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# Organizational Conflict

## New Insights

*Edited by Josiane Fahed-Sreih*





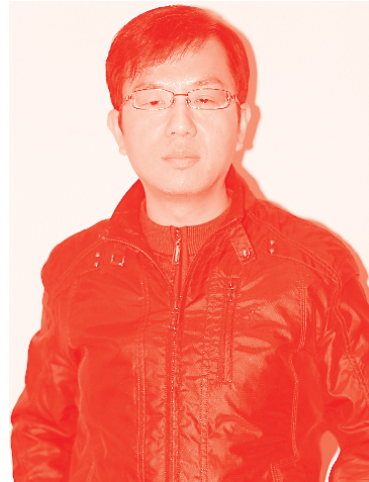
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# Organizational Conflict - New Insights

*Edited by Josiane Fahed-Sreih*

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Edited by Josiane Fahed-Sreih

#### Contributors

Norman Chivasa, Mitashree Tripathy, Louise Kiernan, Ann Ledwith, Raymond Lynch, Nanche Billa Robert, Kyriaki Fousiani, Antony Tebitendwa, Ngoni Chikwanha

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# Meet the editor



Dr. Josiane Fahed-Sreih is a full-time associate professor of Management in the School of Business, Lebanese American University. She is the founder and director of the Institute of Family and Entrepreneurial Business and a chairperson in the Department of Management at the same university. She was previously the assistant dean. She obtained a Ph.D. from Sorbonne University, Paris, France. Dr. Fahed-Sreih is the Middle East Coordinator for the Family Firm Institute (FFI), the USA, and a family wealth and family business consultant. She received the 2007 FFI International Award for outstanding achievement in furthering the understanding of family business issues that occur between two or more countries. She has participated in and organized international conferences, workshops, and seminars. She has presented at major conferences locally and internationally and consulted on management issues in many countries, including Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Syria, Bahrain, Oman, France, Cyprus, and Lebanon. She currently sits on five boards of directors as a shareholder, two as a chairman of the board, and one as an independent director in the private sector. She is also an advisor on boards of community service organizations. She speaks regularly to trade and professional groups and presents her research at academic conferences worldwide. She is frequently invited as a keynote speaker to the recognized family business and corporate governance conferences. Her research interests are in management, family business, the functioning of boards of directors, and corporate governance. She has published three books, several book chapters, and academic articles in international journals. She is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Family Business Management* and is a reviewer for *Family Business Review*, *Corporate Governance*, and *Journal of Management*.



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Conflict of Power and Leadership among Afro-Pentecostal Churches:  
Resurrecting the Traditional Model of Transferring Power and Managing  
Appreciations in Faith-Based Organisations in Zimbabwe  
*by Ngoni Chikwanha*

# Preface

Workplace conflict is a state of disagreement or misunderstanding between members of the same organization. Conflict is normal and can arise in any workplace where people interact and have opinions that are contradictory.

Conflict arises when one person in any given organization sees that their goal, attitude, or values are different from those of other members of the organization. Conflict can occur between two members of the same organization or between one member and a group of members.

This book is a collection of chapters that deal with conflict in organizations from different perspectives. Whenever there are two persons exchanging relationships or tasks, there is a chance that conflict may occur. In the traditional perspective, conflict is viewed as something bad and negative. The human behaviorist perspective on conflict stipulates that conflict is normal whenever two persons are in contact, and the interactionist perspective on conflict stipulates that conflict can have a positive influence in organizations up to a certain level, below which conflict is functional and above which conflict becomes dysfunctional. When conflict is functional, it creates competitiveness, which can bring positive results in an organizational setting.

There are three types of organizational conflict: relationship conflict, task conflict, and process conflict. Two persons in an organization might have conflict about the way to perform a certain task, or they may have conflict about a process. The most difficult type of conflict to handle is relationship conflict, which can be very harmful because it affects the individual on a personal level.

Conflict can take place if there is **unclear responsibility** and there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for a certain project or task. To avoid organizational conflict, roles and responsibilities of team members should be explicitly stated and agreed upon ahead of time. **Scarcity of resources**, such as money, time, and materials, is another factor influencing organizational conflict. **Conflict of interest** is when there is a distortion between the personal goals of the individual and the goals of the organization. Fighting for one's own goals may hinder the overall success of the organization. Interpersonal relationships can influence conflict as well. Different people have different personalities, and this can affect their relationships. Conflicts in the workplace can arise due to both individual and inter-individual factors. Individual causes are attitudes, personalities, beliefs, and norms. Inter-individual conflict arises when there is a breach of the organization's norms by a manager.

This book sheds light on the different types of conflicts that may arise in organizational settings and how to go about solving them.

**Josiane Fahed-Sreih, Ph.D.**  
Lebanese American University,  
Lebanon



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Section 1

Conflict and Creative  
Problem Solving

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# Power Asymmetry, Negotiations and Conflict Management in Organizations

*Kyriaki Fousiani*

## Abstract

Relationships are seldom equal. In fact, social interactions involve most of the times power asymmetric relationships. Especially in organizations people are daily faced with situations where they are either in a powerful or in a powerless position compared to others. Power stems from various sources and takes several forms. For instance, people are powerful when they can administer punishments or rewards, when they are in a hierarchically higher position than others, when they have knowledge and expertise, when they are admired and respected, and when they have alternative options which enable them to make choices. Importantly, power determines the way people interact with each other and subsequently, the way they engage in conflicts and conflict resolution. Power-holders are best able to asymmetrically enforce their will and therefore, they have the capability to determine the process and the outcome of a conflict. In this chapter, I present the major sources of power and the main differences between them. Consequently, I elaborate on the impact of power on conflict management based on the negotiation literature. I conclude by touching on the necessity to distinguish between two contradictory faces of power: power as opportunity and power as responsibility.

**Keywords:** power, negotiation, conflict management, power as opportunity vs. responsibility

## 1. Introduction

Imagine that you are a manager in a large organization. You ask your subordinate employee for her help with a new project, but she refuses to help out because she has been working on a tight deadline and currently, she does not have any time for extra tasks. You are annoyed by the employee's reaction and there has been tension between you two ever since. You ask her to meet up and discuss... How do you think the meeting will go? How will you react to the employee and how do you think that the employee will respond?

A key element to take into account before trying to think of possible answers to these questions is that between the two persons, you and the subordinate employee, there is one big difference: power asymmetry. You, manager, have power over the employee, which enables you to punish, reward, or enforce your will to her, whereas the employee does not have power over you. Power asymmetry is a decisive factor in how all kinds of relationships develop and how conflicts are handled and resolved.

Power makes the world go round. Power enables people to enforce their will over others and as such, it determines people's attitude towards a conflict and the way they choose to resolve it. In this chapter, I will delineate the role of power in conflict management focusing on conflicts in organizations in particular. First, I will explain how power is defined and which are the main sources of power. Consequently, I will present research-based evidence on the role of power in conflict management. Finally, I will touch on the importance of distinguishing power that is construed by the power-holder as opportunity from power that is construed as responsibility.

## 2. What is power and what are its sources?

Power is pervasive and as such, it is difficult to give it an accurate and clear-cut definition. For instance, power can be seen as the access to valuable material (food, money) or social (knowledge, information, decision-making opportunities) resources [1, 2], as the capability to achieve personal goals and influence other people's outcomes, as the capability to administer punishments and rewards, or as the potential to influence others and modify their attitude and behavior [3].

Power may stem from various sources. For example, a senior manager may rely on their ability to punish or reward others to get things done. A renowned expert in a field may rely on their knowledge and expertise, and a person who is admired by others for their skills or achievements may rely on personal qualities to influence others.

Social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven [4] studied power more than half a century ago and suggested that power can arise from various sources. French and Raven have grouped the forms of power into two broad categories, namely *positional* (or structural) and *personal* power. Positional power refers to the type of power that people have because of their status or position in an organization or society. This type of power aims to ensure that individuals and teams conform and work together towards predetermined outcomes and common goals set out for the group. Positional power includes the following three sub-types:

*Legitimate* power is derived from holding a formal title in some organization or in society and using the power that comes with that title. A country president, a senior manager, a CEO, or a prime minister have legitimate power. However, this type of power is unstable because when the title or position is lost, power instantly evaporates.

*Coercive* power is derived from one's ability to punish others for not complying with the rules and regulations or for not doing what needs to be done. Threats and punishment are standard coercive tools. For instance, when people imply that someone will be denied privileges or will get demoted or fired, they use coercive power.

Finally, *reward* power is derived from one's ability to reward others for doing positive things or for doing what needs to be done. Some examples of reward power include salary raises, promotions, compliments, and desirable assignments.

Although positional power enables power-holders to get things done and ensure that everyone works towards the same goal, it is not the type of power that inspires people. It is personal power that wins the hearts and minds of people, inspires them, and prompts them to commit to tasks. In other words, personal power inspires people to rise to greater heights, set the bars high, and perform as well as possible. Personal power includes the following two types:

*Expert* power is derived from having unique, in-depth information, expertise, or knowledge about a subject or a topic. When one has knowledge and skills that enable them to understand a situation, use solid judgment, and suggest useful or practical solutions, people trust them and eventually do what they say or want.

Finally, *referent* power is derived from the respect or admiration a person commands because of their personality traits and personal qualities. For instance,

celebrities have referent power, which is why they exert such an influence on how laypeople think, feel, or behave. Actors, singers, and famous artists can influence everything from what people like or buy to which politician they vote. In the workplace, a person with referent power is a person who often makes everyone feel good and inspired, so that person has a lot of influence on their colleagues.

Apart from the above sources of power, which stem from either one's position or one's personal qualities, people may possess a different type of power, the so-called *Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement* (BATNA). The term BATNA was originally used by Roger Fisher and William Ury in 1981 in their book "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In" and it involves a type of power that is inherent in conflict management and negotiation situations in particular. BATNA is defined as the most attractive alternative that a person can take if conflict management (i.e., negotiation) with a partner fails and an agreement cannot be made. In other words, one's BATNA is what one's best alternative is if negotiations do not succeed. In fact, having an attractive alternative enables people to be less dependent on others, which is translated into increased (sense of) power [5, 6]. For example, "*think for a moment about how you would feel walking into a job interview with no other job offers — only some uncertain leads. Think about how the talk about salary would go. Now contrast that with how you would feel walking in with two other job offers. How would that salary negotiation proceed?*" ([7], p. 52) In the first situation, your BATNA is unattractive (you have no other job offers

Source of power	Description and examples
<b>Positional power</b>	
<b>Legitimate power</b>	<i>Description:</i> Holding a formal title in some organization or in society and using the power that comes with that title. People are influenced by the power-holder's position rather than by the power-holder as a person. <i>Example:</i> A president, a CEO, a prime minister, a king.
<b>Coercive power</b>	<i>Description:</i> Ability to punish others for not doing what needs to be done. People comply out of fear. <i>Example:</i> Use of threats and punishments.
<b>Reward power</b>	<i>Description:</i> Ability to reward others for doing what needs to be done. People comply in order to get rewarded. <i>Example:</i> Raises, promotions, desirable assignments, training opportunities, compliments.
<b>Personal power</b>	
<b>Expert power</b>	<i>Description:</i> Possession of in-depth information or knowledge about a subject. People are actually influenced by the power-holder's claims and change their attitude and behavior based on the power-holder's attitude and behavior. <i>Example:</i> Suggestion of effective solutions, use of solid judgment, outperforming others.
<b>Referent power</b>	<i>Description:</i> Respect or admiration of a person based on his/her personality traits and personal qualities. People "follow" (oftentimes uncritically) the power-holder no matter whether they agree with him/her or not. <i>Example:</i> Celebrities and people with a "charismatic" and inspiring personality and attitude.
<b>Contextual power</b>	
<b>Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement</b>	<i>Description:</i> The most attractive alternative that a person can take if negotiation or conflict management with a partner fails and an agreement cannot be made. People comply with the will of others more if they have no other attractive alternatives. <i>Example:</i> Going to a job interview while having already another attractive job offer.

**Table 1.**  
Major sources of power.

and thus no other good alternatives), which increases the likelihood that you accept a low salary in case you are offered the job. In the second situation, however, you have a strong BATNA (you have two other job offers), making you less dependent on your prospective employer and enabling you to negotiate a higher salary. The difference between the two examples is “power” (see **Table 1** for a brief description of all sources of power) (for a review of types of power, see also [8]).

### **3. Why is power important in conflict management?**

Research suggests that besides their content-based differences, all kinds of power have a main characteristic in common: “dependence”. Regardless of the specific sources of power that are involved, it is the level of *dependence* between individuals that allows power to occur [9]. Accordingly, the less one is dependent on the other, the more powerful one is, and the more one is dependent, the more powerless one is. As such, whether it is positional, personal, or contextual (e.g., BATNA), power should influence the direction of a conflict and conflict management process in the same way.

To test this hypothesis, Van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni, and Manstead [10] conducted five studies. In Study 1, power was operationalized as one’s possession of an attractive alternative (BATNA). Participants were recruited in the lab and were assigned into one of the two experimental groups: high or low-power groups. All participants were assigned to the role of a phone seller and were told that two buyers were interested in the phones they were selling. The first buyer had already made an offer and participants had to negotiate the price with the second buyer. Participants in the high-power group were given an attractive offer (alternative) by the first buyer (the first buyer’s offer would give them 570 points, while the maximum points they could reach were 760 points). However, participants in the low-power group were given an unattractive offer (alternative) (the first buyer’s offer would only yield 190 points). Subsequently, participants had to negotiate the phone price with the second buyer and make a counteroffer. Importantly, participants got informed about the buyer’s (opponent) emotional reaction to their counteroffer. More specifically, buyers were presented as having reacted happily or angrily to the participants’ counteroffer. Results showed that low-power participants made more concessions than high-power participants, and also, the buyer’s emotions (angry or happy) influenced them to a greater extent. Specifically, low-power negotiators conceded more to an angry buyer than to a happy one, whereas high-power negotiators were immune to the buyer’s emotional state.

Van Kleef et al. [10] replicated these findings in four additional studies, where power was operationalized differently. For instance, in one study, high-power participants had a managerial position in an organization (legitimate power). In contrast, low-power participants had a junior-trainee position. In another study, high-power participants had the full support of the top management for the negotiation to come. In contrast, low-power participants did not (i.e., note that in conflicts in organizations), the availability of support increases individuals’ sense of power because it enables them to form coalitions with others in order to get their way and assures them that they do not stand alone in the conflict [11]. These findings suggest that regardless of the power source, the mere existence of power asymmetry between negotiators determines the negotiation outcome: The low-power negotiators are more likely to concede to their powerful opponent than the other way around. It is noteworthy, however, that in none of these studies did the researchers operationalize personal power. All five studies used positional power or BATNA to operationalize power and therefore, there is no evidence about how referent or expert power of power-holders influences an opponent’s reaction in the conflict.

An important reason for which power is such a determinant factor of conflict management is that power directs people's willingness to search for information about their partner [12, 13]. Information gathering involves questioning one's partner and "asking for information" to test one's beliefs and assumptions [14, 15] and as such, it is central to conflict management. Importantly, questions can be diagnostic or leading. Diagnostic questions aim at providing evidence for or against one's beliefs or assumptions, whereas leading questions have the purpose to yield answers that confirm one's beliefs or assumptions, regardless of whether those beliefs and assumptions are valid or not [16]. Subsequently, diagnostic questions allow negotiators to better understand their partners and their wishes than leading questions [17–19]. In three experiments, De Dreu and Van Kleef [20] investigated the effects of power on people's willingness to search for information about their negotiation partner. Participants were placed in a high or low-power position (relatively to their partners) and were also told that their partners had competitive or cooperative personalities. Just before negotiations began, participants were given the opportunity to write down questions they would like to ask their partners. Participants' questions were then content-coded as diagnostic or leading.

In line with their predictions, De Dreu and Van Kleef [20] found that low-power participants indicated a stronger drive to understand their partner, which prompted them to ask more diagnostic than leading questions, especially when their partner was described as competitive. These findings provide evidence that low-power individuals, especially when faced with a competitive partner, feel less comfortable and are more likely to develop an accurate impression and opinion about their partner. However, high-power participants did not indicate such motivation regardless of their partner's (competitive or cooperative) personality. These results might also shed light on why low-power negotiators are more influenced by powerful people's emotions and why they concede more (as was shown by [10]).

Besides the differential outcomes that powerful and powerless individuals can achieve in conflicts and negotiations (e.g., more or less concessions of the opponent), power can also shape people's emotional expression during a conflict. For instance, Petkanopoulou, Rodríguez-Bailón, Willis, & Van Kleef [21] carried out three studies to investigate how power shapes anger expression and what are the motives of high- versus low-power individuals to express anger at others. In line with their predictions, researchers found that high-power individuals are more prone to express their anger directly at their target as compared to low-power individuals, who are more likely to express their anger indirectly (e.g., by sharing it with other people rather than with the target of the anger). Moreover, low-power individuals expected that expressing their anger directly would elicit reciprocal anger in the powerful and would cause negative consequences to them. In contrast, high-power participants expected that both direct and indirect anger expressions would elicit fear rather than reciprocal anger in the powerless.

Based on the above, one would conclude that holding power, no matter what the source of power is, makes people appear tougher in conflict management processes, more immune to the others' emotions, and more focused on self-interested goals. A fundamental question that arises here is: "Is power inherently "selfish", and what is its functionality in organizations?" This is a very interesting question as power is inherent in organizations, in human interactions and relationships, and of course, in all kinds of conflict.

In real-life, we see that the effects of power on people's behavior are not uniform. For instance, laypeople frequently rely on powerful others, seek advice, or count on their help whenever they need it. In the following, I present two contradictory functions of power in order to illuminate this issue: power as opportunity versus power as responsibility.

#### **4. Is power an opportunity or a responsibility?**

In the above, we defined and examined power as one's capability to influence one's outcomes, as one's access to valuable material and social resources, as one's capability to administer rewards or punishments to others, and as one's potential to influence others. As such, power prompts power-holders to view their advantage over the powerless as an opportunity to achieve personal goals instead of taking care of the powerless. Indeed, power-holders frequently show less caring and affection towards the powerless and treat them as a means for goal attainment [22, 23]. The opportunistic propensity of power-holders is nicely depicted in the activation/inhibition system theory [2], which suggests that possessing power frees people up from external constraints as power makes them feel that their resources approach or even exceed the demands of a situation. Therefore, power-holders have the luxury to experience situations predominantly as opportunities to achieve their own goals and therefore, construe others through a lens of self-interest [2]. In contrast, low power activates an "alarm system" that makes people experience situations and social interactions as a threat. Accordingly, low-power people are more sensitive to powerful others' potential constraints and become more attentive to the interests, desires, and goals of the powerful. Subsequently, powerless people often become easier targets of power-holders' aggression, dominance, and self-interested behavior [24, 25].

Based on the above, one would conclude that some paranoia about the powerful seems to be reasonable. There is evidence, however, that the effects of power are not uniform. In fact, we often observe that in real-life (e.g., within an organization) powerful people are more benevolent than they are thought to be, attentive to the others' needs, and show concern about other people's goals and interests [26, 27]. Indeed, rather than being careless or selfish, power-holders often see their power as responsibility towards others and as an inner obligation to take care of things that need to happen (e.g., ensuring that important goals are met [28]). For instance, we frequently see in organizations that leaders do show concern for their followers' outcomes and use their power not only to serve their own goals but also the needs and desires of their followers [29, 30]. All in all, power, apart from giving power-holders the opportunity to act upon will and behave self-servingly, it also entails responsibility towards the powerless [29, 31].

A fundamental and interesting question is "when do power-holders see their power as responsibility or opportunity and how does the differential perception of power influence conflict management"? To the best of my knowledge, there is no empirical evidence to test this hypothesis directly. However, recent research shows that power-holders do not behave opportunistically when their power is stable and safe, that is when they do not fear that they might lose it. In contrast, when their power is unstable, power-holders are more susceptible to act self-servingly [32]. Indeed, prior research in the field of leadership suggests that when leaders are threatened by the prospect of losing power, which goes together with losing access to valuable resources, they react negatively to the prospective loss (see [33]). In a similar vein, research in the field of conflict management revealed that power-holders show more concern for their low-power partners' needs when their power is not in jeopardy.

Fousiani et al. [34] conducted two studies to come to this conclusion. In the first study, participants were put in dyads and were told that they would negotiate some issues/disagreements with their partner. Participants were split into two groups: high and low-power groups. Participants in the high power group were assigned to the role of a powerful manager who had the ability to make decisions that affect employees. Participants in the low power group were assigned to the role of a powerless employee who had to follow the managers' decisions. Most importantly, the issues or disagreements that participants were invited to negotiate with each

other were not always the same. Dyads were invited to negotiate (in random order) power-related disagreements, that is disagreements about power possession in the decision-making processes, and task-related disagreements, that is disagreements regarding the coordination of work activities. Researchers found that high-power negotiators accommodated (gave in) their low power negotiating partner especially when the disagreements at hand touched on task-related but not power-related disagreements. According to the researchers' interpretation, these findings point out power-holders' motivation to accommodate the powerless when their powerful position was safe, and their inclination to maintain the status quo and keep their power position intact [35–37]. In other words, high-power negotiators do not mind using their power in favor of the powerless and accommodating them as long as their power position is safe, but they do mind if their power position is in jeopardy.

Overall, these findings reveal that power-holders are not as opportunistic or competitive as they are believed to be. In fact, whether power-holders collaborate, accommodate or compete with the powerless in conflict situations seems to depend on how stable and safe their power is perceived to be. Based on the above, one would expect that power not only is it not inherently “selfish” but it is used responsibly and benevolently, especially when power-holders perceive their position as safe.

## **5. Concluding remarks**

This chapter presented the impact of power on organizational conflict and conflict management in organizations based on the negotiation literature. Power is pervasive and as such, it has a great impact on conflicts in organizations. People usually associate power with unethicity and immorality, self-interested attitude and behavior, and win-lose outcomes [34, 38]. Indeed, empirical evidence supports this postulation and shows that power-holders are less empathic to the powerless and unaffected by their low-power partners' emotions, less willing to search for the beliefs, needs, and desires of the powerless, and they always demand the larger piece of a pie.

However, we should be careful with overgeneralizing these findings as power is also associated with providing help and support to the powerless, taking care of things that others cannot take care of, and treating those in need with responsibility and benevolence. As such, power asymmetry in organizations is desirable and functional and may promote win-win outcomes for the involved members, especially when power-holders feel that their powerful position is safe and not subject to changes. This suggests that organizations should encourage interventions geared at fostering power-holders' (e.g., leaders) sense of safety regarding their positions (see also, [39, 40]) in order to enable them to see their power as responsibility towards others rather than as opportunity and pay more attention to the needs and goals of the powerless (e.g., subordinate employees). Although power as responsibility is less attractive to power-holders and power as opportunity is particularly alluring [31], organizations might consider fostering the positive sides of being responsible for the outcomes and achievements of the powerless. This is the best way to ensure fairer outcomes and effective conflict management between those involved in asymmetric power relationships.

## **Conflict of interest**

“The author declares no conflict of interest.”

## **Author details**


Kyriaki Fousiani

Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, Department of Organizational Psychology, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

\*Address all correspondence to: k.fousiani@rug.nl

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# How Task Conflict Can Support Creative Problem Solving in Teams by Stimulating Knowledge Sharing, Critical and Creative Thinking and Meta-Cognition

*Louise Kiernan, Ann Ledwith and Raymond Lynch*

## Abstract

This study explores how task conflict can support creative problem solving in teams and the cognitive processes applied. As multidisciplinary teams can be diverse in nature, they may not always partake competently in the pooling of information, and as a result task conflict may arise due to differences in mental models. Under certain conditions task conflict is considered to be beneficial to creative problem solving because it stimulates knowledge exchange and integration and constructive criticism to reach co-created decisions and solutions. Four case studies were conducted to analyse the discourse of teams carrying out design and innovation projects. Task conflict was found to have a positive impact on creative problem solving in the application of four cognitive processes: knowledge processing, critical and creative thinking and metacognition (team self-reflection). Task conflict was positively related to creativity in the proposal of solution alternatives. The successful application of the cognitive processes was dependent on an awareness of when task conflict is appropriate and high level social skills. The findings have implications for managers of teams solving complex problems. They highlight how the cognitive processes can be constructively used to stimulate and manage conflict to effectively solve problems in teams.

**Keywords:** creative problem solving, task conflict, knowledge sharing, critical thinking, creative thinking, meta-cognition, cognitive processes

## 1. Introduction

Institutions and businesses are increasingly reliant on multidisciplinary teams to develop innovative solutions. Creative problem solving can occur in a variety of settings such as entrepreneurship, new venture research and development, and science [1, 2]. Many problems in organisations are complex and ill-defined and therefore orchestrate the need for the methods and processes of multidisciplinary teams which is now common place [3–5]. Team, creative problem solving is considered to be a key contributor to a company's competitiveness [6, 7]. Successful team cognition is when knowledge is distributed, shared and integrated within a team to make informed evaluations, judgements and decisions, during problem solving [8].

Alternative views and opinions when solving complex and ill-defined problems can result in the consideration of a wider array of perspectives and relevant information, which can ultimately result in more informed decision making [8–10]. The sharing and elaboration of diverse perspectives can steer group members to avoid early agreements and snap decisions by encouraging divergent thinking to explore alternative requirements and solutions [2, 11]. However the cognitive processes necessary for creative problem solving have had limited study, in the literature [12]. It has also been shown that the formation of functionally diverse teams does not automatically lead to knowledge sharing and subsequent creative problem solving and disciplinary differences may cause disagreements [13–15]. Alternatively teams may form an early consensus in the form of groupthink, where team members opt for team cohesion at the expense of the further examination of the problem elements [16]. Team creativity and performance has been shown to benefit from task conflict [17–19].

Task conflict is believed to support the exchange and integration of distributed information held by each team member, making for more informed judgements, decisions and solutions [14, 20]. The benefits of task conflict are associated with the constructive challenging of other's opinions and ideas; the encouragement of assertive, independent and unbiased thinking, to balance opposing arguments [21, 22]. These benefits are however subject to strong social, communication and collaboration skills [20, 23]. While conflict can be viewed as communication through dialogue, the components of communication that determine how conflict may support teams has not been significantly addressed [20, 24].

From the perspective of a discourse study around conflict, this study builds on the discussion that views conflicts as episodes of social interaction that are constructed between team members [24, 25]. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore how through dialogue teams manage task conflict and the cognitive processes applied during creative problem solving.

## **2. Team cognition in creative problem solving**

Previous research on creative problem solving has focused on individual, rather than on team cognition but there is now increased recognition of the importance of understanding team cognition [1]. Team creativity relates to the processes that integrate diverse views to create useful and novel solutions [26]. Studies have found task conflict to relate positively to creativity [27]. Task conflict is considered to promote divergent thinking to explore the problem area and broaden the scope of ideas [2]. The process of creative problem solving involves a number of steps. The first step is the identification of the problem scope and problem elements in order to provide some structure to the problem [28]. Ideation then occurs where one or more ideas are developed. The next step is concept development where selected ideas from the previous stage are further developed, critiqued and evaluated to identify difficulties with the solution. The final step is the refinement of solutions and their implementation [6]. Although numerous forms of team cognition may facilitate team creative problem solving, we focus on four forms of thinking that have a strong influence.

The following cognitive processes are instrumental to creative problem solving [29]. Firstly, as creative problem solving is focused on generating multiple solution options it has mainly been associated with creative thinking. Creative thinking is divergent with the purpose of creating a range of novel ideas [30–32]. It is linked to ideation and brainstorming [33, 34]. In many creative industries such as design and innovation, the solution space can be large in the iteration of multiple ideas which calls for creative thinking [35]. Design and Innovation studies have linked heightened levels of creative thinking to creative performance

[32, 36]. Individuals with advanced creative thinking skills, are deemed to have more originality, and novelty in their outcomes. Tests to determine levels of divergent and creative thinking measure fluency, flexibility and originality [37, 38]. Team creativity concerns the production of novel and useful ideas to produce products, processes and procedures by a team of people working together [39]. Team work is beneficial to creativity as groups are able to produce novel, creative outputs due to quality interactions and diverse cognitive inputs of the team members [40]. The working definition of creative thinking for this study is defined as:

*Divergent thinking to explore and generate alternative ideas and options [41].*

Secondly, while creative thinking is intrinsic to creative problem solving it is not sufficient in addressing the scope of many complex problems. Creative problems, such as design and innovation problems are ill-defined [42] and un-structured [43]. These problems often have multiple ways to represent the problem, multiple solution paths, emergent sub problems, goals that conflict, requiring distributed knowledge to solve them [42, 43]. Therefore many work place problems require convergent as well as creative and divergent thinking [44], which has not been extensively studied [45]. In creative fields like design, concept generation involves alternating between convergent and divergent thinking [46]. This has been attributed to a co-evolution process where the solution and problem space are explored and constructed in parallel [47, 48]. This entails alternating between the creation of solutions and then the further structuring of the problem as solution generation surfaces a need for further information. Convergent thinking is deductive and logical, involving evaluation, judgement and analysis. Convergent thinking can support the creative process. As alternative options are created through divergent thinking, convergent thinking is applied in a sense making process in order to select the more viable solutions for further development where divergent thinking is applied once again [49, 50]. These alternating cycles are thought to be so frequent that cognitively they occur concurrently in the ideation process [45]. Critical thinking is associated with convergent thinking as it is deductive and logical and includes the skills of analysis, interpretation, inference and evaluation [51, 52]. It involves questioning the reliability of knowledge and sources, and converging on answers and decisions [52, 53]. It involves being able to provide rational arguments to defend a position taken [54, 55]. The working definition of critical thinking for this study is defined as:

*Convergent, logical and deductive thinking to interpret, analyse and judge information [41].*

Thirdly, Along with the application of critical and creative thinking, functioning communication is essential for teams to create and share information, make decisions and coordinate their efforts [56, 57]. Mol et al. [8] define team cognition as “an emergent state that refers to the manner in which knowledge is mentally organized, represented and distributed within the team” (p. 243). Teams do not always pool distributed knowledge successfully due to difficulties in understanding other team members, the task, and a tendency to agree rather than look for clarifications or elaborations [58]. Therefore, communication and knowledge processing are key aspects of the collaboration process [8, 56]. The presentation of information clearly during creative problem solving can improve creative outcomes [32]. Knowledge processing relates to the collaborative process of the co-construction of knowledge where team members interact with each other to build shared new knowledge [59, 60]. Activities include active discussions such as asking for feedback and clarifications [61]. The working definition of knowledge processing for this study is defined as:

*The process of elaborating, explaining, clarifying and exchanging information [41].*

Lastly, Reflective thinking or meta-cognition is identified as one of the essential creative problem solving skills to control and monitor the process [51]. The literature has shown that metacognitive skill is synonymous with creativity and open ended problem solving [62, 63]. The ability to switch between divergent and convergent thinking requires metacognitive knowledge about when, how, and why to alternate between these processes [64, 65]. Meta-cognitive activities are around planning the management of the problem solving process, monitoring the progress and ability of the team, and evaluating the success of the methods used [62, 66, 67]. The main elements of meta-cognition are: planning, monitoring and evaluating one's problem solving strategies [62, 68, 69]. The working definition of meta-cognition for this study is defined as:

*Self-reflection through planning, monitoring and evaluating oneself or the team [41].*

While these are the main cognitive processes involved in creative problem solving, multi-disciplinary teams can fail to collaborate and disagreements may occur due to differences in views and opinions [13, 14, 58].

### **3. Task conflict**

Teams engage in discussions and negotiations to integrate diverse perspectives and ideas and this can cause conflict [70, 71]. Task conflict relates to disagreements about the task, including differences in judgements, opinions and alternative directions [72, 73]. Four meta-analyses have been carried out to understand the effect of conflict on team performance, including [17, 70, 74, 75]. The findings from these studies is incomplete but some of the findings show that task conflict can improve creative problem solving when certain conditions prevail. While the findings unanimously found process and relationship conflict to negatively influence team interactions task conflict can enhance team interaction through debate to consider a greater amount of information, opinions and ideas to create an in-depth understanding of the task [19, 76].

Task conflict has been associated with enhanced creativity in inter-organisational teams [77, 78]. Task related disagreements among team members are a key driver for rich collective knowledge structures emerging from knowledge exchange, which has a positive influence on team creativity [40]. Task conflict is considered to aid creative problem solving and group decision making because it defers decision making and triggers critical thinking and constructive criticism to evaluate solutions [17, 79, 80]. During the negotiation of conflict several opinions can be shared and integrated to support solutions and decisions [9, 81]. As groups participate in task conflict they acquire a deeper learning and more knowledge of the problem elements. As individuals are willing to hear other perspectives they can then examine their own position and adjust [73] to reach common ground [82]. Task conflict can provide the team with the opportunity for further thinking to broaden the problem and promote novel and creative problem-solving solutions [20]. Micro conflicts for teams solving complex unstructured and ill-defined problems can be beneficial by decreasing uncertainty [14]. The benefits of task conflict are not automatic, Teams must be willing to communicate in order to mitigate against the potentially negative influence that task conflict can create [20, 72].

The discussions of the team members during episodes of conflict can determine if conflict has a positive influence on teams. Gheorghe et al. [40] argue that the ability of teams to process information rests on the cognitive processes and individual representations, as well as on the quality of interactions that take place among group members. It can take team members several turns of speech to negotiate and resolve task conflict [25]. Task conflict can instigate collaboration, and social skills are necessary for effective collaboration to resolve conflicts [23]. A collaborative



approach with the application of social skills can reduce task conflict transforming to dysfunctional forms of conflict like relationship conflict. [23, 83]. There are two approaches to resolving conflict, either through degenerative and competitive dialogue or through generative and collaborative dialogue [24, 84]. In degenerative discussions, the focus is not on forming a shared understanding, and the competitive nature of this approach often ends in a win or lose outcome [84]. In a generative dialogue the conflict is used as a vehicle to promote discussion and debate with the ultimate aim of arriving at a shared understanding. Collaboration, means focusing on shared goals, accommodating and integrating the positions of others [24].

While a number of studies have addressed the social skills necessary for collaborative problem solving such as [23, 85] there have been limited studies that have explored the cognitive processes involved in managing task conflict during creative problem solving. Many studies on conflict involve retrospective studies e.g. [70] and researchers have proposed that studies on conflict processes, require observational studies to understand the micro conflicts in the course of discussions [14]. They argue that examining the social-cognitive processes during the back and forth exchanges during conflict in creative problem solving, can provide insights into why task conflict can benefit team performance.

We propose that limited levels of task conflict can have a beneficial impact on creative problem solving by stimulating certain cognitive processes to encourage information exchange and negotiation, to build constructed knowledge within the team. Producing a creative output involves finding connections among seemingly unrelated concepts, requiring a complex knowledge structure facilitating groups to shift between perspectives [40]. In turn this will stimulate iterative episodes of idea exploration and evaluation to arrive at considered solutions. The purpose of this study is to understand how task conflict can support creative problem solving in teams and the cognitive processes used in the process.

#### **4. Method**

Case studies were used to investigate design teams working in context at the front end of innovation projects and explores the dialogue of the participants to understand their cognitive processing. The research methodology was chosen to understand the context dependent and complex interconnected processes of creative problem solving. An important part of team creative problem solving is verbal communication and conversation.

#### **5. Data collection**

There were four cases in the study. Two of the cases involved two teams within each case, this is summarised in **Table 1**. A case was determined by the context and the project. Therefore, if two teams worked on the same project within the same environment this made up one case. The first case consisted of a bio-medical fellowship program (MedDev1), the second an undergraduate project (Students), the third a professional practice case (Consultants) and the fourth an additional bio-medical case (MedDev2). All data collected was from the front end of the design and innovation process.

Observations were carried out during meetings and work sessions. The raw data was audio recorded and transcribed. Field notes were taken during and shortly after observations episodes to correctly record the activity (Cohen et al. 2007). The research data analysed for each case is summarised in **Table 2**.

Teams	Project	Team Type	Expertise
Med-Dev 1 (2 teams of 4)	Medical device innovation	Interdisciplinary: engineering, medicine, business and law.	Fellows, experienced /post-doctoral level
Undergraduate (2 teams of 7)	Design of a user-centered crew rest for flight attendants.	Interdisciplinary: product design and digital communication	Undergraduate design students, novice
Consultants (1 team of 4)	User experience software interface design.	Interdisciplinary: interaction design, software engineering and business.	Industry consultants, experienced
Med-Dev 2 (1 team of 4)	Medical device innovation	Interdisciplinary: engineering, medicine and design.	Fellows experienced /post-doctoral level

**Table 1.**  
*Case study profile.*

	MedDev1	Students	Consultants	MedDev2
Analysed data	4 hrs of conversation recorded and analysed	5 hrs of conversation recorded and analysed	1.5 hrs of conversation recorded and analysed	5.5 hrs of conversation recorded and analysed
Meeting durations	<i>Problem definition:</i> Team A: 1 hr. 40 min Team B: 1 hr. 52 min	<i>Problem definition:</i> Team A: 40 min Team B: 46 min. <i>Ideation:</i> Team B: 1 hr. <i>Concept development:</i> Team A: 30 min	<i>Problem definition &amp; Ideation:</i> 1.5 hrs	<i>Problem definition:</i> 3 hrs <i>Ideation:</i> 1 hr. 25 min <i>Concept development:</i> 1 hr

**Table 2.**  
*Details of data collection.*

## 6. Data analysis

The analysis followed protocol and conversation analysis studies in creative research [86, 87]. The turn taking during conversations was analysed during meetings, e.g. [87]. The team dialogue was audio recorded, transcribed and imported to NVIVO and organised per case study. Analysis was both manual, in reviewing the data and digital, in the use of NVivo to theme the codes. The data was first divided into manageable chunks of topic segments. Topic shifts or changes were considered to be a suitable means to define topic segments as, topic shifts and changes start and finish through cooperation and consensus [88]. How a topic shift, or change occurred was assessed to determine if the participants reached agreement or if they changed topic without agreement. Expressions of agreement came in the form of utterances such as: uh, yeah, yes, mm, and Ok (ibid). Content analysis was applied in the deductive analysis of text data from the team discussions, through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns [89]. The four cognitive processes selected from the literature (knowledge processing, critical thinking, creative thinking and meta-cognition) were allocated to the utterances of each participants. **Table 3** shows the cognitive processes explored and descriptors for each [41]. There was some overlap for example where an utterance could overlap two cognitive processes.

Cognitive processes	Primitives
Knowledge processing	The process of elaborating, explaining, clarifying and exchanging information.
Critical thinking	Convergent, logical and deductive thinking to interpret, analyse and judge information.
Creative thinking	Divergent thinking to explore and generate alternative ideas and options.
Meta-cognition	Self-reflection through planning, monitoring and evaluating oneself or the team.

**Table 3.**  
*Descriptor of each cognitive process.*

Reliability is about the degree to which findings can be repeated in subsequent studies, even by other researchers. An inter-rater reliability study was performed with a second coder, to code a portion of the data according to the descriptions of the themes provided by the researcher. The results showed a Kappa coefficient of: 0.718.

## 7. Findings

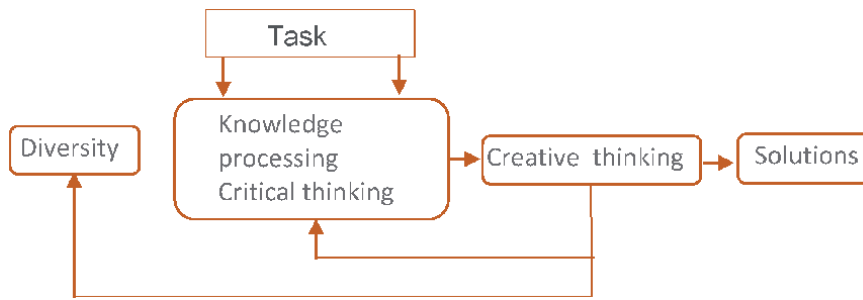
The findings have confirmed that during creative problem solving teams will alternate between the four cognitive process of: critical thinking, knowledge processing, metacognition and creative thinking to different degrees to instigate conflict and use it to support creative problem solving. The level of use across the four cases was:

1. Critical Thinking (40%)
2. Knowledge Processing (34%)
3. Meta-Cognition (27%)
4. Creative Thinking (7%)

**Table 4** outlines the number of topics segments per team at each phase with task conflict. While the teams were solution orientated and proposed several solutions to problems they engaged in limited creative thinking. As teams shared knowledge this surfaced a diversity in opinions and views which triggered task conflict. To resolve the conflict and arrive at a united position the teams iteratively alternated through the cognitive processes outlined, in a cycle of information sharing and elaboration, solution generation, solution evaluation and reflection (**Figure 1**).

	Med-Dev1 Team A	Med-Dev1 Team B	Under-graduate Team A	Under-graduate Team B	Consultants	MedDev2
Problem Definition	0 of 40	1 of 56	0 of 13	0 of 11	0 of 44	3 of 40
Ideation	—	—	—	3 of 34	—	0 of 37
Concept development	—	—	3 of 15	—	—	3 of 34

**Table 4.**  
*Number of topic segments per team at each phase with task conflict.*



**Figure 1.**  
Team creative problem solving cognitive processes.

**Table 5** provides an example of four topic segments from the Med Dev 2 case. The team were at the stage of developing and selecting solution directions for their project. Their aim was to develop an:

*“easier way to manage faecal matter from an Ileostomy<sup>1</sup> in a way that reduces the risks of skin complications and improves security in its management.”*

The team were trying to reach a conclusion on the selection of a final solution. Agreement was slow to reach, as solutions were evaluated, critiqued and judged by the team members before reaching a decision. Task conflict prompted the evaluation of solutions put forward by team members and strong negotiations ensued before any common ground was reached. There were a number of options that the team were considering which were around removing the risks of skin complications that can occur when using ileostomy bags. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the viability of the options. The example in **Table 5** is a proposal put forward by L suggesting that users would cut the proposed solution to their size. He uses knowledge processing to share this information and critical thinking in providing a rationale for the proposal. Team member R instigates task conflict by disagreeing with the proposal and uses critical thinking to argue that it allows too much room for error. While L accepts R’s argument he counter argues to justify his solution with a material that would stretch to size with an undersized hole. The team members continue to share information and then L picks up the argument again to propose that it is acceptable for users to cut a hole in the product. While this is accepted by K it is not accepted by RS who argues that the solution may not be any better than the original product which leaks. L provides a further argument to justify his proposal over the existing solution. While the team have not reached an agreement the task conflict that has ensued has forced the elaboration of information between the team members and an evaluation of the potential risks associated with the proposed solution.

The discussion continues and a new line of argument is introduced by L in **Table 6** around the requirement for a solution to adhere to manufacturing requirements. He argues against a proposal that had been put forward earlier by R arguing that it complicates the manufacturing process. A number of counter arguments proceed further. There is still no agreement between the team members in reaching a solution path but a further analysis of proposed solutions have been put forward through the exchange of knowledge processing and critical thinking brought about by task conflict.

As consensus did not occur in the previous topic, K shifts the topic to propose a different solution. The response to this is more positive, as *creative thinking* is used to develop the solution instead of critiquing it. K proposes how the idea could work.

<sup>1</sup> An ileostomy is an opening in the abdominal wall that’s made during surgery. The end of the ileum (the lowest part of the small intestine) is brought through this opening to form a stoma.

	<b>Cognitive processes</b>
L: You could go with the guideline that if your stoma is an inch in diameter you cut it at $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch.	KP, CT
R: I would not have anyone cut anything. Just the cutting thing L. if you allow them to cut it gives someone the room for error.	CT
L: Yeah you are right, but again this is cut and if you look at the difference between this material and that one. There is no real stretch in this one. They cut it and it leaves gaps. Do not worry if it's not disposable then you can pick a size. Whereas if it is that type of material you cut it smaller and you get a seal.	KP, CT
K: If you could get these bags.	KP
R: If they get it, there is a top on it that is completely closed over and they come along with their scissors and cut it.	KP
L: I'm actually speaking about creating the hole in that.	KP
K: Alright (agreement).	
L: Let us say for arguments sake that that is a flat at the moment .	KP
K: It's flat and there is no hole and you get your cutter and cut it to the size of the stoma. That's ideal.	KP, CT
RS: Are you not back to square one then, as the original?	CT
L: There would be two differences one slightly more than the other. One difference is that there is no adhesive. This is touching the skin. Ordinarily there is an adhesive there and that is causing a problem. You do not have any adhesive and you do not have to change it. If you have to change the bag ten times a day this stays on. The second thing is if you cut a hole in that it does not stretch around the stoma. It's just placed around it and there are gaps. Whereas with this one let us say you make a hole in that you have got that element of stretch around it.	KP, CT

*KP: knowledge processing, CT: Critical thinking, CRT: Creative thinking, MC: meta-cognition.*

**Table 5.**  
*Concept development discussion.*

<b>Examples</b>	<b>Cognitive process</b>
L: I'm trying to think of it from a manufacturing point of view, as soon as you put this protrusion on it you have a different mode of selection, like what size is your stoma? It's almost like you have to buy these as customised. I'm just thinking production line.	CT
R: It's three different moulds.	CT
L: If it's three different moulds it becomes more expensive very fast.	CT
RS: But if they have to cut it to size would it be accurate enough?	CT
R: I would not allow them cut it at all. I think if we made it flat and this gives you your accommodation that might be enough, we might prove that you need two different sizes within the range.	CT
RS: would it not just stretch on to any size?	CT
K: I would not be worried about manufacturing that, versus a flat in terms of a mould. This stuff is very easy to mould.	KP, CT
L: The question is are you manufacturing ten different sizes or can you customise it?	CT
RS: That looks like it would stretch to any size	CT

*KP: knowledge processing, CT: Critical thinking, CRT: Creative thinking, MC: meta-cognition.*

**Table 6.**  
*Concept development discussion 2.*

Both R and K then build on the idea and establish an agreement on the solution path. Another observation is that when solutions were rejected in the previous topic segments and critiqued in the course of conflict episodes the team members were forced to consider alternatives or adjustments to solutions. This shows a clear relationship between task conflict and creativity (**Table 7**).

The discussion continues with further back and forth exchanges of critical thinking which then results in an agreement on a solution direction and a conclusion of the topic (**Table 8**).

Examples	Cognitive processes
K: The way I was thinking, this part could be stiffer and smaller or bigger but if you could get bags with a standard shape cut out that slots into that perfectly every time.	CRT
R: A snap fit.	CRT
K: And your inner flowery type opening always guides the fluid in, they still stick on to each other, then you are sure that there is no contact with the skin. The problem there probably is this hole. Maybe you have to sell exclusively H. bags with a standard hole size.	CRT, CT
R: There is two different options of bags, you can get ones that are cut to size and ones that are pre-cut, so they can sell a pre-cut.	KP
K: So they can do that.	KP
R: So maybe just to further that, if this was to go in you would nearly snap fit it in or that once it's in, there is a rim that goes out this way and it hooks into it. It might be harder to get it in, but once it's in there is a lock on it.	CRT, CT
L: Like vacuum cleaners.	CT
Kev: That's a clever mechanical lock all right but I would still be hoping that the adhesive we currently use in bags and manufacture would suffice to stick the bag onto whatever we have so that there is no leak. But it would be a nice addition.	CT
R: I just thought that if you were getting direct contact between here and here that it is not touching the skin at all is that not it?	CT
K: yeah that's it.	

*KP: knowledge processing, CT: Critical thinking, CRT: Creative thinking, MC: meta-cognition.*

**Table 7.**  
Concept development discussion 4.

Examples	Cognitive processing
L: Let us say for argument sake that this was your size and it goes into the bag and that's your stoma. There is the risk if you have a smaller stoma that it comes out and leaks back and gets held in here, I mean.	CT
R: Unless this stretches on. Try it on that and see.	CT
L: I'm just saying that in the worst case scenario if that happens you may still be in a much better position than you are if it happens without this ring because as you have seen from the pictures it can spread out whereas it might just be limiting the problem to a few millimetres around it. So you might still be off to a pretty good start.	CT
R: You might get 95% cover.	CT
L: 95% effectiveness. <b>CONSENSUS</b>	
R: Yeah that would be great. <b>CONSENSUS</b>	CT

*KP: knowledge processing, CT: Critical thinking, CRT: Creative thinking, MC: meta-cognition.*

**Table 8.**  
Concept development discussion 4 continued.

A final observation as witnessed in the data presented was that at no stage did the task conflict head towards relationship conflict which has been shown to be a risk and a reason why some researchers do not support the benefits of task conflict [70]. The teams showed an advanced level of social skills in recognising how to benefit from the conflict. For example, in **Table 8** L actively argues against his own solution to ensure that all risk associated with the solution are uncovered. In **Table 7** the teams avoided conflict during episodes of idea generation in order to suspend judgement to let ideas flow.

## 8. Discussion

Our findings have a number of implications. Firstly, the significant contribution of this paper to the literature on conflict management is in showing how task conflict can stimulate cognitive processes that facilitate teams to partake in creative problem solving. The topic segments depicting conflict as presented here are representative of discursive social interactions, illuminating the cognitive processes and results of the conflicts [24, 90]. They present an understanding of the generative dialogues that are used in instances of task conflict during creative problem solving. The findings highlight that the negotiation of conflict can prompt teams to share diverse information and perspectives, negotiate and elaborate on that information to arriving at co-created solutions as shown in **Figure 1**. Task conflict prevented premature agreement by challenging the status quo and instigating new lines of thinking. As team members shared diverse knowledge and perspectives with knowledge processing this triggered task conflict. To negotiate the conflict and arrive at a united goal, the teams iteratively cycled through episodes of creative thinking in the proposal of ideas, critical thinking to judge and evaluate the ideas and the perspective of others and metacognition to reflect on the suitability of the strategies engaged with by the team.

Secondly, another finding was that task conflict is indirectly and positively connected to team creativity [78]. The findings show however that conflict was not associated with creative thinking and that the topic segments that displayed creative thinking were not topics that had instances of task conflict. Team members appeared to recognise where and when to use conflict and did not critique early ideas. However, there was evidence to show that the task conflict that occurred in preceding topics often forced a rethink in terms of solution directions and it was this, that prompted the teams to use creative thinking to come up with alternative solutions. This required a balance in the management of the conflict in that, while task conflict led to a creative rethink on solution paths, it was important that task conflict did not stifle creative thinking in the flow of alternative ideas. This supports Kiernan et al. [91] who showed that task conflict impacts positively only at certain stages of the creative process, the problem definition and concept development phases. While they recommend moderate levels of conflict at these phases they argue that conflict has the potential to have a damaging impact at the ideation phase by stifling the fluency of ideas. Therefore the focus for teams at the ideation phase should be on producing a breath of ideas which is desirable for creative problem solving [92].

The third contribution points for a need to have advanced social skills [23] and a heightened awareness of when and how to apply these skills. It is about understanding when the introduction and the continuation of task conflict can benefit the progress of the team. It has been shown that enhanced communication, [20] social skills, [23] and generative dialogues [24] are necessary to support the negotiation and beneficial impact of task conflict. This study provides empirical evidence

that the use of the cognitive processes of knowledge processing, critical thinking, creative thinking and meta-cognition were linked to advanced social, communication and collaboration skills that supported the teams to partake in, control and gain from the conflict. Many team members demonstrated this with being able to build strong arguments but also in knowing when not to argue. Team members also regularly built on the arguments of others in order to build on a position being advocated to the group. This concurs with the literature which shows that this is a differentiating factor between experts and novices during episodes of conflict in design problem solving [91].

With respect to the inconclusive findings in the literature with regard to the benefits of task conflict, this research has made a fourth contribution to show that task conflict can benefit creative problem solving and should be encouraged. This study has highlighted the cognitive processes that are verbally uttered and how they are used to both instill and resolve task conflict. These findings have implications for how creative problem solving teams are managed. This study proposes that while task conflict can support creative problem solving it needs to be managed carefully. Advanced social, communication and collaboration skills need to be developed. This can be reached by facilitating the application of the cognitive processes outlined. These cognitive processes can serve as an aid to support teams to start and then negotiate the conflict. The levels of collaboration and social skills applied will determine how well teams function and an experienced facilitator may be necessary to both instigate and manage the negotiation of task conflict to ensure that the level of conflict does not escalate to unmanageable levels. This may be even more necessary when facilitating more novice and inexperienced teams. The level of conflict observed in this research was moderate. Higher levels of conflict could have a counterproductive impact on team interaction resulting in prolonged delays in decision making. This supports the literature which stresses that heightened and prolonged episodes of task conflict could be detrimental to a team's ability to move forward [17, 79].

## **9. Conclusions**

The findings highlight how task conflict can benefit creative problem solving in teams by prompting team members to engage in a social exchange by applying cycles of the cognitive processes of; knowledge processing, critical thinking, creative thinking and meta-cognition. These cognitive processes were instrumental in supporting both divergent and convergent thinking and suspending decision making to process additional information and explore alternative ideas. While conflict was positively related to creativity it was not associated with creative thinking, however previous episodes of conflict often resulted in subsequent topic segments of creative thinking. The ability to apply the cognitive processes appeared to depend on advanced social and collaborative skills pointing to a possible difference between how experts and novices might compare in managing conflict.



## Author details

Louise Kiernan\*, Ann Ledwith and Raymond Lynch  
University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

\*Address all correspondence to: [louise.kiernan@ul.ie](mailto:louise.kiernan@ul.ie)

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Section 2

Conflict and Company  
Performance

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# Intergroup Conflict and Organizational Performance: A Case of Kiboga Hospital, Uganda

*Antony Tebitendwa*

## Abstract

The study aimed at finding out whether there is a relationship between intergroup conflicts and organizational Performance, using the case of Kiboga hospital. The study contributes to the body of existing literature by laying down strategies for managing and reducing intergroup conflicts. The study employed a cross-sectional research design along with a quantitative approach. The study population was 95 of which a sample size of 76 respondents was selected using Krejcie and Morgan table. Data was collected by the use of a questionnaire which was self-administered. Data were analyzed by the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Results revealed that respondents consented that intergroup conflicts affect performance with an average mean of 4.154 and a standard deviation of 1.092. A correlation coefficient of 0.903 which is significant at 0.01, revealed that there is a significant relationship between intergroup conflicts and performance which lead to the rejection of a null hypothesis. The study concluded that moderate levels of conflicts improve performance since they stimulate thinking and creativity in decision making towards goal achievement. However, extreme levels of conflict reduce performance in terms of patient care for our case of investigation. The study recommended strategies management can employ to manage extreme levels of conflicts to improve patient care.

**Keywords:** conflict, intergroup conflicts, organizational performance, patient care, conflict management

## 1. Introduction

Conflicts are an inevitable part of organizational life since the goals of different participants such as managers and staff are often incompatible [1]. This results in a situation whereby they disturb each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives. Indeed, conflict is part of organizational life and may occur between individuals, and groups [1]. While conflict is generally apparently known as dysfunctional, it can also be functional because it may cause an issue to be presented in different perspectives. Therefore, conflict has both positive and negative effects [2]. It can be positive when it encourages creativity, new looks at old conditions, the clarification of points of view, improve quality of decisions by stimulating personality thinking and challenges individual to become better, and hence the growth of human capabilities to handle interpersonal differences.

Conflicts arise at different levels within the hospital as a social organization and this is identified as a global problem which is determined by internal reasons of organizational management, socio-psychology, personal and other external factors like; economic, social, and cultural factors that occurs over time. A study by [3] identified inter-professional conflicts which is between Nurses and Doctors as one of the major and frequent hospital conflict which affects the quality of patient care. This is mainly caused by income differences, prestige, and authority of doctors over other health care professionals. The physicians' power appears to arise from the knowledge and social class [4]. This situation shows that the potential for conflict to arise in a hospital setting is considerably high [5]. Just like Nigeria, in Uganda, the working relationships between doctors and nurses have been affected by withdrawal of services by both doctors and nurses which cripples hospital activities.

According to [6], conflict arises when people take on incompatible position, changes their perception and ideas, as these are inevitable and necessary for community life. He further states that conflicts can arise between co-workers, supervisors, team members, and subordinates, or between employees and external stakeholders. This statement supports the fact that the potential for conflict to arise in a hospital setting is considerably higher due to the complex and frequent interactions among the nurses, doctors, and other employees as well as the variety of roles they play. Specialization and organizational hierarchy often add to the intergroup conflicts in hospitals [7]. In health institutions where work-related conflict exists can interfere with nurses' roles performance if not well managed. Unresolved conflicts may be linked to poor communication resulting from refusal to cooperate, poor team collaboration and problem-solving, decreased clients' satisfaction, distrust, split camps, gossips, and disruption of work-flow in the hospital setting [8].

The World Health Report [9], estimates that there are 57 countries with critical shortages that have come as a result of either poor conflict management strategies or the absence of which is equivalent to a global deficit of 2.4 million doctors, nurses, and midwives. These may draw health care professional's attention away from patient care and drain their personal resources posing a threat to team safety climate and ultimately the quality of patient care. However, [10] states that well managed intergroup conflict in an enabling environment allows for issues to be tabled and discussed with objective language. Each party is empowered to state his or her position with confidence that the other party is genuinely listening, wanting to understand. Possible solutions are discovered with open minds therefore improving organizational performance.

Kiboga hospital is a government-owned hospital with a status of a general hospital. It is a hospital located in the central region of Uganda. The hospital is faced with intergroup conflicts among its different medical and support departments, and its performance has been declining over time. Given the functional and dysfunctional nature of conflicts, this study, therefore, seeks to establish whether there is a relationship between intergroup conflict and organizational performance.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Intergroup conflicts**

Organizational conflict is regarded as the discord that occurs when the goals, interests, or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with those of individuals or groups block or frustrate each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives [1]. According to [11], organizational intergroup conflict is a condition between or among workers whose jobs are interdependent, who feel angry,

who perceive the others as being at fault, and who act in ways that cause business problems. This analysis defines workplace intergroup conflict as a situation in which interdependent workers, perceive positions or action as irreconcilable, with the consequence that at least one of the parties perceive that disagreement are emotionally upsetting, causing a problem at workplace [12].

Many scholars [13, 14] equate the aspect of team-based structures as a result of increasing complexity and environmental demands that force organizations to specialize and diversify their workforce, to focus efforts and efficiently handle their subtasks. However, utilizing these combined efforts as well as resources can be a challenge for team-based organizations, due to structural and psychological barriers between groups that hinder effective intergroup relations [15]. This is because groups pursue their own interests at the expense of the overall organizational goal [10]; they compete over scarce resources [16]; and fail to manage the disruptive dynamics of social categorization [17]. The imbalance of both differentiation of subsystems and the need for integrating these subsystems in pursue of superordinate organizational goals represents an inherent potential for interface or structural conflict between work units [18]. If not managed well, such interface conflict result into negative interdependence with the likely result that one group's goal achievement decreases the possibility of another group's goal achievement [19].

## **2.2 Organizational performance**

Performance is defined as the evaluation of the constituents that try to assess the capability and ability of a company in achieving the constituents' aspiration levels using efficiency and effectiveness. Since organizations perform various activities to accomplish organizational objectives, performance can also be referred to as the frequent assessments of organizations carried out in relation to the achievement or non-achievement of set objectives and goals [20]. However, many factors affect organization performance. Conflicts within the organization are among the factors that can either positively or negatively affect performance. Traditionally, conflicts are viewed as bad. It is considered harmful for organizational functioning since it is related to hostility, antagonism, and unpleasantness. A study carried out by [21], about the effects of conflict on employees performance pointed out that, in spite of the grim picture painted about conflict as an organizational tremor, this social action can also foster posterity for business ventures. With constructive and a prudent approach, conflicts can revolutionize new ideas which can take organizations to unprecedented heights in their endeavors. It was concluded that the effect of conflicts on the organization can either be positive or negative, but when managed properly, the positive effects can be used to encourage organizational innovativeness and build cooperation among the employees which enhances performance [21]. A recent research by [22] on the impact of conflicts on the Organizational Development, highlights the above point by stating that conflicts are not automatically destructive, but this aspect depends to a large extent on how they are perceived by those who observe them, but equally on how they are managed by the manager who has to take into consideration the constructive, positive aspects of a conflict and diminish the destructive peculiarities.

Indeed, conflicts are not all bad, it is just the level of conflicts that makes them functional or dysfunctional. According to [23], Organizational performance is low when conflict is at two extremes: high levels or low levels. Organizational performance is high at moderate levels of conflict. At a low level of conflict, that is, there is usually mutuality of opinion, people agree with each other and there is no stimulation to change. People are not adaptive to environmental challenges and, therefore, do not search for new ideas. The organizational performance, thus,

tends to be low. At a high level of conflict, people do not agree with each other. There is lack of cooperation amongst their activities and behavior. This leads to lack of discipline in the organization resulting in low organizational performance. At optimum level of conflict, that is, people disagree with each other resulting in new ideas. People think differently in a constructive way. New solutions are developed to deal with problems and achieve the goals through optimum utilization of resources. Therefore, moderate levels of conflict are beneficial to organizational performance. A study by [24], elaborated this further by specifying the type of team conflict that benefit from moderate levels of conflict. The occurrence of moderate level of task conflict is more helpful during planning and strategizing phases of the work, when decision making is most needed, rather than during task execution phases. In fact, task conflict during task execution was found to interfere with effective integration of work activities and team creativity.

A study by [22], emphasized that conflicts are inevitable and often lead to the efficiency of the organization's activity, to its development. He adds that all organizations regardless of their size, the conflict is an integral part of the process of development and capitalization of human resources within the organization, which requires a permanent analysis in the direction of strategic development of those entities. This is because conflict is inherent in human interaction, appearing as a result of different systems of social values, differences in principles, culture, interests.

### **2.3 The effect of intergroup conflict on organization performance**

One scholar [15] asserts that intergroup conflict is a common occurrence in workplace scenarios where one group of workers might find themselves at a face to face junction with another group. According to [25], goal differentiation between the organizational departments makes the environment competitive as each department has its own goals to achieve, for the magistrate's concern is primarily with quality and that of service staff primarily with speed. For each department to achieve its own goals and at the same time cooperate with other departments in achieving the overall goal of the organization while competing for scarce resources shared with other departments, results into both interdepartmental and intergroup conflict.

The above notion is supported by the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT), which states that perceived competition for limited resources can lead to hostility between groups. This is when valuable resources are perceived to be abundant, then groups cooperate and exist in harmony. However, if valuable resources are perceived as scarce, then these groups enter into a competition which leads to intergroup conflicts. The resources in question can be physical (such as land, food, or water) or psychological (such as status, prestige, or power). One group need only believe that competition exists for hostile feelings and discriminatory behavior to follow. How long and how severe the conflict becomes is determined by the perceived value and scarcity of the resource in question [26]. RGCT states that Interdepartmental or intergroup conflicts can be resolved when there is a performance situation that requires each group to depend on each other to achieve important goals equally valued by both groups where everyone's help and cooperation is needed. Therefore, management can solve intergroup conflicts by setting up organizational goals that require interdependence of different departments to maintain intergroup relations to improve performance.

Though the claim that well managed intergroup conflict automatically results in efficiency gains is challenged by some, it is generally accepted that the right kind of friction and constructive confrontation and arguments over ideas in an atmosphere

of mutual respect can help an organization to have the potential to drive greater performance and creativity. Conflicts are also beneficial where intergroup conflict improves team dynamic within the group, by team increasing their cohesiveness and task-oriented when they face an external threat. Moderate intergroup conflict motivates members to work more efficiently toward their goals, thereby increasing the team productivity [27]. According to [28], there can be no intergroup conflict without a degree of information as to performance information in the basis period and, ideally, a targeted performance in a future time period. Intergroup conflicts can either be constructive or destructive in nature. However, it is important to note that intergroup conflict is a reality of our daily lives and intergroup conflict is thus inevitable in a human workplace.

A study by [29], states badly managed intergroup conflict, personal attacks are common, people can get visibly angry and feelings get hurt. When co-workers do not respect the fact that approaches in addressing issues at work can differ, everyone suffers due to unresolved intergroup conflicts risk with great potential to worsen the situation. Emotionally, the work environment grows more toxic and financially expensive, the toll can be a problem consequently affecting the performance of the organization from all angles. A big number of organizations are losing valuable resources including talent, time, and revenue from work conflicts arising from within and outside. So far, this matter has not been accorded much attention from a risk management perspective but, as a result of the emphasis on performance, researchers in human resource management have stressed the need for effective human resource strategy in conflict management with reducing conflict. Although conflicts differ in terms of sources and causes, they all have destructive consequences if handled poorly [30].

The Meta-Analysis research carried out on the three types of Team Conflict: Task, Relationship, and Process conflicts, highlights another perspective on how conflicts can be beneficial or unbeneficial. The research concluded that although relationship conflict which involves interpersonal tensions, frictions, and resentment can harm team performance, task conflicts which is concerned with different ideas, perspectives, and viewpoints regarding the work itself has the potential to improve team performance and team innovation [31]. In addition, the Pearson correlation findings by [21] indicated that whereas relationship conflict is negatively linked to performance, there is a positive correlation between task and process conflict and employee's performance. A recent study carried out by [32] regarding Conflicts on Team Trust and Team performance also concluded that task and relationship conflict, process conflict, team trust, have noteworthy effect on team performance. The study emphasized the importance of task conflicts on performance when members within a team engage in highly complex tasks. With highly complex tasks, task conflict fosters intensive information exchange as well as detailed information processing. Problems can be considered from different perspectives, different opinions or alternatives can be discussed, which may produce high quality solutions and enhance performance. Based on the literature the following null hypothesis was stated:

*There is no significant relationship between Inter-group conflicts and Organization Performance.*

### **3. Methodology**

The researcher used a cross-sectional research design, this is where the data on the study variables are collected at the same point in time. There were 95 Health Care Providers at Kiboga Hospital in Uganda including Administration, Medical

Doctors, and Nurses. Krejcie and Morgan Table [33] was used to determine a sample size of 76 respondents. A quantitative approach was used and data was collected by the use of a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree to 5 for strongly agree. Interpretations were based on 4.21–5.00 – Very High, 3.41–4.20 – High level, 2.61–3.40 – Moderate, 1.81–2.60 – Low, and 1.00–1.80 – Very low. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to measure the central tendency and correlations were used to test the null hypothesis. The reliability of the research tool was tested and the Cronbach alpha value was 0.821 which is above 0.5. This suggests that the questionnaire was highly reliable as suggested by [34]. Before data collection, permission was granted by Kiboga hospital administration.

## **4. Discussion of findings**

### **4.1 Response rate**

The researcher had a total population of 95 and from which a sample of 76 respondents was selected for the study. Of those sampled respondents, a total of 74 returned their questionnaire, it is most likely that the two questionnaires were misplaced. This represented a response rate of 97.4% which was considered appropriate for the study. This correlates with [35] recommendation that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; Therefore, 97.4% was an excellent response rate for the study.

### **4.2 Demographics**

Most respondents (60.7%) were Nurses, medical doctors (18.0%), administrative staff (16.4%) and support staff (4.9%). The majority (56.8%) were females while 43.2% of respondents were males. The majority of the respondents (74.3%) worked for the Hospital between 5 and 8 years, between 2 and 5 years (14.9%), and above 9 years (10.8%). The majority (49.2%) of the workers were Bachelor's Degree holder and Diploma holders (55.4% and 33.8%) Few respondents had Master's Degree and certificates (5.4% and 5.4%) respectively. The majority of the respondents were aged between 26–35 years (55.4%), between 36–45 years (23%) 46 years and above (12.2%), and between 18–25 years (9.5%).

### **4.3 Descriptive statistics of intergroup and organizational performance**

In order to assess the level of agreement and disagreement on the different items used to measure intergroup conflict in the questionnaire, the mean and standard deviation were used to determine the central tendency. A low standard deviation implies that responses were closely related to the mean value while a high standard deviation implies that responses were highly deviating from the mean value. The results are shown in the table below:

According to **Table 1**, there is a high agreement on all the measures of intergroup conflicts and their effect on performance. The average mean of 4.154 and the standard deviation of 1.092 implies that the majority were in agreement although the responses were varying a lot.

From **Table 2** below the level of mean responses together with the average mean of 4.4831 regarding organizational performance indicate that functional intergroup conflicts positively affect organizational performance whereas dysfunctional



conflicts if not managed well can have a negative impact on Organizational performance. Based on the average Standard deviation of 0.8858, the variance of responses was minimal.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intergroup conflict is a common occurrence at workplace in health institutions	76	1.00	5.00	4.1351	1.10198
Intergroup conflicts in health institutions have a positive effect on organizational performance	76	1.00	5.00	4.323	1.03511
Intergroup conflict has a negative effect on the performance of the health institution.	76	1.00	5.00	4.0676	1.22005
Intergroup conflict is avoidable at the workplace especially in health institutions	76	1.00	5.00	4.1892	1.11865
Goal differentiation in the health institution makes the environment competitive due to intergroup conflicts	76	1.00	5.00	4.4189	.89146
Competition over resources causes intergroup conflicts and consequently affect organizational performance	76	1.00	5.00	3.8649	1.20869
Lack of coordination is the common source of intergroup conflict among different department	76	1.00	5.00	4.0811	1.06959
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>4.154257</b>	<b>1.092219</b>

*Source: Primary data (2020).*

**Table 1.**  
*Descriptive statistics on intergroup conflict and Organizational Performance.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Intergroup conflict results in poor organizational performance in your organization	76	1.00	5.00	4.4730	.90996
Conflict management lead to improved quality of organization performance in health institutions	76	1.00	5.00	4.6081	.77314
Employee performance is improved due to functional Intergroup conflict in health institutions	76	1.00	5.00	4.5270	.87934
Organizational conflict has a negative effect on the performance of the health institution	76	1.00	5.00	4.3243	.98075
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>4.4831</b>	<b>0.8858</b>

*Source: Primary data (2020).*

**Table 2.**  
*Descriptive statistics on Organizational Performance.*

#### 4.4 Correlation analysis

The main aim of the study was to establish a relationship between intergroup conflicts and organizational performance. Pearson's correlation coefficient has been computed so as to establish this relationship. A high correlation coefficient would suggest a strong relationship between the intergroup conflicts and organizational performance and vice versa for a low correlation coefficient. The results are presented in the table below.

Research findings in **Table 3** below that there is a significant positive relationship between Intergroup conflicts and Organizational performance, generating a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.903^{**}$ , and significant at 0.01. This, therefore, implies that the null hypothesis that states: *There is no significant relationship between Intergroup Conflict and Organization performance*, is rejected and the alternative is accepted. The positive correlation indicated that as employees engage in intergroup conflicts it is likely to affect their performance positively or negatively. Intergroup conflicts can affect performance by causing changes to occur, both within the group and individuals, members will usually overlook individual differences in an effort to unite against the other side. According to [36], intergroup conflicts brings positive effects for the better, by removing barriers caused by different assumptions or misunderstandings about a team's tasks, or goals. Conflict can be constructive when it creates broader awareness about how team members are experiencing their work and thus leads to changes that improve members' productivity and they ought to work together toward achieving common goals. Conflict can also lead to process improvements, such as when it reveals a deficiency in how the team communicates, which can then be corrected. Clashes of ideas can lead to more creative solutions or otherwise provide perspectives that persuade the team to take a different approach that is more likely to lead to success [1]. The Pearson correlation findings by [21], indicated that whereas relationship conflict is negatively linked to performance, there is a positive correlation between task and process conflict and employee's performance. Therefore, it was concluded that the effect of conflicts on the organization can either be positive or negative, but when managed properly, the positive effects can be used to encourage organizational innovativeness and build cooperation among the employees which enhances performance. This is because organizational conflicts improves team dynamics by increasing cohesiveness among members.

A recent study carried out by [32] emphasized the importance of task conflicts on performance when members within a team engage in highly complex tasks. With highly complex tasks, task conflict fosters intensive information exchange as well

		Intergroup conflicts	Organizational Performance
Intergroup conflicts	Pearson Correlation	1	.903**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	74	74
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.903**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	74	74

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

**Table 3.**  
Correlation analysis between intergroup conflicts and organizational performance.

as detailed information processing since problems can be considered from different perspectives, different opinions or alternatives can be discussed, which may produce high quality solutions that enhance performance. Another recent research by [22], emphasized that conflicts are inevitable and if properly managed often lead to the efficiency of the organization's activity, which leads to its development.

On the negative side, a study by [3] found out that conflicts between nurses and doctors consumes much of the time and attention that should be committed to patients. Therefore, the consequences here range from poor coordination of patient care, less patient satisfaction, poor perception and utilization of health care services, medication error, failure to rescue patients, and even deaths. The results further revealed that patients suffered neglect and abandonment as they are caught in-between the conflicts of these two groups. Therefore, it is important for hospital management to identify and properly manage intergroup conflicts to avoid performance distractions.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

The study findings revealed that there is a strong positive significant relationship between intergroup conflict and organizational performance. This implies that intergroup conflicts that occur in an organization either result in a negative or a positive effect on performance in the organization depending on the level it occurs. It is important to note that organization performance increase when conflicts are at moderate levels. However, conflicts can negatively affect performance especially at a low level where mutuality of ideas exists between members and if not managed well to escalate to high levels where members lack cooperation regarding activities and behavior. Therefore, in order to offer quality patient care, it is crucial for management to identify functional and dysfunctional conflicts and effectively manage them so as to enhance hospital performance.

Management of health organizations should always address and manage the issues related to intergroup conflicts, by building trust, promote leadership, address cultural differences, establish ground rules, and finally promote good communication and listening skills among the group members and members of other groups so as to improve on patient care.

Where groups have differing goals, it is prudent for management to establish a superordinate goal that can only be reached when the conflicting groups work together. A superordinate goal not only helps alleviate conflict, it focuses more on performance, which is what the organization needs to survive. If this is done in the right way it will eliminate or reduce intergroup conflicts.

Misperception of the abilities, goals, and motivations of others often leads to conflict, so efforts to increase the dialogue among groups and to share information should help eliminate conflict. As groups come to know more about one another, suspicions often diminish, and greater intergroup teamwork becomes possible, which improves performance.

Management should identify and make significant changes in the structural variables involving the conflicting groups such as changing jobs or rearranging reporting responsibilities among health care teams. For effectiveness, groups involved should participate in structural change decisions. If done well, this can lead to permanent resolution of intergroup conflicts within health care institutions.

Given the relevance of task conflicts in decision-making teams, there is a need for better selection and training of team members, as well as a culture that enables team members to leverage task conflicts appropriately, as opposed to minimizing and avoiding them completely. By doing so, it enhances performance among health services teams.

## **Conflict of interest**

There is no conflict of interest in this present study. This research work is not a part of any other studies and it is my original work.

## **Author details**

Antony Tebitendwa  
Uganda Martyrs University, Kampala, Uganda

\*Address all correspondence to: tebitendj35@gmail.com

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# Conflicts in Environmental and Agricultural Organizations in the Far North Region of Cameroon

*Nanche Billa Robert*

## Abstract

The population of the Far North Region of Cameroon suffers the most from poverty and huge environmental challenges. As a result, they have the highest concentration of environmental organizations in Cameroon. Data was collected by interviewing key informants who work in environmental and agricultural companies. It was discovered that conflicts in such organizations are caused by the differences people have in terms of opinions, interests and needs as they work together with each other. Their strictness with one another also causes conflict especially when doing dirty or difficult work tasks. Conflict also comes about when the religious values of each other is not respected especially that of the Muslims in Christians dominated companies. There is also generational conflict which is characterized by the confrontation between the older and less educated generation who have some experience and young graduates who would like to implement new practices. Other causes are discrimination where workers are not promoted basing on merit but on their ethnic relation to one another. There is equally an economic cause which is due to the non-distribution of part of the substantial profits that some companies make to their employees as well as too low salary and poor work tasks distribution.

**Keywords:** environment, agriculture, organization, discrimination, Cameroon, religion, work task, relation, conflict, generational, economic

## 1. Introduction

Conflict has different meanings and is used differently depending on people's subjective experiences. The main problem is not the many different definitions but rather the ways scholars have conceptualized the term. As a result, scientists have defined conflict in broad terms: Jehn and Bendersky (2003) [1] defined conflict as "perceived incompatibilities or discrepant views among the parties involved". De Dreu et al. (1999) [2] state that conflict involves "the tension an individual or group experiences because of perceived differences between him or herself and another individual or group". The term conflict reflects the assumption of involving not only differences but incompatible goals and is a win-lose affair. In order to better understand conflict, Elisabeth N. and Stewart C. (2019) [3] ask the following questions which equally interest us: What does conflict look like? How should it be identified in the workplace? And how can we capture its dynamics in our theorization?

Louis R. (1967) [4] state that the term “conflict” can be used to describe various conditions and states such as the scarcity of resources, policy differences of a conflicting behavior, or an affective states such as stress, tension, hostility, anxiety, etc. of the individuals involved, or a cognitive states of individuals, which can be their perception or awareness of conflicting situations, and even still behavior, ranging from passive resistance to overt aggression. An industrial dispute means any dispute or difference between employers and employees or employers and workers or between workmen and workmen, which is connected with employment or non-employment or terms of employment or conditions of labour of any person. According to Priyakshi M (–) [5] *Conflict can be considered as a breakdown in the standard of decision making and it occurs when an individual or group experience difficulty in selecting an alternative. Conflict arises when individual or group encounters goal that both parties cannot obtain satisfactorily.*

Organizational Conflict or otherwise known as workplace conflict is described as the state of disagreement or misunderstanding, resulting from the actual or perceived dissent of needs, beliefs, resources and relationship between the members of the organization. At the workplace, whenever, two or more persons interact, conflict occurs when opinions with respect to any task or decision are in contradiction (Business Jargon, –) [6].

Task conflict is disagreement about the content of the work that workers perform; relationship conflict exists when employees have interpersonal incompatibilities arising from differences in personality or opposing values (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005) [7]. Process conflict is closely related to task conflict: Whereas task conflict has to do with the actual task, process conflict concerns how the task is done (Jehn, 1997) [8]. While the concepts of task and relationship conflict are widely used in conflict research, the application of process conflict is still limited. More recently, the concept of status conflict (Bendersky and Hays, 2012) [9] has emerged, and it concerns disputes over members’ status positions in social hierarchy.

Despite disagreements, task conflict is commonly considered constructive and relationship conflict dysfunctional. Relationship conflict interferes with performance by lowering effectiveness, creativity, and the quality of decision making (de Wit, Jehn, and Scheepers, 2013) [10]. By contrast, task conflict is healthy and necessary because it stimulates discussions and prevents premature consensus, leading to enhanced decision-making quality, work-team effectiveness, and performance. Since the 1980s, major strand in organizational conflict research has concentrated on refining the conflict-type framework to distinguish between negative and productive conflict, by showing out how “these two types of conflict differentially affect work group outcomes” (O’Neill et al., 2013) [11].

Therefore conflict is an instrumental means to achieve authoritatively sanctioned ends. “It is through conflict that teams can be productive and enhancing and leaders effective” Tjos-vold’s (2006) [12]. Depending on the situation and the kind of outcome desired by management, there is a widespread interest on how to attain the “right” kind of conflict for the achievement of goals.

Conflict equally occurs in the routines of work and the norms embedded in everyday social interaction as organizational members go about their daily activities which constitutes the cultural context of conflict (Mikkelsen, 2013) [13]. Therefore, conflict is an inherently dynamic process of communicating which pays particular interest to the role of language and symbols in shaping and co-developing it (Mikkelsen and Gray, 2016.) [14].

Specifically, there are three distinct and competing ways on conceptualizing conflict: as a distinct behavioral phenomenon, as an instrumental means, and as a social construction.

It is a process in which one party suggests that its interests are being opposed by another party. As a role, people see only the observable part of conflict – angry words and actions of opposition. But this is only a small part of the conflict process (Mcshane, S. and Glinow, M, 2008) [15] because the conflict process consists of five stages: firstly, a potential opposition or incompatibility; secondly a cognition and personalization, thirdly, an intentions; fourthly a behavior; and finally an outcome.

Internal Sources of conflict refer to factors which are inherent within the framework of an organization. The major prime factor of internal sources of conflict is the “Opposing interests” of industrial actors. Differing interests bring about conflict because the two parties in organizations try to share the “industrial cake”. Equally, there is usually “power relationship” between the two actors in an industry which make conflict production inevitable (Bernard O. Ashimi R. 2014) [16].

According to Gatlin, J. et al. (2019) [17], there are eight potential reasons which cause conflict in an organization: conflicting needs, styles, perceptions, goals, pressures, roles, differing personal values and unpredictable policies. An organization is a system of position roles with each member belonging to a role set. Conflict role occurs when an association of individuals sharing interdependent tasks and performing formally defined roles are influenced both by the expectations of others in the role set and by their own personalities and expectations. A person’s role joins with that of other members’ as well as their set of organizational roles to produce opportunities for a role conflict. This type of conflict increases individual’s anxiety and frustration and reduced efficiency as it can as well motivate him to do better work (Henry P, Börje O. (1971) [18].

Unmanaged conflict in the workplace can lead to miscommunication which bring about confusion or non-cooperation, non-respect of deadlines or delays, increased stress among employees, weak creative collaboration and team problem solving, disruption to work flow, knowledge sabotage Serenko, A. (2020), Serenko, A. (2019) [19–20], reduced customer satisfaction, distrust, split camps, and gossip (De Angelis, Paula 2008) [21]. The win-lose conflict in groups may have some of the following negative effects: Divert time and energy from the main issues, delay decision, create dead locks, drive unaggressive committee members to the side-lines, interfere with listening, Obstruct exploration of more alternatives, reduce or destroy sensitivity, cause members to drop out or resign from committees, Arouse anger that disrupts a meeting, provoke personal abuse, cause defensiveness. It causes strains such anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, and low levels of job. Equally, interdependence recognizes that differences will exist and that they can be helpful, so members learn to accept ideas from dissenters (which does not imply agreeing with them).

An environment organization is one which is part of the conservation<sup>1</sup> or environmental movements<sup>2</sup> that seeks to protect, analyze or monitor the environment against misuse or degradation from human forces. In this sense, the environment may refer to the biophysical environment or the natural environment (Wikipedia the free encyclopedia List of environmental Organization) [22]. The organization may be a charity, a trust, a non-governmental organization, a governmental organization or an intergovernmental organization. Environmental organizations can be global, national, regional, or local. Some environmental issues that environmental

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<sup>1</sup> seeks to protect natural resources, including animal and plant species as well as their habitat for the future

<sup>2</sup> Also known as the ecology movement, it includes conservation and green politics, and is a diverse philosophical, social, and political movement for addressing environmental issues. The movement is centered on ecology, health, and human rights.

organizations focus on include pollution, plastic pollution, waste, resource depletion, human overpopulation and climate change.

Agriculture places a serious burden on the environment in the process of providing humanity with food and fibers. It is the largest consumer of water and the main source of nitrate pollution of groundwater and surface water, as well as the principal source of ammonia pollution. It is a major contributor to the phosphate pollution of waterways OECD (2020) [23] and to the release of the powerful greenhouse gases (GHGs) methane and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere (IPCC.. Climate change 2001) [24]. Increasingly, however, it is recognized that agriculture and forestry can also have positive externalities such as the provision of environmental services and amenities, for example through water storage and purification, carbon sequestration and the maintenance of rural landscapes (Murgai, R., Ali, M. and Byerlee, D. 2001) [25].

In the Far North Region of Cameroon, there are seven organizations, that deals with issues related to the environment and agriculture: GIZ, PNDP, HYSACAM, ACEFA, SOLKAMTECH, COPPRESSA, SAHEL AGRO. We noticed that most environmental organizations intervene as much as possible to ameliorate the precarious environmental problems of the region while those dealing with agriculture are mostly transformative: transforming raw materials into finished goods.

We examine the causes of conflict in the above agricultural and environmental organization in the Far North Region of Cameroon whose population suffers the most from poverty and huge environmental challenges and which has the highest concentration of environmental organizations. Therefore our objective is to find out the causes of conflicts in environmental and agricultural organizations in the Far North region of Cameroon.

## **2. Theories of organization conflicts**

Functionalists state that a conflict serves a social function and they ask the following questions: “Why is there conflict? What purpose does it serve?” George Simmel views conflict as designed to resolve divergent dualisms; as a way of achieving some kind of unity, even if it will be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties”. Conflict serves as a social purpose even if reconciliation comes with the total destruction of one party. Conflict socializes members into a group and reduces the tension between group members. Furthermore, a conflict may end with a victory of one party over another or it can be resolved through compromise; or through conciliation.

Functionalists define conflict as “the clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be.” Conflict serves the function of pushing society to new institutions, technology and economic systems. It is a “situation which generates incorruptible goals or values among different parties”.

Functional, constructive forms of conflict is the conflict that supports the goals of a group and improves its performance (Robbins, S., et al., 2003) [26]. Conflict leads to competition among groups and they work harder to produce more, it is advantageous to the group and the institution. It is viewed as a confrontation between two ideas, goals and parties that improves employees and organizational performance. One of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. It also inspires new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals (Robbins, S., et al., 2003).

Conflict is “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards and interference from the other

party in achieving their goals” Floger, J. P (1993) [27]. This approach introduces two important concepts: Interdependence and perception. Interdependence is connected to such situations where one party’s future actions depend on another party’s actions. The differences are created by conflict, for example, values, goals, motives, resources and ideas. In the business world, differences in such characteristics as work experience, personality, peer group, environment and situation, all lead to difference in personal attitudes, beliefs, values or needs”.

### **3. Methodology**

We first of identified all the environmental and agricultural organizations in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Then we prepared a semi-structured interview guard which consisted mainly of questions that helped us to know the causes of conflict in the various organizations. We obtained a research permit from the director of the Higher Institute of Polytechnique Maroua in which the department of Environmental Studies is found. We then selected fifteen students Master students and trained them on how to conduct the interview and sent them to the field. They dropped the research permit at the head-office of each company and they were granted permission to conduct the interview with key-workers. They purposely selected experienced workers, that is, those who have been working in the companies for long and who had an in-depth knowledge of the functioning of the companies. They met them at convenient areas where the interview was conducted: some in their offices during break time or when their colleagues had gone out for break and others in the quarters and some in a quiet environment in the companies. Follow-up information were given in a created Whatsapp group. The experienced workers shared their views on the organizational culture and sources of conflict.

### **4. The results**

#### **4.1 Areas of expertise of the environmental and agricultural enterprises**

The environmental and agricultural organizations in the Far North Region of Cameroon are either cooperation (GIZ), private structures (SOLKAMTECH, COPPRESSA, SAHEL AGRO) or parastatal structures (HYSACAM, PNDP, ACEFA). They have very diverse fields of activity: sanitation and waste management, reforestation, the fight against climate change, environmental protection, and the processing of agricultural products.

These organizations have varied domains of expertise: the PNDP operates on small scale micro-projects. It carries out: reforestation, waste management, small-scale disaster management, sanitation and pollution reduction. In the domain of reforestation, it fights against the advancement of the desert and it works in collaboration with the GIZ cooperation. In disaster management, it reconstructs schools that have been destroyed by floods. In the area of sanitation, it builds latrines for needy populations. In the area of biodiversity, it builds artificial ponds for animals and shelter.

SOLKAMTECH<sup>3</sup> SARL was founded in 2010 by a renewable energy and the environment engineer and its activities extend to other regions of Cameroon: the East, Adamawa, North regions where it has already implemented numerous projects. It aims at providing renewable energy as a solution to people who do not

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<sup>3</sup> Solar Kamerun Technology

have access to electricity and those who cannot afford to pay huge electricity bills as well as those who have unstable electricity supply. This company is multifunctional because it is also involved in the business sectors: buildings and doing other public works, providing solar photovoltaic, thermal as well as wind and biomass.

Sahel Agro, also called Sahel Agro Wilfec Holdings was created in 2013 and it launched production in January 2015. It aims at improving the overall food conditions of the Sahelian zones and to set up a new method of consuming industrial product. It's main activity (area of expertise) is Agribusiness. It works in the processing and marketing of high quality corn flour and provides customers with product ranges of 500 g, 1 kg, 5 kg, 10 kg, 25 kg and 50 kg which are available anytime and anywhere.

The ACEFA<sup>4</sup> program was created in 2013 in Diamaré and it contributes to the sustainable improvement of producers' incomes in order to reduce poverty in rural areas and also helps to improve Family Farms and Producers' Organizations (POs).

GIZ has been working in Cameroon since the early 1960s. Its regional office is in Yaoundé where the company's activities are coordinated. The main sponsor of GIZ is the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development. It operates in 12 different programs but we are interested in its PROFE<sup>5</sup>. This program operates in four regions of Cameroon: the Center, the East, the North and the Far North. In the far north region, it is aim at restoring landscape, responsible for wood and energy (improved stoves) and the management of non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

GIZ is a cooperation while SOLKAMTECH, COPPRESSA, SAHEL AGRO are private structures and HYSACAM, PNDP, ACEFA are .parastatal structures.

#### *4.1.1 Sources of conflicts in environmental and agricultural organization*

The conflicts in environmental and agricultural organizations in the Far North Region of Cameroon are: relational conflict of authority, generational conflict, discrimination, economic and work task conflicts. However, not all these conflicts are necessarily negative because for executives, the absence of conflict can even be a problem since it can mean the lack of collaborators or their inability to work with other workers to produce the best of them.

#### *4.1.2 Relational conflict*

Conflicts in organizations are regularly triggered by the differences people have in terms of opinions, interests and needs as they work together. These relations may be between employees or with senior colleagues, there are always misunderstandings between collaborators; that is, collaborators hardly understand each other when sharing opinions with each other. There are romantic relationships which create conflicts in enterprise or when employees are strict with one another especially when doing dirty or difficult work like keeping the environment clean. This exists when one person of the same hierarchical rank encroaches the competent domain of the other which produces conflict of authority and then leads to jealousy

In COPRESSA, there are conflicts between employees and in some cases with senior colleagues. For example in 2019, a colleague decided not to share the

<sup>4</sup> programme d'Amélioration de la Compétitivité des Exploitations Agropastorales (Programme to Ameliorate the competency of Agropastoral Exploitation)

<sup>5</sup> forest, fauna and environment program.

company's vehicle with her colleague. This was because her colleague scolded her at the wrong time and place while they were in the field in front of people who were not members of their company. According to her, the population ought not to have been aware of it. As a result, they did not speak to each other for almost 4 months when they returned to the company until their hierarchy resolved their misunderstanding during a weekly meeting and resolutions were taken to restore peace and calm between them. It significantly affected the functioning of the organization and rendered workers less productive and there was a slowdown in the advancement of projects.

The sources of conflicts at COPRESSA are varied and diverse. When executing projects for example, there are always misunderstandings between collaborators; that is, collaborators hardly understand each other when sharing opinions with each other. Members are primarily focused on completing their tasks for projects to get through, although they hardly share ideas with other members. As a result, stress is generated through the rationalization of work. There is also a dysfunctional hierarchical relationship which does not only smoothly coordinate workers but also fail to communicate with them. As a result workers face personal difficulties and at times, they lack the motivation to work etc. It produces tensions which lead to social conflicts among workers.

There are romantic relationships which create conflicts in enterprises. One of the employees of the SOLKAMTECH was at logger head with his supervisor because they both fell in love with their colleague. In addition, two other employees also loved the same girl and it created bitterness and lack of collaboration between them.

Strictness is also a source of conflict in the sense that it causes tensions between employees, and brings about rivalry. For example in HYSACAM, when filling the dumpsters, workers hardly allow their fellow colleagues to leave even to satisfy their natural needs. Whenever it is done, the response is often a negative one even if the colleague concerned is a senior worker. Most often, the staff representative reports them to the hierarchy which summons them and sanctions them if necessary. The disciplinary council can punish them by either giving them a three-day warning or a permanent dismissal as it has been the case of several employees who were victims for leaving work for one reason or the other.

It also exists when one person of the same hierarchical rank encroaches the competent domain of the other which produces conflict of authority and then leads to jealousy. For example, in 2018, the technical head of the departmental cell was in a conflict of authority with the coordinator of PCP-ACEFA Maroua because he had established a good organizational culture in the establishment and it led to competition or rivalry: it is also present in the ACEFA program because employees are called upon to express their skills in order to produce an unbeatable final results and as a result, they are in constant competition with each other. As an illustration, last year's best employee was jealous of his co-workers and it caused huge conflicts which affected their relationship as well as their performance at work. There is an ACEFA employee of the same rank like his colleague who gave order to his fellow colleague and it created a tense atmosphere between them and he warned him to stop ordering him about. This type of conflict produces psychological problems: violence, anxiety, depression, aggression, frustration etc. which equally affects the personality of individuals).

Conflict also negatively affects the psychological well-being of employees. If it is severe, conflicting thoughts, ideas and beliefs can lead to resentment, tension and anxiety. It can also destroy collaboration and team spirit in the structure and structure will render the company less productive.

#### *4.1.3 Religious conflict*

Maroua is a Muslim dominated community and the Muslim do not joke with prayer and especially the hours they have to pray. Most often they close their businesses and stop their other activities in order to pray. However, some companies in the Far North Region where the Muslim do not hold dominant positions do not respect their prayer hours but the work tasks they have to complete thereby affecting the religiosity of its Muslims workers. At ACEFA for example, when it is prayer time for its Muslim employees, the coordinator will ask them to complete their work task before going for prayer. Therefore the Muslim employees are dissatisfied with this attitude and it generates conflicts. It must be noted that the Muslims consider their prayer time seriously and they ensure to pray at affixed times of the day therefore, this generates a lot of conflicts between the Muslim workers and the company.

#### *4.1.4 Generational conflict*

Generational conflict is characterized by the confrontation between an older generation of workers who have some experience and young graduates who would like to implement new practices. Young graduates have more theoretical knowledge as compared to older workers who are less-educated or who are not graduates. When the young graduates try to put theories into practice or try to innovate the manufacturing process, they face opposition from the older generation. Young workers apply theory or try to maintain the standard in the laboratory to the letter to process products and respect the smallest details in the production process in order to avoid any possible risk. On the other hand, the older workers with practical experience are often careless and often do trial and error tests which often produce poor results.

A clear example is at Sahel Agro, during the grinding process of grains, young graduate will let the corn grains to naturally dry while older workers will put the grains in the oven (over 180 °C) in order for it to get dry faster which of course destroys the properties of the grains and render the flour produced less rich and of reduced quality. The older and experienced workers argue with the young graduates when they explain it to them and it leads to conflict between the two generations of workers. It was a serious problem between the two groups until an expert engineer in transformation intervened to clearly explain the young graduates' approach in transforming corn into flour to the older employees.

This confrontation between older people who have some experience and young graduates who would like to set up new practices is also visible at PCP-ACEFA and the most affected are the older generation because young people who have just graduated from the training schools have more improved knowledge of organizational culture, in other words an update of the corporate organizational culture.

This clash of opinion or ideology or technology that arose between the workers generally affected their morality and religion. Misunderstanding from a false interpretation of facts or actions affect the company and workers in various way: violence, anxiety, depression, aggression, frustration and the personality of individuals is hurt. It affects the organization work tasks, the psychology of the workers, the technological progress of production and retards the economic activities of the company and makes interdependence of tasks or heavy work methods difficult.

#### *4.1.5 Ethnic discrimination*

Workers are not promoted basing on merit but on their ethnic relation to one another. Position intended for one worker is most often given to a completely



different person. This leads to a kind of jealousy, lack of respect, denigration between employees hence widening the conflict between them in the company. At SOLKAMTECH excellence premium and other bonuses are given to employees basing on their relationship with the hierarchy and not necessarily on merit. Some workers work more and receive fewer bonuses while those who work less receive more bonuses. Tribalism is due to the fact that Bamilekes are the most favored in the structure and are the only ones who occupy the major positions in the company and this creates tension and disagreement between the employees.

#### *4.1.6 Economic cause*

The scarcity of resources (spaces, equipment, training, etc.) creates conflict in environmental and agricultural enterprises. Conflicts are present due to the non-distribution of part of the substantial profits that ACEFA makes to its staff. Employees complain that the bonuses that suppliers pay do not reach employees not even half and there is also the problem of too low salary at especially the private companies.

The delay in payment of wages at HYSACAM forces the employees to borrow money from their colleagues or they borrowed cooked-food from the women who carries out restaurants business around the organization. When salary is retarded for long, they find it difficult to pay back the food vendors and even their colleagues and it creates conflict between them, their colleagues and the food vendors. The debt conflict tarnishes the image of the company in the outside world and the personnel do not command the respect of the surrounding population and it tarnishes their dignity.

#### *4.1.7 Conflict of work tasks*

In the Far north Region of Cameroon, environmental organizations such ACEFA suffer from frequent poor distribution of work tasks. Our respondents (the employees) of ACEFA confirmed that workers of the same rank in the organization have unequal distribution of tasks while some workers have more tasks, others have less. Work is mostly informal, unplanned and therefore unpredictable. There are cases where some employees leave work much earlier than others. That is to say, they work overtime while others do not. However, some aspects of the work tasks of employees are well organized in this organization, the respect of the arrival and departure time are well managed. Interdependence of tasks (This is when the work of one person depends on the work of another). There is poor adequacy between the objectives set and the means made available, low investment in production tools (hardware, software, etc.), cumbersome, unclear working methods and procedures.

Conflicts have a negative impact on ACEFA Maroua it diverts certain efforts from bearing fruits and the achievement of set-down goals become difficult. At a time when efforts should be made to converge the resources of ACEFA Maroua towards the goals set, a conflict can arise that wastes the structure's resources and it leads to wasted time and money that have been invested in the project. Conflicts equally have a positive impact on the performance of the structure too because the birth and/or resolution of a conflict often makes it possible to find a constructive solution to a problem help members to improve or get better at the tasks. It also improves interpersonal relationships and increases team cohesion and performance.

#### *4.1.8 Organizational type and conflict resolution*

In Maroua, organizational conflict depends on the type of organization whether it is a co-operation, private or Organizational conflict is as a result of lack of team

work and organization of work. Where there is teamwork in organizations, there will hardly be conflict. In PNDP which is a cooperation where employees are better paid, there is hardly conflict in its structure because there is solid teamwork and they work in harmony and all its departments are linked.

GIZ socializes its new recruits to respect its code of ethics and integrity which helps them to learn and understand how cooperation works. Communication is simple, fluid, without fear but the employee and the hierarchy must respect each other. The languages spoken are: French, English and the local language to facilitate the integration of new employees. The hierarchy supports employees facing a difficult task to enable them better advance in their tasks and for them to quickly integrate in the cooperation. At the GIZ cooperation, the concept of conflict is not a topical issue because it has a small and efficient staff with an exemplary behavior. The absence of conflict promotes an excellent working environment which always produces satisfactory result at the end of most projects.

At SOLKAMTECH the various conflicts are discreetly managed by the hierarchy without the intervention of other members which the conflict does not concerned. They always try to find a common ground for the conflicting party, at times the management board also takes particular cases to the court. The management does everything to prevent conflict from affecting the production and the returns of the company, and ensures that every worker gives the best of himself. However, personal problems are not managed by the company. They also manage conflict through negotiation which helps to reconcile opposing points of view, Mediation versus arbitration, in which case the mediator facilitates discussion, guides conservation or provokes it. At times too, the hierarchy may decide in an authoritarian manner (with or without the party concerned). This type of conflict resolution is necessary in emergency situations.

Equally through an amicable way, the hierarchy explains to the young people that despite their knowledge, it would be better to recognize the place of the elders and explain to them new ways of doing things in a humble and gentle way. In this case, the parties become involved in the resolution of the problem and the conflict is solved peacefully.

The circulation of information within the SOLKAMTECH company is provided by the company using an internal communication network, that is, an internal Internet, telephone and also through posting within the company. This is how the respondents are often informed about the organizational changes, set out objectives as well as the internal regulations, and any new development concerning work. Circulation of information at SOLKAMTECH between its employees is very important because it plays a role in letting everyone know the work tasks the company engages in. It also integrates interpersonal communication which facilitates the exchange of information between workers.

At COPRESSA Communication is facilitated through exchanges by organizing weekly meetings (every Monday) which allow the coordinator and employees to discuss the important activities of the previous week. This meeting helps staff to set goals for the current week and the coordinator use it to draw the attention of dishonest and misbehaved employees in the course of the week and congratulates all those who distinguished themselves throughout the week. It is a means intended to enable staff to present their suggestions and express their ideas on matters relating to the running of the business. There is also a platform in which employees communicate after working hours on good news concerning them like births and unfortunate events such as death.

The dialog or communication in this structure varies according to the post people occupy: executives communicate using a WhatsApp platform where they exchange on topics concerning the company. Information notes are pasted on

bulletin board for other employees. There is a rally with all company staff every Monday which helps to keep cohesion and allows new employees to learn about the hierarchy.

## 5. Discussion of results

This research shows that economic reason is responsible for the conflict that affects a good number of environmental and agricultural companies in the Far North region of Cameroon. This is because in many work situations, workers have to share common resources; therefore, the scarcer the resources in an organization, the greater the chance for a conflict situation. Resource scarcity leads to a conflict because each person that needs the same resources necessarily undermines others who pursue their own goals. Limited resources may include money, supplies, people or information Mcshane, S. L and Glinow, M. A. (2008). [15] but in this case, it is money. Equally, concerning the environmental companies in Maroua those in the private sector particularly suffer from this scarcity the more. This is due to conflict of interest in which there is a disorientation between the personal goals of the individual and the goals of the organization. As *Daniel K.; Robert L. (1966)* [17] puts it, this conflict of interest arises when the individual fights for his personal goals which hinders the overall success of the project.

This scarcity of resources creates conflict between the hierarchy as well as the workers and the surrounding environment as it is the case in HYSACAM. More so, the benefits of the organization are not equally shared; most often, the hierarchy takes everything giving little or nothing to the employees as it is the case in ACEFA. This shows that, the major prime factor of internal sources of conflict is the “opposing interests” of industrial actors. Differing interests bring about conflict because the two parties in organizations try to share the “industrial cake”. Therefore, members of a company competes with each other over scarcity of resources like time, money, materials etc. leading to conflict between them.

Equally, the research also shows a generational gap between the older generation who is less-educated with a long experience in the company and a younger and educated generation who are more qualitative in the production process than the older generation thereby producing a generational conflict between them which is later resolved most often in favor of the younger generation. This shows that, conflict serves a social purpose even if reconciliation comes with the total destruction of one party. Conflict socializes members into a group and reduces the tension between group members. Conflict may end with a victory of one party over another or it can be resolved through compromise; or through conciliation. One of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. It also inspires new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals (Klnicki, A. and Kreithner, R., 2008) [28]. The generational conflict at Sahel Agro was resolved through an expert engineer of raw material transformation giving reason to the younger generation to the detriment of the older generation.

The win-lose conflict in groups may have some of the following negative effects: Divert time and energy from the main issues, delay decision, create dead locks, drive unaggressive committee members to the sidelines and interfere with listening. The older and experienced workers argue with the young graduates when they explain it to them and it led to conflict between them. It was a serious problem between the two parties until an expert engineer in transformation intervened to clearly explain the young graduates’ approach in transforming corn into flour to the older employees. This confrontation between older people who have some experience and young graduates who would like to set up new practices is also visible at

PCP-ACEFA and the most affected are the older generation because young people who have just graduated from the training schools have more improved knowledge of organizational culture, in other words an update of corporate organizational culture. This affects the older generation and they either drop out or resign from committees, their anger is aroused that disrupts a meeting, provoke personal abuse and cause defensiveness. It causes strains such as anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, and low levels of job performance (Richard A 1976) [14].

At the workplace, there is conflict whenever, two or more persons interact, especially when opinions with respect to any task or decision are in contradiction (Business Jargon: -) [6]. Our research clearly shows this when people or workers have it difficult to cooperate because of the attitude of one another either through an impolite usage of language or disrespect for a colleague in front of the population as it was the case at COPRESSA.

## **6. Conclusions**

In this chapter, we have examined the causes of conflict in the agricultural and environmental organizations in the Far North Region of Cameroon whose population suffers the most from poverty and huge environmental challenges and which has the highest concentration of environmental organizations. We discovered that:

There are disputes over how revenues should be divided, how the work should be done, and how long and hard people should work. There are jurisdictional disagreements among individuals, departments and between unions and management. These subtler forms of conflicts involve rivalries, jealousies, personality clashes, role definitions, and struggle for power and favor. There is also conflict within individuals- between competing needs and demands – to which individuals respond in different ways.

We discovered also that conflicts in organizations are regularly triggered by the differences people have in terms of opinions, interests and needs as they work together. These relations may be between employees or with senior colleagues, there are always misunderstandings between collaborators; that is, collaborators hardly understand each other when sharing opinions with each other. There are equally romantic relationships which create conflicts in organizations when two or more male employees fall in love with the same female employees it creates conflict. It also occurs when employees are strict with one another especially when doing dirty or difficult work tasks like cleaning the environment. Equally when one person of the same hierarchical rank encroaches the competent domain of the other, it produces conflict of authority and then leads to jealousy. It also comes about when the religious values of each other is not respected especially that of the Muslims where a majority of the workers are non- Muslims, it provokes conflict because the prayers hours of the Muslims are hardly respected.

There is also generational conflict which is characterized by the confrontation between those who have some experience and young graduates who would like to implement new practices. Young graduates have more theoretical knowledge as compared to older workers who are less-educated or who are not graduates. When the young graduates try to put theories into practice or try to innovate the manufacturing process, they face opposition from the older generation.

One of the causes of conflict in environmental and agricultural organizations is discrimination: workers are not promoted basing on merit but on their ethnic relation to one another. Position intended for one worker is most often given to a completely different person. This leads to a kind of jealousy, lack of respect, denigration between employees hence widening the conflict between them in the company.

Another source of conflict is economic which refers to the scarcity of resources in environmental and agricultural enterprises. Conflicts are present due to the non-distribution of part of the substantial profits that ACEFA makes to its staff. Employees complain that the bonuses that suppliers pay do not reach employees not even half and there is also the problem of too low salary at mostly private organization unlike cooperation like GIZ.

Finally, the poor distribution of work tasks is another source of conflict in these companies. Our respondents (the employees) of ACEFA confirmed that workers of the same rank in the organization have unequal distribution of tasks while some workers have more tasks, others have less. Work is mostly informal, unplanned and therefore unpredictable. There are cases where some employees leave work much earlier than others. That is to say, some employees work overtime while others do not.

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## **Author details**


Nanche Billa Robert

Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Sciences for Development,  
Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, University of Maroua, Cameroon

\*Address all correspondence to: [nanchefile@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nanchefile@yahoo.co.uk)

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Section 3

# Conflict and Communication

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# Rhetoric Communication to Handle Interpersonal Conflicts at Workplaces

*Mitashree Tripathy*

## Abstract

Organisations are large platforms amalgamating people from diverse backgrounds, mindsets, experiences, opinions and beliefs. It is likely that at times there may be a clash in personalities leading to conflicts. While conflicts resolved create productive workplaces, on the contrary unresolved conflicts generate dissatisfaction and discontent among the people further leading to inefficiency among the employees directly hampering the organisation as a whole. Communication is understood as the most indispensable factors that moulds and reflects in our everyday relationships. Because of its dynamism and complexity, communication forms the essence of interpersonal relationships in organisational contexts. Understanding the vitality of communication, the concept this paper explores is how rhetoric communication, an Aristotelian principle may help resolving interpersonal conflicts, creating a win-win situation and further extending healthy interpersonal relationships at workplaces.

**Keywords:** communication, rhetoric, organizational, conflict, philosophy, management

## 1. Introduction

The concept of communication plays a major role in building interpersonal connections. The concept, the scope and the essentials of communication is dynamic and at the same time complex. Dynamic, because it involves and depends on the perception that feeds human interaction and that evolves over time and complex because it includes several steps before finally receiving a feedback from a receiver. Interestingly, its complexity does not merely gets restricted to individuals, rather expands to groups, organisations and cultures all around the globe. This dynamism and complexity in communication together form the essence of interpersonal relationships. Studies claim “through communication individuals describe and propose their preferred relationship to objects or others” [1]. Communication helps individuals to question and reply and it is in this fashion that they develop objectives regarding their favoured relationships and the manners for progressing with them. This is how interpersonal relationships sustain or abstain.

Particularly in organisational contexts, communication is more intricate where people spend a significant quantity of their lives. Working with others, sharing interests and activities form a work environment where a great deal of connections

takes place through correspondence. Transactions with superiors, subordinates, managers, peers, customers, clients and other members internally or externally linked at workplaces frame the day to day schedules making workplaces all the more collaborative and blended. This system is indispensable and inevitable as employees at workplaces need to understand what their organisations demand and how are they proceeding to meet the demands. While organisations demands may vary however, it is expected that the interpersonal relations at the workplaces remain constant, although may get stronger but should not feeble. This is because “achieving goals is possible only when employees form a strong bond between each other at workplaces” [2]. Stronger bonds create excellent interpersonal relationships thereby converting workplaces as a potential source of satisfaction and contentment. However, on the contrary, “relationships at work can be source of great distress and dissatisfaction when conflicts do occur” [3]. This is because while people spend a considerable proportion of time at workplace, they somehow tend to underrate this time and neglect the “the effect that their behaviour has on the way others behave and therefore on the achievement of personal and organisational goals” [4]. Communication becomes dysfunctional during conflicts. Ultimately, these intricacies may interfere in the business performances and smooth running of the organisation. Interestingly, it is communication again that resolves conflicts.

## **2. Literature review**

Communication is an activity of relaying information from one source to another. Communication helps to create the world we live in. The way we interact, make relationships both personally and professionally, understand, develop, manage, lead, experience is all dependent on communication. In fact it is communication that offers strength and vitality to our existence. The concept of communication is very vast and means different to different people. For example, communication scholars will understand communication as a theory. Similarly, people from the business world understand communication as crucial information to be executed. In personal relationships communication would mean to share opinion, emotions and beliefs. For a vendor, communication may mean to present or persuade someone to buy their products. In short, communication is any such activity that includes exchange of views, information, messages, and opinions between two parties that are expected to promote a healthy relationship. However, there is no fixed definition of communication. Literature is replete with several definitions like “communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another” [5]. Further studies claim “communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and make himself or herself understood” [6]. Still more definitions claim “communication is a process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding response results” [7]. Although, there can be indistinct definitions based on various studies on the theory and definitions of communication, it seems reasonable to summarize and assert that communication is an activity that is commenced by a source and gets executed to another to provide some meaning with a purpose to build a bridge between the two.

While communication is inevitable and its value can never be disparaged, its expertise in organisational contexts holds of greater significance. The reason is the purpose of the organisations is focussed for long-term goals that are executed meticulously through equally efficient structures. The implementation of communication in such strategies certifies the result of the efforts given. One study claims “communication is perceived as a magical elixir, one that can ensure a happy

long term relationship and can guarantee organisational success". But at times, there arise discrepancies or misinterpretation of communication when people work for common goals that result in conflicts. Authors mention "a disagreement often begins when two people or parties have different interest and work against each other in pursuit of their own objectives" [8]. This can also be between subordinate and superior or between co-workers where superiors may coerce forced strategies using their power and co-workers may even become ugly so much that at times they "become destructive, leading to anger, burnout and stress directly affecting mental, physical and emotional wellbeing" [9].

Studies mention that "conflict management refers to the systematic prevention of unproductive conflict and proactively addressing those conflicts that cannot be prevented" [10].

Conflicts can take place at various levels in an organisation. For example, there can be conflicts between departments, teams and individuals as internal communication structure is concerned and between customers, clients and third parties when external communication is concerned. Interpersonal conflicts although inevitable can be hazardous. Its seriousness emerges when the consequences of conflicts are taken lightly and easy and for granted in similar ways just like conflicts are taken. Hence, a constructive conflict handling system in organisation is a must. Many studies argue that both conflict resolution and conflict management are same and that if an organisation lacks conflict this symbolizes that the conflict has already been solved but, for a temporary moment. However, "if the removal of the symptoms of conflict does not remove the causes of conflict, then the solution reached is an illusory one" [11]. Thus, it may be fruitful if a conflict is managed rather than simply solved for better results.

Blake and Mouton (1964) were first to develop a scheme for managing "interpersonal conflicts into five types like forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising and problem solving" [12]. Further these five modes were reinterpreted by Thomas (1976) where "he considered the intentions of a party through cooperativeness and assertiveness in classifying the modes of handling conflict into five types" [13]. Cooperativeness is an act that originates from within an individual in need to suit and agree to other's concerns while assertiveness to satisfy one's own concerns through respect for other people.

Many studies have also attempted to find if there could be an intervention of emotional intelligence in conflicts management. Or more possibly does there sustain any relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management. Results indicated that "individuals' conflict management preferences predicted actual conflict management behaviours and EI was found to moderate this relationship" [14]. More recent studies on emotional intelligence depict it is always advisable to know a person in person in order to anticipate challenges and avoid objectionable surprises. In such aspects emotional intelligence plays a major role as "knowing the confronter, one will need to understand and work through one's own feelings about the subject matter of the confrontation as well as one's feelings about those who hold opposing views" [15]. Comprehending how one feels and counters when confronted is a key element in emotional intelligence.

In the above studies one common link and a key factor in all findings is communication. Most of the times and most during conflict management if the sender before giving any message to the receiver gives a thought to the intended message and attempt to stimulate the receiver in a way that is intended to achieve a specific result, probably then not only the conflict is managed but also it would have long term effects in organisational growth as well. Such communication is known as rhetoric communication, a strong principle prescribed by Aristotle. This paper attempts to explore the relevance of rhetoric communication in interpersonal

conflict management in the organisation. This paper declares rhetorical communication is not simply a prudent approach to solve interpersonal conflicts but it's an instant win-win over an audience. The upcoming section will study interpersonal conflicts in organisational contexts in details and rhetorical communication as an intervention in the same.

### **3. Organisational conflicts**

Conflict is as inevitable as breathing. It is a natural process. It takes place during when two or more individuals, groups, organisations or even nations interact with each other while attaining their objectives. Often during the process there might arise unavoidable inconsistencies or incompatibilities “when two or more of them desire a similar resource that is in short supply when they have partially exclusive behavioural preferences regarding their joint action; or when they have different attitudes values, beliefs, and skills” [16]. This suggests that during conflicts one of the parties have a differing perception of beliefs, opinions, interests, and aspirations from that of another thus causing an incongruity between the two. Although the concept of the conflict is not a novel one and has influenced out thinking process since quite a long time, its dealing and acceptance has been largely under-rated. Efficient dealing with conflict is highly indispensable if it is realized that the changes associated with it will have immense benefits.

The success of every organisation either large or small largely depends on the profit it makes. Many business organisations mostly centre on daily functions and operations and extend strategies and standards to proceed in order to achieve the desired results. However, these objectives and plans disappear when there occur conflicts between one or more parties that impact everyone associated with the organisation so much that at times, when conflicts are unchecked they can bring down an organisation's moral and image in the market. Hence organisational conflict can be described as “a phenomenon that depicts disagreement within or among individuals or group working together in an organisation over means or ends; or in an attempt to establish their views in preference to others” [17]. And when the conflict takes place between two or more individual, it is termed as interpersonal conflict. It's true that sometimes perception of interference from others can act as a reason of conflict; however, perceptions are not always true. Studies reveal that organisational conflict commonly originates because of “power, relationships, substantive and task issues, emotion, information, structure, values, and styles” [18]. Power struggles, perceptual differences in relationships due to roles and responsibilities, conflicts arising from tangible items, disagreement on the accuracy of or withholding a data or information, hurt feelings associated with various relationships, are some of the common reasons behind the instigation of organisational conflict. Interestingly, each of the reasons is unique in itself and demand different management application and strategies.

There may be various reasons behind organisational conflicts however, the impact that conflicts create are at times hazardous as sometimes they can be life threatening. Employees may have commitment issues resulting to reduced turn over and complete absenteeism. Put differently, workplaces seem like war spaces as employees continue to be on stress gradually, that impacts their problem-solving, decision making and thinking abilities. Studies indicate that “enduring stress further increases irritability and tendencies to distance oneself from social environment” [19].

Many organisations have already learned how unproductive conflicts can hamper their success and adapted fruitful methods to develop a structural

framework to conflict management there are still many organisations that are struggling to find out suitable ways out. While destructive conflicts act as a barrier in workplace performance and many employees at their workplaces in fact are inclined more towards destructive conflicts sometimes voluntarily or involuntarily, with absolutely no approach towards developing constructive manners to resolve the issues between them, organisational theorists and researchers are still struggling to probe deep into what can be the only, if not, probably be more appropriate solution to manage conflicts apart from what the literature provides. The following section will explore if rhetoric communication as an Aristotelian principle be considered as a constructive and practical approach to handle interpersonal conflict. The following section studies in details about the same.

#### **4. Rhetoric communication**

The word rhetoric means “the art of persuasion” [20]. As an art rhetoric is of utmost importance to every part of a society. And that’s why perhaps, rhetoric as a subject has been written in every age and realm wherever and whenever the study of arts and sciences have been encouraged. Ancient studies believe that “the power of pleasing and persuading those whom we address has excited every faculty in the mind of man, to detect, if possible the secret springs of that pleasure and persuasion, which give us such dominion over the feelings of our fellow creatures” [21]. It in fact speaks about the production of belief that one creates in the mind of an individual while persuading in considerations with fact and its possibility that also provide pleasure.

Good contributions to the rhetoric emerged with the intervention of Aristotle views and his contributions in the subject where he explored the unexplored realm of the art. In fact it was his treatise on the art of rhetoric that acts a structural and a systematic treatment of the subject so much that it remains as the quickest and the most direct form of any works related to any subject. Aristotle in his book Rhetoric focuses on the use of language in persuasive argument. He detects that if there is an appropriate blend of both practical and aesthetic elements this will lead to an effective presentation. On the same grounds Aristotle writes “proofs that depend on the spoken word fall into three categories that are the speaker’s character or ethos, putting listener in a certain frame of mind through emotion or pathos and through demonstrating or seeming to demonstrate something through argument or logos” [22]. Many studies understand this concept as “the triadic classification of arguments that persuade by virtue of an appeal” [23]. The mode of communication through ethos, pathos and logos is a crucial discovery reflecting a standard classification of a practical discourse contributing to conflict management. The following sections will traverse through all the three modes of communication to unravel the contribution of the same in conflict management.

#### **5. Ethos**

*Ethos* “is a Greek word meaning character that is used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community, nation, or ideology” [24]. And as Aristotle elucidates ethos is related to the character of the sender or the speaker in the process of communication. A character is a key trait that frames the personality of an individual. Aristotle defines character as “what shows a man’s disposition the kind of things he chooses or rejects when his choice is not obvious” [25]. Hence character can be understood as any such act by an individual in terms of goodness

and badness of the morals and values. Studies mention “the core characters are respect, responsibility, honesty, trust, caring fairness, perseverance, self discipline, courage, citizenship and life skills” [26]. And in fact these moral and values build a character of an individual and put a claim on the conscience of an individual to act in a certain manner.

During an interpersonal conflict at least one party or one source lack character or in simpler words when at least one party fails to exhibit morals and values interpersonal conflict happens and sometimes fails to get managed. While managing conflicts it's very essential to understand and evaluate the ethics of the source because ethics inspires credibility and credibility promotes belief. An individual with moral character would always gain trust and belief from others. Hence, the credibility of the individual would provide a quick help in assessing the wrongness or rightness of situations thereby offering solutions to conflict management.

## **6. Pathos**

*Pathos* in Greek is associated with emotional appeal. However, many studies consider that “a better equivalent might be appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination” [27]. This is because through emotional appeal, an audience doesn't merely respond emotionally but also attempts to identify and understand about what the points the speaker intends to convey. This emotional appeal instigates a feeling of pain and misery in the mind of audience creating an impact on the audience. It would not be counterfeit to express that emotions do an important work while negotiating particularly during interpersonal conflicts. Many observational studies reveal that “negotiators rely on emotions to overcome obstacles such as initial mistrust and interpersonal friction” [28].

During interpersonal conflict management, pathos acts as a powerful principle as it connects its sources through emotions. Although the emotional appeal depends on how it is conveyed, however, its impact necessarily overcomes much of suffering. One must have a concrete grip over one's passions. One of the studies refers that “passions matter in real- life deal making and dispute resolution” [29]. One ought to have clarity on the medium of communication and discover what the emotions are conveying in order to adapt to the situation thereby engaging others successfully. This indicates one must be prepared to negotiate or manage conflicts through emotions. Although it is obvious that anxieties and resentments may skulk under the surface, however, once festered the communication can go out of control and may not be acceptable. Hence, emotions have to be used judiciously while conflict management, to arouse empathy and not tense up.

## **7. Logos**

*Logos* in Greek “means reasoning or argument” [30]. It is associated with logical appeal and is used to persuade an audience by the use of rational claim in order to support an argument. Studies suggest that “*logos* refers to the internal consistency of the message, the clarity of the thesis, the logic of its reasons and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence” [31]. The main motive of the use of logical reasoning during an argument is to create an impact on the audience through validation of proof in order to support the argument by substantiating it.

During an interpersonal conflict management, although the speaker is able to provide an apparent proof in order to convince the audience. Most of the time during an interpersonal conflict lack of proof or essential evidence may either give



rise to conflicts or deepen the existing conflict. However, through the valid appeal of logic, the speaker tends to prove his/her point and bring truth to the surface. Evidently, a speaker may be able to provide facts, statistics, figures and analogies as proof in order to showcase his/her views before the audience.

However, the point is focusing only on one mode of communication and rejecting the other two would make the purpose of conflict resolution dilute and the outcome may largely seem vague. For example, if one only focuses on the credibility part, even if the morality of the individual appears right, but if he/she lacks the emotional approach or fails to provide sufficient proofs to keep the views, the speaker may not be able to manage the conflict. Similarly, if one focuses only on the emotional part and disregards the integrity and the logical reasoning appeal of the individual still the conflict won't be managed. Likewise, if the emphasis is given to the scope through logical argument excluding the emotional and the ethical aspect of the communication the conflict may not still be managed. Hence, during an interpersonal conflict management one must be able to blend all the three modes of persuasive communication in order to make it more effective.

Discussing all the three modes of communication in order to handle interpersonal conflicts it must be understood that at the core, the conflicts need to be handled also considering the fact that how during conflicts the needs of the people get affected by the conflicts. Hence, "for a solution to be lasting, it must meet the needs of all those involved in the conflict" [32].

## **8. Conclusion**

The most important element in interpersonal conflict management at workplaces is communication and the usage of persuasive approach in the communication process. Beyond the ethos versus pathos versus logos according to the Aristotelian principle of communication, the key factor that helps in interpersonal conflict management is identifying the aspects of the managing the conflict sensibly. The element of ethical, emotional and logical standards cue must be well picked during interpersonal conflict management so that one knows exactly how to strike the bull's eye. Interpersonal conflicts can be well managed when all the three modes of persuasion are appropriately influencing each mode of communication over the other. Focusing on only one of the modes and implementing only one agenda creates more incoherency and incoherency during the conflict management. Communication without ethics or character can be manipulative. Communication without emotions can lead to coercion and inflexibility and communication without facts, logic, reasoning and argument can be misleading during interpersonal conflicts. After analyzing the derivatives of ethos, pathos and logos, in the paper, we now have the residue of reinforcing a richer appreciation of how all the three modes of persuasion must work in consistency during an interpersonal conflict management. Hence, ethos pathos and logos, can provide a braided thread that is not only strong but also sustainable in interpersonal conflict management.

### **Author details**

Mitashree Tripathy  
Faculty of Management Studies, Sri Sri University, Odisha, India

\*Address all correspondence to: mitashreetripathy84@gmail.com

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# Managing Conflict in Faith-Based Organizations in Zimbabwe

*Norman Chivasa*

## Abstract

One of the basic theories commonly believed in the secular world today is that conflict is inevitable which means that individuals and groups have needs, interests, dislikes, likes, partnerships, values and preferences which are often not compatible. This is also true of faith-based organizations. Using the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe church as a point of reference, this article argues that in Christian circles there is need to deliberately develop a perspective of conflict that reflects conflict as a positive force that generates both co-existence and growth in the church to counter the conventional view in the majority of churches that consider conflict as a destructive force. In the Apostolic Faith Mission church, intra-church disputes have a negative effect on the wellbeing of individuals and groups (the church) as conflict creates rivalry, hostility, divisions, hate, breakaways, among others. This is because a strongly adversarial attitude to conflict of all sorts is reflected in the approach of the church to conflict and in particular, some pastors have responded with legal action against the disciplinary activities of the church. Consequently, this article suggests that faith-based organizations should appreciate the importance of conflict for positive growth and development as a good number of Christians today are still pessimistic about conflict.

**Keywords:** Apostolic Faith Mission church, conflict, faith-based organization, Zimbabwe

## 1. Introduction

The phenomena of conflict, world over, is experienced at different levels and in varying degrees of human interaction. This is so because “Every relationship... no matter how close, how understanding, how compatible there will be times when ideas, actions, needs or goals won't match those of others around” [1]. In a real world such situations do occur and usually there are negative feelings that go along with them. For this reason, in some circles conflict is feared because it is viewed as a social ill that always negates development and a source of all distressed relationships that militates against harmony sustenance. While in other circles it is perceived as a necessary ingredient for human survival which potentially helps individual people to understand each other better whenever it occurs.

Within this framework, the contemporary world now looks at conflict as unavoidable and a beneficial phenomenon that exists wherever people live. This perspective demonstrates a shift from the unschooled and myopic view that regarded conflict as a vice to human survival yet when better managed it provides the opportunity to learn more about other people's needs, values or rights.

As such, instead of working hard to avoid conflict societies must be ready through experience and training to meet and manage conflict constructively. Thus, well-managed conflict can yield up positive relationships.

This Chapter explores conflict management strategies employed by faith-based organizations taking the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) church as a point of reference. The AFM in Zimbabwe church has set procedures to curb conflicts that potentially threaten the life of the church. By coming up with conflict managing strategies, the AFM in Zimbabwe church has acknowledged that conflict in itself is not necessarily a vice, but a challenge, which when carefully handled may benefit the church and society at large. Accordingly, the AFM in Zimbabwe church has also demonstrated a shift in its view of conflict by championing for the non-violent resolution of conflicts following a realization that human diversity does not threaten harmony but enhances meaningful relationships when the parties to a conflict keep engaged to dialogue following disagreements.

## **2. Research approach**

The aim of this article was to assess how conflict involving pastors in the AFM in Zimbabwe church is being managed. To systematically achieve this aim, qualitative research approach was followed through the descriptive, explorative and normative tasks [2]. The descriptive task led the researcher to establish the current state of affairs relating to the nature of conflict and how they are being managed in the faith-based organization under review. The explorative task led the researcher to evaluate structures responsible for handling conflict in the AFM in Zimbabwe church. The normative task led the researcher to recommend strategies ought to be employed by the AFM in Zimbabwe church when addressing conflicts involving pastors.

Sources of data came through document analysis, in particular the church's two primary documents: Constitution and the Policy Document, which represent data for public consumption. Other sources of data include literature on dispute handling procedures of the AFM in Zimbabwe by Chivasa [3] and intra-church or group conflicts from Blackburn and Brubaker [4]; Schrock-Shenk et al. [5] among others. To keep an updated record on conflicts involving pastors in the AFM in Zimbabwe local Zimbabwean newspaper articles from Herald, Sunday Mail, Chronicles, Newsday, and H-Metro among other newspapers were instrumental. The major reason for consulting local newspapers was due to that conflicts involving pastors receive media coverage in local newspapers in Zimbabwe.

## **3. Statement of the problem**

Conflicts in the AFM in Zimbabwe involve everyone from church members, laypersons and high profile leadership such as pastors. In the AFM church pastors are responsible for resolving conflicts, administering church doctrines, enforcing Christian values and constitutional regulations. The issue facing the article is if, for example, the pastor is engaged in misappropriation of church funds, extramarital affairs or some other misdemeanor, the church would not expand both numerically and spiritually. Such circumstances, if anything, generate discontent, break apart the church and blackmail the whole Christian culture.

Such activities religiously and morally stain the church's purity. For the broader community, now that the leaders (pastors) of whom they seek divine support are

involved in such vices, people who may wish to convert to Christianity may be discouraged. The key research question is who will help pastors to resolve their conflicts without causing the church to degenerate into a spiritually paralyzed religious body bearing the mere label of Christianity?

#### **4. The rationale for studying the AFM in Zimbabwe church**

Of the major Pentecostal denominations in Zimbabwe, the AFM in Zimbabwe church boasts the singular honor of having been in existence for more than a century. In 2015, the AFM in Zimbabwe celebrated 100 years of active ministry across Zimbabwe. She claims to have an estimated membership of about 2, 3 million. In 2006, the denomination claimed that its membership was estimated at 2, 5 million [6]. Due to lack of updates on denominational records, membership figures are liable to amplification [7]. However, commanding a large membership following was not the impetus behind the choice of AFM in the present article, but numerical age of the denomination was the major drive. The AFM in Zimbabwe is the oldest Pentecostal of them all in Zimbabwe. As a matter of fact, the numerical age of the AFM in Zimbabwe cannot be overlooked considering that the rise of other popular Pentecostal denominations in Zimbabwe (for example, Johane Masowe) which trace their origins from the AFM in Zimbabwe [8]. Other popular denominations that broke away from AFM in Zimbabwe which have been in existence for more than 50 years or so include Apostolic Faith Mission of Mugodhi which broke away in the 1940s and Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa which broke away between the 1950s and 60s. As if that was not enough, in 2010 the AFM in Zimbabwe gave birth to other popular denominations such as: United Family International Church, Heartfelt International Ministries, Apostolic Flame Ministries [7, 8] and the list is still on-going. Thus, numerical age was an important factor in the selection of the denomination under review, as well as the nature of conflict experienced up to this day.

#### **5. Overview of conflict involving pastors in the AFM in Zimbabwe church**

The AFM in Zimbabwe church is one of the oldest Pentecostal denominations in Zimbabwe, hereinafter referred to as a faith-based organization, tracing its origins as far back as 1915. Ever since its establishment, the AFM in Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesian African Church in 1915, was largely run under the supervision of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa but even then conflicts involving pastors have been an integral part of this church's life.

In 1989, the AFM's self-autonomy in Zimbabwe ushered in a new period in which the church encountered a multitude of head-on conflict situations involving pastors and the majority of cases arising from sexual immorality, violent tendencies, drunkenness, forced transfers, misappropriation of church funds, confiscation of church property, disputes over leadership roles and personality clashes [3]. To exemplify practical instances of conflict among pastors, the researcher identified cases that occurred between 1990 and 2018. The researcher, therefore, made a conscious choice of the period 1990 to 2018, which covered an upsurge of conflict situations resulting from the behavior of AFM in Zimbabwe pastors which resulted in the split of the church under review in 2018. Most of these conflict situations were both glossed over and degenerated into various levels of intractability, which have troubled this faith-based organization for 28 years.

For instance, in 1990, Masvingo Province experienced a conflict situation involving allegations of sexual immorality, leveled against a pastor by the church elders. After investigations by the Provincial Committee the matter was discussed in the Provincial Council meeting and a resolution was passed to suspend the pastor indefinitely. Another example of conflict situation of similar nature, an extra-marital affair, was also witnessed in 1994. The case was unearthed following reports by the church elders to the Provincial Overseer. The Provincial Committee made investigations and a resolution to place the pastor under censure for one-year pending reinstatements was passed.

In 1995, two cases were unearthed. The first involved a Provincial Overseer, who faced allegations of promiscuity. Following investigations a resolution was passed by the Apostolic Council to depose him from serving as Overseer with subsequent indefinite period of censure. The second case involved allegations of extra-marital affair, which the probing committee found no substantial evidence.

Also, in 1996, four gruesome conflict situations haunted and shook the church in the same year. A surge of tension occurred within one congregation following allegations of extra-marital affair leveled against a pastor. A report was forwarded to the Provincial Committee and the pastor denied the allegations. Following this, a resolution was made by the Provincial Committee to transfer the pastor to another congregation and the case came to a standstill.

During that same period three more cases heralded. The first one involved allegations of confiscating church property by a pastor and before investigations were made, it appears the pastor unceremoniously left for another province and the case was left insoluble. The second case involved allegations of polygamy. Following reports to the Provincial Overseer, the Provincial Committee made investigations and the matter was deliberated at a Provincial Council meeting and a resolution to suspend the pastor indefinitely was agreed upon. The third mishap involved a wrangle over the control of an assembly between a deputy Overseer and a junior pastor. Tension occurred following a decision by the Provincial Committee to place the deputy Overseer at the congregation which was already under a junior pastor. As pressure from the Provincial Committee was mounted on the junior pastor to create space for the deputy Overseer, the matter was left insoluble following the junior pastor's decision to unceremoniously leave the church to join another denomination.

In 1997, a resident pastor was alleged of attempted rape. The Provincial Committee made investigations following the pastor's arrest amidst allegations by family members of the victim. Subsequently, the matter was brought to court which some Provincial Committee delegates did attend and the pastor pleaded not guilty. And findings from the court proceedings were presented to the Provincial Council by the Provincial Committee delegates. The Provincial Council resolved that the pastor was to be suspended pending placement under censure by the Apostolic Council.

Apart from that, 1999 saw the province under review recording another conflict situation which spilled over to 2005 resulting in factions in the same church. Tension occurred following allegations of embezzling church finances being leveled against a Provincial Overseer by some members of the Provincial Committee. The case subsequently translated into violence between 2001 and 2003 and police had to be called in to restore order at the church premises where the alleged Overseer was stationed. The Provincial Committee and the Provincial Council discussed over the matter and recommendations were made to the Apostolic Council, which did not resolve the matter promptly. The Daily News newspaper of Tuesday 28, January 2003, confirms that police arrested the alleged Provincial Overseer on allegations of misappropriating church funds, common assault and malicious injury to property. According to the newspaper, the arrest followed disturbances in which the



Provincial Overseer was alleged to have teamed up with other members and turned the church premises into a boxing ring. After a week, the newspaper of February 4, 2003 reported that the alleged Provincial Overseer appeared in court for a similar case in which he was charged with embezzlement of church funds but was not asked to plead against the charges. According to the newspaper report, the pastor had loaned church funds to a church member who returned it within a week and instead of depositing the money into the church's bank account the pastor allegedly converted it into his own use [8].

Furthermore, after the alleged pastor's acquittal the Apostolic Council cleared the charges and the pastor's suspension was lifted pending expiry in April 2003, a resolution contested against by the Masvingo Provincial Council, which demanded ostracization of the alleged pastor from pastoral duties. Accordingly, the Provincial Committee refused to abide by the decision of the Apostolic Council and this resulted in the alleged pastor's congregation splitting into two camps. And the two factions waged bitter war to gain control over the affairs of the congregation in which some youths resorted to physical force to ensure their favored pastor retains control. As the story goes, about four youths were arrested in connection with fighting, demolition of church property, the use of force to take over the church premises and driving the church vehicle with flattened tyres [8]. According to the newspaper report, despite the alleged pastor's acquittal by the Masvingo Magistrate who declared that "There was no evidence for the clergyman to warrant prosecution" [8], tension was still raging between Apostolic Council and Provincial Council over the status of the alleged pastor in the church until 2007.

As if that is not enough, to give an update information on some of the conflicts involving pastors that received wide media coverage. The following newspaper titles demonstrate the size of the problem;

1. Just who is Emmanuel Makandiwa? Herald, 11 February 2011.
2. AFM should go back to the drawing board, Newsday, 21 April 2012.
3. AFM Church members in demo against overseer, H-Metro, 18 January 2013.
4. AFM Church Overseer accused of being used by the devil, H-Metro, 16 January 2013.
5. AFM Church pastors bribe overseers to be transferred to 'profitable' assemblies, H-Metro, 15 January 2013.
6. Nemukuyu B, Lawsuits lead to AFM Pastor's suspension, Herald, 13 August 2013.
7. Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe and other vs. Murefu.
8. Nemukuyu B, AFM top brass sued over 'looting spree', Herald, 31 December 2015.
9. Zimbabwe riot police beat up Waterfalls members in Church.
10. Jachi F, AFM pastor fined for ungodly behavior, Herald, 18 February 2015.
11. Laiton C, AFM Pastor screams at the High Court, Newsday, 28 February 2015.

12. Mbanje P, Fierce leadership row rocks AFM, *Newsday*, 14 April 2015.
13. AM Pastor, congregants clash, *Manica post*, 17 March 2016.
14. Kadirire H, AFM members want defrocked pastor reinstated, *Daily News*, 06 January 2016.
15. Mhlanga B, AFM fires senior pastor, closes Assembly, *The Standard*, 03 January 2016.
16. Chaos As AFM Finally Breaks Up, *Zimeye*, 14 October 2018.

In the first case, for example, the headline was a response following Makandiwa's decision to leave the church unceremoniously against the background of allegations of conflict of interests with the AFM in Zimbabwe church. Case of concern is number six, which records the pastor taking a complaint after misunderstandings against the church's decision. His decision resulted in him being indefinitely suspended. Another case of concern is number 15, which documented the ostracization of a pastor arising from misunderstandings between the parties to the dispute. Case number 16, represents a watershed conflict that changed the membership the AFM in Zimbabwe church. According to reports, the 2018 break-up was due to power struggle and other factors between top leadership involving the long-time and out-going church president, former deputy and the general secretary. At the time of writing this article, the once united AFM in Zimbabwe church has two rival church presidents one group has identified itself as the 'Original AFM and its rival identifies itself as 'Reformist AFM' with each camp claiming legitimacy and ownership of church property. These issues are still being decided by the courts of the land. From these cases, one can conclude that the church under review is more inclined toward adversarial position in which case the majority of pastors respond by going through the courts of law as they fight for what they consider as a violation of their rights (we discussed in detail on the principles focused on powers and privileges below). Against this background, this article assess the extent to which the faith-based organization is dealing with conflicts involving pastors with a view to recommend effective strategies. Whether the current strategies produced sustainable outcomes or just alleviated the impact or not resolved at all, are questions to be considered?

## **6. Conceptualizing conflict**

Conflict is part and parcel of human life, and neither is the church spared [9]. As such, if the church wants to make the most of circumstances of conflict, conflict dynamics must be known. Although it is difficult to define conflict because of a variety of meanings in circulation, this article is closely associated with Adler & Towne's concept of conflict, who understand conflict as 'an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive conflicting goals, scarce rewards, and the other party's intervention in achieving their goals' [1]. There are two major points to remember about conflict here. Conflict, in the first place, is an expressed struggle that implies that it is an open confrontation. In that sense, when all the parties concerned become aware of their differences, that is, in one way or the other, conflict may be said to exist; each party involved must realize that there is discord, tension or clash between them.

Second, disputes are made up of interdependent groups. This is so because "Any relationship... no matter how close, how detailed, how compatible there will be times

when feelings, acts, needs or priorities will not match those of those around” [1]. The tension inside an interaction is crystal clear. Thus, as family, colleagues, workmates, church mates or neighbors, the parties experiencing a conflict engage in different spheres of social interaction. Since this article is interested in a church organization’s conflict situations, it is important to remember that faith-based organizations are like family structures. Faith-based organizations are made up of people who affect each other, such as the teacher of the Sunday school, usher, deacon, deaconess, elder, priest, overseer, church president, to name a few. The actions of one participant impacts others as these individuals interact, thereby necessitating conflict, misunderstandings or disagreements. Conflict thus exists during an interaction [4].

There are three levels of social interaction from which conflict frequently arises: interpersonal, intra-community or intercommunity interactions [10, 11]. Conflict at an interpersonal level includes tension between people. Conflicts typically arise from variations in personality, attitudinal issues, communication failure, different expectations, limited resources and incompatible behaviors at this stage. Such factors may also fuel tensions between individuals.

An Intra-community tension includes tension within a community between individuals or groups that can also erupt due to, among other factors, personality differences, attitudes or limited resources. A conflict between a pastor and an over scarce resources is a good example. A common example of an intragroup conflict includes tension between cultures or community members, a clash of ideologies between Christians and Muslims [10].

The majority of researchers believe that conflict is a dynamic phenomenon that can be positive or negative [10, 12, 13]. When contained, handled and resolved, conflict becomes constructive in a way that prevents it from escalating into abuse (harm by intention). In contrast, it is considered destructive and thus harmful when a dispute transforms into hate, resentment, hatred, animosity and hostility between the parties [13]. Conflict only becomes negative if conflicts or misunderstandings are not adequately resolved, then conflict will turn into a crisis that will probably have a negative impact on human life [14]. The possible negativity or positivity of conflict is reflected below:

Conflict is not always a mechanism that is negative. Conflict, therefore, is one of the most important positive forces for social change. It tells us that something is wrong; conflict is a growth and development driver. There will be stagnation without conflict [15].

The above sentiments imply that conflict is not inherently a bad experience, but it helps to reveal other people’s goals, priorities and roles, which can in turn foster development and positive social interactions between individuals and groups. This article is more concerned with the management of intra-church conflict.

## **7. An evaluative discussion on models of managing conflict in faith-based organizations**

### **7.1 Frameworks for managing conflict in the AFM in Zimbabwe**

The fact of conflict has contributed enormously to the establishment of an internal conflict management system called the Code of Conduct and Grievance Handling Procedure (CCGHP) in the AFM church in Zimbabwe [16]. Simply put, the AFM recognized that conflict in itself is not inherently a vice, but a challenge, which can improve the church and society at large when carefully handled.

The AFM in the CCGHP was established to act as a “guideline for rules and standards of conduct and procedures within the church to foster unity and discipline”

[17]. It is important to focus on the priorities of their CCGHP in order to assess the grievance management structure within AFM in Zimbabwe. There are institutionalized ways of coping with conflict in groups and societies [10]. The CCGHP is an institutionalized structure for conflict management at the AFM church in Zimbabwe. It includes policies, corrective steps, and actions to be made and recognizes leaders with dispute resolution responsibilities. A reflection of the aims of the CCGHP offers us the aspirations of the church under scrutiny in relation to issues of dispute. The code's goals are:

- To create consistent principles of code of conduct and maintain discipline within the church;
- To allow fulltime church leadership, lay employees and general staff to resolve conflicts among themselves;
- To outline actions that constitute disciplinary action-responsible misconduct;
- To state the disciplinary action that can be taken when the code is not complied with;
- To take corrective action in the event of inappropriate conduct or behavior; to develop clear, equitable and timely disciplinary processes that aim to remedy rather than punish unacceptable behavior; to include a vehicle or process within the church to address grievances [17].

The goal of the CCGHP was to resolve disputes in order to promote peace and harmony as desired results within the church. Another element of a happy church is unity. The mechanisms used by the AFM's CCGHP in Zimbabwe are built to create unity in the church. What is odd about AFM in Zimbabwe, however, is that the church mainly uses church discipline as its key conflict response mechanism in which the perpetrator is granted a period of censure ranging from three months to 12 months, depending on the nature of the offense as described in the Constitution of the church [18], Chapter 13.

## **7.2 Conflict-handling systems at the AFM in Zimbabwe**

Despite attempts to demonize and minimize conflict by some individual Christians, there have been positive efforts by church leadership to deal constructively with conflict. The formation of the Local Council of Elders, the Regional Committee and the Apostolic Council to mediate disputes at the various levels of the Church can also be viewed as a positive step for the resolution of conflicts. It is important to stress that these structures are elected by a ballot system that uses the winner to take over all democratic processes and majorityitarianism. It is only the office of a pastor that is not voted into office, but appointed to be a member of the local council of elders [18].

A three-year theological training at a denominational college and the completion of a probationary period (internship) of at least one year are the requirements for one to qualify for the office of a pastor in the AFM in Zimbabwe. When employed to serve in an assembly, the pastor immediately becomes the chairman of the elderly council, which consists of seven adults. The members of the board are chosen on merit. One of the key merits is that such a person must pay tithes faithfully after which he/she can be elevated from deaconship to eldership, which is the highest rank before one becomes a pastor.

There are six lay staff on the local board of elders (mostly elders and, in some cases, deacons) and a local pastor as chairman. The local elders' board is responsible for the local congregation's affairs and this means resolving disputes at that level. The elders' local board is accountable to the provincial committee [17, 18].

Seven people are part of the provincial committee. The provincial overseer is the chairperson. An overseer is an administrative position assumed only by a pastor who, every three years, wins an election. The key qualification for being an overseer is that he or she must have reached the age of 40 years and worked in ministry in the church for more than ten years. Therefore, the provincial committee consists of pastor, elders and deacons who, on merit, assume these positions [18]. The provincial committee supervises a province's affairs and reports to the Apostolic Council. With political and administrative provincial demarcations in Zimbabwe, a province in the AFM in Zimbabwe does not drop squarely. There are three times more provinces in the AFM than in Zimbabwe's political and administrative provinces. The Apostolic Council, containing ten office bearers, is the supreme structure. The chairperson is the church president, who is chosen triennially from within the provincial overseers' ranks. The Apostolic Council is the protector of the Church and responsible, among other duties, for handling conflict [17, 18].

As evidence suggests, structures in Zimbabwe's AFM are built on the basis of experience, not necessarily on conflict resolution skills. Experience is supposed to indicate the number of years one has served in the church's leadership system. Some of the attributes taken from some biblical scriptures, such as 1 Timothy 3:13 and Titus 1:19, include qualities such as faithfulness, ability to lead, charismatic skills and good standing among peers. In terms of ability, a person who is chosen should be a dynamic preacher or teacher in either of these roles. Conflict resolution skills are also not taken into account when choosing individuals for leadership in the AFM church in Zimbabwe.

A more in-depth study of the state of affairs at the AFM in Zimbabwe shows that the development of the CCGHP can be seen as an effort to achieve sustainable conflict outcomes. However, these mechanisms (local elders' board, provincial and apostolic council) were challenged for not being able to deal constructively with conflict because most conflict situations appeared to have adversarial results where some pastors called 'black shepherds' or dangerous wolves in the skin of sheep are perceived as a threat. In most cases, it would be very difficult for so-called black shepherds to rise to higher positions in the church, such as overseers and president of the AFM. The boards have appeared in some cases to be used by some senior pastors in the church hierarchy to settle scores and create personal vendetta. These mechanisms are notorious in the AFM church in Zimbabwe for putting offending pastors under censorship, suspension and, in some cases, ostracizing them for good [3, 19].

Typically, after charges of sexual immorality were brought against them, three former senior pastors were indefinitely silenced in the 1990s. About the same time, more than 10 pastors quit the church unceremoniously in the Midlands province following accusations of insubordination. AFM witnessed a number of new Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe from 2008 to 2015, founded by their former pastors, who have left AFM in Zimbabwe with two influential pastors from Harare Province and another from Chitungwiza East Province.

These and other cases that followed are classic examples that have been tendered by provincial committees and the Apostolic Council to facilitate adversarial dispute approaches rather than to pursue reconciliatory approaches. One example of an adversarial approach is driving a minister out of the church. Adversarial tactics are listed as unilateral decisions [4]. In the case of AFM in unilateral decisions typically take place at the provincial level where the overseer may be a dominant

figure in the decision-making processes and procedures. Normally, the national executive endorses disciplinary actions. Dissatisfaction with dispute resolution has resulted in many court cases being brought in Zimbabwe against the Church and the AFM executive. Unilateral decisions do not always settle a conflict, but tend to reinforce factionalism, which can be more serious since certain parties with decision-making powers can attempt to force another party to bend to their will, which can often be resisted to create more bitter feelings between leadership and ordinary church members [16].

### **7.3 How should conflict be managed in faith-based organizations?**

Due to conflict situations such as dismissal of pastors, insubordination, pastors accused of sexual immorality, misappropriation of funds, fabrications focused on personal vendettas, extramarital affairs or divorce cases, among others, the existing internal conflict managing strategies in the AFM in Zimbabwe church tend to be under serious strain. Drastic steps taken against some pastors due to the alleged conflicts of interests between pastors engaged in activities of independent ministries from 2010 onwards caused the offended pastors to leave the church unceremoniously. These acts are disruptive patterns of conflict that usually do not settle the conflict, but help to blow it out of proportion [5].

The move led to the accused pastors attracting a number of members of the former AFM in Zimbabwe. As for the pastors who want to stay within the AFM in Zimbabwe, they turn to secular courts for remedies. In 1 Corinthians 6:18, critics then accuse them of going against Paul's biblical stance that states that Christians do not pursue resources from secular courts, but resolve their issues through local church systems. Paul recognized that, because of Christ in them, Christians would never be driven by self-interest when resolving disputes in the Church.

If Paul had lived longer, He would have known that, Christians might be so greedy and biased against brothers who turn to secular or conventional courts. Incidences of case overload in coping with disputes in the church of the AFM in Zimbabwe also indicate that a large percentage of workers, especially pastors, have no or little training in conflict resolution.

Furthermore, the fact that the CCGHP was designed to deal with disputes without actually going through the courts, but there are still some conflicts going through the courts brings to mind a multitude of concerns as to whether or not the CCGHP is really achieving its goals. In view of this, it can be assumed that the CCGHP's capacity is not as efficient as desired, given that certain disputes, particularly those that continue for a prolonged period of time, end up in the courts of law, causing uncertainty in the church.

As mentioned in local newspapers cited above, there are many cases of disputes involving pastors, including, among others, two supervisors from Masvingo Province, one from Harare Province, one provincial youth leader from Harare Province, one pastor from Midlands North Province, and one from Masvingo Province and Harare east province to not provide an exhaustive list.

Conflicts in the AFM in Zimbabwe are handled, according to the CCGHP, by the Local Council of Elders, the Provincial Committee or the Apostolic Council [17]. Therefore, since protocols and methods are already set down, resolving disputes in the court of law implies that internal mechanisms have either been exhausted or that specific dispute may be beyond the ability of the internal conflict handling committee. In the same way, it can be concluded that it is a sign that the internal mechanisms of the AFM in Zimbabwe are either not sufficiently used or not completely understood that they go through the direction of the courts of law. It should be remembered that disputes that go through the court are expensive

and that route is not a fair investment for the AFM to pursue in the church of Zimbabwe [12, 13].

#### **7.4 Principles focused on powers and privileges**

The CCGHP is focused on values based on authority and freedom. As is often the case in AFM, a senior person such as the pastor, overseer or church president is responsible for coping with conflict in the power-based relationships. The attribution of seniority to dispute resolution is characteristic of the African approach to conflict.

As mentioned above, it is believed in traditional cultures that a senior individual has developed the capacity to deal with disputes over time. In addition, seniority is linked to wisdom to deal with any emerging dispute [19]. This seems to be the case with the AFM in Zimbabwe, in which the responsibility for presiding over certain disputes, especially those involving pastors, is provided to senior pastors or supervisors.

The distinction is that the relationship oriented African approach to conflict is driven by the desire to strengthen relationships or reconcile the contending groups as opposed to an approach that seeks to decide who is right or wrong, as is the case with the rights-based approach. There are several commonalities, but the rights based approach varies greatly from the conventional dispute resolution process. In the rights-based system, decision making authority is vested in the hands of a senior person, which suggests that the power to determine the outcome of the dispute is based on rank or position. Usually, in this situation, the most powerful party wins while the less powerful loses. This kind of conflict solution typically produces winners and losers in a real world, which ensures that the conflict will reappear because it remains unresolved [12].

A dispute resolution is assured only by a mutually satisfying outcome of a conflict. The management (in this case, the Provincial Committee or the Apostolic Council) relies heavily on laws, rules and regulations to decide the outcome of a dispute in the rights-based approach. Under this model, management ensures that laws are respected and that sanctions are imposed if not adhered to. The perpetrator is also not consulted in the process of imposing punishments, and the ultimate objective in most situations is to win over the perceived opponent or offender at this stage, thereby producing a winner-loser outcome. The dispute may seem to have vanished in some way, but since there is a winner and loser, it may come again, but at a higher cost [12]. The solution focused on rights does not really allow reconciliation between the perpetrator and the offended.

It should be understood that the settlement of disputes is focused on mediation between the parties to the conflict. It allows the parties to work together cooperatively (offender and victim, in this case the pastor and the aggrieved assembly or vice versa) by listening to each other, not with the intention of winning a debate, but to consider the situation, desires and needs of each other. Dialogue includes skills such as empathy, which is “to listen with your opponent’s ears, see with your opponent’s eyes, and feel with your opponent’s heart. Lack of empathy allows the parties to the dispute to get swept up and confused in the competition for “dog-eat-dog... [20].

Open communication is another important skill that sustains dialogue, as someone said: “People don’t get along because they fear each other. Since they don’t know each other, people dislike each other. They do not know each other and they have not interacted with each other properly” [20]. As a central element of dispute resolution, mediation between the parties (offender and victim) can also theoretically produce win-win results.

To this end, both leadership and follow-up in the church of the AFM in Zimbabwe will need to accept that the existing internal conflict management processes do not always yield win/win results, and possible reasons for this are that they are neither derived from the model of criminal law nor the model of African Ubuntu Restoration.

## **8. Conclusion and recommendation**

The question that this article sought to address was how best can the AFM in Zimbabwe manage conflict effectively to help to promote unity and growth instead of fanning divisions, animosities and factionaries among the conflicted pastors? As results indicate, the church under scrutiny uses adversarial tactics that ostracize those with which the leadership of the church disagrees. The propensity of the stronger party to ostracize the other party to a dispute does not help to foster cooperation and progress, but rather fans factionalism as it produces win/lose results, generating animosities particularly for those pastors against whom loss is incurred.

Conventional wisdom does not advocate ostracization of the person or party with whom church leadership is in dispute, but rather encourages mediation between the parties to a conflict, the idea being that there is a greater possibility of better relationships if the parties engage in influencing the results of the conflict. This article argues that the church should accept the view that tension is natural and good for the life and development of the church in order to move toward a relationship-oriented outcome.

The whole church must take it seriously to deal with conflict involving groups and establish basic assumptions that there is nothing satanic about conflict. Based on selected biblical texts, which encourage dialogue rather than ostracization, pastors, local elders' councils, the provincial committee and the Apostolic Council must establish optimistic conclusions about conflict. In view of this, the article suggests that, in order to deepen their understanding of conflict as a positive force, the church under review may conduct conflict resolution training courses, seminars or Bible study sessions. AFM in Zimbabwe and its affiliate institutions that train pastors should continue to advance subjects or courses in Conflict or Peace Studies in their curricula to empower student pastors on conflict-related issues. It has been argued in other quarters that instruction in dispute resolution is not the essence of Christianity. This article argues that conflict resolution training is a valuable investment for the church and must be supported if the church is to help create harmony and growth.



## Author details

Norman Chivasa  
International Centre of Nonviolence, Department of Peacebuilding, Durban  
University of Technology , Durban, South Africa

\*Address all correspondence to: [normanchivasa@gmail.com](mailto:normanchivasa@gmail.com)

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# Conflict of Power and Leadership among Afro-Pentecostal Churches: Resurrecting the Traditional Model of Transferring Power and Managing Appreciations in Faith-Based Organisations in Zimbabwe

*Ngoni Chikwanha*

## Abstract

It is commonly believed that democratic elections lead to the election of good leaders and help to mitigate conflict of power within organisations. However, power struggles that are associated with leadership succession at the top level and the appreciation of leaders who occupy top positions seem to engender strife in faith-based organisations. Using the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe church (AFM) as a point of reference, this article sets out on the premise that the change of the traditional model of transferring power that occurred from 2000 up to the time of this study and the appreciation of leaders at the top level trigger strife in the AFM. Up to the time of this study, in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe Church (AFM), there are some innuendos that suggest that during the time that the AFM followed the traditional model of transferring power the older, senior, and mature leaders who assumed top positions of leadership did not put much emphasis on appreciations. Consequently, this article suggests that faith-based organisations should not change their traditional models of transferring power at the top level as well as manage the appreciation of top leaders as a way of mitigating organisational conflict.

**Keywords:** Apostolic Faith Mission Church, organisational conflict, power, appreciations, faith-based organisation, Zimbabwe

## 1. Introduction

The transferring of leadership and handling of appreciations (hefty financial gifts and benefits associated with top positions of leadership) in faith-based organisations generally trigger a conflict of power. This chapter examines the model of transferring power and the handling of appreciations employed by faith-based organisations, taking the Apostolic Faith Mission Church (AFM) as a point of reference. One of the most critical problems facing the AFM is the conflict of power that is associated

with leadership succession and handling of financial benefits called appreciations which manifest in diverse forms such as delay in the holding of tri-annual elections, perceived or real reluctance to relinquish power, handpicking of successors, implementation of contested constitutional reforms and schisms among other issues. Such conflict of power has yielded undesirable consequences both for the image of the AFM in general and the general spiritual well-being of the majority of the ordinary church members in particular. Therefore, there is a need to examine the model of transferring power in the AFM as well as to revisit the handling of appreciations as a way of addressing organisational conflict. This essay explores the need to revisit the traditional model of transferring power and handling of the appreciations as a way of resolving organisational conflict in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe.

## **2. Research approach**

This research aimed to assess leadership is transferred at the top level in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. To systematically achieve this aim, a qualitative research approach was followed through descriptive, explorative, and normative tasks. The descriptive approach led the researcher to find out the status quo about how power is being transferred in the faith-based organisation under review. The explorative task led the researcher to make a comparative analysis of the traditional models of transferring power practised by both the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFMSA) and the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM). The normative task led the researcher to recommend the traditional model of transferring power and management of appreciations as peace-building models that ought to be employed by the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM). Sources of data include document analysis and in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed and they yielded data that were analysed to inform this study. To identify informants for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions purposive and snowballing convenient sampling techniques were instrumental. I used purposive and snowballing sampling to target pastors, elders, deacons, deaconesses (who include pastors' wives) and the leaders of the Young People's Union (YPU). In-depth interviews were held with pastors and lay workers of the AFM in Manicaland North and Manicaland Central Provinces. These sampling techniques proved useful to elicit data from pastors and lay leaders. I considered this group of informants as experts in the ongoing dynamics of power in the church under review. According to Duve and Maitireyi [1], 'data are the facts, figures and other materials, past and present, that serve as the basis for study and analysis'. Literature on the AFM in Zimbabwe and grey literature on power struggles in the AFM were reviewed, based on their advantage of appraising this study with current and existing dynamics relating to the power contestation being experienced in the AFM. The inclusion criteria for selecting literature on Google involved key concepts such as AFM power struggles. Also, as an active member of the church under review for a period amounting to 24 years, I used my experience as well as my research findings to reach the conclusion that disrespect of seniority which is symbolised by the relegation of the traditional institutionalised leadership succession planning trend, the appreciations, among other issues precipitated widespread power contestation and unrest in the AFM.

## **3. Statement of the problem**

Conflict of power is becoming evident within the AFM's top leadership ranks. It also seems the conflict of power that is affecting the leadership succession process

of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) is further complicated by appreciations. If the legitimacy of the top leader is contested and the appreciations are not managed well it engenders strife in the church. It also triggers appellate court appeals, break-ups, tarnishes the image of the church, and generates civil unrest in the body of Christ. Some church members backslide and those who want to join the church will not be able to do so. The key research question is, how can power be transferred amicably and appreciations managed well in a way that does not degenerate into hostility, appellate courts appeals, and schisms?

#### **4. The rationale for studying the AFM in Zimbabwe Church**

According to Ndlovu ([2], pp. 1-4) is presently one of the fastest-growing Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. It is also considered to be the mother of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe [2, 3]. AFM is an offshoot of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFMSA) (Hwata, 2015; [2-6]). Ndlovu ([2], p. 119) further argues that;

*Langton Kupara became the first A.F.M.Z.'s black Superintendent in 1983. According to Madziyire and Risinamhodzi (2016, p. 73) Pastor Gashwend officially handed over A.F.M. to local leadership in 1983. During the occasion Gashwend gave Langton Kupara a golden watch, making the complete transformation of A.F.M.S.A. into A.F.M.Z.*

Several studies that have been undertaken from within the context of the AFM have both directly and indirectly alluded to the leadership crisis that is becoming evident in the AFM [2, 3, 5-10]. It is also worth noting that right at the beginning of this work to this present day, AFM has been characterised by innuendos that suggest that the gigantic Pentecostal movement is embroiled in its worst power contestation ever since it became an indigenous church ([2], pp. 1-4; [3, 5, 8]). According to The AFM New Life Assembly Church of Chitungwiza, Harare, website: "The work of the AFM in Zimbabwe is said to have begun in 1915 in Gwanda through the preaching of Zacharias Manamela, a convert of the AFM of South Africa."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Chivasa [7] observes that, "It has long been recognised that the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in Zimbabwe church is the mother of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe (Hwata 2005, p. 27; [4], p. 18; [3], p. 31; [6], p. 2). In 2015, the AFM in Zimbabwe celebrated 100 years of active ministry across Zimbabwe (Madziyire & Risinamhodzi 2015, p. 105; Murefu 2015, p. 1) and the denomination claims to have more than two million members (<http://www.pindula.co.zw>) in a population of 13 million people ([4], p. 17)."

Additionally, several young churches look up to AFMZ as a role model of Pentecostalism that is not only pastoring its members only but it is pastoring other churches too. Machingura [4] further posits that, "The interest on AFM cannot be overlooked considering the number of followers that the church commands, yet surprisingly not much has been done by scholars in terms of research save to mention in passing its existence as one of the biggest Pentecostal churches" [4]. The motivation to conduct this analysis was sparked by two factors. The first was the prevalence of leadership succession-related power contestation in the AFM. The second was that no efforts to date have been made to examine the change of the traditional model of transferring power as the main contributing factor to the widespread power contestation that has engendered incessant schisms in the church under review. As such the current study attempts to fill this gap and it makes a case for the need to resurrect the traditional institutionalised

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, [11].

leadership succession planning trend as well as advocates for the responsible management of appreciations as the panacea to the conflict of power that is currently rocking the AFM in Zimbabwe. To interrogate the conflict of power, this research was guided by the following three questions: What evidence is there that there is a conflict of power associated with leadership succession in the AFM? Which factor(s) mainly contributed to the widespread conflict of power in the AFM? How significant is the traditional model of transferring power and appreciations at the top level in the AFM?

## **5. Overview of organisational conflict and leadership succession in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM)**

The findings of this study show that there is a nexus between organisational conflict and leadership succession in the AFM. Of late there has been considerable interest in leadership succession issues in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) ([3], Nhumburudzi and Kurebwa 2018). To give up-to-date examples of the most typical leadership-related conflict of power experienced in the AFM from 2015 to 2019, I refer to seven articles elicited by the Google search mentioned in the previous paragraph. These eight articles were carried in local newspapers in Zimbabwe:

- AFM Factions Come Close To Blows In Milton Park [12]
- AFM Top Brass Suspended [13]
- AFM leadership wrangle persists [14]
- WATCH: ‘Jambanja MuChurch!’—DRAMA As FIST FIGHT Breaks Out In ‘AFM Church’ Over Power Struggle [15].
- AFM power wrangle rages [16].
- AFM church saga deepens [17]
- AFM remains in limbo [18]
- AFM remains in limbo [19]
- Overstaying AFM leader splits church [20]
- AFM church hires NIKUV to rig pastors’ election [21]
- AFM church in dirty election rigging: Court papers [22]

At the time of this study, the ongoing leadership succession-related conflict of power in the AFM have since spilled into the court of law that is yet to decide on who is the legitimate leader of the AFM as reported by the following contribution on Good Morning Zimbabwe of 17 February 2019 which thus elaborates, “This (leadership succession contestation)... resulted in the two factions electing parallel leaderships with one led by Rev. Madawo and the other siding with Rev. Chiangwa. The legitimacy battle has since spilled into the courts and is yet to be decided” [23].

The above-mentioned conflict of power has also yielded undesirable consequences both for the image of church organisation in general and the well-being of the ordinary church members in particular. The study further stresses that

resurrecting the traditional model of transferring power and managing the appreciations will help the church to address the leadership succession power contestation that has arguably led to the AFM's first wholesale schism since it became an indigenous church in 1983. This schism occurred on the 22nd of September 2018. The AFM split is confirmed by the following report which thus elaborates;

*AFM's total split was yesterday confirmed with the holding of elections by the faction led by Reverend Cossum Chiangwa held at the church's Rufaro Conference Centre in Chatsworth. The faction aligned to Rev. Chiangwa participated in the elections that were held on Saturday putting a stamp to the split with the Reverend Aspher Madziyire grouping [24].*

The history of the traditional model of transferring power in the AFM cannot be fully comprehended without linking it to the history of transferring power in the AFMSA. AFM is an off shoot of AFMSA (Hwata, 2015; [2–6, 10]). Since this research is based on insights that were gained from the field research conducted in pursuance of a doctoral programme [25] part of my PhD, both the AFM gatekeepers and the University of KwaZulu-Natal provided ethical clearance. Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Committee (reference no. HSS/1768/017D).

There is a need to examine the model of transferring power and the management of appreciations in the AFM to know how best to address the current standoff. To do this, examining the history of the leadership succession trend in both the AFMSA and the AFM is critical as it provides the bedrock for addressing the conflict of power rocking the AFM. It seems right from their inception both the AFM and AFMSA followed the model of transferring power at the top level that valued seniority. Nhumburudzi [3] posits that the AFM of South Africa was founded in 1908 by two American Missionaries, who are John Graham Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch. Nhumburudzi [3] further postulates that, "When the Mission was formalised, Thomas Hezmalhalch was elected the first President of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church on 27th May 1909 while John G. Lake was the Vice President, probably because Hezmalhalch was older than Lake." In support of the traditional model of transferring power alluded to above, Nhumburudzi [3] categorically states that it was the AFM of South Africa deputy president, Lake who succeeded Hezmalhalch as president as narrated below; "By the end of 1910, Thomas Hezmalhalch had returned to the U.S.A after serving a one year term and John G. Lake became the President for three years until 1913 when he also went back to U.S.A."

Coming to the AFM, Nhumburudzi [3] notes that, "The history of the AFM presidential succession has mostly seen the Deputy President succeeding the President. Reverend J. Mvenge was Deputy to the first black AFM in Zimbabwe leader, Reverend Langton Kupara and succeeded him after his death. Reverend Mvenge was also succeeded by his deputy Reverend Stephen Mutemererwa." Rev. Mutemererwa was also succeeded by his deputy Manyika and up to the time of this study it is only Rev. Manyika and Rev. Madziyire who have not been succeeded by their deputies and somehow the above shows a violation of the institutionalised leadership succession trend. Similarly, Ndlovu ([2], p. 120) reinforces that;

*After his departure, his then Deputy Superintendent, Rev. Jeffries Mvenge was appointed the next A.F.M.Z. According to Madziyire and Risinamhodzi (2016, p. 93) Mvenge retired in 1996 and his Deputy President Rev. Stephen Mutemererwa was elected the President." Ndlovu ([2], p. 121) adds that, Reverend Enos Manyika was Stephen Mutemererwa's Deputy President and was elected his successor in the year 2000 after Mutemererwa's retirement.*

Related to the foregoing, Murefu [26] posits that, “The correct position is that the previous presidents were actually elected from among the then executive council members by the executive council itself and mandated by the workers’ council. We then went for an electoral college with equal representatives from the provinces to elect Rev. Enos Manyika then Rev. Madziyire respectively.” Murefu further clarifies that, “the term executive was used before it became apostolic council. There were only 6 provinces then, then the bible college principal and other heads of departments” [26]. So from the time, the AFM in Zimbabwe became an indigenous church in 1983 ([3], p. 34) and during the successive years up to the time of the immediate past president, the church followed a traditional model of transferring power at the top level which saw the outgoing presidents always being succeeded by his deputy president up to the time of Manyika. This model of transferring power enabled older, senior, experienced and mature leaders to assume leadership at the top level. In support of the traditional model of transferring power, C. Reus-Smit [27] reinforces that, “In a nutshell, the concept of binding institutions suggests a constitutional order that helps to lock-in a set of rules that will outlast change in the distribution of power. In the same vein, E. Frantz and E.A. Stein [28] posit that, “institutionalised succession rules hamper coordination efforts among coup plotters... by assuaging the ambition of some elites who have more to gain with patience than with plotting.”

My analysis revealed that it is mainly the changing of the traditional model of transferring power which valued seniority which has triggered a widespread conflict of power in the AFM. This is an analysis of the fourth chapter of my doctoral thesis on the dynamics of power and its implications on leadership succession, governance and peacebuilding in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM).

Both the print and electronic media are rife with stories relating to conflict of power that is becoming evident in the AFM. Consequently, for the past couple of years, AFM has been characterised by innuendos that suggest the prevalence of conflict of power which have since spilled into the secular courts [2, 3, 8]. In support of the above standpoint, Nhumburuzi [3] echoes identical sentiments when he contends that, the immediate past president’s “Administration has suffered the most break-aways ever experienced in the history of the AFM church.”

Although, conflict of power is common within organisations including Christian organisations, it is a cause for great concern that the conflict of power that the church has been experiencing over the past couple of years has finally resulted in the church’s worst split ever since it became an indigenous church. The conflict of power that is becoming evident in the AFM is linked to appreciations. Historically, from the time that AFM started in Zimbabwe until 2003, leadership succession in the AFM followed a trend that saw the deputy president succeeding the outgoing president. This ensured smooth transfer of power as leadership easily changed hands from one senior pastor onto another senior pastor. However, both in 2003 and 2018, relatively young presidents took over the leadership of the gigantic Pentecostal movement and this has sparked conflict of power in the church. The church has since split into two major factions, the Madawo and the Chiangwa factions. Chiangwa is a relatively old senior pastor who is also a former long-time provincial overseer and deputy president of the AFM while Madawo is a relatively young pastor who is a former long-time provincial overseer and general-secretary of the AFM. During the in-depth interviews, the informants reported that the traditional model of transferring power valued seniority. Even though the Constitution and Regulations outline how the president is elected from among the overseers who have served for at least two terms [3], all the respondents who were interviewed in this study strongly believed that revisiting the traditional model of transferring power that valued seniority leadership appointment at the top level and managing appreciations are the panacea to the leadership difficulties being experienced in the church.



## 6. Conceptualising conflict of power and resurrection

### 6.1 Conflict of power

To a greater extent, this study concurs with Mapuranga [29] who conceives conflict of power as a struggle for power that occurs between individuals and among groups. She further argues that the general conception that power struggles are associated with secular politics only is erroneous. She adds that wherever we find a contest for power between individuals and groups, dynamism of power is present. She further contends that there is nothing amiss in problematizing power struggles occurring in the church or analysing it using a political lens, hence this study [29].

### 6.2 Resurrection

To avoid the ambiguity associated with the use of terms in everyday usage, this study relied on the following dictionary definition of resurrection which is proffered by the Cambridge Dictionary to mean, “*the act or fact of bringing someone back to life, or bringing something back into use or existence*” [30]. Similarly, the Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the concept resurrection to mean, “*to bring to view, attention, or use again*” [31].

## 7. An evaluative discussion of traditional models of transferring power in faith-based organisations

Chivasa [32, 33] laments that; it is adversarial conflict resolution that has engendered unrest in the AFM. However, this study proposes the need to revisit the traditional model of transferring power as the panacea to the leadership difficulties that are being experienced in AFM for a plethora of reasons. First, the ballot system is believed to have led to the appointment of novices. Resonating with the findings of this study, in his study Nhumburudzi [3] notes that the election system has led to the election of ungroomed leaders. Similarly, Ndlovu ([2], p. 140) observes that;

*It was found that the leadership wrangles, church politicking and association of leadership positions with financial benefits have led to great complications in the patterns of successions within A.F.M.Z.*

Commenting on the advent of elections in the AFMZ, Ndlovu ([2], p. 68) reinforces that from its inception the AFMZ used an institutionalised leadership succession trend which used the appointing system before it transitioned to the ballot system. He thus elaborates that;

*The A.F.M. Church from its inception used to appoint its leaders in positions of authority. The system of appointing leaders in positions later proved to be problematic and the church opted for elections through secret ballots (Madziyire and Rinamodzi, 2016, p. 91).*

Nhumburudzi [3] further observes that the;

*The history of the AFM reveals that schism within the AFM started in the early years of the Church in South Africa under the leadership of Reverend Le Roux, John G. Lake's successor, who was elected President in 1913, a role he filled until 1943. According to Horn (2006), in 1919, under Le Roux's leadership, the*

*black African Zionist Church withdrew accusing the AFM leadership of practicing racism in the church.*

Although by and large his study decries the shortcomings of the ballot system due to its manipulability by the incumbency, and the unprecedented strife that it has caused and so on, Nhumburudzi [3] surprisingly seems to proceed to endorse the same ballot model by claiming when he claims that:

*The responses indicated that the election succession system ensured stability to the church during leadership changes when Pentecostal leadership power was transferred from one leader to another. The AFM Church in Zimbabwe had continued to survive through four successive leadership power transfers in the past by using the ballot. ([3], p. 8)*

Chivasa concurs that the ballot has caused discord in the AFMZ but he does not argue well how this leadership succession power contestation that has spilled into the court of law can be addressed serve for the institution of dispute resolution mechanisms which he proposes. However, to me Chivasa's Dispute Resolution Framework is an attempt to address the fruits and not the root causes of the power contestation in the AFMZ [8]. Similarly, Machingura [9] laments the prevalence of win-lose conflict resolution that is practiced in the AFMZ and has seen some pastors being pushed out of the church but he again does not seem to offer any feasible solution about how the prevalent power contestation can be addressed.

However, it is on record that, by and large Ndlovu ([2], p. 68) categorically castigates the ballot system when he posits that;

*This study made an enquiry to assess the reliability of the use of elections within the A.F.M.Z. today. Responding to the question of how they observe the use of elections as a system of appointing leaders into positions of authority, the respondents revealed that this has created untold problems.*

Ndlovu ([2], p. 68) elaborates that the;

*The idea of holding elections was never there in the A.F.M.Z. Initially, we were told that the man in charge would order people to pray, after prayer the Spirit of God will lead the church to the right leader. This was possible because the church was still growing and there were less complications. Since then the church opted for the conduction of elections. However, it has turned to be a problem again. Respondent E.M48 observes that elections have created a lot of challenges within the church. In the run-up to elections, many people are deliberately doing ungodly things in order to get into power or remain in power. As a result, a lot of dirty dealings, unimaginable, are happening in the church to the extent of some being victimized and tainted so that they do not contest the elections (Respondent E.M48). In support of this observation Respondent M.G52 points out that there is a great number of campaigns and pulling down each other during election years. Hence this puts the unity of the church in a compromised position.*

However, after immaculately observing the shortcomings of the ballot, Ndlovu [2] proceeds to make insinuations that suggest that the leadership-succession-related power contestation that is being experienced in the AFMZ can only be sufficiently addressed if the existing constitution is amended with the active participation of all the key stakeholders. It is however noteworthy that Ndlovu ([2], p. 197) recommends that, "More research is recommended in coming up with an effective, transparent and accountable system of appointing leaders into positions within the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe" and this is a gap that this study has attempted to fill.

The majority of the participants who took part in this study expressed the view that the changing of the traditional model of transferring power gave rise to the handpicking of a successor by the outgoing president.

*The former president (Rev. Manyika) influenced the election of the incumbent president Bishop (Rev. Madziyire) and now Bishop Madziyire now wants to facilitate the appointment of his successor (Rev. Madawo) who would protect his interests and also the interests of his predecessor. At the time that the incumbent Bishop was elected to be the president he was not the best leader. There were other more deserving more experienced, more senior and more mature leaders who included, Rev. T.I. Murefu who was the then General Secretary of AFMZ and the renowned late Evangelist Phaniel Chiweshe who were expected to take over the reins of power. Chiweshe was appointed in America [34]*

The data collected in this study suggested that in 2003 Manyika used the ballot to facilitate the handpicking of his preferred successor. The above-mentioned handpicking of a preferred successor is also alleged to have been done by Madziyire in 2018. Madziyire is alleged to have delayed the elections to allow his preferred successor Madawo to attain the minimum age of 50 years. Chivasa [8] argues that the minimum age required for one to become the president in the AFMZ is 50 years. It is also possible that the relegation of the ILST was facilitated by the fact that according to Nhumburudzi [3] “Both president and his deputy, were retired in 2003 when their ages hit the 65 line.” Nhumburudzi ([3], p. 35) further claims that consequently, “a young president was voted in 2003.” According to Murefu [35], the president (2003–2018) “served his probation under his predecessor (Rev. Manyika) in Bulawayo.” The findings of this research demonstrate that the election of the president (2003–2018) was received with mixed feelings in the church. A focus group discussion with elders suggested the above handpicking of the successor. One elder said;

*It's Rev. Manyika who cooked the whole controversial top leadership succession which led to the election of the immediate past president (Rev. Madziyire). At the time he was elected the immediate past president (2003–2018) was little known and when he was elected everyone expressed dismay. There were other more senior and experienced leaders who were better qualified to become president the likes of Rev. T.I. Murefu and the late renowned Evangelist Rev. Chiweshe [36].*

Another elder who participated in the focus group discussion was of the view that, “The president (2003–2018) is the project of the immediate past president. It is the immediate past president who facilitated the election of the incumbent president” [37]. It is therefore possible that one of the most senior pastors Rev. T.I. Murefu who was the then general secretary of the AFM and was highly expected to succeed Rev. Manyika was possibly side-lined from the leadership succession race consequent to the allegation of sexual misconduct that was levelled against him. According to Chivasa [7] alleged acts of misconducts such as sexual misconducts of pastors are not taken lightly in the AFM. He however does not unpack how the handling of pastoral misconducts could be linked to leadership succession power contestation in the AFM. In addition to his seniority, it also seems Rev. Titus Murefu qualified to succeed Manyika by virtue of his being the then general secretary of the AFMZ. The fitness of the general secretary in the leadership succession equation is observed by Nhumburudzi [3] notes that some of the participants he interviewed in his study on leadership succession on ZAOGA categorically stated that, the Secretary-General appeared to be the second favourite to the succession of the ZAOGA leadership post after Mai Guti. The fitness of

the Secretary-General in the top leadership succession equation is also reinforced by Magaracha and Masengwe [38] in their study on the leadership succession in the Johane Marange Apostolic Church where they argue that the church's secretary Mushati was also expected to succeed Johane Marange. The other favourable candidate who was heir apparent was Evangelist Chiweshe. According to the former Secretary-General of AFM in Zimbabwe who is the incumbent president (Rev. Madawo), "*Evangelist Chiweshe had been an evangelist since 1985 and he also worked as a pastor in the United States between 2001 and 2003*" [39]. So it seems when the elections were held in May 2003, Evangelist Chiweshe had been away for nearly 2 years which made it very difficult for him to make it even if he participated in the elections. However, upon returning from America in an informal discussion that was held between the late Evangelist and the researcher, the late renowned Evangelist Chiweshe [40] claimed that in America he had been appointed at a non-existent congregation by the then president Rev. Manyika and the above suggests relegation of some sort. However, it is no secret that late Evangelist Chiweshe is highly regarded in the history of the AFMZ as reported below, "*We last heard of AFM crusades during the days of the late Rev Masiyambiri and the late great general of God Rev. Chiweshe*" [41]. It, therefore, seems it was through the side-lining of both Murefu and Chiweshe that Manyika managed to create room for his preferred handpicked successor.

The foregoing discussion sought to illustrate how the research participants in this study think that the AFM president (2003–2018) was handpicked to become the president against the ILST of the AFMZ which valued seniority. Related to the foregoing, commenting on the premature election of the president (2003–2018), Ndlovu ([2], p. 123) posits that, "In 2003, he (immediate past president 2003–2018) was elected Overseer of Bulawayo Province and the same year he was elected the A.F.M.Z. President, a post he never expected to hold at that time (Madziyire & Risinamhodzi, 2016, p. 101)." In support of the above, Madziyire and Risinamhodzi (2016) echo that the long-time serving president (2003–2018) was elected to become president at a very young age in 2003. The importance assigned to the institutionalised leadership succession trend in the AFMZ is further emphasised by an Elder [42] who was one of the research participants who pointed out that the immediate past bishop (2003–2018) was not the rightful candidate for the post of president. He thus elaborated; "The president is too junior. The leadership succession trend was such that the more senior would lead. While in the secular world it is acceptable for a junior to lead a senior in church it is not acceptable for a junior to lead a senior."

The supremacy of the traditional model of transferring power is authenticated by the below-mentioned findings that came from the research participants who participated in this study.

- When the AFMZ became an indigenous church it did not follow the constitution in electing its top leaders. Consequently, the late Reverend Kupara who is the first black superintendent was not elected using the ballot but he was simply appointed based on age, leadership experience, seniority and maturity [43].
- Rev. Kupara was appointed based on seniority. In the past the one who was appointed first would be the leader. It had become the tradition of the church that the president is succeeded by his deputy president [44].
- It had become our tradition in A.F.M.Z that the deputy will always succeed his senior. Reverend Kupara was appointed based on seniority. The failure to respect seniors started in Harare when the late Rev. Mazadza was removed from leadership by Rev. T.I. Murefu. It then spread to other provinces [45].

- In the past people used to have a lot of respect for their leader in the church because leadership was earned through seniority. People would look forward to learn more from them. It seems people do not have much to learn from the current president (2003–2018). The precedent that has been set is enabling novices to assume key leadership positions and this is creating problems [46].
- Moreover, the current president is too junior. He did not do anything to qualify for that top position. In the secular world some junior people are qualified to lead adults by virtue of their education, training and skills [47].
- The president (2003–2018) is too junior. The leadership succession trend was such that the more senior would lead. In the past people used to have a lot of respect for their leaders in the church because leadership was earned through seniority [46].
- The leadership succession was such that the more senior would lead. But after president Manyika a more junior president took over and this caused leadership problems in the AFMZ [47].
- The church was supposed to use its traditional way of appointing leaders [48].
- In the past it was easy to predict that so and so was going to become the next leader [49].

A closer examination of the above-mentioned key research findings that came from the research participants who participated in this study show that they unanimously concur that the traditional model of transferring power was the best as it valued seniority and also made it possible for the deputy to succeed the president. It may be possible that one weakness of the ILST was that it made no provision for the situations where the president retired together with his deputy. Nhumburudzi [3] claims Manyika retired together with his deputy. Madziyire also cites similar allegations that his deputy Chiangwa who was also supposed to retire together with him in 2018, altered his birth certificate to reduce his age. The above sentiment of self-qualification is echoed by the remarks that were made by a Bishop who was interviewed in this study who categorically stated that, “*The system of electing leaders has been hijacked and those who do not qualify want to qualify themselves*” [50].

In the foregoing discussion, it was argued that the ILST was practiced in both the AFMSA and the AFMZ. According to Leavy and D. Wilson [51], institutionalised leadership succession patterns dominate unless crisis (real or manufactured) force the hand of change. While an elder who participated in this study alluded that the changing of the traditional model of transferring power was caused by the generation gap that was mainly necessitated by the absence of pastors who were in their 60’s who would replace Manyika [44], this view was refuted by a Bishop who was interviewed in a separate interview in this study, who instead argued, “The sitting leaders kill others who have potential and thereby create an artificial leadership vacuum so that there is no one who qualify to take over from them” [52].

In the same line of thought, Ndlovu ([2], p. 68) posits that “The A.F.M. Church from its inception used to appoint its leaders in positions of authority. The system of appointing leaders in positions later proved to be problematic and the church opted for elections through secret ballots (Madziyire and Risinamhodzi, 2016, p. 91).”

It however seems both Murefu, and Ndlovu [2] do not elaborate on what went wrong with the traditional model of transferring power in the AFM. However, somehow, discarding the traditional model of transferring power, Ndlovu ([2], p.

142) alludes that, “there was always a tendency to centralise authority in a few figures or councils.” Similarly, Musariri [5] argues that the ILST was dropped because it ended up being manipulated by a few but still he does not elaborate on how the manipulation occurred.

In support of the traditional model of transferring power that ensured the election of mature senior leaders, Musariri ([5], p. 36) argues that, “It has been discussed in various AFM WhatsApp chat groups such as AFM national pastors’ forum and AFM in Zimbabwe Gotekwa where AFM is accused by some for failing to play a fatherly role to avoid splits.” In support of the traditional model of transferring power, where leadership changed hands from the president to the deputy president, Musariri ([5], p. 17) notes that:

*In 1983 Rev. Gashwend officially handed over AFM to Langton Kupara to mark the complete transformation of AFM South Africa into AFM in Zimbabwe. The church continued to rapidly grow all over the country until now. Rev. Jeffries Mvenge became the next AFM president taking over from Langton Kupara and was succeeded by Steven Mutemererwa. Mutemererwa was succeeded by Enos Manyika and Aspher Madziyire tookover.*

Related to the foregoing, Ndlovu ([2], p. 119) reinforces that;

*Langton Kupara became the first A.F.M.Z’s black Superintendent in 1983. According to Madziyire and Risinamhodzi (2016, p. 73), Pastor Gashwend officially handed over A.F.M. to local leadership in 1983. During the occasion Gashwend gave Langton Kupara a golden watch, making the complete transformation of A.F.M.S.A. into A.F.M.Z.*

Furthermore, Ndlovu [2] categorically states that;

*After his departure (Rev. Kupara), his then Deputy Superintendent, Rev. Jeffries Mvenge was appointed the next A.F.M.Z. According to Madziyire and Risinamhodzi (2016, p. 93) Mvenge retired in 1996 and his Deputy President Rev. Stephen Mutemererwa was elected the President. Reverend Enos Manyika was Stephen Mutemererwa’s Deputy President and was elected his successor in the year 2000 after Mutemererwa’s retirement.” ([2], pp. 120-121).*

In the same vein, Nhumburudzi [3] posits that;

*When the Mission (AFMSA) was formalized, Thomas Hezmalhalch was elected the first President of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church on 27th May 1909 while John G. Lake was the Vice President, probably because Hezmalhalch was older than Lake [3]. The history of the AFM presidential succession has mostly seen the Deputy President succeeding the President. //Reverend J. Mvenge was Deputy to the first black AFM in Zimbabwe leader, Reverend Langton Kupara and succeeded him after his death. Reverend Mvenge was also succeeded by his deputy Reverend Stephen Mutemererwa [3]*

The foregoing supports the research findings which stated that the traditional model of transferring power saw the outgoing president being succeeded by his deputy president. The traditional model of transferring power suffered a major blow when it was replaced by the ballot system which led to the election of juniors’ key positions of influence which is believed to have engendered leadership difficulties in the AFMZ. Resonating with the above standpoint, Ndlovu ([2], pp. 2-7)

states that currently AFMZ is facing leadership challenges which are “fast destroying the great work done by those who shouldered it first.”

Ndlovu ([2], p. 140) further argues that, It was found that the leadership wrangles, church politicking and association of leadership positions with financial benefits have led to great complications in the patterns of successions within A.F.M.Z.

Ndlovu ([2], p. 140) further reveals the secret behind the traditional model of transferring power as follows, “succession tended to be bestowed on those who most imbibed the ethos of the Pentecostal movement.” Similarly, scholars also confirm the pattern through which leadership changed hands in both the AFMSA and the AFM. According to Nhumburudzi [3] it was the AFMSA deputy president, Lake who succeeded Hezmalhalch as president as follows; “*By the end of 1910, Thomas Hezmalhalch had returned to the U.S.A after serving a one year term and John G. Lake became the President for three years until 1913 when he also went back to U.S.A.*” ([3], p. 32) So it can be safely argued that the top leadership succession trends of both AFMSA and AFM followed a pattern that saw the deputy president succeeding the president.

In support of the institutionalised leadership succession trend, Govea & Holm ([53], p. 130) posit that, “the leadership succession system conforms to a set of predetermined and widely acceptable rules. Legitimacy is claimed by the process of selection to the extent that it honours those rules.” Similarly, Habisso concludes by recommending that to eradicate the leadership succession woes there is a need to ensure:

*In conclusion I wish to emphasize that any country, organization or institution worth its name and reputation should have a well-defined, regulated and transparent system for determining leadership succession. Such an institutionalized system is a key requirement for good governance.*

In the same vein, C. Reus-Smit [27] reinforces that, of some elites who have more to gain with patience than with plotting.” “In a nutshell, the concept of binding institutions suggests a constitutional order that helps to lock-in a set of rules that will outlast change in the distribution of power.” In the same line of thought, Frantz and Stein [28] assert that, “institutionalised succession rules hamper coordination efforts among coup plotters... by assuaging the ambition”.

Related to the foregoing, Nhariswa [54] castigates the ballot system as a viable means of effecting leadership succession. He further claims that elections can be manipulated and consequently engender strife in the Church and he recommends the need to have institutionalised leadership succession planning systems.

It also goes without mentioning that although Nhumburudzi [3] immaculately observes that; “It was established that in previous elections, only 3 candidates out of over 1000 pastors would be eligible to contest for the Presidency. Voters were thus forced to come out with a president from the few presented qualifying candidates,” it seems he failed to appreciate how the traditional model of transferring power made it possible for only one person that is the deputy president to qualify to succeed the outgoing president. Consequently, there was virtually no need to have many qualifying candidates. However, one elder [44] who was interviewed in this study argued that the violation of seniority did not first occur at the national level but it first occurred at the provincial level as explained below, “the violation of the seniority-based top leadership succession started in Harare when Rev. T.I. Murefu removed Rev. M. Mazadza as overseer and it then spread to other provinces” [45].

The above resonates with Ndlovu ([2], p. 62) who categorically states that his study, “...also noted the leadership succession patterns as a concern today.” In light of the foregoing discussion, it is the position of this study that it is mainly the change of the traditional model of traengendered strife in the AFMZ. The above explains

why, Ndlovu ([2], pp. 2-7) is of the conviction that currently A.F.M.Z is facing acute leadership challenges which are “*fast destroying the great work done by those who shouldered it first.*” Ndlovu ([2], p. 3) further laments that;

The A.F.M.Z conducted and celebrated its centennial existence in style in August 2015 at Rufaro National Conference Centre<sup>2</sup> in Chatsworth, Masvingo. The event was meaningful but the researcher observed many areas of concern in the church’s managerial and leadership preparedness to face the future and remain spiritually effective. However, the imminent danger is the collapse of the unique spiritual culture and ethos within the Pentecostal churches if they do not keep themselves focused and aligned with the apostolic vision.

Ndlovu ([2], p. 5) adds that, “It was found that the leadership wrangles, church politicking and association of leadership positions with financial benefits have led to great complications **in** the patterns of successions within A.F.M.Z.” It, therefore, seems it is the above scenario that led Ndlovu ([2], p. 197) to conclude his study by recommending that, “More research is recommended in coming up with an effective, transparent and accountable system of appointing leaders into positions within the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe” and this study attempted to fill that gap.

To this end, it can be firmly stated that from its inception until 2003, AFM followed a traditional model of transferring power that valued seniority and ensured that the outgoing president was succeeded by his deputy president. As shown above, the traditional model of transferring power made it possible for senior and mature leaders to assume leadership at the top level of the church. These leaders who were appointed using the traditional model of transferring power did not emphasis appreciations. Consequently, there was little or no widespread conflict of power which was triggered by the love for appreciations by the top-level leaders in the AFM and the church experienced relative peace.

## **8. An evaluative discussion of management of appreciations in faith-based organisations**

A close analysis of the findings of this study shows that in addition to the changing of the traditional model of transferring power, conflict of power in the AFM was also triggered by appreciations. Up to the time of this study, some pastors, all the overseers, and the president in the AFM have access to hefty monetary benefits called ‘appreciations’. It is argued that the leadership succession patterns in the AFM are being complicated by appreciations ([3]; Nhumburudzi and Kurebwa, 2018). The appreciation is also cited as having triggered the dynamics of power in the AFM [2, 5]. Similarly, Ndlovu [2] reinforces those appreciations are causing strife and hatred in the AFM. He proceeds to lament that the concentration of monetary benefits is creating divisions and economic disparities among pastors and engendering unethical practices in managing resources. This is harming followers in the AFM ([2], p.138). Chivasa [33] defines conflict as an expressed struggle for scarce rewards among other contributing factors. According to Baser and Ozerdem [55] many scholars agree that for any peace process to be successful, it must address the underlying causes of the conflict in question [55]. This section will explore the conflict of power in the AFM. A closer examination of the above-mentioned research findings clearly shows that there is power conflict in the AFM. The prevalence of conflict of power in the AFM is also alluded to by scholars who include, but are not limited to, Nhumburudzi (2017), Nhumburudzi and Kurebwa (2018), Chivasa and Mupangwa and Chirongoma (2020), Musariri [5], and Chivasa [33] who are cited above among other writers. The conflict of power in the AFM is triggered by the financial benefits that are associated with the positions of overseer and president [2, 5]. All the respondents who were



interviewed in this study alluded to the conflict of power that is becoming evident in the AFM. It is also highlighted that the conflict of power is a result of financial benefits that are popularly known as “Appreciations” in the AFM. Resonating with the findings of this study, Ndlovu ([2], p. 140) argues that appreciation-related power struggles are “complicating the leadership succession patterns in the AFM.” According to one Pastor B (not his real name, interviewed, 31 May 2018), “The love for appreciations has engendered conflict of power. Right now we have overseers and president whose term of office has expired and they are clinging to power” [56].

In the same vein, Elder E who was also interviewed in this study had the following to say “There is power contestation as to whether we should start with elections or reforms” [57]. Resonating with the findings of this research, Chivasa [8] notes that “The increasing number of disputes involving leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe has been so dramatic.” Resonating with the findings of this study on the prevalence of the conflict of power in the AFM, Musariri [5] advances that conflict of power is prevalent in the AFM. He, however, seems to blame the young pastors who broke away from the AFM as power-hungry. He, therefore, does not argue well how the senior pastors also exuded power-hungry tendencies to remain in positions of authority for extended periods. “It was announced during AFM (National Workers Council) in 2016 that the church leadership has been taken to secular courts by people who were challenging the legibility of 2015 national elections. Hunger for power may result in splits in the AFM because of its system” ([7], p. 42).

Additionally, indirectly alluding to the conflict of power existing between the clergy and the lay workers in the AFM, Musariri [5] argues that:

*Overseer Nhira in an interview says that in AFM after the missionaries left, the congregations were led by elders because the pastors were very few. These elders were not hungry for title and even for money because they served without receiving any payment from the church. However, they were willing to work for free because they did it on a part-time basis. The current AFM constitution does not allow any pastor to be employed in a secular job except after being given written permission from the Apostolic Council (AFM constitution Chapter 15.30.1). This can also be a reason for pastors to end up manipulating the Scriptures for personal gain especially during the time of scarcity of resources like in the current Zimbabwean economic instability. An attempt to control them may end in a split.*

However, it is noteworthy that the majority of the male participants who were interviewed in this study considered the above conflict of power as having been engendered by the competition for financial resources. It is argued that the leadership succession patterns in the AFM are being complicated by appreciations ([3]; Nhumburudzi and Kurebwa, 2018). The appreciation is also cited as having triggered the dynamics of power in the AFMZ [2, 5]. It is therefore suggested that there is a need to revisit the appreciation in the AFMZ.

Gathogo [58] belabours to convince his readers that Afro-Pentecostal churches need money to acquire new technology and advises that people should not be quick to condemn the churches on monetary grounds [58]. However, while he advocates for the need for a balance in handling of church and personal finances he does not seem to offer practical solutions about how that balance can be attained. All the respondents across the subgroup divide alluded to the hefty appreciations associated with the position of the president as triggering conflict of power in the AFM. It is, therefore, important for the AFM to find a way of managing the finances that are raised towards the president’s office. The church ought to encourage people to mobilise resources towards the presidential office and not towards the individual who is occupying the office. Resonating with the findings of this study, and writing

from within the context of the AFM, Ndlovu ([2], p. 140) argues that appreciation-related power struggles are “complicating the leadership succession patterns in the AFM.” Again, similar to the findings of this research, (Kurtz 1982), argues that the reasons why there are tension and struggle in churches are because of money, power, values and beliefs, and factions among other issues. He adds that ensuring an equitable distribution of resources in the church will go a long way in resolving conflicts. The above sentiment is supported by the remarks that were made by the Pastors wife during an interview that was held on the 31st of May 2018. She had the following to say, “Power is sweet and there are benefits attached. The AFM church system has a lot of money especially for the top leaders and this brings problems. The issue of money is causing a lot of problems” [59]. Similar sentiments were echoed by Elder F who argued that “The appreciation is the major source and reason why people fight for positions. Overseer’s appreciation is at both the local assembly level and provincial level. The president is appreciated at the assembly, provincial and a very large scale at the national level” [44].

The observation that was made in this study about appreciations is in line with the findings of Musariri [5]. Writing from within the context of AFM, Musariri [5] argues that, “The Overseer, who is the leader of the province, is now being appreciated at provincial conferences and the same also happens to the president.” Musariri [5] also posits that while in the past AFMZ experienced doctrinal difference-related schisms the current schisms are mainly engendered by “power and money issues.”

Similarly, Ndlovu [2] reinforces those appreciations are causing strife and hatred in the AFM. He proceeds to lament that the concentration of monetary benefits is creating divisions and economic disparities among pastors and engendering unethical practices in managing resources. This is harming followers in the AFM ([2], p. 138). Taking the debate further, Ndlovu ([2], p. 197) further notes that the fight for appreciations has bred the preaching of false and heretic gospel which is now rife in Zimbabwe.

On the origin of appreciation in the AFM, Elder E who was interviewed in this study had the following to say;

*The issue of financial benefit came during the period of president Manyika and from there, people took leadership as an opportunity to make money. The mobilisation of resources towards the individual(s) is believed to have started during the time of Rev. Manyika as the president and it was implemented at a grand scale during the time of Madziyire” [60].*

Alluding to the origin of appreciation, Rev. Madziyire claimed that when the AFMZ started there was no appreciation. The triple appreciation of pastors per annum was then introduced in the AFMZ (The Daily News Live, 13 January 2019). However, contrary to the remarks that were made by an Elder G, who participated in this study, Elder F has the following to say “When the president (2003–2018) came into power it is him who started mobilising and channelling funds towards an individual” [61]. Ndlovu ([2], p. 121) further argued that Rev. Mutemererwa’s administration introduced the appreciation of pastors at the local assembly level in the AFM. In the same vein, Chitando [62] argues that as a result of the emphasis placed on money by preachers, they end up valuing and worshipping “those members who have money and class” [62].

While the majority of the participants spoke against appreciations, the deputy overseers hoped to assume these lucrative positions for them to be appreciated as well. This is shown below, “I am tired of raising money for someone else, I also need that opportunity to become an overseer. At the moment, we are saying God stop heaven, so that we also have our opportunity to enjoy here on earth” [63].

Similar sentiments were echoed by an Elder who argued that “The deputy president is the one who organises the president’s appreciation in the hope that he is going to be the next president. The enthusiasm is driven by the fact that he hopes to be the next leader” [47]. It, therefore, follows that if those hopes of the deputy chairman becoming the chairman are shattered through the handpicking of successors by the outgoing leaders, dynamics of power are created. This seems to be what occurred in the AFM where Rev. Manyika president is believed to have handpicked his preferred successor, hence altering the traditional model of transferring power.

In resonance with the claim made above about the appreciations, Obiakor [64] argues, “African leaders misinterpreted the concept of western leadership, equating it to amassing of wealth by the leader” [64]. It seems it is because of the laity’s great distaste for appreciations that Elder D suggested that “The incoming president need to find a compromising ground. He has to leave the issue of appreciations” [65].

In the same vein, Masengwe and Machingura (2010) concur that;

*In the Apostolic Faith Mission Church in Zimbabwe, most gopreneurs engage in questionable ministerial practices. Related to the foregoing, Shoko & Chiwara (2013, pp. 226-227) reinforce that the church minister, expects his adherents to come back to him with some appreciation packages to acknowledge that they would be blessed with the miracle of prosperity. They expect their clients to come back and offer some token of appreciation for services rendered to them.*

Similarly, A. Chitando [62] notes “one of the most contentious characteristics of newer Zimbabwean Pentecostalism is the emphasis on wealth. Members and visitors are encouraged to give generously to the “man of God” for the God of the “man of God” to bless them.”

In addition to the above, Togarasei (2005) notes that in one other Pentecostal church, people are graded according to their monetary contributions. In the same line of thought, Fainos Mangena & Samson Mhizha (2013, p. 144) argue that “Seeding to the life of the “Man of God” includes his “Birthday Gift.” In one Pentecostal church, members contribute money as a birthday gift for their church leader annually.”

The moral blameworthiness of appreciations is best summed up by Kretzschmar (2015, pp. 6-7) who contends that;

*Those who enter the ministry because they do not know what else to do, see it an opportunity to have a comfortable existence, or exercise power over others. These ought not to be ordained. The church can ill afford ministers who... misuse church money... and... are uncaring and bring the church into disrepute.*

Of all the participants who took part in this study, only two male respondents held different viewpoints on the issue of appreciations. One of the two respondents said “The issue of money is not a problem in the church but how the money is managed.” He added that “Appreciations should continue only that they should also be subject to the 50/50 centralization system” [66]. By 50/50 the deacon believed that the proposed centralisation system should only take 50% of the local assembly resources and 50% should remain at the local assembly to cater for the local assembly development.

It is worth noting that although the appreciations were introduced in the AFMZ before the president (2003–2018) came into power, a closer analysis of the data that was collected shows that appreciation was popularised by him in the AFM. It is during his tenure of office that the collection of the appreciation started to be well-organised at the national level where even corporate bodies that exhibited during the national conferences were also expected to take part in giving appreciation [65].

To this end, it can be reiterated that conflict of power which is mainly caused by the need to access appreciations by those who hold or want to assume key positions of influence is rife in the AFM. The conflict of power is also affecting peaceful co-existence in the AFM.

## **9. Conclusion and recommendation**

The question that this article sought to address was how best the AFM in Zimbabwe transfer power and manage appreciations associated with those who occupy leadership positions at the top level in a way that does not engender widespread strife? As results indicate, conflict of power in the church under scrutiny altered the traditional model of transferring power which saw old, senior, and mature leaders assuming power at the top level that did not popularise appreciations. The changing of the above-mentioned model saw the church embracing a new model that is associated with the ritual use of elections in the handpicking of preferred successors. This resulted in the election of young leaders at the top level who popularised appreciations. For the church to maintain its unity the transferring of power at the top level and the financial benefits that are raised towards the office and not towards the individual who is holding the office. This article argues that the transferring of power in the church should not be left to chance and there is a need to stick to the traditional model of transferring power and managing appreciations as a way of minimising discord in long-time churches. The AFM must revisit the traditional model of transferring power and also manage the appreciations associated with top leadership offices as a way of uniting the fragmented church. Moreover, based on the biblical texts that value respect for seniority in leadership appointment and equitable distribution of resources, the AFM must revisit its traditional model of transferring power and also manage appreciations responsibly in a manner that does not engender conflict. Given the above, the article suggests that it is imperative for the AFM in Zimbabwe councils to integrate its traditional model of transferring power, as well as the management of appreciations in its constitution. Additionally, its theological education colleges should deliberately integrate leadership succession and financial stewardship courses in their curriculums. The article argues that the traditional model of transferring power and responsible management of appreciations are a valuable tradition for the church and must be respected if the church is going to attain lasting peace, growth, and development. In addition, this study argues that the church is a traditional institution and therefore as much as it wants to keep in step with constantly changing environments, it should endeavour to remain faithful to its tried and tested model of transferring power and also manage its appreciations well as failure to do so will trigger a conflict of power. As alluded to above, one option is to integrate the institutionalised leadership succession trend and responsible management of appreciations in the church's constitution. The advantages of the traditional model of transferring power and responsible management of finances are many. The findings of this study show that both clergy and lay workers have great respect for the traditional model of transferring power and the responsible management of appreciations. This minimises the chances of novices to assume power and power contestations that spill into the courts of law causes strife in the church and it also mitigates the conflict of power that is associated with competition to assume positions of authority that are associated with appreciations.

## Author details

Ngoni Chikwanha  
Africa University College of Social Sciences, Theology, Humanities, and Education  
(CSSTHE), Institute of Theology and Religious Studies, Zimbabwe

\*Address all correspondence to: [ngonichikwanha@gmail.com](mailto:ngonichikwanha@gmail.com)

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This book is a collection of chapters on organizational conflict. It discusses the different types of conflict and how to deal with them. Whether it is a relationship conflict, task conflict, or process conflict, dealing with conflict requires analyzing the organization and its members and finding the root cause of the issue.

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