

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP,  
EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF  
MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

by

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## Declaration

I declare that **the relationship between transformational leadership, emotional competence and conflict management skills of managers in the public sector** dissertation, hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of **MADMIN (Masters in Administration: Industrial Psychology)** has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that is it my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

.....

**Matjie MA (Researcher)**



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## Acknowledgements

As a student, with little, if not any knowledge and resources, I would like to acknowledge people who have inspired me, motivated me and contributed to the success of this project.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Prof Charlotte Pietersen, for the guidance she provided me and the contribution that she made to this project throughout the years until the successful completion of this study. I also thank Prof. H. Pietersen for the courage that he gave me to continue with this study in difficulty times, and continued support and trust shown upon me to finish this study. I learned that it was upon me and only me to ensure the successful completion of this study from him.

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Without my parents, I would have never been here to embark on such a project. They encouraged me to study further and further to reach a master's phase in my studies. They showed me love and guidance all the way until the end of this project. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them greatly. Within the period of conducting this research study, I was blessed with a beautiful baby girl, Faith Radebe. She unconsciously helped me to grow and face any responsibility with a brave face, which contrarily meant facing this project head on and finishing it. I deeply thank her and her timing as it was perfect to my growth. I also thank her mother, Constance Mandu Radebe, for her serene conduct during the research process as I had spent many hours stuck in the office.

The bravery, determination, and intelligence that I had to embark on a study of this magnitude was not man-made, the Almighty God Himself bestowed that upon me. I was able to bravely raise my head during trying times, had the energy to continue and the intelligence to write this project. I thank Him as I am proud to have finished this project.

## **Abstract**

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In recent years, the South African government has put a lot of energy into the transformation of public sector departments. Effective leadership is a prerequisite in any effort to transform an organization. However, research findings indicate that there is a critical need to develop and train managers in the public sector to deal with numerous challenges in a fast changing world. They do not only need technical competencies but also “soft skills” to manage interpersonal relationships. This means that the public sector in South Africa needs to develop its leaders’ effectiveness in dealing with the human side of enterprises.

Research in the first world countries on effective leadership behaviour has indicated the following: Firstly, leaders with high levels of emotional competence are more effective in interpersonal situations than those with low levels of emotional competence. Secondly, transformational leadership behaviour has a significant positive relationship with a leader’s emotional competence. Lastly, a leader’s conflict handling style is associated with his/her effectiveness as a leader.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between managers’ transformational leadership style effectiveness, their level of emotional competence (emotional expression and constructive discontent) and their conflict management skills within the public sector in South Africa.

A survey design was employed to collect data. Questionnaires were completed by 126 managers in a public sector department in the Limpopo Province. The questionnaires included items to assess transformational leadership, emotional competence and conflict management skills, and also to siphon demographic information of the managers. Frequencies for demographic information were computed, as well as correlations for transformational leadership, emotional competencies and conflict management styles in order to test out hypotheses about the relationship between the variables of interest.

Findings indicated that the majority of the respondents were Black males under the age group of 41-50, on job levels 11-12, with managerial experience of 1-5 years. The main findings of the study showed the following: (a) There is a very weak, non-

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significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and emotional expression, and a negative relationship between transformational leadership style and constructive discontent; (b) There is a relatively weak but significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the constrictive conflict management skills (collaborating and compromising interpersonal conflict management styles); (c) There is a weak but significant negative relationship between the compromising interpersonal conflict management style and emotional expression, and a very weak, non-significant negative relationship between collaboration interpersonal conflict management style and emotional expression; and (d) There is a weak but significant negative relationship between the compromising interpersonal conflict management style and constructive discontent, but a very weak non-significant negative relationship between collaboration interpersonal conflict management style and constructive discontent.

These findings led the researcher to believe that the respondents are neither transformational leaders nor emotionally competent, and thus could not either compromise or collaborate with others when they are in an interpersonal conflict situation. It is recommended that managers should be trained to develop their leadership, as well as emotional and conflict management competencies.

Even though small sample size was used in this study, there results will be generalized to the whole South African population of public service managers. Further research study with different research methodology is recommended within other public sector departments and provinces within the country.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

#### 1. 1. Introduction

Public sector organizations such as government departments in South Africa play an important role in the welfare and general well-being of everyone in the country. The sector employs a large workforce and, as such, it is important for managers in the public sector to have good managerial skills (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2001). In recent years, the South African government has put a lot of energy into transforming public sector departments to provide quality services to the diverse South African population. Public sector managers have a very important role to play with regard to the achievement of this objective. Unfortunately, it would appear that these managers tend to lose sight of the fact that they also have a responsibility to manage their subordinates effectively. Public sector managers tend to see leadership as a service to “the people”, end consumers, society, and the public interest as service delivery, while private sector seem to managers concentrate only on their followers and productivity (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997). For this reason, the present study focuses on the behaviour of public service managers towards their subordinates, because an effective interpersonal relationship between leaders and subordinates is central to successful service delivery in public service organizations (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002). As mentioned above, the public sector has a large number of employees, but seems to lack effective leadership. According to Sangweni (2003), the public sector should prioritize the monitoring of its managers’ performance and competence levels. This will ensure that where necessary, interventions through workshops and training can be introduced.

Other than the qualifications, knowledge, professional skills, political skills, and experience, public sector managers need interpersonal behavioural skills to be able to act and behave effectively. It is the main focus of this study to identify three behavioural skills that are crucial for success in organizations, specifically the public sector, for managers. They are: (a) leadership style (Bass, 1985), (b) emotional

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competence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), and (c) interpersonal conflict management style (Powell, 1988; Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 1985; Rahim, 2001). These three variables have been selected and are relevant to the current study because of the following reasons.

Firstly, according to Cavallo and Brienza (2002), public sector managers are able to create and maintain a healthy, productive working environment because of the particular leadership styles that they use. Furthermore leadership style has a direct effect on the productivity of employees (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002).

Secondly, previous studies of the relationships between emotional competence and transformational leadership identified a positive relationship between these two variables (Barling, Slater & Kelloway, 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002). This means that these variables influence each other positively. Another study shows that public sector managers who do not have adequate emotional competencies to become effective leaders in their organizations need to be educated and trained to possess a high level of emotional competency (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2001). The findings of these studies identified that managers with relevant emotional competencies might be effective leaders. It is absolutely necessary for public sector managers to be emotionally competent (Diggins, 2004). Specifically, the public sector managers should be self-aware and able to express themselves while remaining regulative of their own emotions. Through the development of emotional self-awareness, public sector managers will be able to relate and interact with subordinates from diverse backgrounds, and also be able to coach and lead (Diggins, 2004).

Thirdly, constructive interpersonal conflict management skills are shown to be central to every organization. Workplace research, conducted decades ago, indicates that it is important for leaders or managers to manage interpersonal conflicts effectively (Duane, 1989; Lee, 1990; Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 1985; & Rahim, 2001). According to Powell (1988), as supported by Rahim (2001), public sector managers must be able to manage interpersonal conflict constructively if they are to function effectively at any level in an organization. It is further shown that there is a positive relationship between leadership style and interpersonal conflict management style that a manager chooses (Powell, 1988). For example, if a manager or leader is an autocrat

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(controlling), he/she will, in terms of interpersonal conflict management style, prefer a win-lose or obliging conflict management style (Powell, 1988).

Lastly, the existence of a relationship between an effective leadership, conflict management style and emotional competence was supported by a number of research studies (Barling et al., 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002). The relationship was shown to be a three-way one, specifically between the transformational leadership style, constructive interpersonal conflict management styles, and behavioural emotional competencies. It became evident that transformational leadership style seemed to be the best management style and to a great degree led to the successful reduction of interpersonal conflicts that can become destructive in the organizations (Allcorn, 1994). The reason for this conclusion was that transformational leaders have the emotional and behavioural skills necessary to effectively and constructively handle interpersonal conflict.

Public sector managers are central to the success of their organizations. They need effective leadership skills to lead and run efficient and effective workforces and organizations. According to Goleman (2000), managers who are not competent may not be able to handle emotional interpersonal conflict situations constructively within the organizations and between their subordinates. It is necessary for these public sector managers to become aware of their own feelings, their own emotions as well as the emotions of their subordinates, peers and superiors, so that they will be able to say the right things at the right time. Also, these managers need to possess social skills that will in turn ensure the smooth handling of conflict situations within the organizations. These social skills lead to healthy relationships in the organizations and also lead to subordinates and or employees' overall work satisfaction (Goleman, 2000; Cherniss, 2000).

The current research is relevant with regard to this problem as it investigates the relationship between these three variables, namely: transformational leadership style, interpersonal conflict management skills and emotional competence of leaders in the public sector organizations in the South African context,

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In the light of the above discussion, it becomes clear that managers who prefer transformational leadership style are likely to opt for constructive ways of dealing with interpersonal conflict situations because they are emotionally competent themselves. Transformational leadership style appears to be a relationship-building leadership style that brings about a positive response from managers for the benefit of the entire organization and its employees.

The majority of the sources cited in the above discussion are from research studies in the private sector in countries other than South Africa. They were conducted in countries like the USA, Britain and Canada, and thus become a challenge to this study in terms of relevance of sources. All managers, from the private or public sector need these social skills to be and remain effective leaders. However, public sector managers tend to show a great deal of shortcomings as compared with their counterparts in the private sector (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2001). It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the relationship among these three variables in public sector organizations in the South African context; to face the challenge of replicating the findings of previous research studies locally; and to reveal new, exciting information about leadership effectiveness in South Africa.

Another challenge that was encountered in the present study was that previous research on leadership effectiveness focused more on personality (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997), life expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1994), or contextual aspects of the situation, than on the behavioural aspects of leadership effectiveness and the actual behaviour of managers. This is something that the present study aims to avoid because it focuses on the actual behaviour of managers in particular situations. The above challenges highlight the significance and relevance of this study.

## **1. 2. Problem Statement**

South Africa has emerged from the apartheid regime and is quickly becoming the centre of attraction on the African continent. The democratic era has brought new ways of providing service delivery to the country's population. A great challenge to service delivery in the country is ineffectiveness, delays and incompetence seen and experienced in national and provincial government departments. These failures are

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linked to the leadership of managers in the public sector. In general, it seems as if many public sector managers or leaders are not well trained or qualified to hold leadership and management posts or to make huge decisions on behalf of the public. The present study aims to identify relevant interventions and mechanisms that could help eliminate incompetence of the public sector managers. The current study examines the leadership styles of public sector managers, their level of emotional competence, and their ways of handling interpersonal conflict. It is thus important for government departments to have effective managers with the necessary behavioural skills to execute their daily activities and lead their subordinates.

Research studies have indicated that public sector managers are poor leaders in their respective departments due to workload, low pay and the fact that their focus is on services delivery rather than on production, with the result that their competence and performance levels need monitoring (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2001; Sangweni, 2003). This statement alone means that there is a need for a mechanism to improve managerial skills in the public sector through a higher level of certain competencies. A research study of this nature in government departments will raise the awareness of managers in matters relating to being effective leaders, and thus to the creation of to result in effective organizations. The study highlights the appropriate behaviour that managers should adopt to become successful as public sector leaders. It was a need to effect change, reverse the negative perceptions and stereotypes that haunt public or government department as poorly-managed organizations, which compelled the research on this topic.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The following main research question was posed:

Is there a relationship between the transformational leadership style, possession of constructive conflict management skills (collaborating and compromising styles), and emotional competencies (emotional expression and constructive discontent) of public sector managers?

The following specific research questions were investigated:

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- a) Is there a relationship between transformational leadership and constructive conflict management skills (collaborating and compromising styles) of public sector managers?
- b) Is there a relationship between transformational leadership and emotional competencies (emotional expression and constructive discontent) of public sector managers?
- c) Is there any relationship between constructive conflict management skills and the emotional competencies (emotional expression and constructive discontent) of public sector managers?

#### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

The aim of the present study was to investigate the leadership effectiveness of public sector managers. For the betterment of the country as a whole, managers or leaders of South African government departments need to be strategic thinkers and transformational leaders to enable them to manage the diversity and the high need of service delivery in the country swiftly. This research study aims to help South Africa to deliver best services to the nation by identifying good management practices and skills in public sector managers. Behavioural skills are crucial for every manager or leader when he or she is faced with all situations in the workplace. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are made with regards to how managers should change their behaviour towards employees and change their approach towards the way they lead their organizations or departments.

With proper implementation of the identified appropriate behavioural attributes and skills, public sector organizations will never be the same again. They will offer competitive service delivery using effective management practices, thus attracting high quality employees and retaining them, just as in private organizations.

#### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

This research study aimed at achieving certain objectives upon its conclusion. Three objectives are identified as follows:

- To identify, analyze and determine the presence of the transformational leadership style of managers, their preferred interpersonal conflict management styles, and their application of emotional competencies.
- To investigate the relationship among the transformational leadership styles, constructive conflict management skills and the emotional competencies of managers in the public sector.
- To make recommendations that could be implemented to remedy any identified shortfall in terms of employed leadership styles preferred interpersonal conflict management style(s) and the utilization of emotional competencies for improved organizational performance.

## 1.6. Hypotheses

The directional hypotheses of this study were formulated and presented in two categories due to the number of constructs involved under each variable. They are presented as the main hypothesis and specific hypotheses.

The main hypothesis:

There is a significant positive relationship among the transformational leadership style, the collaborating and compromising conflict management styles and the emotional competence (emotional expression and constructive discontent) of managers in the public sector.

The specific directional hypotheses are stated as follows:

1. There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and emotional expression.
2. There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and constructive discontent.
3. There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and the collaborative conflict management style.
4. There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and the compromising conflict management style.

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5. There is a positive relationship between the compromising conflict management style and emotional expression.
6. There is a positive relationship between the collaborative conflict management style and constructive discontent.
7. There is a positive relationship between emotional expression and the collaborative conflict management style.
8. There is a positive relationship between constructive discontent ability and the compromising conflict management style.

### **1.7. Conclusion and overview of the whole research study**

Based on the stated hypotheses and the research questions mentioned earlier in the study, the present study specifically proceeds to investigate and examine the relationship among the application of transformational leadership, presence of emotional competence and the usage of constructive conflict management skills of leaders/managers in the public sector. The findings from this research will be generalized amongst South African public sector managers. The findings thereof will be used to add value to the South African public service.

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter to the whole research study. It aims to take the readers through the whole research study in a nutshell. This chapter briefly discusses the variables using previous literature to give a clear understanding of what is discussed in the literature chapters. It highlights the problem statement of the research study. The problem statement is a statement that elaborates on the issue or problem that led to the conducting of this research study. As usually happens in research of this nature, the problem statement caught the interest of the researcher to research it and research questions then arose as a result of the problem statement. After identifying the problem, usually a researcher formulates some questions to base the research on. These questions guide the researcher throughout the whole research process, because the researcher decides to find answers to those questions. Chapter 1 also touches on the objectives of this research. Through the objectives, this research study identifies the problem statement as outlined earlier. With a thorough and specific focus, the researcher investigates the problem

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that caught his attention in the first place, i.e., the investigation of the relationship between certain variables of interest to the researcher. Hypotheses are also crucial in order to present a clear understanding of the research. These are the preliminary answers or assumptions to the research questions that were outlined above. They also put focus on the researcher as the basis for the whole research study.

Chapter 2 is the first of the literature review chapters. In this chapter, literature on Transformational Leadership is presented. Earlier theories and approaches are highlighted. The evolution of leadership from the Role theory to the recent transformational leadership style in terms of definition and theories is also highlighted. Transformational leadership style is thoroughly discussed in this research because it is one of the chosen variables. The measurement instruments for transformational leadership are discussed and a relevant instrument is chosen with which to collect data.

The second chapter of the literature review is Chapter 3. In this chapter interpersonal conflict management skills are the main concerns. The discussion on the most appropriate conflict management styles for interpersonal conflict resolution is presented, and five commonly-known interpersonal conflict management styles are selected discussed. Constructive interpersonal conflict management skills(collaborating and compromising styles) are identified, supported by literature and thoroughly discussed as they are the basis of this study. The measurement instruments chosen for this research are also discussed.

The third chapter of the literature review is Chapter 4. In this chapter, emotional competencies are identified from the literature and briefly discussed. A thorough discussion of two emotional competencies that are supported as behavioural competencies crucial for this study is presented. The competencies selected are, emotional expression and constructive discontent. These behavioural competencies are thoroughly discussed as they also form the basis for this research. The measurement instruments for these competencies are discussed and one relevant instrument is chosen.

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The three above-mentioned chapters are similar in the sense that each of them has certain special constructs that need to be compared or investigated with each other. Chapter 2 focuses on transformational leadership style; Chapter 3 focuses on collaborating and compromising interpersonal conflict management styles, while Chapter 4 concentrates on the emotional competencies of emotional expression and constructive discontent (emotion regulation). The main aim of Chapter 5 is to present literature that identifies the relationship between these constructs. The chapter presents a literature review that describes the relationship between transformational leadership and interpersonal conflict management style, the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional competencies, as well as the relationship between interpersonal conflict management style and the emotional competencies.

Chapter 6 follows in which the research methodology that was used in the research is described. The chapter highlights the context of the study, i.e., the location of the study; the research design; the nature of the research itself; and data collection techniques applied. Chapter 6 also highlights the target population and sample (in this case, managers) together with the biographical data of the respondents or participants. This chapter 6 identifies methods of data collection and analysis. A discussion is also presented on the chosen data collection method and its relevance to this study. The response rate after the completion of the questionnaire by the participants is highlighted. The procedure of accessing the participants, the distribution and the collection procedures of the questionnaires are also highlighted in this chapter.

After the collection of the questionnaires from the participants, data analysis of the results from correlations and frequencies results takes effect. The results of the data analysis are presented in Chapter 7. The frequencies of the biographical data from the respondents are presented. The statistics, i.e. means and standard deviation of each measuring instrument are also presented, to check the distribution level of the response from the respondents. The main focus is on the correlation coefficients of the three variables as discussed in Chapter 5. The correlations are presented and interpreted for the purpose of formulating recommendations to the department. After this presentation, the results are discussed to arrive at findings and hypotheses testing.

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The last chapter of this research report is Chapter 8. This chapter emanates from the step by step scientific research methodology. It is mainly based on conclusions and recommendations that the researcher makes after carefully analysing the findings. A comprehensive justification is provided to explain the direction of the findings. This is followed by detailed recommendations for both future research, based on the resolution of some of the limitations experienced during this study, and for practical purposes in the Government departments. The recommendations give direction on what future South African researchers on the same topic should avoid and what they should consider in order to enhance or improve findings. It also provides practical guidelines to the departments on what should be done to minimize any negative findings. Lastly, the chapter details future research implications and addresses limitations of this study.

At the end of the whole research report, appendices are presented. These refer mainly to the chapter on research methodology (i.e. the data collection techniques and methods). The following appendices are attached:

- A cover page of an approved research proposal presented to the research committee at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus), approved May 2005;
- A letter of request to conduct a research study in the Department of Roads and Transport written by the researcher. The letter stipulates the capacity of the researcher, the intentions of the researcher, the title of the proposed study, the aims and objectives of the study;
- A supporting letter written by the supervisor of the researcher, which states the capacity of the researcher (i.e., Full names, student number, and name of degree enrolled for) and the intentions of the researcher to conduct the research in the Department of Roads and Transport;
- Ethical considerations and an indemnity statement to research participants from the division of Human Resources at the University of Limpopo: Turfloop Campus;

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- A seven-page questionnaire consisting of biographical data, transformational leadership, handling differences (conflict management skills), and handling feelings and emotions (emotional competence);
- Detailed and combined results of the biographical data of the respondents by gender (for statistical purposes), calculated using the SPSS Version 13.0, Frequencies; and
- A binding contract between the researcher and the department of Roads and Transport.

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## CHAPTER 2

### EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

#### 2.1. Introduction

For many years, effective leadership has been a popular subject, thus extensive literature on leadership exists. For example, Stogdill, (1974) and later Bass, (1981) produced comprehensive overviews of the topic. Research on leadership effectiveness has also been conducted in various disciplines that have some interest in the subject. These include anthropology, business administration, educational administration, history, military science, nursing administration, organizational behaviour, philosophy, political science, public administration, psychology, sociology and theology. Numerous researchers have tried to identify a 'best leadership style'. The complexity of the topic has led to different definitions of and approaches to the concept of effective leadership. Some historical trends are highlighted in the following sections.

#### 2.2. Definitions of Effective Leadership

Over the years the definition of the concept of effective management has evolved. In the late 1920s, for example, effective leadership was primarily defined in terms of the ability of a leader to ensure that his/her will was clearly understood by subordinates or employees in order to enhance their obedience, respect, loyalty and cooperation (Moore, 1927). In the 1930s, a different trend emerged. Leadership was described in terms of the interaction between a leader's specific traits and the traits of his/her employees and the mutual acceptance necessary to do things the leader's way (Bogardus, 1934). In the 1970s the focus shifted again. Leadership was then defined as the process in which a leader assists a group to reach organizational objectives (Rost, 1990:59). Rost (1990: 48) defined the concept 'as the art of influencing people by persuasion or example to follow a line of action'. In an organizational context, he defined it as the 'art of influencing the activities' of a group in its efforts towards the goals of the organization. In other words, he conceptualized it as 'action by the leader' that influences subordinates to act in a common direction as led by the leader (Rost, 1990: 51, 54).

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Furthermore, the emergence of the concept of transformational/transactional leadership in the 1990s brought about a change in the perceptions and understanding of leadership effectiveness. Transformational leadership was defined in terms of a leader's ability to influence his subordinates by making use of vision, charismatic powers, leading by example, empowering subordinates in decision making, and by motivating them to achieve organizational objectives (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Parry, 1998). It would appear that definitions of transformational leadership include most of the elements of earlier definitions of leadership in one single comprehensive definition. It is for this reason, therefore, that Bass and Avolio view transformational leadership as the most effective leadership style to be adopted by a leader. In the present study the focus is on transformational leadership. Therefore, the transformational/transactional leadership approach is thoroughly discussed in the sections below as it forms the basis of the present study.

### **2.3. Approaches to Effective Leadership**

Not all the available approaches to effective leadership are relevant to the purpose of the present study. Therefore, they are merely listed to highlight the evolution of leadership. They include:

- (1) Role theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1975; Merton, 1957);
- (2) The Managerial Grid (Blake & Mouton, 1961);
- (3) Participative leadership (Tannenbaum & Alport, 1956; Coch & French, 1948);
- (4) Lewin's leadership styles (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939);
- (5) Likert's leadership styles (Likert, 1967); and
- (6) Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

The more relevant approaches that, to a large extent, have contributed to the evolution of the transformational leadership approach are discussed below. These approaches include the Trait-, Behavioural, - Situational- and Transformational Approaches.

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### 2.3.1. Trait Approach to leadership

As a result of extensive research, the trait approach was developed in the 1940s/50s (Stogdill, 1974). The approach emphasized the personal attributes/characteristics of leaders that are related to leader effectiveness. It was used to identify individual differences between leaders and focused on the unique characteristics that make a person effective as a leader. Personal attributes used to label a person as an effective leader include, among others, high energy, being physically strong, a tendency to persist, size (being tall), responsibility, tolerance of stress, emotional maturity, self-confidence and integrity (Stogdill, 1974). The approach does not consider circumstances or situations in which a person has to lead. However, situations or circumstances ought to be considered as they play an important role in eliciting certain behaviours or reactions from people. The trait approach was criticized because it was difficult to identify leadership traits related to effective leadership (Stogdill, 1974). However, even though it fell out of favour, the approach laid the foundation for other researchers and scholars to embark on effective research on leadership.

### 2.3.2. Behavioural Approach to leadership

The behavioural approach emerged as an alternative approach to describe leadership effectiveness. This approach was developed in the 1950s-1960s at the Ohio State University, University of Michigan, and the University of Iowa, as a response to the collapse of the trait approach. Its focus was mainly on observable behaviour, such as being talkative, approachable, creative, or innovative. These specific behaviours were linked to effective leadership (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Armandi, Oppedisano & Sherman, 2003). Furthermore, the approach stressed the importance of learning. In other words, it was claimed that these behaviours could be learned, and those leaders who were able to learn them ultimately became effective leaders (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Blake & Mouton, 1978; Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973; Likert, 1979). Research on this leadership approach included the use of practical experiments and focus groups to identify leadership effectiveness. In general, two groups of behaviour, linked to leadership styles that distinguish between leaders were identified, namely, task-oriented behaviour and people-oriented

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behaviours (Blake & Mouton, 1978). These behaviours were then measured against the situations under which they could be employed effectively. It was then concluded that certain behavioural activities are more effective than others. Simply put, a talkative leader might be more effective than a shy, unapproachable one. What led to the failure of this approach was the fact that it failed to specify situations under which each or all behaviours that had been learned could be applied successfully in all situations (Yukl, 1990). For this approach to have been successful the researchers should have identified acceptable sets of behaviours which could be linked to specific situations, instead of focusing on behaviours that were isolated from any possible variable or factor within such a specific situation.

The behavioural approach was mainly used in decision-making in boardroom meetings, solely based on the ideas or innovativeness that a certain leader displayed. However, the leaders involved were unable to act upon their ideas and innovations to implement decisions when they faced other real life situations in the workplace outside of the boardroom (Yukl, 1990). It is therefore possible that leaders might be able to think intelligently and make well-informed decisions, but fail to implement them spontaneously when a situation arises.

The main contribution of this approach is that it laid a foundation for the consideration of observable behaviour in leadership research. Criticism of the approach highlighted the need to consider the situation as a moderating variable for leadership effectiveness.

### 2.3.3. Situational/contingency effective leadership approach

The establishment of the contingency/situational approaches to effective leadership saw a change in leadership studies. These approaches emphasized the importance of the impact of situations on leadership actions and decisions (House, 1971). The main emphasis was on the importance of the situation in determining leadership effectiveness by considering the authority and discretion of these leaders, the nature of work performed by the work unit, subordinates' attitudes, and the environment in which work occurred (House & Mitchell, 1974; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Yukl, 1989). Situations and behaviours were considered as equally important contributors to

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effective leadership. There was no specific leadership behaviour that was identified as important to effective leadership in given situations. For example, a kind and understanding leader could be effective in one situation but not in another. According to Yukl (1989), the actions/behaviour of a leader should be identified and matched with specific situations. However, leaders should first understand the situation before engaging in certain behaviours.

#### **2. 4. Transformational and transactional approaches to effective leadership**

Transformational and transactional approaches to leadership effectiveness gained momentum in the 1990s. These two approaches developed as a reaction to the previously discussed approaches to effective leadership. The development of these approaches is based on the work of Downton (1973).

Research findings from Burns (1978) showed that there is a great difference between the transformational and transactional leadership approaches. Burns studied political leaders as they tried to influence others to follow them and their vision. He found that the transactional approach utilized incentives and rewards to influence subordinates to perform and to keep the same performance status. Various leadership styles have been identified under this approach such as laissez faire, contingent rewards and management by objectives (MBO) (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

However, the transformational leadership approach is viewed as the preferred approach to leadership effectiveness (Bass, 1985). It would appear that leaders who are transformational are more effective than their transactional counterparts (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Transformational leadership is seen as a process whereby leaders influence major changes in employees' attitudes and values to achieve organizational objectives. Significantly, the approach introduced the concept of employee empowerment. The transformational approach is useful in the achievement of behavioural transformation in followers through the use of motivation, influence and consideration (Burns, 1978). The transformational leadership style is useful in increasing the performance, job satisfaction and loyalty of subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

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The transformational leadership style can be effective in diverse environments. As mentioned earlier, South Africa is a diverse country, and because of this, it makes the transformational leadership style appropriate and relevant to the South African context and, indeed to the present study. The transformational leader is seen as a change agent. Research has indicated the importance of effective leadership in the field of change management (Ferres, Travaglione & Spencer, 2004; Downey, Gardner & Papageorgiou, 2004). Compared with transactional leadership, transformational leadership is mostly preferred in the management of effective change in organizations (Pounder, 2001). The reasons are that transformational leaders have certain qualities that transactional leaders do not have, such as the ability to facilitate change, to influence subordinates by introducing various meaningful ways of doing things in the organizations, letting subordinates solve their problems through different solutions suggested by the leader, creating, communicating and modelling a vision, and inspiring employees to strive for that vision (Pounder, 2001). It is evident from scholarly discussions on public administration that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in effective leadership in the public sector (Ferres et al., 2004).

Extensive research on the transformational leadership style was conducted by Bass (1985), who identified four characteristics that differentiate the transformational leadership style from the transactional leadership style. The characteristics were idealized influence; inspirational motivation; individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. These findings were later supported by Bass and Avolio (1995), who added *inspirational motivation* to the list. Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam (2003) went a step further by using the term *idealized influence* to replace the term *charisma*.

According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders reach out to their followers or subordinates through joint participation in risks; their ability to maintain consistency in their behaviour; by winning trust and being seen as dependable through the eyes of their subordinates; leading by example; and by being hands-on and practical. They also inspire and motivate by giving employees challenging work and allowing them to express themselves. Transformational leaders also motivate their subordinates to strive for self-actualization, to enjoy their work and to strive for job

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satisfaction (Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders have special abilities to stimulate their subordinates, to help them realize their abilities and be willing to perform better. This is because transformational leaders are visionary, motivational and powerful. They show confidence and encourage others to be confident (Storr, 2004), and they then charm their followers into liking, listening to, and respecting them (Bass, 1990; Downey et al., 2004).

Furthermore, transformational leaders are able to express themselves in the language of choice (Goleman, 1998) and they attract followers through their emotional wellbeing (Goleman, 2000). They are also able to communicate clearly their vision which is related to the needs and values of the subordinates (Yulk & Van Fleet, 1992). They stimulate the intellectual abilities of their subordinates by helping them develop new ideas and ways of doing their work and by giving them possible solutions to problems (Bass, 1990; Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 2000). These strategies give subordinates a sense of satisfaction and belonging and motivate them to make valuable contributions to organizational success.

Another aspect of being effective leaders is that transformational leaders are attentive to specific, individual needs of each employee. They provide support to individuals when necessary and act as coaches to employees in the execution of their duties (Bass, 1990). At the same time such leaders appreciate all employees who perform better than expected. All this leads to higher performance and loyalty to organizations (Bass, 1990).

The findings of a number of studies have identified various specific characteristics or special abilities of transformational leaders, namely personal integrity (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001), self-confidence (Storr, 2004), high energy and stress tolerance (Bass, 1990), an internal locus of control orientation and emotional maturity (Goleman, 1998), as well as socialized power motivation (Yukl, 1989). Research also indicates that transformational leaders are capable of influencing employees in their jobs, their importance and the value of their contributions. They stress the importance of different ways of reaching organizational objectives (Downey et al., 2004). Thus, through support, guidance, motivation and coaching

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transformational leaders play a vital role in changing employees' need level and expand their work-related needs and aspirations (Wright, 1996).

As compared to other leadership styles, including the transactional leadership style, the transformational leadership style has been identified as the most effective style in a great number of situations (Goleman, 1998; 2000). This leadership style also impacts on the leaders themselves and their organizations. According to Hartog, Van Muijen and Koopman (1997), transformational leaders become motivated and inspired to develop their own skills in order to perform better than expected. Downey et al. (2004) associated the transformational leadership style with high efforts and performance, and also with higher effectiveness among leaders themselves. Furthermore, leaders were found to show an attractive and impressive vision that clearly predicted a future full of intrinsic rewards for the organization as a whole (Downey et al., 2004). Transformational leadership increases the awareness and interests in groups, increases employee confidence, and encourages employees to move from being individualistic to becoming more interested in the group's survival (Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994). This finding is supported by research conducted by Antonakis, et al. (2003). Their findings indicated that more emphasis on the group by all employees lead to positive profit for the organization. This could be seen in organizational sales increases, increased market share and increased earnings. Transformational leaders are able to align the organization's vision with its mission successfully. This is because they are able to create greater unit cohesion, greater unit and individual commitment, and reduced employee turnover and maintenance in the organization. They are also able to predict higher levels of product innovation in teams, and create safer work environments.

The above discussion on transformational leadership, based on a review of some of the literature in the field indicates the importance of the transformational leadership style for groups, individuals and organizations as a whole. Individuals or subordinates whose leaders are transformational become satisfied in their jobs, which in turn leads to lower absenteeism, lower employee turnover, high self-confidence, improved loyalty to the employer or organization, and improved performance. When applied in groups, the transformational leadership style enhances group cohesion as a result of trust, honesty and support among the group

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members, which results in high group performance. The group members tend to increase their efforts for the success of the entire group because they feel motivated and they feel that they belong to the group. The organization as a whole benefits from this leadership style in the sense that it provides more accurate alignment to the vision and mission of the organization, leads to increased organizational sales, increased market share and earnings, high level of product innovation, and creates safer work environments (Downey et al., 2004).

It can be concluded that for the personal growth of subordinates, high and improved performance and services from the employees, public sector leaders need to become transformational. This will benefit each department of a public sector organization (Antonakis et al., 2003). More frequent training to help leaders to change their leadership styles and to become transformational leaders is recommended because it has shown greater and improved leadership and improved performance over time (Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994).

The complexity of effective leadership means that it is difficult to find the best possible measure for it. Various researchers such as Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, (2001), Kouzes and Posner, (1995) and Bass and Avolio, (1997) have created different instruments to measure the effective attributes of a leader. In the next section, measures of transformational leadership are discussed, and one relevant measuring instrument for the present study is chosen, based on mentioned reasons.

## 2. 5. Measurements of Transformational Leadership

As with the various approaches to effective leadership, various instruments to measure effective leadership have been developed. The Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) is one of the assessment instruments that were developed to measure transformational leadership (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001). The TLQ is a shortened 78-item public sector version of the 2000 version of the TLQ (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001). It uses a 6-point Likert rating scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), with options to indicate *Don't Know* and *Not Applicable*. The scales of the TLQ were found to be

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reliable and valid with alpha coefficients for each of the scales ranging from 0.81 to 0.91 (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001).

The Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) is another instrument that was developed to measure transformational leadership. The LPI is a 360-degree measure on both leadership behaviour and strategies, developed by Kouzes and Posner (1995). The LPI consists of 30 behavioural statements and is based on self-rating and ratings from others, such as peers, superiors, and/or subordinates. The LPI measures five leadership practices namely, challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way and encouraging the heart. The internal reliability has been shown to be high with various scales being above 0.75 levels (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The LPI measures the qualities of an effective leader, while the current study seeks to measure the actual behaviour a leader needs to adopt to become effective.

Lastly, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is another well-known assessment instrument (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The MLQ consists of a short and comprehensive survey of 45 items measuring different leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Participants respond to a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). Five sub-scales measure transformational leadership (inspirational motivation, idealized behaviours, idealized attributes, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration). Three sub-scales measuring transactional leadership include contingent, management by exception (active), and management (passive). The MLQ also measures laissez-faire or non-transactional leadership and three outcomes of leadership (viz., extra effort, effectiveness and satisfaction) reliabilities for outcomes of leadership, and the total scores of transformational leadership style for the related sub-scales range from  $\alpha=0.74$  to 0.94 (Bass & Avolio, 1997). These reliabilities are high which shows that MLQ is a relevant measuring instrument for measuring the transformational leadership style.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was chosen for the present study to achieve the goals, test the hypotheses formulated, and to assess the actual behaviour of an effective leader. This measure aims to identify whether someone is a transactional, laissez-faire or transformational leader. The reasons for this choice are

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that the MLQ was designed in South Africa. The instrument was also specifically designed to measure behavioural aspects of the transformational leadership style, such as inspirational motivation, idealized behaviours, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

## **2. 6. Conclusion**

The main aim of this chapter was to provide literature on effective leadership in general and transformational leadership in particular. This was achieved by identifying, through consideration of previous research, the importance of the transformational leadership style in organizations and for managers or leaders of public sector organizations in particular. The literature review highlights the arrival of transformational and transactional approaches to leadership as a giant step towards effective organizations in the world. The transformational approach, in particular, has brought the actions rather than thoughts and beliefs of the leader into effect. Transformational leaders become successful in the leadership quest because they are hands on, influential and treat their subordinates like equal partners. They also provide their subordinates with the freedom and opportunity to express themselves and reach optimal levels in their work.

From the literature review it is evident that the most effective leadership style is transformational leadership. It is relevant to study the leadership style along with other influential factors for the success of the organization so as to develop a comprehensive mechanism for providing sound leadership effectiveness in public sector organizations in South Africa. For the purpose of this research study, other influential factors considered are interpersonal conflict management styles and emotional competence. From the literature consulted on transformational leadership it is evident that leader effectiveness is linked to emotional competence and the ability to handle interpersonal conflict constructively. Transformational leaders are emotionally competent and possess the necessary “soft skills” to handle interpersonal conflict constructively. The relationships between these variables are discussed in Chapter 5.

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## CHAPTER 3

### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

#### 3. 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a definitional framework of conflict management. The nature of interpersonal conflict, the impact of interpersonal conflict in the workplace, and a discussion of various conflict management styles are also covered. The importance for managers and leaders to manage interpersonal conflict constructively in organizations in general and in the public sector in South Africa in particular is emphasized. In this regard two constructive conflict managements skills , namely, collaborating and compromising styles are discussed in detail. The chapter ends with a discussion of measuring instruments that could be used to assess interpersonal conflict styles.

#### 3. 2. Definitional framework and the nature of interpersonal conflict

According to Rahim (2001) and Bergh and Theron (2003), conflict, in general, appears in three different forms, namely intrapersonal conflict, group conflict and interpersonal conflict. Intrapersonal conflict refers to internal conflict experienced by the individual when his/her values or roles clash with each other. An example from the workplace is a situation in which a manager is a friend of a subordinate but a boss at the same time. The manager could experience intrapersonal conflict when he/she is supposed to reprimand the employee (friend) for a work-related offence. Group conflict refers, for example, to how individuals handle pressure from the group to conform. As a group or team member one sometimes has to sacrifice something in order to help the group/team to achieve its goals. Interpersonal conflict refers to the existence of simultaneous, opposing and conflicting thoughts, feelings and activities between persons in the same environment.

Rahim (1992 p16) describes the concept of interpersonal conflict as ‘an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance based on goals, values, and aims within or between social entities’. Research of literature in the field of organizational psychology highlighted different ways in which organizational and

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interpersonal conflict manifests itself. Sportsman (2005), for example, indicates that conflict can derive from power struggles in which employees attempt to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals. In the workplace interpersonal conflict could have dire consequences. For example, it could result in actions such as strikes, lockouts, go-slows or poor performance from employees, because they (employer and employees) disagree on some things.

It is, therefore, not surprising that interpersonal conflict management has been an important research focus for a long time. Most of the factors that influence the existence of interpersonal or organizational conflict in the workplace could be controlled if proper mechanisms were in place to do so. Managers also need social and interpersonal skills to manage interpersonal conflict constructively, for example, during salary negotiations.

In the present study the focus is on the skills to manage interpersonal conflict in the workplace, and how managers can learn to handle it constructively instead of avoiding it. The aim is to understand the positive and negative impact of interpersonal conflict on the organization.

### **3. 3. Interpersonal conflict in the workplace**

Interpersonal conflict seems to be a fundamental component of organizational life (Pondy, 1967; Van de Vliert & Kobanoff, 1990). Therefore, interpersonal conflict is unavoidable the workplace (Baron, 1984; Baron, 1985; Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk, 1998; Pondy, 1967; Rahim, 2000; Thomas, 1976). In diverse organizational settings people work together to achieve goals and they have different aims and values. This means that in the workplace interpersonal conflict could arise between two or more people (Bergh & Theron, 2003). Workers engage in an interpersonal conflict with others whom they perceive to be preventing them from attaining their goals. Everyone wants to satisfy their needs or interests without conflict, which is not always possible (Rahim, 1992). No one wants to lose when in an argument, disagreement or negotiations, and it takes a lot of sacrifice and understanding for parties to meet each other halfway in such situations. It also needs finesse and special skills to achieve a win-win situation.

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Over the past number of years various scholars and researchers have embarked on quests to identify interpersonal conflict, its causes, its types, its effects, and various ways to deal with it. Researchers have attributed interpersonal conflict to 'heterogeneity of the work force, environmental changes, and differences in goals, diverse economic interests, differential role structures, conflict group loyalties, and value discrepancies in organizations' (Knapp, Putnam & Davis, 1988 p423). This type of conflict could be attributed to decision-making styles, communication, work responsibilities, resources, personality differences and ideology (Rahim, 1985; Thomas, 1976).

In South Africa various mechanisms have been put in place to solve interpersonal work-related conflicts externally, these include the CCMA, Labour Courts, Labour Appeal Courts. In many organizations internal methods are also in place to solve interpersonal conflict at work, such as bargaining councils, workplace forums, codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures (Gerber et al., 1998).

However, managers continue to play a pivotal role in the management of interpersonal conflict. Conflict can become destructive if a manager or leader does not have the abilities to resolve it constructively. At the same time, interpersonal conflict in organizations used to be seen as a destructive force that needed to be avoided at all costs. It is true that interpersonal conflict is dangerous if mishandled as it could lead to a general breakdown in communication and cooperation (Rahim, 1992). However, it is now viewed as one of the most basic and even constructive concepts in organizational life, because it can bring new stimulating perspectives to the workplace. Therefore, organizational leaders should not and cannot stop interpersonal conflict from occurring, but they can handle it diligently to avoid its destructive effects (Duane, 1989; Rahim & Blum, 1994; Weldon & Jehn, 1995). It also means that managers should be able to understand, identify and manage interpersonal conflict. They also have to know and embrace interpersonal conflict, and develop necessary skills to manage it (Thomas, 1992). They should also see every conflict situation as a learning experience and make necessary adjustments for the benefit of their organizations (Thomas, 1992).

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### 3. 4. Conflict Management Styles

As a result of extensive research on constructive interpersonal conflict management skills, five generally accepted interpersonal conflict management styles have been identified (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Follet, 1940; Rahim, 1989; Rahim, 1992). These interpersonal conflict management styles are referred to as specific behavioural modes that a person prefers to use when addressing conflict situations (Rahim, 1992). A comprehensive model of conflict management styles was developed by Blake and Mouton (1964). This model was later adapted by Hall (1969), Thomas and Kilmann (1974), Rahim (1983a) and Rahim (1983b). The models have been used to identify appropriate skills of managing interpersonal conflict between people in the workplace in order to minimize any negative impact of the conflict episodes on organizational efficiency (Rahim, 1983b). While the model was originally developed in an organizational context, its use has been extended to evaluate conflict in many other settings such as schools and universities and families (McCombs, Forehand & Smith, 1988).

The five interpersonal conflict management styles in the model are commonly known as collaborating, accommodating (obliging), competing, avoiding, and compromising (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Hall, 1969; Lee, 1990; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979; Thomas, 1976; Ting-Toomey, Lin, Kim, Yang, Trubisky & Gao, 1991; Trubisky & Ting-Toomey, 1991).

#### 3. 4. 1. Competing

Competition is not built on trust, loyalty or mutual respect, but on win-lose situations of force and power, where feelings or rights of one party are totally undermined (Baskerville, 1993). This is a destructive interpersonal conflict management style, and is only appropriate when it is not important to preserve relationships. A person who uses this style predominantly focuses on his/her own agendas or concerns with a total disregard for or at the expense of another person (Arizona Student Unions, 2003; Antonioni, 1998; Rahim, 1992). The results of this autocratic style are often rebellious behaviours such as go-slows, strikes and stay-aways by subordinates or unsatisfied employees (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Managers tend to use this style in

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their dealings with subordinates rather than with their own peers or superiors (Lee, 2002). They see competing as a power style that could be successfully applied on powerless inferior parties. They also regard their subordinates as workers who need to be controlled. These leaders are not effective leaders because they are labeled autocrats. There are situations where an effective leader might consider using this style to bring an end to less important conflict in the organization. Transformational leaders are good examples of leaders who are might be able to use this style effectively, depending on the circumstances.

### 3. 4. 2. Avoiding

There are managers who prefer not to resolve or be involved in interpersonal conflict situations. One possible reason why they prefer to avoid conflict is because they are unsure of how to resolve it effectively (Baskerville, 1993). If a conflict situation does arise, it will remain unresolved as the leader in question will ignore it. This results in a lose-lose outcome for both parties as it could lead to unsatisfied or unanswered concerns and questions from one or both parties (Antonioni, 1998; Rahim, 1992). It could also lead to mistrust and a breakdown in communications and have a negative effect on work relationships. Avoiding is regarded as the most uncooperative style which could also result in confusion and violence. For example, striking employees whose needs are not being attended to or who were being ignored, may become violent (Rahim & Magner, 1995). By carefully considering the situation, transformational leaders are able to use this style to handle interpersonal conflict in the workplace effectively. An avoiding style is considered to be suitable when the issue is relatively unimportant and there are potentially dysfunctional outcomes from confronting the other party (Rahim, 1992). However, with reference to example above, a line should be drawn between issues that are important and those that are unimportant to employees.

The use of the avoiding interpersonal conflict management style simply implies that leaders or managers do not appreciate and recognize conflict as being inevitable in any organization. They do not recognize the positive effects that conflict situations might bring to the organization. As a result they turn away from conflict situations at

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all costs. Effective managers should embrace interpersonal conflict and handle it accordingly.

### 3. 4. 3. Accommodating

A person accommodates another person by considering his/her needs (concern for others) and neglecting his/her own needs (concern for self) (Arizona Student Unions, 2003; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). When conflict arises, a manager gives in to another group's interest or demands. For example, when a strike action is looming, this kind of leader will identify the employees' concerns and satisfy them before the strike takes effect. The style clearly results in a lose-win situation (Antonioni, 1998). It shows a lot about the kind of a manager who might use this style to solve conflict situations (Baskerville, 1993). It might point to the personality of such a manager or to a lack of control of situations or circumstances. However, personality alone does not shape effective leadership (Stogdill, 1974), so certain levels of abilities or skills are essential if a leader is to handle interpersonal conflict effectively at all times. The obliging style is considered to be more appropriate when the person is in a weaker position than the other party, the issue is more important to the other party, and preserving the relationship is important (Rahim, 1997).

A leader who adopts the accommodative interpersonal conflict management style acknowledges the existence of interpersonal conflict in the organization. But they avoid it, making sure that it is resolved by their acceptance of everything, as long as it will defuse the tension. By doing so, the manager displays a lack of control or even basic effective leadership skills. Conflict can bring about a new perspective if it is allowed to take effect and when it is managed effectively. By accommodating it this new perspective is not achieved and there will be no fresh ideas or new ways of doing things in the organization. This is a destructive style of managing interpersonal conflict and should be used only when the odds are against the manager or organization. A perfect example will be in a situation in which striking employees cause the company to lose much profit and they are even joined by the company's suppliers (secondary strike).

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## 3.5 Constructive interpersonal conflict management styles

Among the five interpersonal conflict management styles, only two are generally considered to be constructive skills of managing interpersonal conflict, which means that they are effective in most situations. These styles consider both parties' needs (concern for self and concern for others) and they are not hostile. They bring about trust, loyalty, respect and a mutual solution whereby all parties walk away satisfied and ready to continue with the relationship.

### 3.5.1. Compromising

This is an effective style of handling conflict, because both parties are willing to suggest mutually acceptable solutions for their different needs. When this style is used there is a moderate concern to achieve the goals of both parties. It is not a matter of a situation or circumstances, but the skills and abilities to turn the outcome of every conflict situation into a mutually agreeable result. Compromising means that both parties sacrifice some needs in order to meet each other halfway to reach an agreement (Antonioni, 1998; Lawson & Shen, 1998; Rahim, 1992). Both parties' needs and goals are acknowledged and considered (Baskerville, 1993; Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style is highly appropriate when the goals of the parties are mutually exclusive, when both parties are equally powerful and when consensus cannot be reached (Rahim, 1992). An appropriate use of this style results in highly productive employees, respected management and performing organizations.

### 3.5.2. Collaborating

This is the cornerstone for the handling of interpersonal conflict in organizations. Every person's views and needs are considered. Cooperation is the main concern in order to find a solution that satisfies both parties (Arizona Student Unions, 2003; Baskerville, 1993). The use of this style strengthens and maintains the relationships of mutual respect among employees and managers. It further contributes to the development of high moral values among employees (Burke, 1970; Rahim, Buntzman, & White, 1999). The style is about knowing what is right, knowing when to say and do the right thing, and being cooperative when doing it (Rahim & Magner,

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1995). Collaboration can be used to solve very complex matters that need time, commitment and the sharing of ideas (Rahim, 1997). It is regarded as a superior style and as the most appropriate conflict management style in all circumstances and situations (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Burke, 1970; Likert & Likert, 1976). Transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to collaborate with fellow employees and others (this statement is supported in Chapter 5).

However, while it may seem that the collaborating style is most desirable, there may be situations in which it is not in the best interest of either party to use it. For example, this style may be inappropriate when immediate decisions need to be made or when parties involved do not have the necessary problem-solving skills (Rahim, 1992).

### **3.6. Discussion**

Ideally, the mode of handling interpersonal conflict used by managers should depend on the particular situation and circumstance (Lee, 2002). There is no interpersonal conflict management style that is generally accepted as being effective for every situation, and managers need to be skilled enough to be able to identify appropriate styles for specific situations and learn how to implement them effectively.

Compromising and collaborating both lead to constructive results that leave both parties satisfied and relationships intact. Managers who use these styles are calm, self-confident, and emotionally competent and they always focus on the root cause of a problem to reach an amicable solution (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). They exhibit emotional maturity and a high level of leadership abilities.

Lee (2002) conducted research to identify the preferred modes used when handling conflict in various situations and circumstance, such interpersonal conflict between a manager and his/her superiors, peers and subordinates. The findings of the study suggested that the competing interpersonal conflict management style was frequently used by managers when they were in conflict with their subordinates. It was also found that every person has a preferred conflict management style. Leaders and managers might even prefer to use more than one style (Lee, 1990;

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Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Trubisky & Ting-Toomey, 1991). Some writers regard conflict management styles as ever changing and situation-dependent (Friedman, Tidd, Currall & Tsai, 2000). This means that they believe that a leader chooses a certain style as a behavioural reaction to a certain conflict situation (Knapp et al., 1988). Others believe that leaders choose a style based on the relationship between the parties in conflict (Rahim, 1992). However, according to Rahim, Garrett and Buntzman (1992), the style chosen depends on the ethics or values of the leader or person in conflict as well as on the specific conflict situation.

The findings from this study found that managers used the accommodating conflict management style when they were in disagreements with their superiors. They tended to be less accommodative with their peers or people on the same level of power and status as themselves. Managers were found to compromise with their peers in most cases (Drake, Zammuto, & Parasuraman, 1982; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoak & Rosenthal, 1964; Lee, 2002; Rahim, 1983). It would appear that the nature or relevance of an argument or disagreement was not considered. The power relationship between the different parties was the deciding factor. Therefore, it can be concluded that a certain level of competence is needed for managers to handle interpersonal conflicts objectively, irrespective of the situation or circumstances.

Another study was conducted in the Korean Government with the aim of identifying the ability of managers to handle interpersonal conflict constructively (Lee, 2002). The findings showed that most government managers were unable to do this. Most managers indicated the use of stereotypes to judge conflict situations before even starting to deal with them. Lee recommended a training programme for managers to learn about ways to handle interpersonal conflict constructively. He hoped the training would help managers to focus on the problem and not to be stereotypical in their thinking. This has relevance to the present study because one of its purposes is to identify the conflict management styles of public sector managers in the South African context.

The present literature study found that research had been conducted to investigate the relationship between gender and the use of interpersonal conflict management styles (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee-Jung, 2001). The findings were interesting

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because they indicated that males were found to prefer masculine, power related or forceful interpersonal conflict management styles, such as competing, without considering the situation and circumstance of the conflict. The competing interpersonal conflict management style is regarded as being a rude and inconsiderate way of handling interpersonal conflict (Coates, 1986; Brewer, Mitchell & Weber, 2002). This stereotype poses a serious challenge to male managers in the public sector, and necessary steps should be applied to eliminate this behaviour. On the other hand females showed a greater degree of collaboration when in an interpersonal conflict situation. This was seen to be due to their feminine nature that makes them more caring, and which causes them to opt for peaceful solutions to problems (Ting-Toomey et al., 2001).

Although the present study does not focus on gender specifically, it is important to highlight its impact on the use of certain interpersonal conflict management styles. These findings are relevant to the present study because most managers in public sector departments are males, especially in the South African government, because affirmative action has not yet reached its target of employment equity.

According to Ting-Toomey et al. (2001), personality shapes the behaviours of leaders when they make decisions about interpersonal conflict situations. This was deduced from a study on the effects of ethnic background, gender, and self-construal types on interpersonal conflict management styles. The research findings of a study conducted by Antonioni (1998) showed a positive relationship between personality and the choice of interpersonal conflict management style. Antonioni investigated the relationship between the 'Big Five' personality characteristics (extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism) and the five conflict styles (collaborating, accommodating, competing, avoiding, and compromising) to identify the impact of personality of a manager on his/her choice of interpersonal conflict handling styles. A total of 351 undergraduate business students from a major Midwest university in the United States of America (USA) participated in the study. At the same time, 120 mid-level managers participated in managerial development seminars sponsored by the same university. The managers were used in order to assess whether the results from the student sample could be replicated. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the student participants were female and 45% of the managers

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were female. Sixty percent (60%) of the managers were from manufacturing companies, had a college education, and had 10 or more years of work experience. The findings showed that managers who were extroverts (sociable) frequently used the collaboration interpersonal conflict management style, managers who were open preferred to be accommodating, those who were agreeable preferred compromising, because they tended to agree on almost everything to settle the argument, while those managers who were conscientious preferred to avoid conflict at all costs. The neurotic managers tended towards competing as they became obsessed with winning. The overall findings were that personality characteristics of the leaders played a vital role in their choice of conflict management style (Antonioni, 1998).

In the quest to compare and identify which style is most appropriate, effective and constructive, Rahim, Buntzman, & White (1999) studied all the styles used in a tertiary institution in the USA. The study involved the administration of two well-known instruments, namely, the Defining Issues Test (DIT) followed by the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II), Forms A, B, and C. The sample consisted of 443 employed undergraduate business administration students enrolled in junior and senior level management courses. About 48% of the participants were female. The findings indicated that collaborating and compromising were the two styles which were useful in most situations. They were also associated with a high level of respect of employees for leaders and the organization as a whole. These findings provide support that these two styles could be used to handle interpersonal conflict amicably and that they also improve and enhance healthy working relationship among staff and superiors in the workplace. Research also showed that managers who adopted these two interpersonal conflict management styles experienced less conflict in their organizations. In this regard Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) conducted a study on a sample of 125 full-time managers (59 women and 66 men). The managers, who were attending leadership institutes at three universities in the USA, completed various instruments as part of their course requirements. The correlations among the five conflict management styles and the levels of conflict that were experienced, indicated that there was an opposite relationship between integrating and the levels of interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict reported by the participants. This implied that both compromising and collaborating conflict management styles were not situation-dependent as long

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as both parties were competent and willing to resolve the matter at hand. The two styles were effective irrespective of the kind or level of conflict experienced. Both styles should be preferred in order to manage interpersonal conflict productively.

It can be concluded that all the styles are useful depending on the situation, the abilities of both parties and the manager's abilities to steer and manage the conflict resolution process. However, both collaborating and compromising styles are effective in most situations to solve a conflict amicably (Friedman et al., 2000). These constructive styles are universally accepted as appropriate for handling any kind of conflict situation and on any level and still yield positive results for both parties involved.

In the next section various measures for the assessment of interpersonal conflict management styles are discussed in order to select the most appropriate measure for the present study.

### **3.7. Measures of Interpersonal Conflict Management Styles**

There are various measurement instruments that can be used to measure conflict management styles in the organizational context. The *Organizational Conflict Communication Instrument (OCCI)* developed by Wilson and Putnam (1982) is one of the measuring scales used to assess conflict management styles. This instrument was constructed to measure verbal and nonverbal communicative choices in the management of conflict in a variety of organizational contexts. This self-report, 7-point Likert-type instrument contains 29 items (plus 4 items added in a revision of the instrument). The instrument's reliability is (Cronbach's alpha): non-confrontation - 0.93; solution-orientation - 0.88; control - 0.82; and overall - 0.89. According to Wilson and Putnam (1982), there is evidence of high discriminatory power, moderate construct validity and strong predictive validity. They also believe that one advantage of the instrument is that it is quick and easy to administer.

A measure by Rosenthal and Hautaluoma (1987), the *Rosenthal-Hautaluoma (RH)*, was also constructed to measure interpersonal conflict management styles. This forced choice instrument measures the five styles of managing conflict derived from

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conflict management theory (avoiding, compromising, accommodating, competing, and collaborating). It was designed to investigate social desirability bias by pairing statements similar in social desirability. Average test-retest reliabilities for the five styles were 0.70. The authors claim that this instrument provides a broader coverage of the meaning of the different conflict handling styles than other instruments (Rosenthal & Hautaluoma, 1987).

Another well-known organizational and interpersonal conflict measure is *Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)* (Rahim, 1983). The inventory is used to assess the five conflict management styles of dominating, avoiding, obliging, compromising and integrating. The measure has been tested in numerous studies in many different conflict settings and has been found to have a high degree of validity and internal consistency (Weider-Hatfield, 1988; Rahim, 1992). The measure has high convergent and discriminate validity. Test-retest reliabilities of the subscales at 1-week intervals ranged from 0.60 to 0.83. Internal consistency reliability coefficient for each subscale, using Cronbach's alpha, ranged from 0.72 to 0.76.

One of the most well-known and frequently used conflict measurement instruments is the *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)* (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). The measure consists of 30 sets of paired items (total of 60 items) with each pair (A&B) describing one of the five conflict management styles. There are 6 paired items for each style, randomly arranged in the measure. An individual's score for each style is the number of times that the style is chosen. Internal consistency coefficients were reported by the authors to be 0.43 for accommodating, 0.62 for avoiding, 0.58 for compromising, 0.65 for collaborating, and 0.72 for competing. The average alpha coefficient was reported at 0.60 for this measure. The authors consider low social desirability contamination as one of the strengths of the Thomas-Kilmann Scale (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) was used for the purpose of the present study. The reasons for this choice are that the measure was used extensively by various conflict styles researchers (Chanin & Schneer, 1984; Jehn & Weldon, 1992; Johnson, 1997; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Mills, Robey & Smith,

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1985; Womack, 1988) and was found to be reliable, valid and consistent. The TKI is also easy and quick to administer (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977).

### **3. 8. Conclusion**

Previous research has indicated that conflict in organization is mainly influenced by the relationship and the degree of conflict between the parties involved in the conflict (Drake et al., 1982; Kahn et al., 1964; Rahim, 1983). It can be concluded that certain interpersonal conflict management styles are chosen based on the level of interaction between parties involved. However, an effective manager should develop his/her competence and ability to stay focused and apply an appropriate conflict management style regardless of the situation or the relationship between parties involved in a disagreement.

Conflict management skills are crucial if managers are to function effectively at any level within an organization (Powell, 1988). The presence of unresolved interpersonal conflict among managers and subordinates could have both negative and positive consequences for organizations (Rahim, 2000). This means that all interpersonal conflicts should be resolved. The avoiding, accommodating and competing styles, given their nature, are not recommended to manage interpersonal conflict. The use of these styles could result in dysfunctional behaviours such as low morale, sabotage, go-slows, strikes poor performance, stress and poor interpersonal relations between the conflicting managers and subordinates. However, if managed constructively conflict may result in positive consequences including enhanced creativity and innovation, higher quality decision-making and improved mutual understanding (Rahim, 2000).

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## CHAPTER 4

### EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

#### 4. 1. Introduction

In this chapter emotional competence is discussed in terms of a definitional framework and the relevance of the concept for effective leadership. Emotional competence is discussed from a behavioural perspective. For the purpose of the present study two behavioural components of emotion self-management are highlighted and related to effective leadership and the interpersonal skills of managers.

#### 4. 2. Definitional framework

Salovey and Mayer (1990) are credited with originally developing the term *emotional intelligence*. In the USA the concept was popularized by Goleman. According to Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for emotional competence. Mayer and Salovey's definition of emotional intelligence includes four groups of interrelated core competencies, namely, '...the ability to monitor one's own and other's feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions, in terms of a person's capacity for recognizing and managing one's own and others' emotions' (Salovey & Mayer, 1990 p185; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). According to Salovey and Grewal (2005 p281), this model provides a useful framework for studying abilities related to processing emotional information. The definition focuses on two aspects of emotional intelligence, namely, a person's cognitive processes for monitoring emotions and discriminating amongst them, as well as the use of this cognitive information to guide his/her thinking and behaviour (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (2000) and Goleman (1998) also included multiple abilities or competencies under the umbrella term emotional intelligence (EI).

The Goleman (1998) model of EI includes five domains of functioning and twenty-five emotional competencies. He later adapted the model into a model with four

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domains and twenty competencies (Goleman, 2000). In the model, EI is divided into two groups: social and personal competence. Two of the four domains (self-awareness and self-management) are included under personal competence. Social awareness and relationship management are included under social competence (Goleman, 2000; Boyatzis et al., 2000). The self-awareness cluster includes emotional self-awareness (knowledge and expression of own emotions), and accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. Competencies under self-management are emotion self-control, adaptability, achievement drive, conscientious, initiative, trustworthiness. The social awareness competence cluster includes empathy, service orientation and organizational or political awareness. Relationship management or social skills are divided into conflict management, developing others, leadership, being a change catalyst, influence, building bonds, communication, and teamwork and collaboration. Some criticism leveled against the Goleman model is that it includes personality characteristics and knowledge of emotions instead of the behavioural dimensions of being emotionally intelligent (Van der Zee & Wabeke, 2004).

Since the conception of Salovey and Mayer's definition much research has been conducted in the field of EI (Barsade, 1998; Bachman, 1988; Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990). Different terms have also been used to describe the concept of *EI* (Matthews, Zeidner & Roberts, 2002). Both Goleman (1995) and Salovey and Mayer (1990) used the term EI. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) label it *emotional literacy*, Cooper (1997) describes it as an *emotional quotient* and Gardner (1983) uses the term *personal intelligence*. Different authors also use different terms to describe the components of emotional intelligence. For example Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (2000) referred to them as branches, while Boyatzis (1982) calls them competencies. The differences in description of the term and its sub-components indicate that emotional intelligence is difficult to define (Zeidner, Roberts & Matthews, 2004).

For the purpose of the present study, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) definition is adopted. The reason for this choice is that this definition is widely recognized as a standard for scholarly discourse in the field of emotional intelligence (Van der Zee & Wabeke, 2004).

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One of the competencies, emotion management, has been identified as a key dimension in managing interpersonal conflict (Gayle & Preiss 1998; Jones 2000; Martin, Knopoff & Beckman, 1998). Emotion management, the fourth branch of the Mayer and Salovey model, is conceptualized as the behavioural element of emotion (Law & Wong, 2004; Ogilvie & Carsky, 2002). It is defined as the ability to manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others (Salovey & Grewal, 2005 p282). According to Salovey and Grewal (2005 p72), a person's competence in dealing with emotions is an essential component of effective conflict management. These competencies allow individuals to demonstrate the intelligent use of their emotions in managing themselves and working with others in order to be effective in the workplace (Boyatzis et al., 2000). Literature consulted has shown that competence in emotion management by leaders has a positive effect on work-related behaviours such as worker motivation, creativity, performance, interpersonal judgments and communication, performance-appraisal judgments in selection interviews, organizational spontaneity, employee flexibility and helpfulness, absenteeism, as well as bargaining and negotiation (Forgas & George, 2001).

In the present study the focus is on the first behavioural component of emotion competence, namely emotion self-management. Emotion self-management includes the demonstration of emotion regulation and emotion expression (Boyatzis et al., 2000). The decision to focus on this aspect of emotion management is supported by the following argument.

#### **4. 3. Emotional Competence of Leaders**

Various scholars have conducted research on the relationship between effective leadership and emotional intelligence/competence (Goleman, 1998; 2000; Orioli, Jones & Trocki, 1999; Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Rosier & Jeffrey, 1994; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). The findings from these studies showed that effective leaders are emotionally competent and vice versa. Furthermore, emotional competence enables a leader to use a range of personal skills to influence employees successfully to work towards planned and desired organizational goals. These leaders are able to implement an organization's mission and vision without impediment by arousing employees' the enthusiasm to perform.

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Transformational leadership also “has an intense emotional component” (Bass, 1985 p36). For example, a transformational leader’s emotional expression has a direct impact on subordinates’ affect and performance (Bono & Illies, 2006). Emotionally competent leaders and transformational leaders strive for constructive outcomes in every decision they make. They are able to regulate their own emotions by remaining calm, focused and emotionally grounded under pressure in conflict situations (Orioli et al., 1999). They are also highly self-efficient, able to experience positive emotions and can enhance communication, openness and organizational growth, while improving interpersonal performance in themselves and other employees (Staw & Barsade, 1993). Emotionally competent leaders are also able to collaborate with others and work effectively in teams (Goleman, 1998; Rosier & Jeffrey, 1994; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). They have the ability to create group synergy in the pursuit of collective goals and they can balance the focus on tasks with attention to relationships and collaboration. In addition to this they tend to share plans, information and resources. In the end they help to promote a friendly, cooperative organizational climate.

The findings of a study by Mayer and Salovey (1993) suggests that emotionally competent leaders are more likely to be open to internal experiences and are able to label and communicate those experiences. Therefore, it can be concluded that competence in experiencing internal emotions coupled with the ability to understand and manage their own moods and emotions, contribute to effective leadership (George, 2000). According to George, emotionally competent leaders are able to solve problems and to address issues and opportunities facing them and their organizations. Furthermore, they use positive emotions to visualize future improvements to the functioning of an organization. They are able to make effective decisions because they are able to recognize their own emotions accurately and are able to determine whether an emotion is linked to opportunities or problems, and then to use those emotions in the process of decision making (Schwartz, 1990). In addition to the characteristics of effective leadership mentioned above, Boyatzis et al. (2000) identify the following: the ability to identify emotion thus allowing the leader to be aware of his/her own emotions and the emotions of subordinates, thus helping him/her to differentiate between honest and false emotions in others; the ability to

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motivate subordinates by engaging in activities facilitated by emotions; and the ability to encourage the introduction of new, fresh idea from employees in decision making and planning.

Barling et al., (2000), and Palmer, Stough, Burgess and Walls, (2001) conducted two empirical studies on the relationship between emotional competence and effective leadership. Firstly they examined the relationship between transformational/transactional leadership and emotional competence. Their study included 49 managers, who reported high correlations between emotional competence and all three (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration) components of transformational leadership behaviours. EI was measured using the EQ-I designed by Bar-On (1997) and was based on studies by Salovey and Mayer (1990), Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Goleman (1995, 1998a, 1998b). They concluded that emotional competence helps leaders to use transformational behaviours in their leadership techniques or styles. Their conclusions were derived from the fact that leaders who were emotionally competent acted as role models for followers and enhanced subordinates' trust and respect. However, Barling et al. (2000) concluded that all forms of the transactional leadership style are not positively related to the emotional competence of a leader. Palmer et al. (2001) also investigated the relationship between emotional competence and effective leadership. The authors postulated that, because transformational leadership is considered to be more emotion-based than transactional leadership (Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994) there should be a stronger relationship between emotional competence and transformational leadership style than between emotional competence and transactional leadership style. Palmer et al. (2001) correlated the sub-scales of a modified version of the Trait Meta Mood Scale designed by Salovey et al. in 1995 which measures the attention, clarity and mood repair dimensions derived from the Salovey and Mayer model (1990). They used the sub-scales of the multifactor leadership questionnaire of Bass and Avolio reported in 1995 to assess leadership style. It is significant that their findings also indicated significant correlations between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence or competence (Palmer et al., 2001). For instance, they found that the ability to monitor and manage emotions in ones-self were significantly correlated with inspirational motivation and individualized consideration as well as with idealized

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influence and behaviours. The authors suggest that one of the important competencies of effective leadership was emotion self-management.

Although empirical evidence on the relationship between emotional competence and leadership effectiveness is limited emotional competence seem to have great validity in predicting leadership effectiveness. Both studies by Barling et al., (2000) and Palmer et al., (2001) provide empirical justification for the claim that there is a positive relationship between emotional competence and effective leadership. However, both studies tested small samples (49 and 43 participants respectively) and were limited methodologically in that neither used a measure of emotional intelligence specifically designed for use in the workplace.

Emotional competence and effective leadership were also correlated in a study conducted by Gardner and Stough (2002). The study examined the relationship between leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence using senior level managers as the subjects. Two-hundred and fifty questionnaires were sent to the subjects, and only 110 participants returned the questionnaire (44% response rate). In this study, emotional intelligence was measured by using the SUEIT a self-report instrument specifically designed for use in the workplace. The instrument is used to assess individuals' perceptions of the way they feel, think and act at work. Leadership was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 45 items relating to the frequency with which the participant displays a range of leadership behaviours. Reliabilities for the total items (transformational, transactional) and for each subscale range from  $\alpha = 0.74$  to 0.94 (Bass & Avolio, 2000). The findings of the study indicated high correlations between emotional competence and effective leadership styles. The researchers concluded that emotionally competent leaders are more likely to desire success, lead an effective team and be more satisfied working with others.

It is the responsibility of each manager or leader to manage his or her emotions, streamline interactions with subordinates and serve as a role model for them (Orioli et al. 1999). The above statement implies that an emotionally self-aware leader stimulates his/her subordinates to reach out to their full potential and to have positive

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work attitudes. Effective and emotionally competent leaders are good at negotiating and resolving disagreements, because they use the needed social skills to deal with people and situations (Goleman, 1998; Rosier & Jeffrey, 1994; Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

#### **4.4. Emotion self-management: Emotion expression and Constructive Discontent/Emotion regulation**

Being able to manage one's own emotions includes the effective expression and control of such emotions. When one can do this one behaves appropriately in various situations (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler & Mayer, 1999 p61). Emotion self-management is important for leaders because it enables them to handle interpersonal conflict through constructive rather than destructive methods (Smigla & Pastoria, 2000; Colon & Hunt, 2002; Desivilya & Yagil, 2005).

##### **4.4.1. Emotion expression**

Mayer and Salovey (1997) described emotion expression as the ability to express emotions to others. A more comprehensive definition of emotion expression is provided in the EQ Map manual. Emotion expression is described as "The degree to which a person can express his/her feelings, allowing them to be used as an integral part of his/her daily actions and interactions...and explores his/her ability to verbalized emotions in a way that puts this information to productive use" (Qmetrics, 1997 p6). This definition describes emotional expression as a behavioural competency, and indicates the ability of a leader to express his/her emotions when in interpersonal situations (Gardner, 1983).

Emotional expression is also linked to leadership effectiveness. Barsade (1998) put a group of volunteers in a simulation to play the role of managers in bonus allocation sessions. One of the volunteers, a trained actor, was talkative, energetic and came up with innovative ideas. At the end of the session it was found that the group that included the actor was more effective than the other groups. It was then concluded that, because the actor was emotionally expressive, his group had succeeded to a greater degree than the other groups. It was also concluded that emotional

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expression in a leader lead subordinates to perform well. Research findings also showed that managers need to express their feelings and act as role models for their subordinates (leading by example) (Bachman, 1988; Caruso & Wolfe, 2001). It was further established that managers who are emotionally expressive promote the free flow of ideas and keeps the lines of communication open between them and subordinates (Caruso & Wolfe, 2001; Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; George, 2000; Lewis, 2000; McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Sosik & Megerian, 1999; Wong & Law, 2002). Some researchers even recommend the use of an emotional expression test in the recruitment and selection processes of managers to establish who would be effective as a leader to lead a productive group (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

#### 4.4.2. Constructive discontent / Emotion regulation

Constructive discontent is an alternative term used by Qmetrics (1997) to describe emotion regulation. It is defined as a person's ability to stay calm and focused and emotionally grounded in the face of disagreement or interpersonal conflict or any other situation in which a person is provoked (Qmetrics, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Rosier & Jeffrey, 1994; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Being emotionally regulative indicates the ability to manage pleasant and unpleasant emotions and not to engage in negative emotional outbursts and impulses (Boyatzis, 1982; Goleman, 1998).

Leaders who regulate their emotions always know how and when to act (Orioli et al., 1999) and they are able to stay open during arguments (Cooper & Sawaf, 1996). Martin et al., (1998) identified emotion regulation as a prerequisite for maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Emotion regulation in leaders could result in their making and implementing appropriate decisions. Such leaders ensure that decisions are not manipulated as they are usually confident and adamant enough to resist influences (Caruso & Wolfe, 2001; Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Lewis, 2000). Emotion regulation is also associated with establishing a good vision for the future, optimism, the provision of encouragement and meaning to others, stimulating innovation in others, encouraging

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the expression of new ideas, and intervening in problems before they become serious (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

Both emotional expression and constructive discontent impact on interpersonal relations, the effectiveness of a leader and the overall performance of the organization. This assumes that they are of great importance for effective leadership and are therefore relevant to the present study. Public sector managers in this country also need these behaviours to become effective and emotionally competent leaders (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

#### **4. 5. Measures of Emotional Competence**

For more than thirty years researchers in psychological assessment have tried to show the importance of social and emotional intelligence testing in the recruitment and selection processes to predict occupational effectiveness (Boyatzis, 1982; Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, & Weich, 1970; Howard & Bray, 1988; Kotter, 1982). Kotter (1982) identified a number of personal characteristics which separate more successful general managers from less successful ones, using measures of social-emotional competencies such as optimism, communication and relationship skills, and the need for achievement. Research by Boyatzis (1982) identified a number of social competencies (i.e., socialized power, self-esteem, and positiveness) as good predictors of effective leadership. This led to the development of various instruments to assess emotional competencies.

Some of the most well-known instruments are the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) and the Bar-On EQ-I. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (1999) developed the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) as the first comprehensive ability measure of emotional intelligence. They showed that the psychometric properties of this measure (its reliability, convergent and discriminant validity) were satisfactory. The internal consistency reliabilities for the 12 subscales (tapping the four branches of perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions) ranged from 0.49 to 0.94 (consensus scoring), and 0.35 to 0.86 (Mayer et al., 1999). The total branches of reliabilities over a period of time were also found to be satisfactory.

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The Bar-On EQ-I (Bar-On, 1997) has been designed to assess Bar-On's model of EI. Consistent with Bar-On's proposed theoretical structure of EI, the EQ-I comprises 15 sub-scales pertaining to the 15 components of the model, which render 15 sub-scale scores, five EQ composite scale scores and an overall or total EQ score. As with other self-report measures of EI, the EQ-I aims to provide an index of cross-situational consistencies in emotionally and socially competent behaviour and as such, provide an estimate of an individual's EI (Bar-On, 2000). Psychometric analyses of the EQ-I reported in the technical manual (Bar-On, 1997), indicate that it has good internal reliability and test-retest reliability. Across seven population samples, the 15 sub-scales were reported to have average-to-high internal consistency coefficients with Cronbach's alpha's ranging from 0.69 to 0.86 for internal consistency. Similarly, with a South African sample (n=44) the average stability coefficient of the 15 sub-scales after a 1-month period was found to be 0.85, and with a smaller sub-set of this sample (n=27) was found to be 0.75 after a 4-month period. A large number of correlation studies are also reported in the technical manual (Bar-On, 1997), in support of the validity of the EQ-I as a measure of the ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures as well as psychological well-being.

However, both these instruments are used to measure personality characteristics or traits and knowledge of emotions instead of assessing behavioural dimensions of emotional intelligence (Van der Zee & Wabeke, 2004). On the other hand, the EQ Map, the instrument of choice in the present study, could be used to assess the behavioural dimensions of emotion self-management (Qmetrics, 1997). Among others the EQ map includes two behavioural scales, namely, emotional expression and constructive discontent. They are not included in any other instrument to measure EI or EC. Scale 4 is used to assess emotional expression and Scale 10 provides an assessment of emotional regulation or constructive discontent (Qmetrics, 1997).

The EQ Map is a self-report instrument developed by Qmetrics (1997). The instrument covers areas that are broader than just emotional intelligence. It is a five part "personal discovery" of current environment, emotional awareness, emotional competencies, emotional values and attitudes and outcomes (Gowing, 2001). The

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instrument was later adapted by Orioli et al. (1999). The EQ Map integrates six values and attitude scales giving the taker the most accurate picture of their emotional competence and its manifestation in the context of real life. Respondents rate how well statements describe their current behaviour on a four-point Likert-type scale. The instrument has been extensively researched, has been norm tested and is regarded as a statistically reliable measurement that allows an individual to chart strengths and vulnerabilities on a number of emotional intelligence components (Qmetrics, 1997 p1). The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.89 (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Orioli et al. 1999). According to Martin (2004), the reliability of the instrument is good. Reliability coefficients for all the subscales are above 0.85 (Poon, Othman, Anugerah & Sari, 2002). It is self-administered, easy to use and understand.

The adapted version by Orioli et al. (1999) was used in the present study, specifically the two sub-scales of emotional expression and constructive discontent. Emotional expression and constructive discontent focus more on the behavioural aspects of the respondents with items like *“I remain calm or I express my feelings”*.

#### **4. 6. Conclusion**

The main focus of Chapter 4 was on emotional expression and constructive discontent as the behavioural aspects of the emotional competencies. These two components of emotion self-expression appear to be positively related to constructive conflict management styles and to leadership effectiveness, and more specifically to the transformational leadership style.

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## CHAPTER 5

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

#### 5.1. Introduction

In the previous three chapters the variables relevant to the present study are discussed independently. In the present chapter the relationship between the transformational leadership style, the collaborating and compromising conflict management styles, emotional expression and constructive discontent (emotion regulation) is explored.

#### 5.2. Transformational Leadership Style and Constructive Interpersonal Conflict Management Skills

The effectiveness of the transformational leadership style has been highlighted by various researchers. Research findings have shown that the style is particularly useful to bring about change, to manage diversity and to improve employees' attitudes, job satisfaction and work behaviours (Antonakis et al, 2003; Bass & Avolio, 1995; Downey et al., 2004; Ferres et al., 2004). Research has also been conducted to explore the relationship between the transformational leadership and interpersonal conflict management styles (Antonioni, 1998; Bacal, 2004; Baskerville, 1993; Darling & Fogliasso, 1999; Rahim, 1997; Weiss & Hughes, 2005).

Baskerville (1993) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and the management of interpersonal conflict in an organization with a diverse workforce. He designed his own conflict management style questionnaire that allows for self-assessment. The findings of the study showed that respondents who rated themselves high on the transformational leadership style also rated themselves high on constructive interpersonal conflict management styles. It would thus appear that there is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and constructive conflict management styles. The findings also indicated that the transformational leaders in the study were effective in leading diverse teams and to transform the negative perceptions held by employees from diverse backgrounds.

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Based on the findings of the study Baskerville concluded that it is important for managers to understand and constructively manage interpersonal conflict. He also concluded that transformational leaders usually have the necessary soft skills to manage interpersonal conflict effectively.

In one of the few studies conducted in South Africa, Darling and Fogliasso (1999) also attempted to identify the positive effects that interpersonal conflict might bring into a diverse workplace. The research was conducted in a multinational bank with employees from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The researchers found that the main cause of interpersonal conflict was the different interpretations, values, beliefs and norms of the diverse groups of employees. The findings also indicated that diversity plays an important role in the manifestation and constructive handling of interpersonal conflict and that not all leaders are able to manage this type of conflict situation effectively. Leaders who showed competence in dealing with diversity in interpersonal conflict situations were those who exhibited transformational leadership qualities. Therefore, managers who had transformational leadership qualities were identified as the most successful leaders in the bank. They managed interpersonal conflict in a constructive manner by using either collaborating or compromising. The findings also indicated that transformational leaders tended to focus on the positive aspects of every situation. They approached every conflict situation in a rational manner and aimed to extract maximum benefits from every situation. They managed interpersonal conflict constructively because they worked well in a team and because they encouraged subordinates to employ new and innovative ways of looking at a problem and to be creative in the execution of their daily duties. When they used these constructive styles they also learned a lot about their subordinates' needs, concerns, joys and values (Weiss & Hughes, 2005). These findings highlighted the importance for managers to use the transformational leadership style to manage interpersonal conflict constructively in their organizations or departments.

Antonioni (1998) examined the relationship between the so called Big Five personality factors and the five styles of managing interpersonal conflict identified by Blake and Mouton. The findings of the study showed that transformational leaders were high on agreeableness and low on extraversion. These factors were found to

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contribute to effective interpersonal conflict management and leadership. Furthermore, low extraversion, conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness were positively related to the collaborating interpersonal conflict management style. The same factors were negatively related to avoiding (generally accepted as a destructive conflict management style). According to Antonioni, it is more important for transformational leaders to be respected, loved and listened to than to be popular with employees or subordinates. Although leaders who use this style of leadership have a low need for affiliation, they are self-aware, confident, democratic, attentive and caring leaders. In addition, Weiss and Hughes (2005) emphasize that transformational leaders are sociable and self-confident.

According to Rahim (1997), transformational leaders tend to use both of the more constructive conflict management styles (collaboration and compromising). They prefer to lead their subordinates through an exchange of information to achieve positive outcomes. They also accept differences of opinion in conflict situations and they show concern for themselves as well as for their subordinates.

According to Weiss and Hughes (2005), interpersonal conflict is a key element in the development of intra-organizational relationships. Bacal (2004) emphasizes the importance of removing the idea that all interpersonal conflict in organizations is negative or destructive. He identifies transformational leaders as important role players to change this perception of interpersonal conflict. According to Bacal, transformational leaders have vision, they think strategically and they manage interpersonal conflict in a constructive way to achieve the long term objectives of their organizations. They allow an interpersonal conflict situation to occur, because they know that they will experience or learn something new from it. They also realize that they need an exchange of information to achieve the long term goals of their organizations. The only way to achieve this is through the use of a knowledge acquiring style, in other words, through collaborating and compromising.

Based on the literature reviewed it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and constructive interpersonal conflict management styles. Research has shown that leadership effectiveness can be enhanced by using a transformational leadership style and

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constructive conflict management styles. A manager or leader who manages interpersonal conflict situations effectively, amicably, without prejudice or discrimination as a result of age, gender, religion, ethnicity, status, is considered an agent for change or a transformer. This is exactly what South Africa, and more specifically the public sector, needs at the moment.

### **5.3. Transformational leadership style and emotional competence**

The need for high performance is one of the signature characteristics of transformational leaders. They also strive to increase their employees' job satisfaction and to motivate them to perform better. These leaders are apparently successful in doing this. This statement is supported by research findings that have shown that transformational leaders lead successful and high performing organizations (Watkin, 2000). Both Goleman (1995) and Watkin (2000) found that transformational leaders view any obstacles to the achievement of their objectives as learning opportunities that could be used constructively to add value to their organizations.

Researchers have investigated the interrelationship between the transformational leadership style and various behavioural or personality concepts, and more specifically, emotional intelligence and emotional competence. These include Goleman, (1995), Burgess and Walls, (2001), Leslie and Van Velsor, (1996), Posner and Kouzes, (1993) and Sosick and Megerian, (1999). Goleman (1995), one of the pioneers in the field of emotional intelligence, conducted research on the relationship between high performance in education and the emotional intelligence of Asian students. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of these students. The findings showed that high performers possess high emotional competence capabilities such as emotion management. Emotion management includes, for example, not panicking unnecessarily, not being stressed easily, and being able to express own feelings and emotions effectively.

Emotion self-management is a critical element of transformational leadership. It includes the ability to be aware of one's emotions, being sensitive to these,

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evaluating why they exist, understanding their impact on others, and then responding to them appropriately (Cadman & Brewer, 2001). The importance of emotional competence in a transformational leader is highlighted by the findings of research conducted to differentiate between high and poor performing managers based on their use of emotional competencies. Managers who were identified as high performers were found to be emotionally competent and more specifically, aware of their own emotions. Managers who were identified as poor performers showed little evidence of emotional competence (Goleman, 1995). A clear distinction between emotionally competent and incompetent leaders was made, not only by leaders themselves but also by the rating they got from their subordinates. Subordinates rated emotionally incompetent managers as poor performing managers, and emotionally competent managers as high performing managers. In another study, conducted in the Johnson and Johnson Company, more than 1400 (fourteen hundred) employees completed a 183 (one hundred and eighty three) question multi-rater survey that measured a variety of competencies associated with leadership performance and emotional intelligence (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002). The findings of this study showed that managers who were rated as highly effective were those who were emotionally expressive and who were able to control their emotions. Low performing managers were shown to be less able to express and contain their emotions.

These findings were later supported in the study by George (2000), who aimed to describe the emotional competence of leaders. Transformational leaders were found to be emotionally competent in the sense that they are emotionally self-aware and also aware of the emotions of others. They understood their own moods and emotions and those of others. The ability to identify and understand emotions underlies that ability to manage and control them. In relation to emotional competence, the following transformational leadership qualities were identified: the development of collective goals and objectives; instilling in others an appreciation of the importance of work activities; generating and maintaining enthusiasm, confidence, optimism, cooperation, and trust; encouraging flexibility in decision making and change; and establishing and maintaining a meaningful identity for an organization (George, 2000). These aspects were found to be achievable by emotionally competent leaders (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Weisinger, 1998).

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Cherniss and Goleman (2000), as well as Watkin (2000) concluded that emotional competence and transformational leadership are interdependent. Watkin used the ECI to assess emotional competence. The findings of this study showed that emotional competence is important for shaping leaders' abilities and in helping them to become transformational and effective. These findings were used to help managers to acknowledge the impact of emotional competence on their leadership behaviour and to use this insight as a starting point for their own transformation process to enhance their own emotional stability and expressiveness.

It can be concluded that, in general, leaders cannot be transformational without being emotionally competent (Goleman, 1998a; 1998b; Goleman, 2000; Miller, 1999; Palmer et al., 2001). In order to expand on this, Sosick and Megerian (1999) examined the possibility that managers' emotion self-management could moderate the relationships between transformational leadership behaviour and managerial performance. Multi-source data were collected from 63 managers, who responded about their emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviour, 192 subordinates, who rated their manager's transformational leadership behaviour and performance outcomes, and 63 superiors of the managers, who rated their managerial performance. The findings of the study indicated that correlations between leader behaviour and performance varied as a function of the emotion self-management of the managers.

These findings were supported by Barling et al., (2000). They investigated whether emotional competence was associated with the use of transformational leadership in 49 managers. The respondents completed questionnaires to assess their own emotional competence and attributional style, while their subordinates (n = 187) provided ratings of their transformational leadership. Managers who rated themselves high on transformational leadership also rated themselves high on emotion self-management. These managers received similar ratings from their subordinates.

The impact of the transformational leadership style and leaders' emotional expressiveness and motion regulation on relationships with their subordinates was

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also studied by various other researchers, such as Abraham (2000), Cherniss (2000), Goleman (1998), Miller (1999) and Watkin (2000). In general, findings from these studies showed that leaders who preferred to use the transformational leadership style and who managed their emotions well were happier and committed to the success of their organizations. They also promoted healthy relationships with their subordinates. Furthermore, they clearly communicated their vision to employees and engaged in participative decision making. They also tended to build sound interpersonal relations through trust, enthusiasm and cooperation with their employees (Barling et al., 2000; George, 2000; Palmer et al., 2001; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994). These leaders are also seen as role models by their subordinates or followers (Bass & Avolio, 1995; Bar-On, 1997; Salovey et al. 1999; Salovey & Mayer 1990; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994).

#### **5.4. Emotional competence and constructive conflict management skills**

The effective management of interpersonal conflict requires people skills or so called “soft skills”. Competent leaders are able to manage stressful situations constructively and as a result of this, they lead successful departments and organizations (Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990). Research findings have also indicated that leaders who are able to control their own emotions are effective in managing interpersonal situations in their organizations (Posner & Kouzes, 1993). Posner and Kouzes used the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) to identify five leadership competencies, namely, challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. The questionnaire was completed by 1,100 managers, most of who indicated that their ability to control and express their own emotions enabled them to serve as role models for their subordinates. Subordinates were also inspired to strive to accept the organization’s vision. Managers who managed their own emotions well enabled subordinates to be creative and they encouraged their subordinates to increase their performance. Therefore it can be concluded that leaders cannot lead effectively in today’s diverse organizations without a high level of emotional competence and the ability to adapt their behaviour to meet the needs of a specific situation.

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Therefore, emotion management is a prerequisite for constructively managing interpersonal conflict in the workplace (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Weisinger, 1998). Emotion management includes both emotion expression and constructive discontent (emotion regulation) (Goleman, 1998; Huy, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Williams & Sternberg, 1988). Managers who manage conflict constructively should be able to control their own emotions and express their emotions appropriately (Bergh & Theron, 2003; Duane, 1989; Rahim, 2001; Rahim & Blum, 1994; Weldon & Jehn, 1995). Boyatzis (1982) also found that effective leaders use their emotional competence and social skills to create and sustain pleasant emotions in their subordinates. They are also able to restrain unpleasant emotions when these are evaluated as inappropriate. Furthermore, they effectively channel negative affect and restrain negative emotional outbursts and impulses in conflict situations. Weisinger (1998) showed that emotionally competent leaders intentionally make emotions work for them by using their emotions to guide their behaviour and thinking in a positive way.

There is no doubt that both variables contribute to effective leadership and eventually to organizational success. Cherniss and Goleman (2001) studied the relationship between emotion management and effective leadership. They found that poor performing leaders lack emotional self-control. This could result in a tendency to overreact in situations or to express inappropriate or uncontrolled emotions. These leaders also showed poor judgment in interpersonal conflict situations, because they allowed their emotions to dictate their actions. According to Sosick and Megerian (1999), leaders should become emotionally self-aware before they can be effective leaders. Being emotionally self aware could reduce or eliminate imposing one's will on others and dictating to them. It would increase the possibility of using collaborating and compromising in managing conflict and this could result in respect and loyalty for the leader and high performance in employees and subordinates.

## **5.5 Transformational Leadership Style, Constructive Conflict Management Skills and Emotional Competence**

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Previous research findings have shown that both constructive conflict management skills and emotional competence are positively related to the transformational leadership style (Cadman & Brewer, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Morland, 2001). It would also appear that transformational leadership is dependent on emotional competence, which in turn could lead to effective interpersonal conflict management (Clóna, 2004; Leslie & Van Velsor, 1996; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Posner & Kouzes, 1993). For example, Cherniss and Goleman (2001) found that transformational leaders are self-confident and emotionally expressive. They are able to control their emotions in conflict situations or in any situation in which they have to make rational, urgent and difficult decisions. They are also able to manage situations that are emotionally charged, especially when the emotions such as anger and anxiety are aroused. In previous research evidence of a positive link between transformational leadership and emotional competence (Barling et al., 2000; Goleman, 1998; George, 2000; Watkin, 2000), between transformational leadership and interpersonal conflict management (Goleman, 1998), and between interpersonal conflict management and emotional competencies (Cadman & Brewer, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Morland, 2001) were also generated.

Therefore, it can be deduced that effective leadership in organizations can be enhanced through the use of the transformational leadership style, constructive interpersonal conflict management styles and high levels of emotion self-management.

The relationship between the transformational leadership style, constructive interpersonal conflict management styles and emotional competence is displayed in Figure 5.1. This figure shows that the three variables are interdependent and that the transformational leadership style is a central link between constructive conflict management and emotional competence.

This tripartite relationship is important in 21<sup>st</sup> century organizations because they are characterized by diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, political opinions, religions, norms and age, all of which should be considered, acknowledged and managed effectively. Organizations, and more specifically government departments, need managers who possess people skills (Clóna, 2004). This will enhance their

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leadership effectiveness and in the end contribute to overall improved organizational productivity (Cherniss, 2000).



Figure 5.1: Proposed model of the relationship between the transformational leadership style, constructive interpersonal conflict management skills and emotional competence

## 5. 6. Conclusion

There is an urgent need in the public sector in South Africa to develop leadership effectiveness. Effective leaders should be able to improve service delivery in this country. This is of particular importance for managers who get political appointments in the public sector. In the present chapter the relationship between three selected variables that could impact on leadership effectiveness were discussed.

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From the research discussed, it can be concluded that the transformational leadership style is a viable option for public sector managers. Public sector managers need to employ the transformational leadership style, they have to manage conflict effectively and they need to manage their emotions in interpersonal conflict situations.

The first step for the development of effective leadership is for managers to move from the “we can do” to “we did or we are doing” frame of reference. Therefore, there is a need to determine how they are currently functioning in terms of the leadership style and interpersonal conflict management styles that they employ as well as their levels of emotion self-management. Opportunities should be provided for managers to enhance their behavioural skills in these areas.

The main hypothesis and the specific hypotheses for the present study were formulated based on the literature review discussed in this chapter.

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## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research methodology employed in the present study.

#### 6.2. Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from the target population within relatively a short time frame. This type of design is commonly used to gather data from a representative cross-section of a population at a single point in time (Bailey, 1982; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995; Fife-Shaw, 1997). This design allowed for the use of structured questionnaires for data collection from managers of a government department.

#### 6.3. Population

In general, South African government departments are divided into different districts. Limpopo Province is divided into six districts, namely, Capricorn, Waterberg, Mopani, Vhembe, Bohlabela and Sekhukhune. They all report to a head office in Polokwane. Due to the number of staff, different sections of the head offices are also situated in various buildings around town. The target population for this study was public sector managers in a government department in Limpopo Province. Various departments in the region were approached. However, permission to conduct the research was obtained from only one department, namely, the Department of Roads and Transport which is situated in Polokwane (see Appendices A and B). Senior managers, managers, and deputy managers of the Department of Roads and Transport participated in the study.

The vision of the Department of Road and Transport is to achieve an integrated safe, reliable, efficient, affordable and sustainable multi-modal transport system and an

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adequate infrastructure. The mission of the department is to develop, coordinate, implement, manage and maintain an integrated and sustainable multi-modal transport system and appropriate infrastructure. The core functions of the department are road safety and traffic management, public transport, and road maintenance and infrastructure (Departmental Citizens Report, 2006/2007).

The total size of the population of managers in the department is 265. In table 6.1 a breakdown of the population according to level of pay is provided.

**Table 6.1 Target population at the department of Roads and Transport**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Position Name</b>	<b>Number of Managers</b>
9-10	Deputy managers	185
11-12	Managers	41
13-14	Senior Managers	39

#### **6.4. Sampling**

The whole population of managers was included in the study. One hundred and twenty-six (126) managers completed and returned the questionnaires. This yielded a response rate of 48%. Biographical information on the age, gender, and years in managerial position, level of pay, and race of respondents were gathered. Microsoft Office Suite 2007 (Word and Excel) was used to analyze the biographical data.

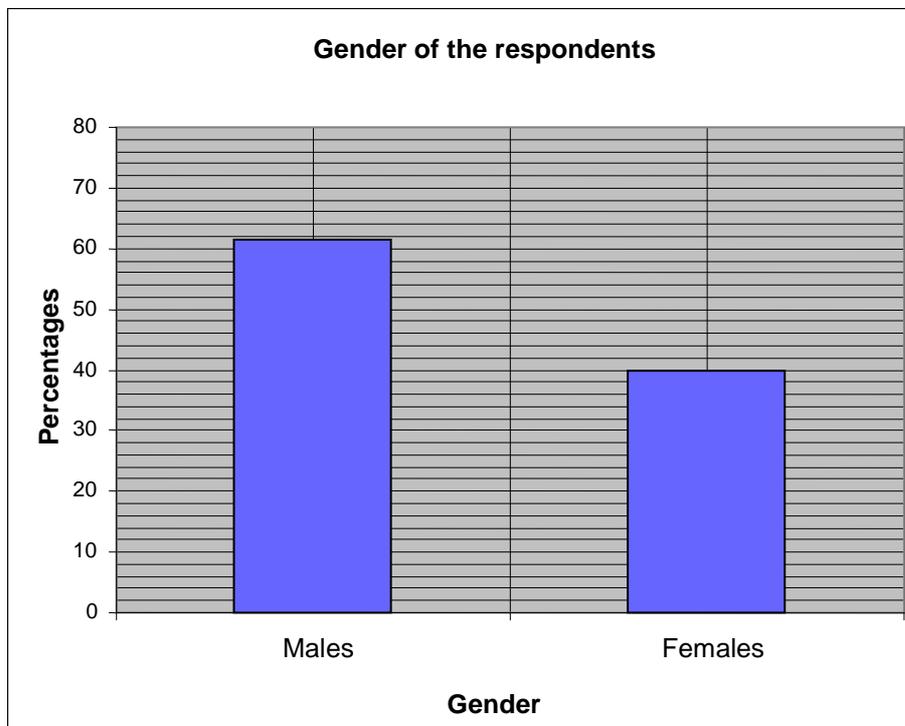
##### **6.4.1. Gender distribution**

A breakdown of the gender distribution of the participants is presented in Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1. It is evident from the table and figure that most of the managers are males and that employment equity could be a problem in the department.

**Table 6.2: Gender**

Gender	Frequencies (f)	Percentages (%)
Males	76	60.3
Females	50	39.7
Total	N=126	%=100%

**Figure 6.1: Gender**



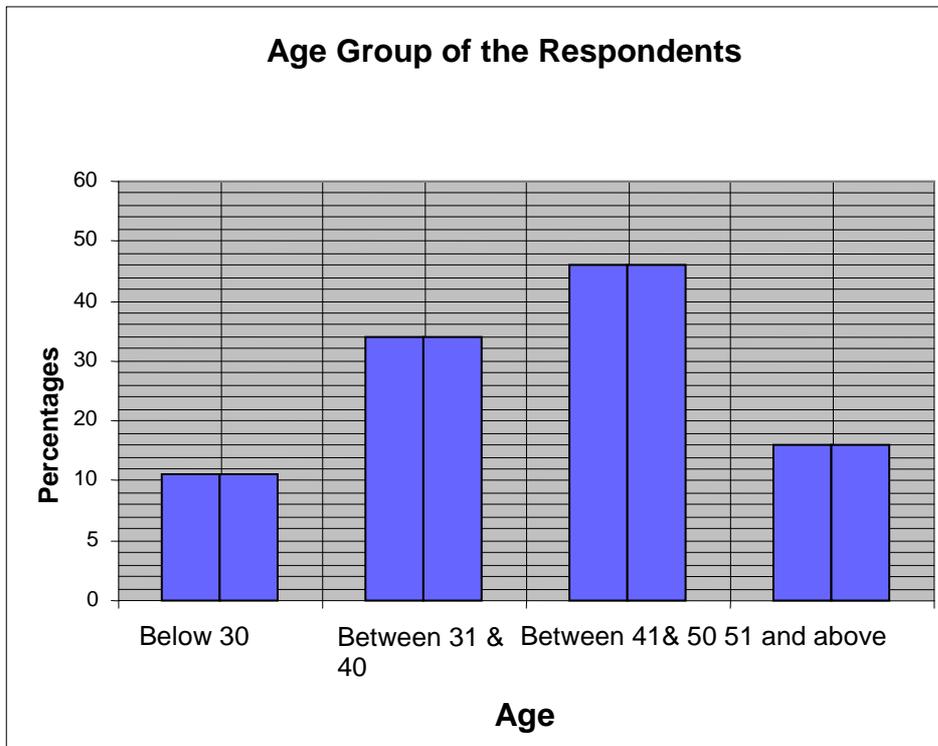
#### 6. 4.2. Age distribution

Table 6.2 and Figure 6.3 represent the age distribution of the respondents. The table and figure show that most participants fall in the age group of 41 to 50. It could be argued that the department might need to revise its hiring techniques, because most of its managers are heading for pension in few years. The department should also focus on succession planning as well as the identification and development of managerial potential in order to ensure that candidates are available to fill managerial positions in the future.

**Table 6.3: Age**

Age	Frequencies (f)	Percentages (%)
Below 30 years	13	10.3
Between 31 & 40 Years	42	33.3
Between 41 & 50 Years	53	42.0
51 and above years	18	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=126</b>	<b>%=100</b>

**Figure 6.2: Age**



**6.4.3. Race distribution**

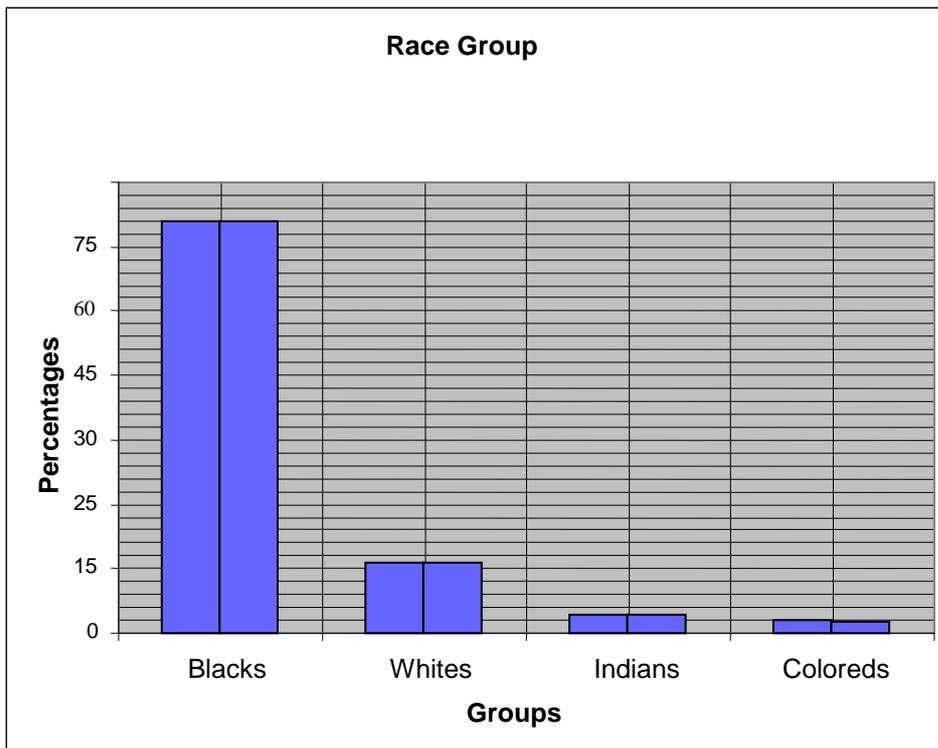
The race composition of the respondents is presented in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.3. It is evident from the table and figure that most of the managers are black. The department might need to review its employment equity plan or revisit affirmative action measures, because it seems that the department implemented these

measures extremely rigorously. However, this particular trend could be attributed to the locality of the department in a province with a large black population.

**Table 6.4: Race group**

Race Group	Frequencies (f)	Percentages (%)
Black	97	77
White	20	16
Indian	6	5
Colored	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=126</b>	<b>%=100</b>

**Figure 6.3: Race group**



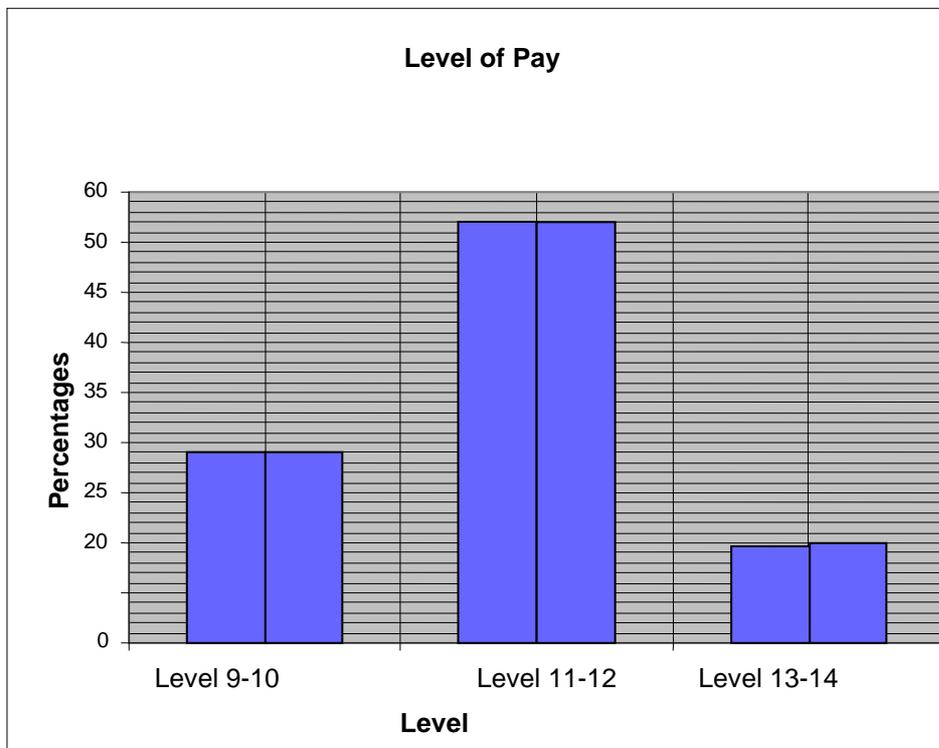
#### 6.4.4. Level of pay

Participants were requested to indicate their level of pay (see Table 6.5 and Figure 6.4). It would appear that most of the respondents fall in the government pay scale of level 11 to 12, which represents deputy managers and managers.

**Table 6.5: Level of pay of the participants**

Level of Pay	Frequencies (f)	Percentages (%)
Level 9-10	36	29
Level 11-12	67	53
Level 13-14	23	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=126</b>	<b>%=100</b>

**Figure 6.4: Level of pay of the participants**



#### 6.4.5. Number of years in managerial positions

Participants were requested to indicate the number of years they had been employed as managers. The results are presented in Table 6.6 and Figure 6.5. The figure and table show that despite the fact that most managers fall between the ages of 40 and 50, most of them have had less than five years experience in a managerial position.

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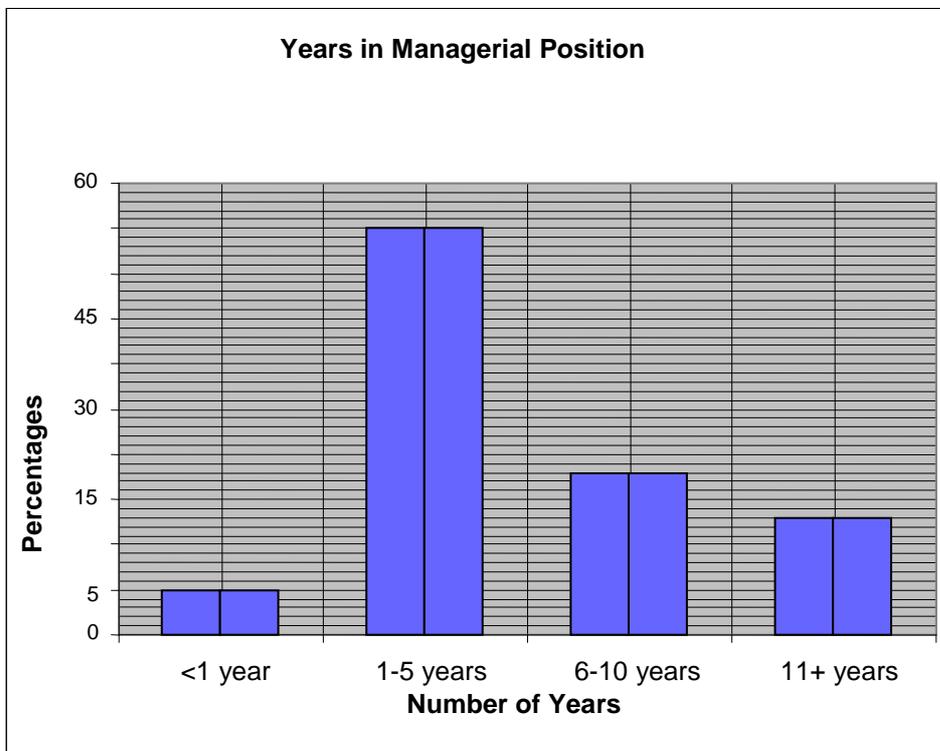
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**Table 6.6: Number years in managerial positions**

Years in Managerial Positions	Frequencies (f)	Percentages (%)
<1 year	8	6
1-5 years	68	55
6-10 years	33	26
11+ years	17	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=126</b>	<b>%=100</b>

**Figure 6.5: Number years in managerial positions**



## 6. 5. Measuring instruments

The biographical questionnaire and the questionnaires used to assess the three variables of interest were combined into one questionnaire with different sections, namely, A: Biographical information, B: Leadership styles, C: Conflict management styles and D: Emotion self-management (See Appendix E). Instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were provided for each section.

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- 6.5.1. Section A of the questionnaire was used to gather biographical information of the participants. This section presents questions with answers in blocks, and respondents had to choose and tick an applicable alternative (see Appendix E).
- 6.5.2. Section B includes the items on leadership style. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used in this section. It is a well-known questionnaire for the assessment of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The MLQ has 21 items that are answered on a Likert-type scale of: *not at all, very seldom, sometimes, often, very often if not always*. Reliabilities for outcomes of leadership, the total scores for each subsection (inspirational motivation, idealized behaviour, individual consideration, idealized attributes and intellectual stimulation) of the questionnaire on transformational leadership range from  $\alpha = 0.74$  to 0.94 (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The SPSS was used to compute means and frequencies.
- 6.5.3. Section C covers interpersonal conflict management styles. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode (TKI) Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974) was used. The questionnaire consists of 30 dichotomous items (A or B) giving respondents an option to circle their choices. The internal consistency or reliability coefficients of the instrument were reported as 0.58 for the compromising style and 0.65 for the collaborating style (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). The average alpha coefficient was reported at 0.60 for this instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Each style of interpersonal conflict management was measured on 6 items in the questionnaire. The frequency of choosing A or B was used as a means to the scoring of the questionnaire.
- 6.5.4. Section D included items on emotional expression and constructive discontent of the EQ Map (Version 4.5) - items 1 to 9 for the assessment of constructive discontent and items 10 to 19 for the assessment of emotional expression on a four point Likert-type scale (*very well (1), moderately well (2), a little (3) and not at all (4)*). The coefficient alpha of each scale is 0.89 (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Orioli et al., 1999). The EQ Map is a reliable instrument, with all reliability coefficients above 0.85 (Orioli et al. 1999). Frequencies were

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computed using the SPSS. Frequent responses indicate a degree of applicability to certain behaviour. Reverse items were rated in reverse then translated to the normal form. For example item 5 is in reverse. If a respondent ticks a 4, a normal answer becomes 1, and item 31 is in reverse and if a respondent ticks a 2 a normal answer becomes 3.

The EQ Map, the MLQ, and the Thomas-Kilmann Scale were found to be relevant to measure the variables in the current study and their psychometric properties were deemed to be satisfactory. Furthermore, it has been shown that measuring instruments with internal consistencies higher than a 0.5 significance level can be used in behavioural research (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995).

## **6.6. Ethical considerations**

Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research and their participation was voluntary. They were informed that information provided would be treated as confidential and that only group responses would be reported for research purposes.

## **6.7. Data collection procedures**

Questionnaires were distributed at the department's office and collected after an agreed upon period. The department's Human Resource section assisted in the process of distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

## **6.8. Data analysis**

The Scientific Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0 for Windows was used to analyze the data. Frequencies, means and standard deviations were calculated. This was done to see the distribution scores and the dispersion of the responses in terms of responding to the questionnaire items (Bless & Kathuria, 1993). Microsoft Excel was used to construct graphs and histograms. Pearson correlations were calculated

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because all questionnaire items were measured on an interval scale of measurement.

## 6.9. Hypotheses

### Null Hypotheses $H_0$ :

- a) There is a negative relationship between the leader's transformational leadership style and the emotional expression of the leader.
- b) There is a negative relationship between the leader's transformational leadership style and the constructive discontent of the leader.
- c) There is a negative relationship between the leader's transformational leadership style and the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.
- d) There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.
- e) There is a negative relationship between the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style of a leader and the leader's emotional expression.
- f) There is a negative relationship between the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style of a leader and the leader's constructive discontent.
- g) There is a negative relationship between the emotional expression competence of a leader and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.
- h) There is a negative relationship between the leader's constructive discontent and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.

### Alternative Hypotheses $H_1$ :

- a) There is a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the emotional expression.

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- b) There is a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the constructive discontent.
- c) There is a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style.
- d) There is a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style.
- e) There is a significant positive relationship between the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style and the emotional expression.
- f) There is a significant positive relationship between the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style and constructive discontent.
- g) There is a significant positive relationship between emotional expression and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style.
- h) There is a significant positive relationship between constructive discontent and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style.

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## CHAPTER 7

### RESULTS

#### 7.1. Introduction

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for the group of participants on transformational leadership, interpersonal conflict management, and emotion self-management are reported and interpreted in this chapter. The results of the correlational analysis of the relationships between the variables of interest are also presented and interpreted in order to understand the end results of the data analysis in this study. The aim is to see if the null hypotheses mentioned in chapter one and six are rejected or supported.

#### 7.2. Descriptive Statistics

##### 7.2.1. Means and standard deviations: Transformational leadership style

In Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1 the degree to which four dimensions of transformational leadership style were rated as applicable to the day to day behaviour by participants illustrated.

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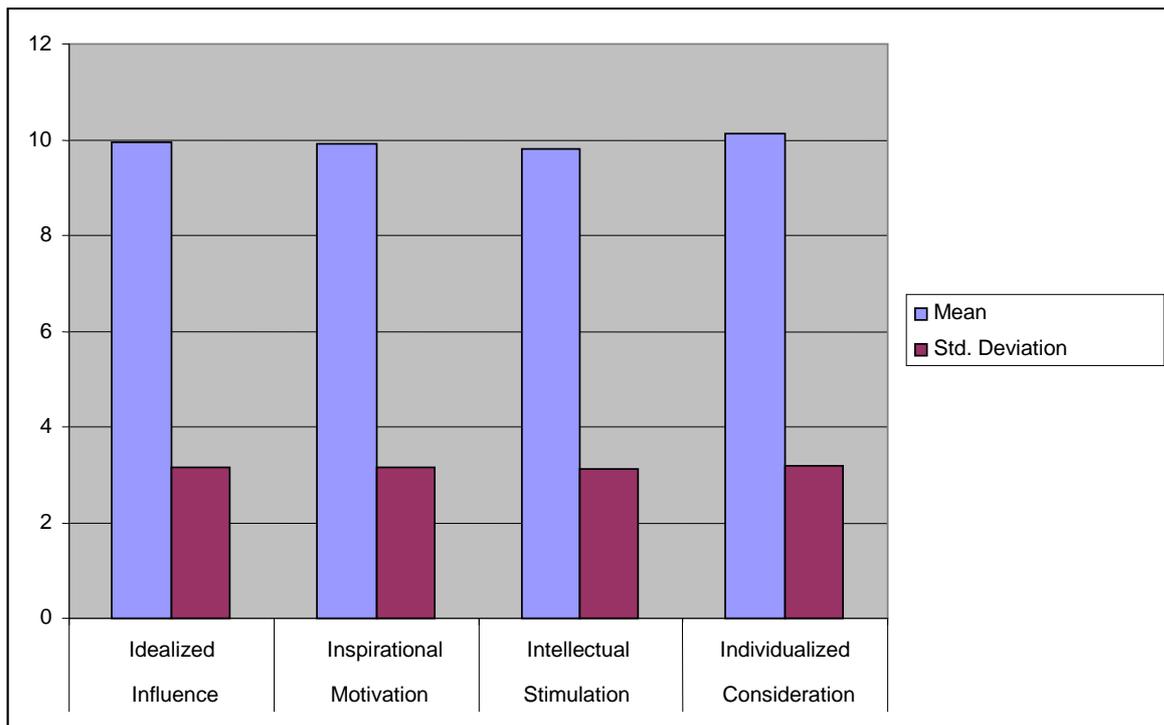
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**Table 7.1 Means and standard deviations: Transformational leadership dimensions**

MLQ Items	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration
Mean	9.96	9.92	9.79	10.11
Std. Deviation	3.155	3.149	3.128	3.179

It is evident from the table and graph that the means and standard deviations are relatively equally distributed for Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. The high mean scores also indicate that the respondents most probably tend to use the transformational leadership style in their interactions with subordinates.

**Figure 7.1 Transformational leadership dimensions**



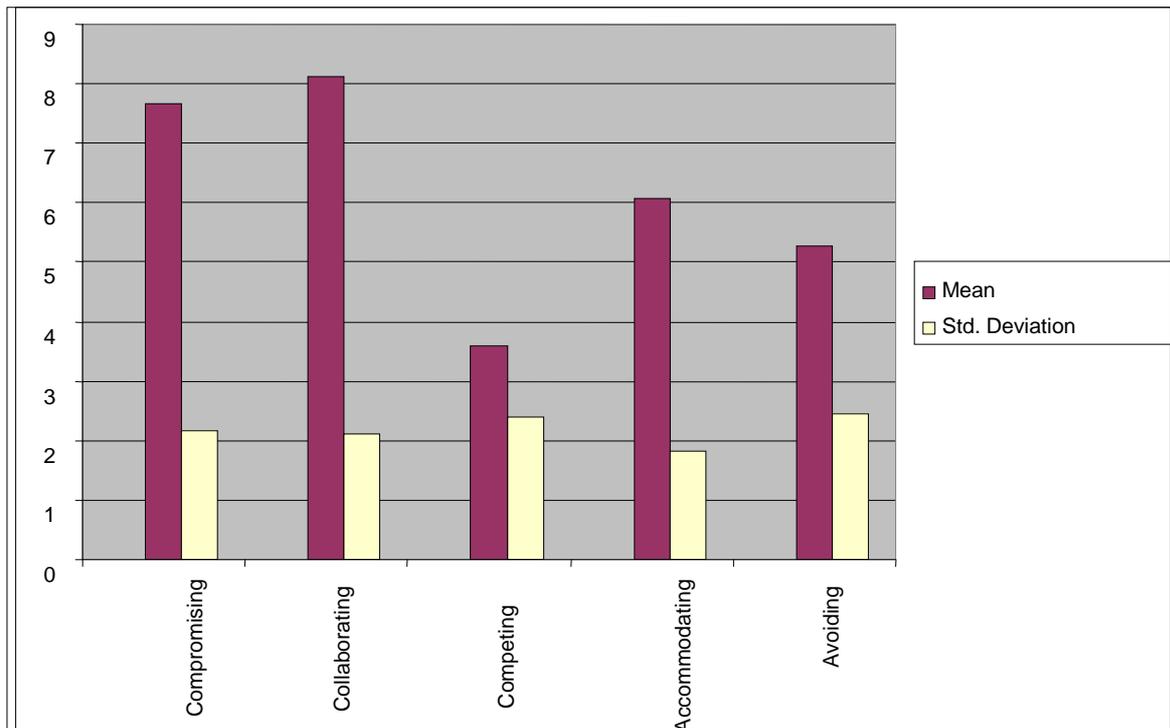
### 7.2.2 Means and standard deviations: Conflict management styles

The means and standard deviation on all five interpersonal conflict management styles are provided in Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2.

**Table 7.2 Means and standard deviations: Conflict management styles**

Conflict Management Styles	Compromising	Collaborating	Competing	Accommodating	Avoiding
Mean	7.66	8.13	3.59	6.06	5.28
Std. Deviation	2.177	2.114	1.894	2.461	2.442

**Figure 7.2 Conflict management styles**



The table and figure show that respondents prefer to use the collaborating and compromising styles. Avoiding and competing are the least preferred styles for interpersonal conflict management.

### 7.2.3. Means and standard deviations: Emotion self-management

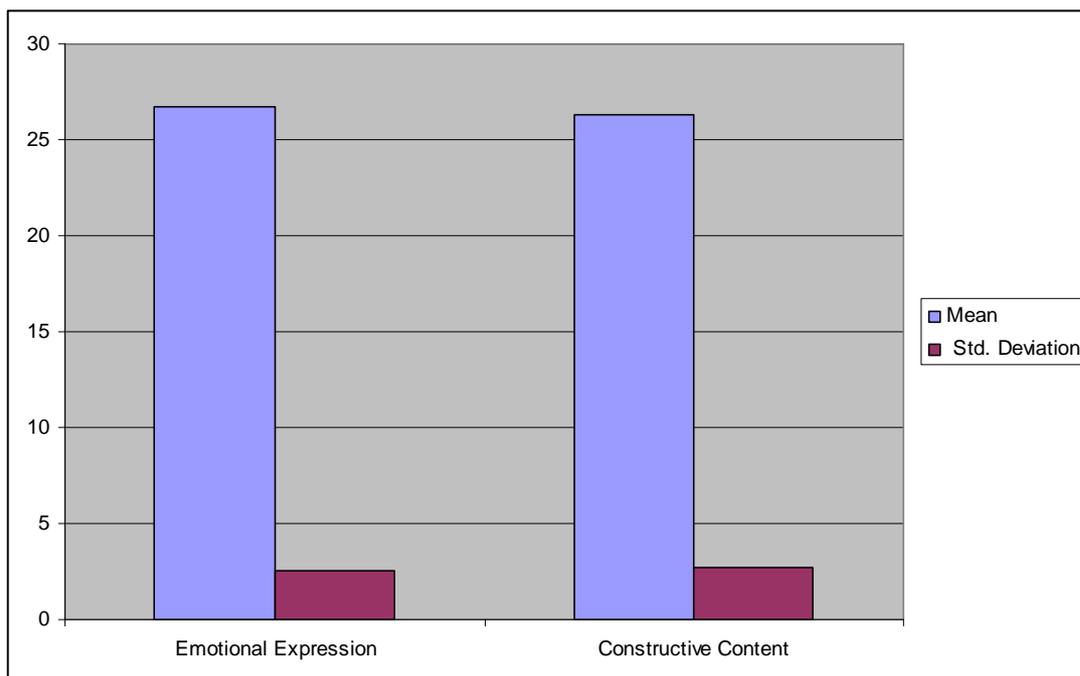
Means and standard deviations for emotional expression and constructive discontent (emotion regulation) are displayed in Table 7.3 and Figure 7.3.

**Table 7.3 Means and standard deviations: Emotional competencies**

Emotional Competencies	Emotional Expression	Constructive Content (Emotion Regulation)
Mean	26.72	26.33
Std. Deviation	2.522	2.745

It is evident from Table 7.3 and Figure 7.3 that the average score of the respondents on emotion expression is 26.72 and their average score on emotion regulation is 26.33. This is quite far removed from an optimal possible score of 57 on the two competencies. A score of 30 to 37 on these competencies indicates unsteady and fluctuating performance (Qmetrics, 1997 p2).

**Figure 7.3 Emotional competencies**



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### 7.3. Correlations

The Pearson product moment correlation (one-tailed) test was used to analyze the relationship between the transformational leadership style, the collaborating and compromising interpersonal conflict management styles and emotional expression and constructive discontent/emotional regulation.

#### 7.3.1 Correlations among the transformational leadership style and selected conflict management styles and emotion self-management competencies

In Table 7.4 the correlations among the transformational leadership style and selected conflict management styles (collaboration and compromising) and emotion self-management competencies (emotion expression and constructive discontent/emotion regulation) are portrayed.

**Table 7.4 Correlations: Transformational leadership style, collaboration, compromising and emotion expression and constructive discontent**

Variables		Emotional expression	Constructive discontent (Emotion Regulation)	Collaborating	Compromising
Transformational Leadership Style	Pearson Correlations	.057	-.040	.259**	.208*
	N	126	126	126	126

\*\* .Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* .Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

The following is evident from Table 7.4:

- There is a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the collaborating and compromising interpersonal conflict management styles.

- There is a non-significant relationship between the transformational leadership style and the two emotion self-management competencies.

### 7.3.2. Correlations between constructive conflict management styles and emotion self-management competencies

**Table 7.5 Correlations between constructive conflict management styles and emotional competencies**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Emotional Expression</b>	<b>Constructive Discontent (Emotion Regulation)</b>
<b>Compromising</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>-.199*</b>	<b>-.202*</b>
<b>Collaborating</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>-.042</b>	<b>-.053</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>126</b>

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

The correlations between constructive conflict management styles and emotion self-management competencies are presented in Table 7.5. The results in Table 7.5 show that:

- there is a significant negative relationship between the compromising interpersonal conflict management style and the two emotion self-management competencies.
- there is a non-significant negative relationship between the collaborating interpersonal conflict management style and the two emotion self-management competencies.

## 7.4. Hypothesis Testing

### 7.4.1 Main Hypothesis

Based on the results depicted in the previous sections the main hypothesis was partially rejected. There is a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the collaborating and compromising conflict management styles but a non-significant relationship between the transformational leadership style and the emotional self management competencies (emotional expression and constructive discontent of managers in the public sector).

### 7.4.2 Specific Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were rejected:

- There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.
- There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.

The following null hypotheses were accepted:

- There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the emotion expression of the leader.
- There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the emotion regulation of a leader.
- There is no relationship between the compromising interpersonal conflict management style and the emotion expression of the leader.
- There is no relationship between the compromising interpersonal conflict management style and the emotion regulation of the leader.
- There is no relationship between the collaborating interpersonal conflict management style and the emotion regulation of the leader.
- There is no relationship between collaborating interpersonal conflict management style and the emotion regulation of the leader.

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The following alternate hypotheses were accepted:

- There is a positive relationship between the leader's transformational leadership style and the collaborative interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.
- There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the compromising interpersonal conflict management style of the leader.

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## CHAPTER 8

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 8.1. Introduction

Managers in the public sector have a key role to play in the improvement of service delivery by employees in their departments. Research findings have indicated that effective interpersonal relationships between managers and subordinates are central to the successful delivery of services by their departments. The effectiveness of managers as leaders is to a large extent dependent on the behaviour that they exhibit during interactions with their subordinates. Therefore, behavioural skills are crucial for managing interpersonal relationships in the workplace. In the present study the relationship between three behavioural competencies for managers in the public sector that are crucial for successful manager-subordinate relationships was investigated. A diagnostic approach was used to identify behavioural competency development needs. Based on the findings of the study possible interventions are suggested for the development of these competencies in order to increase the leadership effectiveness of public sector managers. The limitations of the study are outlined and possible avenues for future research are also suggested in this chapter.

#### 8.2 Discussion

Previous research findings gleaned from a study of available literature indicates that managers' ability to create and maintain a healthy, productive work environment depends to a large extent on their preferred leadership style. The reason for this is that leadership style has a direct effect on the productivity of employees (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002). It was also suggested that transformational leadership is crucial in the public sector (Ferres, et al., 2004). Furthermore, transformational leadership is a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness. This style of leadership is recommended in situations where there is a need to change the behaviour of subordinates through the use of influence and consideration (Burns, 1978). It is also effective to increase the service performance expectations, productivity, job satisfaction and loyalty of subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Therefore, managers should be encouraged to

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use transformational leadership to enhance the quality of service delivery by employees in the public sector. In addition, managers in the public sector must also be able to manage interpersonal conflict between themselves and their subordinates effectively (Powell, 1988; Rahim, 2001). Lastly, managers would not be able to manage emotional laden interpersonal conflict situations constructively when they communicate with their subordinates unless they were emotionally competent (Goleman, 2000).

The findings of the present study show that the group of public sector managers who participated in the investigation regard themselves as transformational leaders. The findings also suggest that the respondents prefer to manage interpersonal conflict constructively. Transformational leaders emphasize caring, inspiring, leading by example and challenging employees. They prefer not to engage in competing, avoiding or accommodating when they have to manage interpersonal conflict situations. Constructive conflict management skills/styles and transformational leadership are both characterized by concern for the needs of subordinates as well as concern for the leader's own needs. Furthermore, the findings indicate a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and constructive conflict management styles (collaboration and compromising) of the respondents. The findings of the study replicate previous research findings which indicate that managers who rate themselves high on transformational leadership also prefer to use more constructive interpersonal conflict management styles (Baskerville, 1993; Darling & Fogliasso, 1999; Goleman, 1998b; Weisinger, 1998; Weiss & Hughes, 2005).

It can be concluded that the group of public sector managers in the present study are probably effective leaders because they prefer to use the transformational leadership style and constructive conflict management styles. Therefore, they should be able to motivate their subordinates and enhance services delivery. They are also probably effective in maintaining good relationships with their subordinates.

However, one crucial factor, namely their level of emotion self-management, could negatively impact on their leadership effectiveness and their ability to manage interpersonal conflict effectively. Previous research findings indicate that this

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behavioural dimension of emotional competence is a critical element of effective leadership in general (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002) and of transformational leadership in particular (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001; George, 2000; Watkin, 2000). A positive relationship between transformational leadership and emotional competence has also been suggested (Barling, et al, 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002). Diggins (2004) highlighted that it is essential for public sector managers to be emotionally competent. Emotion self-management is also a key aspect of constructive interpersonal conflict management (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Weisinger, 1998). Therefore it is essential that leaders and managers should manage their emotions when they are involved in conflict with their subordinates. Managers who manage their emotions effectively would, most probably, be less likely to lose their tempers. They would manage distressing emotions well, stay composed and positive even in trying moments. They would think clearly and stay focused under pressure. Emotional self-management would also increase their success in relating and interacting with subordinates from various demographical and diverse backgrounds, and also increase their success in coaching and leading.

Previous research findings also showed a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style, constructive interpersonal conflict management styles and emotion management (Bachman, 1988; Barling et al., 2000; Barsade, 1998; Brody, 2004; Caruso & Wolfe, 2001; Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Diggins, 2004; Gardener, 1983; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Lewis, 2000). However, the findings of the present study show that respondents are not proficient in expressing and regulation their emotions in most situations. It is therefore not surprising that the study failed to provide evidence of a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and constructive interpersonal conflict management styles on the one hand and emotion self-management competencies on the other hand.

In one instance the findings actually suggests a significant negative relationship between the compromising style/skill for managing interpersonal conflict and emotion competencies. These findings are different from previous research findings on the relationship between these variables. Highly significant positive relationships have been shown between the compromising interpersonal conflict management style and

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emotional competencies (Huy, 1999; Williams & Sternberg, 1988). To compromise means to meet each other halfway in order to reach a 50/50 agreement (Baskerville, 1993; Lawson & Shen, 1998). Emotion self-management would enhance the process of compromising, because the leader would be able to express and control his or her emotions and would not allow emotions to interfere with the conflict resolution process (Goleman, 1998; Huy, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Williams & Sternberg, 1988). The findings of the present study show that the respondents' effective use of compromising could be negatively affected by their lack of emotion self-management.

The findings also indicated no relationship between the collaborating style on the one hand and emotional expression and emotion regulation on the other hand. Collaborating results in a win-win outcome (Arizona Student Unions, 2003; Baskerville, 1993). The collaboration process could be enhanced if leaders/managers expressed emotion accurately and appropriately and if they controlled their emotions (Goleman, 1998; Huy, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Williams & Sternberg, 1988). Therefore, the group of public sector managers who participated in the study would probably fail to achieve a win-win outcome to a conflict situation because they lack emotion self-management skill (a prerequisite for constructive interpersonal conflict management).

Previous research also showed that public sector managers do not have adequate emotional competencies and that they should be trained to increase their level of emotional competence (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2001). The findings of the present study replicate these findings and show a lack of emotion self-management competencies in the respondents. There is also no relationship between the transformational leadership style and emotion competence of managers in the present study probably because the respondents reported relatively low levels on emotion self-management competencies.

It can be concluded that the respondents were able to identify "best leadership practices". They also show a preference for using more constructive interpersonal conflict management styles. However, although they regarded themselves as transformational leaders and showed a preference to use more constructive

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interpersonal conflict management styles, they most likely lacked the behavioural capabilities to manage their emotions effectively when they were involved in disagreement with their subordinates.

The public sector in South Africa has been widely criticized for a general lack of quality in service delivery. Various initiatives have been launched to enhance service delivery in various public sector departments. Research findings have also indicated that there is a need to improve the skills and competencies of managers in the public sector (Bourantas & Papalexandis, 2001; Sangweni, 2003). This could be achieved by continuously monitoring their competence and performance levels as well as by implementing training and development initiatives to develop their skills and competences and to motivate them to change their behaviour.

Consequently, it is critical that public sector managers in South Africa should be provided with the opportunities to develop their skill in managing their negative emotions when they are involved in interpersonal conflict situations. The development of these skills would also enhance their effectiveness as managers in general and as transformational leaders in particular (Goleman, 1998; Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Martin et al., 1998; Orioli et al., 1999). Fortunately emotional competence can be developed (Goleman, 1998).

### **8.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the present study, the following are recommended to the Department of Roads and Transport and to public sector organizations in general:

- A public sector organization should base its training and development policies on the integration of job content training as well as managerial and leadership training. Such a department should also include guidelines for the assessment of leadership effectiveness in its selection as well as its training and development policies.
- A situational diagnostic approach to the practice of leadership should be used to identify the training and development needs of managers.

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- Managers in a public sector organization should be provided with opportunities to develop their abilities to express their emotions accurately to others. They should also learn how to use “... their emotions as an integral part of their daily actions and interactions...” (Qmetrics, 1997 p6). In addition, they should learn how to keep negative emotions, such as anger, frustration or hostility, and other disruptive emotions associated with conflict under control. They should also be provided with opportunities to develop the necessary skills to inhibit emotional impulsivity and to “...stay calm and focused and emotionally grounded even in the face of disagreement or conflict” (Qmetrics, 1997 p2).
- A public sector organization should include measures of emotional competence in the assessment batteries that it uses as part of the process of selecting candidates for managerial positions.
- It should also be kept in mind that all three variables of interest in the present study are critical for effective leadership in the public sector. Therefore, assessment batteries used to identify the developmental needs of managers as well as those used to select candidates for managerial positions should also include psychological assessment measures to assess their leadership style(s) and interpersonal conflict management styles.
- Continuous transformational leadership, interpersonal conflict management and emotional competence training and development programs for managers, employees with managerial potential and newly hired managers should also be developed and implemented. This would improve their performance over time. Training and development sessions could be arranged on a quarterly basis.
- Alternatively, persons with identified training needs could attend relevant training workshops and training sessions offered by government institute such as South African Management Development institute (SAMDI) and Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) to develop their interpersonal conflict management capabilities, emotional competence, and leadership styles.
- The use of self-awareness programmes could also be considered to enhance managers’ personal and professional development and to track change in

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their own behaviour. For this purpose the Theory of Self-directed Learning programme developed by Boyatzis and McKee (2002) is recommended. The purpose of this program is to help managers to change or adjust their behavioural styles. The program includes five self-discovery modes, namely: (1) My ideal self; who do I want to be? What do I want out of life and work? (2) My real self - how do I act? My strengths - where my ideal and real self overlap, my gaps - where my ideal & and real self differ. (3) My learning agenda - building on my strengths while reducing gaps. (4) Experimenting with new behaviour, thoughts, and feelings, practising the new behaviour, building new neural pathways through to mastery. (5) Developing trusting relationships, like coaches that help, support and encourage each step in the process. The programme could be adapted to focus on the three variables identified in the present study.

#### **8.4 Limitations of the study**

- The findings of the present study are most probably not representative of the public sector in general. Data was collected from one public sector department in the Limpopo Province only and the sample size was relatively small. Therefore, caution should be taken when the findings are generalized to other public sector organizations in the province and nationally.
- The study focused on the assessment of transformational leadership and excluded the assessment of other leadership styles. Managers also assessed their own leadership style. A more comprehensive assessment of leadership style could be achieved when subordinates also assess a leader's style.
- Only emotion self-management competencies were assessed. A more comprehensive assessment of emotion management could be achieved by including an assessment of how leaders manage the emotions of others as well as their own.
- Other factors that were beyond the researcher's control that might impact on the findings are (a) time frame of the research, (b) respondents' commitment and honesty, (c) lack of training of respondents, (d) unreturned questionnaires.

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## 8.5 Future Implications

More research is needed in South Africa, especially on the transformational leadership style, interpersonal conflict management styles and emotional competence. Most previous research on these variables has been conducted in the private sector of some Western countries. The present study contributes to research on the variables of interest in the public sector within the South African context. The following should be considered by future researchers:

- A bigger, more representative regional and/or national sample should be used.
- A 360 degree assessment of the transformational and other leadership styles should be used.
- A more comprehensive assessment of emotion management should be done.

## 8.6 Conclusions

A public sector department should regard its employees as valuable assets for improved service delivery. In government and most work settings the lower level staff members are responsible for core functions of the organizations and they have to implement the vision and mission of an organization at grassroots level. However, they get less pay, recognition and acknowledgement than managers. They deserve to have considerate and caring managers who could serve as role models for them to emulate. Research has shown that productivity and employee satisfaction are not only influenced by high remuneration and good working conditions, but also by the relationship between managers and their subordinates (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002). It has also been found that an effective leadership style has an important impact on the motivation, commitment, adaptability and satisfaction of employees and on organizational performance as a whole (Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk, 1998).

Transformational leadership has consistently been identified as the most appropriate style to achieve organizational objectives, such as quality service delivery. Moreover,

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the South African workplace is characterized by diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and political opinions, just to mention the few. Effective leaders should be able to overcome these and lead without bias, prejudice or discrimination. They should also be able to manage any conflict situation effectively. It is clear that the public sector also needs managers who are skilled in interpersonal conflict management because constructive conflict management could optimize leader-subordinate relationships, irrespective of diversity. Lastly, managers in the public sector need emotion self-management capabilities as a prerequisite for effectively managing interpersonal conflict in their departments and to come into their own as transformational leaders.

However, managers in the public sector are, in general, ineffective leaders (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2001; Sangweni, 2003). This could be attributed to a lack of insight into their own behaviour or a lack of experience when managers in the public sector are appointed or promoted to higher managerial posts. It is therefore imperative that any shortfall in their behavioural skills that could affect their effectiveness as leaders should be identified in a timely manner. Planned interventions should be implemented to make them aware that they need to become more effective and to develop necessary skills to use in their interactions with their subordinates. Of particular importance in this regard is that their emotional competence should be developed and that their awareness of the importance of these competencies for their effectiveness as leaders and for the constructive management of interpersonal conflict should be increased. By doing this a public sector department would most probably ensure that it has a motivated workforce and competent managers, and this could result in high performance, high job satisfaction and improved service deliver and ultimately in the attainment of its vision and mission.

The findings of the present study demonstrate the current state of affairs in a public sector department. Research of this nature in government departments could shed light on the awareness of managers pertaining to their ability to be effective leaders. The study also highlighted the appropriate behaviour that managers should adopt to become successful and showed that they lack emotion self-management skills.

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For the betterment of the country as a whole, South African government department managers need to be strategic and transformational as leaders. They need to manage diversity effectively and ultimately achieve the goal of providing quality services to people that they serve. Leadership effectiveness could most definitely enhance the ability of the public sector in South Africa to offer competitive services and ultimately to attract and retain quality managers and employees.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**COVER PAGE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

*RESEARCH PROPOSAL*

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP,  
EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A PUBLIC  
SECTOR ORGANIZATION

MATJIE M. A

200013528

Department of Industrial and Organizational Psychology

University of the Limpopo

SUPERVISOR: DR. C PIETERSEN

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## APPENDIX B

### REQUEST LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY BY THE RESEARCHER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS AND TRANSPORT

P O BOX 3116  
SOVENGA  
0727

Head of Department  
Department of Roads and Transport  
Private bag x9484  
Polokwane  
0700

Sir/Madam

#### **Application for permission to conduct research at the department**

I am hereby requesting permission to conduct research survey in your department. The survey will take form of questionnaires.

I am currently registered as an Industrial Psychology Masters student at the University of Limpopo. My supervisor is Prof. C Pietersen, Associate Professor at the Department of Human Resource Management. The title of my thesis is “The Relationship between Transformational Leadership, Emotional Competence and Conflict Management in the Public Sector Organization in the Limpopo Province.

If requested, I will be happy to provide my research proposal (approved by the Ethics Committee, University of Limpopo) and present sample questions from the questionnaires to the department. The final findings and recommendations of the study will be presented to the department for its own use. Confidentiality of data is ensured. Data will only be used for research purposes and group analysis.

I am looking forward for a positive response.

Yours sincerely

MATJIE MA

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## APPENDIX C

### SUPPORT LETTER OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE SUPERVISOR TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS AND TRANSPORT



**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**  
**SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

---

To : Head of Department  
Private bag x9484  
Polokwane  
0700

From : Prof C. Pietersen  
Associate Professor: HRM

Date : 6 February 2006

---

**MR M. A. MATJIE**  
**MASTERS STUDENT**

I am currently supervising Mr Matjie. He is registered for a Masters degree at the university of Limpopo. The title of his thesis is: *“The Relationship between Transformational Leadership, Emotional Competence and Conflict Management in the Public Sector Organization in the Limpopo Province”*.

It would be appreciated if you would consider his application to conduct his research at your organization.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Prof C Pietersen  
Supervisor

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## APPENDIX D

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATION AND INDEMNITY STATEMENT TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO: TURFLOOP CAMPUS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO APPEAR IN RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES/INTERVIEW SCHEDULES AND IN THE RESEARCH COVER LETTER/PAGE:**

#### *IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS/RESPONDENTS*

1. Completion of the following questionnaire(s) and/or participation in the following interview(s) is voluntary and anonymous/confidential.
2. Only grouped responses are used for scientific analysis and dissemination.
3. The individual identities of respondents (in the unlikely event that it may become known) are protected at all times.
4. By completing this questionnaire/participating in this interview the respondent indemnifies the University of Limpopo and all persons involved with the above project, for whatever reasons, including negligence on the part of the researcher(s) and research supervisor(s) or project leader(s).

Prof H J Pietersen (2006)  
HOD: HRM

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## APPENDIX E

### MEASURING INSTRUMENTS/QUESTIONNAIRE

(Supervisor: Prof C. Pietersen, Tel number: 015-2682629).

You (the respondent) are invited to take few minutes of your time and complete the attached questionnaires. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. The findings from the study will be only used for research purposes only. Grouped responses will be used for scientific analysis and dissemination. You are not required to write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. This means that data that you provide will be anonymous. Please be honest when you answer the questions.

Thank you very much for your help and co-operation.

MATJIE MA (200013528)

CELL: 072 686 2768/0766673896

DEGREE: M.ADMIN (INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY)

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

By completing this questionnaire the respondent indemnifies the University of Limpopo and all persons involved with the above project, for whatever reasons, including negligence on the part of the researcher(s) and research supervisor(s) or project leader(s).

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## SECTION A

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

For each of the questions in Section A, mark your choice with an X in the appropriate column.

1. Gender:

Male


Female

2. Age:

Below 30


31-40

41-50

51-above

3. Population group:

Black


White

Indian

Coloured

4. Remuneration Level:

Level 9-10


Level 11-12

Level 13-14

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5. How long have you been in the Managerial position?

Less than 1 year

1 – 5 Years

6 – 10 Years

11 – And over years


## SECTION B

### LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This questionnaire provides a description of various ways in which those in leadership positions act. Twenty-one descriptive statements are listed below. Judge how frequently each statements fits you. The word “other” may mean your followers, clients, or group members. Circle the number that best describes how you think or feel you lead others.

**KEY: 0= NOT AT ALL; 1 = VERY SELDOM; 2 = SOMETIMES; 3 = OFTEN; 4 = VERY OFTEN, IF NOT ALWAYS**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. I make others feel good to be around me.                               | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. I express with a few simple words what we could or should do.          | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. I enable others to think about old problems in new ways.               | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. I help others develop themselves.                                      | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work.   | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. I am satisfied when others meet agreed-upon standards.                 | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. I am content to let others continue working in the same way as always. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. Others have complete faith in me.                                      | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. I provide appealing images about what we can do.                       | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things.         | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. I let others know how I think they are doing.                         | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. I provide recognition/ rewards when others reach their goals.         | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything.       | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. Whatever others want to do is okay with me.                           | 0 1 2 3 4 |

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- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 15. Others are proud to be associated with me.                             | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. I help other people find meaning in their work.                        | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 17. I get others to rethink ideas that they never questioned before.       | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 18. I give personal attention to others who seem rejected.                 | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 19. I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish.      | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 20. I tell others the standards they have to meet to carry out their work. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 21. I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential.             | 0 1 2 3 4 |

## SECTION C

### HANDLING DIFFERENCES

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Consider situations in which you find your wishes differing from those of another person. How do you usually respond to such situations? Think of situations with subordinates.

On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair, please mark the "A" or "B" statement which is most characteristic of your own behavior. In many cases, neither "A" nor "B" statement may be very typical of your behavior, but please select the response which is closest to that which you are more likely to use.

1. A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.  
B. Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.
2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.  
B. I attempt to deal with all of his/her and my concerns.
3. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
B. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
4. A. I try to find a compromise solution.  
B. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.
5. A. I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution.  
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
6. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.  
B. I try to win my position or viewpoint.
7. A. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.  
B. I give up some points in exchange for others.
8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
9. A. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.  
B. I make some effort to get my way.
10. A. I am firm in pursuing my goals.  
B. I try to find a compromise solution.
11. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.  
B. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
12. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions or views which would create controversy.  
B. I will let him/her have some of his/her positions if he lets me have some of mine.
13. A. I propose a middle ground.  
B. I press to get my points made.
14. A. I tell him/her my ideas and ask for his/her ideas.  
B. I try to show him/her the logic and benefits of my position.

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15. A.I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.  
B.I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.
16. A.I try not to hurt the other's feelings.  
B.I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position or views.
17. A.I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
B.I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
18. A.If it makes the other person happy, I might let her maintain her views.  
B.I will let him/her have some of his positions if he/she lets me have some of mine.
19. A.I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.  
B.I try to postpone the issue until I have had enough time to think it over.
20. A.I attempt to immediately work through our differences.  
B.I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
21. A.In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.  
B.I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.
22. A.I try to find a position that is intermediate between his/her's and mine.  
B.I assert my wishes.
23. A.I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.  
B. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
24. A.If the other's position seems very important to her, I would try to meet his/her wishes.  
B.I try to get him/her to settle for a compromise.
25. A.I try to show him/her the logic and benefits of my position or view.  
B.In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
26. A. I propose a middle ground.  
B.I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
27. A.I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.  
B.If it makes the other person happy, I might let him/her maintain his/her views.
28. A.I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
B.I usually seek the other's help in working out a solution.
29. A.I propose a middle ground.  
B.I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
30. A.I try not to hurt the other's feelings.  
B.I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.

## SECTION D

### HANDLING FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

**INSTRUCTIONS:** For each item listed below, please indicate how well it describes the way you currently you handle/express your emotions in interpersonal situations. Please circle a number in the box that best correspond with the way you handle or express your feelings and emotions.

		Very Well	Moderately well	A Little	Not At All
1.	I let other people know when they are doing a good	4	3	2	1
2.	I express my emotions even if they are negative	4	3	2	1
3.	I let others know what I want and need	4	3	2	1
4.	My closest friends would say I express my appreciation of them	4	3	2	1
5.	I keep my feelings to myself	1	2	3	4
6.	I let people know when uncomfortable feelings get in the way of our work	4	3	2	1
7.	I have trouble reaching out to other when I need help	1	2	3	4
8.	My co-workers would say I express my appreciation of them	4	3	2	1
9.	I would do anything to avoid looking foolish to my peers	4	3	2	1
10	I am not afraid to express my feelings even if I believe they will	1	2	3	4

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	cause a disagreement				
11.	When it comes right down to it, I can trust myself to get things done	1	2	3	4
12.	I remain calm even in situation when others get angry	4	3	2	1
13.	It is better not to stir up problems if you can avoid doing so	1	2	3	4
14.	I have a hard time getting consensus from my work team	1	2	3	4
15.	I solicit feedback from my peers on my performance	4	3	2	1
16.	I am good at organizing and motivating groups of people	4	3	2	1
17.	I enjoy the challenge of facing and solving problems at work	4	3	2	1
18.	When I make a critical comment, I focus on the behaviour not the person	4	3	2	1
19.	I avoid confrontations	1	2	3	4

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## APPENDIX F

### DETAILED AND COMBINED RESULTS ON THE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS

		Gender				Total	
		Male		Female		Count	Col %
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %		
Age	<30 yrs	6	7.9%	7	14.0%	13	10.3%
	31-40	25	32.9%	17	34.0%	42	33.3%
	41-50	32	42.1%	21	42.0%	53	42.1%
	51+ yrs	13	17.1%	5	10.0%	18	14.3%
Population	Black	62	81.6%	35	70.0%	97	77.0%
	White	9	11.8%	11	22.0%	20	15.9%
	Indian	3	3.9%	3	6.0%	6	4.8%
	Coloured	2	2.6%	1	2.0%	3	2.4%
Remuneration	Level 9-10	22	28.9%	14	28.0%	36	28.6%
	Level 11-12	42	55.3%	25	50.0%	67	53.2%
	Level 13-14	12	15.8%	11	22.0%	23	18.3%
Time	<1 yr	3	3.9%	5	10.0%	8	6.3%
	1-5 yrs	45	59.2%	23	46.0%	68	54.0%
	6-10 yrs	15	19.7%	18	36.0%	33	26.2%
	11+ yrs	13	17.1%	4	8.0%	17	13.5%

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## APPENDIX G

### CONTRACT OF CONDUCT BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS AND TRANSPORT

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