



Management and Trade Union Strategies for Resolving Conflict at Alusaf Hillside Industry, South Africa

Prudence Marty Zikhali

University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa

E-mail: marty.zikhali@ul.ac.za

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Abstract

This paper investigated the strategies used by both management and trade unions in resolving conflict in industries. The sample of 100 (35 females and 65 males) was drawn from a population of 1201 respondents consisting of employees and management working at Hillside industry in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province of South Africa using a simple random technique. The observation method was used in conjunction with simple random sampling to collect and solicit the necessary information for this research. In addition to this, the researcher made use of most of the official records and statistics that were made available to the researcher by the management at Hillside Aluminum Industry. Qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used because they were both found to be useful to the researcher. The questionnaire survey was also used in combination with the interview study method for the purposes of reaching a broad spectrum of the respondents. Quantitative data was analyzed using the chi-square test (χ^2) to generate descriptive statistics showing frequencies and percentages, while the qualitative data was analyzed manually by creating themes to generate results. The rationale for using statistical method, was to develop tests for assessing the level of rejection of a hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that if managers in organizations involve employees in decision making, positive relationships are enhanced. Eventually, new approaches of doing things develop. The study recommended that, companies should have a strong policy that prohibits any form of harassment or threatening behavior. Management and trade unions should take care when an employee exhibits any signs of work-related stress to collaboratively forestall industrial conflict and enhance peace and harmony. Therefore, the need for the establishment of a crisis management team to deal with violent incidents before, during, and after they occur.

Keywords: *Conflict; Conflict Resolution; Conflict Management; Trade Union*

1. Introduction

This paper investigated the strategies used by both management and trade unions in resolving conflict at Alusaf Hillside industry. Alusaf is one of the smelter facilities owned by Billiton (Group) located in Richards Bay in South Africa. It is the largest Greenfield Aluminium Smelter ever built and was officially opened by the late former President Nelson Mandela in April 1996. Hillside Aluminium is a modern primary aluminium smelter with 720 reduction (electrolytic) cell, producing more than 670k tons aluminium per annum. The smelter is based on Pechiney AP30 technology and employs 1201 permanent employees and 800 contractors. The Hillside smelter is situated in the coastal town of Richards Bay in northern Kwa-Zulu Natal, 200km north of Durban, South Africa. Today, the company is an essential part of the South African industrial scene, a major foreign currency earner in the international marketplace and a significant producer of high-quality aluminium for export markets. Atate Smelter casted its first ingot on 26 June 1996 and cost R7.2 billion to build and is 500.000 tons per year Greenfield Aluminium Smelter. The Hillside smelter uses French-based Aluminium Pechiney AP30 technology and is one of the world's cleanest and most efficient smelters. Its 576 reduction pots are the largest in commercial production worldwide and operate at about 320 000 amps and consume less than 13.7 MWh of electric energy per ton of aluminium produced.

2. Background of the Study

At the end of the 1970's a completely new labour relation's dispensation was introduced in South Africa, but unexpected challenges emerged. From that time legal rights in the field of employment were accorded to everyone irrespective of race, colour, gender, or creed. It was expected that all problems that had been experienced before would be a thing of the past. However, from then, new challenges emerged. The focus in the 1980's was on the policies and strategies of introducing the new order. During that time, all the activities in industrial relations centred on power and influence, namely, the politics of industry and labour economics. This period was marked by strife and conflict between management and the workers. The challenges of the late 1990's seem to be of a different nature. The focus has shifted from the political arena to the workplace. It could still be recalled that trade unions were not allowed to play the expected roles during the apartheid arena. In this research, an attempt was made to analyse the functions or roles, which management and trade unions could play in resolving conflict. In addition to that, this research looked at the various ways in which management and trade unions could improve the elements of co-operation in the workplace.

Unfortunately, management in most organisations are found to be hostile to trade unions and do not see trade unions as contributing to the development, growth, and co-operation of the organisation. This view has been held for many years. This article sought to analyse the functions, strategies and roles used by management and trade unions in resolving industrial conflict. According to (Piet, Nel & Van Dyk, 2004; Wilson, 2022), conflict can be defined as differences of opinion that influence the interaction between interdependent parties. In this research, conflict is seen as an informal state of confrontation and under given conditions that has the potential to become a labour dispute whereas management refers to those roles where holders or actors in positions of authority are expected by stakeholders in an organization to make decisions, which can be regarded as binding to the organization.

3. Conflict in the Workplace: Its Early Beginnings

Conflict is the primary motive force of an industrial relations system. It is the essential variable in industrial relations system. It is implicit in the logic of the system (Wheelen & Hunder, 2012). Conflict means an element of workplace relations, which may be termed conflict at work, as well as overt industrial conflict, which may take an individual or collective form (Morley and Stephenson, 2015).

Differences in interest, thought process, perception as well as need leads to a conflict. When individuals do not agree to each other's opinions, a conflict arises. Conflict can occur at any place be it organizations, groups and even at our homes. It is important not to fear or try to avoid conflict, but one must learn how to resolve it in a healthy way. Conflict can cause great harm to a relationship if it is mismanaged, but when handled in a constructive way, it will provide an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people. Whether conflict occurs at home, work, school or among groups, learning conflict resolving skills can help to resolve differences in a healthy way and build stronger, more rewarding relationships (Segal, Robinson & Smith, 2023). Conflict resolution is an agreement reached when all or most of the issues of contention are cleared up. Therefore, it is critical that facilitators develop and maintain the trust, respect, and support of both labor and management representatives and their constituents/superiors. Sometimes a facilitator must be ready to step aside if the necessary trust and confidence cannot be achieved or are lost with one or more of the parties. It is further believed that it is not only inappropriate but unworkable for neutrals to attempt to facilitate employee involvement efforts in unionized settings without the' active involvement of the union (Chaykowski et al., 2001; Pruitt & Kim, 2004)). Salamon (2000) defines a trade union as, any organization whose membership consists of employees, who seek to organize and represent their interests both in the workplace and society and, seeks to regulate their employment relationship through the direct process of collective bargaining with management. According to this research, a trade union is a body of people set up to represent workers' interests in an industrial setting.

4. Causes of Conflict

Although conflicts are common – effective resolution of those conflicts tends not to be. Even though it may not always be possible to avoid conflict completely, it's important to be able to recognize common causes of workplace conflict to help stifle them early on (Place, 2019). There are various causes of conflict identified by different theorists. Among those are social structures, power dynamics, class struggle, and social inequality, all of which contribute to ongoing conflicts within societies.

- **Social Structures**

These structures and institutions play a significant role in the perpetuation of conflict. These structures, such as economic and political institutions, create and maintain social inequalities, leading to competition for limited resources and privileges.

- **Power Dynamics**

Power dynamics contribute to conflict, as those in positions of power use their influence to retain their advantage while suppressing the marginalized groups. The struggle for power and access to resources often results in conflict.

- **Class Struggle**

Conflict theorists argue that capitalist societies inherently create and perpetuate social inequalities, leading to class conflict between the dominant class and the marginalized working class which is referred to as class struggle.

- **Social Inequality**

Social inequality and injustices can further fuel conflict as marginalized groups seek to challenge and change the status quo. All of the above-mentioned causes of conflict contribute to ongoing conflicts within societies (Place, 2019).

5. Theoretical Underpinning

There are three distinct levels in the structure of any big organization that is, top management (corporate), line management and employees. Top management must provide information to all line managers to enable them to communicate set objectives to staff at lower levels. Line management must clarify the objectives to be met to the employees, and this usually leads to problems. The business concepts used by managers when talking to their subordinates are not always understandable to them. On the other hand, the line managers are unaware that the lower-level employees do not understand the information. They delegate the job tasks and activities and expect good results. Conflict arises when the employee is scolded for not doing the job as he was expected to and given due warnings, emphasizing the conflict. Conflict is caused by the misunderstanding of business concepts in the communication process, to the shop floor in the department. It is not easy for the manager to simultaneously talk to the levels of the employees in any organization. When he communicates, he himself understands, that the employee's level of understanding, is lower than that of management (Niewmeijer & du Toit, 1994). Differing cultural backgrounds, differing levels of business exposure, type of training received by employees, geographic environment, are some of the factors causing this misunderstanding, which eventually leads to conflict in the workplace. It is not easy to combine the three levels of the organizational structure into one common picture and language that is simple and understood by all. Employees see managers as owners of the company, and managers see workers as employees of the organization. This causes a division between the parties (Niewmeijer & du Toit, 1994). This gap of misunderstanding affects the organization, its customers, and its employees.

Conflict is universal yet distinct in every culture, it is common to all persons yet experienced uniquely by every individual. Conflict is a visible sign of human energy, it is the evidence of human urgency, and it is the result of competitive striving for the same goals, rights, and resources. A conflict is destructive, has destructive consequences, if the participants in it are dissatisfied with the outcomes and all feel they have lost because of the conflict. A conflict is constructive in its process and consequences if all participants are satisfied with the outcome and feel that they have gained because of the conflict (Segal, Robinson, and Smith, 2023). The more equally participant groups are satisfied, the more constructive the conflict. Conflict is essentially competitive but not all competition is conflictual. Productive conflict occurs when parties can call a time out when a conflict process is out of control and can discuss what is going wrong with more insight than feeling. Each partner is more committed to achieving mutually satisfactory solutions than to winning at the other's expense. Non-productive conflict occurs when parties feel stuck in a conflict style that continues despite all efforts to change it. The participants feel the relationship is out of control and they are both powerless to interrupt it. The conflict ritual produces only increased tension, suspicion, powerlessness, and unhappiness with self and others. When one partner feels powerless, helpless, and optionless, then discussions are beyond reach and the relationship has become non-productive the difference between constructive and destructive conflict, bears on our selection of the criteria of institutional effectiveness. Some might challenge the appropriateness of equating institutional effectiveness with high ratings by the identification and rules criteria, especially the former and it might be argued that conflicts are more readily resolved if products and rules are not clear (Augsburger, 1992; Powelson, 2015).

Conflict is not only inevitable to growth but also a requisite of it. Provided that institutions operate effectively, the continuing conflict between buyer and seller (over quality, performance, and price) leads the seller to seek ever less costly ways of production. If the political system operates well, conflict between candidates can lead to greater output by the government. Furthermore, the character of conflict changes with growth. Labor seeks higher wages, which management can pay only if productivity goes up. Thus conflict, if properly contained and managed, propels growth. It should also be remembered that economic growth generates conflict. A continuously growing national product brings with it disagreement over how increments will be divided. Economic growth requires an increasing division of

labor. As skills become more specialized, society becomes more differentiated (Olabiya, 2022). Thus, one can say conflict is the joint action of two or more parties seeking inconsistent goals and necessarily it has a resolution.

Cvenkel (2020), asserted that conflict can also be defined as a situation in which interdependent people express (manifest of latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests, and, as a result, they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals. The moment that people enter conflict, or have the potential for conflict, they assume the ability to affect one another's thoughts and or behaviors. In other words, conflict requires interdependence, and more important, it often promotes interdependence as people continue to fight. After conflict, people may decide to terminate the relationship, thereby ending the interdependence. But when conflict continues, people reaffirm their interdependence by simply confronting one another to achieve their goals. They may not like or trust one another, but they remain interdependent. Which means conflict is triggered by perceived interference.

Workplace conflict is of special interest. Increasingly, managers and team leaders are using mediation, to solve productivity problems, resulting from poor communication and co-operation between employees-estimated to account for 65% of job performance deficiency. It is impractical to train managers extensively in mediation techniques. Managing workplace conflict is rarely a primary job function. Managers hold a significant advantage, compared with mediators who are not in roles of authority. If necessary, the manager can override an employees' reluctance to participate by pointing to the impact on productivity resulting from their difficult in working co-operatively (Mutege, Joshua & Maina, 2023). Therefore, managerial mediation session is a business meeting, not a discussion of personal issues which makes it a powerful means of solving organizational problems, conflict in inevitable and managers should be aware of what triggers anger and know how to manage such anger since it can result in conflict. This study is therefore guided by the Unitary and the Pluralist theories of doing research. The choice of these theories is informed by the fact that no one single theory can explain holistically what triggers conflict between the employers and employees in the labour employment in industries (*ibid*).

6. Perspectives for Dealing with Conflict

6.1 Unitary Perspective

According to Fox (1984), the unitary approach is characterized by a belief that work organisations are unified bodies in which everyone shares the same goals. As Crouch (2003) argued that conflict is then seen as rather unnecessary, the result of misunderstanding or mischief. In other words, it is seen as pathological. It is not surprising that the perspective is simply rejected as wholly inadequate. There is mass evidence that organisations are not unitary structures but are coalitions containing competing interests. Conflict is too common and obviously based on genuinely different interests to be written off as the outcome of misunderstanding. But Fox and Crouch then have a problem, for they both recognise that a unitary view is probably adopted by a large number of what Crouch (2003) calls 'non-academic practitioners of industrial relations, especially on the managerial side'. Many people think that firms have common goals. They also think that given sufficiently good communications and sufficient will, conflict can be eliminated. If the normative view that conflict is pathological were treated as a description of reality, unitarists would not need to try to account for the existence of trade unions, for they would have to believe that unions, as reflections of differing interest within firms, could not exist. Similarly, if normative statements were treated as descriptive, there would be no need for practitioners of industrial relations, for the very existence of industrial relations implies differing interests (Edwards, 2009).

Winkler 1974 and Maoz, 2014, have argued that members of boards of directors tend to see industrial relations in very simple terms, with conflict arising from misunderstanding or the behaviour of

troublemakers. The reason according to them was their lack of direct knowledge of labour issues and their insulation from shopfloor workers. Fidler (1981) found in a survey of chief executives of large firms that the most frequent explanation for the presence of two sides in industry was an aberration. Conflict was the result of poor communication. There was no enduring view of the firm as a set of coalitions. The unitary view is certainly inadequate as an analysis of the causes of industrial conflict. A unitary perspective contains a vital element of truth, which tends to be neglected when the perspective is treated as self-contained system and rejected as a whole.

According to (Edwards, 2009; Bendix; 2019), this argument should not be misunderstood. It is not being suggested that harmony is a natural condition in industry or that the pursuit of co-operation can be divorced from struggles for control. But a theoretical approach is needed which can incorporate the issues identified by the unitarists. It is not a matter of a conflict model of society versus a co-operation model. But of a model, which can embrace conflict and co-operation and thus transcend the simple division between approaches, which has tended to exist in the past. The unitary view recognises the importance of co-operation and consent. Unitarists are correct in assuming that workers are not in a state of permanent conflict with their employers. They may adopt or at least take for granted the aims of the firm.

6.2 Pluralist Perspective

If the unitary view has been disregarded, the pluralist perspective has suffered from over attention from its opponents. It is common to find it argued, for example, that pluralism assumes a roughly equal balance of power between employers and employees organised in trade unions and sees industrial relations problems as ‘pathological’ (Wheelen and Hunger, 2012). The accusation that pluralism necessarily assumes a balance of power has been denied by Clegg (1975), one of the leading pluralists. Ross Martin (1983) has shown that another common accusation, namely the pluralists assume that the state is simply neutral as between the interests of employers and the workers. Hyman (1989) has argued most versions of pluralism start from a statement that conflict is inevitable and natural, but they rapidly qualify this by focusing on the means through which conflict is institutionalised, and by treating conflict as a contained and limited phenomenon. The whole logic of the analysis is to move away from a focus on what Hyman (1989) calls the ‘material bases of conflict to an assessment of how conflict is organized and channelled (Edwards, 2009).

Clegg (1979) argued that pluralism and Marxism are similar in so far as both are concerned with conflict and stability. Both regard conflict as inevitable in industrial relations as in other aspects of social life. They both face the problem of explaining how conflict can exist without destroying society. Industrial relation is the study of rules governing employment. These rules cannot be understood without understanding the organisations, which take part in their creation. Each of these organisations has its own sources of authority. Whenever there are separate sources of authority, there is the risk of conflict. When organisations are in conflict, they may apply pressure to persuade each other to make concession. Overt conflict is equated with the application of sanctions by organisations. Broader conflict of interests exists because organisations have different sources of authority (De Vos, 2011). Korpi and Shalev, 1979; Stewart et al., 2021, have attacked the assumption that conflict occurs solely within collective bargaining. They suggest that the use of organisation’s power resources within the political arena is also important. In the traditional and in these newer forms of pluralism, the focus is overwhelmingly on conflict, which, arises out of clashes between organisations. They both argued that a pluralist approach does not tackle the problem of the nature or the basis of conflict, and merely concentrates on what happens when organisational expressions of conflict have already been articulated. The pluralist perspective, although lacking a view of the basis of conflict and tending to focus only on concrete forms of conflict that are collectively organised, can be effective in the analysis of clashes between organised groups (Edwards, 2009).

7. Conflict Resolution: A Theoretical Framework

This theory was developed by Muzafer Sherif, an American psychologist who carried out the famous “Robbers Cave” study into group. The theory is a “Realist” theory because it proposes that conflict between groups is not based on something irrational but on an actual need for resources. It’s a “conflict” theory because it rejects the idea (common in the ‘60s) that groups could share and cooperate (Mutezo, 2015).

Realistic Conflict Theory (RCT) is a social model that attempts to explain why prejudice, negative stereotypes, and discrimination are developed towards members of other social groups (Sherif, 1966). Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and differing lifestyles are often examples of factors that separate people into different groups. RCT is a social theory which suggests that conflict can arise between different groups of people that have differing goals and are competing over limited resources (Lundy, and Darkwah, 2018). *Realistic conflict theory* assumes “conflict can always be explained by some tangible (like territory, money, prizes) or intangible (like power, prestige, honour) resource that is desired by both groups and is in short supply”. When two or more groups are competing over limited resources (either from real or perceived scarcity) prejudicial feelings and negative stereotypes can develop towards the other group. Conflict and negative attitudes towards other groups can be reduced if both groups have a superordinate goal (a mutually beneficial goal for both groups in which both groups need to participate to reach the goal) (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). This theory was adopted in this study because of its relevance in attempting to explain why conflict occurs as humans perpetually strive to acquire perceived needs since perceived competition for limited resources can lead to hostility between groups.

7.1 Critiques and Limitations of Realistic Conflict Theory

There are several weaknesses of realistic conflict theory of intergroup behavior which should be noted, namely,

- The tendency to assume that conflict is always negative
- Its focus on negative aspects of society,
- Its lack of attention to social stability and order, and
- Its tendency to view individuals and groups in terms of their power and status rather than their shared humanity
- It tends to overlook the internal dynamics and complexities that exist within the groups. This oversimplification can limit our understanding of the multitude of factors that contribute to social inequalities and can hinder efforts to address these issues effectively.

8. Research Problem and Purpose

Labour relationship can be very stressful in an organization. For the fact that there are different individuals who have personal differences such as race, religion or ethnic background, this relationship can be made worse when the personal differences begin to develop between employers and employees. In some instances, managers do not understand the job tasks of their subordinates or are uninformed about the job duties that each employee is supposed to perform which leads to conflict. Also, employees lose confidence in managers due to inconsistent decisions or bad planning which also becomes a source of conflict. Communication is the key in any relationship. Therefore, managers need to spend time clearly communicating their goals to employees and then confirming those goals in writing to avoid misunderstandings or breakdown in communication.

Both management and employees have realised that they need each other to achieve their goals. But the two parties required practical ways of showing willingness to co-operate. Lakshmi & Rani (2019) asserted that although there are several causes of violence, employers must take the initiative in finding

solutions, as stability is essential for wealth creation. Hence the purpose of this study is to find out the strategies employed by both management and trade unions when resolving conflict and endeavours to find out if those strategies are effective.

9. The Objectives of the Study Are

- To establish if workers are affiliated to any trade union.
- To establish if industrial conflict occurs because of different interests and goals between management and employees.
- To establish if the outcome of conflict resolution determines the level of productivity and organizational effectiveness.
- To establish if there is a relationship between the causes of conflict determine the resolution methods and the outcome.

10. Research Design and Methodology

This study has applied both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and methodologies.

The sample of 100 (35 females and 65 males) was drawn from a population of 1201 respondents consisting of employees and management working at Hillside industry in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa using a simple random technique. People from different ethical groups, gender, age, religion even union and non-union members were included. It also included people who are members of the unions and those who are non-union members. The observation method was also used in conjunction with simple random sampling to collect and solicit the necessary information for this research. In addition to this, the researcher made use of most of the official records and statistics that were made available to the researcher by the management at Hillside Aluminium Industry. In short, the researcher used triangulation to overcome the deficiencies that flow from one method.

10.1 Methods of Data Collection

A questionnaire survey was used because it was found to be very useful in this study. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions. Most of the respondents used this opportunity quite effectively. The information narrated by the respondents was summarized and categorized into themes. The statistical method was also used to develop tests for assessing the level of rejection of a hypothesis, that is, to determine the probability of an error being produced in generalizing a property of a sample to the entire population. The multiplicity of such tests reflects the variety of problems and conditions (Mukhopadhyay, 2020). A chi-square test (χ^2) was used, which is a commonly used non-parametric test. There were some shortcomings in collecting all the relevant information. The researcher encountered some problems because; sometimes the respondents were illiterate (they cannot read and write). Other respondents left the questions unanswered. Others refused to answer the questionnaire. These problems were eliminated by providing some explanations to the respondents about the purposes of the research. To those who were illiterate, assistance was given by reading questions for them and recorded their answers. The respondents were not obliged to answer the questionnaire.

10.2 Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Results

The responses from biographical data are presented by means of simple frequency tables and briefly discussed. Simple percentages and themes that emerged from individual interviews are presented, analyzed, and discussed qualitatively.

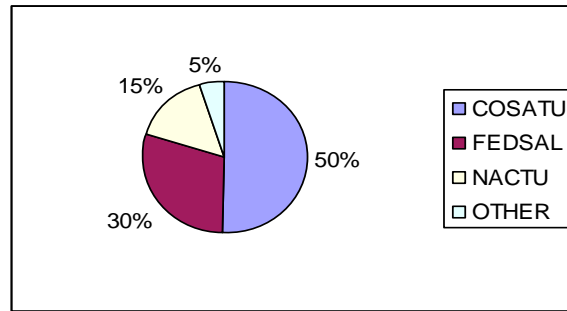


Fig. 1: Workers' affiliation to trade unions

Figure 1 above reveals that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents are registered members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents are registered with the Federation of South African Labor Unions (FEDSAL). Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents reported that they are members of the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU). Only a small percentage, namely, five percent (5%) of the respondents are registered with other unions. The inference we can draw from the above is that COSATU is the majority union at Hillside Aluminum Industry with the membership of fifty percent (50%) followed by FEDSAL then NACTU. Minority unions at Hillside Aluminum Industry are those which fall under "Other" category on the table above because it has only five percent (5%) of the respondents.

The respondents were asked if they think there is a relationship between the decision taken to resolve conflict, productivity, and the outcome of the conflict resolution process. The following are the few responses that were selected from the respondents:

Respondent A: "Yes, there is a relationship, I remember the sometimes we had a strike which took the 3 weeks, although we are suffering financially but at the end, we got 6.5% salary increase although it was not the initial 12% percentage we were demanding".

Respondent B: "When we embark on a strike action, the employer insists that no work no pay. So, some of us will go back to work with fear but those who refused ended up summoned to a disciplinary hearing and others were fired".

Respondent C: "If our salaries are increased, we get motivated to work and there will be less absentees even the car parking will be full because most of us will be at work and that will increase performance and productivity for the company".

Respondent D: "When the company do well in terms of productivity, we get bonuses and sometimes we will be invited to the year-end function with our immediate families, just to celebrate and enjoy".

The conclusion we can draw from the above selected responses shows that there is a relationship between conflict resolution and the outcome of the conflict resolution process.

H₀: Industrial conflict occurs because of different interests and goals between the management and employees.

H₁: Industrial conflict does not occur because of different interests and goals between the management and employees.

Table 2: Different Interests and Goals lead to Conflict

Respondents' views	Female	Male	Total
Yes	30 (32.2)	62 (59.08)	92
No	05 (2.8)	03 (5.2)	08
TOTAL	35	65	100

The figures in brackets represents the “expected frequency” (f_e)

Observed $x^2=1.68$

Critical value =3.84

Degree of freedom = 1

Level of significance (α) =0.05

The contingency “C” =2

Therefore, H_0 is accepted because the observed x^2 is less than the critical value.

This confirms that industrial conflict occurs because of different interests and goals between the management and employees.

This therefore shows that there is a weak relationship between industrial conflict and different interests and goals between management and employees.

The above table 2 reveals that thirty (30) female respondents out of thirty-five (35) respondents were of the view that industrial conflict occurs because of different interests and goals between management and employees. Only five (5) female respondents were of the view that industrial conflict occurs because of different interests and goals between management and employees. This finding confirms the analysis of Piet, Nel & Van Dyk (2004) who found that when two or more parties must work together to achieve a certain goal, conflict is almost inevitable. The two parties involved will not necessarily fight with each other, but the chances are that they will have differences of opinion that could lead to a general breakdown in cooperation.

H_0 : Methods of conflict resolution determine the outcome of conflict resolution process.

H_1 : Methods of conflict resolution do not determine the outcome of the resolution process.

Table 3: Methods of Conflict Resolution Determine the Outcome of Conflict Resolution Process

Respondents' views	Female	Male	Total
Yes	22 (21.7)	40 (40.3)	62
No	13 (13.3)	25 (24.7)	38
TOTAL	35	65	100

The figures in brackets represents the “expected frequency” (f_e)

$X^2 =0.016$

Critical value =3.84

Degree of freedom =1

Level of significance (α) =0.05

The contingency “C” =0.0208

Therefore, H_0 is accepted because the observed χ^2 is less than the critical value.

This confirms that methods of conflict resolution determine the outcome of conflict resolution process.

This, therefore, shows that there is a relationship between the methods of resolving conflict and the resolution process.

Table 3 above shows that many of the respondents (both males and females) sixty two percent (62%) and thirty eight percent (38%) respectively, are of the view that methods of resolving conflict determine the outcome of resolution process. The research conducted by Ngongo (1993) on the patterns of the management and resolution of student-teacher, student-principal and student-student conflicts also supports this finding. She argued that where teachers mostly use power-based methods of dealing with conflict, the outcome reflected include coercion, violence, and resistance because teachers used methods of control which reflect authoritarian leadership. She further argued that these methods require obedience to teacher authority. They (methods) do not support students to generate solutions to their problems with teacher. While they may induce compliance from students, they are necessarily problem directed.

Ngongo (1993) related to the conflict cases as to show that the causes of conflict determine the resolution methods and the outcome. The following are some of them:

Table 4: The causes of conflict determine the resolution methods and the outcome.

Conflict Case no.	Nature/source of conflict	Method used	Result
1.	Demand for refund of fees.	Aggression by students. Initially avoidance by principal and later submission.	Fees returned. underlying issues not identified.
2.	Scarce resources.	Stimulating conflict by students over issue. Force by students. Compromise by principal.	Some stationary obtained. Relationship between students and teachers strained. conflict smoothed.
3.	Conflict over detained school mate.	Explanation about detention of school mate.	students gained new perspective as a result of the explanation. conflict diffused.
4.	Parents alleged to incite students to cause conflict. Issue- local students not admitted.	Violence by students	Problem of admission not solved. Student-school relationship strained.
5.	Students attacked teachers.	Suspension and charged of students. Stoning school by students. Police intervention.	No resolution. School-student relationship poor.

Table 4 above reveals that there is a relationship between the causes of conflict, the resolution methods, and the outcome. This is also confirmed by the findings of (Zikhali & Twala, 2001) that the methods used in resolving conflict led to potential consequences of it i.e., destructive outcomes and positive outcomes. Looking on the positive outcomes, conflict can often exhilarate, energize, and motivate people. For some people conflict is a strong mobilizer of their energies which otherwise might not be available for organizational activities. Conflict can also lead to innovation, creativity, and change. New ideas often are born in the midst of conflicting viewpoints which are openly shared and discussed.

Conflict if handled properly, can be transformed into enriched problem solving. Managers who desire to use conflict creatively, that is, to benefit the organization need to listen with understanding and refrain from evaluating, recognize and accept the feelings of the individuals concerned, facilitate communication between individuals and they must be able to clarify the nature of the conflict. It is essential to get to the root of the conflict. Individuals in conflict are often actually saying the same thing in different ways. Any manager involved in conflict should make sure that he or she knows what the conflict is about. This will also help him/her address the problem rather than attack the person, that is, it will divert anger and lead to a problem-solving mode (Zikhali, 2000).

11. Recommendations and Proposed Plan of Action

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings made. Thereafter, some recommendations were made, and a workable plan of action proposed.

Regarding hypothesis number 1: the findings of the study were supported by Piet, Nel & Van Dyk (2004) who found that when two or more parties must work together to achieve a certain goal, conflict is almost inevitable. The entire findings of the study were supported by Coser (2001) who argued that conflict helps to revitalize existent norms, or it contributes to the emergence of new norms. In this sense, social conflict is a mechanism for adjustment of norms adequate to new conditions. A flexible society benefits from conflict because such behavior, by helping to create and modify norms, assures its continuance under changed conditions. Also, Marx in Edward (2009) argued that capitalist production is centrally a contradictory process of cooperation and conflict. Some degree of cooperation is necessary for production to take place. At the same time a basic conflict exists between those who own the means of production and those who do not and have to sell their labor to survive. Concerning the causes of conflict in an organization and the resolution methods used: Myers, Myers (1982) said that avoidance strategies are used whenever people feel threatened by potential conflict and are afraid that they might not be able to handle it effectively.

12. The Study Made the Following Recommendations

a) Recommendations Directed to Management

Managers should, through their employers' associations, establish resources centers, a facilitator or mediator of conflict should be employed. A facilitator specializing in conflict resolution and management will assist employers and workers to manage and resolve conflict. He or she can also be involved in the running of management courses for managers. Managers should avoid deciding unilaterally and imposing their decisions upon workers.

b) Recommendations Directed to the Trade Unions

Trade unions and any bargaining agent should be involved in joint decision-making. However, employers could determine the extent to which employees can be involved. Where employees cannot be

involved in decision making, employers need to provide employees with the necessary information. Employee representatives should attend empowerment programs where they can be taught some relevant skills to manage conflict. The researcher recommends this because neutral third parties e.g., mediators or arbitrators are invited to help in resolving conflict.

c) Recommendations Directed to the Government and All Other Stakeholders in Industries

The government should be certain that a mandatory course for managers on conflict management is organized by the Department of Labor. This could be an integral part of Management Courses. The Government in South Africa needs to introduce a new policy in industries. The policy recommended here should make it possible for black employees to be provided for equality with any racial group in the country.

Based on the recommendations made for the purposes of reducing conflict in the workplace, the following were proposed:

- Companies should train managers so that they can be able to handle conflict and maintain harmony in the workplace.
- The organizational plan should be communicated, and every worker should be involved.
- Companies should have a strong policy that prohibits any form of harassment or threatening behavior.
- A supervisor should be concerned when an employee shows any signs of serious personal stress.
- Employers and employees should work as a team for the effectiveness of an organization, and
- Companies should develop a crisis management team to handle violent incidents before, during, and after they occur.
- Further research needs to be conducted on conflict. Such research can also introduce areas of gender and equality which have not been covered by this study.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been revealed that industries have a pertinent role in preventing, diagnosing, and managing conflict continuously and creatively. The researcher regards conflict management at industry level as part of effective leadership and management by workers and employers. It is hoped that the above recommendations, if implemented, will bring some changes in the problems that might hinder effective conflict resolution between employers and employees. It is also hoped that this study will contribute towards assisting those workers who wish to become managers of their companies in future. It is further envisaged that the study will help even aspiring managers, to be able to know what triggers their anger and how they can manage such anger since it can result in conflict. Hopefully, the conclusions reached, and the recommendations made in this study will be a challenge to employers and the Department of Labor for consideration and implementation. It is also hoped that when that happens, the rate of conflict in industries will show a significant decline. Eventually, this could contribute towards the general enhancement of the quality of work life in industries.

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