management: $M = 5.78$; $SD = .89$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .63$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.25$; job level middle management: $M = 5.78$; $SD = .89$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .63$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.25$; job level middle management: $M = 5.78$; $SD = .89$).

ii) Speaking up

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between speaking up and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .73$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.57$; $SD = 1.33$; job level senior management: $M = 5.53$; $SD = 1.30$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .56$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.57$; $SD = 1.33$; job level middle management: $M = 5.28$; $SD = 1.16$)

- Job level junior management and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .84$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.44$; $SD = 1.30$; job level senior management: $M = 5.53$; $SD = 1.30$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .68$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.44$; $SD = 1.30$; job level middle management: $M = 5.28$; $SD = 1.16$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .96$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.46$; job level senior management: $M = 5.53$; $SD = 1.30$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (large practical effect; $d = .82$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.46$; job level middle management: $M = 5.28$; $SD = 1.16$).

iii) Voice opportunities

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between leaders granting voice opportunities and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .64$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 3.69$; $SD = 1.70$; job level senior management: $M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.76$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .42$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 3.69$; $SD = 1.70$; job level middle management: $M = 4.39$; $SD = 1.67$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .91$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 3.26$; $SD = 1.60$; job level senior management: $M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.76$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .69$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 3.26$; $SD = 1.60$; job level middle management: $M = 4.39$; $SD = 1.67$).

(d) *Employee Engagement*

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between employee engagement and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .60$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.84$; $SD = 1.22$; job level senior management: $M = 5.55$; $SD = 1.12$)

- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .71$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.72$; $SD = 1.22$; job level senior management: $M = 5.55$; $SD = 1.12$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.72$; $SD = 1.22$; job level middle management: $M = 5.22$; $SD = 1.00$).

The employee engagement subconstructs (job engagement and organisational engagement), both had significant mean differences ranging from a small to a large practical effect.

i) Job engagement

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between job engagement and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .39$; $p = 0.0025$; job level professional: $M = 5.20$; $SD = 1.15$; job level senior management: $M = 5.63$; $SD = 1.05$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .41$; $p = 0.0025$; job level staff: $M = 5.18$; $SD = 1.15$; job level senior management: $M = 5.63$; $SD = 1.05$).

ii) Organisational engagement

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between organisational engagement and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .41$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.87$; $SD = 1.39$; job level senior management: $M = 5.44$; $SD = 1.40$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .58$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.59$; $SD = 1.54$; job level senior management: $M = 5.44$; $SD = 1.40$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .69$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.39$; $SD = 1.64$; job level senior management: $M = 5.44$; $SD = 1.40$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .88$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.14$; $SD = 1.58$; job level senior management: $M = 5.44$; $SD = 1.40$)

- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.14$; $SD = 1.58$; job level middle management: $M = 4.87$; $SD = 1.39$).

(e) *Organisational trust*

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between organisational trust and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.30$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.37$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .52$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.52$; $SD = 1.38$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.37$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .71$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.24$; $SD = 1.40$; job level senior management: $M = 5.23$; $SD = 1.37$).

The organisational trust subconstructs (integrity, dependability and commitment) all had significant mean differences ranging from a small to a moderate practical effect:

i) *Integrity*

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between integrity and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .40$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.71$; $SD = 1.37$; job level senior management: $M = 5.26$; $SD = 1.45$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .51$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.52$; $SD = 1.46$; job level senior management: $M = 5.26$; $SD = 1.45$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .71$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.24$; $SD = 1.45$; job level senior management: $M = 5.26$; $SD = 1.45$).

ii) Commitment

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between commitment and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .40$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.84$; $SD = 1.39$; job level senior management: $M = 5.42$; $SD = 1.48$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .46$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.74$; $SD = 1.49$; job level senior management: $M = 5.42$; $SD = 1.48$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .65$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.44$; $SD = 1.53$; job level senior management: $M = 5.42$; $SD = 1.48$).

iii) Dependability

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between dependability and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.29$; $SD = 1.40$; job level senior management: $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.35$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .51$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.26$; $SD = 1.38$; job level senior management: $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.35$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .60$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.09$; $SD = 1.53$; job level senior management: $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.35$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .68$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.00$; $SD = 1.42$; job level senior management: $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.35$).

(f) *Conflict types*

The conflict type subconstructs (relational conflict, status conflict and process conflict, as well as group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) all had significant mean differences ranging from a small to a moderate practical effect:

i) Relational conflict

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between relational conflict and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level senior management and job level staff (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = 0.0026$; job level senior management: $M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.65$; job level staff: $M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.55$)
- Job level senior management and job level professional (small practical effect; $d = .35$; $p = 0.0026$; job level senior management: $M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.65$; job level professional: $M = 4.07$; $SD = 1.53$).

ii) Status conflict

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between status conflict and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level senior management and job level staff (small practical effect; $d = .43$; $p = 0.0113$; job level senior management: $M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.65$; job level staff: $M = 4.19$; $SD = 1.47$).

iii) Process conflict

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between process conflict and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level senior management and job level staff (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = 0.0056$; job level senior management: $M = 3.17$; $SD = 1.58$; job level staff: $M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.65$).

iv) Group atmosphere

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between group atmosphere and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .37$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 5.03$; $SD = 1.28$; job level senior management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = 1.03$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .42$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.99$; $SD = 1.20$; job level senior management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = 1.03$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .74$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.57$; $SD = 1.34$; job level senior management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = 1.03$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .34$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.57$; $SD = 1.34$; job level middle management: $M = 5.03$; $SD = 1.28$).

v) Conflict resolution potential

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between conflict resolution potential and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .52$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.75$; $SD = 1.17$; job level senior management: $M = 5.37$; $SD = 1.25$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .59$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.58$; $SD = 1.45$; job level senior management: $M = 5.37$; $SD = 1.25$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .78$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.34$; $SD = 1.39$; job level senior management: $M = 5.37$; $SD = 1.25$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.34$; $SD = 1.39$; job level middle management: $M = 4.98$; $SD = 1.28$).

(g) *Interpersonal conflict handling styles*

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between interpersonal conflict handling styles and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .41$; $p = 0.0064$; job level staff: $M = 4.61$; $SD = .77$; job level middle management: $M = 4.88$; $SD = .53$).

The interpersonal conflict handling styles' subconstructs (integrating, dominating, avoiding and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2) all had significant mean differences ranging from a small to a large practical effect:

i) *Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1*

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .74$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 5.00$; $SD = 1.12$; job level senior management: $M = 5.74$; $SD = .88$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 5.00$; $SD = 1.12$; job level middle management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = .92$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .78$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.83$; $SD = 1.40$; job level senior management: $M = 5.74$; $SD = .88$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .53$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.83$; $SD = 1.40$; job level middle management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = .92$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = 1.05$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.70$; $SD = 1.10$; job level senior management: $M = 5.74$; $SD = .88$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .75$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.70$; $SD = 1.10$; job level middle management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = .92$).

ii) Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .66$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 5.19$; $SD = 1.14$; job level senior management: $M = 5.83$; $SD = .78$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 5.19$; $SD = 1.14$; job level middle management: $M = 5.63$; $SD = .85$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .80$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.97$; $SD = 1.31$; job level senior management: $M = 5.83$; $SD = .78$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .60$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.97$; $SD = 1.31$; job level middle management: $M = 5.63$; $SD = .85$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (large practical effect; $d = .89$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.94$; $SD = 1.19$; job level senior management: $M = 5.83$; $SD = .78$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .66$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.94$; $SD = 1.19$; job level middle management: $M = 5.63$; $SD = .85$).

iii) Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.21$; $SD = 1.02$; job level senior management: $M = 4.73$; $SD = 1.10$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .76$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.26$; job level senior management: $M = 4.73$; $SD = 1.10$)

- Job level staff and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .65$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.26$; job level middle management: $M = 4.55$; $SD = .96$)
- Job level staff and job level professional (small practical effect; $d = .34$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.26$; job level professional: $M = 4.21$; $SD = 1.02$).

iv) Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 2

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 2 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level staff and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = 0.0004$; job level staff: $M = 3.86$; $SD = 1.35$; job level senior management: $M = 4.50$; $SD = 1.28$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p = 0.0004$; job level staff: $M = 3.86$; $SD = 1.35$; job level middle management: $M = 4.42$; $SD = 1.16$).

v) Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level middle management and job level staff (small practical effect; $d = .38$; $p = < .0001$; job level middle management: $M = 4.14$; $SD = 1.14$; job level staff: $M = 4.58$; $SD = 1.17$)
- Job level senior management and job level staff (moderate practical effect; $d = .66$; $p = < .0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.79$; $SD = 1.22$; job level staff: $M = 4.58$; $SD = 1.17$)
- Job level senior management and job level professional (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = < .0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.79$; $SD = 1.22$; job level professional: $M = 4.36$; $SD = 1.16$).

vi) Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level senior management and job level staff (large practical effect; $d = .82$; $p = < .0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.42$; job level staff: $M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.41$)
- Job level senior management and job level professional (moderate practical effect; $d = .65$; $p = < .0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.42$; job level professional: $M = 4.38$; $SD = 1.34$)
- Job level senior management and job level junior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .51$; $p = < .0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.42$; job level junior management: $M = 4.24$; $SD = 1.54$)
- Job level senior management and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = < .0001$; job level senior management: $M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.42$; job level middle management: $M = 4.17$; $SD = 1.42$).

vii) Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .47$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.90$; $SD = 1.06$; job level middle management: $M = 5.37$; $SD = .94$)
- Job level professional and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .38$; $p = < .0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.90$; $SD = 1.06$; job level senior management: $M = 5.32$; $SD = 1.11$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.85$; $SD = 1.17$; job level middle management: $M = 5.37$; $SD = .94$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (small practical effect; $d = .41$; $p = < .0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.85$; $SD = 1.17$; job level senior management: $M = 5.32$; $SD = 1.11$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .62$; $p = < .0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.70$; $SD = 1.21$; job level middle management: $M = 5.37$; $SD = .94$)

- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .54$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.70$; $SD = 1.21$; job level senior management: $M = 5.32$; $SD = 1.11$).

viii) Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2

Table 7.49 summarises the significant mean differences between compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2 and job level in organisations (staff (non-managerial), junior management, middle management, senior management/executive, professional (non-managerial)):

- Job level professional and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .60$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.94$; $SD = 1.05$; job level senior management: $M = 5.52$; $SD = .86$)
- Job level professional and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .51$; $p = <.0001$; job level professional: $M = 4.94$; $SD = 1.05$; job level middle management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = .97$)
- Job level junior management and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .55$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.89$; $SD = 1.36$; job level senior management: $M = 5.52$; $SD = .86$)
- Job level junior management and job level middle management (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = <.0001$; job level junior management: $M = 4.89$; $SD = 1.36$; job level middle management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = .97$)
- Job level staff and job level senior management (moderate practical effect; $d = .69$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.19$; job level senior management: $M = 5.52$; $SD = .86$)
- Job level staff and job level middle management (moderate practical effect; $d = .60$; $p = <.0001$; job level staff: $M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.19$; job level middle management: $M = 5.46$; $SD = .97$).

To conclude, Table 7.49 indicates a number of significant mean differences, ranging from a small to a very large practical effect. It is clear that, in general, the employment position (job level) of participants significantly influenced their perceptions to the constructs of relevance in the current research. For parsimony reasons, only observations that had a large to a very large practical effect were included in the summary below.

- Firstly, it is evident that employee voice behaviours differ significantly between diverse job levels. A very large practical effect was noted for overall employee voice relating to the significant mean differences between respectively junior management ($d = 1.20$) and staff ($d = 1.42$) versus senior management. Both junior management and staff scored significantly lower than senior management on overall employee voice. Additionally, a large practical effect was noted for overall employee voice relating to the significant mean differences between professional staff (not in a managerial position) and senior management ($d = .95$), with professional participants scoring significantly lower than senior management on voice behaviour. Moreover, staff also scored significantly lower (large practical effect at $d = .91$) than middle management with regard to voice behaviour. More specifically, a large practical effect was noted for speaking out (i.e. to colleagues) with staff scoring significantly lower than senior management (large practical effect at $d = .99$). Large practical effects were also noted for speaking up behaviour between staff and senior management ($d = .96$) and middle management ($d = .82$) respectively; and also between junior and senior management ($d = .84$) with staff and junior management respectively scoring significantly lower. Furthermore, granting of employee voice opportunities showed a large practical effect of significant mean differences between staff and senior management, where staff scored significantly lower than senior management on their perceptions of whether voice opportunities are granted by leaders.
- Organisational engagement showed significant mean differences based on participants' job level. Accordingly significant mean differences of a large practical effect were noted in relation to organisational engagement with staff scoring significantly lower than senior management ($d = .88$).
- Regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles, job level influenced the handling of conflict through integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2) and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (2). Large practical effects were noted between the significant mean differences of staff and junior management respectively, who scored significantly lower than senior management with regard to integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2). Significant mean differences of a large practical effect were noted for an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2 between senior management and staff.

Table 7.49 below summarises the various significant mean differences that were noted as discussed above, ranging from a small to a very large practical effect.

Table 7.49

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Job level

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
Organisational Culture	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.46	1.30	37.42	6.25	< .0001	middle - senior	-.49***	-.90	-.08	.42
	Junior management	33	4.68	1.13				professional - senior	-.53***	-.94	-.11	.44
	Middle management	134	4.70	1.23				staff - senior	-.73***	-1.14	-.31	.61
	Senior management/executive	131	5.19	1.09								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.66	1.29								
Tolerance of conflict	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.62	1.50	35.31	5.04	.00	staff - senior	-.73***	-1.18	-.28	.54
	Junior management	33	4.91	1.28								
	Middle management	134	4.99	1.30								
	Senior management/executive	131	5.35	1.16								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.90	1.32								
Allowance of mistakes	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.25	1.47	45.25	5.27	.00	professional - senior	-.64***	-1.13	-.14	.44
	Junior management	33	4.36	1.30				middle - senior	-.66***	-1.15	-.16	.45
	Middle management	134	4.32	1.52				staff - senior	-.72***	-1.22	-.23	.51
	Senior management/executive	131	4.98	1.38								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.34	1.52								
Leader conflict behaviour												
Collaborative leader conflict behaviour	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.23	1.60	78.95	8.42	< .0001	middle - senior	-.63***	-1.14	-.11	.44
	Junior management	33	4.30	1.58				professional - senior	-.84***	-1.36	-.32	.54
	Middle management	134	4.61	1.39				junior - senior	-.93***	-1.75	-.12	.62
	Senior management/executive	131	5.23	1.44				staff - senior	-1.01***	-1.53	-.49	.66
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.40	1.67								
Dominating leader conflict behaviour	Staff (non-managerial)	128	3.27	1.32	14.50	2.15	.07	junior – professional	-.72***	-1.42	-.03	.58
	Junior management	33	2.71	1.29								
	Middle management	134	3.29	1.30								
	Senior management/executive	131	3.20	1.36								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	3.43	1.22								
	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.01	1.45	67.45	8.39	< .0001	senior – staff	-1.00***	-1.48	-.52	.73

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
<i>Avoiding leader conflict behaviour</i>	Junior management	33	3.71	1.50				senior – middle	-.63***	-1.10	-.15	.46
	Middle management	134	3.64	1.41				senior – professional	-.52***	-1.00	-.04	.37
	Senior management/executive	131	3.01	1.29								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	3.53	1.50								
<i>Perception of leader social exchange behaviour</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	126	2.79	.73	5.08	2.45	.05	staff – senior	-.31***	-.61	-.01	.42
	Junior management	31	2.96	.71								
	Middle management	125	3.00	.68								
	Senior management/executive	67	3.10	.72								
Employee Voice	Professional (non-managerial)	110	2.90	.75								
	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.32	1.20	185.55	36.98	< .0001	middle – senior	-.55***	-.93	-.18	.55
	Junior management	33	4.55	1.20				professional – senior	-1.07***	-1.45	-.69	.95
	Middle management	134	5.33	1.00				professional – middle	-.52***	-.89	-.14	.46
	Senior management/executive	131	5.88	1.00				junior – senior	-1.33***	-1.93	-.73	1.20
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.81	1.24				junior – middle	-.78***	-1.37	-.18	.70
								staff – senior	-1.57***	-1.95	-1.19	1.42
								junior – senior	-1.33***	-1.93	-.73	1.20
								staff – middle	-1.01***	-1.39	-.63	.91
								staff – professional	-.50***	-.88	-.11	.41
<i>Speaking out</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	5.10	1.12	84.78	19.95	< .0001	professional – senior	-.77***	-1.12	-.42	.76
	Junior management	33	5.10	1.25				professional – middle	-.47***	-.82	-.12	.45
	Middle management	134	5.78	.89				staff – senior	-.99***	-1.34	-.63	.99
	Senior management/executive	131	6.08	.85				staff – middle	-.69***	-1.03	-.34	.68
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	5.31	1.16				junior – senior	-.99***	-1.54	-.44	.63
<i>Speaking up</i>								junior – middle	-.69***	-1.23	-.14	.63
	Staff (non-managerial)	126	4.20	1.46	120.67	17.32	< .0001	professional – senior	-.96***	-1.52	-.40	.73

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
	Junior management	33	4.44	1.30				professional – middle	-.70***	-1.18	-.23	.56
	Middle management	126	5.28	1.16				junior – senior	-1.09***	-1.86	-.32	.84
	Senior management/executive	68	5.53	1.30				junior – middle	-.83***	-1.54	-.13	.68
	Professional (non-managerial)	109	4.57	1.33				staff – senior	-1.34***	-1.88	-.79	.96
								staff – middle	-1.08***	-1.53	-.62	.82
<i>Voice opportunities</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	126	3.26	1.60	140.73	12.51	< .0001	professional – senior	-1.11***	-1.82	-.40	.64
	Junior management	33	3.97	1.72				professional – middle	-.70***	-1.30	-.10	.42
	Middle management	126	4.39	1.67				staff – senior	-1.54***	-2.23	-.85	.91
	Senior management/executive	68	4.80	1.76				staff – middle	-1.13***	-1.71	-.55	.69
	Professional (non-managerial)	109	3.69	1.70								
Employee Engagement	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.72	1.22	55.85	10.49	< .0001	professional – senior	-.70***	-1.09	-.31	.60
	Junior management	33	4.94	1.34				staff – senior	-.83***	-1.22	-.44	.71
	Middle management	134	5.22	1.00				staff – middle	-.50***	-.89	-.11	.45
	Senior management/executive	131	5.55	1.12								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.84	1.22								
<i>Job engagement</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	5.18	1.15	19.99	4.17	.00	professional – senior	-.43***	-.80	-.05	.39
	Junior management	33	5.21	1.35				staff – senior	-.45***	-.82	-.08	.41
	Middle management	134	5.50	.96								
	Senior management/executive	131	5.63	1.05								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	5.20	1.15								
<i>Organisational engagement</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.14	1.58	129.16	14.20	< .0001	middle – senior	-.58***	-1.09	-.07	.41
	Junior management	33	4.59	1.54				junior – senior	-.85***	-1.66	-.05	.58
	Middle management	134	4.87	1.39				professional – senior	-1.05***	-1.56	-.54	.69
	Senior management/executive	131	5.44	1.40				staff – senior	-1.31***	-1.82	-.79	.88
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.39	1.64				staff – middle	-.73***	-1.24	-.22	.49

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)											
									Min	Max												
Organisational trust	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.24	1.40	68.50	9.15	< .0001	middle – senior	-.59***	-1.05	-.13	.44										
	Junior management	33	4.51	1.44									professional – senior	-1.17	-.25	.52						
	Middle management	134	4.64	1.30									staff – senior				-1.46	-.53	.71			
	Senior management/executive	131	5.23	1.37																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.52	1.38																		
<i>Integrity</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.24	1.45	73.74	8.92	< .0001	middle – senior	-.56***	-1.04	-.07	.40										
	Junior management	33	4.57	1.52									professional – senior	-1.23	-.26	.51						
	Middle management	134	4.71	1.37									staff – senior				-1.52	-.54	.71			
	Senior management/executive	131	5.26	1.45																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.52	1.46																		
<i>Commitment</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.44	1.53	65.84	7.47	< .0001	middle – senior	-.58***	-1.07	-.08	.40										
	Junior management	33	4.78	1.67									professional – senior	-1.19	-.18	.46						
	Middle management	134	4.84	1.39									staff – senior				-1.48	-.48	.65			
	Senior management/executive	131	5.42	1.48																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.74	1.49																		
<i>Dependability</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.00	1.42	66.75	8.54	< .0001	middle – senior	-.66***	-1.13	-.19	.48										
	Junior management	33	4.09	1.53									professional – senior	-1.16	-.22	.51						
	Middle management	134	4.29	1.40									junior – senior				-1.61	-.12	.60			
	Senior management/executive	131	4.95	1.35									staff – senior							-1.43	-.48	.68
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.26	1.38																		
Conflict Types																						
<i>Relational conflict</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.30	1.55	43.17	4.14	.00	senior – staff	-.79***	-1.34	-.24	.49										
	Junior management	33	3.86	1.75									senior – professional	-1.11	-.01	.35						
	Middle management	134	3.91	1.68																		
	Senior management/executive	131	3.51	1.65																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.07	1.53																		

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)											
									Min	Max												
<i>Status conflict</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.19	1.47	33.06	3.28	.01	senior – staff	-.68***	-1.22	-.14	.43										
	Junior management	33	3.86	1.77																		
	Middle management	134	3.77	1.62																		
	Senior management/executive	131	3.51	1.65																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	3.99	1.55																		
<i>Process conflict</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	3.87	1.65	38.26	3.69	.01	senior – staff	-.71***	-1.25	-.16	.44										
	Junior management	33	3.58	1.60																		
	Middle management	134	3.36	1.60																		
	Senior management/executive	131	3.17	1.58																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	3.66	1.61																		
<i>Group Atmosphere</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.57	1.34	51.39	8.59	< .0001	middle – senior	-.44***	-.85	-.02	.37										
	Junior management	33	4.90	1.32									professional – senior	-.47***	-.89	-.06	.42					
	Middle management	134	5.03	1.28														staff – senior	-.89***	-1.30	-.47	.74
	Senior management/executive	131	5.46	1.03																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.99	1.20																		
<i>Conflict Resolution Potential</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.34	1.39	75.09	11.41	< .0001	professional – senior	-.63***	-1.06	-.19	.52										
	Junior management	33	4.58	1.45									junior – senior	-.80***	-1.48	-.11	.59					
	Middle management	134	4.98	1.28														staff – senior	-1.03***	-1.47	-.60	.78
	Senior management/executive	131	5.37	1.25																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.75	1.17																		
<i>Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles (ICHS)</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.61	.77	6.79	3.61	.01	staff – middle	-.27***	-.50	-.04	.41										
	Junior management	33	4.60	.89																		
	Middle management	134	4.88	.53																		
	Senior management/executive	131	4.80	.69																		
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.65	.68																		
<i>Integrating ICHS 1</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.70	1.10	89.44	20.78	< .0001	professional – senior	-.75***	-1.10	-.39	.74										
	Junior management	33	4.83	1.40									professional – middle	-.46***	-.81	-.11	.45					

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
<i>Integrating ICHS 2</i>	Middle management	134	5.46	.92	70.27	16.75	< .0001	junior – senior	-.91***	-1.46	-.36	.78
	Senior management/executive	131	5.74	.88				junior – middle	-.63***	-1.18	-.07	.53
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	5.00	1.12				staff – senior	-1.04***	-1.40	-.69	1.05
								staff – middle	-.76***	-1.11	-.41	.75
	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.94	1.19				professional – senior	-.65***	-.99	-.30	.66
	Junior management	33	4.97	1.31				professional – middle	-.44***	-.79	-.10	.44
	Middle management	134	5.63	.85				junior – senior	-.86***	-1.41	-.32	.80
	Senior management/executive	131	5.83	.78				junior – middle	-.66***	-1.20	-.12	.60
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	5.19	1.14				staff – senior	-.89***	-1.24	-.54	.89
								staff – middle	-.69***	-1.03	-.34	.66
<i>Dominating ICHS 1</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	3.82	1.26	62.62	12.96	< .0001	professional – senior	-.52***	-.89	-.15	.49
	Junior management	33	4.17	1.20				staff – senior	-.90***	-1.28	-.53	.76
	Middle management	134	4.55	.96				staff – middle	-.72***	-1.10	-.35	.65
	Senior management/executive	131	4.73	1.10				staff – professional	-.39***	-.76	-.01	.34
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.21	1.02								
<i>Dominating ICHS 2</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	3.86	1.35	33.41	5.18	.00	staff – senior	-.64***	-1.07	-.21	.49
	Junior management	33	4.18	1.49				staff – middle	-.56***	-.99	-.13	.45
	Middle management	134	4.42	1.16								
	Senior management/executive	131	4.50	1.28								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.13	1.22								
<i>Avoiding ICHS 1</i>	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.58	1.17	44.63	7.85	< .0001	middle – staff	-.43***	-.84	-.03	.38
	Junior management	33	4.36	1.49				senior – staff	-.79***	-1.19	-.38	.66
	Middle management	134	4.14	1.14				senior – professional	-.57***	-.97	-.17	.48
	Senior management/executive	131	3.79	1.22								
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.36	1.16								

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
<i>Avoiding</i> ICHS 2	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.64	1.41	24.04	12.12	< .0001	senior – staff	-1.16***	-1.64	-.68	.82
	Junior management	33	4.24	1.54				senior – professional	-.89***	-1.37	-.42	.65
	Middle management	134	4.17	1.42				senior – junior	-.76***	-1.51	-.01	.51
	Senior management/executive	131	3.48	1.42				senior – middle	-.69***	-1.16	-.21	.48
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.38	1.34								
<i>Compromising</i> ICHS 1	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.85	1.17	34.59	7.42	< .0001	professional – middle	-.47***	-.83	-.11	.47
	Junior management	33	4.70	1.21				professional – senior	-.42***	-.78	-.05	.38
	Middle management	134	5.37	.94				staff – middle	-.52***	-.89	-.16	.49
	Senior management/executive	131	5.32	1.11				staff – senior	-.47***	-.84	-.10	.41
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.90	1.06				junior – middle	-.68***	-1.25	-.10	.62
<i>Compromising</i> ICHS 2	Staff (non-managerial)	128	4.80	1.19	53.84	12.27	< .0001	junior – senior	-.62***	-1.20	-.05	.54
	Junior management	33	4.89	1.36				professional – senior	-.58***	-.94	-.23	.60
	Middle management	134	5.46	.97				professional – middle	-.52***	-.87	-.16	.51
	Senior management/executive	131	5.52	.86				junior – senior	-.63***	-1.19	-.07	.55
	Professional (non-managerial)	130	4.94	1.05				junior – middle	-.57***	-1.12	-.01	.48
								staff – senior	-.72***	-1.07	-.36	.69
				staff – middle	-.65***	-1.01	-.30	.60				

Notes: N = 556. 95% Confidence limit (CL). *** $p \leq .0001$. ICHS = Interpersonal conflict handling styles

7.4.5.3 Tests for significant mean differences: Trade union membership

No significant mean differences were observed through the ANOVAs and post-hoc tests examining the mean differences between the socio-demographic variable of trade union membership (union member versus non-member) and other variables of relevance to the research.

7.4.5.4 Tests for significant mean differences: Number of employees

The significant results of the ANOVAs and post-hoc tests examining the mean differences between the socio-demographic variable of number of employees in the organisation and other variables of relevance are reported below and summarised in Table 7.50. For parsimony reasons, only the significant results were reported.

(a) Organisational Culture

Table 7.50 summarises significant mean differences between organisational culture and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .57$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.45$; $SD = 1.23$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.17$; $SD = 1.27$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.45$; $SD = 1.23$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 4.97$; $SD = 1.06$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .32$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.45$; $SD = 1.23$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.85$; $SD = 1.20$).

The two subconstructs of organisational culture, namely, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes, both had significant mean differences of a small to a moderate practical effect. These two subconstructs are discussed below.

i) Tolerance of conflict

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between tolerance of conflict and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .46$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.68$; $SD = 1.36$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.30$; $SD = 1.35$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .42$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.68$; $SD = 1.36$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.22$; $SD = 1.22$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .34$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.68$; $SD = 1.36$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 5.12$; $SD = 1.21$).

ii) Allowance of mistakes

Table 7.50 summarises significant mean differences between allowance of mistakes and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (151–500 employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .35$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.48$; $SD = 1.53$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.01$; $SD = 1.41$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .59$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.16$; $SD = 1.44$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.01$; $SD = 1.41$).

(b) Leadership

Table 7.50 summarises significant mean differences between leadership and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .43$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 3.54$; $SD = .66$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.84$; $SD = .72$).

The subconstructs of leadership, namely, collaborative leader conflict behaviour, dominating leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour all had significant mean differences of a small to moderate practical effect. These three subconstructs are discussed below.

i) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.50 summarises significant mean differences between collaborative leader conflict behaviour and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .62$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.56$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.13$; $SD = 1.44$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .51$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.56$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 4.95$; $SD = 1.41$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .35$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.56$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.75$; $SD = 1.61$).

ii) Dominating leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between dominating leader conflict behaviour and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (small practical effect; $d = .31$; $p = .04$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 2.98$; $SD = 1.21$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 3.37$; $SD = 1.33$).

iii) Perception of leader social exchange behaviour

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between perception of leader social exchange behaviour and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .47$; $p = .00$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 2.79$; $SD = .69$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.13$; $SD = .75$)

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = .00$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 2.79$; $SD = .69$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 3.13$; $SD = .70$).

(c) *Employee voice*

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between employee voice and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .36$; $p = .00$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.84$; $SD = 1.26$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.30$; $SD = 1.36$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .38$; $p = .00$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.84$; $SD = 1.26$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.28$; $SD = 1.06$).

(d) *Organisational trust*

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between organisational trust and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .57$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.43$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.10$; $SD = 1.29$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .60$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.43$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.09$; $SD = 1.15$).

The subconstructs of organisational trust, namely, integrity, commitment and dependability all had significant mean differences of a small to moderate practical effect. These three subconstructs are discussed below.

i) Integrity

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between integrity and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .61$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.51$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.18$; $SD = 1.37$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .56$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.51$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.08$; $SD = 1.25$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .31$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.51$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.76$; $SD = 1.42$).

ii) Commitment

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between commitment and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (151–500 employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.71$; $SD = 1.61$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.40$; $SD = 1.23$)
- Number of employees (151–500 employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .42$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.71$; $SD = 1.61$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.33$; $SD = 1.31$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .62$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.56$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.40$; $SD = 1.23$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .55$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.56$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.33$; $SD = 1.31$).

iii) Dependability

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between dependability and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .48$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.09$; $SD = 1.41$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 4.75$; $SD = 1.29$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.09$; $SD = 1.41$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 4.72$; $SD = 1.39$).

(e) Conflict types

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between conflict types and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .33$; $p = .04$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 4.28$; $SD = .74$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.51$; $SD = .68$).

The subconstructs of conflict types, namely, task conflict, relational conflict, status conflict, process conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, all had significant mean differences of a small to moderate practical effect. These subconstructs are discussed below.

i) Task conflict

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between task conflict and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .50$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.50$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.58$; $SD = 1.33$)
- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (small practical effect; $d = .45$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.50$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.46$).

ii) Relational conflict

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between relational conflict and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .50$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.41$; $SD = 1.55$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.19$; $SD = 1.57$)
- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .47$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.41$; $SD = 1.55$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.18$; $SD = 1.70$).

iii) Status conflict

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between status conflict and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (51–150 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (small practical effect; $d = .46$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.41$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.15$; $SD = 1.52$)
- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .55$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.29$; $SD = 1.61$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.15$; $SD = 1.52$)
- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.29$; $SD = 1.61$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.12$; $SD = 1.71$).

iv) Process conflict

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between process conflict and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .44$; $p = < .0001$; number of employees (< 50

employees): $M = 3.11$; $SD = 1.50$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.75$)

- Number of employees (< 50 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (small practical effect; $d = .41$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 3.11$; $SD = 1.50$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 3.75$; $SD = 1.64$)
- Number of employees (51–150 employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .54$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 2.97$; $SD = 1.37$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.75$)
- Number of employees (51–150 employees) and number of employees (500+ employees) (moderate practical effect; $d = .52$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 2.97$; $SD = 1.37$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 3.75$; $SD = 1.64$).

v) Group atmosphere

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between group atmosphere and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (51–150 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .49$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.77$; $SD = 1.31$; number of employees (51–150 employees): $M = 5.36$; $SD = 1.08$)
- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .46$; $p < .0001$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.77$; $SD = 1.31$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.34$; $SD = 1.12$).

vi) Conflict resolution potential

Table 7.50 summarises significant mean differences between conflict resolution potential and number of employees in organisations ((< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .36$; $p = .01$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.66$; $SD = 1.34$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.12$; $SD = 1.18$).

(f) *Interpersonal conflict handling style*

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between interpersonal conflict handling style and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .27$; $p = .01$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.63$; $SD = .66$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 4.82$; $SD = .78$).

The subconstructs of interpersonal conflict handling styles, namely, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1, an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1, and a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1, all had significant mean differences of a small to moderate practical effect. These subconstructs are discussed below.

i) *Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1*

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .35$; $p = .00$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 5.04$; $SD = 1.17$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 5.42$; $SD = 1.02$).

ii) *Obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1*

Table 7.50 summarises the significant mean differences between an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (< 50 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .29$; $p = .02$; number of employees (500+ employees): $M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.14$; number of employees (< 50 employees): $M = 4.87$; $SD = 1.18$).

iii) *Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1*

Table 7.50 summarises significant mean differences between a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1 and number of employees in organisations (< 50 employees), (51–150 employees), (151–500 employees), (500+ employees)):

- Number of employees (500+ employees) and number of employees (151–500 employees) (small practical effect; $d = .36$; $p = .03$; number of employees (500+

employees): $M = 4.19$; $SD = 1.13$; number of employees (151–500 employees): $M = 4.58$; $SD = 1.00$).

The above results show a number of significant mean differences of a small ($d \geq .20$) to moderate ($d \geq .50$) practical effect. It is thus concluded that the size of an organisation as measured in number of employees should be considered in a conflict management framework. Significant mean differences with a moderate practical effect related to the following variables:

- Organisational culture (including allowance of mistakes) had significant mean differences with a moderate practical effect between the number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees versus 500+ employees. In both cases, organisations with more than 500 employees scored lower.
- Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect were noted in relation to collaborative leader conflict behaviour between number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees versus 500+ employees; and between 51 to 150 employees versus 500+ employees. In both instances, organisations with more than 500 employees scored lowest.
- Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect were noted in relation to organisational trust, integrity and commitment respectively between number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees versus 500+ employees; and between 51 to 150 employees versus 500+ employees. In all instances, organisations with more than 500 employees scored lowest.
- Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect based on the number of employees were noted in relation to the various conflict types of task, relational, status and process conflict. Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect were noted in relation to task conflict between number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees versus that of 51 to 150 employees. Organisations with less than 50 employees scored lowest. Moreover, relational conflict and status conflict showed significant mean differences respectively between number of employees' groupings of less than 50 employees versus the grouping 500+ employees. Organisations with less than 50 employees scored lowest. Lastly, significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect were noted in relation to process conflict between number of employees groupings of 51 to 150 employees which scored lower than the 151 to 500 employees group and the 500+ employees group.

Table 7.50

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Number of Employees

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)			
									Min	Max				
Organisational Culture	< 50 employees	128	5.17	1.27	50.40	11.43	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.72***	-1.05	-.38	.57		
	51–150 employees	73	4.97	1.06						(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.51***	-.93	-.10	.45
	151–500 employees	88	4.85	1.20						(500+ employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.39***	-.78	-.01	.32
	500+ employees	267	4.45	1.23										
Tolerance of conflict	< 50 employees	128	5.30	1.35	43.19	8.31	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.62***	-0.99	-.26	.46		
	51–150 employees	73	5.22	1.22						(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.54***	-0.99	-.10	.42
	151–500 employees	88	5.12	1.21						(500+ employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.44***	-.86	-.03	.34
	500+ employees	267	4.68	1.36										
Allowance of mistakes	< 50 employees	128	5.01	1.41	64.45	10.20	<.0001	(151–500 employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.52***	-1.04	.00	.35		
	51–150 employees	73	4.63	1.45						(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.85***	-1.25	-.44	.59
	151–500 employees	88	4.48	1.53										
	500+ employees	267	4.16	1.44										
Leadership	< 50 employees	128	3.84	.72	10.39	7.70	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.3***	-0.48	-.11	.43		
	51–150 employees	73	3.82	.52										
	151–500 employees	88	3.76	.73										
	500+ employees	267	3.54	.66										
Collaborative leader conflict behaviour	< 50 employees	128	5.13	1.44	90.68	13.04	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.94***	-1.36	-.51	.62		
	51–150 employees	73	4.95	1.41						(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.75***	-1.27	-.24	.51
	151–500 employees	88	4.75	1.61						(500+ employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.56***	-1.04	-.07	.35
	500+ employees	267	4.20	1.56										

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
<i>Dominating leader conflict behaviour</i>	< 50 employees	128	2.98	1.21	14.12	2.80	.04	(< 50 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.39***	-.75	-.03	.31
	51–150 employees	73	3.36	1.28								
	151–500 employees	88	3.28	1.34								
	500+ employees	267	3.37	1.33								
<i>Perception of leader social exchange behaviour</i>	< 50 employees	83	3.13	.75				(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.34***	-.57	-.11	.47
	51–150 employees	56	3.13	.70				(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.33***	-.60	-.06	.48
	151–500 employees	74	3.01	.74								
	500+ employees	246	2.79	.69								
Employee Voice	< 50 employees	128	5.30	1.36	26.13	5.65	.00	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.47***	-.81	-.12	.36
	51–150 employees	73	5.28	1.06				(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.44***	-.86	-.02	.38
	151–500 employees	88	5.20	1.13								
	500+ employees	267	4.84	1.26								
Organisational trust	< 50 employees	128	5.10	1.29	69.37	12.39	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.78***	-1.16	-.40	.57
	51–150 employees	73	5.09	1.15				(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.77***	-1.24	-.31	.60
	151–500 employees	88	4.63	1.44								
	500+ employees	267	4.32	1.43								
<i>Integrity</i>	< 50 employees	128	5.18	1.37	82.65	13.47	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.88***	-1.28	-.48	.61
	51–150 employees	73	5.08	1.25				(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.78***	-1.27	-.29	.56
	151–500 employees	88	4.76	1.42				(500+ employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.45***	-.91	.00	.31
	500+ employees	267	4.30	1.51								
<i>Commitment</i>	< 50 employees	128	5.33	1.31	79.81	12.24	<.0001	(151–500 employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.68***	-1.28	-.08	.48
	51–150 employees	73	5.40	1.23				(151–500 employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.61***	-1.14	-.09	.42
	151–500 employees	88	4.71	1.61				(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.87***	-1.37	-.37	.62
	500+ employees	267	4.53	1.56				(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.8***	-1.20	-.39	.55
<i>Dependability</i>	< 50 employees	128	4.72	1.39	45.90	7.70	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (51–150 employees)	-0.65***	-1.13	-.17	.48

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
Conflict types	51–150 employees	73	4.75	1.29				(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.62***	-1.01	-.23	.44
	151–500 employees	88	4.34	1.52								
	500+ employees	267	4.09	1.41								
	< 50 employees	128	4.28	.74	3.31	2.70	.04	(< 50 employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.23***	-.46	.00	.33
	51–150 employees	73	4.35	.49								
Task conflict	151–500 employees	88	4.51	.68								
	500+ employees	267	4.43	.61								
	< 50 employees	128	3.87	1.50	46.53	7.48	<.0001	(< 50 employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.7***	-1.22	-.19	.50
	51–150 employees	73	4.11	1.39				(< 50 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.66***	-1.06	-.26	.45
	151–500 employees	88	4.58	1.33								
Relational conflict	500+ employees	267	4.53	1.46								
	< 50 employees	128	3.41	1.55	64.38	8.37	<.0001	(< 50 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.79***	-1.23	-.34	.50
	51–150 employees	73	3.66	1.66				(< 50 employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.77***	-1.34	-.20	.47
	151–500 employees	88	4.18	1.70								
	500+ employees	267	4.19	1.57								
Status conflict	< 50 employees	128	3.29	1.61	80.28	11.01	<.0001	(51–150 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.67***	-1.20	-.14	.46
	51–150 employees	73	3.48	1.41				(< 50 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.86***	-1.29	-.43	.55
	151–500 employees	88	4.12	1.71				(< 50 employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.82***	-1.38	-.26	.49
	500+ employees	267	4.15	1.52								
	< 50 employees	128	3.11	1.50	66.54	8.75	<.0001	(< 50 employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.71***	-1.28	-.15	.44
Process conflict	51–150 employees	73	2.97	1.37				(< 50 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.65***	-1.09	-.20	.41
	151–500 employees	88	3.82	1.75				(51–150 employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.85***	-1.50	-.21	.54
	500+ employees	267	3.75	1.64				(51–150 employees) – (500+ employees)	-0.79***	-1.33	-.24	.52
	< 50 employees	128	5.34	1.12	38.07	8.37	<.0001	(500+ employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.59***	-1.01	-.17	.49
	51–150 employees	73	5.36	1.08				(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.56***	-.91	-.22	.46

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits		Cohen (d)	
									Min	Max		
<i>Conflict Resolution Potential</i>	151–500 employees	88	4.95	1.27								
	500+ employees	267	4.77	1.31								
	< 50 employees	128	5.12	1.18	20.95	4.01	.01	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.46***	-.82	-.09	.36
	51–150 employees	73	5.03	1.11								
	151–500 employees	88	4.84	1.59								
Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles (ICHS)	500+ employees	267	4.66	1.34								
	< 50 employees	128	4.82	.78	5.44	3.84	.01	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.2***	-.39	-.01	.27
	51–150 employees	73	4.80	.65								
	151–500 employees	88	4.84	.65								
	500+ employees	267	4.63	.66								
<i>Integrating ICHS 1</i>	< 50 employees	128	5.42	1.02	16.28	4.50	.00	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.39***	-.69	-.08	.35
	51–150 employees	73	5.38	1.00								
	151–500 employees	88	5.26	1.05								
	500+ employees	267	5.04	1.17								
	< 50 employees	128	4.87	1.18	11.97	3.15	.02	(500+ employees) – (< 50 employees)	-0.34***	-.65	-.02	.29
<i>Obliging ICHS 1</i>	51–150 employees	73	4.78	1.04								
	151–500 employees	88	4.78	1.07								
	500+ employees	267	4.53	1.14								
	< 50 employees	128	4.34	1.23	11.81	3.03	.03	(500+ employees) – (151–500 employees)	-0.39***	-.75	-.03	.36
	51–150 employees	73	4.46	1.15								
<i>Dominating ICHS 1</i>	151–500 employees	88	4.58	1.00								
	500+ employees	267	4.19	1.13								

Notes: N = 556. 95% Confidence limit (CL). *** $p \leq .0001$. ICHS = interpersonal conflict handling styles

7.4.5.5 Tests for significant mean differences: Formal employee engagement programme

The significant results of the ANOVAs and post-hoc tests examining the mean differences between the socio-demographic variable of formal employee engagement programme in the organisation and other variables of relevance are reported below and summarised in Table 7.51. For parsimony reasons, only the significant results were reported.

(a) Organisational culture

The subconstruct of tolerance for conflict indicated significant mean differences of a small practical effect and is discussed below.

i) Tolerance of conflict

Table 7.51 summarises the significant mean differences between tolerance of conflict and the presence (yes) or absence (no) of an employment engagement programme in the organisation (yes, no):

- Employment engagement programme (no) and employment engagement programme (yes) (small practical effect; $d = .24$; $p = < .0001$; employment engagement programme (no): $M = 4.86$; $SD = 1.59$; employment engagement programme (yes): $M = 5.18$; $SD = 1.14$).

(b) Leadership

The subconstructs of collaborative leader conflict behaviour, dominating leader conflict behaviour and avoiding leader conflict behaviour all indicated significant mean differences of a small practical effect and are discussed below.

i) Collaborative leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.51 summarises the significant mean differences between collaborative leader conflict behaviour and the presence (yes) or absence (no) of an employment engagement programme in the organisation (yes, no):

- Employment engagement programme (no) and employment engagement programme (yes) (small practical effect; $d = .24$; $p = < .0001$; employment engagement programme (no): $M = 4.48$; $SD = 1.82$; employment engagement programme (yes): $M = 4.87$; $SD = 1.43$).

ii) Dominating leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.51 summarises the significant mean differences between dominating leader conflict behaviour and the presence (yes) or absence (no) of an employment engagement programme in the organisation (yes, no):

- Employment engagement programme (no) and employment engagement programme (yes) (small practical effect; $d = .26$; $p = .03$; employment engagement programme (no): $M = 3.00$; $SD = 1.32$; employment engagement programme (yes): $M = 3.34$; $SD = 1.32$).

iii) Avoiding leader conflict behaviour

Table 7.51 summarises the significant mean differences between avoiding leader conflict behaviour and the presence (yes) or absence (no) of an employment engagement programme in the organisation (yes, no):

- Employment engagement programme (yes) and employment engagement programme (no) (small practical effect; $d = .26$; $p < .0001$; employment engagement programme (yes): $M = 3.34$; $SD = 1.37$; employment engagement programme (no): $M = 3.72$; $SD = 1.57$).

The results showed a number of significant mean differences for tolerance of conflict, collaborative leader conflict behaviour and dominating leader conflict behaviour between organisations without a formal employee engagement programme and organisations with an engagement programme. In all instances, organisations without a programme scored lower than organisations with a formal engagement programme. In addition, a significant mean difference was observed between organisations with a formal employee engagement programme that scored lower than those organisations without such a programme relating to avoiding leader conflict behaviour. All these significant mean differences were of a small practical effect. Table 7.51 below summarises these results.

Table 7.51

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Formal Employee Engagement Programme

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of Squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Simultaneous 95% Confidence Limits	Cohen (d)		
Organisational culture												
<i>Tolerance of conflict</i>	EE programme	317	5.18	1.14	47.16	13.68	< .0001	no - yes	-.33***	-.65	-.01	.24
	No programme	131	4.86	1.59								
Leadership												
<i>Collaborative leader conflict behaviour</i>	EE programme	317	4.87	1.43	67.34	14.29	< .0001	no - yes	-.39***	-.77	-.02	.24
	No programme	131	4.48	1.82								
<i>Dominating leader conflict behaviour</i>	EE programme	317	3.34	1.32	11.82	3.51	.03	no - yes	-.34***	-.66	-.03	.26
	No programme	131	3.00	1.32								
<i>Avoiding leader conflict behaviour</i>	EE programme	317	3.34	1.37	39.32	9.58	< .0001	yes - no	-.39***	-.73	-.04	.26
	No programme	131	3.72	1.57								

Notes: N = 556. 95% Confidence limit (CL). *** $p \leq .0001$. EE programme = employee engagement programme

7.4.5.6 *Preliminary analysis 6: Towards constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management*

The empirical results attained from the test for significant mean differences provided supportive evidence for the acceptance of research hypothesis H6:

Research hypothesis 6: Employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The test for significant mean differences indicated that participants differ based on their socio-demographic groupings. For parsimony reasons and as indicated through the process of stepwise regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis, only five of the socio-demographic variables were reported. The characteristics of age, job level, trade union membership, numbers of employees and employee engagement programme showed significant mean differences of a small to moderate practical effect with regard to perceptions about the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The following main findings were evident:

- *Age:* Although a number of significant mean differences were detected among the different age groups, these differences were all of a small ($d \geq .20$) practical effect. For the most part, the differences were observed between the age groups over 35 years and the age group of participants between the ages of 18 to 34.
- *Job level:* Significant mean differences, ranging from a small ($d \geq .20$) to a very large ($d \geq 1.20$) practical effect were observed, with only those with a large to a very large practical effect noted here. It was evident that employee voice behaviours differ significantly between diverse job levels. Moreover, significant mean differences of a large practical effect were noted between the various job levels in relation to organisational engagement, integrating

interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2) and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2.

- *Trade union membership*: Counter to expectations, no significant mean differences were detected based on whether participants belonged to a union or not.
- *Number of employees*: The results showed a number of significant mean differences, of which most were of a small ($d \geq .20$) to moderate ($d \geq .50$) practical effect. The findings imply that the number of employees in an organisation plays a role in perceptions of organisational culture (including allowance of mistakes), collaborative leader conflict behaviour, organisational trust (including integrity and commitment) and the various conflict types (task, relational, status and process).
- *Formal employee engagement programme*: The results showed a number of significant mean differences for tolerance of conflict, collaborative leader conflict behaviour and dominating leader conflict behaviour between organisations without a formal employee engagement programme and organisations with an engagement programme. In all instances, organisations without a programme scored lower than organisations with a formal engagement programme. This suggests that organisations with a formal employee engagement programme have an organisational culture that tolerates conflict better, that perceive their leaders as engaging more in collaborative leader conflict behaviour and less in dominating leader conflict behaviour. In addition, a significant mean difference was observed between organisations with a formal employee engagement programme that scored lower than those organisations without such a programme as it relates to avoiding leader conflict behaviour. This suggests that organisations with an engagement programme perceive their leaders as engaging less in avoidant leader conflict behaviour. All these significant mean differences were of a small practical effect.

Table 7.52 provides a synopsis of the test for significant mean differences, indicating how participants from different socio-demographic groups within South African-based organisations differ regarding their experiences of the variables of relevance to this study. For parsimony reasons, only the groupings indicating a moderate to very large practical effect are listed. From the five core socio-demographic variables identified during the stepwise regression and hierarchical moderated regression analysis, only job level and number of employees had significant mean differences from a moderate to a very large practical effect.

Table 7.52

Synopsis of the Test for Significant Mean Differences: Socio-demographic Groupings Indicating a Moderate to Very Large Practical Effect

Socio-demographic Grouping	Cohen d	Practical effect size	Variable
JOB LEVEL			
Junior management and middle management	.70	M	Employee voice
	.68	M	Speaking up
	.63	M	Speaking out
	.63	M	Speaking out
	.62	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1
	.60	M	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.53	M	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1
Junior management and professional	.58	M	Dominating leader conflict behaviour
Junior management and senior management	1.20	VL	Employee voice
	.84	L	Speaking up
	.80	L	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.78	M	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1
	.62	M	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour
	.60	M	Dependability
	.59	M	Conflict resolution potential
	.58	M	Organisational engagement
	.55	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.54	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1
Middle management and senior management	.55	M	Employee voice
Professional and middle management	.56	M	Speaking up
	.51	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2
Professional and senior management	.95	L	Employee voice
	.76	M	Speaking out
	.74	M	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1
	.73	M	Speaking up
	.69	M	Organisational engagement
	.66	M	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.64	M	Voice opportunities
	.60	M	Employee engagement
	.60	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.54	M	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour
	.52	M	Organisational trust
	.52	M	Conflict resolution potential
	.51	M	Integrity
.51	M	Dependability	
Senior management and junior management	.51	M	Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2

Socio-demographic Grouping	Cohen <i>d</i>	Practical effect size	Variable
Senior management and professional	.65	M	Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2
Senior management and staff	.82	L	Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.73	M	Avoiding leader conflict behaviour
	.66	M	Avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1
Staff and middle management	.91	L	Employee voice
	.82	L	Speaking up
	.75	M	Integrating ICHS 1
	.69	M	Voice opportunities
	.68	M	Speaking out
	.66	M	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.65	M	Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1
	.60	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2
Staff and senior management	1.42	VL	Employee voice
	1.05	L	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 1
	.99	L	Speaking out
	.96	L	Speaking up
	.91	L	Voice opportunities
	.89	L	Integrating interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.88	L	Organisational engagement
	.78	M	Conflict resolution potential
	.76	M	Dominating interpersonal conflict handling style 1
	.74	M	Group atmosphere
	.71	M	Organisational trust
	.71	M	Integrity
	.71	M	Employee engagement
	.69	M	Compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2
	.68	M	Dependability
	.66	M	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour
	.65	M	Commitment
	.61	M	Organisational culture
	.54	M	Tolerance of conflict
	.51	M	Allowance of mistakes
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES			
(< 50 employees) and (151–500 employees)	.50	M	Task conflict
(< 50 employees) and (500+ employees)	.55	M	Status conflict
	.50	M	Relational conflict
(500+ employees) and (< 50 employees)	.62	M	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour
	.61	M	Integrity
	.59	M	Allowance of mistakes
	.57	M	Organisational trust
	.57	M	Organisational culture
	.55	M	Commitment
(500+ employees) and (51–150 employees)	.62	M	Commitment
	.60	M	Organisational trust

Socio-demographic Grouping	Cohen <i>d</i>	Practical effect size	Variable
	.56	M	Integrity
	.51	M	Collaborative leader conflict behaviour
(51–150 employees) and (151–500 employees)	.54	M	Process conflict
(51–150 employees) and (500+ employees)	.52	M	Process conflict

Notes: N = 556. Moderate (M) practical effect ($d \geq .50$), large (L) practical effect ($d \geq .80$), and very large (VL) practical effect ($d \geq 1.20$).

7.5 DECISIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Table 7.53 sets out the various key decisions that were taken regarding the research hypotheses.

Table 7.53

Decisions Regarding the Research Hypotheses

Empirical Research Aims	Research Hypothesis	Statistical Procedures	Evidence in support of research hypothesis (yes/no/partial)
<p>Empirical research aim 1: To determine the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as demonstrated in the context of ER in a sample of South African-based organisations.</p>	<p>H1: There are statistically significant interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common method variance • Construct validity • Internal consistency reliability • Bivariate correlations 	Yes
<p>Empirical research aim 2: To determine the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.</p>	<p>H2: A significant association exists between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.</p>	Canonical correlation analysis	Yes
<p>Empirical research aim 3: To determine whether employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the</p>	<p>H3: Employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict</p>	Path modelling (Mediation modelling)	Yes

Empirical Research Aims	Research Hypothesis	Statistical Procedures	Evidence in support of research hypothesis (yes/no/partial)
outcome variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).	management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).		
<p>Empirical research aim 4: To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.</p>	<p>H4: The theoretically hypothesised framework has a good fit with the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust.</p>	Path modelling (Mediation modelling – structural equation modelling)	Partial
<p>Empirical research aim 5: To ascertain whether employees’ socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and</p>	<p>H5: Individuals’ socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	Stepwise multiple regression Hierarchical moderated regression	Partial

Empirical Research Aims	Research Hypothesis	Statistical Procedures	Evidence in support of research hypothesis (yes/no/partial)
<p>employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>			
<p>Empirical research aim 6: To determine whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within South African-based organisations.</p>	<p>H6: Employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) differ significantly regarding their experiences of the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).</p>	<p>Tests for normality Tests for significant mean differences</p>	<p>Partial</p>

7.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 7 reported on the findings of the statistical analysis. Accordingly, the three main stages of the statistical processing and analysis of the data, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 6, were reported. These stages included reporting the preliminary and descriptive statistics (stage 1), the correlational analysis (stage 2) and the inferential multivariate statistical analysis (stage 3). The relationship dynamics involving the following variables were investigated:

- (1) Antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice).
- (2) The mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust).
- (3) The moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme). Five of the socio-demographic variables were identified as being core to a conflict management framework for South African based organisations, namely, age, job level, trade union membership, employee numbers and employee engagement programme.
- (4) The outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The next chapter, Chapter 8, interprets the results in order to formulate conclusions and make recommendations for the construction of a conflict management framework. The findings and the limitations of the research are also considered. Finally, suggestions for future research are offered.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 8 focuses on interpreting and integrating the literature and the empirical findings in order to formulate conclusions, limitations and recommendations. To do so, the empirical results (as reported on in Chapter 7) are integrated with the results from the literature review (Chapters 2 to 5) and interpreted with the intention of assessing the degree to which the results supported the study's central research hypothesis (Chapter 1) and empirical research hypotheses. The chapter addresses steps 8 and 9 of Phase 2, the empirical research process, as indicated below in Figure 8.1. The chapter also addresses research aim 7, namely, to make recommendations for ER specialists, LR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers and human resource professionals with regard to conflict management practices in South African-based organisations, as well as future research in the field.



Figure 8.1 Step 8 and step 9 of Phase 2, the empirical research process

8.1 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This section integrates and discusses the results of the study by considering the socio-demographic profile of the participants, as well as the descriptive and inferential statistics. The section concludes the empirical research aims and how these aims were met in the current research.

8.1.1 Socio-demographic profile of the sample and frequencies

The research sample consisted of predominantly white females of 35 years and older. The average age of the sample of participants was 44 years and the biggest representation was from the Generation X cohort (35–49 years). Most participants had attained a tertiary postgraduate qualification. In line with the inclusion criteria, all respondents were employed. According to the socio-demographic data, respondents were mostly permanently employed in large, private sector organisations with more than 500 employees. Participants were generally at middle or top management level and had been with their current employer for more than 11 years. Their annual nett income level was between R51 001 to R787 000; and thus fell – relative to South African personal income circumstances (Coetzee & Van Aardt, 2018) – into the South African middle income group. Most of the organisations in which the participants worked had formal employee engagement programmes in place. Typically, participants belonged to professional bodies, such as the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP). In the main, participants were not trade union members, although most of the organisations they worked for had trade union representation. By and large, participants did not agree that trade unions contribute to effective conflict management in organisations.

According to Fotohabadi and Kelly (2018), employment relationships and conflict management practices vary in relation to individual differences such as national culture, gender, age group and the like. Consequently, the socio-demographic profile of the current research was considered when constructing a conflict management framework. The main individual and organisational characteristics of the sample are discussed in section 6.2 (Chapter 6).

8.1.2 Descriptive statistics: Interpretation of the results (mean scores)

This section provides an interpretation and discussion of the mean scores found on the various items of the measurement instruments applied in developing the conflict management framework

for South African-based organisations. The results reported in Table 7.4 (Chapter 7) are relevant to this section.

8.1.2.1 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Leadership

The psychosocial conflict management profile revealed that participants perceived their leaders to behave mainly in a collaborative manner, closely followed by enacting avoiding conflict behaviour. Dominating leader conflict behaviour was least applied. However, the means of the three types of leader conflict behaviours were close and all in the mid-range. Previous research confirms a positive relationship between leadership styles, conflict type and interpersonal conflict handling styles (Tanveer et al., 2018). Leaders who display avoidance behaviour or who dominate in conflict situations may influence the resolution and prevention of conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012; Tanveer et al., 2018). Conflict avoidance (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978) frustrates followers as it creates uncertainty (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and indicates low concern for followers (De Dreu et al., 2001). Nevertheless, although a win–win style in resolving conflict is generally accepted as best, the situation (e.g. time constraints or the situation itself) may dictate leaders' ideal conflict management behaviour (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Marquis & Huston, 1996; Rahim, 1983).

Furthermore, participants generally viewed their leaders as engaging only to a moderate extent in social exchange behaviour. Research suggests that leaders who use cooperative conflict management styles (i.e. integrating, obliging and compromising conflict management styles that indicate greater concern for others) enhance the social exchange process (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). The fact that participants perceived almost equal usage of collaborative, domineering and avoiding leader conflict management behaviour may perhaps explain the finding of perceived moderate exchange behaviour in leaders.

It is accepted that leaders play a vital role in the management of conflict (Mayer et al., 2018; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017), and that conflict management is regarded as a key leadership competency (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018). It is therefore imperative to consider these findings in a conflict management framework.

8.1.2.2 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Organisational culture

The psychosocial conflict management profile revealed that, generally speaking, respondents regarded their organisations as having an organisational culture that somewhat allowed for

mistakes and tolerated conflict. Ideally, a conflict culture should tolerate conflict and aim for its early resolution (Lipsky & Avcigil, 2010). Leadership is key to a positive, strong organisational culture (Gupta et al., 2018; Warrick, 2017), and specifically also to a conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). A conflict culture is regarded as a vital subculture in organisations (Katz & Flynn, 2013) and is significantly influenced by leaders' conflict management styles (Gelfand et al., 2012). A conflict culture provides a clear understanding of the values and norms of the organisation as they relate to conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012; Warrick, 2017). Therefore, if possible, a work environment should be created where followers feel safe enough to display innovative and creative behaviour, voice their disagreements, be accountable for and admit mistakes, and engage in potentially conflictual discussions (Binyamin et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990).

As may be seen from the finding discussed above, this is not currently the case in the South African-based organisations in which the study participants worked. Scholars argue that cross-cultural conflict naturally occurs in multicultural contexts (Du Plessis, 2012; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018) and that employees from different cultures will differ with respect to their conflict tolerance levels or how mistakes are viewed (Yeh & Xu, 2010b). The finding that respondents regard South African-based organisations as having an organisational culture that somewhat allows for mistakes and tolerates conflict should be considered against this background and should also be considered in the conflict management framework.

8.1.2.3 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Employee voice

The psychosocial conflict management profile showed that participants generally engage in speaking out behaviour (i.e. speaking to colleagues), rather than in speaking up behaviour (i.e. speaking to management). Although speaking out behaviour is welcomed, employees should ideally also engage easily in speaking up behaviour. Nonetheless, this finding is in line with previous research that indicates that employee silence dominates employee voice (Morrison, 2014).

Van Dyne et al. (2003) caution that employee silence (i.e. deliberately withholding important ideas, opinions or concerns about organisations) is not the opposite of employee voice, or merely the absence of voice. On the one hand, employee silence is often related to disengagement and fear, whilst voice is associated with winners, constructive behaviour, engagement and positive organisational contributions (Morrison, 2014). On the other hand, voice is potentially seen as challenging behaviour that may hamper interpersonal relationships or lead to conflict (LePine &

Van Dyne, 1998), creating tension and awkwardness (Liu et al., 2010). As such, conflict is often avoided, which negatively relates to employee voice and furthermore damages the exchange relationship between leaders and their followers (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). As was seen in the previous section, respondents in the current research indicated that they perceived only moderate leader social exchange behaviour and that leaders often avoid conflict. It is possible that these findings thus relate to the somewhat limited speaking up behaviour found in this research.

Additionally, responses indicated that, on average, participants were ambivalent on whether management grants voice opportunities. This finding implies that voice opportunities that are granted are perhaps not clear enough in their intention, and/or that insufficient voice opportunities are granted in organisations. This finding is in line with research that indicates that South African workers feel disempowered and believe that they have very little influence on decision-making (Bischoff et al., 2018). It also highlights the difficulty involved in increasing voice behaviour in South African-based organisations to ensure innovative and quick responses to deal with today's challenging business world (Farh & Chen, 2018; Liu et al., 2010). Respondents in the current research indicated that they perceived only moderate leader social exchange behaviour and that leaders often avoid conflict. It is possible that these findings relate to the somewhat limited speaking up behaviour found in this research.

8.1.2.4 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Employee engagement

The psychosocial conflict management profile revealed that participants predominantly engage more with their jobs (their work role) than with their organisations (their role as members of an organisation). In general, participants were only moderately engaged. This finding indicates a number of potential challenges, as employee engagement leads to less conflict, although it does not eliminate conflict completely (Soieb et al., 2013). It is therefore important to question why employees are more engaged with their jobs than with their organisations and how this finding influences the management of conflict.

Previous research has emphasised the importance of team and co-worker relationships for employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Furthermore, a lack of trust in the supervisor–employee relationship has a negative impact on the level of employee engagement in organisations (Deloitte, 2017), as may a lack in organisational trust, as was evident from the participants' responses. However, employee engagement is facilitated by employees working in highly

resourceful jobs stemming from high quality leader-member-exchange relationships (Breevaart et al., 2015) – but, as discussed above, the current research showed that employees only perceived moderate levels of leader-member-exchange behaviour. Kahn (1990) suggests that employees are quicker to disengage and withdraw from situations that hold a potential for conflict with their leaders rather than with their peers. Bakker and Demerouti (2018) argue that conflicts are part of job demands and thus affect work engagement negatively. Relationship conflict is regarded as extremely negative in a collectivist society (such as South Africa) and has the potential to manifest in burnout (Shaukat et al., 2017) and emotional exhaustion (Bear et al., 2014). All these aspects may potentially influence the moderate engagement levels indicated by participants.

8.1.2.5 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Organisational trust

The psychosocial conflict management profile revealed that participants only have a moderate level of trust in their organisations. Conflict is seen as a phenomenon that undermines trust (Nešić & Lalić, 2016), while conflict is reduced by the positive effects of trust (Zaheer et al., 1998). As only moderate trust levels were found in the South African-based organisations where respondents worked it may indicate discontent, which may not necessarily be expressed, considering the moderate response regarding voice behaviour. Additionally, leadership, organisational culture and employee engagement also indicated a moderate response. One aspect that may contribute to South African organisational trust issues is the country's past. In countries with unresolved social conflict, individuals often find it hard to trust anyone outside of their own kin or group (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). This aspect may be very true for the South African conflict-ridden society. Clearly, once trust is lost, it is not easily rebuilt (Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017).

8.1.2.6 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Conflict types

In general, task conflict (relating to the task content) was more prevalent than any other form of conflict among the participants of the current research, while process conflict (relating to focusing on how to get a task done) was least experienced by participants. This is an interesting finding as other studies posit that relationship conflict is the most frequently experienced conflict type in workplaces (Tanveer et al., 2018). However, participants indicated that they were fairly positive about the group atmosphere in their work unit (based on high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members and low competition) (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). This may perhaps

explain the relatively low prevalence of relational conflict as perceived by the participants. Nonetheless, it somewhat contradicts the finding of a moderate level of organisational trust. However, group atmosphere is considered from the perspective of a work unit, and thus, the levels of trust are not directly comparable with organisational trust.

In addition, participants moderately perceived potential in resolving conflict. Potential of conflict resolution (Jehn, 1995, 1997) is a dimension of conflict that occurs in the various conflict types. Conflict resolution potential refers to the degree to which the impression is given that the conflict may possibly be resolved (Jehn, 1997). Jehn (1997) argues that individual characteristics, group structure (e.g. leader involvement) and the dimensions of conflict (e.g. emotionality) have the biggest influence on whether individuals view conflict as resolvable or not. As only moderate levels of leader-member social exchange behaviour were prevalent, this may have contributed to the moderate level to which participants perceived the potential to resolve conflict.

8.1.2.7 Psychosocial conflict management profile of participants: Interpersonal conflict handling styles

The psychosocial conflict management profile revealed that participants mostly maintained an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), followed by a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), while an obliging interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2) was the third most used style. This was followed by a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2) and, least used, an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2).

Interpreting this finding is not as straightforward as it may seem at first glance. Parmer (2018) points out that the successful management of conflict in organisations necessitates an understanding of when each style should be used during a specific conflict incident. This implies that conflict management styles should be varied according to the situation (Hendel et al., 2005; Rahim, 1983). Additionally, people handle conflict according to their personality types (Ayub et al., 2017). Nonetheless, interpersonal conflict handling styles are based on dual concern theory (concern for self and for others) (Blake & Mouton, 1964, Thomas, 1976, Rahim, 1983) and styles that maintain a balance between these two concerns are preferred, with an integrating style in particular being the preferred choice (Ayub et al., 2017). The findings that respondents mostly use an integrated style, and refrain from engaging in an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style, are thus welcomed.

8.1.2.8 *Main findings: Synthesis*

In summary, it is concluded that the participants perceived their leaders to engage mostly in collaborative leader conflict behaviour, and moderately in social exchange leadership behaviour. In the main, participants regarded their organisations as having a culture of somewhat allowing for mistakes and tolerating conflict. Participants engaged more in speaking out behaviour than speaking up behaviour, and either slightly disagreed, or could not agree or disagree, on whether their managers (leaders) were granting them voice opportunities. Generally speaking, participants engaged more with their jobs than with their organisations and indicated moderate levels of organisational trust. Task conflict was more prevalent than any other form of conflict. Generally, participants perceived the atmosphere in their work unit (based on high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members and low competition) as fairly positive. Participants perceived to a moderate extent that potential to resolve conflicts existed. Like their leaders, participants mostly maintained an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style.

8.1.2.9 *Counterintuitive findings*

Some of the findings were counterintuitive. Firstly, it was expected that relationship conflict would be most prevalent in South Africa with its high levels of conflict and adversarialism in ER (ILO, 2016a). Webster (2013) indicates that racial division in South African workplaces continues and results in workplace cultures characterised by low levels of trust and skills and high levels of adversarialism. Nonetheless, respondents indicated that task conflict was the most frequently manifested type of conflict. This is also against the norms of previously reported research, which indicates relationship conflict as the most prevalent form of conflict, followed by task conflict (Tanveer et al., 2018).

Secondly, it was surprising that organisational trust was indicated at a moderate level, despite reported adversarialism and conflict in South African workplaces.

Thirdly, the fact that the sub-construct of conflict acceptability norms (conflict openness versus conflict avoidance norms) did not fit the model was surprising. According to Jehn (1997), acceptability norms determine how conflict is perceived within groups or organisations – while some groups have more open norms and encourage the expression of doubts or opinions, other groups may avoid such confrontations (Tjosvold, 1991a). Both openness and avoidance conflict norms have positive and negative outcomes for conflict (Jehn, 1997). Different norms may be evident within one group based on the type of conflict; for instance, whereas relational conflict

may be avoided, task conflict may be openly discussed (Jehn, 1997). Whether a more open or a more avoiding style is used in managing conflict was considered with regard to leadership (an avoidant conflict leader behaviour), and with regard to interpersonal conflict handling styles. Subsequently, it was surprising to find that conflict acceptability norms did not fit the model.

Fourthly, the descriptive results on the variables were less negative than expected. Dickenson (2018) argues that South Africa's IR system is in crisis, having to contend with the legacies of inequality, migrant labour, racial, gender and ethnic divisions in the workforce, and high structural unemployment and underemployment (Beukes et al., 2017; Festus et al., 2016; Jordaan, 2016; Schoeman et al., 2010; Webster, 2013). Unemployment and poor educational levels persist, despite various improvements since 1994 (Bhorat et al., 2015; Business Monitor International Ltd., 2017; Festus et al., 2016; Meagher, 2016; Wentzel et al., 2016). Despite these challenges, the variables all had means generally in the mid-ranges and none of the means indicated a dire result. This may perhaps be ascribed to the efforts made to manage diversity and other challenges in organisations, and the fact that members of South African organisations are for the most part sensitised to differences. However, this is a matter for future research and falls outside the scope of the current research.

8.1.3 Empirical research aim 1: Interpretation of the correlation results

Research aim 1 is relevant to this section.

Empirical research aim 1: To determine the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as demonstrated in the context of ER in a sample of South African-based organisations.

Tables 7.5 to 7.12 are of relevance to this section.

The results obtained provided support for research hypothesis 1.

8.1.3.1 *Relationships between the socio-demographic moderating variables and the independent, mediator and dependent variables*

Bivariate correlational analysis showed that a number of relationship dynamics were evident between the various socio-demographic constructs and the independent, mediator and dependent constructs of the study. Mainly small practical effects were evident.

(a) *Race*

The research showed that race had a significant but negative relationship with the overall construct of employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, Saks, 2006b), particularly with organisational engagement. This finding implies that race has an association with employee engagement, moreover the negative relationship between race and employee engagement indicates different experiences of employee engagement (particularly as it relates to organisational engagement) by the various racial groups. This is in line with the seminal research of Kahn (1990) which indicates that differing organisational groups (for instance based on race) have various degrees of psychological presence in organisations. This is ascribed to diverse self-in-roles behaviours for dissimilar ethnic groups, cultures and group affiliations. Research undertaken by Bell and Barkhuizen (2011) on employee engagement in South Africa also suggests that differences are prevalent between ethnic groups and level of work engagement. From the viewpoint of a conflict management framework, this suggests that employees from various racial group may view employee engagement initiatives differently, and that a one-size-fits-all approach should be avoided.

In addition, the current research found that a significant but negative relationship exists regarding the overall construct of conflict types (specifically, task conflict) and race. Previous research supports the finding that cultural diversity increases task conflict (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). Scholars (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn et al., 1999; Jehn & Greer, 2013) advance the notion that social category diversity issues (e.g. race and gender) result in individuals forming their own value systems, which they take to work. Value diversity increases relationship, task and process conflict (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn et al., 1999; Jehn & Greer, 2013) when members rally around others in similar categories, or because of different backgrounds (Pelled, 1996). The implication for conflict management is that not only does race potentially influence the manifestations and perceptions of the various conflict types, but the perceptions and manifestations may be influenced by different racial groupings.

Lastly, a significant negative relationship was found between race and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (1). This style is determined by making two propositions to which the participants have to respond, namely: *I try to find a middle course to resolve a deadlock*, and *I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks*. The negative correlations found imply that a compromising style may be perceived differently by the respective racial groups. Nonetheless, race was found to be positively related to an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (1). Questions on this style related specifically to whether respondents dealt with conflict with management in an obliging fashion, for example *I usually meet the needs of management*; *I give in to the wishes of management*; and *I generally try to satisfy the needs of management in conflict situations*. This may imply that all the racial groups often choose to accommodate the needs and wishes of management. This finding may relate to the finding relating to the lack of speaking up behaviour (see section 8.1.3.2) – should employees choose to accommodate management, they would not engage in speaking up behaviour initiatives.

(b) *Gender*

Significant negative correlations were observed between males and females with regard to the overall construct of employee voice (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, and speaking up). This implies that males and females may differ in their experiences around voice behaviour. This finding is in line with research that indicates that diversity issues such as gender may influence employees' tendency to voice their opinions and perceptions, or to remain silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). The implication for conflict management is that males and females will not engage in similar voice behaviours, and gender should thus be considered when constructing a conflict management framework.

Significant negative correlations to gender were observed with regard to organisational engagement. This negative association may indicate that males and females experience organisational engagement in different ways. According to Kahn's (1990) seminal work, women are often undermined and subsequently may feel unsafe to fully engage in their work roles because their anxieties limit the energy they have to fully engage. Recent research (Schaufeli, 2018) indicates that countries with gender equality experience higher levels of employee engagement than countries with unequal societies. South African women still have to cope with various inequalities and stereotypes, and are judged in terms of their biological sex and from a sociological perspective (Mayer et al., 2018). These research findings may explain the current research finding on the differences evident in correlations between gender and organisational

engagement. Gender is thus a socio-demographic characteristic to consider in engagement initiatives, and hence, when managing conflict.

Significant negative correlations were observed between the genders with regard to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The negative correlations indicate that males and females may have different perceptions regarding conflict management, perceptions that will need to be considered in any conflict management framework. Previous research (Budd et al., 2017) confirms that males and females differ on various aspects relating to conflict, although contradictory results were found on *how* the genders differ (Ome, 2013). Nonetheless, as more women join the labour market (Festus et al., 2016), issues such as discrimination and stereotyping, and potentially thus conflict, increase (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Budd et al., 2017).

Significant negative relationships were indicated regarding some of the conflict type subvariables and gender, while positive associations were also found. Firstly, the current research suggests significant negative relationships between gender and conflict resolution potential. In other words, the existing association indicates that males and females differ in the extent to which they view potential to resolve conflict (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Jehn (1997) argues that individual characteristics, group structure and dimensions of conflict (e.g. emotionality) have the biggest influence on whether individuals view conflict as resolvable, or not. The current research finding is thus in line with previous research.

Secondly, significant negative relationships were found between gender and group atmosphere. Jehn's (1995, 1997) scale of group atmosphere considers the effect of positive or negative group atmosphere on the different types of conflict, based on the prevalence (or absence) of high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members, and low competition. This finding implies an association between gender and group atmosphere that may differ between males and females.

Thirdly, a significant positive relationship was observed between the genders and relational conflict. This implies that organisational members' experience of relational conflict may be related to their gender. This is in line with previous research (Ayub & Jehn, 2010; Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled et al., 1999) that stressed that social identity and social categorisation processes increase relational conflict. Generally, research suggests that men experience significantly more relational conflict than do women (Ismail et al., 2012).

Significant negative and positive associations were found between males and females, and their use of interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is in line with research that confirms an association between gender and choice of conflict handling style that may differ based on sexual category (Ome, 2013; Rahim, 1983). Firstly, significant negative relationships were found between gender and the integrating and dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2). This implies an association between males and females, and the integrating and dominating styles that may differ depending on the gender category. Secondly, a significant positive relationship was found between gender and an avoidant leader conflict behaviour, and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2) respectively, implying that the choice of interpersonal conflict handling style is related to gender. Organisational members often avoid conflict altogether in the hope that it will resolve itself (Katz & Flynn, 2013). This is worrying, as Parmer (2018) explains that people with an avoiding conflict style neglect the fulfilment of their own and the other party's needs and concerns. However, other research contradicts the finding that conflict is mostly avoided. Fotohabadi and Kelly (2018) argue that organisational leaders generally use an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style, followed by a compromising and then a dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles, while the obliging and avoiding styles are least used. The current research supports this finding.

Previous research found that relationship conflict was positively related to avoidance behaviour (Benitez et al., 2018; De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001a; O'Neill et al., 2013), while task conflict does not lead to members avoiding each other. Bear et al. (2014) posit that women are more likely to avoid relational conflict. According to Bear et al. (2014), an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style in the context of relational conflict mitigates the negative emotions of emotional exhaustion for men but not for women. Nonetheless, Bear et al. (2014) advance that avoiding relational conflict leads to higher levels of emotional exhaustion, and as such, women need to find alternative ways of managing conflict. However, as relationship conflict leads to interpersonal difficulties, avoidance may be a way to deal with the conflict to ensure continued team performance (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; O'Neill et al., 2013).

(c) *Age*

With reference to age, significant positive correlations were observed for the following employee voice variables: the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out and speaking up. This implies that organisational members' age may influence initiatives to foster employee voice in organisations, as well as in conflict situations. This is in line with research that postulates that age may influence

employees' tendency to voice their opinions and perceptions, or rather to remain silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Differences in age may also play a role in whether voice results in conflict. For example, Ali Arain et al. (2018) argue that employees younger than 25 years use prohibitive voice more frequently than their colleagues aged 31 to 35, and that this may contribute to the possible differences in experience, work pressure and tolerance for dysfunction between the two groups.

Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was observed between age and employee engagement (the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement, and organisational engagement). This implies that age influences the way organisational members engage with their work roles and organisational roles. Hoole and Bonnema (2015) confirm that a significant relationship exists between various generational cohorts and their experience of engagement, although Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) indicate that engagement is only weakly positively related to employees' age. Still, a significant difference was found in a South African study between Baby Boomers who are mostly engaged in their work, and Generations X and Y who display lower engagement (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015).

On the one hand, significant positive relationships were found between age and the following conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) variables: conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), and lastly, a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (2). On the other hand, negative correlations were found between age and the subscales of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale and all four types of conflict (task, relational, process and status conflict). Furthermore, negative correlations were found between age and an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), as well as an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (2). These relationships are discussed below.

Firstly, a significant positive relationship was found between age and conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, respectively. This implies a relationship between age and these two subconstructs, where the different generational cohorts may have different views on the potential to resolve conflict and on group atmosphere. Secondly, significant negative correlations were found between age and the subscales of Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale and all four types of conflict (task, relational, process and status conflict). Some prior support (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Ismail et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 1999; Jehn & Greer, 2013; Pelled, 1996; Urick et al., 2016) for this notion was found in research indicating that visible differences and social category diversity, such

as age variances, may affect relationship and other types of conflict. Stereotyping increases conflict; indeed, research indicates that diverse generations may be prone to conflict, even when no interactions have yet taken place (Urlick et al., 2016). The current research finding thus confirms a relationship between age and participants' experiences of the different types of conflict; and that the different generations may perceive conflict types differently.

Furthermore, significant positive relationships were found between age and some of the interpersonal conflict handling styles, namely, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), and lastly, a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (2). This implies that age should be considered when managing conflict. Furthermore, significant negative correlations were found between age and an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), as well as an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (2). This implies a relationship between age and these conflict handling styles, such that these may differ depending on age. This is in line with prior research that suggests that age influences the use and effectiveness of avoiding and constructive conflict management strategies, with older employees showing higher professionalism than their younger colleagues while also being more likely than their younger colleagues to avoid conflict (Beitler et al., 2016). Parmer's research (2018) also suggests that the collaborating and competing styles of conflict management have a strong relationship with age, with older employees showing strong correlations with collaborative conflict management styles. In contrast, younger generations (aged 18–25) related significantly to competitive-type conflict management styles (Parmer, 2018).

(d) Qualifications

Negative, significant correlations were observed between qualifications, and the leadership subvariables of leader-member social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, respectively. This implies a relationship between these leadership aspects and the qualification level of organisational members that may lead to differing perceptions of leader exchange behaviour and leader collaborative conflict behaviour. Prior research confirms the importance of education and experience in leader outcomes and behaviour (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007; Echevarria et al., 2017).

Moreover, significant but negative relationships were found between qualifications and organisational culture (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes). This implies a relationship between level of qualification and organisational culture;

one where organisational members with different education levels may differ in their perceptions of organisational culture. Qualification level should thus be included when an organisational culture is considered that is conducive to the way conflict is managed. This finding is confirmed by prior research that argues that employees with higher qualifications are more open to innovative and learning organisational cultures that also consider creative ways of managing conflict and the formation of a conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012).

Qualifications correlated significantly and negatively with employee engagement (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement, organisational engagement). This implies a relationship between the engagement levels and qualification level of organisational members, which may differ between organisational members with different qualification levels. This is in line with previous research that confirms that there are significant differences in the way varying qualifications predict employee engagement at work (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011). However, contradicting research findings exist on the exact nature of this relationship. Some scholars (Jackson & Rothmann, 2004) advance the notion that individuals with lower education levels are more engaged, while other research has found that academics with doctoral degrees are more engaged than their counterparts with a four-year degree (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). Nonetheless, when engagement initiatives are used as a strategic initiative to assist in the management of conflict, qualification level should be considered.

Similarly, a significant and negative relationship was found between qualification level and organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability). This implies a relationship between the qualification level and level of trust in an organisation, which may differ based on the level of qualification. When conflict is managed, the qualification level of organisational members should thus be considered in any organisational trust initiative. No prior research was found that addressed the matter of qualification level and organisational trust.

Two significant, negative correlations were observed regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles and qualification level. The finding suggests that a significant relationship exists between an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1) and an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (2) and varying qualification levels, respectively. The integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1) considers, for instance, the level at which an individual works with management to find solutions to a problem that will satisfy their expectations. The obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (2) relates to aspects such as an individual trying to satisfy

the expectations of management. The finding thus implies that differences in education level may influence perceptions and applications of these two conflict-handling styles. This is in line with previous research that argued that an individual's educational level influences the way that employee reacts during conflict and conflict management (Church, 1995). A conflict management framework should thus consider the educational level of organisational members and how this may influence the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles.

No positive correlations were observed between qualifications and any of the socio-demographic groups. This was perhaps to be expected as differences in educational background, training and work experience intensify the probability that various perspectives and opinions exist in a workgroup (Jehn et al., 1999).

(e) *Job level*

While a significant positive correlation was observed between job level and the subscale of collaborative leader conflict behaviour, a significant negative correlation was detected between job level and an avoidant leader conflict behaviour. This implies that the employment position (job level) of an organisational member might influence the way in which leader conflict behaviour is perceived. This is in line with research by Rahim (1983) that indicates that status amongst organisational members (for instance, being on the job level of management versus non-management) affects the way employees react to conflict. Also, although it is accepted that leaders should ideally follow a win-win style in resolving conflict, they may prescribe the ideal conflict management style to suit the situation (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Marquis & Huston, 1996; Rahim, 1983). Research suggests that leaders who use cooperative conflict management styles (i.e. integrating, obliging and compromising conflict management styles that indicate greater concern for others) enhance the social exchange process, improving trust and cooperation as well as voice behaviour (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b).

Significant positive correlations were found in the relationships between job level and the Innovative Cultures Scale, specifically regarding tolerance of conflict. This implies that job level within the organisational hierarchy should be considered in organisational culture initiatives, specifically in relation to a culture that tolerates conflict. This is in line with research that suggests that organisational culture is entrenched by leadership (Schein, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013) as lower-level leaders imitate higher-level leaders, and organisational members imitate their leaders and supervisors (Zanda, 2018).

Significant positive correlations were found between job level and the overall employee voice construct (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, and the Voice Measure (granting of employee voice opportunities). This implies that the job level of an organisational member may influence how employee voice is perceived and applied. This is in line with previous research that suggests that qualification levels influence the perception of voice, with more qualified employees experiencing voice initiatives better (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). A conflict management framework that incorporates voice behaviour should thus consider employee voice behaviours at various job levels; and should implement voice mechanisms all employees can relate to.

Significant and positive relationships were observed between the overall employee engagement construct (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales), and specifically organisational engagement and job level. Kahn (1990) explains that the more influence and status in a work role, the more individuals shape their own roles, allowing for an increase in engagement levels. This implies that when conflict is managed through employee engagement initiatives, the job level of organisational members should be considered.

Significant positive correlations are evident between job level and organisational trust (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability). This finding implies that organisational members' job levels influence their levels of organisational trust – a relationship that needs consideration when constructing a conflict management framework. Gilbert and Tang (1998) suggest that job status positively relates to group cohesion, and that group cohesion is positively related to organisational trust.

Significant positive relationships were observed between job level and conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, respectively. Moreover, significant positive correlations were detected for the integrating (1 and 2) and dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles; while negative correlations were observed for the obliging (2) and avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that the job level of organisational members relates to how conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere are perceived and conflict handled. Although the use of an integrating and dominating style may thus not differ according to job level, an obliging and avoiding style may have differing relationships according to job level. This is in line with research that posits that a team's hierarchal position in the organisation determines its conflict dynamics (Jehn & Greer, 2013). The more advanced in the hierarchy of an organisation, the better equipped individuals are to manage difficult interpersonal situations (De Wit et al., 2012).

(f) *Income level*

Significant positive correlations were observed with all the employee voice subscales, job engagement, the subscales of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and the integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Very little information is available on the relationships between income and the various constructs of relevance to the research. The implication for a conflict management framework is that individuals' level of income significantly influences their perceptions about conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Some previous research (Crawford et al., 2010; Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001) has been conducted on the relationship between income level and employee engagement, arguing that engagement is enhanced by a fitting recognition and reward system, fairmindedness and perceptions of justice. This implies that a conflict management framework that incorporates a strategic focus on increasing engagement levels should consider the heterogeneity of income and reward systems in the organisation.

Significant negative associations were also observed in the current research between income level and the obliging (1) and avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Moreover, negative correlations were observed with process conflict. A conflict management framework should thus consider that differing income levels amongst organisational members (also implying differing levels of experience and tenure) might influence the prevalence of process conflict. This finding is in line with research (Jehn et al., 1999) that indicates that varying levels of work experience increase the possibility of opposing perspectives and thoughts within a workgroup, which potentially increase task or process conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). Moreover, Rahim (1983) found that status in organisational groups (e.g. being supervisors, subordinates or peers, which relates to income level) influences the way employees react to conflict. For instance, employees are more obliging with their supervisors, and more integrating and compromising with their peers and subordinates, when handling conflict.

(g) *Tenure*

A significant negative relationship was detected between tenure and the organisational trust construct of dependability. This implies that organisational members' dependability varies depending on their length of service in an organisation. This is in line with prior research (Gilbert & Tang, 1998) confirming that longer tenure potentially increases emotions of either being trapped in an organisation – which may negatively influence organisational trust – or increasing

organisational loyalty. One may thus argue that this may then also potentially influence dependability. The implication for a conflict management framework is that tenure may influence the contributing role organisational trust may play in how conflict management is perceived by organisational members. In addition, tenure related significantly negatively to an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2). The longer organisational members are in the service of an organisation, the less they will react in an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style, and vice versa.

(h) Employment status

Organisational members' employment status (e.g. permanent versus part-time employees) had significant negative relationships with speaking out and with job engagement. This implies that employees' type of appointment might influence whether employees speak out and how engaged they are with their jobs. Employment status may therefore influence the management of conflict, specifically in relation to voice behaviours and job engagement. No previous research on this matter was found.

(i) Trade union representation and trade union membership

A number of significant relationships were observed between the various subconstructs and trade union representation, as well as union membership. Firstly, significant positive relationships were found between trade union representation and trade union membership respectively, and perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, the overall subconstruct of leader conflict behaviour and more specifically, collaborative leader conflict behaviour respectively. Secondly, a significant negative relationship was found between union membership and an avoidant leader conflict behaviour. These findings imply that union representation and union membership might affect the way in which leaders and employees view their reciprocal relationships and might influence leader conflict behaviours, specifically concerning a collaborative or an avoidant leader conflict behaviour. When organisational members belong to a union, leaders engage less in avoidant leader conflict behaviour.

Secondly, a significant positive relationship was found between trade union representation and trade union membership respectively and all the organisational culture subscales (overall organisational construct, allowance for mistakes and tolerance for conflict). In other words, when unions are represented in organisations and employees belong to unions, an organisational culture of allowing mistakes and tolerating conflict is more prevalent. Moreover, a significant

positive relationship was found between trade union representation and trade union membership, and the overall multidimensional employee voice construct respectively; implying that voice increases with union presence. Union voice is thus complemented with other forms of employee voice (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). Trade union membership had a significantly positive relationship with speaking out specifically. This is in line with the argument that while unions provide employees with collective voice, individual voice often gets lost in the process (Gilliland et al., 2014). These findings thus imply that the presence or absence of union representation and membership significantly influences the organisational culture, voice behaviour and perceptions on whether leaders grant voice opportunities, and should thus be considered in constructing a conflict management framework. The current findings confirm scholars' (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986) arguments that organisations should consider how parties engage with each other to adopt and implement conflict management practices. For instance, on a functional level, how do the organisation's culture and employee voice strategies influence the buy-in of trade unions and union members in a conflict management approach?

Thirdly, significant positive relationships were found between trade union representation and trade union membership respectively, and organisational engagement, as well as the overall organisational trust construct and the subconstructs of integrity, dependability and commitment. These findings imply that increased union presence (representation and membership) contributes to higher levels of organisational engagement and organisational trust. The reason for this finding may perhaps be found in the fact that organisations with trade union representation and union member presence normally hold a pluralistic view to their ER, and accept conflict as a natural phenomenon between employers and employees who hold differing viewpoints and goals (Fox, 1966). Effective collective consultation with union representatives, if there are any, assists in reinforcing employees' trust in management (Emmott 2015). Lipsky and Avgar (2010) also argue that organisations should involve all stakeholders (e.g. employees and unions) in the design of a conflict management system, especially as unions are prone to view such systems as a strategy of union avoidance (Lipsky & Avgar, 2010). Acknowledging these aspects may perhaps contribute to increased engagement and organisational trust. Hence, organisations should take cognisance of the potentially significant role the presence or absence of unions plays regarding engagement and trust, and subsequently in conflict management.

Fourthly, significant positive correlations were detected between trade union representation and trade union membership respectively, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal

conflict handling styles). It is imperative to investigate how conflict and conflict management systems vary between unionised and non-unionised environments and whether a difference in conflict manifestation and management is evident at the workplace level (Avgar, 2017). Regarding the construct of conflict types, the following relationships were evident: A significant positive relationship was found with conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. This implies that union registration and membership might positively influence the perceptions of group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential. Negative correlations were observed for both trade union representation and trade union membership, and the various conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict). In other words, as union presence (representation and membership) increases, fewer manifestations of the various conflict types are present. Trade union membership also correlated negatively with the overall multidimensional conflict types construct. The implication for a conflict management framework is that the absence or presence of union registration and membership influences the manifestation of various conflict types differently.

Fifthly, regarding the construct of interpersonal conflict handling styles, the following relationships were evident with trade union representation and trade union membership respectively. A significant positive relationship was found in turn with an integrating (1) and a dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that union representation and membership influence the handling of conflict in either a dominating or an integrating way. Trade union representation had a significant positive relationship with the overall interpersonal conflict handling styles construct. Subsequently, organisations should take cognisance of the potentially significant role unions play in conflict management.

(j) Workplace sector

Significant negative relationships were found between workplace sector and perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, as well as with the overall leader conflict behaviour subconstruct, specifically related to a collaborative leader conflict behaviour. These findings imply that different workplace sectors (private, semiprivate or public) influence the way leaders' exchange behaviour and conflict behaviours (specifically a collaborative leader conflict behaviour) are perceived. Additionally, a significantly positive relationship was observed between workplace sector and an avoidant leader conflict behaviour. An organisation's workplace sector may thus influence the way leadership is perceived – as such it may influence the role of leadership in a conflict management framework.

Significant negative relationships were observed between workplace sector and overall organisational culture, overall employee voice and overall organisational trust. In addition, significant negative relationships were observed between workplace sector and overall employee engagement, and specifically organisational engagement. This is in line with South African findings indicating that public sector employees experience employee engagement differently compared to private sector employees (Martins, 2015), as well as a British study that showed that public sector employees are less engaged than private sector employees (Kular et al., 2008).

Significant negative correlations were evident with conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, implying that workplace sector might influence perceptions on these aspects. Lastly, significant negative relationships were observed between workplace sector and the overall interpersonal conflict handling styles construct, and specifically with an integrating (1 and 2), an obliging (1), a dominating (1) and a compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. These findings imply that a conflict management framework should be constructed taking specific note of whether it is done for the private, government or semi-private sector.

(k) Number of employees and workplace size

Number of employees and workplace size both related significantly positively with the dominating leader conflict behaviour subscale; implying that the bigger the organisation, the more leaders engage in dominating leader conflict behaviour. In addition, a significantly negative relationship was observed with organisational size and employee numbers, and with the perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, the overall leader conflict behaviour construct and, more specifically, with a collaborative conflict behaviour. Hence, it is inferred that the bigger the organisation, the less perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour are present.

Significant negative relationships were observed with, respectively, number of employees and workplace size, and the overall organisational culture construct. Similarly, significant negative relationships were observed with, respectively, number of employees and workplace size, and the employee voice behaviour construct (specifically speaking out) and the (leaders grant) employee voice opportunities construct. In other words, the bigger the organisation, the less employees speak out or perceive that their leaders grant them voice opportunities. Workplace size showed a significantly negative relationship with speaking up, implying that the bigger the size of an organisation, the less employees engage in speaking up voice behaviour; an aspect

leaders should consider when constructing a conflict management framework. Significant negative relationships were also observed between, respectively, number of employees and workplace size, and overall employee engagement (specifically organisational engagement) and overall organisational trust and all its subvariables (dependability, integrity and commitment). This suggests that the bigger the organisation, the less employees engage (specifically with their organisation) and the less organisations are trusted.

Significant negative relationships were observed between, respectively, number of employees and workplace size, and conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Hence, the bigger the organisation the more employees perceive lower levels of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. However, positive correlations were observed for both number of employees and workplace size, and the various conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict). Subsequently, perceptions on the manifestation of the various conflict types increase as organisational size increases. This implies that the size of an organisation and the number of employees working there significantly influence the way in which the respective conflict types, conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere are perceived, and may therefore influence the construction of a conflict management framework significantly. Moreover, significant negative correlations were observed with the overall interpersonal conflict handling styles construct, and specifically, with the integrating (1 and 2), obliging (1 and 2), and dominating (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Number of employees showed a significant negative correlation with a compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. It is thus concluded that workplace size and number of employees might influence conflict management and should be taken into consideration when constructing a conflict management framework.

(I) Formal employee engagement programme

Whether organisations had a formal employee engagement programmes or not showed a significant negative relationship with perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, as well as with the overall leader conflict behaviour construct (specifically with collaborative leader conflict behaviour). In other words, organisations with such a programme increase perceptions of exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. A significant positive relationship with an avoidant leader conflict behaviour was observed, implying that without a formal programme, leaders avoid conflict, whereas conflict is not avoided when an employee engagement programme is implemented. Moreover, significant negative correlations were observed with the overall organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and

organisational trust constructs, and with conflict resolution potential. Regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles, significant negative correlations were observed between the absence of a formal employee engagement programme in an organisation, and integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2), and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles (2) style, while a significant positive correlation was observed between the absence of a formal programme and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. These findings imply that a formal employee engagement programme might have a significant influence on the way a conflict management framework is constructed.

However, contrary to what was expected, no significant relationships were indicated between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) or the mediating variables of organisational trust and race, tenure and employment status (with the exception of speaking out which showed a significant relationship with employment status). A significant relationship was noted between race and task conflict. Leadership, organisational culture and organisational trust also did not correlate with age, income level, or with gender (apart from an avoidant interpersonal conflict handling style). No significant relationships existed between employee voice and qualification, or between tenure and employee engagement (job and organisational engagement). Employment status was the only socio-demographic grouping that had no significant relationship with any of the styles of interpersonal conflict handling.

8.1.3.2 Relationships between the independent and mediator variables

A number of relationship dynamics were evident between the various independent constructs and the mediating constructs of the study, as portrayed in Table 7.6. Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

(a) Leadership

Significant positive relationships between perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and overall leader conflict behaviour and the overall employee engagement construct (medium practical effect) were observed, specifically also with job engagement (medium practical effect) and organisational engagement (large practical effect). This is in line with prior research by scholars that confirms the importance of leadership (e.g. Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Caniëls et al., 2018) and high quality leader-member exchange relationships (Breevaart et al., 2015) in promoting employee engagement. This finding may explain why participants are only moderately engaged and show low engagement with their organisations (i.e. their role as members of an

organisation). Extant literature confirms that strong leadership positively enhances work engagement (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, et al., 2014; Caniëls et al., 2018; Sahoo & Mishra, 2012). Specifically, empowering leadership behaviour influences positive work engagement (Mendes & Stander, 2011), while transformational leadership behaviours lead to employees who recognise the importance of their work and thus set work and personal goals important to them. This leads to greater engagement and trust between leaders and their followers (Bono & Judge, 2003; Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, et al., 2014) and implies that positive perceptions of reciprocal behaviour will positively affect engagement (in particular, organisational engagement) at the workplace.

Furthermore, a significant positive relationship with a large practical effect was evident between perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and overall leader conflict behaviour, and the overall organisational trust construct, and specifically also with the three subconstructs of integrity, commitment and dependability. Thus, positive leader social exchange behaviour might increase organisational trust and vice versa. Consiglio et al. (2016) confirm that strong relationships between leaders and their followers in workplaces enhance a sense of belonging, and instil trust. Based on the principles of social exchange theory, moderate levels of leader social exchange behaviour as indicated in the present research may explain why only a moderate level of trust in participants' organisations was indicated. Based on the theory of social exchange (Blau, 1964), these findings further supports the importance of dual concern behaviour by leaders.

Specifically, avoidant leader conflict behaviour has a significantly negative relationship with all the employee engagement and organisational trust constructs and subconstructs. According to Gounaris et al. (2016), while an accommodating and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style instils trust, applying an avoiding style does not inspire a trusting relationship. This implies that the type of leader conflict behaviour that is applied might affect levels of engagement and organisational trust either negatively or positively. Previous research (Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017; Tuncdogan et al., 2017) also stresses the importance of leadership behaviour in applying appropriate actions and solutions to problems in various situations, thereby positively influencing the wellbeing of employees and organisations. These findings should be considered in conflict management.

(b) Organisational culture and employee voice

Concerning the independent variables of organisational culture and employee voice, significant positive relationships were observed between all the employee engagement and all the organisational trust constructs and subconstructs. In particular, significantly positive relationships with a large effect were found between an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and allows for mistakes, and integrity, commitment, dependability and the overall organisational trust scale (Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey). In addition, a significantly positive relationship with a large effect was noted between an organisational culture that allows for mistakes and organisational engagement, as well as the overall organisational trust scale (Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey). Moreover, significantly positive relationships with a large effect were found between the Overall Voice Behavior Measure, and organisational engagement, integrity, commitment, dependability and the overall organisational trust scale (Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey). According to Kular et al. (2008), high-engagement workplaces have leaders who create safe trusting organisational cultures, where employees are willing to express their ideas. Thus, literature confirms that both organisational culture and employee voice positively affect employee engagement and organisational trust (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Costa, 2003; Greco et al., 2006; Keen, 1990; Men, 2012, Rofcanin et al., 2017; Welbourne & Schramm, 2017). Subsequently, it is deduced that constructive perceptions of organisational culture and employee voice (and their various subconstructs) may have a positive influence on levels of employee engagement and organisational trust, and should be considered in a strategic conflict management framework.

8.1.3.3 Relationships between the independent and dependent variables

A number of relationship dynamics were evident between the various independent and dependent constructs of the study. Table 7.7 has reference. Small, moderate and large practical effects were evident.

(a) Leadership

With reference to the independent variable of leadership, significant negative relationships were observed between, respectively, perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, and the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict). This implies that negative perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and/or a decline or absence of a collaborative leader conflict style may influence an increase in the

manifestation of task, relational, process and status conflict. This finding confirms prior research by Tanveer et al. (2018), which posits that a strong positive relationship is evident between the type of leadership style (e.g. transactional versus transformational), conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Furthermore, the current research shows that the overall subconstruct of leader conflict behaviour has a significant negative relationship with relational conflict. It is therefore inferred that the way leaders behave during conflict (e.g. collaborative or avoidant) may affect to varying degrees the manifestation (or not) of relational conflict, and should thus be considered in a conflict management framework. Tanveer et al. (2018) confirm this finding by indicating a strong relationship specifically between leadership style and relationship conflict. These findings further support the expectation that reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964) drives the way conflict manifests and is managed in organisations.

It is thus no surprise that significant negative relationships were observed between an avoidant leader conflict behaviour and, respectively, conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2) and a compromising (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that when leaders maintain high levels of an avoidant conflict behaviour, it might negatively affect perceptions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and give rise to lower levels of either integrating or compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles. Considering that dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) states that avoidance of conflict indicates low concern for self and others, this finding was to be expected – avoiding conflict rarely resolves it. Moreover, as group atmosphere is based on aspects such as trust and respect (Jehn, 1995, 1997), it would be negatively affected by an avoidant conflict behaviour that indicates low concern for self and others. In addition, an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style shows concern for self and others, while a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style indicates moderate concern for self and others and a give-and-take approach (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). Hence, none of these interpersonal conflict handling styles go hand in hand with avoidant leader conflict behaviour.

Confirming these arguments, the current research further observed significant positive relationships between, respectively, perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, and correspondingly, conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere and all the interpersonal conflict handling styles apart from an avoiding (1 and 2) style. In particular, the research indicated positive correlations with a large practical effect between perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and a collaborative leader conflict

behaviour, and group atmosphere. This implies that positive perceptions of leader reciprocal behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour might have a positive effect on conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and all the interpersonal conflict handling styles (apart from an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles). These significant relationships are in line with research that argues that leaders' interpersonal conflict handling styles greatly influence other individuals' styles of handling conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016).

Significant positive relationships were also evident between dominating and avoidant leader conflict behaviours and the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status), as well as with the overall multidimensional conflict types construct. This implies that high levels of dominating and avoidant conflict behaviours from leaders might result in high levels of the four conflict types, as well as with overall conflict types. Significant positive correlations were observed between a dominating leader conflict behaviour, and the obliging (1) and dominating (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles, as well as overall interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that when leaders use a dominating conflict behaviour, increased levels of the obliging and dominating interpersonal conflict handling styles may be prevalent. Similarly, a significant positive relationship were observed between an avoidant leader conflict behaviour and an avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling style. It may thus be deduced that should leaders avoid conflict, employees may follow suit and apply an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. Clearly, leaders' exchange behaviours and style of conflict behaviour (indicating concern for others or not) may significantly influence conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations.

These findings support the argument that when organisational members show concern for both themselves and others (Rahim, 1983), it results in positive reciprocal behaviour through social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), ensuring the constructive management of conflict in a collaborative pluralistic (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) manner. Hence, premises of collaborative pluralism, dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) are extended to act as one in a combined fashion.

(b) Organisational culture

Significant negative relationships were observed in the current research between overall organisational culture (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes), and respectively, the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status) and an avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict

handling style. This implies that positive perceptions about an organisation's culture (specifically whether it allows mistakes and tolerates conflict) might lessen perceptions and manifestations of the various conflict types. In addition, a negative relationship implies that a positive organisational culture might lessen usage of an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is in line with prior research (Gelfand et al., 2012) that suggests that the organisation's culture positively relates to how conflict is handled and perceived.

In a similar vein, significant positive relationships were observed between overall organisational culture and its subconstructs (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, the multidimensional overall construct of conflict types, the overall interpersonal conflict handling styles construct, and integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Particularly noteworthy was the positive relationship of a large practical effect size between an organisational culture that indicates a tolerance for conflict and conflict resolution potential, as well as group atmosphere. Correlations of a large practical effect were also noted between the overall Innovative Cultures scale and conflict resolution potential, as well as group atmosphere. This implies that strong perceptions about a positive organisational culture (allowing mistakes and tolerating conflict) might result in positive perceptions about conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, the multidimensional overall construct of conflict types, the overall interpersonal conflict handling styles construct, and integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Significant positive correlations were also observed between the overall organisational culture and allowance for mistakes, and the obliging (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Hence, the current research concludes that an organisational culture significantly relates to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Scholars (Chatman & O'Reilly 2016, O'Reilly et al., 1991) support this viewpoint, arguing that organisational culture prompts behaviour of fit in organisations because it directs acceptable ways of (for instance) managing conflict by emphasising acceptable organisational values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly 2016). In this way, a conflict subculture is formed (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Moreover, it is argued that leaders' interpersonal conflict handling styles not only influence other individuals' styles of handling conflict, but also those of departments and organisations (Gelfand et al., 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). Henceforward, a group culture is shaped in an organisation that subsequently shapes individuals' conflict style (Gelfand et al., 2012). The findings above

support arguments that organisations need to create a conflict culture conducive to constructive conflict management (Gelfand et al., 2012). Additionally, it is argued that a collaborative pluralistic approach will instil a culture of cooperation (Gelfand et al., 2012; Imoisili, 2006, 2011) and dual concern, which may be supported by social exchange behaviour, thus enhancing the organisational culture, as well as a conflict culture built on the premises of social exchange and dual concern.

(c) *Employee voice*

Negative correlations were observed between, respectively, the Voice Behavior Measure (employee voice), speaking out, and the Overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), and relational, process and status conflict respectively. This implies that increased levels of, respectively, employee voice, speaking out and whether leaders grant voice opportunities result in fewer manifestations of (respectively) relational, process and status conflict. Speaking up also correlated negatively with status conflict, hence it is inferred that when employees engage in speaking up behaviour, fewer manifestations of status conflict occur. In other words, voice behaviours prevent (or at least lessen) the manifestation of various conflict types. Finding ways of lessening conflict is important, especially when seen in the light of research that posits that individuals in collectivist countries dislike conflict and therefore tend to resolve it through passive, collaborative or avoiding tactics, rather than in engaging in voice behaviour to resolve conflict (Hofstede, 1980a; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). Morrison and Milliken (2000) state that a pluralistic approach to workplace relationships enhances the use of meaningful voice and welcomes differing opinions. It is argued in the current research that collaborative pluralism (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) indicates dual concern (Rahim, 1983), resulting in reciprocal social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964), and that employee voice behaviour is instrumental to this notion. The current finding that voice has a negative relationship with the various conflict types is thus promising.

In addition, the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up and the Overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), all correlated negatively with avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Hence, it is reasoned that the less employees engage in voice behaviour, the more conflict is avoided. This is in line with prior research that showed that avoiding conflict negatively relates to employee voice and damages the social exchange relationship between leaders and their followers (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018).

Positive correlations were observed between, respectively, the Voice Behavior Measure (employee voice), speaking out, speaking up, and (respectively) conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Similarly, positive correlations were observed between, respectively, the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking up and the Overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities), and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the obliging (1) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Particularly noteworthy were the positive correlations of a large effect between speaking out and speaking up, as well as granting of voice opportunities and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style. Similarly, a positive relationship with a large effect was observed between speaking up voice behaviour and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2. The Overall Voice Measure (employee voice opportunities) also correlated positively with an obliging (2) interpersonal conflict handling style. It is therefore inferred that voice behaviour significantly influences conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

8.1.3.4 Relationships between the mediating and dependent variables

The next section provides a summary of the relationships found between the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust, and the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

(a) Employee engagement

All the employee engagement subscales (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement and organisational engagement) correlated negatively with, respectively, task, relational, process and status conflict types and avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is in line with research by Jungst and Blumberg (2016) that found that employees are less engaged in workplaces riddled with unpleasantness, such as with task (and it may be argued, other types of) conflict.

Positive correlations were observed between all the respective employee engagement subscales (Job and Organizational Engagement Scales, job engagement and organisational engagement) and respectively conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), obliging (1), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. The Job and Organizational Engagement Scale (overall

employee engagement) also correlated positively with the obliging (2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. Notably, the findings indicated a significant positive relationship with a large effect between organisational engagement and group atmosphere. These findings are in line with previous research that posits that a strong positive relationship is evident between conflict management, a supportive organisational culture and employee engagement (Emmott, 2015).

However, to the knowledge of the researcher no previous research has considered the relationships between employee engagement and all the various conflict types, or the various interpersonal conflict handling styles. The current research findings therefore contribute to extending the existing body of knowledge on these aspects. They also stress the importance of positive psychology in creating meaning in workplaces so that employees may feel energised and engaged (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), thereby influencing the organisation's approach to managing conflict constructively and proactively (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018). Hence, it is concluded that through a general approach of dual concern (Rahim, 1983), positive social exchange relationships (Blau, 1964) may stimulate the engagement levels of employees, thus enhancing conflict management in a collaborative pluralistic (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) manner.

(b) Organisational trust

All the organisational trust subscales (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey integrity, commitment and dependability) correlated negatively with task, relational, process and status conflict types respectively, and apart from dependability, also correlated negatively with an avoiding (2) interpersonal conflict handling style. This implies that when the various conflict types are prevalent in workplaces, and/or when an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style is implemented, organisational trust (including integrity, commitment and dependability) is diminished. Specially, the Overall Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey and the three organisational trust subconstructs of integrity, commitment and dependability correlated significantly positively with a large effect with conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. These findings are supported by prior research. Scholars argue that when trust is low, perceptions of relational conflict increase (Simons & Peterson, 2000); in fact, task, relationship and process conflicts are negatively related to trust (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Moreover, an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style decreases trust levels (Gounaris et al., 2016).

Positive correlations were observed between all the respective organisational trust subscales (Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey, integrity, commitment and dependability) and conflict

resolution potential, group atmosphere, Jehn's Intragroup Conflict Scale, ROCI-II and the integrating (1 and 2), obliging (1 and 2), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is in line with research by Ndubisi (2011) that found that interpersonal conflict handling styles that are integrating, accommodating and compromising enhance organisational trust. It is concluded that when high levels of organisational trust (including integrity, commitment and dependability) are prevalent, perceptions of conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere, conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles indicating some concern for self and/or others are enhanced. Organisational trust thus positively influences conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This is in line with previous research that posits that although conflict undermines trust (Nešić & Lalić, 2016), trust also reduces conflict (Zaheer et al., 1998). Scholars (Currie et al., 2017; Hodson, 2004) confirm that conflict at workplaces decrease when perceptions exist that organisations are trustworthy. Hence, it is concluded that when organisational trust is evident in organisations, positive relations with the various subconstructs of conflict in the current research will prevail.

These findings are all in line with the notion that when employers and managers respond sincerely to the concerns of their employees (Boxall, 2016) – also with dual concern during conflict management (Rahim, 1983) – organisational trust increases, ensuring a positive spiral of social exchange (Blau, 1964) and collaborative pluralism (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) to the benefit of all.

8.1.3.5 Relationships between the various independent variables

(a) Leadership

Significant positive correlations were observed between the leadership subscales (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale; Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and all of the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) and all the employee voice variables (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure). Specifically, perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour correlated significantly positively with a large effect with all organisational culture constructs (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes), as well as with granting of employee voice opportunities (the Voice Measure). This implies that positive associations and dynamics exist between leadership (perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour), organisational culture (overall organisational

culture, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and employee voice behaviour (overall employee voice, speaking out, speaking up, and perceptions of provision of voice opportunities) in organisations that will cohesively strengthen a conflict management framework.

Additionally, an avoidant leader conflict behaviour correlated negatively with all the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) and all the employee voice variables (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure). This implies that the more leaders behave in an avoidant conflict behaviour manner, the more it negatively influences an organisational culture that shows tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes, and employee voice behaviour (speaking up, speaking out, and perceptions of employee voice opportunities). Thus, leaders should not avoid conflict as this potentially weakens organisational culture and employee voice behaviour. Rather, conflict should be addressed in a collaborative fashion.

In contrast, collaborative leader conflict behaviour correlated significantly with a large effect with all the organisational culture constructs (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and with granting employee voice opportunities. Moreover, collaborative leader conflict behaviour correlated significantly with a moderate effect with the employee voice behaviours of speaking out and speaking up, and the overall Voice Behavior Measure.

It is interesting to note that significant positive correlations (but with a very small practical effect) were observed between dominant leader conflict behaviour and all the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, and allowance for mistakes); however, dominant leader conflict behaviour did not correlate significantly with any of the employee voice variables. This implies that this behaviour may show a positive association with an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and allows for mistakes. However, the practical effect of the correlations was very small. Although it was expected that a negative correlation would exist between dominant leader conflict behaviour and employee voice behaviours, this did not materialise in the findings.

(b) Organisational culture

All the organisational culture subscales (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) correlated positively with most of the leadership variables (Perceptions of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale; Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale,

collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and all the employee voice variables (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure). In particular, it was observed that the Innovative Cultures Scale (measuring overall organisational culture) and allowance for mistakes correlated significantly positively with a large effect with perceptions of leader social exchange, and leader conflict behaviour (specifically also collaborative leader conflict behaviour). Moreover, it was noted that an organisational culture that tolerates conflict correlated significantly positively with a large effect with perceptions of leader social exchange and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. These findings confirm that positive associations and dynamics exist between organisational culture (overall organisational culture, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and leadership (perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, overall leader conflict behaviour, and specifically collaborative leader conflict behaviour), as well as employee voice behaviour (overall employee voice, speaking out, speaking up, and perceptions of provision of voice opportunities) in organisations that together will support a conflict management framework.

However, all the organisational culture variables had a negative correlation with avoidant leader conflict behaviour, and had no significant correlations with dominant leader conflict behaviour. This finding again reiterates that leaders should not avoid conflict, as this will weaken organisational culture; rather they should address conflict in a collaborative fashion.

(c) Employee voice

All the employee voice subscales (the Voice Behavior Measure, speaking out, speaking up, the Voice Measure) correlated positively with most of the leadership variables (Perceptions Of Social Exchange Leadership Measurement Scale; Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale, collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and all the organisational culture variables (Innovative Cultures Scale, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes). In particular, granting employee voice opportunities (as measured by the Voice Measure) correlated significantly positively with a large effect to perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. However, all the employee voice variables had a negative correlation with avoidant leader conflict behaviour, and had no significant correlations with dominant leader conflict behaviour. These findings support the findings discussed above on leadership and organisational culture. They again reiterate the strong positive associations between employee voice behaviour (overall employee voice, speaking out, speaking up, and perceptions of provision of voice opportunities), organisational culture (overall organisational culture, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and leadership (perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, overall leader conflict

behaviour, and specifically collaborative leader conflict behaviour) in organisations that may strengthen a conflict management framework should these aspects be present in the organisation. Moreover, the negative significant correlation between employee voice and avoidant leader conflict behaviour again emphasises that avoidance of conflict is not conducive to increasing employee voice behaviours. Nonetheless, the descriptive statistical findings (section 7.2.1) indicated that participants mainly engage in speaking out behaviour (i.e. speaking to colleagues) and not in speaking up (i.e. speaking with their superiors) behaviour. This may be related to the finding of a relatively low mean score in the perceptions of participants regarding their leader-member social exchange behaviour.

8.1.3.6 *Main findings: Synthesis*

The correlations between the various constructs of the research were conducted in order to address empirical research aim 1. Overall, the correlational statistics confirm significant relationships between the various constructs of relevance to the research. Significant relationships in the expected directions were shown between the independent variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. All of these variables also showed significant relations in the expected directions with the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Significant positive relationships were evident between specifically two leadership constructs (i.e. leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and some of the other constructs of relevance to the research. In particular, leader social exchange behaviour showed positive relationships with a large effect with collaborative leader conflict behaviour, overall organisational culture (including tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes), granting of employee voice opportunities, organisational engagement, overall organisational trust (including integrity, commitment and dependability) and, lastly, group atmosphere. The importance of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) as the underlying foundation to conflict management is emphasised by these findings, notably the importance of the leader in indicating leader–follower social exchange behaviour. Secondly, leaders with a collaborative leader conflict behaviour showed significant positive relationships with a moderate to large effect to overall organisational culture (including tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes), granting of employee voice opportunities, overall employee engagement (including job and organisational engagement) and overall organisational trust (including integrity, commitment and dependability).

It may be argued that these findings stress the importance of the notion of dual concern (Rahim, 1983) in conflict management, as a collaborative conflict management style is indicative of concern for self and for others.

With regard to the independent variable of organisational culture (tolerating conflict and allowing for mistakes), significant positive relationships with a large effect size were found between these constructs and perceptions of leader social exchange, collaborative leader conflict behaviour, the overall organisational trust scale (Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey), as well as integrity, commitment and dependability. Particularly noteworthy was the positive relationship of a large practical effect size between an organisational culture that indicates a tolerance for conflict and conflict resolution potential, as well as group atmosphere. This implies that when organisations show tolerance for conflict, the potential to resolve conflict is enhanced, as is the group atmosphere of the organisation.

Relating to employee voice, the third independent variable, the following noteworthy relationships were observed. Firstly, granting employee voice opportunities (as measured by the Voice Measure) correlated significantly positively with a large effect to perceptions of social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Secondly, significant positive relationships with a large effect were found between the Overall Employee Voice Behavior Measure, and the mediating constructs of organisational engagement, the overall organisational trust construct (Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey) and the organisational subconstructs of integrity, commitment and dependability. Thirdly, and particularly noteworthy, were the positive correlations of a large effect between the voice behaviours of speaking out and speaking up, the granting of voice opportunities and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style, and between speaking up voice behaviour and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (2). These findings imply that when employee voice behaviours are active, the social exchange behaviour of leadership, organisational engagement and organisational trust are enhanced. Moreover, voice behaviour relates positively to dual concern behaviour, as a positive relationship with collaborative leader conflict behaviour and a compromising and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style was evident.

Lastly, the findings indicated a significant positive relationship with a large effect between the mediating variable of organisational engagement and group atmosphere; as well as between overall organisational trust (as measured by the Overall Trust & Employee Satisfaction Survey) and the three organisational trust subconstructs of integrity, commitment and dependability, and

conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. This implies that heightened organisational engagement and organisational trust enhance group atmosphere, while organisational trust is also related to the potential to resolve conflict.

These findings are in line with the principles of the theoretical frameworks of collaborative pluralism (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and dual-concern theory (Rahim, 1983). It is concluded that these theoretical frameworks feature strongly in the relationships between the antecedents, the mediators and the outcome variables, as confirmed by the bivariate correlational analysis in the current research.

A first assessment of the degree to which the data supported the integrated theorised psychosocial framework proposed in Chapter 5 (see Figure 5.1) was provided by the bivariate correlational analysis of the relationships between the respective variables of the research. The reported correlations provided evidence of associations, which warranted further investigation, even though all the theorised relationships between the variables were not empirically confirmed. The results thus provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H1 (see Table 7.53).

8.1.3.7 Counterintuitive findings

Various counterintuitive results relating to relationships between the respective socio-demographic variables were observed and are discussed next.

(a) Race

It was expected that a significant negative relationship would exist between the various racial groups and relationship conflict. However, although a significant negative relationship was found with the multidimensional construct of conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict, as well as group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential), when considered individually, the only relationship that was significant was the one with task conflict. However, previous research suggests that racial and cultural backgrounds significantly affect conflict experiences in the workplace (Ayub & Jehn, 2014. Jehn et al., 1999; Mestry & Bosch, 2013). Scholars (Pelled 1996; Pelled et al., 1999) have found that a significant positive relationship exists between relational conflict and the diversity aspects of race, gender, age and tenure. Lastly, it was expected that race would show relationships with leadership, especially as research suggests that African leadership has a humane and person-centric relational approach that acknowledges the interdependence between people (Patterson & Winston, 2017). However, no relationship was

evident in the current research. It was hypothesised that race would predict organisational culture. Nonetheless, no significant relationships were found. This finding may relate to the fact that manageable tension deriving from diversity conflict may induce greater awareness and change initiatives – as is often the case in South Africa where various diversity programmes are regularly implemented. It may also be that organisational cultures in South Africa already embrace racial and cultural diversity, and thus manage diversity conflict – as advised – by promoting harmony and trust building (Coleman et al., 2017). Furthermore, it was expected that race would show correlations with employee voice, which it did not. This is counterintuitive as research on collectivist societies (such as South Africa) indicates that they view conflict with dislike and resolve it using passive, collaborative or avoiding tactics – employees will thus not easily engage in voice behaviour to resolve conflict (Hofstede, 1980a; Park & Nawaikitphaitoon, 2018). Moreover, previous research (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018, Wilkinson et al., 2018) suggests that high levels of workplace diversity (e.g. due to racial differences) result in organisational members not expressing their views. Contrary to expectations raised by previous research (Hofmeyr & Marais, 2013; Ndubisi, 2011), race also did not show a significant correlation with organisational trust.

(b) Gender

Although it was hypothesised that individuals from different gender groups would differ regarding leadership (apart from an avoidant leader conflict behaviour) and organisational culture, and organisational trust, no significant relationships in this regard were detected. Additionally, although a relationship was expected between gender and relational conflict, the relationship direction was positive and not negative as expected.

(c) Age

It was expected that correlations would be observed between the various participants with differing ages (e.g. according to generational cohorts) and viewpoints on leadership and organisational culture. This was based on prior research indicating that the various generational cohorts have differing work values and attitudes (Costanza et al., 2012) and have differing expectations of organisational culture (Eversole et al., 2012). It was also expected that age and/or generational cohorts and organisational trust might correlate, as Schloegel et al. (2018) suggest that bias and stereotyping based on age hamper trust; however, no significant correlations were observed.

(d) Qualification

Counter to expectations, no relationship was observed between voice behaviour and qualification levels. Previous research indicates that education levels (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Katou, 2018) influence voice behaviours. Moreover, it was expected that a relationship might be observed between education level and the propensity for conflict types, as educational background shapes various viewpoints (Church, 1995; Jehn et al., 1999, Strasser, 1992); however, no such relationship was evident.

(e) Income level

Counter to expectations, no relationship was observed between any of the leadership, organisational culture or organisational trust variables. Moreover, it was hypothesised that a relationship would be evident between income level and task, status and relational conflict. However, the only relationship that was noted was between income level and process conflict.

(f) Tenure

Although it was predicted that tenure would significantly influence leadership, organisational culture, employee voice and employee engagement, no significant relationships were observed. Furthermore, it was surprising that tenure had such an insignificant relationship with the various conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Even though prior research indicates that tenure heterogeneity is negatively associated with relational and task conflict – in fact, that tenure has a stronger relationship with task conflict than age, gender or race (Pelled et al., 1999) – no significant relationship in this regard was found in the current research. Moreover, a negative relationship was only observed between tenure and an obliging interpersonal conflict handling style, while it was expected that other relationships would surface. It is deduced that tenure is therefore less important in a conflict management framework.

(g) Formal employee engagement programmes

Counter to predictions, significant negative correlations with only a small effect were observed with the overall organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust constructs and with conflict resolution potential, implying that the absence of a formal employee engagement programme will negatively relate to these factors. Similarly, significant negative correlations were observed with the integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles (1 and 2), and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (2), implying a negative

relationship between the absence of an employee engagement programme and the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles indicating dual concern (Rahim, 1983). Given the general support of employee engagement initiatives, it was expected that stronger relationships would be evident.

8.1.4 Empirical research aim 2: Canonical correlations

The canonical correlations formed the first stage of the inferential statistics. Empirical research aim 2, section 7.4.1, and Tables 7.16 and 7.17 are of relevance to this section.

Empirical research aim 2: To determine the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

The magnitude and directions of the bivariate correlations, as discussed in section 8.1.3 above, provided an early suggestion of the importance of the respective independent (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and mediating (employee engagement and organisational trust) variables in predicting conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in the workplace.

Significant associations were confirmed through the canonical correlation results between

- (1) the composite set of independent variates (collaborative leader conflict behaviour, perceptions of social exchange leadership, tolerance of conflict [organisational culture], employee voice [speaking out, speaking up, employee voice opportunities]; and the mediating employee engagement [job engagement and organisational engagement], and organisational trust [integrity, commitment, dependability] variables), and
- (2) the composite set of dependent variables, namely, conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2 and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2).

The above finding shows that the leadership constructs of collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership; an organisational culture that tolerates conflict; overall employee voice (speaking out, speaking up, employee voice opportunities); overall employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement); and overall

organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were the strongest organisational and psychological factors in explaining conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) – specifically in relation to conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2 and compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2). The various constructs highlighted by the canonical results as most important for a conflict management framework are discussed in more detail below.

8.1.4.1 The role of leadership

The findings suggest several important aspects leaders in organisations should consider when managing conflict. Firstly, the canonical results emphasise the importance of a collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Gelfand et al. (2012) explain that collaborative conflict behaviour implies that the management in organisations encourages employees to resolve conflict using a problem-solving approach, treating it as an opportunity to develop and grow. As leader–member exchange behaviour at its core involves reciprocal interaction processes (Tse et al., 2018), it may be deduced that leaders' collaborative approach to conflict may very well foster similar behaviours in their employees. This is in line with previous research that suggests that collaborative conflict behaviour emphasises the importance of finding creative solutions so that a win–win scenario may unfold (Gelfand et al., 2012). Leaders who engage in collaborative conflict behaviour, emphasise constructive negotiations and joint problem solving through a cooperative and proactive approach (Gelfand et al., 2012). Such leadership behaviour thus supports a social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964) as well as a dual concern approach (Rahim, 1983; Rahim et al., 2018) to ER, and specifically to the management of conflict.

These approaches to conflict management was reiterated by the second leadership aspect highlighted by the canonical results, namely, the importance of perceptions of social exchange that transpire between leaders and their subordinates in their daily dealings and specifically in conflict situations. When leaders employ cooperative (integrating, cooperation and obliging) conflict management styles, social exchange behaviours increase employees' perceptions of psychological safety, trust and employee voice behaviours (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). Considering Blau's social exchange theory (1964), it was assumed that the way leaders deal with conflict would influence the way followers respond to conflict behaviour, thus enhancing collaborative conflict behaviours.

These findings were supported by the bivariate correlational analysis (section 8.1.3.3(a)) which indicated significant negative relationships between perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour as well as the four conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict). The magnitude and direction of these results implied that negative perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, and/or a decline or absence of a collaborative leader conflict style, may influence an increase in the manifestation of task, relational, process and status conflict. Tanveer et al. (2018) also confirmed a strong relationship between the type of leadership style (e.g. transactional versus transformational), conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Specifically, the current research shows that the overall subconstruct of leader conflict behaviour has a significant negative relationship with relational conflict. It is concluded that the way leaders behave during conflict (e.g. collaborative or avoidant) may affect the manifestation (or not) of relational conflict to various degrees. Prior research (Rahim, 2002; Tanveer et al., 2018) confirmed a strong relationship between leadership style interpersonal conflict handling styles and relationship conflict.

8.1.4.2 The role of an organisational culture that tolerates conflict

The third finding of the canonical analysis indicates that an organisational conflict culture that tolerates conflict is important to consider as part of a conflict management framework. According to the research by Yeh and Xu (2010a, 2010b), tolerance of conflict is seen when employees respect the opinions and views of others, are willing to speak up and out – even when there are disagreements, and are willing to compromise when there is conflict at work. Leadership plays an important part in shaping an organisational culture. In fact, research suggests that the way leaders approach conflict is strongly associated with their organisations' conflict culture. Leaders simultaneously shape and are shaped by their organisations' shared and normative ways of managing conflict (Gelfand et al., 2012). In other words, leaders who predominantly engage in a collaborative fashion when conflict arises would most probably support a collaborative conflict culture.

Such a culture is important from an ER perspective, as scholars argue that collaborative conflict cultures are likely to positively relate to organisational justice perceptions because conflict is addressed open-mindedly and inclusive of the needs and concerns of others (Gelfand et al., 2012). In the current research, significant positive correlations were observed during the bivariate correlational analysis between the leadership subscales measuring perceptions of social exchange, leader conflict behaviours and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, and all of the

organisational culture variables. The canonical finding pointing to the importance of an organisational culture that tolerates conflict, as well as the importance of perceptions of social exchange leadership behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour, thus supports these correlational analysis findings. The finding is also in line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and a dual concern approach (Rahim, 1983; Rahim et al., 2018) to ER, and specifically to the management of conflict.

8.1.4.3 The role of employee voice behaviours

The fourth canonical finding emphasises the importance of employee voice (speaking up, speaking out, and granting voice opportunities) in conflict management. Voice is related to employee participatory practices in organisational decision-making, and thus assists the management of conflicts of interest between employees and employers (García et al., 2017). It is therefore regarded as vital in healthy employment relationships. A collaborative, pluralistic view acknowledges and welcomes diverse viewpoints and simultaneously regards conflict as natural – this perspective often improves the quality of decisions and, as such, organisational performance (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Isiaka et al. (2016) emphasise open communication and voice behaviour as a fundamental part of organisational life that boosts relationship building and ensures cooperative workplace behaviour between the role players (Deutsch, 1990). Additionally, employee voice increases perceptions of fair procedural justice (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b) and fairness in general (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018), thus assisting a conflict management agenda. Based on the principles of social exchange theory and dual concern, one may deduce that granting voice opportunities, and promoting speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, would benefit the management of conflict – as confirmed by the canonical analysis results.

However, encouraging employee voice in organisations necessitates a conducive organisational culture and strong leadership (Gupta et al., 2018; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). The positive relations pointed out in the bivariate correlational analysis between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice support this notion.

8.1.4.4 The role of employee engagement

The canonical findings emphasised the importance of both job and organisational engagement in conflict management and employee engagement is often seen as a measure of ER effectiveness (Amah, 2018; CIPD, 2012). Research suggests that employee engagement contributes to lesser manifestations of conflict but cannot eliminate conflict completely (Soieb et al., 2013).

Researchers (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) explain that when parties abide by exchange guidelines according to social exchange theory, relationships will grow to be trusting and loyal with mutual commitment. According to Saks (2006a), organisational engagement is fostered by aspects such as job characteristics, perceived supervisor support, procedural and distributive justice and rewards and recognition and, thus, is a result of social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964). Ensuring that organisational policies reflect procedural and distributive justice enhances engagement and creates a culture of trust and cooperation in organisations (Lee & Raschke, 2018). Kular et al. (2008) also indicate that high-engagement workplaces have leaders who create safe, trusting organisational cultures where employees are willing to express their ideas. This notion is supported by the bivariate correlational analysis that indicates correlations between employee engagement and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). All the employee engagement subscales correlated negatively with, respectively, task, relational, process and status conflict types and an avoiding (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is in line with research by Jungst and Blumberg (2016) that found that employees are less engaged in workplaces riddled with unpleasantness, such as with task (and it may be argued, other types of) conflict. Furthermore, significant positive correlations were observed between employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and, respectively, conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere and the integrating (1 and 2), obliging (1), dominating (1 and 2) and compromising (1 and 2) interpersonal conflict handling styles. These findings therefore support the canonical relationship finding pertaining to the importance of employee (job and organisational) engagement in a conflict management framework. Because little research has been undertaken on the topic of conflict management and employee engagement, these findings address an important research gap.

8.1.4.5 The role of organisational trust

According to the canonical results, the organisational trust variables of integrity, dependability and commitment are important aspects to consider in a conflict management framework. Conflict is said to undermine trust (Nešić & Lalić, 2016) but conflict is reduced by the positive effects of trust (Zaheer et al., 1998). Research suggests that conflict between employers and employees decreases when the collective perception exists that the organisation is trustworthy (Currie et al., 2017; Hodson, 2004). However, scholars caution that in countries with much unresolved social conflict (such as South Africa), individuals may find it hard to trust anyone outside their own kin or group (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018) – once trust is lost, it is not easily rebuilt (Greenwood &

Rasmussen, 2017). Drawing on Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, this research supports the importance of trustworthy relationships that enhance collaboration (Jensen, 2003) and cooperation (Schoorman et al., 2007). The canonical finding is strengthened by the bivariate correlational analysis that pointed to strong relationships between the organisational trust variables and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

8.1.4.6 Main findings

The results of the canonical analysis were useful in identifying the strongest predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). In line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the results indicated that leadership (perceptions of social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour), an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and employee voice (speaking up, speaking out, and granting of voice opportunities) are of particular significance in conflict management in relation to conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, and an integrating and an interpersonal conflict handling style. Additionally, in the context of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), employee engagement (both job and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, dependability and commitment) are equally important in predicting conflict management (conflict types, specifically conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere; and an integrating and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style). It was thus shown that perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour significantly predict positive perceptions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Moreover, positive perceptions about leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour contribute to the use of conflict management styles that show concern for self and others, as per dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983; Rahim et al., 2018), that is, a compromising and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style.

Hence, the results provided empirical support for the construction of a conflict management framework that includes leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust and is based on the principles of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983). The results thus extend these respective theories by offering a theoretical lens that combines the principles of these three theoretical frameworks into one theory applicable to conflict management.

The canonical correlation analysis confirmed that the variables that the participants scored highest or lowest are important to consider in constructing a framework for conflict management, as did the bivariate correlational analysis findings. These constructs thus inform conflict management interventions. The practical implications of the canonical results for conflict management are varied. To manage conflict effectively, organisations should consider interventions that support leadership development, specifically in relation to enhancing the use of collaborative leader conflict behaviour (indicating dual concern) and social exchange behaviour. In addition, an organisational culture of conflict tolerance should be advocated. Employee voice behaviour (speaking up and out) should be enhanced by amongst other things creating employee voice opportunities to do so. It is especially important to note that leaders should encourage and promote speaking up behaviour. Interventions that support these aspects would enhance employee engagement (both job and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability); all aspects that are imperative for a conflict management framework. Moreover, organisations need to support the use of integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles by creating an awareness of the positive effect of these two styles which both show a concern for self and others, thus also enhancing social exchange behaviour. Organisations should also be cognisant of the group atmosphere in the organisation and should ensure that employees see the potential of resolving conflict.

The results obtained provided support for research hypothesis 2:

8.1.4.7 Counterintuitive findings

The canonical results emphasised the importance of all constructs that positively relate to the principles of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983). The only construct expected to be a strong predictor of conflict management (conflict types, as they relate to group atmosphere and potential for the resolution of conflict; as well as the integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles), but that was not identified as a strong predictor, was that of an organisational culture that allows for mistakes. This was counter to expectations, as the research hypothesised that organisational culture (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) predicts conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). This hypothesis was premised on findings that an organisational culture stimulates certain behaviours and cultivates a person–organisational fit because of shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991).

The results of the bivariate correlations indicated a number of significant correlations between allowance for mistakes and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). In fact, with the exception of the avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style 1, allowance for mistakes correlated significantly with all the dependent variables and all their subconstructs. Allowance for mistakes showed significant positive relationships of a moderate practical effect size to the outcome variables as identified by the canonical results, namely, conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere and an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2). Allowance for mistakes also showed a significant positive relationship of a small practical effect size to the outcome variable of a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 1. Although these findings may have supported allowance for mistakes to be included in the canonical relations results, this was not a strong enough predictor of the outcome variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

8.1.5 Empirical research aim 3 and empirical research aim 4: Mediation modelling

Empirical research aim 3 and empirical research aim 4, section 7.4.2, and Tables 7.18 to 7.25 are of relevance to this section. Mediation modelling, including path modelling and structural equation modelling (SEM), were used to address research aim 3 and research aim 4:

Empirical research aim 3: To determine whether employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Empirical research aim 4: To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.

Four separate parallel mediation models were tested. Regarding the first three models, the independent variables included organisational culture (model 1), leadership (model 2), and employee voice (model 3). For models one to three, overall conflict types and overall interpersonal conflict handling styles were the dependent variables, while employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability) were included as parallel mediation variables.

The canonical analysis was also useful in the structural equation modelling. Based on the canonical correlation results, model 4 included tolerance of conflict (organisational culture); collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership (leadership), as well as the three employee voice variables (speaking out, speaking up and employee voice opportunities) as independent variables. Model 4 included group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential (conflict types) and integrating 1, integrating 2 and collaborative 2 interpersonal conflict handling styles as dependent variables. As with models one to three, the parallel mediating variables included employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability).

The mediation modelling indicated that organisational culture (model 1) and leadership (model 2) had significant indirect pathways through employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Mediation models 1 and 2 had structural validity, while models 3 and 4 did not have structural validity.

Hence, the following conclusions were drawn regarding the results of the mediation modelling and the elements to consider in constructing a psychosocial framework for conflict management:

Overall, it was found that the mediating variables of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) are important mechanisms explaining the direction and strength of the predictive link between leadership behaviour and organisational culture, and conflict management (specifically, the multidimensional conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles constructs). Employee engagement and organisational trust as mediating variables have received little attention in previous research. As such, the finding of the current research contributes to this knowledge gap by exploring various avenues. The current finding is in line with extant research (Kular et al., 2008) that indicates that high-engagement workplaces have leaders who create safe, trusting organisational cultures where employees are willing to express their ideas. However, little research has been undertaken on the topic of conflict management and employee engagement. Nonetheless, Emmott (2015) suggests that a strong positive relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture. Moreover, conflict is reduced by the positive effects of trust (Zaheer et al., 1998). Drawing on Blau's (1964) social exchange theory and earlier research that confirms that trustworthiness enhances collaboration (Jensen, 2003) and cooperation (Schoorman et al., 2007) while reducing conflict

(Currie et al., 2017), the importance of organisational trust is emphasised for a conflict management framework. These research findings are important as scholars confirm that relatively few conflict-related research studies have considered trust as a mediator (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 2008).

Secondly, building on the canonical results, leadership (model 2) – specifically collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership – strengthen conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2; and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2) through the mediating role of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). Research confirms (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b) that leaders who use cooperative conflict management styles (i.e. integrating, obliging and compromising conflict management styles that indicate great concern for others) enhance the social exchange process, improving trust and cooperation, as well as voice behaviour. These dynamics are important to consider in the framework for conflict management.

Thirdly, and confirming the canonical results, an organisational culture of conflict tolerance strengthens the multidimensional variable of conflict types (considering group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, and the manifestation of various types of conflict, namely, task, relational, process and status conflict), and the way in which these aspects influence group performance (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) through the presence of high levels of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). Tolerance of conflict (organisational culture) further strengthens the use of certain interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2, and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles 2) through the presence of high levels of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). Extant literature reaffirms that an organisational culture provides the holistic and acceptable norms and values that characterise the organisation (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016) and its conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). These dynamics are important to consider in the framework for conflict management.

Employee voice does not show a mediatory link through employee engagement and organisational trust to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Nonetheless, employee voice did show a positive predictive link to organisational trust (commitment,

dependability, integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement), which in turn had a positive predictive link with conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Drawing on a collaborative pluralistic outlook that accepts and welcomes varying viewpoints and simultaneously sees conflict as potentially beneficial, the necessity of meaningful employee voice in the workplace is accentuated (Heery, 2016; Hickland, 2017). As such, building on the canonical results, employee voice should also be considered in the framework, especially as variables explaining conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles as a composite set of variables (in group atmosphere, dispute resolution potential, integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2, and a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2). This is confirmed by extant literature that shows that avoiding conflict negatively relates to employee voice and damages the exchange relationship between leaders and their followers (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). However, when leaders use cooperative conflict management styles (integrating, cooperation and obliging styles), social exchange behaviours that may increase employees' perceptions of psychological safety, trust and use of employee voice are enhanced (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015).

8.1.5.1 Main findings: Synthesis

It is concluded that the findings on employee engagement and organisational trust as mediators in the current research address an important gap in the extant literature. The findings extend social exchange theory by indicating that the socio-cognitive outcomes of employee engagement and organisational trust mediate the predictive roles of leadership (specifically leader social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and organisational culture (tolerance of conflict) on conflict types (particularly group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating interpersonal conflict handling styles 1 and 2; and compromising interpersonal conflict handling style 2). The findings thus again provided empirical support that reiterates the formation of a new extended theoretical lens for conflict management consisting of the combined principles of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983).

Additionally, the structural equation modelling determined that there was sufficient empirical evidence to support an acceptable fit between the theoretical hypothesised framework and the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance in the research. The results of the mediation modelling and the SEM analysis paved the way for an integrated conflict management framework illustrating the key

relationships between the variables. It is concluded that evidence was found to support research hypothesis 3 and partially support research hypothesis 4.

8.1.5.2 *Counterintuitive findings*

It was expected that the effect of employee voice on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) would be strengthened by the presence of high levels of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). This expectation was based on extant literature arguing that according to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), managers and employees in mutually beneficial relationships would open-mindedly discuss diverse ideas (Tjosvold et al., 2014). Similarly, Hoogervorst et al. (2013b) suggest that leaders grant voice to their subordinates when they perceive a reciprocal relationship, arguing that when subordinates show that they want to belong to the organisation, they will use their voice in ways that benefit it. In the same vein, conflict scholars refer to employer–employee relationships as dual concern relationships (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986), as having cooperative goals (Deutsch, 1973), or prosocial motivation – similar to voice behaviour (De Dreu et al., 2001; Morrison, 2014). Predictably, a meta-analytical study (Colquitt et al., 2001) indicates that a significantly positive relationship exists between the opportunity to express voice and the trust held in organisations and their leadership. Employee voice is also regarded as an important driver of employee engagement (Alfes et al., 2010; Amah, 2018; Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Ruck et al., 2017). Given the important role of employee voice in employee engagement and organisational trust, and in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), it was thus surprising that no mediation effect was found.

8.1.6 **Empirical research aim 5: Stepwise multiple regression analyses**

Empirical research aim 5, section 7.4.3, and Tables 7.26 and 7.33 are of relevance to this section. Forward stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted as a first phase to assess empirical research aim 5. The second phase, namely, a hierarchical moderated regression analysis, is discussed in section 8.1.7 below.

Empirical research aim 5: To ascertain whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of

- (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust),
- (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and
- (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The forward stepwise multiple regression analysis identified a number of significant predictors of the independent (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediating (employee engagement and organisational trust) and dependent (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) variables, as discussed below.

8.1.6.1 *Leadership*

Firstly, the stepwise regression model indicated that both number of employees and implementing a formal employee engagement programme are significant predictors of leadership. The finding that number of employees is a significant predictor of leadership is an interesting finding, as extant literature shows contradictory results on which organisational size (as measured by, for instance, number of employees) is optimal for leadership – larger or smaller numbers (García-Morales et al., 2008; McGill & Slocum, 1993; Vaccaro et al., 2012). The finding that a formal employee engagement programme significantly moderates leadership is supported by extant literature that confirms the important relationship between employee engagement and leadership styles (Popli & Rizvi, 2016).

However, contrary to expectations, a number of predictions on how the various socio-demographic characteristics would predict leadership did not materialise. Research hypothesis 5 predicted that race would significantly predict leadership, as leaders play an important role in the process of managing diversity and diversity-related conflict effectively (Coleman et al., 2017). Similarly, it was predicted that gender would predict leadership. However, counter to expectations, gender and race were not indicated as important predictors of leadership, even though research suggests that gender and race affect the quality of leader-member-exchange behaviour (Scandura & Lankau, 1996). Leadership suffers when leaders do not generate favourable conditions to deal with perceived social incompatibilities (Hendrickson, 2016; Zanda, 2018). Also, existing literature argues that individuals' cultural background and social environment shape their perceived ideas of leadership (Den Hartog et al., 1999). Pauliené (2012) suggests that collectivist societies – such as African countries (Patterson & Winston, 2017) – observe leadership from the perspective that it flows from followers who are reliant on their leaders for security and direction. In other words, African leadership has a humane and person-centric relational approach that acknowledges the interdependence between people (Patterson & Winston, 2017). Research therefore suggests that leaders should view cultural differences as a situational characteristic to which they need to adapt their leadership styles (Solomon & Steyn, 2017), especially in a country such as South Africa with its multiracial and multicultural composition. Despite all these findings, the current research did not identify race as an important predictor of leadership.

Based on previous research findings (Mayer et al., 2018), it was predicted that traditional gender roles and stereotyping would affect the role of leadership in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). In the South African context, female leadership is judged in terms of biological sex and from a sociological perspective where women have prejudicial societal labels attached to them. These sexist stereotypical beliefs negatively influence perceptions of women as effective leaders (Mayer et al., 2018). Nonetheless, the current research did not support this prediction.

Counter to expectations, the following predictions were not supported by the current research: It was hypothesised that tenure would play a role in leadership because, generally, older individuals are more experienced and thus regarded as better leaders (Tuncdogan et al., 2017), instilling trust in leadership (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017). In addition, although it was expected that education would moderate a relationship with leadership, the current research did not point it out. However, in research that was done by Barbuto Jr et al. (2007), leaders with advanced degrees showed

higher levels of individualised consideration than leaders with lower educational levels (Barbuto Jr et al., 2007).

Additionally, it was theorised that age would predict leadership, as research has shown that each generation has different expectations of leadership (Lowe et al., 2008), and leadership behaviour and outcomes are dependent on age (Carstensen et al., 1999; Rudolph et al., 2018; Tuncdogan et al., 2017). Moreover, it was hypothesised that qualification would significantly predict leadership. Extant literature confirms the importance of education and experience in leader outcomes and behaviour (Barbuto, Jr et al., 2007; Echevarria et al., 2017). It was hypothesised that job level would significantly predict leadership because leaders at varying hierarchical levels are responsible for differing functions and responsibilities (Zanda, 2018). It was also hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict leadership. This is based on previous research findings that suggest that a strong relationship exists between tenure and trust in leadership (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017).

It was also hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict leadership, as Ali et al. (2018) posit that four leadership orientations exist in Africa, of which the one group comprises leaders who are motivated by leadership rewards such as wealth and job security. However, contrary to expectations, none of these predicted relationships were supported in the current research.

8.1.6.2 Organisational culture

The second stepwise regression model identified job level, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme as significant predictors of organisational culture. Previous research has pointed to the importance of job level in organisational culture as it pertains to autonomy and thus the degree to which employees may have decision-making powers (Van den Berg & Wilderom, 2004). Additionally, scholars confirm that organisational size plays an important role in various organisational aspects (e.g. the organisational structure and culture) because of the changes that occur as organisational size varies (Beer, 1964; Vaccaro et al., 2012). Extant literature also supports the role of organisational culture in building a highly engaged workforce, and the importance of formal human resource interventions in reaching this objective (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013). These findings should therefore be considered in fostering an organisational culture conducive to the construction of a conflict management framework.

However, a number of counterintuitive findings were highlighted in the current research regarding organisational culture. Although it was also hypothesised that race would predict organisational culture, the findings did not support this relationship. The importance of an organisational culture that promotes diversity in order to avoid conflict is emphasised in extant literature (Coleman et al., 2017; Schloegel et al., 2018). It was also expected that gender would be a significant predictor of organisational culture, as Isiaka et al. (2016) posit that integrating a diverse workforce in organisations (e.g. because of the increased labour force participation rate of women) is an enormous challenge. In fact, research advocates that an organisational culture that promotes collectivist values moderates the relationship dynamics between socio-demographic aspects of race, gender and nationality, and cooperative behaviour (Chatman & Spataro, 2005). Nonetheless, these relationships were not supported in the current research.

Furthermore, based on findings from extant literature (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; O'Reilly et al., 1991) that a greater person–organisation fit is established between individual organisational members' values and their organisational culture with longer tenure, it was theorised that tenure would significantly predict organisational culture. Similarly, it was assumed that education would significantly predict organisational culture, as organisations function within a fast paced and ever-changing environment, necessitating a learning culture that embraces the formation, acquisition and transfer of knowledge to all organisational members (Dajani & Mohamad, 2017; Senge, 1990). It was argued that employees with higher qualifications would be more open to innovative and learning organisational cultures that also consider creative ways of managing conflict and the formation of a conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). It was also expected that age would modify organisational culture, as different age groups have differing needs and may have different requirements regarding, for instance, a flexible workplace culture (Eversole et al., 2012; Rofcanin et al., 2017).

Additionally, based on previous writings, it was proposed that job level would significantly predict organisational culture. Research suggests that organisational culture is firstly engrained by leadership (Schein, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013) and that leadership at the top of the organisation influences the organisational climate and culture through a trickle-down effect that, over time, informs the organisational culture of the organisation (Zanda, 2018). It was also expected that income levels would significantly predict organisational culture, as the seminal work of Martins (1992, 2002) argues that organisational culture holds three perspectives – an integrated, a fragmented and a differentiation perspective. According to the differentiation perspective, it is

acknowledged that individual organisational members differ according to biographical characteristics and that subcultures are subsequently formed within organisations (Martins, 1992, 2002) around, for instance, income differentiation. However, none of these hypothesised relationships were confirmed by the forward stepwise regression analysis.

8.1.6.3 *Employee voice*

The third stepwise regression model showed that, as hypothesised, job level, workplace size and a formal employee engagement programme are significant predictors of employee voice. Extant literature confirms these relationships. Firstly, scholars (Howell et al., 2015; Kahn, 1992) explain that influence and status (from, amongst other things, the position they hold in an organisation) ensure a bigger voice. This is confirmed by Guarana et al. (2017), who explain that employee voice behaviour is affected by both whom voice is expressed to and by the person expressing voice. Secondly, Arrowsmith and Parker (2013) confirm that formal human resource management initiatives to foster employee engagement should recognise the importance of employee voice – without employee backing (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005) no engagement will be present, nor will positive voice behaviour result. Thirdly, scholars (Constantin & Baias, 2015) acknowledge that communication in organisations of different sizes holds its own challenges, and that employees will refrain from voice behaviour should they experience that they are not heard and that their voice behaviour is meaningless (Hickland, 2017). It is generally recognised that employee voice is a vital mechanism for ensuring the prevention and management of conflict. For instance, research shows that social exchange behaviour results when leaders use cooperative conflict management styles (integrating, cooperation and obliging styles) which, in turn, increase employees' perceptions of psychological safety, trust and use of employee voice (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). Hence, these socio-demographic variables and their effect on employee voice are important to consider in the construction of a conflict management framework.

Based on existing research (e.g. Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018), it was also hypothesised that aspects such as gender, age and race may influence employees' tendency to voice their opinions and perceptions, or rather to remain silent. For instance, research shows that older employees hold voice in higher regard than their younger counterparts, even though all individuals regard voice as important (Ali Arain et al., 2018; Palumbo et al., 2009). It was also hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict employee voice as research indicates that the benefits of employee voice reduce the longer employees remain with an employer (Avery et al., 2011). Moreover, research suggests that cultural differences influence the way employees

relate to voice behaviour (Brockner et al., 2001). It was also hypothesised that education level would significantly predict employee voice, as research shows that education level influences how voice is perceived (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018) and expressed (Katou, 2018). Moreover, it was hypothesised that income levels would significantly predict employee voice. Mayer and Davis (1999) posit that should managers believe that their employees are committed to the organisation and its wellbeing and are speaking up to improve the organisation, they may be persuaded to respond in a favourable way by rewarding the employee accordingly. However, counter to expectations, none of these relationships were observed in the current research.

8.1.6.4 *Employee engagement*

As hypothesised, race, age, qualification and job level were indicated as significant socio-demographic predictors of the mediating variable of employee engagement. Firstly, as explained in previous research, even though relatively little research has been conducted on the relationship dynamics between engagement and racial ethnicity (Truss et al., 2013), it is confirmed that various groupings experience engagement differently (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Research specific to South Africa (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011) proposes that significant differences are prevalent between the different socio-demographic groups (based on home language and ethnicity) and the level of work engagement of the respective groups. Therefore, it was hypothesised that race would significantly predict employee engagement.

Secondly, based on extant literature, it was expected that age would modify the mediating variable of employee engagement. According to Hoole and Bonnema (2015), a significant relationship exists between various generational cohorts and their experience of engagement, even though there are conflicting views on the strength of the relationship.

Thirdly, based on existing research, it was conjectured that education would significantly predict employee engagement. Significant differences in the engagement of individuals with differing qualifications were noted (Bell & Barkhuizen, 2011), even though there is disagreement on which qualification grouping is most engaged (Barkhuizen & Rothman, 2006; Jackson & Rothmann, 2004).

Fourthly, existing literature supported the prediction that job level would significantly predict employee engagement. Kular et al. (2008) indicate that because senior executives experience role characteristics such as authority, stimulation and the availability of resources, they are the most engaged grouping, while hourly workers are least engaged. Kahn (1992) explains that the

more influence and status that are evident in a work role, the more the individuals involved can shape their own roles, allowing for an increase in engagement levels. Extant literature therefore supports the current research findings.

Nonetheless, counter to expectations, the predictions based on extant literature which states that other biographical characteristics may modify employee engagement were not supported. For example, Kahn (1992) proposes that different organisational groups (e.g. based on gender) may have either more or less psychological presence, as people from different group affiliations are subjected differently to self-in-role behaviours. Thus, it was expected that gender would be a significant predictor of employee engagement, even though extant literature confirms that relatively little research has been conducted on the relationship dynamics between engagement and gender (Truss et al., 2013). However, Kahn (1990) maintains that women, who are often undermined, may feel unsafe to fully engage in their work roles and, what is more, their anxieties limit the energy they have available to engage (Kahn, 1990). A recent study by Schaufeli (2018) confirms that countries with no gender inequality experience higher levels of employee engagement. It was also hypothesised that, based on prior research that suggests that employee engagement declines the longer employees stay with an organisation, tenure would significantly predict employee engagement, (Robinson et al., 2004). Additionally, based on existing research findings (Crawford et al., 2010; Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001) that engagement is enhanced by (amongst other things) a fitting recognition and reward system, it was expected that income levels would significantly predict employee engagement. However, none of these relationships were confirmed by the current research.

8.1.6.5 Organisational trust

A paucity of research on relationship dynamics between socio-demographic characteristics and organisational trust was evident. Nevertheless, the current research confirmed some of the expectations set for the relationships between the socio-demographics and organisational trust, as based on existing literature. In particular, the current research findings support the hypothesis that job level, workplace sector, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict organisational trust. Firstly, the expectation that job level would significantly predict organisational trust was based on research by Gilbert and Tang (1998), who suggest that job status positively relates to group cohesion and that group cohesion is positively related to organisational trust. Secondly, workplace sector was expected to predict organisational trust, in part because of the general perception that public-sector organisations are in the main

regarded as inefficient and ineffective (Gould-Williams, 2003). Thirdly, workplace size was also expected to influence organisational trust, as also confirmed in extant literature by the finding that organisational trust was more associated with smaller organisations than with larger ones (Gould-Williams, 2003). Fourthly, research confirms that organisational human resource practices (it is argued that these may include formal employee engagement practices) significantly predict organisational trust (Gould-Williams, 2003).

Scholars confirm that conflict is often widespread in diverse groupings (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). However, a number of counterintuitive findings of the current research did not support the predictions on the relationship between some of the biographical moderating characteristics and organisational trust. Firstly, it was found that race does not predict organisational trust. Similarly, Gilbert and Tang (1998) found no apparent differences in the relationship between organisational trust and the various races, or organisational trust among races; however, their research was conducted in an organisation where diversity training was offered and cultural diversity was part of the organisational culture. Conversely, Ndubisi (2011) suggests that cultural diversity affects trust, while Huff and Kelley (2003) propose that the relationship between race and trust is affected by whether the national culture is collectivist or individualistic.

Secondly, it was expected that gender would significantly predict organisational trust. This was hypothesised based on extant research that supports diversity management in order to increase trust between organisational members from different groupings, such as males versus females (Gilbert & Tang, 1998; Joubert, 2017).

The third prediction that did not materialise was that income levels would significantly predict organisational trust. This was based on the literature that postulates that perceptions of distributive injustice negatively influence trust levels in organisations (Katou, 2013).

Fourthly, although it was expected that age would modify organisational trust, this was not substantiated. This was perhaps to be expected as extant research on the relationship between organisational trust and differing ages and generational cohorts is inconclusive. Nonetheless, scholars postulate that diverse generations have different inclinations regarding trust (Lowe et al., 2008; Tsai, 2017) and that negative age stereotyping obstructs trust (Gilbert & Tang, 1998).

Fifthly, it was conjectured that education would significantly predict organisational trust. Scholars (Heyns & Rothmann, 2015; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007) argue that the decision to trust is significantly influenced by the belief that the other party is trustworthy. Scholars (Dietz

& Den Hartog, 2006) suggest that ability, benevolence and integrity significantly influence perceptions of trustworthiness and aspects such as knowledge and that cognitive and emotional skills influence perceptions of competence (Heyns & Rothman, 2006). Notwithstanding these arguments, qualification level did not predict organisational trust in the current research.

Additionally, it was hypothesised that tenure would significantly predict organisational trust. For instance, Gilbert and Tang (1998) argue that longer tenure increases the possibility that employees may experience feelings of being trapped, which may negatively influence organisational trust; however, no significant direct relationship between organisational trust and tenure was found. Accordingly, none of these relationships were confirmed by the current research.

8.1.6.6 Conflict types

Current research findings confirm extant literature that states that job level, age and trade union membership significantly predict conflict types. Firstly, the finding that job level predicts conflict types is in line with previous research that indicates that the way employees react to conflict situations differs depending on job level (Church, 1995; Rahim, 1983), in part because the higher the job level, the more experienced the individual, and hence, the better equipped individuals are to manage difficult interpersonal situations (De Wit et al., 2012). Jehn and Greer (2013) further point out that a group's hierarchical position in the organisation also determines its conflict dynamics (Jehn & Greer, 2013).

Secondly, prior research suggests that age would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict types. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) states that individuals form groups according to perceived likenesses and dissimilarities, for instance as found in the distinctive principles, feelings, beliefs and inclinations held by differing generational cohorts (Guo & Cionea, 2017; Katz & Flynn, 2013; Lowe et al., 2008, Williams, 2016). It is accepted that these different groupings potentially increase workplace conflict (Urick et al., 2016), for instance relationship conflict (Ismail et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 1999).

Thirdly, the current research findings confirmed that trade union membership significantly moderated the relationship between the independent variables and conflict types. Extant literature on pluralism emphasises that unions and the process of collective bargaining are vital in preventing and managing conflict (Currie et al., 2017; Ilesanmi, 2017) and also give voice to

employees (Godard, 2014a, 2014b; Hayter, 2015). According to Currie et al. (2017), the collective voice of unions is imperative as conflict is regarded as natural in the employment relationship. However, with union membership on the decline globally (Dimitriu, 2016), the resulting void left in the workplace is only partly addressed by alternative forms of employee voice (Tapia et al., 2015). Clearly, the presence or absence of union membership in organisations will influence how employees voice their discontent – if voiced at all.

However, counter to expectations, a number of biographical characteristics were not found to significantly moderate the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict types. Although it was expected that race would significantly predict the outcome of conflict types, the current research did not support the prediction. The hypothesis was premised on previous research that found that racial and cultural background significantly affects conflict experiences in the workplace (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn et al., 1999; Mestry & Bosch, 2013).

It was also hypothesised that gender would be a significant predictor of conflict types as more women join the labour market (Festus et al., 2016). Discrimination and stereotyping on the basis of gender are bound to increase, increasing the potential for conflict situations (Budd et al., 2017; Ayub & Jehn, 2014). Moreover, Budd et al. (2017) argue that women handle conflict differently from men. Role conflict (Kuschel, 2017) and work–family conflict (Ghislieri et al., 2017) are increasing.

It was hypothesised that qualification would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict types. Moreover, research shows that differences in educational background increase the probability of differing perspectives and opinions in a workgroup (Jehn et al., 1999). Often such workgroups find it more difficult to determine how to proceed with tasks, potentially increasing process and task conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). Additionally, potential conflict is amplified in South Africa because of educational inequality, the so-called brain drain and rapid technological advancement (Festus et al., 2016; Kaplan & Höppli, 2017; World Bank, 2017c).

Furthermore, it was expected that tenure would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict types. This was in line with previous research by Jehn et al. (1999) that argues that differences in work experience lead to a variety of opinions and perspectives

amongst organisational members, which may lead to conflict. In fact, tenure diversity is negatively associated with relational conflict (Pelled et al., 1999). However, other research contradicts this view, arguing that longer tenure lessens relational conflict because of increased experience and understanding (Ismail et al., 2012).

It was expected that income levels would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable of conflict types because South Africa ranks as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Benjamin, 2016; Bhorat et al., 2014; World Bank, 2015, 2017c). Discriminatory practices and industrial action are often associated with wages (Benjamin, 2016). Thus, wage inequality may lead to perceptions of injustice, giving rise to conflict (Spaho, 2013). However, none of these findings in the extant literature was confirmed in the current research.

8.1.6.7 *Interpersonal conflict handling styles*

The forward stepwise regression analysis pointed out that number of employees was the most significant moderating predictor of interpersonal conflict handling styles. This finding is in line with extant literature (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) that points out that the more individuals there are in a group, the more diverse viewpoints will be held on interpersonal conflict handling, values, attitudes and the like. Attaining synergy among such diversity holds numerous challenges.

However, a number of counterintuitive findings resulted. Firstly, it was expected that job level would significantly modify the relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable, interpersonal conflict handling styles. This was hypothesised based on previous research findings that indicated that employees of different job levels react differently in various conflict situations (Church, 1995). Rahim (1983) argues that status amongst organisational members (for instance, management versus non-management) affects the way employees react to conflict. Secondly, premised on prior research (Ndubisi, 2011), it was expected that race would be a significant predictor of interpersonal conflict handling styles. It was also expected that gender would significantly predict the choice of conflict handling style, as previous research has shown that males and females differ in their choice of styles (Ome, 2013; Rahim, 1983). Parmer (2018) also argues that interpersonal conflict management styles have a significant relationship with age. Moreover, qualification was expected to influence how individuals react in various situations (Church, 1995).

Nonetheless, counter to expectations, none of these predictions was confirmed in the current research.

8.1.6.8 *Main findings: Synthesis*

In summary, the empirical results attained from the moderated stepwise regression analysis provided partial supportive evidence for the acceptance of research hypothesis H5. The stepwise multiple regression analysis indicated that job level, number of employees and whether or not a formal employee engagement programme is implemented in an organisation are the three most important predictors to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age. Specifically:

- Job level significantly predicted the independent variables of organisational culture and employee voice, both mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), and conflict types.
- Number of employees significantly predicted leadership and organisational culture (independent variables), the mediating variable of organisational trust, and the outcome of interpersonal conflict handling style.
- Whether a formal employee engagement programme was present in an organisation predicted all three independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), as well as the mediating variable of organisational trust. Interestingly, it was not a significant predictor of employee engagement.
- Age predicted employee engagement and conflict types.
- Although number of employees did not predict employee voice, workplace size did predict employee voice.
- Race, qualification level and workplace sector all significantly predicted employee engagement.
- Trade union membership was a significant predictor of conflict types.

The results suggested that organisations that wish to manage conflict on a strategic, operational and functional level should be cognisant of a number of specific differences in organisational socio-demographic groups. High-quality social exchange relationships indicating dual concern for self and others may especially be enhanced by accommodating a conflict management approach that allows for the divergent needs of individuals on different job levels and age groups. Accordingly, a generic conflict management approach would not suffice for individuals of different

job levels or generations. From an organisational level perspective, the size of an organisation (as measured by number of employees) should be taken into consideration when constructing a conflict management framework. The complexities and uniqueness of both sides of the spectrum of big and small organisations should be acknowledged. Furthermore, the importance of having a formal employee engagement programme in an organisation was highlighted by the findings.

8.1.6.9 *Counterintuitive findings*

Counter to expectations, gender, income level, tenure, employment status and trade union representation were not significant predictors of any of the variables of relevance to this research. It was especially interesting to note that race was only a significant predictor of employee engagement, as it was expected to be a more prominent predictor of all the respective variables, given South Africa's history and related challenges. Furthermore, the fact that gender did not significantly predict the constructs of relevance to the research was very surprising, given the general stereotyping of women and the discriminatory practices towards women in South African society. South African organisations reflect the diverse groupings of the country in terms of race, ethnicity, age and gender diversity through structural and historic frameworks, structures, rules and regulations (Mayer & Barnard, 2015; Mayer & Louw, 2011; Mayer et al., 2018; Shteynberg et al., 2011). It was also unexpected that union membership would not predict employee voice, as union membership is regarded as a vehicle with the main aim of providing employees with voice through, for instance, the collective bargaining process.

8.1.7 **Empirical research aim 5: Hierarchical moderated regression analyses**

Empirical research aim 5, section 7.4.4, and Tables 7.33 to 7.7.47 are of relevance to this section.

Empirical research aim 5: To ascertain whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of

- (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust),

- (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and
- (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted as a second phase to further assess empirical research aim 5. Stage 1 (sections 7.4.4 and 8.1.6) identified, by way of a stepwise multiple regression analysis, the most significant predictors to include in stage 2. Stage 1 indicated that number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme and job level are the three most important predictors to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age. In addition, workplace size, race, qualification and trade union membership were also identified, although these variables all predicted only one other variable.

Subsequently, for the purpose of testing research hypothesis 5 during this second phase, it was decided for parsimony reasons that only the core socio-demographic variables that predicted more than one variable (as identified in phase one) would be included in the moderation analysis. This was decided in order to further reduce the socio-demographic variables to a core group that could then be considered in the hierarchical moderation regression analysis. Respectively, the socio-demographic variables of workplace size, workplace sector, race and qualification all predicted only one variable; and were thus excluded from Phase 2. Although the socio-demographic variable of trade union membership only predicted one variable (namely conflict types), it was considered in the moderation analysis because of its importance in the context of the study. Through this process of elimination, five core socio-demographic variables remained of the nine biographical variables identified during the stepwise regression analysis. The hierarchical moderated regression analysis further assisted in identifying those socio-demographic variables that should be considered in the conflict management framework.

The mediation modelling (section 8.1.5) indicated that employee engagement and organisational trust mediate the relationship between leadership and organisational culture (independent variables), and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles – dependent variables). Furthermore, it indicated that although no mediatory link was present through employee engagement and organisational trust between employee voice (independent

variable) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles – dependent variables), employee voice did show a strong predictive link with employee engagement and organisational trust, which in turn had a strong predictive link with conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

However, to construct a conflict management framework for organisations based in South Africa, it was also necessary to consider how diverse socio-demographic groups may affect these relationships. Existing research suggests that socio-demographic characteristics may affect the way employees experience the relationships between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in the workplace. This was deemed especially important because of the rich diversity of ethnicities, cultures and languages that organisations functioning in Africa are exposed to. Scholars agree that even though diversity potentially increases creativity and innovation of ideas and viewpoints (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018), diversity is also fertile ground for potential conflict (Kets de Vries et al., 2016). In fact, research suggests that diversity in organisations results in higher conflict levels (Nash & Hann, 2017). Moreover, discrimination, self-segregation and stereotyping negatively affect group interaction (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Jehn et al., 1999). It was therefore necessary to study how the various groupings would affect a conflict management framework. Therefore, the hierarchical moderated regression analysis was undertaken.

The hierarchical moderated regression analysis indicated that age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programmes had significant moderating effects that explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

8.1.7.1 Main predictive effects

The following main predictive effects were found:

- The hierarchical moderated regression analysis pointed to main positive predictive effects in terms of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types. This implies that organisations should consider the role of these four predictors (organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement

and organisational trust) in interventions aimed at addressing conflict types (conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere) as part of a conflict management framework.

Jehn and Mannix (2001) describe group atmosphere as existing within groups based on trust, respect and cohesiveness (Chatman, 1991), open communication and discussion norms (Jehn, 1995) and the liking of team members (Jehn, 1995). Based on the findings, it is firstly deduced that the organisational level constructs of organisational culture and employee voice, and the psychosocial constructs of employee engagement and organisational trust, may strengthen social exchange behaviour in workplaces to strengthen group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential.

Conflict resolution potential (Jehn, 1995, 1997) refers to the way conflict is resolved, for example whether it is done by openly and honestly confronting conflict (therefore indicating concern for self and for others), or by compromising (indicating moderate concern for self and others), or by avoiding (indicating low concern for self and others) conflict. Considering the description of conflict resolution potential (Jehn, 1995, 1997), the second deduction made from this research finding is that organisational culture and employee voice, and employee engagement and organisational trust, hold the potential to result in positive social exchange behaviour that potentially assists in resolving conflict by showing concern for self and for others (dual concern). The finding therefore lends support to the expansion of dual concern theory by integrating its theoretical principles with social exchange theoretical principles.

- Counterintuitive to what was anticipated, no main predictive effect was found between leadership and conflict types. However, extant literature emphasises the importance of strong leadership in constructive conflict management (e.g. Binyamin et al., 2017; Hendel et al., 2005; Tanveer et al., 2018), and hence, it is argued that conflict management is regarded as a key leadership competency (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018). The finding was therefore surprising and warrants further research.
- The hierarchical moderated regression analysis suggested that main positive predictive effects were evident in terms of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust (all the independent and mediating variables) on interpersonal conflict handling styles. Thus, the three independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the two mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) influence the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is an important implication, as this finding extends dual concern theory to

indicate that leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust may predict the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles based on social exchange behaviour in the choice of conflict handling style.

- According to the hierarchical moderated regression analysis, only one of the socio-demographic variables, namely union membership, had a significant (negative) main effect on conflict types. This implies that union membership predicts perceptions of conflict types. Organisations are therefore advised to foster collaborative pluralistic relationships with unions to ensure positive perceptions of conflict types (i.e. group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential).
- No significant (negative) main effects between the individual socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size and employee engagement programme) and interpersonal conflict handling styles were manifested. This implies that none of these socio-demographic variables had a direct main effect on choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles.

8.1.7.2 *Interaction effects*

The following interaction effects were evident:

(a) *Age*

The results showed that the effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles were conditional on age. This finding indicates that those participants who scored high on, respectively, (1) organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict); (2) employee voice (positive perceptions of speaking up and out, and having voice opportunities); (3) employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement); and (4) organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity); and who are younger than 50 years, are more positive than those participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles (differing styles – integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding and dominating – relating to various levels of concern for self and concern for others). According to extant literature (Parmer, 2018), older employees, who are less competitive than their younger counterparts, generally choose more collaborative (as opposed to competitive) conflict management styles. However, according to Beitler et al. (2016),

age influences the effective use of either an avoiding or a constructive conflict management strategy – older employees are more likely to avoid conflict than younger employees (Beitler et al., 2016). This implies that organisations should consider the generational groups in interventions aimed at developing staff to choose an optimal conflict handling style.

Counterintuitive to expectations, the relationship between leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours) and interpersonal conflict handling styles was not conditional on age. This implies that age does not modify the predictive relationship of leadership on interpersonal conflict handling styles. Moreover, age also had no interactive effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and conflict types. These two findings were unexpected as research shows that the various generational cohorts have diverse work values and attitudes (Costanza et al., 2012) which, it is assumed, may influence their viewpoints and experiences of these individual level and organisational level constructs.

(b) Union membership

Union membership showed important moderating effects. Interestingly, the research found that the relationship between leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours) and conflict types was not conditional on union membership. However, the effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on perceptions of conflict types were all conditional upon union membership. Participants who scored high on, respectively, (1) organisational culture (i.e. participants with positive perceptions about their organisations having a culture of allowing for mistakes and tolerating conflict); (2) employee voice (i.e. participants engaging in speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities); (3) employee engagement (positive perceptions of job engagement and organisational engagement); and (4) organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about the dependability, commitment and integrity of their organisations), and who belonged to a trade union, tend to be more positive toward perceptions of conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those who do not belong to a union. This implies that an approach of collaborative pluralism in ER (accepting conflict as natural and unions as collaborative partners in the relationship) (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) enhances employees' experiences of conflict types, which in turn leads to higher quality social exchange behaviour in organisations.

This is in line with earlier research that suggests that workplaces with a union presence have better employee relations (Gill & Meyer, 2013).

Furthermore, the results showed that the effects of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was also conditional on union membership. This implies that those participants who scored high on organisational trust (holding positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who belong to unions are significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating compromising, obliging, dominating, avoiding) than those participants who did not belong to a union. Extant literature confirms that a good relationship between labour and management enhances organisational trust (Gill & Meyer, 2013). The question remains whether union membership enhances the experience of organisational trust in conflict situations because of the implied safety of being a union member in such situations. Should this be the case, it may be argued that this finding does not necessarily indicate trust in the organisation per se, but rather trust in an organisation that maintains a perspective of collaborative pluralism, thus accepting conflict as natural in work relationships and unions as representatives of employees in the workplace. Extant literature contains examples of union participation as part of a cooperative management participation model which specifically creates positive roles for individual workers and unions (Lee & Lee, 2009). Hence, existing literature supports a cooperative, innovative and harmonious relationship, rather than an adversarial one (Gill & Meyer, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2009). This finding further supports the extension of dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) as it relates to social exchange (Blau, 1964) and collaborative pluralistic perspectives on ER (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), and thus implies the expansion of these theories into a new integrated theoretical lens.

Apart from the interaction effect of union membership on interpersonal conflict handling styles, no other interactive effect was present with regard to any of the other independent variables and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Hence, it is concluded that organisations should consider their relationship with representative unions should they want to emphasise the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles that are high in dual concern. Such an approach should result in positive reciprocal social exchange behaviours that may benefit the management of conflict.

(c) *Job level*

The effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on the job level of participants. This implies that participants working in organisations at staff or professional level (i.e. on a non-managerial level), and who scored high on employee voice (holding positive perceptions about speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities), are more positive toward overall conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants on a managerial (junior, middle, senior) level. It may be argued that the concept of voice behaviour mainly affects employees who are not on managerial level; however, junior, middle and even senior level managers still need to engage in voice behaviour with their supervisors. Nonetheless, in principle, employee voice is regarded as a mechanism for employees to voice concerns, dissatisfactions, suggestions and contributions to decision-making to management via formal and informal, individual and collective avenues (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Hence, the finding that participants on a staff or professional level who scored high on employee voice behaviour are more positive in regard to overall conflict types confirms the importance of employee voice in a conflict management framework. The finding suggests that voice behaviour contributes to perceptions of a positive group atmosphere and the potential to resolve conflict for staff who are not in managerial positions. Moreover, the fact that such staff members are positively inclined to voice behaviour suggests that they will not withhold voice (Morrison, 2014). This finding supports the theoretical assumptions of social exchange, as can be seen in the reciprocal attitude towards conflict types.

Job level had no interaction effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and interpersonal conflict handling styles. No other moderating effect in relation to job level was noted.

(d) *Number of employees*

The number of employees in an organisation showed important interaction (moderating) effects for leadership and organisational trust. The effect of, respectively, leadership and organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles were conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Participants who worked in organisations with 150 and less employees (i.e. smaller organisations in terms of employee numbers) had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal

conflict handling styles than those participants in organisations employing 150 staff members. This implies that when participants scored high on, respectively, (1) leadership (i.e. having positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours) and (2) organisational trust (i.e. holding positive perceptions about the dependability, commitment and integrity of their organisations), and worked in organisations with 150 and less employees, they had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were employed in organisations with 150 and more employees. Extant literature confirms that leaders who use cooperative conflict management styles enhance the social exchange process, improving trust and cooperation as well as voice behaviour (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). Given the complexities of bigger organisations and how organisational context (e.g. task accomplishment, resource dependencies and the like) may influence organisational structures and behaviours, which in turn influence trust levels (Six & Sorge, 2008), the finding does not come as a surprise. This implies that differing interventions should be considered for conflict management in organisations of differing size.

However, no interaction effect was noted for employee voice, organisational culture or employee engagement on interpersonal conflict handling styles. Furthermore, number of employees had no interactive effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and conflict types.

(e) Formal employee engagement programme

The results showed that the effect of organisational culture on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the existence of a formal employee engagement programme in organisations. This implies that those participants who scored high on organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and who are exposed to a formal employee programme are more positive toward overall interpersonal conflict handling styles (differing conflict handling styles based on the presence or absence of a concern for self and/or others) than those participants who are not exposed to a formal employee engagement programme. This implies that an organisational culture conducive to conflict management will be strengthened by a formal employee engagement programme, which, in turn, would have a reciprocal social exchange effect in how conflict is handled through choice of conflict management style indicating concern for others and for self.

It is concluded that a formal employee engagement programme is especially important in terms of its interactive dynamics with regard to the organisational culture and perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles, and thus for a conflict management framework. No other interaction effects were found between a formal employee engagement programme in relation to the other independent variables (leadership, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Additionally, a formal employee engagement programme had no interactive effect on the relationships between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement) and conflict types.

8.1.7.3 *Main findings: Synthesis*

In summary, the empirical results attained from the moderated regression analysis provided partial supportive evidence for the acceptance of research hypothesis H5.

The socio-demographic characteristics pointed out through the stepwise forward regression analysis (i.e. age, union membership, job level, number of employees, and formal employee engagement programmes) showed significant conditional links in terms of the independent and the mediating variables on the dependent variables. Because these biographical characteristics add important dynamics in terms of the links between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice (the independent variables) and employee engagement and organisational trust (the mediating variables) on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), it is concluded that these dynamics – as further discussed below – should be considered in a conflict management framework.

Firstly, the research indicated that main positive predictive effects were evident between organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, on conflict types (conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere), implying that these organisational and psychosocial aspects are likely to affect perceptions of conflict types through reciprocal social exchange behaviour, and should thus be considered in a conflict management framework. As previously explained, a positive group atmosphere is based on high levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, liking of group members and low competition between members of the group (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Drawing on social exchange principles of reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964), it is thus argued that positive perceptions about organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust may enhance positive perceptions of group

atmosphere. Furthermore, Jehn (1997) argues that individual characteristics, group structure and dimensions of conflict have the biggest influence on whether individuals view conflict as resolvable, or not. The finding that main positive predictive effects are evident between organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict resolution potential not only supports Jehn's (1997) argument, but further suggests reciprocal social exchange behaviours (Blau, 1964) of dual concern (Rahim, 1983). It is therefore argued that because of the positive perceptions that seem to result from these relationships, the potential to resolve conflict by showing concern for self and for others (dual concern) is likely to be enhanced. The finding therefore lends support to the expansion of dual concern theory (indicating a choice of five conflict handling styles depending on whether conflict is handled in a way that shows high concern for self and others, or not) (Rahim, 1983) by integrating its theoretical principles with social exchange (Blau, 1964) theoretical principles (in other words, arguing that individuals' actions are the result of reciprocal behaviour).

Secondly, it was determined that main positive predictive effects were evident between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles. Hence, drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), it is argued that positive perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust are expected to result in positive reciprocal behaviour where employees are more likely to use an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style when addressing conflict, thus indicating high concern for self and others (Rahim, 1983). This is in line with De Dreu (2008), who suggests that when employees perceive cooperative outcome interdependence, more value is placed on their own and co-workers' interests, opinions and values (De Dreu, 2008). Although previous research has found only modest support for management practices as a moderator of conflict management styles within organisations (Fenlon, 1997), scholars argue that an integrative approach suggests a healthy conflict profile, as ideas are openly debated and a variety of perspectives acknowledged within a perceived safe environment (Ayub et al., 2017; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Tjosvold, 2008). Therefore, it is argued that the choice of interpersonal conflict handling style is informed by reciprocal behaviour that results from leadership, organisational culture, and employee voice practices within organisations that provide such a safe perceived space, as well as from positive psychosocial outcomes such as employee engagement and organisational trust. It is thus probable that positive perceptions about leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust) may predict the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles that are

characterised by high concern for self and others. Therefore, this finding informs the expansion of dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) by arguing that it is likely that positive social exchange behaviours (Blau, 1964) result from positive organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive outcomes, which may in turn inform the choice of conflict handling styles to indicate high dual concern for self and others.

Thirdly, an important finding in the context of the study was that union membership had a significant (negative) main predictive effect on conflict types. Based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), organisations would benefit from having a collaborative pluralistic perspective on unions, as this may result in good quality social exchange reciprocal behaviour. Hence, organisational culture, employee voice behaviour, employee engagement and organisational trust are likely to be strengthened by employees' membership of unions, positively affecting conflict types (i.e. group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential).

Furthermore, a number of interaction effects were evident regarding the outcome of interpersonal conflict handling styles. Firstly, the results showed that age moderates the effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles, implying that generational differences should be considered in a conflict management framework.

Secondly, the effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on union membership. Extant literature confirms that efficient collective consultation with unions (if present) assists in strengthening organisational trust (Emmott 2015; Gill & Meyer, 2013). Moreover, workplaces with a union presence often have better employee relations (Gill & Meyer, 2013). Hence, drawing on social exchange reciprocal behaviour principles (Blau, 1964), it is argued that a collaborative pluralistic approach to ER (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) may strengthen workplace relationships and organisational trust by fostering strong relationships with unions (Emmott 2015; Gill & Meyer, 2013), which in turn may possibly result in an effort to resolve conflict through a win-win, high dual concern approach (i.e. using integrating and compromising conflict handling styles) (Rahim, 1983). This finding lends support for the extension of social exchange (Blau, 1964), dual concern (Rahim, 1983) and collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) into an extended and integrated theoretical lens for managing conflict.

Thirdly, the effect of leadership and organisational trust respectively on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. This finding was to be expected as research suggests that leaders who use cooperative conflict handling styles that indicate greater concern for self and others enhance social exchange behaviours, subsequently improving trust and cooperation (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). However, it may be argued that the complexities of bigger organisations with greater numbers of employees may increasingly complicate cooperative behaviours because increased group numbers result in diverse viewpoints on factors such as interpersonal conflict handling styles, values and attitudes (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Achieving synergy amid such diversity holds numerous challenges. Furthermore, extant literature suggests that organisational trust is generally more prevalent in smaller rather than larger organisations (Gould-Williams, 2003).

Fourthly, the results revealed that the effect of organisational culture on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the existence of a formal employee engagement programme in organisations. This relates to the argument that in order to engage employees and to contribute to their wellbeing, an open, supportive and fair organisational culture is necessary (Albrecht, 2012; Welbourne & Schramm, 2017). It is thus likely that a strong cooperative organisational culture that allows mistakes and tolerates conflict may support effective conflict management, especially when supported by a formal engagement programme.

Furthermore, the research indicated various interaction effects regarding the outcome of conflict types. Firstly, the effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on perception of conflict types were all conditional on union membership. Hence, an approach of collaborative pluralism is advised in ER (accepting conflict as natural and unions as collaborative partners in the relationship), as union membership positively affects employees' experiences of conflict types, which in turn are likely to lead to higher quality social exchange (Blau, 1964) behaviour in organisations. Secondly, the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on the job level of participants. This is in line with extant literature (Guarana et al., 2017) that posits that employee voice behaviour is not only affected by the person expressing voice but also those to whom voice is expressed.

The findings discussed above supported the expansion of and integration of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), dual concern (Rahim, 1983) and social exchange (Blau, 1964) theories into one extended meta-theoretical lens for managing conflict.

8.1.7.4 *Counterintuitive findings*

Some findings were counterintuitive. Firstly, no main predictive effect was found between leadership and conflict types. However, extant literature emphasises the importance of strong leadership in constructive conflict management (e.g. Binyamin et al., 2017; Hendel et al., 2005; Tanveer et al., 2018). Secondly, no significant (negative) main conditional effects were realised between the individual socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) and interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that none of the socio-demographic variables affect the strength or direction of the relationships between interpersonal conflict handling styles and, respectively, leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust. These findings warrant further research.

8.1.8 **Empirical research aim 6: Test for significant mean differences**

Empirical research aim 6 is of relevance to this section. Also refer to section 7.4.5 and tables 7.48 to 7.52.

Empirical research aim 6: To determine whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within South African-based organisations.

To address this empirical research aim, tests for significant mean differences were conducted. These tests indicated that participants differ based on their socio-demographic groupings. Only the five (age, job level, trade union membership, numbers of employees, and employee engagement programme) most important socio-demographic variables for the purposes of this research, as indicated by the process of stepwise regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression analysis, are reported for parsimony reasons. The main findings are discussed and interpreted in terms of pertinent literature in the sections below.

8.1.8.1 *Socio-demographic group differences: Age*

Although a number of significant mean differences were detected among the different age groups, these differences were all of a small ($d \geq .20$) practical effect size. For the most part, the differences were observed between the 18 to 34 age group and, respectively, the 35 to 49 age group and the 50 years and older group.

Firstly, the 18 to 34 age group scored significantly lower than the 35 to 49 age group and the 50 years and older age group on employee voice (speaking up and speaking out). This implies that the 18 to 34 years group engages less in employee voice behaviour than their older counterparts. This finding is in line with extant literature indicating that employees from various generational cohorts value employee voice differently, and that older employees regard voice behaviour with higher value even though all generations view voice as important (Palumbo et al., 2009). Research has also found that the different generations need different forms of voice. For example, millennials (Generation Y) rely more on informal mechanisms of communication such as social media, which may influence their perceptions of voice (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Hence, a conflict management framework should consider the specific needs of the different age groups in planning employee voice interventions.

Secondly, the 18 to 34 age group scored significantly lower than the 35 to 49 age group and the 50 years and older age group on employee engagement (also job engagement), while significant lower mean scores were also noted between the 18 to 34 age group and the 50 years and older age group on organisational engagement. Extant literature holds conflicting views on how and if age influences engagement levels (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). For example, whereas Hoole and Bonnema (2015) believe a significant relationship exists between various generational cohorts and their experience of engagement, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) posit that engagement is only weakly positively related to employees' age. Nonetheless, scholars often agree that older workers are generally more engaged than their younger counterparts (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Thirdly, the 50 years and older age group scored lower than the 18 to 34 age group on process, relational and status conflict, and lower than the 35 to 49 age group on overall conflict types.

The 18 to 34 age group scored significantly lower than the 35 to 49 age group and the 50 years and older age group on conflict resolution potential. Jehn (1995, 1997) explains conflict resolution potential as the way conflict is resolved through either confronting, compromising or avoiding

conflict. Related to this matter, the various age groups also showed significant mean differences about choice of conflict handling style. Whereas the 18 to 34 age group scored significantly lower than the 35 to 49 age group on a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), significantly lower mean scores were also noted between the 18 to 34 age group and the 50 years and older age group on the integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2), and the compromising interpersonal conflict handling style (2). However, the 35 to 49 years and 50 years and older age groups scored lower on an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2) than the grouping of 18 to 34 years. Parmer (2018) confirms that interpersonal conflict management styles have a significant relationship with age. Hence, a conflict management framework should consider generational differences when addressing conflict types, conflict resolution and style.

8.1.8.2 Socio-demographic group differences: Job level

Significant mean differences, ranging from a small ($d \geq .20$) to a very large ($d \geq 1.20$) practical effect size, were observed. For parsimony reasons, only significant mean differences of a very large to a large practical effect size are highlighted.

Firstly, it was evident that employee voice behaviours differ significantly between diverse job levels. Regarding overall employee voice, the mean scores of professional employees on employee voice were significantly lower (large practical effect size) than those of senior management, while employees on staff level and junior management level also had significantly lower mean scores than those of senior management but with a very large practical effect size. In addition, staff level employees had significantly lower mean scores than those of middle management (large practical effect size). Employees on staff level also had significantly lower mean scores of a large practical effect than their senior management counterparts regarding speaking out and speaking up voice behaviour, as well as on being granted voice opportunities. Junior management also scored significantly lower than their senior management colleagues, and staff members than their middle management colleagues, regarding speaking up voice behaviour (large practical effect size). When considering these rights carefully, it becomes clear that the lower the job level, the less employees engage in employee voice (including speaking out and speaking up voice behaviour) and the less they are granted voice opportunities. Although this is not surprising when considering that seniority brings more experience, and thus that senior staff members are better equipped to manage difficult interpersonal situations (De Wit et al., 2012), it does emphasise that employee voice behaviour is not fully utilised among junior staff members.

Nonetheless, the finding is in line with previous research. Guarana et al. (2017) explain that employee voice behaviour is affected by whom voice is expressed to and by who expresses voice; as Kahn (1992) argues, influence and status ensure a bigger voice. According to Howell et al. (2015), managers acknowledge voice behaviour from employees whom they perceive to have status, for instance because of their position in the organisation.

Secondly, regarding organisational engagement, significant mean differences of a large practical effect size were noted between employees on staff level (who had significantly lower mean scores) and senior management. In other words, staff members seem to be less engaged in their organisations than senior management. This finding is supported by extant literature. Kular et al. (2008) indicate that because of role characteristics such as authority, stimulation and available resources, senior executives are more engaged than lower level and hourly paid workers who normally are least engaged. Job levels holding influence and status allow officeholders to shape their own roles, thus increasing engagement levels (Kahn, 1992). However, Kahn (1992) also points out that higher status equals less choice in being engaged, and thus, in order to remain authentic, present and focused, individuals constantly draw from their inner self (Kahn, 1992).

The third finding that indicated significant mean differences of a large practical effect size was noted between the various job levels in relation to an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2) and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (2). Employees on staff and on junior management levels scored significantly lower than senior management on the use of an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2). Additionally, senior management had significantly lower mean scores than staff members with relation to an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. These findings imply that senior management engages more in an integrating than in an avoiding conflict management style, whereas staff members often avoid conflict, and staff and junior management engage less in integrating conflict handling styles. This finding is supported by research (Rahim, 1983) that shows that status amongst organisational members (e.g. management versus non-management) affects the way employees react to conflict.

In summary, it is concluded that significant differences are evident between employees on various job levels, of which only those with a large effect size were discussed here. Job level should therefore be considered when a conflict management framework is developed.

8.1.8.3 *Socio-demographic group differences: Trade union membership*

Counter to expectations, no significant mean differences were detected based on whether participants belonged to a union or not.

8.1.8.4 *Socio-demographic group differences: Number of employees*

The results showed a number of significant mean differences, of which most were of a small to moderate practical effect size. From the findings it may be deduced that organisational size (as measured by number of employees) plays a role in perceptions of organisational culture (including allowance of mistakes), collaborative leader conflict behaviour, organisational trust (including integrity and commitment) and the various conflict types (task, relational, status and process). For parsimony reasons, only those significant mean differences with a moderate practical effect size are discussed in more detail below.

Firstly, the research showed that organisations with less than 50 employees had significantly higher mean scores regarding their perceptions on organisational culture (including allowance for mistakes) than organisations with 500+ employees. This implies that organisations with smaller numbers of employees hold more positive perceptions about the organisational culture as it pertains to allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict. This is in line with previous research that states that organisational size affects organisational structure and culture because of differing challenges and changes that occur as organisational size varies (Beer, 1964; Vaccaro et al., 2012).

Secondly, significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect size were noted in relation to collaborative leader conflict behaviour between numbers of employee groupings of less than 50 employees versus 500+ employees; and between 51 to 150 employees versus 500+ employees. In both instances, organisations with more than 500 employees scored lowest. This implies that bigger organisations engage less in collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Extant literature shows contradictory results on which organisational size (as measured by, for instance, number of employees) is optimal for leadership – larger or smaller numbers (García-Morales et al., 2008; McGill & Slocum, 1993; Vaccaro et al., 2012). Nonetheless, a collaborative approach to conflict indicates a higher concern for self and for others, and it may be argued that it becomes more difficult to show this concern the bigger and more complex the organisation becomes. Further research on this matter is needed, as a paucity of research was noted on leadership and collaboration (Silvia & McGuire, 2010).

Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect size were noted in relation to, respectively, organisational trust, integrity and commitment between number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees, as well as the grouping of between 51 to 150 employees versus 500+ employees. In all instances, organisations with more than 500 employees scored lowest. This implies that organisational trust (integrity and commitment) is lower in bigger organisations and higher in organisations that have 150 and less employees. This is in line with extant research that suggests that organisational trust is generally more prevalent in smaller organisations than in larger ones (Gould-Williams, 2003).

Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect size based on the number of employees were noted in relation to the various conflict types (task, relational, status and process conflict). With relevance to task conflict, lower scores were noted for number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees versus the grouping of 51 to 150 employees which had higher scores. This implies that smaller organisations experience less task conflict than bigger organisations (in this instance, a small to medium-sized organisation). Moreover, relational conflict and status conflict respectively showed significant mean differences between number of employees groupings of less than 50 employees which scored lowest versus the grouping 500+ employees. This implies that relational conflict and status conflict is experienced more in big organisations (500+ employees) than in small organisations. Lastly, significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect size were noted in relation to process conflict between number of employees groupings of 51 to 150 employees which scored lower than the grouping of 151 to 500 employees and the grouping of 500+ employees. In other words, employees in smaller organisations (51 to 150 employees) experience less process conflict than bigger organisations. These findings thus suggest that smaller organisations (less than 150 employees) generally experience less task, relational, status and process conflict than their bigger counterparts (especially organisations with more than 500 employees). Existing literature (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) supports this finding by arguing that increased numbers in a group (be it a team, organisation, or any other group) result in higher numbers of diverse viewpoints on conflict handling, values, attitudes and the like, making it very difficult to attain synergy amongst such diversity.

8.1.8.5 Socio-demographic group differences: Formal employee engagement programme

The results showed a number of significant mean differences for tolerance of conflict (organisational culture), a collaborative leader conflict behaviour (leadership), and a dominating

leader conflict behaviour (leadership) between organisations without a formal employee engagement programme versus organisations with an engagement programme. In all instances, organisations without a programme scored lower than organisations with a formal engagement programme. This suggests that organisations with a formal employee engagement programme have an organisational culture that tolerates conflict better, that perceives its leaders to engage more in collaborative leader conflict behaviour, as well as more in dominating leader conflict behaviour. In addition, a significant mean difference was observed between organisations with a formal employee engagement programme and those organisations without such a programme, with the former scoring lower than the latter in relation to an avoiding leader conflict behaviour. This suggests that organisations with an engagement programme perceive their leaders to engage less in avoidant leader conflict behaviour. All these significant mean differences were of a small practical effect size.

8.1.8.6 Main findings: Synthesis

The characteristics of age, job level, trade union membership, numbers of employees and employee engagement programme showed significant mean differences of a small to very large practical effect size with regard to perceptions about the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the dependent variable of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). It can thus be inferred that these socio-demographic differences should be considered in a conflict management framework. Of these five core socio-demographic variables, job level and number of employees had significant mean differences from a moderate to a very large practical effect size, and are thus the two socio-demographic variables with the most significant differences in relation to the constructs of relevance to the current research. Job level and number of employees are thus especially important to consider when planning conflict management interventions.

These findings thus partially support hypothesis 6.

8.1.8.7 Counterintuitive findings

Counter to expectations, no significant mean differences were detected based on whether participants belonged to a union or not. This may be because the majority of participants in the current research were not trade union members, although most of the organisations they worked for had trade union representation. As such, further research on this finding may be required.

8.2 SYNTHESIS: CONSTRUCTING A PSYCHOSOCIAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The central hypothesis of the research, as outlined in Chapter 1, stated that the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust are significant mechanisms in explaining the relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations. In addition, perceptions of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediating psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations will be experienced differently by members of homogenous socio-demographic subgroups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size and employee engagement programme), and will have different implications for conflict management practices in combination than they do individually. The hypothesis furthermore assumed that a conflict management framework can be constructed from the elements that emerged from the empirical links between the constructs. The research focused on determining whether supportive evidence could be found in terms of these assumptions.

More specifically, the current research study was intent on determining how certain factors in the organisational ER context predict, mediate and moderate the appearance of various conflict types, as well as interpersonal conflict handling styles. It was argued that expanding on the existing knowledge around these aspects may contribute to the construction of a conflict management framework. It was anticipated that the theorised psychosocial conflict management framework might inform ER and business management strategies, policies, procedures and practices that would enhance the effective management of conflict in a South African-based organisational context, and in so doing, contribute to overall organisational performance.

Hence, all the hypothesised relationships were statistically tested and the results provided support for the central hypothesis as stated above. The results of the statistical analysis informed the empirically manifested psychosocial conflict management framework, which is depicted in Figure 8.2 and discussed below and in preceding sections. These relationships emphasised the essential organisational and psychosocial elements to consider when constructing a conflict management framework for South African-based organisations.

All findings relate specifically to participants who were mostly white, middle-income females of 35 years and older (Generation X cohort) with a postgraduate degree, working full time for more than 11 years at large, private-sector South African-based organisations (+ 500 employees). Participants typically belonged to professional bodies but were not union members. Employing organisations mostly had representative trade unions and also had formal employee engagement programmes in place. Although the results may be applicable to a wider audience, the profile above explains the average respondent in this research.

8.2.1 A theoretical foundation for conflict management within an employment relations context

This research was based on the general premise that organisations function within an environmental sphere of influence that presents organisations with macro, meso and micro contexts that hold specific implications and challenges for the effective performance of organisations (Hackman, 1987; Oc, 2018). Conflict is only fully understood when such contextual factors are acknowledged (Bear et al., 2014) and strategically managed through an open system approach (Dunlop, 1958). Managing conflict in organisations is complex and organisations have to constantly adapt to these changing and dynamic macro, meso and micro-environmental situations through a strategic approach (Avgar, 2017; Du Plessis, 2012; Isiaka et al., 2016; McDonald & Thompson, 2016; Miles et al., 1978; Runge, 2016; Rust, 2017) that analyses ER challenges. This approach necessitates connecting the macro- (e.g. socioeconomic and political aspects), meso- (e.g. strategic alliances; internal and external stakeholders), and micro level (e.g. organisational level strategies, policies, procedures) dimensions (Hyman, 1995) of a dynamic and changing world of work. Individuals and organisations not only shape their own context but are also concurrently shaped by it.

Sound ER between management and employees on a micro level is mirrored in harmonious and cooperative relationships (De Silva, 1998) that ultimately contribute to successful organisations (Addison & Teixeira, 2017; Fashoyin, 2004; Pyman et al., 2010). Working towards the goal of sound ER is thus vital, and developing best practice for conflict management from an ER perspective on the macro, meso and micro levels, is imperative. Although the macro and meso environments are acknowledged in this research as fundamental to understanding the context and causes of workplace conflict, they are not the focus of the research. This study concentrated on constructing a conflict management framework for workplaces – that is, the micro-environmental level.

Three meta-theoretical lenses formed the foundation of the research, namely, collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976). Collaborative pluralism is summarised first.

According to Brett (2018), workplace conflict transpires in situations where social interdependence prevails but incompatible activities arise, thus interfering with goal achievement (Tjosvold et al., 2014). Collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) explains a philosophy of dealing with coexisting conflict and cooperation in the employment relationship (Avgar, 2017; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; García et al., 2017; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) that stems from different authorities and sources of loyalty within organisations (Kaufman, 2008; Loudon et al., 2013), and different interests between the role players (Delaney & Godard, 2001; Loudon et al., 2013; Van Buren & Greenwood, 2011). Pluralism accepts that conflict is inevitable and at the heart of any employment relationship (Heery, 2016) and that it should be managed constructively and strategically. Collaborative pluralism argues that role players should work collaboratively to enhance common workplace interests (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Hence, collaborative pluralism is regarded as one of three meta-theoretical lenses that shape the construction of a conflict management framework for workplaces.

According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), a mutually dependent, reciprocal exchange process results in social behaviour between employers and management (Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Emerson, 1976; Soieb et al., 2013). Employees reciprocate employers' behaviour by matching their behaviour – forming a(n) (in)formal social exchange relationship (Hansen, 2011; Hom et al., 2009; Yu et al., 2018). According to Saks (2006a), employees will partake in these give-and-take relationships as long as the general rules of exchange and the norms of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) are followed. When the relationship is characterised by unequal reciprocity, equity is re-established by one party who subsequently invests less in the exchange relationship so as to restore equity (Ali Arain et al., 2018). This way, a fluid, long-term relationship (Blau, 1964) of shared commitment and emotional investment (Hom et al., 2009; Shore et al., 2006) forms between employees and their organisation.

Dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) argues that two broad dimensions are evident in conflict management between the role players: a concern for self and/or a concern for others. Based on these two dimensions, a choice between five modes of interpersonal conflict handling styles is possible: an integrating (high

concern for self and others), obliging (low concern for self but high concern for others), dominating (high concern for self and low concern for others), avoiding (low concern for self and others) and, lastly, a compromising style (moderate concern for self and others) (Rahim & Magner, 1995a). Different conflict conditions determine a strategic choice in dual concern through which conflict can be managed (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Pruitt (1983) suggests that dual concern theory gives parties a strategic conflict management choice which may be affected or altered as one party encourages the other to be concerned about their outcomes.

Based on the above theoretical principles, the research assumed that a significant and positive link exists between the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables. Additionally, it was assumed that further analysis can be performed to explore the relationship dynamics among the variables. These assumptions were confirmed in the research and informed the conflict management framework as discussed below.

8.2.2 Leadership dynamics in the psychosocial conflict management framework

The results emphasised the importance of leadership in a conflict management framework, as also suggested by prior research (Gelfand et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2018; Townsend & Hutchinson, 2017). For the purposes of this research, leadership was regarded as the ability to adapt to given situations while simultaneously influencing followers to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2002). Considering this definition, the research focused specifically on how leaders behave during conflict, arguing that, based on social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), leaders may set the tone for conflict management in organisations. This argument is supported by Gelfand et al. (2012), who state that employees tend to adopt comparable attitudes to leaders to manage conflict, in this way developing a conflict culture in an organisation (Gelfand et al., 2012). Leaders – through social exchange – thus drive the conflict culture of an organisation through their own conflict management behaviour (Gelfand et al., 2012). Therefore, it was hypothesised that a positive relationship exists between perceptions of social exchange leadership and leaders' positive conflict behaviours based on high dual concern. The canonical correlation analysis confirmed that those variables participants scored highest or lowest in are important to consider in constructing a framework for conflict management. Subsequently, it was confirmed that leadership should inform conflict management interventions.

Although research indicates that different styles of conflict handling are necessary in different situations (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Marquis & Huston, 1996; Rahim, 1983), a collaborative leader conflict behaviour is generally preferred. Research suggests that cooperative conflict handling styles (i.e. integrating/collaborating and compromising styles that indicate greater concern for self and others) enhance the social exchange process to improve trust, collaboration, and voice behaviour (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). The current research showed that leaders who engage collaboratively during conflict episodes foster a conflict climate where positive perceptions are held regarding the potential to resolve conflict, and a positive group atmosphere prevails. In other words, when leaders display conflict behaviours that indicate high dual concern to followers, employees feel valued (Saks, 2006a) and are likely to respond positively through reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964). The research confirmed positive correlations between leaders who act collaboratively during conflict and who show positive social exchange behaviours, on the one hand, and the use of integrating and compromising conflict handling styles of employees on the other. Hence, it was no surprise that the research confirmed a positive relationship between dominating and avoiding leader conflict behaviours (low in dual concern), and the prevalence of all four conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict). Prior research affirms the relationship between leadership styles, conflict type and interpersonal conflict handling styles (Tanveer et al., 2018). Hence, the importance of collaborative leader conflict behaviour and positive social exchange leadership behaviour that point to high dual concern should be stressed in conflict management interventions in order to ensure positive reciprocal behaviours from employees.

In addition, leadership optimises the other constructs in this study and the way these constructs (organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust) shape conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Firstly, the research was based on the premise that leaders' conflict perceptions and behaviours significantly predict how organisational members perceive and handle conflict, thus shaping the organisational culture and, more specifically, the organisation's conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). In other words, individual conflict management preferences unite around normative means for handling conflict that are (at the very least) in some measure shared by others in the organisation, owing to recurrent interactions and established organisational structures. The way leaders manage conflict is therefore imperative in forming (through reciprocal behaviour) a conflict culture that indicates high dual concern. These arguments were supported in the current research as

perceptions of leader social exchange and conflict behaviours correlated significantly with a conflict culture that indicates tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes.

Secondly, extant literature confirms that leadership meaningfully influences employee voice (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Elsetouhi et al., 2018). Hence, the research predicted that a positive relationship exists between perceptions of social exchange leadership and leaders' positive conflict behaviours; and employee voice (overall voice behaviour, speaking out, speaking up, and granting voice opportunities). The research findings confirmed these relationships. Perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour, overall leader conflict behaviour, and particularly collaborative leader conflict behaviour, all relate positively to all the employee voice variables. However, when leaders avoid conflict, employees are likely to refrain from voice behaviour and hold negative perceptions about the granting of voice opportunities.

Thirdly, research suggests that strong leadership positively enhances engagement (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, et al., 2014; Caniëls et al., 2018; Sahoo & Mishra, 2012) and organisational trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gounaris et al., 2016). The current research findings supported this view. It was found that positive perceptions of leader conflict behaviour and overall leader social exchange behaviour correlated positively with all the employee engagement and the organisational trust variables. In particular, social exchange leadership behaviour relates significantly to employee engagement (job and organisational engagement). Based on social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), these findings further support the importance of high dual concern behaviour by leaders, as these are likely to prompt positive perceptions of employee engagement and organisational trust.

Fourthly, the research was based on the premise that employment relationships and conflict management practices may be influenced by certain socio-demographic characteristics found in, for instance, national cultures, gender, age groups and the like (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018). In the first instance, the correlational analysis indicated that qualifications, workplace sector and workplace size show significant relationships with leadership. Furthermore, the findings indicate that organisational members, who did not fall in the category of senior management but in lower job levels, differ significantly in respect of perceptions of collaborative and avoiding leader conflict behaviours. Moreover, staff members and senior management also have significant mean differences in perceptions of leader social exchange behaviours. A conflict management framework should therefore stress that differing perceptions about leader conflict behaviour and social exchange behaviour may exist between senior staff and lower job levels, which, in itself, is

a possible cause of conflict. Therefore, a conflict management framework should consider varying views regarding these leadership matters.

Furthermore, when considering the socio-demographic characteristics as moderators, the findings indicated that number of employees (indicating workplace size) and implementing a formal employee engagement programme were identified as important predictors of leadership. Number of employees in an organisation also showed important interaction effects for leadership; namely, that the effect of leadership on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Specifically, participants who worked in organisations with fewer than 150 employees (i.e. smaller organisations) had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants in organisations employing 150 and more staff members. These differing perceptions were also evident when considering significant mean differences, highlighting that leader conflict behaviour and social exchange behaviour are likely to be viewed differently depending on the number of employees (organisational size) and the existence or absence of a formal employee engagement programme. These findings should be considered in a conflict management framework, especially for bigger organisations, as this implies that bigger organisations are likely to display less social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviours. Based on the principles of dual concern (Rahim, 1983) and social exchange (Blau, 1964), such behaviour is likely to negatively affect conflict management.

Fifthly, mediation modelling indicated that, overall, the mediating variables of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) are important mechanisms explaining the direction and strength of the predictive link between leadership behaviour and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Leadership – specifically collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of social exchange leadership – strengthens group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential (conflict types) and integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles through the mediating role of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity). The one exception to this finding is the fact that the pathway between leadership and a dominating leader conflict behaviour was not significant. This implies that a dominating behaviour does not seem to strengthen positive perceptions about conflict management. This finding confirms that leader conflict behaviour that does not show high dual

concern may result in negative reciprocal behaviour by followers. These dynamics are important to consider in the framework for conflict management.

In summary, it is concluded that the research supports the theoretical principles of social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983) from a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), as it relates to the role of leadership in managing conflict. When leaders display social exchange behaviours to their followers and handle conflict collaboratively, followers react with reciprocal behaviours of positive exchange and dual concern. Hence, it is concluded that in an ER context that functions from a collaborative pluralistic point of view, perceptions of leadership that display high dual concern behaviour strengthen positive reciprocal behaviour among employees, enhancing the strategic management of conflict from a holistic perspective.

8.2.3 Organisational culture dynamics in the psychosocial conflict management framework

As predicted, the research confirms the importance of an organisational culture that allows mistakes and tolerates conflict by potentially strengthening the chances of successfully managing organisational conflict. In this study, organisational culture is regarded as the patterns of shared assumptions that are internally integrated as organisations deal with external challenges in ways that are considered valid. These patterns are thus carried over to new employees as the correct way to think, perceive or feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2010). Thus, an organisational culture prompts certain behaviours and ensures organisational fit through shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991). The basis of organisational culture is found in social constructionism, which reasons that individuals cannot be analytically detached from their environment but rather that they simultaneously represent their environment and are subjects of that environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1996).

Firstly, the research proposes that when an organisational culture regards conflict as a natural phenomenon (Fox, 1966) that has to be tolerated while also allowing for mistakes (Yeh & Xu, 2010b), it potentially fosters positive perceptions of leader social exchange and conflict behaviours, while also promoting employee voice and the granting of voice opportunities. The research further confirmed that a negative significant relationship was evident between all the organisational culture variables and an avoidant leader conflict behaviour (low dual concern), while no significant correlations with dominant leader conflict behaviour (low dual concern) were

evident. This finding is supported by prior research that shows that individuals, as well as departments and organisations, may develop a conflict handling style – an aspect importantly influenced by leaders' conflict management style (Gelfand et al., 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). These findings thus suggest that positive organisational culture perceptions (specifically also as it relates to conflict) are likely to support reciprocal positive social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983) behaviours that may benefit conflict management interventions. Extant literature also points out that an organisational culture provokes behaviour of fit in organisations by focusing on shared meaning, values and norms (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; O'Reilly et al., 1991); thus it is likely to direct accepted behaviour towards managing conflict in the organisation. Norms such as openness, voicing opinions and collaboration thus potentially influence the conflict culture of the organisation (Gelfand et al., 2012).

Secondly, the research confirmed significant relationships with a large practical effect between overall organisational culture (allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and all the organisational trust variables, as well as with organisational engagement, while moderate practical effects were noted with overall employee engagement and job engagement. Extant literature emphasises that developing a culture of engaged employees is an attribute of successful companies (Wiley, 2010). Moreover, trust is necessary to increase harmony and to reach mutually acceptable outcomes (Du et al., 2011; Pruitt, 1983). Hence, positive organisational and conflict cultures are imperative, as they are likely to strengthen employee engagement and organisational trust.

Thirdly, organisational culture (overall organisational culture, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) relates negatively to all four conflict types (task, relational, process and status) and to an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. In other words, positive perceptions of an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and allows for mistakes (Yeh & Xu, 2010b) are likely to lessen the prevalence of the four conflict types and the use of an avoiding conflict handling style. Low dual concern behaviour (as seen in the use of avoidance when handling conflict) (Rahim, 1983) is thus likely to decline when a positive organisational conflict culture exists. This supports the notion that a positive conflict culture contributes to positive conflict management through reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964) that is indicative of high dual concern (Rahim, 1983).

Fourthly, it was interesting to note that allowance for mistakes correlated positively with the obliging interpersonal conflict handling style. This is not ideal, as an obliging (accommodating/yielding) style shows low concern for self and high concern for others. (Ayub et

al., 2017; Rahim et al., 2001). Thus, the research suggests that when mistakes are allowed, differences are likely to be toned down while commonalities are emphasised, thus addressing the concerns of the other party (Rahim et al., 2001). Although such an approach may have a place under specific circumstances, ideally conflict should be managed in a way that indicates high dual concern, thus promoting positive reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964). Conflict management strategies should take cognisance of the fact that allowance for mistakes relates positively to obliging conflict behaviour.

Fifthly, the research findings suggest that when positive perceptions are held about an overall organisational culture that also tolerates conflict, it is likely that a positive group atmosphere would be evident, as well as the use of an integrating conflict handling style. These correlations were further clarified by the mediation analysis which showed that organisational culture (as denoted by a culture of conflict tolerance and allowance for mistakes) links positively to group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, as well as to integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles through employee engagement (job and organisation engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity). Hence, it is concluded that positive perceptions about an organisational conflict culture (indicating conflict tolerance and allowing for mistakes) are likely to be strengthened by high levels of employee engagement and organisational trust to enhance positive perceptions of group atmosphere and the potential to resolve conflict, and the use of high dual concern interpersonal conflict handling styles (Rahim, 1983). The importance of employee engagement and organisational trust interventions is thus emphasised in the construction of a conflict management framework, specifically also as it relates to organisational culture. This finding supports the notion of reciprocal social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) that results from a positive conflict culture, which in turn is likely to result in high dual concern behaviour (Rahim, 1983).

Sixthly, scholars argue that cross-cultural conflict naturally occurs in multicultural contexts (Du Plessis, 2012; Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018), and that employees from different cultures and groups are likely to differ with respect to their conflict tolerance levels, or how mistakes are viewed (Yeh & Xu, 2010b). Therefore, a number of socio-demographic characteristics were considered in the research to determine how these relate to perceptions of organisational culture. Several findings in this regard were evident that are important to consider for a conflict framework. Significant correlations were evident between overall organisational culture, tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes on the one hand, and qualification level, job level, trade union

representation and membership, workplace sector, number of employees and workplace size, and employee engagement programme on the other hand. These findings are in line with extant literature that argues that a compromise is necessary in shaping organisational culture (Schneider et al., 2013) because individual members may have subcultures based on their function, gender, occupation and the like, which may result in different experiences of and meaning applied to the organisational values. This implies that these biographical characteristics are likely to relate to differing perceptions about organisational culture. Hence, these characteristics should be considered when constructing a conflict management framework.

In fact, the moderation analysis showed that job level, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme are all positive predictors of organisational culture. For instance, organisations with fewer employees seem to have more positive perceptions of organisational culture (conflict tolerance and allowance for mistakes) than larger organisations. This is in line with extant literature that suggests that organisational size plays an important role in organisational structure and culture because of changes arising based on organisational size (Beer, 1964; Vaccaro et al., 2012). Furthermore, perceptions of overall organisational culture and tolerance of conflict are likely to differ depending on the job level of organisational members. For example, leaders in the higher hierarchical structure of an organisation have a great impact on setting the organisational culture, which then trickles down to lower levels (Zanda, 2018). It was also interesting to note that when employee engagement programmes have been implemented, perceptions about tolerance of conflict in organisations are more positive than when such a programme is absent.

Moreover, the moderation analysis emphasised that a number of interaction effects were evident based on these socio-demographic aspects. For instance, when participants belong to a trade union and have positive perceptions about their organisations having a culture of allowing for mistakes and tolerating conflict, they tend to be more positive about the various conflict types (i.e. task, relational, process and status conflict) as well as group atmosphere and dispute resolution potential than those who do not belong to a union. Furthermore, the results suggest that the effect of organisational culture on perceptions of conflict handling styles was conditional on the age group of participants, as well as whether a formal employee engagement programme was in place. More specifically, participants who scored high on organisational culture and who were younger than 50 years were more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants older than 50 years. Extant literature (Parmer, 2018) also confirms that interpersonal

conflict management styles have a significant relationship with age. In addition, those participants who scored high on organisational culture (organisations high on allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and who were exposed to a formal employee programme were more positive toward overall interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were not exposed to a formal employee engagement programme. Conflict management interventions should thus note these relationships when planning conflict management interventions

Therefore, it was argued that an organisational culture that views conflict as a natural phenomenon to be managed collaboratively (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) and that tolerates conflict and allows mistakes, might enhance positive reciprocal conflict behaviours (Blau, 1964) and strengthen high dual concern conflict handling (Rahim, 1983). Yeh and Xu (2010b) argue that tolerating conflict and allowing mistakes are also necessary to allow an innovative approach to conflict management, hence seeking new and creative ways of dealing with conflict. Accordingly, it is concluded that the research supports the theoretical principles of social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983) from a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) as it relates to the role of organisational culture in managing conflict. From the viewpoint of a collaborative pluralistic ER context, perceptions of an organisational culture that show high dual concern (Rahim, 1983) for employers and employees will strengthen positive reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964) among employees, enhancing the strategic management of conflict from a holistic, integrated perspective.

8.2.4 Employee voice dynamics in the psychosocial conflict management framework

The research predicted that employee voice would contribute significantly to the successful management of conflict in organisations. Employee voice is defined (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) as deliberate but voluntary informal and/or formal upward communication (speaking up) or outward communication with colleagues (speaking out) (Liu et al., 2010; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). The main aim of employee voice is to improve (rather than to criticise) organisational performance through either prohibitive or promotive voice. Prohibitive voice takes place by suggesting constructive and appropriate adaptations to customary work procedures and other work-related issues because of challenges and potential problems that are experienced. Alternatively, employees may share original and constructive thinking, ideas, plans, recommendations, clarifications or observations for change (promotive voice) (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liu et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). In addition, the research considered perceptions about whether or not leaders

grant voice to employees in order for employees to express their opinions (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b). Employee voice is regarded as reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964) – employees only engage in voice behaviour should they feel safe to do so. From a collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) point of view, conflict is accepted and welcomed, as differing perspectives are regarded as potentially beneficial. Therefore it is argued that employee voice improves the quality of decisions and thus also organisational effectiveness (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Hence, meaningful employee voice is welcomed from a pluralist perspective (Heery, 2016; Hickland, 2017).

Overall, reciprocal relationships are evident between a conflict culture of allowing for mistakes and tolerance of conflict and that of voice behaviour, as well as between voice behaviour and positive perceptions of leader behaviour. Drawing on social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), it was not surprising to find that collaborative leader conflict behaviour is likely to enhance voice behaviour, while avoidant leader conflict behaviours are likely to result in negative employee voice. Extant literature also confirms that encouraging employee voice in organisations necessitates a favourable organisational culture and strong leadership (Gupta et al., 2018; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018).

The findings suggest that overall employee voice and granting of employee voice opportunities relate significantly to overall engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and overall organisational trust (integrity, dependability and commitment). Extant voice literature confirms that employee voice contributes significantly to employee engagement (Alfes et al., 2010; Amah, 2018; Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Ruck et al., 2017). Employees feel valued and involved when they are able to share their ideas, opinions and concerns within their work environment, thereby increasing engagement (Rees et al., 2013; Ruck et al., 2017). Moreover, employees engage only in voice behaviour when trust is evident (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Employee voice behaviour is regarded as vital to healthy conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The research found that overall voice behaviour and speaking out and speaking up behaviour relate to an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style, while overall voice and speaking up behaviour also relate significantly to a compromising interpersonal conflict handling style. Granting voice opportunities is also positively linked to an integrating conflict handling style, while overall voice behaviour (including speaking out, speaking up, granting of employee voice opportunities) is likely to lead to the lesser use of an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. This finding thus supports the notion that positive perceptions

about voice behaviour are likely to result in reciprocal social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) that benefits conflict handling using high dual concern styles (Rahim, 1983). Extant literature confirms that leaders who use cooperative conflict management styles (integrating, cooperation and obliging styles) that indicate dual concern benefit social exchange behaviours which increase employees' perceptions of psychological safety, trust and use of employee voice (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015).

Employee voice behaviour relates to conflict types. The findings show that employee voice behaviour has negative relations with relational, process and status conflict; in other words, positive voice behaviour is likely to result in lesser manifestations of these conflict types. Similarly, speaking up behaviour was negatively related to status conflict. Additionally, positive perceptions of voice behaviour indicated reciprocal exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) in relation to positive perceptions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. This is in line with previous studies (Friedman et al., 2000) that posit that when employees participate in cooperative behaviours (such as employee voice), their feelings regarding the workplace are more positive and they are more likely to be satisfied and collaborative in general.

A number of socio-demographic characteristics correlated with voice behaviour. Workplace sector, income level, job level, and age are likely to relate to voice behaviour, especially with reference to speaking out and the granting of voice opportunities. Overall voice behaviour and granting of voice opportunities had significant relationships with union representation and union membership, while union membership also correlated significantly with speaking out. Extant literature confirms that different socio-demographic aspects influence the way employees perceive and react to voice (Benson & Brown, 2010; Howell et al., 2015).

These characteristics and their relationship with voice behaviour were also confirmed by the stepwise regression analysis that indicated that job level, workplace size and a formal employee engagement programme predicted employee voice. Additionally, the hierarchical moderation results suggest that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on union membership. Participants engaging in speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities and belonging to unions, are more positive regarding overall conflict types than those participants who did not belong to a union. Additionally, the results suggest that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on job level. Participants working in organisations at staff or professional level (i.e. non-managerial level), and who indicated positive perceptions about speaking up and speaking out voice

behaviours and having voice opportunities, were more positive toward overall conflict types than those participants on management level. Scholars emphasise the importance of including all groupings in order to ensure successful workplace practices (Townsend et al., 2013). Furthermore, the effect of employee voice on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age. Participants who indicated positive perceptions of speaking up and out, and having voice opportunities, and who were 50 years and younger, were more positive regarding the various interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants older than 50. Extant literature confirms that age may influence employees' tendency to voice their opinions and perceptions, or rather to remain silent (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Because these socio-demographic characteristics have significant relationships with the voice behaviour of employees, the likelihood that these characteristics may influence conflict management from the perspective of employee voice should be considered in a conflict framework.

Employee voice does not appear to have an indirect link through employee engagement and organisational trust to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Nonetheless, the research suggests that positive perceptions of employee voice are likely to link to positive perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement), which in turn are likely to indicate positive links with conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. This is supported in part by existing literature that argues that an indirect relationship exists between employee voice and employee engagement when mediated by the exchange relationships experienced by employees, based on the levels of trust between employees and management (Rees et al., 2013). Perceptions of voice behaviour mediate engagement, as well as trust in senior management and the employee–line manager relationship. Hence, engagement is likely to be higher in organisations that have high-quality social exchange relationships (Rees et al., 2013). However, when voice opportunities are perceived as pseudo voice with no real effect or no real intention to hear their views, reduced voice behaviour and increased intragroup conflict (De Vries et al., 2012) are likely to ensue. Thus, it is argued that such negative perceptions may result in low dual concern behaviour (Rahim, 1983).

In summary, the results confirmed that employee voice should be considered in a conflict management framework. It is concluded that the research findings, as discussed above, support the theoretical principles of reciprocal social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) and dual concern

(Rahim, 1983) from a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) as they relate to the role of employee voice in managing conflict. From a collaborative pluralistic ER context, perceptions of positive voice behaviour and granting of voice opportunities are likely to strengthen positive reciprocal conflict behaviour (i.e. a positive conflict climate indicative of positive group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential; and the use of integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles indicating high dual concern). Employee voice thus has the potential to enhance the strategic management of conflict from a holistic perspective.

8.2.5 The mediating role of employee engagement in the psychosocial conflict management framework

For the purposes of this study, employee engagement was viewed from two distinct employee roles – a work role (job engagement) and an organisational member role (organisational engagement) (Saks, 2006a). Therefore, employee engagement is described as employees being psychologically present (Kahn, 1990) in their job and organisational roles (Saks, 2006a), indicating physical (energy and vigour), emotional (being dedicated) and behavioural (being absorbed and engrossed) components (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006a; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employee engagement was studied from the perspective of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

Extant literature confirms that high levels of employee engagement are related to lesser conflicts, although they do not eliminate conflict completely (Soieb et al., 2013). Research suggests that employee engagement is facilitated by employees working in highly resourceful jobs stemming from high quality leader-member-exchange relationships (Breevaart et al., 2015). Hence, the importance of leadership in a conflict management framework, and specifically also as it relates to employee engagement, is stressed. The research confirms that positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour relate positively to job engagement and organisational engagement, as well as overall employee engagement. Kular et al. (2008) indicate that high-engagement workplaces have leaders who create safe, trusting organisational cultures with healthy employee voice behaviours. Thus, the finding of lower organisational engagement amongst participants may be ascribed to the fact that participants scored perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour relatively low. Additionally, the way leaders approach conflict is important for employee engagement. When leaders behave collaboratively in conflict situations, it is likely to reflect positively in job, organisational and overall employee engagement. Thus, these findings support the notion of reciprocal social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964).

Increasingly, organisations accept the importance of a more humane approach to the management of organisations, which should be embedded in the organisational culture (Bagraim, 2001; Bankole, 2010; Katz & Flynn, 2013). In line with prior research, the current research suggests that organisational culture predicts employee engagement. Specifically, the research confirmed the following relationships between organisational culture and employee engagement. Firstly, when organisations display a conflict culture that tolerates conflict, higher levels of job engagement, organisational engagement and overall employee engagement are likely to be prevalent. Similarly, overall organisational culture and a culture that allows mistakes positively relate to overall, job and organisational engagement. Scholars agree that a strong positive relationship exists between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture (Emmott, 2015).

It was explained above that employee voice plays an important role in a holistic, strategic conflict management approach. Confirming reciprocal social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), the research suggests that employees who display voice behaviour show positive levels of employee engagement. The seminal work of Kahn (1992) confirms that engaged employees partake in voice behaviour. Hence, speaking out, speaking up, granting of voice opportunities and overall voice behaviour are all related positively to job, organisational and overall engagement. Bakker and Demerouti (2018) explain that job resources (such as having a voice in decision-making processes (Kwon et al., 2016)) contribute to engagement.

The importance of employee engagement in the conflict management framework is supported by further research findings on the outcome of conflict types. Employees displaying job engagement and organisational engagement are likely to be less inclined to relational, process and status conflict. Additionally, positive levels of job and organisational engagement are likely to increase positive perceptions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Although no relationship was found between job engagement and task conflict, the research indicated that employees with high levels of organisational engagement are likely to be less inclined to task conflict. Extant literature confirms that employee engagement contributes to lesser conflict, although it cannot eliminate conflict completely (Soieb et al., 2013). Additionally, the research suggests that employees with high levels of job engagement and organisational engagement tend to mostly display an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style, or alternatively a compromising, obliging or dominating style. Importantly, the higher the level of job and organisational engagement, the less an avoiding conflict style is used, and vice versa. These

findings confirm that positive reciprocal behaviour based on social exchange principles (Blau, 1964) is conducive to conflict management that is indicative of high dual concern (Rahim, 1983).

As explained above, leadership and organisational culture indicated an indirect link through employee engagement to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. However, although employee voice does not appear to have an indirect link through employee engagement to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, positive links to employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) were evident, which in turn had positive links to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

A couple of socio-demographic characteristics should be highlighted that may reflect on the engagement levels of employees. Kahn (1992) maintains that varying organisational groupings may have either more or less psychological presence, as people from different ethnic groups, cultures and group affiliations are subjected differently to self-in-role behaviours. A conflict management framework should consider these characteristics when planning engagement interventions with the aim to enhance engagement, thus benefitting conflict management. In general, it should be noted that tenure is the only socio-demographic variable that showed no relationship with employee engagement (job and organisational engagement). However, the following demographics are important to consider: Firstly, significant positive relationships were observed between age, job level and overall employee engagement, while a negative relationship was evident with workplace sector, indicating that the different sectors relate in different ways to employee engagement. In addition, the presence of a formal employee engagement programme links positively to higher levels of engagement. Secondly, significant positive correlations were observed between organisational engagement and job level, as well as trade union representation and membership. Thirdly, a couple of negative relationships were observed that point to possible differences between the relationships of the various groupings. Both overall and organisational engagement related negatively to race, qualification level, workplace sector, number of employees and workplace size. In addition, the research showed that qualification level also correlated negatively with job engagement, while income level had a positive relationship with job engagement. Hence, organisations should take note that these socio-demographic characteristics are likely to influence the role of engagement in a conflict management framework.

Furthermore, the stepwise regression analysis suggests that race, age, qualification and job level were the most important positive predictors of employee engagement. Moreover, the results suggest that the effect of employee engagement on perceptions of conflict types was conditional

on union membership. Participants who held positive perceptions of job engagement and organisational engagement and who belonged to a union were more positive towards overall conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict types, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants who did not belong to a union. Furthermore, the results suggest that the effect of employee engagement on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age. Participants who scored high on employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and who were in the age group 18 to 49 years had significant higher positive perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were 50 years and older.

Hence, it is concluded that the research findings support the theoretical principles of social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983) from a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) as it relates to the role of employee engagement in managing conflict. In a collaborative pluralistic ER context, employee engagement mediates the link between leadership and organisational culture and conflict management (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, and the use of an integrating or compromising interpersonal conflict handling style). Although employee voice behaviour does not indicate an indirect link through employee engagement, it did predict employee engagement, which in turn linked to the conflict management outcomes. In other words, the finding supports the notion that positive reciprocal behaviours among employees are likely to result in positive levels of employee engagement, which strengthen positive conflict management outcomes of high dual concern. Employee engagement is therefore likely to enhance the strategic management of conflict from a holistic perspective.

8.2.6 The mediating role of organisational trust in the psychosocial conflict management framework

Trust in this research is studied from an individual point of view, with the trust referent being the organisation. Hence, for the purposes of this study, organisational trust is defined as a psychological state indicating a willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of an organisation (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) serves as the theoretical model for the organisational trust construct. Three dimensions of trust were considered, namely, integrity, commitment and dependability. Mayer et al. (1995) describe integrity as the level to which the trustee displays strong moral and ethical behaviour, displayed

in, for instance, fulfilling promises and acting consistently and fairly. Commitment is described as the feeling of belonging in an organisation and actions towards the organisation over time (Chathoth et al., 2011) based on the belief that it is a relationship worth maintaining, hence indicating a preparedness to be identified with the organisation (Paine, 2003; Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). Dependability refers to the consistent, faithful and reliable actions of an organisation, indicating that it will follow up on its promises (Chathoth et al., 2007; Paine, 2003, 2012). This indicates a concern for organisational members (Mishra, 1996).

Existing research confirms the importance of organisational trust in a conflict management framework. Trust is a catalyst for increasing harmony and reaching mutually acceptable outcomes, and communication, cooperation and conflict are all possible effects and outcomes of the presence or absence of trust (Du et al., 2011; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gounaris et al., 2016; Pruitt, 1983). Hence, the research predicted that organisational trust would form an integral part of conflict management. The research assumed that conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles are predicted by the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust. According to the canonical results, integrity, dependability and commitment are imperative for a conflict management framework.

Leadership was indicated as a key predictor of organisational trust. Specifically, perceptions of social exchange leadership behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour relate significantly to overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability (all with a large practical effect). Existing literature agrees that managers who respond sincerely to the concerns of workers increase trust levels (Boxall, 2016). However, when leaders engage in avoiding leader conflict behaviour, a negative relationship with overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability results. In other words, social exchange behaviour by leaders that is indicative of dual concern is likely to enhance organisational trust, while a lack of such behaviour (as seen in avoiding conflict behaviour by leaders) is likely to result in lower trust levels and the use of conflict management styles that indicate low dual concern.

Similarly, tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes and overall organisational culture all relate significantly to overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability (all with a large practical effect). Negativity is shielded by an organisational culture that holds trust in high regard (Schloegel et al., 2018). Hence, based on the principles of social exchange (Blau, 1964),

positive perceptions about the organisation's culture, and specifically its conflict culture, result in higher organisational trust.

Employee voice also relates significantly to organisational trust and should be considered in conflict management interventions. Overall employee voice behaviour, speaking out, speaking up and granting of voice opportunities all related significantly to integrity, commitment, dependability and overall organisational trust. Therefore, it is argued that voice behaviour is significantly linked to organisational trust through social exchange behaviour – positive voice behaviour is likely to result in positive organisational trust levels. This is an important finding as research shows that employees carefully consider whether to speak out or up, calculating the cost-benefit risk of doing so (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Without trust, voice behaviour is likely to be absent.

Organisational trust predicts conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and mediates the relationship dynamics between leadership and organisational culture, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). When organisational trust (overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability) is evident, lesser manifestations of task, relational, process and status conflict types are likely to result. This is confirmed by extant literature that suggests that conflict between employers and employees decreases when the collective perception exists that the organisation is trustworthy (Currie et al., 2017; Hodson, 2004). Furthermore, an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style is less likely to be used when organisational trust is evident. Positive levels of organisational trust (overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability) relate to positive levels of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, as well as the use of integrating, obliging, dominating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles. These styles all indicate high to moderate levels of dual concern. These research findings are in line with extant literature that confirms that the parties to the employment relationship show an increasing willingness to cooperate and collaborate when organisational trust is prevalent, thus improving workplace relations (Currie et al., 2017; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). When conflict is managed constructively, it reinforces trust in organisations (Tjosvold et al., 2016).

A couple of important considerations regarding the various socio-demographic characteristics were evident relating to organisational trust, and should therefore be considered in a conflict management framework. Firstly, contrary to expectations, none of the socio-demographic groupings of race, gender, age, income level, tenure (except for the sub-construct of dependability

which indicated a negative relationship with tenure) and employment status indicated any significant relationships with the organisational trust variables. This was counterintuitive, as extant literature suggests that tenure (Gilbert & Tang, 1998) and diversity issues (e.g. age differences) affect trust relationships (Williams, 2016). However, qualification level, workplace sector, number of employees, workplace size and a formal employee engagement programme showed negative relationships with organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability), indicating the possibility that the various groupings may relate differently to trust. Job level and trade union representation and membership related positively to organisational trust. The results also indicated that differences in perceptions of organisational trust are likely based on differing job levels of organisational members, as well as varying numbers of employees.

The stepwise regression analysis confirmed that job level, workplace sector, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme were all positive predictors of organisational trust. Moreover, the hierarchical moderated regression analysis suggested that the effect of organisational trust on conflict type was conditional upon union membership. Participants who held positive perceptions about the dependability, commitment and integrity of their organisations and who belonged to a union had significantly more positive perceptions of conflict types (task, relational, process, status conflict, and group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) than those participants who did not belong to a union. Likewise, the effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on union membership. Participants who held positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity and who belonged to unions were significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who did not belong to a union. Furthermore, the results suggested that the effect of organisational trust on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age. Participants who held positive perceptions about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity and who were within the age group 18 to 49 years were significantly more positive about the various interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants in the 50 years and older age group. Lastly, the moderation results suggest that the effect of organisational trust on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Participants who held positive perceptions of their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity and who worked in organisations with smaller numbers of employees (less than 150 employees) were more positive about the various interpersonal conflict handling

styles than those participants from organisations with higher employee numbers (151 and more employees).

In summary, it is concluded that organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) is important in intensifying the direction and strength of the link between leadership behaviour and organisational culture, and the multidimensional conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and various interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, compromising). From the above discussion and drawing on social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), it is evident that positive social exchange relationships indicative of positive dual concern leadership, organisational culture initiatives and voice behaviours are likely to benefit positive levels of organisational trust, which in turn are likely to result in high dual concern conflict management behaviours and conflict types. Hence, it is concluded that the research findings support the theoretical principles of social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983) from a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) as it relates to the role of organisational trust in managing conflict. In a collaborative pluralistic ER context, perceptions of positive leadership and organisational culture are likely to have an indirect link through organisational trust that will strengthen positive reciprocal conflict management behaviour among employees. Although employee voice behaviour does not indicate an indirect link through organisational trust, it did link positively to organisational trust. Organisational trust initiatives are thus likely to benefit the strategic management of conflict from a holistic perspective.

8.2.7 The moderating role of the socio-demographic variables in the psychosocial conflict management framework

As explained in sections 8.1.6 and 8.1.7, the moderating role of the socio-demographic variables in the conflict management framework was determined by a two-stage process. Firstly, forward stepwise multiple regression analysis identified the moderating variables that acted as significant predictors of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust, conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. These results were discussed above, and will only be briefly summarised in this section for ease of reference.

During this first stage, the results suggested that number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme and job level are the three most important socio-demographic variables to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age. More specifically, number of

employees (indicative of organisational size) predicts leadership, organisational culture, organisational trust and interpersonal conflict handling styles. The presence of a formal employee engagement programme predicts leadership, organisational culture, employee voice and organisational trust. Ironically, a formal employee engagement programme does not predict employee engagement. Job level predicts organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict types, while age predicts employee engagement and conflict types. These socio-demographic variables are regarded as core to the conflict management framework. Furthermore, a number of socio-demographic groupings were identified as important for a conflict management framework, although to a lesser extent as they predicted fewer variables in the research. Firstly, workplace size predicts employee voice, whilst race, qualification and workplace sector predict employee engagement. It was interesting to note that in a country as diverse as South Africa, race only predicted employee engagement. In addition, trade union membership significantly predicts overall conflict types. Thus, it was concluded that varying demographic groupings influence employees' perceptions of organisational level aspects such as leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as well as the psychosocial elements of employee engagement and organisational trust, as well as the management of conflict (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). These demographics should be considered in a conflict framework, as a one-size fits all approach to conflict management will not suffice.

The stepwise multiple regression analysis was followed by a hierarchical moderated regression analysis to determine whether the significant socio-demographic predictor variables performed as significant moderators in explaining the variance in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The latter analysis indicated that age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programmes had significant moderating effects. These effects explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

8.2.8 Dynamics around the testing for significant mean differences

For parsimony reasons, only the socio-demographic groupings pointed out as being the core moderating variables are discussed below.

8.2.8.1 *Socio-demographic group differences: Age*

A number of significant mean differences were detected among the different age groups. For the most part the differences were observed between the 18 to 34 age group (Generation Y/Millennials), and either the 35 to 49 age group (Generation X) or the 50 years and older group (Baby Boomers).

Firstly, Generation Y participants scored significantly lower than the Generation X group and the Baby Boomer group on employee voice (speaking up and speaking out). Thus, the 18 to 34 age group (generation Y) is likely to engage less in employee voice behaviour than their older counterparts. Extant literature confirms that voice behaviour is more important to older employees than the younger generation (Palumbo et al., 2009). Moreover, different generations need different forms of voice. For example, millennials (Generation Y) prefer informal modes of communication, such as social media; these preferences may influence their perceptions of voice (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Hence, a conflict management framework should consider the specific needs of the different age groups in planning employee voice interventions.

Secondly, Generation Y (millennials) participants scored significantly lower than Generation X and Baby Boomers on employee engagement and job engagement, while significant lower mean scores were also noted between Generation Y participants and the age group of 50 years and older (Baby Boomers) on organisational engagement. Extant literature holds conflicting views on how and if age influences engagement levels (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Nonetheless, scholars often agree that older workers are mostly more engaged than their younger counterparts (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Thirdly, Baby Boomers scored lower than Generation Y participants on process, relational and status conflict, and lower than Generation X on overall conflict types. When interventions are planned for conflict management, organisations thus need to consider that Generation Y/Millennials are more prone to process, relational and status conflict. Also, Generation Y scored significantly lower than Generation X and Baby Boomers on conflict resolution potential, implying that the 18 to 34 age group is more negative about the potential to resolve conflict than their older counterparts. Jehn (1995, 1997) explains conflict resolution potential as the way conflict is resolved by either confronting, compromising or avoiding conflict. Related to this matter, the various age groupings also showed significant mean differences about choice of conflict handling style. The 18 to 34 age group is less prone to using a dominating interpersonal conflict handling style (1 and 2) than their older counterparts (Generation X and Baby Boomers) and are also less

prone to the use of integrating or compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles than Baby Boomers. Moreover, Generation X and Baby Boomer participants make less use of an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style than Generation Y. Parmer (2018) confirms that interpersonal conflict management styles have a significant relationship with age. Hence, a conflict management framework should consider generational differences when addressing conflict types, conflict resolution and style.

8.2.8.2 Socio-demographic group differences: Job level

Significant mean differences, ranging from a small to a very large practical effect size, were observed. For parsimony reasons, only significant mean differences of a very large to a large practical effect size are highlighted.

Employee voice behaviours differ significantly between diverse job levels. The results showed that the lower the job level of participants, the less they engage in employee voice (including speaking out and speaking up voice behaviour) and the less they are granted voice opportunities. Although this is not surprising when considering that seniority brings more experience, and thus that senior staff members are better equipped to manage difficult interpersonal situations (De Wit et al., 2012), it does emphasise that employee voice behaviour is not fully utilised by junior staff members. This finding is in line with previous research that suggests that influence and status ensure a bigger voice (Kahn, 1992). According to Howell et al. (2015), managers acknowledge voice behaviour from employees whom they perceive to have status, for instance because of their job level. However, conflict manifests on all job levels, emphasising the importance of voice behaviour on all levels.

Secondly, employees on staff level (who had significantly lower mean scores) show much lower organisational engagement than does senior management. This finding is in line with extant literature. Kular et al. (2008) indicate that the characteristics of senior staff jobs (e.g. having authority, stimulation and available resources) result in higher levels of engagement than lower-level and hourly paid workers who normally are least engaged. Job levels holding influence and status allow officeholders to shape their own role, thus increasing engagement levels (Kahn, 1992).

The third finding that indicated significant mean differences of a large practical effect size was noted between the various job levels in relation to an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. Staff level and junior management level

participants make much less use of the integrating interpersonal conflict handling style than senior management do. However, senior management engages much less than staff members in an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style. Rahim (1983) confirms that status amongst organisational members (e.g. management versus non-management) affects the way employees react to conflict.

As noted above, only significant mean differences of a large to a very large effect size are pointed out for parsimony reasons. Hence, it is evident that job level should be considered when a conflict management framework is developed.

8.2.8.3 Socio-demographic group differences: Trade union membership

No significant mean differences were detected based on whether participants belonged to a union or not.

8.2.8.4 Socio-demographic group differences: Number of employees

The results showed a number of significant mean differences, of which most were of a small to moderate practical effect size. For parsimony reasons, only those significant mean differences with a moderate practical effect size are discussed in more detail below.

According to the mean scores of participants, organisations with less than 50 employees hold more positive perceptions about the organisational culture as it pertains to allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict than those organisations with more than 500 employees. This is in line with extant literature that suggests that organisational size affects organisational culture because of differing challenges and changes that occur as organisational size varies (Beer, 1964; Vaccaro et al., 2012).

With respect to perceptions on collaborative leader conflict behaviour, the results indicated that participants from organisations with more than 500 employees scored lowest compared to organisations with less than 50 employees and organisations with between 51 and 150 employees. This implies that bigger organisations engage less in collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Extant literature reflects contradictory results on which organisational size is optimal for leadership – larger or smaller numbers (García-Morales et al., 2008; McGill & Slocum, 1993; Vaccaro et al., 2012). Nonetheless, a collaborative approach to conflict indicates a higher concern for self and for others, and it may be argued that it becomes more difficult to show this concern as the organisation becomes bigger and more complex. This is a challenge bigger organisations

face when managing conflict, as organisations ideally need to foster a conflict climate that indicates dual concern and results in positive reciprocal behaviour. Further research on this matter is needed, as a paucity of research was noted on leadership and collaboration (Silvia & McGuire, 2010).

Significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect size were noted in relation to organisational trust, integrity and commitment respectively based on the number of employees in participants' organisations. Thus, organisational trust (integrity and commitment) is lower in bigger organisations and higher in organisations that have 150 and less employees. This is in line with extant research that suggests that organisational trust is generally more prevalent in smaller organisations than in larger ones (Gould-Williams, 2003).

Furthermore, significant mean differences of a moderate practical effect size in relation to number of employees were noted in relation to the various conflict types (task, relational, status and process conflict). Smaller organisations (less than 50 employees) experience less task conflict than bigger organisations (50–150 employees). Moreover, relational conflict and status conflict showed significant mean differences between organisations with less than 50 employees and organisations with 500+ employees. Thus, relational conflict and status conflict are more prevalent in big organisations. Lastly, participants in smaller organisations (51–150 employees) experience less process conflict than those in bigger organisations. These findings suggest that smaller organisations (less than 150 employees) generally experience less task, relational, status and process conflict than their bigger counterparts (especially organisations with more than 500 employees). Existing literature (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) supports this finding by arguing that increased numbers in a group (be it a team, organisation, or any other group) result in increased numbers of diverse viewpoints on conflict handling, values, attitudes and the like, making it very difficult to attain synergy among such diversity.

8.2.8.5 Socio-demographic group differences: Formal employee engagement programme

The results showed a number of significant mean differences for tolerance of conflict (organisational culture), collaborative leader conflict behaviour (leadership) and dominating leader conflict behaviour (leadership) between organisations without a formal employee engagement programme versus organisations with an engagement programme. In all instances, organisations without a programme scored lower than organisations with a formal engagement programme. This suggests that organisations with a formal employee engagement programme have an organisational culture that tolerates conflict better, that perceive their leaders to engage

more in collaborative leader conflict behaviour, but also more in dominating leader conflict behaviour. In addition, a significant mean difference was observed between organisations with a formal employee engagement programme which scored lower than those organisations without such a programme as it relates to an avoiding leader conflict behaviour. This suggests that organisations with an engagement programme perceive their leaders to engage less in avoidant leader conflict behaviour. All these significant mean differences were of a small practical effect size. Nonetheless, it does indicate that formal interventions play a significant role in the perceptions of participants.

8.2.8.6 Main findings: Synthesis

The characteristics of age, job level, numbers of employees and employee engagement programme showed significant mean differences of a small to very large practical effect size with regard to leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). From the five core socio-demographic variables earlier identified in the stepwise regression, job level and number of employees had significant mean differences of a moderate to a very large practical effect size, and are thus the two socio-demographic variables with the most significant differences in relation to the constructs of relevance to the current research. Hence, job level and number of employees are especially important to consider when planning conflict management interventions. Furthermore, counter to expectations, no significant mean differences were detected based on whether participants belonged to a union or not. This may be because the majority of participants in the current research were not trade union members, although most of the organisations they worked for had trade union representation. As such, further research on this finding may be required.

8.2.9 Dynamics regarding conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)

A number of important findings relevant to the management of conflict should be noted. (Note: sections 8.1.1 to 8.1.8 explained the relationships between the various constructs of relevance to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The discussion below will thus not repeat those findings but merely focuses on the specific conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling style constructs.)

8.2.9.1 *Conflict Types*

Conflict types were considered as a multidimensional construct, which included four types of conflict (task, relational, process, and status conflict), as well as conflict acceptability norms, conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Because of poor model fit, conflict norms (referring to whether conflict is openly accepted or avoided) were discarded, however, all other subconstructs were considered. Task conflict refers to conflict and differences about the content and goals of the task at hand (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Relationship conflict is defined as the existence of interpersonal incompatibilities, while process conflict relates to differences in opinion between group members on how a task should be completed (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Status conflict refers to differences over employees' comparative status position in their group's social hierarchy (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). The results showed that participants mostly experience task conflict, while process conflict was least experienced by participants. Because of the prominence of task conflict, organisations should consider ways of managing task content to lessen its manifestation. Contrary to what was expected, relationship conflict was less prevalent than task conflict in South African-based organisations. In part this expectation was based on extant literature that suggests that relationship conflict is the most frequently experienced conflict type in workplaces (Tanveer et al., 2018). Furthermore, Webster (2013) indicates that racial division in South African workplaces continues and results in workplace cultures characterised by low levels of trust and skills and high adversarialism. More research on this matter should be conducted.

Participants indicated that they mostly maintain an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style similar to their perceptions of their leaders' conflict behaviour. It may be argued that this finding emphasises the importance of reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964) in increasing positive conflict management through the use of conflict handling styles high in dual concern (Rahim, 1983).

Participants indicated that they were fairly positive about their work units' group atmosphere and perceived to a moderate extent that the potential to resolve conflicts exists. Group atmosphere is based on respect and cohesiveness, open communication, discussion norms and liking of team members, (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Thus, it potentially influences the various conflict types and organisational performance (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Conflict resolution potential refers to the degree to which the impression is given that the conflict will be possible to resolve based on individual characteristics, group structure (e.g. leader involvement) and dimensions of conflict (e.g. emotionality) (Jehn, 1997). It may perhaps be argued that because participants experienced

only moderate levels of leader-member social exchange behaviour, organisational trust and employee engagement, they also perceive the potential to resolve conflict only to a moderate extent. However, further research in this regard is necessary. Group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential are both imperative for a conflict management framework. Drawing on Rahim's (1983) dual concern theory and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), group atmosphere and conflict resolution are likely to be enhanced by conflict handling indicating dual concern and positive perceptions of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice mechanisms that ensure positive reciprocal behaviour.

8.2.9.2 Interpersonal conflict handling styles

Interpersonal conflict handling styles relate to a strategic choice that is made on how conflict should be managed based on a concern for self and for others (Rahim et al., 2001). Participants mostly maintained an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style (high concern for self and others, open exchange of ideas and problem-solving), followed by a compromising style (moderate concern for self and others, give and take relationship), while an obliging style (low concern for self and high concern for others, differences are down-played, and focus is on shared goals) was the third most used style. This was followed by a dominating style (high concern for self and low concern for others, win-lose behaviour), and least of all, an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style (low concern for self and others, conflict is side-stepped). Although scholars advise that different styles should be used according to specific situations (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Marquis & Huston, 1996; Rahim, 1983), in general an integrative conflict handling style is advised (Ayub et al., 2017) because it indicates high concern for both parties involved in the conflict. Drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), it is argued that such conflict handling will result in reciprocal high dual concern (Rahim, 1983) behaviour.

8.2.10 Main findings for the construction of a psychosocial conflict management framework: Synthesis

The results should be considered against the sample profile which consisted of mainly white employed females of the Generation X cohort (35–49 years) who held a tertiary, postgraduate qualification. Respondents were typically permanently employed in large, private-sector organisations with more than 500 employees, which had a formal employee engagement programme in place. Generally, they were middle-income earners in middle or top management level positions and had tenure of 11+ years. Participants largely belonged to professional bodies

(e.g. the SABPP). In the main, participants were not trade union members, although most of their organisations had trade union representation. Overall, participants did not agree that trade unions contribute to effective conflict management in organisations.

The empirical research findings as set out above indicated that significantly positive relationships exist between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as mediated by the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. Overall, the correlational statistics confirmed significant relationships between the respective constructs. Significant relationships in the expected directions were shown between the independent variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust. All of these variables also showed significant relations in the expected directions to the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The structural equation modelling determined that there was sufficient empirical evidence to support an acceptable fit between the theoretically hypothesised framework and the empirically manifested structural framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance in the research. The results of the mediation modelling and the SEM analysis paved the way for an integrated conflict management framework illustrating the key relationships between the variables.

The results emphasised the importance of leadership (leaders' social exchange behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) for a conflict management framework. Particularly, leader social exchange behaviour showed significant positive relationships with overall organisational culture, granting of employee voice opportunities, organisational engagement, overall organisational trust and group atmosphere. Additionally, leaders with a collaborative leader conflict behaviour showed significant positive relationships to overall organisational culture, granting of employee voice opportunities, overall employee engagement and overall organisational trust. Collaborative conflict behaviour by leaders indicates a concern for self and for others (Rahim, 1983), and may assist in shaping a conflict culture based on high dual concern in organisations. Moreover, number of employees and implementing a formal employee engagement programme were identified as important predictors of leadership. In fact, the effect of leadership on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. In addition, the mediating variables of employee engagement (job

engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) are important mechanisms explaining the direction and strength of the predictive link between leadership behaviour and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). These results pertaining to leadership emphasise the importance of positive reciprocal behaviours based on the principles of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and leader conflict behaviour indicative of high dual concern. These dynamics are important to consider in the framework for conflict management.

The research showed that an organisational culture that tolerates conflict and allows for mistakes relates significantly positively to perceptions of leader social exchange, collaborative leader conflict behaviour and overall organisational trust. Moreover, the research findings suggest that when positive perceptions are held about an overall organisational culture that also tolerates conflict, it is likely that positive group atmosphere would be evident, as well as the use of an integrating conflict handling style. Furthermore, organisational culture (as denoted by a culture of conflict tolerance and allowance for mistakes) links positively to group atmosphere, conflict resolution potential, and to integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles through employee engagement (job and organisation engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity). The importance of employee engagement and organisational trust interventions are thus emphasised in the construction of a conflict management framework, specifically as it relates to organisational culture. Furthermore, the research confirmed the importance of socio-demographic variables concerning organisational culture. In fact, the moderation analysis showed that job level, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme are all positive predictors of organisational culture. Moreover, the moderation analysis emphasised that a number of interaction effects were evident based on these socio-demographic aspects. The results suggest that the effect of organisational culture on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on trade union membership. Furthermore, the results suggest that the effect of organisational culture on perceptions of conflict handling styles was conditional on the age group of participants; as well as whether a formal employee engagement programme was in place. Organisations should thus note these relationships when planning conflict management interventions.

The research indicated that when leaders grant employee voice opportunities, employees perceive their leaders to act according to social exchange behaviour principles and with collaborative conflict behaviour. Furthermore, significant positive relationships were found

between employee voice behaviour and both organisational engagement and overall organisational trust. Moreover, speaking out and speaking up voice behaviour, as well as granting of voice opportunities, showed significant relationships with integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles, as well as with perceptions about collaborative leader conflict behaviour. Likewise, positive voice behaviour is likely to result in lesser manifestations of relational, process and status conflict types. Additionally, positive perceptions of voice behaviour relate to positive perceptions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Various socio-demographic conditions were highlighted relating to employee voice. Accordingly, job level, workplace size and a formal employee engagement programme predicted employee voice. Additionally, the hierarchical moderation results suggest that the effect of employee voice on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on union membership and job level, while the effect of employee voice on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age. Lastly, although employee voice does not appear to have an indirect link through employee engagement and organisational trust to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, voice links to organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement), which in turn is linked to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Organisational culture and employee voice behaviour predict employee engagement. Leaders who apply social exchange principles in their behaviour and who behave collaboratively in conflict situations are likely to enhance job, organisational and overall employee engagement. Employees displaying job engagement and organisational engagement are likely to be less inclined to relational, process and status conflict, while employees with high levels of organisational engagement are likely to be less inclined to task conflict. Additionally, positive levels of job and organisational engagement are likely to increase positive perceptions of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere. Employees with high levels of job and organisational engagement tend to mainly use an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style, or alternatively a compromising, obliging or dominating style. Importantly, the higher the levels of job and organisational engagement, the less an avoiding conflict style is used and vice versa. The research suggests that race, age, qualification and job level were the most important positive predictors of employee engagement. Moreover, the results propose that the effect of employee engagement on perceptions of conflict types was conditional on union membership, while the effect of employee engagement on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age. Lastly, leadership and organisational culture indicated an indirect link through

employee engagement to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. However, although employee voice does not appear to have an indirect link through employee engagement to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles, positive links to employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) were evident, which in turn had positive links with conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

Leadership (perceptions of social exchange leadership behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour), organisational culture (tolerance of conflict, allowance for mistakes) and employee voice (speaking up, speaking out and granting of voice opportunities) were indicated as key predictors of overall organisational trust (integrity, commitment and dependability). Furthermore, organisational trust predicts conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and mediates the relationship dynamics between leadership and organisational culture, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). When organisational trust (overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability) is evident, lesser manifestations of task, relational, process and status conflict types are likely to result. Positive levels of organisational trust (overall organisational trust, integrity, commitment and dependability) relate to positive levels of conflict resolution potential and group atmosphere, as well as the use of integrating, obliging, dominating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles. Job level, workplace sector, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme were all positive predictors of organisational trust. Moreover, the hierarchical moderated regression analysis suggested that the effect of organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on union membership. Additionally, the effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles was conditional on age and number of employees in an organisation. It is therefore concluded that organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) is important in intensifying the direction and strength of the link between leadership behaviour and organisational culture, and conflict types (task, relational, process and status conflict, group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and various interpersonal conflict handling styles. Although employee voice did not show an indirect link through organisational trust to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), positive links to overall organisational trust were evident, which in turn had positive links to conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles.

The research findings indicated that the socio-cognitive outcomes of employee engagement and organisational trust mediate the predictive roles of leadership (specifically leader social exchange

behaviour and a collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and organisational culture (specifically tolerance of conflict) with regard to conflict types (particularly group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles). The research also suggests that employee voice shows strong links to employee engagement and organisational trust, which, in turn, are linked to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Additionally, the results suggested that number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme and job level are the three most important socio-demographic variables to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age. The hierarchical moderated regression analysis indicated that age, union membership, job level, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme had significant moderating effects. These effects explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) in regard to the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Additionally, the socio-demographic characteristics of age, job level, trade union membership, numbers of employees and an employee engagement programme showed significant mean differences with regard to perceptions about leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). These socio-demographic differences should be considered in a conflict management framework. In particular, job level and number of employees were indicated as the two socio-demographic variables with the most significant differences in relation to the constructs of relevance to the current research. Job level and number of employees are thus especially important to consider when planning conflict management interventions.

The findings provided empirical support that reiterates the formation of a new extended theoretical lens for conflict management consisting of the combined principles of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983). In summary and drawing on the principles of social exchange (Blau, 1964), it is concluded that in a collaborative pluralistic ER context (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), positive perceptions held by the participants about the organisational context conditions of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are likely to predict positive perceptions about the socio-cognitive processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. Furthermore, based on reciprocal social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), the results show that for the participants,

employee engagement and organisational trust in turn are likely to influence positive perceptions of group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, as well as the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles that show high dual concern (Rahim, 1983). The research thus confirms that the behavioural outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are dependent on positive high dual concern social exchange behaviours. It is also important to note that these findings were conditional on the biographical characteristics pointed out by the research (age, union membership, job level, number of employees, and formal employee engagement programmes), which moderated the effect of the organisational context conditions on the socio-cognitive outcomes and the behavioural outcomes.

The principles of the theoretical frameworks of collaborative pluralism (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and dual-concern theory (Rahim, 1983) support an extended theoretical lens. The research concludes that these theoretical principles feature strongly in the relationships between the antecedents, mediators and outcome variables, as confirmed by the findings of the current research. More specifically, based on the literature review and the above empirical findings on the relationships between the constructs of relevance to the research, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Conflict and cooperation are regarded natural phenomena in organisations (Fox, 1966) that hold a collaborative pluralistic perspective on ER (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017).
- Organisations that honour a collaborative pluralist approach to ER would consider an organisational culture that, based on the principles of social constructionism (Denison, 1996), acknowledges the existence of conflict and cooperation, and therefore advocates a conflict-positive culture to ensure the constructive and strategic management of conflict on all levels of the organisation (Dillon, 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). A conflict culture that sets the tone for conflict management within organisations is necessary to deal constructively with conflict. Such a conflict culture should form part of the organisational culture (Gelfand et al., 2012). A conflict culture where conflict is tolerated and mistakes are allowed supports the notion of collaborative pluralism and dual concern, while also allowing for an innovative approach to conflict management. Such a positive conflict culture is supported by the leaders of the organisation displaying positive social exchange behaviour that indicates a collaborative approach to conflict that supports high concern for self and others.

- Leadership is therefore imperative in this process. Not only should leaders give strategic consideration to the influence of the macro and meso environments on conflict in organisations (the micro environment) but – drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) – they should also lead in a way that ensures positive reciprocal behaviours. By increasing positive perceptions of leaders' social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964), as well as leaders' conflict behaviours that show dual concern for self and others (Rahim, 1983), organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust, and subsequently, conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are enhanced (see for instance Currie et al., 2017; Dillon, 2012; Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018; Gelfand et al., 2012; Hoogervorst et al., 2013b; Tjosvold et al., 2014).
- Employee voice is vital in the process of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). However, employee voice behaviour is dependent on positive social exchange behaviour (Hoogervorst et al., 2013b; Tjosvold et al., 2014) because of the perceived risk of engaging therein. This research argues that should organisations engage with ER in a collaborative pluralistic (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) fashion, positive reciprocal behaviour should result (Blau, 1964) through, for instance, voice behaviour that assists in positively managing conflict. It is therefore important that managers grant their employees voice opportunities and, when conflicts occur, manage these conflicts by indicating high dual concern.
- Employee engagement and organisational trust both enhance conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) (Currie et al., 2017; Jungst & Blumberg, 2016). Scholars argue that employee engagement (e.g. Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Robinson et al., 2004; Saks, 2006a) and organisational trust (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 1986; Moorman et al., 1992; Shore et al., 2006; Tsai, 2017) result from social exchange behaviours (Blau, 1964). Moreover, collectivist values and trust building have been shown to moderate differences and increase cooperation (Coleman et al., 2017). Hence, it is argued that high levels of employee engagement and organisational trust may increase the quality of collaborative pluralism in workplaces, and may enhance the strategic management of conflict based on the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of dual concern and social exchange in organisations.
- Hence, considering these constructs as part of a conflict management framework lays the foundation for an approach to organisational conflict where, according to dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), organisational members show high concern for both themselves and

others, resulting in positive reciprocal behaviour through social exchange (Blau, 1964), thus ensuring the constructive management of conflict from a collaborative pluralistic employment relations perspective.

It is proposed that these results thus extend social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) and collaborative theory (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) by offering a new theoretical lens for conflict management that combines the principles of these three theoretical frameworks into one combined strategic conflict management theory.

This research supported calls by scholars (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001) to consider an integrated approach to conflict management on a strategic, functional and workplace level (e.g. Avgar, 2017, Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014). An integrated approach to conflict management also acknowledges the various role players (on an individual and organisational level). A collaborative pluralistic (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) perspective is consequently advised for organisations. The research further suggests that the influence of the macro, meso and micro environments be considered (Avgar, 2017; Currie et al., 2017; Kochan et al., 1984, 1986; Tjosvold et al., 2014).

The research shows that leadership plays a key role and thus it is suggested that organisational interventions should firstly target leadership as a factor in the organisational context. Hand in hand with such an approach would be to develop an organisational conflict culture with values, norms and practices that support openness and collaboration (Gelfand et al., 2012) and therefore also the notion of dual concern (Rahim, 1983), and from a broader perspective, collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Furthermore, leaders should consider whether their employees are granted sufficient employee voice opportunities, specifically to stimulate speaking up voice behaviour. In line with extant literature (Gupta et al., 2018; Lipsky & Avgar, 2010), it is suggested that employee voice be part of a conflict culture to enable meaningful discussions with employees about conflict situations and other aspects that may potentially give rise to conflict. Friedman et al. (2000) advise that when employees participate in cooperative behaviours (e.g. employee voice), positive feelings regarding the workplace result and employees are more likely to be satisfied and collaborative in general.

However, the research also confirmed the importance of socio-cognitive outcomes. It is therefore suggested that strategies and interventions should entail a long-term focus to enhance employee

engagement and organisational trust levels. While the current research confirmed that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice predict employee engagement and organisational trust, further research may indicate other important aspects that should also be considered in a strategic integrated conflict management approach. Although it was not the focus of this study, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and methods should form part of such an integrated approach.

The research indicated a number of key new insights:

- Extant literature on dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) focuses on how a concern for self and a concern for others influence the choice of conflict management style. Drawing on the principles of reciprocal social exchange behaviour (Blau, 1964), this research expanded on dual concern theory by showing that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, are likely to predict dual concern conflict management practices.
- According to social exchange theory, social behaviour results from a mutually dependent, reciprocal exchange process (Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Emerson, 1976; Soieb et al., 2013). Employees reciprocate their employers' and/or leaders' behaviour towards them by matching behaviour, thus forming a formal or an informal social exchange relationship (Hansen, 2011; Hom et al., 2009; Yu et al., 2018). The current research extended social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) by finding evidence of reciprocal social exchange behaviour in the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and mediators that predict conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Based on the theory of social exchange, the research suggests how leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust predict conflict types, group atmosphere and the potential to resolve conflict, as well as the choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange.
- The research further showed that positive perceptions of high dual concern behaviour may result in reciprocal social exchange behaviour in organisations and vice versa.
- The research extended the perspective of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) (as seen for instance in voice behaviour) by indicating how such a perspective on ER benefits dual concern (Rahim, 1983) and social exchange (Blau, 1964) behaviour.

- The research suggested an integrated approach to conflict management by considering the way organisational context conditions (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) may influence socio-cognitive outcomes (employee engagement and organisational trust) to enhance conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). More specifically, the results showed that should positive perceptions exist about organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive behavioural outcomes, it may lead to a conflict climate that is conducive to the potential to resolve conflict, indicate positive group atmosphere, and result in the use of high dual concern interpersonal conflict handling styles. To the knowledge of the researcher, no other study has considered the specific combination of constructs in an integrated conflict management approach.
- The research indicated the important role leadership plays in relation to all the constructs of relevance in the research, but also specifically in an integrated conflict management approach that considers the role of leadership in the way organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust contribute to conflict management. Although previous research has indicated the role leadership plays in conflict management (e.g. Mayer et al., 2018), and the role leadership plays on the various constructs individually, no previous research has considered the combination of constructs within this context.
- An integrated conflict management approach necessitates a conflict culture that tolerates conflict and allows for mistakes. Such a culture is conducive to positive reciprocal social exchange (Blau, 1964) and high dual concern (Rahim, 1983) behaviours, and supports collaborative pluralistic values.
- The research highlighted the likely influence of organisational context conditions (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and socio-cognitive behaviours (employee engagement and organisational trust) in an integrated conflict management approach. Specifically, the research indicated that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice predict employee engagement and organisational trust, and how these conditions are likely to affect the outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust. These results contributed to the development of a theoretically and empirically based framework for conflict management in organisations. Therefore, the research added scholarly and practical knowledge to the relationship dynamics between the constructs of relevance to the research.

- The research expanded on the knowledge available in a number of research areas where a paucity of research was evident. Few studies have considered conflict from a holistic point of view; rather, a fragmented approach is evident from the literature (Avgar, 2017). Previous research has rarely considered conflict and conflict management systems as they vary between unionised and non-unionised environments (Avgar, 2017). Few research studies have considered voice behaviour from the perspective of all levels of staff, and not only from a management perspective. Little research has been done on the relationship dynamics between employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict management. Past research has not sufficiently addressed the way interpersonal conflict handling styles potentially affect a strategic and integrating approach to conflict management (Avgar, 2017). Moreover, according to Avgar (2017), few studies have considered the antecedents of conflict management or focused on conflict management as a dependent variable. According to Bradley et al. (2015), surprisingly few studies have considered the role of leadership in conflict and Process conflict and status conflict have not been well researched. Conflict research often focuses on conflict resolution through ADR processes and much less on the role of other organisational strategies and processes and few studies have considered a preventative approach to conflict management. Many of these research gaps are addressed by the current research. Furthermore, few studies have indicated the impact of socio-demographic variables on conflict management within a South African environment; this lack of research was evident for all the constructs of the research.
- It was interesting to note that the canonical analysis results emphasised the importance of all constructs that positively relate to the principles of collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange (Blau, 1964) and dual concern (Rahim, 1983) for the purposes of managing conflict. This provided support for the suggested integrated conflict management framework.
- The research broadened knowledge on the way in which diverse socio-demographic groups (specific to the sample) differ in their experiences of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust through the lens of dual concern and social exchange theory, and how these differences are likely to influence conflict management.
- Although it was evident that employee engagement and organisational trust play a potentially vital role in the management of conflict, a paucity of research was evident on the relationship dynamics of employee engagement and organisational trust as mediators in a

conflict management framework, or in the combination of constructs in the current research. The research therefore adds valuable scholarly knowledge about the topics of employee engagement and organisational trust in conflict management, thus informing a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange and dual concern.

- Based on the theory of social exchange, the research deliberated on the way in which employee engagement and organisational trust mediated the relationship dynamics between the antecedents and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Furthermore, the research indicated that age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programmes had significant moderating effects that explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) regarding the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- In combination, the findings contributed to a theoretically and empirically tested integrated conflict management framework for participants employed in South African-based organisations.
- Conducting the research across various non-related organisations and with employees on various organisational levels addressed a research gap that was identified in the literature, namely, that a multilevel view is necessary in conflict research (De Wit et al., 2012). However, individual level research is necessary on intragroup conflict, as individuals perceive conflict differently; a factor that influences the way they make decisions and deal with the conflict. This has been a limitation in previous research that considered conflict mainly from a team or group perspective (De Wit et al., 2012).
- Extant literature (Lipsky et al., 2003) posits that generally, conflict management research considers the various challenges from a managerial viewpoint, hence the current research invited responses from organisational members on all organisational levels (managerial and non-managerial). The mostly equal sample representation for managerial versus non-managerial level participants is regarded as one of the strengths of the current study.
- It should be noted that at the time of writing and to the knowledge of the researcher, no other studies have used the measuring instruments that are used in this research in the South African context. Accordingly, the research may contribute to establishing the reliability and validity of the instruments in a South African sample.

A number of conflicting, unexpected and/or counterintuitive insights were derived:

- The descriptive results on the variables were less negative than expected, considering the negative picture that is painted by scholars of South Africa's ER. According to Dickenson (2018), South-African-based workplaces have to deal with an ER system that has to contend with a number of challenges (inequality, migrant labour, poor education levels, a segmentation of racial, gender and ethnic division of the workforce, and high structural unemployment and underemployment) (Beukes et al., 2017; Festus et al., 2016; Jordaan, 2016; Schoeman et al., 2010; Webster, 2013). Nonetheless, participants indicated generally positive perceptions about their workplaces – the variables all had means typically in the mid-ranges and none of the means indicated a dire problem. The reasoning behind this finding should be considered in future research, as it falls outside the scope of the current research.
- Related to this finding is the unexpected fact that task conflict was the most prominent conflict type in workplaces. It was expected that relationship conflict would be most prevalent in South Africa with its high levels of conflict and adversarialism in ER (ILO, 2016a). In addition, this finding is not in line with extant literature that indicates that relationship conflict is the most frequently manifested type of conflict followed by task conflict (Tanveer et al., 2018). Further research is thus required on this matter.
- The fact that the subconstruct of conflict acceptability norms (conflict openness versus conflict avoidance norms) did not fit the model was surprising. Acceptability norms determine how conflict is perceived within groups or organisations – while some groups have more open norms and encourage the expression of doubts or opinions, other groups may avoid such confrontations (Jehn, 1997; Tjosvold, 1991a). More research is therefore needed on this matter.
- Contrary to expectations and the extant literature, which suggests strong leadership is imperative in constructive conflict management (e.g. Binyamin et al., 2017; Hendel et al., 2005; Tanveer et al., 2018), no main predictive effect was found between leadership and conflict types. Further research on this finding should be conducted to facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between leadership and conflict types.
- Unexpectedly, no mediation effect was evident through employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) on employee voice and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

- It was hypothesised that gender, income level, tenure, employment status and trade union representation would be significant predictors of the variables of relevance to this research; however, they were not. One of the most unexpected findings was that race was only a significant predictor of employee engagement, as it was expected to be a more prominent predictor of all the respective variables, given South Africa's history and related challenges. Furthermore, the fact that gender did not significantly predict the constructs of relevance to this research was very surprising, given the general stereotyping of women and the discriminatory practices towards women in South African society. South African organisations reflect the diverse groupings of the country in terms of race, ethnicity, age and gender diversity through structural and historic frameworks, structures, rules and regulations (Mayer & Barnard, 2015; Mayer & Louw, 2011; Mayer et al., 2018; Shteynberg et al., 2011). It was counterintuitive to find that union membership did not predict employee voice, as union membership is regarded as a voice mechanism. This may be because the majority of participants in the current research were not trade union members, although most of the organisations they worked for had trade union representation. As such, further research on this finding may be required.
- Additionally, no significant (negative) main conditional effects were realised between the individual socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) and interpersonal conflict handling styles. This implies that none of the socio-demographic variables affect the strength or direction of the relationships between, respectively, leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, on interpersonal conflict handling styles. These findings warrant further research.

The research also confirmed the following corroborated insights:

- The research confirms the suggestion by scholars that an integrated conflict management process should be considered on strategic, functional and workplace levels (e.g. Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986) because (among other reasons) conflict manifests on multiple organisational levels. Furthermore, actions and decisions taken on the various levels affect one another, while conflict manifestations and management efforts may also affect the outcomes of organisational activity at different levels (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986).

- The current research acknowledges the importance of strategically aligning a conflict management framework with the challenges experienced in the macro and meso environments (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986).
- The research findings support extant literature that stresses the importance of leadership in managing conflict (Binyamin et al., 2017; Hendel et al., 2005; Tanveer et al., 2018). This research argues that in order for a conflict management framework to succeed, strong and ethical leadership on an organisational and dyadic level is imperative. Leadership relates significantly to a positive organisational culture (Fotohabadi & Kelly, 2018), as well as specifically a conflict culture in organisations (e.g. Gelfand et al., 2012), the enhancement of employee voice (e.g. Binyamin et al., 2017), employee engagement (e.g. Caniëls et al., 2018; Saks, 2006a) and organisational trust (e.g. Boxall, 2016, Greenwood & Rasmussen, 2017).
- Extant literature explains that norms and values such as openness, collaboration and integrity potentially influence the conflict culture of the organisation (Gelfand et al., 2012). The current research confirmed that a positive conflict culture contributes to constructive conflict management through reciprocal behaviour that is indicative of dual concern.
- Extant literature confirms that employee voice enhances positive workplace behaviours (Ali Arain et al., 2018). The research confirmed that overall employee voice, speaking out, speaking up, and granting of voice opportunities relate positively to perceptions of social exchange leadership, overall leader conflict behaviours, collaborative leader conflict behaviour (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015), all the organisational culture variables (Gupta et al., 2018), and all the engagement and organisational trust constructs. Extant voice literature confirms that employee voice significantly predicts employee engagement (Alfes et al., 2010; Amah, 2018; Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Ruck et al., 2017), while a significant relationship is evident between voice behaviour and organisational trust (Colquitt et al., 2001).
- Although a paucity of research is evident on employee engagement and conflict, extant literature suggests a significant relationship between employee engagement, conflict management and a supportive organisational culture (Emmott, 2015). The current research confirmed these significant relationships.
- The current research is in line with extant literature that suggests that trust is enhanced when a cooperative conflict management strategy is in place that focuses on conflict resolution strategies that benefit all role players (Hempel et al., 2009). Trust is further heightened by considering interpersonal conflict handling styles that are integrating,

accommodating and compromising (Ndubisi, 2011). Drawing on dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the current research supports these findings. Extant literature also suggests that task, relationship and process conflict are reliably negatively related to trust (De Wit et al., 2012; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). The current research confirmed these results.

In summary, the current study informed a framework for conflict management on a theoretical and empirical level that expanded on dual concern, social exchange and collaborative pluralism theory in the following ways:

- Current research on dual concern theory (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995a; Thomas, 1976) focuses on how a concern for self and concern for others influence the choice of conflict management style. This study expanded on this theory by showing that positive perceptions of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, as mediated by employee engagement and organisational trust, influence dual concern and choice of conflict management style.
- The research expanded social exchange theory by reporting that positive perceptions of the respective antecedents and mediators result in reciprocal positive conflict management outcomes (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- The research indicated how different socio-demographic groups in South Africa experience the constructs of relevance in the study, and how that informs conflict management.
- The study expanded knowledge on the way a holistic approach to conflict types, interpersonal conflict handling styles, group atmosphere and potential for conflict resolution informs a conflict management strategy based on the principles of social exchange, dual concern and collaborative pluralism.

In summary, it is suggested that collaborative pluralism, social exchange and dual concern theory offer theoretical frameworks to link the relational components of the antecedents, mediators and the outcome variables. This study argues that based on the literature review and the empirical results, organisations that hold a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) on their ER will accept conflict and cooperation as natural phenomena in organisations (Fox, 1966). Additionally, it is argued that such a collaborative pluralist approach to the employment relationship will foster an organisational culture that – through social constructionism (Denison, 1996) – acknowledges the existence of conflict, and hence, advocates a conflict-positive culture to ensure conflict is strategically and holistically managed on all levels of the

organisation (Dillon, 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). Positive experiences of organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive outcomes thus lay the foundation for an approach to organisational conflict where, according to dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), organisational members show concern for both themselves and others, resulting in positive reciprocal behaviour through social exchange (Blau, 1964). Socio-demographic differences should be acknowledged in the process.

An overview of the empirically manifested psychosocial framework for conflict management in South African-based organisations is provided in Figure 8.2. The general exploratory links between the various constructs are indicated in Figure 8.2. Because of the cross-sectional design of the research study, no causal links are illustrated. This framework could serve as a guideline for organisations when devising conflict management practices.

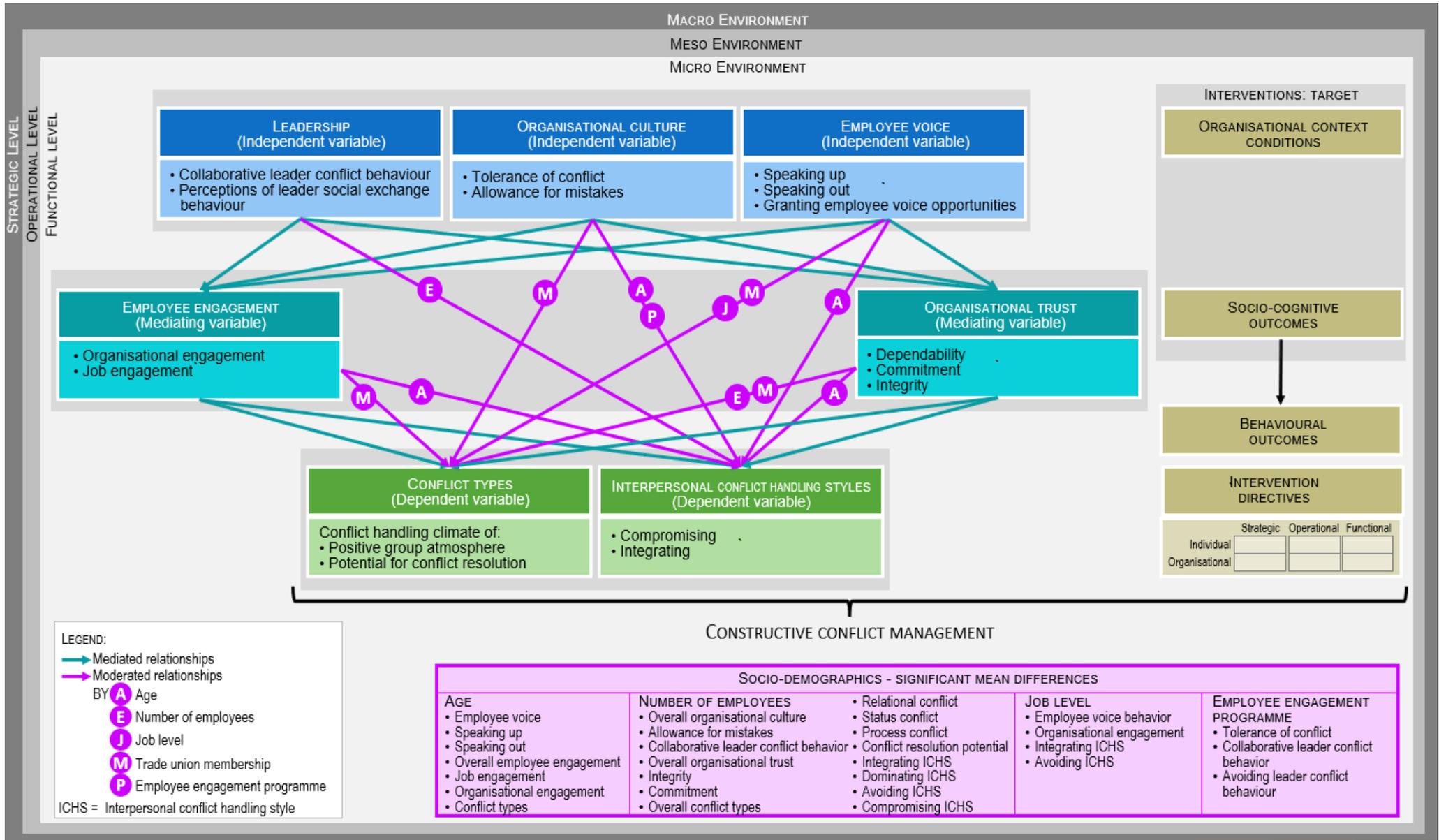


Figure 8.2: Core Elements of a Suggested Psychosocial Framework for Conflict Management

8.3 CONCLUSIONS

The general aim of the research was to investigate the components and nature of a psychosocial framework for conflict management in organisations; to investigate the way in which such a framework manifests by exploring the relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles); and to explore whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level and tenure) differ significantly regarding these variables.

This section considers conclusions derived at from the literature review and the empirical study In terms of the research aims outlined in Chapter 1.

8.3.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review

Literature research aims 1 to 3 (section 1.3.2.1) entailed the contextualisation of ER in the South African environment, as well as a comprehensive conceptualisation and theoretical exploration of the relationships between a number of variables that were regarded as important in constructing a strategic and integrated framework for conflict management. The framework consisted of the independent variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust, and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict styles and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The moderating role of socio-demographic variables on the variables of relevance to the research was also considered. In drawing conclusions on the relationship dynamics between the variables, reference is made to each of the specific theoretical research aims of the study.

8.3.1.1 Literature research aim 1: To conceptualise the constructs of concern to the study within the context of ER in South African-based organisations

The first aim was achieved in Chapters 2 to 4. Accordingly, the following conclusions, based on the literature review, were drawn in regard to conflict management within an ER context in South African-based organisations:

- Conflict is broadly addressed through three main approaches (section 2.2.2.2) which include, firstly, third-party intervention approaches (e.g. alternative dispute resolution), secondly, conflict style framework approaches (e.g. organisational initiatives and team approaches), and thirdly, integrated conflict management systems which coordinate the processes and mechanisms put in place to manage conflict strategically so as to prevent, manage and resolve disputes and conflict manifestations (Löhr et al., 2017).
- According to the seminal work of Hyman (1972), both potential sources of conflict and sources for enhancing harmonious relationships are present in the employment relationship; although they do not cancel one another out, they do contradict each other. It is therefore concluded that conflict and cooperation coexist in organisations (Bélanger & Edwards, 2007; Delaney & Godard, 2001; Deutsch, 1990; Gould & Desjardins, 2014; Hyman, 1979; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017).
- Hackman (1987) maintains that environmental factors (on a macro-, meso- and micro-environmental level) provide contextual background to organisations. This has implications for team effectiveness, leadership challenges and the like (Oc, 2018). Understanding of conflict is incomplete when contextual factors are ignored (Bear et al., 2014).
- ER, as a multidisciplinary field of study, deals with the formal and informal relationships between an organisation and its employees. It embraces all the collaborations and processes by which the role players adjust to each other's needs, requirements and expectations in the employment relationship (Dundon & Rollinson, 2011).
- A collaborative pluralistic perspective on ER suggests that an integrative and distributive approach to the employment relationship (as opposed to an adversarial, distributive focus) may result in mutual gains over the long term (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017). Unions have to be approached as the legitimate partner and the voice of employees (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) when represented in the organisation.
- Conflict is inevitable and inherent to the workplace (Avgar, 2017; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017; Tjosvold et al., 2014). It is regarded as both multidimensional and multilevel. Organisational conflict is defined as an inharmoniousness state in an organisation resulting from unmet, threatened or incompatible objectives, interests or values amongst dissimilar individuals or groups (Jones & George, 2016; Litterer, 1966). In this context, such ongoing disputes threaten employees' wellbeing, individuality and security and their sense of belonging (LeBlanc et al., 2014). Conflict descriptions thus emphasise three themes, namely, parties are interdependent, a perception of incompatibility among the parties is

present, and some form of interaction takes place between the conflicting parties (Putman & Poole, 1987). Hence, conflict is described as a process where one party perceives its interests to be adversely affected or opposed by another party because of perceived incompatibilities (Wall & Callister, 1995).

- Conflict management is regarded as having a strategic, long-term focus on managing conflict by considering the internal and external organisational environment (Lipsky et al., 2014) and aligning conflict management strategies and processes with other business and ER strategies, policies and procedures (Currie et al., 2017; Lipsky et al., 2003; Lipsky et al., 2014; Nash & Hann, 2017). In this way, a constructive conflict management process is ensured that brings opposing sides together in a cooperative manner. In addition, practical, attainable and cooperative strategies are designed to manage and monitor differences constructively (Ghai et al., 1998; Wright et al., 2017) with the overall aim of enhancing the performance and effectiveness of organisations (Lipsky et al., 2014).
- Although various categories of conflict are documented, this research specifically considers task, relational, process and status conflict. Task conflict refers to conflict about the content and goals of the task at hand (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Relationship conflict is defined as the existence of interpersonal incompatibilities (Jehn, 1995, 1997) and is deemed to manifest most in organisations (Tanveer et al., 2018). Process conflict relates to differences in opinion between group members on how to get a task done (Jehn, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001), while status conflict refers to differences over employees' comparative status position in their group's social hierarchy, a position that may be negotiated and challenged (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Scholars caution that all types of intragroup conflict are often present in conflict manifestations and that it is never just one or the other (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017). Additionally, no agreement has been reached on whether conflict can be both functional and dysfunctional. De Dreu (2008:6) concludes that conflict is only positive "under an exceedingly narrow set of circumstances".
- Scholars (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) suggest that group atmosphere (based on the levels of trust, respect, open conflict norms, and liking of group members and low competition), potential to resolve conflict and conflict acceptability norms (openness versus avoidance norms) should be investigated together with conflict types in order to determine their effect on these conflict types and group performance.
- In order to manage conflict in organisations successfully, it is necessary to differentiate between potential conflict handling styles applicable to diverse conflict incidents and

situations that may require different styles of conflict handling (Hendel et al., 2005; Parmer, 2018; Rahim, 1983). Dual concern theory relating to interpersonal conflict handling styles (Rahim, 1983, 1995) suggests two basic dimensions of interpersonal conflict handling, namely, concern for self and concern for others. When these two dimensions are combined, five specific styles of handling conflict result, namely, (1) integrating (collaborating) – high concern for self and others; (2) obliging (accommodating or yielding) – low concern for self and high concern for others; (3) dominating (competing, confronting or contending) – high concern for self and low concern for others; (4) avoiding (withdrawal or ignoring) – low concern for self and others; and (5) compromising style (cooperative) – intermediate concern for self and others (Rahim et al., 2001). An integrating style is most strongly linked to organisational performance (Tjosvold et al., 2014; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017) and is typically the preferred choice of style (Ayub et al., 2017).

- Conflict management approaches have either a preventative or a reactive focus, or a combination of the two, resulting in three broad strategies for conflict management, namely, third party intervention modes (e.g. alternative dispute resolution), conflict style frameworks incorporating problem-solving, and integrated conflict management approaches.
- Existing literature indicates that leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, organisational trust and employee engagement all relate significantly to conflict and conflict management in organisations; hence, the decision to consider these variables in an integrated approach. Leadership style, behaviours and perceptions are key in influencing conflict perceptions and in successfully implementing conflict initiatives (Dunford, Mumford, Boss, Boss, & Boss, 2017). An organisational (conflict) culture significantly affects the conflict management systems and strategies that are applied (Katz & Flynn, 2013, Parmer, 2018). Effective communication (including employee voice) is vital in enabling an understanding of various parties' intent, opinions, needs and the like, and thus may assist in preventing or reducing conflict, as well as better understanding it (Wu et al., 2017). Employee engagement indicates a relationship of trust between the role players (Emmott, 2015; Currie et al., 2017) and relates significantly to conflict management (Emmott, 2015). Organisational trust increases cooperation between parties and thus contributes significantly to managing conflict in such a way as to ensure a culture of stability, trust and cooperation (Madlala & Govender, 2018). It was concluded that these organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes are vital to an integrated conflict

approach. Blau's (1964) social exchange theory is the foundational theory for the leadership, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust variables.

- Organisational demographics are divided into three groups of employee characteristics (Lawrence, 1997), namely, undisputable characteristics (e.g. gender and age), characteristics that explain individual relationships with organisations (e.g. tenure or employment status) and characteristics that explain employees' position in society (e.g. trade union membership). Scholars (e.g. Jehn et al., 1999) confirm that conflict is experienced differently depending on diverse characteristics. Hence, it is concluded that diverse biographical characteristics should be considered in a conflict management framework.

8.3.1.2 Literature research aim 2: To construct a theoretically integrated framework for conflict management based on the relationship dynamics among the constructs

The second aim was achieved in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 provided a synthesis of the main findings. It offered a theoretical integration and evaluation of the literature review, concluding with an overarching conceptual framework for conflict management in South African-based organisations, as derived from extant literature on the relationships between the constructs (literature research aim 2) as illustrated in Figure 5.3. The following conclusions were drawn:

- From the literature review it was concluded that the three meta-theoretical theories of collaborative pluralism, social exchange and dual concern suggest that theoretical frameworks should connect the relational elements of the independent, mediating and dependent variables. Extant literature suggests that organisations that hold a collaborative pluralistic perspective (Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) on their ER will accept conflict and cooperation as a natural phenomenon in the employment relationship (Fox, 1966). According to the principles of social constructionism (Denison, 1996), it is concluded that leaders who hold a collaborative pluralist approach to ER will endorse an organisational culture that acknowledges the existence of conflict and thus advocates a conflict-positive culture to enable conflict to be strategically managed on all levels of the organisation (Dillon, 2012; Kinicki & Fugate, 2016). It is furthermore concluded that such an approach will lay the foundation for conflict to be managed according to dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983) where organisational members show concern for both themselves and others. Drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), it is concluded that such positive behaviours will lead to positive reciprocal behaviour (Blau, 1964) (e.g. employee voice behaviour and increased

levels of employee engagement and organisational trust), thus ensuring the constructive management of conflict.

- Drawing on collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the subtheory of social constructionism (Denison, 1996) as well as dual concern theory (Rahim, 1983), it was concluded that the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust will significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

8.3.1.3 Literature research aim 3: To outline the possible implications for practice and research of the theoretically proposed psychosocial framework for conflict management within the South African ER context

The third aim, literature research aim 3, was achieved in Chapter 5 (section 5.4). The aim was achieved by proposing a theoretical relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as mediated by the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust, and moderated by diverse socio-demographic characteristics. As a result, and based on the theoretical relationship between the variables, the theoretical integration resulted in the construction of a theoretically integrated conflict management framework that may be used to inform conflict management practices (Figure 5.5).

Section 5.4 provided a synopsis of the practical implications for the management of conflict in South African-based organisations, as derived from the literature review. Figure 5.5 gives an illustrative overview of the practical implications of the predicted conflict management framework.

The following conclusions were drawn:

- It was concluded that conflict should ideally be managed following an integrated, strategic approach (Avgar, 2017; Bendeman, 2007; Lipsky et al., 2017; Lynch, 2001; Rahim, 2002). Leadership plays a vital role in this process.
- The influence of macro-, meso- and micro-environmental challenges should be considered.
- Organisations should consider their conflict management and general strategic orientation (Lipsky et al., 2017).

- On the functional level, management should consider how the various role players engage with each other in order to enable and adopt strategic objectives for conflict management practices (Avgar, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). This includes deliberation on voice behaviour, the organisational culture, managing diversity, employee engagement strategies, and the like.
- In the workplace, conflict interventions should be considered on organisational, team and individual level to safeguard healthy workplace relationships (Avgar, 2017; De Beer, Tims et al., 2016; Kochan et al., 1986) taking into consideration the theoretical principles of dual concern (Rahim, 1983), reciprocity (Blau, 1964) and collaborative pluralism (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017).

8.3.2 Conclusions relating to the empirical study

The empirical aim of this study was to address six research aims, as discussed below.

8.3.2.1 Empirical research aim 1

To determine the nature of the statistical interrelationships between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating variables (employee engagement and organisational trust), the moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as demonstrated in the context of ER in a sample of South African-based organisations.

Research aim 1 was achieved in Chapter 7, which provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 1 (H1) (see Table 7.53).

Based on the empirical results, the following core conclusion was drawn:

Individuals' perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level and tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement

programme) are significantly related. The observed relationships between the respective variables alluded to reciprocal relationship dynamics that might inform the construction of a conflict management framework.

The following particular inferences were drawn from the significant relationships that emerged, lending empirical support to the hypothesised relationships between the variables in the theorised psychosocial conflict management framework:

- The three antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) were significantly correlated in the expected directions. Specifically, significant positive bivariate relationships were noted between leadership (notably perceptions of social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and the organisational culture variables and granting of employee voice opportunities. As predicted, avoidant leader conflict behaviour correlated negatively with all the independent variables. This supports the view that interrelationships exist between these variables which predict employees' reciprocal behaviours.
- The outcomes supported the notion that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice should be regarded as precursors of employee engagement and organisational trust, as significant correlations in the expected directions were reported. This supports the view that interrelationships exist between the variables depicting organisational context conditions that predict employees' reciprocal socio-cognitive outcome behaviours.
- The results supported the premise that leadership, organisational culture and employee voice should be regarded as antecedents of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), as significant bivariate correlations in the expected directions were reported. Strong positive reciprocal associations were especially noted between the antecedents and conflict resolution potential, group atmosphere and an integrating conflict handling style.
- The findings supported the notion that employee engagement and organisational trust should be regarded as precursors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), lending support to the proposed mediating effect of employee engagement and organisational trust. Significant correlations in the expected directions were reported, in particular a notably significant relationship was evident between the organisational trust variables and group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential, supporting the notion of social exchange behaviour.

- The results mostly supported the hypothesised relationships between the socio-demographic variables and the constructs of relevance in the research, as significant correlations in the expected directions were noted.

8.3.2.2 *Empirical research aim 2*

To determine the association between the independent and mediating variables as a composite set of latent construct variables and the dependent variables as a composite set of latent construct variables.

Research aim 2 was achieved in Chapter 7, which provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 2 (H2) (see Table 7.53).

Based on the empirical results, the following core conclusion was drawn:

The research suggests that there are significant reciprocal associations between

- *the composite set of independent variables (collaborative leader conflict behaviour, perceptions of social exchange leadership, tolerance of conflict culture, speaking out, speaking up, employee voice opportunities), and the mediating variables of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment, dependability); and*
- *the composite set of dependent variables, namely, conflict types (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and interpersonal conflict handling styles (integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles).*

Hence, the following specific conclusions were drawn:

- Employees who have positive perceptions about collaborative leader conflict behaviour, social exchange leadership, tolerance of conflict culture, speaking out, speaking up, employee voice opportunities, employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (integrity, commitment, dependability) are likely to have positive perceptions about their organisation's conflict climate (group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential) and integrative (high dual concern) or compromising (moderate dual concern) conflict handling styles.
- The four conflict types (task, relational, status and process conflict) and conflict handling styles indicating low dual concern (dominating, obliging and avoiding) did not emerge as

significant conflict management outcomes. This was to be expected. Drawing on the principles of social exchange (Blau, 1964), positive perceptions about the organisational context conditions (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and socio-cognitive outcomes (employee engagement and organisational trust) are not expected to result in the manifestation of conflict types, nor in the use of conflict handling styles low in dual concern. Hence, the exclusion of these variables supports the premise that employees are likely to respond with high dual concern reciprocal conflict management behaviours should they hold positive perceptions about organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes. These reciprocal associations should be considered in the framework for conflict management.

8.3.2.3 Empirical research aim 3

To determine whether employee engagement and organisational trust significantly mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the outcome variable (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research aim 3 was achieved in Chapter 7, which provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis 3 (H3) (see Table 7.53).

Based on the empirical results, the following core conclusion was drawn:

Overall, it was concluded that the mediating variables of employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement) and organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) are important mechanisms for explaining the direction and strength of the predictive link between leadership and organisational culture, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The following specific conclusions were drawn from the significant relationships that emerged, lending empirical support to the hypothesised reciprocal relationships between the variables in the theorised conflict management framework:

- Leadership explains perceptions of social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour but not dominating leader conflict behaviour. Additionally, high leadership explains lower levels of avoiding leader conflict behaviour, which implies that positive

perceptions of leadership are likely to ensure that there are fewer perceptions of avoidant leader conflict behaviour.

- High levels of organisational culture explain high levels of conflict tolerance and allowance for mistakes.
- High levels of employee voice explain high levels of speaking out, speaking up, and employee voice opportunities.
- Leadership, organisational culture and employee voice seem to function as antecedents of employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Hence, the extent to which employees are engaged and trust their organisations and have positive perceptions of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) is likely to be determined by respectively positive perceptions of leadership (social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour), organisational culture (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) and employee voice (speaking up, speaking out and granting of voice opportunities).
- Positive levels of employee engagement and organisational trust predict the extent to which positive perceptions of leadership (as indicated by perceptions of social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) and/or of organisational culture (tolerance of conflict and allowance for mistakes) affect perceptions of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Employee voice does not act as a significant mechanism in explaining the link between employee engagement and organisational trust, and conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Nonetheless, employee voice is likely to explain high levels of organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement), and of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Hence, it is concluded that organisational contextual factors (such as an organisation's leadership, organisational culture and employee voice behaviour) are likely to affect employees' socio-cognitive outcomes of engagement and organisational trust either positively or negatively, depending on the perceptions of employees. Drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), positive perceptions of leadership (social exchange leadership behaviour and collaborative leader conflict behaviour), organisational culture (conflict tolerance and allowance for mistakes) and employee voice (speaking up, speaking out and granting of voice opportunities) seem to have reciprocal associations with employee engagement and organisational trust. Moreover, positive

employee engagement and organisational trust are likely to strengthen the predictive effect of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice on conflict management (positive group atmosphere, conflict resolution potential and the use of either integrating or compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles). However, negative perceptions are also likely to result in negative outcomes and conflict handling indicative of low dual concern. These findings are thus important for conflict management.

8.3.2.4 Empirical research aim 4

To determine whether there is a good fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural framework and the theoretically hypothesised framework based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance to the research.

Research aim 4 was achieved in Chapter 7, which provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis 4 (H4) (see Table 7.53).

Based on the empirical results, the following core conclusions were drawn:

Sufficient empirical evidence exists to support an acceptable fit between the theoretically hypothesised framework and the empirically manifested structural framework, based on the overall statistical relationships between the variables of relevance in the research.

- Employees' perceptions of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice significantly predict their perceptions on employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Levels of employee engagement and organisational trust are likely to affect the predictive effect of leadership and organisational culture on conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Although employees' perceptions of employee voice in conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are not strengthened by levels of employee engagement and organisational trust, the findings suggest that employee voice has a significant positive predictive effect on employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Socio-demographic variables (such as number of employees, job level, formal employee engagement programme) should be considered in the management of conflict because of their influence on the relationship dynamics between the independent (leadership,

organisational culture and employee voice), mediating (employee engagement and organisational trust), and dependent (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) variables. Firstly, the number of employees in an organisation is likely to affect leadership, organisational culture, organisational trust and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Secondly, the presence of a formal employee engagement programme in organisations seems to predict leadership, organisational culture, employee voice and organisational trust. Thirdly, the perceptions organisational members hold about organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict types are likely to be predicted by the job level of these members. Fourthly, workplace size predicts employee voice. Fifthly, the demographics of race, qualification, age and workplace sector are likely to influence levels of employee engagement, while age and trade union membership are likely to influence perceptions of conflict types.

- The relationship dynamics between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are conditional on the socio-demographic characteristics of age, union membership, job level, number of employees, and formal employee engagement programmes and should be considered in the conflict management framework.
- The differences between groups (age, job level, trade union membership, numbers of employees, and employee engagement programme) are likely to affect perceptions about leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and should be considered in intervention design for conflict management.

These empirical findings thus support the theoretically hypothesised framework. The various relationships as noted above should be considered when constructing a conflict management framework.

8.3.2.5 Empirical research aim 5

To ascertain whether employees' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly moderate the association of the effect of

- (1) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust),
- (2) the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) as predictors of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), and
- (3) the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) as predictors of individuals' experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

Research aim 5 was achieved in Chapter 7, which provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis 5 (H5) (see Table 7.53).

Based on the empirical results, the following core conclusions were drawn over two stages:

- *Stage 1: A number of significant predictors of the independent (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediating (employee engagement and organisational trust), and dependent (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) variables were identified. Number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme and job level are the three most important socio-demographic variables to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age.*
- *Stage 2: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programmes had significant moderating effects that explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial process variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) in relation to the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).*

More specifically, the following conclusions were drawn:

Stage 1: A number of significant predictors of the constructs of relevance were identified that should be considered in constructing a conflict management framework.

- Number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict leadership.
- Job level, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict organisational culture.
- Job level, workplace size and a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict employee voice.
- Job level, race, age, and qualification significantly predict employee engagement.
- Job level, workplace sector, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict organisational trust.
- Job level, age and trade union membership significantly predict conflict types.
- Number of employees significantly predicts interpersonal conflict handling styles.

It is concluded that number of employees, a formal employee engagement programme and job level are the three most important socio-demographic variables to consider in a conflict management framework, followed by age. Moreover, because of the importance of trade union membership in an ER context, it is advised that the role of these organisations should also be considered.

Stage 2: Age, union membership, job level, number of employees and a formal employee engagement programme had significant moderating effects that explained the relationships between the constructs of relevance to the research.

Based on the significant relationships that were evident, the following specific conclusions were drawn:

- Employees' perceptions of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust significantly predict how they will experience conflict types.
- Employees' perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust significantly predict the style of interpersonal conflict handling that employees may engage in.
- Union membership significantly negatively predicts perceptions of conflict types. Hence, it is concluded that employees who hold union membership may be inclined to negative perceptions of conflict types.

- The effects of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles are likely to be greater for some employees than for others, depending on their age. Employees who are younger than 50 years tend to be more positive than participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles
- Employees who hold positive perceptions about organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, and who belong to a trade union, tend to be more positive toward perceptions of conflict types than those who do not belong to a union. However, the effect of positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours on conflict types was not conditional on union membership.
- Employees who hold positive perceptions about organisational trust (i.e. being positive about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who belong to unions, tend to be significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles than employees who do not belong to a union.
- Employees working at staff or professional level (i.e. on a non-managerial level), and who have positive perceptions about speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities, tend to be more positive toward overall conflict types than those participants on a managerial (junior, middle, senior) level.
- The effects of leadership and organisational trust respectively on interpersonal conflict handling styles were conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Employees who hold positive perceptions about their
 - leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours, and/or
 - trusted their organisations (i.e. having positive perceptions on their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity), and
 - worked in organisations with 150 and less employees
 had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were employed in organisations with 150 and more employees.
- Employees with positive perceptions of organisational culture (allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and whose organisations have a formal employee engagement programme, tend to be more positive toward overall interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants whose organisations had no formal employee engagement programme in place.

8.3.2.6 *Empirical research aim 6*

To determine whether employees from different socio-demographic groups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) significantly differ regarding their experiences of the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice); their experiences of the psychosocial processes of employee engagement and organisational trust; and their experiences of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) within South African-based organisations.

Research aim 6 was achieved in Chapter 7, which provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis 6 (H6) (see Table 7.53).

Based on the empirical results, the following core conclusions were drawn:

(Note: For parsimony reasons, only five of the various socio-demographic variables are reported, namely age, job level, trade union membership, number of employees and employee engagement programme).

- For the most part, differences were evident between, respectively, the age groups over 35 years versus the age group of participants between the ages of 18 to 34. Younger employees tend to
 - engage less in speaking up and speaking out voice behaviour
 - be less engaged in regard to both job and organisational engagement
 - have less positive perceptions about the potential to resolve conflict.

Moreover:

- Generation Y employees are likely to experience more relational, process and status conflict than baby boomers.
- Lastly, Baby Boomers and Generation Xers engage more in integrating, dominating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles, while Generation Y/Millennials engage more in an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style.
- Employee voice behaviours, organisational engagement levels and the use of an integrating and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles are likely to differ significantly between the lower and higher job levels.

- Firstly, junior management, professionals and staff tend to engage less than senior management in overall employee voice behaviour, while staff also tend to engage less than senior management in speaking out behaviour and staff and junior management are likely to engage less in speaking up behaviour than senior and middle management. Staff level participants generally perceived much fewer voice opportunities being granted by leaders than by senior management.
- Secondly, staff level participants tend to be less engaged than their organisations' senior management. Furthermore, job level is likely to influence the handling of conflict through integrating and avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Staff and junior management also tend to engage less in an integrating interpersonal conflict handling style and more in an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling style than senior management.
- Contrary to expectations, no significant mean differences were detected based on whether participants belonged to a union or not. Clearly, unions can play a much stronger role in conflict management than they currently do.
- The number of employees in an organisation (as it relates to bigger versus smaller organisations) tends to influence perceptions of organisational culture (including allowance of mistakes), collaborative leader conflict behaviour, organisational trust (including integrity and commitment), and the various conflict types (task, relational, status and process).
 - Individuals in organisations with more than 500 employees tend to hold less positive perceptions about their organisations' culture (including allowance of mistakes), collaborative leader conflict behaviour and organisational trust (including integrity and commitment) than organisations with less than 50 employees.
 - Organisations with more than 500 employees are also likely to hold less positive perceptions about organisational trust (including integrity and commitment) than organisations with 50 to 150 employees.
 - Task and relational conflict tend to be less experienced in organisations with 50 and less employees than in organisations with more than 500 employees. Process conflict is also less evident in smaller (51-150 employees) than larger (151+ employees) organisations.

Ideally, conflict management interventions for big organisations (500+ employees) should therefore differ from those of smaller organisations. Hence, organisations should take note

of the differing leadership challenges and expectations between organisations with larger or smaller numbers of employees.

- The presence or absence of a formal employee engagement programme is likely to influence perceptions of tolerance of conflict, collaborative leader conflict behaviour, avoidant leader conflict behaviour and dominating leader conflict behaviour. Organisations without a formal programme tend to hold more negative perceptions of these aspects. Hence, it is concluded that when organisations approach conflict management in a holistic, integrated manner, they should consider ways of formally increasing employee engagement in organisations through the implementation of a formal employee engagement programme.
- Conflict management interventions should in particular consider job level and number of employees, as the significant mean differences from these two socio-demographic groups were of a moderate to a very large practical effect size.

These findings indicate that the experiences of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust, conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles among participants vary by age, job level, trade union membership, numbers of employees and the presence of an employee engagement programme. Subsequently, ER practitioners should be cognisant of these differences and accommodate them in policies and procedures aimed at managing conflict, and thus, employee well-being.

8.3.3 Conclusions relating to the central hypothesis

The central hypothesis of the research, as outlined in Chapter 1, stated that the mediating variables of employee engagement and organisational trust are significant mechanisms in explaining the relationship dynamics between the antecedent variables of leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, and the outcome variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations. In addition, the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediating psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in organisations will be experienced differently by members of homogenous socio-demographic subgroups (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme), and will have different implications for conflict management

practices in combination than they do individually. The hypothesis furthermore assumes that a conflict management framework can be constructed from the elements that emerge from the empirical links between the constructs.

Both the literature review and the empirical study provided evidence in support of the central hypothesis.

8.3.4 Conclusions relating to the field of employment relations

The inferences derived from the literature review, together with the results of the empirical research, make a contribution to the field of ER and to conflict management practices in particular.

The literature review offered new insights into the way employees' perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust influence conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The literature review also clarified the way in which socio-demographic characteristics are related to leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). More specifically, the literature review provided new insight into the various concepts and theoretical models that contribute to leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The literature review provided grounds for the construction of a psychosocial conflict management framework for South African-based organisations, indicating the antecedents, mediators and moderators that have to be considered during the development of conflict management practices. From the findings it is concluded that ER practitioners should focus on the concepts and theoretical models that influence the variables of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The empirical study has provided new knowledge on the relationship dynamics between leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust, the socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and conflict

management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The study was conducted with the primary aim of constructing a conflict management framework for South African-based organisations. Such a conflict management framework could be used to explain various workplace-related aspects of conflict management.

The framework is based on the following premises relating to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles):

- Leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust are major antecedents of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Leadership, organisational culture and employee voice are major antecedents of employee engagement and organisational trust.
- Leadership plays a significant role in promoting conflict management that is indicative of dual concern and social exchange.
- Organisational culture is valued in its own right as a means of displaying a positive conflict culture and climate against which conflict should be managed.
- Employee engagement and organisational trust are valued in their own right, as they are a means to enhancing vigour and commitment in the process of conflict management.
- Employee engagement and organisational trust mediate the link between leadership and organisational culture, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Although employee engagement and organisational trust did not mediate the link between employee voice and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), employee voice did show a positive link to organisational trust (commitment, dependability, integrity) and employee engagement (job engagement and organisational engagement), which in turn had a positive link with conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Voice behaviour should therefore still be considered in the framework.
- Age, union membership, job level, number of employees and formal employee engagement programmes had significant moderating effects that explained the relationship between the independent variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and the mediating psychosocial variables (employee engagement and organisational trust) on the dependent variables of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

- Employees' differ – based on their socio-demographic groupings –in their perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles).

The empirical study provided novel information that assisted in creating a broader perspective on the way organisational context conditions (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) contribute through positive reciprocal social exchange to the experience of the socio-cognitive outcomes of employee engagement and organisational trust. This subsequently supports positive dual concern behavioural outcomes with regard to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Importantly, the socio-cognitive outcomes of employee engagement and organisational trust may enable organisational members to manage conflict by indicating high levels of dual concern. As a result, conflict may be managed in a conflict handling climate of positive group atmosphere and potential for conflict resolution, using integrating and compromising conflict handling styles.

Socio-demographic characteristics play a vital role in the integrated psychosocial framework and should be taken into consideration during the development of conflict management practices. This emphasises the need for targeted interventions on both an individual and an organisational strategic, operational and functional level. The fact that employees differ in their experiences of the organisational context conditions (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) and socio-cognitive outcomes of employee engagement and organisational trust suggests that universal approaches to managing conflict may not be optimum. Instead, this information accentuates the need for developing targeted interventions designed to reduce the negative experiences of conflict by enhancing positive experiences of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, thereby creating positive reciprocal behaviour of dual concern when managing conflict among diverse populations from a collaborative pluralistic perspective.

8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the literature review and the empirical study are discussed below.

8.4.1 Limitations of the literature review

The exploratory research into employees' perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict

types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) in South African-based organisations from an ER context was limited by the following factors:

- Although there are various antecedents of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles), only three variables (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice) were explored in this study. For this reason, the study was unable to provide a holistic indication of the antecedents that could potentially have an impact on the experience of conflict management in South African-based organisations in an ER context. Similarly, a multitude of mediators (apart from employee engagement and organisational trust) and moderators (apart from the socio-demographic characteristics relevant to this research) have been considered in extant literature which may be applicable to constructing a conflict management framework. While these various viewpoints and elements are acknowledged, it was not possible to include all possible mediators and moderators in one research study. Nonetheless, a framework for conflict management was developed based on a number of important aspects.
- The literature review was not a systematic review, which implies that not all available literature was necessarily studied, and that bias may have existed in its review. Nonetheless, seminal authors as well as published meta-studies were considered in order to address the possibility of this limitation.
- Although various studies have been conducted on leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) as separate constructs, to the knowledge of the researcher no research has been conducted in the South African context or internationally on the relationship dynamics between these variables in a single study. Moreover, limited numbers of studies have specifically emphasised the relationships between the socio-cognitive variables of employee engagement and organisational trust in terms of conflict management, and none in the combination relevant to the current research.
- While there are numerous approaches to conflict management, none was found specific to the South African ER context. Consequently, the study was unable to provide a South African perspective on conflict management within a South African ER context.

- Much of the research done on conflict in the literature is considered from the viewpoints of teams, and not on the individual or organisational level. Although the current research was conducted on an individual level, the literature review considered all levels (dyadic, team, organisational levels) of conflict research.
- An integrated conflict management framework was considered in the current research. However, such a framework focuses on both internal and external components from a strategic perspective (Avgar, 2017; Lipsky et al., 2003, Lipsky et al., 2017). Thus, the suggested focus of the framework is on internal organisational processes, even though the research acknowledges the macro environment and its influence on organisational conflict. A further limitation of the research lies in the fact that alternative conflict resolution strategies (such as ADR) were not considered, only the potential to resolve conflict as viewed by respondents. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that it is an element that should be considered in an integrated conflict management approach.

8.4.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The generalisability of the findings on the size and characteristics of the research sample and the psychometric properties of the various measuring instruments could be limited for the following reasons:

- Although the sample consisted of 556 participants, a larger sample would be required to establish a definite relationship between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics in this study) and outcome variables (conflict management – conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in this study.
- Further, the findings are only generalisable to the group of participants. It is accepted that the research results may not be a reflection of the views, experiences, attitudes and behaviours of all working individuals in South African-based organisations.
- When considering the data, it should be noted that response bias cannot be ruled out. Self-reported surveys assess intentions or the likelihood of certain behaviours, which is not the same as actual behaviour (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), a particular problem when deliberating constructs of a challenging nature, such as voice – the assumption that intentions would translate to certain behaviours raises concern (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998).

Hence, to rule out bias, thorough research was conducted from multiple sources that were both seminal and current in order to consider theory and related empirical findings so that relationships between the various constructs could be hypothesised (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Furthermore, although the concerns about the value of self-rating when probing into workplace employee behaviours are noted, scholars argue that it remains a valid assessment form because employees' co-workers or managers may not know of specific behaviours individuals engage in at work, or because employees may alter their daily behaviours when being observed by others. As such, self-reporting was believed to be appropriate in determining conflict management and related behaviours. Nonetheless, the limitations of self-reporting are acknowledged.

- The representativeness of the sample is unclear, as the active response rate could not be calculated because the number of the total population is unknown. This is due to the open nature of the invitation for participation on social media networks. Nonetheless, it may be assumed that because of the potential magnitude of the population, the sample will only represent a miniscule percentage of the target population. However, as the aim of the research was not to generalise the findings of the research, but rather to gain a better understanding of the relationship dynamics of the chosen variables, a(n) (implied) low response rate is acceptable, albeit acknowledged as a limitation of the study. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the research results may not be a reflection of the views, experiences, attitudes and behaviours of all working individuals in South African-based organisations. Still, it is argued that the sample distribution characterises the heterogeneity of South Africa's diverse population and, hence, that a greater understanding of conflict management behaviours, attitudes and styles was obtained through the research.
- The research considered responses from individual working employees. As the research is not limited to specific organisations or teams, a wide spectrum of employees could respond. However, because of this approach the research is not specific to teams or to organisations as a unit. Comparisons between viewpoints of employees within one organisation are thus not possible and doing the research differently may show different outcomes.
- Data obtained by the measuring instruments were based on the personal opinions, perceptions and experiences of the participants, which may have influenced the validity of the research results. However, the study did test for common method bias to address this limitation. Generally, the various measuring scales showed acceptable internal consistency. Nonetheless, the Voice Measure subscale (Hoogervorst et al., 2013a) and the ROCI-II

(Rahim & Magner, 1995b) measuring scale did not support convergent validity. This was regarded as a limitation of the study.

- Similarly, discriminant validity was supported for all subscales apart from the job engagement subscale (a subscale of the Job and Organizational Engagement Scales (Saks, 2006b)) and the subscales of the Trust and Employee Satisfaction Survey (Chathoth et al., 2011), measuring organisational trust. However, from a theoretical viewpoint, integrity, commitment and dependability are all dimensional components of organisational trust and are therefore not distinct but rather interrelated. Nonetheless, the possibility of multicollinearity was taken into consideration in the interpretation of the findings.
- Mediation model 2 considered the effect of leadership through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. According to the model 2 results, positive perceptions of leadership (as indicated by perceptions of social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviour) link positively to positive perceptions of conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles through perceptions of organisational trust (commitment, dependability and integrity) and employee engagement (job and organisation engagement). However, the pathway between leadership and dominating leader conflict behaviour was not significant; this finding was considered by cautiously interpreting the findings. More research in this regard is necessary.
- Mediation model 3 considered the effect of employee voice through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. According to the model 3 results, the model had an overall poor fit and the results could not be interpreted in a valid manner. Although the results of the standardised path coefficients and indirect effects are reported, the findings suffer from validity limitations. This was considered by interpreting the findings cautiously. More research in this regard is necessary.
- Mediation model 4 measured the effect of the canonical results through employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles. Overall, model 4 had a poor fit and therefore the results could not be interpreted in a valid manner. Although the results of the standardised path coefficients and indirect effects are reported, the findings suffer from validity limitations. This was considered by interpreting the findings with caution. More research in this regard is necessary.
- Generally speaking, the various measuring scales showed acceptable scale reliability. However, the various subscales relating to interpersonal conflict handling styles obtained low reliabilities which were taken into consideration in the interpretation of the findings

However, owing to the relatively large sample size (N = 566) and the exploratory nature of this research, the lower reliabilities of some of the subscales were regarded as acceptable to continue with testing the research hypotheses. Nevertheless, the low reliabilities were seen as a limitation of the research.

- Considering all the possible predictors of conflict management, it is concluded that several organisational context conditions and psychosocial variables were omitted from this study. Including other factors might have affected the findings in a different way.
- The socio-demographic variables were limited to race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size and an employee engagement programme. Other socio-demographic variables might have had a different influence on the research findings.
- As a result of the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the researcher was unable to control the research variables. Hence, causality in the significant relationships could not be determined, although links could be explored which may inform future research studies. Indeed, to consider the value of suggested interventions for conflict management, longitudinal research is needed. Nonetheless, a distinct advantage of a cross-sectional design lies in cases where little is known about the relationship dynamics between various constructs, as is the case in the current research. Such an approach assists in firstly clarifying potential causal links by establishing relations between constructs.
- The measuring instruments that were used were in general designed for Western countries, and were not specific to South Africa with its wide-ranging population.

Taking the above-mentioned limitations into account, the study nonetheless showed the potential of investigating variables that influence the experience of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The results of this study could be regarded as a first step in advancing and stimulating further research into conflict management practices in the diverse South African ER context.

8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these research findings, conclusions and limitations, the following recommendations are made pertaining to ER practitioners, as well as for further research in the ER field.

8.5.1 Recommendations for the field of employment relations

The research findings and significant relationships that emerged from the study alluded to a number of interventions that may be developed in terms of the field of ER:

- ER is often viewed from a very narrow perspective, focusing mainly on the conflict relationship between management and trade unions. Organisations fail to acknowledge that ER is a broader field, which include an individual dimension component as well as collective, formal dimensions. Hence, the individual is often neglected in an ER context. It is recommended that organisations consider ER through the theoretical lens of collaborative pluralism and work toward finding a balance between cooperation and conflict on an organisational and individual level. Acknowledging the coexistence of cooperation and conflict as natural phenomena may assist in fostering positive social exchange relationships.
- ER should have a strategic and holistic focus on conflict management and thus approach it in a holistic fashion, considering other organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes.
- Given the history of South Africa, special attention should be given to diversity aspects, and the way in which diverse socio-demographic groupings experience conflict and conflict management within an ER context. In particular, it should be acknowledged that South African citizens (like many of their African counterparts) generally maintain a collectivist culture, in contrast to the individualistic culture that largely prevails in the Western world. Hence, westernised practices and policies may not be relevant or suitable to a collectivist society.
- Hence, it is recommended that within a collaborative pluralistic ER context, conflict management should be approached from a social exchange perspective to ensure strong relationships and conflict management strategies that are based on positive reciprocal behaviour of dual concern. It is advisable that positive social exchange relationships be built on both an individual and a collective level, especially within the South African context where relatively strong unionism prevails.

8.5.2 Recommendations for practice

A number of recommendations may be formulated based on the significant reciprocal relationship dynamics illustrated in the comprehensive conflict management framework that was developed for South African-based workplaces:

8.5.2.1 *General recommendations*

- A collaborative pluralistic perspective (Fox, 1966; Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2017) on ER is advised, knowing that conflict and cooperation exist simultaneously in workplaces. Conflict is a natural phenomenon between role players in the employment relationship and should be managed. Recognising and involving all role players using a collaborative pluralistic perspective is argued to contribute to stronger and healthier social exchange relationships (Blau, 1964) characterised by high dual concern behaviours (Rahim, 1983). Accordingly, ensuring stakeholder inclusivity is vital.
- Hence, management should consider interventions to enhance employee–organisation fit and relationships between the various role players (e.g. management, trade unions, and the like) and how they engage with each other. Such interventions may include (but are not limited to) voice behaviour, the organisational (conflict) culture, diversity management practices, employee engagement strategies and organisational trust levels. In particular, organisations should consider their relationships with representative trade unions.
- Organisations should take cognisance of the potential influence of macro-, meso- and micro-environmental challenges on ER.
- It is recommended that an integrated approach to conflict management is necessary, consisting of individual and organisational conflict interventions on a strategic, functional and workplace level that are aligned with the organisation's conflict management and general strategic orientation (Lipsky et al., 2017).
- Management should raise awareness of social exchange relationships involving high dual concern, and the benefits they hold for the organisation and employee wellbeing.

8.5.2.2 *Prevention and intervention measures relating to the organisational context conditions*

(a) *Leadership interventions*

- Leaders should strive to maintain positive social exchange behaviours, indicating high dual concern, that will result in reciprocal positive conflict behaviour that is conducive to

organisational effectiveness. Ensuring top management and other leaders' commitment to the conflict management strategy is therefore of great importance.

- Organisations should promote interventions that may enhance the reciprocal relationships that exist between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust. It is likely that perceptions held by employees on one of these aspects may affect their perceptions of other aspects. The organisation's leadership (notably social exchange leadership and collaborative leader conflict behaviours) is vital in the process of shaping an organisational conflict culture and granting employees voice opportunities that may stimulate speaking up and out behaviours. This, in turn is likely to increase employee engagement and organisational trust. Should they hold positive perceptions about organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes, employees are likely to respond with high dual concern reciprocal conflict management behaviours (positive group atmosphere, conflict resolution potential and integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles).
- Organisations should promote the principle of social exchange in the way role players engage with each other. Leadership – specifically collaborative leader conflict behaviour and perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour – strengthens positive group atmosphere and conflict resolution potential and the handling of conflict with high levels of dual concern. Leadership also significantly predicts the choice of conflict handling style by shaping a conflict culture based on their own conflict behaviour. Leaders engaging in collaborative conflict leadership are likely to stimulate a conflict culture of collaborative conflict behaviour, which is likely to be reciprocated in employees conflict behaviours.
- The numbers of employees in an organisation and the absence or presence of a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict perceptions of leadership and should be kept in mind in the planned interventions.
- More specifically, the effects of leadership on interpersonal conflict handling styles are conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Employees who hold positive perceptions of their leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours, and work in organisations with 150 and less employees, had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were employed in organisations with 150 and more employees. Therefore, when developing interventions aimed at leadership development with respect to ensuring high dual concern conflict handling, the size of the organisation should be considered.

- Management is advised to develop and implement interventions directed at leadership conflict management growth. Hence, interventions should be developed that take cognisance of the conflict situation, the choice of leadership style and conflict management style, as well as the type of conflict that leaders need to deal with.
- In summary, leadership should focus on enhancing positive collaborative pluralistic ER; developing their leadership skills, developing a strong conflict-positive organisational culture; supporting voice behaviour and granting voice opportunities; enhancing employee engagement and organisational trust; and implementing interventions to ensure employee–organisation fit and, in particular, an organisational culture indicating conflict tolerance and allowance for mistakes.

(b) *Organisational culture interventions*

- Leaders – through a trickledown effect – shape a conflict culture. Positive perceptions about organisational culture are likely to strengthen leadership support, employee voice behaviour, employee engagement and organisational trust, and also predict conflict types and conflict handling. Thus, organisations should consider a culture of conflict tolerance and allowing mistakes. Drawing on social exchange principles (Blau, 1964), such an approach is likely to result in a positive group atmosphere, conflict resolution potential and high dual concern conflict handling.
- One of the reasons for recommending a conflict culture that allows for mistakes and tolerates conflict is because such a culture supports organisational innovation (Yeh & Xu, 2010b), hence, allowing for an innovative approach to conflict management.
- Because job level, number of employees and the presence of a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict organisational culture, these aspects should be considered when planning and developing interventions.
- More specifically, employees who are positive about their organisational culture (allowance for mistakes and tolerance of conflict) and whose organisations have a formal employee engagement programme tend to be more positive toward overall interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants whose organisations had no formal employee engagement programme in place. Hence, management should consider a formal employee engagement programme as part of their organisational culture interventions.
- Management should consider the possibility that the effects of organisational culture on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles are likely to be greater for some

employees than for others, based on their age. Employees younger than 50 years who hold positive perceptions of organisational culture, tend to be more positive than those participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Organisational culture interventions should therefore consider the specific age group in their planned intervention, as this may advance the use of interpersonal conflict handling styles that indicate high dual concern.

(c) *Employee voice interventions*

- Empower employees by encouraging employee voice behaviour.
- Management should develop, implement, promote and utilise voice opportunities.
- Organisational members should be made aware of the importance of employee voice in general, but also as an important part of conflict management because it predicts employee engagement and organisational trust, which in turn predicts conflict management (conflict type and interpersonal conflict handling style).
- Job level, workplace size and the presence of a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict employee voice. Therefore, these aspects need to be considered in the development of voice interventions.
- Management should consider that employees at staff or professional level (i.e. on a non-managerial level), and who hold positive perceptions about speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours and having voice opportunities, are likely to be more positive toward overall conflict types than employees on a managerial (junior, middle, senior) level. Organisational leadership plays a vital role in promoting voice behaviour among managerial staff.
- The effects of employee voice on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles are likely to be greater for some employees than for others, based on their age. Employees who are younger than 50 years and who hold positive perceptions of voice behaviour, tend to be more positive than those participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Hence, employee voice interventions should consider voice behaviour and granting of voice opportunities that may benefit both age groups, but especially the high-risk older group.

8.5.2.3 *Prevention and intervention measures relating to the socio-cognitive outcomes*

Employee engagement and organisational trust are important mechanisms for strengthening the predictive link between leadership behaviour and organisational culture, and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Engagement and trust levels further predict the choice of conflict types and conflict handling style. Organisations should therefore plan interventions that will assist in increased levels of engagement and trust.

(a) Employee engagement interventions

- It is advised that a formal employee engagement programme be implemented in organisations to enhance levels of engagement.
- Management should provide positive individual engagement experiences to ensure gain spirals with other employees
- The demographics of job level, race, age and qualification significantly predict employee engagement, and should therefore be considered when planning and developing engagement interventions.
- The effects of employee engagement on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles are likely to be greater for some employees than for others, based on their age. Employees who are younger than 50 years and who hold positive perceptions of voice behaviour, tend to be more positive than those participants older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Management should therefore consider interventions targeting these specific age groups in order to optimise employee engagement interventions.

(b) Organisational trust interventions

Furthermore, interventions to determine and enhance trust levels should be considered.

- Because job level, workplace sector, number of employees and the presence of a formal employee engagement programme significantly predict organisational trust, these should be considered in any planned trust intervention.
- The effects of organisational trust on perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles are likely to be greater for some employees than for others, based on their age. Employees who are younger than 50 years and who hold positive perceptions of voice behaviour, tend to be more positive than employees who are older than 50 years regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Any organisational trust initiative should thus take cognisance of

differing age groups, as interventions that work for younger employees may not benefit organisational trust in older employees.

- Employees who hold positive perceptions of organisational trust (i.e. being positive about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who belong to unions tend to be significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles than employees who do not belong to a union. Interventions aimed at enhancing organisational trust should keep this in mind.
- The effects of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles were conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Employees who trusted their organisations (i.e. having positive perceptions on their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity); and worked in organisations with 150 and less employees, had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants who were employed in organisations with 150 and more employees. Organisational trust interventions that also aim to enhance high dual concern conflict handling should thus consider the size of the organisation when planning the intervention.

8.5.2.4 *Prevention and intervention measures relating to conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles)*

- Strategic conflict management interventions for conflict management practices and procedures should be developed and implemented. This will entail the identification of the conflict types that may be prevalent in organisations, an assessment of the group atmosphere and perceptions about the potential to resolve conflict, as well as an assessment of the conflict resolution practices and interpersonal conflict handling styles used in organisations.
- Boost positive dual concern conflict handling behaviours, while also implementing initiatives to improve group atmosphere and conflict resolution strategies and policies to enhance positive perceptions about the possibility of resolving conflict. It is recommended that management should deal with conflict in a collaborative style that indicates high dual concern to ensure positive reciprocal behaviours.
- Develop specific conflict-related educational and growth interventions pertaining to the above evaluations for individuals and groups. Conflict interventions should focus on the organisational, team and individual levels and should promote emotional and conflict intelligence, as well as personal abilities conducive to conflict management.

- Because of the complexities of conflict management as pointed out in the research, it is recommended that a specialised task team be formed to deal with conflict prevention and management.

(a) *Conflict type interventions*

- Employees' perceptions of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust significantly predict how they will experience conflict types. Hence, interventions planned to ensure a positive group atmosphere, conflict resolution potential and the management of various types of conflict should consider these organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive outcomes.
- Union membership significantly predicts perceptions of conflict types. Employees who hold positive perceptions of organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust, and who belong to a trade union, tend to hold more positive perceptions of conflict types than those who do not belong to a union. However, the effect of positive perceptions of leader social exchange behaviour and leader conflict behaviours on conflict types was not conditional on union membership. These aspects should be considered when planning conflict type interventions.
- Management should consider the job level of organisational members when planning interventions to ensure a positive group atmosphere, conflict resolution potential and the management of differing conflict types by enhancing voice opportunities. This is because employees working at staff or professional level (i.e. on a non-managerial level), and who have positive perceptions of speaking up and speaking out voice behaviours, and having voice opportunities, tend to be more positive toward overall conflict types than those participants on a managerial (junior, middle, senior) level.

(b) *Interpersonal conflict handling style interventions*

- Employees' perceptions of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust significantly predict the style of interpersonal conflict handling that employees may engage in. Therefore, planned interventions to ensure high dual concern interpersonal conflict handling should consider these organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive outcomes.
- Perceptions on interpersonal conflict handling styles as predicted by organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust are likely to be greater for

some employees than for others, based on their age. Therefore, any planned intervention should consider the age group it targets to ensure maximum benefit.

- Management should take cognisance of the fact that employees who hold positive perceptions of organisational trust (i.e. being positive about their organisations' dependability, commitment and integrity) and who belong to unions tend to be significantly more positive about interpersonal conflict handling styles than employees who do not belong to a union. Trade union membership should therefore be considered when planning interventions that entail organisational trust development with the aim of fostering high dual concern conflict handling.
- The effect of organisational trust on interpersonal conflict handling styles is conditional on the number of employees in an organisation. Hence, interventions that are developed to ensure high dual concern conflict handling by enhancing organisational trust should consider the size of the organisation that the intervention is planned for. Participants who worked in organisations with 150 and less employees (i.e. smaller organisations in terms of employee numbers) and who held positive perceptions about organisational trust had significantly higher perceptions of interpersonal conflict handling styles than those participants in organisations employing 150 staff members.

8.5.2.5 Prevention and intervention measures relating to diverse socio-demographic groupings

- When planning interventions, organisations should consider the various groupings in the organisation and acknowledge that differing socio-demographic characteristics are likely to affect perceptions of organisational context conditions and the socio-cognitive outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Organisations should keep these relationship dynamics in mind to ensure optimal conflict management.
- Diversity management policies and practices should be considered with the aim of enhancing high dual concern conflict management. Specifically, organisations should deliberate the likely impact of organisational size (as measured in number of employees), the absence or presence of a formal employee engagement programme, the job level and age group of the target group when planning or implementing conflict management interventions.

- Because of the importance of trade union membership in an ER context, it is advised that the role of these institutions should also be considered. Organisations are advised to foster healthy, strong relationships with trade unions that are represented in their organisations.
- Additionally, organisations should acknowledge and keep in mind employees' socio-demographic characteristics when developing and implementing conflict management interventions, specifically with the aim of targeting high risk groups.
- In general, different ideas and perspectives held by the various socio-demographic groups should be respected and acknowledged. Organisations should consider policies as well as ways to ensure the optimal well-being and needs of a diverse workforce.
- Implement organisational, team and individual level conflict interventions to ensure healthy workplace relationships
- Provide social support and confirm employees' workplace identities by dealing with unease and acknowledging the needs of diverse socio-demographic groups.
- Management should consider implementing different interventions for the various generations. In particular, organisations should consider creative age-appropriate interventions for the Generation Y/Millennials who, as a group, tend to be less positive about the various elements of the proposed framework. Such targeted interventions should encourage employee voice behaviour (speaking up and speaking out), enhance their job and organisational engagement levels and increase positive perceptions about the potential to resolve conflict. Furthermore, because Generation Y/Millennials experience more relational, process and status conflict, interventions should be planned to assist this age group to manage these conflicts. Ideally, Generation Y/Millennials should be encouraged to engage more in integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles, and less in avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Accordingly, training and development interventions to explain the benefits of high levels of dual concern should benefit this age group.
- Different interventions should be planned for organisational members on various job levels, specifically in relation to employee voice behaviours, organisational engagement levels and the use of an integrating and an avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Firstly, regarding employee voice, it is recommended that interventions should be planned to encourage employee voice (speaking up and speaking out) among junior management, professionals and staff. Secondly, regarding employee engagement, it is advised that interventions be implemented especially within the lower job levels (i.e. staff members), who

are generally less engaged with their organisations than senior management. Regarding interpersonal conflict handling styles, staff and junior management should be encouraged to engage more in integrating and compromising interpersonal conflict handling styles, and less in avoiding interpersonal conflict handling styles. Accordingly, training and development interventions to explain the advantages of high levels of dual concern might be beneficial.

- The number of employees in an organisation (as it relates to bigger versus smaller organisations) influences perceptions of organisational culture (including allowance of mistakes), collaborative leader conflict behaviour, organisational trust (including integrity and commitment) and the various conflict types (task, relational, status and process). Hence the following interventions are suggested. Firstly, bigger organisations (more than 500 employees) in particular should consider ways of creating a strong and positive organisational (conflict) culture (including allowance of mistakes) and various initiatives in this regard should be considered. Secondly, leadership in bigger organisations should be made aware of the importance of collaborative leader conflict behaviour in reciprocal social exchange behaviour of dual concern. Leadership development initiatives may be helpful in this regard. Thirdly, bigger organisations (more than 500 employees) should focus on enhancing organisational trust (including integrity and commitment). Fourthly, because task, relational and process conflict are more prevalent in larger organisations, interventions should be planned for these organisations to assist with resolving these conflict types. Ideally, conflict management interventions for big organisations (500+ employees) should therefore differ from those of smaller organisations.
- The results showed that the presence or absence of a formal employee engagement programme influences perceptions of tolerance of conflict, collaborative leader conflict behaviour, avoidant leader conflict behaviour and dominating leader conflict behaviour. Organisations without a formal programme tend to hold more negative perceptions of these aspects. Hence, it is concluded that when organisations approach conflict management in a holistic, integrated manner, they should consider ways of formally increasing employee engagement in organisations through the implementation of a formal employee engagement programme.
- When developing conflict management interventions, the target audience's job level and the organisation's number of employees (organisational size) should be considered. This is

because the research revealed that differences in these two socio-demographic groups might have a moderate to a very large practical effect size.

8.5.3 Recommendations for future research

The researcher acknowledges that this was an exploratory study of previously unknown relationships between a variety of constructs and within its specific context, implying the need for further research in this field.

The research sample consisted of predominantly white females of 35 years and older who held a postgraduate qualification and were employed in permanent middle-income positions in large private-sector organisations. Future studies should thus make use of larger, independent samples that are more representative of various socio-demographic groups, in this way increasing the generalisability of the findings.

Another recommendation would be to extend and replicate this research among organisational members on various levels in shared environments (e.g. within one organisation) in order to see whether relationship dynamics differ in such environments. Replicating the study with other samples may assist in understanding whether the low reliabilities and discriminant validity (as discussed in section 8.3.2) findings are related to the measuring scale, or are a result of measurement error based on the interpretations of the scale. It is possible that some items in the scales were confusing or difficult and that the length of the questionnaire contributed to response fatigue. The hierarchical moderated regression analysis indicated that main positive predictive effects were evident between organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement and organisational trust on conflict types. However, contrary to what was anticipated, no main predictive effect was found between leadership and conflict types. Further research on this finding should be conducted to facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between leadership and conflict types. General future research is thus necessary to assist in finding answers to these issues.

Ideally, future conflict management-related studies should consider a longitudinal approach in order to assess the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. A longitudinal approach would be especially helpful if future studies could implement recommendations so that pre- and post-testing may be conducted to measure the impact of the relationships between the variables.

Longitudinal studies could furthermore ascertain the impact of conflict management on a strategic, functional and workplace level over the longer term.

Another recommendation would be to consider further organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes in the framework as antecedents, mediators or moderators. Future research should also focus in more detail on the exploration of the relationship dynamics between the current antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust), moderators (the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, employee engagement programme) and outcome of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). Research related to employee engagement and organisational trust is especially needed as these are areas where very little research has been conducted. The findings of this study allowed only a limited understanding of these antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes of conflict management. Future research in this area would be valuable for ER practitioners, human resource professionals and industrial psychologists in terms of improving conflict experiences of employees, thus enhancing employee wellbeing at both organisational and individual level, while simultaneously contributing to organisational performance.

In the main, current conflict management research focuses on Western countries. Further research in South Africa and the broader African continent is necessary to expand the knowledge on conflict from an African perspective.

8.6 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

The study added value at a theoretical, empirical and practical level.

8.6.1 Value added at a theoretical level

At a theoretical level, this research emphasised that the employment relationship is characterised by the simultaneous presence of the opposing elements of conflict and cooperation. Therefore, a collaborative pluralistic perspective to ER is suggested which accepts conflict as natural and a phenomenon that should be managed by means of a concerted approach that includes all relevant role players. The literature review added to prevailing ER theory by recognising and

conceptualising a number of key constructs to managing conflict from an ER context in an integrated manner. Applicable theoretical models explained the relationship dynamics between these variables in an effort to construct an integrated theoretical psychosocial conflict management framework.

The literature review significantly contributed at a theoretical level by identifying significant relationships that exist between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), mediators (employee engagement and organisational trust) and outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) and the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme). Additionally, the literature review indicated that socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, qualification, job level, income level, tenure, employment status, trade union representation, trade union membership, sector, employee numbers, organisational size, and employee engagement programme) could act as predictors for the respective constructs of relevance to the study.

Three meta-theoretical lenses acted as a foundation for the research, namely, collaborative pluralism, social exchange theory and dual concern theory. Collaborative pluralism was viewed as the only plausible perspective for managing conflict in South African-based organisations because of macro-, meso- and micro-environmental contexts that hold specific implications and challenges for the effective performance of organisations. Social exchange theory was deemed useful as an overarching theoretical lens for exploring the relationship dynamics between the suggested elements of the framework, as it emphasises the realities of a mutually dependent, give-and-take, reciprocal exchange process for ER. Dual concern was considered as a necessary approach to conflict management as it emphasises two broad dimensions that are evident in conflict management between the role players: a concern for self and/or a concern for others. Based on these two dimensions, a choice between five modes of interpersonal conflict handling styles are possible.

The literature study suggested that the theoretical principles of social exchange, dual concern and collaborative pluralism might be extended by offering a new theoretical lens for conflict management that combines the tenets of these three theoretical frameworks into one combined strategic conflict management theory. The literature study concluded that an approach to organisational conflict is necessary when, according to dual concern assumptions, organisational

members show concern for both themselves and others. This results in positive reciprocal behaviour through social exchange, thus ensuring the constructive management of conflict from a collaborative pluralistic employment.

At a theoretical level, the integrated psychosocial conflict management framework that was developed from the comprehensive literature review may contribute to existing ER management literature by highlighting novel relationships between variables that have not been examined individually or in combination within a South African ER context. These variables have, to the knowledge of the researcher, also not been examined in combination globally.

The insights gained from the literature review could be used to inform ER policies and practices aimed at enhancing South African workplace relations. The literature review may also guide further research on the development of integrated conflict management strategies by considering the relationship dynamics between organisational context conditions, psychosocial processes and conflict management outcomes within diverse contexts (e.g. South African workplaces). Further research may also be considered on the notion that positive reciprocal social exchange relationships and behaviours of dual concern may result in positive conflict management outcomes in organisations, thus maintaining a collaborative pluralistic perspective on ER.

8.6.2 Value added at an empirical level

At an empirical level, the contribution of this study was the construction of an empirically tested psychosocial conflict management framework for South African-based organisations within an ER context. The research makes a novel contribution by providing empirical support for theoretically suggested relationships between variables that have not been tested individually or in combination in this context. The research considered the relationship dynamics between leadership, organisational culture and employee voice (antecedents); employee engagement and organisational trust (mediators); and the outcomes of conflict management (conflict styles and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The moderating role of the socio-demographic variables on the constructs of relevance to the research was also considered.

The empirically tested results extended collaborative pluralism, social exchange and dual concern theories to form a new theoretical lens for the management of conflict by showing that positive perceptions held by participants about organisational context conditions predicted positive levels of the socio-cognitive processes of employee engagement and organisational trust. Furthermore,

the results show that for the participants, employee engagement and organisational trust in turn influence the way they manage conflict (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles). The unique relationship dynamics between the antecedents (leadership, organisational culture and employee voice), the mediating effect of psychosocial processes (employee engagement and organisational trust) and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) thus provided insight into the conflict management literature from a holistic, integrated point of view – something the various theoretical models have not yet clarified. The research thus confirms that the behavioural outcomes of conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) are dependent upon positive dual concern social exchange behaviours. These findings are conditional on the biographical characteristics of the sample (age, union membership, job level, number of employees, and formal employee engagement programmes) which moderated the effect of the organisational context conditions on the socio-cognitive outcomes and the behavioural outcomes of conflict management.

As a final point, the empirical results should make a contribution to the field of employment relations by evaluating the psychometric properties of a number of measurement instruments that have generally only been used globally. By considering the validity and reliability of these measurements in a South African sample, this study should encourage further research on these constructs in the South African organisational context.

8.6.3 Value added at a practical level

At a practical level, the development of an empirically validated psychosocial conflict management framework contributed to a better understanding of the importance of collaborative pluralism and positive social exchange behaviours that indicate dual concern when managing conflict from an ER perspective. It also indicated the importance of considering the influence of the macro, meso and micro environments, and of an integrated approach to the management of conflict. It highlighted how organisational context conditions may predict socio-cognitive behaviours and the outcomes of conflict management. It also explained the importance of recognising diverse socio-demographic characteristics when considering conflict management.

Subsequently, recommendations were formulated in terms of ER policies and practices at both the organisational and individual level, and from a strategic, functional and workplace level. These propositions may inform conflict management strategies, policies, practices and procedures. Additionally, a number of conflict management interventions were recommended which may

assist ER practitioners to change the highly adversarial nature of ER in South Africa to one of collaborative pluralism, positive social exchange relationships and dual concern behaviours. Finally, it is trusted that such a change may contribute to the success of organisational performance, thereby assisting in eradicating poverty, unemployment and inequality in the broader South African community.

8.7 REFLECTION ON DOCTORATENESS

Conducting this research broadened the researcher's own understanding of the role of ER from a business management perspective in organisations, and how conflict may affect organisational performance. It also broadened the researcher's understanding of the ER field of study and practice and the impact of the macro and meso environment on ER in organisations (the micro environment). The study provided particular insight into how South Africa's history has shaped today's employment relationships to become highly conflictual and adversarial.

Specific insight was provided on conflict management from the context of ER by considering collaborative pluralism, social exchange theory and dual concern theory as overarching theoretical lenses. It explained the importance of collaborative pluralism in creating positive social exchange organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes to enable high dual concern in the process of conflict management.

The psychosocial conflict management framework further added insight into the complexities of an integrated approach to conflict management within organisations. It explained the importance of a pre-emptive, strategic approach to conflict management by optimising organisational context conditions and socio-cognitive processes, rather than a reactive approach that focuses only on conflict resolution and not conflict prevention. Furthermore, the research provided insight into how differing socio-demographic characteristics shape ER in general, as well as, specifically, the management of conflict.

The study enhanced the researcher's doctorateness and graduateness as an academic. The researcher gained insight into the importance of reciprocal social exchange behaviours of dual concern and of a collaborative approach to conflict management. As an academic, these insights expanded her knowledge on conflict management. She also acquired knowledge and a systematic understanding of research practices and methods. The researcher expanded her ability to engage in academic exploration and critical analysis of new and complex phenomena,

topics and situations. It is hoped that the current research will inspire other scholars and practitioners to further research the topic of conflict management.

As an ER practitioner, the researcher gained a better understanding of the simultaneous presence of conflict and cooperation in the employment relationship, and of how various organisational conditions and socio-cognitive processes may aid the process of maintaining a balance between these two conflicting aspects within the relationship. However, because conflict is viewed as a natural phenomenon, its management was stressed. Hence, the researcher has gained valuable knowledge to assist organisations in managing conflict through an integrated strategic approach.

On a personal level, the researcher was again alerted to the importance of being goal-oriented, of perseverance in challenging circumstances, of time management and of remaining focused, motivated and positive. It is trusted that these insights will benefit the researcher in her personal and work lives.

The doctorateness achieved by completing the current study should contribute to the national imperative of increasing PhD qualified scholars, especially in relation to staff in the higher education sector.

To conclude, the researcher is optimistic that the findings of the research may contribute in some small way to the development of less adversarial ER in South African-based organisations by suggesting possible ways of managing conflict in an integrated strategic manner. It is also trusted that the study contributes to advanced learning and the support of other scholars in the field of research and ER, specifically in relation to conflict management.

8.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed and integrated the research findings. This was followed by a discussion of the conclusions as they relate to the theoretical and empirical research aims. Subsequently, the recommendations, potential limitations and recommendations for future research were considered. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the contributions of the study and a reflection of the researcher's doctorateness.

This chapter thus achieved empirical research aim 7:

To make recommendations for ER specialists, LR specialists, industrial and organisational psychologists, managers and human resource professionals with regard to conflict management practices in South African-based organisations and future research.

This concludes the research project.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNISA HRM ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 12 June 2017

Dear Mrs M Holtzhausen

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)

ERC Reference #: 2017_HRM_010

Name: Mrs M Holtzhausen

Student: #4997816

Decision: Ethics Approval from June 2017 to December 2022

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs M Holtzhausen
E-mail address, telephone # holtzmme@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 4700

Supervisor (s): Name: Prof Melinde Coetzee
E-mail address, telephone # coetzm1@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 8204

Working title of research:

Constructing a framework for conflict management within a South African employment relations context

Qualification: DCOM

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa HRM Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for Mrs M Holtzhausen for 5 years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the HRM Ethics Review Committee on 17 May 2017 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the HRM Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.



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4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date December 2022. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2017_HRM_011 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of DREC: Prof M Coetzee

E-mail: coetzm@unisa.ac.za

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Signature

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APPENDIX B: INVITATION LETTER

Dear prospective participant

Re: Invitation to participate in a voluntary survey titled *Constructing a framework for conflict management within a South African employment relations context*

Survey link: <http://survey.unisa.ac.za/index.php/973185?lang=en>.

I would like to invite you to participate in an online survey conducted for my PhD degree at the University of South Africa. The purpose of this survey is to construct a conflict management framework for organisations that are based in South Africa (i.e. either South African organisations in any industry or sector; or foreign organisations that have one or more branches based in any industry or sector in South Africa). The research focuses on how organisational members (managerial and non-managerial employees) regard their experiences of leadership, organisational culture, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational trust and conflict management (conflict types and interpersonal conflict handling styles) in their organisations. The results of the study may assist organisations to make informed decisions on policies, procedures and conflict management interventions to manage conflict constructively at the workplace. If you are working together with one or more people in an organisation that is based in South Africa (either a South African or foreign organisation with branches in SA), you are an eligible candidate and your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Approval to conduct the research has been obtained from the University of South Africa. The study involves an anonymous online survey that cannot be traced back to any individual or their organisation. The survey can be accessed by clicking on this link: <http://survey.unisa.ac.za/index.php/973185?lang=en>. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without offering any explanation. If you would like to understand the nature of this study in more detail, the consent form presented on the first page of the online survey provides further information. Your participation is voluntary and should not take more than 20–30 minutes of your time.

If you choose to participate, please read and follow the instructions provided.

- Access the survey by clicking on this link: <http://survey.unisa.ac.za/index.php/973185?lang=en>.
- Note that the online survey platform LimeSurvey works best in Google Chrome.
- It is recommended that you complete the survey in one sitting but if you are unable to do so, you may return to it later by clicking on the "Resume later" option visible on the screen. If you click on the "Resume later" button, you will be asked for a username and password (create your own) that you can later use to continue the survey. When you wish to continue, simply click on the link to the survey (above) again and then click on the "Load unfinished survey" button. You will be required to insert the username and password that you created and will then be able to continue to complete the survey. Receiving an error message while completing the survey is usually due to internet connectivity problems. In the unfortunate event of this happening, please use the "back button" of your search engine to navigate back to the last screen completed and proceed with the survey.
- It is not anticipated that participating in the study will harm you in any way. However, should you require further information or have any concerns, you are most welcome to contact me (holtzmme@unisa.ac.za).

It would be greatly appreciated if you would forward this survey invitation to two (or more) contacts in your network who fulfil the criteria of this study. Thank you for taking time to read this information and for considering participating in this study. Your time and inputs are most valued!

Sincerely

Maggie Holtzhausen

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I agree to participate in the research project, as outlined in the accompanying letter, which is conducted by Maggie Holtzhausen.

I clearly understand that

- participation is voluntary, confidential and anonymous
- the information gathered from the completed questionnaires will be used for research purposes only
- the information concerning me will be treated as confidential, and will not be made publicly available, and
- individual feedback will not be provided to participants.

I acknowledge that I understand the contents and the nature of the study as explained above, and agree to participate in the study.

Please click on NEXT to start the survey, which also indicates your agreement to the above. If you do not wish to further participate, click on exit and clear the survey.