CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION AT WORK PLACES: IS IT THE GRASS THAT SUFFERS? EFFECTS OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE ON INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

Management of conflict and the prevention of violence at workplaces is a key practice among the 20st century organisations. The purpose of this study was to interrogate, the conflict phenomenon in Zimbabwe with a view to provide sustainable conflict management solutions, given its negative impact on organisational productivity and individual performance if not properly managed. The study was both qualitative and quantitative in design. A total of 54 companies were interviewed through in-depth interviews, questionnaires and observations. The results of the study indicate that conflict was rife in Zimbabwe organisations and that it was counterproductive, especially for those companies that did not have conflict management policy. Data was analysed statically using Pearson's correlation analysis and thematically. The recommendation is that there is need to embrace a conflict management model that cuts across national, industrial, organisational and individual levels.

Keywords: Conflict prevention, violence management, Conflict matrix, Conflict resolution, Ubuntu

Introduction

Most organisations presently pre-occupy themselves with issues that concerns how they can increase their profits, how they can position themselves better, fighting competition, product quality, satisfying customers, how to go global and all sorts of things that ultimately pleases the shareholders at the end of the day. Yet we have an important "business to deal with first, so that the above pre-concerns can self-address themselves.

This is the issue of conflict and violence prevention. This is an area that companies have forgotten as they jostle for external satisfaction, ignoring issues that may hinder what I would quickly call "fast progress-quick growth"(FPQG) of institutions and individuals. Establishing an environment that is peaceful and conflict free is a key agenda item in this study.

Overview to conflict and violence management
        Various studies have been undertaken on the subject of conflict and violence management. The majority of these studies focus on conflict at government levels, and issues of violence that result in wars within and between nations. Political conflict is what lingers in our minds. These very issues of conflict and violence are also very dominant in organisations, and have both negative and positive effects on performance ultimately affecting national output (Ford, 2001).Conflict is a natural aspect of any workplace, but can turn dysfunctional when a company's policies produce clear winners and in such situations, organisations have an obligation to help the warming parties resolve their concerns. Notably, when properly channelled, conflict and become a positive influence in helping organisations reach their goals, develop future leaders, and promote new opportunities for collaboration and learning.

        There can be no development without peace, and no peace without development (Uvin, 2002). However, issues of peace conflict and violence have been theorised throughout decades in different manners and with various ideological underpinnings. Many companies have faltered due to protracted conflict and inexcusable. A compelling need to rigorously and routinely focus on these issues in an integrated manner with the aim of developing joint conceptual and practical strategies becomes apparent for the improvement of overall company performance.   In fact, we anticipate positive synergy between individuals and organisations that they work for. To assume that there is no conflict in our workplaces is only beneficial in the short-term (Hoppers, 2002). Conflict, like malt can go through a process of "fermentation" waiting until we get to the end of what I can refer to as "conflict fermentation end point" (CFEP) is "dangerful" – a state that is more than dangerous to the survival of enterprises. The idea of conflict prevention appears to be gaining recognition world-over and Zimbabwe is not an exception.   While this idea is increasingly acknowledged in many developments and to same levels, peace building cycles, integrated practice is paced-low. Assumably, interdisciplinary work is complex, calling for people in their comfortable zones of experience to grapple with new concepts and practiced, to transcend their disciplinary boundaries and traditional organisational mandates (Uvin, 2002).   From the peace and conflict resolution fields, the equitable development and justice leaning of

peace theory in the 1960s and 1970s, emergence of scientific theories of conflict resolution in the 1980s could not be avoided and identity-based conflict in the 1990s. These focused at state and inter-state levels, but the same theories are applicable at enterprise level. Whatever, the case and the barriers faced, the fundamental notion coming out of them is the need to work out peace, conflict-resolution models that facilitate growth and development.

The common dynamic leading to conflict in organisations include inter-group resentment, social polarisation, rising intolerance and extremism, human rights violations at work, just but to name a few. Practitioners might dissolve these matters in private, but did not believe they had to consider the implications of their own work on these dynamics or explicit seek to address them (Tshirgi, 2002). In a number of cases, any exclusive two individuals or groups who are in disagreement or conflict is normally characterised by negative stereotypes and prejudices, each side perceiving the other as bad and in extreme cases, evil (Asghav, 2002). Neither side is able to recognise that they might be mirror images of each other, ideologies are misused and placed above human life and any inhuman cause against the other is justified as a necessary end. This is more so for state and inter-state conflict, but the same can be found at enterprise level if no early intervention measures are put in place as is going to be suggested in this paper.

As a key driver in this study, understanding evolution of conflict management is paramount. Prior to the 1940s, conflict was considered counterproductive to organisational goals. The conflict management style was conflict avoidance leaving the conflicted party to feel slighted. Since the mid-1970s, experts believe that a conflict-free, cooperative organization tends to become stagnant and unresponsive to market change. As a result, a new position on conflict management emerged as an interactive approach encouraging conflict to enhance performance in the workplace through conflict management. Is this the focus of organisations in Zimbabwe in the first century?

Statement of the problem

Conflict management in organisations is a complex, yet simple practice. The 21st century is experience individual and organisational dynamics, in which individual have become much more informed and knowledgeable. Globalisation, international, cultural dynamic trends also have changed the way organisations operate. The complexion of organisational development brings with it conflicting views, agenda and ways of thinking. This status quo mode impact on individual and organisational performances either way. This study is motivated against a background of an attempt to establish effects of conflict and violence on

overall performance of organisations and also provide a clear position on strategies that can be employer to effecting deal with conflict and violence in the 21st century.

Research questions

The study posits the following research questions

- What are major effects of conflict and violence on individual and organisational performance?
- What are the chief causes of conflict and violence at workplaces?
- Which intervention measures can be put in place to effectively manage conflict?

Research objectives

- To identify and assess major effects of conflict and violence on individual and organisational performance.
- To examine the causes of conflict and violence at workplaces
- To identify and examine measures that can be put place to effectively manage conflict.

Significance of the study

Since the early 1990s, conflict, peace and security and employee democracy have emerged as one of the most central aspect in organisational conflict dynamics. This has necessitated the need to intensify research in the area of conflict and violence prevention globally. This study is one, among many that attempts to look at contemporary peace, conflict and security issues at workplaces in the 21st century. Organisations, institutions and other related enterprise tend to benefit from this study, with specific to conflict management strategies, ultimately enriching them to become more focused on producing more in a peace-free work environment. The study also produces conflict models that can be adopted in policy formulation. At national level, government can design use friendly policies that are meant to exploit conflict and violence in a way that re-brand negative conflict to positive one. Individuals will channel their energies where it matters most. Finally interested researchers will pursue conflict studies, taking a leaf from this one.

Literature review

There are various studies that have been undertaken on the conflict resolution and violence prevention in organisations. However more ground work need to be done in terms of research focussing in the 21st century business dynamics.

Types of conflict

In the workplace, they are basically two forms of conflict. The first is a conflict about decisions, ideas, directions and actions. This is referred to as substantive conflict. The second form of conflict is personalised conflict, substance conflict deals with personality disagreements about the substance of issues. Handled correctly parties in conflict can create, for themselves and those around them, the ability to resolve an issue with something creative or better than either party's original position (Sias, 1998).   Contrary, personalised conflict is fuelled primarily by emotions (usually anger, frustration) and perceptions about someone else's personality, character or motives. When conflict is personalised and extreme each party acts as the other is suspect as a person. Secondly personalised conflict is about emotion and not issues, problem solving almost never works, because neither party is really interested in solving a problem in extreme cases, the parties go out of their ways to create new ones, imagined or real. Research on conflict and violent prevention has shown that personalised conflicts almost always get worse over time, if they cannot be converted to substantive conflict. This is because; each person expects problems, books for them, finds them and gets an answer (Bueu, 1996). This is indeed counter- productive. Instead of employees concentrate on creative thinking, they concentrate on creative anger.

The Conflict Matrix

The matrix, as a concept is borrowed from algebra where it is applied to factor analysis in the search for the most common or representative factor explaining or determining particular phenomenon. In this study, the conflict matrix is adopted as a metaphor to capture the root cause or combination of causes of conflict their interrelated nature and the direction in which they are likely to go in the future.   My intention is to drive the frontiers of organisational conflict analysis beyond identification and general descriptions of patterns of behaviour and interaction of explanation and hence being able to produce and prevent. The adoption of a conflict matrix dilutes and move individuals to go beyond descriptive models and dwell more on explanatory model. The adoption of a conflict matrix in conflict resolution and prevention modes assists organisations to accomplish the following:

- Identify the root causes and exacerbating factors of organisational conflict
- Align these causes to specific conflicts in an attempt to establish common causation
- Establish causal interrelationships in the conflict dynamics
- Identify the common driving forces propelling the conflicts

- Indicate the direction in which these conflicts are likely to move in the next period.

Akin to the regional conflict matrix (Baregu, 1998) the matrix showed have properties and is essentially defined by two critical properties. The first one being, matrixes as mould in which causal variables of conflicts are embodied. This is the analytical and explanatory property of the matrix. The second is the matrix as vector showing the magnitude of the conflicts and the direction of movement including the likely forms of conflict transformation. This is the dynamic and prescriptive property of the matrix.

Instrumental features

The working matrix has at least three key instrumental features:

- Heuristic device- in this case the matrix will assist in the conceptual concretisation of what is implicit in the ideas embodied in organisational security, complexes, conflict complexes and security systems.

- Empirical tool- in this case the matrix can be used as a mechanism for identifying, gathering, systematising and analysing data.

- Analytical method – in this case the matrix may be used to analyse conflict situations in order to arrive at a reasonably accurate diagnosis of the problem and hence the most appropriate prescription.

The application of the matrix carries with it key assumptions which basically are:

- Organisations in Zimbabwe (especially) during this recovery period) constitutes a conflict and violent system.

- that organisational conflict is inter-related, interactive and have reciprocal effects.

- that these conflicts (inter-organisation, intra-organisation and intra-individuals and inter-individuals) may be traced to common causes.

- that a change in one conflict area affects other areas

- that organisational conflict resolution should be holistically conceived though operationalised.

Broader vision for peace

A small but growing number of psychologists have become involved in the peace movement in many ways, ranging from educational efforts to acts of civil disobedience. In this study, the underpinning discussion is on the belief that the whole essence of conflict and violence prevention is directed towards maintaining a peaceful working environment. The results of working in a peaceful environment are somehow predictable.   It is because of this, that I have to provide basic framework on peace issues and how this can improve organisational performance. Peace is often defined in

terms of what it is not. Peace is the "presence of qualities, values and approaches in human relationships that build greater harmony."(Van der Linder and Nayler, 1998). By providing a definition of peace positively (what peace is) rather than negatively (what peace is not) we begin to see the basic assumption underlying psychology approach to human welfare. The desire to pronounce peace in organisations emanate from the need to prevent direct violence from taking place. Direct violence has been the classic concern of peace psychologists. From a psychological perspective, direct violence often is rooted in ethnic identities or other identities based in social groups, including religion (Fisher et al; 2000). It is necessary at this juncture to distinguish between conflict and direct violence.   Conflict is a psychological concept in which different concepts or ideas are at odds with one another. When conflict occurs, one may work with the opposing party or use violence to achieve one's aims.   Violence is more likely to be considered if one party emphasises its own goals over that of the other.

Three themes should be kept in mind when considering the broad scope of acts constituting direct violence:

• transfer of motives and experiences of a conflict involving two individuals or groups

• cultural context provides the background for the actions, and in many ways sets the tone for violence to occur

• need to protect one's identity is an important theme in direct violence. Basic psychological forces create biases in favour of groups to which we belong, and against groups to which we do not belong.

Another form of violence is structural violence. This refers to aspects of society that limit people's ability to reach their potential (USAID, 2001). This is not of interest to this study but serve to mention that they are pockets of structural violence in organisations in which certain groups of people get "favoured treatment" at the expense of others. Some people see structural violence as a normal part of living in society, an inadvertent consequence of the way things are!

If peace is looked at in terms of what it is rather than what it is not, then the scope of peace broadens substantially. Firstly, then if that is the case, concern is with peace and violence prevention, its root causes must be addressed. Some causes such as anti-society personality disorder, greed, and lust for power, are "psychological" and reside within the individual (Terlinde,2002).

Moral consistency occurs, if the broader dimension is adopted. It seems inconsistent to claim to seek peace, while at the same time endorsing practices that harm individuals in the systems. A morality in an organisation that opposes direct violence while supporting structural violence would be inhumane at best.

Conflict resolution
Generally speaking, they are social "dividers" in any conflict situation. These dividers are internal capacities for conflict. Notably, there are also social "connectors" which are internal capacities for peace choices made in planning and executing peace programs should aim to strengthen connectors while weakening, or at least not strengthening, the dividers. This of course, includes considering the impact of injected resources and the ethical implications of actions taken (Anderson, 1999).

Cooperative resolution flowchart
This chart begins at the top with a conflict practitioners' perspective, the first question to be asked in beginning to craft a response is whether the contending parties in the conflict are willing to use a cooperative dispute resolution method, meaning some form of mediation or negotiation. Heftelbower (1999) describes the necessary attitude as "a commitment to be constructive".Thus if all parties are committed to be constructive, cooperative processes have a good chance of success. The hard part of conflict resolution is making parties involved in conflict to believe and agree to be constructive.
A negative positive move that can be engineered, by conflict practitioners, is determining that both sides are not willing to use cooperative processes to resolve the conflict. What needs to be done in such a situation is to find ways of intensifying the conflict, increase so as to raise the cost of being uncooperative (Tshirgi, 2002). Thus parties to conflict resolution may begin to ask the ways to reduce cost of cooperation so as to encourage them toward cooperation. The chart below provides insight into this work process:

Figure 1.1 Conflict resolution flow diagram
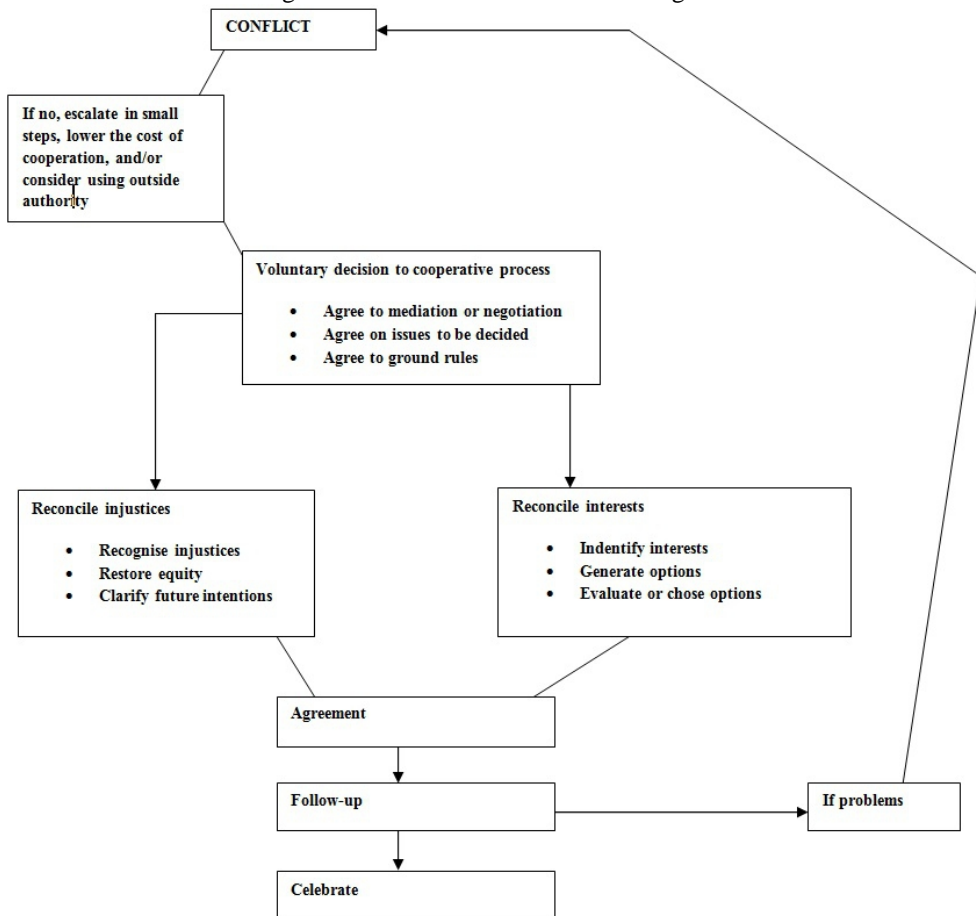
Dugle Ruth – Heffelbower, Adopted from Claassen, Used By Remission

A detailed analysis of dividers and connectors would show that there is a general lack of trust between groups and the position is that others feel benefiting from cooperation while others feel they benefit from separation from the diagram, it is important to realise the need to assist people who are ready to cooperate, to move on down the flowchart with a process for reconciling injustices.

Reconciling injustices

This is usually referred to as "restorative justice" concepts, the basic idea of victim offended work is to make the victim as whole as possible while restoring the offender to the community of work as a productive person Of significance to note, is for the victim to regain some of the control lost through becoming a victim and to begin the healing process. The offender, whether it is the organisation itself or the individual, there is need

to take responsibility for his or her actions and making things as right as possible. There are four basic movements in reconciliation (Classen, 1996):
- forming a commitment to be constructive
- acknowledging the injustice
- restoring the equity
- being clear about future intentions

In brief, when analysing the connectors and dividers in a work community, it is paramount to include the provision of the four movements as connecters and to identify the workplace's natural methods for promoting these four movements. Peace building is a necessary part of development, not a luxury item to be sacrificed to speed or budgets (Classen,1996). New cycles of violence can undo the good work that was done on other facets of the organisation. Thus conflict resolution and violence prevention requires the reconstruction of trust in a work environment.

Application of ubuntuism/hunhu and indigenous knowledge systems in conflict prevention

Generally, Africa is a peaceful country. Pockets of violence experienced in organisations resemble colonial mentality, which have overshadowed our own Africanness. I want to agree with the study done by Catherine A, Odera Hoppes in her paper "indigenous knowledge systems, sustainable livelihoods and the intellectual property system: a peace action perspective". She reiterated in her paper that the work for peace is to build liberation, wellness in a world of peace with nature, peace between genders, generations and races, where the excluded are included but not by force, and where classes, nations and states serve neither direct nor structural violence. She goes on to argue that one of the consequences of colonialism and apartheid for indigenous knowledge system was the fundamental erasure that was effected over the rich knowledge heritages of non-western people. According to them, anything done by an African was non-science, satanic, including all forms of worship (Mbiti, 1969). The ways of amicably solving conflict were relegated as primitive and hence perpetuating African conflict. It is my view and school of thought in this paper that through African Renaissance and the root to ubuntuism, indigenous owned organisations even those foreign owned may find solace and happiness in restoring peace and order. Zimbabwe is a peace loving nation, and this cascade to individuals who are prepared to work for the common good. Galtung et al (2002) argues for the need to recover ubuntu, building liberation and restoring well-ness of African societies.

Peacemaking

Efforts to reduce, eliminate, and prevent direct structural violence alluded to, in this study are called peacemaking and peace building, respectively. Peacemaking takes many different forms which share several characteristics: they emphasise nonviolent means to reducing direct violence, they are reactive, and they occur in a specific defined time and place (Woodrow, 2001). Related to peacemaking is peacekeeping, which also exists to reduce direct violence but does so by keeping the parties separate from one another. The unfortunate thing about peacekeeping is that it does not typically address conflicting motives, but only the violence that occurs between the parties. This peacekeeping is called negative peace because it is more limited (Prendergast, 1996). Its basic strategy is to keep the parties apart from one another by direct intervention of third party. This peacemaking (positive peace) is more flexible than peacekeeping. My view is that it attempts to apply western approaches such as mediation, to non-western context can be ineffective because of cultural differences to interpersonal relations.

Another important component is peace building. Peace psychologists are devoting increasing efforts to reducing structural violence by peace building.   At its most essential peace building focuses on reducing hierarchies within and between organisations, because the privileges enjoyed by those at the top of the hierarchy come at the expense of those at the bottom. Peace building emphasises human interdependence rather than isolation. It seeks to be proactive rather than reactive, is not limited to a specific time and place and threatens the current socio-economic and political status quo.

At higher levels, the hazards of intervening in direct violence are obvious, peace building often entails much higher levels of tension and conflict than does peacekeeping, and it too can result not only in psychological discomfort but also in pain(Howard,2001). This is due to the amount of effort required to address fundamental assumptions and conflicts between parties at different levels in the social hierarchy. It is important to remember that leaders and management do not easily give up systems of power, and such revolutionary acts are not undertaken without risk. Empowering individuals at lower levels of a hierarchy (employees in general) gives them greater control over their destiny and reduces conflict.

Conflict – sensitive programming

Conflict programme interventions need to be conflict sensitive i.e. conceived and implemented with the awareness that both the what (programme objectives) and how of programme implementation has the

potential to raise or lower tensions between individuals or individuals and the organisation (Uvin, 2002).

This conflict sensitivity refers to the capacity of a development organisation to:

• understand the context in which it operates

• understand the interactions between the organisation's interventions and the context

• act upon this understanding to minimise harm and avoid negative impacts

• act to maximise the positive, peace building impacts of development intervention

The following summation, quoted from (Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peace Building activities – OOECO 2008.p20) provides a deeper explanation of conflict sensitivity: "doing harm in a conflict situation means having impacts (intended or not, direct or indirect) that aggravate grievances, increase tension or vulnerability or perpetuate conflict in some way. The notion of conflict sensitivity is intended to mitigate such harm by encouraging systematically taking into account both the positive and negative impact of interventions on the contexts in which they are undertaken and vice versa. Conflict sensitivity is now a key pillar of development policy and intervention strategies. This is relevant to programming whether it is directly aimed at contributing to peace building or not".

One important facet about issues of sensitivity and programming is the ability to working around in and on conflict or as summarised by the table below:

Table 1.1 Sensitivity programming

	Working around conflict	Working in conflict	Working on conflict
Understanding of the interaction between conflict and development	Conflict is a disruptive factor, over which little influence can be exercised Development programmes can continue, without being negatively affected.	Development programmes can be negatively affected by, or have a negative impact on conflict dynamics	Development programmes can maximise opportunities to positively affect conflict dynamics
Programmatic options	Withdrawing from or keeping out of conflict affected areas. Continued work in low risk areas and/or traditional development activities	Reactive programme adjustments in medium and high risk areas Minimising the potential for programmes to do harm	Refocusing programmes onto the structural causes of violent conflict Designing new programmes that focus on addressing structural causes

Overview of basic steps and elements of a conflict-related development analysis (CDA)

It is important to note that CDA involves analysing both the context and the ongoing (development and other) responses. This is crucial for planning purposes to identify synergies or gaps and counteract overlaps or contradictory initiatives that may collide and create negative effects, for example through the competition for scarce resources in a given area of intervention.

The basic sequence is:

1.   Analyse causes of conflict, actor's positions/interests/needs, and existing capacities for peace

2.   Development scenarios to assess and anticipate trends

3.   Analyse ongoing responses to conflict or in conflict concepts

4.   Make strategic choices by identifying objectives and defining and planning responses

<div align="center">Table 1.2 Analysis aspects</div>

<u>**Analysis of Conflict**</u>	<u>**Analysis of Ongoing Responses**</u>	<u>**Identification of Ways Forward**</u>
✓ Survey of causes ✓ Actor analysis ✓ Capacities for peace analysis ✓ Dynamics/scenarios	✓ Mapping of current responses ✓ Development and conflict: working in/on/around conflict ✓ Development and formal	✓ Strategic conclusions ✓ Implications for policy, programming, and advocacy strategies

To ensure that the programme/project manager and board's understanding remain current, the situation/conflict analysis should be regularly monitored and updated throughout programme implementation together with results monitoring of programme objectives. It should also inform any evaluation which is undertaken. This can be done in various ways, for example by building it into a participatory learning process with the main counterparts of the programme or project, or by conducting a peace and conflict impact assessment for the ongoing programme. Changes in programme objectives responding to changes in the wider setting should be documented, so that any evaluations of the appropriateness of programming

can reflect the rationale for these changes in the light of ongoing monitoring of the situation/conflict analysis.

Understanding the Theory: Conflict Styles

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. However they also noted that different styles were most useful in different situations. They developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) which helps you to identify which style you tend towards when conflict arises. Thomas and Kilmann's styles are:

Competitive

People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made fast; when the decision is unpopular; or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. However, it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations.

Collaborative

People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution.

Compromising

Compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something and the compromiser him-or herself also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.

Accommodating

This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted. This person is not assertive but is highly cooperative.

Accommodation is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party, when peace is more valuable than winning, or when you want to be in a position to collect on this "favour" you gave. However, people may not return favours, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes.

Avoiding

People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem.

Once an individual understands the different styles, you can use them to think about the most appropriate approach (or mixture of approaches) for the situation one is in. You can also think about your own instinctive approach, and learn how you need to change this if necessary.

Ideally one can adopt an approach that meets the situation, resolves the problem, respects people's legitimate interest, and mends damaged working relationships.

Understanding the Theory: The "Interest-Based Relational Approach"

The second theory is commonly referred to as the "Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach". This type of conflict resolution respects individual differences while helping people avoid becoming too entrenched in a fixed position.

In resolving conflict using this approach, the following rules are adopted:

• **Make sure that good relationships are the first priority:** as far as possible, make sure that you treat the other calmly and that you try to build mutual respect. Do your best to be courteous to one-another and remain constructive under pressure.

• **Keep people and problems separate:** recognise that in many cases the other person is not just "being difficult" – real and valid differences can lie behind conflictive positions. By separating the problem from the person, real issues can be debated without damaging worming relationships.

• **Pay attention to the interests that are being presented:** by listening carefully you will most-likely understand why the person is adopting his or her position.

• **Listen first;** talk second: to solve a problem effectively you have to understand where the other person is coming from before defending your own position.

• **Set out "facts":** agree and establish the objective, observable elements that will have an impact on the decision.

- **Explore options together:** be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you can get to this idea jointly.

By following these rules, you can often keep contentious discussions positive and constructive. This helps to prevent the antagonism and dislike which so-often causes conflict to spin out of control.

Using the Tool: A Conflict Resolution Process

Based on these approaches, a starting point for dealing with conflict is to identify the overriding conflict style employed by yourself, your team and your organisation.

Overtime, people's conflict management styles tend to mesh, and a "right" way to solve conflict emerges. It is good to recognise when this style can be used effectively, however make sure that people understand that styles may suit different situations.

Effects of Conflict on Individuals and Organisations

Results of studies carried out in America, shows that the stress of dealing with chronic unresolved conflicts makes itself felt in numerous negative ways throughout an organisation. By estimates, conflict is a factor in 50% of voluntary departures, and 90% of involuntary ones, states an analysis from the centre for conflict resolution. The average turnover cost, in turn, approaches 75 to 150% of the former employed salary. Productivity declines by up to 25% as workers lose themselves in various distractions to avoid confronting the problems.

Failure to address negative conflict risks promoting the spread of "presenteeism" a situation commonly associated with companies experiencing high turnover.   Instead of quitting employees at these organisations feel less engaged and let other take on an increasing share of their work effectively employees essentially "retire on the job" doing just enough to get by as the centre for conflict resolution's analysis. The above situation provides insight into which would possibly happen, unless management acts quickly. I foresee a situation where the discontent that results from peers taking on uneven workloads can jeopardise an organisation's long-term survival.

While conflict may result in negative repercussions, it may also provide growth opportunities. Every conflict has the potential to improve an organisation's long-term growth if leadership recognises these opportunities (Forbes, magazine, 2011). The presence of too many lie-minded people makes it difficult to innovate, let alone stimulate research and development. This is why; I have always personally felt that there is need to encourage employees with diverse backgrounds to argue different alternatives as they present themselves. Properly managed conflicts can also offer the chance for

leadership growth and team development while providing a whole new set or perspective.

The good news is that by resolving conflict successfully, problems can be easily solved and other benefits never expected (Ford, 2001):

• Increased understanding: the discussion needed to resolve conflicts widens employees' awareness of the situation, giving them insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining those of other people.

• Increased group cohesion: generally team members will develop stringer mutual respect and renewed faith in their ability to work together.

• Improved self-knowledge: individuals are bound to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.

Good organisational conflict is conflict and disagreement that allows the organisation or people in it to grow, solve problems more effectively, and counter-balance the inertia that most organisations develop.

Research carried out indicates that organisational conflict is helping people examine that which they take for granted, old ways of doing things that may no longer be optimal and stimulate creativity and problem solving.

With the exception for the few who are conflict immune, when an individual become the focus of workplace conflict, it can have profound effect on our career, job advancement, and perhaps as important, job satisfaction. The more conflict, the more wasted time, and the less valuable you are. Is this what Zimbabweans crave for in the 21st century? Is this what organisations set to achieve? If not, conflict should be effectively managed for positive gains. A revisit of the millennium development goals to provide an in-depth framework on conflict management in Africa is necessary. A separate study can be carried out to functionalise this aspect in the context of the 21st century business dynamics.

Research method

The study design is both qualitative and quantitative. The triangulation of the study design provides useful meeting points, in terms of strengthening the outcome, in relationship to the nature of the topic being studied. I used what I would like to call a case-cross survey approach . Organisations across industries were purposively sampled to represent their sectors, while organisations in those sectors acted as case references. Simplistically, the study is a case with cross-surveys. The choice of the approach was informed by the need to have a fair and just representation of all sectors of the industry chosen (manufacturing, tertiary education, banking, retail, tourism, farming, transport, and mining industry). A sample of 54 companies chosen from the sectors above was used. The figure below shows the sample summary by industry:

Figure 1.1 Sample size
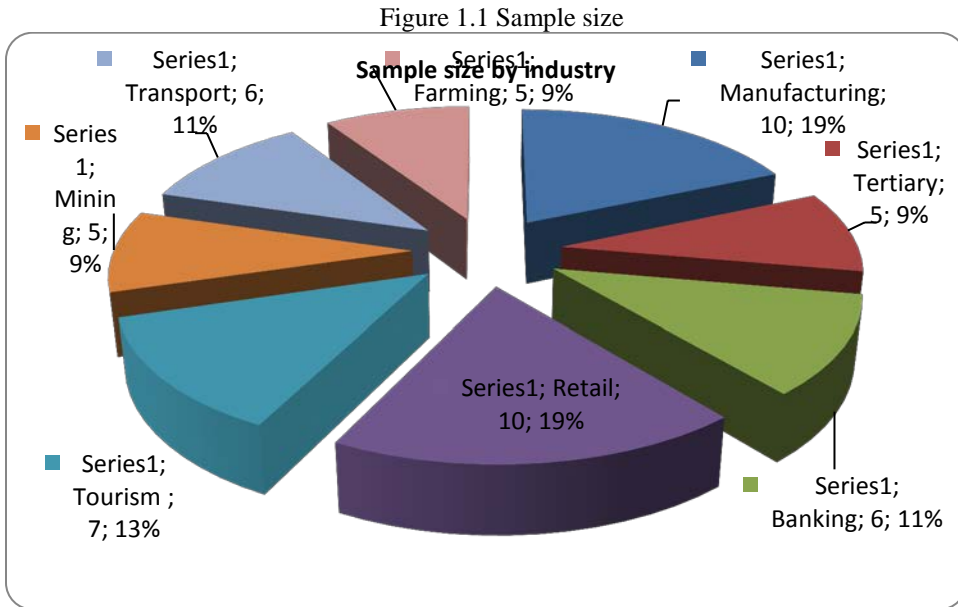
The reason for having the above representation was to enable me to see if the nature of the conflict and violence issues were homogeneous or heterogeneous across different sectors of the economy. The result of the study were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews, telephones and as well as simple questionnaires which I designed to gather specific data (used as guide questions). The guided questionnaire was tested and showed significant results of reliability.

Results

The results obtained from the study show some commonalities and variations in terms of conflict intensity and prevalence in different organisations. It is critical to point out that, at this juncture, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that conflict and violence prevention can be achieved at 100% rate. However, results shows that with concerted effort, existing conflict levels can be lowered and turned into opportunities for creative and innovative purposes. Thus evidence on the ground that conflict should not be suppressed instead provoked where it is not.

Out of 54 companies and institutions interviewed, 85% indicated that they experienced what I will refer to in this paper as "conflict boom" during the past two decades. This could have been attributed to the macro-environmental challenges (economic and socio-politic) at large that have been prevailing. Thus most of these companies were emerging from crises that saw most of them closing and re-opening. When asked to least down major conflict causes, the following results emerged:

Table: Causes of conflict

Conflict item	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor communication	54	4.0224	.92384
Different perceptions	54	3.6677	.97007
Conflicting interests	54	3.4829	1.25269
Scarce resources	54	4.1451	.95110
Waving egos and personality clashes	54	4.1156	.92123
Poor performance	54	2.5981	1.31239
Cultural differences	54	3.9876	.99056
Office romance	54	2.9844	1.33103
Conflicts roles and policies	54	3.7570	1.06220
Employer-employee relationship problems	54	3.8215	1.03287

The table above shows the key causes of conflict that causes problems in organisations. Five conflict items seem to have the highest mean score(s) and these are scarce resources (4.1451), personality clashes (4.1156), poor communication (4.0222), employer-employee relationship problems (3.8215) and cultural differences (3.9876).

As to how these "conflicts and violence" comes be dealt with the participants responds gave various, sometimes contradicting views on the matter. Stated below are the situations in terms of the views coming from various organisations.

Table 1.3 Resolution methods

Resolution method	Frequency	Mean	Std. Dev.
Maintaining a culture of Peace and tranquillity	54	2.5982	1.31238
Reconciling injustices	54	4.0221	.92382
Collaborative approach	54	3.4206	1.18252
Avoiding	54	4.0468	2.78978
Mediation	54	3.8346	1.07146
Compromising	54	3.8344	1.07147

The statistics above indicate generally that the majority (80%) of organisations tend to employ avoidance (4.0468), mediation (3.8346) and reconciling injustice (4.0221) strategies and others such as compromised (3.8344) and collaborative approach (3.4206). The evidence above shows that the establishment of a culture of peace seeing to be lacking, yet this is the most sustainable resolution method. This implies that its terms of conflict resolution, there is more ground work needed to conscientise organisation systems in Zimbabwe, for sustainable conflict management.

The study also wanted to establish terms of violence experienced by organisations. Statistically the forms of violence are shown in the table below:

Table 1.4 Forms of violence

Form of violence	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sexual harassment	54	3.5141	1.19180
Bullying	54	3.7685	1.10671
Aggression	54	3.8037	1.05861
Workplace shooting	54	2.8916	1.24013
Violence by customers	54	3.5426	1.13164
Violence by strangers	54	3.0563	1.16235

Some of the comments given by respondents include "sexual harassment is prevalent in our company. Every year will handle on average 10-20 cases of sexual harassment. Those are reported cases only. They could be more cases that go unreported"

"Oh! There is high level of physical violence in this company. Quite a number of supervisors use fists to coerce employees to meet targets or risk being fired. I will not mention names but we have a few foreigners who do not have respect over our guys around. If you read newspapers you have seen the reports of managers physically harassing employees in this company. We however have put policies that precisely address conflict and violence matters because we realised. It was counterproductive.

Bullying was also rather a common occurrence in more than 30% of the organisations. On effects of conflict and violence on performance of individuals and the organisations at large, the results concurs with studies carried out by (Ford, 2002) in which the ultimate result in ineffective and inefficient organisations. Individual's interview indicated that they would spend most of their time fighting, quarrelling and sometimes in a state of "presentation' a situation which is counterproductive. This is what one of the respondents had to say: "You cannot expect to see results that are positive as individuals' energy are re-focused on conflict instead on the work itself"

As for effect on organisations, alluded one responded "The Company loses, vision, pursues a wrong mission and fails to fulfil its overall dreams, as energies are shifted to unproductive issues"

Summarily, the table below shows common items that were cited as the ultimate experiences, organisations will go through, it conflict and violence are not properly handled:

Effects of failure to manage conflict on individual and organisational performance

The results of the study show that conflicts are inevitable in the business world. They arise between individuals, such as between a manager

and an employee or two co-workers as well as between groups such as different departments of a company, or between a company and a vendor or customer. If not handled properly, conflicts can be very expensive for a business organisation as alluded to by 92% of the respondents. In situations where conflict ends up in litigation, the costs are tangible (attorneys' fees and sometimes pay out of large verdicts to the other party, and also time lost in pursuing conflict.

Table 1.5 Effects of failure to manage conflict on individual and organisational performance

Outcome of failure to manage conflict and prevent violence	Frequency	Percentage frequency
Low productivity	50	93%
Increased absenteeism	40	74%
"Presenteeism" increases	25	46%
Stress	40	74%
Quality problems	54	100%
Increased costs of production	54	100%
Missed deadlines/delays	33	61%
Reduced creative collaboration	44	81%
Work disruption	54	100%
Distrust	29	54%
Split camps	39	72%
gossip	47	87%
Morale problems	40	74%
Poor performance	47	87%
Employee turnover	33	61%
Adverse publicity	50	93%
Loss of customers	25	46%

The results above (90% +) shows that quality problems, increased cost of production and workflow disruption, adverse publicity and low productivity ranks high. This implies that if conflict is not properly managed, it has serious negative consequences and can prejudice the survival of organisations if not properly managed. In America, organisational costs such as work disruption and turnover costs have also been increasing (USAID, 2001). It is estimated that on average, over 40% of managers' time is spent on resolving workplace conflicts. Employee turnover costs, including recruitment, hiring and training new employees, are averaging between 75% and 150% of annual salary. Hence, reducing conflict in the workplace will significantly increase productivity and substantially reduce costs.

In terms of who suffers most "the grass" or the perpetrators? Conflicting results come. About 70% of the respondents indicated that the innocent persons and institutions suffer. The argument being that failure by an organisation to perform affects society, communities and the National Development Framework with direct effect on national Cross Domestic Product being negatively affected. The sum effect of time wasted handling

conflict instead of focussing on the core activities is high, and hence, indeed the "grass will suffer". The other school of thought emerging from the study (30%) is that the perpetrators of conflict and violence "will feel the heat themselves. Instead of the parties involved achieve them work time and expending energy on unnecessary tasks, stress and fatigue may begin to manifest in themselves. The third school of thought reflects that parties suffer, the organisation performance is comprised, societal gains are compromised and national interests are compromised and finally global gains, obtainable from competitive and productive sectors of the economy.

The three schools of thought emerging from my study, reflects the need to take conflict management as an important practice and showed not be left to individuals, what it implies is that there is need to establish work–related conflict management models starting from National-Industrial-Organisation to individual levels.

Pearson's Correlation

Although the findings above aim several interesting data on conflict and violence prevention and effect on overall performance of both individuals and organisations, then I carried out a correlation to show relationship between conflict and violence, social constraints, leadership attitude resolving and suppressing conflict. This was done using Pearson's correlation and the findings are shown in the table below:

Table 1.6 Pearson's Correlation

Conflict Nature	Percentage occurrence
Conflict and violence occurrence sign	.797
sign. (2-tailed)	0.003
Belonging to different groups social constraints	-0.074
sign. (2-tailed)	0.83
Leadership attitude	0.573
sign. (2-tailed)	0.065
Resolving conflict	-0.095
sign. (2-tailed)	0.781
Suppressing conflict	-0.091
sign. (2-tailed)	-0.074

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The study showed that there is a significant positive relationship (a=0 r=0.797) between and effect on individual and organisational performance. The relationship between leadership attitude and enhanced performance was also positive with r=0.573 albeit not significant.

It was also not revealed that there are negative relationships between failure to resolve conflict positively (r=-0.095) escalating conflict (r= -0.074) and suppressing conflict and violence.

The study also focused on why conflicts needed to be handed effectively and the results from the 54 respondents show that the following were expected benefits:

- Conflict leads to changes and improvements
- Conflict can be a sign that someone's needs are not being met
- Conflict can result in amazing ideas (creativity and innovation)

Thus while conflict can be a destructive force, it can also be constructive as long as it is managed and dealt with quickly and effectively. Organisations will enjoy these benefits of creating a healthy and innovative workplace by solving conflict positively. Solutions of the respondents however indicated that handling and resolving conflict that arises in the workplace was one of the biggest challenges managers and employees face.

Discussions

Managing in the wrong, real and legitimate differences between people can quickly spiral out of control, resulting in situating where co-operation breaks down and the fearing mission is threatened. This is particularly true as evidenced in the study of organisations who adopted wrong approaches to conflict resolution. A productive approach, from the study findings id the one where parties take a positive approach to conflict resolution, where discussions are courteous and non-confrontational, and the focus is on issues rather than on individuals. Conflict management hence is seen in this context as less about identifying a problem than it is about establishing an ongoing process with leaders dedicated to creating open communication channels developing productive work relationships, encouraging participation, improving organisational process and procedures and helping individuals develop "win-win" outcomes. The outcome of the study shows that workplace conflict acts as an immediate and visceral challenge to all those involved. Conflict, thus involves instinctual responses that if not checked and manages can easily complicate and worse it. The revelations from the study indicate that without the right information and attitudes, managers can naturally tend to "avoid" or to "overreact to" potentially damaging conflicts and breakdown in working relationships. Thus, to respond effectively in the unfamiliar territory of conflict resolution should is what this study advocates for, to all organisations in Zimbabwe and beyond. All development interventions undertake in conflict settings and also to interactions which are aimed specifically at conflict preventions must be undertaken with a certain level of sensitivity. As evidenced from the study, all programming needs to be sensitive to the inherent or overt tensions is to potential with actual conflicts, and be conducted in such a way to –at a minimum – heighten tensions and at best – reduce tensions. Crisis settings are characteristically dynamic, and it is not unusual for changes in

the setting to happen on short periods of time. This flexibility in programming is critical.

The results also indicate that the majority of companies (80%) are immersed in conflict and hence the need to pay heed to this monster. Conflict is not always negative, hence results here shows that if converted to good use organisations can become more creative, more productive than before. In fact organisations that experience frequent conflict and have conflict management structures tend to be doing well as compared to those that suppress it. Conflict is a natural part of any system. Generally, managers who successfully manage conflicts in their organizations will experience lower rates of complaints than managers who fail to do so. Hence, informal resolution of complaints terminates further administrative processing and related costs. The direction the study points indicates (using evidence on the ground) that civility bring a sense of peace and harmony to an otherwise stressful workplace. Incivility in the office carries a very high price in both human and financial terms. Conversely, a more civil workplace environment means better quality of life for employees and higher quality of life for employees means higher quality work, which is indeed an incentive to all organisations to foster a 'a culture of civility' at work.

In practice, situational analysis informs planning process and should include a discussion of actual aim potential tensions in conflict situations, and how these could have an impact on and need to be addressed by development programming.

Recommendations

Organisations in the 21st century can adopt the Conflict matrix, in order to make speed resolution processes and prevention mechanisms. For this to work, organisations must first be considered conflict systems. What I mean here is that conflicts in organisations are interconnected and that any development or changes in any of the conflicts affect the other conflict. The matrix operates at two vital levels: the organisational level and the individual level. At the organisational level, it involves a comprehensive survey, of conflicts and violent act in the organisation.

• Identification of the conflict and/or its classification
• Determination of intensity of conflicts
• Identification of root causes
• Exploitation of interconnections and patterns of interaction between conflicts.
• Determination of scope

And at individual level, it will focus at similar variables above. For both levels the following variables need to be considered

- Hegemony
- Resources
- Irregularities
- Social and cultural repression
- Political and economic hardship
- Perceptions

The current situation in Zimbabwe organisational growth is bound to call for intervention modes. Generally, by virtue o f the organisations energetic from economic crisis, as they self-adjust conflict and violence are inevitable.

There is need to improve communication between managers and employees.

There is need to implement a conflict management resolution/strategy and prevent workplace conflicts from escalating and making a negative impact on one's organisation. This will facilitate a gradual transition to a culture that understands and incorporates "creative conflict" into its working dynamic.

Put indicates to measure projects-disaggregated so that unusual levels of progress between different social groups can be recognised and tackled.

Adopt a trans conflict philosophy that asserts that successful transformation of conflict requires a multi-dimensional approach that engages with and aims at transforming the very interests, relationships, discourses and structures that underpin and fuel outbreaks of low and high intensity violence.

There is need to enhance the institutionalisation of conflict management procedures, through effective training.

Further Research

A qualitative - quantitative research on integrative conflict in Zimbabwe net industries and beyond focussing on how conflict can be used productively need to be undertaken at a large scale.

Conclusion

Conflict has been found to be one issue that generates frequent expressions of emotion, frustration and anger. Organisations and individuals frequently immersed in conflicts situations tend to gave lower morale levels, lower productivity, higher turnover, and more employee burnout. Conflict is inevitable and hence should be used productively. With it, is it the glass that suffers? Indeed, parties involved in conflict suffer the consequences of their behaviours. Innocent individuals, departments and teams can suffer because

of the behaviour of others. This situation directly affect GDP and hence the need to develop national conflict intervention models.

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